

Socialist Worker

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

DOCKERS: FIGHT

SW Political Correspondent

PROTECTED by the same massed ranks of police that have been defending scabs at Neap Wharf, Scunthorpe, Jack Jones succeeded on Wednesday in persuading his union's dock delegate conference to call off the national docks strike.

But even as he told the delegates that the Aldington-Jones committee had produced a solution to the problems of tens of thousands of dockers, cries of 'scab' from outside Transport House showed that many rank and file dockers thought otherwise.

The Aldington-Jones committee has done next to nothing about the main problem of dockers in the big ports—the continued axing of their jobs as port employers make huge profits from the 'container revolution'.

A secret survey by the National Ports Council estimates that the number of registered dockers will fall from 41,500 today to less than 30,000 by 1975. It expects a loss of 5,000 jobs in London, a similar number in Liverpool, and approximately 1,500 in Hull, Grimsby, Immingham, Bristol and the small ports in Lancashire.

Contrasted with this loss of 12,000 jobs, what Jones-Aldington offers is next to useless.

A levy on 'unregistered' ports will in no way deal with the main factor leading to the drain of jobs from London, Liverpool and Hull—the fact that big ports like Felixstowe, modernised at government expense, can employ non-registered labour at wages and conditions far worse than registered dockers would accept.

Fronties by port employers to 'lean on' container operators to make them take on dock labour are worthless. Employers are always keen to make such promises when they are threatened with a massive profit loss through the continuation of the dock strike.

These lures can change very quickly when that threat is removed and they will undoubtedly continue to transfer trade to cheap-labour container bases.

Dockers cannot depend on their own leader, Jack Jones, to safeguard their jobs. He has presided over a rundown in the dock labour force by a third in recent years without taking any action until docks stewards forced his hand.

THE ANSWER

The only way to stop jobs slaughter is to bring all docks, wharves and container bases into the dock labour scheme, to ensure that all dock workers have the same wages and conditions that those in the main centres have won through long and bitter struggle.

The Vestries and the Hays Wharfs and the other multi-million pound concerns will say they cannot afford this. The answer to them should be a complete takeover of the docks by nationalisation under workers' control.

The leaders of the Transport Workers Union have refused to put up any real fight for their members. They want them to accept a government inquiry—held by the very men who put the five dockers in jail. Nothing better expresses the bankrupt politics of Jack Jones.

BACK FIGHT

The docks delegate conference accepted this sell-out plan. But that must not be the end of the struggle. The conference is totally unrepresentative of the mass of dockers. The giant Royal Group in London, with 4,000 dockers has only two delegates, while the ports of North Cornwall, with a total of 22 dockers, have one.

The Tories hope that now the conference has been pressurised by Jones to end the struggle, other pressures can defeat continued unofficial action. But if the dockers had not taken unofficial action against the loss of their jobs by blacking container bases, even the meagre concessions of Aldington-Jones would never have been made.

It is up to all trade unionists in all industries to back the dockers' fight for jobs, despite the Jones' sell out. By fighting the run down of their industry, the dockers have pioneered a national fight against redundancy and the dole.

We must back that struggle—against the port employers, against Jack Jones, against the government, the police and, if necessary, the miners.

MUST GO ON

12,000
more
jobs
to be
axed by
1975



Police and pickets clash at Neap House Wharf on Monday: report page 8

'Going to the NIRC was diabolical' —Chobham steward

by Laurie Flynn

'EVERY WORKER must support the dockers in their fight for job security. What saddens me about the people on the little wharves that are working on and the transport drivers who are organising against the dockers is that they are doing the employers' job for them.

'And their own jobs will be on the line in the years to come. If the working class would only see sense and unite to fight the employers, we would all live in a better world.'

No, it wasn't Alan Williams, Vic Turner or Bernie Steer who said this. It was Tony Churchman, shop steward of the non-dock workers at the Chobham Farm container depot in East London who took the three London docks stewards to the NIRC, kicking off the first attempt to jail trade unionists under the Industrial Relations Act.

Tony Churchman was heavily featured in the press at the time of the Chobham industrial court case. But the press misrepresented him then and they won't touch him now.

In an exclusive interview with Socialist Worker this week, he explained how the container workers started out fighting the dockers who were supposedly 'stealing' their jobs but ended up on strike alongside them in a united struggle for job security.

The situation where worker was fighting worker was brought about by the employers. Tommy Wallis (who owns Chobham Farm) did move work out of the organised dockers' reach. Most of us accepted from the start that much of the work in Chobham...



Churchman: united now

dock work.

'What we set out to do was protect our jobs for as long as possible and then make the employers pay severance for using us. Early on we weren't too clear just what the employers' strategy was. But they were definitely trying to break the dock labour scheme.'

'The Chobham Farm settlement was the historic turning point. It's funny, but the employers are the greatest con artists in the world. The richer they are the better they are at telling you they're poor.'

'We had terrible trouble negotiating a pay rise at Chobham. The employers said they couldn't possibly afford more than

'Then, after the dockers got to work, they created new jobs and suddenly found the money they didn't have two weeks before. The dockers got their agreed rate for five hours less off the working week and all the container workers got big improvements in pay. We're united now in Chobham Farm.'

'Everything is improving. What we realise is that we are stronger by 41,000 dockers. That is why we're now on strike alongside the dockers. We have to win this struggle.'

'What we did by going to the NIRC was diabolical. We were doing exactly what the Tories and the employers have always tried to do.'

'Over the past couple of months I've had a political education it takes most people a lifetime to gain. I've learned all about this Act. It is designed to stop the ordinary worker from protecting his livelihood with the only weapons he has.'

'I am proud to be associated with the dockers. I only wish workers in each and every industry were as united for we would then be able to build a better society. This government is a rich man's government and they will never do anything except oppress the working class.'

'The dockers' and the miners' persuasive methods are the things that can sort out the scandal of low pay, pitiful old age pensions, the Fair Rents Act, unemployment. United, there is nothing the

The props fall away from mining profiteers

LAST WEEKEND'S news that the National Coal Board has decided to hold an inquiry into pit prop profiteering will not surprise readers of Socialist Worker. A detailed account of the operation appeared in our 20 May issue.

One thing that is not yet clear is whether the inquiry terms include investigations into the large blocks of shareholdings held by NCB officials in the firms that did the profiteering.

The inquiry follows a report prepared 'on his own initiative' by a member of the NCB scientific staff. He listed dozens of ways the two major pit prop firms were being allowed to sell the board totally unnecessary materials and spare parts and generally make a fat living at the expense of the miners and the public.

Disclosed

The report leaked to the press. Of the commercial papers the Sunday Telegraph alone printed a word of it.

Private Eye, Socialist Worker and The Collier, the rank and file miners' paper, alone picked up and developed the story.

In particular, credit must be given to Private Eye for disclosing in detail the wide involvement of NCB officials and their wives. Private Eye was following up its celebrated investigations into Lord Robens' connections with the placing of NCB contracts, in particular with firms with which his son and heir was associated. The young Alfred Robens was a director and shareholder of Bonser Engineering, one of the two main pit prop profiteers.

But the paper that really set out to campaign on the issue within the working-class movement was The Collier. In each of the three issues that have appeared so far, the whole question of the Robens' involvement in what might charitably be described as 'nepotism' was raised in detail.

'Independent'

Action was demanded of the National Union of Mineworkers. Perhaps this is now bearing fruit.

But it is important to remember that this inquiry is a strictly internal one.

Presumably it will be closely supervised by senior NCB executives. These include Mr W V Sheppard, who is now NCB deputy chairman.

He sat on an independent arbitration panel which rejected another pit prop firm's claim that Bonser had pirated one of its designs after Lord Robens had persuaded them to surrender its patent. Mr Sheppard forgot to mention that his wife Nancy owned 500 shares in Bonser Engineering at the time he was sitting on the independent panel.

Bonser made fat profits (and paid fat dividends) on the basis of copying someone else's design and getting the NCB contracts, with a pit prop almost identical to a rival firm's original design.

ARTHUR MALONE

WORLD NEWS

Manifesto calls for struggle

FOR the first time since the crushing of the Left Opposition in 1927, anti-Stalinist intellectuals in the Soviet Union have issued a revolutionary socialist call to the working class for action against the bureaucratic regime.

A typewritten document stuffed into letter-boxes in working-class districts calls for demonstrations, strikes and protests in defence of working conditions, following the example set by Polish workers in 1970.

Dissident intellectuals have previously restricted their appeals to calls for liberal reforms and democratic rights for intellectuals.

In calling for class struggle and workers' self-defence, at least a wing of this intellectual movement has adopted a new outlook, understanding the need for a new revolution by the working class to establish socialism.

This appeal, addressed to workers

who so far have not played an active role in the dissident movement, exposes the truth about the low living standards of the Russian people, the monstrous privileges of the bureaucracy thinly concealed by 'socialist' rhetoric, rising prices and the lack of democracy.

A section of the manifesto quoted by the New York Times reads: 'We have no socialism in our land! How can there be socialism with 20 times as many spongers and bosses as there were in Tsarist Russia! How can it be socialism if the working man's average wage is 100 rubles and the income of a high official several thousand a month!

Oppress

'How can it be socialism if the people are deprived of their most elementary rights: freedom of speech, of the press, of the right to strike!

'It is precisely the absence of these rights that enables the Kreminites secretly and openly and without pity to rob and oppress our



Brezhnev: the manifesto calls him a state capitalist

people. And it is not towards Communism that we are going—that is a lie! What we have is state capitalism, the worst and most rapacious system of government.

'Respected citizens! Fight for your rights, for a better life. Defend one another, one for all and all for one. Only through struggle can we achieve a change for the better.

'If we won't fight, we will turn more and more into the slaves of the Communist Party's upper crust, into draft animals. Long live freedom and democracy!'

The manifesto notes that the standard of living of even unemployed workers in the West is higher than that of employed Russian factory or office workers.

At the same time, the authors do not seem to hold the illusions about 'western democracy' which have been characteristic of intellectuals in the past. They note that workers in Western capitalist nations won their relatively high degree of freedom and prosperity through struggle, not through the beneficence of the capitalist system.

This document represents the first visible steps in the fusing of the democratic aspirations of the intellectuals with the pressure exerted by the Russian peoples for freedom and a decent material standard of life. This process, which has begun to break to the surface in various of the so-called 'socialist' countries since the first uprisings in East Germany in 1953, will lead to an explosive revolutionary transformation of their societies.

As the forerunner of this transformation, the appearance of the revolutionary manifesto in Russia is an event of world-historical importance.

(This article first appeared in *Workers' Power*, the newspaper of the United States International Socialists.)

Political prisoners on hunger strike

THE British Committee Against Dictatorship in Brazil (313, Caledonian Road, London N1) have made public the text of an open letter from political prisoners, which was smuggled out of the Tiradentes prison in Sao Paulo last June.

The letter states that for the past three years most of the political prisoners in Sao Paulo have been held in the Tiradentes prison, built in the 19th century. The cells are infested with rats, and the walls are constantly running with water.

On 11 May five political prisoners were transferred to the state prison, where they were to be kept alongside common criminals. This meant a worsening of their conditions, even though the treatment laid down for political prisoners was not available at Tiradentes.

The prisoners were concerned, moreover, that the transfer might be a prelude to the physical elimination of their fellows.

The next day the remaining prisoners began a hunger strike. This immediately met with reprisals from the prison authorities, and 13 more prisoners were transferred to the state prison. After six days of the hunger strike, some of the prisoners had fallen ill. The authorities then offered to meet the prisoners' demands and to allow visits from relatives.

But it soon became clear the authorities would not keep their word; six prisoners were transferred to the President Wenceslau prison on the edge of the jungle.

The prisoners did not abandon their demand that they should be kept together as a group, not split up and shifted to other prisons.

The hunger strike started again. Several Brazilian intellectuals have signed a protest, and the British committee (address above) is circulating petitions on behalf of the prisoners.

Something wrong?

LAST year the American car industry set a new record—for badly designed vehicles. They built 8,578,349 cars, but 8,790,286 were recalled for safety defects (Some were recalled more than once.)

Corruption Year in Vietnam too

by Ian Birchall

RECENT news-items from Saigon show once again just what sort of 'freedom' is being defended in South Vietnam.

On 6 August, General Nguyen Van Vy, the South Vietnamese Minister of Defence, who had held office since 1967, was dismissed following investigation of a financial scandal. Seven colonels have also been stripped of their offices.

In 1968 the Vietnamese Army set up an army fund for savings and mutual aid, to provide help for war cripples and the widows of soldiers. Every soldier paid a compulsory levy equivalent to 10 pence a month and some £5 millions were collected.

But in 1969 General Vy removed a large sum from the fund to create the Army Bank, in which he held 99 per cent of the shares. Meanwhile it was reported that war widows had

received nothing from the fund a full year after the death of their husbands.

On 8 August the National Council of the South Vietnamese press decided to call on all daily papers to stop publishing for two days in protest at the government's recent press laws. It also asked all daily and weekly papers to print a mourning band on all their publications to draw the attention of the public to the measures.

The government's decree (which the publishers claim is unconstitutional) requires all newspapers to pay a large sum as surety, and lays down heavy penalties for breach of national security regulations. If the payments are enforced, many of Saigon's 62 newspapers would have to go out of business.

The Minister of Information made it clear that this was the intention, saying it would help to get rid of the less 'responsible' newspapers.

POWELL POLITICS PAY OFF

FALKNER PLACE in Liverpool is a modern corporation housing estate where about 200 families live.

All of the houses are new and the last tenant moved in only a few weeks ago. The people who live there were all on the City's housing list for years and, until recently, had struggled to cope in some of Merseyside's worst slums. Many of them had suffered from rent racketeers, insanitation, damp and overcrowding.

TERRORISED

But now, amidst the pride of furnishing new homes, something else has happened in Falkner Place. For in the last week it has been terrorised by four successive nights of violence. Windows have been smashed, petrol bombs thrown, new front doors kicked and battered with bricks and some of the residents savagely beaten and reduced to nervous exhaustion.

Now rubble is scattered across the streets and windows are either boarded up or covered with strips of chicken wire. The victims include a local youth rushed to hospital with stab wounds and a popular neighbourhood social worker just ending the first week of a three-month jail

PETER RANKIN in Liverpool

During those four nights barricades of wood, wire and glass were built and the whole area placed under virtual siege. It was a frightening experience and the menace remains.

Mrs Alice Galleh, a resident of Falkner Place, speaks for many: 'We were on the housing list for nine years before we got this, and we were living with five children in a two-bedroomed flat. These are beautiful homes but we can't stay here if things go on like this.'

Since those four nights a variety of explanations have been offered. Some say it was just a gang fight while others claim that it was caused by jealousy from corporation tenants dissatisfied with their own cramped pre-war accommodation. But none of these is really adequate.

For if it was just a gang fight then why were the homes in Falkner Place uniquely included and if it was just jealousy then why should only one small new housing estate spark off such events?

Remembering the first night Mrs Dorothy Abdullah told me what happened: 'We were just sitting there

lying through the window, I raced out and saw that it had happened to all the other houses.'

64-year-old Mr Tom Clarke said: 'I was out walking my dog near the house when I saw them. They were like a pack of wild animals screaming, and then I was hit by a half-brick.'

BATTLEFIELD

'They' were 150 local youths and when Mrs Galleh and her children were watching television she heard shouts of 'That's a nigger's house' and a large piece of wood was thrown through her living room window.

That's why the 150 came and why Falkner Place today resembles more the scene of a mini-battlefield than several new squares of homes opened only in May. Racism was the cause of those four nights of terror. Falkner Place was singled out, not because of gang warfare or jealousy, but simply because a majority of its residents were black.

And when the 150-strong gang of white youths descended on it they

Powell politics.

Hunted by the mob, the residents appealed for help. Local black youngsters responded to their call and many of them now stand guard over the area every night.

They find themselves in an almost impossible situation. For unlike the 500 policemen who have assaulted the Hull dockers and protected the scab lorries at the LSD wharf in Scunthorpe, the families of Falkner Place have received no such support. Instead the police have either not intervened or else openly allied themselves with the discriminators.

The facts speak for themselves. More black defenders have been arrested than white attackers. The Falkner Place barricades have been ripped down while little action has been taken to stop the people responsible for the barricades going up. A local social worker—who had previously criticised police harassment of the black community—has alone been speedily tried and bundled off to prison.

The only man so far sentenced has been charged with 'insulting words and behaviour which might have led to a breach of the peace'.

And that's not all. For on the first night of terror a white grandmother pleaded with the police to help her. Accusations of 'nigger lover'

was their only reply.

But if the residents of Falkner Place are victims so, too, in a different way, are the white youths themselves. For them there is little future and few prospects. Most are unemployed or else trapped in dead-end jobs. They live in giant sprawling estates or scruffy tenements and high-rise flats.

FRUSTRATION

The neglect of planners and indifference to social needs have robbed them of amenities and caused despair and boredom. For many the Army is regarded as the only alternative to the frustration of their lives.

And once in the Army they are given 14 weeks training in discipline and how to kill and then sent off with a deliberately encouraged racial dislike of the Irish—to patrol the streets of Derry and Belfast while upholding the bigotry and corruption of Unionist rule.

This is the real meaning and purpose of racialism. Instead of uniting against those who cause their unemployment and poor housing, the youngsters are divided and stimulated to attack other working people.

Racialism must be fought. Meanwhile every support has to be given to those black people determined to defend Falkner Place.

Socialist Worker

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Unite against headfixers

BIGGEST LAUGH of the week was the remark made on one of those BBC talk-back programmes that the building workers' strike was responsible for soaring house prices. Everyone who knows anything at all about the matter is very well aware that the cause of rocketing house prices is government policy.

A vast expansion of credit engineered by the government, together with a slower pick-up in industrial investment than the government expected, diverted a lot of money into the property market. And since supply can expand only slowly the speculators are making a killing.

Some of them are wealthy members of the government, like Lord Carrington, as Paul Foot pointed out last week. The profits made are huge, twice the outlay or more over a couple of years in some cases.

So far the building workers have had no increase since the house and land price inflation really took off last year. Even if they win their claim in full and the increase was to be passed on in full by the building firms (as no doubt it will be) the house price increase will be peanuts compared to the continuing increases caused by the land sharks and property speculators. As we pointed out in July, house building costs of all kinds (materials, wages and overheads) have risen by 42 per cent since 1965 but the price of land for house plots has risen by 108 per cent. And the rate of increase in the prices of used property is astronomical.

The people who benefit are not the owner occupiers who sell in order to buy again. Still less are they the building workers. They are the big City gents, the friends of Mr Heath and Lord Carrington, the people who finance the Tory Party that has made this bonanza possible for them.

The lady who thought it was all the fault of the building workers is probably not a wealthy profiteer. The odds are that she depends, directly or through her husband, on an ordinary wage or salary. She is probably one of the people who is being robbed and instead of blaming the robbers she has been conned into blaming her fellow workers. There are millions and millions like her and television and the press are doing their utmost to increase the number.

Systematic attempts to mislead and divide workers, to turn them against one another, are being made on an ever increasing scale. The reason is obvious. The great rise in industrial militancy this year has alarmed the ruling class.

The miners' splendid victory alarmed them. So did their failure to defeat the railwaymen. And the collapse of the attempt to make the Industrial Relations Act stick by imprisoning the five dockers was another heavy blow.

But our ruling class has no thought of giving up the struggle. It is preparing to intensify the struggle. To succeed our rulers must set worker against worker.

That is why each instance of lorry drivers crossing a picket or pottery workers demonstrating against dockers is given the full television and press treatment. The demonstrations in Cornwall were organised and paid for by employers, of course. But most of the workers participating are not scabs.

They are ordinary decent working men and women who are victims of the head-fixing industries, the mass media controlled by the capitalist class. As the enemy steps up his propaganda socialists have to step up theirs to bring home to their fellow workers the basic unity of interests of all working people.

The difference between the best paid worker and the worst paid is very small indeed compared to the difference between all of us and the class that exploits us. Unity in support of every section that is struggling to maintain and improve its wages and conditions is the watchword.

A deadly threat

THERE IS ONE form of disunity that our rulers find it very easy to exploit. It is racialism. Take the great fuss about the Ugandan Asians who hold British passports.

There is no room for them we are told, at least not if they all come at once. It is an argument that is widely accepted by ordinary people and yet it is the purest moonshine. If they all come in tomorrow it would cause an increase in the population of less than 0.001 per cent. If they were Australians, for example, no one would notice the difference.

As a matter of fact a bigger increase might be caused, nine months from now, if television went off the air for a week or two.

The truth is that there is one reason and one reason only for the fuss the government and the media are making. These people have the wrong coloured skin. Anyone who pretends otherwise is a hypocrite.

We all know that legitimate fears about jobs and housing account for a lot of the hostility that is being whipped up here. But they don't make it any less irrational or any less dangerous.

Racialism is a deadly threat to the working-class movement. Remember, the mass support that Hitler used to smash the German workers' movement was built up on the basis of Jew-baiting.

VERY GOOD, PARKINSON!



AT THE IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS TRAINING SCHOOL....

COMMENTS

Shepherd's flock

THE Transport Workers Union seems to have revised its attitude to recruitment. From Wolverhampton comes news of a newly-unionised taxi firm—but unionised with a subtle difference.

William Shepherd, owner of Apex Taxis, encouraged his drivers to join a union—not because he is a stout defender of workers' rights but as protection against bigger taxi firms. Apex cannot operate from taxi ranks and the other taxi firms keep a sharp eye on Apex for any infringements of the rules.

Mr Shepherd does not specify how TGWU membership will act as "protection" in his pursuit of profit but he is in a strong position to stop any of his drivers getting out of hand.

For having encouraged his drivers to join the union, Mr Shepherd nipped smartly in and appointed himself shop steward. "I am in an ideal position to meet any trouble," he duly observed.

JUST how much love there was for just-deceased Post Office Engineers' gensec Lord Delacourt-Smith can be gauged from the latest union journal. No finer tribute could be paid to him, it says, than to reprint the speech his lordship made to the last POEU conference. Things have reached a pretty pass when snuffed union bosses have to provide their own obituaries.

Orange abuse

ORANGEMEN in Edinburgh, stout defenders of law and order, have issued a public incitement to intimidate and harass Ron Brown, a Labour councillor and well-known engineering union militant. Brown proposed that Edinburgh council should build a monument to James Connolly, the Edinburgh-born revolutionary murdered by the British government as they sought bloody revenge for the Easter Rising in Dublin in 1916.

Brown told this column: "In proposing that a plaque or monument be erected at the birthplace of

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GENERAL NOTICES



Strike that never was: see Fancy That

James Connolly I am not simply wanting a tribute to a great socialist of the past. It is far more than that. I want to re-emphasise our working-class history—our revolutionary heritage—which is so important at the present time.

Now the Loyalist Defence Association has put out a leaflet 'to the people of Edinburgh' attacking him for wanting a monument to 'the traitor who was executed for murdering British soldiers.' The leaflet prints Brown's home address and phone number and urges the goodly citizens to contact him and let him know that "it is not a lunatic that you want as a councillor nor an IRA lover."

In the emotive atmosphere of a major Scottish city, the LDA's call could easily lead to abuse and intimidation—or worse—of Ron Brown, his wife and family.

Last word from Brown: "The LDA is attempting to split workers on sectarian grounds. In my view one of the reasons for this happening is the bankrupt policies of so many Labour and TUC leaders."

FORGET the Test Match—a far more crucial battle was fought out last Sunday when Tribune met Socialist Worker at cricket. The result: a resounding victory for revolutionary politics and iron, Bolshevik discipline on the field. Tribune scabbled 66 desperate runs and our lads replied with 230 for 9. The victory was merely a sporting reflection of political reality and not, as one joker in the crowd pointed out, because SW's playert went to better schools.

Warpath

MUCH bother and pother in the press last week when police uncovered a 'dockers' armoury' of offensive weapons as pickets' cars were searched on route for Scunthorpe. Weapons included starting handles, a quite unnecessary appendage to reliable British motor cars.

The bobbies also found a quantity of bale-hooks, again items that dockers never use in their employment, it

being a well-known fact that they open bales with their teeth.

Daily Mirror readers must have thought that American Indians had hit Humber side when the paper reported that police had found 'tomahawks' in dockers' cars. The Mirror didn't explain that what the dockers call tomahawks are an essential tool of their trade.

It is perfectly normal for them to carry them in their cars as they never know when or where they will be working on any given day.

The police were so intent on searching for weapons that they failed in their elementary duty of protecting private property. One docker returned to his car to find grass stuffed down the windscreen washers and his tyres gouged with nails. That was one piece of mayhem that didn't make the national press.

Dropped brick

FANCY THAT: The Scottish Daily Record reported last Friday: "Union chiefs put curb on strike". It said that building union leaders had blocked all-out strike action by Scotland's 60,000 building workers and 15,000 on strike had been ordered back to work.

That was on page 10. Which is strange because page 25 of the same issue carried an ad from both UCATT and the TGWU announcing that all construction workers were now on official strike.

THE ferry service across the River Tyne acquired a new boat a few months back called the 'Freda Cunningham', named after the wife of lovable and incorruptible GMWU regional boss Alderman Andrew Cunningham. It seems that Cunningham's curse on any form of industrial action has hit the luckless boat. What with engine trouble and navigational equipment problems, the boat has hardly done a week's service in its first three months.

Turned off

A SIGNIFICANT victory against dope peddlers has been chalked up by the police in that bracing Lincolnshire seaside town of Skegness. They swooped on five Indian immigrants suspected of being illegal entrants smuggling drugs into the country.

The police said they became suspicious when one of the Indians used a word like 'hashish' when describing the contents of a box they had.

Further investigation showed that the box contained the ashes of a cremated relative. Suitably admonished, the bobbies escorted the Indians to a nearby river to scatter them.



It's exploitation that speeds Grand Met to those big profits



Maxwell Joseph

His £430 million empire uses immigrant workers, scared to lose their work permits, as cheap labour

FEW companies can have been in the public eye more often recently than Grand Metropolitan Hotels, the £430 million takeover kings who dominate the so-called leisure industry.

Among the many gifts this organisation brings you are Mecca bingo and dancing, Miss World competitions, Watney's and Truman's beer, a massive chain of steak houses and the chance to gamble away your ill-gotten inflationary wage increases in one of its many betting shops.

For the silver-tongued scribes of the commercial press, it has all been a marvellous success story. Each new Grand Metropolitan takeover has been greeted with a flood of admiring articles.

And, in truth, Grand Met has been an enormous success in the private grab-motive terms polite society approves as the supreme virtue. Grand Met has brought home the bacon for its shareholders, and there is every indication that it will continue to do so. A circular last month from the big stockbroking firm Simon and Coates puts it nicely: 'The shares should be bought for their exceptionally sound growth prospects.'

FAWNING

Only recently has Grand Met blossomed into the brewing and entertainment industries. All its wealth and exceptionally sound growth prospects are based on the operation of extremely profitable hotels, mainly in London.

The business press has often remarked on Grand Met boss Maxwell Joseph's ability to extract

'It is necessary in my view that large companies do not get into the wrong hands, to people who do not give a damn about their workers... to people who are out for the profit motive without any other consideration'

-MAXWELL JOSEPH
Financial Times
4 August 1972

higher profits from the hotel game than anyone else. But in years of fawning comment, they never seem to have asked how.

The company's glossy image hides a sewer of exploitation and robbery. And it is this which has produced these lovely profits.

Grand Met is known as the worst big hotel employer.

Its London hotel workers were only recently given a basic wage rate of £15 a week—with a view to heading off the Transport and General Workers Union's attempts to organise Grand Met workers. This pitiful, revised rate is still about £4.50 a week less than Trust Houses Forte pay for identical work, under an agreement with that well-known militant union the General and Municipal.

But the basic rate question does not even begin to hint at the real misery hidden behind the smooth doors of Grand Met's hotels.

Grand Met is geared to the exploitation of Portuguese and Spanish workers, who, much to Mr Maxwell Joseph's advantage, often cannot speak or read English fluently. Their wage slips can therefore register widely different sums from one week to the next even though they work the same hours in the same job. And it is always difficult for unorganised workers to raise grievances and get explanations even when you speak the same language as your personnel manager.

BOXES

Over the past two weeks I have had several conversations with Grand Met Spanish and Portuguese workers through an interpreter. And the facts are quite definite. Many of the wage slips simply do not make sense—except, that is, to the advantage of the company.

Most profitable of all Grand Met's London hotels is the Rembrandt, which snuggles into the splendidly affluent and central Kensington area.

This is where the whole spirit of the operation can be measured. Some of the workers only get British government work permits

on condition that they live on hotel premises. Grand Met naturally charges them for this privilege—£4 a week. This is deducted from their wages, though, there's nothing on their wage slips to say so.

Living-in accommodation is not quite up to the standard of the guest rooms. Workers live in 'rooms' 8 ft x 6 ft. The individual units are partitioned off and the partitions do not reach to the ceiling. So privacy is an impossibility. There are no windows.

For ventilation there is a glass skylight. This is so badly designed that it has to be closed when it is raining. There is no rest room, no individual washing facilities, in short, no nothing.

In winter workers living-in can either go out and about in the cold or return to the comfort of their 8 by 6 cell. These are, incidentally, on the seventh floor and there are strict instructions, to workers, including one serious asthmatic, not to use the lifts.

UNSUSPECTING

Life is little better for the workers who have the fortune not to lodge with their employer. They have no rest room or washing facilities either, though they work long hours on split shifts. Still, maybe they can squeeze into one of their pals' 8 by 6's. If not, there are two chairs in the corridor.

Once Maxwell Joseph and Co have done with their labour power for the day, the workers who live out are thrown on to the housing market where Maxwell made the stake-money that took him into hotels. There they pay as much as £10 a week for the pleasure of living with their families on one room.

Another remarkable aspect of the Grand Met operation is the service charge. Most unsuspecting customers really do believe that the 10 per cent extra they pay is taken out of the tills, set aside for the staff and shared out at the end of the week.

With Grand Met this is not at all the case. The service charge is simply directed towards those exceptional profits.

Not unnaturally this situation has caused disaffection. Considerable interest has recently been shown by Grand Met workers in trade union organisation—and it is here that the various Tory and Labour government immigration restrictions play a role so helpful for the Grand Met balance sheet.

For Portuguese and Spanish workers are forced to live at Her Majesty's as well as Maxwell Joseph's pleasure. They are frightened that their work permits might not be renewed—and Grand Met does everything in its power to see they keep that feeling of insecurity.

The recent advent of trade unionism has been met with a vicious campaign of persecution. A management circular was sent round saying that while the company cannot actually prevent workers joining the union, they



should be 'strongly discouraged'—in other words frightened, and/or sacked.

This ensures that the serious trade union militants located and serviced by the excellent Portuguese and International Branch of the Transport and General Workers Union are forced underground. That is why none of them are named in this article.

Maxwell Joseph really has got everything going for him, it would seem.

'ROBBERY'

As far as 'respectable' society is concerned, the only problem posed by the exploitation, and robbery of the London hotel industry is that waiters no longer speak adequate English.

Dame Patricia Hornsby-Smith, Tory MP for Chislehurst in Kent, has recently unleashed a long correspondence in The Times on this terrible threat to the world of the expense account diner. She

and her tinker's beings v plioed a system many th 'humane' Just h is wus Portuga that in bad as h He a London as a h paradise brutal av It ha that soc open dic the rele The dockers them. will settl Hotels a workers' struggle can ob moveme

International Socialism 52



Labour, from the safety of opposition, once again proclaims its commitment to a 'fair society'. Raymond Challinor, in 'Labour and the parliamentary road' strips away the party's reformist pretensions and the Labour 'left's' hopeless dedication to evolutionary change. PLUS Nigel Harris on India Tony Cliff on Lenin David Widger on Mayakovsky

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IS magazine, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN

So you don't think the workers could run the country?

THE PRESS, the Tories and even some Labour Party leaders have been raging over the past few weeks, claiming that 'democracy' is threatened by the refusal of trade unionists to accept the imprisonment of pickets and fines against the unions.

But more and more people are coming to feel that the present parliamentary system in no way enables them to exercise any control over the way decisions are made. At the same time they also feel that the experience of countries like Czechoslovakia and Hungary shows that a dictatorship that calls itself 'socialist' is no better.

But there is an alternative. This article, reprinted from *The Worker*, newspaper of the Irish Socialist Workers Movement, shows how.

WE BELIEVE that a socialist society is a free society.

For anyone to have a chance to be free they must have control over their own lives. If we gain control of the places where we work we can directly control the present and future of the society we live in. That's a beginning on the road to freedom.

To reach that point, however, requires attack and criticism of the existing structures. It requires mobilising people around demands and objectives to be fought for.

If we wrote 'This is the way society should be run', and offered plans and blueprints, we would not be describing a free society, because the people had not decided themselves in struggle and in discussion, how things should be run.

We could talk poetically about a beautiful Utopia, but the trouble with Utopias is that they don't connect with the here and now. They never tell us how to get to the promised land and the good life. They don't draw on the experiences of people in the past who have fought for a radical change, and for a better society.

Lessons

Learning these lessons is important. It is not at all the same thing as learning history from a text-book. The struggles of the working class are, in any case, largely unwritten in the ordinary history books.

The periods from which we can learn important lessons for the present struggle include those when workers took over, for a while: Hungary 1956, Spain 1936, Italy 1920, Germany 1919, Russia 1917.

In all these cases workers were living under harsh conditions, but they were prepared to fight for a change. In all these struggles the workers took over factories and set up workers' councils in order to carry on their struggles.

In each factory a General Assembly of Workers, that is, everyone in the factory, elected a Workers' Council.

The members of the council were directly responsible to the rest of the workers. They were not a new elite, but were liable to be thrown out at any time if the General Assembly found their contribution unsatisfactory.

The main job of the Workers' Councils in these cases was to co-ordinate everyone's efforts. The final decisions were taken by the whole assembly of workers.

Shot

In this way, workers in struggle have begun to define a shape for a society controlled by the majority. But clearly there would be little chance of total revolutionary change if each group of workers simply concerned itself with its own factory or locality.

The Hungarian workers recognised this in 1956. When the revolution erupted after the 23 October demonstration, at which several people were shot by the secret police, workers' councils were immediately formed. Within a matter of days these councils had joined to form Regional Revolutionary Councils in some areas.

In Miskok, one of the main industrial centres of Hungary, all the workers in the area elected a local council, took over the local radio and were broadcasting their demands by Thursday 25 October, only two days after the original confrontation in

workers, from the base. Such objections are usually founded on the idea that power must always be concentrated in a few hands.

Nobody would deny that society is complicated. But technological advance has also produced machinery to make decision-making and planning easier, and to do away with a lot of unnecessary work—for example, the computer.

Most people associate the computer with massive, anonymous, bureaucratic organisations, but under workers' control, and if the profit motive was no longer determining, it could be 'liberated'. It could become an essential instrument of planning in a worker-managed society. Computers could evaluate the likely effects of different decisions and proposals put forward by different groups—at least those of a technical kind. Programmed with the knowledge of an industry or a group of industries it could balance changes in one sector with changes in another.

The final arbiter, however, on decisions affecting the lives and everyday existence of the working people must be the workers themselves through their representative bodies.

Power

Obviously some people will get more pleasure from, and will be better at, certain jobs than others; some specialisation is inevitable. But there is no reason why this should be a basis for privilege. Those people can help others understand problems facing society, and help towards the democratic solution of those problems.

At present we find that many workers lack the confidence to insist that they can, and do, acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to a whole range of work and political activities. They are trained to accept the rule of the few.

Yet in many different and small ways, everyday experience can lead workers to discover their own power. How many times have we had to listen to the boss telling us how to do the job and making it abundantly clear that he doesn't have the first idea of the problems involved?

If we start to relate that kind of experience to the whole of society, we can see how many wrongheaded assumptions we make about political power and economic power.

The sum total of working class experience is infinitely more than the knowledge of any 'experts'. It is the working class which has built the world as we know it—not experts and leaders. It is the working class which can change a situation where a tiny majority have effective control of our whole society.

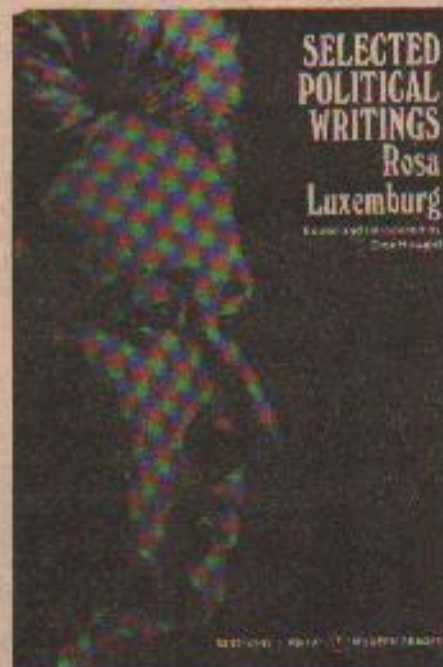
If we build a truly democratic society, a society controlled from grass roots by the workers' own organisations, we will be able to build our society in the way we want, not the way the bosses want.

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The 6ft by 8ft boxes that are 'home' for the hotel workers: top, doors lining the corridor; left, one man's windowless living space; above, the view over the cubicles; below, the entrance to the Rembrandt's plush halls. The film was smuggled out.



Special investigation by LAURIE FLYNN



Rosa Luxemburg, revolutionary genius, fighter and thinker, murdered in her native Germany in 1919. This selection of her writings includes essays on Woman's suffrage and the class struggle, Social Reform or Revolution and The Beginnings of the German Revolution. Edited by Dick Howard. Price £1.80 plus 5p postage.

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FROM: IS BOOKS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

Builders: 'It's a backs to the wall fight'

THE docks strike has captured the headlines but behind a press-imposed wall of silence a struggle of equal importance has been raging in the building industry.

On building sites throughout Britain workers, many previously untouched by trade unionism, have been stopping work and manning mass pickets.

A fortnight ago the official leaders of the main union, UCATT, headed by president of the TUC George Smith, attempted to settle £5 short, for a mere £25-a-week basic, £2 of which is subject to penalty clauses. Significantly, this move came the day after the TUC had signed its 'conciliation' agreement with the bosses' Confederation of British Industry.

Yet within four days the union leaders were forced to change their stance completely after a wave of protest strikes and demonstrations of unprecedented size had shaken the industry.

Now most major centres have gone beyond the official leaders' policy of 'selective strikes' to press for a total stoppage. They are following a strategy pioneered in Bristol and Birmingham—stopping organised sites and then manning mass pickets to persuade unorganised sites to come out too.

One well-organised site that joined the all-out strike last week was Cubitt's World's End, on the 'poorer' end of London's fashionable King's Road, Chelsea. The workers there are building luxury council flats that they themselves will never be able to afford—estimated rents range from £17 a week upwards.

Forced

Don Quinn, the convenor, and John Fontaine, the bricklayers' steward, explained that the strike was providing the first real opportunity to get the industry organised. In the past the greatest hindrance to this has been the 'lump'—labour only subcontracting.

'While the lump exists there'll be no real organisation in the building industry. It's like a cancer', said Don Quinn. 'Even committed trade unionists have on occasion been forced to go on to lump jobs.'

'A few months back you could look for a job in the papers and not see more than one in a week that wasn't on the lump.'

'On the lump you couldn't straighten your back from one end of the day to the other', he said. 'You had to get a £2 sub every day

for a drink just to get the sweat back into your body.'

It was pure slavery. You have no right to notice, they can sack you on the spot. And if you have an accident on the lump you get nothing. Instead of getting benefit, they probably discover you haven't been paying tax or stamps and you get prosecuted.

'When you work, you have a pace-maker in front of you who gets £4 more than you, and you have to keep up with him. You look for bricklayers' jobs in the Evening News and it will say 'greyhounds only', meaning speed merchants. But we're not dogs, we're human beings', said John Fontaine.

It increases unemployment fan-

tastically. Four men do 20 men's work. And when you're over 45 you're finished completely.

'There's a non-union site next to us, Kind and Co. There are no proper eating facilities there, no washing facilities, nowhere to change your clothes. Men have to keep a change of clothes in cardboard boxes in the middle of the site, where the rain can get at them.'

Because of this, the percentage of union sites in London has been small. 'You could count the number of organised jobs on the fingers of one hand', said John Fontaine.

'The papers refer to us as militants. But we're not. We're just looking for decent conditions and a good standard of living. We want people to be treated as human beings. We're individuals with different ways of working, at different speeds.

'We're not machines, they treat us

like machines. The lump is like a jungle—only the fittest survive and the rest get the sack. It's no wonder that building workers sometimes behave like animals when they're treated like animals.'

'But we want to be treated like human beings.'

Change

'There has been an attempted sell-out by George Smith—there's too much caviare and brandy up there', said Don Quinn. 'But he's been forced to change his mind, and he's going to be forced to change his mind again, because we're not going back until we get what we're fighting for.'

'This is a backs-to-the-wall fight. If we don't fight it, there's no hope for trade unionism in the industry at all. If we don't do it now, we'll never do it.'

'There's a wind of change among the men. You can go to a site, stop it and give out union forms. They elect their stewards on the spot and the site is organised in a single day.'

'There are no union members on Kinds, but they supported our demonstration against the sell-out yesterday and we stopped the site with a wink of the eye today.'

'The selective strikes have not been effective enough. Every site in London should be pulled out. In fact, this action should have been taken at the beginning of the strike. And there should be picketing of brick works and depots.'

'It will take a time to stop all the sites in London, but by stopping supplies at the source we can bring them to a halt more quickly. If we fight it in this way, we can win and establish real trade unionism for the first time over most of the industry.'

Builders' stewards John Fontaine (left) and Don Quinn (right) on the building workers' demonstration in Hyde Park, London, last week.

by SW reporter

Pawns on their golden chessboard

I HAVE mentioned the City phenomenon of the takeover before. This is the story of the recently successful bid for civil engineering contractors Amey by Consolidated Goldfields.

Perhaps of all recent bids this one has displayed least concern for the workers involved, and most evidence that takeover bids are a sophisticated game.

Amey Group is a large readymix concrete and road building company. Sales each year amount to nearly £40 million. Workers' maximum weekly earnings, before all deductions but including overtime, are £35. The chairman's weekly wage is £300.

In addition every Amey worker provides nearly £1000 profit yearly for the lucky shareholders.

Consolidated Goldfields is a £200 million international mining and finance company. They have a problem. Under a new system of corporation tax that the Tories are about to introduce, companies will be penalized if they do not pay their profits out in dividends. It will also be difficult for companies who earn their profits abroad to pay these out—so they will have higher tax bills.

Consolidated Gold is one such company. To reduce the tax bill they have to

IN THE CITY



with T.H. Rogmorton

earn a good slice of their profits in Britain—and that's where Amey comes in.

The directors of Consolidated Gold, who already own a good chunk of the construction industry, saw the chance to

buy some British profits AND strengthen their monopoly position in the industry. In all the documents that have been printed by both sides (Amey rejected the bid), not a word has been mentioned about the interests of the employees.

The press has referred to the whole affair as a poker game and it is in this spirit that the boards of directors have taken it.

The Stock Exchange have some rules about the way these games can be played. One is about the length of time that the bidder can have to win.

Selling

Each week Consolidated Gold have extended their bid by a week, so that every Wednesday afternoon for the past few weeks the future of 3000 jobs has been at stake: the capitalists have pushed a few more pawns about their golden chess board.

If you think that all this is just cynicism and that the Amey directors may really be concerned about the future of the company they own, then consider this: the bid, which the directors of Amey consider inadequate, values each Amey share at 241p, yet in the year before the offer the directors of Amey and their advisers sold more than a million shares at prices up to 174p.

Perhaps this is some indication of their interest in the company and its employees.

In other words, the gentlemen getting anything up to £300 a week are willing to start selling off the company that they ran, and then launch themselves into a campaign to prevent someone buying that company (to force the selling price still higher?)

The prospective buyer was interested only in buying something that would help reduce his tax bill and pay more to his impoverished shareholders.

Neither side has mentioned the interests of the workers involved and every technique used makes the operation more like the poker game that the City newspapers delight in calling it.

The thing to remember is that the City loves this—and it is not exceptional. People and their jobs are continually being used as pawns in the City's game. But they are normally clever enough to disguise their callousness and indifference to the workers.

BOOM OR BUST?

The crisis in the aircraft industry

'The huge sums of money being spent on Concorde will only serve to save a few hours for businessmen or to carry on pleasure trips a tiny handful of privileged people. We have to ask what sort of society refuses to spend even a small amount of money providing a reliable and efficient bus service for ordinary people while at the same time wasting millions on Concorde.'

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OUR NORMAN



IDEA - JOHN KENNEDY '72

Stanmore engineers left high and dry by union

SW Reporter

ON FRIDAY 4 August, the workers of Stanmore Engineering, Wembley, admitted defeat at the hands of their employer. Those dismissed without redundancy money voted to apply for it.

The defeat of these workers—all Engineering Union members—has not caused much of a stir in their union. But it is the union that is responsible for this defeat, and its policy of plant-by-plant bargaining for its national wages and conditions claim that has been the direct culprit.

When, some months ago, the employers rejected their claim, the engineering unions set their members to fight for it at plant level. The AUEW specifically sent out a circular saying that its districts should select firms in their area to take on, and give their members in dispute every support.

But this policy proved to be little more than fine-sounding words. Most workforces that slumped in the claim did it with no perspective of a district fight. Even the struggle in Manchester was sadly lacking real co-ordination.

Occupation

On 13 May, after months of fruitless negotiations, the workers at Stanmore Engineering started a go-slow in support of the claim. The management retaliated by attempting to cut off the power to the machines. The workers were ready, and started an occupation.

The tactic of occupation was a big step forward for the 120 AUEW members. During a previous strike, scab labour had been brought in to work the machines. Occupation ruled that possibility out.

The management was determined to repossess the machinery in the factory. To this end, it kept a constant watch on movements in and out of the occupied factory. There were several attempts to break in, using the police to intimidate the workers.

Finally, at 6am on Friday 23 June, they turned up with a High Court interim injunction and managed to evict the three sleepy workers who were holding the plant. Immediately management moved the machinery out of the factory, served dismissal notices on nearly 30 workers, and offered redundancy money to those eligible among the remainder.

Response

Now it was essential to use the massive power of the union to get the jobs back. Ten days later the issue was raised from the floor at a meeting of stewards from the whole of the London confederation district.

But the first response of Hugh Scanlon was to stress that the action of the Stanmore workers was not in accord with union policy. He asked who had selected Stanmore as the most suitable factory to take on.

To ask the question was to answer it. No one had. The whole mess up and down the country over the claim had been caused by an abdication of real leadership by the union.

If Scanlon had been really interested in winning back the jobs for the Stanmore workers, let alone with impressing his membership that the union was serious in fighting for the claim, he could have ensured that Zenith carburettors, for which Stanmore produced castings, were blacked in the giant Midlands motor firms.

Slaughter

Most promises of help the men did receive got lost in the official channels. By allowing the workers to be led like lambs to the slaughter, the union showed that it wasn't that interested in fighting for them.

The men learned too late that they should have kept a regular force in the occupied factory, and they when they were evicted that they should have had daily meetings to make sure that people didn't drift away and get other jobs. The whole workforce needed to be mobilised to specific tasks for winning their fight.

By visiting the Vauxhall factory at Luton the men did secure a vague promise that Zenith carburettors would be blacked after the annual holiday. But by then it was too late.

The almost total indifference shown by the union officials towards the Stanmore struggle proves, as the dockers and miners have already shown, that to be engaged in struggle isn't sufficient. One has to adopt the tactics necessary for winning it, even against the resistance of the union

Top union man named in Poulson hearing

Andy Cunningham's free holiday in Portugal



CUNNINGHAM

A NEW NAME was added last week to the list of Tory politicians, government civil servants and Labour Party careerists involved in the bankruptcy proceedings of architect John Poulson. There was an audible sigh of relief from government circles when a leading trade union official was named in the Wakefield court hearing.

He is Alderman Andrew Cunningham, North East regional secretary of the General and Municipal Workers Union. Counsel for the trustees in the bankruptcy hearing said that Poulson

by Martin Tomkinson

paid £256 for Cunningham and his family to holiday in Portugal.

Poulson admitted that he had done 'a lot of work' in Cunningham's union office in Newcastle and this was the reason he had paid for the holiday in Estoril. The architect also agreed that he had employed Mrs Freda Cunningham, the union official's wife, from October 1969 to January 1970 but he could not recall in what capacity she was taken on.

He said he had sent a memo to the effect that Mrs Cunningham should be paid £1500 a year but that payment should be transferred so that it would be paid by T Dan Smith. Smith is the former full-time Labour leader of Newcastle council and ex-chairman of the Northern Economic Development Council.

Cunningham's rise to fame and power in the North East is rivalled only by T Dan Smith. Cunningham's advance was two-fold, through the GMWU and the Labour Party. When his brother-in-law gave up his job as GMWU organiser, Cunningham was appointed his successor.

He became a Labour member of Felling Urban Council in 1938 and eight years later was elected to Durham County Council. Since then he has scrambled up many ladders in his quest for a multi-career. He is now:

Chairman of Durham Police Authority,
Chairman of Newcastle Airport Committee.

Chairman of Tyneside Passenger Transport Authority.

Chairman of the Northern Regional Council of the Labour Party

When Cunningham was appointed regional secretary in 1964 he began his new job by burning the files of his predecessor. He announced that he would be the most expensive regional secretary the North East had ever had.

He set out to achieve this notable distinction by organising regular slap-up meals for a select few. When the union celebrated its 75th anniversary it hired the Albert Hall in London and spent £70,000 on food and drink.

Not to be outdone, Cunningham held a dinner at Newcastle's Station Hotel for district officials and local employers.

Boasted

According to the union journal, the guests at another function included just one trade unionist. The rest were local government officials and employers.

The journal boasted that 'the cordial relations of the union with industrial managements in the North East were manifest again at the annual luncheon of the district committee'.

The union's 'cordial relations' with the employers extend to investing large sums of the members' subscriptions in private industry. The 1970 figures show £70,000 invested in Tyne-Tees Television, £19,000 in Yorkshire Television (of which general secretary Lord Cooper is a director), £10,000 in Swan Hunter, the Tyneside shipbuilders and £30,000 in Vickers.

This is the background of the man who had a paid holiday at the expense of John Poulson. In 1965 Poulson was appointed consultant architect for two multi-million pound housing developments in Felling, where Cunningham started his rise to power. The contracts are estimated to have been worth £250,000 in fees to Poulson.

Cunningham is presently in Stockholm on a trade union delegation. When told about the revelations in the Poulson inquiry, he said: 'That's a laugh'.

Others find it less amusing. Two Felling councillors have called for a police inquiry into the Poulson contracts. This was rejected, probably in line with Cunningham's expressed view that 'There's far too much noise made about public life'.

Members of the GMWU may think, on the contrary, that there is too little noise made about union officials' intimate links with industry and local government contracts.

Youth take over empty office



Action was more effective than polite letters: scene of the occupation and some of the squatters

by Sara Carver

MANCHESTER: At 6am on Saturday, Manchester Rebel youth group took over an empty office building in the city centre. The occupation is part of the Rebel campaign to force the corporation to provide free premises for all young people in the area, open 24 hours a day and run by them without adult or outside interference.

The Rebel group had already written to the Borough Surveyor and the press. A big delegation went to the town hall to press their demands but the council bureaucrats slung them out contemptuously. The young people involved soon realised that polite letters and peaceful pleas would not win them a thing.

By taking over the building and inviting all young workers and school students to join the fight, Rebel hopes to force the council to sit up and take notice. Youngsters have flocked to join the 'squat'.

Printers at the Daily Express works next door have shown great interest in their new neighbours. In the early hours of Saturday morning a number of printers were shown round the occupied building and as the night shift clocked off they brought copies of the Sunday Express and voiced their support for the action. One printer named Cedric, who has a 10-year-old daughter, said: 'I hope she'll grow up to fight as you're doing.'

TRANSPORT MEN PROTEST OVER JOBS LOSS THREAT

TRANSPORT WORKERS at the Hammersmith (West London) works of Manbre Sugars—part of the Manbre-Garton-Sankey group—are picketing the works over an attempt by management to deprive them of their jobs and force them to accept re-employment on worse conditions.

The management claims this involves them working for an outside contractor, Brocklehurst of South London. But this firm is owned and run by Manbre. When the men refused to accept this arrangement on Monday they were told they were dismissed but could reapply for their jobs if they accepted the company's terms.

One of the strangest aspects of the whole affair is the behaviour of the men's union, the Transport Workers. The men

work in West London but two months ago, the SOUTH LONDON district official of the union, Kaye, was negotiating over new terms of employment for the men with Brocklehurst.

The workers knew nothing about the change he was negotiating. Management claim that Kaye had agreed to their terms but he denied this on Monday.

The workers believe that the management have been looking for a pretext to break unity between production and transport workers. At the moment sugar stocks are low and the company may have plans to lay off production workers, using the struggle with the transport workers as a pretext.

We'll back rent strike say factory workers

by Tony Boyle

KIRKBY: A packed meeting of 300-400 tenants from the Merseyside town's Tower Hill estate voted on Monday to go on a total rent and rates strike when the Tories' 'Fair Rents Act' comes into force.

The meeting was called by the estate's Unfair Rents Action Group and only seven voted against the strike call. Street and block committees have been set up to prevent any victimisations or evictions of tenants who withhold their rent.

And several local factories have pledged to take industrial action if tenants are threatened with victimisation. They will also send workers to add the tenants' committees.

Action groups to fight the Rent Act have now been set up on the town's four big estates—Tower Hill, South Dene, Northwood and West Vale. The groups have elected a co-ordinating committee to link up all Kirkby's tenants.

WHAT'S ON

Copy for What's On must arrive by first post Monday or be phoned Monday morning. Charges are 5p per line, semi-display 10p per line. CASH WITH COPY. No insertions without payment. Invoices cannot be sent.

MEETINGS

NOTTINGHAM IS: education meeting on Reform or Revolution with Mal Collins. Thursday 24 August, 8pm. Lion Hotel, Clumber Street (near Victoria Centre).

BATH IS public meeting 8pm Thursday 24 August: Tony Cliff on How to Fight the Tories. Hat and Feather pub, London Rd.

KILBURN and HARLESDEN IS public meeting: John Palmer on Technology and the Fight for Jobs, Thurs 24 August, 8pm, Anson Hall, Chichele Road, NW2.

TONY CLIFF on LENIN: Sun 27 August 8pm New Inn, Bromsgrove St, Birmingham City Centre, Birmingham District IS.

WIGAN IS SOCIAL Ale and Music. Swan and Railway Hotel, Wallgate, Saturday 19

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DUBLIN flat to let for two weeks from Friday 25 August by SWM comrades going on holiday. Suit two. £6 a week. Write soon! D. Kane, 3 Mountain View Road, Ranelagh, Dublin 6.

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Socialist Worker

KANGAROO COURTS AGAINST DOCKERS

AT NEAP HOUSE WHARVES near Scunthorpe dockers from Hull, Grimsby and Goole have been receiving a bitter taste of the tactics now being employed by the authorities to counter the growing effectiveness of mass picketing in industrial disputes.

Police drawn from eight counties have used all the tricks learnt in Ireland to break the picket: road blocks and searches, snatch squads, Special Branch photographers to identify militants. People have been arrested at random. One lad sitting on the grass eating his sandwiches was dragged away.

The wharf was clearly chosen with care by the employers as a scene for confrontation. 'This place is built like a castle,' one picket said. It is built on an uphill slope, and was surrounded last week with wire.

From behind the rows of police, scab-farm labourers doing casual dock work in their spare time at wages and conditions that organised trade unionists would never tolerate—were able to throw stones at the pickets on Monday unimpeded by the so-called defenders of 'law and order.'

DRAGGED AWAY

It was only when dockers began to push forward in protest on Monday that the police responded by dragging away two pickets.

Enraged dockers then began to tear down the wire fence around the wharf. The police intensified their attacks even more.

One docker was dragged up a steep bank by his hair. His trousers, shoes, and shirt were torn off him and the police continued to knock and beat him until a conscience stricken journalist intervened.

One docker yelled at the lines of police: 'So this is what happens in Northern Ireland.'

And a new twist to 'British justice' had been organised—not a magistrates' court or a crown court, but a kangaroo court. Last Wednesday, before any arrests had been made, a special sitting of the court for that night had been organised.

Unlucky pickets were piled into police vans, where several officers discussed who would invent charges against whom. The actual court was even more amazing.

Charges were misread. An officer identified one man in the dock, but the man he named was still in the cells. Nevertheless, there was strict equality before the law. Out of 22 arrested that day, 18 got fines of £40, to be paid off at £2 a week, regardless of the size of their families.

The frame-up surprised the men. But it has not demoralised them. They see the issue as being wider than Neap House

wharf itself. As one docker put it: 'If they keep this wharf unregistered, then the whole of the Trent will become one big unregistered port in a few years.' The area will suffer low wages and appalling conditions, while unemployment in Hull and the other registered ports mounts.

The authorities recognise the problem. That is why they have picked on the wharf as a test case in their efforts to break the power of mass picketing.

But other local groups of workers are learning the lesson. Hull lorry drivers and Scunthorpe construction and steel workers have been on the picket lines with the dockers.

PICKET LINES

MORE THAN 2600 workers in the two Scottish factories of GEC Telecommunications in Glenrothes and Kirkcaldy downed tools last week to bring production of the important crossbar telephone exchanges to a standstill. Harry Gibson of the AUEW said: 'They are pursuing the national claim for a substantial increase in wages, extended holidays, a shorter working week, and equal pay for work of equal value. This was presented at local level to GEC and they stuck at the very first point.'

Management has refused to discuss the wage rise on the grounds that an agreement is in force until 1973, but no mention was made that this agreement could be broken if there was a change in the economic situation.

The employers have now threatened that if there is not a return to work within eight weeks, they will be forced to shut down the factory. The shop stewards' answer was: close down in four weeks and see the factory occupied.

BOLTON:—Workers at the Walmsey group factories in Bury, Bolton and Wigan are on strike following a lockout of workers at the Bolton factory a month ago. The lock-out followed an overtime ban by the workers and the blacking of certain contracts in support of a pay claim.

Support and messages of solidarity to Wigan District Secretary, AUEW House, 100 Chapel Lane, Wigan.

KIRKBY:—Management at Fisher-Bendix, the firm stopped from closure earlier this year by an occupation, has conceded a claim by workers for a 35-hour week, an extra week's holiday and higher wages. The deal will give skilled workers £39.25, labourers £30 and women £27.50—all without any productivity strings.

Builders' strike hots up

SW Reporters

THE BUILDING WORKERS' strike has been gathering momentum over the past week after rank and file pressure forced the main union, UCATT, to reverse its plans to sell out the struggle.

Towns that have never known sustained action by building workers in the past are now almost completely shut down. In Leicester, Nottingham, York, Stoke and many other centres, most of the sites are out.

In London, which had previously been far behind centres like Birmingham and

Bristol, an attempt is being made to close all sites. The city has been divided into sections with the best organised jobs in each serving as a focus from which to picket and stop unorganised and lump sites.

But the union leadership is still trying to hold back the movement. Many officials make fine speeches about an all-out national stoppage, but in practice they are trying to limit action to selective sites—the strategy used for two months already

without forcing the employers to budge. And there are strong indications that the national leadership of the unions see the strike action as merely an escape valve for militancy, while they try to get a far-led-up version of the deal the rank and file rejected last week. All this makes it essential that the demand goes on:

Extend the strike. For an all-out national official strike.

Mass picketing of all sites still working and of cement works, and other sources of building materials, supply and power for the contractors.

No settlement without reference back. No local retreats on the claim. All negotiations to include elected strike committee representatives. For the democratisation of the building unions.

Immediate campaign for collections, donations and solidarity action from other unions and from the TUC.

No retreat on the £30 for 35 hours claim.

GLASGOW:—300 building worker shop stewards voted early this week to reject the building unions' policy of selective stoppages and for an all-out strike for the full claim. The decision came after a week of unprecedented activity in the West of Scotland's building industry.

That began with 80 shop stewards calling for a strike and demonstration against the proposed sell-out by UCATT's executive. In the pouring rain, 2000 workers decided to stop the whole of Glasgow, whatever the officials thought. Flying pickets were organised and site after site came out.

Held fast

The next day all 4000 strikers met again at the union office to put a recommendation to the officials that the next stage of the campaign should be an all-out strike. Within an hour regional secretary, Donald MacGregor, appeared and announced that this was now the West of Scotland Action Committee's policy. But he didn't say that this could be overruled by another Action Committee covering the whole of Scotland, which was what happened the very next day.

But the new Co-ordinating Committee of shop stewards held fast, the pickets continued to go out, and the struggle continued.

Because of all the twists and turns the officials have made in just one short week, it is essential that a regional rank and file committee is set up to cover Dundee, Aberdeen and Edinburgh as well as Glasgow. This is needed because of the danger that the officials may attempt to sign a Scottish-only deal with the building employers that would still fall well short of the claim on hours, holidays and working conditions.

Travelling picket

LEEDS:—700 workers voted on Saturday to extend picketing. A TGWU representative pointed out that it was only the rank and file that had prevented a sell out and that only they could bring victory.

But a call from the floor to extend the strike to local authority workers in the building unions was rejected by the platform although these workers are pushing for the same claim as building workers. A small travelling picket organised from the meeting went off and succeeded in bringing out men on three 'lump' sites.

CAMBRIDGE:—The upsurge of militancy among builders in the East Anglia region was reflected at the regional conference of UCATT on Saturday. The union regional secretary, who only nine days before had been predicting that the employers latest offer would mean a quick end to the dispute, tried to argue against an immediate national strike and used phrases about 'rapid escalation'.

But the delegates, one after another, demanded an all-out national stoppage. They criticised the union's leadership—or rather lack of it. In this area activists have been forced to work in a vacuum because of the regional office's failure to co-ordinate activity.

The secretary suggested that members should be realistic and be prepared to accept £26 with or without reduction in hours.

But a steward from the Stoneage Action Committee was cheered by the delegates when he said that an offer of anything less than £30 by Christmas was not even worth considering.

SUPERVISORS STRIKE

SOUTHAMPTON:—Members of the Technical and Supervisory Section of the engineering union in the Vespene-Thorneycroft group, a subsidiary of John Brown, have been on strike for a fortnight. This follows the sacking of 19 inspectors at the Woolston yard in Southampton who were on a work-to-rule for parity with other trades.

Craft unions have refused to work with non-union labour brought in to replace the TASS members. By last Friday 372 workers had been laid off, 140 of them electricians. Now management hopes to close the yard until the dispute is settled. Meanwhile, they are trying to stir up inter-union rivalry in preparation for a re-negotiation of the 'Blue Book' productivity deal which starts in March 1973. They may try to bring in shift working as their new covered yard nears completion.

SW Reporters

And the dockers themselves are starting to see that behind all the fine talk about 'the rule of law' stands an employing class prepared to use crude violence and rigged trials in order to maintain its profits.

'Police treated us like rats'

LOWER CLYDE shipyard workers have had the same experience of police backing up their employers. The number arrested has risen to 50 as the authorities have tried to break picketing by striking engineers at Scott Lithgow.



Going back buoyant: convenor Monty Hulce (left) and steward Tony Wilson

Round-the-clock sit in wins pay increase

STOCKPORT:—The last of the engineering sit-ins in the Manchester area ended last week with the workers buoyant and the management 'a little subdued'.

After occupying the Stockport factory of Bason and Sons around the clock for 16 weeks, 50 workers have accepted an offer that gives them an extra day's holiday and a £4 wage increase.

Settlement is well above the average gained in the district-wide engineering dispute, though Bason workers started from a lower level. It was squeezed out of a reluctant management as a result of the determination of the workers to maintain their occupation long after the other factories had returned to work.

'We've had a few waverers but even they have now realised what can be done', says convenor Monty Hulce. 'Now the lads have got more confidence. They know what a sit-in means now.'

refused to call off their occupation until work restarted. No improvement was made on the claim for the shorter working week as this demand was dropped by a district stewards' meeting during the struggle.

'We've hammered this as a bad decision which did endless harm', Monty maintains.

The success achieved at Bason's was the result of the splendid determination of the workers. By maintaining a militant occupation they were able to more than double the management's original offer. But in common with most of the other Manchester settlements, nothing was gained on the vital demand for the 35 hour week.

This was a demand that could only be won through concerted national action—and the union leadership refused to organise it.

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