

# Socialist Worker

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WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

**Smash the Freeze!  
Kick out  
the Tories!**

**WE HAVE THE POWER**





# BLACKING BOOST FOR FINE TUBES UNION FIGHT

SW Reporter

PLYMOUTH:—Two moves in the attempt to break the non-union firm of Fine Tubes, where trade unionists have been on strike for nearly three years, have given the strikers new hope.

Acting on information that vital chemicals for the manufacture of the steel tubes in Plymouth were being supplied by Domestic Chemicals of Exeter, strike committee member Frank Clark spoke to the company's managing director, Mr Blackler.

If the company continued to supply Fine Tubes, warned Clark, it would find its name on the blacking list. Blackler's reply was to complain to the Plymouth Transport and General Workers Union office of 'harassment' by Clark.

As a result, Domestic Chemicals is being blacked throughout the South West.

Similar treatment has been handed out to Calor Gas when the strike committee discovered the firm was supplying Fine Tubes with ammonia.

After a meeting on 9 April in Bristol, the convenor of ICI (Severn-side), one of the biggest chemical works in the West Country, gave an ultimatum to the ICI management: Unless Calor Gas undertook not to supply Fine Tubes, no subcontractors' lorries would be loaded with ammonia from ICI.

If Fine Tubes are denied their ammonia and their chemicals from Domestic Chemicals, their operations could grind to halt within a fortnight.

These two blacking decisions came as a considerable relief to the Fine Tubes strike committee. On 31 March they received a letter from the secretary of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee at Rolls-Royce's Engine Division, which had previously decided to black all Rolls-Royce products from Derby until an undertaking came from the Derby factory that Fine Tubes material would not be used.

The letter, signed by H Hey, secretary to the JSSC, reported curtly that the committee, before waiting for the monthly meeting of all stewards on 3 April, had decided to lift the blacking of Derby products because 'we could not jeopardise the jobs of our members.'

Even less support was forthcoming from Mr Hugh Scanlon, president of the AUEW, who was lobbied by strike committee members during the meeting of the AUEW National Committee at Torquay.

'He told us that we were being sectarian in asking for financial support,' Frank Clark told Socialist Worker. 'He said he'd paid out more money per striker than the TGWU—which simply isn't true.'

'The AUEW cut off strike pay after a year of the strike and since then have only paid out £125 to their members on strike.'

An emergency motion on the strike was not called for debate at the AUEW's National Committee.

## Sweet strike goes on

HULL:—Workers at Needlers Chocolate factory have voted by a three-to-one majority to continue their strike over the sacking of proposed shop steward Ken Chapman.

While the workers are determined to hold out, the General and Municipal Workers Union has been looking for a way out. Bill Allen, the union full timer, cooked up a deal with management in London for national negotiations on wages.

The deal said that if there was a full return to work then a Department of Employment conciliation officer would be brought in to determine whether Ken Chapman was to be reinstated.

This was turned down by the 200 strikers because a conciliation officer has no power to insist that someone be reinstated and the workers feel this is only a trick to get them to halt industrial action.

The union official agrees that Ken Chapman has been victimised but insists that he cannot make the strike official because workers have refused the conciliation offer.



# FINE TUBES UNION FIGHT

## Sacked Searle is reinstated



Christopher Searle: dismissed for not going through the bureaucratic channels

EAST LONDON teacher Christopher Searle has won his long battle for reinstatement. He was sacked two years ago by the governors of the Sir John Cass Foundation and Redcoat school for publishing a book of poems, *Stepney Words*, written by pupils at the school and printed without the governors' approval.

Now Education Secretary Mrs Margaret Thatcher has upheld a decision by the Inner London Education Authority not to consent to the dismissal. There were demonstrations by schoolchildren in his support following his sacking. Mr Searle's fight was backed by the National Union of Teachers.

## BIG STEEL THREAT TO POTTERIES

SW Reporters

STOKE-ON-TRENT:—British Steel Corporation's rationalisation plans have now spread to the Potteries. Workers at Shelton Iron and Steel works have been told that there is no future for the plant.

Two converters, three blast furnaces and the continuous casting unit are to be closed, involving a loss of 1650 jobs. There is no other work available for the men in the area.

The 950 who work in the Light Beam Mill are to have their jobs guaranteed only until the end of the 1970s.

There has been little fight back so far. As soon as rumours started circulating about the impending closure, an Action Committee was set up of local MPs, councillors and some shop stewards.

The Action Committee has started drawing up feasibility plans for the plant. It argues that with the installation of electric arc furnaces there is a future for steel making in Shelton.

To prove the point, the men have worked hard to produce £1½m profit for BSC this year and have been thanked with the threat of redundancy.

Some members of the Action Committee recognise the uselessness of such tactics. Local MPs have already accepted that the jobs are lost and are asking Christopher Chataway, Minister for regional development, to declare Stoke-on-Trent an area of 'intermediate status' in the hope of attracting new industry to the area through government grants.

This is not the way out. Shelton workers need to link up with workers in other plants to fight redundancies in the industry nationally.

A step in the right direction was taken by Shelton workers who went to the Shotton conference against BSC's national closure plans.

## Printmen firm in strike for women's rights

by Murray Armstrong

PAISLEY:—Workers at Stimuir printing works are in their third week of strike over equal pay for women workers and full rates for all at 18. There are 100 SOGAT members in the shop and only 25 are women but the men are solid in their support.

Alec Mayberry, the deputy father of the chapel (shop steward), told Socialist Worker: 'This was a cheap labour shop. We've only been organised since last November but the fight began when the management tried to replace a screen cleaner with a boy at 30p an hour.'

'We have to stop them using cheap labour and this applies as much to women as to young workers. The men are right behind the equal pay demand.'

### Recognition

Local management were willing to pay the increase from April but the parent company, 3M, blocked that. Equal pay for the 25 women at Paisley may be easily paid but the management eye is on the wider implications throughout the 3M combine.

'They have offered us £1.20 in October,' said Alec Mayberry. 'But who knows if £1.20 will be good enough by then? If the union gives us full backing we'll stay on the street until then.'

The Stimuir strike has been

declared official—but only for the one-third of the increase and equal pay allowable under Phase Two of the freeze. Mr Mayberry pointed out that they were a small shop and didn't feel strong enough to take the lead in smashing the freeze. They had to follow the union.

'For us this is a fight for recognition, a trial of strength. Nevertheless, the trade union movement has backed down all along the line in front of this government,' he said.

'We should all be out in support of anybody who challenges the freeze. We should fight from 1 May onwards—we should have been fighting from last May Day.'

## Pools strike in week 11

BLACKPOOL:—The strike of women at Empire Pools for union recognition is in its 11th week.

Coaches and taxis paid for by the management are being used to break the picket line. The scabs have received a £1 plus 4 per cent rise and have been given holidays with pay. They include students from local schools and colleges.

The police have refused to take any action over a poison-pen letter sent to one of the strikers, threatening her with assault.

## Miners in battle to stop Yorks closures

SW Reporter

MINERS at the North Yorkshire colliery of Newlands struck last week in protest at the threatened closure of their pit.

Large numbers picketed the Yorkshire delegate council meeting of the mineworkers' union in Barnsley.

The picket was swelled by miners from Gomersal colliery which is also threatened with closure. Nearly a thousand jobs are at stake.

Some of the men at Gomersal colliery are facing their sixth experience of pit closures, the last one less than a year ago. When they moved to Gomersal they were assured by the Coal Board that it was a long life pit.

### Prepared

The NCB claim that Newlands is no longer profitable to mine, despite the fact that the pit currently makes a profit. The Yorkshire NUM prepared a water tight case for keeping the pit open but the national executive has refused to fight the closure.

At Gomersal the NCB is playing a more subtle game. In the light of the Lofthouse disaster it is claiming that Gomersal is unsafe and has to be closed to prevent another collapse.

There is certainly evidence to suggest that some of the faces now being worked are unsafe but local miners argue that there are vast reserves of coal which could be worked in comparative safety.

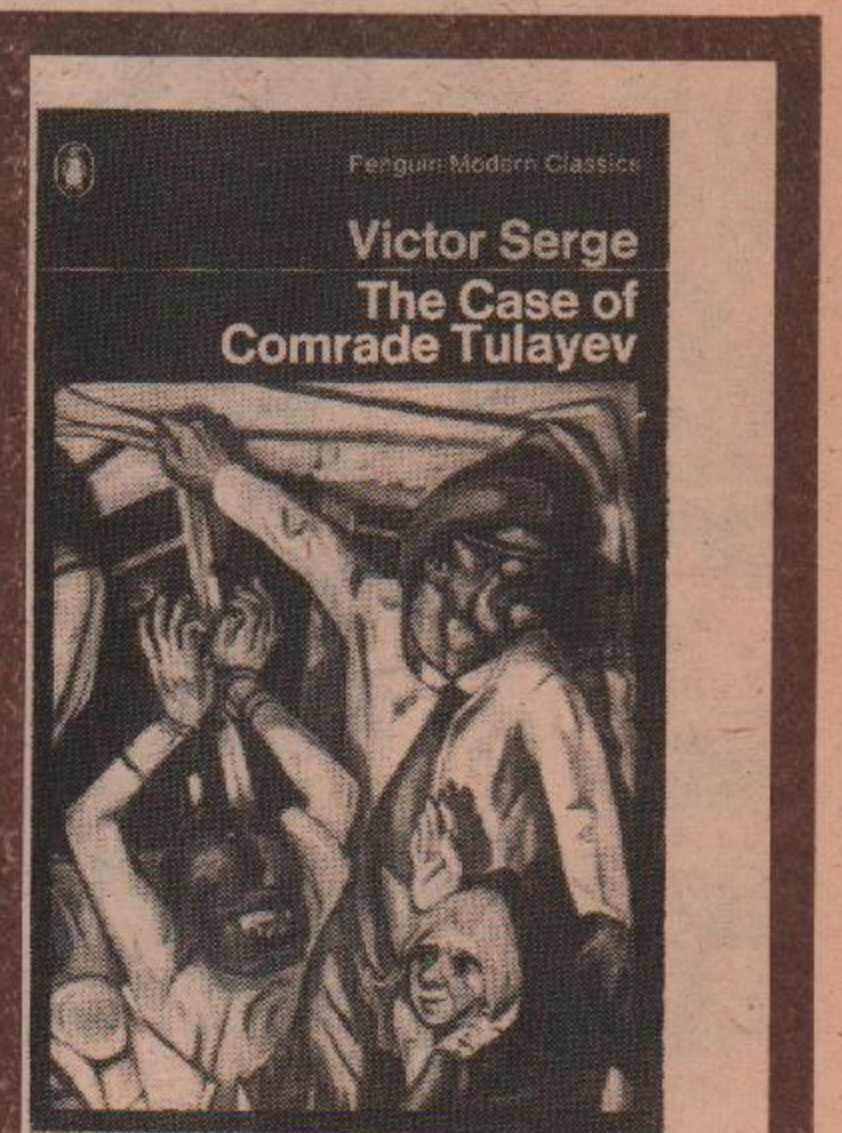
### Incentive

Because of the low wages and lack of job security in the mining industry the NCB is suffering from an acute labour shortage. To solve that problem and to increase productivity it is bent on closing the smaller, less profitable pits and transferring the men to other pits.

If the NCB is successful in closing Newlands and Gomersal it would have the incentive for closing virtually all the North Yorkshire pits.

It is vital that the Yorkshire area of the NUM initiates a campaign throughout the coalfield to keep these pits open.

As one Newlands miner said to Socialist Worker: 'What we want now is action, not words. By coming on strike we have given the lead. Now the union must follow.'



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# Help us speak with a louder voice!

**Socialist  
Worker**

'THE FREE PRESS' is one familiar parrot-cry of employers and politicians that has taken a few hard knocks in recent years.

Few groups of workers involved in struggles for higher wages against the Tories will have returned to work with the same respect for the 'fair and impartial' press that they had before. Power workers, postmen, dockers, railmen and nurses have all been subjected to a political roasting from the press tycoons of Fleet Street.

The hospital workers will long remember the vicious slander campaign that accused them of callous disregard for the welfare of patients. The press headlined every hysterical outburst from senior doctors. It played up every minor split in the strikers' ranks. It ignored the magnificent solidarity and determination of the majority. And it turned a blind eye to the near-slave labour conditions of their work and pay.

Of course, the press is not always successful. It does not have the power to stop workers striking. And when it fails to mobilise 'public opinion' (that is, other workers) against those on strike, groups like the miners and dockers, backed by large chunks of 'the public', can inflict major defeats on government and bosses.

## Slanted polls

But the daily barrage of lies and distortions can demoralise and isolate strikers, particularly those with limited industrial strength. As the power workers and health workers know only too well, screaming headlines, editorials, carefully-selected interviews with hostile workers or strikers' wives, and slanted opinion polls can sap the determination of even the best militants.

Why does the press react in this way? Far from being 'free', 90 per cent of newspapers—national, regional and local—are owned by seven giant combines. They are dominated by immensely rich and powerful men who put their money in the most profitable sectors of British capitalism—property, oil, hotels, transport—and who have a vested interest in the survival of the system that gives them their power and wealth.



Hospital workers and gas men with Socialist Worker on the picket lines

That means their propaganda guns are trained on those who threaten the profitability of the system and even the system itself. The press attacks workers in struggle because it fears the potential power of that class to put an end to the dung-heap society which gives the press barons their power and prestige.

Some on the left dismiss the press as a conspiracy against workers. It is not as simple as that. Of course, the leading editors are often called to Downing Street or government ministries for 'off the record' briefings on major industrial disputes or the army's role in Northern Ireland.

But in general there is no need for Lord Thomson, Lord Cowdray, Lady Pamela Berry or Sir Max Aitken to meet together to plan their attacks on workers. They are held together by a common interest to denigrate those fighting for some small improvement in their lives while the real crimes—poverty, slum schools, atrocious working conditions, property speculation, vast wealth held by a tiny few—go unrecorded.

The ruling class is tiny. It seems all powerful because of its ownership and control of what is known as the 'mass media'—press, television and all other outlets for ideas.

The working class, on the other hand, has enormous power but often appears

weak and divided because it has few weapons to argue its case and link up across the boundaries the system has devised to divide us.

That is why it is important to extend the scope and influence of those papers that fight uncompromisingly with workers in struggle and argue the case for socialist politics that can build a movement to sweep away the present system and replace it with one based upon the common interests of all working people.

## Sales boost

Vast numbers of workers have been drawn into struggle in recent years—a struggle that has refashioned their ideas about the nature of the society they live in. Many of them have appreciated the support given to them by Socialist Worker and some have joined the ranks of the International Socialists, determined to help build a mass workers' movement to defeat capitalism. As a result our circulation has grown from 8000 in 1968 to close on 30,000 today. More importantly, the influence of IS and its roots in the working class have developed by leaps and bounds.

But we are not satisfied. Compared to the massive circulation of the bosses' press, we are still a small voice. Our ambition

is to be much louder and to be heard by far greater numbers of people. The growth of our size and influence convinces us that our politics, our analysis of the present system, the role of the trade union leaders and the Labour Party, are fundamentally right and acceptable to more and more people.

We are also convinced that we can boost our sales dramatically. The IS conference agreed, as a priority, to fight to reach 40,000 copies a week by the end of the year. It will not be an easy target to hit but it can be done if all our readers and supporters who value the role of the paper will help to win new readers.

And finance as well as readers. Unlike the bosses' press, we receive no hidden subsidies from advertising. Every extra paper sold helps reduce the paper's losses.

Will you consider taking a regular order in to your place of work? Many readers take one copy, then pass it on to their workmates. Why not encourage them also to buy their copies?

## Union branches

Will you take a regular order for your housing estate? Socialist Worker's support for the tenants' struggles has been warmly welcomed. It should be possible to substantially extend sales among tenants.

Will you raise the paper in your union branch, stewards' committee, tenants' committee, or any part of the labour movement in which you are active? Get your organisation to take a regular order. If necessary we would be happy to send speakers to meetings to explain the paper's policies.

If you are a student, take a regular order for your college. Wherever you work, if you value Socialist Worker, do everything you can to win more readers and influence.

Our circulation manager, Margaret Renn (01-739 2639) will be happy to answer any queries and take up any suggestions for increasing sales.

Socialist Worker is more than just a paper. It is a weapon, an indispensable weapon for all those fighting the Tories and their big business friends. It is your paper. Together we can hit that 40,000 target and from there go on to even bigger sales and influence.

# ANGER AS COUNCIL FAILS TO PROP UP DANGER HOMES

by Jimmy Rule

A ROW is brewing in the tin mining area of Camborne, Cornwall, over the failure of the council to make safe a shaft that has appeared at the back of numbers 33 and 35 Centenary Street—a shaft that is a potential danger to surrounding properties as well.

In a letter hurriedly delivered by hand, Mr and Mrs Ewart Nicholls of number 35 were advised by the Camborne-Redruth Urban District Council to evacuate their home and seek temporary accommodation, as builders working at number 33 had uncovered two holes about 15 feet deep and five feet away from the kitchen foundations of number 35. The holes are probably part of old mine workings.

Although the council did not offer any alternative accommodation, Mr and Mrs Nicholls moved out with their furniture within hours to allow the council to carry out 'safety work immediately'. They went to live with their son and daughter-in-law who live in a rented house and are not supposed to take lodgers.

Nine weeks' later, with the 'safety work' not even started, the couple are back living in their 'dangerous home' in a desperate attempt to get the council started on the work.

Sixty-one years old Kit Nicholls, a tool-room fitter at Holman Brothers, said: 'We got fed up with being mucked about.'

## NEGLIGENCE

In a typical official cover-up, Mr Dennis Phillips, engineer and surveyor to the council, said: 'There has been an unfortunate bottleneck of administration difficulties.'

The 'administration difficulties' concern insurance cover in a deal with the contractors employed to do the job.

The 'get out' quick letter arrived on 7 February. On 17 March another council letter said arrangements were being made to investigate, seal and

back-fill the void under number 33 but nothing will be done before Mr Nicholls signed a document to waive any claim for damage to his home, by the council or contractors, other than through negligence.

On the advice of a solicitor, the couple refused to sign, and quite rightly so. How on earth could Mr Nicholls prove negligence if his house collapsed or was found at the bottom of the shaft?

In the meantime, while the council and its officials are busy protecting themselves, instead of serving their constituents, the couple are living like squatters and at their wits-end, waiting for some word of a start from the officials.

From the time the couple co-operated with the council by moving out of their home, not one council official has been to see them to tell them what the precise position is.

On frequent visits to the council

offices to see Mr John Pearson, the clerk of the council, for information regarding their position, the couple have been told that no one is allowed to see Mr Pearson, and on each occasion they have been handed on to an assistant.

Mr Pearson apparently can be seen only by appointment, even by elected councillors. Labour councillor Jack Gardener has only been able to speak to Pearson by telephone.

## UNNECESSARY

No record of the affair has so far appeared in the minutes of council meetings. Kit Nicholls has tried through two councillors to have the reason for the long delay put on the agenda for discussion at the council meeting, but has been unsuccessful.

He also wrote to Pearson on 2 April to have the matter brought up at a council meeting, and received a

reply on 10 April telling him he had been wrongly advised by his solicitor.

By their failure to act quickly, the council and its officials have caused Mr and Mrs Nicholls weeks of unnecessary mental strain. As Kit Nicholls said: 'The worry and uncertainty are the worst things. I do not think the council has treated us properly over this. They were keen enough to get us out, so why this delay if it was as dangerous as they said?'

The house is mortgaged with the council and has three years to run. Kit Nicholls is a member of the AUEW and has now placed the matter in the hands of his union's solicitors.

To be fair to the Tory and 'Independent' dominated council and their officials, they are not always so slow. The Tory Rent Act was implemented with great haste, and so far without any 'administration difficulties.'



# Tory MP named in million-pound currency swindle

A HUGE CURRENCY SWINDLE involving British Tory MP Harold Soref has been uncovered in Zambia. Soref, the member for Ormskirk, and his firm, Soref Brothers, helped a Lusaka businessman to deposit money in a London bank despite Zambia's laws against the export of currency.

A full investigation has been ordered and it is expected to reveal that millions of pounds are being smuggled out of Zambia by foreign firms. It is well known that Zambian politicians and businessmen are putting their own money into Swiss banks and that naturalised Asian businessmen use British personnel in Zambia on contract terms to deposit money in British

by Our Lusaka Correspondent

banks.

At the moment, Zambia needs all the foreign exchange it can get as the effects of the boycott of Rhodesian transport routes is beginning to be felt. President Kaunda has warned the Zambian people to tighten their belts and shortages of consumer goods—including essential foodstuffs like meat, dairy produce and vegetable oil—are already evident.

Yet hoarding by those well enough off to buy in bulk, and by traders who will be able to make big killings later, is going on at the expense of ordinary Zambians.

The government's main concern in appealing to the UN and Commonwealth Sanctions Committee for aid in diversifying transport routes, is to keep Zambia's industries (especially the vital mining sector) supplied with raw materials, machinery and chemicals, and to keep copper flowing to world markets.

Despite its small population (just over four million), Zambia has proportionately one of the biggest urban populations in Africa. Although 70 per cent of the people still live on the land, the copperbelt, situated on the railway line south, is vital to the economy.

President Kaunda's philosophy of 'Zambian Humanism' is a variant of the 'African socialism' and 'non-alignment' practised by

the ruling groups in other African states. What it really means is that imperialist exploitation of the country by foreign companies and competing eastern and western powers is allowed to continue. Despite the socialist rhetoric of the ruling politicians, the working class is kept in check, cheap labour being the main incentive to foreign companies to invest in Zambia.

Companies such as Anglo-American, Lonrho, Mobil, Barclays, and many others famous for their co-operation with racist regimes in Southern Africa operate north of the Zambezi as well.

In the immediate aftermath of Ian Smith's closure of the border with Zambia in January, two separate groups of workers in struggles were forced to accept defeat at the hands of their bosses in the interests of national unity. At the Chilanga cement works near Lusaka, 400 workers were confronted with baton-wielding police after booing and jeering the full-time union officials who refused to negotiate till they returned to work. The workers wanted a 2½p an hour increase and demanded the removal of three top executives in the company that employs them, including the works manager and the personnel manager. The cement workers earn about £15 a month, and live in a shanty town polluted by smoke and fumes from the factory.

## Copperbelt

In Livingstone, on the Rhodesian border at Victoria Falls, 23 'ring-leaders' of an unofficial strike of clothing factory workers have been sacked and evicted from their company-owned houses following a dispute.

The vanguard of the Zambian working class remains the miners, organised in the 50,000-strong Mine-workers' Union. Their tradition of militancy goes back to the 1935 and 1940 copperbelt strikes and riots, when colonial police opened fire and killed 19 demonstrating miners.

In 1966 they won a 20 per cent increase after a two-week stoppage. The employers (51 per cent ownership of the mines rests with the state) have now imposed a productivity deal drawn up by a firm of London management consultants. Some rank and file miners who opposed this deal were detained for organising against the union leadership. Meanwhile the companies, notably Anglo-American, based in South Africa, continue to repatriate profits and will be paid generous compensation for the partial nationalisation of the mines for the next decade at least.

## Oppressed

Militant workers are easily disposed of. In the Livingstone clothing factory dispute, the sacked men were immediately replaced by others 'who queued up at the factory as soon as the sackings were announced' (Times of Zambia: owner Lonrho, director Duncan Sandys).

Kaunda's Zambian Humanism and one-party rule are part of Zambia's problems rather than part of the solution. Zambia is an underdeveloped, oppressed nation and must be supported in any confrontation with the racist states in Southern Africa, as the freedom fighters must be supported in their actions against the settler regimes.

But the revolution which alone can smash apartheid and racism south of the Zambezi will also set in motion the revolution in the north.



White police gather to evict an African family for removal to the 'Bantu homelands'



SPOTLIGHT ON AFRICA

# BLIND ALLEY DANGER FOR BLACKS

THE intervention of Zulu Bantustan leaders in the strike of Zulu workers at South Africa's only aluminium plant at Richards Bay could have dangerous implications for the workers' movement.

The Bantustans have been artificially created by the white government. They are the keystone of the apartheid policy of separate development. Although millions of African workers were born and have worked all their lives in the African townships built in the white areas, it is the Bantustans that are decreed their true, tribal, homelands.

Urban Africans have no right to live permanently in the urban areas. They are merely visitors to the white areas which cover 87 per cent of the land area in South Africa and contains all the industries. Once an African ceases to minister to the needs of the whites through old age or disability, he is deported to his homeland.

## SURRENDER

For the majority who have not suffered the system of migrant labour, it will be the first time they have experienced the benefits of their so-called national territory. They will find more poverty and worse starvation.

Workers who are sacked because of militancy are labelled 'redundant agitators' and, with their wives and dependents, are thrown out of the white areas into the wilderness of the Bantustans.

Apartheid is a massive scheme to divide and rule the African working class. In the 1950s laws were passed to separate Zulus from Xhosa, from Tswana and so on. Schools were forced, under the Bantu Education Act, to teach in tribal languages.

The government likes nothing better than induced tribal faction fights since it distracts Africans from fighting their true enemy. The African Nationalist movement fought these laws by demonstrations and pass burnings. But by the early 1960s opposition was smashed by bannings and jail sentences.

Buthelezi, now the chief executive officer of the Zulustan, was for years against the Bantustan plan. In 1970 he surrendered and decided to work

by W Enda

within the system to get 'problems resolved'.

He has stated that in exchange for his co-operation he expects the Zulustan to be consolidated from 29 separated areas into one block.

At times he appears daring in these demands. The whites are not giving in quickly. They will give these concessions to Buthelezi slowly.

To the outside world it will appear that the government is really sincere in its promises of separate development. More important, such moves could begin to con the African working class into the belief that perhaps their future could lie in the distant homeland. Such an illusion would inhibit them in their fight to improve their conditions in the urban areas.

The only black organisation which publicly denounced the Bantustan plan was the South African Student Organisation. They denounced people like Buthelezi as stooges. During the

strikes their leadership was banned and many members jailed for giving out leaflets to strikers.

At the same time the leading economic journal in South Africa, the Financial Mail, ran a series of advertisements featuring the Bantustan heads (there are eight different Bantustans) appealing to white firms to set up shop in their territories.

## OUTRAGE

Buthelezi started off his plug by saying: 'By building your factory in Kwa Zulu, you'll be helping us to help yourself.' Among the list of juicy financial concessions, he offers the promise that such firms would be able to exploit 'problem-free labour resources.'

When Buthelezi's Councillor for Community Affairs intervened in the strike he tried to persuade the strikers to go back to

Zululand. He said that he would prevent other Zulus from being recruited as scabs through his control of the Labour Bureaux in the Zulustans.

The white Minister of Bantu Affairs was outraged at this interference in a white area. But other pro-apartheid ministers approved of it, seeing Buthelezi as the person who in the future can persuade Zulu labour to be 'problem-free' inside the white areas as well as the Bantustans.

In the event all the Zulu aluminium workers went back to work and accepted the rise they had rejected before the councillor had intervened.

Buthelezi is trying to cash in on the workers' independent initiative in the urban areas, to further his own ambitions. If the Zulu workers follow him they will be treading along the path determined for them by their white rulers, and away from their comrades in the African coloured and Indian working class at large.

# BRIEFING

THE STATE of Michigan has ruled that Chrysler Corporation must pay back wages and the cost of psychiatric treatment for workers it drives insane through racism and inhuman working conditions.

The Michigan workers' compensation board issued this ruling in a review of the case of James Johnson, a black worker at a Chrysler plant in Detroit who shot and killed two foremen and another worker after he was sacked in 1970.

Johnson had been fired when he refused to perform an unsafe job without proper safety equipment. His trial in 1971 revealed a pattern of racial discrimination by Chrysler management and conditions in the plant which drove him mad.

The trial judge agreed, finding Johnson innocent due to insanity and ordered that he be confined in a 'hospital' for the criminally insane.

The Workman's Compensation ruling orders Chrysler to pay Johnson 5000 dollars in back pay and a weekly stipend of 75 dollars for psychiatric treatment.

Chrysler management had no comment on the ruling.

SIGNS in a Detroit car plant warn workers that in case of fire they have 40 seconds to evacuate the six-storey building. If a worker is not out in that length of time, he or she will have to contend not only with the fire, but with carbon dioxide gas which will be sprayed into the plant to save the company's machinery.

SOLIDARITY—that's the way to win a hospital workers' strike. Workers at a clinic in Virginia, America's major coal-mining area, went on strike—the state's first ever hospital strike. 134 of the 185 strikers were arrested for picketing on the first day.

Strong support came from the local miners, who closed 18 mines in an unof-

ficial solidarity strike. Arnold Miller, the newly elected president of the Mine Workers' union, joined the picket line at the hospital and the strikers also received help from local residents.

After three weeks on strike, the workers won a wage increase, improved fringe benefits and a grievance procedure.

PRESIDENT NUMEIRI of the Sudan has signed into law some wide-ranging concessions to foreign investors. They can now be exempted from profits tax for five years, with reduced rates for another five.

All profits can be freely sent out of the country and generous exemptions from customs duties and reductions in local taxes, electricity and freight charges are available.

Guarantees against nationalisation and confiscation have been somewhat weakened

by other guarantees that nationalisation will always be carried out in accordance with law and with fair competition. This has not deterred major foreign companies such as Lonrho from becoming deeply involved with the Numeiri government.

Lonrho chairman Duncan Sandys, on a recent visit, told the speaker of the Sudan People's Assembly (elected by 170,000 out of a population of about 15 million): 'I feel here as if I were in the British House of Commons.'

While Khartoum's hotels strain beneath a press of representatives from 'middle-rank European and Japanese firms, it is the Americans who have so far been first in the field. Major US companies known to be in the Sudan or on the brink are General Motors, Colgate and Union Carbide. There is even a plan to disfigure the junction of the Blue and White Niles with a Khartoum Hilton.

But these are still early days. Much of the Sudan is still waiting to be sold to foreign capitalists.





JOHN MACKIE, MP.  
Tied cottage landlord

## Farmer John:

# Always true to his evictions



'TIED COTTAGES, a problem which has plagued us for so long, must be brought as soon as possible within the law relating to eviction.'

This clear promise to take agricultural workers out of the feudal age and give them some protection from unscrupulous farmers appears in Labour's Programme for Britain, the Labour Party's policy document on which they will fight the next election. The programme commits the next

Labour government to give farm-workers in tied cottages 'exactly the same protection' against eviction as given to tenants of other private property in the 1965 Rent Act.

No one is more in agreement with official Labour policy than Mr John Mackie, Labour MP for Enfield East and vice-chairman of the parliamentary Labour Party's agriculture policy group.

Mr Mackie has been supervising Labour's policy in agriculture since he took over his family farm of 700 rich acres at Bent, Kincardineshire.

After the war he moved south and now farms 1500 lush acres at Harold Park, Waltham Abbey, and Plumridge and Vicarage Farms, Hadley Wood. At the current selling price of agricultural land near London, Mr Mackie is a millionaire.

Five other people who are deeply concerned at the state of the law regarding tied cottages are Mr and Mrs Alec Oakley and their three children, who have been living at Vicarage Cottage, Vicarage Farm, Hadley Wood, for the past five years. Mr Oakley started work as a herdsman

on Mr Mackie's farm 16 years ago.

Last December, Mr Oakley complained that he was not getting enough money to live on. He was told that the country was in dire peril, and that a wage freeze had been announced which meant that he could not get the pittance of a rise negotiated for him by his union until the 'freeze' was over.

Mr Oakley's average pay for a seven-day week on the farm was £26.

In desperation, Mr Oakley left the farm and took a job at higher pay at Enfield Rolling Mills. At once, Mr Mackie's firm applied for a writ to evict him from his 'tied' cottage. Mr Oakley offered to pay rent, but the offer was rejected.

On 10 April Judge S H Granville-Smith, sitting at Edmonton County Court, ordered the Oakleys to leave their house by 10 July.

Mr Peter Herman, Mr Mackie's farm manager, told the judge that he needed the cottage to house a new herdsman. At the moment, he admitted, the firm employed a relief herdsman but this was 'more expensive' than employing a full-time herdsman.

Mr Oakley said that he could not find any alternative accommodation. 'Private accommodation is completely beyond our means,' he said. 'If we are evicted we will be out in the streets.'

Talking about his work for Mr Mackie, Mr Oakley told the court: 'It was just captive labour.'

### Security

A spokesman for the National Union of Agricultural Workers tells me that the union is seriously worried about the continuing problem of evictions from tied cottages. The union has had notice of 'at least 12' such evictions already this year.

The union is particularly angry about these evictions since it had secured firm pledges from the Labour Party leadership before the 1964 election that a Labour government would grant absolute security of tenure to farmworkers in tied cottages until alternative accommodation of equal standard was found for them.

These pledges were given at a rally in Great Yarmouth in 1963 by George Brown, then Labour's deputy leader, and at a Norfolk rally a few months later by Harold Wilson himself.

'They were very sympathetic,' said the union spokesman, 'but when it came to it, they conceded points to the farmers' lobby. So the Agriculture Act, 1970, allows farmers to evict tied tenants if 'the efficient management of the farm is seriously affected.' Judges and magistrates (many of whom are farmers) are uncommonly quick to detect cases where a farmer's efficient management is seriously affected.

This change in Labour's policy had, needless to say, nothing to do with the fact that Mr John Mackie was parliamentary under-secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture for all six years of the Labour government.

Mr Mackie has two lovely houses of his own—at Laurencekirk, Kincardineshire, and at Nazeing, Essex.

## ROCHE BOSH!

THE Monopolies Commission report on profiteering by Roche Products, the Swiss firm which in the last five years swiped £25 million from the Health Service in 'excess profits' from two drugs, Librium and Valium, has some interesting information about the way the drug firms run rings round the Health Service.

The report reveals that Roche employ 66 men and women, many of them scientifically qualified, at huge salaries to rush around the country persuading doctors to prescribe Librium and Valium (and other Roche products). In 1971, these people made 58,500 visits to doctors in Britain—and the company estimates that about 90 per cent of all British doctors are visited at least once a year by Roche salesmen.

The total cost to Roche of these forms of 'promotion' was £1.25 million in 1971 alone.

Altogether, the report estimated, British drug companies pay some 3000 sales representatives who make about two and a half million visits to doctors to plug their products, at a cost (eventually borne by the Health Service) of £10 million a year.

Compare this with the efforts of the National Health Service to warn doctors about prescribing too many or too expensive drugs. Last year, the NHS employed 10 'regional medical officers' who made 3000 visits to doctors.

THE report has had a terrible effect on Roche shares. There are only 54,000 shares in the company, and they have now dropped to their lowest value for five years—£29,000 each.

Anyone thinking of saving up for a Roche share should remember that the shares do not carry any voting rights.

## Quote of the Week

'IN LONDON, the banqueting business of the Savoy and of Claridges reached an all-time record, earning over £1¼ million, an increase at the Savoy of 26.22 per cent and at Claridge's of 21.09 per cent. No doubt this business would increase still further if we had the space . . .'

—Sir Hugh Wontner, chairman, The Savoy Hotel Ltd, 4 April.

## Richard the Lion Heart

ONE of the six people accused in the notorious 'Terrorism Trial' in Pretoria is Alex Moumbaris, an Australian citizen, who worked for Reuters in Britain from 1964 to 1970 first in the telephones department and later on computers. He was throughout a keen member of NATSOPA, the print-workers' union.

Last month Martin Francis, who worked alongside Alex Moumbaris at Reuters and grew friendly with him, wrote a letter to Sir Richard Briginshaw, general secretary of NATSOPA, pointing out Moumbaris' union connection and asking Briginshaw to organise official protest about the imprisonment and trial of a former member. He suggested a press statement outlining the union's objections to South Africa's Terrorism Act.

Francis was surprised to receive—on 13 April—a rather cool letter from Sir Richard, asking for more information. 'You might be able to tell us,' wrote the Brig, 'what Mr Moumbaris was doing in South Africa—was he employed there, and how long he had been there, how the charges arose and

of course any other relevant information?'

The letter appeared to suggest that there might be some substance in the terrorism charges, which would, perhaps, influence the union's attitude. Martin Francis wrote immediately in reply: 'Putting aside the question of whether the accused in the case are guilty of the charges they face, one must consider the trial within the framework of the South African system of justice and protest at the treatment accorded the accused so far, and the virtual impossibility of a fair trial within that system . . . One must remember that we are talking about justice within a fascist police state.'

For the record, Martin Francis did fill in some of the details. Mrs Moumbaris, who was arrested with her husband and held in solitary confinement for four and a half months until she was deported—by then seven months pregnant—says they were in South Africa on holiday.

Moumbaris has been held in solitary

confinement for eight months. The Pretoria jail where he and the other five accused are held is the 'hanging jail', where there is at least one execution, if not two or three, every Wednesday.

Moumbaris has been subjected to the peculiarly horrible psychological torture of having condemned men placed in the cell next to him in the night before the execution. After one such night, Alex Moumbaris attempted suicide.

John Hosey, another of the accused men, whose father is a convenor at British Leyland, has been ruthlessly interrogated and almost certainly tortured. They are not allowed under the Terrorism Act to contact the British Consul, and the precise details of the men's condition are not available.

'I hope,' wrote Martin Francis, 'that I have persuaded you that we should not delay action on the broad issues of the case any longer.'

He is looking forward to prompt action from the NATSOPA hierarchy.

## THE EARL'S PAGET

REGINALD PAGET, the well-known Labour MP, lover of hunting, capital punishment, anti-union laws and British army terror in Ireland, has, I am sad to report, lost one of his greatest friends and allies in his struggle for civilisation.

So deeply did he feel the loss of this man, the Earl of Verulam, one-time Tory MP for St Albans and managing director of Enfield Rolling Mills and Delta Industries, that he was moved to write a correction to the obituary published by The Times.

'I feel that the success of John, Earl of Verulam, was bigger than your obituary would suggest,' wrote Reginald. 'His personality was gentle and retiring. His leadership was rooted in patience and understanding and in great diligence. Nearly every working day he went unattended to some factory long before the office opened and learned at floor level what was

happening.'

Then came the most moving of Reginald's tributes: 'But the success that was to him most precious was Gorbambury [his country house]. He has left it secure for at least another generation as the home of a family united not only in the love of a husband and a father but in the love of each other. This was the achievement to which his life was primarily dedicated.'

We should remember, however, that the Earl was able to maintain this closet of family love on the backs not only of the employees of Enfield Rolling Mills and Delta but of Rhodesian black workers.

The Earl got his stake in life on a tobacco plantation in Rhodesia where he gained the enviable reputation of being one of the worst slavers in the business. He and his friend Reginald also shared a deep admiration for the white supremacist regime in Rhodesia.

## South African Connection

DESPITE all the denials from South Africa House, I can confirm, from an impeccable source who once worked for the South African terror machine in this country but has since repented, that the three Boeings 707 acquired by Air Rhodesia came from South African Airways.

They mark the intention of the Smith regime to build Rhodesian Airways from the existing internal air service to new international operations. Air Rhodesia has already negotiated landing rights with TAP (Portuguese Airways) at Lisbon, and are assured a welcome at Johannesburg, Cape Town, Frankfurt, Paris, Brussels and Athens.





Aldn McCrellis (right) pointing out the huge oxygen tanks at the bottom of his garden to neighbours John Turner and Mrs Harris (centre).

**PEOPLE** living near the Lucas battery factory in Formans Road, Birmingham, are angry.

They met Lucas management last week to complain about lead dust from the factory, and were told: 'We're doing everything possible to bring down lead levels. What do you expect us to do? Wave a magic wand and clean up the air?'

The short answer the local people give is 'Yes'—and it doesn't need magic either. As Mrs Foley, who lives nearby, said: 'If the men inside the factory in the trade unions band together they should be able to demand absolute safety, which will protect local tenants and children, as well as themselves.'

The angry reaction of the local people was provoked by a report issued by Dr S G Phillips, one of the city's medical officers, which gave the results of lead tests on 27 children living near the battery factory and attending Leys Secondary Modern School, which is right next door to it. The children had blood lead levels ranging from 17 to 34 microgrammes—the acceptable safe limit is 40 microgrammes for children.

Quite rightly the figures have given cause for concern, especially from parents with young children.

Alan McCrellis and his wife Margaret have two children, aged five and seven, and their house borders on the factory. Mrs McCrellis said her own health was bad—she had lost four stone in weight—and her children had suffered bad health since moving to the area.

### Corroded

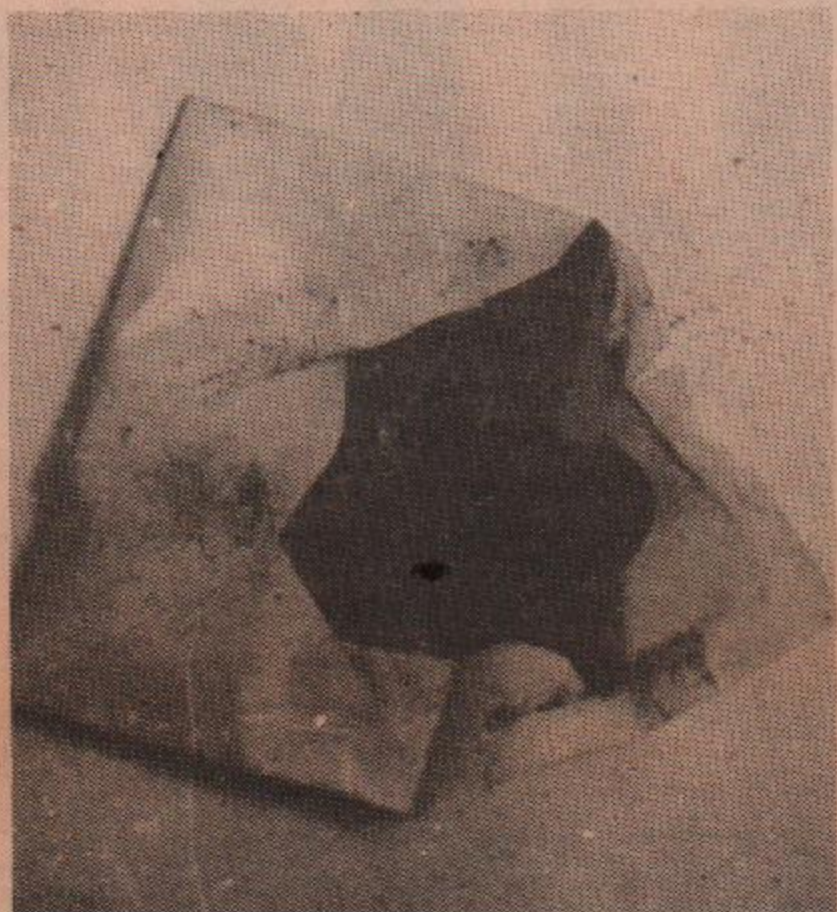
At the bottom of Mr McCrellis' garden are huge oxygen tanks. About four months ago they were corroded and brown with rust—so Lucas tried to scrape and paint them. But they were so bad they had to be dismantled and taken away to be done.

John Turner is 85 and has lived in the neighbourhood since 1922. 'I had the guttering done last year,' he said, 'and it was completely corroded. The builder said it was due to acid from the factory. I can remember open fields round here but since Lucas took over the old Lanchester factory they've built it up and are still doing so.'

Mrs M Harris, who also lives on the edge of the factory, produced an envelope containing the dust scraped from her skylight. All the local people complained about their washing, curtains and gardens being affected by the 'fall-out' from the factory.

It's clear that something is wrong. What can be done about it? Sam Robinson is the Transport Workers Union official responsible for Lucas

# Lead danger at the bottom of the garden



'Fall-out' collected from a skylight in a house near the factory

factories. He said that parts of the factory were new, parts old and no matter how many precautions were taken dust would be in the air.

But the company had been approached about the lead hazard, he said. Firstly, about payment for working with it. The works engineering department are paid a lead hazard allowance of £5.50 per week, but TGWU members receive only 67p.

Lucas have their own doctor who does three-monthly blood tests—it used to be monthly but the company stopped this when they introduced new equipment which they said improved ventilation. When workers are found to have a high lead level they are transferred to other sections, which can mean a drop in pay of up to £10 on a 40-hour week.

Sam Robinson said the union was demanding time off on full pay for any man who had a high lead level until it was normal. TGWU members in Formans Road said they were

dissatisfied with the way these points have not been taken up in a determined way with management. It is now nine months since Lucas said they would look into hazard allowance payment for Formans Road and Olton battery workers.

The important question workers are asking is: if lead outside the factory is affecting children, something is wrong with the levels inside the factory too.

The trade unions do not do an independent check on lead levels in the factory but the Factory Inspectorate were there in January. Mr Grimsey of the Inspectorate said that while conditions were never perfect, levels in the factory were not excessive. But a pamphlet issued by the Inspectorate in 1971 recommended a reduction in the maximum level of lead dust in the air.

### Sludge

There is also fierce discussion among research workers on safe levels of lead within the body—at present 0.4 parts per million for children, 0.8 for adults—because of the way lead can be stored in the body when a person is healthy and released into the blood stream during illness.

Also, as any trade unionist knows, the visit of the Factory Inspector produces a remarkable—if short-lived—concern for factory safety among most management. In Formans Road one is struck by how casually lead dust is dealt with.

Floors are hosed with water and pools of dust and lead sludge collect in floor hollows, while pallettes carrying lead plates are covered with lead flakes which have dropped off. Where lead oxide is mixed it is discharged from a platform as a dust. Workers in the factory also complain of the inadequate ventilation system.

For all these reasons many workers are worried about the lead hazard and although they receive milk to combat lead in their bodies (a standard procedure, anyway) they want more action. It is crazy that the government action in stopping free milk means that the Birmingham Education Committee can't supply it to the children at Leys Secondary Modern School although residents are demanding it.

Apart from the lead danger, asbestos and acid used in battery production are also dangerous.

It's clear that both Lucas workers and local residents have a common and urgent interest to see that Lucas management make the factory absolutely safe inside and out and that no one should be endangered for the sake of Lucas profits.

Granville Williams

# BANNER BRIGHT

## an exhibition of trade union banners

NO DOUBT those trade union leaders who sing the Red Flag with great ardour once a year and spend the rest of their time trampling it into the dirt will be flocking to East London's Whitechapel Art Gallery this month to proclaim the Banner Bright exhibition of union banners as 'our great heritage'.

In truth there would be some justification for such a claim. For among the assembled banners there are examples of their tradition: the elaborate designs of the conservative craft unions of last century, preaching collaboration and harmony with the employers and putting great stress on the need to protect pension funds from the excesses of strikes and industrial actions.

Turn of the century militants had an apt phrase for such bodies: 'coffin clubs', they called them, and the description still fits the bill today.

### Living heritage

But there is another heritage on display at the exhibition: the heritage of courage, determination, sacrifice, and, above all, of a will to win through the collective action of ordinary working people. It is not accidental that red is the predominant colour of the union banners lovingly assembled by John Gorman, for the early history of trade unionism is steeped in workers' blood, blood spilled by men and women rebelling against the tyranny of the factory masters and the armed soldiers sent to protect 'their' property from the evil of illegal combination.

The colliers of Merthyr cut down by the guns and sabres of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and the Dorset labourers sent in chains to the penal colonies of Australia are part of a real, living heritage that finds a powerful echo today among dockworkers, health workers, railmen and others prepared, in spite of their wind-bagging leaders, to cast off the new fetters being forged by the today's generation of hard-faced industrialists and their political puppets.

John Gorman has toured the country, spurred on by burning desire to save and display these banners of a class that won't lie down, to bring to a new generation of workers a glimpse of the steely tradition of past generations.

His collection brilliantly captures the two, antagonistic sides of trade unionism: the timid, cap-in-hand, forelock-tugging attitude of those who cringe at the rich man's frown and the rich vein of struggle and self-sacrifice against a system of competition and profit that must be replaced by one of common endeavour.

### Solidarity for ever

Of course there are ironies: the bargemen's banner that sings hosannas to Cardinal Manning after the great 'Dockers' Tanner' strike; the Durham miners' magnificent banner of the 1920s that carried portraits of Marx, Lenin and Keir Hardie, now replaced by the grisly visage of the Rt Hon Harold Wilson; the servile Transport Workers' banner in which a humble worker appeals to army officer, professor and employer for knowledge.

But there are also simple and effective messages that are as true today as when the great banner makers, such as George Tothill, first put them on canvas: 'Solidarity for ever', 'Unity is strength,' 'An injury to one is an injury to all.' Here are the symbols and the slogans of generations who refused to be trampled on, stood up and fought back, and go on fighting.

● *Banner Bright*, Whitechapel Arts Gallery, High Street, London E1, is open until 23 May, admission free, Tuesdays to Saturdays, 11am-6pm. John Gorman has written a book, also titled *Banner Bright*, with many pictures, some full colour, of trade union banners. Appallingly priced at £5 (publisher Allen Lane), it is worth buying or borrowing both for the pictures and the fine socialist introduction by Gwyn A Williams.

FRIEDRICH ENGELS  
THE CONDITION  
OF THE  
WORKING CLASS  
IN ENGLAND  
INTRODUCTION BY ERIC HOBBSBAWM

# ENGELS

It is common to think of Friedrich Engels as the shadow and rich benefactor of Marx, and nothing more. He was, however, a man of outstanding ability in his own right—and much of Marx's work was based on Engels' knowledge of 19th century working conditions.

Price 50p, plus 6p postage

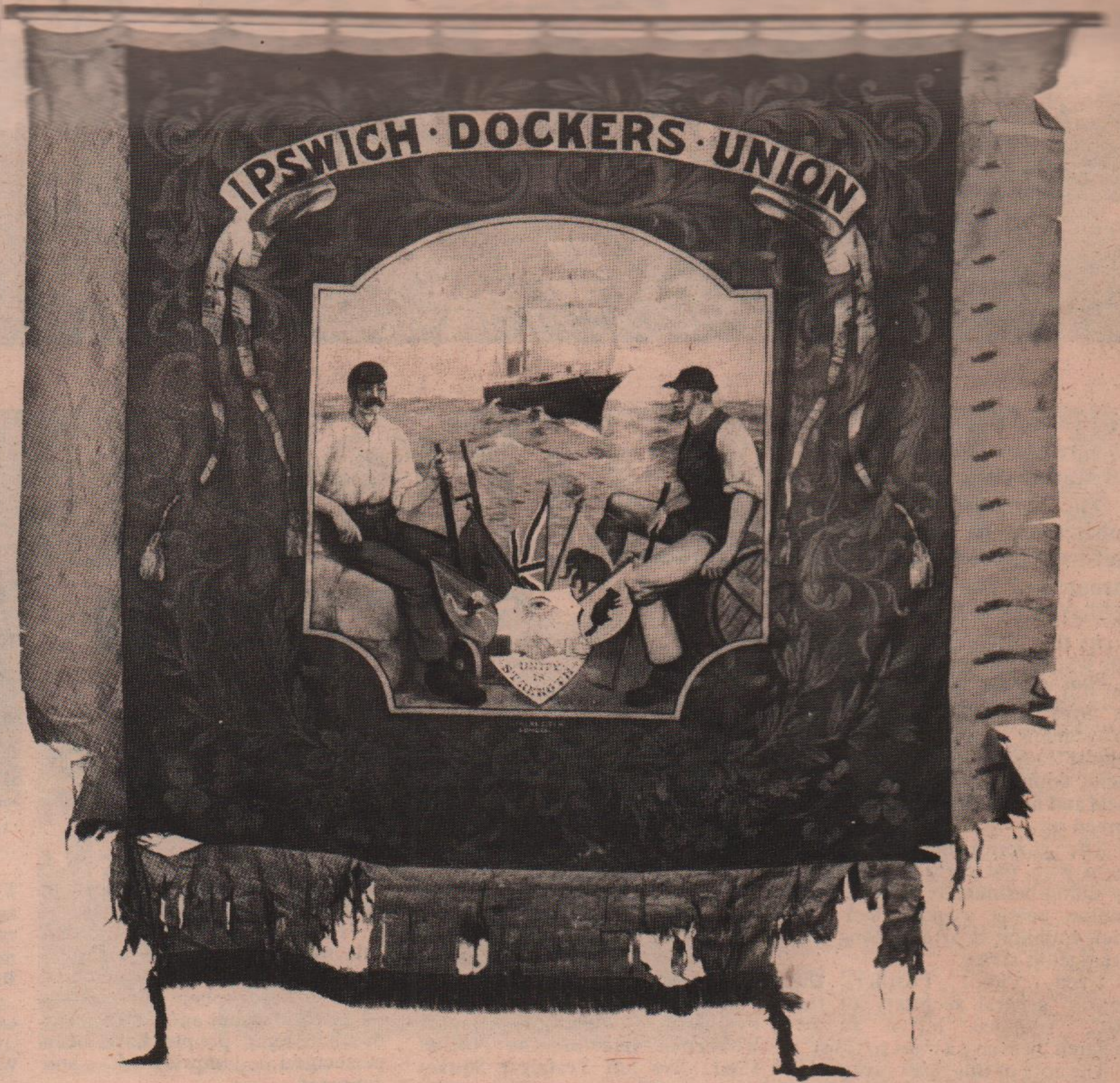
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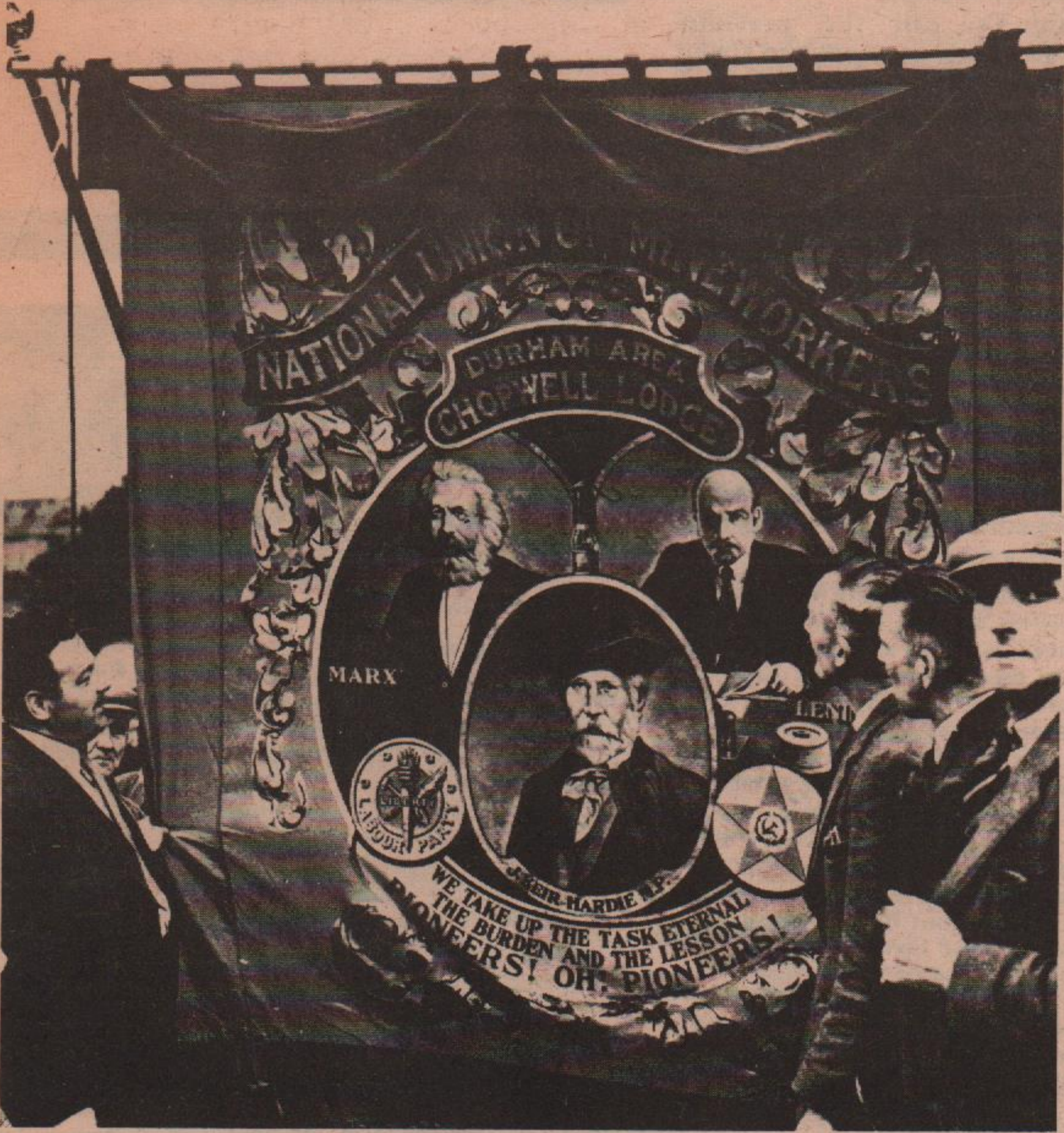
An example of 'coffin club' unionism from the 1920s, where great stress is placed on good works rather than militant action.



An early banner of one of the dock workers' unions that came under the umbrella of the great Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Labourers' Union after the strike of 1889. The uncompromising attitudes of the new general unions clashed with the conservatism of the earlier craft organisations.

# The class

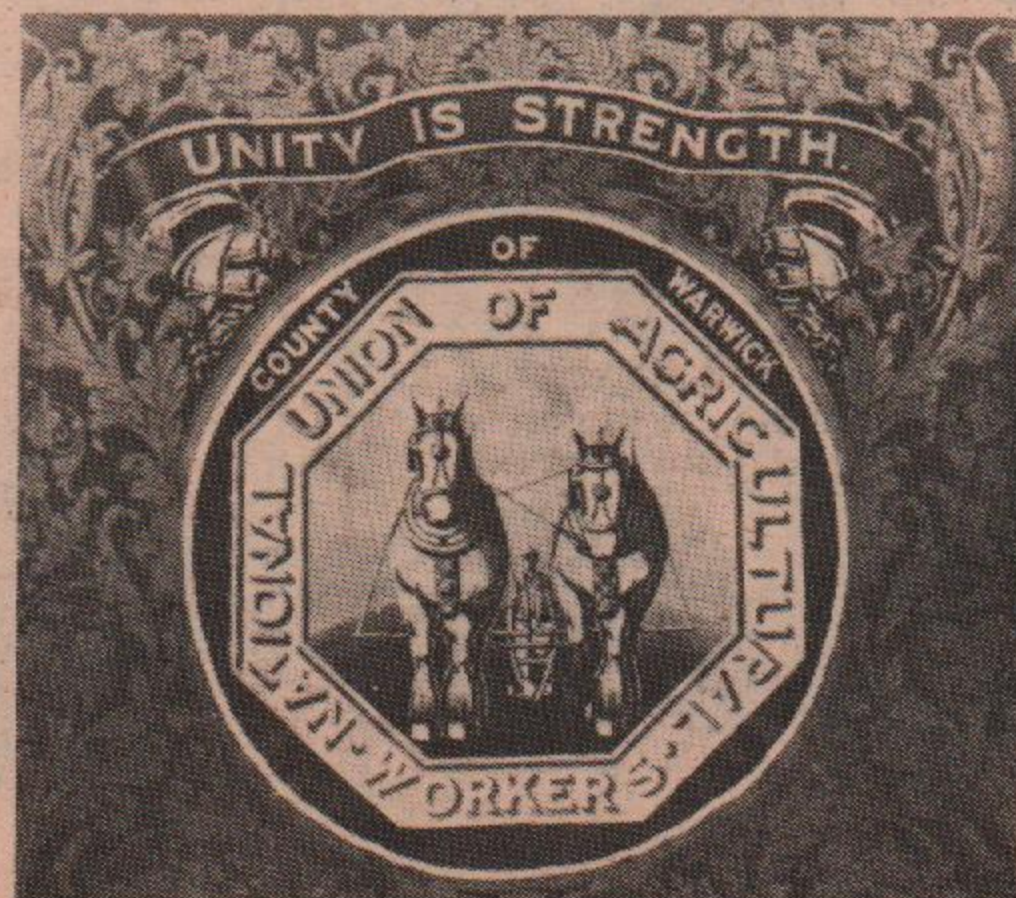
# that won't lie down...



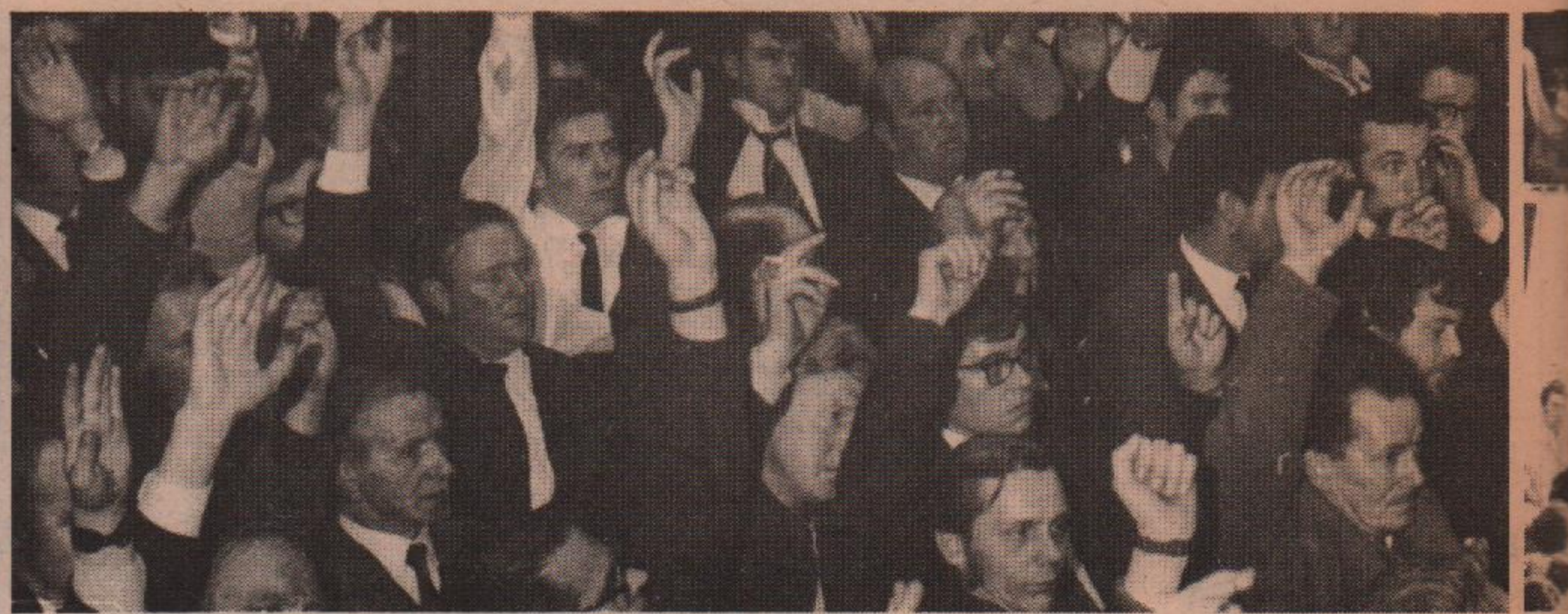
A famous banner of the early 1920s from the Durham area nicknamed Little Moscow because of its support for the Russian Revolution. Below is a detail of Ben Tillett, famous dockers' leader in 1889 from a dockers' banner.



One of the most class-conscious banners ever produced—and one that would not please the present leaders of the GMWU! It comes from the post-World War One period when unskilled workers battled against bosses and black-legs to organise. The banner shows a union man telling the boss to keep out as his mate deals with a scab. Below is an agricultural workers' banner—after the miners the most prolific banner makers. Below right is an early call to organise women workers.







DELEGATES to the special Trades Union Congress in the Fairfield's Hall, Croydon, on 18 March 1971, gathered in sombre mood.

The congress had been called to discuss the publication by an abrasive new Tory government of an Industrial Relations Bill which threatened the very existence of the unions affiliated to the TUC.

As the TUC's preamble to their document on the Bill which they presented to the Congress made clear, the Bill was the most offensive of an array of weapons which the government was brandishing against trade unionists. Unemployment, council house rents, school meal and milk charges had all been forced up.

The government was cock-a-hoop with the early successes of its union-bashing. A quarter of a million postal workers had just been humiliated after a long and courageous strike.

Even Victor Feather, the 'gentle' general secretary of the TUC, sounded bitter as he declared, 'we have a right to resist'.

The core of this resistance came in recommendations one and four which Feather moved at the conference. Recommendation One 'strongly advised' unions not to register under the Industrial Relations Act, and recommendation four stated clearly: 'Affiliated unions shall not co-operate with the National Industrial Relations Court and the Commission on Industrial Relations.'

### Wrong

The preamble to the recommendations in the General Council's report made it clear that this 'non-co-operation' referred to all the tribunals and agencies which fell under the NIRC's umbrella.

As far as Vic Feather was concerned, resistance stopped here. 'It would be wrong,' he told the conference, 'for the TUC to encourage unions to break the law.'

It would also be wrong, he said, for the TUC to use its industrial strength against the Bill, even before it became an Act. 'If the General Council were to back the use of industrial action against the Bill, it would neither convert the public to our way of thinking nor unite the movement.'

So the law was to be resisted by 'passive non-co-operation' in

# From a scratch to gangrene

the hope, as Vic Feather said once again, that the government would 'see sense', drop the Bill and invite the union leaders to discussions about the national economy.

Nine years previously, Vic Feather's predecessor, George Woodcock, had told the TUC in 1963: 'We left Trafalgar Square long ago. Now our work is in the committee rooms.'

Four weeks before the Croydon conference Vic Feather had spoken to the biggest working-class demonstration in British history—in Trafalgar Square. The experience shocked him deeply, and even at that unlikely stage, he was more than anxious to get back to the committee rooms.

But the Feather line was far from unanimous at the Congress. First to speak from the floor was Jack Jones, general secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union.

Jack Jones wanted action. 'We urge again sincerely,' he trumpeted, 'that the general council should lead a united industrial action involving all unions in a form and method to be determined by the General Council...'

'The movement is waiting for this lead. The atmosphere and feeling is there. It would give the complete lie to those who say that the workers and unions are really in favour of this Bill, as though free people prefer slavery.'

This rhetoric was improved upon by the President of Britain's second-largest union, the Amal-

gamated Engineering Union, Hugh Scanlon.

'I believe', said Scanlon... 'that this magnificent congress should say, with one voice, loud and clear, that we have upheld the right to strike for decades and for the sake of that right people have been persecuted, imprisoned and deported.'

'I believe that we should say, not apologetically, but clearly, "Yes, we will keep that weapon shining bright, we will use it to defend ourselves from the government's attack through class legislation." Let us say that we will use that weapon to the utmost in order to bring about if necessary the defeat of the government itself...'

### Failed

Scanlon and Jones' opposition to the Feather line was defeated by more than a million votes. Their attempt to make non-registration under the Act a condition of TUC membership failed too, but by a smaller majority (771,000).

In the three months before the annual TUC congress in September 1971, however, government intransigence and workers' militancy increased. At that congress, the



FEATHER: Right to resist

TGWU and AUEW delegations again moved that the TUC instruct rather than 'strongly advise' their members to de-register under the Bill.

Once again, Scanlon's rhetoric was faultless: 'We must be clear. A single scratch can lead to gangrene. Whatever the motives, a single step towards implicit co-operation with the Act by any section of our movement might give temporary relief, but in the long term it would be disastrous to all.'

'Any element of co-operation would not resolve the problem but merely exacerbate it. It could make all our fine principles... collapse like a pack of cards. This is the bleak, untrammelled truth and no service would be given to our movement by disguising these facts.'

The motion was passed—by more than a million votes. The journalists duly wrote about a 'triumph for the militants', and failed to notice one interesting omission from all the speeches of trade union leaders.

Scanlon's call the previous March for workers to use the strike weapon 'to the utmost' to defend unions against the Act was not repeated.

# THE LONG RETRACTION

Special article by...

# TUC's nod and a wink

THE MAIN PART of the Industrial Relations Act became law in February 1972. The miners were on official strike for the first time since 1926, and the result, as far as Heath, Carr and Co were concerned, was going to be the same as in 1926.

When the unfortunate Mr Feather wormed his way to Downing Street in the middle of the strike, the Prime Minister sent him packing with a warning of heavy unemployment and redundancy if the miners' strike continued. Mr Feather could only reply that he had tried his best to bring an end to the strike, but without success.

By the beginning of March the miners had dealt the Tories one of the most savage blows ever inflicted on a British government by a trade union. The strength and fighting spirit of the miners frightened not only Heath.

It frightened Vic Feather. Like magnets, the two men were drawn into one another's arms.

### Agreement

On the eve of the strike's victorious outcome (3 March 1972), Mr Feather told the Guardian: 'If Mr Heath has now got an open mind, we'll be there to talk.'

Six days later, he was back in Downing Street for what he described to the Daily Telegraph as 'a very good meeting.' 'There was clearly,' Feather went on, 'widespread and strong agreement with the view the Prime Minister expressed very strongly that the country is in a mood where it expects unions and employers, as well as the government, to shoulder their responsibilities, separately and collectively, to do something about in-



JENKINS: Take a risk

flation, especially about prices.' At that crucial meeting in March 1972, in other words, Feather agreed to soften his already soft line towards the government, if Heath would start talking to the unions.

Within six weeks, no doubt by coincidence, the trade unions, with a nod and a wink from the TUC General Council, started to smash the solid front of 'non-co-operation' with the Industrial Relations Act which Feather and the General Council had urged on them a year previously.

Leading the rout were the supervisory staffs (ASTMS) and the postmen (UPW), led by 'left' trade union leaders. At the Croydon conference, Clive Jenkins, general secretary of ASTMS, had promised: 'As of today, we want to say that we are willing to take a risk and stand together with everyone else in a unified way.'

Jenkins had cast his union's votes in favour of non-co-operation. Now he was taking the case of one of his members to an industrial tribunal under the NIRC.

Similarly, Norman Stagg, president of the UPW, had said at Croydon: 'We think that the policy of passive resistance is right. We think that a policy designed to castrate us is correct. We believe that we are entitled today to stand up and defend the manhood of this movement.'

Now Stagg was defending his man-



SCANLON: Mea culpa

hood at the National Industrial Relations Court.

Simultaneously, developments were planned towards policies they had. Bill became an Act under government the railmen's work £50,000 fine for a on the Transport and Union, a General Council meeting on the unions to defend NIRC 'if necessary'.

The TGWU was the fine and promotion solidarity of Croydon shattered by the act Council—and the force for three months.

At a Labour rally on 3 June, Feather ment should put the Industrial Relations Act on ice then be open for discussion on how to dustrial climate.'

He was determined Downing Street really in the best trade union movement Nottingham miners 'to spurn the conciliatory coming from the government.'

One difficulty Industrial Relations

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

### Social Security for Strikers



a Socialist Worker pamphlet 2p





# JAW-JAW NOT WAR



# REAT

PAUL FOOT

IN LATE JULY, five dockers were imprisoned for refusing to attend the NIRC. Five days later, after a massive display of solidarity, they were released.

The Act was made to look absurd. The way to beat it was clear. Once again, Mr Feather and Mr Heath took fright and nervously sought one another's company.

On the day after the dockers' release from Pentonville, Feather said: 'If the Prime Minister is prepared to suspend the Act, then I have told him that the TUC general council can foresee rapid improvements being made in the national interest.'

At the Trades Union Congress in September, Feather, Jones and Scanlon all repeated that 'meaningful' discussions with the government could not take place as long as the Act was on the statute book. 'The TUC,' said Feather, 'is still willing to talk to the CBI and the government on condition that this offensive Act is repealed or at least put on ice.'

## RESPONDED

The offensive Act was not on ice, however, when the 'rounds of talks' between TUC, CBI and government continued on 12 and 26 September. At this last meeting, Heath proposed the notorious £2 wage ceiling. Feather responded at once: 'I believe the proposals contain the possibility of a strong counter against inflation, and the proposals will be given very careful and responsible consideration by the TUC.'

'The proposals,' he went on, 'indicate a good deal of fair play for a great number of people.' The Industrial Relations Act, whose scrapping or suspension had been an 'essential condition' for so long, was not mentioned.

From that meeting onwards, Feather and Jones, who also attended the tripartite talks, abandoned the attempt to 'scrap' the Act by negotiation. Instead, during the talks which continued through October and the first five days of November, they fastened onto a new condition for their agreement to wage freeze—statutory control of prices.

## FEEBLE

This was not acceptable to Heath either. The talks petered out:

*When the freeze was announced on 6 November, Feather protested feebly. In speeches on 8 November and again on 22 November he again proposed a re-opening of the tripartite talks.*

He was supported by Jack Jones. In a speech to the parliamentary press gallery, Jones said: 'I do not rule out the possibility of the trade unions talking again to the government... I want to make it quite clear that I do not defend defiance of the law.'

On 11 January 1973, the government published its first White Paper on Phase Two, indicating, as might have been expected, that the 'freeze' was not a temporary phenomenon. The basic right of trade unions to negotiate wages and conditions freely with their employers was being taken away, the government hoped, for ever.

Mr Feather's first worry was that there might be some violent



Pentonville: the TUC took fright

reaction from trade unionists. Interviewed on BBC-TV that night, he said: 'I hope that people will not go out on strike... We will not incite anyone to do anything.'

Meanwhile, the workers caught in the freeze were suffering.

But no one on the general council at any stage suggested that the movement should sponsor industrial action to assist them. Instead, on 19 January, the general council decided on a 'non-co-operation' policy on Phase Two.

*Strong words were uttered at the meeting in opposition to further Downing Street talks, and most observers reckoned that the talks were off for several months. They were reckoning without Vic Feather.*

Four days after the meeting, in what the Times described as a 'remarkable conciliatory' speech at Warwick University, Feather said he was 'sorry' that the tripartite initiative had failed, and restated terms for reopening talks.

By 3 March, with the gas men beaten, the miners demoralised and the hospital workers crucified, Feather said: 'I think that if the government were to alter the Industrial Relations Act very

quickly, if they were to say "Right, we will discuss an agenda that is open"—then I think we are on the way to victory as a country.'

This was the first reflection of the change in the general council's mind, first openly declared by Hugh Scanlon at the parliamentary press gallery a few weeks later, that they were prepared to offer wage restraint for a mere change in the Act.

A few days after the freeze started, all the workers caught in the first period of the freeze had been beaten by the government. A special congress of the TUC had been asked by a unanimous general council to do nothing whatever to fight the freeze. They refused, and called for a massive protest—for one day.

## CRYING

Now we are back way behind square one. Feather is still crying out for Chequers and 10 Downing Street, and messrs Jones and Scanlon are still making speeches about the 'profoundly serious' nature of the times.

*In the two years since the Croydon conference, the working class has inflicted tremendous*

damage on the government by industrial action.

Despite these victories, and partly because of them, the trade union leadership has been engaged in permanent retreat. The extreme right of the movement led by Frank Chapple are openly calling for acceptance of the freeze and the Act.

The Centre, led by Feather, had bargained its opposition to the Act for the right to parley in Downing Street.

The biggest retreat of all, however, is on the left. Scanlon and Jones no longer even talk about the 'industrial action' which both were calling for at Croydon two years ago. The more serious the government legislation, the more crippled the workers caught by it, the less these leaders are prepared to authorise.

## PRESSURE

It is because trade union officials necessarily become isolated from the men and women whom they represent. Their distance from the rank and file, their almost universally better conditions of life than the rank and file, act as constant pressures pushing the trade union leaders in the direction of the employer.

The trade union leader is always frightened to unleash the full industrial strength of his members for fear that his own position will be exposed in the process.

In the short lull before the next struggles against the government and its class, trade unionists could do worse than reflect on the intrinsic impotence of their union leaders, left and right.

*If the government and its class is to be effectively beaten, trade unionists must look away from the impotent negotiators on the general council and turn instead to their own rank and file power and to a socialist organisation which will nourish it, spread it and direct it to where it hurts most.*

half of June, the first warning shots were fired by the NIRC over the London docks.

Sir John Donaldson, his appetite whetted by the £50,000 he had got from Jack Jones, was hungry for more. Vic Feather's dream of permanent negotiations with Heath were held up by the existence of the Act, and the determination of the government not to drop it.

As June and July wore on, Feather made it a condition of negotiation that the government should shelve the Act. On 16 June, he put out a press statement: 'The priority must now be to SCRAP THE ACT. No government can continue with such self-inflicted humiliation.'

The reason for this apparently tough approach was not the determination of Feather himself, but the existence on the TUC councils of 'left-wingers', notably Hugh Scanlon, who alone the previous April had opposed the new co-operation line.

## Dialogue

The left's resistance did not last long. On 12 July the TUC's economic committee decided to engage in further talks with the government, through the meetings of the National Economic Development Council.

Scanlon was still unperturbed. He told a London conference that evening: 'The repeal, or at least the "freezing" of the Act remain the first prerequisite of any meaningful dialogue between the unions and the government.'

The NEDC talks, whose first round took place on 18 July, were rudely interrupted by the refusal of the London dockers to play ducks and drakes with the Act, as their union leaders had done.

## International Socialism 58

Labour Party/Gaullism and after/Steel in crisis/The CP and the left May 1973 15p Lenin and the revolutionary party



The May issue of International Socialism features an important and controversial article by Tony Cliff **Lenin on the Revolutionary Party**. This is an article that will be quoted and argued about for a long time. Other features include: **Crisis in Steel**: Rob Clay and Nick Howard **The Communist Party and the Left**: Steve Jefferys **Gaullism and After**: Ian Birchall **Memoirs of a Revolutionary Part V**: Reg Groves **Reforming the Labour Party?** Duncan Hallas **Plus Notes of the Month and Reviews.**

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# That 'kindly bobbie' has an iron fist

'THE OPERATION of the law is certainly in favour of the rich against the poor,' Mr Reg Gale, chairman of the Police Federation, stated at a Liberal Party school two summers ago. 'Position and money are power,' he added.

Such frankness with regard to the law and the armed bodies of men that uphold it is uncommon. This is not surprising.

For the very best way to make police and army effective as agents of the few in the oppression of the many is to ensure that the notion they are impartial is given wide currency. And the notion is given an appearance just to help this along.

Policemen for instance have a very hard job. They deal with the aftermath of car accidents on the motorways. They clean up after all sorts of human tragedies. Therefore they are nice people doing an essential job.

What this 'analysis' forgets is that firemen or ambulancemen or hospital workers also undertake such tasks and could do so exclusively.

When breaking picket lines or getting 'essential supplies' out of the docks during a strike, it is of great assistance to police or army to have people identify them with other, kinder tasks.

In Northern Ireland, for example, the army and the police are not shoring up a social system which can no longer just rely on religious sectarianism to guarantee the unchallenged sway of the tiny minority with wealth and power. Army and police, it is said, are 'putting down terrorism', 'keeping Protestants and Catholics from one another's throats.' No mention is made of the system which put them at one another's throats in the first place and used everything from a jobs and housing shortage to thuggery and brutality to keep them there.

## Blatant

Since the massive upsurge of the civil rights movement in 1968, the British ruling class has been forced to apply in Ireland some of the lessons it so carefully learned on its home territory over the last 150 years.

For the function of an 'impartial' police force is little different from that of a blatantly partial one. As Gus John, the black social worker, explained the situation in the squalid Handsworth ghetto of Birmingham: 'The local police generally act on the belief that it is their business to maintain law and order and in no way to concern themselves with social problems.'

A senior Handsworth police officer put it even more succinctly to Gus John: 'We don't make the social conditions in Handsworth, we only

## Taking the scales off



## justice

A SERIES BY LAURIE FLYNN

have to police them.'

The problem in Northern Ireland since 1968 is that one cohesive social group has demonstrated that it would not recognise the legitimacy of the institutions of so-called law and order.

So what did the British employing class do? It sent in the troops and set about making the minimum alterations to certain aspects of the system in order to weld these people to its continuation rather more securely.

The B-Specials had to be abolished not because our masters disagreed with the job they had been doing over the years. Far from it, the B-Specials had to be abolished only because they were no longer effective.

A recent review of a book on the Specials in Police, the official magazine of the Police Federation puts it well: 'The force was so closely aligned in its membership to the most vigorous and determined supporters of partition that it is hard to believe that it could have ever been regarded by the Catholic population as a wholly impartial police force.'

While the abolition of the B-Specials was the result of experience gained in Britain, the flow has been and increasingly is the other way.

There was a time in this country, as in all others, when there was no standing army funded and equipped by taxation and permanently at the ready to do the bidding of those with titles to property and authority.

Ireland changed all that. The British business class needed a bunch of professionals to put Ireland to the

sword. And so Britain's first standing army was raised.

It was not long before the professionals' energies were directed elsewhere. They were to operate on a world scale and it was not long before one-third of the globe was appropriately coloured red for Empire.

Fortunately however, repression has always implied revolt. In the long chain of organisations which have fought for the national liberation of Ireland, the Irish Republican Brotherhood emerged in the later part of the last century. It was countered by the setting up of a special branch of the Metropolitan Police.

Founded in 1884, the Special Branch soon spread its net wider than the monitoring and suppression of the activities of Irish Republicans. Prior to the 1914-18 bloodbath it ruthlessly scrutinised any group of people who stood out against the patriotic butchery that was to make the whole of Europe a cemetery.

## Whitewash

It kept its eyes on little known exiled Russians like Vladimir Lenin. It kept its eyes even on the best elements of the trade union movement. It followed and harassed any and every working-class militant who fought and organised for a new social order.

And the circle has been completed yet again. Two weeks ago Lord Widgery, Britain's Lord Chief Justice, ruled that any trade unionist who tried to make a picket effective by standing in front of a lorry while disputing with its driver was breaking the law.

Lord Chief Justice Widgery was the man who last year conducted the infamous whitewash inquiry which, contrary to all the available evidence, exonerated the British Army for its murder of 13 innocent citizens in Derry. The 13 were among some thousands who were exercising their civil rights to demonstrate for change and freedom.

Since the troops went in four years ago, Ireland has been a vital laboratory for the British ruling class. From it have come the theorists of counter insurgency, the Kitsons, the Clutterbucks and the like, who insist that the army and the police must be properly equipped to break picket lines and put down the mass struggles of British workers.

Theirs is a sombre warning of the violence which those with wealth and power will let loose to hang on to it. Their warning is also a reminder of the clarity of thought, the high level of organisation and the ingenuity which are essential to any struggle for human progress against such forces.

Next week: What is the state?

BOOKS

REVIEW



Police clear a way through London's East End for a car carrying fascist officers

## Fascists: those adult boy scouts

THE FASCIST MOVEMENT IN BRITAIN, by Robert Benewick, Allen Lane, £1.60.

SIR OSWALD MOSLEY led the only successful fascist movement this country has ever seen. From 1932 to 1940 he spoke all over the country and his organisation claimed a membership of 40,000, with powerful financial backers. He wrote books, pamphlets, wore an interesting black uniform modelled on his heroes, Hitler and Mussolini.

'By one road or another,' he wrote in 1933, 'we are determined that fascism will come to Britain.'

Sir Oswald, now in his 80s, lives outside Paris. He is still waiting for the call of destiny.

Mosley's movement, its rise and fall, are the subject of this book, which despite the price is a paperback, a reprint of Political Violence and Public Order.

There had been fascist movements before Mosley. After the First World War, with the Russian Revolution a warning to the middle and upper classes and the triumph of Mussolini an encouragement that it might be possible to smash the workers' movement, a rash of little groups were formed—the Imperial Fascist League, the National Fascisti, the British Empire Union. They represented few people: discontented army officers, decaying gentility, and their politics were not the kind likely to set the country on fire with fascist enthusiasm.

Benewick describes how Brigadier-General Blakeney of the British Fascists regarded his movement as 'the adult growth of the scout movement'—which might worry a few people next time little Johnny's trying his uniform on.

In the 1920s Mosley spent much of his time deriding fascism and accusing of Conservatives of fascist sympathies. This was an accurate enough charge.

Mosley was a Labour MP at the time and was considered to have a promising future. He had been returned to parliament as a Conservative in 1918 as the youngest MP in the house, was a hereditary baronet, had a 'good war record.' In 1922 he ran as an Independent Tory and won, and by 1924 was in the Labour fold.

## Crisis

He was apparently ideal material. He easily overcame the obstacle of his aristocratic background and put forward radical proposals to heal the nation's ills. The left of the Labour Party liked him because he said vaguely left-wing things, and the Macdonald-Snowden leadership liked him because there was nothing they liked more than a good crawl round the aristocracy. In 1929 he was in the Labour government.

By 1932 he had left the Labour party, founded and abandoned the 'New Party' and embraced what was to become his life-long creed, fascism. He left the Labour Party in disgust at its incompetence—not its failure to introduce socialism, not its grovelling before the

British ruling class, but because of its inability to find any adequate capitalist way out of the massive financial crisis of 1929-31.

The eight years of prominence of the British Union of Fascists were eight of the most squalid and depressing in European political history. The workers' revolutionary movement was poisoned by Stalinism and made little headway against the rising right-wing tide.

Mosley's movement made its own little contribution. He pioneered, at Belle Vue in Manchester in 1933, the technique of using spotlights to pick out anyone in the audience unwise enough to heckle. Then the blackshirts would move in for a little head-kicking. A popular policy this, one which hit its peak at London's Olympia in 1934, where for two hours the anti-fascist movement was beaten up when they dared to challenge the local Hitler.

## Aloof

Nowadays Mosley is anxious to disown any interest or support for violence, and of course he always stresses that he was never anti-Jewish.

Not half. In a telegram to Julius Streicher, the Nazi leader, Mosley wrote: 'The forces of Jewish corruption must be overcome in all great countries before the future of Europe can be made secure in justice and in peace.' Meanwhile his blackshirts roamed the streets attempting to recreate the nightmare of Nazi Germany in Britain.

Benewick shows how the Labour Party remained aloof from the struggle, what opposition there was being organised by the Independent Labour Party and the Communist Party, the latter in particular at the Battle of Cable Street in 1936.

But this book is weak in its respect for the 'traditions of parliamentary rule and the British way of life' which are invoked as a barrier to fascist success. The Public Order Act, for example, prohibited the wearing of military uniforms. But such laws had been passed in Germany—and had been ignored.

The crisis in England was of a different kind. The crucial point about the failure of the British Union of Fascists came before Mosley had even thought of organising it. The General Strike of 1926, the betrayal of the TUC and the successes of Stanley Baldwin eliminated the need for a British fascism.

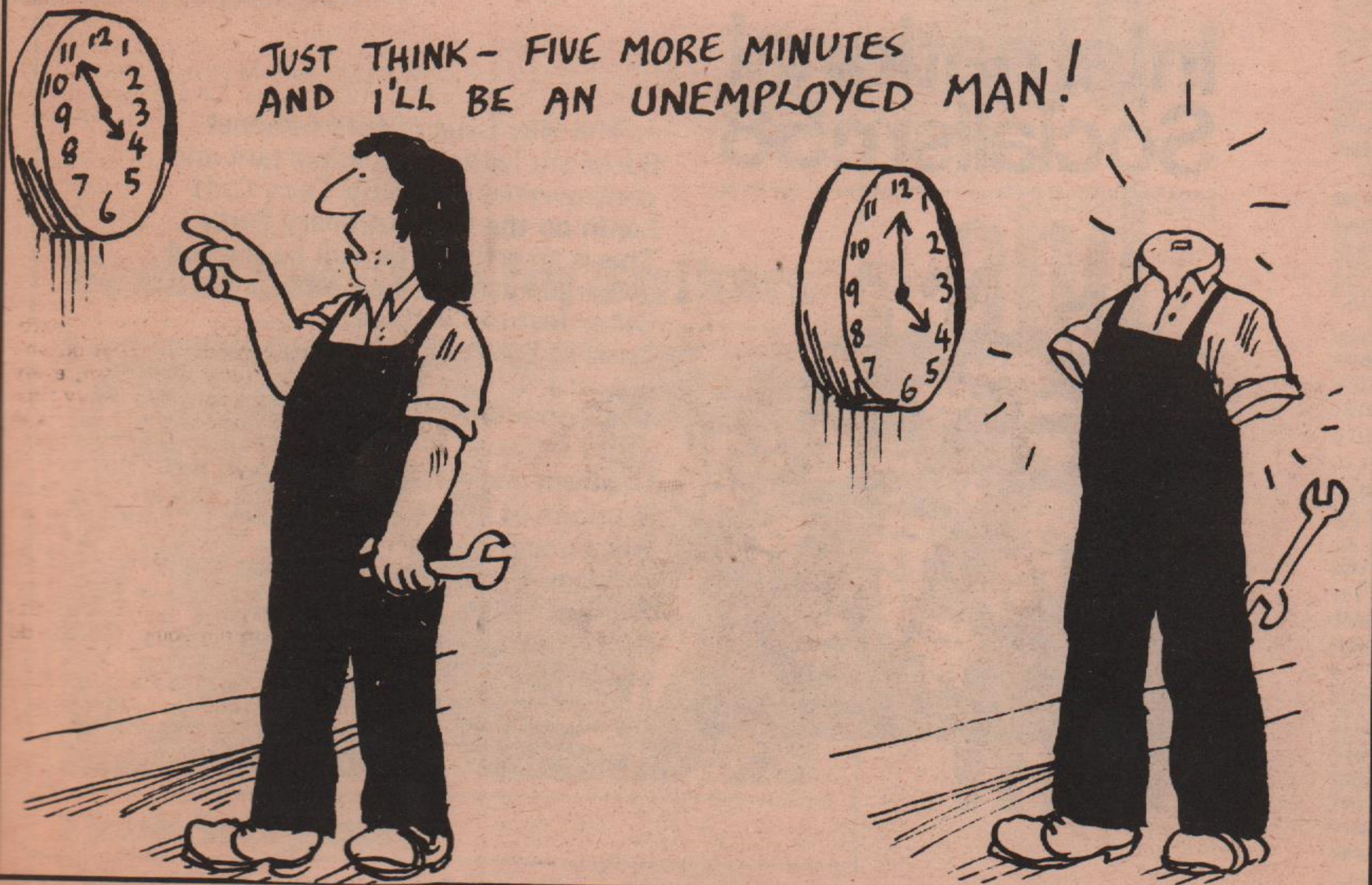
The working-class movement of Britain was not until the late 1940s the power that it had been before 1926. In Germany and Italy the ruling class had to go the whole way in destroying the workers' movement, so they needed fascism. Britain didn't.

Benewick concluded by arguing that fascism is unlikely to return as a mass movement in Britain. Would that one could be so sure.

The growth of the revolutionary workers' movement in this country will lead to an increasingly desperate and vicious response from the ruling class. Mosley may be politically dead, but the National Front, Enoch Powell and the British ruling class aren't.

NIGEL FOUNTAIN

## OUR NORMAN





THE Head of Publicity for Westward Television, R L Elliot, is quite right to insist that neither Angela Rippon, nor anyone else working for Peter (nutty centre) Cadbury, would express an opinion, warranted or unwarranted, in public, about anything (Letters, Socialist Worker, 14 April).

So I apologise for telling tales out of school. I'd also like to put it on record that I regard our local TV station with the warmest affection and have a great deal of respect for almost all of the people who work there.

They have a lot to put up with, only part of which is having old Milk Tray squeezing their minging budgets so as to draw the nearly half-million pound profit their hard work produces every financial year.

I'll go further. Angela wasn't bleating up a gum tree when she said that television studios turn the general public into idiots. It was her straight gut reaction to seeing

## The box's do-it-yourself censors



how her guests behave when she fixes them with that glittering smile and asks them to raise their right hands and give an opinion without moving their lips.

After all, if you've been scrutinised by Securicor, herded down passages, pushed

into a barn where they shine lights into your eyes, had sinister-looking equipment shoved under your nostrils, when you've been patronised by some plasticised professional, set up as a crowd of goons to face a knowing panel of 'intellectuals', asked for an opinion without having been told what was going to be discussed, cut short just before you make your point, been browbeaten by a link-man who doesn't listen to what you're trying to say—then you are going to start to feel a bit of an idiot.

The frightening thing is that nobody in TV, certainly not our Angie, who wouldn't hurt a fly unless it struck her first, would think of deliberately trying to make an idiot of anyone, particularly not the general public. The fact is they don't know how to do any different, and if they ever found out

they wouldn't be allowed to.

Television is dominated by lip-service paid to a mythical 'technique', a phantom 'professionalism'. Both these words mean the same thing: tight control of what goes on in front of the cameras.

The result is the total banality we've all got so used to that we don't even notice.

### Flatten

Of course nobody, not even the BBC's Charlie (you-name-it-we-won't-do-it) Curran, sets out to draw the guts out of their programmes. But experience tells them that to allow more than a minimal spontaneity on to the box is dangerous. Spontaneity, they'll tell you, is all very well, but it can lead to things going

wrong.

Once, on BBC Plymouth, we got a glimpse of Hugh Scully with his back to the camera scratching his arse when he ought to have been in there with his story of the stranded baby seal on Paignton beach.

'By Crikey!' we cried. 'The man lives and breathes like the rest of us!'

It isn't that the telly's dead and it won't lie down, it's that it's deadly and it won't stand up.

It's frightened that if it ever got up on its feet and started fighting for itself some terrifying figure in authority would fetch it one across the kisser and flatten it for good and all.

Of course, nobody knows who that terrifying figure might be. All they know is that it isn't them. Or their immediate boss. Or even his immediate boss.

Let me tell you a story. One of the ITV companies suddenly got nervous about a play that had already been recorded but hadn't been transmitted in their region. So they invited the regional Independent Broadcasting Authority man, a retired army officer, to drop in and view the piece and to tell them if it was OK to put it out.

The IBA man told them he didn't think much of it but that while it wasn't the sort of play the IBA liked to see on the air he wasn't going to stick his neck out by banning it. That left the programme company biting its nails, but they came up with the answer. They decided to show it to the national networking committee, and if they bought it it must be OK. When last seen, the networking committee was round at the chiropodist.

### Conspiracy?

Which is why programme executives are going grey playing grandmother's footsteps with a ghostly will-o'-the-wisp called 'what you can get away with.'

This is why you get Broadcasting Advisory Councils putting out 'guidelines' and 'directives' on what they consider is 'good taste' or 'acceptable'. They're trying to pin Grandma down so everyone can play safely round her skirts.

Censorship in television isn't an iron-fisted dictatorship. It's a conspiracy entered into by everyone who works in the business.

Every time your programme executive gets interested in something which might conflict with what he or his bosses might think is the established attitude to the programme, he has to make a quick guess in the dark, knowing that if he guesses wrong too often, that's his career up the spout.

He pretty soon gives up guessing. Which is why the upper echelons of television are manned by a posse of frightened mediocrities.

When Pam Brighton suggested to Bill Morton that they put on some experimental drama with a political content in Full House instead of the trendy fringe nonsense he started the programmes with, Pam got the boot on the spot.

### Scared

When Bill Cran delivered his film on Operation Motorman, the British Army invasion and occupation of the Bogside, to Peter Pagnamenta, in charge of Midweek, the plughole down which the BBC Current Affairs Department is quickly disappearing, Pagnamenta hurried the film down to the security vaults and turned the key on it.

It isn't that Morton's opposed to political drama. What Morton's scared of is that someone higher up might be opposed to it.

And it isn't that Pagnamenta's a secret member of the Ulster Defence Association. He wet his knickers because he thought he might have to carry the can if he put Bill Cran's film out under the Midweek title.

If you want to work in television, you have to be passed by some sort of selection board which subjects you to a pretty rigorous screening process. And it doesn't end there. You pretty soon learn, every day you walk into your office, every time you sit down in front of the monitors in the control room, that you're being expected to screen yourself.

And that's what you do. You don't have any choice. Not if you want to go on working.

And that being so, it isn't very likely that they're going to let a dirty great unscreened general public into their studios to mess about with the equipment and do what it likes.

Not without subjecting it to some kind of systematic brainwashing to guarantee it comes out making like a lot of idiots.

And that's official. Did somebody mention 'Open Door'? I'm saving that for next time.

Tom Clarke

# COME IN HILDA MUGGINS

## Basker Vashee on the CAST theatre group

POLITICAL agitation can take many forms. One of the more dramatic and effective was demonstrated a fortnight ago at a meeting of Holborn International Socialists, where CAST, the left-wing theatre group, presented for the first time their new play, Hilda.

It is about the attempted manipulation of a working-class woman by a TV crew, who use her to launch 'participatory' television.

The play itself grew from a tradition of CAST plays that began with the general upsurge of the left during the 1960s. Indeed, the plays reflect the conflicting and changing perspectives in the student and workers' movements of the time.

When the play John D Muggins is Dead first appeared in 1964, the left was experiencing a general disenchantment with the peace movement. The hero was an American serviceman, for the Vietnam war had intensified and people were questioning what type of society could unleash such a barbaric war. The play nailed down, in an original form, the fact that 'Banning the Bomb' was not going to bring an end to war, since the war machine was intimately linked with capitalism and conditioning of people for war began long before the serviceman stepped out of the plane in Vietnam.

### PLACARDS

Having analysed capitalism, the left now asked how it could be changed. In Britain the Labour Party seemed to offer some hope. Mr Oligarchy's Circus, the next CAST play, hammered out the theme that the Labour leaders, already in power, were no different than the Conservatives in their attitude to capitalism.

There was an unforgettable scene in the play, when a Labour Party official with a cockney accent, addressing striking workers, asks them to return to work for the new technological Britain.

By 1969, the student movement had grown and The Trials of Horatio Muggins appeared. In this play, revolutionary students with placards and red flags, ridicule a worker for his apathy, and taunt him for his interest in materialism. With bewildered anger the worker turns on the students, exclaiming that what the students were theorizing about he had lived all his life. What finally emerges

is a plea for a coherent ideology for the working-class movement.

The next play summed up the experience of the 1960s, and developed a method of presenting the contradiction between the images people have of themselves and their surroundings and the harsh reality of the system. Muggins' Awakening depicts the pop culture and its pretensions, and contrasts it with war in Vietnam, the class struggle and the poverty of the developing world.

With the latest play, Come in, Hilda Muggins, CAST is explicitly revolutionary. The choice of a working-class woman to demonstrate the inescapable logic of revolution is highly effective.

The television crew wants Hilda to explain her grievances—but in a way acceptable to the media. So they concentrate on the trivial happenings in her life, calling forth her teacher, her first boss, her grandfather, and a bevy of drunkard uncles to recall Hilda's life. To explain the discontent that Hilda feels, they invite an academic, who recalls in pseudo-scientific verbiage the great benefits of the Welfare State, the 'never had it so good' era and the prosperity of the industrial system.

### DREAM

And what do workers like Hilda do? They reject it.

He mourns the lack of patriotism, the degeneration into permissiveness and the worship of rebellious heroes rather than those who represent moral authority.

Hilda's scepticism about the programme increases as her life is explained in this manner. She angrily portrays the housing manager and the bailiff, who had a greater part in her discontent.

The TV crew enacts a dream sequence to lull her, then immediately smashes the dream as utopian. A bewildered Hilda is then confronted by a highly dramatised Labour MP



Players in a scene from CAST's latest production

who—with blood pouring out of his mouth—strongly condemns her revolutionary views and exhorts her to accept the 'good things' in life, to remain passive, to accept life as it is.

The TV crew, having been reduced to derision, elevates the high point of her life—when she won the 'Golden Sun, Mum of the Year' award. Hilda heatedly explains that the £100 she won went towards supporting her family while her husband was on strike and that the incident was one experience that made her a revolutionary.

At the end we see Hilda operating a machine, saying: 'What have I got to worry about? I can stop it and I can

start it again. The power lies in my hands. All we got to learn to do is to organise that power.'

In the first performance of the play CAST was a little uneasy. Some of the actors seemed to lack the confidence and enthusiasm necessary for an agitational play, though the potential for a polished version is certainly there. A review of this nature cannot do justice to the vitality, the humour and the high drama of the overall play.

● Invite CAST to your trade union branch, an IS meeting or to your factory and see for yourself. They can be contacted through Roland Muldoon by phoning 01-402 6087.

KATH ENNIS

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## WOMEN FIGHT BACK







# Phoney talk on 'safe' poison levels

YOUR REPORT on blood lead levels in children near the Lucas works in Birmingham (14 April) provides yet another example of the way in which poor control of poisonous substances, particularly lead, threatens not only workers but the community outside—usually working class.

In challenging this two-tier subversion of health, we must be careful not to be taken in by phoney ideas of 'safety levels' for lead in the air and in the blood.

Your report said that 'The safety level for children is 40 micrograms'—meaning 40 micrograms in every 100 millilitres of blood—but there is no such thing as a safe level for lead in the blood. Some children may be apparently quite healthy above this level; others may be very ill below the level.

Lead poisons the brain and nervous system and children are known to be more susceptible to it than adults, but the subtle effects on behaviour and later mental development are not properly understood and may go unnoticed.

It has been suggested that there may be a link between the unexplained rise in the incidence of mental illness among children and the increasing amounts of lead in the air.

The myth of safe levels in air and in our blood is essential to industry: the idea that it is all right to expose us to certain levels of poison is a license to pollute the workplace and the environment outside.

The same applies to almost every industrial hazard. For example workers are conned into believing that 90dBa is a safe limit for noise exposure for a lifetime, but one in 10 workers will lose at least 30 per cent of their hearing for speech.

If we are to fight the subversion of working-class health we must not be conned by 'safe levels' which do not protect workers from danger but shield big business from the 'crippling' cost of proper safety engineering.—PATRICK KINNERSLY, Maldon, Essex.

## Muggings

FOR Hester Blewitt (7 April) to draw any analogy between 'muggings' and factory accidents is misconceived. The former is a calculated positive act intended to put a person in fear and if the threat is not successful then to inflict on them a vicious attack.

The latter is at most gross negligence and usually an act of inadvertentness. In many cases extreme efforts are made by shop stewards and management to avoid injuries but these are ignored.

It is imperative in a discussion on criminal sanctions not to fall into the trap of drawing an analogy whereby you finish up by convincing the other parties that a vicious criminal should get six months.

Recently somebody told me that it was incongruous to give the Great Train Robbers large sentences when John Bloom only got a fine. Did he mean that the Robbers should only have been fined? And does Hester Blewitt wish muggers to receive only a financial sanction?—TONY CONWAY, Northfleet, Kent.

AT THE National Port Shop Stewards Committee meeting in March, of which I was chairman, the committee determined policy towards the conference of the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions.

Policy arrived at was absolutely clear and agreed to by all ports present, including London. It was simply that at both national and port level, the delegation would go to the conference to give full support to the intended resolution, which the platform was proposing at that meeting.

Certain delegates from London have written to your paper voicing 'particular criticism' of the conference. In so doing they have ignored both national and port level policy on this issue. Their behaviour at the conference was the conduct of individuals and in no way represents the policy of the National Port Shop Stewards.—S HOLMES, Southampton.

# LETTERS

## STRATEGY AND TACTICS VITAL FOR MILITANTS

TONY CLIFF'S analysis last week of the current trade union situation is essentially correct. What he failed to pose is the demand around which militant workers can link up and form rank and file organisations. It is not enough to have a socialist world outlook. On the contrary, what is necessary is those with a socialist world outlook to offer the strategy and tactics that can unite and lead the movement forward.

The revolutionaries are tested not by their knowledge of marxism, essential as it is, but by their ability to lead. Cliff puts forward all the points from which a strategy can be derived. Most importantly, he talks about the relationship between the form of organisation and the level of struggle. In discussing the miners' strike he shows how the NCB and NUM leaders by changing the length of the agreement alter the length of struggle.

In addition, any strategy must break down isolation and restore confidence to the workers in their own collective strength. All this can be achieved by forcing the TUC to adopt a policy of the co-ordinated presentation of wage claims.

If all trade unions, both nationally and locally, were instructed to present wage claims at the same time and demand that they be answered within the same time the self-interest of all groups of workers would coincide. In

such situations the idea of councils of action could be translated into reality.

Where Cliff falls down is in his estimation of trade union bureaucracies. Even the TUC leaders prefer being seduced to being raped. Many of them would go along with such a proposal if only to strengthen their own bargaining position. If it is the historical task of the trade union bureaucracy (and it is) then they must be in the position to betray something.

The need to betray and to have something to betray constitutes the vacillating character of the trade union bureaucracy. The trade union leaders would seek to use the threat of unleashing so much workers' power to do a deal. After all the role of professional negotiators is to do deals at the expense of the working class. For this reason coupled with the original strategy, we must include the demand—no deal with the Tories or the CBI.

The task of revolutionaries is to lead. And leadership just doesn't depend upon the size of the revolutionary organisation, but upon the necessity of these ideas to the maintenance of working-class organisations. Providing we campaign correctly during the coming months we, small though we are, can have a profound effect on the labour movement.—MICK RICE, Birmingham.

## Timid approach of reviews

OF ALL the articles in Socialist Worker the review page suffers from an apparently timid and self-conscious fear of applying a marxist analysis of culture. Too many contributors bow to a view of culture which would not be out of place in the Guardian or the Sunday Times.

Witness Tom Clarke's misguided 'write to your producer' plea—as if a plea for a scathing attack on capital-

ism by all IS members would produce any response by the media except hollow chuckles. Also the article on Picasso fell in to the same trap as the capitalist press, in taking a totally uncritical view of the politics and art of the artist.

As if the fact that the ruling class tells us Picasso is a great artist actually makes him one. I would suggest

## JUST ONE THING IS MISSING: MARXISM

KEVIN CROWE's letter (14 April) on the need to stand firm on Irish principles, to avoid opportunism and to combat the alleged 'chauvinistic sentiments' of the 'most militant' sections of the British working class, must be regarded as unique in terms of its historical sweep.

He offers prescriptions on the role of a revolutionary party in relation to the IRA, historical examples of pre-1905 Russia, the 1905 Petersburg soviet, a 'small group of revolutionaries active in Palestine', links with the Trotskyist Fourth International, Stalinism and the CP's demise as a 'left Labour pressure group' as arguments to support his notion that it is counter-revolutionary not to 'mention' Ireland or to attack the IRA on 'every conceivable occasion.'

To whom, exactly, does he address his argument? Certainly not IS. It is just about noticeable (to those who read them) that most IS publications do 'mention' Ireland at length. Nor is the IRA attacked on 'every conceivable occasion'—that is a fact.

The IS analysis does meet Kevin's demand for an 'unpopular but principled stand', and that is that only the working class, organised on the basis of a revolutionary socialist programme, can achieve victory in the Irish struggle. That is principled and it is certainly 'unpopular' with those who are imbued with the worst romantic adventurism typical of the now defunct 'Victory to the IRA' lobby.

Finally, Kevin tells us that if only the British working class would stop expressing their chauvinistic sentiments about Ireland 'the revolution would be taking place'! The message is clear: forget your marxist analysis of capitalist crises, forget Lenin's treatise on the role of the party and most of all forget Trotsky's thesis on the permanent revolution.

Just combat chauvinism, and the revolution will 'take place'. That, presumably, is what Kevin Crowe means by 'principled'—it is certainly bound to be very unpopular with serious revolutionary socialists.—GEORGE JOHNSTON, PAUL SMITH, Coventry.

that from about 1938 most of Picasso's works appealed more to the bourgeoisie's desire for good investment potential than to any artistic sentiments. As for his politics, apart from his avowed belief in communism and in the Communist Party, what did Picasso ever do for the working class, either through his art or participation in struggle?—JOHN PENNEY, Stockport.

# Six on explosion charges after big police swoop

FOLLOWING police raids on 13 April, six people have now been charged 'that between 1 January and 13 April, at Coventry, they conspired together, with other persons unknown, to cause by an explosive substance an explosion in the United Kingdom of a nature likely to endanger life or cause serious injury to property.'

Those charged are: Anthony Lynch (36) fitter, Anthony McCormick (17) engineer, Gerry Rush (26) electrician, Frank Kelly (28) building labourer, Frank Stagg (31) driver, and Father Patrick Fell (32) a Roman Catholic priest. All have been refused bail.

All are Irish except Father Fell. Demonstrators carried placards 'Release Political Prisoners' at the hearing last week when they were

remanded until 25 April.

All are active supporters of the Coventry Northern Relief Committee. This group has been effective in collecting money in factories and clubs and sending many thousands of pounds to the Six Counties.

### Purpose

Finance has also been raised to bring Belfast children to Coventry for a holiday, folk concerts have been held and Irish language classes started.

None of the defendants has been charged with holding dangerous explosives and the police have given no sign that they have discovered any. The conspiracy charge is being used to bring together in one trial people who

are only loosely connected—the Northern Relief Committee has no members, only collectors and supporters—and against whom only flimsy evidence is held. Of those charged, only Father Fell is prominent in the committee.

The charges have served one purpose already. Coventry police have used them to portray themselves as the discoverers of a dangerous plot to destroy life and limb. With a stage-managed display of security they escorted the defendants to the court—about 300 yards.

Many others have been interrogated for hours. Many were taken from their beds in the early hours, others called for at the factories where they were working the night shift. Those being questioned were not allowed to see

their solicitors when they asked, and mine detectors have been at work in several gardens. Nothing has so far been found.

### Intimidate

The aim is clear: to lock up six members of the Northern Relief Committee on a conspiracy charge, to intimidate others, and so stop the flow of money from Coventry to the Six Counties—and to strengthen the 'law and order' lobby with a spectacular trial.

The nature of this and all conspiracy charges must be exposed. Those held must be defended. The publicity that is likely to surround the trial will provide a focus to attack the British government's policy in Ireland.



# Danger signals for sparks conference

THE ELECTRICAL, Electronic and Plumbing Trades Union two-yearly delegate conference at Douglas, Isle of Man, next week will be hard pressed to stop the rot in the union.

Among the important policies that will be debated, the central one will be the union's attitude to the Industrial Relations Act. The present situation is that the union deregistered after the jailing of the five dockers last year.

But the union is appearing before the National Industrial Relations Court and the leadership wants to continue to do so and bring its own cases before the Tory court.

A whole string of the resolutions seek to drive the union even further to the right on this issue. They call for registration, for amendments to the Act, and for payment of fines levied by the National Industrial Relations Court.

Others congratulate the executive council for their performance at two successive Trade Union Congresses where, under the direct instruction of general secretary Frank Chapple, they staged a walk-out in protest against even the mildest TUC opposition to the Industrial Relations Act and the new state wages policy.

## Oppose

Only three resolutions call for the union leadership to take positive steps to oppose the Act by supporting the TUC line. But these are so unspecific that even if passed they will not fully tie the hands of the leadership which in any case feels that conference decisions are merely 'advisory'.

The most specific resolution on this subject has not even managed to get on the order paper. The Glasgow South East branch sent in a resolution seeking to instruct the executive not to register the union and to oppose the Act.

It is understood that this resolution was considered to be in order by the Standing Orders Committee but has been excluded from the agenda on the instruction of Frank Chapple himself who insists that no resolution can seek to instruct the executive.

Another resolution from the militant London Press branch has been ruled in order, however. This asks conference to congratulate the engineering union on its principled stance in opposing the Act and refusing to pay fines and urges the executive to follow suit.

## Campaigns

Right wingers believe that the platform has a better chance of beating this resolution because of its references to the engineers.

With the reorganisation that has taken place in the union, the conference attendance will be smaller than ever before. This has been a key part of the operation of increasing power at the top and making it more difficult for successful opposition campaigns to be mounted.

Each branch in the EPTU now has only one delegate to the conference. This has led to the fantastic situation where big militant branches like Glasgow Central with 4500 members have one delegate, exactly the same strength as Uddingston branch which has one tenth of Glasgow's membership.

This position was achieved by ruthlessly amalgamating dissident branches and ensuring that they had only one delegate in their new form. In addition each branch is only allowed to table one conference resolution. Clearly the left will have to work hard just to stand still.

## Bid to end car strike

THE French Ministry of Labour has stepped in in a bid to end the massive strike at the nationalised Renault car firm.

The unions demanded lay-off pay when a strike by 400 press men led to 7000 other workers being made idle. The 7000 struck last week to back up the demand for lay-off pay. The total laid off has now reached 35,000 out of Renault's 96,000 workforce.

# Midlands bosses in attack on militants

by Paul Holborow

DARLSTON:—2500 workers at the Rubery Owen car components firm are locked in a decisive battle with the company. The month-old strike is one of the most important clashes between organised labour and employers in the West Midlands for many years.

The company's aim is simple: It wants to

re-establish total managerial dominance over the shop floor by a variety of methods.

1. It is using the fig leaf of the wage freeze to hide the fact that for years it has grossly underpaid dayworkers. Instead of the Owen family footing the bill, the pieceworkers are being told to

take a cut of as much as £11 a week in their wages.

2. The company also wanted to establish fully Measured Day Work—the system of rigid managerial control that replaces piecework—throughout the two plants. This is in the form of a high guaranteed wage or 'fall-back rate'. Those workers who have agreed to go on to the high fall-back rate have found over the last three years that their wages have lagged far behind the pieceworkers.

A few months ago there was a five-week strike in order to try to regain the losses. The number of supervisors has risen sharply in preparation for full Measured Day Work.

Measured Day Work will solve many of the management's problems because it will mean the pieceworkers will no longer set the pace for wages in the rest of the factory. There is also evidence to suggest that Rubery Owen's main customers in the motor industry have exerted strong pressure on the company to bring its wage structure into line with their own MDW set-up.

3. If it wins this battle, the company hopes to get rid of the leading shop stewards and militants within the factory. According to the company, anybody who organises to protect the standard of living of his family is 'a militant'.

If the company does win, leading shop stewards and militants are under no illusion that Rubery Owen will hold much of a future for them. Life for those left in the factory will not be attractive if the union organisation that took 15 years to build has been broken.

## Disaster

In answer to management's three-pronged attack, the negotiating committee received a clear mandate from the shop floor in both the Darlaston and Kings Hill plants to put a counter proposal: £2.50 across the board plus what has already been offered to dayworkers.

Rubery Owen management is trotting out the usual sob stuff about the firm being on the brink of financial disaster. In 1970 it made £1.35 million profit and in 1971 £1.92 million. In the same year £104,000 was received by the Owen organisation in investment income—in other words the profits that have been produced by the workers at Darlaston and Kings Hill have been reinvested elsewhere.

Over the years the company has created a gravy-train for the Owen family which is directed not back into Darlaston but to other, more profitable investment areas.

When the company was set up the Owen family put up less than £1 million capital. Now they have assets worth £23 million.

Having built an empire stretching across the world on the backs of the Darlaston workers, the firm is seeking to 'rationalise' its operations. In the last five years there have been more than 700 redundancies, several departments have closed, and there have been substantial cutbacks in motor frame and heavy axle.

Substantial sections of dayworkers as well as pieceworkers have stood shoulder to shoulder to resist management's attempt to divide them. With this type of unity, many trade unionists at Rubery Owen are confident that they have the power and determination to stop the company.

This is a battle of vital importance that should receive the widest possible support and solidarity.

## Women strike

ELLAND (Yorks):—Shop floor workers have staged a sit-in strike at the Nu-Swift fire extinguisher firm in support of women workers striking for more pay.

The women recently joined TASS—supervisory section of the engineering union—which put in a claim for £5 to £10 a week extra. After several meetings, management offered £1.63, or £1 plus 4 per cent, strictly in line with Tory pay laws.

Nu-Swift made record profits last year, but average pay is only £15.75. The women, who have suffered bad pay and conditions for years, rejected the management offer and voted to strike.

Then shop floor workers, who had backed the women's campaign to join a union, staged their solidarity sit-in. They say they'll stay in until a settlement is reached.

# Scots TUC ignores



Wilson at the Scots TUC: good for teabar profits

# the real issues

by Jimmy McCallum

ABERDEEN:—Last week's conference of the Scottish Trades Union Congress was distinguished by its irrelevance to the real issues of the day.

The television trade unionists, Clive Jenkins, Jack Jones and Alan Fisher, were all there with their practised five-minute militancy. So was Harold Wilson, only he showed no militancy and took 55 minutes.

Jenkins called for 'a policy of attempting to boycott the Pay Board' while speaking to an ASTMS resolution that avoided any reference to the Board.

Fisher of the Public Employees, fresh from negotiating his hospital members' retreat for the Tories, hastened to attack 'those critical of the fact that others settled while we soldiered on'. It was the 'structure' of the trade union movement rather than the attitude of other trade union leaders that was responsible, he said.

Jack Jones, choosing the unemployment debate to make his major contribution, was equally evasive. 'The major problem,' he said, 'is the continuous problem of jobs lost through technological change, rationalisation and mergers.'

Not a word about the TGWU's policy of support for productivity deals. Instead Jones argued for increasing the minimum period of notice of dismissal to three months.

But when he turned to the shorter working week, Jones really gave the game away. 'We must give absolute priority to reducing the working week and the working year,' he said without once mentioning the fact that under Phase Two of the Tory state pay laws such steps are specifically outlawed.

## Frozen pay award leads to TASS men's sit-in

CLYDEBANK:—TASS members at Singers, Clydebank, are staging a sit-in strike against the freeze. Draughtsmen, planners, manufacturing, liaison and model engineers and quality control staff decided at a mass meeting last week to maintain their sit-in strike for a wage claim which was negotiated last December.

The claim includes an increase of £3.50 to £4 for different grades, coupled with a restructuring agreement, dating from November which involves further increases of 50p to £2.

At a meeting between the union, Singer and the Department of Employment last month the all-round increases were agreed as complying with Phase One of the freeze. But the company dragged out negotiations over the implementation of the claim until after the beginning of Phase Two in April and then said that the agreement was contrary to the £1 plus 4 per cent provisions of the freeze.

The Department of Employment then declared that no money should be paid, no further negotiations should take place, and

that the case should be submitted to the Pay Board.

TASS members voted for an immediate walk-out and a work to rule. Management then sacked the 150 TASS members who retaliated by sitting-in.

TASS—the supervisory section of the AUEW—has declared the strike official. The members are demanding the wage increase as negotiated, reinstatement, and reimbursement for time lost. Management's offer of reinstatement with no reimbursement and £1 plus 4 per cent has been rejected.

Jim Irvine, secretary of the shop committee, told Socialist Worker: 'If they clobber us on this one, then it opens the gates for other employers.' Bill Moore, the chairman said that Singer were attempting to break TASS for future negotiations as well as make members toe the line on this one.

Eddie Opie, shop committee convenor, summed up the situation when he said: 'Either they move on our offer or they get the police to eject us. If that happens, the whole place will close.'

Wilson, when he was Prime Minister in 1966, had attained great heights of oratory addressing the Aberdeen STUC. 'I ask you,' he said then, 'to go back to your union branches or lodges determined to preach the gospel of the New Britain and the New Scotland, determined to do everything in your power to ensure that no working practice is tolerated which increases industrial costs and holds back productivity.'

This year delegates were not asked to go anywhere. But many did. They left the hall for the tea bar and when the General Council attempted a standing ovation, barely a quarter of the remaining delegates responded. Wilson's picture of the glorious days of 1970 before the Tories returned to government to raise unemployment, rents, prices and bring in anti-union legislation was just too unbelievable.

The only serious debate in the entire week took place on a move from the National Union of Journalists, seconded by ASLEF, immediately to expel from Congress any union registered under the Industrial Relations Act.

## Dilemma

Communist Party delegates had been instructed not to rock the boat and so when the issue was finally put to the vote, the General Council's policy of allowing registered unions another three months was carried by 714,000 to 116,000.

Bill Scott, an engineering union delegate, illustrated the dilemma of the broad left. He made a good speech, pointing out the incompatibility of registered unions remaining in Congress and then, when everyone thought he would support the NUJ move, concluded instead by backing the General Council.

For the powerful broad left at the STUC, principle plays second fiddle to positions on the General Council. The Scottish Miners joined the engineers and the TGWU in voting a further three months' grace to the scab unions. And the TASS section of the engineers actually abstained.

The most lively event of the week was the daily Socialist Worker bulletin put out by the Aberdeen International Socialists. Its value was convincingly demonstrated on the last day of Congress when 70 copies of Socialist Worker were sold.



# Soldier was told 'Shoot the children'

From page 16

They just didn't have decent homes or a job. I saw a part of myself in them.

'One thing that really sickened me was the treatment of young girls when they came through the checkpoint. You had to give them a 'physical search'. This was very thorough, and as you can imagine, is designed to be very humiliating for them. Another thing was the house to house searches.

'You're supposed to be searching for arms. But really the idea is to terrorise as many people as possible. And we only searched Catholic homes.

'You never carry out the searches during the day, always at night time. You go into the house, drag everyone out of bed and herd the lot of them—the young, the sick, the elderly, into one room. And then you tear the place apart on the grounds that you are looking for arms.

'I was in Belfast during what the Republicans call Bloody Sunday. I thought that was disgusting, that the officers should have been court-martialled. I thought the inquiry was a disgrace too. It didn't mention half the

things that went on.

'They didn't say that the paras could have broken the march up with gas or rubber bullets if they'd wanted to. Instead they just opened up with live bullets. None of the soldiers out there was taken in by the inquiry. Everybody knew what the paras were like.

'That whole business had a big impact on what I felt. There was a lot about what really happened in the Irish papers. And about then I started to see some of the Republican papers and thought they were telling more of the truth. Later I went out with a girl from the Creggan estate in Derry and she explained to me

what the Republicans felt.

'A lot of the soldiers don't want to be out there. But I started to go a bit further. I just thought it was all wrong and I was always on to the other soldiers that this was Ireland and we had no right to be here. My mates thought I was a bit mad though.

'The crunch came when I was on duty one night in Derry last November. A captain came up to me. His name was John Elliott, one of the 'get-tough' brigade. Anyway he came up to me while I was on my own in a guard box in Hawkins Street and he ordered me to shoot at some little kids who were

nearby. He just assumed I would obey. I just couldn't do it.

'I was taken off to the guard room and kept there. They took everything off me and charged me with disobeying a direct order and with insubordination. Later I was taken back to England, to Colchester to wait for the regiment to return so that my court martial could get underway.

'The regiment came back just before Christmas but everyone was given Christmas leave. I was too, on condition that I came right back. I didn't because I felt that I had been wrongly charged and because I was sick of the whole thing.

'They came and picked me up from my parents' house in Walthamstow on 30 January. I was taken back to Colchester and then sent to a military hospital in South London.

'All the time I was under arrest I was trying to see some of the officers to tell them Elliott had no right to order me to do anything like shooting children and that I had been wrongly charged. But no one would listen.

'After three weeks in the hospital I decided to get out. I thought it was best to go to Dublin and I've been in Dublin since and I'm hoping to get a job here.

'There's been a fair old fuss here because I deserted and then declared my sympathies with the Republicans. I thought about joining the Provisional IRA before I came across here. And when the fuss has died down I will join.

'I know this sounds difficult to believe. But I was truly horrified by what I knew the Army to be doing in Northern Ireland. And when I believe in something I try to carry it through to the end. That's why I deserted and that's why I support the Republicans. The Catholic community has no choice but to protect itself from the attentions of the British Army.'

## Seconds out at Timex

WASHINGTON, County Durham: 120 workers have been on strike for three weeks at the Timex factory after the sacking of engineering union convenor Albert Ogle for an alleged scuffle with a manager.

The company really want to get rid of him to increase production with the minimum of fuss. The factory, which received generous government grants, already pays £10 a week less for comparable jobs than the Dundee Timex factory. Timex aims to make Washington its largest automated factory in Europe.

On some jobs it has doubled produc-

tion without any increase in wages. It is rumoured that it may get more grants to move machinery from Dundee to the low-wage area of Durham.

Supervisors and police have prevented strikers entering the factory, fire doors padlocked and windows covered to prevent them talking to those still working.

The district committee of the union has endorsed the strike and shop stewards at the Dundee factory have promised industrial support.

Donations please to: H Robinson, 27 Sheraton, Leambrake Estate, Gateshead, Co. Durham.

## Sit-in as boss tries to sack militants

STOCKPORT: Engineering employers in the North West continued their victimisation campaign against union militants last week at the small engineering firm of Bason and Sons.

The firm was recently rented to Forrest Paschal, of Silver City, Carolina, USA, whose management, claiming that business was bad and output poor, tried to sack convenor Monty Hulse and four stewards, who led an 18-week occupation during last year's engineering struggle. But the bosses were forced by engineering union insistence on 'first in, last out' to try to sack six others too, to make the victimisation less obvious.

The workers retaliated by immediately occupying the works. They foiled an attempt by staff backed by eight squad cars of police to padlock the factory doors.

Management then agreed not to take legal action while talks were held with engineering union officials. But next day the police harassment continued and in the evening a writ was served on 18 workers on trespass charges.

## Strike now in third week

BIRMINGHAM: Workers at Baxters decided at a mass meeting last Friday to continue their strike against the victimisation of their convenor, Larry Blewitt.

After the meeting a director, Mr M Hale, expressed anger at the decision. 'We don't want him back. I'll close the factory down,' he said. 'I don't know what the unions are interfering for. We have the fire and fire and that is what we've

With such views among management, it is clear that the workers have to apply

maximum pressure to win this dispute. The strike committee is issuing a bulletin giving details of strike collections, social security payments and picket rotas, and combatting the more blatant lies of the management. So far financial support has come from Tractors and Transmissions, SU Car-burettors and the Birmingham number 5 branch of the engineering union (AUEW).

Collection sheets and donations to Ken Wilkes, Baxters Shop Stewards Committee, 46 Victoria Road, Harborne, Birmingham B17 0AE.

# TEACHERS AGREE TO THE TORY PAY LIMIT

by Chanie Rosenberg (Hackney NUT)

SCARBOROUGH:—The conference of the National Union of Teachers has reflected the lull in trade union action. By a large majority delegates agreed to settle the teachers' salaries claim within the government's limit of £1 plus 4 per cent.

Despite an excellent speech by Dick North of Lambeth, a supporter of the Rank and File teachers' group, they rejected a call to discuss action in support of the TUC strike on 1 May.

The strikes by London teachers last month over their claim for an increased allowance showed militancy and unofficial solidarity action on a scale not seen before. The union leaders took fright and since then have gone out of their way to keep down such militancy. They opposed further strikes by London teachers and wrote to all schools saying the call of the Westminster NUT Association for a half-day strike in support of the hospital workers was 'unconstitutional'.

The union leaders also brought an emergency resolution before the conference in an attempt to remove from local NUT associations their traditional right to organise strike action. 'No member or members shall organise or engage in a strike or industrial action without the prior approval of the executive . . .', it read.

If this were passed it would make it difficult for branches to fight over issues such as inadequate housing, oversize classes

and unfair treatment by headteachers. The threat of an immediate walk-out has often been enough to make authorities give in. Now the executive is trying to make such threats 'unconstitutional'.

The executive's attacks on militancy have been backed by leading Communist Party teachers. At the Party's conference meeting John Tarver advised delegates to 'ignore' attempts to raise the May Day issue and most Communist Party members followed his advice in abstaining.

Max Morris, this year's NUT president and a member of the Party, indulged in some now fashionable left-bashing. His attack lumped together 'free schoolers', 'de-schoolers', 'community schoolers', 'sociologists', 'ultra-lefts', 'adventurists' and 'nut cases'.

## STRONGER

The conference edition of his Party's magazine, Education Today, talks of 'sick irresponsible people', 'romantics, adventurists, Trotskyists, anarchists—all of whom are of petty bourgeois origin'. Shades of the 1930s!

But now the rank and file organisation in the union is stronger than ever before.

The conference is overweighted with delegates who are predominantly middle-aged, male and headteachers, from small towns and rural areas, while the militancy in the union is mainly among the younger class teachers from the big cities. But the impact of the militant Rank and File group on the conference grows every year. 160 delegates attended its main meeting and it was able to produce daily leaflets for the conference.

# WHAT'S ON

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

## IS MEETINGS

**IS IRISH FORUM**  
The Protestant Working Class  
Speaker Jeff Bell  
Friday 27 April, 7.30pm  
The Roebuck, Tottenham Court Rd  
(nearest tube Warren St)

**EALING IS Social:** bar extension to midnight, entertainment: CAST's new play, plus music. Friday 27 April, 7.45pm.  
George and Dragon, Uxbridge Road, Southall (bus 207 from Ealing Broadway). In aid of Printshop Fund.

**LANCASHIRE REGION IS DAY SCHOOL**  
Sunday 29 April  
Regency Hall, Blakey Moor  
(off Northgate), Blackburn  
10.30am: The Freeze—speaker  
Chris Davison  
2pm: The role of revolutionaries in the trade unions—speaker Roger Rosewell  
IS members only  
Also Rebel regional meeting  
Same place, 11.30am  
All Rebel supporters welcome

**HORNSEY/BARNET IS public meeting:** Fight the Tories—the need for a revolutionary party. Speaker: Paul Foot. Wednesday 9 May, 8pm, Bull and Butcher, Whetstone High Road, (near Totteridge and Whetstone tube/buses 263, 134, 84, 125).

**IS HISTORY GROUP SCHOOL**  
Saturday 28 April  
Rootes Hall, Warwick University,  
Coventry  
11.30am-1pm: Organising session for group  
2-4pm: Harry Wicks on  
The TUC left and the Russian trade union movement in the 1920s  
4.30-6.30pm: Reg Groves on  
The revolutionary left in the 1920s and 1930s  
School fee 20p. Details from:  
69 Arden Street, Coventry

**HIGH PEAK Socialist Worker meeting:** Women and the Fight for Equality. Spkr Sara Carver, Sunday 29 April, 8pm, Glossop Labour Club, Chapel Street (near Town Hall). All welcome!

**BIRMINGHAM IS May Day public meeting:** The Fight for Socialism. Tuesday 1 May, 7.30pm, Lecture room 2, Digbeth Civic Hall, Speakers: Larry Connolly (AUEW deputy convenor), Lucas, Jim Clarke (NUM, Lea Hall Colliery) and Tony Cliff, author of The Employers' Offensive. Further details from 021-358 2861.

**EXETER IS public meeting:** Smash the Wage Freeze. Speaker Wally Preston, Tues 1 May, 8pm, Devonport Inn, Fore Street, Exeter.

**MANCHESTER DISTRICT IS MAY DAY PUBLIC MEETING**  
The Struggle for Socialism  
Speaker Bob Light (TGWU steward,  
London Royal Docks  
Tuesday 1 May, 7.30pm  
Basement Theatre, Town Hall  
extension, Mount Street

**CHELMSFORD IS public meeting:** Equal Pay—Women fight back. Speaker Barbara Kerr, editor of Woman's Voice, Tuesday 8 May, 8pm, Civic Centre, Chelmsford.

**WORCESTER IS public meeting:** Fight the Freeze. Speaker Tony Cliff (IS executive member), Thursday 3 May, 7.30pm, Co-op Guild Rooms, St John's.

**BIRMINGHAM DISTRICT IS Social:** Saturday 5 May, 8pm, extension to 11pm. The Mermaid pub, Stratford Road, Birmingham 12. Karaoke Klowns in Mr Oligarchy's Circus 1973, plus music and folk singing. Admission 50p—proceeds to district and printshop fund.

**GLASGOW IS public meeting**  
Roger Protz, editor  
of Socialist Worker  
**AFTER MAY DAY—WHAT NEXT?**  
Thursday 10 May, 7.30pm  
Christian Institute, Bothwell St

**COLINDALE AND HARLESDEN IS public meeting**  
**IRELAND AND THE WHITE PAPER**  
Speakers: Eamonn McCann, Pat  
Prenderville and Jeff Bell  
Thursday 3 May, 8pm  
Willesden Junction Hotel,  
Station Road, London NW10

**WANDSWORTH IS public meeting**  
**FIGHT THE TORY RENT RISES**  
Speakers: David Skinner  
(Clay Cross councillor) and  
John Palmer (IS executive).  
Thursday 3 May  
St John's Church Hall, East Hill, SW18

**CHATHAM Socialist Worker readers' meeting:** After May Day, what next? Speaker Mick Young (AUEW), Wed 2 May, 7.30pm, Army and Navy pub, Paddock, Chatham, Kent (opposite Town Hall).

## OTHER MEETINGS

**RANK AND FILE TECHNICAL TEACHERS** meet in The Roebuck, Tottenham Court Road, near Warren St tube, London W1, Sunday 29 April, 7pm, to discuss local organisation and the 1973 conference.

**ALL-SCOTTISH Student Conference on Indochina:** Saturday 5 May, Strathclyde Student Union, Information from the secretary, 90 John Street, Glasgow C1.

**INDOCHINA—SUPPORT MUST CONTINUE:** Demonstrate Trafalgar Square, Saturday 5 May, 2pm. Meeting and march to US and Saigon Embassies. Organised by Indochina Solidarity Conference.

**DO YOU KNOW there are 55,000 political prisoners in Indonesia?** Meeting: Wed 2 May, 7pm. Speakers: an ex-prisoner from Indonesia, Lady Fleming, Malcolm Caldwell; chairman Lord Avebury. Small Hall, Friends House, Euston Road, London NW1.

## NOTICES

**FRED AND ANITA LINDOP** have moved to 205 Ham Park Road, London E7.

**JUST OUT for May Day:** Lessons of the General Strike, 1926, by Bob Dent. A look at the role of the government, the TUC and the rank and file with lessons for today. Copies 10p each (plus 3p postage). Bulk rates available. From Millenium, 9 Sefton Drive, Liverpool 8 (051-733 2635).



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# Socialist Worker

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

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British  
soldier  
rebels  
over  
'Shoot  
children'  
order

## ALL OUT ON MAY DAY!



TORIES, PRESS AND TELEVISION have been cock-a-hoop since the hospital workers returned to work. The government's £1 plus 4 per cent formula for holding down wages has been forced through and now employers can boost profits and investment at the expense of working-class living standards.

Employers and government have been aided by the refusal of the trade union

SW Political Correspondent

leaders to organise the forces of the movement. Despite the fine words of the union leaders, the hospital workers were left to fight alone.

The call for a national one-day stoppage was pushed through the special TUC congress against

the wishes of the TUC leaders. By delaying it until May Day—when the different sections of the trade union movement had been isolated and forced back to work—the General Council hoped to remove an embarrassing obstacle to its own plans for further talks with the government.

But the stoppage on Tuesday can still be of immense value to rank and file trade unionists. It can provide a clear example of the unified strength at the disposal of the trade union movement.

It can reveal what forces the trade union leaders could have mobilised to back the hospital workers. It can give heart to sections of workers preparing for the second round of the battle against the freeze in the autumn.

The press is aware of this. That is why, knowing it cannot prevent large numbers of workers taking action, it has tried to belittle the stoppage.

That is why it has repeated over and over again that the one-day strike is 'irrelevant' and 'certain to be small'.

The union leaders have done little to counter such talk. Right-wing officials have instructed their members to ignore the strike call, in some cases even to scab.

The 'left wing' leaders have backed the call, but have refused to campaign actively for its implementation.

### SUCCESS

They have failed to produce floods of leaflets and propaganda to tell working people what every businessman already knows—that food prices and rents will continue to rise, that it is deliberate government policy to raise profits at the expense of living standards.

The task of ensuring success for the May Day stoppage has been left in the hands of rank and file activists, while the official leaders prepare the way for another session of secret diplomacy with Edward Heath.

It is not surprising that many people on the shop floor feel that May Day is only a token action, that it will do nothing to make the Tories change course or to improve conditions and wages.

There is some truth in this. A one-day strike alone will not halt big business plans.

But the May Day strike can be a vital point of departure. A successful stoppage in the key industries will show that the working class has the strength to defeat the government's policies, if only it cares to use it.

It will convince those who have hesitated about taking action in recent months that there is at rank and file level a mood for united action and that groups who take on the government need not be left to fight alone.

Above all, united action on May Day will show that the working class is not prepared to lie down and be trodden on, that we have the will to fight and win.

That is why all trade unionists must exert themselves to the full to make sure the strike is a success.

## £45,000 freeze buster



PRIME MINISTER Edward Heath—or Admiral Atastroke to his yachting friends—has just coughed up £45,000 to buy himself a new yacht. Here he is at the wheel of the new Morning Cloud as he sails her off Cowes, Isle of Wight.

On shore, Mr Heath is best known for his hysterical

outbursts against 'greedy' trade unionists and their excessive wage demands. His recent advice to the nation was: 'Think of someone else, not yourself, where pay is concerned.' We wonder who Sailor Heath had in mind when he wrote that cheque for £45,000—health workers, farm workers or pensioners?

Dig  
deep  
to hit  
target

WE'RE ALMOST THERE! The £30,000 IS printshop fund was boosted by £577 last week—bringing the grand total to £28,366.

Readers from High Peak in Derbyshire sent a magnificent £45.43, while strikers at Watney Mann brewery in London did their bit for the red revolution with £11.45. Student teachers in Manchester donated £37, GEC SW discussion group, Coventry, £3.50, Glasgow Corporation Electricity Board stewards £2.50.

Donations from IS branches include: Walthamstow £11.40, Bath £4.20, Birmingham South £10, Sheffield £10, Brighton £10, Southampton £63, Liverpool £2.50, Mid-Derbyshire £5, Cumbernauld £16, Tottenham £7.50, Enfield £105.37, Islington £15, Paddington £10, Cardiff £2.60,

Holborn £18.50.

Don't let up on your efforts, even if the Tory freeze is hitting you hard. Apart from bounced cheques we don't mind the colour of your money.

Rush donations to: Jim Nichol, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

MAY DAY  
London demonstration and  
rally

Assemble 1pm, The Embankment,  
Temple Place.  
March to Hyde Park for rally at 3pm.  
Organised by the London Federation  
of Trades Councils with the London  
Joint May Day Committee.

GEORGE WILLIAMS was one of 'our boys keeping Protestants and Catholics apart in Northern Ireland' until last November.

But his tours of duty in Derry and Belfast taught him that the reality and the rhetoric were rather different things. He slowly became convinced that the troops in Ireland were there to put down and keep down the oppressed minority with thuggery and brutality.

And in November 20-year-old George Williams, a gunner with the 3rd Royal Horse Artillery, who comes from Walthamstow in London, refused to obey an order. His captain had told him to shoot at young children. He would not do so and was taken into custody and charged with disobeying a direct order and insubordination.

While waiting to be court-martialled, George decided it would be better to desert. So he fled to the Irish Republic, where he now lives in a Dublin guest house.

George now feels so strongly about the wrongs that Britain's rulers have committed and are committing in Ireland that he has become a supporter of the IRA.

He has tried several times to get his story told in Britain, giving interviews to many newspapers. But each time the editors of the so-called free press have decided that his story should be suppressed. This week he gave an interview to Socialist Worker.

'I joined the army for the usual reasons. After leaving school at 15 I worked in the building industry—on the lump. I joined up because I wanted to get a bit of excitement and see the world.

'In the year and nine months I was with the 3rd Royal Horse Artillery, I put in three stints in Northern Ireland. A lot of what I saw sickened me.

'I've always been against violence, unnecessary violence I mean. Even when I was at school I remember seeing kids being punished for things they didn't do, kids being beaten up for nothing by those in authority. Ireland was like that, except it was on a massive scale and much more serious.

'When we first went out there, the officers tried to fill us up with the usual load of cobbles about doing it for Queen and country. Quite early on I saw some soldiers beat up a Catholic lad and then charge him. In court they said he had fallen down the stairs, and of course no one believed his story.

'And the officers also tell you that you've got to be tough. They tell you rubber bullets just don't hurt enough to disperse a mob from the Bogside or Creggan. They tell you to put a razor blade or a piece of barbed wire in the rubber bullets.

'I realised quite early on that the Army was there to keep the Catholics downtrodden and in a situation where

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