

# Socialist Worker

FOR WORKERS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

164 26 MARCH 1970 EVERY THURSDAY 4d

## WHO CONTROLS? WORKERS' ACTION WORRIES BOSSES

by Sabby Sagall

**WORKING-CLASS POLITICS** is back on the agenda. That is the message from last week's action by dockers and airline workers.

The dockers struck for a day to demand full nationalisation of Britain's ports. And airline workers threatened to strike if British United Airways is handed over to private enterprise instead of being merged with state-run BOAC.

Since the war the working class has been mainly concerned with improving its wages and conditions—and rightly so.

But now that economic struggle is more and more being transformed into a political one that begins to question the whole basis of our big business system, owned and controlled by a tiny handful of rich and powerful men.

The importance of the workers' actions last week was underlined by the howls of rage from both Tory and Labour MPs.

The abuse hurled at groups of workers trying to assert some control over their own lives shows the hypocrisy of the capitalist class and their representatives in parliament and the press. The state under Labour has been working hand in hand with big business, underwriting its investments and guaranteeing its profits at the expense of the wages and living conditions of the working class.

On page 3 this week, an important article describes how the robbery of the workers has increased since Labour took office.

### VAST SUMS

At the same time, the government has been pouring vast sums into the coffers of private industry: from 1964/65 to 1968/69, state aid to private industry increased from £325 million to £1,192 million.

Labour's policies expose how the state under capitalism exists to protect and extend the interests of the bosses. Those who own and control industry regard the state as their 'private property and believe that they have an absolute right to use its services in order to boost their wealth, power and privilege.

When the bosses manipulate the state for their own ends, it is in the 'public interest'. When workers use their organised strength to limit the political power of their masters, they are denounced as 'undemocratic'.

The millionaire press shrieks with horror when workers take industrial action to back up political demands. It conveniently forgets that it was the Labour government that introduced politics on to the factory floor.

The Prices and Incomes Board, the Donovan Commission, the Commission for Industrial Relations, Labour's drive to establish productivity bargaining and destroy the



Dockers at a mass meeting at Tower Hill last week

independent power of shop floor organisation are all political attacks on the working class. They stem from Labour's commitment to overhaul British big business in an age of increasing international competition.

The gulf between the industrial and political struggle is being bridged because Labour's policies mean an attack on working-class organisation in the factories.

The press and MPs do not complain about thrusting this kind of politics into industrial affairs because these are the kind of politics that prop up the power of the bosses.

Those who rage against workers 'usurping the functions of parliament' cover up the undemocratic nature of the capitalist system.

Did Ford workers elect their

chairman, Leonard Crossland? Did ICI workers elect their chairman, Sir Peter Allen?

A tiny majority of top shareholders and directors have the power to take the major decisions that affect the lives of millions of workers in the most fundamental way — decisions over wages, prices, location of investments, size of the work force, etc. The result of this control over society by the employing class is that one per cent of the population own half of the country's industrial and commercial wealth.

Labour's term of office has underlined the powerlessness of parliament, and the inability of radical MPs to alter this situation, whatever their personal wishes and intentions may be.

Parliament cuts off the political representatives of the labour movement from the mass of rank and file workers. Labour MPs lead sheltered lives, divorced from the anxieties and hopes of workers.

Can MPs really understand the problems and needs of dockers or airport workers? Their decisions to act for themselves and not to rely on MPs shows that workers are more and more aware of the sham character of 'parliamentary democracy'.

For what can be more democratic than groups of workers taking action themselves in order to control vital parts of their working lives?

### MAKE LINKS

For years, the ruling class has defined politics in terms of parliamentary politics, in terms of the five-yearly ritual of deciding which set of politicians is going to sell out, the workers, 25 years of comparative stability helped reinforce this view of politics in the minds of most workers.

Last week's events showed sections of workers beginning to make links through their own activity between industrial and political questions. They reveal the extent to which workers have begun to experience the onslaught of the employers as a political one.

Another part of this growing counter-attack by increasing numbers of workers are the demands based on class solidarity, such as the wages parity campaigns.

Workers are beginning to see politics in a new light, to see it as an activity which they collectively take part in to attempt to control their own lives.

They are re-defining democracy in socialist terms — in terms of people acting for themselves instead of relying on remote and powerless politicians.

No wonder the ruling class is frightened. For this questioning of what is politics and what is real democracy is an important step towards building a mass revolutionary working class movement that will overthrow the profit system and build a planned society producing for the needs of the whole community.



A Queensbury sailor with the ponies in their pens

## Ponies suffer so the rich can play polo

from Joe Rourke

Able Seaman and NUS convenor on motor vessel Queensbury

MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay:— The crew of the Queensbury are objecting to the appalling conditions in which polo ponies are transported from the Argentine to Britain so that the landed gentry and idle rich can enjoy their sport.

The voyage lasts one month. Payment of freightage is based upon the cubic feet taken up by the cargo. To cut costs, pens for the ponies were erected on the after-deck in Buenos Aires on 6 March with instructions that the minimum of space should be used.

The pens are divided into stalls which we have measured and found to be 35 inches wide and 9 feet long — just sufficient space for the pony to fit in.

Each pony is separated from the rest by two dividing boards of one inch in thickness. Their heads are lashed down permanently for the full voyage to reduce any possibility of fighting.

We have been told that ponies housed in this manner cannot lie down and are consequently less likely to become sea-sick.

### Ample room

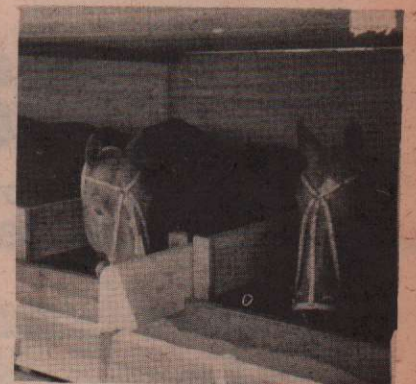
But on our outward voyage from Liverpool to Buenos Aires, we carried 12 English horses bought by Argentinians who were willing to pay sufficient freightage to allow each animal to have its own box. There was ample room to turn around and to lie down in.

Each day of the voyage, before we reach Liverpool on 3 April, will be progressively worse for the ponies. Each day sees a deterioration in their condition and behaviour. When we cross the Equator, the temperature will reach 100 degrees F.

The cost to the English buyers of shipping the ponies is £105. To buy them on the hoof in the Argentine costs in the region of £50. Some 120 ponies a year are sent to Britain for polo players.

The barbarous treatment handed out to these unfortunate animals in the name of British sport needs to be exposed. I assume that the 'social set' from southern England are the people responsible as I have not found any polo played in my home town of Bootle.

Crew members have pointed out that the Queen is the patron of the Royal Society for the Prevention of



Close up showing how the heads are tied

Cruelty to Animals, while her husband, Prince Philip, is a leading advocate of polo, a sport which resorts to cruelty to obtain its animals.

The animals suffer — and so do the crew in watching their plight. We have come to the conclusion that titles and wealth set some people above common decency.

These people have no one to answer to. Who in Britain would have the nerve to charge Prince Philip with cruelty to animals?

One myth that has been expounded is that the English are kind to animals and Latin Americans are not. The gaucho employed to look after the ponies is a devoted man who treats them as if they were his own children.

In protest against what I have seen on this voyage, I would like to lead a demonstration at the start of the polo season in June at Great Windsor Park or wherever they play to show what I think of this

## How the system robs you

Important feature on page 3

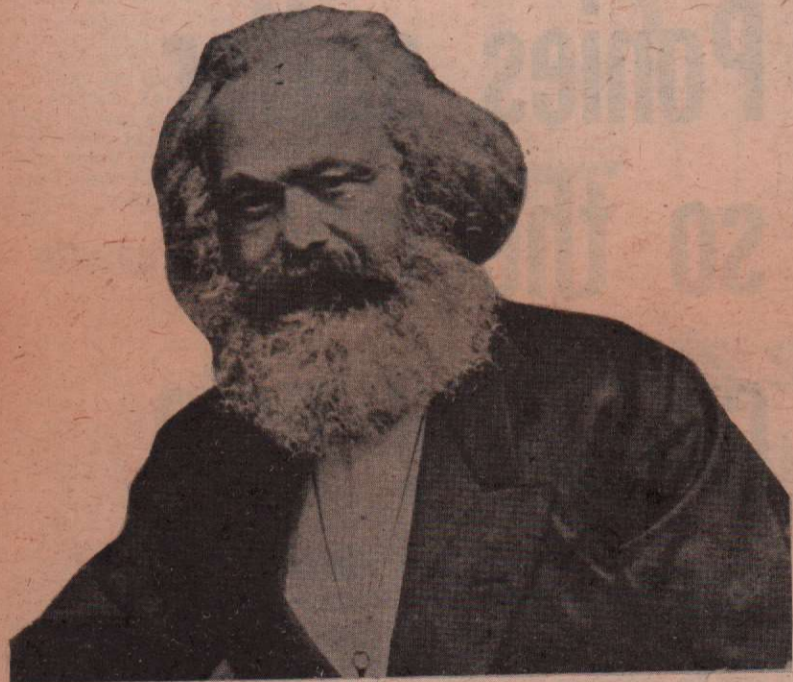
A PHILOSOPHER produces ideas, a poet verses, a parson sermons, a professor text-books, etc. A criminal produces crime. But if the relationship between this latter branch of production and the whole productive activity of society is examined a little more closely, one is forced to abandon a number of prejudices. The criminal produces not only crime but also the criminal law; he produces the professor who delivers lectures on this criminal law, and even the inevitable text-book in which the professor presents his lectures as a commodity for sale in the market. There results an increase in material wealth, quite apart from the pleasure which... the author himself derives from the manuscript of his text-book.

Further, the criminal produces the whole apparatus of the police and criminal justice, detectives, judges, executioners, juries, etc., and all these different professions, which constitute so many categories of the social division of labour, develop diverse abilities of the human spirit, create new needs and new ways of satisfying them. Torture itself has provided occasions for the most ingenious mechanical inventions, employing a host of honest workers in the production of these instruments.

The criminal produces an impression now moral, now tragic, and renders a 'service' by arousing the moral and aesthetic sentiments of the public. He produces not only text-books on criminal law, the criminal law itself, and thus legislators, but also art, literature, novels and the tragic drama, as Oedipus and Richard III, as well as Mullner's Schuld and Schiller's Rauber, testify. The criminal interrupts the monotony and security of bourgeois life. Thus he protects it from stagnation and brings forth that restless tension, that mobility of spirit without which the stimulus of competition would itself become blunted. He therefore gives a new impulse to the productive forces. Crime takes off the labour market a portion of the excess population, diminishes competition among workers, and to a certain extent stops wages from falling below the minimum, while the war against crime absorbs another part of the same population.

The criminal therefore appears as one of those natural 'equilibrating forces' which establish a just balance and open up a whole perspective of 'useful' occupations. The influence of the criminal upon the development of the productive forces can be shown in detail. Would the locksmith's trade have attained its present perfection if there had been no thieves? Would the manufacture of bank-notes have arrived at its present excellence if there had been no counterfeiters?

Crime, by its ceaseless development of new means of attacking property, calls into existence new measures of defence, and its productive effects are as great as those of strikes in stimulating the invention of machines.



Law and order — Marx speaks

# Socialist Worker

6 Cottons Gardens London E2

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.

# Reign of terror in US mineworkers' union

by Bill Gerchow

JOSEPH YABLONSKI, a candidate for the presidency of the United Mine Workers' Union, and his wife and daughter were shot to death in their home on New Year's Eve. Like everyone known to be openly critical of the UMW leadership and its double dealings, Yablonski was well aware that his life and the lives of his family and friends were in danger.

Elijah Wolford, who dropped out of the UMW race after Yablonski entered with greater support, had rifles and shotguns throughout his home in Morgantown, West Virginia.

When asked about this he said, 'I like to hunt. But I also like to live.' Yablonski had a double-barrelled 12-gauge shotgun and a .22 rifle in one corner of his bedroom, to be used for defence if attacked. But his killers crept into the house and caught the Yablonski family by surprise.

The telephone wires had been cut. All three were shot repeatedly in the head.

The same slick, professional technique had been used on 2 July last when Yablonski assaulted and knocked unconscious while on a campaign tour in Springfield, Illinois. His vice-presidential running mate was similarly assaulted in Shenandoah Pennsylvania.

## Brutal repression

After Yablonski's murdered body was found, his son Joseph Jr. exclaimed to newsmen, 'You guys just didn't believe how rotten this union was.'

Those familiar with the scene were quite aware of the problem. President Tony Boyle and his gang in the UMW leadership are not only corrupt and dictatorial, they are capable of the most vicious, brutal repression. Elijah Wolford has likened the UMW to a totalitarian state.

Of course, Tony Boyle himself, like all 'honourable men,' has an alibi. And the FBI will be reluctant to open a can of worms that threatens to expose the rotten complicity of UMW, big business and government since 1950 in fleecing the working people of Appalachia for super profits.

Tony Boyle reportedly 'won' another five-year term by beating Yablonski by a vote of 81,056 to 45,872. But like Boyle himself, the election showed signs of corruption.

Though it appears that Yablonski lost, it took retired and perhaps dead miners (in dummy branches) to



YABLONSKI: attacked corruption

defeat him. Boyle raised pensions from £46 to £61 10s a month (obviously insufficient except as a bribe) six months before the UMW election. Moreover, Yablonski discovered that Boyle had 50,000 extra ballots printed up before the election.

The official UMW newspaper, though directed by a court order to give equal or adequate space to Yablonski, was almost entirely filled from start to finish with admiring reviews of Boyle's leadership. Boyle also had the overflowing union coffers to swipe from (the size and management of this fund is a known scandal in itself) to run his campaign, while Yablonski's campaign was run on a shoestring.

What is significant is the amount of active rank and file support that Yablonski received. He got at least half of the working miners' vote, and he carried entire sections around northern West Virginia. Quite obviously, he mustered enough support prior to the election to shake up Tony Boyle and his union gang, and to cast permanent doubt upon the integrity of that leadership.

Yablonski's campaign focused on Boyle's corruption. Many feel that this approach was by no means sufficient. There was too much personality-baiting and too little politics even by the standards of the usual union campaign.

## Mass support

This was particularly obvious in relation to the 'black lung' issue, which spurred on 42,000 miners to the biggest wildcat strike in this country in almost 20 years. For it was this — crying out for political analysis and action — which gave Yablonski and other courageous critics of the union the chance to speak out against the union dictatorship with some mass support behind them.

While Yablonski and Boyle were waiting for the December UMW election, the rank and file was awaiting the Mine Safety Bill. There was altogether too much waiting on both counts and this distracted the rank and file from organising its own collective power during the second half of 1969.

Prodded by the Mannington mine disaster in November 1968, which killed 78 miners, and by the 42,000 wildcat-striking miners, Congress finally passed a piece of health-and-safety legislation that was at least half a century overdue. On paper it looks fairly strong if minimal in scope. How it will be implemented is the major question.

For the first time, there is a standard for the 'permissible' level of coal dust, which affects the lungs and causes 'black lung disease'. 'Black lung disease' has been responsible for the unnecessary deaths of some 100,000 miners since 1900, and continues to kill thousands needlessly every year.

Since it has been known how to prevent it for almost 50 years, the continued prevalence of the disease, and the resulting deaths, are the results of the coal companies — backed by the UMW hierarchy — who are unwilling to cut into their profits in the slightest to save their wage-slaves from injury, disease and death.

These companies have been hand-

in-glove with the UMW ever since the 1950 deal between George Love, then president of Consol, largest coal company in the US, and John L Lewis.

The deal, simply put, was this: pay increases in exchange for no improvement of working conditions and the suppression of strike threats. The federal government, concerned at the time about the Korean War aspect of the permanent arms economy, gladly gave its blessings to the deal.

It looked for a time as though the Nixon administration was going to veto the Mine Safety Bill. Advocates of the bill had wanted to place a 4¢ per ton tax on coal to finance health and safety research, but this provision was knocked out by coal industry pressure and by an administration that would rather protect the long-range profits of the coal companies than gain an anti-inflationary tax.

However, Nixon finally signed the bill because he, the coal industry, and the UMW were afraid of the short-and-long-range consequences of a veto. Massive wildcats had been threatened. 100,000 coal workers might strike and then organise their collective power outside of industry and union control.

## High profits

Since the Vietnam War, the latest adventure in the permanent arms economy, the coal industry has been making better-than-ever profits off the land and workers of Appalachia. The massive theft of this surplus is why Appalachia is what it is today: rich country, poor people.

Twenty-seven per cent of all industrial power is still supplied by coal. Profits have never been higher. But in their rush for profits from the permanent war gravy-train, work conditions and health conditions have been left to degenerate, while the UMW stands by with their hands in the pockets of the industry.

Given the corrupt and co-opted UMW, the results for miners have been maiming, disease, unemployment, suffering and death — while the exploiters never had it so good.

The industry enjoys a tax rate twice as low as even establishment experts agree it should be. More importantly, all major power companies buy coal on long-term contracts, up to 30 years, and the big coal companies, like Consol, are either owned outright by big oil companies or are tied up in interlocks. The oil companies who own these mines are not going to abandon a black-gold prize of 3.2 trillion tons of extractable coal.

These capitalists, with government protection and union complicity, steal the wealth from the land and the people of Appalachia and deposit it in their own bank accounts in big cities, far removed from the poverty and suffering they leave behind. They promote high levels of unemployment when it is financially in their own self-interest.

## Shock and anger

But today, the mine workers of Appalachia are awakening to the crime that has been perpetrated against them. Yablonski's murder has brought it home.

The mine safety bill cannot stem inflation, war profiteering, collusion, or repression, as many miners are already realising. The Miner's Voice coming out of a rank and file committee in Morgantown, West Virginia, is beginning to become the kind of militant paper that is needed.

Widows are organising in Mannington. As I write, 20,000 miners, shocked and angered by the vengeful murder of Yablonski, are out on strike. And this is only the beginning.

The miners are up against a vast alignment of forces. They must look to their collective strength. No 'respectable leaders' at the top can save them. They must consolidate their own massive rank and file power from below.

## William Morris

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# Who really runs Britain? The figures speak for themselves

One of the central economic problems in every developed country today is the age-old question of how much of the product should go to the workers and how much to the other factors of production. The answer to this question can be very important for the health of a modern economy. In a real sense, the economic difficulties of the UK, the general strike in France last year and President Kennedy's confrontation with the steel industry in 1962 all had their origins in this basic problem. (P J Loftus, Lloyds Bank Review, April, 1969)

by Lionel Sims

THE EMPLOYERS rarely make such statements out in the open. But here, without any huffing it is clearly recognised that those who own 'the factors of production' will always aim to reward their workers with as little as possible for their efforts.

More than that, the general result of the overall struggle between all workers and all employers over the sharing of the national income will always tend to average out with the working class receiving a minimum subsistence wage.

Of course, what goes to make up a subsistence wage will change over time. The average worker today expects and receives far better elementary 'comforts' than his 19th century brother or even, for that matter, of his counterpart between the two world wars.

The average real wage of all manual workers in 1969, allowing for the effects of price increases, is just under 1½ times as large as the average working man's wage in 1938.

That sounds all right, but if you look at the family budget of an average worker there is nothing to show that spending is above a subsistence minimum. For any family that had a total income between £20 to £25 a week in 1968, 30 per cent of it was spent on food, 9 per cent on fuel, light and power bills, 13 per cent went on housing costs, 8 per cent went on clothing and 5.8 per cent on household durable goods and 11 per cent went on transport costs.

That leaves just over £5 to pay all taxes, to spend on tobacco and all the other bits and pieces for the family. And, as the Family Expenditure Survey scrupulously observes, 3.9 per cent goes on alcohol, no doubt to forget where the other 96.1 per cent went.

## Minimum

The National Food Survey of 1967 showed that approximately 19 per cent of working class diets were below the minimum nutritional requirements laid down by the British Medical Association in 1950 while 40 per cent of workers' diets were above the minimum.

Out of the 3.1 million families covered by the Circumstances of Families Report in 1966, 20 per cent of all the families lived in households whose structural conditions were in some way defective. 11,700 families lived in houses which were in a dangerous state of decay.

In terms of overcrowding, 12 per cent of all families lived more than 1½ persons to a room (including the kitchen) and 13 per cent of all families suffered from a lack of amenities below elementary requirements. 62,460 families did not have a lavatory or a fixed bath or shower, nor was there even a hot or cold water tap in the building.

The 1966 Sample Census showed that, out of all those persons in families whose chief wage earner was a manual worker, 59 per cent did not have access to a car, 37 per cent had access to one car, and the remaining 4 per cent to two or more cars.

An analysis of working class



budgets therefore reveals about one-fifth of the families below the minimum subsistence level (diet and housing), roughly 40 per cent above the minimum (diet and motor cars), and the remaining 40 per cent clustered about the average wage.

But about one-third of all the families covered by the 1966 Sample Census had no children and about one fifth had more than two children. The remainder, almost one half of all families, had one or two children.

It is those families who have no children, or those with one or two children but more than one wage-earner, that can afford a level of expenditure above the subsistence minimum. Similarly, those families with more than two children, or with one or two children but only one wage earner, make up that part of the working class with expenditure below the subsistence minimum.

## Survives

Taken together, all three groups average out at a subsistence expenditure and at a reproduction rate that will just ensure enough children to replenish and renew the work force. The working class therefore participates in the sharing of the national income only insofar as it survives as a commodity for the employers.

Not everyone who works is a worker and it is not every worker who is a productive worker. It is the relation between the amount of value created by the productive worker for his own subsistence and the value he creates but is taken from him by his employer which is a precise measure of the exploitation underlying the creation of the national income.

The problem is to sort out who are the productive workers and then the wages they receive and what is the total surplus appropriated by all the employers, the capitalist class. But history is on our side.

When capitalism was in its infancy, production was carried out by craft labour. The craftsman then included in his individual person all that has subsequently been divided between different social groups, but reproduced on an obvious class scale rather than a concealed individual scale.

As a capitalist he was a man of wealth, as a merchant and soothsayer he was a traveller on national holidays, as technician he was an inventive genius, as a foreman he was the Puritan sharing in God's grace, and as the worker he was a Methodist sharing in God's wrath.

Productive and unproductive functions are more clearly separated today. All the operatives directly involved in the material productive process of manufacturing industry, construction, part of transport, in agriculture and craft trades are

productive workers.

Although the transport industry does not produce anything tangible like the other spheres of material production, it is a very real necessity in the production process. The value of molten steel is enhanced by its journey from the furnace to the mould, then to the rolling mill, as sheet steel from the foundry to manufacturing industry and as a motor car from industry to the consumer.

Although they are less directly involved as these operatives, technologists, draughtsmen, designers and production managers carry out the overseeing functions necessary to any co-operative effort in material production. Since the second world war teachers have carried out the productive function of heightening the average skill of all the workers.

The average worker today is not an unskilled manual worker as in Karl Marx's day, but somewhere between unskilled manual work at one extreme and the research work of an industrial technologist at another. Since teachers have their raw material in human beings and they 'produce' an average skill content which increases the value of labour power, they must be considered to be productive workers.

All these productive workers together create the national income. In order that they can continue reproducing products, they require a group of workers servicing their own activities, doing the jobs that do not expand production but are nonetheless necessary.

## Surplus

Clerks and typists, all office workers, are engaged in a continual process of assessing by accounts what the operatives and technologists are doing. A productive worker creates value for his own subsistence and value over and above that as a surplus taken by his employer.

A clerk or typist creates no value, instead their wages come out of profits. But they are treated as if they were productive by the employer, since he pays them more or less the same subsistence wage. We may be sharing in the profits, he says, but who said anything about fair shares!

All that remains on the labour market are those in such services as health and the mass media, and these are employed to maintain the order and discipline necessary for an employing class to regularly rake off a surplus from productive workers. Nurses care for us in a different way than prison officers. Just over £3½ million was spent on police, prisons, law courts and parliament in 1968.

All forms of profit and all the wages of non-productive workers come from the labour power of prod-

uctive workers. On top of that there is a fantastic amount of waste in capitalist production.

In 1961, over one million potentially productive workers, 1,064,032, were wasted on producing weapons, practically all of them in manufacturing industry. The £2,688 million which will be spent on all armaments in 1970 is therefore part of the total surplus, while those million or so workers must be subtracted from the productive pool of workers.

The constant changing of models, especially in car manufacture, adds nothing to the quality of the model itself, only a different appearance to the consumer. But the costs of re-styling the models and producing the different tools needed for each model are enormous—approximately 10-20 per cent of the total value of all consumer durables, or about £4050 million in 1968.

Another source of waste, where the sales effort penetrates and impedes production, is advertising. In 1968 the total cost of advertising in Britain was about £494 million.

The total waste in the production process resulting from the private ownership of industry, leading to armaments production, the wastage on sales effort and the detrimental effects of pollution and waste, must have been somewhere in the region of £8000 million, or about one-fifth of the gross national product in 1968.

If we add up the total wages of all productive workers in 1961, after they had paid tax, the sum is approximately £7½ thousand million. If we add up all the profits of private and public industries, all the wages of unproductive workers, and all the waste expenditure, the sum is around £16 thousand million.

That means that for every £1 a

worker produces for his own wage packet, he produces a further £2 which is taken by the employers and used in their own interests. Or the same thing put in another way—of a working week of five days, one and two-thirds working days go in creating the worker's subsistence, while three and a third working days create the capitalist class's surplus there is a rate of exploitation of more than 200 per cent.

We mention 1961 figures because that is the last year in which there were full figures. Since then, however, the statistics and, more significantly, the experience, point to a growing rate of increase of exploitation.

## Colossal

First, because the minimum subsistence is being pushed down. In 1956 31.5 per cent of the total population had diets below the BMA nutritional minimum. By 1960 it had risen to 36.5 per cent of the population and by 1967 to 46 per cent.

Secondly, because the recent few years have been a period of growing surplus in terms of profits, but especially in terms of such non-activities as claiming rent for the ownership of land, or interest for the ownership of money.

These statistics, drawn from the research bodies set up by the employers and politicians, establish beyond any doubt the colossal human potential of organised labour. If workers can provide the £3½ million necessary to imprison themselves, if they can create a £16 thousand million surplus that is used by the employers against their will, then how much can they create when they are liberated?

## International Socialism 42

The Stalinist States: Chris Harman  
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Socialists and the election

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# The rate of exploitation is on the increase

# The plight of immigrants in Europe weakens workers' struggle

by Stephen Castles

WHILE SOCIALISTS ARE preoccupied with their national struggles, the bosses are busily planning and integrating across national boundaries.

An important part of their strategy is the exploitation of immigrant workers in an attempt to split working-class solidarity. Socialist Worker has pointed this out for Britain, but what is less commonly known is that similar tactics are used in the Common Market and in other European countries.

Today there are nearly nine million immigrants in Western Europe.

Figures for Belgium are not given, as no reliable ones are available, but it is known that there are about 300,000 immigrants there—mainly Italians and Turks. The largest numbers are in Britain (2½ million), Germany (2 million), France (2½ million), and Switzerland (nearly a million, or about 15 per cent of her population).

Most immigrants come from underdeveloped regions—either the backward parts of Southern Europe like Portugal, Greece, Spain, Southern Italy or from more distant areas such as North Africa, India, West Indies.

## Further afield

Countries with no colonial ties and with relatively high wages, like Germany, Switzerland and Sweden, recruit mainly from Southern Europe. Even so, they are having to seek workers further and further afield and Turkey is the main source today.

France, Belgium and Holland have workers both from Southern Europe and from third world countries. France has 471,000 Algerian immigrants, 148,000 from her other former North African colonies and about 50,000 workers from the rest of Africa.

Wherever they come from and wherever they go, migrants are exploited in a similar fashion. This disproves the theory put forward by reactionary social scientists that immigration is just a 'colour problem'. This theory is an attempt to hide the economic and social roots of discrimination.

Immigrants form about 5-7 per cent of the working population in most West European countries. In Switzerland they are a third and in Luxembourg a quarter. They are mainly unskilled or semi-skilled workers and they are concentrated in the lowest grade jobs of certain industries and regions.

The immigrants get only the jobs which other people will not take, either because of low wages or unpleasant and dangerous working conditions. For instance, the building industry, which offers little security and hard conditions, has a high proportion of immigrant workers nearly everywhere. Metal manufacture, textiles, clothing, public services and transport and domestic service are other sectors heavily dependent on immigrant labour.

In Switzerland 34 per cent of male factory workers and 53 per cent of female ones are foreign. The commonest occupation for foreign men is building (35 per cent) and for women, domestic service (29 per cent). In Germany, a third of the foreign workers are in the metal industry. The next largest groups are in other manufacturing industries and in building. The mines in Belgium rely heavily on Italian and Turkish workers.

In most countries there are laws which restrict the freedom of foreigners to change jobs. This stops them getting promotion and makes them specially vulnerable to pressure from the employers. A row with the boss may mean expulsion from the country.

Many immigrants come illegally—often to escape military service in fascist countries. These men

without papers can be forced to take low wages and they cannot complain to the authorities or the unions.

Immigrants nearly always come from backward areas and have never worked in industry before. As they want to save money fast to improve things for their families, they are often willing to work long hours or very fast on piecework.

Finding somewhere to live is one of the greatest difficulties. In Germany and France there are special hostels for single workers, but they are quite inadequate—there are only 100,000 beds in Germany and 60,000 in France.

In any case, immigrant workers dislike such hostels because of the authoritarian rules. The employer often controls the hostel and can keep out union representatives and put the workers on the street in case of a dispute.

## Low incomes

Most immigrant workers—especially those who bring their families with them—have to find dwellings on the private market. This is difficult, due to low incomes and widespread prejudice.

Immigrants come to work so they inevitably go to the expanding industrial towns where the housing shortage is already severe. The result is that many end up in overcrowded furnished rooms or badly-equipped attics or cellars.

In France, which has the worst housing shortage in Europe, it is often impossible for them to get any sort of flat. That is why at least 100,000 immigrants live in the bidonvilles (shanty towns) which surround most of France's large cities.

Here they build shacks of waste materials and live without electricity, piped water or sanitary facilities in the worst possible squalor. The effect on health is not surprising: tuberculosis is common and

rickets—the scourge of 19th century Britain—has reappeared.

The exploitation of immigrant workers brings various advantages for the bosses.

1. Before the war, employers used a high rate of unemployment to keep down wages. Working-class militancy has made this impossible today.

As economic expansion leads to labour shortages and higher wage rates, employers hope that bringing in immigrant workers will prevent 'over-full' employment and thus restrain wage growth. The unemployed masses of the underdeveloped areas are regarded as an external industrial reserve army.

2. Immigrants are usually unskilled, and restrictive laws and discrimination in employment make sure they stay that way. This tends to split the working class into two strata: the immigrants in unskilled jobs, nationals of the Western European countries in the skilled, supervisory and white collar sectors.

The unlimited reserves of unskilled labour available cause wage stagnation in the unskilled sector. On the other hand there is a limited number of skilled men available, so wages rise in the other sectors. The bosses hope to create an indigenous 'labour aristocracy' which will see its interests in individual promotion rather than collective action.

3. Similarly in the housing and social field the immigrants get the worst conditions and remain segregated from the rest of the working class in ghetto like conditions. Racism is used to deepen the split, by developing the fear of competition.

Immigrants are made the scapegoats for the big business system's failure to provide reasonable housing and social facilities. The working class and its organisations are weakened.

A vicious circle has tended to develop throughout Europe. Workers are suspicious of immigrants and even try to keep them out of certain jobs or housing areas.

Immigrants therefore have little confidence in their fellow workers and their organisations and do not join the unions. Often the unions speak of solidarity but do little to bring it about.

In Switzerland, the unions have even campaigned to keep foreigners out. In the Belgian miners' strike

the unions used the fact that over half the strikers were foreign as an excuse for doing nothing.

Such policies help the bosses to drive a wedge between the different groups.

Any exploitation of one section of the working class harms the long-term interests of the whole class by breaking its unity. Socialists must understand the objective problems arising in connection with immigration and must take action by:

1. Exposing all forms of exploitation of immigrants and fighting to end them.
2. Contacting all immigrants living in bad conditions and helping them to organise.
3. Bringing immigrants into working class organisations and getting such organisations to pay special attention to immigrants' problems.
4. Demanding full political and trade union rights for immigrant workers.

## Most exploited

The experience of many disputes—including the May general strike in France—proves that immigrant workers can be brought into the class struggle and act in full solidarity with other workers. Immigrants are the most exploited section of the working class and are willing to become militant once the possibility of struggle becomes evident.

Socialists throughout Europe are realising this. In France, left-wing students are helping bidonville residents to fight evictions. In January the headquarters of the French Employers' Association was occupied in protest against the treatment of immigrant workers.

German and Swiss socialists are also campaigning for political rights for foreign workers who can at present be expelled if they are involved in politics.

But solidarity does not come about without special efforts. Immigrants are isolated by language and by their weak legal and social position.

Only when they see that others are ready to unite with them in their fight for better conditions will they come into the general struggle. Socialists cannot afford to ignore the revolutionary potential of this important new section of the working class.



An immigrant shanty town at Nanterre, near Paris: a small North African girl drags water home

# Support your local policemen!

by a correspondent

A WAVE of dissatisfaction is sweeping through the rank and file of the British police. These are the men who are retained by capitalism to do its dirty work, as a reserve force or a real force against workers' strikes and students' sit-ins.

They also fight against small crime in order that the great fundamental crime of exploitation and war may continue undisturbed.

The high turnover rate in the police force, in spite of wage increases and the technical gimmicks of recent re-organisation, reflects the discontent of an unfree section of the working class subjected to difficult, sometimes dangerous work, a rigid discipline code, the mistrust of their 'superiors' and the suspicion of other workers.

All over Britain, policemen have been voting with their feet (flatly, of course) against the iniquities of their lot. The Home Office and the Chief Constables constantly complain of undermanning even in the streamlined forces now at their disposal.

Within the force itself, discontent is smouldering, often expressed against the most immediately available scapegoat—the 'hippy', the immigrant or the murderer. The policemen's wives so often have to bear the brunt of the strain, with their menfolk constantly out or on call.

The wives, now feeling threatened with the loss of their husbands and breadwinners as the result of the recent spate of murders, are uniting in common action to demand the re-introduction of hanging for the killers of policemen.

Resolutions to this effect have been passed for years by the Police Federation: it has now become a popular demand in the rank and file. Whatever reservations socialists and progressive workers may have



about this movement of feeling, it is a fact and it is only one part of a general mood of growing independence among the men on the beat.

The climax of this mood has now been seen in the resolution passed by the Bristol branch of the Police Federation demanding the right to go on strike. We may be sure that this demand will spread and that it will be resisted by the 'liberal' Home Secretary and the Chief Constables and (whatever concessions may be made verbally) by the bureaucracy of the Police Federation itself.

The police of Britain have their own history of militancy and trade unionism. The old 'Nuppo' (National Union of Police and Prison Officers) uniting all ranks below the top crust and maintaining firm links with their brothers in the prison service, campaigned actively for policemen's rights in the years around 1910.

It requested (and received) solidarity action with the rest of the trade union movement.

Its struggle for recognition and better conditions culminated in the great police strike at the end of

World War One. It was smashed, with its leading militants hounded out of the force and the rest enrolled under threat of the sack, into the present Police Federation and Prison Officers' Association, with the sweetener of a wage increase.

Now, in 1970, the ghost of Nuppo walks the land again.

Revolutionary socialists should define their attitudes to this mood among rank and file lawmen. They must make up their minds whether they are 'liberals', therefore putting the moral issue of the death penalty before all other considerations, or socialists working with a working class whose attitude to hanging is after all similar to that of the police.

They must make up their minds whether they are 'rebels' and therefore against authority as such, dismissing those who wield authority as irredeemable enemies, fit only as targets for counter violence — or whether they are revolutionaries who will work with a class movement among policemen just as they would work with one among troops.

Contact — discreetly — your local policemen.

Approach — sympathetically — the meetings of your local policemen's wives. If the women's liberation groups are to reach beyond the grievances of the middle-class feminists, they might just as well start with this section of working-class housewives.

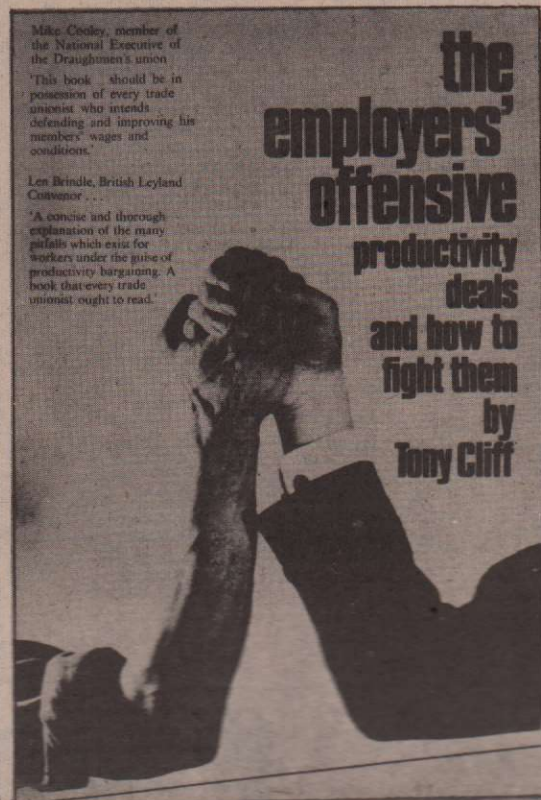
You can agree with what they are doing without accepting all the reasons (such as the demand for hanging) which have prompted this collective action.

Support the unionisation of the police — with full rights, including, above all, the right to strike.

Behind that uniform, a misguided working-class brother is trying to hide. That truncheon can be turned against capitalism.

## THE BOOK THEY'RE ALL TALKING ABOUT

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# Asia plundered as big firms make millions

FOR 25 YEARS America has garrisoned Asia. The Pacific is belted with US air bases, ports for the US fleet, supply depots, training grounds and hundreds of thousands of troops.

This was true before Vietnam and will be true after the US loses the war and has to get out.

Laos, Korea, Thailand, Japan, Okinawa, Philippines, Formosa and South Vietnam are all US troop sites.

All the politicians promise plans to 'leave Asia to the Asians', but the more they talk the deeper in they get. President Nixon won't show us his 'secret plan to end the war' but he has admitted that Washington plans to keep 300,000 GIs in Vietnam for at least 10 more years.

This is no 'mistake' or 'blunder'. American business has a worldwide empire and it's the job of the government to protect that empire no matter how many lives it costs.

That's why Vietnam will be followed by new wars, in a never-ending stream.

In country after country the peasants, who form a majority of the population, are supporting revolutions against their corrupt and backward governments - rulers that in most cases are front men or minor allies of Western business interests. Vietnam is a good example of this.

## Standards lowered

Many Americans believe the myth that Western colonial rule - no matter how undemocratic - brought modern education, sanitation, medicine, a better diet and some 'civilisation' to those backward peasants in Asia.

That's all untrue. When the French conquered Vietnam, then known as Indochina, they lowered the average standard of living, a practice America has continued. In fact, the workers and peasants of South Vietnam lived better 200 years ago than they do now with Western 'help'.

The French used forced labour to build their fortifications and roads. Peasants were kicked off the land, and left to work as labourers or tenant farmers for the big, French plantations.

Each village was forced to buy a minimum quota of opium and liquor from the French government, who encouraged drug addiction in order to profit from it. Each year the French businessmen exported millions of dollars worth of rice, tin, lumber, coal and natural rubber while the Vietnamese peasant grew poorer.

By 1938 the average peasant was eating 30 per cent less than his father did in 1900, while 40 per cent of each rice crop was exported by the French. During depressions (a 'civilised' invention) tens of thousands of peasants died of starvation.

## Stripped bare

This was colonialism - the enslavement of a people by foreign invaders, while their country was stripped bare. No wonder that time and again the Vietnamese rose against the French colonial armies.

Peasant revolts, underground trade unions, guerrilla bands and revolutionary parties were organised to kick the French out. After 30 years of struggle, French colonialism was about to lose Vietnam in the 1950s.

The French people had got fed up with dying in wars just to protect some corporation's investment. Mass desertions, troop mutinies, sabotage of war supplies and other actions were getting common.

The Vietnam war was so hated in France that the government was forced to rule that no draftee had to serve there. Caught between the growing strength of the Vietnamese and the growing opposition at home, the French politicians had come to



Bank billboard in Saigon - overlooked by a tank

the end of their rope.

But Washington insisted that they fight on. Out of our tax dollars the French were given hundreds of ships, planes, tanks and vehicles - we ended up paying 80 per cent of the French military costs. And when they finally lost in 1954, the politicians of both Republican and Democratic parties demanded that US forces take up where the French left off.

Senator John F. Kennedy demanded that we 'take the ultimate step' and send in GIs. Vice President Nixon said, 'the administration will have to face up to it and send in troops.'

So as far back as 1954 Washington wanted to get involved in Vietnam, but a vast public outcry ensued. With the bloody Korean War still fresh in everyone's mind, the American people weren't going to buy a new Asian 'adventure'. So Washington shut up, and began the secret manoeuvres that got us into the present hopeless mess.

## Real point

While Washington kept explaining that it only wanted to save the poor Vietnamese from Communism insiders knew what was really going on. US News & World Report, the pro-business weekly magazine, got to the real point: 'One of the world's richest areas is open to the winner in Indo-China... tin, rubber, rice, key strategic raw materials are what the war is really all about. The US sees it as a place to hold at any cost.'

America is the strongest colonial power in the world, exploiting the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Washington was more sophisticated than the old European powers.

Coming late to the imperialist game, the US never asked for outright colonies, and always preached 'democracy' in ringing tones. When the US did conquer a nation - such as the Philippines - it was eventually turned loose.

All the American government wanted from these 'independent' governments was the right to station its bases and troops on their soil, get them to support its foreign policy and wars, and let US business corner the lion's share of the trade, mineral and oil rights and all other economic benefits. No wonder Americans are hated around the world.

US corporations have over \$75 billion invested overseas. The big oil companies invested \$2 billion in Middle East oil development - but they get a return of almost \$1 billion every year from it.

Standard Oil, DuPont, Firestone, Chase Manhattan and the other big corporations have almost \$2 billion

invested just in the Far East, with a yearly profit of over \$150 million.

The wealth of these corporations is the mass poverty of other countries. The first thing that any revolution has to do in these nations is to stop the robbery by foreign corporations, to take over their plants and offices.

It was no accident that Washington - for all its speeches about spreading 'democracy' - backed up the French colonialists in Vietnam. It's no accident that the US 'allies' in Saigon are former collaborators with the French against their own people, crooks and two-bit dictators of the worst variety.

Nixon's plans to garrison Vietnam permanently with 300,000 GIs means no end to this war. 'Secret' US military operations in Thailand, Laos and Cambodia promise more wars to come.

The fact is that these peasants in Asia are right on at least one point - that they should toss foreign corporations and foreign armies out.

Reprinted from Wildcat, an American revolutionary socialist paper that circulates widely among GIs.

# Cottons Column

LAST FRIDAY a government spokesman told the slumbering Commons that there are well over 100,000 classifiable slums in London alone.

This sudden concern for the plight of the slum dweller is not unconnected with next month's elections for the Greater London Council. Labour would like you to think that it will rigorously tackle the problem, unlike the nasty Tory occupants of County Hall and other town halls throughout Britain.

But before you rush out to enthusiastically cast your vote for the party of the people, look at the government's own sparkling record in housing.

Remember its election pledge of building 500,000 new homes a year by 1970? 'Nothing,' said Harold, 'will deter us from this target.'

Nothing, that is, except Labour's own inability to honour its pledges and to take tough action against the land speculators, money lenders and big builders.

Last year Housing Minister Anthony Greenwood quietly abandoned the 500,000 target. In 1968 he managed to produce 400,000 new dwellings but last year there was a disastrous falling away to 366,793.

And what for 1970, the year when the promised land of fine new housing for all would at last come into view? According to the National Council of Building Material Producers, the number of houses completed this year could be at least 10,000 down on last year.

Worse, while the private sector is likely to remain stable at around 180,000 the public sector will drop to around 175,000.

So more new housing is available for the middle class than for the working class. Another fine example of how Labour government works.

Three million families in Britain today live in slums or near-slum conditions. 2.9 million dwellings have no internal lavatory, 2.1 million no fixed bath, 3.4 million no hot and cold water system and 3 million no wash basin.

The shame of it all is too much for Mr Greenwood. He will not be standing in the next election...

JOHN LENNON has told a bored world that the Beatles smoked pot in the Buckingham Palace loo when they went to receive their OBES.

I understand from reliable police sources that Queenie is not to be prosecuted for allowing her premises to be used for drug taking.

## The song's the thing

INTERESTING that the winner of the Eurovision Song Contest was

Rosemary Brown who represented 'Ireland'. But Rosemary - professional name Dana - comes from Derry's Bogside in Northern Ireland, which the bigoted fanatics who run that police state claim is more British than Britain.

Terrified of being submerged into the 26 counties, the gentlemen gangsters of the Orange Order wage terror against all those who speak of political and economic unity of Ireland. But it's all right for a little chirruper to represent all the 32 counties. And the Dublin government allows this nonsense to take place.

## Nixon's learning

ANNOUNCING his decision to put education on the same credit sale basis as real estate and salvation, the US president Richard Nixon said there was something basically inequitable about a system which gave a student with a family income of over £5000 a year nine times as many chances of getting to university as one from a £1000 a year background.

MORE THAN two years after Ronan Point collapsed, Newham (London) Borough Council have decided to sue the firm that built the flats for the cost of repairing it. They have also signed a contract worth nearly £1 million for the repair work.

The firm that is being sued and the firm that got the repair contract are one and the same, Taylor Woodrow.

## Sandys of time

THAT PRIMA BALLERINA of the law and order brigade, Duncan Sandys, ran through a short history of his political development in a Sunday newspaper.

Today he believes that children are no longer taught the horror of killing. Unruly students should be expelled. Murderers should be hanged.

When he was at university, he played a little jape on his fellow students, sending out nearly a thousand forged summonses. To celebrate their communal relief when he told them about his nifty little trick, he and his chums smashed jars full of whitewash all over the buildings and called the fire brigade.

But, 'unlike the students of today, we never claimed the right to run the university...' he said.

QUOTE from Lord Thomson: 'The Lord must love me because he surely takes care of me.'

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# Chrysler: Franco's finger-men

The American people may like freedom, but US business has a real love affair with dictatorship. From South Africa to Spain, US corporations are backing dictatorships with heavy dollar investments. The reason is simple - dictatorships and corporations think in the same groove.

In Spain, Chrysler discovered that four of its auto workers at the Barcelona plant were members of

the underground union there. The local Chrysler executives promptly had them arrested by the Spanish secret police, and while they were rotting away in prison sent them letters firing them for not showing up at a company disciplinary 'hearing'. Ten other workers at the same plant were so unfair as to file a public grievance with the government over working conditions. Chrysler had them arrested by the Spanish secret police too.



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# Socialist Worker

## LABOUR WILL PRESS ON WITH UNION SHACKLES

by John Palmer

IF SUCCESSFUL at the General Election, the Labour government intends to press on with its campaign to introduce legal sanctions against the unions.

There is growing evidence that Barbara Castle and her colleagues withdrew the anti-union proposals contained in In Place of Strife last year purely as a tactical move.

The Labour leaders then had to bow before the storm of rank and file trade union opposition. They saw in the strikes launched against their proposals on May Day 1969 the beginning of a serious movement opposed to all shackles on the unions.

With an election approaching, Wilson and company have made a reassessment of their chances of getting legislation of some kind on the statute books.

They are backing on two important factors. The first is that the Tory threats to introduce even more repressive laws against strikers and even union officials will encourage trade union leaders to accept Labour's medicine as 'the lesser evil'.

### BOWED

They also expect to be assisted by the deliberate campaign of the Tories to step up an 'anti-union public opinion'.

Proof that the Labour leaders intend to resume their war against the unions is indicated in the manner in which Mrs Castle has presented the new Industrial Relations Bill. The Bill consists of the pieces of carrot designed to 'sell' the penal clauses last year.

Although the Bill, which among other things provides for union recognition by employers, has been presented, the Labour leaders are making it clear they have no intention of trying to put it on the statute book before the election.

In Whitehall, Labour politicians are openly stating that this is necessary if they have to come back to the issue of anti-union laws after the election. It is also clear that Vic Feather, the TUC general secretary and other union bosses, know this full well.

They must also know that the Labour government is not going to offer something for nothing.

But they are doing nothing to forewarn and to forearm the labour movement about the dangers of a new clash with the government after the election.

Although some Labour politicians may have their doubts about risking a fresh collision with the unions they reckon that with a new five-year term in office this is a reasonable risk.

### RECESSION

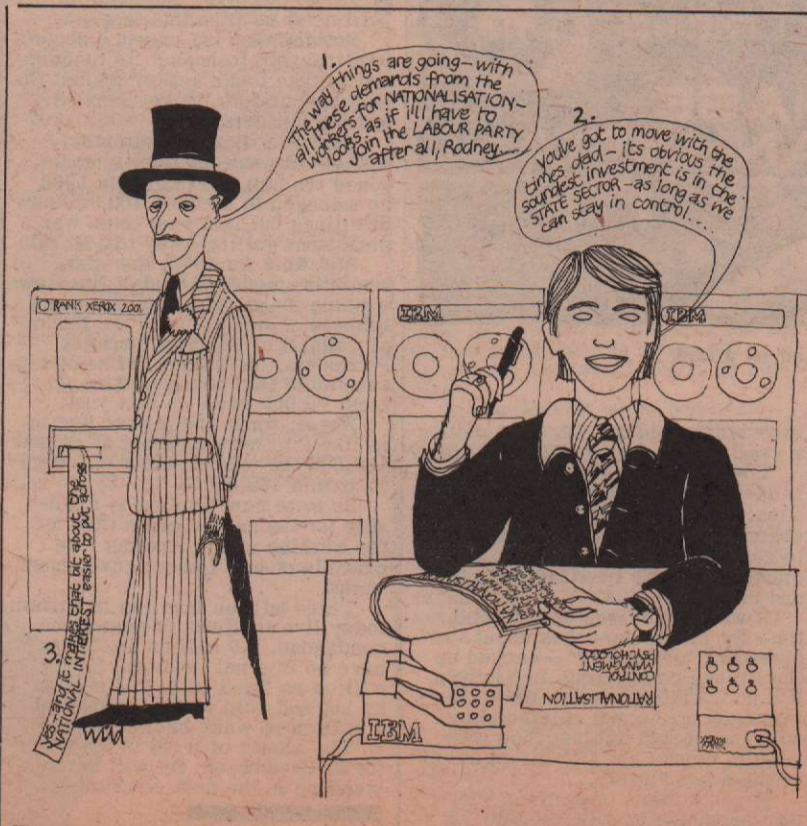
More relevantly, however, the right-wing Labourites realise that the economic situation for British capitalism is likely to get worse over the next year or two, especially if the American trade recession gathers pace. Faced with their 'duty' to modernise industry against this difficult background, the Labour right wing have no compunction in imposing new sacrifices and shackles on their working-class supporters.

The duty of every socialist and trade union militant in the period up to and during the general election is to expose this sordid conspiracy at every Labour election meeting.

In the struggle to keep out the Tories, the open and undisguised enemies of working people, the dishonest and reactionary role of the Labourites must also be exposed.

### Fitters walk out

FITTERS employed by Yarrows at the Edmonton Incineration Plant construction site in North London have been on strike since last Friday following the contractor's attempt to use staff men on fitters' work



## Scots sparks to fight job grading threat by JIB

SW Reporter

MORE THAN 500 electricians employed on the vast petro-chemical site at Grangemouth in Scotland have overwhelmingly decided to have a half-day stoppage combined with a demonstration in Edinburgh on the day of the next meeting of the Scottish Joint Industry Board for the electrical contracting industry.

The sparks are concerned at the possibility of the SJIB moving onto the Grangemouth site and imposing JIB rates which in some cases could mean a drop of up to 5s an hour. The site agreement at Grangemouth, one of the biggest construction sites in Scotland, is no workers' charter, as the recent bitter Boilermakers' dispute has shown. But it does not have the restrictions and penalty clauses of the JIB.

### Discipline

As the new contracting working rules show, the JIB intends to push on with disciplining workers to keep up the bosses' profits. One of the new rules states that in future overtime rates will only be paid after a full 40 hour shift has been completed. This means that if an electrician works late on Monday and Tuesday night and has a day off on Thursday his overtime will be paid at plain time.

But not only the sparks on Grangemouth should be concerned. It is safe to assume that the leaders of the Electricians and Plumbers Union would love to spread the JIB idea to the plumbing section. And woodworkers' leaders have already pushed the boat out on job grading. All construction workers should give support to the demonstration.

Other electricians are also involved. In recent months, the SJIB's net has been sweeping wide. Local authority sparks have been

Published by the International Socialists, 6 Cottons Gdns London E2. Printed by SW (Litho) Printers Ltd. (TU all departments) Registered with the Post Office. Annual subscription £2 10s.

graded and electricians in firms only loosely associated with the contracting industry have been swallowed up.

So although the Grangemouth call of 'hands off' is the right one it is only a part of the fight in the EETU/PTU. With executive elections not far off, electricians will have one of their few remaining opportunities to show their disapproval by voting against a leadership that has consistently put support for government policy on productivity deals and wage freeze before its members' interests.

But it's not enough to just put up candidates opposing the ruling clique. There must be a thought-out policy that will result in the EETU/PTU becoming a union that reflects the wishes of its members.

STUDENTS at Manchester University's Institute of Science and Technology carried the struggle against big business domination of education a stage further last Thursday.

Each year UMIST awards honorary degrees. This year the authorities decided to honour Sebastian de Ferranti, chairman and managing director of Ferranti Ltd., the company which made an 82 per cent profit on its Bloodhound Missile contract a few years ago.

UMIST's decision was not unconnected with the fact that on May Day Vincent de Ferranti, Sebastian's dad, is to open the new Ferranti and Cockcroft building at UMIST. Ferranti must have made a handsome donation towards the cost of this building from their equally handsome profits.

The students' union decided to picket the building in protest at Sebastian's 'honorary fellowship'. When the guests arrived they had to

## Centrax: 21 week strike ends in victory for workers

SW Reporter

AFTER 21 WEEKS ON STRIKE, 1200 workers at the Centrax engineering plant in Newton Abbot, South Devon, have returned to work claiming a major victory.

The decision was made last Friday at a mass meeting when the strikers voted to accept an offer of £3 a week more to be spread over the next 18 months. They will be paid a shilling an hour more as soon as they return.

At the start of the dispute, skilled workers were taking home less than £13 for a 40 hour week and lower-paid workers were paid under £10.

The strikers showed magnificent solidarity throughout the dispute and received financial backing from factories up and down the country. The strike gave impetus to the growing campaign in the depressed south-west region for a minimum wage of £17 10s a week.

Last week, Centrax boss Dicky Barr offered the men £3 more and agreed to introduce a new pay structure that will reduce the present five grades to two. The old system had developed so many sub-grades that it was manipulated by the management to divide and weaken the work force.

### Full of confidence

Barr also agreed to take back workers who had been made redundant. They include two men sacked during the strike.

The strike committee, full of confidence after their resounding victory, intend to prepare a full report of the dispute for other firms in the region. They will also build a strike fund to help other south-west workers who take militant action for better wages.

The women workers at Centrax, who played an important part in the strike, may help to form a socialist women's group in the area.

Now, as work re-starts at the plant which Dicky Barr threatened to close down completely a week ago, the shop floor workers will have to be on their guard against any attempt to get them to finance their own pay increase through a productivity swindle.

### Motorway swallows railmen's jobs

LIVERPOOL:- British Rail have decided to close a huge marshalling grid which starts at Edge Hill Station. This will put the jobs of 70 shunters into the melting pot.

Some will be offered jobs in other yards (probably with less overtime), but most will get the sack. Many of the older men will find it difficult to get new jobs in this area of increasing unemployment. The grid is part of a huge complex of yards, depots and sidings. Its very size is a temptation to British Rail to cash in and take advantage of the high price of building land.

A big slice is to be sold to the local authority for the new Liverpool Manchester Motorway.

RAILWAY MILITANTS have welcomed last week's pay increase of 11 per cent without strings as a reasonably satisfactory offer. British Rail were forced to offer more than a pittance because of the growing threat of strike action.

But many workers are aware that the government has only agreed to the increase because of its need for votes in the approaching election.

## Metal Box engineers strike for union rights

by Dick Jones

NEATH, South Wales:- Members of the Engineering Union at the Metal Box company have been on strike for two weeks for union recognition.

After a minor shop floor dispute a fortnight ago, the company refused to recognise the union's convenor or any of its stewards. It withdrew all union facilities.

The company is proud of its steady rate of growth on an international scale, made possible by its ability to prevent a single major wage rise (compared with national rates) for a period of 30 years.

The company is now trying to introduce a productivity deal at the Neath plant. They will make massive savings from the deal but they are not prepared to give the workers a reasonable increase on the basic rate.

Management have also refused more highly-skilled workers the right to negotiate particular conditions of their work.

### Rising profits

The workers have had enough. They know that the management have been so keen to keep their customers happy that they have recently cut their prices. The workers also know that in spite of the cuts, MB profits have continued to rise through keeping a tight rein on wage rates.

In order to make sure that profits continue to rise, the company is looking for new ways to save money. This explains the desire to push through a productivity deal.

And to make sure that the deal goes through smoothly, management are prepared to clamp down on the union in a bid to make it powerless to resist their plans.

Shop floor workers are solidly behind their union and elected representatives. They know they must defeat the management on this issue to resist the new robbery that has been planned for them.

On Saturday, a mass meeting voted unanimously to stay out on strike for full union rights. On Monday, the workers marched through the town to publicise their case, which deserves the support of all trade unionists and socialists.

THE International Socialists are holding their annual conference in London over the Easter weekend. They will discuss documents on western capitalism, eastern Europe and the 'third world' as well as planning their industrial work

## University honours a 'war-mongering profiteer'

make an undignified climb over the students to get into the ceremony.

One senior academic had to be 'cooled off' by his fellow academics who desperately tried to maintain their dignity when he assaulted a girl student.

While the ceremony was underway, the students decided to refuse access to their union building already set up for a dinner in Sebastian's honour. They collapsed the awnings over the red carpet and set up barricades at the main entrance.

### TRADITION

Lord Bowden, the Vice-chancellor, scurried across to reason with the students. He felt they were 'behaving rather badly'. When questioned about the honouring of a 'war-mongering profiteer' he explained: 'It is a tradition, we give them to our friends.'

Lord Bowden's 'reason' did not persuade the students, who rein-

forced their barricades. Finally some of the guests smashed a door down to get to their dinner in scenes of unceremonial and undignified violence.

But if the honoured guests hoped to have a quiet dinner they were disappointed. The students chanted slogans at the doors and stamped on the ceiling over the dining hall, forcing the eminent guests to switch on a juke-box at full blast.

Some students felt the demonstration was a failure as they had prevented neither the ceremony nor the dinner. But it is unlikely that the authorities regarded it as a complete failure.

Future ceremonies will probably not be held in term-time and the high-class nosh-ups will be held in less vulnerable places.

Workers at Ferranti factories in Manchester are said to have enjoyed the story considerably...