

# Socialist Worker

PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

Jailings—the ugly face of the social contract

## FREE THE PICKETS!



Eric Tomlinson (second left) and Des Warren (right) outside the court this week as their appeal was being heard.

**LORD CHIEF JUSTICE Widgery must have felt at home in that roomful of expensive antique books, velvet drapes, fancy wood panelling and with four huge chandeliers.**

This was the Court of Appeal where he told Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson they were to go back to jail for picketing in Shrewsbury during the 1972 official builders' strike.

These pickets were singled out, with 24 comrades, not because they had committed a violent crime, but because the ruling class saw the results of effective picketing during the 1972 miners' strike. Now, the very day after the Scottish lorry drivers won a victory through strong picketing, the ruling class puts the knife in.

In the middle of a strike wave the judges have sent three men back to jail to prove to the working class that their class will use any means to defend and maintain their system. If picketing hurts their profits, they will dig up old laws—such as the 1875 Conspiracy Act—to put you in jail.

The Labour government let these men stay out of jail for five months pending the appeal to soften the trade unions into accepting the Social Contract.

Well, this is the real face of the Social Contract. The capitalist class knows only one kind of contract—the kind that rakes in the dough. For interfering with the employers' profits, two workers are now in jail.

The Labour government could repeal the Conspiracy Laws at any time, but they won't. They might have to use them themselves to see that the system isn't seriously challenged in the future.

Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson are now paying a price that could have been avoided. George Smith, general secretary of the builders' union UCATT, sold these men down the river during the trial and is now saying he regrets the court's decision.

Well, let's see the executive of UCATT call out all their members to free these men. Let's see the TUC, which was born out of struggles such as this, call on all its members to strike to free these men and wipe the Conspiracy Laws from the statute books—instead of ranting about the Tolpuddle Martyrs and the Peterloo Massacre.

The Labour government has rattled on

these men. So have the TUC and the builders' unions. The rank and file must not do the same.

That Des and Ricky should rot in jail for the profits of Sir Robert McAlpine and his friends shows what this system is really all about.

Hatred is not enough. Neither are lobbies or petitions. It's action that will count.

They are in prison for us all and we should be out on the streets for them. If we aren't, then the old slogan 'an injury to one is an injury to all' might remain on the trade union banners but it won't mean a thing. Two of our comrades will be still locked up

We must free these men.

**Mass strike action now to free the pickets.**

**The TGWU and UCATT must call all-out official strike action by all members to force their release.**

### Rank and File call for action

A CALL for strike action to free the two men was issued, within an hour of the jailings, by Roger Cox, secretary of the Rank and File Conference Organising Committee. 'The lead in the fight to free the two lads will come from the rank and file, and we've got to organise to make it successful', he said.

'The committee will produce an immediate leaflet calling for strike action and the building of local rank and file committees to ensure we get it. If we don't fight, our right to

picket will be under grave threat.

'This brutal act must be condemned by all trade unionists. You can really see the violence of the forces of "law and order" now'.

The committee is organising the Second National Rank and File Conference against wage restraint and unemployment on 30 November. For delegates' credentials and for copies of the leaflet calling for strike action to free the pickets (75p for 500) write to Roger Cox, 214 Roundwood Road, London NW10.

## Defend your paper

**£5000 APPEAL:**

**We've now got**

**£1759, we need**

**£3241 more**

DEAR SIR,

I enclose a postal order to the value of £6 for the fighting fund for Socialist Worker. The money is from a collection we had in our company from readers and sympathisers—what few I could get. We hope this will help towards the disgusting fines and costs imposed on you and our paper and hope this will not be the end of the paper that has become part of our lives.'

Yours fraternally, D P Roberts, (AUEW convenor).

No one on Socialist Worker has heard of Brother Roberts before. We don't even know what factory he's convenor in. We do know that his letter spells out exactly what our fund—to meet the legal costs imposed on us last month—is all about.

For hundreds, if not thousands of workers throughout the country Socialist Worker is 'our paper'. Letters have poured into the office from all over the country from workers repeating again and again 'Don't go under. You publish too much which isn't published in the capitalist press.'

Or as two sisters, A and E Wilson, wrote from Yorkshire: 'This is a chance to hit back at those who would like to destroy socialism. I have great pleasure in enclosing £5.'

Shining through the vast majority of letters is the need to keep the paper going—the refusal to go back to the days when socialists have to rely for news and views on the trivia and tedium of the capitalist press.

Trades councils after trades councils sent donations. Huddersfield Trades Council have asked for 80 collection sheets to send to affiliated bodies.

The Magazine Branch of the National Union of Journalists, at an emergency meeting last Monday attended by more than 60 people, passed a resolution calling for a campaign to remove the Widgery judgement—and to raise Socialist Worker's legal costs.

The meeting raised £80 in a collection.

Altogether, we've received £1759 in the first two weeks, more than £1000 was in the second week. We need that £5000 in six weeks. We need it to survive.

Our thanks to the following organisations and individuals who contributed money.

#### SOCIALIST WORKER DEFENCE FUND.

Guardian NUJ Chapel £15.40  
Hampstead and Highgate NUJ Chapel £15.  
Hollis Bros, Royal Group Docks £13.  
Liverpool Rank and File teachers £1.17  
TGWU 5/190 branch £5.  
Working Women's Charter Conference £25.75.  
Socialist Worker readers Lucas, Forman Road, Birmingham £7.23.  
Mullards toolroom, Blackburn £3.50  
Norwich International Socialists £37  
SW readers, AUEW, Macclesfield £6  
North Herts IS £49.40  
SW readers, South Acton estate £3.55.  
Bristol IS £25  
Chrysler Stoke nightshift £5.50  
SW readers, Canley, Coventry, £3.05.  
SW supporters, West Bridgeford College £3.30.  
Edinburgh IS £40.

Continued on back page

# THE CASE FOR THE

# LORRY-DRIVERS

Drivers picketing Road Services Caledonian in Glasgow last Saturday, where a scab driver had smashed through the line the previous day leaving two pickets with broken bones. He is not expected to work again.

PICTURE: John Sturrock (Report)



PICTURES: John Sturrock (Report)

**The job we have to do**

by John Stevenson

Manchester lorry driver and member of the United Road Transport Union

THE road haulage industry is a jungle. Nearly every company has a different wage structure. The smaller firms are always trying to undercut others.

The basic rate for a 32-ton articulated vehicle is £22.20. Drivers usually work 11 hours with one hour off. Bonuses can be tied to mileage, tonnage or hours—they encourage speeding and overloading.

There is little to be said for the sleeper cab. It can speed up journeys by having one man sleeping while the other drives but it is bad for health.

Drivers who have been in the job for years invariably get twinges in the right shoulder from driving thousands of miles with a draught from the window. Hours spent on plastic-covered foam seats often result in haemorrhoids. Add to this the vibration and noise and it adds up to really unhealthy conditions.

This is just inside the cab. But being a cab driver can mean being a loader too. More drivers are killed through loading accidents than on the road. How many men fall off wagons while roping and sheeting?

## Inedible

Although it costs at least £3 for the night, many drivers get the minimum accommodation allowance laid down by the wages council—£1.75. Most of the doss-houses masquerading as accommodation are a disgrace, even though some of the worst are advertised in the union papers.

The choice is no better on the motorways. Fortes have a franchise of service stations and one condition of this is to provide reasonable, cheap meals for transport drivers. In fact, the meals are almost inedible and very expensive. It's time we picketed these places.

The life of a haulage driver affects your family. You rarely see the children. If you happen to be working in the town, you can take your lad along to spend the day with you. So next time you see a lad in the cab, remember it's about the only time he gets to talk to his dad.

We are undermined 24 hours a day by the cowboys in the haulage industry. They go out, tip, run back. To survive in a jungle, you either have to behave like wild animals or organise to change it.

FOR far too long Britain's lorry drivers have settled for appalling wages and conditions while their employers have been able to afford big wage increases.

250,000 lorry drivers are employed by the 17,000 members of the Road Haulage Association, which is one of the greediest and most right-wing organisations in the country. In the late 1940s, the RHA spent half a million pounds in a campaign against the Labour government's nationalisation of road transport.

The campaign, run by a man who later became a director of the bosses' pressure group Aims of Industry, resulted in the denationalisation of most

road transport in 1953—and the dropping of road transport nationalisation from later Labour Party programmes.

Since then the road transport companies have fought all government restrictions on road traffic. They spent another £300,000 on fighting Labour's mild Transport Act of 1968. They have enthusiastically supported demands for more and more government spending on roads.

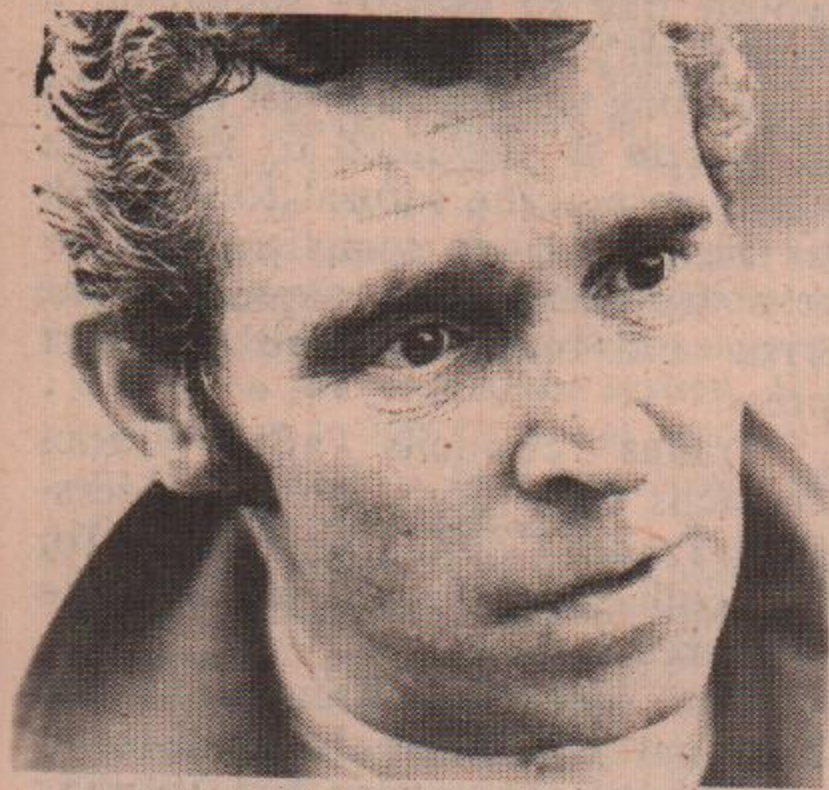
As a result of these campaigns, the road transport bosses have amassed enormous profits. No private industry in the country has been so free to

put on the profits as the road haulage industry.

The chief reason for these profits has been low wage costs. Because lorry drivers have not used their vast industrial power to force wages up, the hauliers have had it all their own way. The union leaders have co-operated in this task.

Now the drivers in Scotland and in Hull have broken through. Now it's up to lorry drivers all over the country—whether they work for private hauliers, for nationalised hauliers such as British Road Services, or on lorries owned by manufacturing firms—to follow this lead. The demand must be for what the drivers in Hull and Scotland have won: £40 for a 40-hour week. Not a penny less!

## What Glasgow pickets are saying



Patrick Moore: Road Services Caledonia

**PATRICK MOORE:** 'If the employers get what they're after on mileage the Aberdeen-Glasgow run will no longer be an overnight job. They'll have us running about like dafties. Yet driving north is really murder. Your average on the Highland roads is 21 miles an hour because they're difficult roads, yet they want to speed us up and reduce our earnings on them. They're not on.'

**WILLIAM LOWRIE:** 'The stuff in the papers really gets up your nose. They talk about us taking home £70 a week. Well I earned £51 top

of the line the other week and that was for doing more than 70 hours, including two nights away from home I took home £36.

There are some that do earn £70 a week. But by God they work for it. They're doing night shunts, they're breaking the law missing breaks and going there and back in one night when they should only do the journey one way—all in a bid to get a decent wage.'

**JIMMY GLENCROSS:** 'One thing that gets you when you're doing distance is your allowance. We get £3 overnight. Yet you can pay £2.75 just for bed and breakfast and the digs and food is going up all the time.'

'The employers make no arrangements for us. We just have to get on with it. And so we do. In one place in Inverness the accommodation is 30 drivers to a room.'

**MICHAEL DILLON:** 'Until this strike we never knew how powerful we were. This claim of ours should have been settled more than a year ago. But the employers just mucked us around and the union did nothing.'

'Now we've got our own committees in Glasgow, Greenock and Grangemouth and our stewards are meeting with drivers from across the border to get things going.'

**JOHN FORBES:** 'We're just not putting up with the situation where the officials and employers natter away on negotiations and we get nothing done. The committees have linked up and they are going to meet every month now to discuss our grievances and make sure the union does something about it. We will no longer put up with such lousy wages. We've had enough.'

## The union's game

THE pay of lorry drivers employed by most road haulage companies is still controlled by wages councils. The last 'negotiations' on the road haulage wages council before the Tory pay freeze left drivers with a basic minimum ranging from £18 for five-ton lorries to £20.38 for 21-ton lorries and over for 40 hours driving per week.

These appalling rates mean drivers work heavy overtime to get anywhere near a decent wage. Average hours increased from 53.3 hours a week in 1971 to 53.9 in 1972. Nearly a third of all payments to drivers of heavy vehicles was overtime.

In November 1972 the wages council recommended a £2.40 rise on the minimum for 1973. This was refused by the Tories' Pay Board, and the wages council revised its offer downwards to £1.82 a week pittance.

The Transport and General Workers Union representatives then stormed off the council and recommended that their drivers seek local

agreement. Despite this, no union support was offered for militant action against the Tories' Phase Two, and the drivers were left in the lurch. The union then went back on the wages council and sold their members down the drain again with a miserable increase under Phase Three.

### Assured

The union has made common cause with the road bosses in dealings with the government bodies under the illusion that if the Road Haulage Association and the British Road Federation got their way, the jobs of lorry drivers will be assured.

They are wrong. The total goods carried by lorries over the past ten years has gone up by 60 per cent, almost all because of bigger lorries. The number of drivers employed has remained almost constant. And every time the RHA wins a battle with the government for stopping speed restrictions or removing traffic regulations, it means longer hours and worse conditions for the drivers.

## How the bosses caused the crisis

THE government wants to bail out British industry with £1000 million of taxpayers' money. Why? Because they tell us, British industry is in crisis.

So it is, but who caused it, and should we pay for it?

The businessmen argue that raw material prices have gone up during the past year, and that this affects their profits. Although profits still look enormous, runs the argument, they are in fact much smaller because of the increased costs of raw materials and machinery which industry needs to continue.

Well, raw material prices *did* rise. This *did* affect the real size of profits.

### Dividends

But during 1972 and 1973, the boom years for industry and the freeze years for the workers, enormous profits were given away in dividends or put in the bank. In 1971, company profits after raw material prices have been accounted for were £9963 million. In 1972, £11,454 million; in 1973, £14,517 million. In 1972 and 1973, £9,400 million was paid out in dividends and interest payments—that's about a fifth of the total national product! £4895 million more was kept by companies and put in the bank. What happened to it then?

Between the end of 1971 and the end of 1973, lending by British banks to property companies increased from £340 million to £2321 million. Insurance companies and pension funds invested £1400 million in property.

That is what British industry did with its profits in 1972 and 1973.

All that money represented wealth created by the workers. Much of it, in insurance companies and pension funds, is owned by the workers but invested for them by gangs of entirely unaccountable spivs, invested in property developments which push workers from their homes.

### Productive

There is a crisis. It's not as bad as the businessmen claim. They only pay 25 per cent tax on their profits, which is much less than workers pay on their wages.

But the cash crisis would not be there if companies had not paid out enormous sums in dividends and interest payments and if thousands of millions had not been diverted from productive industry to property speculation.

The only reason the wealth was diverted was because greedy men thought they could get bigger profits in property. These are the people who caused the crisis.

Workers must not pay for it—either through higher taxes, reduced government spending on houses and schools or in higher prices. The companies should pay. The government will not make them, because to do so would be a fundamental attack on capitalism. Only the removal of the system will solve the crisis.

## Ireland gets an oily deal

THE oil slick now smeared all over the beaches of West Cork gives a perfect picture of the effect multinational firms have on the economies of the countries where they operate.

Gulf Oil built a terminal, one of the biggest in the world, at Bantry Bay some six years ago. It was opposed by tourist interests and small conservation groups, but generally welcomed in an area starved of employment.

What now emerges, and what no one knew at the time, is that Gulf sought and received an assurance from the Irish government that there would be no Harbour Authority set

up at Bantry. That is, it was allowed to run the terminal itself without being accountable to the public. It also received gigantic tax concessions and freedom to take all profits out of the country.

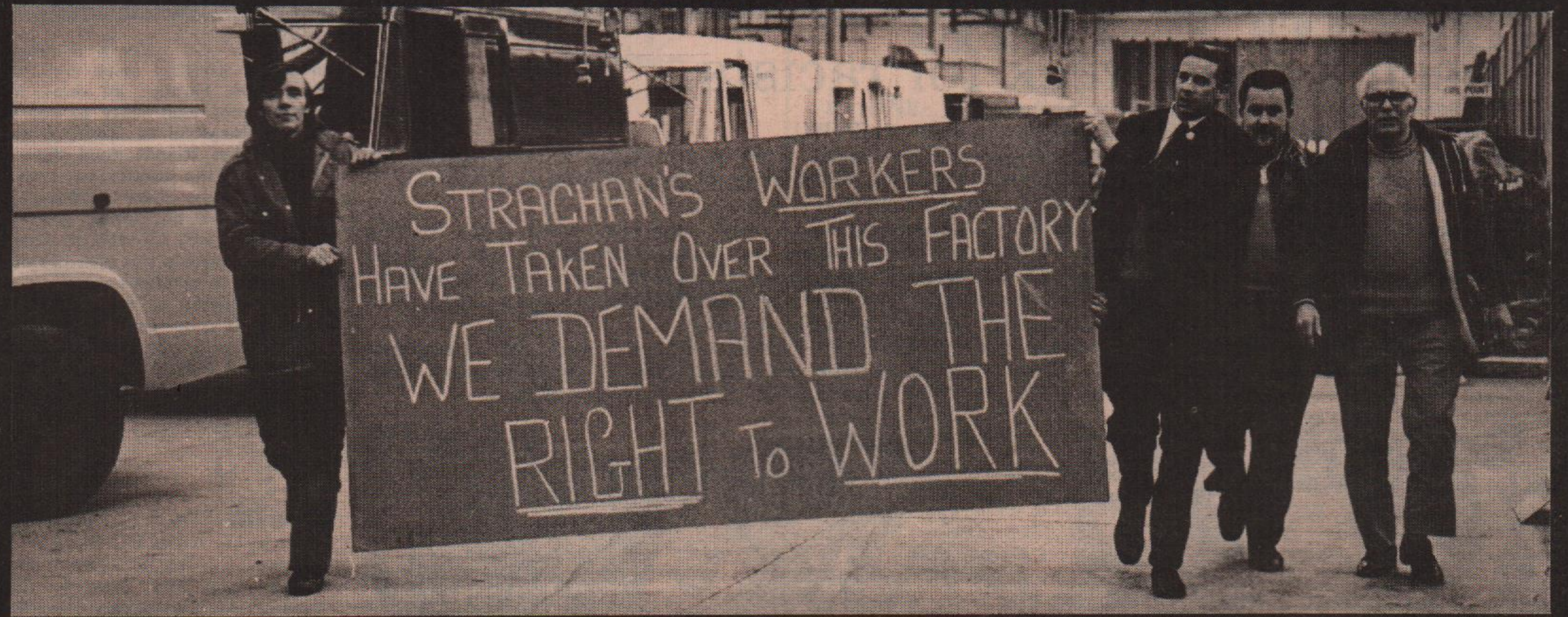
Since then it has clearly ignored the interests of the area and got on with the job of making money hand over fist. Anti-seepage precautions seem not to exist. The company admits to 21 spillages. Local fishermen put the figure much higher. Gulf first estimated the present

spillage at six barrels. It turns out to be the biggest since the Torrey Canyon, possibly bigger, and there were no plans to deal with it. The result is that the livelihood of the fishing industry is threatened and the natural beauty of the area destroyed.

Meanwhile other multi-nationals are carving up the rest of Ireland's resources. Marathon (off-shore oil and gas) and Bula and Tara (Silver, lead and zinc) have already won their 'concessions'. But despite the presence of Labour in the Irish government, there are no plans to take them over, or even to try to control them effectively.

# Lesson Number 1

## Get union officials under workers' control



Flashback to the Strachans occupation in defence of jobs, March 1974

### NATIONAL RANK AND FILE CONFERENCE: BIRMINGHAM, 30 NOVEMBER

Malcolm Vass, former AUEW steward and chairman of the fund-raising committee at Strachans, summed up their experience:

One lesson that stands out is that if workers unite and stand together like we did then the Maxwell Josephs just crumble, and even the legal system can be bucked.

But the biggest problem for the working class at the moment is not the employers or the legal system, but the trade union officials. So

long as they're in office without having to worry about re-election they'll continue to ignore the members' interests and look after their own.

I feel the only way to put the pressure on them is to build a rank and file movement with members united behind the aim of removing the system of voting in national officers for life, and which will bring the unions under the control of the membership.

## WHAT WE THINK

THE fight against unemployment is one of the two themes of the Second National Rank and File Conference to be held on 30 November. A delegation from the Strachans Occupation Committee attended the first conference in March, and their experience since then provides a striking example of the need for a Rank and File Movement of trade unionists.

The Eastleigh factory of Strachans, a subsidiary of Maxwell Joseph's investment company Grand Metropolitan Hotels, used to make van bodies for Fords—until one Friday in March the stewards were told the factory was to be closed in 1½ hours time.

The factory was at first occupied. Then, when the workers were evicted by a police raid in the early hours of the morning, they kept a picket line outside the gate.

Despite the odds against them, the workers could have won if the trade union leaders had not pulled the carpet from underneath them at the most crucial time.

### DISPUTE

So long as the Strachans lads were fighting alone they were ignored by the officials—with the honourable exceptions of the ASTMS and AUEW district organisers, and their hands were tied by their executives. The TGWU and the AUEW even refused to make the dispute official, claiming there was nothing in their rule-books to cover unemployed workers in dispute!

The Strachans workers wasted weeks trying to contact other workers through the official union machine, and Ernie Allen, district

secretary of the TGWU, even tried to charge the strike committee for the union stationary.

To keep up the struggle the workers needed to raise £600 a week, and to win they had to get effective blacking. They sent delegations round the country and the blacking list circulated by the National Rank and File Conference Organising Committee was so effective that six weeks after the dispute ended Grand Metropolitan were still contacting union offices asking them to stop the blacking of their products.

The breakthrough for Strachans came in June when the Southampton and Newhaven dockers agreed to black all Grand Metropolitan and Ford products.

Then the national officials sprang into life. Three days before the black was to come into force there was a meeting of national trade union officers. Greville Williams of the TGWU stated that Strachans was not worth sacrificing the Ford Motor Company for, and unless the pickets accepted the company's offer of compensation his union would disown the dispute.

A meeting of the strikers was fixed for the following morning. Many of the militants were away on delegations, and no one knew what was to be proposed at the meeting.

The sell-out was sharp and brutal. The dirty work was done by George Guy, official of the Sheet Metal Workers Union and a

member of the Communist Party. He said Strachans had offered each man £1,136 compensation for the loss of his job and the national officers were recommending acceptance.

He said he wanted no divisions or splinter groups and that the pickets should decide there and then whether to accept or reject. If they rejected the offer there would be no further union support for the dispute.

### SELL-OUT

No speakers from the floor were allowed and a vote was taken immediately after Guy had spoken. By a narrow majority the offer was accepted, and Strachans' work

was transferred to Willenhall Radiators in Wolverhampton.

The sell-out at Strachans proves what strikers all over the country are learning the hard way: that union officials of every colour will do their best to sabotage the militancy of their own members when those members are in struggle.

Workers in struggle cannot rely on their union leaders. Nor can they rely on their own isolated militancy. They have to link with other workers in the struggle before their militancy can win.

That is why the Rank and File Conference Organising Committee's call for organisation is vital. Now is the time to respond to their call for a second conference. Fill in the form below.

ADVERTISEMENT

## FIGHT WAGE RESTRAINT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

### Support the Second National Rank and File Conference

Saturday 30 November, Digbeth Hall, Birmingham  
Make sure your shop stewards committee, union branch or district committee is supporting this important conference.

Delegates' credentials 50p

The Rank and File Conference Organising Committee has compiled verifiable lists of imprisoned Chilean trade unionists in all the main industrial and service sectors for adoption by British trade union bodies. Copies of these and a covering letter can be obtained from the secretary.

If you want credentials, get your trade union branch or shop stewards' committee to fill in this form and send it to the Secretary, Rank and File Conference Organising Committee, 214 Roundwood Road, London NW10.

Send us credentials for \_\_\_\_\_ delegates to the Rank and File Conference on November 30.

NAME OF TRADE UNION BODY \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ TRADE UNION STAMP

# LETTERS

Please send us your letters. 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.

## It's been a good week for racists...

**WITHOUT DOUBT** racialism had a good week last week. The House of Lords decision on working men's clubs and the colour bar was heavily covered in the Birmingham Evening Mail. This paper, anti-working class, anti-black, made all the racists in the West Midlands who as club owners or managers have been waiting for changes in the law on racial discrimination, happy.

The Transport Union produced its report on the magnificent struggle of the Asian workers at Imperial Typewriters, Leicester. It tried to divert attention from the reactionary role of its own officials and the outright racist role of George Bromley and Reg Weaver of the

Leicester TGWU.

The report aims at producing a smokescreen by focussing attention on the role of 'outside agitators'.

Socialists and trade unionists must fight for the unity of workers, not just at work but at rest. If we can work together, we can drink together. Any attempts by social clubs to keep out black workers must be met with picketing and boycotting.

The TGWU's white-washing of their role at Imperial must be met with resolutions of condemnation from TGWU branches.—DICK PRATT, Birmingham.



White faces, black faces...The one face of the picket line

## Dockers should know

AS LONDON dockers and members of the Transport and General Workers Union, we would like to express our disgust with the Preston Dockers Club in imposing a colour bar.

We find this particularly disturbing because Preston dockers have previously had a fine record of trade union solidarity. We well remember that Preston dockers stood by

Liverpool and London dockers till the very end of the 1972 strike. It was in fact the last port to call off the strike.

But we would like to remind dockers in Preston that when the five dockers were imprisoned under the Industrial Relations Act, we put out an appeal to trade unionists to free them by taking industrial action.

We didn't just appeal to white workers. We appealed to all workers, black or white to support us. And it was only because we did get the support of workers of all colours that the five were released.

We would also like to remind Preston dockers of how prominent black trade unionists were on the picket lines outside Pentonville Prison. It would appear that black workers are good enough to strike with us, good enough to stand on picket lines with us, but not good enough to drink with us.

In the interests of trade unionism Preston dockers should see that this decision is reversed:—DICK DESMOND: 1/100 TGWU Shop Steward, JIMMY CLARK: 1/6 TGWU, FRANK SUGDEN: 1/37 TGWU, IAN OLLEY: 1/37 TGWU, GEORGIE SCOTT: 1/6 TGWU shop steward, TEDDY GATES: Chairman Royal Stewards committee, BOB LIGHT: 1/6 Royal Docks Divisional Committee, JAZZER THOMPSON: 1/35 PLA Shop Steward, EDDIE PREVOST 1/6 Vice Chairman. Royal Docks Stewards Committee.

## Put NAS out of business!

WOULD Peter Smith and Julian Wells (26 October) be as ready to defend the National Association of Schoolmasters if it were a union based on racist premises rather than sexist ones? After all what's the difference?—if they are prepared to defend the rights of workers to choose to join sexist unions then they must be equally prepared to defend the right to organise into racially based unions.

This amounts to trade union cretinism as their statement that they would rather see teachers in NAS or the Union of Women Teachers than in no union at all demonstrates. In other words the principles of the union aren't important, just the battalions—and who cares why they organise?

Jeannie Holborow's statements about the NAS are quite correct. She implies that it is male chauvinist organisation dedicated to female inferiority and should therefore be driven out of business. Quite right. And also as she quite correctly points out, government legislation will certainly not do that any more than government legislation will end racial discrimination.

The only way that we will end discrimination within the trade unions and in society at large is by rank and file pressure—a point also made quite specifically in Jeannie's article.

The National Union of Teachers'

union represents all teachers, regardless of sex. It must be built up into the strongest of unions. That won't be done by defending the right of sexist unions to poach its members as they have been doing consistently since they came into existence.

The NAS teachers was the first union to be recognised by the TUC. In its attempts to gain respectability among trade unionists it had to take this course. It is a reflection of the TUC's weakness, not the NAS's strength that it was granted recognition.

The NUT bureaucracy will be 'aided and comforted' by the sight of rank and file condoning the existence of divisive sexist unions. Far from being opposed to the NAS, union bureaucrats at local level usually pride themselves on their good relationships with the NAS. They certainly wouldn't condone campaigns against the NAS.

It is up to the rank and file teachers to argue with the misguided teachers who join NAS, or worse still UWT, on the mistaken belief that they are more militant, and win them to a union which can fight on behalf of all teachers.

Peter and Julian cry that 'these ideas are essentially an accommodation to reformist ideology'. We say that their ideas are essentially an accommodation to reactionary liberal ideology.—SAL JENKINSON, ANNA DEASON, Hackney NUT.

## MOST IMPRESSED...

Do Peter Smith and Julian Wells approve of the Law Lords decision to uphold the 'rights of the Preston Dockers Club to deny membership rights to black people? Or do they oppose racism with more conviction than they oppose sexism?

They express their shock that an International Socialist should subscribe to the 'thoroughly pernicious notion that we can settle political questions in the labour movement by appealing to the bourgeoisie state.'

And yet after describing the reactionary position of the National Association of Schoolmasters, Jeannie Holborow concludes: 'the white paper does nothing to change that, only rank and file pressure can.'

I was particularly impressed by their 'political' defence of the NAS as a 'real trade union' on grounds that they were the first teachers' union to affiliate to the TUC!—CATHERINE BEARFIELD, Hackney.

**HONOUR . . .** I'm a member of an affiliated working mens club. My club card says 'Honour all men, love thy brother, one hospitality to one another, be not forgetful to entertain strangers, he who has friends must show himself friendly.' Fine sentiments—now I find there are some clubs I could go to with my wife and be turned away—because she's Asian . . . All club members, black and white should put pressure on colour bar clubs to change their ways or cease to be affiliated to the CIU . . . There must be a procedure in the club's constitution for bringing this up. It's up to us to put this right, not lag behind waiting for the Labour government to do some legal juggling with the Race Relations Act.—FRANK ABBOTT, London, N16.

**OBSCURE ANNA . . .** Anna Paczuska's reply to her critics (12 October) is rather obscure . . . It's nonsense if she means women can only fight for liberation through the rank and file movement containing men and women . . . The war must be waged on all fronts . . . I agree with Kathy Ennis who wrote in a recent issue of International Socialism Journal that 'It is tragic that IS has not yet absorbed the best ideas of the women's liberation movement.' IS should support the Working Womens Charter. Let's have more revolutionary solidarity and less sectarianism. Women's Liberation generally excludes men, not out of hostility but because 'women want to work things out for themselves'. Work alongside men is also essential.—KATHLEEN JONES, Shrewsbury.

**ZIONISM, MARXISM, FASCISM (Cont)** . . . Once again it's reared its head! John De Frece of the MAPAM Socialist Zionist Party (19 October) writes of the 'national liberation movement of the Jewish people'. This is the problem that's divided the working class against itself—nationalism! Race before class, the concepts of the National Front and other right-wing groups . . . whose aim is to break the unity of the working class while the real culprits, the ruling class sit back and laugh their bloody heads off . . . The NF is anti-working class, anti-black, anti-Jewish, anti-communist . . . The International Socialists are constant supporters of the working class of all countries . . . They must, like all true communists scorn all forms of nationalism . . . The real problem is capitalism . . . Class consciousness not race consciousness. Unity not chaos and slavery.—TERRY COLLETT, Horsham.

**PART TWO . . .** Socialist Worker should publish a history of the foundations of Israel . . . Mr De Frece says the Palestinians were pawns of British imperialism . . . Before 1947 they lived under a feudal system . . . More recently significant left-wing groups have emerged, tending to be dominated by the ideologies and material resources of the nationalist petit-bourgeois military regimes of the area . . . It's not surprising that there are right-wing trends in groups like El Fatah and the Arab World which put the movement on a racial or 'Holy War' approach.—L HOLLEY, Bath.

**A WREATH FROM KEITH.** I have just been reading Sir Keith Joseph's speech in the paper . . . And what a lot of bloody rot he has to say about the 'left-wing bully boys'. I don't know how he has the nerve to say this. We all know who the bully boys belong to. Keep the poor poorer and the rich richer. This

bloke is mad if he blames the working class for the mess this country's in. I suppose he thinks it would be better if the poor were put away for good.—ANN WOOD, Pontefract.

**EVENING ALL—AARGH!** . . . I came across this cutting from a speech delivered by Lord Willis in the House of Lords in 1964 . . . 'When I was a boy in a neighbouring poor district of London there was constant hostility between the local people and the police. One of our pastimes on a Friday night used to be to beat up a policeman. It was quite often a common thing to tie up a policeman to a lamp post and leave him there for hours—savage, brutal but it was a war between the police and the public' . . . Lord Willis is the creator of that disgusting, nauseating series, Dixon of Dock Green.—A G MASCARENHAS, Leeds.

**SOCIALISTS AND ELECTIONS** What We Think (19 October) commented that 'The unashamedly parliamentary approach of the Communist Party has increased the irritation and despair among many party workers who are urged to devote their time and attention to parliamentary and local government elections.' Yet three weeks before the same column proclaims that 'revolutionary socialists should take part in elections under suitable circumstances.' What are these? Why don't the International Socialists dismiss parliamentary elections and electioneering as the irrelevancies they are?—BARRY GREATOREX, Derby.

*IS doesn't believe that socialism can come through parliament, an institution of the capitalist state. But parliamentary candidatures can be used as a platform. Take a look at Lenin and the Bolsheviks . . .*

**RED HERRINGS AND RED WALES . . .** The idea that Plaid Cymru (19 October) has anything to do with socialism is a dangerous illusion . . . Their election manifesto favoured a wage freeze, subsidies for big business on food and hand-outs for industrialists . . . When you realise that more than 70 per cent of Welsh industry is owned outside Wales, Plaid's solution is so much nonsense . . . They obscure the fact that capitalism is international, taking no notice of borders and mountains . . . Welsh workers face the same problems as English and Scottish workers. The nationalists have no solution to our problems . . . The sooner people realise the better.—BRYAN REES, Swansea.

**MONEY AND STRIKES . . .** The Ford worker (Marriage? Strike? 5 October) asked how to get supplementary benefit during a Ford dispute when he was laid off . . . Your only hope as a single man is the 'emergency clause' in the SB rules which is covered by Section 13 of the 1966 MSS Act. You should argue you are in 'dire need' of money to survive (their figures suggest you need £6.50 a week from any source). This is only likely to apply if you're living away from home and paying rent or if your parents themselves are on SB . . . If they don't give you enough, appeal and if possible get the help of your local Claimants Union. Finally a tip for all strikers. For a few bob you can get the Handbook of the Child Poverty Action Group—CPAG Rights Guide 1—Unemployed Workers And Strikers Guide To Social Security. It's published by CPAG, 1 Macklin Street, London, WC 2 B.—KEN RUTTER, London, W13.

**WE DO . . .** Why don't you support fellow socialists in their fight North and South of the border . . . Official Sinn Fein and Republican clubs have fought seven elections in about 18 months on both sides of the Irish border . . . Find out who the real socialists in Ireland, the Officials, are and don't just support everythign the rest of the press opposes, like the Provisional IRA.—C HUNT, Bury St Edmunds.

**I ABSTAINED . . .** As far as I'm concerned there was only one answer in the election—I abstained. Any other action would appear to have been a betrayal of the What We Stand For. For revolutionaries to stand would be a capitulation to the capitalist parliamentary process.—JOE HERD, Methil, Fife.

## SORRY!

THE FACTS given in Brewery Workers Sold Short (26 October) aren't true. The decision whether to go on strike or not depended on the union's success in asking for re-negotiations to be reopened immediately. The company agreed—so there was no need to report to members.—SHOP STEWARD, Fountain Brewery, Edinburgh.  
We apologise for this important error in the story.

Tony Cliff:

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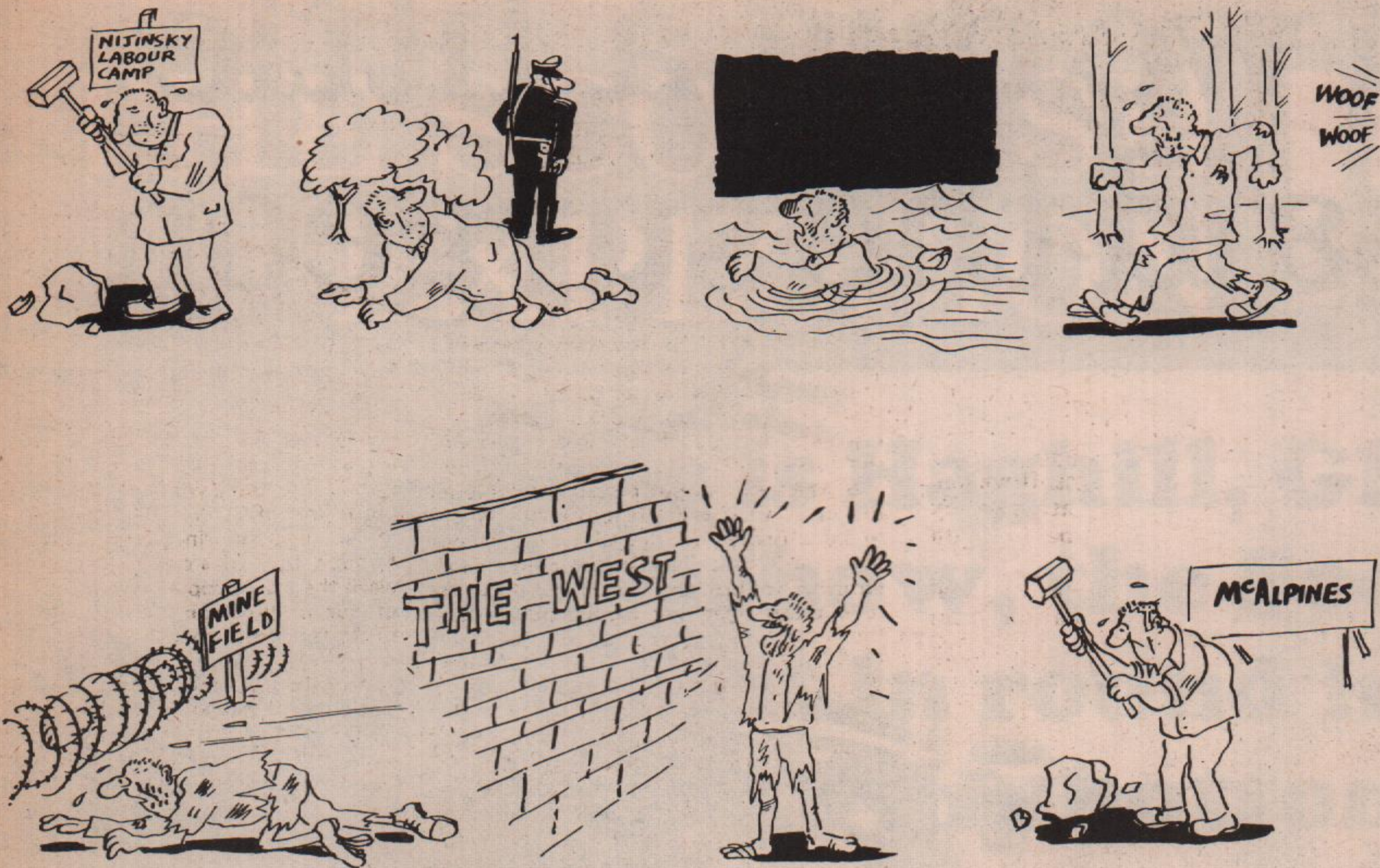
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# Capitalism causes famine —that's official

'FAMINE' is becoming a common word in the press these days. First there was mass starvation in parts of West Africa. Then Ethiopia. Now there are reports of the worst famine in India since Bengal 1942-3, when three million people died.

A typical report appeared in the Financial Times last week:

'In West Bengal a woman burnt her only child and began to eat it; in villages in other states people are reduced to eating leaves. A family of seven in Andhra Pradesh found their grain store empty so they ate a tin of insecticide . . .'

Usually, the press give the impression that such starvation is the result of a natural calamity:

'In Assam, North West Bengal and North Bihar the crops have been devastated by the floods that have

been sweeping South East Asia. Over the rest of India crops are withering because there is not enough rain.'

All that anyone in the West can do, it seems, is pray for a change in the weather and give a few bob to Oxfam.

But last week the Washington Post revealed details of a recent US government study that tells a quite different story. The 300-page study is such dynamite that it is being kept secret until after next month's United Nations World Food Conference.

The report says there is plenty of food in the world to feed everyone. It asserts that, far from the world running out of land on which to grow food, 'there is twice as much land available for farming as is in use currently.'

It also notes: 'Government decisions to cut production are one cause of the recent situation. Between 1968 and 1970, four major grain-producing countries, the United States, Canada, Australia and Argentina, adopted policies which caused a decline in wheat acreage from 120 million to 81 million acres. Had these four countries maintained the wheat area they had in 1967 and 1968, yields obtained from 1969 through 1972 would have produced over 90 million more tons of wheat.'

## Produce

As might be expected from a US government publication, it attempts to justify the present system all the same. But its justifications can hardly hide the condemnation made by the facts it presents.

The report says the world could easily produce the two per cent more grain needed to provide adequate diets for most of the world's undernourished people, but getting that grain into those people's stomachs 'would be so enormously complicated as to be quite impractical.' It indicates that the main problem is 'poor distribution and poor management of the food that is available.'

In other words, what is causing famine and starvation in different parts of the world is not some 'natural catastrophe', but the very organisation of capitalist society.

Those who control the food supplies are not prepared to open them up to the world's poor because there is no profit in doing so. This is true of the few rich farmers in India, who refuse to produce wheat on the scale that is possible until the government raises the price. It is equally true of the United States government itself, which insists that Third World governments accept its dictates before letting them have any grain.

## Wally Belper's column

### WHERE IS HE NOW?

DOES anyone remember Kenneth Littlejohn? Littlejohn and his brother were the small-time gangsters hired by the British government to infiltrate and discredit the IRA. Only when the brothers were captured on a bank raid, the British government welched on them, dropped them like a hot penny.

Then Kenneth Littlejohn escaped and blew the whole story to the press.

And at first the press listened. Neither Liz Taylor nor Richard Burton was getting engaged that week, so Littlejohn was 'news'. He was the name on everybody's chequebook. BBC TV even interviewed him wearing a black wig, somewhere in Holland.

But since then nothing has been heard.

This is sinister. Just remember how the press treated that other escapologist, Ronald Biggs. Biggs was just a bigger-time gangster who made a fortune by hitting a train driver over the head. He then made another fortune, being chased round the world by newspaper reporters.

Now Biggs is safe in Brazil, where he is making an LP, using a chorus of police-whistles for a backing group.

But not Littlejohn. I doubt if he is making LPs. I doubt if he is alive. Almost certainly he's been eliminated, so he won't be any more embarrassment to the British government. The press certainly know this. They wouldn't have dropped the story so quickly otherwise.



Kenneth Littlejohn: eliminated?

THERE was a letter in *The Guardian* last week from the director of *Population Countdown*, the group that advocates compulsory birth-control. His name is Ronald Dick. Straight up.

FOUR weeks ago, before the present row, Sir Keith Joseph gave an interview to Poly Toynbee for *The Observer*. Unfortunately, as is often the case in *Social Class 1*, Sir Keith was tired and emotional at the time. Tired as a newt in fact.

He went raving on about how the country was going to the dogs, how we needed a new prophet, and how television was undermining our morals and ought to be banned. In short he did his pieces.

But for some reason, The

*Observer* has never used the interview, even after Sir Keith's infamous speech to the Nuremberg Conservative Association, when he was hot news. Couldn't have had anything to do with the fact that David Astor, who owns *The Observer*, is a right-winger, could it?

This quote comes direct from last week's *Southend Standard*: 'Mr Victor Shaw, a dustman, found a suspected mortar bomb while emptying bins on a caravan site in Rochford on Thursday. Mr Shaw, 25, picket up a bag next to a dustbin and saw a bomb inside. Mrs Shaw, of Princes Street, Southend, said: "My husband is angry because he thinks if people leave bombs for the dustman, they should leave a sign saying whether they are live or not".'

I feel Mrs Shaw's tip is a very sensible one, and I only hope all the terrorists who read the *Southend Standard* take it to heart.

### Life in Social Class 1

Lord Montagu has got married again. To celebrate the nuptials, he naturally had a few friends round for a light-ale and a rollmop beigel. 400 friends in fact, and they all had to come cased up like the *Great Gatsby*.

Lord and Lady Montagu themselves both had matching creations in pure white silk, hand-made by Michael Fish. The suits cost 150gns each, the shirts 35gns and the ties a piddling 10 gns.

## When is a crime not a crime?

NEXT time you hear someone mumbling about equality before the law remember the case of Thomas Crowley.

Thomas, who is 20, was jailed for six months last week. Magistrate Neil McElligott recommended that Thomas should be deported when he was released.

McElligott took the case of this young Irish-born building worker very seriously indeed. 'He comes here and gets good employment and then starts to swindle the Revenue,' he said.

But of one thing we can be certain: the real reason Thomas Crowley copped it has little to do with the fact he was swindling the

tax and everything to do with the fact that he is working class and Irish.

We can be certain about this because there are other people, of a different class, who get full dispensation from prosecution for tax evasion.

### Exempt

Take Mr J Fox Andrews of Bristol. He was a proven tax swindler, thieving a good deal more than Tom Crowley's £3 a day. But the authorities decided that Mr Fox Andrews could not be prosecuted because 'it would undermine public confidence in the law'. Mr Fox Andrews was

a judge.

Not just judges are exempt. In the taxmen's union journal, *Taxes*, in January Anthony Christopher wrote:

'Crime . . . is comfortably conceived in class terms. Those who commit crimes are thought of as dangerous and deserving of all they get. Tax evasion, on the other hand, . . . has been the preserve of normal, upright, respectable businessmen. They are even admired for it and boast about it in pubs and clubs.'

Which is why Duncan Sandys and his Lonrho colleagues, who salt their money away in the tax free Cayman Islands, are still free to go about their business and Tom Crowley is in jail.

In 1917, for the first time in world history, a workers' government took power in Russia. Out of the bloodbath of the First World War an alternative and better society was born. Within 20 years it was dead, murdered by a new class, a new despot—Stalin.

## RUSSIA

### How the Revolution was lost

Chris Harman 15p.

FROM: IS Books, 265, Seven Sisters Road, London, N4. Please add 4p for postage



# I'm afraid we dug a little too deep, said the surgeon



WALTER SALMON looks an ordinary man of 48. Then you notice that he looks older, that he walks awkwardly, that he holds his back stiffly. His wife Kathy appears tense and seems to watch him all the time.

Fourteen years ago Walter, Kathy and their five children were a 'well off' working class family living in Chiswick, West London. In his own words, he was a 'true blue bosses' man' who worked for success and the comforts money could buy. Today his children won't speak to him. His married life is destroyed. He has been thrown on the scrapheap by society.

In December 1960 Walter had an accident while working on a building site. Cast-iron guttering fell from a roof, hitting him on the head and knocking him out. He fell back heavily and was taken to hospital, where he was treated for concussion and bruising and detained for several weeks.

He returned to work, though still feeling unsteady. He felt pains shooting up his back and extending into his neck, shoulders, arms and legs. He had occasional black-outs when the lower part of his back was touched. Repeated visits to the doctor threw up vague suggestions of lumbago, rheumatism or fibrositis. His complaints were given little attention.

Walter's life changed. His comfortable home life fell apart. Unable to work because of back pains and increasing black-outs, he began to feel trapped and closed in. The family suffered financially. Nobody mentioned compensation.

Walter returned to his doctor. This time the diagnosis was 'nerves'.

The pains continued. So did the unsatisfactory answers from the doctor.

Walter became worse, so now Kathy went to the doctor, demanding he do something. Walter was having difficulty breathing and felt 'shut in' wearing a shirt and tie.

The doctor wrote to the West Middlesex Psychiatric Unit, where Walter was seen by a psychiatrist and admitted at once. Kathy was told he might be in for six weeks. They might better have said six years. That was 1963.

The treatment was a long line of drugs, each of which only made Walter gradually more confused and disorientated.

**Kathy said she just wanted her husband back.**

**The doctor replied: 'Oh you'll never get that. Why don't you leave him?'**

Kathy was horrified by what she saw. This man, once mentally agile and physically strong, had changed little by little into a vegetable.

The psychiatric brigade had failed to bring Walter back into line. As one doctor told him: 'There's nothing the matter with you, what you need is to get back to work.'

The final admission of failure came in 1968 with the cool 'offer' of brain surgery. They set about procuring the necessary signatures. Kathy, told that the operation was the only chance, gave her signature, as did their 17-year-old son. Walter himself, by this time permanently sedated, was easy prey.

The operation—a leucotomy—means boring two holes through the skull and cutting the connections between certain parts of the brain.

Walter's nature was changed completely. Kathy said she was not married to the same person. Some weeks later she despairingly asked the surgeon what had happened to Walter and was told: 'Oh, I wondered when you were going to ask... I'm afraid we dug a little too deep.'

In horror, she said she just wanted her husband back. The doctor calmly replied: 'Oh you'll never get that. Why don't you leave him?'

The doctors had certainly left him. Left him with part of his brain missing. Left him with little hope of ever keeping a job again. He still had the pain in his back...

Now he suffered feelings of violence, instability and hatred which he had never known before. His five children turned against him as he suddenly became a violent madman. Violent scenes in the home grew more regular, until his son tried to stab him to death.

In the Old Bailey trial that followed, the psychiatrist gave evidence that the incident had to be seen in the light of Walter's mental history. The operation had been a failure. Walter was now a 'schizophrenic, psychopathic liar'. And so, disguising his own failure, the psychiatrist named Walter as the origin of the problem. The judge dismissed the case at Walter's request.

They had sent him to hospital eight years earlier with a mild feeling of claustrophobia, and had released him a schizophrenic, psychopathic liar!

## Worried

The pressure of those years, visiting hospital every night, worrying at home, bringing up five children, suspecting that the doctors had done no good for Walter, had begun to take their toll on Kathy. Now she became ill herself, not knowing what to do for Walter.

She also became more aware of her position as a woman in society, as a woman in relation to her husband and as a woman suffering. It was not too long after this that she helped to found the Chiswick Woman's Aid Centre, the first of its kind in England.

Walter, meanwhile, felt still more confused and worried. He decided to leave London to live by himself in Bristol.

That was in 1972. Slowly he began to fight back.

He was granted a minimal Disablement Pension—and discovered after all these years he could, in fact, apply for industrial compensation. Last June he appeared be-

fore a Medical Assessment Board.

But first he made a shattering discovery. A consultant uncovered x-rays which showed a 'Z' shape had formed in Walter's spine as a result of an old, unhealed fracture. This, said the consultant, could only have been caused by a severe injury.

The only such injury Walter had known was the building site accident of 1960. This fitted with the fact that the hospital had found him 1½ inches shorter than before.

## Evidence

When he came before the Medical Assessment Board this was apparently not considered. Walter, on his own, felt swamped by its cold bureaucracy and couldn't present half the evidence he had. The Board decided that due to the head injury in 1960 he had lost his faculty to work and had been '10 per cent disabled' for one year (1960-61). The assessment said it didn't take into account his depression, paranoia and the stomach operation for stab wounds.

He was awarded £22, a lump sum.

The devastation of his life, the 14 years of mental torture, the mental breakdown of his wife Kathy and the effect on the children, the Board apparently did not see these as related to the original accident.

Walter, however, had by then learnt enough to reject the £22. Reunited with Kathy, he is trying to appeal against the assessment, with help from the Mental Patients Union.

Walter and Kathy have both learned, by the most tortuous means, the political meaning of their situation. Walter, who after the operation on his brain confides in the psychiatrist that he has the feelings of a 'murderous bastard' and wants to kill, is simply told: 'If you do kill or harm anyone, we'll put you in Broadmoor.' Kathy, expected to leave Walter or, if not, to support him, sees the impossibility of her position as a woman and the need for change in society.

Meanwhile all society will ever offer them is 'compensation'—and that only if they can find a good radical lawyer and sympathetic, competent help. Compensation will never change what they have suffered.

# THE SCOTTISH EXPLOSION



**This is Haghill, Glasgow.  
Somehow, the Social Contract didn't  
quite seem to fit in round here. But they found  
a place for it—at the bottom of the Clyde**

*THE Scottish strike wave was kicked off by the workers at Hoover's Cambuslang. They have now been out on unofficial strike for eight weeks.*

*It's not been easy but the workers have stayed united and determined to right a situation where they are on a miserable basic of £26 with average earnings before tax of a mere £32.*

*That's why they've defied the all-out efforts of the AUEW executive to get them back to work without cash on the table.*

*The executive broke all records to deal with Hoover. Normally strikers are kept waiting weeks for an official pronouncement. But the EC dealt with Hoover before the first week was out.*



*EDDIE McAVOY, AUEW shop steward at Hoover's, tells what it's like to be in the middle of the strike wave—and face to face with the Social Contract...*



**IF WE HAD** united working class leadership here in the West of Scotland the situation would be even better than it is already. If the Jones and the Scanlons were doing what they should be doing instead of being members of the government, we would have a fantastic battle. We could improve every single workers wages and clear up a few other injustices besides.

But workers aren't getting that leadership. So they're doing the leading themselves. We're near to a local general strike. But instead of trade union officials running around trying to lead it, we've got leaders who're only out to damp down the fire.

If we had a genuine alliance of trade unionists, we could link up the various strike committees, the employers could never pick us off one by one. The problem is people think we'd lose our separate identities if we joined forces. You have to set that aside in the interests of unity, for with unity the employers are on a hiding to nothing.



We've had four years under a Tory government when our wages were under constant attack. And last year Hoover made £25 million profit. Now they're saying that they've cash flow problems.

But they're a multinational like the others. They've profits they've piled up away abroad. They never invested it or nothing.

So we're not going to pay for their small cash problem. They can damn well bring back some of their money from America.

None of us minds getting paid in dollars.

We have fantastically low wages. That's why it sickens me to hear Len Murray, Jack Jones and Co making their speeches. They must be working for the CBI.

Take Jones' speech at Motherwell. He said that high wages could cause unemployment. If you shut your eyes and ask who said it you'd come up with the answer—an employer. For it's an employer's argument.

If we accept the Social Contract we will end up with a wage freeze. In 1964 George Brown came up with a similar thing to the Social Contract. Only then it was the TUC-CBI declaration of intent. A year later our wages were frozen.

If you accept the Social Contract, they tell you quite openly your living standards will drop. Under this so-called contract, there is nothing to prevent the shareholders and the other people I call parasites increasing their profits.

I'll never know how anyone has the nerve to tell a man going home with £27 a week to pay the rent and feed the family that he should pull in his belt. It is just deceit and any union which says we should accept the contract is selling the members down the river.

I'd accept a Social Contract, if everyone was equal and if everyone had the same standard of living. But until such time, I will not. Pushing such a thing now is nothing but a recipe for continuing the exploitation of the working class.

What causes unemployment is not our wages, high or low. Employers will shut places down even if they break even. They're looking for what they think is a satisfactory rate of

return.

They've never invested to help the working class. They invest to help a small minority who already own wealth and want to have more at their disposal.

As long as you have this situation you'll have closure threats, shut downs and lack of job security. The only way to get job security is to take industry out of their hands, to nationalise their factories. You'll never control them any other way.



Jones and Scanlon were part of the great leadership who were going to lead the working class to higher living standards. But now we see that Jones makes the capitalist and their profits the first priority. And I was foolish enough to think that trade union officials were supposed to be responsible to their members.

They were all great fellows under the Tories all attacking prices and how much they'd gone up. But now with wee Harold in there, they've changed their tune. They're saying that profits are OK, as if civilisation depends on them. What a joke.

But they're not on. Up here people are showing that they're not going to tolerate the situation any longer.

All it needs is the organisation and leadership. People are sitting on the sidelines waiting and watching. If we had the organisation, there's nothing we couldn't do.

## SPREAD STRIKES!

GLASGOW International Socialists have responded to the present wave of disputes in the West of Scotland by launching a mobilisation around this six-point programme:

- 1 EXTEND the strikes. Put in wage claims and take action now.
- 2 NO RETURN to work until the full claims have been met. No productivity strings. Not a penny less than £10.
- 3 GIVE the strikes official backing by the unions. No sell-outs by full-time officials.
- 4 FOR a West of Scotland all shop stewards' meeting to give full support, moral and financial, to those in dispute.
- 5 FOR a West of Scotland Rank-and-File Strike Committee to link those in dispute and those putting in claims, and to organise a common strike fund.
- 6 SUPPORT the National Rank-and-File Conference in Birmingham on 30 November.

**'If we had the organisation, there's nothing we couldn't do...'**

# PUNTERS BACK THE PICKETS

by Roy Brown

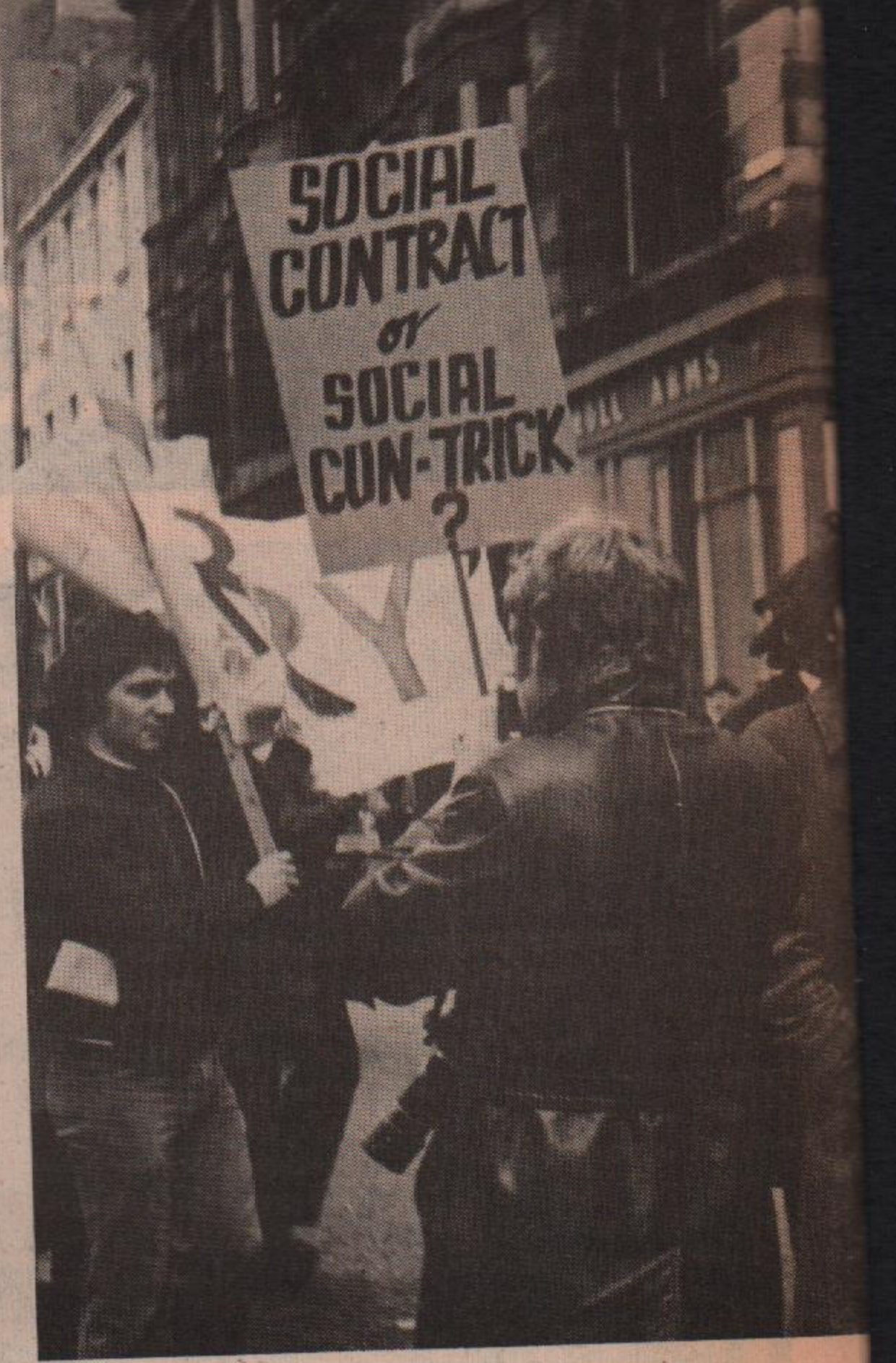
A ONE-DAY token strike was staged by members of the Joe Coral betting organisation last Saturday following the management's consistent refusal to talk about recognition of TUBE (The Union of Bookmakers' Employees) in the Glasgow area.

Offices where scab labour was employed were picketed successfully. In one shop the normal Saturday takings of £2000 dropped to £70.

The success of the strike was achieved mainly because of the women counter clerks' determination in picketing the offices.

The strikers went back to work on Monday and are determined to win union recognition.

Support from the public was fantastic. The women counter clerks earn £14 to £16 for 31 hours. In the last three months, Coral's have made £2 million profit.



# Some contract

## Shortages? We know the real culprits

By Gail Armstrong

OVER the past few weeks we have seen shortages of perishables and some canned goods in the shops in Scotland as the haulage drivers were stepping up their strike.

Now that the drivers are winning things may improve. But the busmen are still standing firm and there are thousands and thousands of other low-paid workers who could well follow them into battle. So our problems could well carry on.

### Story

One thing that all housewives and workers should remember is who is really responsible. The press and TV are all too ready to point the finger when workers demand decent conditions and wages.

It is a different story when sugar or petrol supplies magically dry up. We are told greedy Arab sheiks, panicky women shoppers or natural disasters are responsible.

But there is no getting away from it-time after time we can see the bosses and their class looking after themselves and doing very nicely out of it.

Earlier this year, when lentils disappeared from the shops, workers at Allied Supplies (suppliers to Templetons Liptons Cochran's and Galbraith supermarkets) discovered a warehouse full of them in Glasgow.

### Double

They struck for an independent inquiry into the hoarding. But, needless to say, lentils soon reappeared in the supermarkets at double the price.

Whatever the propaganda over the next week or so, all shoppers should remember one thing: It's the bosses who cause the shortages.

They held back on the drivers' money because they want more sweat per penny. They're the ones who cause the lay-offs and it's on them that we should vent our anger.

by Peter Rain, TGWU  
THE UNION right at the centre of the storm in the West of Scotland is the TGWU. Lorry drivers, bus workers, dustmen, engineering workers have all been on strike despite the fact that of all the union leaders, Jack Jones TGWU general secretary, is the most fervent supporter of the Social Contract.

And Jones has not exactly disguised where he stands in this vital battle. Indeed his performance recently must destroy the myth that he is some kind of militant once and for all.

Only last month, every T and G branch received a circular from Brother Jones pointing out that although the Tory Industrial Relations Act was dead the union had never been 'above the law'. He went on to give the following advice:

No strike should take place until the period of notice required under the Contract of Employment had elapsed, and the TGWU regional office given its blessing.

No written appeals for solidarity action should be circulated.

Only small numbers of pickets should be used and all offers of outside help should be refused.

In other words, Jones was saying: Carry on as though the Industrial Relations Act was still in force.

He showed where he stands a year ago, when he last visited Clydeside.

7000 workers had struck at Chrysler Linwood over the company's intention to move scabs in to do the work of striking electricians.

Jones said: 'The repairing of machinery by high level management supervisors in these circumstances is not unusual. It is not contrary to good trade union practice for our members

PICTURES:  
John Sturrock  
(Report)

to work on the machines.' This is rather like telling the carriers to work with the army during a dustcart drivers' strike. The Linwood workers ignored Jones' advice.

Two weeks ago at the Scottish delegate conference of the TGWU, Jones went a step further along the road from co-operation with the employers to outright support for them. He warned that wage claims could lead to closures and 'that 'austerity measures' might have to be accepted.

Perhaps the reason why Brother Jones used the expression 'austerity measures' is that it would have been too embarrassing for him to say what he actually means—wage cuts and unemployment.

But why does Jones behave like this and use classic employers' arguments. The answer isn't that his sole desire in life is to sell his members down the river, though it may seem like that. It's simply that for him and those he has gathered about him, like Alec Kitson and Ray MacDonald, the achievement of 'socialism' is a long gradual process to be carried out by successive Labour governments and by people like him.

During that process, advances are supposed to be made. But capitalism will still exist, and so accommodations will have to be reached with big business. If that means wage restraint and unemployment in what Jones sees as the long term interests of his members, then so be it.

And so even today, in a society in which the economy is dominated by huge multinational companies, in which 7 per cent of the population own 84 per cent of the wealth, in

which there is a serious crisis which employers are trying to make us pay for, Jones is in favour of wage restraint from his members.

Objectively, this puts him on the side of the employers in current struggles. Wage restraint by workers means higher profits for the bosses.

In the present situation Jones has some difficulties. Representing hundreds of thousands of low paid workers who have suffered most from the various wage restraint policies of recent years, he has to be careful.

And the sheer numbers of TGWU members currently on strike makes it extremely difficult for him to take too hard a line without provoking a massive revolt inside the union. At all costs he wants to avoid that at the moment. But give him time and he will take the hard line.

### Disguise

Jones' reputation as a militant and scourge of big business is based on a few conference hall speeches. In the real world he's only too willing to co-operate with the employers and to use the whole machinery of the union to that end.

In the period ahead, with raging inflation and increasing unemployment, the ability of the Joneses of this world to disguise their right wing deeds with left wing phraseology will prove more and more difficult.

In certain circumstances, to keep control of particular situations, Jones will be forced to make fighting noises. But in general he will move even further to the right.

Jack 'Jekyll' Jones, socialist militant, avowed enemy of the capitalist class never existed, except in the fevered minds of newspaper hacks.

Jack 'Hyde' Jones, supporter of wage freeze, austerity measures and basher of the TGWU rank and file, is about to enter the scene.

# VILE WORK, VILE PAY

by George Kelly, convenor,  
Glasgow Corporation electrical  
workshops

DESPITE massive pressure to follow the decision of the dustcart drivers and return to work on the basis of a shaky promise from the Corporation, Glasgow's striking sewage workers voted to stay out for £35 basic on Monday.

The vote was unanimous, despite the General and Municipal union officials' remarks that the men 'were fighting a lone battle' and that other Corporation workers were as bad off. What a condemnation of the union's inactivity over the years.

The strikers do the most dirty and dangerous jobs in the city's sewage works for pitiful wages:

£22.17 basic for grade three and £24.77 basic on a seven shift system.

Even with additional bonus few can reach the princely sum of £30.

But Glasgow's Labour controlled council is sticking to the letter of the law and insisting negotiations have to be carried out at national level.

The health hazards caused by the estimated 35 million gallons

of untreated sewage that have been poured daily into the Clyde is being played down by the local press.

But the Clyde Purification Board are pumping in a ton of liquid oxygen at a cost of £500 a day to help keep alive the river's plant life.

### DECENT

They are also buying two floating aerators at £5000 to aid the oxygen. How about diverting this cash to the sewage workers?

At the moment, the strikers are on their own. As shop steward

and strike committee treasurer Lewis Collins said: 'We must link with other low-paid Corporation workers.

'But we're solid. I'm prepared to stick out for a decent basic wage.'

Much has been made by full-time officials of the national wage award due within a week.

But it is unlikely to come up to the sewage lads' claim of a £35 basic—unless there is a fight.

Attempts must be made to link up all low paid local authority workers. With the spirit of the sewage workers, a breakthrough for decent wages in local authorities is a possibility.



GEORGE Hillingdon

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# 'Incredible—but it's happening'

MARIA Burgess teaches at Victoria Drive school in Scots-toun Glasgow. But for five years she taught at Cranhill, a working class comprehensive.

Staff were always short there. And the shortages have been increasing, thanks to lousy wages and the widespread feeling that if you were going to get lousy wages, you'd be better off teaching in a respectable school.

But now the teachers are on the move to get those lousy wages altered. They are determined to win their claim: £15 a week.

Their union is pussyfooting like the others, though it is having to make some noises. The rank and file action committees are handling the thing gently, to say the least, and are not yet moving for determined all-out action.

But the teachers want cash in the hand now. And though many still think they are a cut above such people as schoolkids and the other strikers, their ideas are changing. Maria explains:

Until this year, the mass of teachers were apathetic. Now we have unofficial action involving more than 2000 in the West of Scotland and many more elsewhere.

It seems incredible. But it's happening. In the staff rooms you hear people saying things you'd just never heard before from people who were imbued with the idea of letting their leaders get on with polite negotiations, being moderate and reasonable.

But this year it became clear that if we didn't do something then the education system would collapse. People were voting with their feet and packing jobs in.

In the dispute the older kids are very sympathetic. They come up and say they never realised how little we earned. And the parents, too, are friendly.

But a lot of teachers don't want pupils to know or be involved. They still think this unprofessional. They don't understand that higher wages will benefit the kids and so the kids are centrally involved.

There's a lot to change in the educational set-up. And not just teachers' attitudes to wages. Teachers tend to look on the alienated kids as troublesome. They feel superior, that these kids are stupid.

Teachers also accept that working class kids have to go out into lousy jobs. At my last school, the kids went into a big C and A factory nearby.

Another member of the staff asked me why I bothered. "After all," she said, "They're only going to push buttons for the rest of their lives." That's what we've got to change.

# some society!

## The Scottish Explosion



JOHN KEENAN, senior steward, Rolls Royce East Kilbride:

THE FEELING of working people in the West of Scotland is terrific. There's no hostility to us strikers. Just the opposite. I was walking to the picket the other morning and I came on a street cleanser.

I said to him "You're about the only person left at work." He said: "I think I'll just have to come out in support."

The Rolls Royce claim is for £10 for all the three factories. Under the legal shackles we settled not so long ago. It was backdated to April. But we refused to sign the agreement since it was not freely negotiated.

What surprised me was the tremendous feeling for the claim. It just goes to show you the frustration that has built up about wages.

When someone mentions the Social Contract to our people they just say: "What's that? We've

never been consulted about that."

One of the main reasons that working class people are in the mess we're in today is this whole bit about being reasonable. We've been too reasonable. Who's ever been reasonable with us?

It's hogwash that we have to create more wealth before we can get any more. California is the richest state in the richest country in the world. But there is still plenty of poverty and food riots.

The simple truth is that until we have a society based on need and not greed workers will have to go on fighting every inch of the way

That's what so terrible about the behaviour of the union leaders, like Jack Jones' speech about big wage increases creating unemployment.

The union leaders who use these employers' arguments are part of the top of the heap. That's the truth of it. I saw that Len Murray had his tea at Brook's Club the other evening.

That just about sums him up. Who elected him, anyway?

McCORMACK, convenor, Rolls-Royce

SUBSTANCE of the Social Contract is that the poor help the poor while the rich keep a secure grip on the pile. This alone exposes it as a massive confidence

a lot from the dignitaries of the movement about that workers must be involved. But at no stage have the grass roots to have their say on this so-called contract. I am absolutely certain it would be thrown out. That if we hold back everything will follow and we'll change is so much rubbish. The only way forward is to who possess, not share out the misery among the

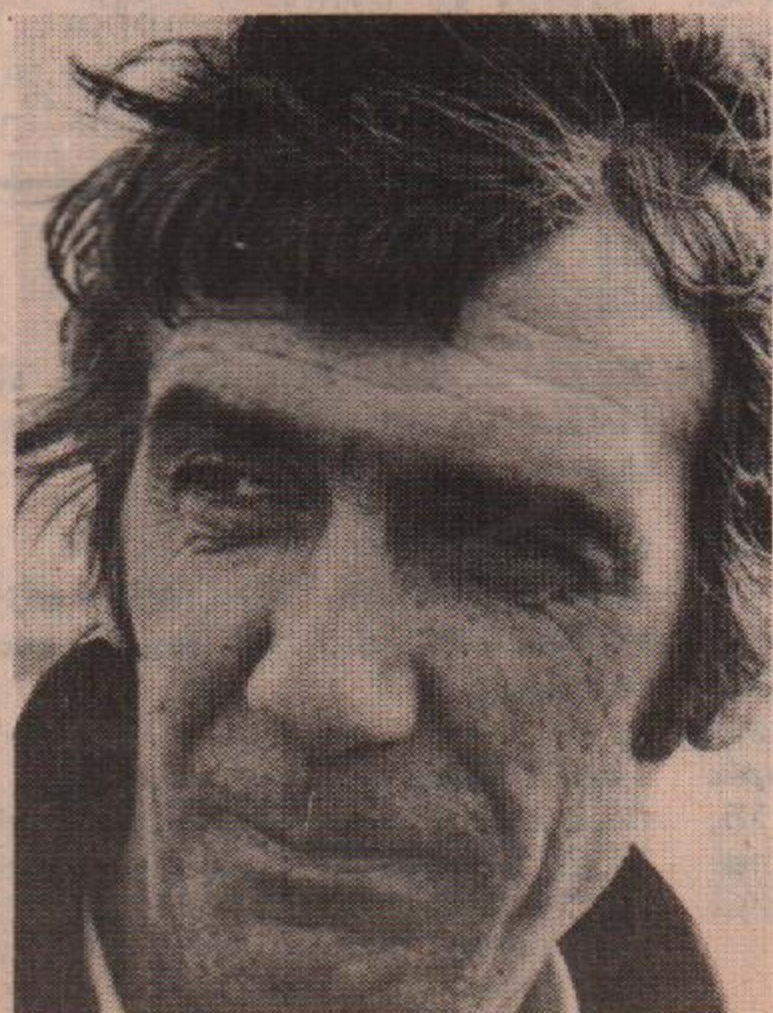
ever and Co are on the side of the employing the election, Harold has left us in no doubt our government stands.

DUFFY, convenor of Goodyear Tyres, and member of the Transport Union

PRESENT wave of struggles in Scotland is easily gained. For two years workers have been shit on. They are trying to get back to where they were when improve their living standards a little.

Contract, as far as I'm concerned, was supposed to be binding. The unions were to hold back on wage claims and wages would be frozen and wealth redistributed. If these happen and the Labour Government does the same as clearly there can be no contract.

There are just no longer willing to let their wages be remote negotiations over which they have no is the connecting link between all these dis- must be made official.



## We're strong—but we're stronger together

by Jimmy McCallum (TASS)

IN EVERY strike and dispute, one thing stands out: the rank and file have no confidence in the authority of the trade union machine and rely totally on their own initiatives, organisation and power.

This isn't just a reaction to the half-heartedness of local officials and the arrogance of national officers. In many ways it is a statement of what has become obvious.

If any dispute is to end in victory it depends on the extent to which the shop stewards can extend and strengthen the strike.

The lorry drivers' strike clearly shows this power and self-reliance. From the beginning, the shop stewards controlled the way the strike unfolded.

It isn't only the lorry drivers who have shown the militancy and strength of the rank and file. The Glasgow dustmen, who are now back at work awaiting an offer, also established that their stewards would do the negotiating in their fight against the Labour-dominated council. And the busmen, the teachers, engineering workers are doing the same.

This clearly indicates that workers on the shop floor, on the site or in the classroom, have had

enough of the cynical conference manoeuvre of the leadership of the trade union movement.

Events in Scotland over the last few weeks hold the key to the situation throughout the working class movement. The way the TUC has snapped up the Social Contract has opened up the gap between themselves and the rank and file.

### Power

But we have to help rank and file confidence grow. The way to make sure that it does grow is to give it a fighting focus.

That is what the second national Rank and File Conference is about. And at the same time it is about something more. The rank and file have shown and are showing yet again that the working class has tremendous power. What is lacking is serious political direction.

A genuine rank and file movement would speed victory in the fight for higher wages. It would lay the ground for a united battle against unemployment.

Most important of all it would draw together the real power of the workers and put it to work for the emancipation of our class.

## The lesson they learned

A MEETING of the High Street freight depot workers—members of the National Union of Railwaymen decided last Friday to end their five-week strike after management conceded an increase in manning.

A signed agreement stated that 134 men were needed to cover jobs. The number employed is 70.

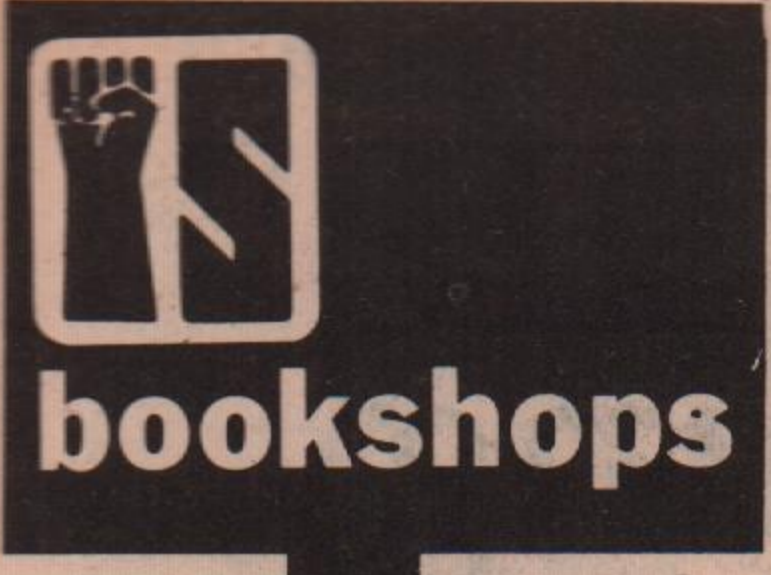
Management tried to confuse the issue by introducing suggestions of new shift patterns. They were only prepared to discuss manning if there were concessions on productivity.

The strike committee learned two main lessons. Their members were prepared to fight on a non-wage issue. And they only went back to work because of isolation and lack of financial support from other sections of the trade union movement.

Like the postmen in 1971, the will was strong but their pockets empty. They are now determined to set up a committee of rank and file workers involved or expecting to be involved in struggle. Set up links now so they will not in future be defeated because of lack of finances.

Their final bulletin stated: 'We appeal to the members of the trade union movement throughout the country to join with us in expressing dissatisfaction with union representatives sitting in their comfortable offices who refuse to represent their members satisfactorily.'

These workers will continue to press for retrospective recognition of the strike as official and call on all members in NUR branches in Glasgow to endorse this at their branch meetings.



Pamphlets produced by the International Socialists:

**The Struggle for Workers' Power**, by Roger Rosewell, 10p

**Can Socialism come through parliament**, by Roger Kiene, 10p

**Workers against racism**, by Paul Foot, 10p

**Women fight back**, by Kath Ennis, 10p

**Trotsky**, by Duncan Hallas, 5p

**Lenin**, by Jim Higgins, 5p

**The Meaning of Marxism**, by Duncan Hallas, 25p. **Study Guide to The Meaning of Marxism**, by Richard Kuper, 10p

**The Politics of Lenin**, by Paul Ginsborg, 20p

**Russia: How the revolution was lost**, by Chris Harman, 15p

**Asbestos, the dust that kills in the name of profit**, 10p

**National Front: The new nazis**, 10p

**The Struggle in Ireland**, by Chris Harman, 15p

Four educational reprints from IS (US), the International Socialists of the United States: **WAR AND THE MIDDLE EAST**, principally articles by Hal Draper plus 'The Arab States' by Ian Birchall from IS Journal (30p)

**POPULAR FRONT OF THE 1930s**: Articles by Trotsky, Swaback, Held and Rosmer from *New International* and by Kirkwood from IS Journal (15p)

**READINGS IN THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF CAPITAL** includes a number of articles by Cliff, Kidron and others from IS Journal and its predecessor *Socialist Review*, plus articles from *New International* in 1949 (40p)

**POLITICS AS RELIGION** consists of the articles by Duncan Hallas from IS Journal documenting the degeneration of the Fourth International, with an introduction by Cal Williams of ISUS and appendices by Shachtman, Draper, Erber and Natalia Trotsky (40p)

**Also WOMEN IN THE CHINESE REVOLUTION** by Laurie Landy traces the changing role of women in China, and shows that the new society there 'has "liberated" women so that they can be more easily exploited... by a new... mode of production and ruling class. The emancipation of women in China awaits a new social revolution...' (25p)

**THE RAGGED-TROUSERED PHILANTHROPISTS** is out of print in paperback until March 1975. The hardback is still available at £2—get your local library to buy it.

**MAIL ORDER FROM:**  
IS Books, 265, Seven Sisters Road, London, N4. Please add 4p for postage on pamphlets, 7p on books.

**DIRECT FROM:**  
IS Books, 265, Seven Sisters Road, London, N4; 64 Queen Street, Glasgow, C1; 224, Deritend High Street, Birmingham; 14 Grange Road, Middlesbrough; the Socialist and Trade Union Centre, 65 Queen Victoria Road, Coventry; and Angle Books, 4 Roseangle, Dundee.

# Two strikes, almost identical—but one won and one lost. Why?



PICURE: John Sturrock (Report)

LEFT: Women strikers at SEI, Heywood, jeering as blacklegs go into the factory. Meanwhile 30 miles away in Liverpool, women's pickets at Wingrove and Rogers (BELOW) were forced to stand by as police cleared a way. Both strikes were by women members of the Engineering Union, women not normally militant. One SEI striker said the union officials 'sold us down the river'—but is that all there was to it?

'WE'LL march back with our heads held high,' said one of the victorious strikers at Wingrove and Rogers in Liverpool last week. After 17 weeks on strike they were elated and confident. They had won all their demands.

The same week, another group of women workers in the North West were expressing vastly different feelings. After 11 weeks on strike, women at SEI, a GEC subsidiary in Heywood, had voted despondently to return to work with only a fraction of what they wanted. Demoralised and confused, one striker laid the blame for the defeat at the door of the local Engineering Union officials. 'They sold us down the river,' she said.

Yet on the surface the disputes were very similar. Both involved small groups of women manual workers who were nominally members of the AUEW but had little experience of organising disputes. Both were part of the recent explosion of strikes which women workers have been forced into in an attempt to cope with raging inflation. Both were doubtless stimulated by the existence of government-prescribed threshold payments and the Equal Pay Act, legally entitling them to wage increases they weren't getting.

## Fearsome

One ended in failure, one in success. Are we to conclude that the air in Merseyside is different from the rest of Lancashire, that it makes workers more militant and more likely to succeed? Or perhaps the Merseyside women were able to put their case with more eloquence and greater persuasion? Perhaps Wingrove and Rogers are less fearsome employers than the GEC colossus, so guaranteeing a greater chance of success?

Of course such ideas are nonsense. While GEC may be a more powerful set-up than Wingrove and Rogers, the response of both managements



## REPORT: ANNA PACZUSKA

to workers' demands for increased wages was the same—hostile. No management goes in for chivalrous sentiment when profits are at stake. And the air in Liverpool and Manchester is equally filthy.

The difference in the two strikes lies in the way they were organised. These differences were crucial. Women are a weak, poorly-organised sector of the trade union movement. For a century the response of more experienced trade unionists to this has been to pass pious motions calling for equal pay.

Sympathy is not enough, action is the key to winning any dispute.

The strikers at both factories got the sympathy of feminists and socialists across the country. Money was raised by trade unionists and women's libbers. But in Liverpool rank and file trade unionists sympathetic to the women on strike decided to organise action in their support. Their appeals for the blacking of the firm's goods were effective and lent considerable weight to the strikers' case.

So when AUEW members on Merseyside voted to hold a one-day

strike in support, management didn't bother to wait for the result but conceded the demands immediately.

The strikers, aided by the experience of other AUEW members on Merseyside, had ensured that they were themselves actively involved in running the strike and that it wasn't manipulated by union officials. Though some workers continued to work in the factory, they needed big police aid to cross the picket line and it was the united efforts of men and women trade unionists that won the strike.

## Involved

But in Heywood the picture was very different. From the beginning the workers were divided, for the men workers weakened the strike by continuing to work. Some even escorted women scabs into the factory.

Worse still, the initiative of the strike was left largely in the hands of the AUEW officials. This meant the women strikers were not actively involved in winning support, but were left day after day on the picket line or posting appeal sheets—instead of

travelling the country to win support.

The officials appealed to the men workers to support the strike, but in the absence of rank and file pressure from AUEW members in the area they did not instruct the men to come out.

The officials announced grand plans for a blacking appeal—but never put them into action.

Appeal sheets were issued—but effective appeals round the GEC combine were never planned.

The strikers started to become demoralised. So, despite the good wishes of women throughout the country, the strike was failing.

Too late, rank and file trade unionists in Manchester decided to organise action in support of the strikers. Gerry Walsh, a shop steward at Ferrant, said at a meeting organised in support: 'The AUEW has not fought to gain support for the women at SEI. It is important for members to act at shop-floor level.' A mass picket was planned for 28 October.

But the very lack of shop-floor involvement has taken its toll. On Tuesday last week AUEW officials, intimidated by management threats to sack the strikers, appealed for a return to work. Uninformed about support and misinformed by the officials, more than half of the women voted to return. The strike was over, the demands not won.

Many of the strikers quickly came to realise the role of the officials. Angriely they saw how they had been manipulated.

The lesson is clear. If weak sections of workers are to win, active support has to be organised involving the better-organised workers.

Workers at both Wingrove and Rogers and SEI have expressed support for the aims of the National Rank and File Conference later this month. It is to be hoped delegates at the conference will listen to their experience and organise effective support for future women's strikes.

## WHEN TO SWITCH ON

**SATURDAY**  
BBC-2: 9.10pm 45 MINUTES EACH WAY is 90 minutes about football in 2ND HOUSE, features contributions from Jackie Charlton, Danny Blanchflower, Bobby Smith, Harry Gregg, Bill Tidy, Tony Hancock, Alan Plater and Willis Hall.

**SUNDAY**  
BBC-1: 8.15pm. OH WHAT A LOVELY WAR started out as an anti-war stage show at Joan Littlewood's Theatre Royal in London's East End. It wound up as an over-blown 'spectacular' movie with an all star cast which says little about war and a lot about the useless liberalism of its director Richard Attenborough.

**NOTORIOUS WOMAN** is a seven part series on the French woman writer George Sand at 10.15pm on BBC-2.

**OPEN DOOR** at 11.40pm (BBC-2) is on the Wapping Parents Action Group.

**MONDAY**  
BBC-1: 8.10pm. Panorama looks at THE POLITICS OF FOOD, or how the world's ruling class is allowing 460 million people to starve... On BBC-2 at 10.15.

**SECOND CITY FIRSTS** play series has SILENCE on the aftermath of unsuccessful strike at a Cornish boatyard.

**TUESDAY**  
BBC-1: 9.25pm. TUESDAY'S DOCUMENTARY surveys THE RISE OF THE RED NAVY on the growth of Russian maritime power.

**WEDNESDAY**  
ITV: 1.30pm. CROWN COURT is WINKLERS on the illegal eviction of tenants.

**THURSDAY**  
BBC-1: 9.25pm. BABY LOVE, the PLAY FOR TODAY is on baby snatching. On BBC-2 at 10.10pm MAN ALIVE begins a two parter UNFIT FOR HUMAN HABITATION on housing. BYRON LIVED HERE (BBC-2) on the poet at 8.45pm.

## How I became a socialist

ROD McFIE fought a private battle against the dole, the law and the army, until the Tower Hill rent strike convinced him that together and organised the working class could beat all three. He still lives in Tower Hill with his family and is a member of Kirkby International Socialists. Here he writes of the influences that made him a socialist.

RIGHT: The Tower Hill rent strike of 1972. 'During the strike I realised I was fighting a political battle and not a one-man hate campaign.'

IT WASN'T reading books or watching films which made me a revolutionary.

It was due to being brought up in poverty, fighting for my life in a Liverpool slum, having a father who had just returned from fighting in the Second World War and thinking he was fighting for a good cause—brainwashed into believing that it was his place to be one of the 'have nots'.

During my childhood it was constantly hammered home to me that I should be a good boy at school, that I shouldn't question what my elders told me, and that I should join the Orange Lodge because the 'Papes' are bastards.

When I left school at 15 with only a nominal education I was forced into an office job as a junior clerk. There I spent 12 months of humiliation running errands for jumped-up middle-class no marks who didn't like me because of my accent and because I swore at them. Finally they couldn't stand me no more and sacked me.

At first I was quite pleased but then I discovered the humiliation of the dole queues.

On the dole I was getting £1 12s 6d, of which I had to give my mother £1 10s—leaving me with



# Assault course

2s 6d. With this I had to look for a job, not the easiest thing in the world. I used to get up at seven in the morning and walk around Merseyside looking for a job. The 2s 6d was spent on cups of tea.

## Forced

After a few months of this I thought: 'My parents have told me to be good and honest, but what has it got me? 2s 6d a week.' To get what I wanted and what society owed me I was forced into crime.

I was stealing to keep up appearances and at times to eat. I attended court five times and was

eventually branded a menace to society and sent down for three months. Three months of further humiliation, being treated like an animal for wanting a fraction of what the judge who sent me down had got.

When I came out of jail I was back at square one. No job and no money. I didn't want to return to a life of crime because with my limited intelligence I was no match for the supposed defenders of our rights, the police. I joined the army.

The adverts said they would teach you to think for yourself and be a man. Biggest load of crap I've ever heard. All your thinking's done

for you. You're encouraged not to think. You're told what to eat and when to eat it. What time to get up and what time to go to bed. You're given a bible and told the Lord will protect you while you are killing your fellow workers.

After a few months they realised that they had in me a man that was prepared to do a little thinking for himself and so they kicked me out for false enlistment. I was obviously not moral enough to go around killing people.

I laugh now when I think of how many revolutionaries the army must have trained in the use of weapons. Each one of them another nail in the ruling class coffin.

## Battle

Since the army I've worked for a number of bosses of various sorts. I'm married now and have three children and now know the problems of bringing up a family under this corrupt system. I now live on the Tower Hill council estate in Kirkby and it was here that I realised that I wasn't fighting the battle on my own.

It was during the Tower Hill rent strike that I realised I was fighting a political battle and not a one-man hate campaign. I realised the need for an organisation to fight. I saw the tremendous effort the International Socialist members were making in this battle against capitalism. And I saw the Communist Party capitulate and I knew that if anybody could win the battle for socialism it was the International Socialists.

I joined the International Socialists and I am now proud to call myself a member of the organised working class, a member of an organisation made up of people like myself, of people who have had a better training ground than the assault course at Aldershot. We've been training all our lives and the ruling class have been contributing to our training.

## Fascism

Books and films and folk songs are great for use as weapons in argument and for pointing out the greed of the ruling class, but when the revolution comes, as it surely will, we will have to be cunning, vicious and hard. We shall have to fight for survival as well as socialism because the alternative is fascism.

I will use these books now as an additional weapon to my experience but I can't stand behind a barricade and throw books at the enemy. What I shall throw at the enemy is a lifetime of hate and humiliation backed up by the weapons the army has taught me to use, and we shall win.

We are working class. We have the power. We have the resources. Success is inevitable.

Di Hatchett

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

PRICES are rocketing. Inflation and profiteering by food manufacturers and middlemen mean soaring food prices. It is increasingly difficult to make the housekeeping money stretch that bit further every week. It's time we had organised trade union action for higher wages and to keep down prices.

Workers in Italy have already been forced to take direct action. Last month workers in Turin refused to pay increased bus fares and the electrical union called on people to refuse to pay the new, higher electricity charges.

In Milan people took over two supermarkets one Saturday for half an hour and charged the customers half the price on all the goods.

This is nothing new. British working men and women have taken action on food prices in the past. In 18th century Britain there was a widespread belief that it was immoral for any one man to profit from the needs of others. It was also assumed that when food was short the prices of necessities would stay at the normal price even if there was less to go around. If prices rose, or people suspected swindling by dealers, there was immediate retaliation.

In Honiton, Devon, in 1766 lace-workers seized corn from local farmers, sold it at the market at a price they set, and returned the money and

the sacks to the farmers. This happened all over the country.

The history books describe them as 'bread riots'. But they were not riots. They were highly organised actions. Women would take over the market place while the men visited the local farms and mills, seizing corn and flour. Farmers and millers got paid if they co-operated.

Bread was the staple diet of labourers and their families, so the price and supply of grain was important. When farmers started to export food during a European food shortage in 1795 roads were blockaded, ships stormed at ports, there were threats to destroy canals and burn farmers' houses.

## DEMOLISH

When food was seized it was sold by ration. Millers found to be hoarding flour had their mills attacked, machinery wrecked and mill dams let off. The idea was to punish the millowner rather than steal the flour.

In 1795 a crowd at Seven Dials in London began to demolish the shop of a baker suspected of selling short-weight loaves. A passing magistrate weighed the loaves, found the suspicions to be true, and distributed the bread to the crowd. Parish constables and magistrates were frequently enlisted, by persuasion or force, to

preside over the price setting.

Food 'riots' were generally started by women, who had more experience in judging prices and weights.

There were strenuous efforts by magistrates and landowners to prevent this action. In 1795 the 'Speenhamland system' was introduced, which subsidised wages in relation to the price of bread. Farmers were also ordered by the magistrates to sell at reasonable prices and parish funds used to subsidise prices.

For popular action over food prices, once started, was almost impossible to stop. Troops might take several days to arrive. So the threat of action was often enough to regulate prices and actual 'riots' were guaranteed to succeed.

After the crowd had finished with shop prices they might visit the houses of the rich for 'contributions', given voluntarily or under pressure. In Witney in 1767, the crowd declared in a written notice that they would not suffer 'such damned, wheezing, fat-gutted rogues to starve the poor by such hellish ways on purpose that they may follow hunting, horse racing etc and maintain their families in pride and extravagance.'

It's the sort of message we should be issuing to today's fat-bellied food merchants.



## UP THE HAMMERS!

THE Half Moon Theatre, the one theatre in London that produces consistently enjoyable socialist drama, has a new production called *The Hammers*, about West Ham Football Club. It's based on play Alan Plater wrote about Hull City but has been adapted by an ex-docker, Billy Colvill, to fit Upton Park. In sketches, songs and knees-up, 'The Hammers' follows the fortunes of a Hammers fan, Ray, a master joiner. It's your chance to relieve the Hammers winning the FA Cup in 1964, the European Cup Winners Cup 1965 and England winning the World Cup 1966.

It's directed by Pam Brighton, who laid on the excellent production of Brecht's *St Joan* of the Stockyards earlier this year, and has been packed out by local football fans.

Performances are at 7.30pm every night except Monday until 16 November. The Half Moon is at 27 Alie Street, behind Whitechapel roundabout. Phone 01-489 6465.

It would suit a branch outing. The Half Moon, who are doing their utmost to attract a working class audience, are open to negotiation over reductions for block bookings. Bring a bottle and sing all the Upton Park favourites.

## IN THE PICTURE

AMERICAN photographer Nancy Hellebrand has been in the International Socialists for two years. During the same two years she has been taking photographs of workers in their homes. She took more than 200 of cleaners, typists, building workers, drivers, gasmen, railway workers and pensioners. Some have been printed in *Womens' Voice* and *Socialist Worker* and there has been a small exhibition in the London IS Bookshop.

Thirty are now on show at London's National Portrait Gallery until Sunday, 3 November. The Gallery is behind Trafalgar Square in Charing Cross Road and is open 10am-5pm on weekdays, 10am-6pm on Saturdays and 2pm-6pm on Sundays. At the same gallery is another exhibition, 'The Camera and Dr Barnardo', also of interest to socialists.

A book of Nancy Hellebrand's photos is published by Lund Humphries at £2.95, available at the exhibition.













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# Socialist Worker

PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

**STRIKE TO FREE  
SHREWSBURY  
PICKETS**

**Defend the right to picket**

**Defending the right to picket**

