

Socialist Worker

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

Workers inflict blow after blow on the tottering Tories

THEY CAN BE

by Socialist Worker Political Correspondent

BRITAIN'S DOCKERS went back to work on Tuesday having achieved one of the most magnificent victories in the history of the labour movement. Their country-wide strike action in support of the three shop stewards threatened with jail by the Industrial Relations Court inflicted a major political defeat on the Tory government.

They proved that militancy, solidarity and determination at rank and file level can break the anti-union laws. Even more important, they showed that if similar action were taken in unison by workers in all the key industries then the Tories could be driven from office.

No one should underestimate the severity of the defeat inflicted on the Tories. The centrepiece of their policies is the Industrial Relations Act, designed to break the power of the trade unions where they are most powerful—at the workplace.

Last Friday, as the dockers said, was the 'crunch'. The call for support from all sections of the movement in support of the three stewards met with instant response. Every indication was that there would be an explosion of rank and file solidarity strikes until all the proceedings against the stewards were dropped.

OFFENSIVE

The government went rapidly into reverse gear. The Court of Appeal sat and quashed the prison threat on the application of an unknown, state-appointed 'Official Solicitor' discovered in a convenient filing cabinet.

The direct action of the dockers achieved more in one day than two years of committee-room opposition from the knights of the TUC.

The Tories have spent two years in a determined offensive against the living standards and organisations of the working class. The poorest and most exploited sections of society were to be forced to foot the bill for more investment and bigger profits.

Unemployment has been boosted, prices have soared, welfare services slashed and charges increased, wages reduced, savage rent increases planned for the autumn—all an intensification of the policies of the previous Labour government. The assault was underlined by the Industrial Relations Act.

All was going well for the Tories. Then came the miners, the railmen and now the dockers.

'CONCERNED'

The fight back has come from below. We have seen nothing but compromise, manoeuvre and retreat from the so-called leadership of the trade unions.

With three dockers facing jail last week, Jack Jones said he was 'gravely concerned'. He made no declaration that he would mobilise the 1½ million members of his union if the court order was upheld.

Vic Feather appealed to the Tories to put the Act 'on ice'. No declaration by him that the TUC would mobilise all its members in support of the dockers.

While they dither and search for compromise, it is becoming increasingly clear to millions of workers that the Tories are tottering and can be kicked out. Many of their policies are in ruins.

They face a major balance of payments crisis. Another devaluation is on the cards, to be followed by further massive price increases. Investment is not going up and the success of the miners and railmen



Monday's mass meeting of London dockers at Tower Hill. They pledged strike action to back any workers threatened by the law. Picture: Mike Cohen

means they cannot hope to attack wages as brutally as before.

And the Industrial Relations Act has been shown to have all the force of a ruptured balloon when faced by determined opposition.

The Tories must not be allowed to recover. Any hesitation will give them time to prepare fresh attacks, exploit weaknesses and divisions in our ranks and cook up an 'incomes policy' deal with the leaders of the trade unions.

The workers have shown that they have the industrial strength to topple the Tories. The fight must now be intensified.

Any further threats from the NIRC must be met by immediate strikes. Substantial wage demands to beat down

the rising cost of living must be backed by the open and declared threat of industrial action.

The tenants' movement and the trade unions must unite and prepare for open warfare against the 'Fair Rents' Act this autumn.

INTENSIFY

From all these struggles, we must redouble our efforts to build independent, fighting organisations of workers that will lead the opposition to any attacks on our standards and freedoms by any government.

If the Tories are kicked out we face the return of a Labour government thrust into office at a time of major political and economic crisis. It will use that crisis to fob

off any demands for reform and unless put under pressure from organised workers will be used by the employers to continue and intensify the attacks of the last eight years.

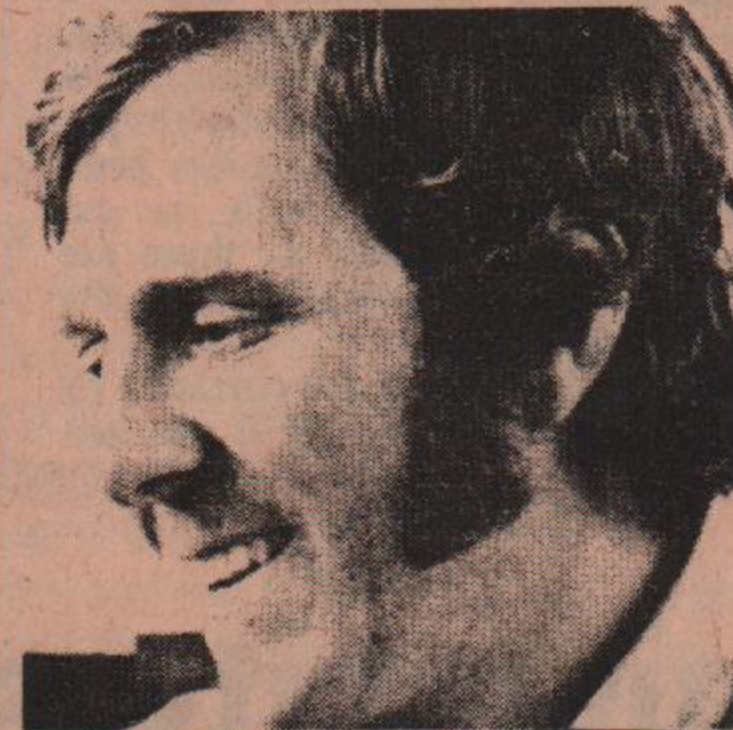
That is why it is vital to build genuine councils of action, powerful combine committees and wide-ranging tenants' organisations NOW to fight the Tories and to insist that the struggle against the employers' offensive goes on unimpeded by the fine words and phoney promises of the Labour leaders.

A tremendous opportunity now exists to forge from all these struggles a new, mass-based socialist party dedicated to the total transformation of our present society into one run and controlled in the interests of working people, not profit.

'A great victory'

'I'M RELIEVED for myself that I didn't finish up in Pentonville. But in some ways I'd much sooner have gone in and the situation blown up. It's no use keeping this under the mat. The trade union movement must smash this Act.'

This is what 29 year old Alan Williams, one of the three London dockers threatened by the Industrial Relations Court, told Socialist Worker this week after the Tories had backed



Alan Williams: Smash the Act

down from imprisoning him, Vic Turner and Bernie Steer in the face of massive solidarity action.

'It just happened that dockers were the first to get the crunch', he said. 'It could be anyone and that is why we're stating that we'll strike in support of any trade unionist treated this way.'

'Certainly the government was frightened. But personally I think that creep Feather and the TUC were involved. They don't even recognise my union [the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers] yet they offered to pay our legal fees if we went into a civil court for an appeal. We refused.'

'The situation has now come to pass where the whole fight has been passed on to the shop stewards. It really seems that the official unions will not fight the Act. Any steward worth his or her salt must do so.'

'It's just as well that workers like the dockers were the first. It might have been some poor unfortunate sod who couldn't make the stance.'

'Anyhow it was a great victory. But we're keeping our eyes on the places where it could blow again, like UCS.'

HOW DONALDSON GAGGED THE PRESS: EXCLUSIVE PAGE 10

WORLD NEWS

BRIEFING



Iranian students cover their faces while demonstrating against the Shah in Rome

TERROR RULES ON IN TURKEY

IN THE past 13 months, since martial law was declared in the main towns of Turkey, a reign of terror has thrown thousands of workers, peasants and intellectuals into prison. So far about 2000 have been brought to trial.

Left-wing parties and some trade unions have been smashed, press and radio are censored, the universities are tightly controlled. A network of informers spans the country and armed bands of fascists, the police and army have murdered 29 people.

Turkey is a country of high military and economic importance for European and American capitalism. From 1946 onwards the United States built more than a hundred bases there as part of the 'cold war' offensive.

After the Cuba crisis in 1962 there was a partial disengagement, but the Jordanian repression of September 1970 started a new build-up.

Low wages—on the land, where 70 per cent of the population lives, the average income per person is £15 a year—and high unemployment, officially put at two million, have attracted large amounts of profit-hungry foreign capital. Most of this has been invested in industries such as car assembly and chemicals, as these are heavily dependent on imports from the parent firms.

The devaluation of the currency by 66 per cent in August 1970 resulted

from a correspondent

in even higher profits on the exported products. It also meant a big jump in prices—in other words an attack on the living standards of workers and peasants.

Workers hit back with increasingly militant strikes. Peasants seized land from the landowners and revolutionary organisations grew in strength.

The ruling class, weak and divided in itself, has always needed the backing of a strong army, but by March last year the situation had become so critical that the army forced it to set up a government of national unity. A month later martial law was declared and a vast manhunt for trade union and left-wing leaders and revolutionaries fighting against American imperialism began.

TORTURE

Large numbers of prisoners have been brutally tortured. For example, 41 quarry workers made a complaint against an officer who had shares in the quarry. They were arrested. A report says they were 'beaten one by one by the police. For four days they were hungry and without money. Their families hadn't been informed. They were probably fired from their jobs since they hadn't attended work for four days.'

A favourite method of torture is *bastinado*, in which the prisoner's feet are fixed in an apparatus so that he cannot move them, and cudgel blows

are then rained on the soles of the feet. Deep gashes open and the victim cannot usually walk for some days afterwards. Many prisoners were tortured for more than a month in this way.

Ten special military courts try those prisoners who are charged. One of these courts declared: 'The court believes that it is impossible to find out whether the defendants were tortured to obtain the truth, or whether they were forced to confess to crimes that they did not commit.'

The court therefore believes that it is not necessary to verify the accusations and decides unanimously to reject the objections.'

Of those who have been brought to trial the death sentence has been demanded for 96.

So far six prisoners have been given death sentences, and at the beginning of May three of them were hanged. They were accused of 'attempting to get rid of the constitution by force'. But, as their lawyers pointed out: 'It is impossible to believe that a state can be overthrown with four pistols'. The lawyers themselves are now on trial.

The arrests continue—452 in the past two months. But only a few days before the executions, 49 prisoners expecting to be sentenced to death were given jail sentences and some even acquitted. There are other signs that the grip of the generals is relaxing slightly—a new government took over last month because the parliament had refused to grant the previous one power to make decrees. Though workers and peasants are very demoralised, there is still some resistance.

The Queen shakes bloody hands

by Ian Birchall

THE SHAH of Iran (Persia) is the private guest of the Queen at Windsor Castle this week. The Queen is evidently less fussy than some about the company she keeps.

When the Shah was in Switzerland last week police had to mount the biggest security operation in their history. When he addressed the International Labour Organisation, trade union delegates from France, Denmark, Holland, Switzerland and Sweden refused to attend.

The Shah's firing squads have had plenty of work this year. In March 19 alleged 'terrorists' were shot. The conduct of the trials was highly dubious: foreign observers were excluded.

On 19 April four more oppositionists were shot. One was Ali Bakeri, said to have been one of 11 sentenced on 19 February. But his name was not among the 11 listed after the February trial. The military court must have decided to spare him the strain of a rigged trial.

Amnesty International reports: 'Arrests are arbitrary; prisoners are tortured; courts are empowered under SAVAK (secret police) jurisdiction; the accused are not allowed free choice of lawyers; at trials no proof of guilt is presented other than confessions extracted by torture; trials are not reported and are sometimes completely secret; the right of appeal is denied. Observers also report that many arrested persons are never even brought to trial.'

Persian Gulf

The Shah claims to have introduced 'profit sharing' to Iran. But in April last year, when textile workers demanded increased wages, troops opened fire killing three and wounding 12.

However, resistance continues—in March this year several hundred students in Teheran University demonstrated against the regime.

Behind the Shah's campaign of repression lies a concern to prove to the United States—who are perhaps confused by his friendship with Mao's China—that he is sufficiently tough. He is anxious to exercise full authority over the Persian Gulf.

The Shah, upset by widespread criticism of his regime in France and the failure of the French government to discipline Iranian students in France, is threatening to switch commercial agreements from France to West Germany, with whom he has just concluded an £80 million oil deal.

Britain's Tories, too, see the Shah as a friend. As The Guardian said on 15 June: 'In this oil-rich breeding-ground for Arab nationalism, the Shah's 'Big Brother' attitude is regarded in Whitehall as welcome as the flowers in May'.

ALLENDE's Popular Unity government in Chile is proud of its record on maintaining and extending civil liberties. As a result, papers are now published which were illegal under the Christian Democrats. One such paper is *Pacna*, which proclaims its aims in its April edition:

'The *Pacna* group has never supported military coups as an end in themselves, but it believes that it is natural and morally justifiable that in times of chaos one's hand should reach for the sword . . . It is necessary to destroy marxism politically, ideologically and culturally.'

'But the foundation of the new era will not be a parliament like the present one, nor the present political parties, but the armed forces . . . The armed forces must intervene, not as a surgeon, but, on a suitable occasion, to become the government indefinitely . . .'

'The *Pacna* group calls equally for the diffusion of the doctrine of the military state, and to prepare the conditions necessary for it to become a reality.'

The centre pages of the same issue are devoted to a review of the book *The Doctrines of Nationalism* by the French writer Jacques Blancard d'Assac, of which *Pacna* says: 'We recommend it without hesitation'. This is a presentation of the 'thought' of such men as Petain, Salazar, Mussolini and Hitler.

In the meantime the Chilean Communist Party is doing its duty—it is pressing for action by the government against the revolutionaries of the left-wing MIR.

THE FRENCH Communist Party daily newspaper *L'Humanite* has made an urgent appeal for more readers. It has had to sack some staff and close down part of its premises because of acute financial difficulties.

For a long time the readership of *L'Humanite* has been far lower than party membership—in fact party conferences have passed resolutions urging members to read the paper. The latest crisis is one more proof that the party's electoral strategy has failed to build a real base. Its impressive five-million vote does not reflect any deep commitment.

THE DECISION by the Iraqi government to nationalise the Iraq Petroleum Company, is simply an attempt by an underdeveloped country to claim a share of its own country's wealth.

The first challenge to the company came from the Kasseem regime in 1961, which took its unexploited concessions and claimed arrears of £130 million. The company simply refused to recognise these decisions.

Last year at the negotiations at Teheran and Baghdad the oil-producing countries managed to get an increase of 8.4 per cent on the price of crude oil. Iraq Petroleum responded immediately by making a 17 per cent reduction in production in Iraq, thus reducing Iraq's total income. It was this that forced the Iraqi government to nationalise.

THE CROATIAN fascist organisation *Ustashi* has long been active within the Yugoslav immigrant population in Australia. Posing as a 'democratic' anti-communist group, the *Ustashi* has enjoyed the support of leading members of the government, including Prime Minister William McMahon.

On 6 April the *Ustashi* showed their real character by bombing the flat of Martin Jurjevic, a political moderate who has opposed them within the Yugoslav community. A second explosion shattered an immigrant information centre.

The blasts coincided with Croatian nationalist celebrations on 10 April which commemorate the establishment by Hitler and Mussolini of an independent Croatian state under the fascist Ante Pavelic.

In response to the bombings, a Committee for Democracy in Australia has been formed by liberals, radicals and Yugoslav anti-fascists. The group will attempt to build a public mass campaign against *Ustashi* activities.

MICHEL DEBRE, French Defence Minister, has defended France's programme of nuclear tests in the Pacific. He claims that there is no proof that such tests have harmful consequences.

GIORA NEUMANN, the 18-year-old Israeli draft resister who has been imprisoned since last November for refusing to serve in the occupied territories is to appear once again before a military court. His offer to serve in a hospital or kibbutz outside the occupied territories has been rejected.

A DOZEN of Czechoslovakia's leading actors are to be prematurely retired at the end of this month. This is just part of the government's attempt to stamp out opposition elements in cultural and artistic circles.

University students challenge Greek junta

THE REIGN of terror which has gripped Greece since 21 April 1967 is coming to an end. For the first time the power of the ruling junta to act as master of ceremonies for any social development in Greece has been challenged—not by the middle-class 'opposition', but by the spontaneous action of the students.

With the prospect of Greek entry into the Common Market, industry is changing—it is becoming more capital intensive, concentrated into larger blocks, more rationalised under the control of monopoly capital.

This means a change in the manpower needed—greater specialisation in the labour force, more technical and supervisory staff, and a management elite trained to provide for the needs of monopoly capital.

The liberal opposition in Greece has been arguing that such highly specialised staff cannot be trained except under a fairly liberal system—with the students participating in their own oppression.

The junta, on the other hand, has pointed to past experience and argued that any liberalisation will lead to further disturbances. Events have proved that both were right, and that the middle-class

is unable to control a basically irrational and anti-human system.

In a distorted form, the education system reforms went through.

They stress specialisation and selection from an early age. This means that fewer people will go to the elite universities, and that those who fail the stiff exams will be swallowed by the newly expanded technical colleges.

Elections

Six-monthly exams, compulsory lectures and seminars and closer supervision have been introduced—a reflection in the student world of what is going on in Greek industry.

The junta's game came to an end over the election of student representatives. They wanted to have the elections, but also to control who would be elected. This was too much for the students.

Demonstrations were organised on 21 and 24 April, and 15 May. Some students tried to organise a demonstration on May Day but were arrested.

by George Gionis

Their demands for free elections in the university developed into demands for free elections in the country as a whole.

In March a strike of technical students spread from Athens to Thessaloniki, and in the end 2500 strikers were involved. Their militancy was so great that the junta's representative warned his bosses that he 'could not prevent any extremist actions being taken'.

In Athens on 21 May, the students demonstrated again in the city centre streets. When they were attacked by the police, passers-by helped them to escape. Others returned to the university, painted militant slogans on the walls and gave out political leaflets.

The response of the junta was erratic. Its first reaction was to announce that all further demonstrators would be shot. Students were arrested, tortured, beaten and kept in jail. The political police camped outside the university for a while. Threats were accompanied by a checking of 2000 student files for good behaviour.

But this threatened to ruin the junta's game. The future elite would not be too

eager to join a system that bloodied its nose. So ministers were sent up and down the country to announce the 'great debate' on the education system and the need to take the students' views into account.

The false choice being offered the students between participation and non-participation only makes their discontent greater. The junta offer 'liberalisation' to avoid trouble. But any steps towards liberalisation produce demonstrations and strikes which have to be stamped on.

Vicious

So reforms are just talked about and nothing done—which makes everybody more and more angry.

The junta is caught up in a dilemma which reflects the irrationality of capitalism. The vicious repression combined with sweet words serves only to fire the resistance of the students. But more important, it is an example of how even the best-laid capitalist plans can come to grief in face of mass rejection.

It is an example to the Greek workers that the junta is not omnipotent, and can be successfully fought. The importance of the student strike is not its immediate effects, but what it is a sign of.

Socialist Worker

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Next step a freeze?

TWO BODY blows for the National Industrial Relations Court in one week. But the beast is not dead. Of course the speeches of ministers like Robert Carr—'The Act is working and most certainly will not be put on ice'—contain a large amount of political ballyhoo.

They also contain some truth. The success of the Transport Workers Union was achieved **within** the framework of the law.

The splendid victory of the dockers over the court shows once more that solidarity and determination can paralyse the law. That lesson must be hammered home. But the government has not given up.

Heath and Donaldson have been rescued from a still more humiliating defeat by the Official Solicitor—who, we are solemnly assured, has absolutely no connection with government. The government has been blown off course—it has been shown to lack the strength to strong-arm well organised sections of workers. It will return to the offensive on a new tack.

All the indications are that this will take the form of a new 'incomes policy' and the NIRC has a vital role in this. The relative failure of Heath's 'get tough with the unions, end industrial anarchy approach' has been partly due to its limited 'ideological' appeal.

It went down famously in the stockbroker belt and had some success in exploiting the frustrations of badly organised and unorganised people, especially women. But in the nature of the case it strengthened the hostility of the better organised and more politically conscious workers to the government.

It was part of the 'stand on your own two feet', 'every man for himself and the weakest to the wall' philosophy which is basically unacceptable to thinking workers and indeed even to sections of the middle classes. A famous pioneer advocate of this philosophy, the 18th century Scotsman Adam Smith, was candid enough to describe the purpose of government as 'to secure wealth and to defend the rich from the poor'.

Barrage under way

Mr Heath no doubt shares this view but he dare not admit it. He badly needs a 'new image', a way of controlling wages that can be made to seem more reasonable to organised workers. And so, in spite of having to eat so many words, he is moving back to the policies of the Wilson government in this field as well as in state intervention in industry.

There may be a new wage freeze by law, as in 1966. The Prices and Incomes Board may be revived—under a new name. There may be tax changes to hit workers who gain wages above government norms. Some combination of these sort of measures are likely by the Autumn.

The preliminary propaganda barrage is well under way. For just as with the Industrial Relations Act, the co-operation of the trade union leaders is essential to the government. So is the toleration, if not the support, of those workers in the strongest bargaining position. Every effort will be made to stress the 'fairness' of restraint all round. We can expect Tory ministers to talk more and more about the plight of pensioners and the low paid just as Wilson and Brown used to do.

For the government knows very well that inflation will accelerate in the months and years ahead. The Sunday Times gave something of the game away last weekend when it spoke of 'the coming three to five years, when any number of causes of inflation apart from wages will be at work'. Some of these causes are directly due to government policy—the Housing Finance Bill and the coming Value Added Tax, for example. Some are due to the world-wide nature of the present inflation, some are specific to Britain.

In the month of May exports were 4 per cent lower than six months earlier and imports were 10 per cent higher. The deficit due to excess of imports over exports is now running at £500 million a year, the same figure as in the period before the 1967 devaluation.

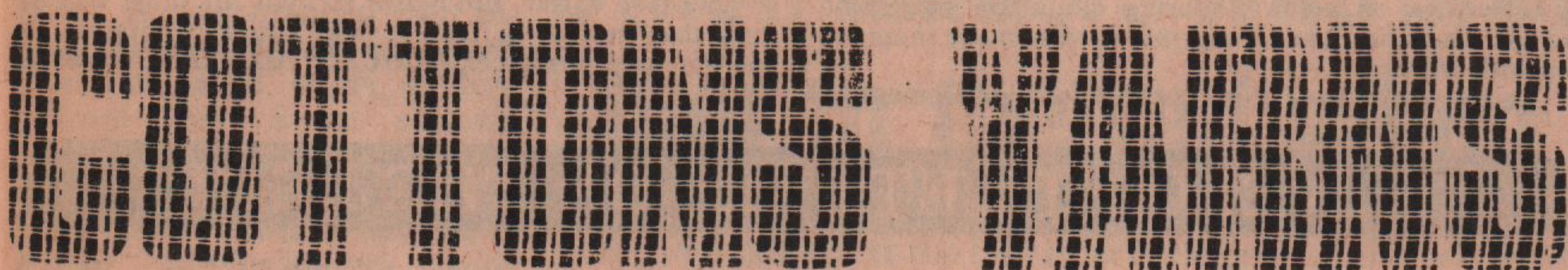
As trade picks up—and it is picking up—the gap is likely, on past performance, to grow. A new devaluation is threatening and is already being freely discussed in the financial press. It will give a sharp upward twist to the price spiral.

The threat to working-class living standards is growing and will go on growing. Unless these standards are seriously to be reduced intensified industrial action will be needed. The government will combine deception and legal action—sweet words and the occasional big stick—in its efforts on behalf of the class it represents. Joy at last week's defeats for big business must not be allowed to mislead militants into thinking that the struggle is nearly won. It is only just beginning.

WE'RE TIGHTENING UP ON
THE COMPANY MEDICALS,
PARKER....

**B
R
S
T**
IF YOU CAN'T
READ THIS YOU
WILL BE MADE
REDUANT

Evans



Sweethearts

THE COMFORTABLE MYTH that wage increases are the sole cause of rising prices drips relentlessly from the mass media. Ignored almost totally are the fiddles and blatant swindles cooked up by giant monopolies to rook the housewife and the indifference or connivance of the government.

A sweet case of such crookery has been discovered by a close look at the report of the Public Accounts Committee for 1971-72. One reason why the price of sugar has soared by 40 per cent in the last five years, so that a 2lb bag now costs two bob, is that the British Sugar Corporation has allowed 260,000 tons of sugar beet to be refined in an inefficient way as a result of an agreement it has with Tate and Lyle.

As the government owns 36 per cent of British Sugar, which buys up all the home-grown beet, Ted and his lads are up to their necks in this swindle. It works like this:

British Sugar has 18 mills with ample capacity for processing 900,000 tons of sugar a year. But only 640,000 tons are refined completely. The rest is hived-off to Tate and Lyle in a semi-refined state, although it would take little extra planning for British Sugar to refine the whole lot.

Instead, Tate and Lyle finishes the job, adding to the cost which is passed on to the luckless consumer.

That is not the end of the tale. A further cause of rising sugar prices throws an interesting light on the government's commitment to a 'free market economy' with no aid for firms that can't keep up with the rat race.

The domestic sugar market has long been divided up between three concerns—Tate and Lyle with 60 per cent, British Sugar 25 per cent, with the rest going to a small company called Manbre and Garton. When Manbre and Garton broke this



CUNNINGHAM: rent-a-vote

gentleman's agreement and boosted its share of the market it threw out Tate and Lyle's profit structure.

To redress the balance, Tate and Lyle has repeatedly asked—and got—government permission to increase its prices in order to retain its profits levels.

Tate and Lyle, fierce champions of 'private enterprise', last year contributed £2000 each to the Tory Party, the Economic League and Aims of Industry. Just sweeteners...

STUDENT ACTION, Argentina-style: Students in Cordoba who found a policeman in their building, took off his clothes and pushed him naked into the street with a poster on his back demanding the release of political prisoners.

Cheeky

A BODY called the Fisher Committee is investigating abuse by claimants of the Supplementary Benefits system, no doubt to reinforce the government-inspired belief that millions of work-shy dodgers are rooking the nation's wealth. Fortunately, the Child Poverty Action Group has chipped in a report that gives ample evidence that such abuse is negligible and that it is the Supplementary Benefits officials who need investigating.

As one example of the high-handed, callous and arbitrary way the officials cut off benefits, it quotes the case of an unmarried mother who had her benefit stopped when the local nosey-parker discovered a bottle of after shave lotion on her mantelpiece. This, apparently, 'proved' that she was actually living with a man while claiming benefit as a single woman.

In fact she was living alone and a man friend gave her the lotion because she liked the smell. Her money was restored when the CPAG made an appeal to a supplementary benefits tribunal.

The group says in its evidence that

far from claimants abusing the system, many of them are not informed of their entitlement 'with the result that "non-take-up" of welfare benefits is one of the major abuses of the social services.'

SAD SIGHT in Stoke Newington, North London: the initial 'H' has fallen off the front of the block of flats named after Hugh Gaitskell. It now bears the legend 'UGH GAITSKELL'—a suitable description of the design of the flats and the politics of the man who inspired them.

Blockbuster

THIS COLUMN'S old friend Alderman Andrew Cunningham, regional baron of the General and Municipal Workers Union in the North East, has made yet another stirring contribution to the workers' cause.

When the NE regional Labour Party conference discussed the Fair Rents Act, the delegates voted overwhelmingly in favour of refusing to put the proposals into operation. Brother Cunningham, chairman of the conference, then ruled that a card-vote should be taken and cast his GMWU block vote of 104,000 against the motion, which was soundly and 'democratically' defeated.

His union represents many of the lowest-paid workers in the North East. But at least they can reconcile their forthcoming rent increases with the thought that it is union policy.

Gale force

ON the prices front again, the Social Sciences Dean of Chicago University, Gale Johnson, who has made a special survey of the Common Market and its farming policy, cheerfully predicts that the British consumer doesn't know what is going to hit him or her when Ted the Teeth drags us into Europe.

Even worse, rocketing prices will hit hardest at the poorest sections of the community. Johnson reckons that a low income British family will spend approximately 4.5 per cent of its income on the Common Agricultural Policy, whereas a family in the £3700-£5500 bracket will spend only 1.7 per cent of its income on the EEC plan.

It is estimated that over the next 10 years the cost of contributing to the Agricultural Policy will double for the higher income groups but increase eight times for those at the lower end of the income scale.

Anyone for a wage freeze?



A not-so-quaint old firm cashes in on the property robbery

IF YOU ask anyone in the City or a reporter of the capitalist press about the New River Company they will probably tell you the quaint story of how the New River Company is the oldest quoted company on the Stock Exchange and was founded in 1619 to dig the canal and bring water from Hertfordshire to London. At the opening ceremony King James I fell in.

Such stories are convenient tools by which the ruling class and often their toadies in the financial press distract attention from the realities of modern capitalism. Our readers may be more interested in the following story.

The New River Company, now a property company, recently announced that its profits for the year ending 25 March 1972 were £187,883—less than the year before, when they were £195,601. But the directors had employed a firm of valuers to revalue their freehold properties and this showed a value of £8,410,000, compared with £1,900,000 in 1959, a rate of growth to make even Harry Hyams green with envy.

MAKE WAY FOR THE FASHIONABLE RICH

The growth is even more surprising considering that in June 1971 the directors estimated that the property was worth £3,500,000. So where is the property, that it can increase in value so dramatically as this?

Most of it is in Islington, Clerkenwell and Kings Cross. Much of it is residential, often slum property, which, if empty, is extremely valuable as the middle class continue their inexorable takeover of working class areas close to the centre of London, pushing out the local inhabitants.

The New River Company has many flats and houses standing empty which it is not reletting. Their profits fell last year because often the rentroll falls as they modernise and sell, or just sell, the valuable leaseholds.

It is obviously much more profitable to sell a dilapidated house in a fashionable district than collect the rent each week from it as a slum.

But the report shows that the company had nearly £3 million collecting interest in the bank—and it wasn't there in 1970. The income from this offset the fall in rents. That money itself probably came from the successful disposal of empty properties.

Now you may think it criminal for a property company to more than quadruple its money in 12 years, often at the expense of people who used to live in its property. And you may think it criminal for a company to make money by removing its tenants and, at a time of desperate housing shortage, have buildings standing empty.

And it is. But the City, the financiers, the insurance companies and the banks love it. On the day the New River Company announced its results, its shares, which stood at 355p in 1971, leapt by more than 100p from 650p to 760p.

WITH THE BLESSING OF THE CHURCH

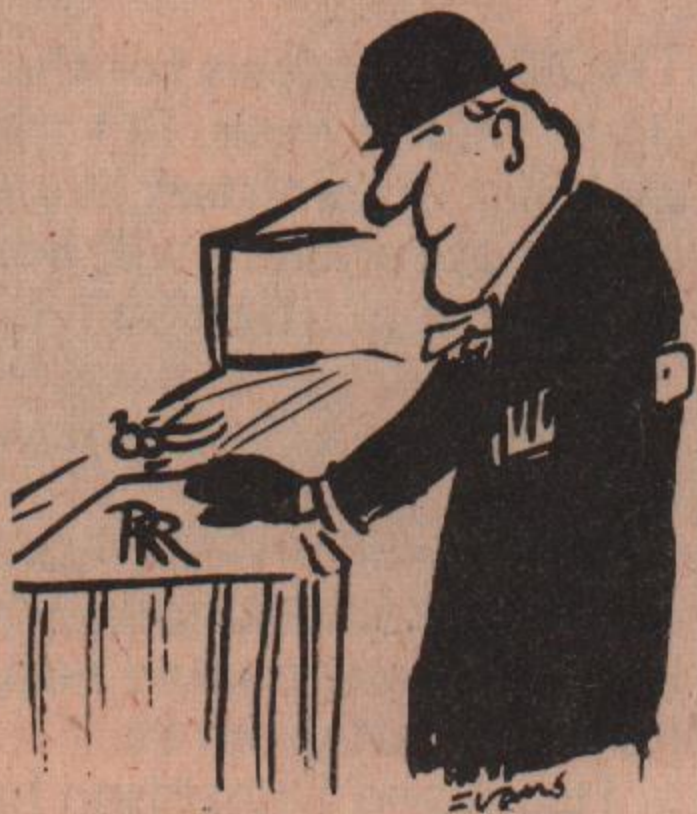
Now 32 per cent of the New River Company is owned by London and Merchant Securities, which is 46 per cent owned by Millrayne Securities, which is 52 per cent owned by Sir Max Rayne, chairman of the National Theatre Company. Sir Max is on the board of the New River Company and is very much its guiding light.

Sir Max has received a lot of help from the City. The Norwich Union Insurance Society holds 2.4 million London and Merchant shares. The Official Custodian for Charities and the Sun Alliance Insurance Company also have large shareholdings and the Yorkshire Insurance Company has loaned Sir Max millions of pounds.

Sir Max was originally put on the road to success by the Norwich Union and the Church Commissioners—those men who look after the £400 million belonging to the Church of England.

The commissioners loaned Rayne big sums of money during the 1940s. Ever since 1955, when they sold him 65 acres of property they owned near Paddington that, embarrassingly, was slum property with a fair number of brothels, the connection has flourished to the mutual advantage of both.

IN THE CITY



with T.H. Rogmorton

The second point to remember is that although these property developers may be involved in near criminal activities, they are eminently respectable men, which partly explains why the City and the Church Commissioners can warm to them so easily. They are not unshaven, they do not carry sawn-off shotguns, they do not even look like thugs.

But many property developers and financiers are still involved in rent racketeering, ruthless eviction and thuggery.

Only last year in New York, Rayne's company was prevented from evicting the tenants of a whole mid-town apartment block, so that he could turn it into offices.

WHO CARES FOR THE HOMELESS?

The recent Socialist Worker feature on housing showed how the 'respectable' Triumph Investment Trust and Slater Walker Securities are involved in ruthless profiteering from people's housing misery in Notting Hill. Maxwell Joseph, the man who runs the mammoth Grand Metropolitan Hotels, started in business by buying rows of small houses in the East End and auctioning them in blocs, with no regard for the welfare of the tenants.

These people, in their well-cut suits, expensive cars, opulent houses, with their smooth voices and polite manners have made, and are making money at the expense of defenceless, poor, ill-informed tenants. They are happy to let houses stand empty while people are homeless on the streets.

And it is not that the authorities, the City, the banks, the insurance companies—the seats of economic and political power—do not care: they know, they approve, they applaud, they finance and they profit by it.

TYING LABOUR WITH REFORMS

KEN MULLER (17 June) wants Socialist Worker to 'put the onus on the reformist leadership of both the trade unions and the Labour Party to adopt, campaign for and implement a clearly defined socialist programme.' At the same time it should 'make it clear that we as revolutionaries do not think they will be able to.'

Of course we don't. More to the point, neither do most Labour voters. Whatever other ideas they may have, they are not prone to suppose that the Labour Party is ever going to destroy capitalism and usher in the Workers' Republic!

In my experience, the average Labour voter has a pretty realistic understanding of what the Labour Party has been—a party committed to reform within the general framework of capitalism. And that, by and large, is what they have voted for.

Now the real difficulty about Ken Muller's 'experience of reformist betrayal' argument is that people only feel 'betrayed' if they don't get what they feel entitled to expect. The general disillusionment with the Wilson government had nothing to do with Wilson's failure to run up the red flag over the Palace of Westminster and take over the 80 great monopolies—or whatever number it is. No one in their right mind expected any such thing.

What large numbers of Labour voters *did* expect was a better deal on welfare, housing, education, wages and so on. They didn't get it and *that* is what made them fed up with Wilson.

—We know that the failure of the Wilson government to

deliver various reforms in the interests of working people was due to the present situation of British capitalism. We know that any government committed to 'reform' within capitalism today will instead make attacks on working-class liberties and living standards.

We know it, but largish numbers of Labour voters are not yet convinced of it. That is why we are for the return of another Labour government and that is why we try, through the unions, to commit the Labour Party to specific, definite commitments to reforms, to a programme to abolish unemployment, including work or full pay, the repeal of the Industrial Relations Law and the Housing Finance Bill and no introduction of similar schemes to replace them, the abolition of means testing and all welfare charges and so on.

Not socialism

The problem is not to convince people that the Labour Party is not a revolutionary party—they know that very well. What has to be done is to help forward the process of showing people that the Labour Party cannot deliver the sort of goods its supporters actually expect—and that is certainly not socialism.

The more limited and definite the things we can commit Labour to, such as the abolition of Health Service charges, the more effective the demonstration of the need for an alternative to fight for those things. And that means, in fact, a fight against capitalism in today's circumstances.—DUNCAN HALLAS, London SW17.

LIVELIEST LETTERS ON THE LEFT

Farm workers need all our support

I READ and welcomed Kathleen Basnett's letter (3 June). The general public has not got a clue what the farm worker has to put up with—endless hours of toil, very low wages, tied accommodation, fear of getting the sack and having to change your whole personality to keep that job.

I know all about the plight of the farm workers and I would be only too happy to see something done and done quickly. I know because I too was faced with the same situations mentioned in Kathleen Basnett's letter.

But in one thing she is not quite correct. If her cousin had sat tight, eviction would have taken far longer than three months. I know of cases where the farm owner has taken up to 18 months to get his eviction through.

Even so it's much the same, three months or 18 months. The working class

on the land are in a terrible state and the landowners are sitting back laughing at the fat profits they receive.

I was employed on the land for nearly three years and I finished up a nervous wreck. I am happy to say that this is not the case now as I am a Post Office worker and a district organiser and a central secretary in the UPW.

I get my satisfaction in life trying to help my fellow workmates, but I cannot for one minute forget the men and women on the land.—RON HALE, Woburn Sands, Bletchley, Bucks.

Abortion

TO ARGUE the case of abortion on demand from the premise 'Every Baby Must Be A Wanted Baby' (17 June) seems to me to be inconsistent with socialist thinking. Would Wendy Henry kill off the old and lonely members of our society who are often forgotten by their families?

I am a socialist but would consider myself a fool if I failed to be a realist. My own child was a 'mistake' but I love him just as much as if he had been planned and I know that I speak on behalf of many parents.

I support free contraception, however, because this would obviate the need for abortion which, after all, consumes the resources of the Health Service. If the socialist creed means anything at all, then surely we should protect the rights of all human beings—including the unborn.

And who knows—perhaps K Marx himself was unwanted at the time of conception!—GLORIA MURPHY, London SE5.

I AND MANY of my friends have attended as many anti-abortion rallies as we have anti-internment rallies, anti-Vietnam demos and anti-apartheid meetings. I thought the whole basis of socialism was that every human being, black, white, Catholic or Hindu, young or old, should have the right to enjoy all the benefits of life, to say and do whatever may be wished as long as it did not inflict injury on others.

It is ironic that you accuse the Church of hypocrisy and are so obviously guilty of it yourself. Your statement 'The main

WHY THE MAIL IS AFRAID

I WOULD like to add to the article 'Rebuff for witch-hunt' in last week's Socialist Worker. I am the 'schoolboy' who was wooed away from home, even though I am at college, having been thrown out of school when 16.

The whole of the Daily Mail article is full of lies and half-truths. All the quotes which are attributed to me I simply didn't make. So incompetent is the article in the Mail that it even printed a leaflet by the National Union of School Students yet attributed it to me.

When I joined there were no teachers in Merseyside IS, I was not, as the Mail said, surrounded by teachers.

However, I can understand the fears of the Mail. It is precisely because the school

Unions must back us

ALTHOUGH I am pleased that the £55,000 fine on the TGWU has been dropped, the reason why it was dropped displeases me.

The very learned judge came to the decision that the union was not responsible for the thousands of workers who have taken militant action in the docks of Liverpool and Hull. To my way of thinking, if a unanimous sector of any union decides to take any action over any dispute the official union should back them up regardless of the consequences.

After all, the workers are the union and not some two-faced union official at the top of the pile. If the 'official union' fails to recognise the complaints of its members I myself cannot see any reason why the workers should pay their union dues just to subsidise some 'retreating general' on a salary of £100-plus a week.

This also applies to the form of government we are enduring today. It is about time we re-organised this country to give the worker his rightful place in society.—G SPINK, Hunslet, Leeds 10.

argument is that free abortion would encourage women to be permissive' is simply untrue. From the moment of conception, the result is a complete unit of human life.

It contains all the vital components of human life just as we do and therefore it is no less in value than the nine-year-old boy, than the 90-year-old man or than the mother. The welfare of the mother is of equal importance as the welfare of the life she harbours in her womb but it is certainly not of superior importance.

The mother, the gynaecologist, the people and the law have no more right to destroy that individual than I have to destroy Ian Smith, no matter how much I feel it would improve the world.

You wrote of the truly horrific examples of dumped babies and battered children. No one can deny that these are the most detestable crimes of all. But it is the state of society that has caused these incidents and no number of abortions will better the problems and faults of society.—ELLEN REYNOLDS (17 years), Preston, Lancs.

Rosa Luxemburg

BY PAUL FROLICH

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

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

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THE BUREAUCRATS



The platform at the TUC 'Kill the Bill' rally last year in Trafalgar Square. The union leaders' race track runs from here to the corridors of power and the House of Lords—few go back to work on the shop floor.

PERHAPS no other group of men in the country are as well supplied with the good advice of their opponents as the trade union leaders. From Fleet Street editorial offices, the law courts and the cabinet room itself comes an unending chorus of appeals to their 'responsibility', 'good sense' and 'statesmanlike qualities'.

Nor are these appeals aimed purely at enhancing the moral fibre of these worthy leaders themselves, since, apart from an understandable weakness for the more intoxicating refreshments and the good life in general, most of them remain upright and worthy citizens.

The purpose of the advice is to ensure that these leaders of millions of workers keep control over their organisations and members, so preventing 'industrial anarchy' and the breakdown of 'law and order'.

The success of this strategy can be judged by the gratitude shown by our rulers in the honours lists. Nearly half of those elected to the TUC General Council in 1970 had won recognition in this way, ten Commanders, three Orders and two Members (all of the British Empire, of course) were joined by four Barons... at times the House of Lords must resemble an old boys' reunion of General Council members.

DIVIDED

These men of great power and influence are driven into the arms of the establishment they themselves once rejected by far more than their own weakness and a desire for titles. They as individuals represent and express a basic contradiction in the trade union movement itself.

On the one hand trade unions grew and developed to improve and defend the conditions of all who laboured. These improvements were seen as within the framework of the capitalist system itself.

Union leaders who prefer the white flag to the red when under fire

THE ROLE of the trade union leaders is under the spotlight as the Industrial Relations Act starts to bite and the TUC jettisons its opposition and scuttles for cover. What is the function of union leaders? Why do they prefer the white flag to the red one when faced by determined opposition from a vicious, anti-

working class government? The Communist Party's Morning Star recently attacked the International Socialists' analysis of the trade union leaders. This important article outlines the IS approach and the vital role which militants and socialists have to play in the rank and file struggle.

employer scabbing on the strike. What happens under the militant regime of the lefts? The strike is declared official and strike pay is paid, but nothing of the enormous strength of the three million members of the giant unions is used to whip the wildcat employer into line. A strike which concerted action could have settled in days rather than weeks is allowed to drag on for two years!

The result: the growing militancy among workers in the South West is dampened and a small group of courageous and dedicated trade unionists have to carry the burden of a prolonged strike. It is a sell-out as deliberate and ruthless as any of the right-wing, but disguised under the cover of 'official support'.

The 'left' phrases help to cover up right-wing actions. Between addressing conferences on the value of and necessity for workers' control, Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon organise and administer the settlement of productivity deals which, apart from increasing unemployment (another evil they condemn), reduce workers' control over their jobs.

An old bricklayers' saying puts it well: 'Brothers in the hall, bastards on the wall'.

So while the unions were organisations of the working class, they reflected the division of labour under capitalism and were divided along craft, trade and industrial lines.

On the other hand the collective organisation and struggle of the workers could not but assert the spontaneous striving of the workers towards their collective control of industry and society as a whole.

CONFLICT

This contradiction shows clearly in times of economic crisis when no concessions can be won within the framework of the capitalist economic system.

At such times the 'engine' of trade unionism—the mass action of the workers—conflicts sharply with the driver at the steering wheel—the trade union leaders, who dare not reach beyond what is available within the system itself. These leaders then side openly with the ruling class and its state to prevent the mass movement achieving a revolutionary and socialist understanding of what's going on.

TRADER UNION leaders are a very different group to the workers they claim to represent. Their interests, outlook and lifestyle are generally closer to those of the employer than the workers.

One survey showed that only five per cent of trade union leaders ever returned to the shop floor. For most others their



Vic Feather: in the big-time

position is a stepping stone, if not to the House of Lords, then to government and nationalised industry posts or positions in private industry.

Les Kealey, full-time Transport Union official and representative on the Ford negotiating committee who was forced to resign under rank and file pressure during the 1969 Ford dispute, moved into an £8,000-a-year job as a labour relations man for Cunard Lines.

The trade union bureaucrats balance between the interests of the big employers, the state and their own rank and file.

Caught between the employing class and the working class they try always to

act as mediators. In this role they run naturally into the arms of the state, which appears to them as a neutral body.

The road from Trafalgar Square to the corridors of power has become a race track as trade union leaders rush to collaborate with government, and now even co-operate with the Industrial Relations Act.

But the relationship between the leaders and the workers is sometimes clouded by apparent big differences between the political beliefs of these leaders.

Some, like Lord Cooper, represent the most moderate reformism—somewhere between the extreme right wing of the Labour Party and the left wing of the Tories. Others, like Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon, profess a more red-blooded socialist approach.

This confusion is more than amply assisted by the Communist Party, which refrains from criticising these leaders in the interests of an illusionary unity.

LET THOSE who feel that such a judgment is too harsh, look briefly at the struggle of the Fine Tubes strikers in Plymouth, members of the Engineering and Transport Unions.

In the days of Carron and Deakin, no doubt the strike would never have been declared official, the workers would have been instructed to 'return to work' and probably there would have been union/

FEAR

Six months before the General Strike of 1926, the left and right leaders of the TUC were debating whether to centralise and strengthen the TUC General Council. Two statements from the debate sum up, even today, the difference between right and left bureaucrats, different paths to the same betrayal.

From the right, J R Clynes, MP, PC, DCL, 25 years general secretary of the General and Municipal, said in a moment of candour: 'I am not in fear of the capitalist class. The only class I fear is our own.'

From the left the militant miners' leader A J Cook argued: 'My idea of power is that you should use it to avoid a struggle.'

In the event Clynes was proved more correct than Cook. He at least saw that the true power, which he so feared, lay in the working class and not in a powerful alliance of bureaucrats. It is a lesson many would do well to remember today.

HOWEVER left they are, the trade union leaders fear the unity of the political struggle for socialism and the industrial struggle. To them the socialist goal is not something connected to each and every daily struggle of the workers, but a rhetoric best confined to the May Day rally and the conference hall.

Willing or unwilling, they remain prisoners of the system.

To them the members are a stage army, marched on from time to time to enhance the power and authority of their 'responsible' leaders. Having themselves failed to prepare the members for the struggle to transform society, the bureaucrats readily fall back on the excuse that 'the members are not ready'.

The trade unions are a great school in which the workers learn, not only their own strength, but also to distinguish enemy from friend.

To win the unions from bureaucratic domination and for the control of the rank and file is one vital task in building the revolutionary movement today. To fight to control their organisations is a vital step for the workers on the road to power over the whole of society.

Such faith—in a socialist illusion!

A TOUCHING FAITH in the ability of the left union leaders to advance the socialist struggle is displayed by the spokesmen of the British Communist Party.

An article in the Morning Star (2 May) by Dave Priscott, the Party's Yorkshire district secretary, claims to put the 'marxist' view in opposition to that of the International Socialists which, he alleges, is both 'wrong in substance and dangerous in its practical conclusions.'

He makes only a passing reference to the rank and file, and with no effort to relate the trade union leadership to their social position or the role of trade unions in capitalist society—and implies that the view of the union leadership as a 'special social group' is an invention of the International Socialists.

It is worth remembering how often Lenin quoted De Leon's phrase describing union leaders as 'the Labour Lieutenants of capitalism'.

He goes on: 'Of course there are elements of bureaucracy in our trade

union movement, and they need to be fought. But the fundamental problems are political, not organisational.'

'To break right-wing domination of the movement we have often to challenge bureaucratic methods—but the main enemy remains the right-wing policies themselves, not the bureaucratic methods sometimes used to maintain them.'

To separate the 'political' from the 'organisational' aspects is to miss the point completely.

Skin-deep

Organisation is the expression of politics. To suggest that union leaders can be genuinely socialist and leftward-moving while remaining at the head of bureaucratic and undemocratic organisations is a travesty.

The unceremonious haste with which Transport Union official Tony Carfield was removed from office for suggesting that the union's general secretary should be subject to periodic re-election instead of being elected for life showed how skin-deep the socialism of the union's

leadership is when it comes to preserving its own position.

It is an essential part of the development of revolutionary socialist ideas within the trade unions that the militant rank and file insist that any left and socialist leaders give their politics an organisational expression—that they fight for democratic unions, that they genuinely support every workers' struggle, that they do not sell productivity deals while covering up with condemnations of the US in Vietnam for example.

Only a politically conscious rank and file can ensure the unions fight for socialist policies, and we judge left leaders by how much they aid this development.

When, as all too often, they deceive and betray the rank and file, they must be criticised and opposed.

The Morning Star not only fails in this task but deliberately avoids it in the interests of a temporary and illusory unity. It is a unity dearly bought, at the expense of political clarity—exactly that political clarity which Priscott claims to be 'fundamental'.

ARMS RACE: RIVAL GIANTS MENACE THE WHOLE WORLD

The arms race does not often hit the headlines these days. From press and television it would be easy to get the impression that the drive to nuclear destruction is a thing of the past. But this year the two major world powers will be spending more on arms than ever before in history.

President Nixon has asked Congress to provide 83.4 thousand million dollars for 'defence'. Yet the US already has weapons capable of delivering the equivalent of eight tons of TNT for every inhabitant of this planet or of destroying the major population centres of Russia 1250 times over.

Every minute of every day this weaponry is in a state of full alert, ready to be unleashed. 5700 nuclear bombs are primed for dropping on Russia or China from a thousand Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles, from 700 submarine launched missiles, and from hundreds of long-range bombers continually cruising with their pay load.

Each bomb is many times more powerful than those which destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The Russian leaders deploy 2½ thousand such bombs for dropping on America or China from 1300 ICBMs, several hundred nuclear submarines and 200 long-range bombers.

And that is not the end of the story. Both sides have innocuous sounding 'tactical nuclear weapons' for lobbing from large guns.

An international committee reported a few years ago that if a war were to break out using such weapons, with 400 weapons, which is not an unreasonably large number, the physical damage caused would be something like six times that caused by all the bombing of World War Two—and all sustained in a few days rather than years'.

Special feature by CHRIS HARMAN

Such weaponry is not only immensely dangerous. It is also immensely costly. Some 6½ per cent of the total wealth of the world is spent on arms.

That might not sound much. But it is greater than the combined income of the poorer half of the human race.

The US alone spends a sum on its military budget nearly twice as large as the total national income of India's 540 million population.

HOLLOW

Britain's own arms expenditure does not get much attention—either from Tories who are always screaming about 'excessive government spending' or from the Labour 'opposition'. But last year the cost was about 200 times greater than the total amount of money saved by abolishing free school milk.

Why are such massive sums spent? According to the propagandists of the different governments, it is because of the 'needs of defence'.

The hollowness of such claims is easily shown.

It has been estimated that even if the American government did relatively well in a nuclear war, 95 million people, or nearly half the population, would be wiped out. This ignores the countless numbers who would die in subsequent years from the effects of radiation.

On a small island like Britain hardly anyone would survive. Yet the government spends £2,500 million a year on arms.

The most technologically advanced and expensive kind of weapons have even less to do with defence in the real meaning of the word. At the moment America and Russia are spending huge sums of money on building up two anti-ballistic missile systems (ABMs).

A single system involves 100 rockets with H-bomb warheads. The idea is that these can be fired at incoming enemy missiles, exploding them in the air before they reach targets.

That means H-bombs exploding over 'friendly' cities and pouring out radiation with a deadly toll of lives on the local population.

The same point, that this massive arms spending is not really for defence, can be shown in another way. Just look how it has been used in recent years.

The American onslaught on Vietnam is the most obvious instance. In 10 years 100,000,000,000 dollars have been spent on trying to stop the Vietnamese controlling their own country.

At present a quarter of the strategic airforce of the US is involved in this task. Yet no one can pretend that the Vietcong are threatening the lives of America's population.

The record of the Russians is scarcely different. Its forces have moved into action only twice in recent years.

The first time was in 1968, when massive military resources were deployed to put 500,000 troops, complete with tanks and armour, into Czechoslovakia in the space of a few hours.

The second was early in 1969 when, in a smaller operation, Russian forces clashed with the Chinese on the Ussuri River and in Sinkiang. Several hundred members of the two 'Red' armies were killed.

At present a considerable proportion of Russia's missiles are directed southwards at Peking. And there are 50 per cent more Russian troops on the Chinese border than in Europe.



Bombs and the balance of terror

A real explanation of the arms race has to start from the basic fact about the world in which we live—that it is divided up between the rival ruling classes who dominate the rest of us.

In Britain 80 per cent of industry is owned by a mere 2 per cent of the population. Decisive control is exercised by an even smaller minority.

The same is true about all the other private capitalist states.

Things may seem to be different in Russia and the so-called Communist countries. But in reality the same sort of small minority holds power there.

They exercise a tight control over the state, using the crudest of police methods to intimidate anyone who challenges their power. And the state in turn owns all industry.

The ruling classes on both sides of the 'iron curtain' get their wealth not just by exploiting their own population, but also by dominating other countries economically or politically.

Crude force

So the minority who own Britain's wealth also own a large part of the mines of South Africa, the oil wells of the Middle East, the rubber of Malaya.

The great American corporations like General Motors, Ford, ITT, Standard Oil and Du Pont, operate in every corner of the world. Altogether the total overseas holdings of America's corporations total 52.4 million dollars—bigger than the wealth of most countries.

Since World War Two the rulers of Russia have come to exercise control outside the boundaries of the

USSR. The events of 1956 and 1968 demonstrated that in the last resort crude physical force alone enables them to dominate countries like Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

More recently their interests have spread to countries like India (whom they armed against China) and Ceylon (where they helped put down a socialist rebellion).

Each ruling class worries that it will lose control over the sources of some of its wealth, either to the populations it exploits or to other ruling classes.

Lives in fear

The US has terrorised Vietnam and the Russian rulers invaded Czechoslovakia because each feared the 'domino effect'—that successful resistance to their dictate by one small country would encourage rebellion elsewhere.

That also explains why the Russians have intensified their forces along the Chinese border ever since Peking first resisted their authority in 1960.

Each great power lives in fear that the other will secretly develop such superiority over it in arms that it will force the other side to surrender chunks of its empire. Each therefore feels compelled to spend as much as it can on developing arms, in case the other does so first.

This pressure has been made worse in recent years by the worry that other powers may start joining in the game. The Chinese so far have very few bombs and a score or so of missiles.

But this has been enough to prompt both the Russians and Americans to plan massive ABM systems.

The Japanese could build missiles and H-bombs in less than two years if

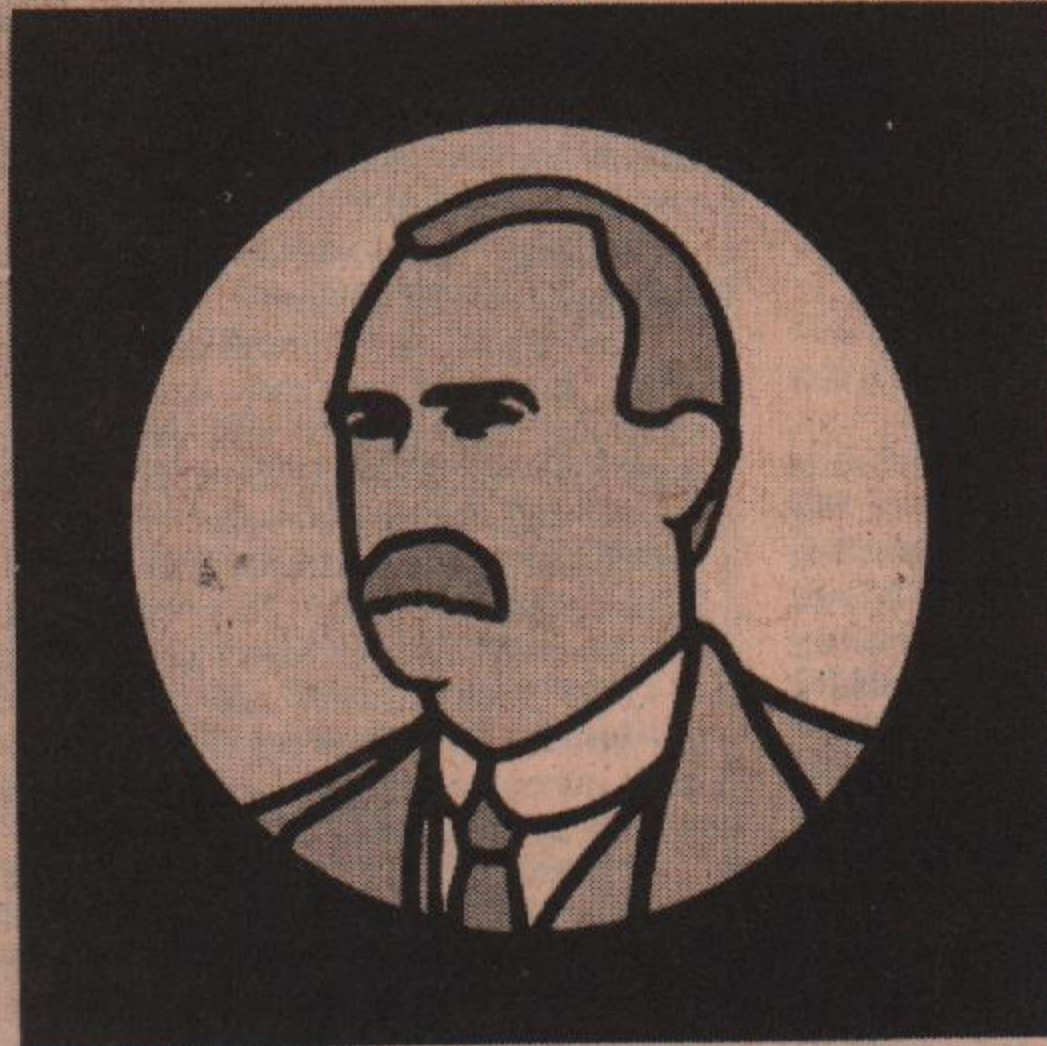
they wanted. And could build small destruction.

There can be arms race while to be divided minorities. They make temporary down the rising but they cannot wards nuclear would mean force on which exploitation are based.

Only an into revolution, in people of every destroy minority do that.

International Socialism 51

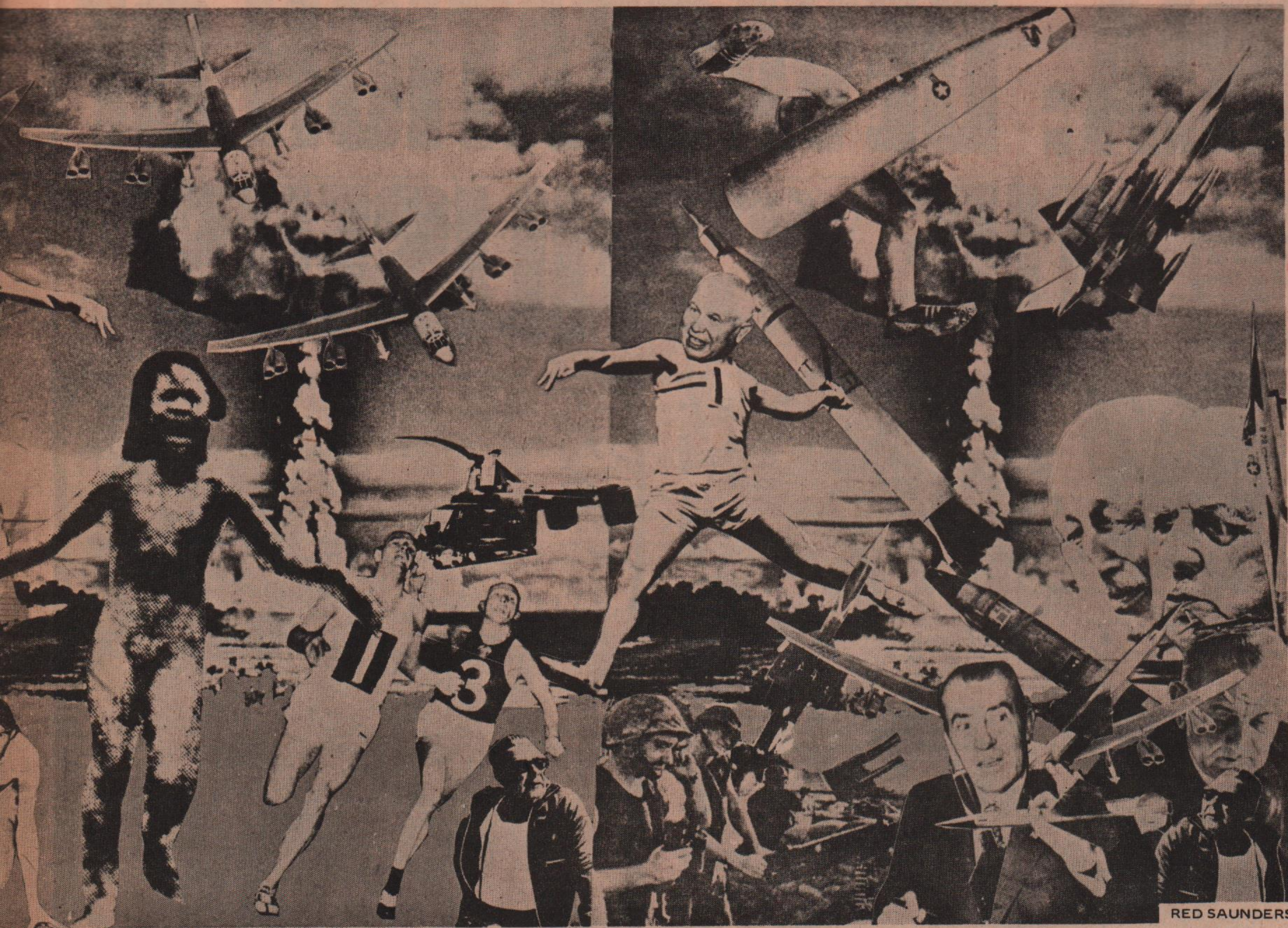
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Action by socialists is vital



The race goes on despite Moscow

Nixon's and Brezhnev's agreement, signed in Moscow a month ago, has been hailed as bringing the cold war to a final end. Yet within days of its completion, the American Secretary of State was pushing for still higher levels of spending on 'offensive nuclear weapons'.

The Moscow agreement does limit the development of certain kinds of arms on either side. It places an upper limit on the number of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles the US and Russia can dispose of.

And it restricts them to building two ABM defence systems each.

What drove Nixon and Brezhnev to the conference table was fear of the massive costs of the most modern weapons. This cost has been threatening to escalate to an unprecedented level.

The development of ABM systems gave both sides the idea that with a little more military expenditure they would be in a situation where, if they launched a nuclear attack first, they could protect themselves completely against any missiles the enemy launched in retaliation.

Prospect

Both sides felt compelled to develop these systems in order to stop the other side doing so first.

Yet the estimated total cost of the ABM system alone was hundreds of millions of dollars. Building full-scale ABMs would have meant both the Russian and American ruling classes cutting wages and welfare benefits.

Inflation would increase on an undreamt of scale. Massive class struggle would be the inevitable result on both sides of the iron curtain.

Rather than face such a prospect, Nixon and Brezhnev preferred to make an agreement with one another.

But the agreement does not stop the relentless competitive drive of the great powers. It has merely deflected it to other areas of the arms race.

The Americans, for instance, are arguing that the limitation on the total number of missiles they can have means that they have to spend huge sums to make existing ones more accurate.

Overthrow

The Russians no doubt are making similar plans.

There is only one way in which the arms race, and its horrific consequences for humanity, will be brought to an end. That is by the organisation of workers in every country to overthrow the rival ruling classes.

For many years this seemed an unlikely and difficult project. But today things are changing. Capitalism is less and less stabilised by arms spending.

Although we do not face the massive slumps of before the war, in every country there is rising unemployment, rising prices and increasingly bitter attacks by the employing class on the workers.

The effort of socialists to co-ordinate and make conscious the counter-offensive of workers' organisation is not merely concerned with the economic well-being of individual workers.

WAR ECONOMY—A BID TO WARD OFF SLUMPS

The need of the world's ruling classes to defend their overseas possessions cannot be a complete explanation of the vast sums spent on arms. For the Americans have now spent nearly twice as much on the war in Vietnam alone as the total value of their investments abroad.

Another factor has to be taken into account: capitalism as it exists today could not survive if it were not for massive military spending.

Until 1940 the chief characteristic of the capitalist economy in all countries was that periodically, about every 10 years, there would be massive slumps. Much of industry would close down and millions would be unemployed.

The 1930s saw the worst slump ever. Nothing governments did seemed able to cure it. Although there was some recovery by the middle of the decade, towards its end the rot began to set in again.

AVOID

But big business discovered during the Second World War that there was an alternative to slumps—massive arms production. A third of everything produced in the US was being poured into the war effort.

Yet the wealth remaining was much greater than in the 1930s. Because there were no slumps, big business seemed able to have both guns and butter.

No wonder that as early as 1944 the head of one giant corporation, General Electric, was expressing the opinion that 'what the nation needs is a permanent war economy.'

When rivalry with Russia replaced war with Germany and Japan, massive arms spending continued. In 1948 US arms expenditure was 10 times what it had been before the war. Today it is 80 times bigger than in 1939.

How has it been possible for big business to avoid slumps by wasting huge sums of money on arms?

The basic cause of slumps is that capitalists are continually driven by blind competition with one another to make massive investments in new machinery and new factories on a scale that cannot be profitable for all capitalists.

After a few years of expanding at



Shut down in the 1930s: The arms race has helped to avoid the old boom-slump economy.

breakneck speed some businessmen decide that their profits are not high enough and stop buying new plants and machines at all. Those firms that supply them with buildings and machinery find that there is no longer an outlet for their goods.

Workers in the construction and machine-making industries are sacked. They in turn cannot buy the output of other industries, which in turn are forced to lay off workers. This continues until much of industry is idle.

Arms expenditure enables capitalist production to go ahead without facing this difficulty for two reasons.

First, it means that a large chunk of the output of industry is absorbed by the military budget, which does not drop sharply as businessmen decide it is no longer profitable to invest.

At the same time there is a reduction in the pressures driving them to invest on a scale that cannot be sustained by the level of profits, and so profit rates do not so readily plummet down, causing an end to all investment.

Of course, capitalists suffer in the

short term by having to hand over some of their profits to the state to finance arms programmes. But the overall situation is like that of the tortoise who outraced the hare. The arms economy slowly expanding over a long time yields more profits than the ups and downs of the slump-boom economy.

Certain powerful business concerns have an even more direct interest in massive arms spending. In the US 22,000 different contractors and 100,000 subcontractors depend on the Pentagon for orders.

WELCOME

Among them are giant outfits like Lockheed, General Dynamics, McDonnell Douglas, Boeing, General Electric, Westinghouse Electric, Honeywell and IBM. Some absorb 10 per cent of the national product, an amount equal to that which goes into new industrial investment each year.

In 1969 the Pentagon spent 262,000 million dollars of money, much of which it allows to be spent by these firms to use for selling.

For these giants every expansion of the arms budget is welcomed. As the Guardian reported a few weeks ago:

'Although America's present intervention in the Vietnam war could add 5000 millions to this year's defence budget, the administration is probably not over concerned. The expenditure is giving a powerful boost to the economy, especially in California and in the other states where the defence industry is concentrated.'

There is nothing inevitable about either slumps or an arms economy. If the people who worked to create wealth actually got together to plan how production was organised and for whose benefit, neither would occur.

But such a state of affairs would be the complete opposite of the present, capitalist organisation of society. In a world run by competing capitalist organisations, the very threat of nuclear destruction is the only alternative to international co-operation as a way of survival.

al for the very future of humanity...

ALGERIA: DEVASTATION OF THE 'CIVILISERS'

TEN YEARS AGO the Algerian war came to an end. The story of this war is rich in lessons for the national liberation struggles of today—not least at a time when the North of Ireland is being called 'Britain's Algeria'.

French forces colonised Algeria in the first half of the nineteenth century, and Algerian territory officially became an integral part of France, sending members of parliament to Paris. This was a legal fiction to be much exploited later on.

French politicians often liked to speak of France's 'civilising mission' in Algeria. Nothing could have been further from the truth. In 1834 a French general had noted: 'Nearly all the Arabs can read and write: in each village, there are two schools.'

French civilisation meant smashing the native culture. In 1954, when the war began, only ten per cent of Algerians were literate. Algeria had fewer doctors per head than a 'backward' country such as Egypt, and the death rate among Algerian children was several times higher than among European settlers.

TRAMPS

But the most catastrophic effect of French 'civilisation' was the rapid rise in population. Since 1830 Algeria's population had risen from two million to nine million. But so little had the French developed the country's resources that it could still only produce enough food for two million.

One French sociologist spoke of a nation reduced to the condition of tramps.

Algeria remained an agricultural nation, producing wine and cereals, though fairly recently oil was discovered in the Sahara.

When an Algerian Assembly was set up in 1947, voting was in two colleges. The first contained the European settlers (there were just over a million) and a small group of educated and privileged Algerians. The second contained the rest of the Algerians who were allowed to vote at all (Algerian women, for example, had no vote).

In effect one European vote was worth at least six Algerian votes.

Such was the stranglehold of France and the European settlers that the Algerian middle class remained small and stunted. As a result, the first attempts to organise against French oppression came from the working people.

In 1926 Messali Hadj, an Algerian who had been a Paris factory worker and for a time a member of the Communist Party, founded the North African Star, which won wide support among Algerian workers in France.

BREAKAWAY

Despite repression by the French authorities the Algerian nationalist movement survived and grew. In 1945 an Algerian rising was met by savage repression from the French government, which at the time contained Communist ministers. More than 40,000 Algerians were massacred.

In 1953 a split emerged in the Algerian nationalist movement, still led by Messali Hadj, who had now developed away from marxism towards a nationalism inspired by the Muslim religion, although he still maintained a socialist rhetoric. A group of younger nationalists, headed by Ben Bella, felt much more sympathetic to the kind of nationalism being developed by Nasser in Egypt.

It was this breakaway which constituted the FLN (National Liberation Front).

French imperialism had just suffered a crushing defeat in Indochina, and the French government were negotiating independence for their other North African colonies, Tunisia and Morocco. In order to take advantage of the situation, and to take the initiative from Messali, who still had wide support, the FLN decided on immediate armed struggle.

On the night of 31 October 1954, there



A mass demonstration by French settlers in Algeria against the French government



A copy of Revolution, the FLN's bulletin

were about 70 terrorist attacks—bombings, ambushes and armed raids. The war had begun.

THE FLN FORCES were small—a leadership of intellectuals with only two or three thousand fighting men, not all of them armed. Soon they succeeded in winning over such middle-class elements as Ferhat Abbas, who for many years had demanded 'reforms', and not independence at all.

Of an Algerian population of nine million, the vast majority were agricultural workers and their families, many of them unemployed for part of the year, and almost all on the brink of starvation.

Those who had moved to the towns scarcely enjoyed any better conditions. One observer described their conditions: '... bands of men, women and children and aged, almost totally naked, whom misery and fear of death has pushed towards the cities and who, each morning, search the garbage pails, disputing with dogs and cats the remnants of food, the rags and the empty tin cans ...'

In fact, it was scarcely possible to speak of an industrial working class in Algeria at all. But, there were Algerian workers—about 400,000 who had emigrated to France to find work and food. Money sent home by these workers supported two million Algerian people.

More important, even though these workers were the victims of low wages, appalling housing and widespread racialism, their experience in France contributed

The first of two articles by Ian Birchall

decisively to raising their level of expectations and aspirations.

The tradition of independent working-class organisation was not strong. The French authorities had made Algerian trade unions legal only in 1932.

As a result the trade unions became satellites of the nationalist organisations. Messali's organisation, the MNA (Algerian National Movement) was stronger among Algerian workers in France, but the FLN built a rival trade union federation in Algeria.

TROOPS

But the FLN's main strategy was not aimed at the working class. The plan was first of all to build up guerrilla strength in the remote mountain areas, and then move towards the towns. When they did begin to operate in the towns, the tactics were those of terrorism—in particular, the throwing of bombs into European crowds.

By 1956 the FLN had gained control of several areas of the countryside, and had set up its own government there, covering taxation, education and health.

The response of the French authorities was firstly to deny that there was a war at all, and secondly to increase massively the French troops in Algeria. By 1958 France

had more than 400,000 soldiers in Algeria, greatly outnumbering FLN armed forces.

The French Army adopted the so-called 'grid' system, involving heavy concentrations of troops in the main cities and towns. Eight large internment camps were built to imprison 6000 Algerians. Torture was widespread: methods included electric shock treatment and the deflowering of girls with bottles.

During 1956 the FLN had built up great strength in the Algiers Casbah, a massive slum which served as a base for terrorism in the rest of the city. But in 1957 a force of paratroops under General Massu moved in and effectively smashed the FLN organisation.

This was a serious setback to the FLN, who were forced back into the countryside.

SETBACKS

Many FLN units operated from over the border in Tunisia. The French Army had put up an electrified barrier along the frontier, but courageous FLN squads armed with insulated wire-cutters regularly broke through.

But despite the courage of the FLN fighters, the war was not being won in military terms. In fact, in purely military

terms the FLN reached its highpoint in 1957, and then began to suffer serious setbacks.

TRAGICALLY, Algerians could not count on the support of French workers. There were elements of spontaneous anti-Algerian feeling among French workers. Young workers were conscripted to fight in Algeria and while they were away their jobs were taken by Algerian immigrants.

But France had two political parties which claimed to be marxist and internationalist—the Socialist Party and the Communist Party. Between them they got more than two-fifths of the votes in the 1956 elections.

If these parties had taken a clear stand they could easily have dispersed any elements of working-class racialism. Unfortunately they had other interests at heart.

After the 1956 elections a Socialist, Guy Mollet, became prime minister. Mollet went to Algeria to study the situation, and was pelted with stones and tomatoes by European settlers, organised by fascist elements.

They need not have worried. Mollet and friends were and remained the most loyal defenders of French rule in Algeria.

The Communist Party did not even have the excuse that they were part of the government. When the rebellion broke out, they were at first silent, directing most of their propaganda to the question of German rearmament. They even issued statements in which criticism of terrorist methods was stressed far more than defence of the right of the Algerian people to struggle.

Since the mass working-class organisations had opted out, the only real opposition in France came from intellectuals, students and youth. Late in 1955 there were large demonstrations by young conscripts. They tried to obstruct troop movements by pulling the communication cords in trains and sitting down on the lines.

The Communist Party publicly discouraged its militants from such actions. It even forbade French and Algerian Communists to contact each other.

By early 1958 the war had reached a huge scale, but the prospects for Algerian independence were far from hopeful.

NEXT WEEK:

Victory and defeat



REVIEW

RANK-AND-FILE POWER by Julian Harber

THE WORKERS' COMMITTEE, by J T Murphy, with a new introduction by James Hinton. IS History Group Pamphlet No 1.

WHY is it that the TUC has capitulated so quickly and so utterly to the government attack on trade unions? Why has ex-docker Jack Jones disowned his former brothers on Merseyside as they fight to protect their jobs? What can be done about it?

These are questions that industrial militants are now asking. They are ones that revolutionary socialists must be able to answer.

In this situation the reappearance of J T Murphy's pamphlet, *The Workers' Committee*, after some 50 years is welcome. For this pamphlet published by the Sheffield Workers' Committee in 1917 was an attempt to come to grips with a situation in many ways similar to that we face today.

After a heavy defeat in the lock-out of 1897-8, the leaders of Britain's engineering union, the ASE, pursued a policy of class collaboration. Shortly before

the First World War the rank and file revolted against this and voted in an executive pledged to a policy of aggressive action against the employers.

But during the war this new leadership also became collaborationist, accepting anti-strike legislation and restrictions on the freedom of workers to move between different employers. They also refused to put up any real fight against government schemes for dilution of labour—allowing the unskilled to do work traditionally reserved for the skilled.

Why did the officials behave in this way, and, more generally, why was it that a man gets into office on the strength of revolutionary speeches, which strangely contrast with those of a later date after a period of office?

REMOTE

Attempting to answer this, Murphy begins to sketch a theory of trade union bureaucracy. The essence of the problem, he believes, lies in the changed social role a man necessarily adopts when he becomes a full-time union official.

'As a man in the workshop he feels every change; the workshop atmosphere is his atmosphere; the conditions under which

he labours are primary; his trade union constitution is secondary, and sometimes even more remote. But let the same man get into office. He is removed out of the workshop, he meets a fresh class of people and breathes a different atmosphere.

'Those things which were once primary are now secondary. He becomes buried in the constitution and of necessity looks from a new point of view on those things which he has ceased to feel acutely.'

These are perceptive and important ideas, and were to be elaborated a few years later—partly as a result of study of the British shop stewards' movement—by the Italian marxist Antonio Gramsci.

Murphy's proposed solutions to this problem are also distinctly similar to Gramsci's. They can be summed up in the words of the shop stewards of Clydeside, the other centre of industrial militancy during the First World War:

'We will support the officials just so long as they rightly represent the workers, but we will act independently immediately they misrepresent them.'

He proposes that workers should 'act independently' by the creation and strengthening of democratic shop stewards committees fully responsible to

the rank and file. These committees should federate on a local and ultimately a national basis.

In the context of 1917 these were relevant proposals. In 1972, in a situation where the TUC will not and (if Murphy's analysis of trade union bureaucracy is correct) cannot really successfully fight the government, they are again relevant.

Shop stewards committees are much more common than half a century ago, it is true, but many are not fully democratic. And the task of linking them locally and nationally has hardly begun.

This is not to say that we ignore the official union machine and do not try to fight within it against all betrayers and compromisers. The two struggles go hand in hand. One fault of Murphy's pamphlet is that he lays insufficient emphasis on this.

Another is Murphy's essentially anarcho-syndicalist belief that a national shop stewards' movement could bring about socialism by itself and so there is no need for a revolutionary party.

These matters are usefully discussed in James Hinton's introduction to the pamphlet, which also provides background material on the wartime shop stewards' movement and a short biographical sketch of Murphy himself.

This pamphlet is available from IS Books, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2, or from the IS History Group, 69 Arden Street, Coventry, price 10p, plus 3p postage.

Where do the miners get their splendid solidarity?

PIT LIFE IN COUNTY DURHAM: Rank and File Movements and Workers' Control. Ruskin College History Workshop Pamphlet 6, by David Douglass.

ANYONE looking for the roots of the miner's splendid solidarity in the recent strike, or interested in the development and experience of his own class will find this pamphlet interesting, although confusing in its approach.

It is written by a leading militant in the Durham coalfield and starts by looking at the methods used by the miners to mark out and defend their area of control down the pits—in the face of continual attempts by management to smash their organisation.

In the early days of mining, and in fact until quite recently, the hewers had one huge factor on their side which gave them the edge in this battle: piece-work.

As in the docks and engineering, piece-work allowed you to do as much as you liked (though not as little!) without too much pressure from supervision. As the author puts it: 'If the carrot of more money could not extract more work, no official could hope to do it.'

Though the piecework system had many bad features, it did keep the supervision down, both under the old 'bord and pillar' system under which the coal face was divided up into 'stalls', with a few mates or 'marras' working in each, and under the 'longwall' method where the entire face was worked by a team. In Durham, the team elected a leader to do a number of jobs from negotiating to sharing out the team's pay from their communal pay-packet.

Next to be described is the highly democratic system of 'cavilling', where all the teams would draw lots to see which team was to work at which part of the coal face.

'Cavilling' was vital to the miner's

battle for job-control because it could be adapted to prevent the sort of victimisation in which one man was continually given the worst work to break his spirit, or was made redundant. It was not only useful as a defensive weapon, but could also be used in attack—by refusing to put the cavils in, as happened at Ashington in 1913, when 4500 men and boys stopped the pit owners meddling with the bargains.

Another possible weapon was that of 'go-slow', which is interesting because of how it brought sections of the men up against opposition from the union bureaucracy.

After the 1872 Agreement, which committed the Durham Miners' Association to 'a virtual productivity deal' through the abandonment of 'restrictive practices,' the leadership came down heavily on branches which allowed these to go on. The leadership has continued to do this right up to the present, although it lifted its ban for a short time due to strong pressure from the rank and file in the late 1870s.

Alliances

The Durham Miners' Association opposed the tactic of 'go-slow' because it supported 'safer' methods of negotiation—first arbitration and then, when even that aroused too much rank and file interest in negotiations, the sliding scale, which related wages automatically to the price of coal.

Despite this, several branches continued to restrict production, and these branches led the way in forming unofficial alliances against the bureaucracy during strikes, as Hebburn and Thornley did during the 1872 strike.

The same happened on a massive scale during the strike against the eight-hour day, night work and the three-shift system in 1910, during which the executive tried to dissipate the miners' obvious fighting mood. But this time



riots broke out in several villages, and a motion of censure on the executive was only just defeated by 344 votes to 338.

Dave Douglass deals in this pamphlet with some particularly militant villages, 'red' villages, and traces their history through from the Chartists to the present day. Some, like Thornley, certainly have

a considerable record of militancy.

Thornley was the only village to take part in the Chartist 'sacred month' or general strike of 1832, was a storm centre in 1872, and a frequent initiator of oppositional meetings.

In general, the pamphlet is an entertaining ramble rather than a real attempt at a history of the Durham miners. It jumps around from strike to strike and back again, without developing an ongoing picture of how the miners adapted their organisation to the difficult problems posed by changing technology.

Uneven

As the author himself suggests, by picking out some 'red' villages, levels and types of militancy were no more uniform than workplace organisation, but he does try to link the miners' different collective views of the union bureaucracies and the state with the development of their organisation at work. Because this relationship is not explained, there can be no real explanation of the more central relationship between the rank and file and the bureaucracy.

The short chapter entitled 'The Leadership and the Rank and File' does not deal with the problem of uneven opposition to the policies of the Durham

Miners' Association leadership. For example, the Tyneside pits presumably fought to keep the weapon of restriction of output because it was vital to them, whereas for other villages this was less important.

In general, it is obvious that some villages were oppositional some of the time, and one or two all of the time, but which were which and why we are not really told.

Because these questions are not answered, the experience of earlier revolutionaries and their attempts to overcome this uneven development is not really dealt with. To attack the bureaucracy is all right, but is not enough—we desperately need studies of the historical development of the nature of working-class consciousness if it is to be forged into a weapon with which to destroy rotten union leadership and the state machine once and for all.

This pamphlet, price 60p, is available from IS Books, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN, postage 6p.

Richard Croucher

Jobs in advert were being killed

MULTI-MILLIONAIRE John Bentley of Barclay Securities—a get-rich-quick investment holding company—announced the closure of the company's Triang plant at Merton, South London, with the loss of 1500 jobs on 4 June.

Just two days earlier—literally as Bentley was signing the death sentence of the Merton factory—his firm was advertising for extra labour. An advertisement offering 'security of employment in a rapidly expanding company' appeared in the Wimbledon News on 2 June.

Now a biased observer might suggest that to seek to induce workers to take jobs at the very time when he was murdering those same jobs was an instance of 'unfair industrial practice'. But we need not lose sleep worrying that Bentley

might receive a midnight call—at his West End luxury pad—from the National Industrial Relations Court tip-staff.

Bentley bought the plant only last November from Lines Brothers, an old family concern. He then carefully gave Triang workers the impression that the days of job insecurity were over. Indeed he persuaded workers from other Triang plants which were being closed to up home and migrate to Merton and 'security of employment'.

The reaction in the factory in the past two weeks has been one of stunned horror. Triang Merton has never been a strong trade union plant but in the past week or so trade unionists have begun to realise that only a determined struggle can save their jobs.

Bentley wants them out so that he

can sell the land on which the factory rests to Town and City Property, a group of property speculators, for redevelopment. It is reported that Bentley will make a cool £2 million profit for himself and his shareholders.

Triang workers are worried about the secret talks taking place between Bentley and the trade union officials of the engineering, transport and furniture workers' unions. This week Triang workers have been demanding mass meetings to hear what has been going on at these meetings.

At meetings at the factory this week the demand has been made 'occupy Triang'—'black all work being sent to Triang Merthyr Tydfyl'—'the unions must support Triang workers defend their jobs'.

Ireland: Danger of sell-out increases

BELFAST:—The Tories have had some success in their efforts to restabilise their rule over Northern Ireland in the past week.

The Social Democratic and Labour Party is following in the tradition of so many other middle-class Irish parties and preparing to sell out the struggle against British repression. It is already re-entering the state machine at local council level, and arrogantly calling for an end to the rents and rates strike—something which it had no part in starting or sustaining.

The real aim of the SDLP leaders is to get a share of state power, so they can 'normalise' imperialist exploitation and domination of the Irish working class. But they have to camouflage this with humanitarian talk about the need for peace and an end to suffering.

But their hypocrisy is shown by the way they continue friendly relations with the Southern Irish government, which holds dozens of Republicans in jail without trial for months on end by a process of repeated remand, and which is using special courts, without juries, to try them. The SDLP makes no protest at this.

THEY CAN JAIL ME SAYS LABOUR MAN

by Ross Hill

SHEFFIELD:—'Don't pay a penny extra under the Tory Housing Finance Bill if it becomes law in October'—that was the main call from a regional conference of more than 70 tenants' organisations last Sunday.

Delegates heard Clay Cross Councillor Skinner declare: 'Our rents in Clay Cross are around 30 bob a week—and they'll stay that way. We will go to prison rather than implement this Bill.'

The conference pledged full support for militant councillors or tenants in the event of any victimisation by the government or its Housing Commissioners.

CAMPAIGN

Tenants will step up their intensive lobbying of councils and Labour groups. There will be a mass march through Sheffield on Saturday 1 July to lobby the next national meeting of Labour groups. (The march will assemble at Whicker Goods Yards in the centre of the city at 12.30pm.)

But the conference stressed that the battle will not end with non-implementation of the Act by councils. The government will send in the Housing Commissioners and councillors will then have to give full backing for tenants who go on rent strike.

When the delegates demanded a national conference of tenants and trade unionists at an early date to plan a campaign to stop the implementation of the Bill, the

THE RENTS BATTLE

secretary of the National Association of Tenants and Residents announced that such a conference would take place on 28 July along with a lobby of parliament.

It is important that affiliations to the national association and requests for credentials for the conference should be made to 283 Grays Inn Road, London WC1. Affiliation fees are: Tenants Associations 5p per member per year, plus £1 entrance fee, trade union bodies £2 per 1000 members plus £1 for each additional 1000 and individual members 50p a year.

EASTBOURNE:—A potential body blow to the Tories' 'double-your-rents' plans came from town hall workers last week. On the final day of the conference of NALGO—the national and local government officers' association—delegates declared their full support for council staff who back local authorities refusing to implement the Housing Finance Bill.

The government will send in their Housing Commissioners to attempt to force through rent rises if a local authority refuses to do the job. The Commissioners will expect to use local town hall staff to aid them in their dirty work—but their plans could go astray if the NALGO conference decision is translated into effective opposition at local level.

Town hall workers who 'black' the Commissioners

should expect official backing from the union for their stand. But the fence-hopping of the NALGO leadership on the issue means that such support is by no means certain and the key task for local union members is to build strong links with tenants' organisations.

At the conference the NALGO leaders opposed the motion at first but then switched sides when they saw that it would be carried with or without them.

INVERNESS:—The annual conference of the Scottish miners passed a resolution attacking the Housing Finance Bill and calling on all Labour-controlled councils to refuse to operate it.

CWMBRAN, Wales:—The local Tenants Association is calling on all tenants to refuse to pay rent rises under the Bill. It is also supporting Cwmbran Council which is refusing to implement the Bill when it becomes law.

BETRAYAL

WANDSWORTH:—There were stormy scenes at Wandsworth Council meeting last week when it was invaded by local tenants demanding that the council refuse to implement the Bill. But an alliance of the Labour right and the Tories voted to implement the Bill by 38 votes to 22.

SOUTHAMPTON:—The local Labour Party passed a resolution last week by 37 votes to 30 to 'work within the Bill'. This means that the Labour group on the council, which is only one short of a majority, won't fight the rent rises or the Bill. Southampton tenants face a rise of 78p a week on 3 July as a first step towards 'Fair Rents'. Already their rents are the highest in the south of England.

BARKING:—A united campaign against rent rises has been launched in Dagenham and Barking. At a meeting last weekend delegates from 25 trade union branches, shop stewards' committees, tenants' associations and political organisations set up an action committee to fight the Bill. The committee is organising a mass petition against the Bill and a lobby of Barking Council to demand non-implementation.

Hostilities

The lack of opposition in the North to the SDLP sell-out is because the Republican organisations, who quite rightly want to continue the struggle against British domination, are offering no real way forward. The Provisional IRA bombing campaign seems, to growing numbers of people, to offer no alternative to the SDLP policy of working with Whitelaw.

The Tories and Unionists last week rejected the Provisionals' offer of an end to hostilities on the ground that they would not talk to 'murderers'. Despite their high moral tone they still manage to talk to each other.

A ceasefire by the Provisionals without major concessions from Britain would be tantamount to an admission of defeat, since they have insisted that force alone is needed to overthrow British rule.

Since direct rule they have failed to develop a new strategy to fit the changed situation, and this has left the door open for the SDLP to pose as the champions of peace.

The South

But there is an alternative to surrender or more bombings—a political campaign for working-class power. This would still leave a crucial role for the armed resistance forces, but one subordinated to the political struggle.

And this struggle would have to take on new dimensions. The need is to involve action in the South against the less obvious, but no less real, imperialist presence there, which means rising prices and rents, increasing redundancies and unemployment, the holding down of wages and the erosion of hard-won working conditions.

● The Anti-Internment League organised a picket in Fleet Street, London, on Monday to protest at the silence of the British press over the 2000 political prisoners held in Ireland. In particular, attention was drawn to the failure of the press to report the hunger strike by prisoners in the North and South. Four of the prisoners in Crumlin Road Jail, Belfast, have refused to eat for 35 days.

A similar picket was held outside the Irish embassy by supporters of the Provisional Republican movement.

Critical wages struggle is ignored at conference

THE conference of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Unions last week did not discuss the present wages dispute in the engineering industry, although this has now reached a critical stage. Instead only general items such as the Industrial Relations Act and the Common Market were discussed by the delegates from the four sections of the union—engineering, foundry, construction and technical.

The real problem of the conference was the lack of effective progress towards complete amalgamation of the four sections. They continue to be industrially autonomous and keep their different rule books. It is clear that in some areas there is little co-operation between the officials of the different sections, which makes the union unable to deal with specific struggles.

A resolution from the technical section (TASS) was finally carried which called for the setting up of joint committees in every area as a step to co-ordinating activity. It also called for a common rule book to be produced as soon as possible.



HUGH SCANLON: warning

In the discussion on the Industrial Relations Act, the union took a stand against the TUC retreat, and called for the executive to organise industrial action against the law. A telegram was also sent to the three London docks stewards who had been threatened with arrest.

The conference reaffirmed its opposition to the Common Market, but a resolution condemning Labour MPs who voted in favour of entry was withdrawn after Hugh Scanlon, the union's president, had warned of divisions in the labour movement and that it might be a breach of parliamentary privilege. His statement was later condemned by several of the more militant delegates.

ABERDEEN:—Fifteen hundred engineers from 39 firms have been on strike for a fortnight demanding a £6 increase, the 35-hour week and four weeks holiday a year.

The employers made an offer before the strike of between £1.72 and £2.25, plus one day's holiday this year and one day

next. Since the strike started they have placed large adverts in the local paper implying that the strike threatens to push up unemployment.

Most of the firms involved are small, but the main employer is the Consolidated Pneumatic Tool Company, which employs 700 people at its Fraserburgh factory and 350 in Aberdeen.

The strike remains 100 per cent solid.

MANCHESTER:—Two more of the sit-ins ended this week. Three factories are still fighting. They are all in their third month of occupation, and need urgent financial support.

Donations c/o Confederation District Secretary, AUEW House, The Crescent, Salford.

LEEDS:—Workers at Marshall-Fowlers, part of the TWW group, are still locked out after six weeks. Last week they voted to reject a meagre management offer of £1.75, despite a company claim that the Hunslet factory was losing money. Workers point out that the company is making an overall profit of £4½ million.

The union's district organiser, St John Binns, refused to recommend the offer be rejected, but the district committee did.

OSSETT:—The district organiser persuaded the workers in occupation at Woodhead's to return to work for £2 all round. He did so by playing up redundancy threats.

Nevertheless, the Woodhead workers have pushed their wages up by a total of £5 since the beginning of the year. They are now nearly double what they were when the factory was first unionised two years ago.

GLASGOW:—2500 workers at Weir's Pumps, Cathcart, struck last week demanding the engineering claim. Support for the strike is solid, with staff workers and other workers in the Weir group preparing to back the Cathcart men. If the firm wants to keep its newly-won share of North Sea oil contracts, it will have to make a big offer quickly.

Missing?

Some delegates referred to the need for a single union for the whole engineering industry. Clearly they had the proposed merger with the Electricians Union in mind.

Referring to this, Jim Conway, the right-wing general secretary, said the greatest obstacle to future amalgamations was the rule concerning regular election of all full-time officials. Active members of the union are going to have to ensure that this one rule is not missing from any new rule book.

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Socialist Worker

No union aid for black strikers

by Anne Clark

WEMBLEY:—The sit-in by 200 black workers at Stanmore Engineering is now in its seventh week. The workers are on a basic wage of £17 a week and are demanding a £4-a-week increase, a 35-hour week, sick pay, four weeks paid holiday and equal pay for women workers.

The firm has refused point blank even to discuss the claim—although its profits were £500,000 last year and there are only seven shareholders. The management had the effrontery to try spinning the hoary 'can't afford it' yarn.

At a meeting in Notting Hill last Sunday, shop steward Tony Linton described the factory's atrocious working conditions. The 200 die-casters have to work in unbearable heat, and disgusting filth. The works manager, who was given the job because he promised to smash the union, has tried to sack the convenor seven times—once for refusing to attend a meeting arranged by the management.

Refusal

Management has always used racialism as a tool to split the workers. Of 30 tool-makers upstairs, 27 are white and all are non-union. Management has done its utmost to make them dissociate themselves from the 'trouble-makers downstairs', and ensures by giving them plenty of overtime that their wage is slightly higher than that of the black workers.

So far the 30 have refused to join the strike.

But the worst stab in the back has come from the engineering union. The workers have not received one penny from their union.

Nevertheless the morale of the Stanmore workers is sky-high, their solidarity is firm as a rock, and their determination increases the longer the strike lasts.

'We're not just fighting for £6 a week and freedom from our filthy working conditions, it's a matter of principle now', said Tony Linton at Sunday's meeting. 'We'll go on fighting even if we starve.'

The strikers need financial support. Donations to: A Linton, 31 Covering Road, Kensal Rise, London W6.

ANTI-INTERMENT DEMONSTRATION

Socialist Worker regrets that in last week's editorial the names of two of those who face charges under the Public Order Act after an Anti-Internment League demonstration in London in February were omitted. They are Kate Hoey and Bowes Egan, members of the organising committee for the demonstration.

National glassworks strike in the offing



A strike meeting at United Glass, Harlow, being addressed by Sam Morton, the General and Municipal branch secretary.

WORKERS in the glass industry, who for years have suffered some of the worst conditions and pay in British industry, are refusing to accept the situation any longer.

At United Glass in Harlow, Essex, 800 General and Municipal members have been on strike for four weeks after management tried to cut manning and break the strength of the union. The workers are picketing factories and warehouses and have sent deputations to United Glass works at St Helens and Castleford, where workers have promised solidarity action and financial support.

At Rockware Glass, the other big producer of glass containers, a battle has been going on over wages and manning. Workers have been on strike in Doncaster and Knottingley in Yorkshire, St Helens, in Lancashire, and Greenford in Middlesex.

At St Helens, Pilkingtons faces a return to the mass struggles of two years ago. Pilkingtons last week declared massive profits of more than £18 million, and is resisting the workers' claim for more wages and holidays.

WE'LL DEFEAT ACT, PLEDGE 800 STEWARDS

by Steve Jefferys

EIGHT HUNDRED shop stewards, representing all the major factories in the West of Scotland, pledged themselves to defeat the Industrial Relations Act at a meeting in Glasgow on Tuesday.

The meeting was called at 48 hours notice by the Scottish Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions when a member of the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders

shop stewards' co-ordinating committee was summoned to appear before an industrial tribunal. An ex-worker from UCS had tried to use the Industrial Relations Act against the steward for operating the co-ordinating committee's policy of giving first choice of jobs at Govan Shipbuilders to those still involved in the 'work-in'.

After hearing speakers call for continued vigilance against the working of the Act, the meeting voted unanimous support for the declaration carried at the National Liaison Committee conference a fortnight ago.

In particular this means immediate strike action if any trade unionist is jailed under the Act, no matter how small his factory or industry. It also means starting to campaign now for a nationwide strike when the TUC Congress meets—which will be 5 September if calls for an earlier recall congress are not successful.

This will add real pressure to the campaign to clear the right wing out of the trade union movement.

Pace

The UCS steward, Willie McInnes, received full support from the meeting when he promised that he would never appear before or recognise the court or any industrial tribunal.

Similar meetings must be organised throughout the country. As one speaker pointed out at the Glasgow meeting, they should be held at least monthly while the struggle continues at its present pace.

On this basis a rank and file movement can be built that would guarantee no retreat before the Tories, whatever the backsliding of the trade union leaders.

Town hall workers' union moves towards the left

THE annual conference of the town hall workers' union (NALGO) reflected a rank and file moving leftwards and a leadership using the threat of the government's legal sanctions to head off militant action.

The huge majority in favour of not registering—although that had the support of the executive committee—and for the call for militant action in support of a claim for shorter hours, longer holidays and a minimum wage of £1200 for all adult workers show how the membership have moved in the last year or so.

The executive committee's lengthy document, Nalگو in the 70s, was in effect contemptuously thrown out and the executive told to go back and prepare a policy relevant to the needs of the membership.

A move to debate a motion in support of the dockers threatened with imprisonment was only defeated by a hair's breadth but the support given to NALGO members refusing to work for government Housing Commissioners was unanimous.

The main problem facing the union rank and file is union democracy. If the policies carried at conference are to be put into effect the executive has to be made responsive to the membership and a growing number of delegates are showing support for the unofficial Nalگو Action Group which is fighting the established leadership

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Mass picketing at whisky factories

SCOTLAND:—Mass picketing by women strikers has persuaded more workers to join the 2500-strong strike at five whisky plants owned by the Distillers Company.

At the Slater Rogers plant in Glasgow on Monday 50 pickets linked arms and barred the pavement, effectively dissuading two girl students taken on by management last week from scabbing. Two policemen tried to limit the picket line to six strikers but failed.

The strike is over the refusal of Distillers to continue with a no redundancy clause in a new agreement on wages and conditions.

WARRINGTON:—1200 workers at GEC's Ruston-Paxman diesel factory voted on Monday to end their 12-week-old occupation. They accepted a 12-month agreement that would give them £2.50 extra a week, with more on bonus and overtime payments, and two days additional holiday.

But the workers decided to ban all overtime until talks start on reducing the length of the working week.

GLASGOW:—750 engineers in the Lower Clyde shipyard of Scott Lithgow walked out on strike on Monday. They were rejecting the paltry increase due under the recently signed national shipbuilding agreement and instead demanding the full national engineering claim.

Scott Lithgow is probably Britain's

PICKET LINES

most profitable shipyard. If the strike is successful, engineers in other shipyards could follow its lead and light a powder keg under the miserable agreement.

DUDLEY:—50 workers at H F Shaw are now in the seventh week of official strike for union recognition. They have rejected the 'offer' of a works committee—with its terms of reference laid down by management.

Management has threatened to close the factory down—but the workers, members of the engineering union, are understandably cynical of the firm's 'economic plight' when the managing director boasts two E-type Jaguars and a private heated swimming pool. Skilled welders get only 35p an hour.

Financial support to: F Bartholomew, 35 Clent Court, Vicarage Prospect, Dudley, Wors.

GLASGOW:—4500 workers at the Singer factory on Clydebank have voted to stay out on strike, although their annual holiday is only two weeks off.

After a visit by Hugh Scanlon, president of the engineering union, to Clydeside, management had improved the offer made to the men to between £3 and £3.75, but with important strings.

The men endorsed the stewards' decision to reject the offer. Gavin Laird, the AUEW convenor, said contacts had been made with the firm's factory in Monza, Italy, where a mass meeting has unanimously voted to back the Clydebank workers.

FIFE:—180 tug men at Rosyth naval dockyard are on strike claiming a special allowance for working on nuclear submarines. Other workers in the yard get 15p an hour extra for this but not the tug men, all Transport and General Workers' Union members.

The men were due to meet on Wednesday to consider an offer from the Admiralty.

LONGANNET 13 CLEARED

THIRTEEN pickets arrested at Longannet Power Station in Scotland during the miners' strike were acquitted of all charges against them last Friday. One of them was Colin Cameron, secretary of Glenrothes Trades Council, who said afterwards:

'I was pleased when I walked out of the court. All of us had been found not guilty after a trial which had lasted nine days.

'But at no time was the verdict in any doubt in my mind. From the moment the jury were chosen all remaining doubts about the outcome vanished. They were mainly working class and included four miners and three miners' wives.

'The major part of the trial was taken up with prosecution evidence. Policeman

after policeman paraded in front of the court giving evidence which varied from the confused and contradictory to the downright untruthful.

'The majority of the jury had decided on the first day that we were not guilty and from then on were smiling and winking at us.

'The trial had its low points too of course. There were times when we all felt that we'd been sitting there for years. But it didn't bother anyone for too long. We just went to sleep and so did the jurors.

'Everyone knew that the evidence was irrelevant anyway.'

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