

Socialist Worker

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS



UCS workers in Whitehall this summer demonstrating against the threat to their jobs. Whitehall must be the scene of a massive anti-Tory protest on 24 November.

ACTION NEEDED ON 24 NOV

MONTH BY MONTH figures are released that tell us how many of our fellow workers are without jobs and without a decent life.

Redundancy notices continue to be handed out, the hopes of hundreds of thousands of workers are shattered and the dole queues grow longer—all as a result of deliberate government-employer policy.

But none of this is inevitable. The organised trade union movement could turn the rising tide of unemployment tomorrow—if it used its strength.

The leaders of the TUC are completely unwilling to lead a fight-back. They make speeches and they organise demonstrations, but they see these as a way of begging for favours from on high, not of enforcing changes.

That is why it is essential that rank and file trade union organisations take the initiative in turning the TUC's lobby of parliament on 24 November into a real display of strength.

The lobby must be supported and made as big as possible—even if that shakes Vic Feather as much as Edward Heath.

Muscle must be given to it by local work stoppages and demonstrations. Delegates must be elected to go to the lobby,

worktime meetings should be held, and protest strikes organised where possible.

We have to turn 24 November into a real display of unity and strength in the face of a deliberate attempt by the Tories to wreck the lives of a million and more working people and to weaken the bargaining strength of the rest of us.

The occasion must also be used to point out to fellow workers that redundancy can be fought, day in and day out, on the factory floor:

- By rejecting productivity deals that reduce the number of jobs going.

- By blacking the work and machines of men the employers are trying to get rid of.

- By pressing for a shorter working week without loss of pay, so more workers have to be taken on.

- By restricting overtime and pushing up wages so that we don't need to work longer hours to get a decent livelihood.

And, above all, by creating a mass movement that demands that the bosses get out of the way and let us run the show if they cannot guarantee work or full pay themselves.

LONG KESH

Report from inside Britain's concentration camp...

The Tory government in Westminster and the Tory Unionist government in Belfast are continuing their policy of mass arrests without trial in an effort to smash opposition to their rule in Northern Ireland. In the last week more than a hundred additional men have been interned. The total held at some time or other since August is now well over 800, of whom half remain imprisoned indefinitely.

Meanwhile, a growing number of stories continue to come out of the internment camps about organised brutality used against the prisoners. Even the Daily Mirror has been forced to print details of torture revealed by Amnesty International. But that only deals with the tip of the iceberg. The following account of one incident in the Long Kesh camp was contained in a personal letter from an internee, Denis Cassin, to one of our readers.

The trouble started over the evening meal. It was of poor quality and quantity. A section of the men started to throw the steel trays over the compound wire onto the cook-house roof.

While this was going on someone set fire to the dining hall-cum-church and games room.

At this stage the four warders in the compound tried to get out. They were taken prisoner by a number of hot heads and two of them were struck. Some of our people went and rescued them from further injury.

Steel beds were taken from one hut and put against the gate. About a half hour after, the British Army arrived.

300 soldiers surrounded the compound. It was just dropping dark at the time. They fired at least nine CS gas cartridges and threw about 10 CS gas grenades into the compound, which is very small.

STINGING

I thought my stomach and lungs were coming up through my throat. The skin on my face and hands was stinging and my eyes, nose and mouth felt as though they were on fire.

The makeshift barricade was removed and the British Army entered the compound proper. They were armed with pick-axe handles and riot sticks and all had riot gear-shields and helmets.

They just went berserk and no one was in any condition to resist. Five men were taken to the military wing of Musgrave hospital and 23 to the camp hospital. There were at least another 30 men with cuts and bruises—about a 50 per cent

casualty rate.

We were all lined up against the wire and kept there for about an hour and a half while the rest of the army went into the huts and wrecked them. We were then given three-quarters of an hour to clean our huts before being locked up for the night.

All personal property was completely destroyed. The British Army stole all cigarettes they could get their hands on. All my books were ripped into pieces. All food was trampled on the floor.

Clothing such as underwear and shirts was torn. Bed clothes were thrown into the muck and water and we had no means of cleaning the mess.

WRECKED

The next morning the British Army entered the compound again. We were taken out, searched, then lined up at the wire and made to stand there for four hours.

The British Army went into the huts again. Anything they missed the night before was wrecked this time. Everybody's personal letters were torn and any that looked interesting were put into a box and taken away.

Photos of wives, children and girl friends were ripped up. Prayer books, rosaries and religious objects were broken up. I had my watch stolen this time and a couple of good shirts. The place was a complete shambles.

The Army has withdrawn and we are licking our wounds. I'm alright with just a bruise across my back.

I'm more annoyed at the loss of the books than I am at my sores. They seemed to really sort out socialist books for special attention.

Inside your bigger paper this week

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WORLD NEWS

BRIEFING

South African crackdown hits even at the clergy

by W.Enda

ON 23 October BOSS, the South African secret police, repeated its record of 1964 when it mopped up large numbers of African National Congress (ANC) and Communist Party militants. 115 people were raided.

On 1 November the result of the trial of the Dean of Johannesburg, G A French-Beytagh was announced: five years in jail, the minimum sentence for a conviction under the Terrorism Act.

Soon we will hear the result of another trial concerning 13 African and Indian Trotskyists of the Unity Movement of South Africa. Again the charge is terrorism.

Due to their lack of clerical respectability and the right skin pigmentation, their sentences will be far more savage, perhaps the maximum—death.

The raids of 23 October were designed to terrify South Africa's so-called white liberals, who have been more vocal recently in their disgust at apartheid. Among those raided were journalists, academics, teachers, 62 white students, and the playwright Athol Fugard—the man who persuaded Arnold Wesker to scab on the actors' union boycott of South Africa by allowing his



The Dean: five years

plays to be performed in front of segregated audiences.

Also raided, but this time detained, were 13 Indians, again mainly students. One of this group, Ahmed Timol, was thrown from the Johannesburg BOSS interrogation room 10 storeys up and killed.

The government hopes it has forestalled the revival of the Natal Indian Congress, which used to work with the ANC. They also hope to have caught the writers of a revolutionary magazine called *Revolt*, circulating clandestinely in Johannesburg.

Like the Dean, their trials will be delayed for months as police spies are groomed to give evidence against them. Unlike the Dean they will be tortured and beaten by BOSS to extract confessions. Charges will then be laid—that way round.

In the Dean's trial the prosecution relied on a series of preposterous police spies. These tracked him to London where he was seen with that well-known terrorist Canon Collins, and with Bishop Trevor Huddleston, active campaigner of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, but lately seduced by Mary Whitehouse's Festival of Light mob.

Fomenting

One spy gave evidence about a slide show the Dean has given in South Africa, titled *The Generation Gap*. The audience consisted of respectable middle-class Black Sash ladies, who wag a refined finger at the government about apartheid.

The slides were of student occupations in Berkeley and Vietnam demos. The Dean was accused of fomenting revolution among the ladies.

Most condemning for the Dean were the 'agent provocateur' activities of a police spy who posed as a close friend for three years. He secretly taped conversations with the Dean where the spy posed the need for a violent solution to overthrow apartheid.

The Dean tried to calm him down, especially when he begged to be sent for training in 'electrical sabotage', but sometimes wearily agreed that maybe a violent overthrow was the only answer. This condemned him.

Of the Defence and Aid activities—that is, sending money to the families of African political prisoners—the Dean was surely guilty. The government prefers prisoners to starve since aid helps the morale of the resistance.

While all other institutions have been forced to kick out black people, the churches still have mixed congregations (in theory rather than fact, since Africans live in ghettos, outside white parishes) and have also allowed Africans to climb high up the clerical ladder.

The government's anger against the churches for this defiance of apartheid turned to fury when the World Council of Churches gave a grant of £70,000 to African freedom fighters in late 1970. Churches inside South Africa denounced the WCC.

Too late. The Dean was bagged, hundreds of clergy were deported, restricted and refused entry. In the raids of 23 October, two Anglican bishops were visited.

The Church has been chastised, the hierarchy frightened and the liberal opposition silenced. Perhaps it will make revolutionaries of some of them.

SECRET FILES have been discovered at the Italian car firm, Fiat, in Turin following a judge's decision to search management's offices. A whole network of spies made up of ex-policemen, as well as people in higher positions, appears to have been set up in the factory.

The organisation is financed and closely controlled by management. A wide range of activities inside and outside the factory is covered by the organisation. Workers and employees are investigated, politicians and civil service functionaries bribed, information on the activity of the revolutionary and traditional left-wing organisations collected.

The files include documents on 'special rewards' allocated by Fiat's management to their men. Among other things they show that bonuses (in the form of a monthly or occasional payment) are paid to policemen who have been prompt in arresting militants on demonstrations or have safeguarded blacklegs.

IF WAR between India and Pakistan breaks out, what is the balance of forces?

India has nearly one million men under arms in 28-9 divisions, two of them armoured, about 1400 tanks, an unknown number of Armoured Personnel Carriers, and over 600 aircraft. Pakistan has nearly 400,000 men under arms, seventeen divisions, two of them armoured, 850 tanks, 300 APCs and nearly 300 planes.

Thanks to US aid the Pakistani Air Force is slightly superior to the Indian. India keeps about 40 per cent of her army watching the Himalayan border with China. However, heavy snow starts falling at the beginning of November, so every day after that makes Chinese intervention in such a war more unlikely.

In 1965, when India and Pakistan went to war, their forces were smaller than they are today by about a quarter to a third. After 23 days fighting both sides were rapidly running out of fuel, ammunition and spare parts. It was estimated when the fighting stopped that Pakistan had about 10 days' supplies left and India just double that. Both sides failed to break through and each lost a lot of armour as neither had any real superiority.

THE NIGERIAN TUC, whose leading members Basse and Goodluck are still in jail—they were arrested in February 1971—has objected to the just-published recommendations of the Adebo wages commission. They said that the report, which awarded salary increases of £300 per annum to those already earning more than £2500, is an abomination.

The report gives scope for discrimination against daily-paid workers by their employers. Also objecting are the Northern State teachers' union, and the Western State civil service union.

IN THE OCTOBER issue of the pro-Common Market propaganda journal *European Community*, Margot Lyon writes: 'No country of the Six gives men and women equal pay for equal work. France in 1957 practised the least discrimination—that was when she insisted on having Article 119 written into the Rome Treaty.'

'Since then, other member states have not caught up with the French model, while France has fallen away from it. During the life of the Community, in cases where the average female wage has been about 80 per cent of that of men, the difference has not been ironed out. It has increased slightly.'

Thus, the Six seems to be moving towards stability based on a relative inferiority for women. Even when wage agreements specifically acknowledge equality, women's work is often graded into a lower category, at less money.'

Spanish police launch attack against pensioners occupying church

In the last month Spain has seen big strikes by carworkers and miners. We hope to publish a full analysis in a coming issue. Meanwhile, as background we are printing extracts from a document written by the Spanish organisation USO (Workers' Union). It is a tribute to the courage and imagination of Spanish workers in face of the brutality of the Franco police state. These events took place at Gijon, on the North coast of Spain.

THE NUMBER of pensioned workers is 37,000 in Asturias and more than a million in the country as a whole. The monthly pensions they get vary between one and eight thousand pesetas (about £6 to £48), but the average is around three thousand (about £18), which is what the majority get.

Faced with the serious problems of surviving on these wretched pensions, the pensioned miners in Asturia have long been struggling for a solution.

Weary of all this lobbying and in face of the ineffectiveness or indifference of all the 'official channels', the pensioners saw no alternative to a desperate action aimed at drawing the attention of public opinion. They decided to shut themselves up in a church, since they knew of no other place which offered at least minimum guarantees.

Flocked

On Thursday 16 September, at 6.30 in the evening, 110 pensioners began to occupy the San Jose church in Gijon. The numbers went on growing till they reached a maximum of three hundred. Most of the time there were around 250 occupiers.

As the occupation became known, an ever increasing number of visitors from Gijon and elsewhere in the province flocked to the San Jose church bringing solidarity

and material support. Throughout the occupation there was an exemplary standard of behaviour:

No alcoholic drinks were allowed, and only water was drunk.

They got up every morning at five o'clock to clean the church.

There was absolute respect for acts of worship and those attending them.

Every day meetings were held to take decisions democratically.

Finally, on 25 September police led by Captain Badas entered the church. The forces of order entered the church by the main entrance, in an irreverent and threatening manner, with their revolver holsters unfastened. They showed no respect for the place where they were. This was in sharp contrast to the ever respectful attitude of the pensioners and retired workers.

It was now about 8 am. Captain Badas stood in the middle of the church, near the main altar, and shouted: 'By order of the governor, you have three minutes to get out of the church.'

The pensioners, sitting on the pews, took out their pension books, and showing them to the police, began discussing with them. As an example of the sort of thing that was said, one worker stood on a pew and declared: 'Senior captain, I have five sons, and a wife with heart trouble. I am 38 years

old, and left the mine at 28 with third degree silicosis. I don't want to steal or kill, but I get a pension of 3000 pesetas (£18). How can I get enough to live without coming and locking myself up here?'

Then Badas gave his men the order to spread out and charge. 'At them! At them! Charge!' The armed police began to hit out furiously like wild beasts at the people on the front pews and in the gangways. Some policemen refused the cruel orders of their superiors, or at least hung back.

'Murderer'

The pensioners clutched on to the pews, holding on to each other. Some hid under the pews to escape the hail of blows. Shouts were heard: 'Murderers! Criminals! Will you never be satisfied with the blood of the poor? Always crushing the people! Sons of bitches! Why don't you show that on television?'

Then the pensioners began to defend themselves. The priests addressed the police, in particular the captain. 'You are a murderer, aren't you ashamed? This is unworthy, criminal behaviour.'

As a result of the repression by the armed police, seven of the pensioners who occupied San Jose were arrested, taken to the police station and charged. At present they are out on bail, but two of them are in hospital.

Two 'musts' for socialists

Love on the dole WALTER GREENWOOD

The magnificent classic novel of the unemployed in Salford in the 1930s—a cry of outrage against a system that condemns men, women and children to poverty 30p

The years of The Week PATRICIA COCKBURN

The story of Claud Cockburn's duplicated paper that remorselessly attacked the war-mongers and the yellow press until it was banned by the government in 1941 35p

THEIR WEEK IN CEYLON

SEVEN MONTHS AGO the Ceylonese government nearly went under in an armed insurrection by the JVP (Janata Vimukhti Peramuna or People's Liberation Front). The insurrection had been prepared for years. Its aim was to break the immense power of foreign capital, to protect Ceylon against the corrupting influences brought in from outside and to institute a more integrated and more egalitarian society.

It was a heroic, romantic movement—a revolt of the rural educated youth against a jobless, futureless and status-ridden society. It had no roots amongst workers and few amongst peasants (except in some of the most backward, low-caste areas).

Yet it came within a hairsbreadth of toppling the government and its supporters. Were it not for unprecedented international support for Mrs Bandaranaike—from the US and Russia, Britain and China, India and Pakistan, and Yugoslavia—the JVP would have taken over.

THE RULING CLASSES are still fright-

ening themselves with stories of what might have happened to them at the hands of the rebels. There is still a curfew in Colombo and its environment. The police and army still have licence to kill and rape and extort. And the prison population of insurgents or suspects is still growing—17,000 by the end of last month.

THE MAIN PARTNER, Mrs B's Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) is suffering a fast erosion of its rural support, less out of positive identification with the aims and methods of the JVP than out of horror at the unexampled savagery that has been loosed against them.

Add to this a widespread despair at the deteriorating economic situation. At the same time Mrs B is losing whatever small trade union base she had in Colombo to her small Coalition partner, the LSSP.

MRS B NEEDS NEW ALLIES from the right—either the defeated UNP, now edging towards the coalition, or the army, now expanding to a multiple of its form-

er size, or both. But the more she moves right, the greater the strains within her coalition partners.

As it is they have no defences on their left. They reacted more viciously than the other parties to the uprising. The LSSP even organised a special volunteer workers' regiment for the defence of property and the status quo.

They have 'held the wage line' for the government since its inception in May last year but allowed prices to rise steeply. They have agreed to drop part of the country's unique food subsidy and to balance the budget.

THE LEFT HAS NEVER had peasant support. It has lost all hope of youth support. Its period of workers' support is fast running out. As soon as Mrs B makes the move to the right that is expected of her, it will have to either break with her, which is unlikely given the record of the current leadership, or join with her wholly ('to ward off the greater evil on the Right'). In either case it will break into pieces.

Amchitka and capitalist priorities

THE FIVE-MEGATON nuclear blast set off by the US government under Amchitka Island, Alaska, did not cause as much damage as some critics feared. It merely had the force of a major earthquake. In the ensuing feelings of general relief many people are in danger of overlooking the most important fact about the blast.

It is part of the most expensive armaments programme in world history—the US Anti-Ballistic Missiles programme. Though Nixon hobbles with the Russians and prepares to visit Peking, the US government is pushing through an arms programme more ambitious than anything undertaken at the height of the cold war.

It is not a once and for all effort. It is a continuing one. As Dr John S Foster, Director of Defence Research and Engineering, told a US Senate Sub-Committee: 'Because of the enormous quantities of equipment involved, and the near rapid rate at which the technology changes, to maintain an effective system one would effectively have to turn over the whole system, the whole \$20 billion system, every few years.'

This huge expenditure is, of course, only a part, though a vital part of the total US arms budget. And this arms production has its effects throughout the world. It is a factor of some importance in stoking up inflation throughout the western economies. It is at the same time essential under capitalism to maintain even the present shaky level of output and employment.

Deadly logic

Of course it is not simply a question of US arms spending. The seven major arms producers—Britain, Canada, China, France, West Germany, Russia and the USA—spend collectively on armaments sums about equal to the whole combined national incomes of the 'Third World' countries, countries which contain two-thirds of the world's people.

This is a direct cause of the continuing desperate poverty and economic stagnation of these countries. When Peru buys Mystere fighters from France, at a cost that is a huge burden on its weak economy, the deadly logic of the arms race compels its neighbours to make an equivalent purchase. All the big powers, East and West alike, maintain an army of salesmen to push their products. Harold Wilson, when Prime Minister, appointed his own special 'merchant of death' to intensify British arms sales.

Compared to the sums spent on arms, the cost of solving such problems as properly feeding and housing the millions of refugees from Bangla Desh is trivial. But of course the money is not forthcoming. We live in a world in which the mass production of means of destruction is a higher priority and indeed is a fundamental feature of the economies of the developed countries.

There will be no end to this state of affairs under capitalism. Massive arms production has become essential to the survival of capitalism. Not the least urgent of the reasons for rebuilding the socialist movement is that it is the only way to end the terrifyingly irrational arms race which, if it continues indefinitely, can have only one end—the end of us all.

AT LAST THE TORIES HELP THE NEEDY

EDUCATION MINISTER Mrs Margaret Thatcher has come to the aid of those poor and needy middle-class parents whose children are driven to attend direct grant grammar schools because they can't quite afford the fees for Eton or Harrow. £600,000 per year is to be doled out for the purpose.

It is quite unthinkable that these worthy and necessitous people should be forced to allow their offspring to attend a common local authority grammar school, still less a comprehensive. Stand on your own two feet is all very well but it was never intended to apply to a group of influential Tory voters. We may not be able to afford free milk for junior children but we can and must find the wherewithal to prevent Manchester Grammar School becoming a lame duck.

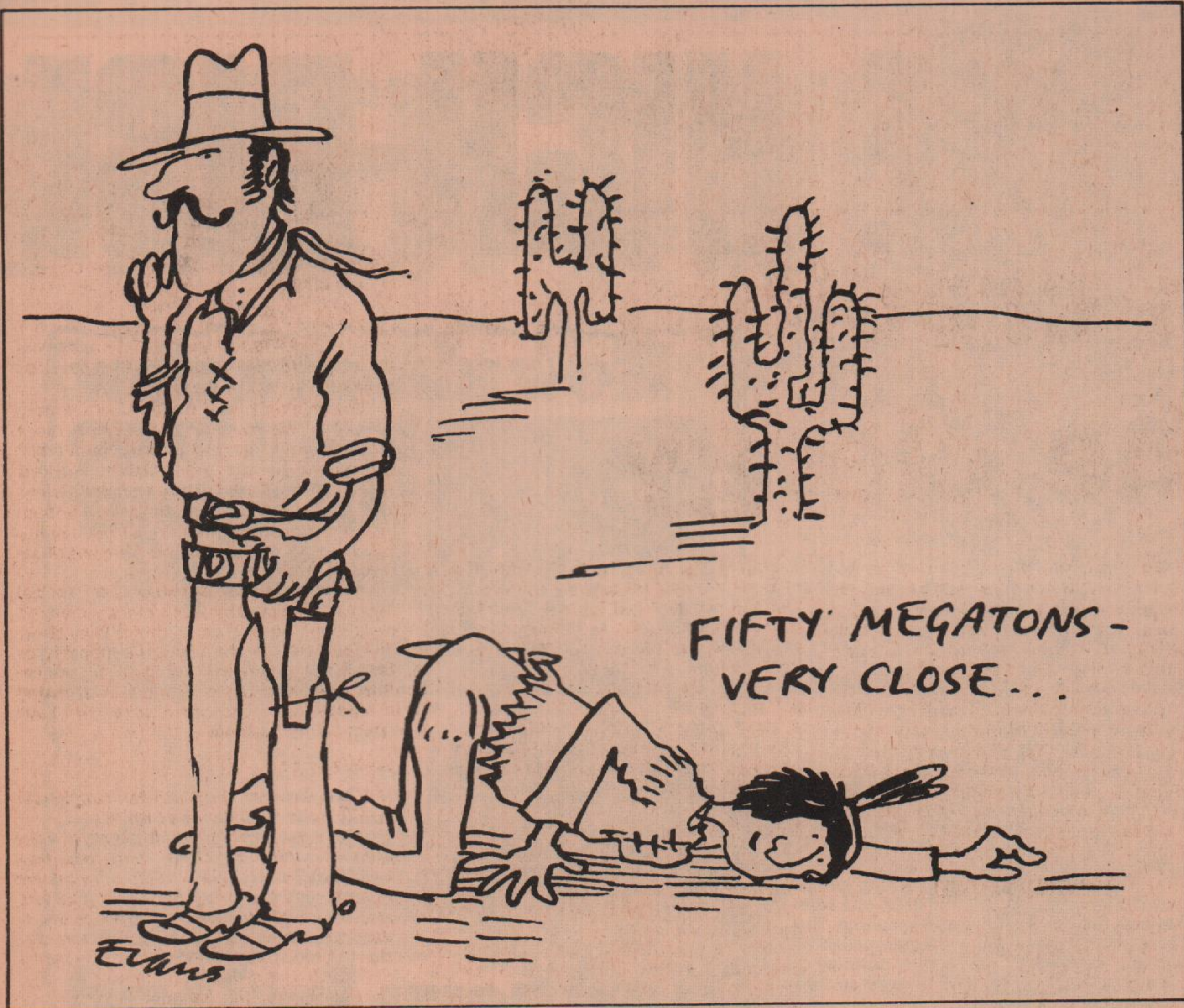
Of course there has to be discrimination in such subsidies. The Post Office must pay. London Transport must pay. And since this means a worse service at a much higher cost with fewer jobs available, we must steady ourselves to endure these things in the bracing wind of competition.

Further cuts

A truly gigantic subsidy is going to have to be paid to the Common Market Agricultural Fund. Some of this, thank God, can be recouped by further erosion of the Health Service and further cuts in social service.

A few years ago a well known writer of right wing views coined the phrase, 'More means worse'. He clearly had a point. More productivity, more Tory government, clearly means worse services, worse benefits, worse unemployment, worse inflation—for most of us that is.

It is consoling to think that Mr Heath's compassionate government is aware of the need to ensure that some, at least, are better off. And just to prove that his government is not solely concerned to help big business he is doing something to help the wealthier, if hard pressed members of the middle class as well.



COTTONS WARMS

Dial-a-bang

SOMEONE, somewhere wants a bomb warning from you... Post Office management at London's Faraday exchange have a novel way of looking after the life and limbs of their staff: when there is a bomb scare in the building they lock all the doors—with the staff still inside.

Our explosives expert writes: 'It is widely thought that people locked inside a building with a bomb are likely to suffer worse injury than if they had been allowed to leave.'

Faraday switchboard girls still treasure the memorable occasion two years ago when they were locked inside the switchroom while police searched for a bomb.

Following the blast at the Post Office tower last week, there were two further scares—fortunately groundless—at Faraday. Despite an agreement with the union to immediately tell the local representatives of such threats, the bosses kept mum and allowed the staff to go on working.

Union-conscious employees are thinking of demanding a new agreement: the bosses must announce a bomb scare—but only to union members. Sounds an explosive way to boost recruitment.

THE house in Percy Circus, Finsbury, where Lenin stayed in 1905 during the third congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, has been incorporated into a new £2m, 350-bedroom hotel on the site.

We don't know what impact the ghost of the great revolutionary will have on the hotel, but we understand the enquiries desk will bear the legend 'What Is To Be Done?'



Lenin: waiters of the world unite

It's a Sinn

JOURNALISTS on RTE, the Irish Republic's equivalent of the BBC, have found a novel way of contesting state imposed censorship of their current affairs programmes. Under section 31 of the Broadcasting Act, they are forbidden to report speeches which might seem to advocate 'unorthodox' methods of political change.

Two weeks ago the programme Seven Days (the equivalent of 24 Hours here) reported the Sinn Fein party conference and in particular one contribution which advocated a hard line against the government.

When it came to the really tough part of the speech, the programme was halted and a reporter came on the screen to say that the speaker had gone on to make certain controversial remarks, which the government would not allow Seven Days to broadcast.

Premier Jack Lynch and his pals are reported to be less than pleased with the journalists' shrewdness in drawing attention to censorship in such a dramatic fashion.

VELVET GLOVE over knuckleduster department: a Socialist Worker staff member returned home after a few days' absence to find the following note from the local bobbies: 'Police entered your rooms today after a call that you had not been seen for a few days and the person was worried about your health.' He says he was feeling fine until he saw the note.

Carrved up

NO MESSING around pretending to be impartial when the Tories are in office. Robert Carr has been busily appointing members of the re-styled Commission on Industrial Relations, all of them people with profound knowledge and respect for the prob-

lems of the shop floor.

They include:-
Leonard Neal, formerly British Rail's industrial relations man, a job to which he brought a commitment to maintaining jobs and conditions—he was formerly Esso's labour manager at Fawley.

Leslie Blakeman, former Ford labour relations boss, a man with a long and happy strike-free record.

Noel Bond-Williams, a director of Delta Metal, which gave £10,000 to the Tory Party last year.

Joseph Edwards, an executive with Pressed Steel Fisher, BMC, Harland and Wolff and now Joseph Lucas, a company distinguished by its cave-man approach to labour relations.

Harold (call me Oscar) de Ville, executive director of British Insulated Callenders Cables. BICC's Staff Association, whose officials are paid by the company, was one of the first organisations to register under the Industrial Relations Act.

There is one 'trade unionist'... *Catherine Hall*, general secretary of the Royal College of Nursing.

When the CIR comes your way to make an 'impartial study' of your firm's labour relations, head for the hills.

LORD BATH, who said last year that he would not exhibit his private collection of Hitler relics, has decided to put them on show after all—in 1973. 'I think it possible then that the public will be more ready for an exhibition of this sort,' he said. Just what kind of regime does his grace think will be in power then?

Black looks

PROBLEMS, problems for the practitioners of apartheid in South Africa. Coloured girls working as usherettes in cinemas reserved for whites only have been told they must not look at the screen when a film considered suitable only for white audiences is in progress.

One cinema manager has got round the problem by sending home coloured usherettes after the interval, before the 'whites-only' main feature films are shown. Some managers are thought to be training their girls to walk backwards, others are contemplating the idea of employing blind coloured girls with guide dogs.

PS: Overheard in a whites-only cinema: 'Flavour of the month... Gott in Himmel, not vanilla again!'



BSA: Bosses' catalogue of failure

THE closure at BSA has given rise to a very strange situation in the boardroom. The chairman, Mr Eric Turner, has resigned and openly accepted responsibility for the failure of the company's products in competition with Japanese motorcycles.

Now the history of BSA is very illuminating. It was formed from a mass of small firms and had interests as widespread as machine-tools, motorbikes, guns and pedal cycles. These were the growth industries of the thirties and then BSA established a reputation for sound but uninspired design. Like most British engineering it was not clever or cheap to produce but it would do the job.

Like every other firm, it prospered during the war, and during the fifties was associated in the public eye with the notorious Sir Bernard and Lady Docker. For this pair, no gold-plated limousine was too vulgar or publicity stunt too awful. They resided in the public eye and the workers of BSA paid the bills.

Initially the home and American markets were crying out for motorbikes and profits were easily come by. But neglect allowed the situation to get out of hand and at last the City moved against the gallant knight and out he went.

There followed a period of selling-off of assets, notably the machine-tool side and the company staggered on, partly on the cash raised. But the motorbike market is volatile, having no fleet sales to tide it over like the car producers, and no consistent profit record was achieved.

It is not surprising to record, then, that no British manufacturer has managed to tap the vast world demand for 50cc transport and that all BSA's attempts have been flops.

This is where the chickens started coming home to roost. There was no money for sizeable investment in new plant so the Honda 50cc bike burst into the British market in the early sixties, after having taken the rest of the world by storm.

Sold off

The BSA reply was to take their antique 250cc engine, designed for low volume production, and literally scale it down to 50cc. The Honda power unit revved to 9,500 rpm and was utterly reliable. The British was hard put to reach 6,000 rpm and was a mechanical disaster.

The British machines did not linger long in the showrooms for they went straight back into store to make room for the fast-selling Honda. They were last heard of being sold off by the clearance firm of Pride and Clarke (Snide and Shark) well below list-price. So was repeated the BSA flop of the fifties, when the Italian scooters swept the market against British products of incredible inferiority. As the ex-owner of a BSA scooter, I write with feeling on this topic.

So the heritage of no investment, poor engineering, guinea-pig directors and

by **FRED MILSON**

feather-bedding caught up with BSA. They faced the Japanese competition of the late sixties with no bike under 175cc, below which line the vast majority of sales are concentrated.

The big bikes may thunder, but the old bloke on a near-moped still does the buying. BSA's 175cc machine can be traced back directly to a design just post-war and despite 25 years of development remained highly unreliable with electrics unsuitable to a powered lawnmower.

The 250cc model faced Japanese bikes re-modelled every couple of years with five gears, overhead cams and performance almost in the 500cc class. It again had 15 years of history behind it, had one cylinder against two and was devoid of the finishing touches that made the Japanese bikes so delectable in the showroom.

Design stagnated

Finally came the big bikes, where Britain, with Triumph and Norton as well as BSA, reigned supreme. The only competition was the German BMW, which was way over on price.

Yet in the middle sixties, sales dipped in the States where these big bikes really sold and Norton and associates under the AMC banner went broke. They were rescued by amalgamation with another engine firm and have not looked back since.

Yet even here design and engineering stagnated and when Honda brought out an electrifying four-cylinder 750cc rich man's toy, BSA-Triumph's answer was the moderate three-cylinder machine that has probably sold fewer examples than the Honda in this country.

Year by year the stolid Mr Turner brought out reports promising great results next year when the American market picked up. Thanks to Easy Rider, it did do a couple of years ago. But the cash ran out for BSA in the middle of the year—the banks had lent quite enough thank you—and the helpless Turner has done the only thing open to him.

Now to draw the motto of this story. Arrant bad management, not strikers, has ruined this company with a determined policy of switching on the neon lighting when the sky was black with birds returning home to roost.

And this kind of management is not rare in Britain. If it was rare, then BSA would have been forced out of business years ago.

Rotten carcass

Instead, firms as well known as Vickers and AEI (highest profit 1956, merged into GEC 1969) are at least as bad. Nor was Sir Bernard the baddest of the boardroom pirates. He was only the most vulgar.

Names like Charles Clore and Sir Halford Reddish spring to mind as sharp operators and monopolists many times worse than Sir Bernard Docker. Rather does BSA symbolise the rotten carcass of British capitalism.

Capitalism proclaims that it is efficient and necessary. That despite its rough edges we have to accept competition and throat-cutting as a price for the standard of living we enjoy.

The BSA situation proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that British industry is inefficient and backward-looking. Surely workers' control, so far from leading to chaos, can lead only straight to an immense leap in production and well-being for all simply by brushing the failed men aside.

Finally, Mr Turner has admitted liability. Will he be giving the redundant BSA workers from the Small Heath plant a golden handshake from the money he has salted away over the last ten years?

Or will he quietly fade out and let events take their normal course, as the working man foots the bill for management incompetence?

THESE are the last two million homes to be built for human habitability in England and Wales alone. They are officially regarded as 'unsuitable', and they will shortly be unfit.

Yet according to estimates from the Trades Union General Workers' Union, there are around 250,000 men in the building and allied trades who have been unemployed right through the winter. They will be out of work in the winter too.

Towards the end of the 1966 General Election campaign, Harold Wilson gave some sincerity and confidence to the 1970 Labour would be building half a million homes a year.

This is a promise given in an eager audience in Bradford.

Wilson's promise to the working people of Britain was on the basis of a commitment to social spending. But in addition his colleagues delighted in the knowledge that a new method of construction was being used to assist in solving the housing problem.

SCO

Sure, the massive programme of industrialisation was set in motion. System building was quicker, cheaper, and needed less time to put them up. This was a key factor at the time, for it was said that there was a chronic shortage of labour.

This decision launched the British building industry on the greatest fiasco of the century. It has since cost the taxpayer millions of pounds well into the next century.

British building firms mostly never bothered to develop their own systems. They were content to use licensed others. These were often used in schemes of the state.

The construction of factories to produce the building units and of the expensive machinery and tackle necessary to move them meant that system-built housing could not be profitable unless built on a massive scale, preferably in units a time.

As a result, competition for local authority orders was fierce. The big contractors vied with one another to get the jobs and were prepared to go to any length to be chosen to construct them.

A massive relations machine was put in motion. Lavished parties, free trips abroad and personal gifts on local councillors and chairman of the housing committees were in particular.

In Bradford, for example, there was a free trip to Stockholm in 1965 paid for by John Lamb, a contractor who later got a

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Northern Ireland

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massive contract to build council houses. The next year there was one to Paris paid for by Concrete (Northern) who later got the job of building flats in Bradford's Newby Street.

There were many more trips for the good burghers of Bradford. An ex-chairman of the housing committee accepted a bathroom suite free from a building firm. The Lord Mayor and his deputy themselves went off to Stockholm at a building firm's expense.

FERRIED

At no time were any of the multi-million pound projects in Bradford put out to tender.

And this was (and still is) going on all over the country. A firm which was not successful in getting the contract for a massive redevelopment in Tottenham, London, only took the housing committee to see its factory in the North of England.

Perhaps that was the mistake. It did, however, pick them all up in chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royces, and ferried them to Euston station where they were put on the Royal Train, specially hired for the occasion.

All the big firms were involved in sell-

ing the solution that the Labour government had so enthusiastically backed, and they were inextricably involved with the whole government machine at top level.

T Dan Smith, Labour's impresario of the North East, set up public relations firms which went all over the country introducing contractors to councillors. One of the firms he founded was later to boast the present Home Secretary, Reginald Maudling, as a director and half his family as shareholders.

Smith's firm was also to represent Bovis, the family building firm of Sir Keith Joseph, and John Laing, owned by Edward Heath's closest friend.

And so the high flats bonanza went on with the good life shading over into a morass of bribery and corruption.

Praised as quicker and cheaper than conventional methods of building, the world of system building was rudely interrupted at 5.50 one morning in 1968 when Ronan Point tumbled its tenants out of the sky, killing five of them.

Such was the impact on the public mind that an inquiry was speedily arranged which condemned no one for faulty design and instructed that all similar blocks be strengthened.

Those with some morality in British construction agree (in private) that this

They 'Fair Rents' nothing but a barefaced swindle

by DICK WILLIAMS

COAL tenants meeting in Rawmarsh, Rotherham, were told they would see rents to double or even triple as a result of the Tories' 'Fair Rent' Bill.

Percy Williams, secretary of the miners' tenants association, said: 'We don't want a 'Fair Deal' from the Tories. It's only a raw deal. The 'Fair Rent' is nothing but a barefaced robbery.'

Under the Tory swindle all rents are to be assessed to find the best for the house. This will apply to all tenants as well. Then over the next three-four years the rents will be raised by 50p a week until a 'rent' is reached.

In Rawmarsh, Tom Ryan, chairman of the tenants committee, said: 'This swindle will be around £6 a week. It will be cheaper to buy a house on mortgage than to rent on the council or the NCB.'

The Bill really shows the Tories' determination to end, once and for all, the idea that housing should be any sort of social service. Instead it is to be a gold mine for land speculators property dealers and landlords.

The Tories claim: 'Oh but there will be rebates for those who can't pay the 'fair rent'. Here we have the true meaning of a fair rent for the Tories—it's one you can't afford to pay!'

The rebates are part of their scheme to increase the rents and to get rid of subsidies.

ONE: The rebates are subject to a means test. And we all know that many of those who should get a rebate won't apply for it, as always happens with means tests.

TWO: If you get a rebate and your income rises, you will lose 17p per £1 in increased rent. And if a housewife goes to work, and earns more than £2.50 a week the rebate will be cut by 17p per pound over the £2.50.

Because the 'Fair Rent' swindle applies to all tenants, the NCB tenants in Rawmarsh recognised the need to mobilise council tenants as well as coal board tenants against the whole scheme. They passed a resolution condemning the Bill and calling upon the whole labour movement to mount a massive wave of opposition to it.

Demand action

Already, in Yorkshire, steps have been taken. The Yorkshire Area of the NUM has passed a resolution against the Bill and have agreed to campaign against it.

The task now is to bring resolutions in all trade unions demanding action against this latest attempt to cut workers' living standards. It is also essential that tenants associations should swing into action, and launch a campaign to explain the need to fight against the whole swindle. The NCB tenants are to launch such a campaign in Rawmarsh.

SPECIAL OFFER

Paul Mattick's **Marx and Keynes: the Limits of the Mixed Economy** is to be published shortly by Merlin Press at £2.50. Pluto Press has a limited number of copies available immediately which are offered to IS members only at reduced rates in one of the following ways:

1. Mattick on its own at £1.70—a saving of 80p.
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PROFIT SWINDLE

Builders for the people: Where YOU pay the piper and HE calls the tune

By ARTHUR MALONE

inquiry was one of the most shameful episodes in the industry's history.

The forces of the state and the establishment in the industry combined to save reputations and do a cover-up.

Taylor Woodrow—the same firm which built the Ronan Point scheme, went on to get a £1 million contract to strengthen it.

In the country as a whole more than a thousand tower blocks had to be strengthened. Of course it was not the contractors who paid for it. They stuck strictly to free trips.

Government and local authorities between them found the money. Over the years you and I will be paying out £60 million plus interest to strengthen these structural miracles. But it is by no means true to say that strengthening puts them right.

SUSPECT

The method of strengthening most commonly used involves the insertion of steel angle brackets to join the panels and the floor into a unity which can withstand the high jinks of a Christmas party, never mind a gas explosion.

Most serious engineers accept that this method is highly suspect and is indeed likely to induce new stresses in the panels which combined with inaccuracies in fabricating and placing the angles could well produce an explosive mixture of a different kind.

It is also completely untrue that system building was ever any cheaper than conventional methods.

It had been conclusively demonstrated that high block building was some 20 to 80 per cent dearer than ordinary 'low rise' housing long before Ronan Point collapsed.

'Low rise' housing is therefore cheaper as well as safer and more pleasant—both trivial considerations of course.

Study after study in this country has shown that there is an intimate connection between 36-storey flats and increases in mental illness, a higher suicide rate and a generally alienated life.

That there is a very direct relationship between tower block living and increases in crime and vandalism has been conclusively proved.

The misery unleashed in this country by the so called slum clearance programme is best witnessed by the songs and poems of the children who are raised in them.

SOUR

The children of Castlemilk in Glasgow have a song about how they must take a lift or climb innumerable stairs just to get a sandwich, a 'piece'.

Their marvellously humorous song concludes with the warning:

*Now we've wrote tae Oxfam tae try
and get some aid,
And a' the kids in Castlemilk have
formed a piece brigade.
We're gonny march to George's Square
demanding civil rights,
Like nae mair buildings over piece-
flinging height.*

So Harold Wilson's pledge went sour. And in so many ways. In December 1968, just over two years after he made it, his own Minister of Housing, Anthony Greenwood, was forced to say 'the Government do not now expect 500,000 houses to be completed in 1970'.

But why did it turn sour? Was it solely due to the corruption of the building industry, and its exceptional ability to produce unscientific and anti-social designs?

Far from it. It was due to a deliberate switch in social policy which sprung from the new-found difficulties of a capitalist economy, from a crisis for which the common people must be made to pay. It proved utterly impossible to maintain the social services and expenditure the Labour Government had promised.

Social services had to be slashed, as did the housing programme. Unemployment



WILSON: pledge went sour

had to be increased, and an industrial relations bill was needed too.

In the housing field strict cost limits were introduced to curb public spending. This made sound economic sense to those who merely tinker with a system.

But in addition to being social madness, there was little economic value in what they were forced to do.

Fixed price tendering was made the norm. And to be sure the contractors 'fixed', loading their tenders in anticipation of inflation.

Local authorities were forced to prune what housing schemes they had under way and cut back on the optionals, like balconies on flats.

Hollamby, the chief architect for Lambeth, London, has shown that balconies pay for themselves within five years since they reduce maintenance costs and assist with simple tasks such as window cleaning.

In one school, the isolation valves in the heating system were cut out in order to save around £3 a time. This meant that the whole place had to be heated during the winter holidays just to keep the janitor's house warm. It is believed that this led

to considerable increases in the electricity bill.

And so the madness has gone on all over Britain.

The Tories have followed suit and launched new and more vicious attacks on working people. A fair rents scheme promises to cut their standards of living by another hefty slice.

Only speculative housebuilding is being boosted by this delightful government. They will offer more chances to their friends in building societies to fleece people of their money. On those council houses that are to be built, the massive interest charges will still have to be paid. Everywhere these account for by far the largest proportion of the weekly rent.

Labour, which set out to unleash the white hot technological revolution, brought you Ronan Point.

The Tories will build more prisons and more unemployment exchanges.

SILENCE

Any government which is in power on your behalf will continue to dole out the appropriate dreams at election time and rely on an industry which will build anything for the sake of a profit, and go on to build more things for more profit, to be reinvested in a mad circle of more which at no time can or does cater for human need.

In the furtherance of that desire to accumulate, the masters of the building industry will manipulate the state machine, the mechanisms of local government, the law, the factory inspectorate and the union leadership, and will try to silence anyone who gets in their way.

It needs big battalions to push them aside and build a society where the songs of children will not be those of Castlemilk, but of other places where they grow healthy and free.



Ronan Point: Five people died

POLLUTION: SURVIVAL OF THE CALLOUS

WE seem to be hearing less about pollution nowadays. Fashionable in the popular press a few months ago, pollution seems to be 'out' in favour of soccer violence and spy scares.

Does this mean that the problem is being overcome? Not likely, though the country's bosses are much relieved to see pollution stories disappear from the headlines. They know that the steady poisoning of the world is an outrage and a most threatening challenge to their system.

All the evidence points to the following facts: firstly, pollution is getting worse and requires an immediate solution; secondly, the public is not being told the facts, and thirdly, no answers to the desperate situation can be found under capitalism.

The crisis has not been dreamt up by political cranks and scaremongers. The modern prophets of doom are scientists of the highest calibre and training.

In June, two Nobel Prizewinners, Professor Jacques Monod of the Pasteur Institute in Paris and Professor Hugo Theorell of the Nobel Institute in Stockholm, joined other scientists and top researchers in announcing that Western man is being poisoned by an ever rising consumption of food additives and food substitutes.

They call this 'internal pollution', and in this category we can include cadmium poisoning.

A recent conference at the University of Rochester in New York learnt that the average westerner's intake of cadmium (which destroys the liver) is close to the safety margin and likely to pass it at any

WHERE THERE'S MUCK THERE'S BRASS—AND THE CAPITALISTS WANT TO KEEP IT THAT WAY

time. A prime source of poisoning is pesticide taken in by the animals and fish we consume. Nearly a quarter of all the DDT manufactured ends in the oceans, where it is killing off young fish at an alarming rate.

The thing about external pollution is that it soon becomes internal. If they poison our rivers, seas and soil, then they poison the food which grows there; we come next when we eat the contaminated food or breathe the poisoned air.

Paradise

Recent research has revealed a connection between metallic poisoning and appalling nervous diseases such as spina bifida in children, and these diseases are prevalent in the very areas subjected to atmospheric pollution.

To see where all this is leading we only have to turn to that polluter's paradise, Japan.

As long ago as the fifties, dozens of Japanese died and hundreds more were

disabled by mercury pollution from a single factory. Now, to walk in Tokyo without a smog mask on a still day is dangerous folly. A small town neighbouring Tokyo recently admitted that 279 of its citizens were crippled by the effects of pollution!

The enterprising Japanese bosses have not been slow to cash in on the pollution boom by installing oxygen vending machines in their department stores.

In September, a conference was told that the facts about pollution were being hidden from the British public. It wasn't a conference of irate conservationists or sensational newsmen. It was that of the British Association, attended by the cream of British scientists.

It works like this: 60 per cent of British scientists are employed in industry, and their freedom to publish is restricted by commercial security; a further 20 per cent are employed by the government, and curbed from publishing anything critical of Government policy. Even the remainder in the universities find it expedient to keep

quiet, since all universities depend heavily on research grants from the industries which are creating the pollution.

A few years ago, the government suppressed a report which indicated that toxic substances in ground nut oil, used in margarine and in poultry foods, had caused the deaths of hundreds of turkeys, and the full report of this spring's investigation into mercury poisoning in tuna fish still awaits full publication.

No solution to the pollution crisis is possible under capitalism which depends on what the bosses call 'free competition'. It costs money to stop pollution—not an impossible sum, but a lot. If one firm decided to curb its pollution, to install devices to purify the effluent it puts into the rivers or the atmosphere, or to eliminate the poisonous content of its products, then the price of its products would rise and in 'free competition' the firm would go to the wall.

Capitalism means the survival of the fittest with the most callous bosses.

The limited progress made by the introduction of smokeless zones did not cost the bosses a penny—raw coal was obsolete as an industrial fuel and there was always something to be made out of flogging expensive new heating systems. But let any Labour or Tory government dare to introduce really effective anti-pollution laws and it will soon be put in its place by the bosses.

'Pollution is inevitable if British industry is to compete with the foreigners,' the politicians would be told—and as always they would back down.

The cure lies outside the scope of capitalism, and a revolutionary approach to the crisis must come soon—another ten year's delay could be too late.

Dale Fox

THE FIGHT FO



Unemployment is near to the million mark. The Tories admit that. The real figures, when you include those who don't 'sign on', are close to 1½ million.

But unemployment is not just a figure. It is people—ordinary people denied the right to work by the callous decision of govern-

ment and employers. There is no greater condemnation of a society based on profit than the sight of men, women and school-leavers suffering the degradation and humiliation of the dole queue while machines stand idle and two-thirds of the world starves.

EVEN MEMBERS of the Tory government are not prepared to defend the present high levels of unemployment. What they do instead is to pretend that workers who still have jobs are responsible for the plight of those on the dole queues.

Anthony Barber, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for instance, argued at the Tory Party conference: 'The simple fact is that workers have priced themselves and their fellow workers out of a job'.

But such a claim must be rather bewildering to many of those at present getting redundancy notices. Usually the employer gives as his excuse for sacking workers: 'We cannot sell the goods you have been making'.

But many ordinary workers would gladly buy many of these goods—if only they had the money.

In other words, it would seem that if wages went up, unemployment should fall. And if wages go down, there is less money to buy goods and so unemployment should increase.

Opposite

Again, if Barber's argument was correct, if would be workers in areas where wages are highest who would face the heaviest unemployment. But in reality quite the opposite happens.

The highest levels of unemployment are in those areas where wages are lowest, such as Northern Ireland, Scotland and the North East.

But it is not even true that wages have been 'rising excessively'. Far from it.

Over the last year they have gone up by 11.5 per cent. That seems a lot, until you remember that prices have risen 10.3 per cent.

And that's not all. Most workers have a third of any pay rise taken straight back by the government as income tax or national insurance contributions. What the average worker can actually buy with his wage packet has been falling for the last year.

The Tory claim that wage increases are responsible for the bulk of price increases is not true either. You don't have to read long economic analyses to see how they lie over this.

Just look back at what the Tories themselves were saying before they took office last year.

The Tory election manifesto for 1970 stated that: 'Britain faces the worst inflation for 20 years. This is mainly the result of tax increases and devaluation.'

Wages and jobs—the great Tory lie



BARBER: Upside-down argument

And Edward Heath pointed out on 16 June last year that: 'The wages explosion is the way in which, when all else fails, those who are able to do so protect their living standards'.

There is another fact which makes it even clearer that high wages cannot be the real cause of unemployment.

If all the workers at present without jobs were given the chance to work, and if all the machinery at present standing idle (about one fifth of the total) was put to use, there would be an enormous amount of extra wealth created.

The Times published a report

last March which estimated how much this wastage due to unemployment was. Its figures were astounding.

'The economy last year was producing about £3,400 million less than it would at its full employment capacity. The shortfall is estimated to rise to over £500 million this year.'

Such a massive increase in wealth would enable every man, woman and child to enjoy an extra £2 a week, free of tax.

Force down

Or to put it another way, it would permit average wages to go up by £9 a week. Very few workers, if any, have received such increases over the last year.

Far from high wages causing unemployment, it is just the other way round. Unemployment is being used deliberately to force down living standards.

Heath, Barber and co are trying to build a smokescreen to cover up their plans and to disguise the real features of a society that demands that such policies be followed.



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BOOSTING PRO

EDWARD HEATH inadvertently let slip the real reason for the soaring unemployment figures in a speech he made in April: 'Jobs,' he said, 'depend on making it possible for firms to earn profits'.

That sums up the reality of the society which the Tories are dedicated to defend.

80 per cent of industry is owned by a mere 2 per cent of the population. That small minority is not prepared to invest its wealth unless it feels that it can make a high level of profits.

It does not matter how hard

employees work, how many years of unremitting service they have behind them, or how miserable the wages they are prepared to accept.

Unless profits are guaranteed to the owners, the workers will be thrown on to the human scrapheap without so much as a second thought.

REFUSED

The whole of the government's present policy is designed to boost profits by forcing down workers' living standards.

That is why groups like the postal workers were refused a

wage increase at all comparable to the rise in the cost of living.

That is why taxes on the wealthy and on big business have been reduced, while the sources of basic nutrition for the children of many working-class families—free school milk and cheap school meals—have been done away with.

That is why council rents are being forced upwards and bigger health service charges introduced.

That is also why the Industrial Relations Act has been passed—to make it more difficult for trade unionists to push up wages to keep up with other increases.

Unemployment's eyes, same purpose.

Dudley Smith Minister for Employment in May that vide temporary that is not what want surgery th work. At the patient is going deal healthier'.

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R JOBS ■■■



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in February:
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less unemployment would surely intensify the militant union pressure for an ever growing share of wages in the national cake'.
In other words, unemployment is necessary to such people if they are to preserve a situation in which the top one per cent of the population have the same combined income as the bottom 30 per cent.
All their usual glib talk about 'wages' being the cause of unemployment has nothing to do with the truth. But the Tories believe it can turn unemployed workers against employed workers, push down earnings, and so make the

system run more smoothly
At the Tory Party Conference Barber appealed to the unemployed (although there could have been few of the unemployed working class, as opposed to the idle rich at the conference) to turn against those with jobs.
MEANING
'Every man out of work today should go to those with jobs and say this to them: "You are the majority. You have the power to stop these strikes which are clearly unjustified, and you have the power to stop unreasonable pay claims—for our sake use it".'

That is the meaning of the present unemployment—to cut wages and reduce union strength. It has another purpose too. Economic experts are prophesying that over the next year the number of jobs will continue to fall, but that industrial production will increase by 4.5 per cent. In other words, machines out of use at present will be worked on—but by those workers already employed on other machines, not by new jobs being created. Once again, profits will benefit from the speed up and workers, employed and unemployed alike, will suffer.

Needed: a fighting programme to force the bosses to take on extra workers

LABOUR PARTY LEADERS have been making speech after speech condemning the unemployment policy of the government. The TUC has been organising demonstrations in various parts of the country.

But workers who are serious about fighting unemployment cannot look for a real alternative to either of these sets of leaders. The Labour Party pioneered the present Tory policy. During its term of office unemployment rose from an average level of 400,000 to a level of 600,000—an increase of 50 per cent.

The chief reason was the policy of 'redeployment' and 'shake-out' in industry pursued by the Labour government.

The results were clear at the time. The Economist magazine, for instance, could forecast in February 1968 that 'Rationalisation means men out of jobs. More than 1½ million workers are liable to be affected in the coming two years'.

It was not only the Labour leaders who were implicated in this policy. So too were the leaders of the TUC without exception. They jumped at the idea of a 'high wage-high productivity economy' as an alternative to militancy in industry.



WRIGHT: behind power sell-out

Penalty bonus

They got the high productivity—fewer men doing more work—but workers are still waiting in vain for the high wages.

One might expect such an attitude from Vic Feather, Lord Cooper, Frank Chapple and co. But it was also the attitude of the so-called 'left-wing' trade union leaders.

For instance, the power workers' agreement earlier this year was signed, among others, by the 'left wing' AUEW official Bob Wright. Yet that agreement will, according to the Financial Times, do away with about 60,000 jobs in the next five years.

Again, the local government workers' unions, including the 'left wing' TGWU, have submitted a pay claim that includes the demand that the employers implement productivity deals—ie reduce the work force—or else pay a penalty bonus to workers.

The unions boast that 'consistently since 1967 we have backed pay and productivity solutions'. One wonders how many are on the dole as a result of these 'solutions'.

Fight back

If unemployment is to be fought seriously, it will not be by the Labour Party or the TUC. Workers at rank and file level have to organise to start a real fight back against Tory policies.

What policies are needed?
Resist Redundancy

The aim of the employers is to increase production by 4 per cent or more over the next 12 months. They intend to use almost every machine they have, but not the workers.

This means that workers who lose their jobs will find it difficult to get new ones. But it also means that we have a powerful weapon in our hands to resist redundancy.

For the employers want to complete profitable orders and then to move their machines elsewhere as part of the process of concentrating production where it is most profitable.

Workers affected by redundancy notices should refuse to accept them. They should con-

sider striking and occupying their plants to stop the employers getting their way.

Other trade unionists in the same firm must impose an overtime ban and should black any goods produced by redundant workers and machines used by them.

If militants cannot persuade other workers to fight in this manner, then as a second line of defence they should demand work-sharing instead of redundancies. At least this keeps the work force together, able to fight as production picks up again

Minimum wage

No Productivity dealing.
This means a reduction in the work force, either by redundancies or by 'natural wastage'. In either case it means forcing more workers on to the dole queues.

Enforce overtime limitations.
Most skilled unions have official limits on overtime. Yet despite that the average working day in this country is the same as 20 years ago.

There has to be a real attempt to do away with excessive overtime. But this will be possible only when millions of workers who depend on overtime to push up their wages to a decent level no longer need to. That means also a struggle for a minimum wage of £25 a week.

Reduce the working week to 35 hours without loss of pay.

If the unions really fought for this demand, the employers would be forced to take on many of those now unemployed.

But more than just trade union activity is needed. What has to be built is a political movement.

Not one based on waiting four years for a Labour government that will behave like the last one, but based on the real strength of workers in the factories.

Its central slogan must be work or full pay.

If employers argue that they cannot afford that policy, then we should say to them that they must hand over to those who can make it work.

That means nationalisation under workers' control of any firm declaring redundancies in any of its factories.

GREAT STEEL CARVE-UP

JUST A FEW MILES from the centre of Sheffield lies the giant River Don steelworks. With unemployment at 5.5 per cent in the city, its future is threatened and 4500 workers face the sack.

This is the result of mass swindling, Tory interference and a colossal carve-up between the businessmen in Westminster and their friends in the City of London.

It is a scandalous story. Once again the greed of a few people is challenging the living standards of many. The last Labour government nationalised the steel industry in July 1967. Before then, long negotiations had been held with private owners about the amount of compensation that should be paid. Finally, after a demand for £1400 million had been rejected, a settlement of £1165 million was agreed.

Victims of giant swindle

Both parties declared their satisfaction. But when the British Steel Corporation officially took over, they found that they had been the victim of an enormous swindle.

Much of the equipment was in such a dreadful state that the Corporation was forced to complain recently: 'As a consequence of underinvestment in the sixties, the Corporation inherited not only a great deal of obsolescent plant, but also much plant which had lacked sufficient maintenance expenditure and which has proved defective when driven at maximum level of output...'

So bad was the situation that when the Corporation independently valued their assets, they found that instead of being worth the £1165 million that had been paid for them, their actual worth was only £834 million.

In other words, the steel owners had swindled a staggering £331 million out of the public.

This wasn't the only profitable scoop that the bosses organised. In the last year before nationalisation, they went wild and gleefully gave millions of pounds away to their shareholders while leaving the incoming British Steel Corporation to pay the bill.

The Consett Iron Company Ltd., for example, made a loss of £347,000 but nevertheless paid out a mighty £1,318,000 in dividends. Others did the same.

The Lancashire Steel Corporation lost £301,380 but paid out £996,009. GKN Steel Co made £553,985 profit and handed out £2,548 to shareholders. It was a bonanza all round.

The English Steel Corporation—which owned the River Don works—proved no exception. It made a profit of £440,675, gave away £995,376 and paid its directors £67,032. When the company was finally nationalised the huge sum of £42,650,720 of taxpayers' money was awarded in compensation.

This was the first big swindle. No crook could have achieved any better success.

A year before nationalisation, a special investigation into the future of the industry took place known as the Benson Report. Its findings were harsh and to the point.

Paid the cost

First, it recommended mass sackings: 'It is envisaged that by 1975 the industry should be able to make do with 100,000 less men than at present'.

Second, mass closures: 'It would not be economically sound to perpetuate steel-making at all... sites'.

Ever since nationalisation, the British Steel Corporation—which is chaired by the £25,000 a year Tory Lord Melchett—has faithfully carried out these proposals. And inevitably, of course, the public and the steel workers have paid the cost.

By May of this year 12,000 men had been made redundant and an additional 30,000 jobs permanently lost. Much of this has been achieved in co-operation with trade union leaders.

The Corporation has publicly recognised this and said: 'The three year productivity programme, initiated in 1969, is beginning to show results in the shape of agreements for relinquishing traditional working practices and job demarcation lines in exchange for a scheme in the resulting benefits, and of redundancy arrangements which facilitate rationalisation measures.'

The present threat to the River Don works is a result of the Benson proposals and of a sordid deal between the Tories and their City associates. When national-

isation took place, not all the firms were included. Some still remained in private hands. Ever since 1967 these firms have been raiding the profitable parts of the public sector.

The most active of these companies has been the big Sheffield company of Firth Browns. Although it was nationalised by the post-war Labour government, given public money and then de-nationalised in 1953, it was left completely untouched in 1967. It is now an extremely rich concern.

Its latest profits were £5,709,869, its dividends a substantial 22.8 per cent, and its directors' pay-out a fat £63,276.

The chairman of this company is a Mr J Clay—a leading and influential businessman. He is also on the boards of Hambros Bank, the Guardian newspaper and Swan Hunters, the North East ship-building firm.

Firth Brown manufactures special steel alloys and, together with the rest of the private sector of the industry, makes a combined profit of around £40 million a year. But this sector only produces about 10 per cent of the industry's total tonnage.

The full extent of BSC's inherited bur-



The River Don works: workers' slogan puts people before profit

by ROGER ROSEWELL SW Industrial Correspondent

den can best be appreciated by realising that although it produces the remaining 90 per cent of the tonnage, its losses last year were £7 million. The most profitable parts were quite simply left to private enterprise.

On 28 June, Firth Browns announced that it had been agreed that they would take over the BSC's profitable die-forgings division and East engineering shop at River Don as well as the order books and goodwill.

Tory master minds

This part of BSC had been called Firth Brown's 'only competitor in special alloys' in February 1968. Now, of course, there will be none and a private monopoly will have been established.

No proper financial details of this transaction have yet been published but it has been admitted that, as part of the deal, the Firth Vickers Stainless Steel Company

—which is jointly owned by BSC and Firth Browns—will be split up with again the most profitable part of the business going to Mr Clay's company.

This snatch has been master-minded by the Tory government and assisted by the fact that many of the former private steel owners currently occupy crucial positions of authority within the nationalised Corporation. This is the second big swindle and if it is successful not only will Firth Browns be even richer, but the jobs of 4500 workers will be in peril.

The River Don works, having been stripped of its profitable parts, will be left only with heavy forgings. The BSC have said that if this proves itself 'unviable' then it will have to be closed.

Every worker I spoke to thought that it would be. The Tory carve-up will compel the verdict 'unviable'. It will be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

One startling result of any closure of the River Don would be that—taking into

account those works which have already been closed or sold off—only one solitary part of the former English Steel Corporation will remain. And this, it should be remembered, was the company that cost the taxpayer £42,650,720 when it was nationalised just four years ago.

Hostile to workers

The River Don workers have decided to fight this hive-off to Firth Browns and any closure of their plant. They voted to organise a 'work on' with sacked men carrying out campaign tasks planned by the shop stewards.

But no amount of publicity or protest will save any jobs. Ever since the Tories have been in power they have demonstrated their hostility to working people.

The only way that the Sheffield dole queues can be prevented from swelling by an extra 4500 men is by a fighting programme that occupies the factory and spreads the struggle. This is what must be done.

CUT THE WORKING WEEK-WAY

TO CREATE NEW JOBS

ONE IMPORTANT POINT in my article on unemployment last week got lost in the editing. The lobby of parliament on 24 November promises to be a massive show of working-class discontent with mounting redundancies and unemployment.

Yet many who will be there will remember that in 1963 we held a similar large and militant demonstration against a previous Tory government over this very same issue only at that time the 'unacceptable' level of unemployment was 'only' 600,000.

Vic Feather and the trade union leaders see this as a chance for the rank and file to let off steam and for themselves to show how militantly they can talk about the evils of unemployment.

Yet who are they talking to? Surely no one is under the impression that workers like getting the sack and being on the dole?

The marches and the lobbies are important only if they lead to a policy of fighting back against the employers in industry.

The demand for a shorter working week as a way of forcing employers to create more jobs has been adopted by many union



leaders—but really only as a useful debating point.

35-hour week claims have been put in as a make weight with many wage demands—only to be abandoned at the first sign of the employers' resistance. The importance of the 'nine-hours' campaign which started in Sunderland in 1871 was that workers forced the issue by simply putting away their tools and going home after nine hours.

being shared out to the remaining men. At the simplest level we must point out to our fellow workers the dangers of working our children out of a job.—CHRIS DAVISON, Teddington, Middlesex.

Role of police

I LIVE and work in a small town of about 8000 inhabitants where for the past five months some 70 workers at Brannan Thermometers Ltd. have been on strike and have been picketing the gates.

When certain companies (which should not be in business) have sent a consignment of goods to the factory, the number of police around the gates resemble an ant hill on a sunny day. At lunchtime last Wednesday there were 18 policemen on duty and only 21 pickets.

On Thursday a young man came to collect his girl friend and the police 'took him into custody'. No reason was given. When a picket asked the reason he was seized by the police and kicked several times, (he has witnesses to this).

When I met him he was limping badly and so were two other pickets and one young girl was taken to hospital with wrist and shoulder injuries.

On Friday there were about 30 policemen on duty. If the TV companies need a replacement for The Guardians they need look no further than our local police. I suggest their cameraman get in touch.

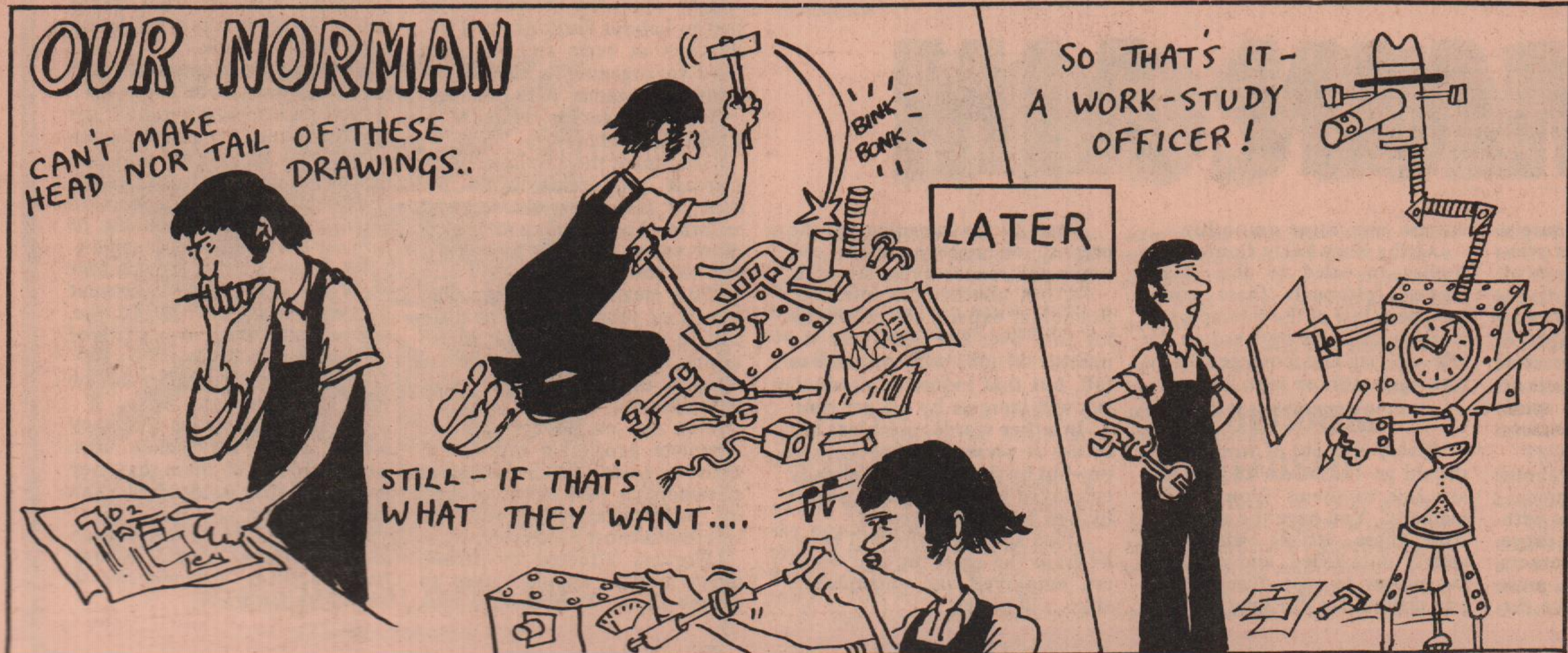
During the past five months there has been an accident at the factory gates when police were on duty, we have had a prowler exposing himself on various housing estates, a person has been interfering with children and more recently one accident involving a child where there were no police to be found, not even in the local station which was locked.

Is it really necessary to pay rates and taxes for the upkeep of the policeforce so they can assault citizens and seemingly do little else?—TAX AND RATEPAYER, Cleator Moor, Cumberland.

I WAS horrified at your 'bounced Czech' story (Cottons Column, 30 October) which I thought was absolutely non-political and in thoroughly bad taste. A number of readers have made similar comments.

I would ask that no other sick jokes of this nature be allowed to appear.—KEVIN J PRITCHARD, Brighton, Sussex.

Cottons Columnist comments: Savage, not sick. Humour can be an effective weapon against the lies and distortions of the Tory press. I hoped the paragraph disposed of the Mirror nonsense about 'red assassins' being used in Ireland.



PICASSO the old man who got lost



LAST MONTH Pablo Picasso was 90. All over the world art critics celebrated the occasion by firing the obligatory 21 gun salutes of compliments and superlatives. They emphasised the genius—and ignored the history that shaped his art.

Most have admitted that the work he produces now doesn't match his earlier paintings, yet they haven't dared suggest its complete failure. Can anyone question his success? Can a man who was well off and independent of patrons at the age of 28, whose name is a household word, seriously be thought of as a failure?

If success is the accumulation of material wealth beyond most people's wildest dreams, being surrounded by uncritical friends and acquaintances, then Picasso is indeed successful.

There's another way of looking at it. If we are concerned with the flowering of our own potential, with the use of our creative powers to build a better world, and with a continuous painful struggle within ourselves to achieve it, then Picasso is a failure.

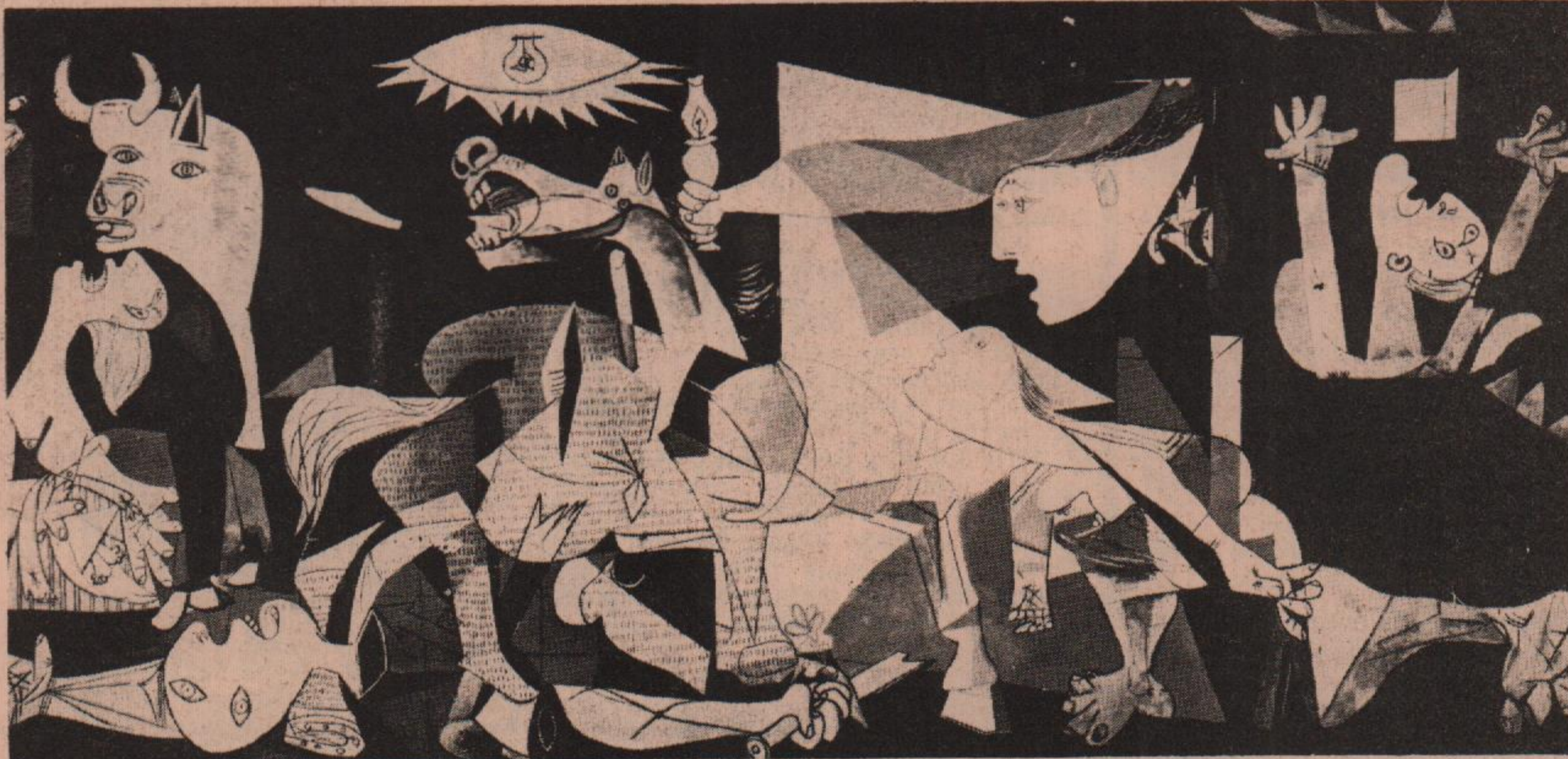
Conflict with himself

Yet it isn't quite so easy. The committed artist is cut off from the mass of working people by the class-based division of labour, and therefore he is always in conflict with himself. He may wish to express the struggle of life in terms of his art, yet when he does so, the 'real' people are unaware of it. Instead he is either ignored by the rich, and doesn't eat, or else debased by being elevated to the position of god and superstar. If he is obscure it is very rarely that working people come to hear of him. If he is rich and 'famous' then he is a sitting duck for critics who can accuse him of 'selling out'. Under capitalist society the artist can't win.

Picasso is the subject of many books, each one telling us what Picasso likes to eat, how Picasso looks first thing in the morning, how many times a day Picasso blows his nose. Yet these little quirks of personality are not the real man—they are merely his 'excess baggage'. Picasso's 90 years have blown him first one way, and then another.

He was born in Malaga in 1881. At the age of 16 he took all possible honours at the Madrid Royal Academy after which he left for the heart of the artistic world, Paris, where he lived a 'bohemian' existence. His paintings of simple people whose lives were uncomplicated and seemingly set apart from the modern rat race soon caught the eyes of the rich art collectors. Rich art collectors just love pictures of simple, uncomplicated people and hungry looking couples.

With the terrible experiences of the First World War, Picasso and others retreated even further into the isolated world



Guernica: horror and revulsion at meaningless of war

of the artist—but in 1937 an event occurred in Picasso's native Spain which was to produce the greatest painting of the century, Guernica.

Guernica is a small town of the Basque province of Vizcaya, lying in a valley 10 kilometres from the sea and 30 from Bilbao. The Basque people have been fighting for the right to rule themselves for many long years, and Guernica was their 'sacred' town—the centre of resistance.

Completely destroyed

On 26 April, 1937, Guernica was practically razed to the ground. A report in *The Times*, of 27 April, 1937, said: "Guernica, the most ancient town of the Basques and the centre of the cultural tradition, was completely destroyed yesterday afternoon by insurgent air-raiders. The bombardment of the open town far behind the lines occupied precisely three hours and a quarter, during which a powerful fleet of aeroplanes consisting of three German types, Junkers and Heinkel bombers and Heinkel fighters did not cease unloading on the town bombs weighing from 1,000 lb. downwards... the fighters meanwhile flew low from above the centre of the town to machine-gun those of the civilians who had taken refuge in the fields. The whole of Guernica was soon in flames except the historic Case de Juntas..."

It has not been possible to establish the number of people killed, but accounts vary from between 100 and 1,600. But all were agreed on one point—Franco had asked the Germans to help him get rid of a vital

pocket of resistance in the Spanish Civil War. The bombing of Guernica was a 'practise run' for the subsequent horrors of Hiroshima.

Picasso had, earlier in the year, been commissioned to paint a mural for the Spanish government building at the World's Fair in Paris. He began work immediately on a piece which depicted all the horror and revulsion he felt at the meaningless massacres of war. The painting caused an uproar and focused world opinion on Guernica. Today the mural is still the property of Picasso and hangs in the Metropolitan Museum, New York.

When France was occupied by the Germans, Picasso did not become actively involved in the resistance movement—but significantly, he was the acknowledged figurehead, the unspoken leader. Consequently he did not have to 'prove' himself. For many his fame absolved him from becoming an activist.

The laurels bestowed on him by the rich patrons of arts prevented him from becoming a fully developed political personality. Picasso was not satisfied with this state of affairs. He wanted very much to be useful—he wanted to develop himself as a person and give his art a chance to serve the struggling people of the world.

Consequently, in 1944 he joined the French Communist Party. He was elated to be accepted into their ranks. The resistance movement was winning, everything looked rosy. It was seven years since Guernica.

Why had he taken so long to join the movement? Perhaps he did not have the patience to be a small part of the struggle.

The French resistance movement was not always on the winning side and it must have been anathema to Picasso to think of himself as a small person in a seemingly defeated movement. He did not understand the need for hard determined striving. He needed to ride the crest of a popular wave.

Avenue to the people

It is doubtful if Picasso himself really understood his own motives, but he genuinely wanted to be of service and he really believed that the Communist Party was the only avenue to the people. He said, explaining his decision: "Have not the Communists been the bravest in France, in the Soviet Union, and in my own Spain? How could I have hesitated? The fear to commit myself? But on the contrary, I have never felt freer, never felt more complete. And then I have been so impatient to find a country again: I have always been an exile, now I am no longer one: whilst waiting for Spain to be able to welcome me back, the French Communist Party have opened their arms to me, and I have found there all whom I respect most, the greatest thinkers, the greatest poets, and all the faces of the resistance fighters in Paris whom I saw and were so beautiful during those August days; again I am among my brothers."

Not surprisingly, Picasso's work and contributions, which mainly took the form of posters, were treated with the reverence attributed to a god—a god who could usefully create great graphic art in the service of the people, but whose other works were

quietly ignored by Moscow. He was exempt from all criticism, too great to be wrong.

In these developments one finds the key to Picasso's decline, not in some 'in-built' failure within himself. Along with thousands of others he retreated into the background. Only a few kept the spark of revolution alive, playing the waiting game.

For the revolutionary today the opportunities and risks have grown, but Picasso is 90. He continues his detached existence in the South of France surrounded by people who are unable to provide a reason for his existence. The tragedy is that he is still very much alive, very much hopeful that he will do something worthwhile. Perhaps a little came from a recent Sunday newspaper article can show he still has the ability to be optimistic:

"The maid takes in breakfast. Sabartes, his secretary and biographer takes in the mail. Françoise brings up the rear. "You have no idea how unhappy I am. Nobody could be more unhappy... I am a sick man." His doctor ignores him and is only interested in his painting. "If he cared about me he would be here now."

Works like a maniac

"His soul itches. He is lonely. Everybody is so stupid, there is no one to talk to. Life is an intolerable burden. Even painting is going from bad to worse. Life is just not worth living. Finally Françoise is able to get a word in, comforting, cajoling, promising. All his friends love him dearly. The doctor is doing his best."

"As to his painting, everybody in the world agrees that it is extraordinary. "You're going to do something extraordinary today." At last Picasso sits up. "Are you sure of what you say? Absolutely certain?" After this he works like a maniac all day long and the next morning the process is repeated."

Wouldn't it have been a marvellous thing for Picasso if the students of France, in May, 1968, had been able to commission from him a poster? That would have been 'extraordinary'—that would have been the thing that would have made all that energy and talent worthwhile.

Our artists are victims of society. We must use them to the full, we must make huge demands of them. Artists are not prophets or gods. They are people out on a limb who are trying to express the struggle for life.

Capitalism sees the potential danger in the 'artistic temperament'. Therefore the rich will dangle carrots for the artist to grasp at. We, as socialists, must ensure that sincere artists are drawn into the struggle for socialism. When all is said and done, developing potential revolutionaries is an art—just as much as painting a picture.

KATHY SIMS

ROCK

IMAGINE: John Lennon: Apple Records. JOHN LENNON: variously Liverpool rocker, pacifist politician and socialist millionaire. His current LP, *Imagine*: variously revolutionary anthems, love stories and speeches set to music.

The album is musically simplified and songs are stripped down. Lennon seems to survive this way. The pop music industry is in business to sell emotion, to make profits out of pain, to merchandise happiness.

In the process feelings are made banal, love becomes Tom Jones and a dark Spanish night, pain becomes Neil Young's self-consoling masochism, a love affair is reduced to a teenybopper code of surrender, jealousy and betrayal. Pop songs for three minutes put heart into a heartless world, they are designed to be emotionally pleasing but manageable and dishonest.

Lennon's emotions are of a different order. His voice shrieks beyond commiseration, chokes at the edge of grief, trembles with excitement. His music is the evidence that he has survived his own fame astonishingly intact, his fight and vision still there.

When he sings of his own pain, tenderness and hatred, it is with indelible honesty. It's also with a sense of possibility, an assertion that there can and must be change. He recently told Melody Maker that he had asked Robin Blackburn and Tariq Ali how he could best help the revolution. They told him, 'by being a revolutionary artist' and he went out and wrote that remarkable socialist stomper 'Power to the People'.

It must rank as some of the better political advice they have given. For Lennon's old sarcasm and cynicism.

which in the Beatles was always counterposed to Paul McCartney's sentimentality, now blossoms into politics. The title track, *Imagine*, sung with a calm, engulfing voice, is a vision of a communist future, a world with no God and no possessions, where all the people share all the wealth.

It ends, as it should, with an objection and an appeal: 'You may say that I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. I hope some day that you will join us and the world will be as one'. Other songs are political in a more intimate way. In pop music, as in life, men are not supposed to express anything but the most stylised emotions: 'strong men don't cry'.

But Lennon, the archetypal hard guy, exposes himself 'shivering inside'. In the capitalist world, we are all victims in different ways; few can find words to explain how or why. But Lennon starts to talk about how men hurt women because they themselves are threatened, how impossible it is to give love when love is something you have never had, how it is hard to go forward when you don't know where you are.

The most financially successful working-class artist this century tells us that he is still scared of being a failure, of the need to fight and to lie. And he is not just asking us to sympathise with his position, but to understand how we all live in a world which is thwarting and maiming our feelings.

When Lennon goes onto the offensive, he's truly frightening. There's a searing song aimed right at the Mary Whitehouse brigade which ends, 'You can go to church and sing a hymn, Judge me by the colour of my skin, You can live a lie until you die, One thing you can't hide, is when you are crippled inside'. And he attacks his old partner, Paul McCartney, in the menacing 'How Do You Sleep At Night'. If only he wrote about the Tories and prod deals as well...

The music is deceptively plain. For the eerie sheets of strings of the New York avant-gardists, the Flux Fiddlers, George Harrison's dobro and slide guitar work and the stark, booting tenor of the late King Curtis are brilliantly used.

And Lennon himself knows better than anyone how to make music that haunts the listener's imagination. He's no Alex Campbell but socialists who are not afraid of their own emotions will find *Imagine* weirdly inspiring.

DAVID WIDGERY

BOOK

The Decline of Working Class Politics: Barry Hindess: Paladin 60p.

BY WORKING-CLASS politics Mr Hindess means Labour Party politics. His main point is a simple one. It is that the Labour Party is less and less a working class organisation and more and more a middle-class one.

Thus: 'After the 1951 election 37 per cent of the Parliamentary Labour Party came from working-class backgrounds. By 1966 this figure had dropped to 30 per cent. Ministers from working-class backgrounds provided about half the membership of the Attlee cabinets in the 1940s. In 1964 the proportion was 26 per cent and it has since fallen to 17 per cent in 1966, to 9 per cent by the end of 1967 and to zero following the ministerial reshuffle of October 1969.'

These changes at the top have gone hand in hand with similar changes at local council level and also 'among the grass-roots party activists'. The book is based on a study of the Labour Party in Liverpool but the picture it paints is familiar to anyone with recent experience

of the Labour Party in other cities.

It is a picture of an organisation that is a shell, with a tiny active membership which is dominated by more or less middle-class people. 'The membership lists, where these exist, are often unreliable. They contain the names of people who are dead, have long since left the area, are no longer members and, in extreme cases, do not even know that they are in the party.' Using these admittedly unreliable lists Mr Hindess concludes: 'Out of a total city membership of 4700 the two types of working-class wards, with about half the city's population, supplied only 1500—less than one third.'

A more reliable indication of middle-class dominance is the background of the ward officials—rather misleadingly described as 'activists'. Professional people who make up 2.3 per cent of the population provide 30.8 per cent of the officials, unskilled workers who make up 19 per cent of the population provide absolutely none of the officials. All the working-class groups together, who make up 90 per cent of the Liverpool population on Mr Hindess' figures, provide 56 per cent of the officials. The middle class 10 per cent provide 44 per cent. These figures were worked out in 1965. It would be interesting to know what has happened since, in view of the continuing decline in party membership.

It comes as no surprise to learn that the alderman and councillors 'tend to be of a higher socio-economic status than either their constituents or the rank and file members'. More significant as a measure of change is the fact that the middle-class members 'show the lowest average age and by far the lowest average length of membership'. As the older generation of Labour Party workers die out the party becomes more middle class in composition.

It would be hard to show any simple

connection between these changes and the politics of the party. After all the party was undoubtedly mainly working class in Ramsey Macdonald's time and Macdonald himself was of working-class origins. That did not prevent the party from pursuing reactionary policies.

What is true is that there is now much less likelihood of biggest left wing movements in the party than was the case in the twenties and thirties—or even the fifties. The Labour Party is a pretty inhospitable place for socialists nowadays. As Mr Hindess says: 'The entrant position (ie entry of socialists into the party) is thus in a sense, self-destructive, for unless those who support it can muster massive support within the party, their numbers are likely to decline as a result either of expulsion or of voluntary movement to the right or left. In part the decline in the rate of expulsion since the early 1950s is attributable to the decline in this section of the membership.'

This is a good and informative book. I wish I could say it was easy reading. Unfortunately it is not. Mr Hindess is a sociologist and employs the jargon of his craft but it is well worth making the effort to understand him.

DUNCAN HALLAS

On one page REVIEW is going to attempt to cover quite a lot. Books, the mass media, popular culture will receive increased attention and the page is also going to deal with topics which the paper, through lack of space, has ignored in the past. During the next few weeks, for example, radical theatre and cinema will be examined.

The development of the page as a socialist forum hinges on the participation of Socialist Worker readers. Ideas, articles and criticism are all needed. Contact Nigel Fountain at Socialist Worker, and specify your field of interest.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

THE International Socialists is a democratic organisation whose membership is open to all who accept its main principles and who are willing to pay contributions and to work in one of its organisations.

We believe in independent working-class action for the abolition of capitalism and its replacement by a classless society with production for use and not for profit.

We work in the mass organisations of the working class and are firmly committed to a policy of internationalism.

Capitalism is international. The giant firms have investments throughout the world and owe no allegiances except to themselves and the economic system they maintain.

In Europe, the Common Market has been formed for the sole purpose of increasing the trade and profits of these multi-national firms.

The international power of capitalism can only be overcome by international action by the working class.

A single socialist state cannot indefinitely survive unless workers of other countries actively come to its aid by extending the socialist revolution.

In addition to building a revolutionary socialist organisation in this country we also believe in the necessity of forming a world revolutionary socialist international independent of either Washington or Moscow. To this end we have close relationships with a number of other socialist organisations throughout the world.

We believe in the necessity to unite socialist theory with the day-to-day struggles of working people and therefore support all genuine demands that tend to improve the position and self-confidence of the working class.

We fight:

For rank and file control of the trade unions and the regular election of all full-time officials.

Against secret negotiations. We believe that all settlements should be agreed or rejected by mass meetings.

For 100 per cent trade unionism and the defence of shop stewards.

Against anti-trade union laws and any curbs on the right to strike, whether the strikes are 'official' or 'unofficial'.

Against productivity deals and job evaluation and for militant trade union unity and joint shop stewards' committees both in the plant and on a combine basis.

For equal pay and a better deal for young workers.

For a minimum wage of at least £25 a week.

Against unemployment, redundancy and lay offs. We support the demand: Five days' work or five days' pay.

For all workers in struggle. We seek to build militant groups within industry.

Against racialism and police victimisation of black workers.

Against immigration restrictions.

For the right of coloured people and all oppressed groups to organise in their own defence.

For real social, economic and political equality for women.

Against all nuclear weapons and military alliances such as NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

Against secret diplomacy.

Against all forms of imperialism. We unconditionally give support to and solidarity with all genuine national liberation movements.

For the nationalisation of the land, banks and major industries without compensation and under workers' control.

We are opposed to all ruling class policies and organisations. We work to build a revolutionary workers' party in Britain and to this end support the unity of all revolutionary groups.

The struggle for socialism is the central struggle of our time. Workers' power and a world based on human solidarity, on the increasing of men's power over nature, with the abolition of the power of man over man, is certainly worth fighting for.

It is no use just talking about it. More than a century ago Karl Marx wrote: 'The philosophers have merely interpreted the world. The point is to change it.' If you want to help us change the world and build socialism, join us.

THERE ARE 15 BRANCHES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

SCOTLAND
Aberdeen
Cumbernauld
Dundee
Edinburgh
Fife
Glasgow N
Glasgow S
Stirling
St Andrews

NORTH EAST
Barrow
Durham
Halifax
Newcastle upon Tyne
Sunderland
Teeside
(Middlesbrough & Redcar)

NORTH
Barnsley
Bradford
Doncaster
Grimsby
Huddersfield
Hull
Leeds
Mid-Derbyshire
Osset
Selby
Sheffield
York

NORTH WEST
Blackburn
Crewe
Kirkby
Lancaster
Manchester
Merseyside
Oldham
Preston
St Helens
Wigan
Bolton
Potters

MIDLANDS
Birmingham

Coventry
Leamington
Leicester
Northampton
Nottingham
Oxford
Redditch
Telford
Wolverhampton

WALES and SOUTH WEST
Bath
Bristol
Cardiff
Exeter
Gloucester
Mid-Devon
Plymouth
Swansea

Wrexham

SOUTH
Ashford
Brighton
Canterbury
Crawley
Folkestone
Guildford
Portsmouth
Southampton

EAST
Basildon
Beccles
Cambridge
Colchester
Harlow
Ipswich
Leiston

Lowestoft
Norwich
Peterborough

GREATER LONDON and HOME COUNTRIES

Acton
Camden
Chertsey
Croydon
Dagenham

East London
Enfield
Erith
Fulham
Greenford
Hackney & Islington

Havering
Harrow
Hemel Hempstead
Hounslow
Ilford
Kilburn
Kingston
Lambeth
Lewisham
Merton
Newham
Paddington
St Albans
Slough
South Ealing
Tottenham
Walthamstow
Wandsworth
Watford
Woolwich
Hornsey

Communists face sharp drop in numbers

by Fred Hall

'THE KERNEL of the questions before our Party Congress is how to find a remedy for the continuing fall in membership and the increasing loss of popularity in the electoral field. This is at a moment when conditions have become objectively favourable for our rapid growth.'

So writes the veteran R Page Arnot, a founder member of the Communist Party, in the pre-Congress discussion in the Party's fortnightly Comment. The Congress meets this weekend. Page Arnot puts the Gollan leadership's problem in a nutshell.

The Executive Committee's Report tells us that 'apart from consistent work to increase membership and improve contact with all members, we had two special campaigns for new members'. The result? Party membership at the end of June 1971 was 28,803 compared with 30,607 at the end of June 1969.

If a left-wing party can't grow in the present very favourable circumstances, when can it hope to grow? But the net loss of 1800 members is only the tip of the iceberg. Much more significant is the steady decline in the activity of a large fraction of the membership.

Ticking over

'The overall picture,' writes another contributor to the discussion in Comment, 'is of a slowly falling membership and a rapidly ageing cadre force, burdened with the Herculean task of holding branches together, collecting money to keep our party ticking over and selling the Morning Star.' Not only are the majority of members inactive, they have lost most of the political conviction and cohesion that once made the Party a formidable force.

'On almost every question there are differences within the Party,' writes Dorothy Freedman. 'As a branch secretary visiting inactive comrades I find those who: think we are too pro-Soviet, think we are too anti-Soviet; think that we spend too much time on elections; that we should contest more elections; that we do not sufficiently expose Maoism; that Chinese communism is a particularly pure sort of communism; that the 'British Road' is 100 per cent correct; that the 'British Road' has held back our development. And these are only a few... Yet without political conviction and understanding of fundamentals, activity too flags.'

The Morning Star 'has won great praise from many trade union conferences and shop stewards committees,' says the Executive. 'Its support in the many strike struggles on the wages front and in defence of living standards and the social services has also been widely acclaimed.'

The praise and acclamation are not, however, translated into sales. No actual figures are officially available but we are told that the 'sharp decline' in sales 'was arrested during 1970' and that in the first quarter of 1971 'there was a slight increase but from then on there has been a decline.'



Gollan: there's another party

Unofficial estimates of the print order vary from 40,000 to 50,000 of which something like 25,000 are 'exported' to Eastern Europe. Thus taking the higher figure and making the unlikely assumption that print order equals sales, not even all the Party members buy the paper.

Add to all this the Party's disastrous election record: 58 candidates in the 1970 general election polled an average of 654 votes each, the worst result in the Party's 50-year history. In the 1971 local elections the Party fought 449 seats. 'In these elections we were defending 11 seats... We lost seven seats and gained one new seat, a net loss of six seats.'—EC Report.

Rapid decline

'Why the catastrophe at the polls?' asks a Watford member in Comment. 'We are told that objective factors were against us. Were they new objective factors? When Labour voters were disillusioned again—with the Wilson government betrayal, we lost votes. There must be reasons for our enormous setbacks. What are they? Does this draft resolution, or any EC statement so far, really make sense of it?'

'Or of the continued and now critical fall in the Party membership? Or of the grim state of branch life and activity? Or the appallingly low sales of literature?'

There are indeed reasons for the Party's rapid decline. And they are political rather than organisational. The Party ceased to be a revolutionary socialist organisation decades ago. Now it is no longer a Stalinist organisation.

Its top leadership and much of the ageing cadre are genuine social democrats. The British Road to Socialism is a left social democratic programme, socialist phrases notwithstanding. The Party's leading trade unionists act as left, and not

so left, social democrats. The Party's strategy is essentially based on the perspective of becoming a parliamentary force.

Unfortunately for Gollan and his friends there is already a rather large and well-established social democratic party in Britain called the Labour Party. And faced with the choice between a big social democratic organisation and a small one, most of the 'progressives' the Party aims to win will opt for the big Party.

Many of them entertain the illusion that it is possible to 'reform' the Labour Party. The Communist Party encourages this belief. The British Road tells us 'it is not the aim of the Communist Party to undermine, weaken or split the Labour Party'. Then why on earth is a separate Communist Party needed?

Tainted heritage

The point is put forcefully by an oppositionist, Jim Brookshaw, in Comment. 'Since we put forward left reformist policies, support uncritically the policies of 'left' Labour and trade union leaders, why should the advanced workers support us? They regard us as little more left than the Labour Party, but tainted with our Stalinist heritage. Why then should they vote for or support another reformist party without a real mass base?'

We can only agree with Comrade Brookshaw. The question is what can be done. It is out of the question for the bulk of the Party's cadres 'to get back to a Leninist position' as he proposes. Most of them never started from one and years of reformist practice and manoeuvres with 'progressives' have determined their political character.

Nor is there any hope from the neo-Stalinist opposition around Sid French. Their uncritical support of repulsive and repressive regimes in Eastern Europe is an additional obstacle to the development of a revolutionary socialist organisation.

Another veteran, Pat Sloan, once editor of Russia Today and a leading propagandist for Stalin, makes the point: 'Stalin's dictatorial rule was terminated only by his death. The absolute power of Chairman Mao still continues. And in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland open revolt by the workers was necessary in order to secure urgent changes in the Party leadership.'

There are revolutionaries in both factions in the Party. Neither faction as such can in fact be converted into the nucleus of a revolutionary socialist party. But that minority of genuine militants in the Communist Party will be an essential component of the revolutionary socialist party that must be built in the 1970s.

WHAT'S ON

Copy for What's On must arrive or be phoned Monday morning. Notices are charged at 5p per line, six words per line. Semi-display 10p per line. Cash with copy or, if phoned, by first post Tuesday. No insertions without payment—invoices cannot be sent.

MEETINGS

TEESSIDE IS: The Millionaire Press & the Socialist Alternative. Speaker Roger Protz, Editor Socialist Worker. The Settlement, Newport Road, Middlesbrough, Friday 12 November 7.30pm.

IS LABOUR HISTORY CONFERENCE: Saturday Nov 13 at Warwick University. The Revolutionary Movement in Britain 1910-1927. Further details: 187 Leam Terrace, Leamington, Warwick.

ENFIELD IS public meeting. The Tory Attack on the Unions. Speakers Jim Higgins (POEU), Alan Watts (AUEW). Tuesday 16 Nov, Edmonton Green Baths, 8 pm.

KILBURN IS: Public meeting. 'The Common Market—what it means for workers'. Speaker: Chris Harman. 8pm Tuesday 16 November, Anson Hall, Chichele Road, Cricklewood, NW2.

HUDDERSFIELD IS public meeting. Tony Corcoran on The Need for a Revolutionary Party. Friday 19 Nov 7.30pm. Armitage Room, Fraternity Hall, Alfred St (back of New St Co-op).

LEWISHAM IS: public meeting. Thursday 18 November, 7.30pm. Tony Polan on

'The Fight Against Racism'. Ladywell Baths, Lewisham High Street, SE13.

NORTHAMPTON IS public meeting. 'Tory Attack on the Welfare State'. Speaker Val Clark. Wednesday 17 November 8.00pm. The Racehorse, Abington Sq., Northampton.

EAST LONDON IS DAY SCHOOL AND SOCIAL: Sunday 28 November 2pm to 11pm. The Swan, Stratford Broadway. Speakers: Brian Trench on Northern Ireland, Chris Davison on Work in the Unions, Tony Cliff on Building the Party. Buffet and Dancing. Guest singer Alex Glasgow. Admission 50p from Kathy Sims 478 7311.

JOURNALISTS CHARTER, founding Conference of an NUJ rank and file caucus, Saturday 20 November, the Milton Hall, Deansgate, Manchester. 10.45am to 6pm. Credentials from 355 Lordship Lane London N17 or at the door.

NOTICES

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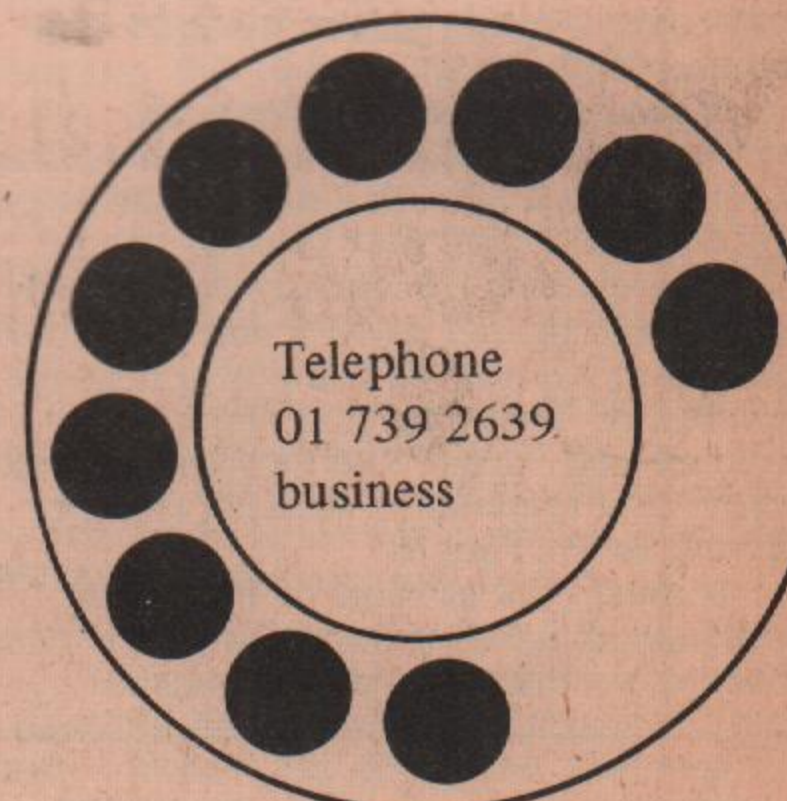
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NATIONAL ELFRIDA RATHBONE SOCIETY helps the educationally handicapped. Funds, volunteers urgently needed. 28 Commercial St., E1. (01-247-9538)

We want to hear from you

Socialist Worker wants to make page 10 the page that reflects the work and activities of the International Socialists. Branches should make a habit of advertising their public meetings as a way of attracting readers.

We also want short reports of what the branches are doing—local campaigns, demonstrations, interventions in strikes, successful public meetings. Brief reports should be sent to arrive by first post Monday.



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UCS JOBS IN DANGER AS LEADERS BACKPEDAL

by Steve Jefferys

GLASGOW:- Last week the Upper Clyde Co-ordinating Committee called their third mass meeting of shop stewards to discuss the fight against unemployment.

Five hundred shop stewards from all over Scotland attended and gave a rousing reception to the Plessey workers, who made it clear they were involved in a real occupation of their factory.

But nothing said at the meeting completely erased the doubts delegates felt on the change in strategy made by the UCS shop stewards. Previously they had urged 'Save UCS' as one unit. Now they had retreated to 'Keep the four yards open—save all the jobs'.

Jimmy Reid's main aim was to deny any intention of selling out the struggle. But he was entirely on the defensive. And each repeated denial merely added to the general unease as he added doubtful justification upon thinly-disguised distortion.

Reid asserted: 'We've never been dogmatic about the form of survival of shipbuilding on the upper reaches of the Clyde. If the Tories want the labour force in one or two firms they can have it—provided they keep the labour force.'

But his audience remembered only too well his oratory in support of the original slogan to 'Save UCS'. For even if two firms were established, the chances of John Brown's becoming 'viable' are negligible in the face of direct local competition from the government-backed Govan Shipbuilders.

STRATEGY

A call for strike action in support of the TUC lobby against unemployment on 24 November was made. But it was phrased in such a way as to allow the Glasgow AUEW District Committee to call a few days later for a one-hour token stoppage, while the UCS stewards and the Paisley AUEW District Committee called for a two-hour stoppage.

Nor was the strike call linked to an essential follow-up strategy to fight redundancy in every workplace, a strategy that would have to include a ban on productivity bargaining and on overtime, pressure for the shorter working week and the demand for nationalisation under workers' control of any firm declaring redundancies.

Since the stewards' meeting, the UCS leaders have been forced to re-appraise their position.

At a mass meeting last Thursday they even threatened to stop releasing completed ships to the government liquidator. Yet their decision to 'withhold ships' is qualified in such a way as to make it almost meaningless, for, at the same time, they announced that they will deliver the next three ships.

But those three ships are the only ships currently nearing completion. After they are finished there is not another due until January. And by that time two-thirds of the ships on the order book at the time of the UCS liquidation will have been completed.

RESPECTABLE

The reason for the failure of the UCS leaders to pursue a genuinely militant policy is because most of them are members of the Communist Party. At present that Party urges its members to appear 'respectable' and to avoid clashing with the Labour Party or with left-wing trade union officials.

But Danny McGarvey, the Boilermakers' union leader, has already privately warned the UCS stewards that if they are not prepared to compromise he will withdraw his members from the Co-ordinating Committee and negotiate separately on their behalf.

Socialists and militants throughout the country must now tell the UCS Co-ordinating Committee that their retreats are putting into jeopardy their greatest achievement. The UCS workers were the first to carry the fight against redundancy back into the factory after the employers had 'legally' sacked them.

But the turning of the struggle into a mock battle can only weaken the confidence of other workers faced with similar threats.

There is still time for a change to take place. Organisations that have contributed to the UCS Fighting Fund should write to the Co-ordinating Committee immediately promising further support if they withhold delivery of the ships due to be handed over.

Police and bosses line up in bid to break strike

THE STRIKE COMMITTEE at Millingford Engineering in Ashton, near Wigan, have complained about the behaviour of the police in a letter to the local chief constable. The police are regularly using the directors' office as a rest and refreshment room, while they insist on limiting the number of pickets on the gates to two.

Two strikers and one policeman received treatment at the local hospital after an incident in which a director in his



400 ON MARCH FOR JOBS

NORWICH:-400 trade unionists marched last Saturday against unemployment—a good turnout for an area usually thought to be backward in trade union matters. The marchers were addressed by George Smith of the TUC General Council, and George Wallace, a local Labour MP. Both were heckled by the audience, some of whom shouted 'General Strike' and demanded to know what the TUC was going to do about unemployment.

Highlight of the meeting was a speech by a shop steward from the BSC River Don plant who attacked the Labour government as well as the Tories for creating unemployment and said that only the working class could fight back. Picture shows part of the International Socialists' contingent on the march.

Picture: Tony Skipper

Demand for £250 increase to beat 'divide and rule'

by Chanie Rosenberg

THE National Union of Teachers adopted a new salary policy at a special conference in Blackpool last Saturday. It is for a flat rate increase of £250 to start next April.

The conference took place under the shadow of a compulsory arbitration award imposed last April under the Teachers' Remuneration Act. The most pernicious aspect of that settlement is the introduction of a complicated system of seven separate pay scales for teachers.

Since the successful strikes of 1969-70 the authorities have been determined to smash the tremendous unity displayed at the time, and this device of separate, unrelated scales is designed for that purpose.

Divide and rule won out even before arbitration, with all the smaller teachers' unions going hook, line and sinker for the scales, which satisfy the sectional interests of heads, deputy heads and heads of big departments—in all one-fifth of the teachers. The NUT and ATTI (technical teachers) alone opposed the scheme.

But the NUT executive is itself made up almost entirely of headmasters, and it is not accidental that its opposition to the scales is weak and ineffectual. Throughout

the negotiations it produced one leaflet of principled opposition, and otherwise merely tinkered with anomalies. Lack of explanation and warning led many NUT members to hope for quick benefit out of them—and damn the long-term consequences of depressed salaries.

This secret acceptance of the scales was only too evident at the conference. NUT conferences are heavily weighted with heads and poorly represent the half of the membership who are on the lowest scale. For the same reason the half of the membership below 35 years of age is considerably under-represented.

Muted voice

In these circumstances the executive manages to manipulate the agenda so that it is rarely beaten. The voice of the rank and file class teacher is muted, while that of the sectional interests and the 'career' teacher comes through loud and strong.

At Blackpool the first amendment chosen for debate was one from the right that called for wider differentials. The executive then urged unity behind its own proposals to defeat this 'backlash' and implied that attempts to push for other things besides the £250—for instance, for a unification of the scales—were 'diversionary'.

The backlash turned out to represent a mere handful of delegates, but the executive succeeded admirably with its manoeuvre. It was ably assisted by members of the Communist Party.

The main opposition came from the Rank and File teachers' organisation, which inspired a number of amendments, seeking in addition to the £250 to unify the scales and to get the rate for the job.

The demand for the £250 flat rate increase is a good rallying cry. It can be successful if unity and strength are gained by militant tactics similar to those used in the 1969-70 struggle. But the members must be warned of dangers for future salary negotiations of 'divide and rule' separate scales. The executive must be forced by the rank and file to campaign on this issue too.

Steel men in link up over sackings

by John Deason

BISAKTA members at Irlam steel works in Lancashire have kicked out their old officials and elected new ones who are committed to fighting planned redundancies and bonus cuts. This is a major breakthrough against previous union policy.

The new officials were elected last week and have already made it clear that they intend to oppose redundancy with work sharing under a guaranteed wage. To strengthen this fight they have already made contact with the River Don steel workers in Sheffield.

A delegation from Irlam visited Sheffield last week. After talks with the senior stewards at the Don works they issued a statement declaring their determination to resist sackings and closure.

The majority of the Irlam steelworkers are in BISAKTA. This is a right-wing union that does not even allow shop steward representation.

The new wave of militancy at Irlam has been inspired by militants determined to change BISAKTA into a democratic union committed to fighting for the interests of the members.

In the steel industry, the fight against redundancy has to be linked to a struggle for democratic control of the union. The previous apathy at Irlam has been largely due to the failure of BISAKTA officials, both at national and local level, to keep the rank and file informed.

Michelin men deflate bosses

by Paul Foot

DUNDEE:-McAlpines, the building firm, are losing vast sums in penalty clauses to Michelin because of delay in construction of a new tyre factory.

Work is being held up because of a strike of all 500 workers. In September, agreement was reached between John Adams, Woodworkers' Society Federation steward, and the site agent about the target for bonus for the 16 joiners working in the cooling water pit section.

For three weeks the management paid according to these targets—about £16 per week per joiner. But after four weeks management suggested a different target and a different rate which would have worked out at about £3 a week.

The joiners blocked the section pending negotiations about the bonus rate. On Friday 23 October, the management sacked the 15 joiners and John Adams. The entire work force walked off the site.

Refused

McAlpines refused to comply with a local disputes panel which unanimously recommended reinstatement and got a 'failure to agree' at national level.

Two ASW Executive members, Crawford and Darcy, have refused to declare the strike official, as has Scottish ASW organiser Donald MacGregor.

And two regional officials of the ASW, McGill and Johnston, have visited McAlpine behind the backs of the shop stewards and have been offered a bargain. McAlpines say they will take Adams back but not the 16 men.

Such a bargain is out of the question both for Adams and the men. 'We've got the ball at our feet,' John Adams told me, 'and nobody's prepared to kick it harder than us. We're staying out for reinstatement, and nothing less.'

To the cheers of the local press, owned by D.C. Thompson, who bans all trade unions, the local social security offices have refused all payment to the strikers and their families.

SIT-IN BID TO STOP CLOSURE

BRIDGEND:- 350 AUEW members from J Eng's factory who lost their jobs when the British Steel Corporation forced the firm into liquidation are occupying the plant.

J Eng's is an important link between BSC's massive Port Talbot plant and one of their major local customers, British Leyland at Llanelli. A monthly interest payment to BSC of £11,000 was not paid for one month, which resulted in BSC bringing in the liquidator and gaining control of the company.

The men's major demand is for the re-opening of the factory and payment of money owed to them, which amounts to an average of £150 each. They are now having trouble with Social Security and there are serious cases of hardship.

A full-scale occupation will take place if there is any attempt to move machinery. The men can win only if their morale keeps up. To do this they should take a clear policy of non-co-operation with the liquidator and strengthen the occupation immediately. For this reason they should claim dispute pay from their union and seek the support of other trade unionists, particularly at BSC and British Leyland.

Picture: back page.



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Socialist Worker

R-R bosses want show down at Bristol

SW Reporter

BRISTOL: The strike of 6000 manual workers at Rolls-Royce is vital to the fight against management's plans to introduce a new wage structure and reorganise all its operations with further massive redundancies.

All future wage structures are at stake. The new management want to crack Bristol and then move work from the higher paid plants at Coventry.

Bristol is the only plant without productivity deals, Jack Martin, a member of the manual workers' negotiating committee, said this week.

Ray Gardiner, another member of the committee, added that only a determined strike would force management to concede that any pay award at Bristol will be on top of a national agreement now under discussion.

'If they succeed in introducing a new prod deal it will be a major defeat. We have to win this one because it is really a preliminary skirmish. The real fight is going to come over the wages structure and the reorganisation of the company,' Ray Gardiner said.

Financial crisis

Since February there has been a rash of battles throughout the Rolls-Royce empire. 6000 are out in Bristol for a cost of living rise, Coventry is involved in the toolroom dispute and at East Kilbride there has just been a return to normal working after a long fight over redundancies.

All these struggles are the direct result of the financial crisis that hit the firm early this year. Then the government stage-managed a bankruptcy to safeguard the investments of the major banks like Lazards and Lloyds.

£30m were paid out to Lazards, Lloyds and the Midland Bank to cover their debenture stocks by a government weeping about bankruptcy.

Employers got rather different treatment than the bankers. 5000 at Derby were made redundant and several hundred more at East Kilbride.

At Bristol, management refused to honour the part of the interim wage award negotiated last autumn which provided for an increase if there was an 'abnormal' rise in the cost of living. The stewards and the workers learnt just how tough management had become.

Management is digging its heels in for a showdown. But the manual workers are showing a willingness to fight despite the financial hardships that have resulted from the earlier overtime ban and work to rule.

And the clerical workers—previously status conscious—are showing sympathy. They have rejected any form of job evaluation and the prospects for forging a new unity are good.

WINSON GREEN—HOW TORY ATTACK HITS CHILDREN

ICI ON WARPATH AGAINST ENGINEERS

SW Reporter

DONCASTER: 200 engineers at ICI's Nylon Plant went on strike last week when 14 fitters were sent home. The dispute was caused by the re-allocation of shift work.

ICI management are on the warpath. 750 workers were sacked in the summer. Ever since then the management have demanded more and more efficiency, with the constant threat that the factory may have to close.

A host of petty measures have been taken by ICI's local boss, 'Adolph' Turner. Workers have called the new regime there the Fourth Reich.

Strict timekeeping on meal breaks has been enforced for the first time and all literature, with a special reference to Socialist Worker, has been banned—except for ICI propaganda sheets.

INSTRUCTION

As part of 'working together' in the 'new atmosphere of co-operation' under the ICI productivity deal, the Weekly Staff Agreement, there is supposed to be consultation with the unions. ICI's interpretation of consultation amounted to the following: one meeting when the unions case was dismissed out of hand, followed by two letters instructing the fitters to turn up on their new day shifts.

As a result the fitters will lose £4 a week each. For this reorganisation, designed to save the company cash and a prelude to reorganisation of the process workers ICI has offered to keep the old rates for only another three months.

The District Committee of the AUEW has called for the strike to be made official, and process workers in the TGWU are in support.

The ICI National Combine Committee has decided that stewards from plants involved in disputes will visit other areas to explain the facts to mass meetings. Every effort must be made to ensure that this decision is carried out on all occasions. It will be of vital assistance in strengthening nationally the organisation of ICI workers.

LATE NOTICES

A MEETING of all IS members in the AUEW will take place early in December. Members concerned contact the Industrial Sub Committee, 6 Cottons Gardens E2 8DN, for further details.

Supervisors keep fighting

SW Reporter

LEEDS: Supervisors and technicians—members of ASTMS—at Doncaster Monkbridge Forge have been on strike for nine weeks over a 25 per cent wage claim. Over the last three years, shop floor wage rates have increased by 38 per cent while supervisors and technicians have lagged behind with only 16½ per cent increases.

The claim was put in 12 months ago, but after going through 'procedure' without success, the 104 men and women gave 24 hours' strike notice and came out

against the advice of their divisional officer.

For five weeks the only support came from local ASTMS branches, the ASTMS Division 1 Council and local factories like English Electric (Bradford). Blacklegs were moved in from the Sheffield factory of the combine.

But when it came to working under

blacklegs most of the AUEW stewards offered no resistance. When pressure from ETU stewards led to a deadlocked Joint Shop Stewards Committee, the 34 electricians followed official instructions not to work under blacklegs and were locked out. As a result they were slandered in the factory and were back to work.

Meanwhile the strike has gained in strength and the ASTMS executive has been forced to make it official. Management's resistance has begun to crumble

by Granville Williams
MARGARET THATCHER was asked recently whether she had ever been poor. 'It depends what you mean by poor,' she replied. 'It so happens we always had access to food.'



SIT-IN STRIKE IN WALES

Some of the workers from J Eng's factory in Bridgend, South Wales, who are occupying the plant against closure. Report: page 11

Coventry on brink of major strike over toolroom dispute

by Roger Rosewell

COVENTRY now stands on the brink of an all-out strike by 8000 toolroom workers that will result in massive factory lay offs and shut downs.

The dispute has been caused by the local engineering employers terminating a 30 year-old pay agreement that automatically gave toolroom workers the average rate of the city's skilled production workers. The employers cancelled the agreement on 1 September and since then the toolroom workers have staged nine one-day protest stoppages. Three weeks ago the employers—who are dominated by British Leyland—retaliated by locking out the strikers for the day following their stoppage.

Last week Rolls-Royce took the employers' offensive to a new peak by indefinitely locking out its 1150 toolroom workers. Now a ballot for an all-out strike is being organised and the first results show an overwhelming majority in favour of it.

The dispute has been complicated by lack of unity between toolroom workers and production workers. For years the toolmakers have benefited from the militancy of the production workers without ever having to fight for wage increases themselves. This has caused hard feeling and has also resulted in the local engineering union district being controlled by a number of leading right wing officials.

The employers' attack on the toolroom agreement is closely linked to the present efforts of British Leyland to scrap piecework in its Coventry factories and replace it with Measured Day Work. This policy was decided in 1968 when the employers secretly agreed to try and abolish piecework because of the ability of militant shop stewards to use the system to push up wages.

The Tory government has been backing the employers. In January, officials of Robert Carr's Department of Employment visited Coventry to discuss the future of the agreement with local employers. Now it has been the nationalised Rolls-Royce company that has escalated the battle by its mass lock-out.

If this attack on the toolroom agreement is successful the whole of Coventry will suffer. A victory will encourage the employers to launch new offensives. This is why they must be beaten and the toolroom workers helped to win.

That may be true of the Tory Minister of Education. But at the Benson Junior School in Winson Green, Birmingham, hungry children have been scavaging in the waste bins for food. The issue was first raised by the headmistress, Miss Violet Legge, in September when free school milk was stopped by the Tories for children between the ages of seven and 11.

But it was not until the matter was raised again on Birmingham City Council last week that the vulture press swooped down and put it briefly into the headlines and then were off again.

What is really happening is more serious and more long term than came out in the sensation-seeking papers.

Winson Green is part of the inner circle of Birmingham—designated as an 'educational priority area'. Housing, school amenities, wages and welfare facilities are so poor that teachers are given hardship money for working in the area.

These conditions have been created over many years. But they are being made completely intolerable by the most recent Tory attacks on those least able to fight back—the unemployed, the poor, the elderly and children.

As Miss Legge pointed out, while rebutting councillors who scoffed at her description of children rummaging in dustbins for food, the withdrawal of school milk means that children are 'penalised just because they are inarticulate and cannot speak up for themselves.'

APPALLING

The crazy logic of the Tory policies can be seen in the case of the increase in school meal prices. So many children have stopped having the meals in Birmingham that the service has lost £110,000 more than would have been the case if the prices had remained the same.

But the hunger of the school children is only one part of the appalling conditions under which many people in Winson Green are forced to live. Housing conditions are equally bad.

For example, a young married couple in Reel Street managed with the help of a doctor to get a house from the local housing department after they found that they could not afford the £6 a week they were being charged in their previous flat. The wife was pregnant and the continual worry of making ends meet was getting her down.

But the house they have moved into is due for demolition in 1973, is surrounded by unoccupied buildings, and the council refuse to carry out necessary repairs because they say it is not worth it for two years.

These conditions are not confined to Winson Green. All over Britain they are becoming more and more common.

Rising unemployment means that growing numbers of families face a difficult struggle to feed and clothe themselves. The real face of Tory Britain is one of hardship, slum housing, subsidies for the well-to-do, and hunger for the children of the poor.

It is a system that has to be swept away and replaced by one which provides jobs, housing, schools and welfare provisions for all who need them.

Builders out over sackings

SW Reporter

TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY building workers at the World's End site, Chelsea, west London, went on strike this week against proposed redundancies.

The site is a militant one that has supported all the strikes and demonstrations against the Industrial Relations Bill. Management is violating the 'last in, first out' principle by demanding the right to sack men of their choice.

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