

Socialist Worker

FOR WORKERS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

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Vietnam, Cambodia, Kent University — the Big Business slaughter mounts



MURDERER

March, demonstrate, strike against war

BY THE EDITOR

THE AMERICAN RULER's war machine rolls on, killing and looting. After the slaughter of Vietnam, the rape of Cambodia, the bloody murder at Kent University, Ohio.

The ordinary people of the world have to pay a high price in order that the planet is kept under the iron heel of big business.

Nixon says he wants peace. He is a liar.

Nixon says he wants freedom. He is a murderer.

The peace and freedom he wants is the right for the American ruling class to invade any country, anywhere, anytime, to unleash the most modern and frightening weapons against poor peasant people struggling for the basic right to run their own affairs.

The giant corporations of America believe that they have some god-given law to dominate and divide the world in the interests of profit.

And while they profit, millions starve. Those who do not directly face the bullets of American imperialism confront a starker, slower death from disease and hunger.

This is the great contribution to mankind of the big business capitalist system. It has developed the most awe-inspiring scientific advances.

The factories churn out an endless stream of modern equipment, the computers tick away, men head for the moon.

But the fantastic possibilities which such developments open up for the whole world are stunted by the endless race for profits, a race run by the few at the expense of the vast majority.

The 'benefits' of modern capitalism can be seen at work in SE Asia. Instead of homes, fragmentation bombs. Instead of food, defoliation, turning land into desert.



Kent University, Ohio: Nixon's 'freedom' lies in a pool of blood...

Notebook on US aggression: page 2

'Aggression'

Nixon speaks of aggression in Vietnam and Cambodia. Is it aggressive to want to live in peace, free from the brutal domination of foreign troops?

Nixon speaks of defending freedom. He means the freedom of the bayonet and the bomb.

And in his own land of the free, where millions rot on the dole queues and in the big city slums, freedom lies in a pool of blood in Ohio.

We have the power to stop all this. The exploitation and dominat-

ion of the world by big business can be finished when the great mass of working people organise to take power away from the tiny groups that twist and distort our lives.

In Vietnam, the people are fighting back — and winning. In America, the black people, the army deserters, draft resisters and students are organising. We support them unconditionally.

But more is needed. The system must be fought in every country and in every factory, America, France, Japan, Russia, Britain, wherever the system holds sway.

Support

The enemy against whom the peasants in SE Asia are pitted is our enemy too. Their struggle is our struggle.

March, demonstrate, strike against the war. Give unconditional support to all those in Asia and America who are fighting the murderers.

Our most vital contribution is to fight the enemy at home, by building a mass revolutionary workers movement which will put an end to capitalist oppression for once and for all.

Students face sack over May Day march

LIVERPOOL:- 40 students have been suspended from Kirkby College of Further Education for taking part in the official May Day march called by Liverpool Trades Council last Friday.

The college principal said this week that the students will be expelled unless they signed an agreement not to go on further demonstrations. He has also suspended the students' union and its representatives.

Stooges have replaced the elected officials and new elections will be run by the college staff.

We condemn Fleet Street witch-hunt

THE MILLIONAIRE PRESS showed last week how worried it is by the growth of the revolutionary socialist movement when it launched a hysterical witch-hunt against Mrs Rosemary Whippe, who was sacked from her job at the Girling brake factory in Bromborough, Cheshire.

Mrs Whippe is a member of the Socialist Labour League. The press, including the sedate Times, spent much time and energy in delving into Mrs Whippe's political past in a desperate attempt to paint a picture of disruption and subversion throughout industry.

Socialist Worker condemns this vile character assassination and trial by press in which the accused has no right to answer the lies and half-truths. We express our total solidarity with Mrs Whippe and her organisation. We defend the right of revolutionary socialists to work where they choose. Socialists are not 'disrupters'. We work patient-

ly to build up a body of working-class opinion that will accept our programme for transformation of the big business system that dominates and threatens all our lives.

It is this system, with its chaotic scramble for markets and profits, that is behind the strikes and turmoil in industry. Big business pays an enormous army of private detectives and security men to spy and hound militant workers and socialists in our so-called democratic society.

Reactionary

We call upon all industrial workers to ignore this reactionary Tory witch-hunt. In particular we urge all printworkers and journalists to refuse to write and print these vicious smears designed to isolate those who fight for a socialist society that will end the power of the profiteers and war-mongers.

All out on Saturday!

KICK OUT NIXON'S MURDERERS

9 May

assemble Trafalgar Sq 1.30pm

March on Grosvenor Square

Assemble and march behind IS banners.

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— and every member and supporter

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S.E. ASIA: NOTEBOOK ON US AGGRESSION

THAILAND

Population: 33 million
Number of doctors: 4,832
Capital: Bangkok
Government: quasi-military, byword for corruption (Boss: General Thanom Kittikachorn)
Per cent of Budget spent on military/police: 40-60 per cent
Number of men under arms: approx. 400,000 (including 12,000 serving in Vietnam)
US aid: 8.5 per cent of the Gross National Product. US expenditure on nine US bases in Thailand: \$189 million
US troops in Thailand: at least 58,000
Opposition: rebellions in north east (bordering Laos) and south (bordering Malaya)

S. VIETNAM

Population: 17 million (including 2 million war refugees)
Number of doctors: 1,220
Capital: Saigon
Government: quasi-military (Boss: President-ex-General - Thieu)
Per cent of budget spent on military/police: 65 per cent
Number of men under arms: over 1 million
US aid: \$678 million (wild underestimate)
US military assistance: classified
US military expenditure: at least \$3000 million per month (NB this excludes other major elements - eg cost of the US 7th Fleet, of bombers based outside Vietnam, eg Guam, Philippines etc)
US troops in South Vietnam: at least 434,000
Opposition: National Liberation Front controls much of country outside main cities

LAOS

Population: 2.8 million (approx) (including about 600,000 war refugees)
Number of doctors: 100
Capital: Vientiane
Government: 'Coalition' controlled by Right and Army (Prime Minister: Souvanna Phouma)
Per cent of budget spent on military/police: 62 per cent
Number of men under arms: 60,000 plus 12,000 irregulars
US Aid: 60 per cent of national budget
US military assistance: classified (but well over \$65 million). NB from 1966 to 1970, secret US military programme, Project 404.
US troops: none publicly admitted, but 2-5000 military 'advisers' and others, including 100 'assistant military attaches', Green Beret units, Air America 'civilian' air assistance, etc; plus CIA 'special force' of 40,000 men, several Thai battalions. NB - 15-18,000 air sorties per month in Laos from US bases in Thailand, from aircraft carriers, Guam etc.
Opposition: Pathet Lao in military control of two thirds of country in north, east and west.

CAMBODIA

Population: 6.5 million
Number of doctors: 440
Capital: Phnom Penh
Government: formerly Assembly under President, Sihanouk; Sihanouk overthrown 18 March by Prime Minister, General Lon Nol, with rumoured CIA support
Per cent of Budget on military/police: under Sihanouk 25 per cent
Number of men under arms: under Sihanouk, 25,000; now projected to increase from 35,000 to 250,000
US aid: 0
US military assistance: 0; small arms now promised
US troops: just invaded by division of up to 20,000 men
Opposition: minor Right and Left wing rebels in north-west (with Thai support), south-east (with South Vietnamese and CIA support) and north-east.



War against the innocent turns land into desert

THE INVASION of Cambodia by US troops last week is only the latest stage in a long process of escalating the war outside the border of Vietnam.

Despite President Johnson's attempts in 1968 to disentangle himself from the war, despite the appearances since, the US military on the ground - now supported by Nixon - have steadily widened the war.

Certainly in 1968, the US stopped its massive bombing of North Vietnam. But it promptly diverted its bombers to lay waste Laos, supposedly to destroy the scapegoat for all American military defeats, the 'Ho Chi Minh' trail through Laos and Cambodia from North to South Vietnam.

The only source of information on the Trail is US military intelligence. Any information can be invented to justify any policy.

The operation in Laos remained secret until very recently when it became clear that for two years the Laotian peasants have had to withstand 'one of the most sustained bombing campaigns in history against essentially civilian targets in north eastern Laos'.

On the ground, US-backed troops last autumn seized the Plain of Jars from the Pathet Lao and deliberately changed the last territorial settlement between the two sides in 1962.

HYSTERIA

This is the background to the sudden hysteria released from the great Washington lie factory in February last about a 'vast North Vietnamese invasion' of Laos.

On 20 February US sources claimed that 16,000 'North Vietnamese' troops were 'flooding' into the Plain of Jars, threatening Vientiane, Thailand and the whole of south-east Asia.

On 22 February, a US communiqué blandly announced that in fact 400 troops not 16,000 had advanced on the Plain and the 1500 defenders had fled.

The Plain returned to the control that had existed last September. But in between the two dates, the 'flood' had been used to justify the US bringing into the bombing of Laos its gigantic B52s based on Guam. The lie served its purpose.

But Laos was a secret war. The US generals needed a public demonstration of their power.

Sihanouk's fall in Cambodia provided the pretext. The generals have always demanded the right to raid Cambodian territory, claiming it was used by massive concentrations of 'North Vietnamese' troops.

South Vietnamese troops crossed the border at least four times in mid-April. If there are no rebels, there are villagers whose corpses can keep up the 'kill-count'.

In the past Washington has restrained these forays in case it drove Sihanouk into the arms of North Vietnam. But the regime that

replaced Sihanouk was much more closely aligned with US interests. To make up for its own weakness, it deliberately set about attacking the Vietnamese minority in Cambodia (not to be confused with any NLF troops there).

And finally Nixon, it now seems clear, has decided to try not for a negotiated settlement in Vietnam but for all-out victory. US troops invaded Cambodia on 30 April. The invasion is supposed to be a strictly limited affair.

But already it is clearly being widened. Two border areas were attacked, but now three more suspected 'North Vietnamese bases' are being proclaimed as vital. And the bases set up by the invasion force are said to be 'semi-permanent' - which does not sound like a 'temporary' operation.

Nixon, with that bland hypocrisy for which the White House is so justly famous, says the invasion took place because the 'North Vietnamese' had escalated their attacks over the preceding 10 days and were concentrating troops on the border to attack South Vietnam.

Yet all this year NLF military activity has been at a lower level than for a year. And if there were 'concentrations' of troops on the border, no one else but Nixon noted them and the invaders have not yet found any of them. But the lies stick if they are big enough.

The action is 'to protect American lives' in South Vietnam. No one knows how it will do this.

What is clear is that a lot of Cambodians will die. The order - 'fire on anything that moves' - will have the same devastating effect on Cambodia as it is having on South Vietnam and Laos - the annihilation of innocent civilians and the reduction of land to a desert.

In the first offensive, seven weapons were captured. 202 'North Vietnamese' were killed, 166 detained. So many 'troops', so few weapons?

The answer is simple. Anyone killed or captured is automatically 'North Vietnamese' even if he is a Cambodian peasant bystander.

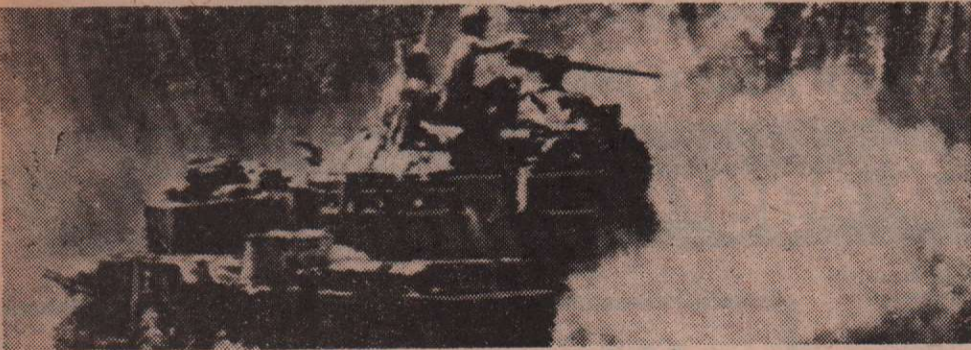
Meanwhile, in case North Vietnam retaliates, US bombers have resumed the bombing of the North (1 May).

And nothing of any value at all has been found in the areas of Cambodia seized. The lies, the hypocrisy, conceal the encroaching desert which US military intervention leaves in its wake.

Nixon is once again trying for victory, while he reserves the claptrap about negotiations for his home audience. The policy is attributed to his adviser, Henry Kissinger. 'In the United States, talk of peace, conciliation and negotiation; in Vietnam itself, go all out for victory'.

It is a prescription we have to reverse: All out victory to the revolutionary forces in the United States.

NIGEL HARRIS



DEFENDING 'FREEDOM': US troops go into action in Cambodia

Socialist Worker

6 Cottons Gardens London E2 8DN

Tel: 01-739 1878 (editorial) 2639 (business)

WHERE WE STAND

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

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.

Nine days that shook the bosses



MAY 1926

by Richard Kirkwood

Part One: 'Not a penny off the pay...'

FORTY-FOUR YEARS ago this week the organised labour movement faced its greatest test this century — the General Strike of 1926.

No event is so surrounded by memory, legend and myth. But in the failure of the strike lie many lessons for the working class today.

The roots of the strike lay in the prolonged crisis of the big business system in the 1920s. In spite of brief revivals, the 1920s saw a series of steadily worsening slumps which were to result in the great depression of the 1930s.

1925 saw the start of another of these slumps. It was accompanied as usual by calls from the employers for wage reductions.

The coal industry, hopelessly inefficient yet essential to big business, was the worst hit by the slump. The Tory government under Baldwin turned down proposals for nationalisation in spite of support for this move among the more far-sighted members of their own class.

By 1925 the choice lay between government subsidy to the mines and wage cuts. On 'Red Friday', 31 July 1925, the determined stand of the miners' union forced the government to offer a six months' subsidy. Baldwin was not ready for a showdown.

But by the beginning of 1926 it was clear that the employers and their Tory friends were ready to stand and fight.



Miners' leaders (left to right) Herbert Smith, A J Cook and W P Richardson on their way to a Downing Street conference

Struggle

In the working class movement the economic crisis was matched by the struggle of revolutionary socialists for influence and leadership. The young Communist Party had started to throw off the sectarian traditions of earlier revolutionaries and was fighting for influence in the trade union movement.

And in spite of its weaknesses, the communist-inspired Minority Movement began in 1924 to rally significant sections of organised workers behind a revolutionary leadership.

An important part of the MM's campaign was for a stronger central direction in the trade union movement to avoid the repetition of labour disunity such as 'Black Friday' in 1921.

In its original form, the MM's demand for 'all power to the TUC General Council' was accompanied by a strong campaign for rank and file control. It seems doubtful if the Communist Party realised just how open to misunderstanding this demand was.

The militant activity of the Minority Movement scored a notable success in the election of a leading member, A J Cook, as secretary of the miners' union. Cook was to prove one of the few union leaders who fought for a militant if not a revolutionary line.

But where Cook and the MM held to a militant line in both word and deed, there were other leaders who emerged to challenge them. Purcell, Hicks and Swales were known as the 'left' of the TUC but in spite of their verbal 'leftism' they were unwilling to become involved in the growing rank and file militancy and remained cool towards both the Communist Party and the MM.

It was to this group of left union leaders that the Communist Inter-

national, in the first phase of its degeneration under Stalin, turned. Trotsky called this policy 'the impatient urge to leap over the young and too slowly developing Communist Party.'

The Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee on which Purcell, Swales and Hicks sat with Russian union leaders, gave the three men an undesired revolutionary image. From 1925, the Communist Party, under pressure from Moscow, became less and less critical of their role.

For the new Stalinist leaders in Russia, the need for strong revolutionary parties abroad was pushed aside in the campaign to win approval from men like Purcell and Hicks, who would boost the image of the new regime and its ludicrous theory of 'socialism in one country'.

But it should be stressed that in the crucial period of build-up to the General Strike, 12 leading members of the Communist Party were in jail for subversion. They were released only three weeks before the strike started.

IT IS AGAINST this background that the General Strike must be seen. Few doubted as 1925 drew to a close that a major showdown with the miners' union would come in 1926.

The militant Cook and the dogged if politically unclear Herbert Smith (famous for his persistent reply to employers and government: 'Nowt doin'') were determined to hold wages and conditions. Cook's famous slogan was: 'Not a penny off the pay, not a minute on the day'.

The employers were equally determined to force cuts. The Tory government refused further subsidies and would not consider national-

isation.

The TUC and the big unions reluctantly committed themselves to support the miners. This was the period of preparation.

The government certainly thought so. It began recruiting a 'volunteer' force, the Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies.

The OMS recruited the more aggressive members of the ruling class, including the British Fascists.

More secret steps were taken. The emergency plans of 1919, which the 1924 Labour government left unaltered, were revived and a network of committees involving civil servants, local authorities, the army, navy and police, together with some transport firms, were created to combat the effects of a strike.

By April 1926 the government began to feel strong enough for a head-on collision with the working class movement. The behaviour of the leaders of the labour movement is summed up in one word: Talk. The Labour Party saw itself as a go-between for the unions and the government.

This view was shared by sections of the TUC General Council, notably railwaymen's leader Jimmy Thomas. He was notorious for his role on Black Friday and admitted that he 'grovelled' before the government during the strike in his eagerness to call it off.

Plans for an industrial alliance of key unions were frittered away. The TUC's industrial committee 'kept in touch with the situation'. At the official level, the trade unions entered the struggle unprepared.

The militants in the movement were largely unprepared, as well. Hamstrung by the Communist International's dependence on the TUC 'lefts', they were unable to cash in on the popular reaction to the arrest of leading Communists, including Wal Hannington and J T Murphy.

The Communist Party was paralysed, torn between the demands of Moscow and the rank and file and gravely weakened by the jailing of its key leaders.

Cook stormed the country, calling for preparation, demanding the stockpiling of food and the organis-

ation of communications. But he met with little response.

Many militants were sincerely convinced that the TUC 'left', like the government, were planning in secret. But Purcell and company did no more than the rest of the General Council.

When the government finally announced that it would refuse the mines subsidy the battle was on.

The pit owners said they would lock the miners out on 30 April. Yet according to Ernest Bevin, leader of the Transport Workers, it was only on the Tuesday before, 27 April, that the strike committee of the General Council, under the chairmanship of Purcell, drafted any plans.

ON THE 29th, the trade union executives met to hear reports from the negotiators. Even Thomas could not accept the bosses' terms (at least not in public) and on 30 April the unions finally committed themselves to hand over power to the General Council and to call a national strike from

Monday 3 May.

But the ability to sell out was not yet exhausted. The negotiating committee tried again to reach a settlement.

Pugh, Thomas and Swales met members of the government to find a 'formula' which, in effect, would force the miners to accept wage reductions.

Julian Symons in his book on the General Strike notes that Swales, the pillar of the Anglo-Russian Committee, 'was the most vocal of these.'

A formula was reached and the miners' leaders were recalled. The General Council were horror-struck to learn that in the hour of crisis, Cook and Smith had gone to talk to the rank and file.

Negotiations seemed ready to begin. Then the hard men in the government found the excuse they needed.

Printers at the Daily Mail refused to print an editorial viciously attacking the unions and calling for ruling class volunteers. Baldwin called off the talks.

From the beginning, the great fear of the TUC was that the strike would get 'out of control'. Jimmy Thomas prayed that in any clash between the constitution and the workers, the constitution would win.

Massive

The first day of the strike saw the most massive response. Almost every train stopped, some at the most convenient point to the drivers' homes.

Not one of the 4000 London General Omnibus Co's buses moved. Only 15 of the 350 underground trains ran and only for short journeys.

The rest of the country was much the same. The TUC leaders were embarrassed by the enthusiasm of non-manual and less important unions to join in.

Many unions had to be restrained. The one notable exception were the professional blacklegs of the executive of the National Union of Seamen, who opposed the strike.

Not just the TUC was astonished by the scope of the strike. The Communist Party, whose factory committees hardly existed, also underestimated the movement.

J T Murphy later wrote that when he emerged from jail three weeks earlier 'Not one of us... thought there would be such an event.'

Yet all over the country, millions of workers responded. Local revolutionaries threw themselves eagerly but uncritically into the struggle.

Councils of Action were formed. Strike committees sprang up. By the end of the first day, more than two million workers were on strike.

Jeremy Bugler in New Society: 'If Lord Stokes wants a hernia, I recommend him to read...'

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**NEXT WEEK:
the 'leaders' betray...**

People against the system

Story:

John Taylor

Pictures:

Chris Steele-Perkins

THE COUNCIL will expose and prosecute every case of Rachmanism brought before it,' promised Alderman Arthur Grey, leader of Newcastle upon Tyne Council, in December.

This month's Bulletin of the city's West End Tenants' Association documents the reality. Landlords do as they please because the Civic Centre refuses to enforce the Rent Act and give tenants protection from harassment and illegal eviction.

Mrs Ann Davidson, for instance, got her rent for one unfurnished room at 70 Elswick Road reduced last year from £2 15s to £1 5s a week. She lived there with her two children.

Midnight visit

The landlord retaliated by locking her out - she had no front door key. With his mates behind him, he banged on her door in the middle of the night, demanding his old rent and trying to force his way in.

The landlord threatened to put Mrs Davidson through the window. He threatened her son. He switched off the electricity.

Mrs Davidson asked for police protection. They said they couldn't watch her home all the time.

The Tenants' Association took her to the legal department of the Civic Centre. This is the department that prosecutes for Rent Act offences.

Insufficient evidence, they said. So Mrs Davidson was harrided out of her home. There was no prosecution.

'Move out'

Another case. Mr Vic Redman, of 162 Westmorland Road, was told to get out by the landlady's son and was threatened. With a member of the Tenants' Association, he went to the police. The smug detective constable had no idea what the law was.

When he was told, he said the police could take the tenant back home, but there would only be more trouble. So the police-

man suggested that Mr Redman move out to the Salvation Army hostel.

Mr Redman did sleep there, but left his belongings in the room.

When he returned he found his food and possessions smashed round the room. The landlady's son told him to get out as the room had been relet, which was true. Then he threw Mr Redman's things around some more.

This was illegal eviction, surely, as well as harassment,

because the landlord relet the room while Mr Redman's things were still there.

Insufficient evidence, said the Civic Centre. Yet there was an independent witness and the landlady, later charged with malicious damage, actually pleaded guilty.

But even this reluctant police prosecution was a cover-up. She was charged with causing £5 damage, but the real damage totalled £20.



Slum landlords get tough with tenants as council folds its arms...



very same slum landlords it claims to be cracking down on.

Tenants seeking exchanges from the Council's 15-year old Noble Street slums have been referred by a housing department official to a notorious landlady. Homeless families from Lancefield House, the city's part three accommodation, are sent to another unsavoury property owner.

Mother of one of these families, Mrs Pat Tiffin, said: 'They said that if I did not go they would have to put the bairns into a home and I would have to go into a hostel. They practically packed my bags to get us out.'

Grey's flannel

The Tenants' Bulletin gives all the facts and all the names. This is the reality of Alderman Grey's promise.

Behind the public relations flannel of this ex-advertising man stands the Tory reality of exploitation and profit which he and his fellow bureaucrats will not tackle.

Not their job

The City Legal Adviser and his Rent Act lawyers were recently asked to come out and read the Riot Act to a harassing landlord. In the words of the Tenants' Association Bulletin:

'They refused. None of these brave men, employed and paid by us to protect us, would lift his backside off the radiators in the Civic Centre and venture into the real dangerous world outside. They said it wasn't their job.'

Not only is Newcastle Council refusing to give tenants the protection of the Rent Act. It is actually sending tenants to the



Trotsky on Black Nationalism

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And with your judgments I disagree.
It's a filthy disgrace
To the whole human race
On what you base a fee.
So you see that I think
All you legal rats stink
And to hell with the powers that be.

VIC REDMAN

The tenant mentioned in the story above

Militant women stress

by Valerie Clark

ONE OF THE MOST interesting organisations campaigning on the equal pay issue is NJACWER - National Joint Action Committee for Women's Equal Rights.

Formed by members of the Vehicle Builders Union after the Ford women's strike in 1968, NJACWER includes some of the most progressive and imaginative people in the trade union movement.

It aims to be a united campaign for women's rights on a national scale, spanning the trade union, political and women's movements.

The campaign has a five-point charter demanding an end to discrimination against women in employment, education and public life.

Mrs Barbara Wilson of Surrey NJACWER, one of its best spokeswomen, says: 'It is up to all those organisations concerned with women's rights to make sure they provide nursery facilities at their meetings and conferences. Until this is done we shall always find men attending in far greater numbers than women.'

'While racial discrimination has rightly become a subject for serious debate, sexual discrimination is still in the category of a music-hall joke. Any woman who constantly campaigns for equality can expect to be greeted with "Tied yourself to any good railings lately?"'

'If more progress is to be made on the road to women's equality then women must organise in NJACWER and the trade unions and be prepared to use all the weapons at their disposal, whether this involves striking, confronting the opponents of equality in wage negotiations or in the home.'

DEMAND

As long as the working woman is expected to do two jobs, to come home from work and then start looking after the family and home and as long as society denies her the help and facilities to enable her to arrange her life in the way she chooses, women must demand equal pay with no strings.

Why should we apologise to the bosses for factors outside our control which they claim 'decrease our productivity'? A woman must demand equal pay even though she takes time off work when a child is ill, even though she gives up work if there's no one to take care of children during school holidays, even though she often stops work for a couple of years when she has a baby.

Women do not have a high rate of absenteeism because they are unreliable - it is because they are given no choice but to put their role as wife and mother first.

The old argument about men needing more pay because of their greater financial responsibilities won't wash either. If you accept this, you should accept that single men are paid at a lower rate than married men! Family responsibilities are covered by taxation and allowances, not by variations in wage rates.

DANGERS

The current demand is not for 'equal pay for equal work' but for equal pay for work of equal value. Women must demand the right to do jobs which at present are exclusively reserved for men.

Here again NJACWER representatives have made it clear that they are very much aware of the dangers of job evaluation, re-grading, and of employers finding it cheaper to go over to more sophisticated machinery and get rid of their women workers altogether.

The phasing-in of equal pay that Barbara Castle wants will enable the bosses to organise in this way. It is important that women within the trade union movement are fully informed on these issues.

NJACWER speakers at the recent women's weekend in Oxford made it plain they were not going to be sidetracked into the traditional diversions over nightwork.

Audrey Wise (Shopworkers' Union) said: 'Human beings were never meant to work at night. We weren't born with great big eyes.'

need for action on the shopfloor



The 'woman question': still treated by many as a music hall joke

'And when women won't work nights, they should not be penalised for it. A lot of men refuse to do nightwork or excessive overtime, but no one then suggests paying them at a lower rate during the day as well.'

The points raised in discussing these issues are of importance to all socialists. Women will fight for the right to work for a decent wage, at the hours they choose and with better conditions.

This should in no way conflict with the demands of male workers. In fact, more men may realise that that have put up with bad conditions enforced overtime or nightwork for too long as well.

The economic argument against equal pay does not centre around the principle of women's inferiority. It has moved into the realms of 'the national interest'. We are told 'the country can't afford it'.

But, as Barbara Wilson of Surrey NJACWER points out, a look at just two large firms shows what a downright lie this is.

PROFITS

The estimated cost of equal pay is £600 million. Shell-Mex and BP make £264 million profit and ICI £126 million profit a year. Obviously the cost of equal pay can easily be met out of present industrial profits.

There seems to be a feeling in the trade union movement organising around equal pay that respectability is necessary.

And this attitude prevails in some sections of NJACWER. Most members are socialists with years of militancy behind them. They are very cautious in their approach to women workers.

This makes them reluctant to be associated with the more political women's liberation groups. This is understandable as they are quite correctly afraid of frightening away working class support at this stage.

As one experienced trade unionist from the post office told me: 'The women I work with have never been interested in the union. We have got to show them that the movement is something to do with them.'

'I put in weeks of effort to get a coachload to come to London for a meeting and if all they hear is a lot of talk about revolution and the brave women of Vietnam, they just won't come again'

'These girls in women's liberation have some good ideas. I don't disagree with them. But they lack experience and their approach is all wrong if they're trying to get through to the ordinary working woman.'

'And believe me, this is where we have got to organise - at factory level.'

As an organisation, NJACWER seems to have too much faith in its

ability to achieve its aims through Parliament, although many individual members have no such illusions. Like the unions, it tends to dislike anything which might 'spoil its image'.

But its members are sincere in wanting to involve the millions of working class women in this country who take little interest in the trade union movement, in wanting to activate them and educate them to see where their interests lie.

COMBINE

The variety of issues around which women are now mobilising, including social problems, industrial conditions and the whole question of women's place in society, indicate that some sort of militant national women's campaign will necessarily arise to link up the different struggles taking place. But any effective campaign would have to combine all the strands of protest which are at present isolated from each other.

NJACWER could broaden its interests to include other areas of discontent. If it puts more emphasis on building local groups to encourage participation by both workers and housewives, if it contacts the large numbers of women in industry who have been ignored by the union, it could become the beginnings of such a militant campaign.

But if it sticks to closed committees and lobbying parliament and the TUC, it may find itself - like many other organisations - ignored and left behind when working class women really start to take action.

REPORT FROM THE NORTH EAST

DAVE PEERS

GMWU - a union the bosses like you to join!

LAST WEEK 1700 workers at the Tyneside firm of George Angus Ltd (a Dunlop subsidiary) decided to return to work after a three weeks' lock-out.

One of the conditions the management demanded for re-employing the workers was that they must remain members of the General and Municipal Workers Union.

A few days earlier workers at Arborite Ltd, North Shields, had been forced back after an unofficial strike. During the strike, factory convenor Ken Joyce had had his credentials removed by the GMWU.

All the stewards resigned in sympathy with Joyce. As a result the factory now has no shopfloor union representation.

Both disputes are part of the nation-wide revolt of unskilled workers against low wages and rising prices.

At Angus the dispute involved a claim for a £5 a week increase together with resistance to the introduction of an incentive bonus system.

At Arborite the immediate issue was the firm's delaying tactics in negotiating an increase.

But in both cases what stands out and links them together is the role played by the officials of the GMWU - especially the regional secretary Alderman Andrew Cunningham.

Cunningham, a member of the Labour Party's National Executive, used the local press and TV to attack the stewards at both factories.

Favourite tactic

He distributed ballot forms printed by the management to break the solidarity of the Angus workers. This is a favourite tactic of the GMWU leadership and has also been used to great effect in the Pilkington strike in St Helens.

In contrast to this burst of activity for the bosses, General Workers' officials were nowhere to be seen when they were needed before the disputes.

As the Arborite convenor stated in the local paper: 'I phoned the union headquarters in Newcastle to tell them we had no confidence in them but I had to leave a message - they weren't there.'

The following leaflet was issued by the Newcastle International Socialists at a mass meeting of the Angus workers and was well received. Many workers helped with distribution and one of them remarked: 'They should have put this in the (Newcastle) Evening Chronicle.'

ANDY CUNNINGHAM is a busy man. In addition to his job as regional secretary of the GMWU, he also finds time to be head of the Tyneside Passenger Transport Authority, the North East Regional Airport Authority, Durham Police Authority, the Northumberland River Board, and several other civic duties.

All this activity does not go unrewarded - his chairmanship of the PTA brings in £1500 for just four meetings a year - and all in all he must pull in at least £10,000 a year.

He is also a very brave man. As he never tires of telling us, he is the one who knows how to stand up to unofficial strikes. The Geo Angus workers have in fact been locked out, but Andy is not going to split hairs - he knows which side he is on.

It must take some courage to stand up to his own members who have been locked out and sacked, to use the press and TV to attack their shopfloor representatives, and to connive with the Angus bosses in his strike-breaking ballot. In a letter to the Chronicle last week he said that the action of the stewards would lead to a loss of faith by millions of people in this country in trade unionism.

What a nerve! It is precisely the action of union leaders like Cunningham who use their power against their own membership, which brings trade unionism into disrepute. No wonder the employers at Angus' have insisted upon membership of the GMWU as one of the conditions of the return to work - they know who their friends are.

All over the country lower paid workers are fighting for decent wages and conditions - look what is happening at Pilkington's - and the employers first line of defence is the officials of the GMWU. They cannot be voted out of office. Only a change in the union structure or an act of God can shift them. Now is the time to press the demand - workers' control in the GMWU!

PROTEST

THE announcement that Vickers are to close Palmer's ship-repair yard on the Tyne at Hebburn has provoked a storm of protest in the local labour movement.

The effect of the closure will be to push the male unemployment rate in the Jarrow/Hebburn area to over 10 per cent.

Palmer's main asset - the biggest repair dock on the Tyne - will not go unused for long. With the help of a bit more government money it can be lengthened to take 250,000 tonnes, and will be acquired at a knockdown price by Swan Hunters.

If it is kept in use as a repair dock then further closures are certain among other-repair yards on the river. On the other hand it could be converted to a building dock, which would lead to closures on the building side as the crisis in the industry intensifies.

The closure of Palmer's will have most effect upon the finishing trades and the fitters. When Hepplewhite, the boilermakers' delegate, described the closure as an 'accomplished fact' on the day it was announced, he was giving clear notice that the boilermakers were not going to fight.

There is plenty of work for them in shipbuilding at the moment and the 300 redundant men from Palmer's will be quickly reabsorbed. The traditional 'go-it-alone' attitude of the boilermakers will make it the task of a united struggle against this, and future closures, an uphill task.

The shop stewards at the Haverton Hill yard on the Tees gave a political lead last month when they called for the nationalisation of the shipbuilding industry under full workers' control.

Join the International Socialists

There are branches in the following areas

SCOTLAND

Aberdeen; Clydebank; Dundee; Edinburgh; Glasgow; East Kilbride.

NORTH EAST

Durham; Newcastle upon Tyne; Teesside (Middlesbrough and Redcar)

NORTH

Barnsley; Bradford; Derby; Doncaster; Hull; Leeds; York; Selby; Sheffield.

NORTH WEST

Lancaster; Manchester; Merseyside; Preston; St Helens; Stockport; Wigan.

MIDLANDS

Birmingham; Coventry; Northampton; Leicester; Oxford; Potteries.

WALES AND SOUTH WEST

Bath; Bristol; Cardiff; Exeter; Swansea

SOUTH

Ashford; Brighton; Crawley; Folkestone; Portsmouth; Southampton.

EAST

Cambridge; Grays and Tilbury; Harlow; Ipswich; Lowestoft; Norwich; North-east Essex.

GREATER LONDON and HOME COUNTIES

Acton; Angel; Camden; Chertsey; Croydon; Dagenham; Deptford; East London; Enfield; Erith; Fulham; Greenford; Hampsstead; Harrow; Hemel Hempstead; Hornsey; Ilford; Kilburn; Kingston; Lambeth; Merton; Reading; Richmond; Stoke Newington; Tottenham; Walthamstow; Wandsworth; Watford; Victoria (SW1).



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

Name _____

Address _____

Send to IS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2.

Cottons Column will be back next week...

Socialist Worker

UNITY CALL ON IRISH MAY DAY

From Ray Burnett

BELFAST:- 2500 Irish workers took part in two important May Day marches in both Belfast and Dublin last weekend. The common theme was unity in the fight against the employers.

Socialists from the North addressed fellow workers in the South and Protestant and Catholic workers marching together in the streets of Belfast.

In Dublin, more than 1500 attended a rally called by the Labour Party.

All the speakers referred to recent anti-Jewish statements by Lord Mayor Coughlin of Limerick. There were demands for his resignation from the Labour Party.

One banner read: 'Limerick soviets not Limerick pogroms'. The turmoil surrounding Coughlin's remarks has deepened into a definite split between the right and the left of the party. A number of prominent members have resigned.

Eamonn McCann from Derry made a strong plea for a united socialist party forged from the whole Irish working class movement. His speech was greeted enthusiastically.

SOLIDARITY

There is a growing awareness of the need for solidarity in the fight against the boss class in all of Ireland.

In Belfast, more than 800 people attended a meeting in York Street at the end of the May Day march called by Newton Abbey Labour Party and People's Democracy.

Sam Gardner, a veteran Belfast trade unionist and AEF deputy convenor at Shorts, drew attention to the dangers of capitulating to extreme right wing threats.

He said that the refusal of the trade unions and Northern Ireland Labour Party to sponsor the march would not be lived down. They had failed to estimate the serious threat to working-class organisations shown by the growth of Paisley's movement.

'The right has steadily grown more dangerous. Now they have made inroads in parliament,' Sam Gardner said. 'Be careful they don't make inroads in the trade union field or a whole lot of us will be looking for new jobs.'

ATTACK

The strongest speech came from Mike Farrell of People's Democracy. He stressed that the best form of defence was attack - an attack on the capitalist system.

'If your so-called Labour leaders fail to support you,' he said, 'follow the example of Newry textile workers and occupy the bureaucrats' offices till they make your struggle official.'

He added: 'The workers have to move forward and they should do so together under the slogan: 'Belfast workers unite and fight.'

A large banner proclaiming 'the wages of bigotry is the dole' served as a useful reminder of the need to continue the struggle on a militant programme of working class politics.

Five weeks on strike

READING:- 32 workers at the Monogram Electric Blanket factory have been on official strike for five weeks following the sacking of their Transport Workers' Union shop steward. They are demanding the reinstatement of the steward, recognition of their union and negotiations over bad canteen facilities and rats and mice in the works.

NOTICES

TOTTENHAM IS public meeting: Kick Nixon's Murderers Out of SE Asia! The Ship Hotel, 499 High Road N17. (one minute Bruce Grove station). Tues 12 May 8pm. Spkr Roger Protz, editor Socialist Worker.

FREE IRISH civil rights prisoners. Rally, Fri 15 May, Conway Hall, Red Sq WC1. 8pm. Spkrs include Bernadette Devlin MP, Mairin De Burca (Sinn Fein) and John Palmer, IS.

MIDDLE EAST for Revolutionary Socialism: new monthly bulletin. 1s from 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2.

SWANSEA IS: Open meeting on Russia since the Revolution, Red Cow pub, Fri 15 May, 7.30. All welcome.

HORNSEY IS public meeting: Jim Kincaid on the welfare state. Hornsey Town Hall, Crouch End Bdway N8, Fri 15 May 7.30pm

SPOKESMAN no 3, May, Special Bertrand Russell Memorial Issue. Contributors include: Raymond Williams, Arnold



A section of the People's Democracy contingent on the Belfast May Day march

Fleet St. nears the crunch

AS WE GO to press, the General Purposes Committee of the TUC are meeting with the bosses' organisation, the Newspaper Publishers' Association and the National Graphical Association in a last minute attempt to stop the shutdown of Fleet Street papers on Friday.

The Daily Mirror, with the support of the NPA, have made it clear that they are prepared to meet the 48s claim of the 120 NGA machine minders if productivity clauses are included in the agreement.

WITHDRAW

But the Mirror NGA chapel, covering the 120 minders, say that when the Mirror bosses say productivity they really mean redundancy. The minders say they will withdraw their strike notices and accept their union's recommendations if a compromise is reached.

But all printworkers must fight any compromise that leaves room for further sackings on national newspapers.

Glass workers fight union move to split strike

ST HELENS:- More than 8000 glass workers are continuing their five-week-old strike for a £10 a week increase and a 40 hour week.

Only 700 workers have returned, although the press has attempted to paint a picture of a total collapse. The vital plants that produce glass for the car industry are still at a total standstill.

The small groups that have resumed work went back after appeals from shop stewards at small meetings last week. But a mass meeting on Sunday of 5000 workers voted by a big majority to stay out.

When a right wing steward attempted to storm the platform, he was dragged off by two women workers. The stewards have been less militant than the rank and file throughout the strike.

Many workers have been angered by the stewards' willingness to go along with the strike-breaking tactics of the main union, the General

and Municipal.

The union has failed to make the strike official. It has organised splinter meetings in an effort to get some groups of workers to return and break the massive solidarity. Workers have declared that a union ballot on the strike was rigged.

Anger at union tactics erupted twice last week. Strikers stormed the local office of the GMWU and windows were broken.

Police are now keeping a close guard on the office.

Whatever the final outcome of the strike, the Pilkington workers have spotlighted the dreadful pay and conditions in the town and have exposed the role of the GMWU.

The union is almost certainly finished in Pilkington's. Many strikers have declared their intention to join the Transport Workers when they go back.

New Devon strike over low pay and bad conditions

EXETER:- 300 men have been on strike at the Otter Mill Switch Gear works at Ottery St Mary since last Thursday. Their action continues the growing revolt by south-west workers against low pay and bad conditions.

The battle was started by the Centrax workers of Newton Abbot who won a major victory after 21 weeks on strike.

The switch gear workers asked the management to negotiate an increase on the hourly rate. Rates at present are 8s 7½d an hour for skilled workers, 7s 9½d for semi-skilled grade one, 7s 4½d for semi-skilled grade two, 6s 5d for labourers and 5s 3d for women assembly workers.

The workers walked out when the management failed to make an offer after 21 days. The strikers want to scrap the existing fluctuating bonus rate which pays a maximum of 2s an hour but which can drop as low as 4d an hour.

They are demanding an across-the-board increase of 4s 4d an hour on the basic rate, plus a 100 per cent trade union shop.

'Fed up'

Shop steward and strike committee member George Gigg said: 'The men are fed up with getting the bonus scheme thrown at them. We are determined to win.' The workers have already accep-

Wall St. wobbles as US inflation roars on...

by Lionel Sims

LAST WEEK the Wall Street stock exchange in America took one of its biggest jolts since the war.

Giant companies reported a colossal slide in their first three months' profits. This dovetailed with the news of an expected balance of payments deficit of \$2,500 million (£10,500 million).

That sum has grown from \$1500 million in 1960 and \$1700 million in 1967. The result was an almighty wobble in the value of American stocks and shares, falling back to as low as the 1963 trough when Kennedy was assassinated.

During the slowdown in industrial production of the past 15-16 months a fantastic \$200,000 million has been wiped off stock market values.

Since the Second World War the American economy, like the rest of the world, has relied on a massive

programme of weapons production. When it was just tanks, aeroplanes and plain old atom bombs the economy was stable, with full employment, rising wages and profits.

But the system bred new monsters, missiles that could blow up other missiles in flight and rockets the size of skyscrapers that, with 10 separate warheads, can drench the atmosphere of a continent in radioactive fallout.

As the dangers to humanity grew, so the costs of production for the bosses grew too. To keep their profits high, they raise their prices.

Dare not devalue

The government increases taxes and interest rates and an all-round price increase follows.

But products which continually rise in price lose out in international competition. This causes the balance of payments problem.

The ruling class dare not devalue the dollar for fear of provoking cut-throat world competition.

Nixon can't slow down the rip-roaring pace of inflation. For over a year now he has tried through a credit squeeze to bully managers to cut costs in the absence of easy loans.

Instead, with tough resistance from the American working class, costs have gone up, profits have fallen and prices have soared.

It is the traditional industries and unskilled workers who gain no advantage from the arms industry that have taken a licking.

Another million workers were added to the scrapheap of three million jobless.

There you have the American economy: a boom in the arms industry produces inflation while a recession in the traditional industries brings unemployment.

Sell the dollar

Last week the stock exchange learnt that inflation had risen to 6 per cent instead of the 5 per cent predicted by Dr Paul McCracken, boss of President Nixon's Council of Economic Advisers.

One thought was in the investors' minds - sell the dollar. Patriotism is all right, but only if it pays. The European and Japanese stock exchanges panicked with a surplus of American dollars on their hands. All shares dropped in value.

A new round in arms production will bring a bigger boom to a narrower market. The decay is well and truly embedded.

The only cure is revolutionary action by the working class.

Tenants fight off bailiffs

TWO HUNDRED tenants resisted attempts by bailiffs and police on Monday to evict Mr Norman Whitmee and his wife and five children from their council flat at Abbey Wood, South London. The tenants linked arms and refused to move in spite of police orders.

Mr Whitmee was ordered to leave the flat when he gave up a job with Greenwich Council. He was offered a smaller flat in a building classified as sub-standard by the council itself.

Mr Whitmee has barricaded the flat. Local International Socialists are maintaining a guard on the flat and builders from the huge Thamesmead site have pledged their support.

Toynbee, David Horowitz, Ken Coates, Bob Smillie, Lawrence Daly, Harold Wilson. Many photographs, cartoons, tributes. Available from BRFF Publications, 45 Gable Street, Nottingham, Price 4s 3d post free.

MARXIST STUDIES - spring issue. Workers' Control and Marxists, John Walters. Self-Management in High Schools, Nicolas Baby. The Law of Value and Self Management in the Workers' States, Ernest Germain. Factory Councils, Gramsci. Book reviews, etc. 3s 4d pp BMS Publications, 16a Holmdale Road London NW6.

A WOMAN'S WORK is never paid for Public meeting on Women's Equal Rights Fri 8 May 7.30pm, Spkrs Chris Norwood MP, Anne Spencer NUTGW, Audrey Wise USDAW. Chair: Brian Nicholson TGWU.

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