

Socialist Worker

FOR WORKERS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

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'MIRROR' REJECTS WORKERS'

LETTER



THE DAILY MIRROR, Britain's mass circulation tabloid with a huge working-class readership, has refused to publish a letter signed by 22 production workers at Ford's Dagenham plant.

When British Leyland boss Lord Stokes launched his anti-union attack on his combine's workers on 25 February, the Mirror brought out its biggest type to spread his slanders across the front page. The paper allowed big business its say, then asked its readers for their opinions.

The Mirror and all the other millionaire papers forgot to tell their readers that a stockbroker's report on British Leyland forecast record profits this year. The report was in sharp contrast to Stokes' speech, which blamed strikes for the company's problems. Only Socialist Worker has published the truth about British Leyland's profits (see last week's issue).

Last week the Mirror published a page of letters from its readers. Eight of the 15 published agreed, often violently, with Stokes. The remainder were either critical of 'both sides' in the car industry or, in the case of a few far from militant stewards, timidly criticised Stokes and spoke of workers 'doing their best' for their bosses and understanding the need to increase productivity (that is, profits).

What was missing was the authentic voice of the shop floor. But the Mirror had such a letter, the one signed by the Ford workers.

The workers received a duplicated note thanking them for the letter, saying the paper liked to hear all the different views of its readers but, of course, could not publish them all.

Here, in full, is the letter the Mirror rejected:

Your front page banner headlines talk of chaos and anarchy in the motor industry. We have years of long service in the Ford factories and let us assure you that:

1. Chaos and anarchy are brought about by management's refusal to cut the profit 'cake' fairly. They are not philanthropic bodies and you have to fight for what is your rightful share of that cake.

2. Management believes in its divine right to manage and to make arbitrary decisions which affect wages, conditions and home life of workers without considering the effect this erosion of dignity has on us. If they do consider it, then it is sacrificed to the god of production.

3. Differences in payment to workers inside one organisation alone—apart from terrific differences up and down the country between one motor car manufacturer and another—make nonsense of the average earnings advertised in the press.

Take-home pay, when we work on day shift, is good if it is more than £16.

4. The constant grind of mass production hits the line worker, the hardest worked and poorest paid. He has very little overtime to cushion him from the reality of low wages. He struggles to keep up with the mechanisation that comes after automation. He works harder and harder, reaping none of the benefits we were promised in the 1950s regarding automation.

With an endless stream of cars stretching in front of him, no wonder the car worker ups and fights, jealously guarding what precious little humanity is left to him.

We enclose pay slips to illustrate item 4. They are all current, all earned by product-

STOKES
The Mirror brought out its biggest type



The Mirror could not publish such a letter. The writers challenge the right of management to run their industries.

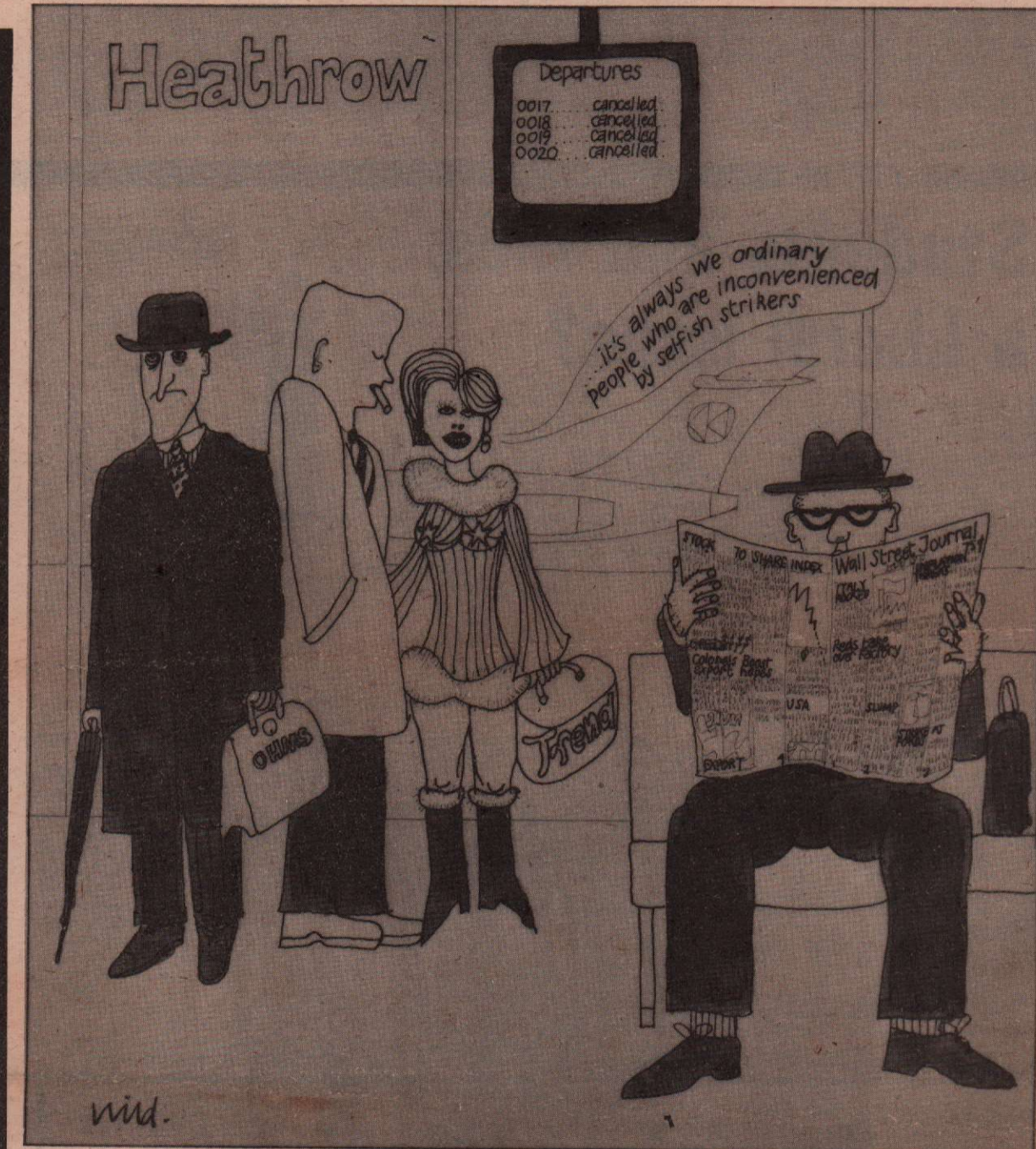
They challenge the whole concept of production for profit which disregards the cost in human wear and tear.

As the struggle on the shop floor intensifies, as both political parties attempt to solve big business's problems at the workers' expense, such ideas have to be ruthlessly stamped out.

The Mirror prints only those letters and articles that paint a to back page col 4

BRITISH LEYLAND shop stewards decided on Tuesday to hold a plant-by-plant enquiry into Lord Stokes' allegations of 'chaos and anarchy'.

The stewards from the combine's 70 plants met in Birmingham with leaders of the three main car industry industry unions to discuss the 'prob-



Court move to end support for Hull trawlermen

THE HIGH COURT united with the fishing industry bosses this week in an attempt to break the month-old strike of trawlermen in Hull. The workers are fighting for a closed shop and a £20 a week minimum wage.

In the High Court on Tuesday, seven Hull trawler companies were granted injunctions against three unions—the railwaymen, transport workers and general and municipal workers.

The injunctions, which operate until Friday but could be extended, seek to stop solidarity action with the trawlermen.

The NUR has been ordered to withdraw instructions to its members not to operate the bridge and lock gates at St Andrews Dock, Hull. The railwaymen's ban stops blackleg crews taking boats out to sea.

The TGWU was ordered to withdraw instructions to lightermen employed by fuel companies that they should not deliver fuel to fish-

ing vessels at Hull.

The TGWU was also ordered to lift instructions, directions or recommendations to the GMWU that it should tell its members to refuse to land blackleg cargoes of fish.

The instructions by all three unions were said to be in breach of contracts between workers and their employers.

This is the second occasion recently when the High Court has stepped in to safeguard companies' profits by ordering strikers to stop picketing and instructing unions not to black supplies.

Two weeks ago the engineering union had to agree to stop blacking supplies to the Johnson Matthey metal works in North London where 12 of its members have been on strike for 10 months for union

recognition.

The law and order brigade of the Tory Party, who want to crack down on workers' rights, have already found a response among the most 'impartial' section of the ruling class—the High Court judges.

'Law and order' means that workers can not fight for a decent wage and seek support from fellow trade unionists.

'Law and order' means that workers can not join the union of their choice.

'Law and order' means stripping the workers of all their hard-won freedoms. We have been warned.

On Wednesday, Hull bobbbers (fish handlers) voted to continue their strike in sympathy with the trawlermen. They are acting in defiance of the High Court injunction.

* My life as a trawlerman: special feature on page 5

IS INDUSTRIAL DISCUSSIONS

Tony Cliff

(author of The Employers' Offensive)

on

Productivity Deals

Sunday 15 March, 7.30pm

They should reject TGWU leader Jack Jones' wishy-washy remarks about the need for 'stronger management' and demand instead:

No redundancies — no Measured Day Work — defend mutuality — parity of wages — and nationalisation

Take a highly confidential letter, Miss Smith...

THERE ARE DISTINCT advantages in being a temporary secretary — especially if you are sent to work for the managing director of the local factory.

The first thing to do when you arrive in the morning is to smile sweetly at the boss. He takes your hand in a friendly grasp, confident in the knowledge that for the week you will be working for his company there will exist between you an aura of trust and confidence.

You will attend to all his little wants such as sharpening his pencils, opening his letters, putting the sugar lumps in his tea, filling in his diary — you know, all those really strenuous jobs he just can't manage himself.

During the few split seconds his podgy hand is lying inert in yours you are quickly summing him up and deciding he'd look just marvellous in a bus driver's uniform or seated behind the wheel of a dust-cart. You make a mental note to pop round after the revolution to see if he's available.

To Work! On the pretext of being dead keen and doing all the left-over filing that's usually waiting for you you rifle through the filing cabinet taking particular note of those marked 'Private', 'Personnel', 'Industrial relations', and all that sort of stuff.

Discreetly you take notes of any redundancy pending, rate of profit — anything that would help the workers in the factory to fight the bosses.

Soon it's time to take shorthand — that's if you can make out what your boss is saying. (If only he'd take that plum out of his mouth.)

During the pauses your eyes wander round the room, taking in the plush carpets, double glazing, expensive furniture and fittings and a few other little 'necessities' like the drinks cabinet behind the door.

Then there's the real world outside the double-glazed windows — you can see the factory which looks more like a prison and it's covered in fine white dust (this is a rubber factory and the dust has something to do with the production). There's a hut in the middle of the grounds called a 'canteen' where you can get soggy boiled up cabbage and shepherd's pie for 3s 6d.

Your first job is to type a memo to his colleague in the Personnel Department advising him that two people in that department will be made redundant in March because of a new planning programme. You make a note to send them an anonymous memo on Friday (the day you leave) warning them of the pending redundancy and advising them to join the union if they've not already done so.

Then he instructs you to write to

a solicitor enclosing a report about a worker who has fallen down an uncovered manhole and is trying to sue the company for damages. The manhole was full of boiling, caustic water and the worker scalded both his legs up to the knees.

His skin erupted in burns and scald marks and he is in great pain. Your boss writes that this man has a history of nervous disorders (which have nothing whatsoever to do with work, of course) and obviously his skin has erupted due to this nervous trouble.

HERDED

They are confident that if they get together with the worker's own insurance company they can all work something out together (ie persuade him to take less money than he deserves — or none at all).

Come lunchtime you look forward to going into the canteen and meeting some of the workers themselves. Instead you are herded away from the 'masses' into a trim little restaurant especially reserved for 'salaried staff'.

Your boss has decided to amble up to the local golf course for his lunch (on expenses of course). He may be back for 2 o'clock with a bit of luck.

During lunch you take advantage

of a chatty typist who unwittingly tells you of the 'awful troubles we've been having with the men on the shop floor'. 'Oh dear,' you sympathise, 'these strikes are getting worse. Whatever are they moaning about now?' 'Something to do with more pay,' she reveals.

You've only been in the building a few hours and already you've amassed enough information for a smashing leaflet. During your afternoon tea break you can be seen, quite openly, reading back copies of the 'Minutes of Meetings' (just getting the feel of the job), Board of Trade Journals and all the other interesting literature which flows into these firms.

While you do a bit of photocopying for your boss you can also take copies of any juicy letters, reports and statistics which may be useful in the future.

On the pretext of visiting the loo you furtively stick a poster up outside the typing pool which lists all the advantages of being unionised. Your boss asks you to take a photocopy of a little pamphlet entitled 'Subversion in Industry'. (Wander what that means?)

Meanwhile old Baggy Drawers (that's your affectionate nickname for your boss) is thrilled to death with your performance. He's amazed at your 'drive', your 'willingness to serve' and your ability to adapt to

any situation.

Apart from that you make a damned good cup of tea and you empty his ashtray twice a day. The fact that you refuse his offer of a lift home in his Rolls endears you to him even more. He likes a woman with spirit.

On Friday afternoon, the date of your departure, he once more takes your hand in an urgent stranglehold. 'Thank you so much,' he drools, 'You've been a great help.'

'Not at all,' I smile. (Get it?) On the bus you mull over all the different jobs and conditions you've worked in over the years, from grimy little warehouses in the depressing docklands of East London to the plush carpeted prison of Ford's offices in Ilford where you enjoy a view of potted plants and 'popular' prints.

But there isn't much time to admire the view because if you fall below the agreed quota of work for the day — you're out!

You arrive at the agency to collect your wages, your shopping bag fit to bust with subversive literature and stationery, you've nicked. (Well, we produce the blooming stuff.)

'We've had very good reports about you, dear,' beams the manageress, 'so we're putting your rate up to a shilling more an hour.'

KATHY SIMS

LETTERS

Students and files: a liberal issue?

MARTIN SHAW's article on university files in last week's Socialist Worker failed completely to give any clear and systematic analysis of the latest round of student revolt.

He used the word 'political' as if it had some magical power: the file issue was a question of political measures against socialists; four students at Manchester were silenced by a political attack on students' freedom of speech.

According to this line of approach, the wave of sit-ins, strikes etc which have shaken university after university in the past few weeks ultimately centre around a tiny minority of students who have been spied on or victimised on political grounds.

It would be extremely pleasant to believe that all these students were taking action either in sympathy with socialists or because they themselves were moving towards socialism. But facts are stubborn things and we have to reckon with them whether we like them or not.

The new wave of student militancy arose directly out of the shocked reaction of liberal students to the discovery of files that contained three types of information: personal, political and on various kinds of relationships between capitalist interests and universities.

This militancy has shown little or no overall tendency to move away from the bourgeois liberal ideas about universities — that they

should remain 'free' and 'independent' so as to be able to research and train students in an 'objective' and 'unbiased' way. On the contrary, its declared aim is to restore universities to their former independence

In this situation, it is our task to fight against the liberalism of militancy. Our approach should be based on the analysis that capitalist universities have fulfilled and always will fulfil three main functions: 1. The production of skilled workers mainly destined for the ranks of the middle and lower middle classes; 2. the production of ever 'new and improved' bourgeois ideology and 3. research into things like industrial relations etc for the benefit of capital. Such an approach should be mandatory for all socialists

To completely ignore, as Comrade Shaw does, this whole aspect of the affair is absent mindedness of frightening proportions. It takes no account of the widely differing circumstances in and around each university.

In any case, to 'continue the fight on a national scale' must mean to continue the fight on a liberal basis, since it was on a liberal basis that the fight began. If we wish to intervene in the fight on a national scale, we should seriously think about trying to establish a base in the National Union of Students.



In my opinion, it is no coincidence that Martin Shaw follows up this suggestion with a rather blunt and ritualistic call to students to help build the revolutionary party.

I believe this proceeds from a faulty application of a strategy that has proved to be correct, that actions like strikes or sit-ins can, if handled correctly, turn a very small number of students towards socialism. This possibility, however, depends on conditions which vary very much from university to university.

What Comrade Shaw seems to be suggesting is that whatever form student mobilisation takes it will inevitably benefit 'a revolutionary movement of the working class'. If IS students follow his example, they will, in propaganda and agitation, leave out all the really important issues, play on the liberal and moral susceptibilities of the mass of the students until they come to the boil and then tell them that the best way of being a liberal is to join a revolutionary organisation. - PETE GLATTER, Richmond, Surrey.

DON'T CONDEMN THE PANTHERS IF THEY DISAGREE WITH WHITE SOCIALISTS

IF IS calls a meeting on racism and invites comrades from a militant black organisation such as the Black Panther movement, then the last thing comrades should expect is the calm and somnolence that usually characterises a talk on, say, state capitalism.

For Comrade Sullivan to accuse the black comrades of 'disrupting' the meeting is paternalistic arrogance. What he means is, he didn't like what they said and thought they should have accepted his analysis of racism in Britain.

All-black organisations such as the Black Panther movement have been created by black people here precisely because they see that their situation in its total complexity is not covered and will not be changed by the existing revolutionary marxist left in this country. If comrades Birchall and Sullivan want to know if the Black Panther movement is a revolutionary socialist organisation with a working class base, why don't they read the movement's literature and why didn't they ask the black comrades such precise questions as where they worked, both politically and job-wise, and what differences they, the black oppressed, saw between American and British racism?

Black Power is an ambiguous slogan as Comrade Sullivan rightly points out — in fact in the USA it's now a definitely reactionary one since it means black business exploiting the ghettos as front-man for white business — and Nixon's publically all for that! No one of the black comrades at the Africa Centre meeting advocated a policy of separatism for black people in this country. That was a stupidly facetious remark from a white comrade.

What the black comrades were saying was, we as an organisation spend, are forced to spend, most valuable time defending black kids in racist courts on trumped-up charges and we've had enough. They didn't strike me as demagogues or exploiters of white guilt hang-ups.

As to whether this group any all-black group, is socialist in perspective, this can only be evaluated through the long, arduous process of building links, exchanging literature taking part in solidarity and support actions where possible and having more meetings. - TONY DUNN, London SW1.

Not sensitive

OVER THE last few weeks I've been quite amazed by the tone of some of the letters on the Black Power issue.

We are living in a period when in this country the whole political spectrum, especially on the race issue, is being deliberately shifted to the right, in which harassment by police, courts, immigration officials, by authority in general of the black community is increasing. It seems, therefore, that the last thing that a socialist should do in such a period is to stress that 'things are different here'. Especially so if this means building up bogus, pseudo-scientific, pseudo-rational theories to justify one's attitude.

See for example, the notion advanced by Comrade Sullivan that ghettos do not exist in this country on the assumption that 51 per cent blacks in one place makes a ghetto but that 49 per cent does not. Or Comrade Birchall's idea that one of the differences between blacks in the US and in Britain is that in the US American negroes came out of a heritage of slavery, presumably unlike those in this country.

Does Comrade Birchall really think that West Indians in Britain today got to the West Indies on voluntary holiday cruises?

Such an attitude at such a time can at best be described as a total lack of sensitivity and at worst and possibly more realistically as making serious concessions to racialism and national chauvinism.

Indeed, underlying the whole debate there has been a total incomprehension of the reality which faces blacks in this country. One must understand how for the West Indians, for example, what is happening in the US is not something remote but something very intimately felt. This is probably because today large numbers of relatives are in the US.

If the black organisations in this country are small, it does not at all mean that the support which they enjoy in the community at large is equally small. Indeed, most young West Indians express large sympathies for Black Power.

Equally obnoxious is the notion that as socialists we should at best tolerate the formation of black organisations after all our efforts to hinder their growth have failed. Recognising the peculiar needs of blacks in our racist society as socialists we should actively help the formation of these organisations in any way we can.

As to Comrade Harman's remark that 'it is not the job of white socialists to tell blacks what to do', it does not of course mean that we should not make our differences with these organisations clear. On the contrary, both sides would obviously benefit from a serious debate.

What Comrade Harman meant is that we cannot possibly take up the position which Comrade Birchall has advanced i.e. that black defence organisations may be all right, but that 'there is no legitimacy in a black only political organisation'.

Since Comrade Birchall is not the object of racist discrimination, he certainly is not qualified in deciding what needs this produces. In this sense, it is not up to us to make decisions for the blacks.

Lastly, in order to reply to the accusation of opportunism which Comrade Bell has levelled at us because of our position on black power, we must, I'm afraid throw the ball back in his court. In a country with an imperialist past, where different forms of racism infect whole sections of the community in different ways, an uncompromising opposition to racialism with the consequent support for black power organisations is the very opposite of opportunism. It is the essence of revolutionary socialist politics. - ANDREW SAYERS, London SW11.

Copies of the Black Panther newsletter can be ordered from IS Book Service, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2, price 10d including post.

Socialist Worker

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Tel: 01-739 1878 (editorial) 1870 (business)

CAPITALISM has nothing to offer mankind but exploitation, crises and war. The ruling classes of the world — a tiny minority — subordinate the needs of the vast majority to the blind accumulation of capital in the interests of competitive survival.

Imperialism condemns two-thirds of mankind to famine and calls forth movements of national liberation which shake the system and expose its essential barbarism. The constant and mounting preparations for war and the development of weapons of mass destruction place the survival of humanity itself in the balance.

The increasing intensity of international competition between ever-larger units drives the ruling classes to new attacks on workers' living standards and conditions of work, to anti-trade union and anti-strike laws. All of these show capitalism in deepening crises from which it can only hope to escape at the cost of the working class and by the destruction of all its independent organisations.

The only alternative is workers' power — the democratic collective control of the working class over industry and society through a state of workers' councils and workers' control of

WHERE WE STAND

production. Only thus can the transition be ensured to a communist society in which the unprecedented productive forces thrown up by capitalism can be used to assure an economy of abundance. Only the working class, itself the product of capitalism, has the ability to transform society in this way, and has shown its ability to do so in a series of revolutionary struggles unprecedented in the history of all previous exploited classes.

The working class gains the experience necessary to revolutionise society by constant

struggle against the ruling class through the mass organisations thrown up in the course of that struggle.

To overcome the unevenness with which this experience is gained, to draw and preserve the lessons of past struggles and transmit them for the future, to fight against the pressure of bourgeois ideas in the working class, and to bond the fragmentary struggles against capitalism into a conscious and coherent offensive, a revolutionary Marxist party of socialist militants is required, embracing the vanguard of the working class.

The struggle to build such a party is only part of the wider struggle to create a World Revolutionary Socialist International, independent of all oppressors and exploiters of the working class, whether bureaucratic or bourgeois.

International Socialists therefore fight for:
Opposition to all ruling-class policies and organisations.
Workers' control over production and a workers' state.
Opposition to imperialism and support for all movements of national liberation.

Uncompromising opposition to all forms of racialism and to all migration controls.

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the paper.

The Rhodesian revolt will last weeks, rather than months said Harold Wilson. That was more than four years ago. Since then there have been a succession of missions to Salisbury and Gibraltar conferences between Wilson and Smith (right). The appeasement of the white racist regime contrasts sharply with British thuggery in Aden and Anguilla. The reason, says ROGER TEMBO, is British big business' huge investment in Southern Africa...



Rhodesia - a prison in the sun

SO IT'S RHODESIA again. It's now a 'republic'. In 1965 it was 'independent'. It will probably be a 'super power' next year!

The meaningless legal formulas provide a smokescreen for Ian Smith's regime to improve on its police-state techniques.

The trouble with this type of politics is that, no matter what you call Rhodesia, things have not changed very much in that country for 80 years. The basis for a racially-segregated population was laid by the British ruling class long before Ian Smith was born.

Today, the five million Africans still remain in hopeless bondage, their leaders in prison or restriction, the peasants confined to barren, over-crowded and infertile 'tribal areas' and the workers slaving for pitiful wages for their white masters. For them, Rhodesia, 'independent' or not, remains a prison in the sun.



South African troops on 'guerrilla patrol'

Blessing

The 200,000 whites (one eighteenth of the population) control parliament and the economy with the blessing and financial support of British, American, West German and Japanese employers through their South African subsidiaries.

Sixty per cent of the white adult population is not even in productive labour. They are involved in 'servicing industries' - retail and wholesale distribution, civil service, insurance and commerce.

They also employ 90,000 domestic servants (there are fewer in Britain) and there are another 100,000 Africans serving them in laundries, restaurants etc. In spite of the whites' phenomenal wealth (they earn on the average £1,500 a year compared to the African income of £95 a year) and a well-provided educational system, they are culturally barren, over-fed and pathetic.

It is nauseating rubbish that the

whites in Rhodesia produce the wealth of the country. They are parasites.

But where do they get the wealth from? There are 400,000 African workers, earning £2 a week and 200,000 farm labourers, earning 2s 6d a week, who do most of the hard work. They are the true producers of wealth. Included among them are the few white skilled workers and railwaymen.

When the 'Rhodesian problem' is raised in the House of Commons, Labour MPs defend 'sanctions' and Tory MPs openly support white racialism. The same debate has been going on for the past 80 years, ever since the British employing class, through blatant force and devious means annexed Rhodesia in 1890 to find gold.

The same brand of culprits in parliament not only help to maintain the deplorable racial state of South Africa but continue, through their interests in British companies, to financially support the Hitlerite Vorster, who used to beat up British servicemen in Durban during the

war to 'help Hitler win'.

For Rhodesia, parliament adopted a policy of 'trusteeship' to the African majority from 1923. Yet they did nothing to stop the white rulers of Rhodesia from dividing the country into black and white areas in 1931.

Some of them even joined in the scramble to acquire land at the expense of the African peasant farmers. As a result some 45 million acres of the most fertile land is for 6000 white farmers and 40 million acres for 4,000,000 Africans.

Armed

Parliament did nothing to stop the white rulers creating an oppressive state machinery to suppress African political parties and trade unions. The culprits armed the Rhodesian army instead.

How on earth can anyone expect them to do anything about Smith and his mob? The only time they will

act is when the African people take to the streets - they cannot fight in parliament or unions to change their conditions. Then, as in Northern Ireland, the troops will be sent to protect their lackey, 'Chichester-Clarke-Smith'.

In Britain as in America and Western Europe, there is a powerful and vocal section of the ruling class desperate to preserve the existing set-up in Southern Africa. This is the class that has little morality and no principles, except their god, profit.

This is the class that will support the suppression of the workers in their own countries, that profits from the exploitation of labour throughout the world. For their god they will fight the wars in Vietnam and arm their lackeys in the developing world.

In Southern Africa, this class for 100 years has armed South Africa and Rhodesia to suppress the workers and peasants there.

The activities of the British ruling class are particularly revealing. They have invested some £1000 million in South Africa and £200 million in Rhodesia all in banks, manufacturing and mining, trade and gold.

They earn £70 million a year through this investment. No wonder successive British governments have paled at any thought of rocking so profitable a boat.

South Africa remains the biggest earner of investment income for British employers. These parasites, like their counterparts in South Africa, live and profit from the slave labour of the African workers.

We cannot respect them as human beings, for their hands are soiled by the blood and death of countless African miners, railwaymen, operators, steelworkers and their children. 50 per cent of African children die before they are five years old in prosperous, sunny South Africa.

In Rhodesia and South Africa, the Africans have fought for a long time with all their means to free themselves from the grip of their conquerors. They have tried with sticks and stones, with strikes and boycotts and with referendums and

constitutional conferences.

But each time they have been defeated, imprisoned or killed off, with the aid of the British rulers who continued for a century to appease the white power structures. Even now the employing class act as whitewashers for the barbarism of apartheid and some even celebrate it, as was seen last week at a champagne party in the Stock Exchange in London when Ian Smith declared his 'republic' and Rhodesian shares went up.

As for the Labour Party leaders they would like to see an African middle class in political power in Rhodesia as long as their interests are not threatened. But this 'neo-colonial' solution is no longer possible.

Threat

After the long series of defeats, the workers and peasants of Southern Africa have now taken up arms to fight these evil regimes. The alliance of the nationalist movements of South Africa and Rhodesia, the Zimbabwe African People's Union and the African National Congress, has proved to be the first real threat to the set-up.

The urgency of the struggle demands that the nationalist organisations must radically transform themselves into democratic workers' movements with the aim of establishing a socialist state in southern Africa.

The achievement of this objective can only come if these organisations align themselves with the working class movements in the advanced industrialised countries. At present, the nationalist organisations are populist, not socialist, with lower middle class leaderships that belong to the past decade when Britain was still attempting a 'neo-colonial' solution.

It is the urgent task of all revolutionaries in southern Africa to provide the alternative programme sketched above to meet the might of monopoly capitalism in that part of the world.

The neck and the blade: a plea against the guillotine

CLAUDE LELOUCH'S *Life Love Death* (Cameo-Poly) is a plea against the continuing death penalty in France. The guillotine's eventual victim is a mask-faced immigrant car worker driven by sexual impotence to strangle prostitutes, despite a normal but boring marriage and a successful affair with a mistress, for which his employers seem to provide a lot of free time.

While it is a pleasing departure from the heavy sentimentality of Lelouch's previous films, the major fault is that he avoids any exploration of the murderer's social or personal situation, preferring to show only the external mechanics of society combining dutifully to unite the neck with the blade.

The neat construction produces nothing but a bald statement. Take it or leave it. So for the first half of the film we see only the police-pursuit of apparent innocence in a whirl of hand-held shots through glass and off reflecting surfaces.

GROTESQUE

The rest of the story is filled in through a series of flashbacks which punctuate the long hours of prison boredom before the final grotesque execution scene as the murderer is processed by society's symbolic ritual of clean shirt, last letter, extremeunction, final cigarette; politenesses which crumble as the victim's struggles are subdued by the derisive laughter. The director

FILMS John Porter

loom behind out of focus.

We all know by now what the female nipple looks like and the 'drugs, sex, youth' syndrome needs very sharp treatment if it is to produce more than a yawn. Barbet Schroeder's *More* (Cameo-Victoria) comes from Luxembourg after a long delay. Sun tinkles on the Ibiza sea and bronzed nudity while the unbelievably naive hero is lured to an early grave along the path of grass, heroin and acid dispensed by a vacant hippy trippy chick who is ultimately in the evil clutches of a knife-throwing ex-Nazi pusher.

Again there's no attempt to explain or explore beyond the surface material and the film falls between idyllic 'freedom' on the one hand and a cliched, unconvincing morality on the other. Toes and heads alike are in the sand.

In playing both sides of the market it loses (even more than *Easy Rider*) the possibility of having a genuine viewpoint. Pink Floyd soundtrack for intermittent consolation.

The Brazilian new wave move-

has produced are concerned above all with the country's social, political and economic problems. Glauber Rocha is its foremost director, and his *Black God, White Devil* (Times, Baker Street) was made in 1964.

The film is a violent, passionate political allegory set in the barren region of the north-east and deliberately adopts a popular framework by treating its characters almost as folklore figures and narrating the action partly by means of peasant song.

FANATICAL

The peasant, driven to desperation by injustice, revolts and kills the estate owner. In his subsequent flight with his wife, he joins the following of a fanatical religious prophet who promises an island of salvation and refuge in the sea in return for much unquestioning sacrifice.

His threat to the established church is great enough for them to hire a haunting killer-figure in a Sergio Leone coat to slay the sect. In fact, the peasant and his wife themselves kill the priest and flee again to join an avenging phantom revolutionary bandit called Lightning who kills the poor to stop their hunger and promises that the sea shall become the land.

Antonio das Mortes, the hired killer reappears on behalf of the landowners. The peasant couple again escape to run in unpled free-

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by Jill Branston

WE DON'T have brainwashing here. Not with arc lights and torture cells.

But there is an increase in bending people's minds to bridge the widening split between what is being done and what is said to be happening.

The process is not deliberate or a conspiracy but it does have a censoring effect on the ideas reaching us from the press, television and radio.

Take newspapers. From the very beginning, mass circulation papers were run for profit.

With the growth of big business monopolies, newspapers became overwhelmingly profit conscious like every other industry. They were gradually gobbled up by a few giant companies like those of Thomson and Beaverbrook.

Enormous power

The point has now been reached when papers stand or fall by their advertising revenue and profitability regardless of their value as a means of sharing human experience or the wishes of their readers and employees. Advertisements often take up over half a paper's space and even set its style.

Enormous power is wielded by a big advertiser, who often sits on the same board of directors as the owner of the paper.

It is not necessary to exercise this power most of the time, but the outspoken journalist or editor knows that it is there. Most editors learn to censor themselves and to keep off certain topics in order to survive.

The same is true in different ways of television where all we can choose between are those

phony alternatives, BBC and ITV—one rigidly bureaucratic and the other run on supermarket principles. Experts predict that the two will have merged by the mid-1970s, which should give us the worst of both worlds.

Both BBC and ITV are headed by political stooges—Lords Hill and Aylestone. Paul Foot's article (Socialist Worker 20 October 1969) showed the grubby race for power behind the scenes of ITV where men like Arnold Weinstock of GEC and Lord Stokes of British Leyland demand ever bigger profits and lower standards through their control of the broadcasting companies.

Because of their interest in companies outside television, there is small chance that serious programmes on profits or redundancy will be encouraged.

The BBC may seem less tied to the market but it is mainly run by officials guaranteed not to upset the government, which supplies the licence money. The men inside each BBC department, if not already career-minded, are soon pushed into thinking of the ratings instead of quality programmes by the combined pressure of financial cuts inside the corporation and the lure of bigger money in ITV.

Given this curious mixture of old-boy network and rat-race at the top, the powers behind the scenes could, until recently, safely let the corporation continue its familiar routines.

But with the recent cuts and other productivity measures imposed by the BBC's plans for radio, there has been mounting criticism of the set-up by the broadcasters themselves. The bureaucratic nature of the organisation has been brought into the open for the first time.

BBC staff who publish their criticisms are technically in breach



DAVID FROST: eunuch in the supermarket

of their contract and liable to be sacked. They have fought against this gagging by first publishing criticisms anonymously and then in a large, united protest in *The Times*.

Along with attacks on radio plans there have been disclosures of censorship inside BBC television. Waldo Maguire's tight control over Ulster TV is notorious.

In Britain itself there are many examples of censorship, such as the seizure of Roy Battersby's documentary which dealt with violence as a consequence of social conditions. It was simply taken away by two men in brown overalls one day.

Lock and key

The BBC bureaucrats decided it gave a 'slanted' view of western violence and it has been under lock and key ever since.

Such examples are in the BBC's proud tradition of political censorship, dating back to the General Strike in 1926. At that time not one representative of the strikers was allowed broadcasting time.

The BBC also put out totally unfounded reports of 'returns to work'

and it became known as the BFC—British Falsehood Corporation.

But such open censorship also highlights the fact that, for the most part, television men either censor themselves or really do see militant shop stewards as a species of polecat.

When an important issue like the Ford Swansea strike is treated, you get Kenneth Allsop in firm control of the louder microphone, sitting like a headmaster in front of the Swansea convenor who is given very little time to develop what he wants to say and is liable to brusque interruption from Allsop at any moment.

As for the more liberal-minded items in current affairs programmes or drama, they suffer from the basic flaw of all good liberals—the ability to attack everything but the hard, economic basis of their own vantage point.

Cathy Come Home is a classic example. It stopped short at just the point where the whole structure of society should be angrily questioned and instead invited help from outside rather than any action from the Cathys.

Its effect, for example, in the setting up of the specialist charity, Shelter, was a result of its

easiness—Cathy was always an attractive, likeable blonde, a victim of one compartment of society rather than one of the dismal, irritable rejects that our whole social set-up creates.

More dangerously, even when you have an accurate account of events (as in many ITV World in Action programmes) because the reporters are competing with other media for your attention (and for higher ratings, profits and promotions) the attempt is always made to streamline the facts. They are tarted up as a 'story', exciting to read or watch, but something that remains gift-wrapped and far from human commitment or difficulty.

And so many people fail to connect TV or newspaper accounts of struggles with their own experiences, simply because real life doesn't feel like a coherent story. This may also explain why revolutionary drama like *The Big Flame* or *Germinal* slip through the net.

Any worker who has been in a major strike knows how the papers, TV and radio chew up the facts. Their invisible persuading power is so great that he often fails to see that the same distortions are applied to other strike coverage.

Some Port Talbot blastfurnacemen, for example, can still talk of 'wildcat strikers' harming the 'national interest' even though they know how falsely these clichés were used against their strike last summer.

News itself is now a commodity like any other—something to be bought and sold which expands or contracts certain items to fill the necessary time or space. But the nature of this particular commodity is explosive with contradictions.

For example, I got most of the information for this article from the 'bourgeois press' which finds that any factual account of world news has to take in revolutionary events and the face of imperialism.

Gawped at

However hard a TV producer or feature writer tries to do a non-political piece on such apparently neutral subjects as sport or holidays, he will soon come up sharp against the priorities of a sick society. The media have a built-in defence against this sort of honesty—their habit of turning everything into a spectacle, to be gawped at and even horrified by before rushing on to the next piece of news or the next programme.

News is kept as far away as possible from what is considered 'politics'. Remember how Bernadette Devlin on 24 Hours, when she was asked about her early life and described the poverty of the Catholic and Protestant slums in Derry, was quickly interrupted by, 'Yes, can we leave the politics till later?'

Everything seems to happen in a dream world over which you have no control and in which you are not involved. You're guided round this world by 'impartial' newscasters or celebrities like Simon Dee or David Frost. Their job is to behave like moral eunuchs, sympathising with Rudi Deutschke (the German student leader seriously wounded by a right-wing fanatic), then with Arnold Weinstock as though there are no differences between the values they represent.

In short, the media are terrified of real conclusions being drawn from the spectacles they offer.

The system reacts violently when conclusions are drawn and when people claim more control over the means of mass communication.

In the French upheaval of May 1968, for example, the radio and TV staff strike was the longest and most bitter of all. The government placed a TV transmitter at the top of the Eiffel Tower to be operated by the army with a studio with three months' supply of film—a trump card that was never used.

Quietly killed

Other attempts to gain more control over the media by the people who run and listen to them have so far been quietly killed. Lord Hill is currently trying to do this with the protest of the BBC radio staff.

The Vice-President of the United States, Spiro Agnew, is trying to gag the American networks. French and Italian TV are up against censorship on the same level.

The little evidence we have of real democratic control over the means of information and entertainment only allows us to guess at the vast possibilities. When it was eventually shown, *The Big Flame* was one example. So was the vitality and imagination shown when Radio Leeds turned over its studios to local teenagers to run for a week.

Such an experiment has not been repeated and has had no consequences. The reason is simple: it embarrasses the authorities into admitting that perhaps, after all, the makers of programmes and their listeners could run the whole thing.

Once you admit that, you might come to the same conclusions for students and ultimately for workers, too.

...AND ON TELEVISION

Back to the 'socialist' cellars

SOMEWHERE deep in the bowels of the BBC lives an executive so conscious-stricken by the appalling drivel wired into the homes of millions of telly-viewers every day that once or twice a year he allows a serious marxist play to escape the censor's net.

How else explain the regular screening of the work of David Mercer? For nearly 10 years now he has written of the dilemma of socialists in a hostile capitalist world, the cruel gap between middle-class revolutionaries and their working-class roots and the mental havoc of the system's most helpless victims.

The Cellar and the Almond Tree, shown on BBC-1 on 4 March, was impressive and moving—if Hollywood tear-jerkers have not emptied the word of all meaning. The play's strange quietness and deliberate pace mark a writer in total control and with a magnificent grasp of all the possibilities of television—flashback, slow fade and superimposed images.

It was set in an unnamed 'socialist' state in the 1948-50 period, two years after the heel of the Red Army had rammed a



MERCER: a gnawing doubt

'people's democracy' onto the war-ravaged population. The state has taken over all property, including a castle whose owner, a countess, is now confined to a small, top-storey apartment.

The local party committee is organising a celebration in the castle and wine is required. But the countess has the keys to the wine cellar and refuses to part with them.

Volubin, a party official, is sent to persuade her to give them up. It is a thankless task, fit only for a minor functionary who has had many clashes with official Stalinist policy and who leads an uneasy existence in the years of the mass purges and terror trials.

The confrontation between Volubin and the countess is more than just a straight clash between hos-

tile and irreconcilable worlds. It is full of light and shadow, subtleties and inflections and is beautifully handled.

The countess represents a class that has ceased to have any meaningful role in society. She is a prisoner of the past, of endless dances, dinners and brief infatuations in a world that was always sunshine and flowers. For her, life is symbolised by an almond tree planted in the castle grounds when she was a child.

For Volubin, the castle has more bitter memories. He was beaten and tortured by the Gestapo in its cellars during the war.

He is a communist racked by doubts ('the only thing red in the Soviet Union are the carpets they roll out for you' he tells, in flashback, a British 'lefty' writer recently honoured in the socialist motherland). His lover has been murdered by the GPU and, though horrified by the monstrous perversion of socialism that Stalinism represents, he can see no other future except through the party.

His is a life of struggle against capitalism and his own doubts and disgust with the only apparent alternative—a socialism imposed by the machine guns of a foreign power. Although he feels an infinite sadness for the countess and the emptiness and silliness of her life, he tells her that she will still be here when good communists are in prison—for that so far has been the result of most revolutions.

Her mind frozen in the past, the countess does not comprehend the communist take-over. She thinks Volubin is her old butler back from the wars. He plays the part and speaks of preparations for the dinner in the castle.

Excited, she gives him the wine cellar keys and with her maid prepares for the big evening. (A brilliant little cameo within the play is the relationship between maid and

mistress, bound to one another yet despising one another.)

Volubin descends with the keys to find the secret police waiting for him in the banquet hall. The 'revolution' is beginning to consume itself.

He returns to the cellars and to the hands of the Gestapo's successors. The countess, meanwhile, goes down to dinner and syfers her arm to the astonished Blaustein, an old comrade of Volubin's, sickened by the arrest and his own inability to stop it. Together, they enter the banquet hall as the assembled guests toast the Soviet Union to the strains of the Internationale.

The acting was superb: Peter Vaughan as Volubin, Celia Johnson as the countess and Sydney Tafler as Blaustein, hiding his doubts and uncertainties behind a jumpy, stage-Yiddish ('problems I have plenty of') facade.

And yet one gnawing doubt remains. Volubin's theory that all revolutions destroy themselves is echoed by Mercer himself in an interview in the *Radio Times*. This is a subjective approach that ignores the stranglehold of imperialism which was responsible for the isolation of the Russian revolution and its plunge into tyranny.

To say that this marks a small but still dangerous move from marxism is not an attempt to score a sectarian debating point. David Mercer has made a formidable contribution to the socialist movement and it would be no small tragedy if he were to despair of the possibilities of real working-class action and a genuine, humane socialism.

That despair is bred by capitalism and, unless combatted, condemns us all to a fate more dreadful than anything suffered by the old guard of Bolshevik revolutionaries.

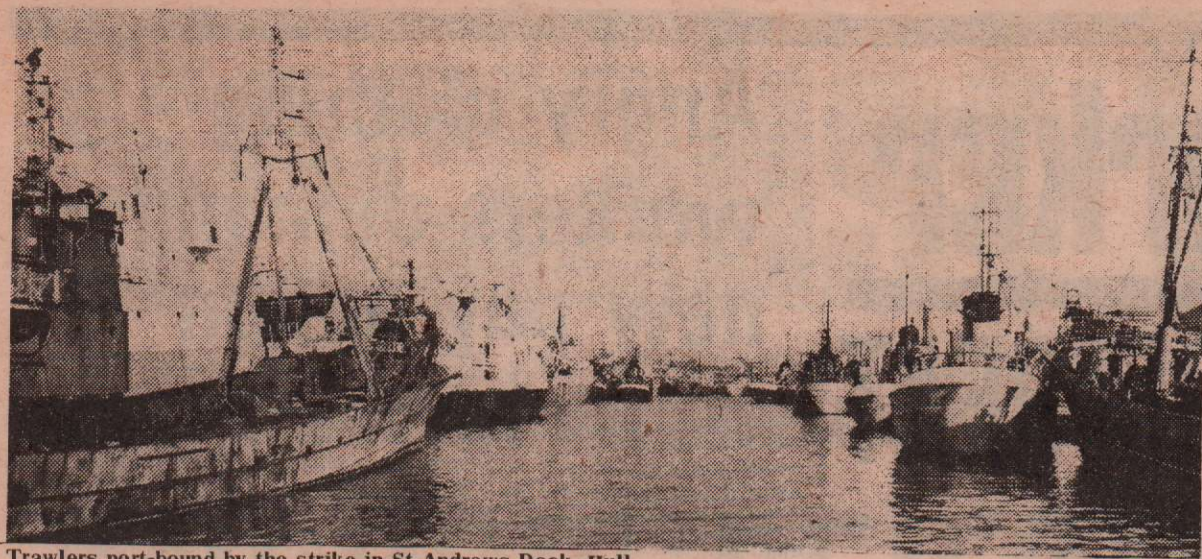
DAVID EAST

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Cottons Column



Trawlers port-bound by the strike in St Andrews Dock, Hull

Trawlermen's strike: 'Fish are more important than lives'

Trawlermen in Hull have been on strike now for a month in an effort to win a minimum wage of £20 and 100 per cent trade unionism. A member of the strike committee describes the condition of their work and the background to the dispute.

by George Oaks

MY LAST TRIP lasted 63 days. After 50 days at sea we heard that the mother of one of the young lads had died.

The skipper wouldn't let him wire the union or get in touch with the owners. You don't argue with the skipper.

Fish is more important than people dying. The skipper knows it. Argue with him and you could do three months when you get back to shore.

On the same trip, the food ran out, so we walked off the deck. The skipper could have done us for mutiny, but he didn't.

Perhaps he didn't want to publicise the fact that we (not him, of course) were starving for a day or two. He didn't let us wire the union—we needn't have bothered to ask.

Seven days a week, on call 24 hours a day. We average 18 hours. It's not rare to work 28 hours at a stretch. There are no breaks, not a bloody minute off.

On the older side trawlers (they're called side trawlers because you fish off the sides rather than off the backs) the men sleep in the fo'c'sle. Because it's at the front, the lads get battered about all the time.

It's really cramped. All the lads sleep in this one compartment. There's no heating and ice builds up very quickly.

Iceicles form

But most trawlers now are of the stern type. Two to a cabin and some sort of heating—when it works. You lie in your bunk with your soaking wet gear on and watch the iceicles forming on the beams. In the big freezers there are four to a cabin.

The food isn't much cop. Again, the side trawlers have the worst, but the others aren't much better.

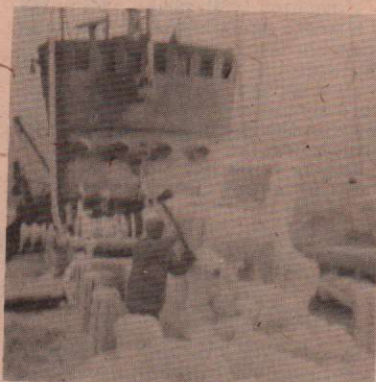
You don't take food at the proper meal times. The skipper makes sure we finish our jobs before we go down below. The food is either burnt or cold. It's not the cook's fault, either.

A year ago, we got a great concession—a half-hour supper break. Even now, some skippers don't recognise it.

Just the long hours themselves would cause fatigue. What with the bad conditions and the bad food, we don't have a chance.

Often when we're working on deck, the skipper will give the order to change to full speed. We can be swept overboard, just to make it back to port more quickly. The faster the trawler goes, the more water is taken on board, the more ice forms.

The skipper doesn't care. He doesn't have to take a pick up and



Chipping the ice off the decks

smash the ice. The owners don't care. All they care about are their profits.

The skipper gives the order for full speed ahead. The skippers and gaffers are all in the race for more fish and more profits. When the D B Finn put into a Norwegian port, it had 90 tons of ice on it.

Even when the fishing is over, the work isn't. The skipper will make up work for us to do. The skippers are often drunk, which makes it worse for the crews. But as long as the trawler comes in chock a block with fish (the ice having melted) the owners don't care who's running the ship.

Working a deck once, I was slipping all over the place, so I asked the skipper for a platform to steady myself. He told me to f... off.

A bit later a door swung back and caught my fingers. The tip of my index finger came off. The next trip the skipper agreed to put a platform by.

Fall-back pay works out at about £23, but if the fish is sold as meal and oil, we hardly get a penny. Bad catch—no bonus. 18 hours a day, seven days a week, more than 120 a week—three times more than Ford workers.

The gaffers, in their 'new deal', offered £13 10s a week holiday pay. All this for working our guts out in fantastic conditions.

On the freezers, they have a letter service, but only if the skipper's willing to put into port. Sometimes, if a deckie is ill, the skipper won't take him to shore unless he's 'critical'—nearly dead.

If it's a good fish, all the less reason for putting into port. It's a rough time when you're after good fish.

No rate of pay is adjusted for experience. We help the young kids who can't get all their work done. No sliding scale of pay. No allowance for families at home. The whole system is completely feudal and out-dated. It just shows what a corrupt and depraved place Kingston-upon-Hull is.

You can't beat the elements, but you can alleviate the conditions—conditions made worse by the drive for profits regardless of human safety. We often have to fish in Force 9 gales.

Protest can be made in port. If you protest you might not get a boat

for six months.

We're 10 years behind other countries in the trawler industry. Germany and Denmark had freezers 10 years ago.

British freezers only came in a few years ago and they aren't much, anyway. The only thing they take care of in designing them is to catch the most fish. We ought to have a safety committee with men who've sailed on it, not some designer who's never been north of Scarborough.

Victorian conditions

Other countries have nationalised their fishing industries. They're subsidised. The men get a much better deal, with none of the cut-throat stuff.

Our conditions are Victorian. Funny that the lads who moan first are the scabs. When it comes to a strike they haven't got the guts to stand with us.

Mike Burton, one of the trawler owners, called the strikers 'gutter rats'. The scabs are the gutter rats. Most of them are non-union, just out of school.

Mike Neve, our union lad, says they don't know any better. We've been told that the bosses are going to fly a new scab crew (if they can find one) to Newfoundland because the so-called experienced scab crews don't know one end of the boat from the other.

We're despised by other people in Hull because we drink when we come out of our hell at sea. They ought to try it out.

Still, the bobbars (fish handlers) have come out in force with us. The dockers are united with us now.

We know we'll win in the end.

AS THE TORIES reel around in drunken stupors in the House of Commons (or perhaps like G Brown, they're just tired) it's good to know that one Labour MP is able to maintain a stout sense of humour.

Mr Eric Heffer, stalwart Tribunit MP for Liverpool, Walton, was in fine jesting spirits last Friday when he told the assembled hon members that 'the competitive society of the Conservatives before the Second World War had millions of unemployed living on the absolute minimum. When Labour is in control the country is run for the benefit of the people.'

How true! Heads nodded in agreement throughout Britain—children deprived of free school milk and suffering from malnutrition, 600,000 unemployed, the growing numbers of homeless caused by the collapse of the government's house building programme.

One per cent of the population owns 42 per cent of the country's wealth. In fact more wealth has been concentrated in fewer hands since the end of the war—in spite of two Labour governments, with large majorities, acting in the 'interests of the mass of the people'.

Such is the impact of Labour's policy of wage restraint that workers have suffered the first real cut in their living standards since the war under the Wilson regime, as prices, profits and dividends are allowed to run riot.

Not that Labour is mealy-mouthed with the cash. Last year, it gave £250m in aid to the development areas and millions more in investment grants. This money goes to the richest and most powerful firms which simply stuff the money away in banks and inflated managerial salaries. ICI alone has received £106m in investment grants in the last three years—and has not taken on a single extra worker.

But Mr Heffer tells us that the government runs the country for the benefit of the masses. What drivell.

Like the rest of the 'left' Labour MPs, he is so clapped out, punch drunk and committed to the 'parliamentary road' that he capitulates to the whole rotten system and ends up a press relations boy for a government rigorously pursuing the most thorough-going anti-working class policies for a generation.

MODERN CIVILISATION is based on incentives. Canadian wheat farmers are just like the rest of the human race. They too need a financial incentive, not to produce food but to leave their lands unfarmed.

On 5 February, Mr E K Turner, president of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, suggested 'an incentive pay-

ment of \$10 an acre... if the objective of taking 10 million acres out of production was to be realised.'

Within a month, the authorities—as concerned as any others with the problem of world hunger and starvation—had acted. On 28 February, the Canadian federal government offered the Western farmers around £39m to destroy their portion of the 1970 wheat crop.

Mr Otto Lang, minister responsible for wheat, was reported as saying: 'I am hopeful this will mark a turning point in our efforts to rationalise the world grain situation.'

Brother Brown socks it to hosiery workers

THE ABOVE-MENTIONED G Brown is still actively buffooning his way around our sceptred isle. Last week found him in his constituency of Belper in Derbyshire where he seemed unworried about winning workers' votes in the forthcoming election.

Belper is an important part of the hosiery industry, famous for its long hours and appalling wages. Brother Brown, his renowned social conscience briding at the workers' conditions, announced that hosiery machines should be 'flogged to the absolute limited, 24 hours a day, seven days a week'.

Mr Jack Palmer, district organiser of the Hosiery Workers' union, was unimpressed. 'Our view is no 168-hour, seven day week and George Brown should know this.'

Mr Palmer added: 'A lot of hosiery workers are employed in the same factory as their wives who work from Monday to Friday with the week-ends off. What good is it for a man to be off on Monday or Tuesday?'

But George was not without friends. Mr Alan Kershaw, director of the National Hosiery Manufacturers' Federation, declared: 'I personally think that economically speaking George Brown was quite right. In these modern times when machines cost so much, George Brown's comment that capital should be used to its full is quite correct.'

Looked at from the union's point of view, they say: 'Who wants to work throughout the night and on Sundays?'

'Socially I can see the workers' argument but we are in competition with countries which are permitted to work seven days a week and unless we do so ourselves we are at a disadvantage.'

Well said, Mr Kershaw. There in a nutshell is the choice—human values or the antisocial demands of the world market. Are you sure you're on the right side, George? Ah well, keep taking the Horlicks...

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49 Schubert Road SW15
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4 Dalross Passage W1
South - S Morris 4 Elphinstone
Street Glasgow SW1
GRAYS & TILBURY Alf Waters
1 Russell Rd Tilbury Essex
HAMPSTEAD Chris Barker
36 Gliden Road NW5
HARLOW Hugh Kerr
70 Joiners Field Harlow Essex
HARROW Kevin Simms
56 Salisbury Road
HAVERING Terry Ward
91 Heath Park Rd Gidea Pk
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD
John Barrett 20 Belswaines Lane
HORNSEY Chris Russell
131 Alexandra Park Rd N22
HULL Dave Gate 90 Bristol Rd
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181 Richmond Road Ilford
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20 Newton Terrace York
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14 Carlisle Mansions
Carlisle Place SW1

Jewish socialists form revolutionary alliance

We have received the following press release from the Jewish Revolutionary Alliance, Birmingham University Union, Edgbaston, Birmingham 15.

WE ARE REVOLUTIONARY socialists actively involved in the internationalist movements fighting capitalism. Primarily our experiences are those of people living under capitalism in Britain. In addition, we are Jews whose people have been subjected to racialism.

We conclude that the bulk of our activities as socialists must be within the general context of the British Left. We also believe as Jews in confronting the hypocrisies of the Jewish establishment. In the context of capitalist

society we believe there is always a fierce potential for racialism and anti-semitism. We believe that the real solution to this problem for the Jewish victims of racialism lies in fighting capitalism and anti-semitism in their own countries and not conceding to the demands of the anti-semites by Zionist emigration.

We condemn the silence of the so-called representative bodies and organs of the Jewish community in Britain on every major issue. We have called a meeting at Birmingham University Union on Sunday, 15 March at 2.30pm to plan direct action to shatter this silence. - John Chowcat, Astrid Joseph, Jeffrey Lever, Charles Pollock, Len Smith.



Please send further details of the meetings and activities of the International Socialists to:

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Send to IS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2.

Socialist Worker

STUDENTS - NO RETREAT ON UNIVERSITY SPIES

by Stephen Marks

LAST WEEKEND'S speeches by Powell and Heath point clearly to the political lessons students need to learn. But the National Union of Students' leadership, together with the university Vice-Chancellors, are doing their best to see that students do not learn them.

As the end of term approaches, the massive Manchester sit-in continues. Tuesday saw a mass meeting at Oxford and Warwick students plan an 'open university' in the first week of the vacation, with the support of the local trades council and Labour Party.

The local labour movement played a big role in getting a university in Coventry in the first place, but now sees that big business rewarded them with its spies. A Labour move on the council to cut off the grant to the university is part of the response so far.

DANGER

But as the term ends the great danger is that the biggest movement so far in Britain's colleges will be killed next term.

Chief candidates for gravediggers are the NUS leaders and the Vice-Chancellors with their bogus concessions. These amount to saying: 'We don't keep tabs on you and to prove it you can see the files we choose to show you.'

The files are not confidential—except to the students. Employers and the forces of law and order are not debarred from full access to data on the inmates of their universities. The Warwick files clearly showed this.

With the massive wages revolt continuing and no party likely to crack down on it before the election, whichever party wins will launch a big attack afterwards, with a 'reds under the bed' scare that will make Wilson's speech on the seamen's strike look like peanuts.

FLEXING

To prepare for this, the forces of 'loranorder' are feeling their way and flexing their muscles on any group that gets uppity and can be picked off more easily than organised labour at the moment. Such groups include Welsh Nationalists, Black Panthers demonstrating in Grosvenor Square for Bobby Seale, and the students as well.

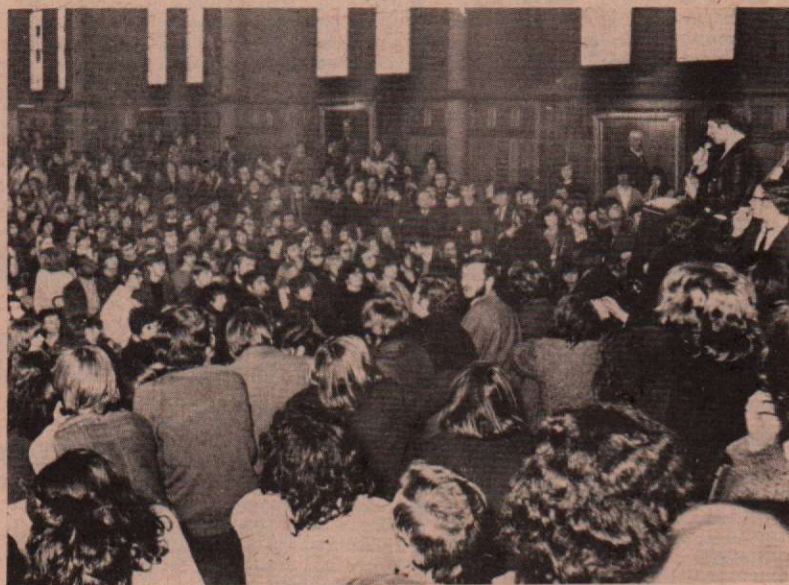
What frightens the ruling class is not the physical strength of students sitting-in but the political threat of a student movement which understands what is being done to it in the universities well enough to forge links with the growing struggle in industry and with the fight against racism. Some of the heaviest files have been on students and staff, often IS members, who have been doing just that.

Any concession that makes it harder for them to keep tabs on us is a partial victory, but 'democratic control of the black list' is not enough. The crucial question is control and a national movement that can continue next term.

PRESS

The NUS's failure to spread the struggle, which only they are in a position to do, must be fought. In every college militants must press, as a basis for action, that the following demands be raised and that delegates to NUS Easter council be mandated by mass union meetings to support them:

1. Every individual to have the right to see his own file.
2. all files, correspondence and minutes to be open to scrutiny by a committee elected by the students, with the right to publish as they see fit.
3. No disciplinary action or withdrawal of grants for any expression of political ideas or involvement in direct action.
4. No further use of injunctions against students.
5. No political criteria to apply to admissions, appointments, promotion, or use of university resources and student representation on all committees dealing with these questions.



Manchester students at a mass meeting during their sit-in

Builders storm union headquarters

by Paddy Faherty (ASW)

FOR THE SECOND week running, the offices of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers and Painters in Clapham have been occupied by angry union members.

Last Wednesday (4 March) carpenters and painters twice entered the building to protest at their executive's handling of a dispute at the St Thomas' Hospital site in south west London. 21 carpenters had been declared redundant on the site while a sub-contractor was taken on to hire non-union 'lump' labour.

Official support for the dispute ended three weeks ago. The London management committee of the union protested against the betrayal of trade union principles as carpenters continued to picket the site.

It appears that the ASW executive recognise the right of the lump sub-contractor. They are willing to take the non-unionists into the union and to have an arrangement with the employer so that union subscriptions are deducted from their wages.

The executive have also agreed that the 21 carpenters will be re-employed on other sites run by the main contractor, Laing, but they will not be taken back at St Thomas'.

George Smith, general secretary of the ASW, saw the demonstrators on Wednesday morning. He agreed to pass their views to the executive. But his replies to questions were so frustratingly negative that the

demonstrators bluntly told him: 'It is your job to look after our interests and you are not doing it.'

In the afternoon, demonstrators took over the executive room for three hours while executive members were present. The police, who were called in during the morning, stayed in the main hall.

After uproar, boos and shouts, Mr Smith announced that 'benefits have not been stopped from this office.' This meant that the dispute was still official and the carpenters were receiving strike pay.

In spite of Mr Smith's statement, a reliable source claims that dispute benefit was stopped for the 21 carpenters from Saturday, 7 March. This decision could only have been taken last Wednesday, during the demonstration.

As far as building workers are concerned, the ASW executive has protected non-unionists to the detriment of its own members. This betrayal has aroused so much anger that members are already calling for a campaign to remove the whole of the union executive.

The Exhibition Shop Stewards' Committee and the London Joint Sites Committee are calling a mass demonstration at the ASW head office next Wednesday, 18 March, Assemble Clapham Common stn 10.30

NOTICES

FULHAM IS Sun 15 March: Nigel Harris on China, 8pm Wetherby Arms, 500 Kings Rd. Buses 11, 22. Tube Fulham B'way.

REVOLUTIONARY struggle in South Africa. Pub mtg, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, WC1, 16 March, 7.30pm (Tube Holborn Spkrs: I B Tabata, president Unity Movement of South Africa, N Honono, president - All-African Convention, Chairman: Tariq Ali.)

LAMBETH IS pub mtg, Fri 18 March, 8.15pm Spkr from Black Panthers. Library, Jeffreys Rd, SW4 (nr Stockwell stn.)

BLACK PANTHERS march to protest against jailing of their members. Starts Clapham Common 3.30pm Sun 15 March. Followed by meeting.

JUST OUT: Germ's Eye View no 5, Special edition—the story of the nurses' fight, 8d post free from Jack Sutton, 11a Rowan Avenue, Manchester 16.

ELECTRICAL REPAIRS and installations done quickly and cheaply. Free estimates. P Denny 01-485 0476.

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Angry clothing workers demand new pay action

by Vince Hall in Leeds

STRIKE COMMITTEE LEADERS in the clothing trade have been casting around for new tactics in their effort for higher wages. After the strike by 25,000 clothing operatives had been called off, a lot of the militancy backing the shilling an hour wage demand has been scattered.

The strikers went back on a resolution that the management must produce a pay offer within 48 hours. But the bosses postponed their talks with the union until this week after meeting within the deadline.

The liaison committee, which was formed in the strike, has now advocated guerrilla strikes. These will be supported by a levy on all the other tailoring employees in the area.

Compared to the mass walkouts of a month ago, this is only a minor skirmish. Many women in the shops, who were the backbone of the three-week stoppage, are demanding that there should be walkouts straight away as the money has not been forthcoming.

Others think that there should be a call for an official national stoppage if the full rise is not signed and sealed before the recall conference of National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers.

Stormy meeting

Leeds No 1 branch, which covers more than 6000 workers, overwhelmingly voted in favour of the call for a national strike after the Easter conference if the full demand of a shilling on the basic rate plus a shilling on the minimum rates for the lower paid are not met.

The meeting was stormy. A bigger room has to be found for nearly 100 people. There has usually been only a handful of people in the past. Standing orders were lifted to push through the resolution.

The situation in Leeds is getting more explosive as the militant ladies realise that they have been got back to work on false pretences and through the lack of leadership of the strike liaison committee. Ready-made clothing could erupt again at any time.

Young nurses get raw pay deal

by Jack Sutton (NUPE)

NURSES will have to wait until May for their biggest ever pay award. On Tuesday the Nurses and Midwives Whitley Council failed to settle the final grading details of the 20 per cent rise which nurses' leaders jubilantly accepted last month.

But the sad truth is that many of the countries 125,000 student nurses have once again been sold down the sluice. For the increase will be an average one and many nurses will be lucky if they get 15 per cent out of the deal — a measly 25s a week.

Tricky picky Crossman and his Whitehall friends have some more nasty tricks up their sleeves as well. The nurses' £48 a year food allowance is incorporated in the deal. This means that 19s 6d is immediately knocked off their 25 bob and some hospitals are also planning to increase their lodging charges.

The new wage rates will be backdated to 1 April—the day celebrations begin in the nursing world of the 150th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale. For the student nurse, however, it looks as if it's turned out to be April Fools' Day after all.

MIRROR LETTER: WORKERS LASH TALK OF 'CHAOS AND ANARCHY'

From page one

picture of a happy, united nation struggling to make ends meet — a struggle damaged by a tiny, unrepresentative bunch of shop-floor wreckers.

It is a totally false picture. Our society is dominated by a handful of rich and powerful men like Lord Stokes, who sit on the boards of newspapers and television companies, controlling and distorting the news to suit their own ends.

Far from being happy and contented, the great mass of working people struggle to make ends meet

as their low wages are eaten away by rising prices, fares and rents. To keep them in their place—at the bottom—the Mirror feeds them a cheap diet of film star sensation, agony columns, strip cartoons and coy half-draped females.

That is the 'free press' for you. The so-called friends of the working class are its most powerful enemies.

When the great mass of workers realise this they will be a long way along the road to transforming the society which the Mirror helps to prop up.

The five pay slips sent to the Mirror showed the following:

Gross	£21 1s 8d	£20 1s 8d	£22 16s 11d	£22 1s 8d	£21 1s 8d
Net	£14 14s 0d	£14 12s 0d	£16 8s 0d	£17 8s 0d	£17 10s 0d
Hours	40	40	o/t 42-40	40	40
Service	22 years	2 years	3 years	8 years	14 years

Rail militants call for £5 without 'strings'

by an NUR member

THERE HAS BEEN a wave of strikes on British Rail in recent weeks. Workers in the engineering shops have been involved and, more recently, guards, locomen and engineers on the London underground.

The demands put forward by the unofficial strike leaders all concern wage levels — locomen want 30 per cent on their basic rate, engineers want £5, guards want better bonuses and shopmen want the differentials removed between the minor shops and the major ones at Swindon and Derby.

It all amounts to one thing — railwaymen are now fed up with sliding lower and lower in the 'Take-home League'.

And in the last two years union leaders have sold tens of thousands of jobs for pay rises which did not even compensate us for the rising cost of living — a thieves' bargain if ever there was one.

The most encouraging development is the growth of unity in the yards and depots—especially in London.

It has always been the trump card of the employers—and the union leaders — to keep each grade isolated. Unfortunately, some grades are still perpetuating disunity by advancing different demands.

That is why the national paper Railway Underground is urging all grades to form a united front against British Rail around the slogan '£5 on the basic — without strings'.

It is calling for national stoppages every Monday in March — a decision already taken locally by guards in several districts, including Glasgow.

We must demand that our timid leaders give full official backing to the struggle. The urgent task is to draw together the thousands of active trade unionists who are fighting in the localities. We must avoid being totally dependent on the

official union machines which have let us down so often.

Railway Underground, which has increased its circulation ten times in the last two months, is available from 44 Sewerby Street, Manchester 16 — 2d each and 1s a dozen, plus postage, cash with orders.

Workshop men accept productivity

A mass meeting in London of 2600 workshop staff voted overwhelmingly on Monday to accept the management's latest offer of £3 a week linked to productivity measures. The offer was made in reply to their claim for £5 a week without 'strings'.

170 maintenance men who have been on three weeks unofficial strike are demanding a further £3. London Transport has agreed in principle to union demands for pay parity among its workshop staff.