

Socialist Worker

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PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

Crisis in Portugal

THE military coup in Portugal last month brought the Portuguese people their first taste of freedom after 40 years of fascist rule.

Political prisoners have been released. Now, pinned in the windows of cafes and bars are lists of the hated secret police. As each man is captured and interned his name is crossed off.

But the people of Angola, Mozambique and Guine-Bissau are still enslaved by Portuguese military government—though it was their fight for freedom that brought about the fall of fascist rule in Portugal itself.

Socialists must get out on the streets of London this weekend to demand immediate freedom for the people of these three countries. Total independence from Portugal now!

Assemble at Speaker's Corner, Marble Arch, at 2pm to march to a rally at Trafalgar Square to hear speakers from the Mozambique liberation movement, from Portugal and from the British labour movement.

All branches of the International Socialists and IS student societies in London and the Home Counties will be supporting this demonstration with banners and placards. (IS stewards' meeting: 12 noon at 8 Cottons Gardens, London E2.)

...and Italy

THE Italian government has collapsed. The Socialist Party, which had linked with the Tory Christian Democrats to form a government, could not agree to the vicious cuts in Italian workers' standard of living which had been demanded by the international bankers.

In Italy prices are rising faster than anywhere in Europe. The balance of payments is in bigger deficit than anywhere in Europe. The fascists, who got more than a million votes in the last election, are out on the streets in force demanding 'strong government'—an end to all civil liberty and the smashing of the trade unions.

The workers are showing their might in a series of powerful strikes. The Communist Party, which got more than five million votes at the last election, may be persuaded to join a 'national government'.

Read in next week's Socialist Worker a detailed eye-witness account and analysis of this turmoil.

NURSES DITCH THE RICH

Total ban on private patients in North East hospitals

by MIKE ATKINSON

Darlington hospital worker and NUPE Hospital Convenor for the North East

WE HOSPITAL WORKERS in the North East have put an end to private medicine in our hospitals.

Private, comfortable side wards which have been reserved for people who are not very ill but have a lot of money are now being occupied by people who are very ill but don't have much money.

Two years ago the Labour Party Conference passed another in a long line of resolutions calling for an end to private practice in the hospitals. Last year, a committee from the Parliamentary Labour Party demanded an end to private practice.

Barbara Castle, the Health Minister, has said it will take 25 years to end private practice. We've done it in the North East in 25 days.

We've done it because the nurses have taken action themselves—supported by other workers in the hospitals.

The nurses' advisory committee for the North East area—made up of more than 30 nurses representing hospitals throughout the area—had declared that private patients would not be treated until the nurses' claim

was met. Now the committee has announced that private patients will never be treated again.

They have said that private practice bleeds the hospitals white. The best wards, the best equipment, the best medical attention is reserved for the rich—which means more crowding, delays, ancient equipment and less medical attention for the people who need it.

Private practice was wrecking the Health Service. So was low pay and

rotten conditions for hospital workers. The nurses here have stopped private practice. They'll go on fighting until they stop low pay and rotten conditions.

The nurses' action has really taken off in the North East. We've had strikes and pickets in hospitals in Durham, Darlington, Aycliffe and Sunderland. We've had hundreds of applications for union membership.

The nurses have been joined by other workers in the hospitals. In Durham on Monday a mass meeting of radiographers called on the executive of their union—ASTMS—to organise an immediate, all-out strike of radiographers throughout the country.

How have we done this? Because we've organised in the rank and file among all hospital workers. Because we've worked in the unions to pull together the militants in different hospitals and in different grades.

We've made it our union, our industrial action. A week ago Monday the executive of my union—NUPE—met to discuss the situation in the North East. They sent us a message: **DROP ALL INDUSTRIAL ACTION IMMEDIATELY.**

The Darlington NUPE General branch met, passed a vote of no confidence in the NUPE general secretary, Alan Fisher, and demanded a meeting with him to discuss the matter. We got the meeting, and we got a 'free hand' for all industrial action in the North East.

SUPPORT

We set up the nurses' advisory committee last year after the ancillary workers in the hospitals had been beaten by the Tory government. We realised that one reason those workers lost was the hostility of the nurses.

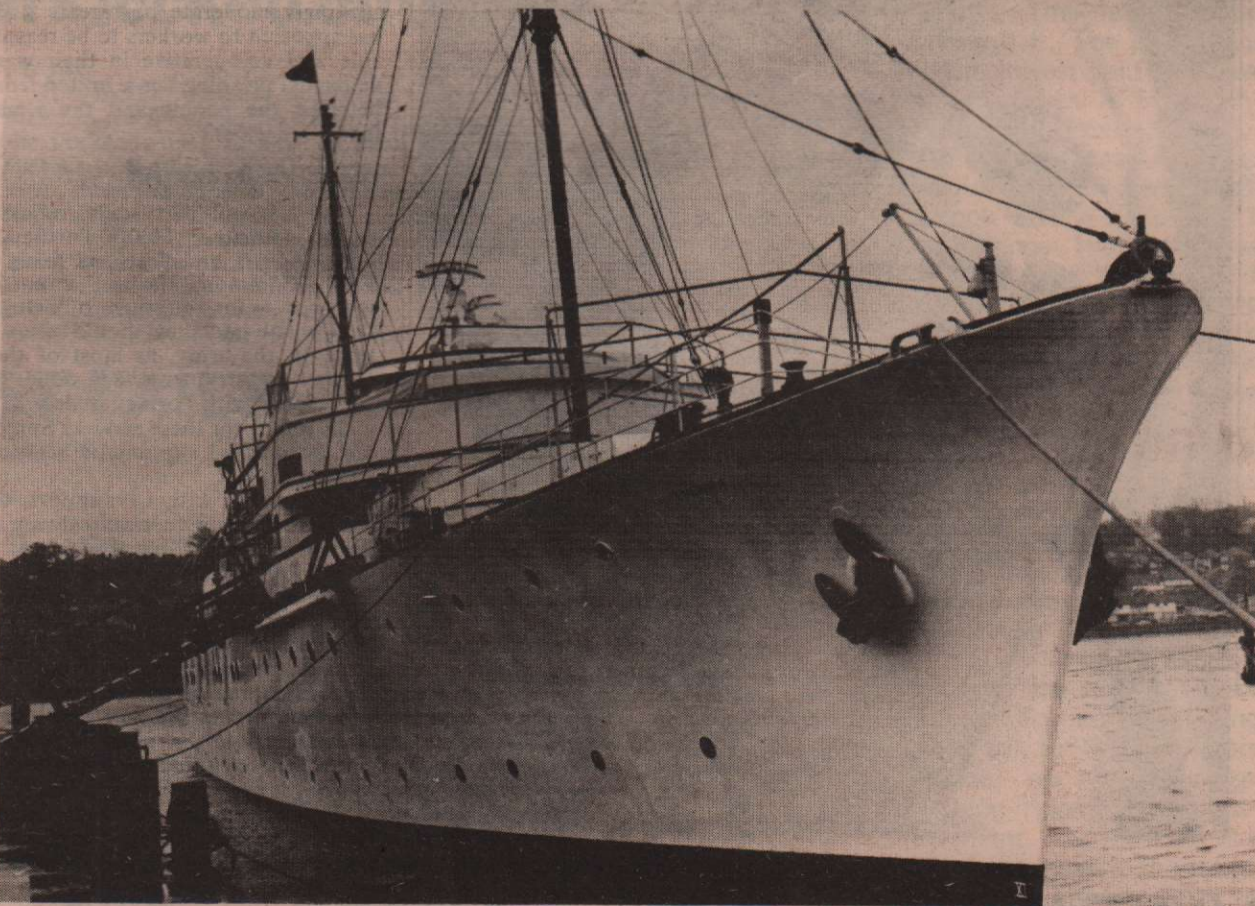
Now, again, the key to the situation in the hospitals is the link between the nurses' claim and the claim for the ancillary workers. The union leaders want to separate the two claims.

We in the rank and file must fight for the claim to be put in at once, and to be linked with the nurses' claim. The two battles must be pulled together by rank and file committees representing all workers in all hospitals.

I'm glad to hear that a Nurses' Rank and File Co-ordinating Committee has been set up. We in the North East will be waiting for a call from the committee's meeting this Saturday for a one-day strike right across industry in support of the nurses.

Once we get the date, we'll be out calling on all the trade unionists in the area. Its *your* Health Service. *You* can help save it by *your* action.

Small print in the social contract...



WHAT COST £290,000 to buy, £500,000 to mend and £1500 a week just to keep lying around?

It's Harry Hyams' yacht. Harry Hyams is the property speculator who became one of the richest men in England largely by building empty office blocks, including the notorious Centre Point in London.

Above is Harry's yacht Shemara. He bought it from Sir Bernard and Lady Docker in 1969 for £290,000, spent £100,000 doing it up and then ran it on to a coral reef in the Greek Islands. He then had to spend half a million pounds on repairs.

Harry got tired of yachting, and hasn't moved his yacht for 20 months. So Shemara, like Centre Point, is empty.

The yacht has stayed right there in Southampton Water with a crew on board, kept in regular repair and costing about £1500 a week. That's what a qualified nursing sister earns in a year.

In spite of its ignominious history Shemara could still serve a useful purpose. It might be used to give holidays to kids who would otherwise spend the summer stuck round their slum homes.

It could be used to give a winter break to pensioners who can rarely venture beyond their front doors.

But Shemara is not meant to serve any useful purpose. It is an empty reminder of the immense wealth at the disposal of our rulers. And the system that provides them with their expensive toys.

INSIDE

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Plus TWO PAGES OF LETTERS — Four and Five

LETTER FROM DERRY

'THINGS are rapidly getting back to normal in Northern Ireland,' the news bulletins keep telling us. Quite so. In the Creggan Estate, the Grenadier Guards, who had maintained a moderately low profile during the loyalist strike, are off the leash again.

Last week they searched Kathy White's house so thoroughly that the Housing Department next day declared it unfit for human habitation. The number of men arrested and held overnight for 'screening' and roughing up at Piggery Ridge Camp is back to the old average of 30 to 35.

The factories at the Maydown Industrial Estate are in full production again. But Catholic workers go there now with more than a little trepidation.

They have to pass through the Protestant Waterside area and the loyalists proved during

By EAMONN McCANN

the strike that they, not the security forces, control access. Most would switch to other jobs if they could: but male unemployment in the Bogside and Creggan still runs at more than 20 per cent.

Politicians scurry and scramble across local television screens, trying to get back into position. Mr Gerry Fitt and Mr John Hume, for example, have rediscovered internment and contort their faces into expressions of concern about 'this running sore in our society'.

It was a sore they seemed singularly capable of tolerating while they sat on the

fake 'power-sharing' Executive with the chief architect of internment, Brian Faulkner.

Their new-felt pain at its presence evokes cynicism and weary smiles around the area. As do many things now. The alternating bluster and blandishment of the British government, the appeals from the pulpits for 'restraint', the promises from this or that leader: the people have heard it all before.

The only issue which has ignited is the plight of the hunger-strikers. Late last Thursday night hundreds marched through the darkness and driving rain after the death of Michael Gaughan.

It is a simple issue: explosive in its simplicity: and the spontaneous mobilisations around it show that, despite all, there remains here a rock of opposition to British plans for Ireland which is not about to crumble. It is on that rock that we must build.



David Skinner. Picture: Chris Davies (Report)

Militancy going to waste...

DAVID Skinner, one of the 11 Clay Cross councillors who refused to raise rents under the Tory government's Housing Finance Act, speaking to 1000 delegates at a solidarity conference at Central Hall, Westminster on Saturdays.

The conference, very critical of the Labour government, called for the cancellation of all fines and charges against the 11, the release of the Shrewsbury Six, the repeal of all conspiracy laws and an end to aid and trade with the Chilean junta.

Despite the powerful rhetoric and the obvious militancy among the delegates, all the speeches concerned either to try to force Labour to adopt a socialist programme or to 'change the leadership'.

Some wanted a special Labour Party conference, others didn't (in case the right wing would win at it).

All the energy of the conference was directed to resolution-mongering within the Labour Party structure.

If half the trade union representatives there devoted half their 'revolutionary' energies to revolutionary activity in the working class movement, twice as much would be achieved.

THE SMILE

THAT SAYS 'I'VE WON'

FRIEDA LOCKHART—an assistant editor at the big publishing and distribution firm, New English Library—was fed up with rotten wages, poor conditions, discrimination against women and a paternalist management. So she asked to join the National Union of Journalists, and told the management.

The management responded in the best traditions of British fair play. Frieda was instantly sacked 'for bad workmanship'.

She refused to go and, with two other members of the NUJ, David English and Keith Vollans, manned a picket outside the NEL offices off Holborn, London, and demanded reinstatement.

The pickets turned away postmen and dustmen and contacted SOGAT, the union of the workers who distribute NEL's books and periodicals.

The SOGAT men, who themselves have a claim in against NEL, responded with a threat to black all NEL goods unless Frieda was reinstated and the NUJ recognised.

The decision worked wonders. Last Thursday, a week after the pickets had been set up, Frieda was reinstated unconditionally, and even won an extra week's holiday.

PICTURE: Peter Harrap (Report)

Portugal on a knife-edge

WORKING-CLASS militancy is still rising fast in Portugal—and not only on the economic front. Last week print-workers on Portugal's biggest newspaper, *Diario de Noticias*, took over the paper and locked out the management and editorial staff. They are demanding the dismissal of pro-fascist writers and executives.

The paper is now produced under workers' control with a big notice proclaiming the fact on its front page.

This is not an isolated case. There have been a whole series of such actions, the *Diario* seizure being the most sensational to date. The workers have already forced the

resignation of the editor.

General Spínola's 'Junta of National Salvation' is threatening to shut down the *Diario* by force unless the workers accept 'normal' discipline and subordination to management.

So far it is only a threat because the junta is desperately trying to keep working-class support for its shaky regime.

It does not lack allies in this work. The big political force among the Portuguese workers is the Communist Party, which claims to have recruited 100,000 new members since the overthrow of Caetano, and far outstrips the feeble social-democrats.

The CP is wholly behind Spínola and has two members in the new government.

One, Acélino Concalces, is Minister of Labour.

The *Guardian* reports that party leader Alvaro Cunhal, 'has adopted a strikingly moderate posture... He has appealed to workers to be reasonable and co-operative in their wage demands, pleading for a united front between the people and the armed forces movement.'

Arrested

'At a recent party rally, referring to the estimated 150,000 Portuguese draft-dodgers and deserters living in EEC (Common Market) countries who now want to return to Portugal, Dr Cunhal said they should agree to serve in the army, as most of their fellow countrymen had done, in accordance with Portuguese law.'

In return for these services Spínola has established diplomatic relations with the USSR.

Meanwhile, with CP support, the Junta has begun to clamp down on the revolutionary left. The editor of the paper *Luta Popular* (People's Struggle) has been arrested.

The arrest of this editor, Jose Sanches, and the increasing violence of CP propaganda denouncing 'provocateurs' and 'extremists' (ie, revolutionary socialists) are symptoms of growing tension between the junta and sections of the working class.

Sooner, rather than later, the Spínola junta is going to make its bid to restore 'order' and 'normality'.



The bosses who 'care'

by John Best, TGWU

your eyesight is more important.'

Three weeks ago he got a 'Dear John' letter from the company saying the agreement with the company allows them to sack a man off with six months' 'sickness', although they have the discretion to retain him.

They wished him all speed with the recovery of his eye, and hoped he would get other employment. Two days later he got his cards.

John turned up at work last Monday, arguing his 'sickness' was caused by company negligence, which the union is taking up. He was turned away.

Full-time Transport Workers'

LAST November, John Nixon, then convenor of Bluebirds Caravans, Poole, had an accident at work. The shop had been rearranged with frames holding sheets of metal moved a foot or so nearer the wall.

A small piece of metal ricocheted off the wall and struck John in the eye. As a result, he was off sick until last month.

He lost the lens of his eye and has to wear a contact lens. Although his sight with this is good, he can only wear it for part of the day.

Before the lens was fitted, doctors told John he could return to light work in the factory. The management said his shop was prone to dust which might be detrimental to his recovery and, in my hearing, told him over the phone: 'Don't worry about your job,

IS action call on Ireland

THE International Socialists' National Committee discussed the Irish question on Saturday and the future activity in the organisation. A resolution, carried unanimously, called for action in every area along the following lines:

Troops out Public Meetings: Branches and Districts should be organising these over the next three months. A speakers' list is available.

Education within IS: All branches should hold meetings for their members and close periphery on the background to and socialist attitude to the Irish question. Districts or regions should organise schools where appropriate.

A speakers' list is available, so are speakers' notes. Issues covered should include the background to partition, Republicanism and terrorism, Loyalism, Orangeism and 'Ulster Nationalism', Permanent revolution, the Irish working class and the national question. A basic reading list will be made available.

It is planned to hold speakers' schools at the end of June. Details will be announced through Socialist Workers' Anti-Recruitment/Troops Out Pickets. During the summer months tattoos and recruiting campaigns take place in many areas. They provide an ideal opportunity for propaganda against the army, their role in Ireland and their possible future role in Britain.

Local Trades Councils should be approached on this question. We will be circulating a list of the events we know of, but many are part of local fetes and carnivals. Keep your eyes open for them!

A draft leaflet, for reproduction by electro-stencil duplicating process, is available from the centre.

Irish Political Prisoners/Hunger strikers: Members and branches should support activity in support of the prisoners where possible. The matter should be raised in trade union branches etc with letters to the Home Secretary.

Raising the Troops Out demand in the trade union movement: Resolutions on this question are important and should express our distinctive anti-imperialist view. A draft resolution is available.

The Worker and the Socialist Workers' Movement: Where we are in contact with Irish workers we should ensure that they see The Worker regularly and know about the Socialist Workers' Movement, the Irish socialist organisation with which IS has fraternal links. Please let the Irish Sub-Committee know of any Irish people interested in the SWM who are returning home.

Union officers were called in, and a statement announced that the reserved the right to take industrial action if John was not reinstated. This is a ridiculous statement, as union always reserves this right.

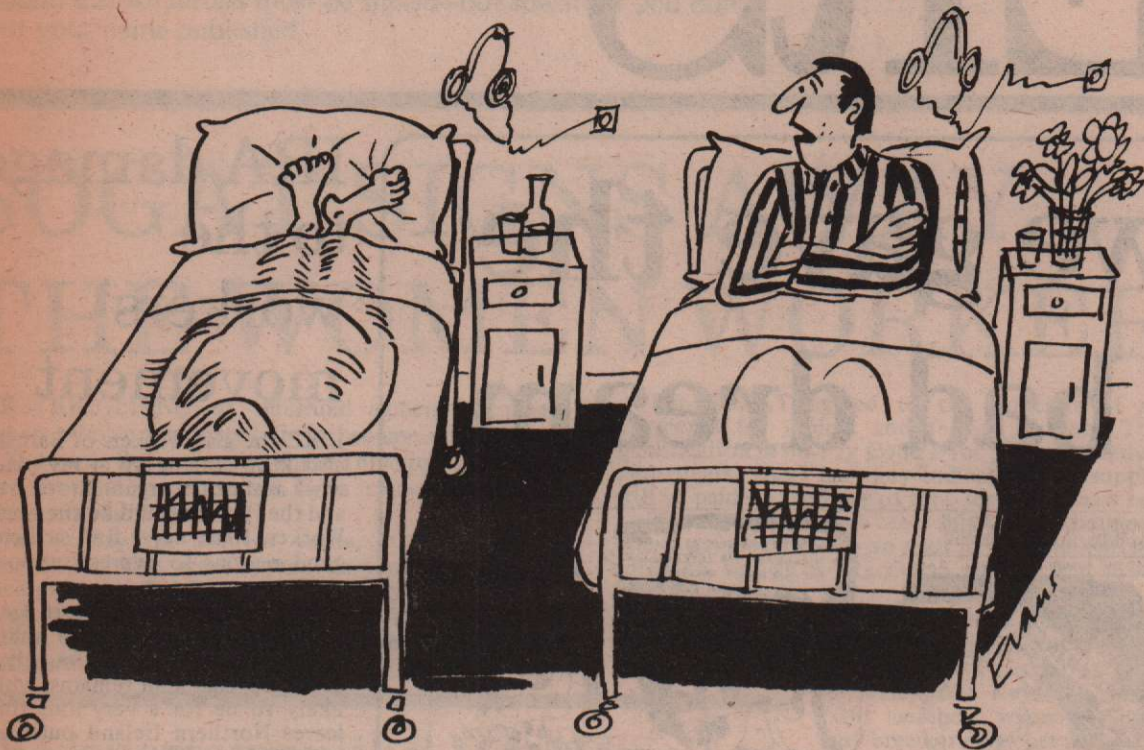
John was not, of course, just run of the mill convenor. He was thorn in the flesh of management and describes himself as a John Blun stating his case clearly to management with no wrapping in pretty words.

He lost a job previously in a local firm after 'a long period of industrial strife' and will probably find difficult to get another locally with reputation like that.

The shop floor is extremely angry at the way their brother has been treated. Management is unlikely to get rid of their thorn so easily.

Evans

I THINK THAT NURSE IS FROM AN AGENCY, SID!



Leyland's 47 safety awards — and Douglas Field is dead

READERS may remember our story a few weeks ago of how Douglas Field died at the bottom of a sludge pit in the number two paint shop at Austin, Longbridge, Birmingham. The pit was 'guarded' by a bench 7ft long by 1ft 4in wide.

An inquest has now been held. The dead man

had a cut on his head and cause of death was stated as suffocation. The inquest also recorded that the safety precautions taken were 'inadequate for the situation'.

According to British Leyland's company paper the firm has 47 awards for safety.

Leyland workers locked out and arrested

STRIKES are illegal in Franco's fascist police state. That is one of the main reasons why 'democrats' like Lord Stokes put up plants there. He was looking for a docile, low-paid workforce.

But Spain's fascist dictatorship is beginning to crumble at the edges. Spanish workers are on the move. 1700 of them staged a sit-in at British Leyland's Authi subsidiary in Pamplona, claiming a 40 per cent

pay rise.

The British Leyland 'democrats' called in the fascist police who drove the workers out of the plant by their customary gentle methods. Management then suspended the workforce for two days.

But only 300 turned up for work after the suspension in spite of the best efforts of the police. So British Leyland declared a three-week lock-out. Lock-outs are illegal too under

Spanish law, but the law is never enforced against 'respectable' and 'law-abiding' men like the British Leyland management.

Instead the police burst into Pamplona Cathedral where the locked-out workers were holding a meeting with the permission of the bishop. The point is that meetings are illegal too, except on religious premises. The police are not supposed to enter such premises without permission.

They did. They broke up the meeting and arrested six 'ringleaders'.

But the dispute goes on. Lord Stokes is beginning to learn that even General Franco's support will not enable him to maintain industrial feudalism in his Spanish enterprises much longer. Perhaps that is why he is reported to be anxious to sell out to General Motors.

Socialist Worker meeting for
British Leyland workers
in Birmingham
THE NEED FOR
A WORKERS' PAPER

Speaker: Paul Foot
Friday 21 June, 7.30pm,
The Old Bull's Head (upstairs room),
near Digbeth Hall, Birmingham

BLACKLIST FAILS

by Frank Dobbs

Vice-president, Middlesbrough Branch
AUEW Construction Section

REDCAR:-170 steel erectors at the British Steel complex have been on strike since last Thursday over the sacking of nine shop stewards. The site is the biggest construction job in Britain for years. It employs nearly 2000 men in all trades, soon to be increased by thousands more.

The main contractors, who include Redpath Dorman Long and William Press, have operated an extensive blacklist and few militants have slipped through the net. Many who worked on the Anchor site at Scunthorpe have been refused work.

This dispute is a turning point. The stewards attempted to call a site committee for all unions. Nine stewards asked for time off to attend. This was refused.

They offered to take time off without

pay. This too was refused. They attended the meeting—and were sacked.

All the AUEW men on the site walked out. On Tuesday they voted unanimously to stay out. Other unions are now offering support. At the meeting many strikers expressed dismay at a statement by Harold Robson, the right-wing AUEW Engineering Section district secretary, that the strike did not affect the Engineering Section—though one of their stewards had been sacked.

A strike committee and temporary convenor have been elected. When the companies have agreed to reinstate the sacked stewards one of the first targets of the joint site committee will be to bring all contracts up to a standard site rate of the £1.28½ an hour now paid by William Press and then to improve from there.

Students face the Front

STUDENTS who heckled a Canterbury National Front meeting last week were attacked by NF organisers armed with clubs and chairs. One girl is still in hospital suffering from serious concussion. A National Front member hit her on the head with a chair.

The police protected the meeting and turned a blind eye to the violence by the fascist heavies. They arrested 10 students but the students were successful in that no members of the public went into the hall.

Donations are needed for legal aid for the 10 students arrested. Please send to Students Union, University of Kent, Canterbury, Kent.

The fight against fascism is one of the main issues at the emergency National Union of Students conference this Saturday. The right wing of the NUS has

attacked the resolution passed at the last conference calling on student unions to deny fascists and racials a platform in colleges.

Many socialists have opposed the resolution as a threat to free speech. They fail to recognise that fascist groups like the NF exploit the right to free speech to win support for their attacks on black people, which are on the increase. The NF are holding an anti-immigration demonstration in London on the same day. The left are organising a counter-demonstration to show to the fascists that they cannot use the streets to spread racist ideas with impunity.

All IS student societies must mobilise for this demonstration and where possible get their student unions to support it.

The grants campaign is the conference's other big issue.

The government announcement on grants last month attempted to buy off the well-organised universities and polytechnics by raising the main grant to £615 a year, as opposed to the £655 demanded.

None of the other demands, especially the abolition of discrimination against married women and of discretionary awards, have been met.

The NUS Executive would like to use the government's concessions to call off the grants campaign next term. But the fight for higher grants must continue.

Because of the way in which the Executive has run down the campaign, next term the campaign will have to be more low-keyed, concentrating on the Further Education sector, which has been left out in the cold by the government's announcement.

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WHAT WE THINK

Another plan to cut wages

'A SYSTEM of universal indexation should be introduced on a percentage basis whereby for each one per cent rise in the retail price index there is a corresponding one per cent rise in gross monetary earnings from employment, the system to be operated quarterly.'

So says the report of the 'independent' National Institute of Economic and Social Research. The proposal is part of a package of which the centrepiece is an increase at all for two years except the cost of living adjustments.

This is a plan for a systematic reduction of real earnings. This is a plan to weaken trade union organisation, especially at shop floor level. This is a plan to abolish all free collective bargaining. This is a plan to fasten state control of wages on the working class.

All trade unionists need to be absolutely clear about these aims. For there is no doubt that, with present levels of inflation, some workers will be tempted by a scheme that appears to offer some protection. There is no doubt either that the 'independent' NIESR is being used as a catspaw by the government. The report is a try-on.

A one per cent gross increase for a one per cent price index rise does not maintain real wages. The Economist magazine, a strong advocate of 'indexation', complacently notes: 'Threshold agreements are now putting up the wages of the unions [sic] that accepted them, but higher tax payments ensure that these wage increases offset only three-quarters of the rise in prices.' Under the NIESR plan there would be cumulative real wage cuts in this way for two years.

The reason the NIESR wants the flat rate 40p of the present threshold scheme replaced by one per cent is partly to save the employers money. 40p is one per cent of £40 and millions of workers earn less and would get less than 40p per point rise. Still more important, it wants to avoid 'differential disputes. The flat-rate (40p per point) marginally reduces differentials. The percentage rise marginally increases them. So the lowest paid come worst off. So much for the 'social justice' we hear of from Labour Party platforms.

Most important of all, by replacing collective bargaining with automatic state pay control, the plan aims at castrating the unions and, especially, the militants.

Look at the history of the various attempts to cut real wages since 1966, the year the last Labour government introduced its total wage freeze. Time and again strongly organised sections have broken through, after a period of acceptance, and bust the norms. Then less well organised sections, or sections with less leverage on the employers, have been aroused and have followed through.

This year's miners' strike is only the latest big scale example. It is this process that has frustrated wage cut plans. It is this process that the government and the employers are out to stop.

The 'social compact' can now be seen more clearly for what it is—a paper-thin sugar coating on a scheme for cuts in working class living standards. On the one hand Dennis Healey says 'nobody now thinks that profits is a dirty word'. On the other hand he describes independent trade union action as 'the ethics of the Clockwork Orange'. The Labour Party, in office, is playing its traditional role—doing the dirty work for the employers.

Under no circumstances must the NIESR scheme or anything resembling it, be accepted by the trade union movement. The job now is to get everything that can be got out of the present threshold scheme and at the same time to compel the government to honour its repeated election promises to restore free collective bargaining.

Nothing else will do.

Orange and black

IF YOU wear a black beret and dark glasses you will be prosecuted in future under the Public Order Act. If you wear an orange sash and the rest of the regalia you are perfectly safe. That is what Roy Jenkins' pledge to the Tories in the House of Commons actually means.

Incidentally, when the Public Order Act was originally introduced, the Labour Party correctly denounced it as an attack on freedom of expression and a weapon of the political right wing. They voted against it and promised its repeal. That promise has gone the way of all the other Labour promises.

LETTERS

Shouldn't this page be read and red?

THE LETTER PAGES reveal a lively interest in our paper, good, but is that all we are after? Those pages of the paper are like a colourizer chart, in which a hundred and one shades of opinion find expression.

Reading those letters reminds me of an early experience of unfettered discussion. Comrades were invited to a meeting to 'speak as you please'. Many spoke, the sole restraint was the chairman who regulated the time. At the close of the meeting as one walked out into the fresh air those that attended were conscious of one thing only; the diversity of opinions expressed.

All very liberal, no guidance, no central theme, no conclusions just a rich variety of individual opinion. That is not what we are after when we speak of worker correspondents. We surely want our readers as they turn from one page to another to feel a guiding hand, helping, equipping them for tomorrow's battles.

Many of us have looked longingly for the signs of a revival in the European working class movement. If one is not falling into the error of greeting the arrival of the first swallow as the sign of spring, it does seem that in Germany, France, Spain and Portugal the workers are once again on the march.

Should we not seriously be thinking of Socialist Worker correspondents in Europe? It is time we ceased to be content with international coverage which reflects and re-writes the continental left press.

Reportage of trends, trade union struggles, political analysis of the unfolding of European scene will enrich our paper and make us all better International Socialists. 50 years ago worker communists employed and unemployed paid their international levy.

For the price of a pint of beer less to drink, we could start building our own correspondents in the capitals of Western Europe.

Finally, I regret to have to express my objection to a passage in your editorial on the situation in Portugal (11 May) namely where you solidarize us with the Maoist advice to the soldiers to desert with their arms.

Let us never forget our ABC. For a revolutionary soldier to desert the army, even with a knapsack full of ammo would mean leaving behind the masses with the officer caste in possession of the modern technical means of warfare.

The line you advanced in that editorial was an individual answer to a political problem. Surely the revolutionary soldier, more so in a revolutionary situation such as exists in Portugal, must tirelessly endeavour to win influence for the idea of soldiers' councils that would ally themselves with the struggles of the workers and peasants.

The individual road out is not our road, whether in the army or the factory we are organically part of the masses in their struggle.—HARRY WICKS, London.

IN BLACK AND WHITE

ONE OF the main grievances of the strikers at the Imperial Typewriters factory in Leicester is the lack of Asian shop stewards. Transport and General local officials and national organiser Moss Evans have tried to explain this by saying it is because of the union rule whereby two years' membership of the TGWU is required before the men can become stewards.

In fact, where I work I was elected branch secretary and a TGWU steward long before I had completed two years' membership. As our local district official said, the rule can be waived if the members concerned so wish.

Now that Moss Evans regards this rule as being sacrosanct, I am awaiting notification of the withdrawal of my credentials. Although I do have one thing in my favour—I'm white.—DAVE LING, London, N16.

Night we gave the boss a bad dream

FUNNY to see last week's 'Our Norman' cartoon in Socialist Worker because Monday night saw our bosses getting the old 'Get up, get out of bed'.

Intex Yarns of Ashton under Lyne, part of the ICI Fibres Division, has recently changed the old Qualitex shifts to new ICI-type shifts. One concession made by the bosses was that payment for those on night shift would be made on Tuesday night/Wednesday morning, so that the lads wouldn't have to come in for their wages on their day off.

The bosses, used to treating the lads in a high handed manner, had put in the foreman's log book on Monday night that 'Too bad, Securicor can't manage the wages! You'll have to come in on your day off for them'.

The lads decided to leave the machines and go down to the canteen and stay there until the bosses could guarantee us our wages for 7.30 on Wednesday morning.

The little bosses got woken first of course—and our little boss duly appeared sleepy-eyed and waffled on about 'Securicor can't manage it—we can give you a sub—no envelopes—if we can draw it from the bank...'

The lads said: 'Too bad—no wages, no work! We'll have it in toffee bags if you have no envelopes.' Our shop stewards, when asked to leave and negotiate said: 'We're just the mouthpiece of the lads—you'd better talk direct with them.'

The convenor, who has been taking a bashing from the rank and file recently both in the factory



Last week's Our Norman cartoon

and the union branch, came in all militant and took a hard line against the bosses.

At 6.45am we decided to go to the gates and meet the incoming shift and put our side to them. 'What shall we do lads?' 'Support B shift' was the reply.

Result, management caved in. 'We'll find the money somewhere'.

Tuesday night when we came into work the bosses called us direct into the canteen for a meeting. Previously they had said in the event of a sit-down the foreman would immediately clock us all off. However, deciding that discretion was the better part of valour they decided this didn't include B shift.

Since they had already docked

the women's pay they wanted face-savers.

'We'll pay you from 2am to 6.45,' they said, 'but you did leave the factory at 6.45 so we will want a good argument to pay you from 6.45 to 7.30.'

We said: 'We'll give you some "Aggro" if you don't.' This seemed a good argument. So they agreed to pay us from 2am to 7.30.

As we told some of the women, who of course have two bosses—one at the factory and one at home: Why B shift got paid and the women got docked is because we are strong and hard, and the women are soft and weak.

They'll know next time.—INTEX INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS, Ashton under Lyne, Lancs.

IRA damage to the workers' movement

LIKE the glassworkers of Barnsley, I also keep coming up at my place of work against the arguments on Ireland and the IRA. But, unlike the Socialist Worker, I can never find sufficiently good reasons to express support for the movement.

The struggle in Northern Ireland, after all, has managed to split the working class there thoroughly, and as long as that split remains, which is likely to be for a very long time, it leaves Northern Ireland outside any potential workers' revolutionary movement. The political attitudes of the various IRA groups involved are very doubtful to any Marxist movement, and the predominantly nationalistic character directly in conflict with the international character of Marxist workers' movement.

There remains only the area of fight of the IRA against the international capitalism as the occupying force. Were we to ally ourselves with anyone who manages to get up the noses of the capitalists and the establishment, we would have to accept into our ranks of people like the Kray Brothers.

And while we support these politically doubtful groups, Northern Ireland is being used as a thorough training ground for the new political police, which eventually will release its talents and the newly learned knowledge on the real Marxists, and the real revolutionaries of Britain.—GEORGE LAMBOR, Hove, Sussex.

Wrong about the AUEW

AT A recent meeting we in the Exeter International Socialists' Branch, strongly disapproved of the editorial (18 May) on the engineering union strike against the Industrial Relations Court.

There was little analysis of the situation. There was no criticism of Scanlon's role in the dispute. This omission implies some degree of support for his calling off the strike, whereas the strike should have remained solid until the NIRC was dead.

The editorial ignores the potentially dangerous tactic of the ruling class of buying off a strike with a seemingly large sum of money but which in fact represents only a small percentage of their profits. It is dangerous to exude enthusiasm over a partial victory such as this.

Scanlon should be criticised for calling a strike for the withdrawal of the fine and not for a strike to smash the NIRC.

The paper should give a lead to the working class and seems to be failing in this by giving a superficial analysis such as this. It is a common fault in reformist papers but is not expected from Socialist Worker.—ROSIE MACKNEY, Exeter.



Division between unions is harming nurses' cause

LACK OF CO-OPERATION between the two main unions involved in the nurses' fight for higher pay, NUPE and COHSE, is undermining the battle.

NUPE's decision not to take part in any industrial action now that the inquiry has been granted for example.

In Edinburgh the feeling is such that the two unions are reluctant even to jointly organise a march.

The SE Scotland regional officer of NUPE, Tony Martin, makes frequent statements to the press about the irresponsibility of overtime bans, work-to-rules etc, without a national ballot of all nurses.

Furthermore he said in a radio interview that NUPE would urge its members to cover for COHSE nurses who are taking industrial action. In our language, to scab on fellow trade unionists. Has he balloted his members to see if they would be prepared to do anything so despicable? The answer is obvious!

Only by nurses acting together can we hope to win our claim, and help to stop the rot of the health service. I, therefore, urge all NUPE nurses to condemn the inactivity of our union, and the reactionary statements of such officers, and to organise at rank-and-file level to force the union

into true representation of its members.

Only in this way can we present the united front that is essential.—SUSAN SIMMONS, (NUPE), Edinburgh.

SOVIET DISSENTERS

HOW ABOUT a real analysis of the whole phenomenon of the treatment of Soviet dissenters? While Solzhenitsyn gets so much coverage in the western press, the real heroes, eg Feinberg, Gorbanevskaya and General Grigorenko, are ignored.

Further, much naivety is displayed, even in Socialist Worker about the machinations of the Soviet authorities. I would like especially to bring to readers' attention the way they have outplayed the West over Solzhenitsyn. They seem to have 'released' him exactly when it suited them ie exactly when he had broken.

Without further ado just compare tracts from 'One Day' with the crazy trash he's coming out with now. Could it be that he is now unfortunately living proof that 'dissenters' really are unstable ranters and not the socialist heroes that those who suffer the all too familiar nightmare treatment are?—MIKE WOLSTENCROFT, Blackley.

Please keep your letters as short as possible, type them if you can, don't worry if you can't. But write on one side of the paper only, and space them wide so we can read them! Address them to LETTERS, Socialist Worker, Corbridge Works, Corbridge Crescent, London E2. All letters must be signed—but specify if you don't want your name published.

Postal Points

SOGAT SIGNS AWAY THE WOMEN WORKERS

THE TRIGGERING of threshold agreements means workers who've negotiated their become eligible for a £1.20 award. But under the Phase Three pay code many other workers not covered by a clause in national agreements could also claim.

On 28 May the printers' union, SOGAT, national executive said they were approaching trade associations to negotiate threshold clauses. On 29 May SOGAT signed an agreement with the employers association, the Scottish Master Printers. All chapels were told about it in Glasgow and West Scotland.

But SOGAT agreed to the principle of *pro-rata* payments for juniors and female learners. The *only* qualification in the Pay Code is for pro-rate payments for part-timers. There isn't any indication that supplements will be paid on the basis of time served or basic rate.

Threshold increases are supposed to be *across the board* payments based on rises in the retail price index. Inflation hits all workers' pay packets and lower paid workers more.

What the SOGAT executive have done is concede a point which wasn't even on the table for discussion!

The March issue of the SOGAT paper quoted general secretary Bill Keys as saying that: 'Our members, when they go out to buy bread or meat, get no concessions if they happen to be Class Four, Class Three or women's rates. They all have to pay the same.'

The 'sportsmanlike' Mr Howell

I WAS interested to read your report on the annual conference of the white collar APEX recently.

The conference was an abject lesson in how to abuse democracy. Dennis Howell, Minister for Sport, and Roy Grantham, Europe's best friend, manage year after year to deny lay members their basic rights.

It so happened that 1974 brought a rules revision conference, a five yearly event, when branches can table amendments—the executive have that privilege every year.

It was mooted that APEX elect their officials and staff, a basic democratic principle to be shouted from every roof top, yet strange to say, Denis Howell allowed a motion of 'next business' which was carried and the subject was not progressed.

An attempt to retire the executive at 65 was similarly treated and David Rhydderch, 74 and Bernard Bagnari, 70 breathed a sigh of relief.

Howell is guilty of blatant cynicism and total disregard for the basic principles of trade-unionism and socialism, merely using his position to spout his own ideas on the Common Market, a subject which has not been debated at conference since 1971, despite many motions presented. (APEX supports Britain's entry into Europe, although the majority of members do not.)

He calls delegates to the rostrum who have speeches to read, which have been written by members of the executive—he prolongs debates on minor issues to try to avoid discussing vital matters. Most despicably, however, is his destruction of the rules of debate, for every time he calls for a vote he repeats and emphasises the executive's attitude, to ensure that they get the last word.

If, by some mischance, conference goes against his advice, there are still ways and means of reversing the decision.

In 1971, when Howell was not president, it was agreed that APEX withdraw investment from those



Dennis Howell and friend (T Dan Smith, now in jail)

companies who make fat profits from cheap South African labour.

As a result of this motion, the Executive Council did absolutely nothing. David Rhydderch, general treasurer, tried to say that it was impossible to find a company not interested in South Africa, yet the Anti-Apartheid Movement can provide a list of such firms.

It is sad to report that in 1974 APEX was kidded into reversing the decision, thus tolling the death knell of credibility.

Amazing isn't it? Howell the Minister complains to the British Lions about playing rugby in South Africa, whilst Howell, the so-called trade unionist lends active support to their regime and besmirches the name of APEX.

It is time the lay members came together and denounced this violation. APEX had a good name once, but its almost Tory ideals are embittering the rank and file trade unionist, who is bewildered by its ostrich-like attitude. Until a proper democratic executive is elected, APEX will be nothing more than a mouth-piece for Howell, Grantham and their stooges.—MIKE SMITH, Chairman APEX, Sheffield Tinsley.

So why did they sign this SMP agreement contradicting this?

It is practically unique in including a two year training period for women in addition to different rates for women workers according to age. Therefore the threshold clause will affect large sections of women workers in the trade.

Men walking into male auxiliary jobs will have got the full £1.20, women with 11 months training will get 96 pence!

There are fantastic repercussions from this agreement for all workers negotiating thresholds at this time. There is now a precedent for pro-rata agreements in certain situations. What's to stop other employers from extending the principle?

It's essential that SOGAT members demand a re-negotiation of the agreement. Resolutions should be sent from all chapels, branches and districts.

Where possible members should negotiate plant agreements for the full £1.20 for all members.

It's our turn to say YOU'RE NOT ON!—JANNIE LIEVOW, Glasgow.

Not round here...

I READ with interest your article on the Engineering union strike and how the rank and file responded to the leadership. I do not think it was quite like that.

In the factory where I work (GEC Measurements) the strike call was put to the vote and they decided not to strike by a very large majority, with only a few people going home. I wonder to what extent this happened throughout the country or what would have happened if every member had voted.

Socialist Worker should have pointed out the failure of the union leaders in not preparing its members on the issue beforehand. Unfortunately many members did not know what it was all about.—JOSEPHINE COSTELLO, Stafford.

HOW MUCH? POW! . . . Every Thursday Nationwide exposes some of the latest frauds going on in the shops. They probably just want to let off some steam and have done. We can learn a lot more from the peasants and workers of a couple of centuries back . . . When Honiton farmers in 1766 tried to hoard corn to force prices up, lace workers seized the corn, took it to the market themselves, sold it at a reasonable price and returned the money and even the sacks back to the farmers. Men working on the turnpike in the Thames Valley became their own 'consumer unit' saying, 'with one voice, come one and all to Newbury in a body to make the bread cheaper.' They toured the villages and towns around Abingdon, and Maidstone to enforce a 'popular price' on all provisions . . . At other times market places were taken over for days at a time by women whilst the men went out into the countryside to seize corn. In 1795 Nottingham women, 'went from one bakers shop to another, set their own price on the stock therein and putting down the money, took it away . . . Such traditions show our power and ability to organise. Let us learn from those traditions and use that power to create a society where people control their own livelihood and destiny.—CHRIS FULLER, Norwich.

ONLY HALF THE STORY . . . the paper is very good at exposing the mistakes and sell-outs of reformist Labour Party and trade union leaders . . . But corruption and being bought off with a few privileges isn't the whole story . . . To suggest that the many branch secretaries who've been fighting the bosses for the last 40 years are corrupt would be a vile insult—the problem is they are serious reformists . . . There must be more about how the idea that you can reform the system is wrong. That what is needed is revolutionary change . . . How reformism splits the working class's fight against capitalist exploitation into an 'industrial sphere' and a 'political' sphere . . . How reformism has only worked because of the boom of the 1950s and 1960s . . . When the cake stops growing then to keep the same size slice you must take over the bakery.—DAVE BLAKER, London N1.

GO AND ASK THE UDA . . . The protestant workers struck in Northern Ireland not because they are intent 'on maintaining the ascendancy of one community over the other' (Eammon McCann 25 May) but because they are no longer content to accept the British ruling classes' view of unity in Ireland . . . They struck for control of their own lives at the expense not of the Catholic workers but of the British ruling class . . . Socialists everywhere should have supported the strike.—P LISTON, Oldham.

SEE LAST WEEK'S LETTERS . . . Socialist Worker still hasn't commented on the Ma'alot massacre . . . a large number of readers looked to the paper for a socialist viewpoint on this bloody incident and failed to get one . . . For the sake of all victims in the Middle East confrontation and not least of all, for the sake of the credibility of the only decent left-wing paper in Britain, such issues mustn't be ignored in future.—DICK DUNN, Barnet.

WHISKY DRINKERS OF THE WORLD . . . I read with amazement The Spongers Who Live On The Welfare in the News of the World where reporters scraped around to find a group of social outcasts who should be pitied not attacked . . . Why don't the reporters search at the other end of the scale among those whose only contribution to the community is that they were born lucky and privileged enough to have money . . . while the majority of the nation sweat they sit at board meetings drinking whisky . . . One of the 'spongers' named was a married woman with three children condemned because she gave up working for £15-£8 of which was rent.—C REID, Darlington.

FORCE FEEDING . . . in prisons can't be carried out properly . . . prison wardens—the medical ones have little knowledge of medicines and illness, nor have they any feelings towards prisoners apart from bad ones. They are only capable of obedience.—D GROVES (ex-inmate), Leeds.

STILL DEATH IN MANCHESTER . . . It was a good idea (Postal Points, 1 June) to suggest using cameras to get evidence . . . I've been taking photos of Labour millionaire MP Harold Lever's constituency . . . It has a polluted canal, debris strewn derelict sites, multi-storey flats built next to derelict mills and factories guarded by alsatians . . . It doesn't seem to matter whether the rich are Conservative or Labour, what is important is the unequal distribution of purchasing power.—M ROSSEL, Handforth, Cheshire.

IT ISN'T GOING TO BE . . . I recently joined the International Socialists, I would like to become a far more motivated socialist not just for the Irish people who I am very oriented towards at the moment but towards all people . . . I'm English but I feel that unless solidarity is reached between all workers and an effort is made from socialists of this country then the work of the great socialists of the past like James Connolly, Marx, Guevara or Trotsky will have been in vain.—CHRIS HUNT, Bury St Edmunds.

IT COULD ALSO BE MET BY GETTING RID OF THE EMPLOYERS . . . The nurses' pay demands could be met by an increase in the employers' share of the national health contributions . . . Why should the worker have his pay packet sliced any more when employers can easily afford it.—NAME WITHHELD, Norfolk.

I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME YOU, VLADIMIR, TO THE MEETING . . . Lenin said after attending a workers' meeting in London 'socialism is simply oozing from them. The speaker talks rot, and a worker gets up and immediately taking the bull by the horns himself lays bare the essence of capitalist society.' Lenin always placed his hope on the rank and file British workers who in spite of everything preserve their class instinct. This must be given expression in SW and show workers that it is truly their paper, a weapon to realise its full potential in the class war.—D WILLIAMS, Birkenhead.

MUM! THERE'S A FISH FINGER GROWING OUT OF MY EAR! . . . Duncan Hallas' article Racism—The False Divide states that racism doesn't occur to any extent in artificial or complex societies. He's wrong, evolution does operate but in different ways instead of favouring beneficial changes it operates in favouring the artificial factors demanded by that society.—DAVE MUNDAY, Redruth.

Disabled: Don't forget deaf

I REALLY must reply to Bob Kornreich's letter (1 June) which advocates that trade unionists enforce the employment of disabled persons, rather than the present situation continue, where employers condescend to employ the disabled as a favour to society.

May I ask readers to consider not only the plight of the physically handicapped and the blind, but the deaf, who, incidentally, were not mentioned in the letter?

I have the very dubious pleasure of looking for jobs for the deaf, although I am afraid that grovelling on my hands and knees before personnel would be a better way of a better way of describing my work. The Ministry of Employment seem unable in this area to place deaf persons, although it is traditionally

the role of the social worker for the deaf to coerce and implore employers to take on the deaf.

To do what?—the most menial and the congenitally deaf cannot represent themselves at all.

Not only are the deaf and other disabled persons, most begrudgingly offered employment, but they are sometimes the first to be made redundant without cause. I have implored management to retain them, knowing the difficulties they would have finding other jobs.

After an hour of reasoning and appealing to his conscience, calling a manager a heartless capitalist, among other things, can be the only weapon left.

Such weapons are not nearly enough. We need to change society. Nor is it enough to simply enforce the Disabled Persons Employment

Act upon employers, who would still assign the sweeping up posts to the handicapped.

Placed in the right job a handicapped person can do as good a day's work as his counterpart and should not be regarded by management as a liability to their companies. They should be treated equally with other workers, but with tolerance and compassion also.

I should like to enlist your readers' support should you feel any disabled members of your union are being treated unfairly. It is a hard enough struggle for ourselves to improve society without the disabled, and particularly the deaf, (who are always the last to be helped), being left behind in this fight.—JILL JONES, (Social Worker for the Deaf) Barnsley.

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TALKING ABOUT SOCIALISM



'AT THE present time man's numbers are increasing at the rate of 70 million a year . . . The fact is that within 5000 years, at our present rate of increase, the total mass of human flesh and blood will equal the mass of the known universe.'

So wrote Isaac Asimov, 'writer of science fact and science fiction', in The Observer last week.

And there won't be anywhere to stand and we will all starve to death. This is one strand in the message of currently fashionable prophets of doom. The other is the argument that the exploding population is polluting the world so massively and using up essential natural resources so fast that we are all going to be poisoned and/or so starved of necessary materials that civilised society will collapse.

The more extreme doomsters believe that we are near the point of no return, that very soon the process will become irreversible. They advocate 'zero population growth', a return to older methods of 'natural' agriculture, a halt to technological development and so on.

How much substance is there in these gloomy forecasts? There is a grain of truth.

It is a fact that rapid population growth is one of the factors—although certainly not the most important—that help to keep the bulk of the population of India and China at a very low economic level. It is a fact that pollution is a serious problem.

Power

But these facts, taken by themselves, are misleading. Take population. The population density of Britain—the number of people per square mile—is much higher than that of India. Africa south of the Sahara is much underpopulated by European standards. One of the highest 'scorers' in population growth is the highly developed USA. It is simply not true that dense population plus high population growth equals poverty and backwardness.

Nor is this at all surprising when you think about it. More mouths to feed also mean more hands to work. The question is what tools these hands have at their disposal and what power is behind their elbows. All the old established industrialised countries had a 'population explosion' as they were industrialised.

None of the relatively heavily populated 'underdeveloped' countries have anything like the population density of Belgium. Their problem is not over-population as such. It is the distortion and deformation imposed on their economies by world capitalism.

To take a simple example. In 1750 Britain and India both had highly developed cotton textile industries based on hand-loom weaving and domestic spinning wheels. These industries were ruined in both countries by the growth of

Profits of doom

factory-based steam powered machine production in Lancashire.

In both cases the handloom weavers were reduced to miserable destitution. But in Britain this was part of an overall process of industrialisation. In British-controlled India it was part of an overall process of de-industrialisation, of economic decline. And the two processes were really one. The industrial revolution in Britain and the destruction of Indian industry went hand in hand.

'Backwardness' is a product of capitalist development, not a result of the breeding habits of Indians, Chinese or whoever.

The danger of the 'population menace' argument is that it is a diversion from the main problem, the achieving of a social revolution and a planned economy. Of course it is theoretically possible for over-population to become a major problem. But it is not the major problem now.

And the same thing is true of the other 'ecological' arguments. The root causes of the state of the world are not technical, they are political.

Duncan Hallas

The politics of Lenin

PAUL GINSBORG

An introduction to the political arguments used by Lenin in his work in the Russian and international revolutionary movements, his ideas on the workers' state, building the party, internationalism, workers' democracy. 20p plus 4p postage (more than 10 copies post free) from IS BOOKS, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

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'Give us an organisation of revolutionaries and we will overturn Britain'

I TRIED to write an article about Paul Ginsborg's pamphlet* on the train up to a shop stewards' meeting in Dundee. I put the pamphlet down and thought about how the ideas and practice of Lenin and the Bolshevik Party related to my life and experiences.

On the news that day was the general strike in Northern Ireland, workers exerting their industrial strength for the most reactionary reasons. Lenin's ideas on imperialism related exactly to the sectarian stranglehold which exists in Ireland, where a community of workers, the Protestants, show how their might can be used, not for revolutionary purposes, but to bring back the status quo in Ireland, where one section of the population will be completely oppressed.

I thought of how different the situation might have been if these workers were organised into a revolutionary party with Leninist ideas. For a start they would be internationalist, and would reject all the rubbish that divides the working class.

Abdication

They would use their power to establish a workers' republic, not some sectarian state. They would reject their history of being systematically used by the British ruling class to further their profit making in Ireland.

Thinking along these lines, Lenin's ideas seemed as fresh today as they had ever been.

I was really struck by the introduction where Paul Ginsborg points out how Lenin never wanted any cult to be made out of him . . . and thought of that obscenity in the Kremlin, the mausoleum of Lenin, with his waxen body lying there and all those anti-Leninists like Stalin and Khrushchev parading around his tomb and holding his memory up to cover their own abdication of all the ideas Lenin ever stood for.

I remembered what I thought of Lenin before I joined IS. I saw him as a backcloth to Stalin. All Stalin's actions, I thought, were the direct responsibility of his predecessor, Lenin. I saw the Cold War, and heard on the TV how Russia was Communist, and how Communism was a threat to our Western Democracy.

In fact, Lenin appeared to me to be a bad bastard. I remembered the marches in Red Square where Lenin's pictures would parade by and I thought Lenin equals socialism, equals Stalin—and Stalin equals a murdering bastard.

Of course, there was no political education at school. All we were taught about was Henry VIII and King Alfred. We got nothing about the industrial revolution, nothing about my class and how the working

*The Politics of Lenin, by Paul Ginsborg, IS pamphlet, 10p.



by Willie Black

ETU, Robb Caledon Shipyard, Edinburgh

class came into being. And certainly nothing about Lenin or the Bolshevik Party.

I once called the revolutionary party, at a public meeting, the 'memory of the class' and it's amazing how true this is.

A few years ago when I was a teenager, I used to go to parties and talk left. Revolution to me was what Che Guevara did in Latin America, or what the Viet Cong was doing in Indochina. Imperialism was what the Americans were doing in Vietnam.

I didn't think revolution in any way applied to what I thought was 'my' country. Britain didn't need a revolution. British workers were all right. It wasn't heaven but neither was it hell.

Lenin's idea that the trade union machine is a short-term defence mechanism was brought home to me. I became aware that the trade unions could not achieve socialism. The mist was lifting. The International Socialists gave me the politics to grasp what the trade unions were all about.

Lenin began to be a great working class hero, not a bad bastard. The Bolshevik Party began to be a party to be admired. The Russian Revolution was the greatest thing the international working class had ever seen.

Ideas about Stalin were cleared up. I learnt that Russia was not a socialist or a communist country. Stalin's ideas on Socialism in One Country and the British Communist Party's Parliamentary Road to Socialism all fell into place.

These ideas had nothing whatever to do with the real struggle for socialism.

But for me it was a painful process learning all this. IS had no short and simple pamphlet on Lenin. It had to be done talking informally over pints of beer, going to day schools, trying desperately to read Lenin's own writings, which I found

difficult.

What I needed was a general introduction to Lenin. Paul Ginsborg's pamphlet serves as this. It is short, and to the point.

It will shatter many of the myths I went around with in my head about the Russian Revolution, Stalin, and the 'Communist' Party. Giving people like me the introduction I so desperately needed when I joined IS three years ago.

Power

In fact if we want to do service to the memory of Lenin, instead of looking at his body in the Kremlin, we should struggle even harder to make a reality of the workers' revolution he fought for. We should fight for the internationalism he advocated. We should build the kind of workers' party he had in Russia.

We have to build the kind of party that the Bolshevik Party was . . . a hard organisation, a disciplined organisation, a Leninist organisation. We need the type of workers' democracy that the Soviets were during the Russian revolution.

In answer to those who say 'You will never see the revolution. You're young sonny, it's a nice idea, but it'll never happen,' we can point to the Russian Revolution and say: 'It did happen, it can happen again and again.'

We can refer them to Lenin in February 1917 saying in a speech to the Swiss audience, 'We the old shall not live to see the revolution.'

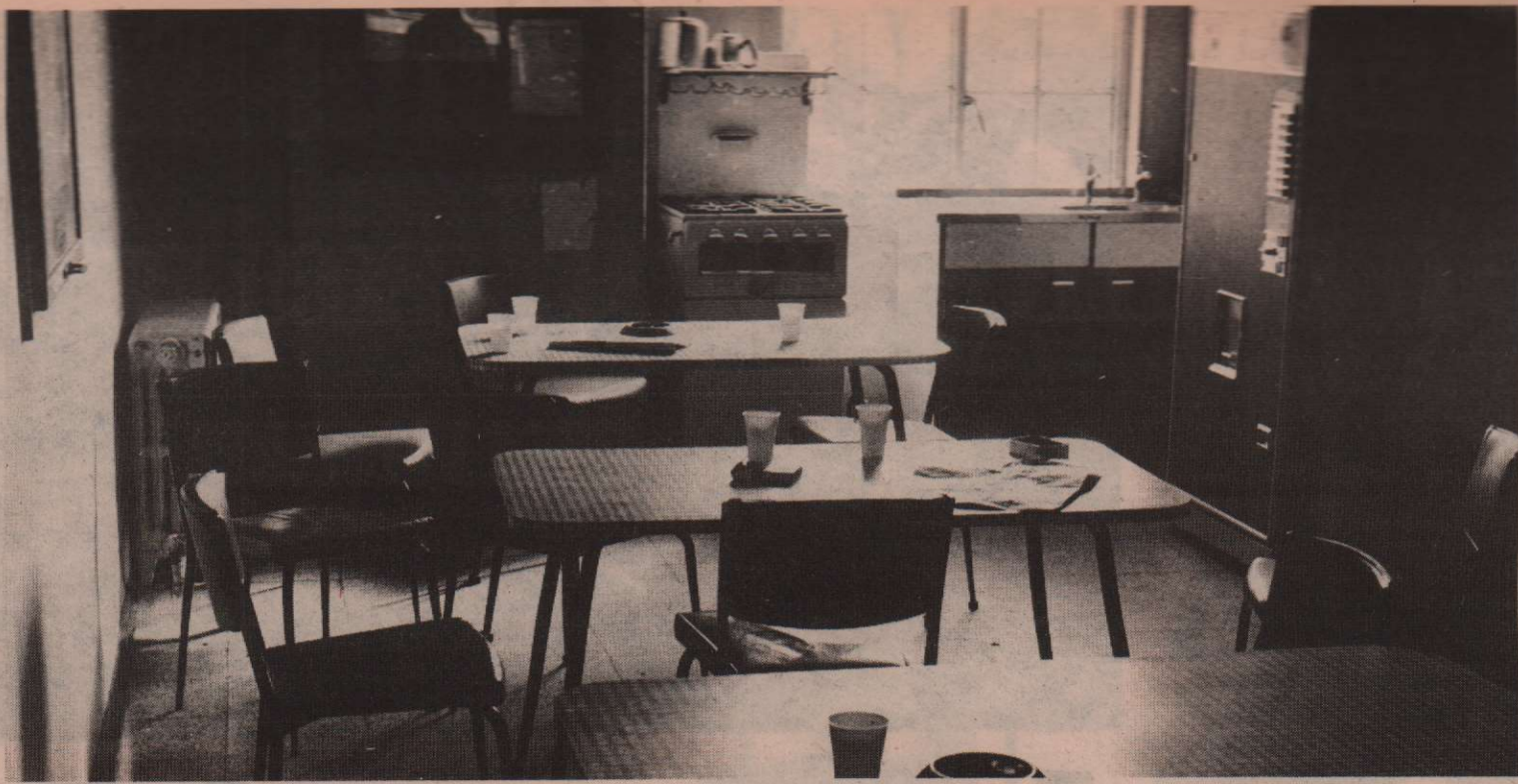
Two weeks later the revolution broke out in Russia and seven months later the workers were in power.

There are two quotes from the pamphlet which sum it up for me. 'The path to revolution is not covered with roses. We shall walk in mud up to our knees if necessary to reach the communist goal, to achieve victory.'

And: 'Give us an organisation of revolutionaries and we will overturn Russia.'

We say: 'Give us an organisation of revolutionaries and we will overturn Britain.'

'Canteen facilities', say the adverts for busmen's jobs. Here's the canteen at Whitehawk Garage—for 200 men. Meanwhile the managers at Southdown House get full scale meals for 20p.



Off work on Saturday at midnight, on again 8am Sunday. It's the ultimate in slave labour, said one conductor

THE old 'Brighton, Hove and District' Bus Company is now amalgamated with Southdown Motor Services and part of the National Bus Company. You've probably seen National's adverts—'together we can really go places'. Try telling that to the passengers!

But here in Brighton, at the Conway/Whitehawk depot, as far as we're concerned all that's happened is that the letters B H & D have been painted over. Exhausting duties, massive overtime and decrepit buses are still the order of the day, which is why busworkers here agree there will be changes in our working conditions—but on *our* terms, not management's.

The ads tempt you: 'alternate mornings and afternoons off,' they say. Can you imagine a more genteel way of describing the grind of shift work? Buses which go out at 6am and finish just before midnight are covered by *two shifts*—nine and ten-hour duties are inevitable and there are *no meal breaks at all*.

This inhuman system works wonders for profits as it destroys our health. The absolute maximum is squeezed out of both buses and the people who work on them, and both are used till they're clapped out. We're expected to operate ancient, poorly maintained vehicles—the night maintenance staff was sacked in a management 'economy' exercise—and broken-down buses are a familiar sight.

Slave labour

But more important is the effect on busworkers themselves. Conductor Paul Moran describes the feeling of 'permanent fatigue' from working unbroken shifts: 'On early turn, you get up at 4.30am, work till 2pm, and you're too tired to do anything.' On late turn your only free time is a few hours in the morning.

Social and home life are bound to suffer. One driver said: 'I never see the kids and I'm knackered when I'm off duty anyway.'

The ads also talk about 'canteen facilities' although they don't point out that there's no time to use them

while on duty. There *is* an excellent subsidised canteen at Southdown House, where managers on £5000 a year pay 20p for a full scale meal. But bus crews at Conway are charged expensive prices and must order their meals in advance—when they can get in—at a canteen which is shut by 3pm.

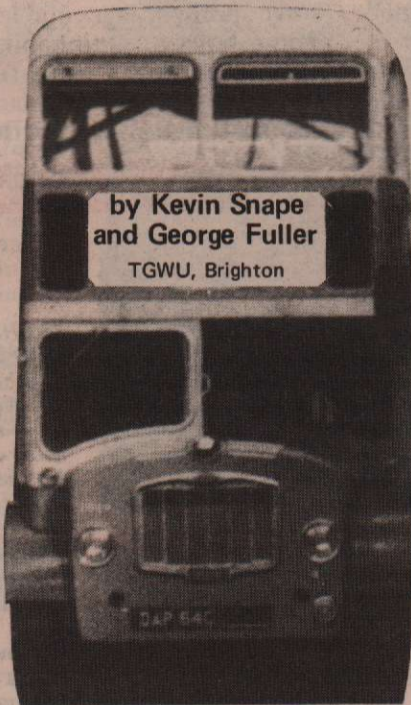
At Whitehawk the 'canteen' is a vending machine which disgorges its own mysterious blend of foul coffee, with a dash of tea and chocolate for flavour. If you're lucky you get a cup too.

As there are no scheduled meal breaks the only free time we get is the few minutes at each terminus while waiting for our time to go—if we're running late then we lose that as well.

There is nowhere even to get a cup of tea and nowhere to wash your hands. So bus crews have to stop the bus, nip out to the toilet, run back, gulp down a flask of coffee and grab a sandwich, eaten with hands covered in grime. Stomach ailments are inevitable.

And the stresses aren't just physical. Said Paul Moran: 'Working ten hours without a proper break, I think we all tend to crack up a bit from time to time. There have been cases of severe disturbance requiring hospital treatment.'

What happens when you fall ill? The ads refer to a 'sick pay scheme'. The 'sick joke scheme' means working a full year before receiving £1.16 for the first week, and £4 for each week



after that, less if you claim social security. This is unless you happen to be a woman—in which case you must work *three continuous years* before you receive a penny.

For slaving away under these conditions, we take home about £20 for 40 hours, with £5 a week extra for driver/conductors. Is it any wonder that busworkers so often do massive overtime to boost their pathetic

wages? Or that seven conductors in every ten left the job last year and three drivers in every ten, leaving the whole service understaffed.

One bloke who left recently told us: 'After many years of buswork in other parts of the country, I found the conditions in Brighton unbearable.'

Shortage of crews means cuts in the service. Conway/Whitehawk buses are running on a permanent 15 per cent cut, and this gets worse and worse as the holiday season goes on. But the management are doing very well thankyou—they save a fortune on wages, uniforms, maintenance and diesel, while the buses that do run take double the money.

Determined

One conductor finally packed it in because 'after ten hours continuous grind on a Saturday late turn, I took over £50 in fares, which means that bus had taken over £90 in one day, manned by two crews. Finishing after midnight, I was then expected to report for duty again before 8am Sunday as *scheduled work*. I consider this the ultimate in slave labour.'

Paul Moran is angry about the cuts in the service. 'It means a lousy service for the public, a load of extra work for us, but more profit for the company.'

How come a management have got away with all this for so long? For a start, high staff turnover makes

the job difficult to organise—potentially militant busworkers just get cheesed off and leave. Shift work and overtime mean crews have often been too knackered or too busy working to bother with the union.

Obstacle

Another obstacle has been the lack of unity between busworkers on the three different companies in Brighton, made worse by the fact that Brighton Corporation busmen are in a different union, the General and Municipal.

But busworkers here are determined that things will change. Union membership has more than doubled since January from 140 to 316. This leaves fewer than 100 still to get in, and the union committee has received a firm instruction from members to reach 100 per cent trade unionism by the end of July. We are also fighting for a basic of £35 for 35 hours, with paid meal breaks, operated through a three-shift system.

The new shop stewards' committee is building unity with the other Southdown depot, who are solid with us on the claim for £35 for 35 hours. Paul Moran points out: 'To win our claim we'll need to take industrial action, but we'll also need the active support of the corporation busmen.'

For too long, powerful organisation among public transport workers has been undermined by the isolation of busworkers in different companies, with different pay and conditions. Our local rank and file paper, 'Waybill', must be expanded to involve workers in the other Southdown garages and the corporation, but local unity is only the start.

It's time for *all* busworkers to join together at a rank and file level and fight together for a good public transport service, a living wage and decent working conditions. Papers like 'Waybill', the Lancashire 'Busworker', and London Transport's 'Platform' should be developed into a national busworkers paper—as part of a powerful rank and file busworkers movement. This is the kind of strength that will make the conditions at Brighton just an ugly memory.

We'd do better ourselves...

ROCKETS fly to the moon at staggering cost and return within a few seconds of the schedule. Yet no worker could rely on his bus to arrive within 10 minutes of schedule, let alone seconds.

Society is super-efficient at sending two or three astronauts a quarter of a million miles to a barren chunk of rock but bungles the job of moving workers, school children and shoppers a few paltry miles across town—why?

Transport is treated like any other commodity and provided not because people *need* it but because a profit can be made out of it. So we get luxurious, fast and comfortable aeroplanes and clapped-out, slow and uncomfortable buses. While works buses, almost always on guaranteed 'full-load' contracts, are generally reliable, the country services are axed, often isolating whole communities.

As cuts bite and connections become even more haphazard,

travelling time is increased and so, effectively, is the working week for large sections of the working class. More and more people are forced to buy cars or remain isolated at home, only going out when capitalism permits them, in other words to work.

With the huge increase in the number of cars on the road, pollution, road building, congestion and road accident costs have escalated to a phenomenal level. All because the transport system is being systematically raped in the quest for profit.

Fine words

Workers in public transport have suffered seriously. Before the war busmen were at the top of the wages table, today they are near the bottom. Despite fine words from the union leaders, productivity deals, especially one-man-operated buses, have been sold for a song and although there have been fine

examples or resistance in many areas they have been isolated by the union leaders' unwillingness to lead a national struggle against such attacks on working conditions.

But there are encouraging signs that busmen are beginning to fight back. There has been a spate of garage bulletins and local news sheets.

There will never be an efficient and ordered transport system until capitalism has been swept away.

This means that the industry will have to be taken over and controlled by rank and file busworkers and run in the interests of their working-class brothers and sisters. This is why members of the International Socialists and other rank and file busworkers are laying the foundations of a national group which will gather all the militants in the bus industry around a platform of fighting policies, a group which will eventually take hold of the industry and start to build an ordered transport system.



The London busworkers' Platform will put busworkers in contact with the rank and file groups throughout the country. Write to Platform, 403 Higham Hill Road, London, E17.

How they made

a bomb out of Nypro



AS THE devastation recedes into the past and the various parties prepare for the public inquiry, the 'cause' of the Flixborough disaster is likely to be narrowed down until some simple 'freak factor' emerges to explain it all.

Within a few days the factory Inspectorate and company spokesmen were saying the explosion was not the product of modern chemical technology but of a small-scale failure in traditional engineering techniques.

Already attention has been focused down to a length of 2ft diameter pipe which is thought to have fractured and allowed the escape of highly-inflammable cyclohexane vapour.

Attention will then be narrowed down to the installation of the pipe, to the welding method and to metallurgical problems. The appalling risk being run as a matter of course at the Nypro plant and in scores of other plants all over the country will be buried in the detail.

It is vital to understand that risk and the commercial pressures which have driven employers to build such bombs all over the country. The precise trigger mechanism is not that important.

Nylon is the chemist's rather inferior imitation of the formula for sheep's wool. There are six or eight ways to make it but until the early 1960s only one was cheap enough to be worth exploiting, Nylon 66. ICI and Dupont sewed up the patents between them and for 20 years after the war creamed off the fattest profits

THE Nypro plant at Flixborough was a bomb. At 4.53 on the afternoon of Saturday 1 June it went off with the force of a tactical nuclear weapon.

Twenty-eight workers died in the explosion or the fire which immediately engulfed the plant and burned for three days. A week later only two bodies had been identified and a mine rescue team which had tunneled through the wreckage was still at its

terrible task of bringing human remains out from the smashed control room.

More than a hundred people were injured as the blast ripped through surrounding villages and left more than 200 houses uninhabitable. Three thousand people were forced to flee before the cloud of black poisonous smoke which rolled northwards to the

River Humber.

Workers in other chemical plants and refineries on the Humber, at Hull and Saltend and Immingham and Grimsby, nearly 30 miles away, heard Nypro go up.

Since then they have been looking at their plants in a new light and asking the question that petrochemical workers all over the country must ask: are we sitting on a bomb?

REPORT: PAT KINNERSLY PICTURES: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

from an ever-growing market.

Other firms wanted a share of this action and sweated in their labs to produce another, preferably cheaper route to nylon.

In Holland the Dutch State Mines company succeeded, producing nylon 6.

It wasn't as good as Nylon 66—it absorbs more water for one thing—but it had the supreme advantage of being cheaper to make. Dutch State Mines was on to a good thing.

As British consumption grew, Dutch State Mines decided to set up in Britain. In 1965 construction began alongside the 25-year old ammonia plant at Flixborough.

The Board of Trade and the local authority had both given the go-ahead without hesitation. Chairman of the Brigg Rural Council planning committee at the time was Councillor Peter Raby. He admitted last week that planning permission had gone through almost as a matter of course when Nypro got its certificate from the Board of Trade.



Wes Hendry escaped from the plant after a blow on the head which knocked him to the ground. 'We went into the fitting shop to see if the others had got out and then we got out by the back road. By then the last of the plant was ablaze. It just went up,' he said.

'We didn't realise that what was a fertiliser factory would turn out to be a potential bomb,' he said.

By August 1967 Nypro UK was in production.

It was a profitable business and Dutch State Mines soon wanted a bigger plant to meet demand. In 1971 Dutch State Mines teamed up with the National Coal Board and began to build a new £15 million plant more than twice as big as the old one.

Into it they built a hazardous short cut. The original plant depended on a chemical called

phenol which was reacted with hydrogen to produce the key ingredient, cyclohexanone. Phenol is a dangerous poison to the nervous system but, for Nypro, it had a bigger disadvantage—it was becoming too expensive.

Nypro decided to make their cyclohexanone by oxidising cyclohexane, a volatile, highly flammable liquid. This involves reacting cyclohexane with air at high pressure and temperature.

Imagine filling a pressure cooker with petrol, putting it in your oven and heating it to 180 degrees centigrade at a pressure of more

than 100 pounds per square inch. You have a small scale, rather mild version of the hazard.

Cyclohexane is more flammable than petrol and Nypro was interested in more than a pressure-cooker full. When the new plant was commissioned at the beginning of last year it had a line of six reactors which contained 300 tons of cyclohexane at any one time.

That was Section 25A, the bomb. Nypro knew it was dangerous but others had been getting away with it since the late 1940s. Their main fear was that peroxides would form in the reactors and set off a mighty detonation. Their process controls were designed to prevent this.

When the new plant was commissioned, troubles on Section 25A mostly stemmed from cheap engineering: flange gaskets were the wrong type to resist cyclohexane and had to be replaced, pumps didn't work properly, valves did not seal completely.

Section 25A then ran well until March this year when a mysterious

The inquiry: How the workers are being kept out

THE shop stewards at Nypro learned some bitter lessons in the week after the disaster. Accustomed to dealing with a management so smooth you couldn't even tell when it was stringing you along, they suddenly found themselves working round the clock, supplying management with lists of workers, visiting the

widows, advising the 500 who had lost their jobs.

Although snowed under by such problems, the stewards committee kept pressing for an independent inquiry to get the facts for other chemical workers. They looked to their national officers for support.

By last Thursday morning, when the only national union officer to

have appeared was Owen Smith of the white-collar ASTMS, Engineers' Union shop steward Dave Liston sent a telegram to its president, Hugh Scanlon, asking for a national officer. None came.

But the stewards and activists in the labour movement had got things moving by themselves. On Thursday morning they were able to take two of their own technical advisers down to Nypro.

This pressure from below eventually forced the Transport Workers Union into action, though strictly on its own terms. Jack Jones, general secretary, announced that the union would conduct its own investigation—and named a chemist picked by head office.

After getting an independent trade union investigation under way, the stewards still wanted to ensure that their investigators would have access to the evidence on site and to Factory Inspectorate reports. They also wanted the public inquiry to be democratic,

with a trade union nominee on the panel and a say in choosing the chairman.

They hoped they might get these things from Michael Foot, Secretary for Employment, when he visited Scunthorpe last Friday. They hoped he would have lunch with them to discuss their ideas.

But Nypro management handed them a guest list for the lunch. On it was the Lord Lieutenant of Humberside; all the mayors were on it. There were no stewards on the list.

When Foot finally came to Kinsley Street Labour Club in mid-afternoon, trade union and Labour representatives were treated to the sort of evasive platitudes they could have had from any minister in any party.

Their suggestions for a democratic inquiry were 'not the way things are done'. Their demand for a right of access to the evidence was not answered.

form of corrosion on the outside reactors.

Instead of the whole section explained, Nypro heavy crane and suspect vessel. 15ft in the line bridged by a 1.5 meter pipe with expansion joints.

It was a run Nypro engineers pipework contractors of Scunthorpe brought in for the lift. The tion leaked.

Fracture of thought to have Nypro disaster. three-month old One possibility which can affect for about a quarter either side of the 'heat-affected zone' and chrome in the metal is we even cease to be

In the corro proved to exist plant, this was welding would with the greater checked by X-ray testing.

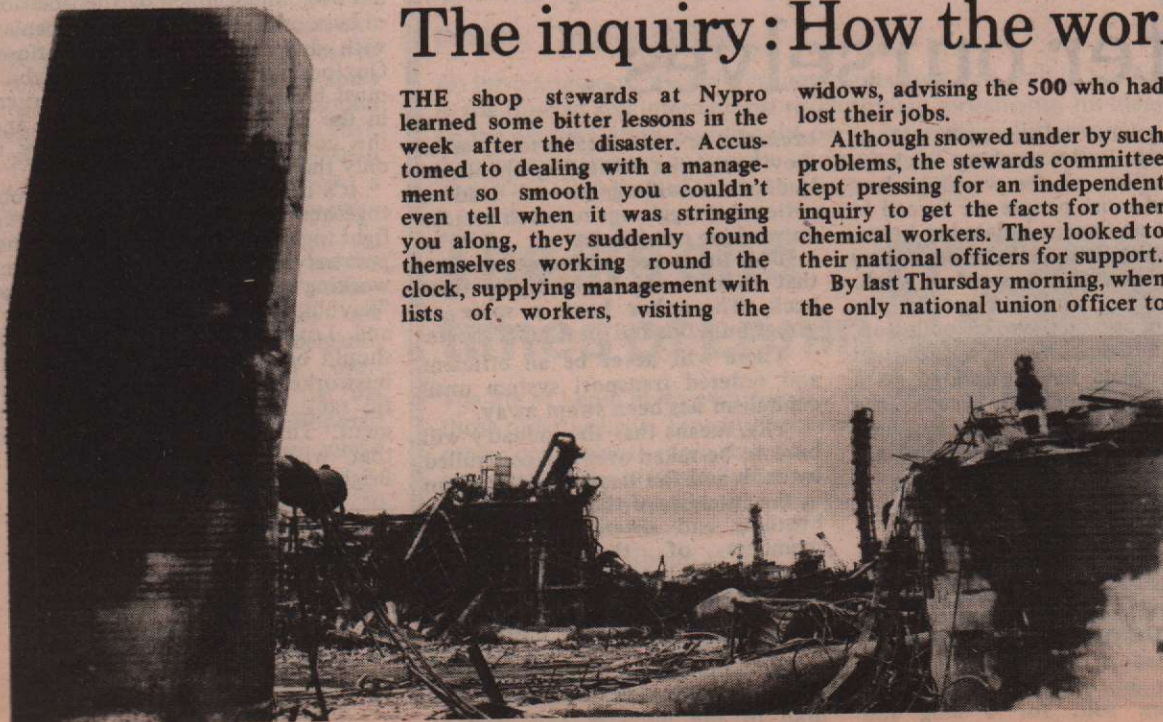
Saf

Workers who at the time told been done.

Mr Bell, a Ny took trade union round the site he didn't think been X-rayed. A men at Nypro's quarters at Scunthorpe questions could be by the chairman committee investigation. He wasn't known was back—they didn't phone number reached.

Whatever the pipe failure, it re shortcoming in engineering. Be was built as a h uous process i process all 3 cyclohexane in free to escape. T immediately an was rapidly er Any spark or set it off and i plex, where p together like cheap radio, it find one.

It was pro minute before up.



Somewhere beneath the wreckage lies the smashed control room where 20 died.



LEFT: The Nypro plant at Flixborough—it exploded with the force of a nuclear weapon.

RIGHT: Section 25A, the 300-ton bomb that blew up Nypro. On the left is the reactor which was pulled out with corrosion problems. Amid the wreckage in the space where it stood is the temporary pipe which triggered the disaster.

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There was no automatic shut-down valve on the reactor to limit the amount that could escape.

The 'sniffers' and sprinklers mounted over some of the flanges were useless against such an emergency.

The one system that might have prevented the cloud spreading beyond the spark-free zone is a steam curtain which automatically shoots into the air all around such an escape. It is expensive. It was not installed at Nypro's Flixborough plant.

Failing all that—and Nypro did fail—at least 20 lives were needlessly lost because the control room was a flimsy box instead of a concrete blockhouse designed to resist such a blast. A similar disregard was shown in the placing and design of the office block. Only a few hundred feet from Section 25A, its light structure just vanished in the blast. On a weekday another hundred workers might have vanished with it.

Nypro's new plant at Flixborough was built as cheaply as possible. 'Everyone agreed it was cheap and nasty, even some of the managers admitted it,' said John Walden, process worker and Transport Workers Union shop steward.

So that was Nypro, a yawning gap between the technology of profitable production and the costly methods needed to make it safe, a cheap plant for which workers ultimately had to pay the price, a hideous wreck of rusted steel, a silence broken by the wind in the crazy towers and by the sound of miners digging for pieces of men which widows might bury with dignity, the nightmare that is never far from the hollow dreams of capitalism.

How to fight these threats

THE fight against hazards in the chemical industry is one of the most difficult, because of the apparently complex processes. But many of the dangers become obvious when you look closely at each part of the plant and ask what would happen if it failed.

In most plants, you don't have to look hard to find dripping flanges, leaking valves, or—as at Flixborough—the regular minor fires which could trigger an explosion.

Workers have the power to wipe out such hazards. Workers' power at Nypro was vast. Nypro

nylon textile industry. The strike at BP Grangemouth paralysed road transport in Scotland. A strike at Nypro would have brought the nylon giants to their knees.

If this power is brought to bear on the management attitude to hazards, if every threat to life and health is answered by a threat to production, then the risks can be brought under control.

So we need:

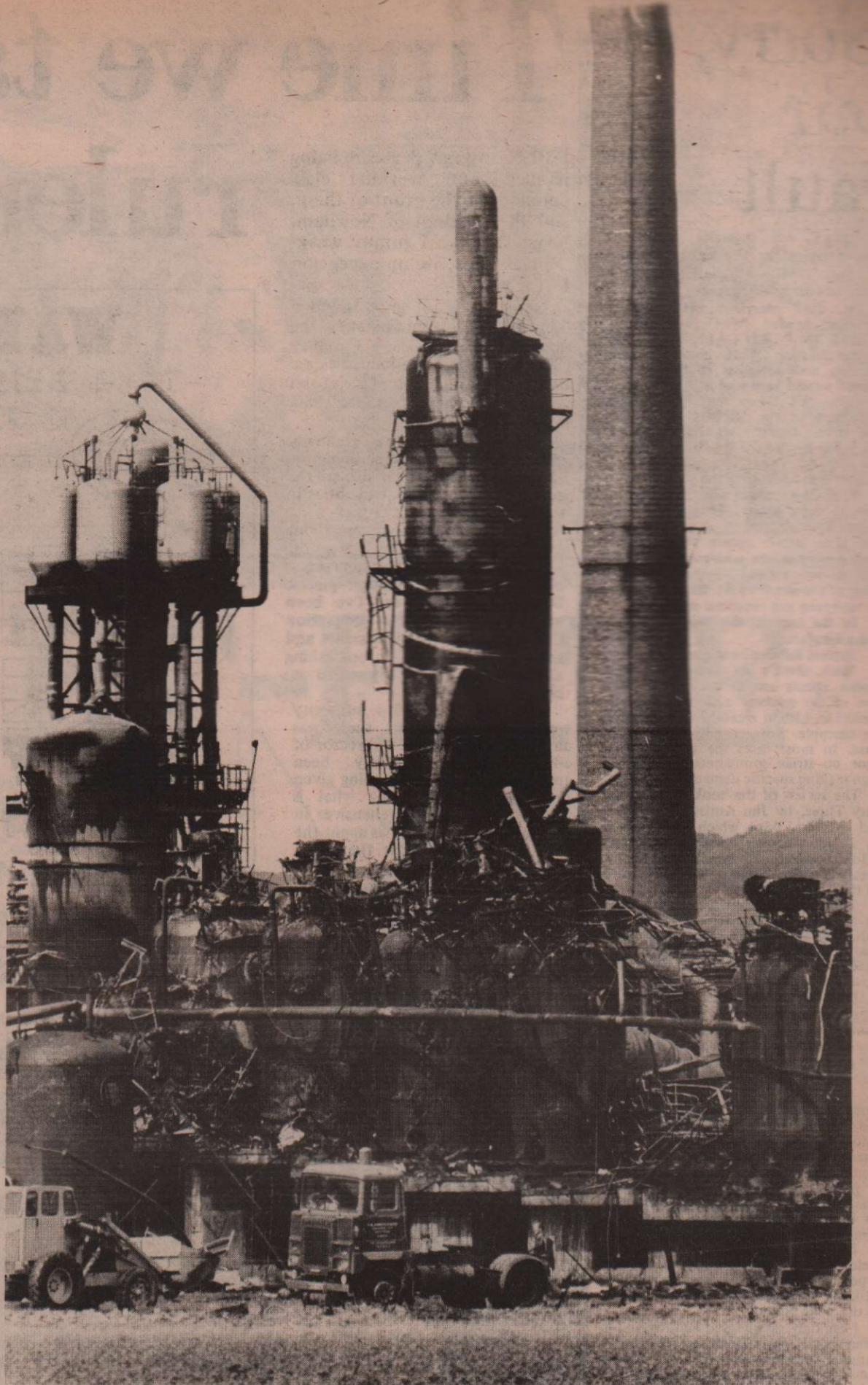
Combine links across the chemical industry to raise safety issues in every plant and refinery. That way, we get better information and stronger negotiating power.

The recognition of safety stewards in every section and the setting up of combined safety stewards' committees. The knowledge of the technicians' stewards must be tapped to help unravel the more complex hazards.

Union-organised 'back-up' services—safety officers and information bureaux. After the Nypro disaster an Engineers Union steward phoned head office in London to be told that the union's safety officer had left. No one could tell him who was doing the job now.

Workers can tame the hazards of industry. Rank and File organisation and safety committees are the only way.

But we will never end the terror of the Nypro-style bombers until the workers control the chemical industry for need and not for profit.



Betrayal across the sea

THE CAUSE of international solidarity has long been a favourite theme of platform socialists. Too often though, the leaders of the labour movement have put their hopes of reform and of respectability with their own bosses before support for workers in struggle elsewhere.

No better example of this exists than the behaviour of the British TUC during the Dublin lock-out of 1913.

A socialist and an organiser, James Larkin, founded an independent Irish Transport and General Workers Union in January 1909. In several sharp clashes the union grew quickly. Its growth fired trade unions throughout Ireland.

The bosses quickly drew together to fight this 'threat'. The fight for better pay and conditions threatened their profits. In 1911 the minimum working day in Dublin was 12 hours. The death rate was higher than that of Calcutta and Moscow.

But the threat to the bosses ran deeper. Larkin and the ITGWU did not confine themselves purely to the battle for better wages and conditions. With James Connolly, secretary of the

**HANDS
ACROSS
THE SEA**

Belfast ITGWU from 1911, they were committed to an Ireland free from British domination and controlled by Irish factory and farm workers.

The Irish bosses too were all for Home Rule for Ireland... as long as they could do the ruling.

In 1909 the Cork bosses formed an employers' federation. In 1911 the Dublin employers followed suit. By the middle of 1913 they were ready for a showdown. W M Murphy owned, among other things, the trams and newspaper presses of Dublin. On 15 August 1913 he gave his workers a choice: leave the union or be sacked.

The union took up the challenge. Nine days later the tramdrivers left their trams wherever they happened to be at 9.40am. More than 400 employers replied with a lock-out at the beginning of September.

By late September 25,000 workers from 27 unions were locked out.

Murphy said he would starve the workers into submission. The Dublin police and British authorities made it clear they would side with him. They offered full armed support.

The key to victory was in the hands of the English workers. Their support was crucial. The rank and file responded quickly. Dockers in Liverpool and railmen everywhere staged sympathetic action.

Massive

They were condemned by the TUC, which opposed a campaign of blacking all goods due for Ireland. Instead they would go to Dublin on a fact-finding mission, they said, while the movement collected money to send supplies to the Dublin workers.

Larkin and Connolly appealed to the British workers directly: 'We propose to carry the war into every section of the enemy's camp. Will you second us?'

From late October onwards blacklegs were transported from England to Ireland. The Dublin

workers fought on. Faced with massive police aid to the blacklegs they replied with their own mass pickets. Those workers who failed picket duty were refused food. The Citizen Army of armed workers was formed to support the pickets.

The TUC eventually called a special conference on Dublin in December. Larkin and Connolly were there. Still the right wingers defeated proposals for blacking and strike action with a motion for a penny-a-head levy for supplies.

The Irish workers had been stabbed in the back. A fight which brought them no immediate national gain was not to the fancy of the TUC, who sabotaged the solidarity movement in England.

Demoralised and starving, the Dublin workers began to return to work in February 1914.

W M Murphy allowed police to travel free on Dublin trams for the next 24 years, in gratitude for services rendered in 1913. It is not known whether similar facilities were extended to the British TUC.

Dave Hughes

Sorry, our fault

IT WAS our mistake. Parts of two articles on the centre spread of last week's Socialist Worker were seriously distorted.

In the interview with Manuel Ribeiro headed WHO HAS THE POWER IN PORTUGAL?, the answer to the question 'What about the Communists and socialists in the government?' should have read:

'Yes, the Communists have been appointed to the Ministry of Labour and to the Ministry without Portfolio. They are by far the strongest working-class party. They have much better-organised support than the socialists.'

'The Communists are urging everyone to keep quiet. They claim that there is a danger of a counter-coup and that former agents of the secret police are at work whipping up strikes and demonstrations so that the right wing of the army would have the excuse to intervene and reimpose order.'

In the original, the words in italics were misplaced.

Manuel Ribeiro continued: 'Well, there's no doubt that some police agents are at work, in a very few of the workers' actions—the bread strikes in Lisbon recently was probably an example. But generally it's not the case. In most cases the workers have gone on strike spontaneously, without even making specific demands.'

The review of the book *The Shrewsbury Three*, by Jim Arnison (Lawrence and Wishart, 45p) which was written by London dockers Eddie Prevost, was made nonsense in several places by printing errors. We reproduce the whole of the final section:

This book fails to search for ways to alter the present set-up. Yet surely this is what Marx meant when he said that previously the philosophers have tried to interpret the world, the point now is to change it.

The book also takes an uncritical approach to the North Wales Defence Committee. To its credit, this committee helped keep the defendants together and raise money for them. But it signally failed in the much more important task of explaining the truth about the Shrewsbury trials and organising a rank and file movement to mobilise in the unions for the release of the jailed men, just as the dockers did when the Pentonville Five were jailed.

Indeed the book levels criticism at what is termed 'the lunatic left'. There is no definition of who these people are. Nonetheless Jim Arnison accuses them of calling for 'instant revolution', of 'being totally without industrial experience', and of wanting to build a rank and file movement 'as an alternative to the trade unions'.

I can only assume that Jim Arnison is referring to the efforts by the International Socialists to build a movement, not—as he mistakenly suggests—to act as an alternative to the trade unions, but to act as a detonator to the wider trade union movement. Such a movement would not only defend workers and their trade unions, but try to begin change in the unions to make them more democratic, to make them more efficient instruments of workers' demands.

Jim Arnison is in bad company when he talks in derisive terms of the 'lunatic left'. For the prosecution at the trial tried to establish that the pickets in the building workers' strike were 'wild men, acting unofficially without the authority of the trade unions,' men who wanted an instant revolution.

In fact Jim Arnison uses this whole attack on the left as a cover up for the inadequacies of the Communist Party in this whole unhappy episode, an attitude which led them to stake everything on the official movement rather than on an independent mobilisation of the rank and file.

In my experience as a dockers and as a member of the Communist Party for 13 years, rank and file committees are invaluable as schools of struggle and can be complementary to the struggles being waged inside the trade unions. It all depends on what purpose they are designed for.

At a more personal level, reading the book sent me back to my own life. I had always been unimpressed, and had been good wages and conditions because of their militancy—but the staff had remained poorly paid and overworked in the traditional office atmosphere, when the boss lectures on the evils of trade unions and tells you to get out if you don't like the pay.

If staff members left they were not replaced—the work was merely 'absorbed' by those remaining. We were told always to keep our wages secret from the others 'so as not to upset anyone' and although there

Time we taught our rulers a lesson

WHEN any raw deals are being handed out, working class people bear the brunt of them, and the children of Newham, being an almost totally working class area, are no exception to the rule.

Newham is a large London borough, with approximately the same population as Coventry (236,000). The main industries are the docks, Tate and Lyle's and various other large factories along the Thames.

As the docks are gradually moving to Tilbury and the industries are being run down, so also are the education and hospital facilities in the borough.

I have two children, one about to transfer to secondary education, and one who should be at nursery—only there aren't enough places. During the past year I've been working with Newham Education Concern, a group of parents and teachers, to try to do something about the education offered to our children.

The local education authority would not admit that there was anything wrong. A new director of education has recently been appointed, the old one being given the job of investigating what is wrong with the comprehensives in the borough, when he has spent the past year denying that there was anything wrong at all.

Last

When you tell them that our borough is bottom in the country for children getting four 'O' level GCE's (103rd out of 103 county boroughs surveyed) and children going on to university, we are told that children don't need qualifications anyway. I hope that in a true socialist society exams will be of no importance, but unfortunately we live in a world where qualifications are power.

Two years ago total comprehensive education was introduced, the same year that the school leaving age was raised. As no money was given by the government to help the introduction of comprehensives, the money set aside for the raising of the school-leaving age was used, spreading the money so thinly that it did no good anywhere.

The women who declared war—and won

By Ann Walker, TGWU

THE FIRST reaction to my request for details of union branch meetings was 'Why should you be interested?'—and that was from a convenor.

When I replied it was because I wanted to attend—the men answered by giving me a description of what I could do by way of entertaining them at the next meeting... most of the suggestions are unprintable.

However, undaunted, myself and one or two other girls on the 'staff' decided we needed to be organised, despite the union's reactions.

Last year we had just four members out of a possible 25 or so—not very encouraging. Management wouldn't recognise us and the fear of victimisation was very real.

To recruit openly for the union was like asking for your 'cards, and without sufficient backing any demands on management were suicidal. Still, we had to keep on fighting.

Staff

The manual workers at our firm had always been unorganised, and had been good wages and conditions because of their militancy—but the staff had remained poorly paid and overworked in the traditional office atmosphere, when the boss lectures on the evils of trade unions and tells you to get out if you don't like the pay.

If staff members left they were not replaced—the work was merely 'absorbed' by those remaining. We were told always to keep our wages secret from the others 'so as not to upset anyone' and although there

THE SCHOOLS crisis grows—and so does the fight back. This poster was produced by the East London Schools Action Group

Unfortunately, going comprehensive round here seems to have meant just calling two schools by one new name instead of all schools being able to offer all sorts of facilities to children. There is no money for facilities or equipment and there is a shortage of teachers for the usual subjects let alone specialised subjects.

The future planning for the two new schools that were built was so shortsighted that they both had temporary classrooms after one year: we also have 20-year-old 'temporary' classrooms at one school, quaintly known as the 'Hutments'.

We did a survey on four schools, comparing them with the minimum standards of the Department of Education and Science.

Three of them failed on most points. They didn't have adequate toilets, wash-hand basins, playground space—which wasn't helped by the 'temporary' classrooms and poor heating. The children even have to keep their coats on all year round because there's nowhere to hang them!

In the last round of government cutbacks, Newham's school building programme was cut back by 100 per cent. We are told by the DES that

we have no 'basic' need of a new school, yet at the last count there were 66 children who had no school place at all: last year this was 150, and Mrs Thatcher's suggested solutions was to increase the class sizes and have even more temporary classrooms.

Also due to the cutbacks, we will lose 550 scheduled nursery school places. At a meeting with Reg Prentice, our director of education proudly stated that Newham was first in London on nurseries.

We looked this up in the GLC Abstract of Statistics and found that Tower Hamlets, a working class borough next door to Newham, was first, with more nursery schools and nursery classes with 70,000 less population.

Other figures the local education authority try to blind us with are that we have over our quota of teachers, but at Easter there were 68 teaching vacancies. What does not get too much publicity is that nearly every comprehensive is on some form of part-time education.

Modernised

A 'Catch 22' situation has developed with one primary school caught by the cutbacks: the head does not want his large old school replaced by a smaller new jerry-built school, but the old school modernised. But the government would rather spend more money demolishing and rebuilding, so this is out.

Due to the cuts, the new school cannot be started yet, and because the school falls below DES standards, some small modernisation work must be done, which will be promptly demolished when the new school, that nobody wants, is built.

The poor results of Newham's children are blamed on parents' apathy, but when parents do become worried and start doing something, we are then called troublemakers and pseudo-intellectuals plus anything from reds under beds right through to Ratepayers and Conservatives.

The council promised 12 public meetings where parents could ask the education committee questions. Two meetings were held last year, and it seems that such disturbing facts came out that none have been held since.

At Cumberland School 200 out of 1500 11-18 year olds had a reading age of less than nine, with one remedial teacher to cope. That is 14 per cent against the national average of ten per cent. Six blackboards in the school had been broken for 18 months.

Worst

Still, they had a typing teacher, but no typewriters. By the time the commerce room had been equipped, the teacher had left and they couldn't recruit a typing teacher!

The working class in Newham, or anywhere, get the worst hospitals when they are born, the worst schools when they are kids, the worst jobs when they leave school, and die of neglect when they are old.

Our life is meant to be one of servitude to our so-called betters, the ruling class, who send their kids to Eton, Harrow and Winchester, where they are taught their rightful place in society, as our lords, masters, and Members of Parliament.

They make sure their kids don't get part-time education, shortage of teachers, overcrowded classrooms, no Hutments, no shortage of money.

Working class kids will always get a second class education while working class parents are prepared to take second best. Are the same things happening to your kids? What are you prepared to do about it?

PAULINE FENN

Under the influence

It takes a long time to make a socialist, but often just one experience tips the balance—taking part in a strike, reading a book, going to a meeting. What made you a socialist? Write and tell us.

IT WAS through racial rather than class discrimination that I became a socialist.

The English hated the Afrikaners who hated the English back. They both hated the Jews, all three hated the coloureds and Indians, and they all together hated the black Africans. That was sunny South Africa.

On the eve of the Second World War a boat stood outside Cape Town harbour. On it were 1700 Jews who had been almost the last to escape with their lives from Nazi Germany. They were looking for a spot somewhere on the planet which would allow them to land and settle.

The town itself was agog. An Afrikaner Nazi organisation of Greyshirts demonstrated through the streets day after day to prevent the boat landing. The English community played it cool. The blacks were outside it all, and the Jews stayed in their homes shivering and shaking.

The boat didn't land. It wandered the earth for many more months, and was finally allowed by the Chinese to disembark its passengers.

These are my early memories. My school situation was one of all-pervasive, subtle anti-Semitism on the part of the entire Christian staff in the white, one-third Jewish school.

Besides learning of our inferiority, we also learnt (and passed exams on the knowledge) that the population of South Africa was two million (there were 10 million blacks at that time to the two million whites), and the official languages English and Afrikaans (three quarters of the population knew no English or Afrikaans), that history started in 1652 with the arrival of the first white settlers, and so on. We were kept strictly separated from the black people themselves.

EMOTIONS

The clear picture of my world as a child was that we Jews were an inferior breed of human beings, and the blacks were not human at all. In actual fact there was a government census of cows, but not of black people.

With hindsight I now know that it was the resultant confusion of emotions created by these racial hatreds that moulded my future attitudes. My teachers told me (subtly, unintentionally but unquestionably) that we were inferior.

My mother told me we were the Chosen People. I was only a kid, I believed them both. So to preserve self-respect I had to balance racial inferiority with proof of racial superiority—bending the stick right over.

Great rebelliousness at school was motivated by one thought: I'll show 'em who's better! Whatever I could do to get Jews chosen for school honours I did. I argued the merits of great Jews of the past, ending up after one such argument with a teacher by being put in the corner with my feet in the wastepaper basket—which simply egged me on to greater cussedness.

The advent of a Jewish teacher was a huge emotional event. On the one hand, of course, she was inferior—all Jews were—on the other our great love and efforts on her behalf would make her superior. I worked for her as for no-one else: all my best creative work at school was done for her in the brief period she taught us.

What propped up my childish pride was the tight-knit, defensive Jewish community, the only place

APART-HATE

Under the Influence usually features books which have helped turn workers into socialists. For CHANIE ROSENBERG, secretary of Hackney Teachers' Association and a member of the IS National Committee, socialism and politics was the result of growing up in South Africa.

a child felt wanted, was important, was precious, where one got the emotional nourishment to stand up at school and fight.

Of course I became an extreme and militant Jewish nationalist, and the prevailing nationalism was Zionism, so I was a Zionist. It was only those who were not prepared to fight against anti-Semitic indignities (usually for financial gain) and the infinitesimal number of socialist internationalists—none among the kids at school—who were not of this persuasion. I was very religious too—that was part of the whole prop to human dignity.

I am certain that this childish rebellion against racialist injustice was the major influence in my development, and indeed in that of nearly all the small band of my compatriots who later became revolutionary socialists.

LOGICAL

Most of the comrades in any left-wing organisation who were white were Jewish, and their earliest rebellion against racial prejudice was extreme Jewish nationalism, expressed as Zionism and religious fervour.

It was a short and logical mostly taken between the ages of 13-18, for the victims of one racial oppression to feel for the victims of another—the blacks—to try and understand the causes of all racial oppression, and hence to break the ties with Zionism which was, as we later saw, an oppressive nationalism of its own.

On coming to England, where the majority do not live in tight communities, I found that many people do not understand that one racialism is not equal to another. One is the oppression of the top dog, the other the rebellion of the underdog. One fights to preserve inequality, the other to achieve equality. They are opposites. One can lead on to fascist thinking, the other to revolutionary

ON THE BOX

■ SUNDAY, ITV, Noon. ONE BRITISH FAMILY, the last of the John Pilger series looks at a black Gordie family.

■ MONDAY, BBC-1, 8.10pm. PANORAMA IN CHINA, includes a talk with Chinese prime minister Chou En-Lai.

■ WEDNESDAY, ITV, 9.30pm. THE FINEST FAMILY IN THE LAND is a farce by Henry Livings, who has been a very funny writer. IN CONCERT on BBC-2 features ALAN

PRICE, ex-Animals organist, writer of music for O Lucky Man! It is at THURSDAY, BBC-1, 9.25pm.

■ Dennis Potter's new play is SCHMOEDIPUS about 'parents and children and sanity and its alternatives'.

■ FRIDAY, BBC-2, 8.15pm. THE MONEY PROGRAMME is SINCERELY, BERNIE CORNFELD, an interview with 'financier' Cornfeld, who made a fortune for himself and lost many for other people...



socialism, which destroys racialism altogether.

It was after the early life experiences, and because of them, that books entered, to confirm our awakening horror at the human relations about us, to explain the reasons why, to give the hope and dream of the brotherhood and equality of man, and to stimulate us to action to achieve it.

We gobbled up all political books and socialist novels available, early becoming Marxists and turning against religion and Zionism. There is no one book I would pick out of the welter of them. They collectively consolidated what our circumstances had shaped us into.

SHOCKED

It was the circumstances first and foremost which shaped us.

The road to revolutionary socialism for us youthful rebels took us through many strange events. I chose to travel third class (for blacks) on the train instead of first class (for whites) or second (for coloureds).

The white guard, shocked, pushed me out to the first class compartment. I protested. He did not de-

mand the difference in the price of the ticket, but he did insist on the colour bar being kept. The incredulous blacks spat at me as I was bundled out.

Mr mother had drilled her children in the religion of sanitary precautions. In every crack of every cup used by blacks lurked syphilis, TB, and other dread scourges. (My mother wasn't a racist—she was hygienic). I went to a black cafe for the first time. I was served tea in a cracked cup. I was nearly sick. I finished it and drank another. The second was easier.

I regularly took up a precious seat in a crowded bus of black workers going to town, all of whom thought the white woman was off her nut. I marched through the white High Street in the company of only black men, to the amazement of the white pedestrians who stopped dead in their tracks to stare.

It wasn't too long before the police got on my track and I left the country. My best friend who stayed on spent nine years in jail.

In England I met coloured South Africans (there are scarcely any black Africans here) and for the first time could talk to them freely and

hear how even the favoured few who managed to come here had lived.

How a girl, one of seven children, spoke to only four of her brothers and sisters—the darker four—because the lighter ones were 'play-whites', mixed with white people in white places and would not greet their darker brothers and sisters, or parents, in the street for fear of discovery of their origins.

How a bright boy who managed to be one of the 20 coloureds to get to university tried to learn maths, physics and chemistry. The latter two, being practical subjects, needed a partner to work with. One white physics student was found willing to partner, so the coloured student could study physics.

A chemistry partner could not be found—so no chemistry. In the maths engineering class (for intended gold mine managers), any row of seats the coloured student sat in immediately emptied.

FURIOUS

Waiting for a boat to come to England, months passed before three whites could be found who agreed to share a cabin with this student. White co-workers would talk to a black laboratory assistant in the lab, but not even greet her outside, in public. A black worker on a train was arrested by the white steward when he opened a book in a spare moment—how dare the upstart presume to be educated!

'The child is father of the man'—or mother of the woman. As a socialist and now a teacher, I not only understand in my mind the situation of black kids in this country, I daily relive the furious rebellion against the indignities heaped on them by prejudiced—or more usually simply non-understanding, insensitive—white teachers and others.

We should demand the employment of many more black teachers so that black children can find a focus of human identity.

I feel the damaged self-respect and confused self-image of the black children, especially those without strong community ties to refresh their hurt spirits. When I see a gang of black adolescents shouting black power and aggressively demanding homage to black equality (or is it superiority as I had demanded?), I remember the fierce and flaunted nationalism of my own youth.

And I rejoice, knowing that this positive, defiant assertion of their black identity can be a stepping stone to a more mature understanding of oppression under capitalism, to an identification with the struggles of all workers and oppressed people, and to the making of revolutionary socialists.

In a different setting, it was my own path of development.

THE UNIONS

AFTER nearly two years of internal argument, the Electricians' and Plumbers' Union (EEPTU) has withdrawn its affiliation to the Scottish Trade Union Congress.

It had been pressing to have a seat on the General Council, claiming its position as a 'large and influential' union entitled it to a voice on the ruling body of the Congress.

But the possible EEPTU nominee for such a position was sitting executive councillor for Scotland Bill Blairford. Blairford was for a long time a member of the Communist Party and his evidence in the ballot rigging trial helped to sink the old Communist Party-controlled union executive.

He is almost universally disliked by STUC top brass. And so, over the years, his election has been successfully stymied by various strategies.

Reaction

To pressurise the STUC, the union affiliated this year without paying fees for all of its membership, though this is against the STUC constitution. Consequently, EEPTU delegates were only allowed to conference as visitors with no voting rights.

The pressure was ineffective and the STUC suspended the union demanding the full affiliation fee. There has since been a reaction typical of general secretary and president Frank Chapple.

He has withdrawn the union's affiliation and demanded the return of the £700 affiliation fees paid.

The whole thing could be seen in a slightly comical light, except that the main losers will be the rank and file delegates to the local trades councils.

These delegations will soon be terminated, effectively silencing the union's voice in these bodies. Among those affected are at least four trades council executive members, at least a

Another lesson in democracy, Chapple-style

by an electrician

couple of chairmen and vice-chairmen as well as dozens of rank and file delegates.

Once again, it is a case of the tail wagging the dog, with Chapple and his tame executive acting with little thought or reference to the members most involved.

All union members should demand the EEPTU re-affiliates on full membership. And if the union wants to continue the fight for a representative on the General Council, it can do it through normal STUC channels,

involving the rank and file at all times, particularly trades council delegates.

THE GOINGS-ON over affiliation to the STUC were paralleled in the way the recent Southport conference of contracting sparks was conducted.

EEPTU Executive member Jack Ashfield was in the chair, but he made no apology for general secretary/president Chapple's non-attendance. When this was raised from the floor, he muttered that the other business of the union had to go on during



Frank Chapple: Nothing for the rank and file to smile about

JAILED PICKETS NOW THE INQUEST

THE SECOND National Delegate Conference of the building workers' union UCATT in Blackpool next week has been flooded with resolutions over the jailing of the Shrewsbury pickets.

The executive must be prevented from using the release of Des Warren and Eric Tomlinson—albeit pending their appeal—to rule out resolutions in which the demand for freeing the pickets is only part of the full resolution.

The executive will obviously try to avoid coming under the full force of criticism over its refusal to mount any serious campaign to free the Six.

Ten resolutions over a new pay deal have been composited into a single motion in three parts—£45 for 35 hours, no more than 12 months' duration for agreements, and the rejection of grading for craftsmen or general operatives.

But it must go further—and take up the continuing scandal of the holiday scheme company, which has £8 million worth of uncashed stamps gathering interest.

This should be repaid to operatives immediately, but a separate resolution demanding that might well not reach the floor.

More than half of Britain's manual workers get at least three weeks' holiday a year. Building workers should be entitled to the same on full pay.

The question of sick pay has been watered down in the composite, which merely calls for 'a substantial increase'. The present rate, 75p a day, could probably be doubled fairly easily—but it would still be of little significance.

But the major issue, which links in with the wage demands, is that of decasualising the industry and abolishing the lump.

Resolutions demanding the abolition of labour-only sub-contractors, 'the God-fathers of the lump', an end to the blacklist and job application forms, and a detailed scheme for decasualisation, may well be passed. The problem is one of getting the decisions implemented.

This raises the crucial question of who controls the union.

And so the building of a rank and file movement is crucial. Without it there can be no significant overall increase in pay and conditions.

TOP OF THE FLOPS

DELEGATES to next week's Folkestone conference of the National Graphical Association will hear a report from the print union's leaders worthy of a place in the Guinness Book of Records as the most complete record of failure any union leadership has presided over.

Its greatest achievement was to turn an overwhelming conference vote last year to de-register under the Industrial Relations Act into a majority the opposite way when an adroitly-worded paper went to the members.

It has also settled all national agreements within the government pay norms while declaring total opposition to such legislation. And so the sorry record goes on.

Closures and redundancies have been accepted. The only exception was the brave stand by the workers at Briant Colour.

Key conference resolutions will be those from Liverpool and London calling for the re-election of

officials every three years. There is also a host of resolutions on future wage agreements. The passing of these resolutions—or even some of them—would be a big step forward.

The biggest problem facing the left in the union is the building of support among the membership. Although marginally successful at winning elections, the Broad Left has to bridge the gap between the activists and the rank and file, who are still generally loyal to the leadership.

The issues socialists must take up are the building of united action between the different print unions at rank and file level, the formulation of a strategy to fight the closures the coming recession will be forcing on us, and the fight for a democratic union controlled by lay members.

There will be a Socialist Worker meeting at the NGA conference. Paul Foot will speak on The Social Con-trick. 5pm-7pm at the Chilworth Hotel conference room, Sunday 16 June.

conferences. Eric Hammond gave a lengthy report on behalf of the executive which concentrated on the 1974 Joint Industry Board Agreement.

Routed

This deal was supposed to win sparks a 34 per cent increase on 1 January. Thanks to the freeze—and the refusal of the EEPTU leadership to fight—they got seven per cent.

Delegates asked for a debate on this matter and the right to vote on the report. This was disallowed, though the chairman did, in his kindness, permit mere delegates to ask questions. Had there been a vote, the executive report would have been rejected.

The rank and file did, however, score some considerable successes. On virtually every issue, the executive were routed.

Despite opposition from the executive, conference agreed to pursue a rate of £1.50 an hour and the 35-hour week with local negotiating rights. The JIB grading system is also to be challenged.

Comrades, the toast is 'The Queen'

THE CONFERENCE dinner was in full swing. A group of delegates from the rank and file organisation happened to ask one of the waitresses which union she was in.

She was surprised anyone should think the hotel was organised—and astonished that this beano (£3.50 a head) was for a trade union.

When the loyal toast to the Queen was announced, the rank and file delegates stayed seated. 'I knew you must be Communists', said the waitress.

'Not us', came the reply. 'The Communists are the ones standing to attention on the top table'.

The top table men of the leadership of the Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions claim to be the most left-wing of any teachers' union and are composed largely of left Labour and Communist Party members.

In practice, their left image is confined strictly to words.

Most of the executive hold management positions in the education business. Yet those with management positions make up only five per cent of the union membership.

The other 95 per cent hold lecturing jobs. So the member has his gaffer for a union leader.

The tone of the conference at Solihull this year was set by the general secretary's report. This contained an attack on the Rank and File Tech Teachers' group.

'They would involve the association in confrontations for which it has neither the resources nor the will, and would fritter away the energies of the association instead of uniting them into effective action for achievable ends.'

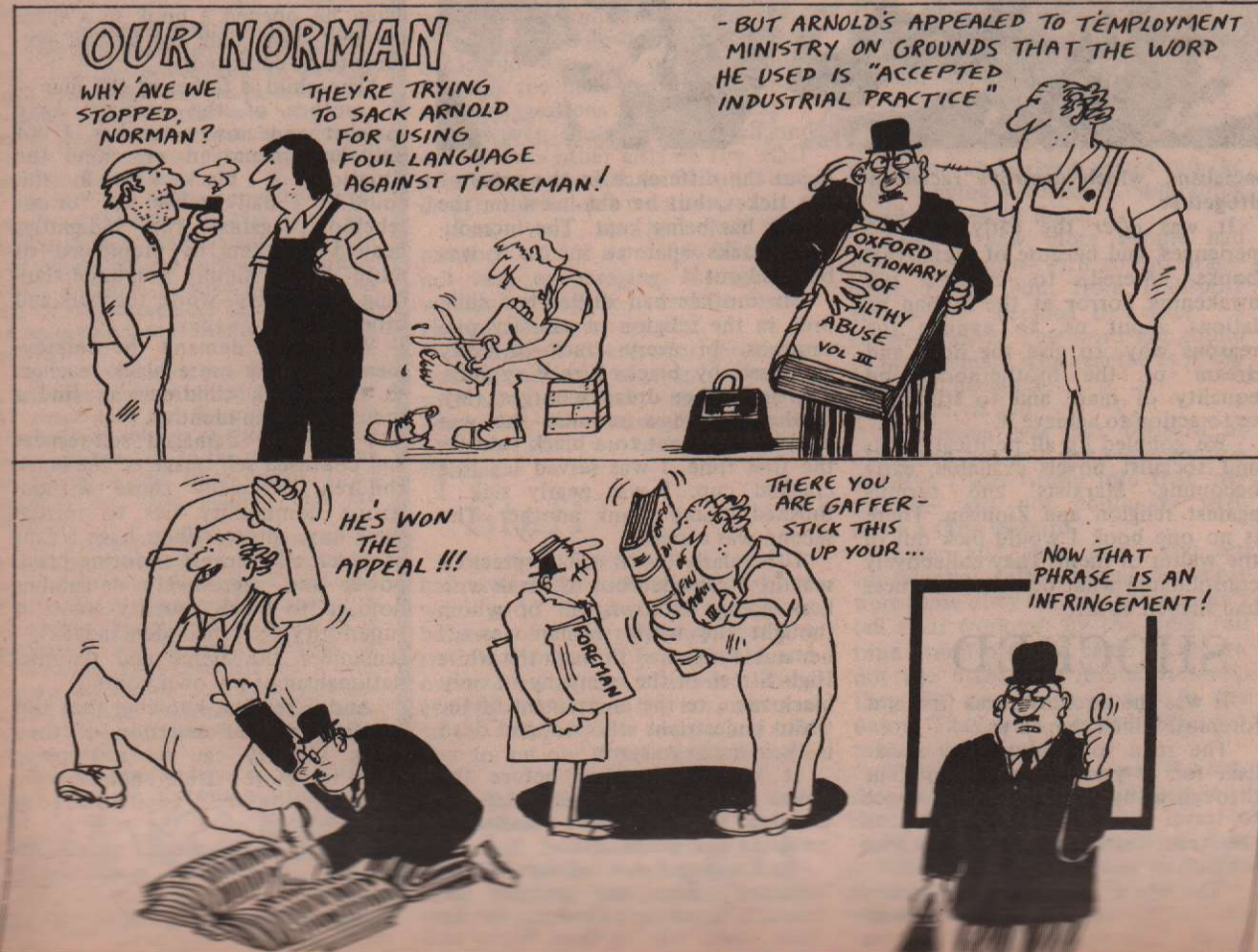
The words 'effective action' trip readily from the tongue. Unfortunately, when it comes to taking any, it's a different matter. The executive failed to act on a single resolution passed at last year's conference.

On any concrete action, the executive aims to keep the membership on a tight rein. It narrowly pushed through a resolution calling for a resumption of national negotiations on conditions of service. As was strongly pointed out by Rank and File speakers, most local areas are in the middle of negotiations or preparing local claims.

This resolution will mean that all the local authorities will stop negotiations and wait for the national outcome, which will probably be worse.

The whole aim is to stifle local initiatives and keep everything under control.

Similarly, local areas of the union are not allowed to take any action without the specific authorisation of the Executive. And this is rarely forthcoming, as members in Manchester and Newcastle found out last year when they were blocked from taking strike action by the Executive.



Unity, brothers but not this way



THE DREAM of one union for the whole engineering industry is now 'off the boil', Bill Simpson, general secretary of the Foundry Section of the 1½ million-strong Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers said last week.

When the union's fourth national conference opens in Great Yarmouth on Monday, the prospects for establishing any real unity between the different sections will be pretty bleak. In April, the amalgamation proposals were rejected by 27 votes to 24 by the national committee of the powerful Engineering Section.

Much was wrong with the proposals put forward by the joint national executive council to the conferences of the four sections of the AUEW. They were for unity at the top of the union tree, at executive level, but were against grass roots unity, with joint district committees and joint shop stewards' committees.

They allowed TASS (the Technical, Administrative and Supervisory Section) to keep all its existing appointed full-time officials without insisting on elections. Even worse, they allowed TASS to appoint rather than elect its two representatives on to the new 13-man executive council.

Strength

They suggested an annual conference for the whole union—a revolutionary idea for the Engineering Section, whose last such conference was in 1919. But then they suggested it be kept very small, with a maximum of only 300 delegates.

The worst aspect of the proposals was not, however, what they contained. It was that they were not fought for among the rank and file.

In the early 1900s, socialists fought and sometimes died trying to

Tom Mann (in shirt sleeves) speaking to a Liverpool transport workers' strike meeting in 1911.

build giant industrial unions that would give workers the strength and confidence to fight their employers. Tom Mann, the first general secretary of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, was one of these. He had joined its forerunner, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, in 1881 at the age of 25.

Ten years later, as a member of the Marxist Social Democratic Federation and with two years' hard work at organising a Dockers' Union (of which he was elected president) under his belt, he came close to winning the position of ASE general secretary.

His platform was 'the true unionist policy of aggression'.

Mann's campaign for direct action and industrial unionism—one industry, one union—led before the First World War to the formation of several local Amalgamation Committees. Made up of militant rank-and-file workers in the ASE and the other unions in engineering, they linked up in 1915 to form a National Amalgamation Committee.

Over the next two years they held six national conferences of rank and file delegates from different engineering unions to discuss amalgamation, and in 1917 they fused with the National Shop Stewards' Movement.

When the crucial ballots on amalgamation took place in 1919, the membership in many parts of the country already had working experience of the value of unity.

Mann, elected ASE general secretary that same year, threw his weight into the campaign and the

ASE voted 92 per cent in favour of amalgamation.

Nine other unions also got more than the required 50 per cent vote (the Pattern Makers and Electrical Trades Union failed), and the Amalgamated Engineering Union came into existence on 1 July 1920.

The lessons of the early campaign for amalgamation must be acted upon today. International Socialist Engineering Union members agreed early this month that the goal of one democratic union embracing all engineering workers, manual and staff, had to be fought for—but not just among the leadership of the different sections.

Unity

A real, active amalgamation will only be brought about if, in every locality, the entire membership is made aware of the advantages such strength would bring.

The leading Communist Party members in the AUEW are primarily concerned with unity at the top, so that their considerable strength in the Construction section and in TASS is brought to bear on the whole Amalgamated Union.

IS engineers oppose this approach as narrow and wrong. It's up to every shop steward and trade union activist who believes in the one union dream to argue now for grass roots unity—for joint shop stewards' committees, for joint district committees, for the exchange of observers at branch level, and for joint Amalgamation Committees to be established in every district to follow the campaign through.

Only when this is done will there be active rank-and-file support for unity that will mean real unity in action.

Whats on

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

IS public meetings

EXETER IS public meeting: Education and society. A discussion led by speakers from Exeter International Socialists. Thursday 13 June, 8pm, Devonport Inn, Fore Street, Exeter.

HARROW IS public meeting: Social contract or social con-trick? Speakers: Duncan Hallas and Jim Higgins. Wednesday 19 June, 8pm, Victoria Hall, Sheppcot Road, Harrow (opposite Granada Cinema).

WYTHENSHAW IS public meeting: Support the Nurses—no social contract. Friday 14 June, 8pm, Wythenshawe Social Centre, Brownley Road. All socialists and trade unionists welcome.

HULL District IS public meeting: The struggle for socialism. Speaker: Tony Cliff. Wednesday 26 June, 7.30pm, Stevedores and Dockers Club, Posterngate, Hull. All welcome.

PARTINGTON IS public meeting: The Rates Scandal. Speaker: Ted Cantel (NALGO shop steward). Friday 21 June, 8pm, Partington Community Centre.

BIRMINGHAM DISTRICT IS public meeting: The life and times of Karl Marx. Speaker: Wally Preston. Sunday 16 June, 7.15pm, Lecture Room 1, Digbeth Civic Hall.

BIRMINGHAM IS Lucas workers public meeting: The Social Con-Trick. Speakers: Bob Light (TGWU, London dock), The Old Bull's Head (near Digbeth). Meeting open to all Lucas workers.

BIRMINGHAM IS British Leyland workers public meeting: Paul Foot is speaking on Friday 21 June at 8pm in The Old Bull's Head. Watch out for further details.

CAXTON IS Social in aid of the Brockwell Three and Cecil Sampson Defence Fund: Saturday 15 June, 8pm-1am, The Nightingale, High Road, Wood Green. (Buses 141, 29, W4, Wood Green tube on Piccadilly line). Tickets on the door 50p.

MERSEYSIDE IS public meeting: Socialism or the social contract? Speaker: Paul Foot. Wednesday 26 June, 8pm, AUEW Hall, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool.

EAST LONDON District IS benefit social: Saturday 22 June, 8.30pm, The Swan, Stratford Broadway, Stratford. The Kartoon Klowns—disco—bar extension. Admission 40p.

NEWHAM IS public meeting: The East End's Crisis—the rundown of the social services. Speakers: Pauline Fenn (Newham Education Concern), Pat Olley (St Paul's Tenants Association, Stratford) and Pam Denard (chairman, London nurses action co-ordinating committee). Wednesday 19 June, 8pm, Lister Room, East Ham Town Hall, Barking Road, E6.

WANDSWORTH IS SOCIAL: Saturday 15 June, Starts 8pm. Bar extension. Disco. Tickets 30p. The Forrester Arms, Mitcham Road, SW17 (5 mins from Tooting Broadway tube, buses 220, 77).

MERSEYSIDE IS Social: Buffet and disco, bar ext. 8pm-1am. Friday 21 June. Strand Hotel, Brunswick St (opposite Pier Head) downstairs. All welcome.

COVENTRY DISTRICT IS: Day outing to Forest of Dean. Sunday 23 June. Tickets £1 (children free) from branch secretaries, or from TU and Socialist Books. Non-IS members especially welcome.

FINSBURY PARK IS public meeting: London—the city that's falling apart. Speaker: a busman, a teacher, a nurse. Thursday 20 June, 8pm, Finsbury Park Tavern, Seven Sisters Road, London, N4.

TWICKENHAM IS open meeting: Crisis in the Health Service. Speaker: A NUPE steward. Thursday 20 June, 8pm, The Red Lion, Heath Road, Twickenham.

Huddersfield IS public meeting: Why Labour can't bring socialism. Speaker: Paul Foot. Thursday 4 July, 8pm. Friendly and Trades Club. Northumberland Street. Admission 10p.

WARLEY IS public meeting: Troops out of Ireland. Speaker: Eddie McWilliams. Tuesday 18 June, 8pm, Spon Croft, Oldbury Road, Smethwick.

IMPERIAL COLLEGE IS meeting: China—an example for the Third World? Speaker: Nigel Harris. Wednesday 19 June, 12.45pm, Civil Engineering 201, Exhibition Road, London, SW7.

WIGAN IS public meeting: Lenin. Speaker: Tony Cliff. Thursday 27 June, 8pm, The Wheatheaf Hotel, Wallgate, Wigan. All socialists and trade unionists welcome.

Classified

Copy for the Classified section must arrive by first post Monday morning. Adverts will not be accepted over the phone. Charges are 1p per word, semi-display 2p per word. CASH WITH COPY to Classified, Socialist Worker, Corbridge Crescent, London E2 9DS.

FORD WORKERS ARRESTED! Picket in support of four AUEW pickets, Monday 1 July, Barking Magistrates Court, Barking High Road, 9.15am.

GIVE BLOOD to the wounded in struggling areas in Africa—Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique. Phone 01-734 9541 for appointment.

GREENOCK public meeting: Support the Chilean workers. Speakers: Billie Fay (Glasgow AUEW district committee) and M Gonzales (Chile Solidarity Committee). Thursday 13 June, 7.30pm, Hector Macneil Baths.

Bus leaving Edinburgh for Portugal Demo 16 June in London. Details phone 447 7288 evenings.

URGENTLY REQUIRED—Unfurnished house/flat in the Merseyside area for young couple with baby who are chesses off visiting the housing department and small-time property speculation companies that dwell in this corrupt city. Please write to Stephen Collier, 13 Shotwick Street, Edge Lane, Liverpool 7.

SOCIALIST GAY GROUP has speakers throughout the country on the gay question and sexism. Inquiries from IS branches specially welcomed. Details from 18 Brisbane Rd, Smethwick, Warley, Worcs.

BRITISH AND IRISH Communist Organisation meeting. Democratic Workers' Controls Over Incomes. Monday 17 June, 7.30pm, Conway Hall.

SOCIALIST EXHIBITION: Stands featuring Marxism, War, Russia, Capitalism etc. to mark 70th anniversary of the SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN. At 52 Clapham High Street, SW4. Open Saturdays 15 and 22 June 10-7. Sunday 16 June 2-7. Monday 17 through Friday 21 June 6-9. Admission free. All welcome.

BRIGHTON bus workers Rank and File meeting. With Pete Glatter, London Transport Platform Editorial Board. Bus workers only. Sunday 16 June, Western Hotel, Western Road, Hove, 7.30pm.

FREE IRELAND FORUM: The blood-bath—blood or bluff? Speaker: Alasdair Renwick. Friday 14 June 8pm. General Picton (corner of Wharfedale and Caledonian Road) London N1.

PERMANENT REVOLUTION: No 2 now out. Articles on Chile, the Workers' Government; Rosa Luxemburg on the Belgian General Strike (first time in English); discussion; reviews. 20p plus 5p postage from 98 Gifford Street, London, N1.

GROUP OF SOCIALISTS with children would like to meet others (with or without children) who are interested in escaping from or avoiding the nuclear family, and in living together as a commune or collective. Phone Droitwich (Worcs) 3730 or 01-348 3475.

RELIABLE IS comrade wanted to share N7 flat from 23 June. £7.50 pw. Ring Shaun Doherty 607-8067.

Yorkshire Conference SHREWSBURY DEFENCE—WHAT NEXT?

One day conference 22 June at York University. Sponsored by York Trades Council and University Students Union Shrewsbury Defence Committees (creche provided). Delegations invited from all Yorkshire trades councils, TU bodies and students unions. Observers welcome. Details and credentials from A Power (sec York TC) 25 Ratcliffe Street, York.

LONDON WORKERS' FIGHT: Readers' meeting. Terry Liddle (Committee for Defence of Ukrainian Dissidents) on Repression and Unrest in The Ukraine. 7.30pm. Sunday 23 June 'Golden Lion', Britannia Street, near Kings Cross.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY aims at building a moneyless world community without frontiers based on common ownership—with production solely for use—not profit. It opposes all other political parties, all leadership, all racism, all war. Write for Specimen socialist literature to 'One World (SW), The Socialist Party of Great Britain, 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4.

LEWISHAM IS public meeting: The crisis in London's public services. Speakers: Beth Stone (NUJ national executive, in a personal capacity) and Gordon Peters (Islington NALGO strike committee). Tuesday 18 June, 8pm, The Albany, Creek Road, Deptford, London, SE8. All welcome, especially public service workers.

BARNET IS public meeting: Support the Nurses. Wednesday 19 June, 8pm. Bull and Butcher, High Road, Whetstone, London, N20 (close to Totteridge and Whetstone tube).

DUDLEY IS public meeting: What we mean by socialism. Speaker: Tony Cliff (IS executive committee). The trade unions and the Labour Party. Speaker: Jack Collingswood (AUEW convenor, Cannon Industries, and member of the Labour Party). Thursday 20 June, 8pm, Castle and Falcon, Wolverhampton Street, Dudley. All welcome.

Meetings for IS members

EDINBURGH AREA IS: Day School and AGM. IS Industrial Perspectives. 11am-3pm, AGM and election of area cttee, 15 June, 3pm-5pm. All members to attend. Trades Council Club, 12 Picardy Place.

IS Training and Publications Committee: Meeting for IS members interested in political economy in Leeds, 22-23 June. Aims: to discuss current economic perspectives and to set up working economics group to service IS. Details from Jim Kincaid, 11 Moseley Wood View, Leeds 16.

IS BUSWORKERS Fraction School: Weekend 22-23 June, IS Books, 224 Deritend High Street, Birmingham. Saturday 3-6pm: Working at the garage, introduced by Les Kay (fraction secretary); Sunday 9-11am: The London busmen's rank and file movement 1932-37, introduced by Pete Glatter (editor, London Transport Platform); Sunday 12noon-3pm: IS and the Rank and File Movement, introduced by Roger Cox, (secretary, National Rank and File Conference Organising Committee). All IS busworkers to attend. Overnight accommodation can be arranged. There is a charge of £1 per member attending for the fraction funds. Contact Les Kay, 99 Tintern Crescent, Blackburn, Lancs.

IS notices

HARLESDEN IS jumble sale at Harlesden Primary School, Acton Lane, London, NW10, Saturday 15 June, 2.30pm. Bargains and refreshments in aid of the Socialist Worker Fighting Fund.

IS MIDDLE EAST GROUP: All IS members from the Middle East, those interested in the area and those in contact with Middle Eastern workers or political groups in Britain or abroad, please contact Phil Marfleet, IS Books, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 (phone 01-802 6145).

SPECIAL OFFER: IS journal issues 60-64 including the special double issue (61) on imperialism, international capitalism, the permanent revolution and the British labour movement. 70p for the five copies (including postage). Orders now to IS Journal, Corbridge Works, Corbridge Crescent, London, E2 9DS.

WOMENS VOICE: Next issue out within a fortnight. Please phone orders to Harlow 37205.

THE IS INTERNATIONAL sub-committee would like to thank the many comrades who have written in expressing interest in helping with IS's international work. Comrades who have not yet had a reply will be informed as soon as possible of any activity they can be involved in. We are at present in process of setting up a number of groups dealing with various areas of the world. There are already groups meeting, or in process of being established, to deal with Southern Africa, Middle East, Italy, Germany and Scandinavia. Others will be set up shortly.

CHINGARI (Urdu): May-June issue now out. Articles on a possible new immigration Act for the suburbs, Blackburn and three strikes. 3p per copy (add 4p for postage) from Chingari, 8 Cottons Gdns, London E2 8DN.

PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION of Lenin available for IS meetings. Phone Eve Barker 01-485 0476.

International Socialists Situations Vacant

Graphic designers: experience preferred but training would be given to applicants with limited knowledge from art college etc.

Lay-out artists: to work on group publications. Must be neat, tidy and accurate. Training given.

Permanent general workers: driving licence would be useful.

Temporary general workers: required from end of June to September. Driving licence would be useful but not essential.

Apply to Jim Nichol, International Socialists, Corbridge Works, Corbridge Crescent, London E2, or phone 01-739 1870.

IS INDUSTRIAL DEPARTMENT needs comrades to help part-time with research work into particular industries, strikes, etc and also help in office. Enthusiasm not experience essential. Ring 01-739 6273.

IS ADMIN OFFICE urgently needs voluntary help one day a week. Phone Judith 01-739 1878, or write to 8 Cottons Gardens, London E2.

SOCIALIST WORKER needs a writing journalist to start full-time at the beginning of September. Qualifications and experience as a journalist welcome but not essential. Lack of either should not deter applicants. Job will entail living in or within commuting distance of London. Apply in writing, giving qualifications and reasons why you want the job—and if you've written anything before send examples of your work. Applications by mid-July at the latest to Editorial Board, Socialist Worker, Corbridge Works, Corbridge Crescent, London, E2 9DS.

DURING THE SUMMER Socialist Worker is always under pressure. Any IS members in London with nothing to do at any time who feel they can help, please give us a ring on 01-739 0185.

NALGO: ANOTHER RETREAT

BRIGHTON: NALGO is calling off all action in support of its London Weighting campaign-only days before the Pay Board is due to report. This decision, taken at the union's local government group meeting on Monday, followed recommendations by the union's National Committee and National Executive Council.

by Barry White

They decided by small majorities to call off the industrial action following the employers' threat not to negotiate on the national claim while London members were engaged in industrial action. So the NALGO leadership has succeeded where

the Labour government and UTC failed. Strikers, some of whom had been out for over 13 weeks, are to be forced back without a penny on the negotiating table.

The decision was a victory for Glynn Phillips, the outgoing chairman of the National Local Government Committee, and the old guard, who have been frightened by the growth of rank and file militancy in London. Many delegates to the NALGO conference from

outside London were misled into believing that the action taken by thousands of London members was growing. Members have been prevented from escalating by the national committee itself. NALGO members in the electricity zone, however, did not bend to blackmail and voted overwhelmingly to continue their London Weighting action. An attempt to persuade conference to reverse the National Executive Council's decision was to be made by supporters of the rank and file NALGO Action Group during the conference.

Earlier in the day the local government group meeting decided on a card vote by 149,12 to 109,085 to instruct the negotiators not to settle the current pay claim within Phase Three and to consider any proposed settlement.

The decision, though a victory against the leadership, fell short of what is required to win the 20 per cent claim in full. An amendment to fix 8 July as the date by which national industrial action should be initiated if no settlement had been reached, was defeated.

After the sell-out on London Weighting, the employers are likely to exploit the leadership's weak bargaining position.

NALGO Action Group delegates have already attacked the decision to sell out on London Weighting as 'cowardly'.

As one delegate put it: 'They have thrown away one of the strongest negotiating positions we have had for years and have played into the hands of the Labour government and TUC in preparing for a sell out on the social contract'.

The latest issue of Nalگو Action News, paper of the Nalگو Action Group, is out this week. It argues its policies on the key issues before the union conference. There is also a report on the nurses' dispute and an analysis of the London Weighting dispute.

Copies from N.A.N. 41 Brinton Avenue, Feltham, Middlesex. Price 5p (plus 3p postage).

BP men bow to witch-hunt

AFTER a series of ferocious press attacks, the 800 refinery workers at BP Grangemouth in Scotland decided last week to end their two-week strike over shift allowance payments.

A settlement gives them a shift allowance of 23.1 per cent, with the remaining 2.9 per cent claimed going to arbitration.

Shop stewards' leader Melvin Keenan, a moderate, recommended a return to work and called off the pickets after an onslaught of press propaganda.

Abuse

The settlement is obviously a great set-back for the men, whose action had brought Scotland almost to a standstill.

After winning an assurance from refinery workers in England that no supplies would be sent North, the men could have got anything they demanded.

Their modest demands unleashed a disgusting torrent of abuse—and Melvin Keenan was reported as saying that 'we feel the state of the economy is such that for the two parties to remain in dispute is against the National Interest.'

BP's refusal to pay up is apparently the act of a saint. So are their giant profits.

In their own interest—and ours—BP workers will have to fight again.

Shutdown? Just let them try!

'THEY'LL NEED THE ARMY TO MOVE US'

Attempt

They have told management they will not accept any redundancies.

AUEW convenor Pat Degan told Socialist Worker: 'This is a blatant attack on strong trade unionism. When I started here we were the worst-paid factory in the district. There was indiscriminate hiring and firing. You couldn't raise your head.

'Now we have established a strong shop floor organisation and set an example to other factories. This is why the boot is going in. The company say the reason for closure is lack of orders. This is utter rubbish. We are going to fight them all the way.'

George Haykin, deputy convenor, said: 'We have become too strong for them over the years. This is their final desperate attempt to smash us. We shall expect full support from the district in any action we need to take.'

Another shop steward said: 'They'll need to bring the troops back from Ireland if they want to get us out of here.'

AYCLIFFE, Co Durham:—120 engineers have threatened to strike against a blatant management attack on trade unionism.

Management told shop stewards at the Fletcher, Sutcliffe and Wild factory last week that they were closing the factory in six weeks.

The factory, which employs 120 AUEW men and 110 members of the Boiler makers' Society, has become one of the key factories in the Darlington and South West Durham district.

Its domestic rates are among the highest, with agreements the envy of other factories. Workers have always been the first out over the Industrial Relations Act and other political strikes.

Remove

The management 'closure' threat is clearly an attack on the AUEW in the factory, which has spearheaded militancy. For two days after announcing a complete closure 'due to lack of orders' management stated that it would be possible to find work for the boilermakers. It was

just the AUEW members that would have to go.

This could be an attempt to split the workforce with a view to complete closure, or it could be an attempt to remove the AUEW militants and replace them at a later date.

Fletcher Sutcliffe and Wild were created from a string of small companies, with government money pumped in, in 1969, under CIR supervision. Since this time three factories have been closed.

AUEW stewards at Aycliffe intend to fight this attack all the way.

GMWU: THE MACHINE BEGINS TO CREAK...

DELEGATES to last week's General and Municipal Workers' Union conference at Blackpool agreed to leave to the executive decisions on the key motions seeking to alter the composition of the union's general council and national executive.

Under the present rules, the top national and regional officials have almost total power on and over these committees. Several conference motions sought to make this set-up more democratic by including more rank and file members.

Now the executive is to draw up a report on the structure of the union for presentation to next year's con-

ference. The decision means the new men fighting to consolidate the national union machine can avoid a public fight with the old guard of the regions.

Nonetheless, the union is being pressed into a situation where members at least have a chance of influencing policy. This was shown when the platform was defeated on the issue of mandating, the ordering of delegates which way they must vote.

Each region used to hold a pre-conference meeting to line up its delegates for or against resolutions. Now these will only be allowed to

mandate on resolutions from branches within their own region or on 'matters of conscience'. A move to end all mandating was defeated, but it does mean the grip of the executive and regional officials is slackened.

Much of the conference was an exercise in getting the GMWU into shape to compete with the other big unions. Strike benefit was raised and on many issues the union moved left of centre.

Bill Bradley, the union's new building industry officer, spoke in support of the jailed Shrewsbury pickets and for a charter giving workers the right to picket effectively. This is an important demand—but Bill Bradley is a recent convert to militant and effective action. During the Pilkington glass-workers' dispute in 1970 he viciously opposed the strikers.

STRIKERS LEARN A THING OR TWO

by Jim Tolton AUEW

LEICESTER:—The five-week strike of toolmakers at Economic Stampings ended with an agreement tying wage rates to the toolroom of the parent company, the Bentley Group.

This is a departure from the original claim—a tie-up with the average pay of toolrooms in the group—but it is a substantial improvement.

It gives an immediate rise of £4.86 on top of a seven per cent increase negotiated in February.

The strikers know this would not have been achieved in the present political and economic climate had they not been prepared to take indefinite strike action backed by financial support from workers in the rest of the Bentley group.

Victimisation opens the floodgates

BEVERLEY, YORKS:—The impact of the victimisation of convenor Jean Jepson is now being felt at Armstrong Patents.

A new wage agreement gives chargehands £2.65 and everyone else £2.25—even though management and unions had agreed to an across-the-board settlement.

The threshold agreement has been signed away. When the cost of living index hits 10 per cent a £1.60 increase will be paid—once and for all. By the end of the year every worker will be losing around £4 a week.

At a stormy meeting militants attacked pro-management Transport Union convenor Tommy Shields for his handling of the negotiations. The vote was evenly divided, but Shields said the agreement had been accepted by a large majority. Then the meeting broke up in confusion.

This was a victory for Shields, who admits he does not believe in trade

unionism. He is the only man in the factory who is paid night rate when he works days, which means he is on £10 a week more than his fellow workers.

Since Jean Jepson was victimised, the union at Armstrongs has been more concerned at looking after management's interests than those of its own members.

Rank and file members are determined to change this situation and get the union working for them again.

Pickets: Fight goes on

A vital conference to boost the campaign to free the Shrewsbury building workers is to be held at York University on 22 June.

Sponsored by York Trades Council and York University Shrewsbury defence committees, it is open to all Yorkshire trades councils, trade union bodies and student unions.

When 'might' is not right

by Arthur Seymour TGWU

CORNWALL:—Service labourers at Heathcoat's Carn Brea factory struck for 48 hours last week after long negotiations to close the ever-widening differentials with machine operators.

The labourers supply the operators with materials and are members of the same union, the Transport and General Workers.

The differential, once £3 a week, grew to £5—and with a new bonus scheme is now £7 and even £11 in some departments.

The labourers are seeking £4 to reduce it back to £3 and have been offered a scheme that 'might' give them £2.

The strike, solid across all four shifts, was backed magnificently by the operators on A and D shifts, despite all manner of threats.

A handful of operators on the B and C shifts did strike-breaking duties and created divisions in the union's ranks which can only hinder the struggle to improve wages and conditions.

SCARED BOSSES STAGE 'LOCK-IN'

by Ivan Crane, AUEW

TWO stewards and two shop committee members from the Howard Rotavator engineering factory at Haleworth, Suffolk got a surprise when they visited a firm called Leeferds in Fakenham, Norfolk.

After five minutes of issuing leaflets encouraging workers to unionise their factory and compare their wages with those at Howards, they were confronted by someone from the management. A wild scene followed.

In a fit of rage this gentleman from the management snatched a leaflet and started threatening the four.

When asked if he was afraid of the truth he replied he was not interested in what the leaflet said.

After threatening an employee talking to the four with the sack, the 'uninterested' management man locked the factory gates, so the workers inside could not get the leaflets. Then he phoned the police.

Maverick on the run

BIRMINGHAM:—Contract electricians working on a £55 million extension to British Leyland's Rover Solihull plant have been on strike for eight weeks. They are demanding the company, Carrier Electrical Contractors, pay the Joint Industrial Board national wage agreement at £1 an hour.

Peter Chandra, the EPTU steward said: 'We're not demanding extra money, only what we're entitled to under the national agreement.'

'Carriers must be making a bomb because they priced the job to include our yearly pay increases of £1 an hour this year, and £1.20 next year. But they are simply not paying it.'

The strikers are now seeking more active support. They point out that British Leyland and other car component firms use Carriers extensively.

They also want the active support of EPTU stewards in Rover Solihull to bring the maverick firm to heel.

Donations, messages of support to: strike fund committee, 36 Flavells Lane, Birmingham B25 8SQ.

GUERRILLA STRIKES ON WAY

by David Yule

EDINBURGH:—Electricians on the Scottish and Newcastle brewery at Fountainbridge are now in the third week of dispute with the contractors. We are demanding 10p an hour extra bonus for all grades.

We got the management to agree to meet us after an overtime ban and a strike one day a week. Our stewards also decided to put a picket on Monday's meeting at the Electrical Contractors' Association.

Full-time EPTU officer Anderson told us to get back to work when we picketed because, he claimed, our picket delayed reaching an agreement.

The offer we got is totally unacceptable. It is an increase on the flat rate when Phase Three ends and a reduction in bonus.

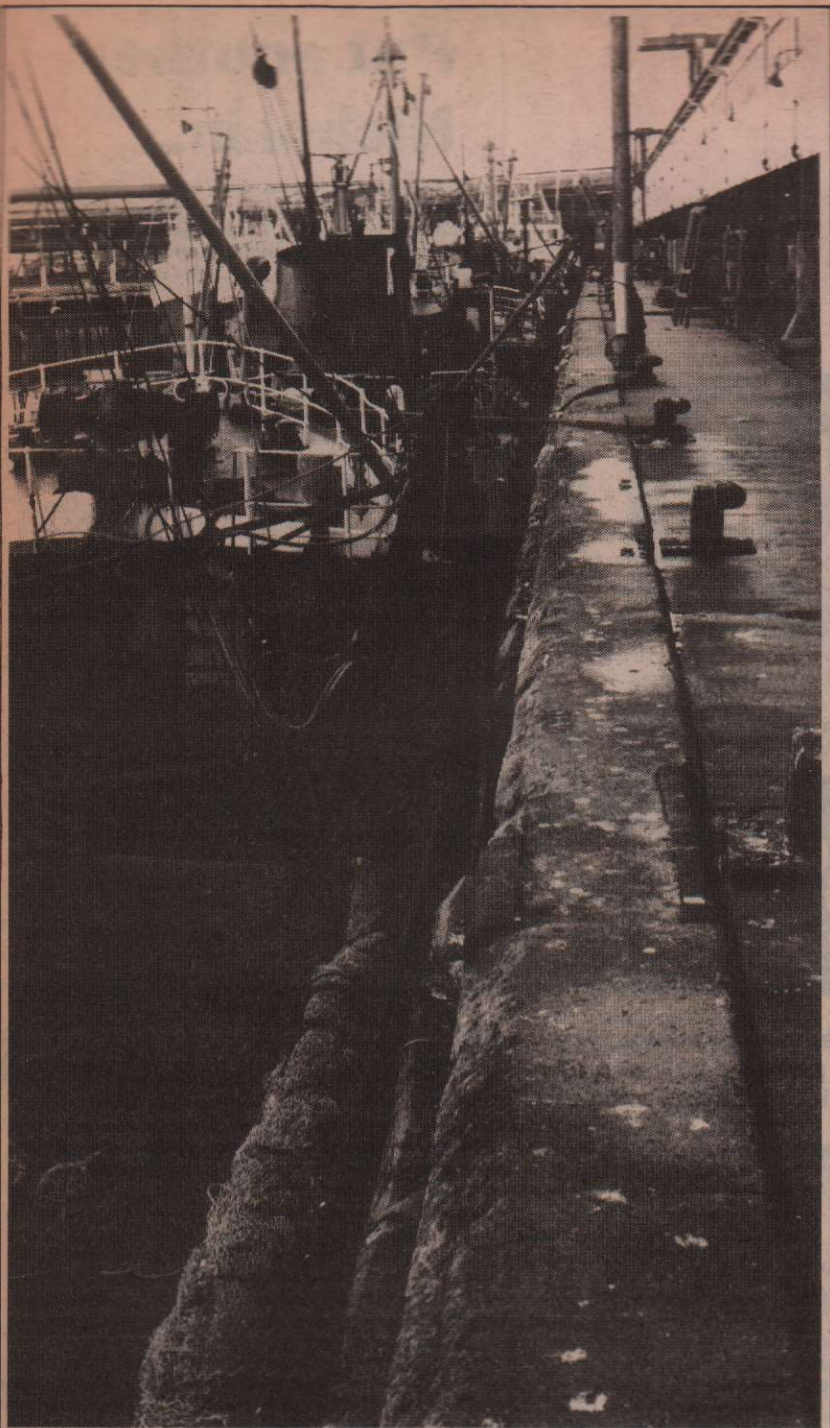
We want 23p now and are not prepared to wait for Phase Three to end. Our plan of action now is for guerrilla strikes to force management to concede.

Chile refugees: Can you help?

THE LABOUR government has agreed to give visas to many Chilean refugees. Many are already in other Latin American countries and are desperately short of money. Their visas are running out.

When these comrades arrive in this country they will have great difficulties finding lodgings.

The Chile Solidarity Campaign calls on everyone who can help to put up a refugee for the first two or three weeks after arrival to contact the Chile Committee for Human Rights, 64 Millbank London SW1, or phone 01-834 6327 between 9.30 and 11am.



THE trawlermen of Fleetwood, Lancashire, for so long brutally exploited by the owners, came out on strike this week. The docks lie idle.

The men get a basic wage of just £21.49 a week while at sea for doing the most dangerous of jobs. Then there is a payment of 64p forevery £100 worth of fish caught. Jim Page, the Transport Workers Union divisional officer, says the men's claim is £5 a week on the basic rate, £1 a day at sea for unsocial hours and increases of ½p on the 64p payment for size of catch.

The owners have offered a £25 basic and a £30 guaranteed weekly wage. This was rejected because there was nothing on the unsocial hours. The strike is solid. PICTURE: Phil McCowan.

CON-MECH AID TURNS TO THE NURSES

by Steve Freeman

TRADE UNIONISTS around Woking, Surrey, where the bitter fight over Con-Mech took place, have now moved to support the nurses in their demands for better pay and conditions. On Tuesday last week a meeting on the nurses' cause was called by the Brookwood Hospital Action Committee and the Sheerwater branch of the Engineering Union.

Although the meeting was at short notice it was attended by about 30 trade unionists from important factories and workplaces in the area, including British Aircraft Corporation, James Walkers, Aircscrews, Plesseys, Creators and by a representative from the Woking General NUPE branch.

After nurses from Brookwood and Holloway Hospitals had explained the nurses' case, the meeting decided to elect a nurses' support committee. This includes representatives from the two hospitals, the chairmen of both local trades councils and six other trade union representatives. Since the meeting the support committee has received the backing of the AUEW district committee.

At the first meeting representatives also came from St Peter's and Bottley's Park Hospitals. The committee decided to publicise the nurses case and hold a demonstration through Woking next Saturday, 22 June. This should be the biggest demonstration through Woking since the 1926 General Strike.

Messages of support to c/o Harry Stovole, Secretary, Nurses Support Committee, 2 Hall Place, off North Road, Woking, Surrey.

Other hospital workers join the fight

ANCILLARY workers at All Saints Hospital, BIRMINGHAM, joined a one-hour stoppage last week. Their united stand completely undermined the threats of intimidation from one consultant.

Nurses at Rubery Hospital sent a telegram to their union executive calling for an all-out strike and ancillary workers at Highcroft Hospital have now threatened strike action if their claim for a 36-hour four-day week and a £30 minimum wage is not met.

In LONDON, nurses at Bolingbroke Hospital have imposed a ban on all private patients. At the Central Middlesex many nurses were afraid to join

militant action because of threats of victimisation, but Brent Trades Council wrote to the hospital management protesting against this and workers from Park Royal Vehicles threatened to go on strike and picket the hospital if there was any trouble. As a result the prestige of the trade union movement is soaring there. So is recruitment.

In and around LIVERPOOL solidarity is rising. Workers at Evans Medical, Speke, collected £60 for the nurses last week. Miners at Cronton Colliery, Whiston, are campaigning for a national one-day stoppage in support.

At HIGH WYCOMBE, 150 workers at

the Dunlopillo and Alfred Burtons factories walked out for a meeting with local nurses. After speeches by local trade unionists, Steve Ludlam, editor of the rank and file paper Hospital Worker, said that only strike action by more powerful groups of workers would compel the government to pay up.

Throughout Britain more and more hospital technicians, radiographers and physiotherapists are taking action over their claims. At Guys Hospital, LONDON, technicians have presented medical supplies going through their pickets. In LEEDS an action committee has been arranging pickets and mobilising support from other workers.

ROW AFTER FIRE AT BREWERY

LONDON:-Three men, including the shop steward for the construction firm Balfour Kilpatrick were suspended last week shortly before a meeting on safety at the Watney's Mortlake brewery extension site. The suspensions followed a row between men and security officials after last Tuesday's massive fire on the site.

The fire gutted the new fermentation plant, a major part of this £11 million extension. How there were no injuries is anybody's guess. Within a couple of minutes the entire building was ablaze.

Throughout Wednesday, electricians picketed not only the building site gates but the main factory. For a while a sit-down at Watney's main gate caused queues of traffic. Inside the brewery maintenance men declared their sympathy with the sparks.

By 4.45pm the three men were reinstated and brewery management agreed to discuss safety conditions with the construction workers.

The men want to know why the building was a blazing torch within minutes, why there has never been any fire drill, what the lagging material round the building was made of, why did it appear to be so inflammable and why wasn't other inflammable material about the site and inside the plant stored safely. Finally, how did the fire happen?

A week had passed now and what has been done? There's been no site safety committee set up so that the men's stewards can have discussions with management. The only fire hydrants on the job are in the offices of the supervisors and foreman. There still hasn't been a fire drill and there is no fire alarm or claxon to indicate danger.

Post early for the union-bashers

LONDONERS have been asked not to post their letters in the W1 postal district. There have been reports that up to four million letters for that area are awaiting delivery. What the public isn't told is that the acute staff shortage which affects virtually every office in the London area has been made worse at the W1 office by attempts to break the organisation of the Union of Post Office Workers branch.

Management has systematically refused to negotiate with Frank Osi-Tutu, the branch secretary or his committee and refers all disputes to union headquarters, where a more agreeable reception is expected. Management has also interfered in the affairs of the branch by encouraging a petition by scab elements to remove the elected branch officials.

After ten weeks of management disruption, the workers were beginning to lose confidence, fearing their isolation would result in defeat. But a meeting of all London sorting offices' delegates last week made clear they were prepared to support industrial action to stop the victimisation. A move to take immediate unofficial action was put off after Maurice Styles, a member of the UPW executive council

and of the Communist Party, made clear his opposition and promised executive action—though they had done nothing so far.

Although agreement was reached on some points the next day it is clear that the Post Office wished to get rid of the increasingly successful militant action by London UPW branches. The struggle is far from over.

Strike goes unofficial

LONDON:-47 members of the white-collar union CPSA are on unofficial strike at the Kensington Post Office computer centre. Members voted to continue the seven-week official strike of all the centres by a 2000 majority, but the union executive called it off after Employment Secretary Michael Foot made a few vague promises.

The members at Kensington say they will stay out until they get a clear guarantee that their claim will be paid. They are now without strike pay.

Donations and messages of support to CPSA branch secretary Geoff Barker, 11 Glamorgan Road, Hampton Wick, Kingston, Surrey.

Transport drivers put union headquarters under siege

by Ron Gallagher URTU

MANCHESTER:-Dissatisfaction with the executive of the United Road Transport Union here came to a head last Saturday with a picket of the union headquarters. Rank and file members from Wigan, Liverpool, Stockport and Durham were on the picket.

From a list as long as your arm, the executive was challenged on three particular issues.

Firstly, at GKN, Hazel Grove, a sit-down for three weeks was followed by three weeks official strike. The executive ignored the rule book which said strike pay must be paid.

The second point was acceptance within Phase Three at Peak Trailers, Stockport, plus the cost of living bonus.

These were the two points the executive agreed to meet us on. But the main issue was the suspension of a regional official John Stevenson. He has the full support of the membership, as he actually believes his responsibility is towards the members, not the executive.

The slogans at the picket included 'we are the unions', but you wouldn't have thought so. Only a five man deputation to the executive was allowed in. Half those remaining managed to get into the building before the main door was locked.

We had no satisfactory answers about John's position. Since then however, he has been officially suspended until a disciplinary inquiry on 9 July. The charges are that he failed to carry out instructions and failed to report to the executive that taped interviews had been made with television regarding his case.

Office block occupied

by Dave Knopfler

BRISTOL:-200 people attended a meeting called by the Bristol Joint Housing Action Group following the occupation of an office block by homeless families.

Bristol Council, with more than 8000 families on its waiting lists, built only 116 council houses last year.

Several trade unionists at the meeting stressed the need for motions of support from trade union branches.

The case was brought up of Mr and Mrs Rich, two elderly council tenants who now face immediate eviction, though they don't owe the council one penny in rent.

With food and publishing bills to pay, our resources are stretched to the full. Donations and messages of support please to the Bristol Joint Housing Action Campaign, 57 Ravenswood Road, Bristol 6.

TEACHERS BACK IN THE FOLD

THE ANNUAL General Meeting of the Educational Institute of Scotland, the largest Scottish teachers union, was held in Stirling last weekend in the middle of Britain's most serious crisis in education.

Conditions in Scotland are the worst in the British Isles.

But in spite of pressure from many areas the EIS failed to take decisive action.

Conference wasn't allowed to debate the key issues. On the first evening dele-

gates were outraged when a procedural device was used to prevent discussion of a work to rule campaign next session.

The platform ruled that in passing the minutes (circulated with 500 other pages of minutes without comment 10 days before conference) conference had accepted executive policy.

The platform came under heavy pressure throughout the conference. By huge majorities the delegates voted to de-register and to reaffiliate to the STUC.

The conference voted to take industrial action in support of its next pay claim.

At the conference the most consistent and effective opposition to the platform came from the Rank and File Group.

If conditions are not to worsen next session and if a substantial wage rise is to be won organisation at local level must start at once to force a reluctant leadership into action. The only way to improve conditions in schools is by a solid work to rule campaign

International Socialists



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

Name _____

Address _____

Trade Union _____

Socialist Worker

PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

SOGAT HIT HARD

THE PRINT and paper workers' union SOGAT this week intensified industrial action against the British Printing Industries' Federation.

Newspaper workers on Thomson and Westminster Press provincial papers have been called out. This extends the strike outside the big printing and stationary firms.

The response to the official strike call has also been strong where it was feared it could be weak, in plants like John Dickinson.

At Dickinson's Hemel Hempstead and Bristol plants, for example, all SOGAT members stopped. Scores of new recruits to the union have been made. Picketing has been tough and effective.

The SOGAT claim affects 100,000 workers in the trade. The union is seeking the immediate abolition of the Class Four category which the extremely wealthy printing employers use to keep women workers on especially lousy pay.

The employers in the BPIF are determined to resist this. They want to continue to reap the particularly rich rewards from Class Four grading.

The union is also claiming wage rises up to the ceiling of Phase Three, a threshold agreement, payment of average earnings for holidays, overtime at time and half and a 100 per cent increase in the small special payments known as machine extras.

Put another Nichol in...

GREAT believers in free speech the Tories—when it's them doing the talking. They denounce the Irish Republicans marching for Michael Gaughan—and supported the thousands of Orangemen who march the streets in bowler hats and sashes.

What's bad for the Tories is good for you—and that means backing your paper with your money. We turn the money into words and ideas that are socialist fuel for your struggle.

Contributions this week reached £382.29, bringing the total to £546.26. And there were a lot of them—too many to mention. Here's some of them—and thanks to everyone who's contributed.

Gardners Factory Manchester £2, Capper Pass—Hull £2, readers at Roneo Vickers Crayford £4.75, and readers at Coventry Radiators £1.50. Lambeth Social Services (Area 1) £3, Evans Medical Liverpool £3.50, AUEW (TASS) readers Yeovil No 6 £1.50 Glasgow Corporation £2, London Print Workers £6, Birmingham Teachers £10.

Donations to Jim Nichol, National Treasurer, International Socialists, 8 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

Threshold: Get in fast!

Howls from the hypocrites

NORTH LONDON:—There were howls of protest in Parliament about the 'IRA marchers' at the funeral procession for Michael Gaughan the Irish hunger striker who died on 3 June. They didn't protest about the manner of his death.

Michael's family, and the Irish Political Hostages Campaign, had emphasised the seriousness of Michael's condition for weeks before his death. The Home Office dismissed the complaints. He died, according to the Home Office, of pneumonia.

He had begun his hunger strike on 31 March. On 2 April he was force fed—with a cup. He was cut severely on either side of his mouth.

At this time Gaughan, fellow hunger striker Frank Stagg and Paul Holmes were being held in solitary confinement.

After the first attempt at force feeding, Stagg and Gaughan were transferred to Parkhurst and to the hospital unit. Two more attempts were made to force feed Michael Gaughan. His brother saw him the Friday before his death. His back teeth had been knocked out. His weight was down to six stone.

Two days later, the Home Office called for his parents. He was only recognisable by his hair. By the following evening he was dead.

BATTLE has been joined all over the country on threshold payments. The bosses are straining to the limit not to pay, or to delay payment at least until 21 June when, according to the Pay Board, they will be able to save one month's threshold.

It is vital that this battle for the threshold is won now. If you leave it another week, the bosses and the Pay Board will try to argue you out of a month's payment. The best way out of that is to get the money now.

4000 workers at Plessey's huge telecommunications factory at Beeston, Nottingham, have reacted sharply to the bosses' attempt to wriggle out of their threshold commitments, writes Mike Hamilton (EEPTU shop steward, Plessey Installations). Last Friday, when the workers refused to accept their offer of £1.60 and no more ever, the bosses locked them all out of the factory.

By Tuesday, the workers had occupied the plant with the support of all the unions.

The manner in which management engineered the lockout shows quite clearly the intentions of the Plessey bosses, the Clarke Brothers. The suspension notices were issued at 4.10pm on Friday, about five minutes after the white-collar workers had gone home. The white-collar workers organised by APEX have accepted the £1.60. This has come wrapped with a meaningless clause about asking for more in the future.

ENGINEERS SHOW THE WAY

by C Waling, AUEW

ACCRINGTON:—1400 AUEW members at Platt International struck over the management's refusal to pay the £1.20 threshold payment.

Management caved in the next day. The £1.20 has been backdated to May 'without strings'.

This victory has shown the way to other factories in the area and is proving that workers are learning there is only one way to fight the employers—through solidarity.

At Plesseys factory in Titchfield, Southampton, 2000 workers are paying a £1 a week levy to support selective strikes by key sections. Machine shop inspectors returned from strike on Monday—and the final assembly inspectors came out in their place. Plessey have offered to pay the £1.20 but the workers are determined to win a guarantee they will also pay future cost-of-living rises that fall due.

British Leyland, the biggest member of the Engineering Employers' Federation, has sent out a circular to all workers informing us that they are not going to pay threshold payments, writes Linda Pedley (APEX deputy convenor, Tractor and Transmission, British Leyland, Birmingham).

APEX has called a one-day strike and day of action on Wednesday for all members at British Leyland. Most white collar workers have agreements with the company under Phase 3 which specifically allow for threshold payments.

Rank and file response to the executive's call has been varied. At AEC, West London, where 300 APEX members struck and picketed the factory, the members wanted stronger action and an approach for united action with other unions.

But a mass meeting at the Drews Lane plant, Birmingham, refused to accept an APEX committee recommendation and voted against industrial action.

CONCEDED

Workers at the John Brown subsidiary, Wickmans in Coventry, struck for two weeks before their employer agreed to pay the £1.20. But they will have to fight again to win the further rises. An overtime ban was recommended by the joint shop stewards at Herberts Machine Tools, Coventry, to a mass meeting on Tuesday to pressurise their employer to pay the full rises. And at Barr & Strouds in Glasgow, where the £1.20 is being paid, the workers have pledged themselves to industrial action if the further rises are refused.

In every area more and more companies are now paying up and some big companies are dodging the Phase Three legislation to pay even more than the 7 per cent plus the cost of living rises. At Ford's, Dagenham, line workers are being paid an extra £3 a week on top of the £1.20 already conceded in the national agreement. Ford coughed up because their rates are so low they can't keep men while prices are jumping at their present rates.

The lesson for all of us is clear. The employers will break legislation if it suits them—to pay more or less than the Pay Board says. We must start letting them know that it suits us to get more—now.

HOW TO STEP UP THE FIGHT

THE IS National Committee unanimously passed the following resolution last Saturday.

Every IS Branch must check that: ALL the factories around which it regularly works or in which it has members have won the threshold payments before 21 June.

WHERE the threshold hasn't been won or where the employers have qualified the agreement, then our job is to launch an immediate campaign to win it—and to

win it before 21 June without any qualifications.

A battle nearer the summer break to win the June Threshold or July Threshold entitlements will be more difficult. The national Socialist Worker leaflet (available from Corbridge Works for £1.50 a thousand) should be used in the campaign.

THE Socialist Worker leaflet is a good introduction to SW in factories where we haven't yet started regular work. So these factories should be investigated by the

local branch as well. LOCAL propaganda work pointing out the dangers of long-term threshold bargaining should be started immediately in all factories where we work regularly or have some influence.

We have to prepare now to fight the most likely proposals to come from Labour this autumn—an incomes policy based on nothing, but threshold rises with a couple of pennies thrown in for the lower paid.

Secret report tells bosses: Don't pay

DETAILED guidance on how to deprive workers of threshold pay increases has been circulated to shipbuilding bosses by their employers' federation.

Stripped of the waffle, their message is simple: Don't pay—and if you're forced to make concessions, give as little as possible.

The confidential document, issued by the Shipbuilders' and Repairers' National Association, has come into the hands of Socialist Worker. It confirms that the hard line being taken by bosses up and down the country is an organised campaign to fight threshold payments.

The document points out that now the threshold has been 'activated', firms not yet committed to an agreement will be under pressure to introduce them. It adds:

'It is nevertheless our view, fully recognising that member firms must take the final decision having regard to all possible circumstances, that whenever possible such pressures should be resisted.'

Cut back

'The rate of increases of the RPI (Retail Price Index) over recent months and particularly the increase in the index for April of 3.4 per cent over the previous month, emphasise the highly inflationary nature of the threshold arrangement and the inadvisability of being committed to this type of payment.'

The document makes a number of suggestions on how to make threshold agreements count for as little as possible:

Take it off, but never add it on. Threshold payments, says the document, should be treated as special supplements and 'may not be included in the base rates for overtime allowances, holiday credits, paid holiday payments and other premiums'.

On the other hand, employers are urged not to miss an opportunity to cut back on threshold payments. 'The payments should be reduced pro rata for absences and for hours of short time working'.

Junior employees should not be paid in full. The document details how the fiddle should operate. A 16-year old apprentice, for example, would only be allowed 17p on each 40p rise.

Make the agreement as brief as possible. 'It is important that member firms should specify the date of termination of the arrangement for the reason that, in the absence of such specification, it may be regarded by employees as a continuing arrangement.'

Sit-in men need support

THE blacking of the subsidiaries of Maxwell Joseph's Giltspur group in support of the Strachan's occupation at Eastleigh, Hants, is so far only moderately successful. The occupation is now in its sixteenth week.

The Strachan's committee are hoping to bring the issue up at the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Union meeting in Yarmouth on Monday 24 June.

They are hoping it will be raised under Minute 741. For this the executives of all confederated unions must have received resolutions from the branches demanding they vote for an official confederation black on Giltspur at the Yarmouth meeting.

Blacking lists available from Strachans Joint Union committee, 53 Derby Road, Eastleigh, Hants.

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