

Socialist Worker

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

RESIST TORY BLACKMAIL

NIXON STEPS UP AIRBORNE TERRORISM

WITH the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong, airborne terrorism against the people of Vietnam reached new depths of horror this week.

Nixon has made it clear that there is no limit to the amount of suffering he is prepared to cause in order to defend American domination of south east Asia.

Yet his actions are not a sign of strength, but of weakness. Reports indicate that the forces of the National Liberation Front and North Vietnam are gaining ground in the South.

The bombing cannot affect the present fighting—military experts reckon it would take six weeks before its effects would be felt even near the border, and six months before they affected developments near Saigon.

Nor can Nixon seriously hope to deter the North Vietnamese. Continual terror bombing from 1965 to 1968 did not break their fighting spirit, and there is no indication they are more likely to be discouraged now.

Above all the bombing cannot transform the corrupt politicians of South Vietnam into a workable and stable government, or make the demoralised South Vietnamese troops into a presentable army.

Yet Nixon has no choice. To send in ground troops would cause massive outrage at home and lose him the elections.

All Nixon can do is go on bombing, aided by a massive array of electronic equipment. He cannot win the war; but he can destroy the economy of North Vietnam painfully reconstructed since 1968. Above all he can go on killing Vietnamese, North and South alike, almost indefinitely.

Doubtless Nixon is scrambling around for a 'political solution'. It is not our job to predict. Imperialism will continue to kill—blindly and pointlessly—until it is disarmed.

Our duty is to make it quite clear that there is only one real solution to Vietnam's problems—the kicking out of the Americans and their puppet government in Saigon.

Last week's issue of Socialist Worker was incorrectly numbered 269 instead of 267. We apologise for any confusion this may have caused.

THE TORIES have issued a challenge to the whole trade union movement by invoking their new Industrial Relations Act in the railway dispute. It is a challenge which must be taken up and thrown back in their faces.

What is involved is legalised blackmail by the government. Unions are being told that if they do not abandon the fight for the living standards of their members, then their funds will be seized. And this in the case of a work-to-rule that cannot mean a breach of contracts of employment, but rather an assiduous keeping to their terms. It seems that in Tory Britain even overtime working is regarded as compulsory under the law.

Massive propaganda has been used to back up the government. Ministers have made scarcely veiled calls for mob action against individual railway workers by stressing that the 'public' should make its feelings felt—as if 10 million trade unionists and their families were not part of the public.

The four or five millionaires who own the press have been only too happy to chip in and lend a hand to their friends in Downing Street. They have been putting about the story that while the miners might have had a case, the railmen have none since the offer is a 'fair' one.

Yet under the offer the average railman will be worse off than 12 months ago. The 12 per cent increase headlined in the papers will never actually find its way into anyone's wage packet. To start with, 35p in every pound of it will be taken straight back by the government in increased tax and national insurance deductions, so that it will be worth only 7.8 per cent. That is rather less than the rise of nine per cent in the cost of living over the last year.

THOUSANDS

If the government has its way, the 90,000 railwaymen at present living on wages below the official poverty line will hardly see a massive improvement in their conditions.

British Rail has spent several thousand pounds on advertisements trying to prove that such workers are not 'lower paid'. But even its distorted picture cannot conceal all the facts.

It argues, for instance, that average weekly earnings will be £32, but then goes on to admit that this is for a 48 hour week. In other words, without overtime rail pay will be under £24—three pounds less than the national average.

Ministers try to create the impression that any concession to the rail-

men would mean increased fares. They do not mention the tens of millions of pounds paid out by the railways every year as interest charges to money lenders.

What the propaganda smokescreen hides is the real aim of the Tory operation. Two years of rising unemployment, welfare cuts, rent increases and onslaughts against the unions have not been sufficient to solve the problems of the government's paymasters, the two per cent of the population who own 85 per cent of the industrial wealth. This was graphically brought home by a record trade deficit of £60m last month.

FAILED

The Tories are desperately manoeuvring to make the rest of us bear the burden that results. They are trying to shift the blame for their failings on to the organised trade union movement.

Their last attempt to do so failed miserably. Through determination, solidarity and militancy the miners' strike gave Heath a bloodied nose. Now he is attempting to exact a harsh revenge.

The trade unions have the strength to break right through the Industrial Relations Act. Massive industrial action by a single strong section such as the railmen can force ministers to eat their own words and compel law lords to look the other way.

For neither can run the railways if the workers refuse with full backing from the trade union movement. And if Heath is forced into another headlong retreat so soon after the miners' victory, it will be the beginning of the end both for his government and his anti-union laws.

All that is needed is that the trade unions stand up and fight, explain the real issues at stake to all their members, and refuse to be intimidated by a law which the working class movement cannot and will not accept.

by Chris
Harman



London railwaymen: their action hit the bosses where it hurt—in the City

May Day Rally

Bring The Tories Down
Why Labour Does Not Fight

Monday 1 May, 7.30pm
Islington Town Hall
Upper Street, N1
(nearest tube—Highbury and Islington)

SPEAKERS

Bernadette Devlin MP
Paul Foot, Tony Cliff
Wally Preston
plus international speakers
Organised by International Socialists

BEER: THE BITTER TRUTH

There's more water in Britain's beer today than ever before. Report: centre pages.

Iceland fights for her fish

by Ian Birchall

ICELAND's proposed extension of her fishing limits to 50 miles has produced unusual unity of workers and bosses in Britain. Not only have the British Trawlers' Federation called for Naval protection, but the Transport and General Workers' Union have threatened to block imports and exports to Iceland.

But the dispute has wider implications than a threat to British jobs. Iceland is in a similar situation to most of the backward countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. It is almost wholly dependent for economic survival on a single product.

Fish and fish products make up 81.9 per cent of Iceland's total exports—compared to figures like 10.6 per cent for Norway, 1.9 per cent for Canada and 0.2 per cent for Britain.

Iceland is also a key NATO base. The US have 3700 men at Keflavik, strategically situated on a major Russian submarine route.

But NATO is unpopular in Iceland. When the country joined NATO in 1969 rioters broke every window in the Parliament building—an unprecedented event in a usually peaceful country.

There is little native capitalism in Iceland. Much industry is American-owned and trawlers are often owned by co-operatives.

Last summer a new government took office, including the People's Alliance—formerly the Communist Party but now without international attachments.

Iceland must choose whether to remain in the American orbit, or to try to break out. But to do the latter it needs economic independence—hence the fishing dispute. It is doubtful whether the present regime is prepared for the social transformation necessary really to challenge imperialism.

Italy: jobless over a million

UNEMPLOYMENT in Italy, as in Britain, is now over one million. Apart from the huge permanent unemployment problem in the south, workers in the industrial north are now being severely hit.

A long list published in the Italian revolutionary paper Battaglia Comunista suggests that the main trouble is the bankruptcy, closing down or severe cut-back of small firms and factories.

Examples include the Allis Chalmers factory near Milan, where 400 workers (like their fellow workers in North Wales) are threatened with the sack, and the textile factories of Cremona, where 1000 lost their jobs in 1971.

Some workers in the major industries have also been affected, such as 1000 sacked by contracting firms in the great chemical industry complex of Porto Marghera. Building workers are badly hit in many cities, as new industrial building falls off.

Workers fighting unemployment have occupied several factories threatened with closure, and in two textile factories at Valmadrera and Bellano occupations have now lasted five months.

GRAMSCI:

Prison Notebooks

£6 post free

Turin 1920: Factory councils and the General Strike

23p, including postage

FROM: IS Bpks

6 Cottons Gardens, London E2

ARGENTINA: END OF THE HONEYMOON

by Vic Richards

ARGENTINA is in a serious crisis. The economy has been declining for the last 18 months. Big business, which has been supporting the military dictatorship, is alarmed and crying out for a solution. Foreign investors and the International Monetary Fund are knocking at the door, asking for their money.

They want the government to step up the attack on the living standards of the working class. By doing so the government could raise profits and investment, and so stop foreign capital going to Brazil instead.

This shows the bankruptcy of the military regime. The military seized power in 1966 in a bid to stop popular unrest from rising to the surface.

Since then their main aim has been to smash the organised power of the trade unions. In this they have been unsuccessful, and so the crisis goes on.

Unable to win by force, the military have now decided to resort to cunning. For several months the military leader General Lanusse has been trying to arrange for his fellow general Peron to return from exile in Spain.

Deceived

Peron was the dictator of Argentina from 1945 to 1955.

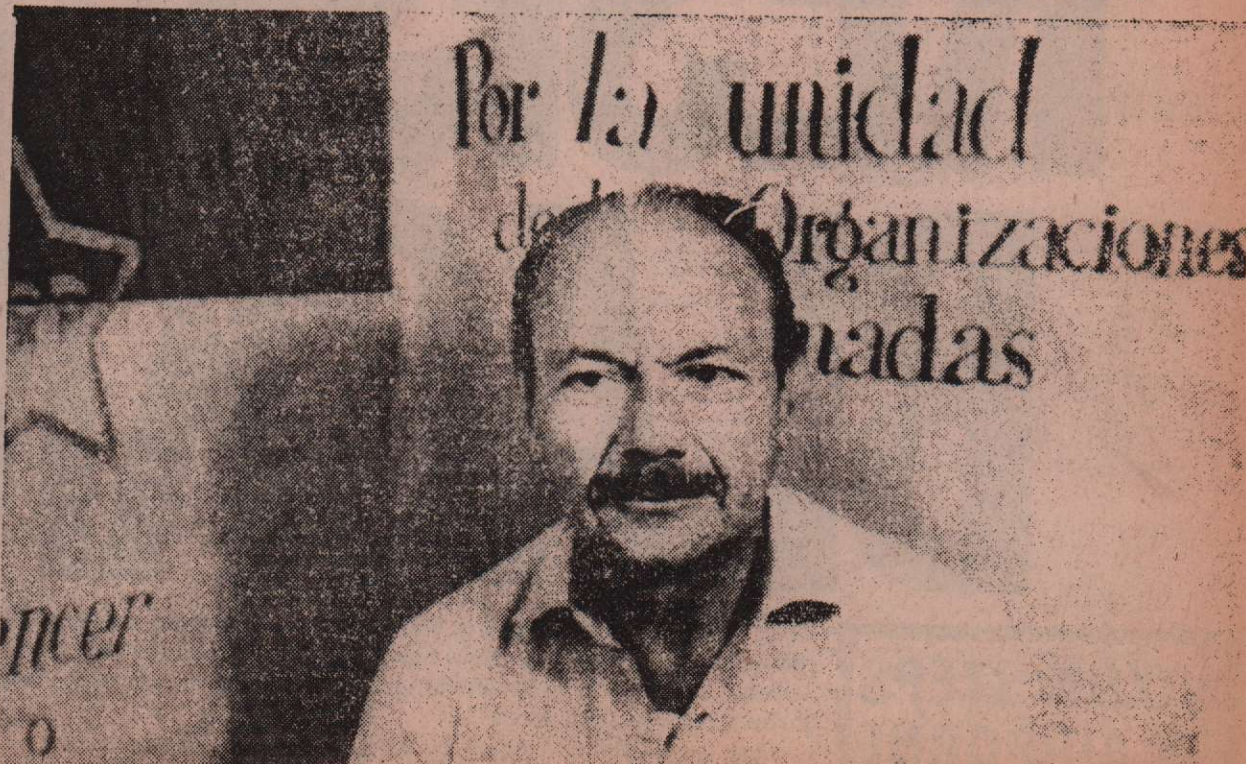
He is one of the most unscrupulous demagogues the world has ever known. He posed as 'friend of the poor' by conceding minor improvements to trade unions and their leaders during the post-war boom.

He deceived workers for 11 years by a sham offensive against the big landowners. But he never carried out a serious land reform—using the excuse that he did not want to upset grain and beef exports.

Pressure eventually mounted from below, and by 1955 he had to grant a last concession, by arming a militia of his supporters. This alarmed big business, so the army overthrew Peron. He left for Spain with his cronies and some £240 million.

Ever since, the bureaucrats of the CGT (the Argentinian TUC) have fostered illusions about Peron. Most workers now look back to his dictatorship as a golden age, so all governments since 1956 have lacked popular support.

But a growing minority now



The kidnapped Fiat executive Sallustro, photographed with revolutionary slogans, before he was killed by the guerillas.

realises that the Peronist bureaucrats defend the unions for the sake of their own power, but want to avoid confrontations with the government over their members' living standards. As the crisis deepens this may develop into a serious movement that will challenge union leaders and government alike.

To forestall this—or a possible coup by the right-wing of the Army—General Lanusse and the CGT are attempting to bring Peron back.

If they can take the steam out of this crisis, they will obtain the support of big business at home and abroad. They can then set about cutting workers' standards of living.

Killed

But these attempts to hoodwink the labour movement are being exposed.

The guerilla group ERP (People's Revolutionary Army)—claimed to be 'Trotskyist'—has kidnapped a few particularly vicious employers' Most spectacularly, they recently abducted and killed the President of Fiat (Argentina), Dr Oberdan Sallustro, in Cordova. After a long strike at Fiat last year, Sallustro co-operated with the Army in suppressing the

unions and jailing the strike leaders.

The ERP's aim in kidnapping Sallustro was to collect the ransom and distribute it among Fiat workers. This would create sympathy for the ERP and show up the CGT's failure to defend its members.

But these 'Robin Hood' type actions may easily lead workers to rely on the guerillas instead of on themselves. The killing of Sallustro—or of extreme right-winger General Sanchez—may provide the excuse for an offensive against the labour movement which the guerillas are too weak to prevent.

Only mass action by organised workers can break the hold of the CGT and lead to the overthrow of the military regime.

There are encouraging developments in this direction. Mass demonstrations have been held in Mendoza against steep rises in electricity charges. One demonstrator was killed and many injured in clashes with the police. As a result the governor of Mendoza has resigned.

General Lanusse has taken off the kid gloves and Peron has been forced to denounce him, jeopardising their honeymoon. The farce may now have come to an end. If so, the future is grim for Argentina's military rulers.



THE DECISION of a South African appeal court to acquit the Dean of Johannesburg was predictable. The sentence passed on him had already served its purpose—to warn liberals and do-gooders to keep clear of any activity involving even mild hostility to the squalid racist regime.

At the same time the South African government is still sensitive to the opinion of world capitalism, and would have found it embarrassing to keep someone as obviously harmless as the Dean in prison for a long time. The 13 Africans, Indians and coloured people sentenced recently under the Terrorism Act—and whose case has had little publicity—will not get such gentle treatment.

THOSE who denounce the 'excessive' wage demands made by British workers and at the same time extol the virtues of the Common Market should look at a report published by the EEC Commission last week. It shows that in almost all Common Market countries labour costs rose more rapidly than in Britain.

The rise was greatest in Italy (14% per cent), followed by Belgium (nine per cent), West Germany (eight per cent),

and Holland (seven and a half per cent); only France (six per cent) came below Britain's six and a half per cent.

AN ITALIAN insurance company is offering a special policy for Members of Parliament seeking re-election in next month's elections. Candidates pay a premium of between £170 and £1300 and the total will be shared among

free travel on Rome buses, free entry to cinemas and sporting events, cheap theatre tickets, and exemption from all taxes.

SIXTY-SIX Cairo textile workers are reported to be still in prison following the savage repression against strikers at the end of March. The trade unions are demanding immediate and unconditional

REPORTS suggest that Albania's friendship with China may be waning. The Albanians criticise China's relations with Nixon and China's 'soft' attitude to the Common Market.

Changing partners would be nothing new for the Albanians. From 1945 to 1948 Albania was virtually ignored by Russia, and when the Communist Information Bureau was formed in 1947 the Yugoslavs persuaded Russia that Albania must be kept out.

But in 1948, when Russia split with Yugoslavia, Albania became the most loyal of the pro-Russians.

Then, in 1961, Khrushchev made Albania the scapegoat for his attacks on China. Now Albania is making new friends—Yugoslavia, and, for good measure, the Greek military dictators.

THERE IS less than wild enthusiasm in Moscow at the latest victories by the Vietnamese liberation forces. A semi-official article in Pravda on 8 April puts all the emphasis on the Paris peace talks and condemns the bombing of the North for 'sabotaging the negotiations' (not for sabotaging Vietnamese life and limb!).

BRIEFING

defeated members. About a dozen deputies and senators took out policies within four days of the scheme being announced.

It is hardly surprising that Italian MPs are worried about losing their seats. Apart from good salaries, they enjoy the privileges of free first-class rail travel, free rail travel for family and dependants, 48 free sleeper journeys a year, free hair-cuts and permanent waves for women, free bath and shower service,

release for all the prisoners.

The strike broke out when workers demanded a seven-hour day and the extension to the private sector of gains won by public sector workers. The employers replied with a lock-out.

When workers demonstrated at the factory gates, they were attacked by a troop of some 9000 security forces and savagely dispersed with clubs. About 200 workers were taken to hospital.

Socialist Worker

For Workers Control and International Socialism, 6 Cottons Gdns, London E2 8DN

Four-pronged Tory attack on workers

'THE GOVERNMENT cannot afford to lose this time. The miners' strike was a considerable set-back. A defeat by the railwaymen would amount to a defeat for the whole government strategy.' So speaks the authentic voice of big business, the Financial Times. And it speaks the truth.

The government's aim is to reduce the proportion of the total income going to workers and to increase the proportion going to big business. The government's strategy to achieve this aim has four prongs.

First, to keep the overall level of pay increases below the rise in prices and to reduce real wages—wages in terms of what they will buy. This is currently the centrepiece of government policy, which is why the Financial Times speaks of the miners' modest gains as 'a considerable set-back'.

Second, to continue to intensify the pressure to tie increases to productivity strings and so to increase the rate of exploitation of workers and, as an inevitable consequence, to increase unemployment.

Third, to cut-back on social services by selectivity, price increases as in the case of rents and allowing inflation to eat away at the value of what remains.

Fourth, to weaken and, in the longer term, to paralyse shop floor organisation by the use of the Industrial Relations Act and to stop 'wage drift'—the achievement of local gains to compensate for low national rates.

The hate campaign against the railwaymen is intended both to intimidate the leaderships of the rail unions—a tactic that was very successful with the power workers—and, if this fails, to prepare the way for the calculated gamble of resort to the law to 'cool off' the work to rule for 60 days. The point of that manoeuvre is to gain time to build up coal stocks which are still too low for the government's comfort.

The Labour turncoat

Propaganda is vital and a vigorous counter-attack is essential. Some obvious points need to be made again and again. Would Heath and his ministers accept a basic rate of £20 a week, plus preservation of modest differentials, for themselves? Or for the Labour turncoat Marsh and the other top bureaucrats of British Rail? Yet this is all the unions are demanding.

And how is it, that if the highly-paid management is even moderately competent, it is possible to produce chaos by sticking to the rules the management has itself laid down?

Again, just how many thousands of millions of pounds, have been paid out to the former shareholders of the railway companies, companies that were bankrupt or nearly bankrupt when they were nationalised?

Above all, the point has to be hammered home that the government is attacking all workers, not simply railwaymen and that, to borrow a phrase from the Financial Times, the workers cannot afford to lose this time. As to the threat of the Industrial Relations law, we should learn from the recent speech of the government's highest-paid member, Lord Hailsham. All systems of law enforcement, said Lord Chancellor Hailsham, depend on an element of bluff. This is absolutely right and we should be grateful for this admission by the highest legal authority. The government may invoke the law, they cannot enforce the law in the face of massive working-class resistance.

A job for militants

The job of militants now is to develop solidarity with the railwaymen. There is also a longer term job that is becoming more and more urgent. Win or lose this one, the government will fight and fight again to break working-class resistance and depress living standards. The employing class is united in this aim and has a clear, thought-out strategy for achieving it.

The official leadership of the working-class movement is divided, lacks any coherent strategy and, in many cases, does not want to fight in any circumstances. No confidence whatsoever can be placed on the trade union leadership left to themselves.

The crying need is for an organised rank and file movement with the will to win, a movement that operates both unofficially and inside the official structures, a movement that develops solidarity, coordination of claims, resistance to the Industrial Relations law and the leadership to make these things possible.

We are living in a highly unstable situation. Unless, in the not too distant future, the employers' offensive is decisively beaten the British working class faces a whole series of defeats. And the offensive will not be beaten unless a powerful grass roots organisation of militants can be created.



COTTONS WARMS

Brown and Mac

STRONG FEELINGS of 'deja vu'—the unnerving sensation that you have experienced an identical situation before—came with the intervention of new Employment Minister Macmillan in the railway dispute last week.

When old man Macmillan was prime minister in those long sun-drenched days of yesteryear, the railway workers had the temerity to want to add a few shillings to the miserable pittance that passed for a wage. Supermac called the union leaders to Downing Street, ordered a few crates of brown ale and, in the course of appealing to their better natures to defend the 'national interest', let it be known that his sympathy for their case stemmed from the fact that his grandad had been a 'railwayman'.

He even produced an old turnip watch presented to grandad for his services to the industry. Whether or not this schmaltz swayed the railmen is lost in the mists of time but today's union men should take note of this sample of Tory honesty.

Supermac's relative was no Victorian wheeltapper or shunter but was a powerful boss of the Great Western, a firm not known for its favourable treatment of working men or early trade unions. Macmillan's casual approach to the truth was typical of his ability to appear as a rather down-at-heel, baggy-pulloverd man of the people. The fact that he was a millionaire publisher was not much known to the general public.

Times pass. Maurice Minimac is a member of a Tory regime that doesn't believe in papering over class differences but in rigorously widening them. Which could be some sort of improvement if workers draw the necessary conclusions.

ANOTHER new Tory big-wig after Toothy Ted's reshuffle is Minister for Industry Tom Boardman. His suitability for the job can best be judged by the fact that he once had to apologise to the Commons for speaking in the debate on the GEC-AEI-English Electric takeover without realising he had shares in the com-



Macmillan: railwayman?

bine. Perhaps his other business connection—with Courage the brewers—had distorted his vision.

Hanging party

MUCH pontificating last week from BBC boss Lord Charlie Hill on how the corporation never succumbs to political pressure from any quarter. The BBC grapevine says otherwise.

Viewers who saw the recent dramatic reconstruction of the Craig-Bentley murder mistrial will recall that it ended with Derek Bentley being hanged in front of our eyes in a gruesome but necessarily realistic fashion.

The producer's original plan was to superimpose on that grisly scene a straight news recording of the last Tory Party conference, baying like bloodhounds as they voted in favour of the return of capital punishment. This was vetoed at top level by TV overlord David Attenborough on the grounds that it would offend Tory viewers.

Evil times

FIRE and brimstone were poured forth on the heads of luckless Beccles, Suffolk, International Socialists when the Rev Malcolm Sutton of St Michael's church delivered his weekly sermon. Primed by local squires, the vicar denounced IS as 'the biggest evil of the twentieth century'.

Curious to know what placed them in the international pantheon of barbarism above Hitler and Stalin, the bemused comrades visited his reverence and asked for his reasons.

'IS smacks of communism to me—and that means imprisonment without trial,' was the dog-collared reply. Yes, and as Comrade Heath was saying only the other day...

HEATON'S TRANSPORT, the St Helens firm that took the Transport Workers to court under the Industrial Relations Act, had better put its own house in order. It hardly passes muster as a 'law abiding' company. The firm failed to file an annual return in 1971 and is violating the 1967 Companies Act. We understand the government has no immediate plans to sue the company.

Foreman doctor

GKN bosses in the Midlands are getting tough on absenteeism caused by illness. Management clearly thinks

that doctors are now part of the world Bolshevik conspiracy and says in its staff regulations that 'salaries will be paid only for absence which in the company's opinion are due to your genuine illness.'

Workers who disagree with the experienced medical opinion of their foreman can appeal 'in the first instance to your immediate superior. Should you fail to obtain satisfaction you may ask that the matter be referred to high authority; if the matter cannot be resolved by other means the managing director can be asked to arbitrate.' In the case of death, 'higher authority' should be interpreted as meaning God.

FIVE bullet-proof jackets—at £200 a time—have been ordered by the Thames Valley Police Authority. Said chairman of the authority Major F R Law: 'One of the jackets is for the Chief Constable in case he visits Northern Ireland.'

His story

THE following may be of interest to would-be socialist examinees. It is taken from the 1969 Associated Examining Board report, on the examiners of O level history.

'Examiners are increasingly disturbed by evidence that some candidates are assimilating a false and superficial view of recent British History. They appear to delight in opportunities to denigrate Britain. There is too frequent an assumption that British influence in the world has been built upon rapacity and aggression: that colonialism was an unmitigated evil: that racial prejudice has been rampant, and that an unprincipled appeasement precipitated the world into the last war.'

'It would be unfortunate if the teaching of more recent periods of history becomes an excuse for propagating a political philosophy...'

Call the lift

AFTER the spy in the cab, the spy in the pocket. Otis lift service engineers in Glasgow have just been issued with two way radio transmitters which allow the management to buzz them and give them fresh work.

Otis engineers used to work on the 'task and finish' basis. This meant they could go home early if they got their skates on. Now they are permanently on call.

To add insult to injury, management asked the men if they would take the transmitters home at night and charge them up on their own domestic electricity. Some actually agreed.

When the proposed scheme was referred to him, one local Electricians and Plumbers' official suggested the men should try the scheme for a couple of weeks 'to see how it works'.



Away with the dogsbody image!

I DOUBT whether most of us who spoke in the debate on women at the IS Conference would write off the Women's Liberation Movement anything like so crudely as did the report in Socialist Worker (8 April).

Up to two years ago women in IS were mere dogs-bodies. We didn't write for the papers, or speak at meetings. We didn't run the branches or lead the activities. IS did virtually no work on any of the problems confronting working-class women.

In 1970 the ideas of Women's Liberation hit us like a ton of bricks,

but, rhetoric aside, it proved necessary for us to move outside IS—into WL and other independent women's organisations—before we could convince ourselves of our own abilities and before we could persuade IS to take work amongst women seriously.

It is a measure of the success, not the failure, of the WL that Conference decided that we will now integrate our work and politics on women into the activity and propaganda of IS. The tasks that face us are massive, and largely thanks to that 'middle-class' and 'apolitical' Women's Liberation

Movement, we are now ready and eager to get our teeth into them.

Certainly the movement has problems. It has stopped growing, and it won't be able to grow substantially until it adopts socialist politics.

Whether it will ever recover from the appalling parodies of marxism that were thrust upon it by the Maoists is hard to say, but knowing the impact that the WLM was able to have on IS, it seems to me to be highly irresponsible to write it off at this point. SANDRA PEERS, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

LIVELIEST LETTERS ON THE LEFT

Some light on IS support for IRA

WE HOPE this letter will contribute to the continuing discussion of the question of our 'unconditional but critical' support for all those, including the two IRAs, fighting imperialism in Northern Ireland.

What prompted us to write was the experience of selling Socialist Worker in an area where there are very few Irish and where the working class is largely hostile to the IRA.

To many working people the phrase

'unconditional but critical' can seem mere equivocation in answer to the question, 'Do you, or do you not support the IRA?'

Much of this is a question of emphasis—'Yes, of course we support the IRA's defence of the harassed Catholic working class; no we cannot support the weapon of terrorism—not because of any moral scruples but because it does nothing to build a real degree of political consciousness among the working class to see that the real enemy is British imperialism and capitalism which is international'.

The record of Socialist Worker in supporting the Irish workers' struggle against British domination and oppression cannot be criticised. The paper should not feel that it has to defend itself against the romanticism of the student left who childishly cheer every move of the IRA but who are divorced from the British working-class consciousness.

What distinguishes IS from others on the left is an awareness of the different levels of understanding among working-class people. Therefore the major task for Socialist Worker is to combat the ignorance born of years of propaganda from the British ruling class, justifying its political and economic domination of Ireland—as well as its conquest of half of the world.

We should make absolutely clear at all times why we say what we do about the IRA and British troops.

There is widespread working-class sympathy for the troops—who are presented in the press as 'our lads over there trying to keep the mad micks from tearing each other apart'—and getting shot into the bargain. This is reinforced by a lack of understanding of the history of Ireland and the reason why the British government can claim to act for the so-called Protestant majority in Northern Ireland.

The real need today is not for slogans but to provide socialist workers with the basic arguments needed to convince a growing number of fellow workers to reject Tory policies aimed at maintaining British economic domination of both Northern and Southern Ireland and to support the Irish in their fight to end this rule.

It must be made clear that in the end the alternatives are a continuation of the misery and exploitation of religious differences that have afflicted Ireland for generations or the overthrow of British rule and progress towards the building of a socialist united Ireland.—MARY CRAMPSE and JENNY DAVISON, Kingston, Surrey.

LETTERS to the editor are welcomed. They should be not more than 250 words in length and typed or written on one side of the paper only. Copy date for letters is first post Monday. Letters may be cut for space reasons.

Fancy Socialist Worker supporting the Building Regulations and such products of bureaucratic spleen, an incredibly repressive part of our society.

Perhaps building workers—at all levels—should take a stand and say: We refuse to build these slums for ourselves and our brother workers.

Yours from across the drawing board.—M DEAN SHERWIN, Barnstaple, Devon.

What about John McLean?

I WOULD agree generally with Jim Kincaid's article on the rent strike on Clydeside, 1915 (Socialist Worker 8 April), which is based largely on Willie Gallacher's book, *Revolt On The Clyde*.

But were many leading shop stewards in Glasgow 'revolutionary socialists'? Gallacher himself admitted that he was a syndicalist at the time of the strike, although he was a very active young militant in the Amalgamated Society of Brassfounders.

It is also a great pity that the article omitted the name of John McLean, the Clydeside socialist schoolteacher, who after all was recognised by Lenin as being one of the very few socialists in Europe, along with Rosa Luxemburg in Germany, who upheld socialist internationalism in Europe throughout the first capitalist world war.—ALLAN LAIDLAW, Greenock.

REFUSE TO BUILD THESE SLUMS!

IN YOUR article about the housing scheme at Barking you point out defects without an analysis of the wider situation. One small thing first:

The pram shed roof drained to a sewer is most unlikely to cause smells just because of this, any more than your kitchen sink should, since drain connections have gully traps.

The point is that rainwater should not be wasted and merely serve to overstrain sewage works but should be kept uncontaminated so that it can flow into rivers—its natural goal—and be available for use. Think of all the rain falling on hard surfaces in London...

As for thin concrete, there's too much over-strong stuff poured under and in buildings. At the expense of human values, we get pokey flats with plasterboard walls so that flushing the bog wakes the house.

Failures nowadays (eg Ronan Point, the roofs which blew off at Harlow) are due to negligence in design or procedure, not quantity of material. After all, Salisbury Cathedral has stood for centuries on brushwood thrown over a swamp, and we certainly don't want today's estates around that long!

Contractors are certainly chiselling, but to a large extent it is the government's heavy-handed housing cost yardstick and competitive tendering for price not quality that makes it impossible to design and build housing schemes of real worth. (Plus many other factors, I agree, but space inhibits).

Union tactics against the Act

IN part five of your series on the Industrial Relations Act you suggest that in cases where immediate action by workers is needed, and notice (to avoid breach and termination of contract) therefore inappropriate, unions should make strikes official, so 'the attack can be taken where the union is strongest'.

Can I make a comment on this? Stewards need not be 'picked off' if they cover themselves properly, and in so doing prevent themselves being charged with inducing, threatening or organising an 'unfair industrial practice'.

For example, if 'unfair' action can be 'organised' in a spontaneous way, then no one at all need be liable under the Act. Similarly, a threat of industrial action is one thing, but a statement that members will strike and that he (the steward) will

not be able to do anything about it if another.

And in cases where stewards are picked out, I question whether, say, 2000 workers taking action in support of a shop steward brought before the National Industrial Relations Court would be less effective than the financial and legal resources of unions. Union funds, even the T&G and AUEW, are not fantastic.

They should be saved, in my view, to back real crunch struggles, where shop floor strength has been defeated, rather than applied, or certainly put at risk, as a general rule, as you suggest.

However, in cases where solidarity and/or union organisation is weak, and particularly in small and medium-size firms, then the strength may well lie with the union. And admittedly, many of the employers prepared to use the Act may fit into this category.

In terms of preventing liability arising

under the Act, may I suggest that a strong case exists for the following:

1 Shop stewards should take a close look at any documents (such as works rules, collective agreements and so on) which might be incorporated into their contracts of employment, and the contracts of their members.

2 Certain actions, bearing in mind (1), may not be in breach of contract. (For example, an overtime ban). It is possible that these can be used immediately in place of a strike, without any 'leaders' being liable.

The TUC policy of non-registration seems to be working well, but even so, the particularly reactionary employer, or non-unionist, or disgruntled member, can involve stewards in the Act no matter how solid their non-co-operation with it.

Therefore, stewards should not think that non-co-operation means that they can forget about the Act. On the contrary, they must know it well.

The general danger is that some stewards will feel impeded in carrying out their functions because of fear of personal liability. They must know the Act, not least because, from now on, the Act will be made ineffective by action on the shop floor as much as by action from the 'formal' union organisation.—PAUL LEWIS, Workers' Educational Association, Swansea.

DISMISSAL NOT POLITICAL

AN ARTICLE in your issue of 1 April suggests that Martin Shaw was not appointed to a permanent lectureship at the University of Durham because of his political activities, and that the post was then 'handed over' to me. This is the first time, to my knowledge, that any such suggestion has been made. If it can be shown to be true, I would immediately and unconditionally withdraw my acceptance of the post.—GAVIN WILLIAMS, Seaford, Sussex.

THE GREAT

Manchester engineers' crucial confrontation with powerful bosses

MANCHESTER: This great sprawling northern capital is a city under seige, scene of a vital confrontation between workers and bosses. After five weeks of battle, the local engineering industry is now faced by 25 official sit-in strikes and lock-outs.

The fight started when the national engineering pay talks collapsed at the end of last year and a meeting of all engineering unions decided to pursue it through factory-by-factory bargaining. The unions called for £6 a week more on minimum wage rates, a 35 hour week, equal pay for women, longer holidays, better lay-off pay—and all without any productivity strings.

The employers, backed by the Tory government, rejected these demands and replied with a miserable offer of only £1.50 a week on the rates of skilled men, with even less for other grades.

Instead of organising a national fight to win the claim, the unions—led by Hugh Scanlon of the Engineers—retreated and abdicated any real responsibility. Instead of fighting the employers they agreed upon the policy of factory-by-factory talks.

Against a background of higher unemployment, the Industrial Relations Act, many employers determined to bring in productivity agreements, no central campaign and enormous differences between the strong and weak factories, this policy was riddled with dangers.

Bitter

Recognising this, Sheffield engineers decided to fight on a city-wide basis. They put in a claim to the Sheffield employers and threatened a total district strike unless it was conceded.

Instead of backing them, Scanlon told them that it would be 'unconstitutional' and could not be allowed. It was a bitter blow.

The next area to take action was Manchester. The workers decided to organise a district campaign of banning piecework, going slow and refusing to work overtime. This is where the battle is currently being fought and where the result will affect the living standards of every engineering worker.

The Manchester campaign is led by the full-time union officials and the district committee of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions. Although they are critical of Scanlon's role during the struggle, they are also committed to supporting him and have refused to organise a really effective district fight.

Split

A district campaign should have the perspective of establishing an agreement with the Manchester employers as a whole. If it were successful it would mean that every worker in Manchester would have a decent pay rise and a long-overdue cut in the hours of the working week.

In order to win this perspective action should be organised throughout the entire area and settlements negotiated at various firms. But it is vital that such settlements should be only for the full terms of the claim. They should be used to split the employers and bring about a situation where, after a number of victories at the major firms, the area employers would be compelled to recognise the settlement and apply it to every company in the district.

If this were done, not only would it better the conditions of workers in Manchester but would also encourage workers in other areas to fight for the same results. Unfortunately, the present campaign has not been led like this.

In order to take some action while maintaining their relationship with Scanlon, the Manchester union officials have organised a district campaign of factory-by-factory settlements. This has inevitably suffered

Story:
ROGER ROSEWELL

Pictures:
RED SAUNDERS



SCANLON: retreat

from a number of serious weaknesses.

The most important of these is that, without a final perspective of an area agreement, many firms are being allowed to settle for considerably less than the national claim and are also reaching agreements that are widely different from one company to another.

The results of this are sometimes good and sometimes bad. But the most important fact is that it has produced unevenness and has undermined the opportunity to organise a united movement.

The district committee has also had a policy of keeping secret the individual factory settlements. Many right wing officials and shop stewards are now exploiting this in order to mislead and confuse many workers.

And because nobody knows what size settlements have been reached and the district is not insisting upon agreements not less than the full amount of the national pay claim, it is impossible for some workers to know whether or not any offer is good or bad.

Strikes

One of the most vital needs of the struggle is for regular weekly meetings of all the shop stewards. These have not been held. If they were it would be possible for the campaign to be properly directed and extended, the level of settlements and the activities of the right wing controlled, aid given to the weaker and most threatened factories and information exchanged.

A real district campaign would need these meetings and would also have to tackle the problem of unevenness in the level of trade union organisation. That is why a series of one-day strikes of the entire area and mighty demonstrations ought to be held.

These would improve the united spirit and determination of the workers. It would also involve every kind of factory—big and small, strong and weak.

And weekly stewards' meetings and a series of one-day strikes would also

SIT-IN BATTLE



expose the weaknesses that exist in various factories. If this were done then action could be taken to overcome them.

Because the Manchester employers and their friends in the Tory cabinet are determined to try and beat the city's engineers, it is vital that a real district campaign is organised.

The militancy of the rank and file has been magnificent. They have fought for the claim and staged a sit-in whenever a boss has tried to lock them out.

Their actions have been an example to the whole labour movement. But now their campaign urgently needs leadership and direction if it is to succeed.

This also means that the battle cannot just be confined to Manchester. If it is, then the national employers will be able to mobilise their total resources in support of their North West members.

The only way this can be defeated is if the struggle is spread. There are

signs already that this is beginning to happen but it is crucial that the union leaders back this development and lead a national fight in support of the pay claim.

The unions must organise rolling district campaigns of strikes and piecework bans and campaign for a national levy in support of all their members in struggle. They must also make a firm declaration that they will defend any of their members victimised by the Industrial Relations Act.

The Manchester pay battle and wave of sit-ins must be supported. If it is successful it will be a great victory.

Already this year the miners have defeated the Tories. It is now essential that every trade unionist rallies to the support of the Manchester workers to ensure that they inflict an even greater and more crippling defeat on this government of big business.

Manchester workers, seen reading the weekly bulletin produced by the International Socialists, are in the thick of a struggle whose result will affect the wages and working conditions of engineers throughout the country. That is why they must be supported by all sections of the trade union movement.



What to fight for

Throughout the present battle, the Manchester district committee of the International Socialists have been issuing a twice-weekly news bulletin. 10,000 copies of each issue have been circulated in many of the major factories. This bulletin is giving vital news and information about the struggle and is campaigning for a programme of victory. This is:

1. No retreat on the full pay claim.
2. Weekly meetings of all the shop stewards.
3. No secret agreements and no

settlements less than the full claim.

4. No redundancies or productivity deals.
5. Weekly one-day strikes and mass demonstrations.
6. Immediate official support for all sit-ins and strikes.
7. Rolling district action across the country in support of the claim.
8. A national levy to support the fight.
9. Resistance to and non-cooperation with the Industrial Relations Act.

Prophets of doom are on the side of the rich nations

LAST CENTURY the middle classes could avoid the environmental hell-holes created by capitalism by living away from the industrial town centres.

Today the environmental effects of capitalism are less easily avoidable and with the growth of the middle class there is more competition for unpolluted living space. This has led to the development of the environment movement.

The movement's theoretical backbone is the science of ecology. Ecology depends upon thinking of the biological world as a whole, whose parts are all interdependent. It therefore harmonises well with a socialist view of man.

Yet its practitioners tend to develop an ideology totally based on ecology, ignoring social and economic forces and smuggling in assumptions from their class background.

Consider the increasing prophecies of ecological doom. The standard argument is illustrated by the analogy used by Hardin in the influential American journal Science.

Overgrazing

The world is compared to a common pasture where the best strategy for each herdsman if he wants to maximise his personal gain is to increase the size of his herd as rapidly as possible. This leads to overgrazing, and the ruining of the pasture.

The argument has a point, as the fate of the world's whaling industry shows.

The obvious way to deal with this problem, you might think, would be to end the competitive system—capitalism. But Hardin argues that each person contributes to the overgrazing—so the vital factor is population.

'In a less perfect world, the allocation of the rights based on territory must be defended if a ruinous breeding race is to be avoided. Fortunate minorities must act as the trustees of civilisation,' he says.

Thus does ecology justify imperialism. Ecologists see the population explosion as the cause of world doom. But this ignores the fact that the average American pollutes the world roughly 25 times more than the average Indian.

This imbalance will almost certainly continue to become more extreme under the present world economic system.

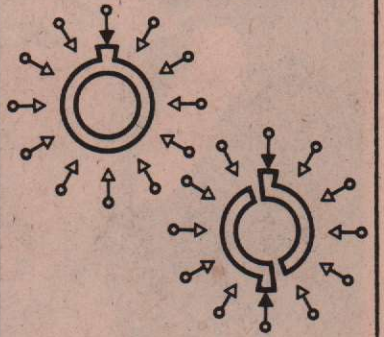
Damaged

There is no good evidence that ecological doom is imminent. Some ecologists claim that Lake Erie, between the US and Canada, has been irretrievably damaged by pollution from the industries of Detroit.

But Lake Erie is not the Pacific Ocean. Populising ecologists are somewhat prone to sensationalism. A few months ago we were being alarmed about the rising level of mercury in tuna fish. Yet the world annual waste mercury production is only one part in 40,000 of the total mercury in the sea.

Of course to go to the other extreme and assume that we can ignore ecology

SCIENCE



for us or against us?

would be shortsighted. But the fact is that the greatest dangers to the world eco-system stem not from population but from the continued uncontrolled use of science by capitalism.

This has been clearly brought out in the best popular book on the environment *The Closing Circle*, by Barry Commoner. He points out that of the massive increases in pollutants in the US since World War Two only five per cent can be attributed to increases in population or to an overall rise in the standard of living.

The rest is due to the introduction of new technology.

Skipped

In a rationally run society a new technology should be introduced for large scale production only when its side effects have been vetted. In a society based on production for profit and not social benefit this does not happen.

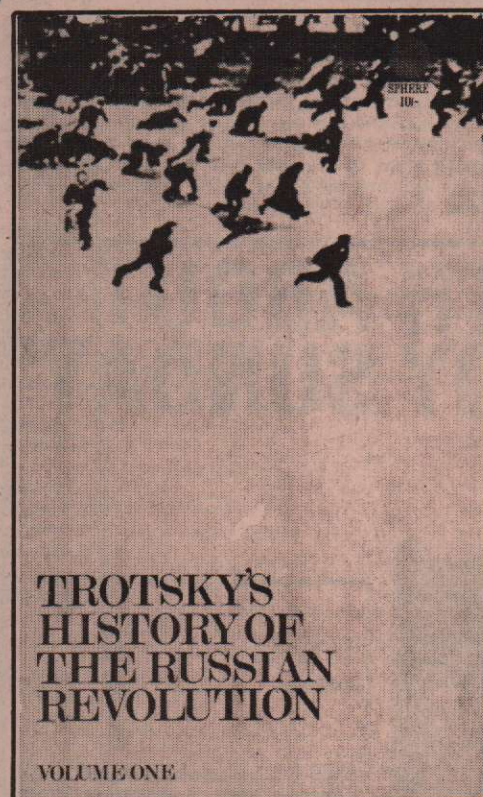
If a new chemical product, for example, produces a big profit for the first four or five years of its manufacture, it must be put on to the market as soon as possible before competitors have developed it. Research into side effects must be skipped and secret.

By contrast, the normal scientific approach to complex problems depends upon open publication of ideas and results.

Outside periods of capitalist boom, the struggle for profits becomes fiercer and super profits are even more jealously guarded. So capitalist governments will certainly fail to ensure adequate control of pollutants, just as they ensure the misuse of the world's resources.

Capitalism, like the Sorcerer's Apprentice, has produced in science a power it cannot control. The power must have a new master.

TIM SHALLICE will be writing a regular column on scientific affairs for Socialist Worker



'The language of the civilised nations has clearly marked off two epochs in the development of Russia. Where the aristocratic culture introduced into world parlance such barbarisms as czar, pogrom, knout, October has internationalised such words as Bolshevik, soviet... This alone justifies the proletarian revolution, if you imagine it needs justification'—Trotsky.

Three volumes, 50p each, post and packing 7p per volume, 15p the three
IS BOOKS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN



Maxwell Joseph drinks his first—and last—light ale after his company, Grand Metropolitan, beat Watney in the take-over battle for Truman spoils. The battle was one of the most vicious in recent big business history, with Watney's using straightforward anti-semitism against Joseph to further their cause. Joseph is bidding for Watney's itself at the moment and the new struggle promises to be just as vicious. The two rivals are however prepared to bury the hatchet over some things. They have been discussing plans to brew all their London beer at the Truman Brick Lane brewery while bottling the lot at Watney Whitechapel. This piece of 'rationalisation' could cost upwards of 600 jobs.

BEER —THE BITTER

'BASS CHARRINGTON has no plans to put up beer prices in the near future', Alan Walker, the company's chairman announced on 11 January this year.

Some six weeks later, Bass Charrington, Whitbread and Allied Breweries chose the same day to put up 1p a pint on draught beers. The other national brewers quickly followed suit.

Walker's notion of 'the near future' was dumped with the same speed as the breweries' endorsement of the Confederation of British Industry pledge to keep price rises below 5 per cent until June.

Brewery shares on the Stock Exchange rose immediately. Working class people sighed and paid up. Most people will pay the going rate for floating their joys or drowning their sorrows.

Boost

A similar sized price rise in November 1970 had boosted the brewers' profits by some 40 per cent and had no impact whatsoever on the fast-growing drink market.

But the brewing companies did at least make some pretence of justifying that increase. They had just been freed from the iniquitous price control imposed by the last Labour government. Wage and other costs were rising rapidly, they contended.

This time they have not bothered with the excuses. They rely on the ideas that have been so relentlessly drummed into people's heads over the past decade—that increased wages equals national disaster.

In the brewing industry the suicide is a total fake, ably abetted by the press and consecutive Labour and Tory governments.

Relief

When the Tories were returned in June 1970, Colonel Whitbread stated that the industry was breathing a sigh of relief. What he meant was that life would be even better under the Conservatives, for him and his kind of course.

In 1966 the employers' federation, the Brewers' Society, made an application to the Prices and Incomes Board for permission to increase beer prices on the grounds that the industry was starved of funds to carry out its pub rebuilding and modernisation programme.

This was refused, though the

LAURIE FLYNN reports

Labour government did instead suggest that the brewers could pick up an awful lot of gravy by increasing labour productivity and totally reorganising production and distribution (shutting half the breweries and bottling stores, that is). The brewers were outraged. They wanted to do both at the same time. And do it they did.

Since the big seven firms own upwards of 70 per cent of all liquor outlets in the UK, they have enormous possibilities for getting round a price freeze. Inspection is impossible.

In any case the Labour government only froze prices in the public bar. The beer firms were free to vary at will the saloon bar mark-up during the so-called freeze of 1967-69.

By increasing the differential on saloon charges, the brewers were able to notch up 10 to 15 per cent price increases on average. Some of them even managed 35 per cent. And when the peg on public bar prices came off in 1969, they did not increase public bar prices alone.

Saloon prices were also jacked up. Since the end of the period of restraint they have managed to add on another

23 per cent to the price of the pint.

And consumption of traditional bitter and mild beers was being drastically cut back in that period. People were encouraged to drink mainly pints of keg which could have been sold as soft drinks in Chicago during Prohibition. Heavy advertising, stressing the family nature of the pub, was designed to get the stuff drunk in saloons, where there was no price freeze.

The switch to lager beer alone would have been enough to keep profitability moving ahead as usual. The profit margin is three times better on that suave, blond Scandinavian drink brewed in Stepney.

Shots

But the brewers wanted to combine inroads on their labour force with increasing exploitation of an expanding market. They made all the fashionable noises about the dangers of increasing cost inflation, the necessity for higher productivity and argued quite dishonestly that they were in trouble.

A private report for the stock-brokers Simon Coates explains the situation as follows: 'Although Watney Mann and Courage have recently warned of the dangers of cost inflation this should be taken as little more than the first shots of the essentially political campaign for the next price rise.'

'Brewers are... effects of cost... proportion of tu... 40 per cent for... This means tha... 'Geared down'... production cost... cent rise in tota... The reorgan... has been preced... very big stakes... seven brewery... breweries, most... by government... increase labour... times and cap... times.

Whitbread's... example of the... quietly conce... brewery work... redundant in si... many of those... up meagre wage... Whitbread... Chiswell Street... City of London... prices, the site... million, while... less than 1 mill... With an invest... million to deve... the property... million by 197... The firm's... already produ... barrels a year... million eventua... build. Under... development... closing the new...

TRUTH ABOUT 'BLOODY SUNDAY'

WHAT HAPPENED IN BERRY

Eamonn McCann 5p

Name

Address

Send copies at 5p per copy plus 3p post, 6 copies or more post free.

Send to Socialist Worker, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

Tory homes plan is green light for slum lords

TORY HOUSING MINISTER Julian Amery last week announced a £200,000 publicity campaign to encourage home owners to improve their houses with the aid of government grants.

The aim is to bring up to modern standards the 4.5 million houses in Britain which lack one or more of the basic amenities like hot water, a bath and inside lavatories.

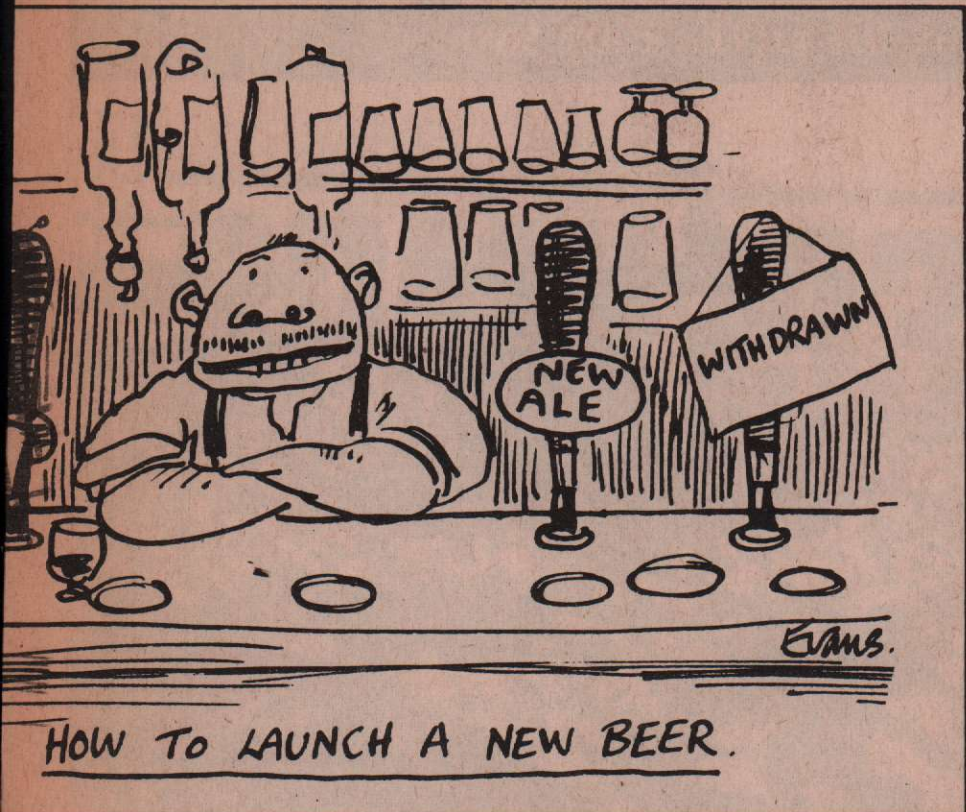
Who is likely to benefit from this campaign? Not the tenants in unfit houses, not the man on an average wage living in a two-up, two-down First World War house.

Accelerated

Improvement grants benefit the speculators who buy up old houses and convert them to self-contained flats. They benefit landlords who harass tenants from their homes in order that they can obtain vacant possession and sell to a developer. The astronomical rise in house prices in the last few years has accelerated this process.

The worst housing conditions are suffered by young working class families, old people and black people in the large cities. The vast majority of them live in tenanted rooms or old houses with rising damp and outside toilets.

There is no proof that improvement grants have improved their conditions in any way. Quite the



TRUTH

insulated from the
flation by the large
over going in duty—
beer, more for spirits.
any cost increase is
10 per cent rise in
comes a 5 to 6 per
cents.
of the industry
at a rapid pace, with
involved. All the big
pubs have built new
of them heavily aided
ants and all likely to
productivity by four
earnings by three
provide the best single
and of goldmine kept
is not least from
who are being made
fligant numbers while
are left only pick

gift, and there is still £33 million left to play around with. Production costs per barrel are two thirds less at Luton. Whitbread also has enormous scope for rationalising elsewhere. With its new Salmesbury brewery in Lancashire's green belt and development grant area (an intrusion authorised on completely deceitful grounds by Tory Minister for Environment Peter Walker after Whitbread gave party funds £20,000), a dozen more breweries will be closed. If Whitbread can raise its plant utilisation to the level of Allied Breweries, as it intends to do, then this alone will increase its pre-tax profits by a further 30 per cent. In 1971 Whitbread increased profits by 34 per cent without any contribution from such changes. In the course of its rationalisation, now completed, Allied Breweries increased earnings per share by 53 per cent.

Bandits

Meanwhile the drink market is actually expanding faster than expected, at around 4 per cent per annum. The big seven who will soon have total domination, and who are organised into a price ring despite all avowals to the contrary, are searching out more ways of expansion. The installation of one-armed bandits in Watney pubs is worth around £2 million a year clear profit to the firm and the Tory government can be expected shortly to reverse the Labour-

inspired legislation which deprived them of 20 per cent of their one-armed bandit profits in tax. They are moving into hotels and motels. Catering is being brought into pubs speedily and the take home trade is expanding fast. They will attempt to mop up the new, lucrative 'home brew' market. The brewers are entirely at home with the Tory government. The McEwan Younger side of the business totally dominates the Scots section of the Conservative Party and handouts and influence ensure a national authority if and when it is needed. The big brewing organisations have a whole string of Tory MPs under their influence on their payroll, and recently they got the nicest little surprise of all. In the cabinet reshuffle two weeks ago, Mr Thomas Boardman, MP for Leicester South West, was made a Minister for Trade and Industry. Formerly he was the finance director for John Courage.

The brewers have the power to enforce their line of argument should any parliamentary-based government ever get troublesome. As the Simon Coates' report notes wryly: 'Price control can only be imposed with the implicit consent of the brewers. If ever the brewers refused to cooperate, as they undoubtedly would if profits ever came under serious pressure, it would be impossible for the government to control the prices of each individual tenant.'

in fact. A small minority of tenanted
es have benefited from improvement grants.
the vast majority have gone to owner occupiers,
high incomes who are able to afford more
£1000 to carry out improvements, or to
tators. There is money to be made in improv-
old houses, as Julian Amery well knows—he
a few himself.
The problem is particularly acute in London.
such as Fulham, Battersea, Islington, and
Kensington, traditionally working class,
become middle class enclaves and sources of
nes for a few estate agents and property
rs.
The operation is easy if you have a few
and quid to buy up a couple of slums, put in
uilders, convert to flats and sell them to rich
ad men or telly people with £10,000 to
on a poky one bedroom pad. A fast operator
is field can make upwards of £20,000 on one
storey house.

firms such as Aylesford and Co and Redfearns
itham have specialised in this type of get rich
activity. They are often not worried about
tenants. Offers of £2000 to families to move
the Moore Park area in Fulham are common
days.

those who prefer to stay put are subject to the
of harassment which some thought died out
ago with Rachmanism. Harassment in 1972 is
more subtle. It has even earned a new name in
estate agents trade—'winklers' are sometimes
oyed to do the dirty work of respectable

property owners.

The reasons for the boom in speculation are obvious. The Labour government introduced the Housing Act 1969, which made improvement grants easier to obtain: they made more money available for improvement areas such as Moore Park.

The balance of payments crisis forced Wilson's government to cut back on new house building. Less money was made available for slum clearance and council house building. High interest rates caused a drop in the demand for new houses to buy.

The policy of improvements was a direct result of this. It was cheaper to improve than to build new dwellings. The Tory government took advantage of this by raising the grants, cutting even further the rate of public house building, and enabling their friends to make a lot of money in the process.

Crocodile tears

It is no surprise that Julian Amery encourages profit in housing. What should be clear to those who suffer in this situation is that the Labour politicians who shed crocodile tears over the rise in homelessness and the harassment of working class tenants started the process themselves because they were tied to the system of finance capital and were not prepared to break with the old adage of rent, interest and profit.

GEOFF WOOLFE

Counter-revolution by red keg men

IN THE affluent London area of Twickenham, you can have the pleasure of going for a pint at Watney's Bird's Nest—a 'pub of the future', as the Watney publicity machine so relentlessly underlines. It still serves drink, you will be glad to hear. There is food and music too.

On every table there is a phone and you can ring up the resident disc jockey, who will play your request and dedicate it to your Auntie Flo and her golden wedding anniversary if you so wish.

Every 15 minutes the joy of living is interrupted by the disc jockey reading out paid adverts for the local petrol station or a nearby undertaker. A pint of Watney's Red costs 24p.

Red is one of the new high profit margin keg beers introduced to take beer to the young, male and female, to make them pay high, very high prices for something which though lousy, is the accepted drink. (In any case it is difficult to get anything else.)

When Red Barrel was about to give way to the new Red, Watney chairman G.T. Webster said: 'Our research showed Red Barrel needed radical change.'

A shop steward in the process department of Watney's Whitechapel brewery, where the new, radical Red is brewed, explains the difference: 'It is exactly the same except that there is less yeast, and concentrated instead of real hops. It is processed quicker and easier and is therefore cheaper to produce. It is, of course, more expensive when you come to buy it.'

Of beer in general, he comments: 'Down 50 per cent in value and strength. They've removed the hop taste. Keg beer is directed at the young who don't know about drink and find this stuff palatable.'

INCREASE

Over the past 10 years the techniques of brewing have been totally revolutionised. This has not been done with any concern for producing better beer more efficiently, though that could be done. The sole aim and purpose of the operation has been to shorten the length of the production process and increase still further the profitability of the giant beer monopolies which dominate the industry.

The process of continuous fermentation has been widely adopted, despite hints from Guinness that all is not well. This means that the beer matures at vastly increased rates—five hours instead of 72 hours at Whitechapel. Output has trebled.

The keg beers and lager are pasteurised so that they can be stored longer. This kills the natural yeast and as a result no natural head is created. Carson Dioxide added later does the job just as well.

The beer-drinkers of Canada were not so fortunate when pasteurisation was brought in. Cobalt was put into the beer in minute quantities without any conception of how much some people drink. Several hundred people got heart diseases.

The modern techniques of production and storage introduce new dangers for brewery workers. Asbestos filters used in the continuous process are known to affect the body at cell level and pre-dispose it to cancer of the lung.

SILENCE

Diethyl pyrocarbonate—extensively used in soft drinks and beers for sterilisation and storage is another serious danger. It is supposed to break down into ethanol, but in the presence of ammonia (everywhere present) it forms urethane, known since 1943 to cause cancer.

No satisfactory investigations into this potential danger have been carried out by the brewing industry. A Swedish investigation published last December has been greeted with deafening silence by the brewers.

Wastage has been another problem the beer giants seriously tackled. Instead of throwing it away, they now put it back into the beer. The brewery sludge and any barrels returned by a pub as sub-standard are put through a humourously titled 'beer reclamation plant'. The end product is then poured back into the new brew.

John Courage spent £150,000 on one such plant. It will pay for itself in a year.

All water used in beer-making—no matter what the source—is chemically treated to make it totally uniform. Local and regional differences are deliberately made to disappear. The water will soon be subjected to multiple re-use as water becomes scarce and expensive.

Standardisation goes further. Bass Charrington offers two bottled beers in its pubs, Worthington Green and Bass Blue, usually at different prices. The two are identical. Watney's Special bitter and Watney's Pale Ale (a bottled beer) are also identical. So are draught Bass and Worthington E.

In the pubs themselves high pressure salesmanship makes the managers turn



What's the difference? Nothing—except the price...

set turnover targets, and paid to meet them. Since this is often impossible, they operate systematic schemes for overcharging.

In the continual drive to widen profit margins, the strength of beer has been deliberately reduced, though no company is obliged to state what the strength of their product was or is.

A survey now being considered by Warwickshire County Council's Department of Trading Standards shows that there has been an average 12 per cent fall in strength since 1965, along with more than 40 per cent price rises. Some pale ales now have a strength of 2.5 per cent—about the level allowed for soft drinks.

SECRECY

Keg and lager beers, backed by a massive advertising campaign, are taking an ever higher section of the market, which is nice for the brewers since the profit margins are twice to three times bigger.

Last year Cyril Arlidge, Northumberland County Council chief weights and measures man, hit out at the British brewed lagers.

He said that while sold at 'strong beer' prices, they were in fact 'weak beers'. They should be labelled 'beers of greater profitability', he suggested. He was promptly rounded on by Edward Guinness, chairman of Harp Lager, who described these remarks as 'nonsense'.

But once you get behind the secrecy of the brewing industry, Mr Arlidge's 'nonsense' is revealed as scientific fact.

Many of the lagers are not genuine deep-fermented beers at all. They are top fermentation beers, flavoured to take on a lager character. They are of course quicker and cheaper to make. They are also weaker and less tax is paid on them by the brewer.

The character of the public house is being changed too in the drive to extend markets. Aside from the syndicate juke boxes and gambling machines, this process has some healthy advantages. The pub as an all-male preserve is going if not already gone, and pubs are also rather more habitable than they used to be.

But for the brewers the social benefits are purely accidental. They run their industry not, as one might suppose, to produce beer, nor to provide a rudimentary base for social life in a society deprived of almost any other public centres of social life.

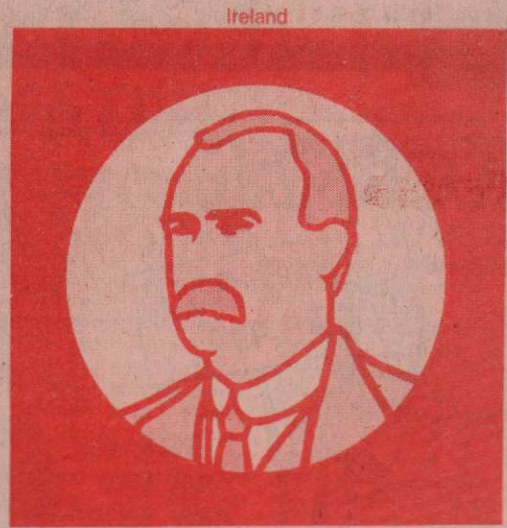
Their industry is geared to the grab motive, like every other industry in this society. Their shabby lack of concern for what does and doesn't go into the brew, their merciless drive to reduce real wages and the workforce, their contempt for safety in their bottling stores, where the noise is like a Jumbo jet and the floor strewn with jagged glass—with no protective footwear for the workers—all these things flow from the beer masters' inability to do anything other than drive for profit, to reinvest, and drive again.

Life itself becomes means to a totally lifeless end. As K.N. Miles, group marketing director for Watneys, put it recently when talking about the objects who buy his dreadful Red Barrel and his marketing techniques:

'They learn to think in terms of brands today. A brand is so much more than a mere product—the brand and all that surrounds it tells the customer something about the personality of the company, the satisfaction that the product offers, the kind of man that this brand suits.'

Unless and until a very different kind of red revolution is let loose, Mr Miles' contemptuous arguments about the nature of the human race will continue to hold almost as much water as the beer he sells.

International Socialism 51



International Socialism on Ireland
JOHN PALMER on how, despite the pretence of independence, the Southern regime is fully integrated into the British imperialist economy
PAUL GERHARDT analyses the facts of sectarian discrimination in the North
BRIAN TRENCH demolishes the 'two nations' propaganda that keeps the Protestant workers on the Unionist side
EAMONN McCANN on why the revolutionary left in the Six Counties had no success within the civil rights movement

20p per copy, subscription £1 per year, from: IS Journal, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN

SHOP STEWARDS IN WORLD WAR ONE: Part two

**TOWARDS SOCIALISM!
SABBY SAGALL ON:**

IN 1917 the 'Home Front' was in a state of growing revolt. The tremendous strike movement of that year against the ruling class' wholesale attacks on trade union conditions was led by the newly-created national shop stewards' organisation.

The official union leadership had totally abdicated the defence of workers' rights in the interests of assisting the imperialist war.

The Cabinet was becoming increasingly alarmed with what was threat not only to the war effort but potentially to British capitalism itself. The main strike leaders were arrested.

The others remained unaware of the strength and potential of the movement they were leading. A delegation of shop stewards received by the Minister of Munitions agreed to call for a return to work in exchange for the release of the arrested leaders. They also agreed that further negotiations would take place between official trade union leaders and the government.

Abandon

The agreement was therefore virtually a surrender by the stewards. The only concession made by the government, in their fear of the growing industrial unrest, was to abandon their proposal to extend dilution of labour—the practice of giving men's jobs to women, skilled jobs to the unskilled, and so on—into private work.

Although the shop stewards' movement developed tremendous power in its leadership of the rank-and-file upsurge, it failed to develop the movement politically, confining the struggle to narrow trade union demands.

The mass strikes during the First World War reflected not just discontent with immediate government policies but an increasing war weariness.

Although most of the stewards were themselves socialists opposed to the war, they did not consistently raise it as an issue in the course of the battles they were leading. They never demanded an end to hostilities as the immediate solution to the problems facing the working class.

General political questions such as the need for socialism were raised in the abstract, unrelated to the specific struggles being fought.

Mouthpiece

Instead of attempting to raise the level of demands so as to raise the workers' level of political consciousness, the rank-and-file leaders saw themselves merely as the mouthpiece of the workers. Although they initiated massive movements, they raised only such demands as had spontaneously sprung up in the course of the developing struggles.

The result was that they merely echoed the most obvious of the workers' grievances, such as dilution, the conscription of skilled men and rising prices. The stewards failed to penetrate to the deeper levels of the

**Why
there
was
no
1917**

revolution in Britain

workers' frustrations, which would have meant launching a campaign against the war and ultimately against the capitalist system.

The mass strikes had deeper motives than those that appeared on the surface. But only a minority of the workers in struggle were conscious of the relationship between dilution and conscription on the one hand, and the war and the capitalist system on the other.

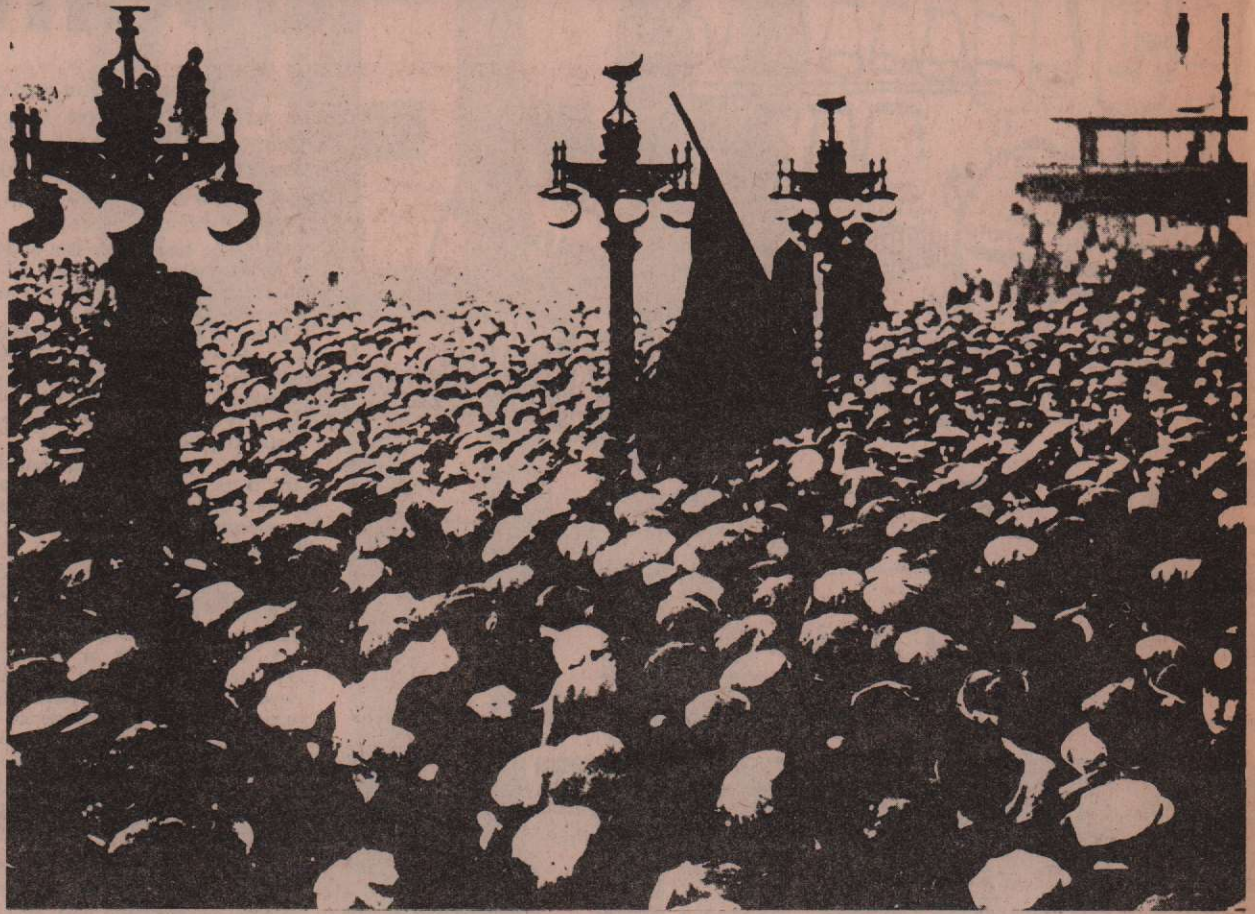
Raised

The shop stewards had a chance to broaden the struggle by basing it on the consciousness of these more advanced sections. By doing so, they could have raised the level of the more backward workers to that of the advanced.

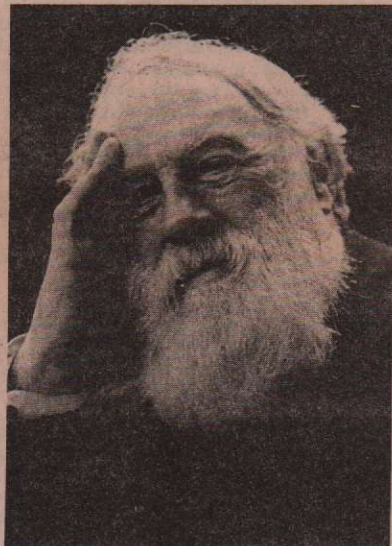
By refusing to tackle the general political questions that lay at the root of the mass strikes, the shop stewards ensured that the struggles remained at the level of those grievances which the mass of the workers could themselves react against.

Moreover, though individual militants might be sent to jail, the movement was generally in a strong position. There was a shortage of skilled labour, and the government's constant need for munitions meant that they could not afford to provoke strikes or delay settling them once they had broken out.

The key problem was the absence of any serious revolutionary socialist party capable of taking political leadership during this period of mass working class upheaval. There had been a real chance to build such an organisation with strong roots in the working class because of the



Where the working-class movement was leading: The Red Flag in Glasgow 1919. But it could go no further



H M Hyndman: socialism by the ballot box

tremendous rise in trade union militancy during 1910-14.

But no existing socialist party was capable of revolutionary leadership.

Although the leading shop stewards were also leaders of the British Socialist Party and the Socialist Labour Party, these organisations made no attempt to give firm direction to the growing movement and to harness the rising tide of militancy to socialist aims.

The BSP under Hyndman's leadership was nominally marxist, but in reality believed that socialism would be achieved through the ballot box rather than by the mass action of the working class. They regarded strikes as a diversion from the real task of winning a parliamentary

majority.

The most important figure on the party's internationalist left-wing was John Maclean, a Glasgow teacher who constantly tried to broaden the industrial struggles on Clydeside into a revolutionary struggle against the war. For this, he was imprisoned more than once by the authorities.

Maclean's revolutionary propaganda helped to spur the Clyde Workers' Committee to action, but it was dominated by members of the SLP, a highly sectarian organisation which did not believe it was possible to win reforms this side of socialism.

Their main aim was to build industrial unions which would unite all the workers in one industry into a single socialist union regardless of craft differences.

Emphasis

But they also believed in the need to achieve a parliamentary majority, after which power would be handed over to the industrial unions to re-organise society on a socialist basis.

So neither the BSP nor the SLP was capable of building long-term influence in the trade union movement.

The leading shop stewards had developed political attitudes from their experiences in the pre-war struggles. Most were influenced by syndicalist ideas.

According to these, capitalism was to be made unprofitable through continuous strikes by the industrial unions. Eventually, through such direct action, the workers would be able to take over the running of industry.

This notion led the stewards to place all the emphasis on building an industrial union, and to interpret the struggles they were leading in narrow trade union terms. To introduce political issues into the industrial struggle was unnecessary, for they believed once the socialist industrial union was built, the capitalist state would automatically fall away.

Betrayed

This syndicalism blended well with the 'anti-leadership' views of the stewards. They had consistently experienced betrayal at the hands of the Labour Party and trade union leaders. They knew well how such leaders bureaucratically manipulated the rank-and-file.

As J T Murphy, one of the leading stewards, wrote: 'The man in the workshop feels every change, the workshop atmosphere is his. But let the same man get into office, he meets a fresh class of people, and breathes a different atmosphere. He becomes buried in the constitution.'

From the fact that union members tend to become corrupted once they are leaders, Murphy concluded that all leadership is bound to stifle the independence and initiative of the rank-and-file.

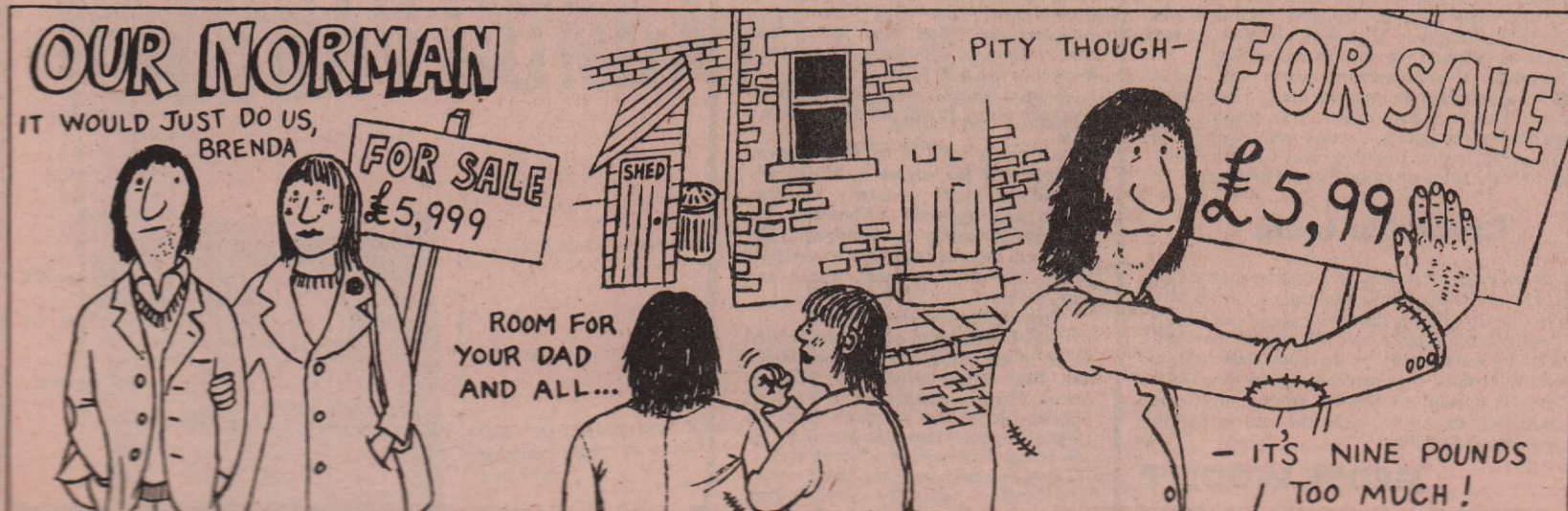
The constitution of the Shop Stewards' Movement laid down that the function of an elected committee should be confined to the conveying of information to the rank-and-file which then had to decide itself on all key policy matters. No initiatives must be taken by an executive independently of the rank-and-file.

Rejected

And because of their suspicion of all leadership, the shop stewards rejected the idea of a revolutionary party.

For this reason, although the shop stewards did begin massive struggles, they were unable to consolidate and build up the movement after the war ended. After the war, the union leaders disengaged themselves from their alliance with the state, and re-asserted control of the industrial struggle.

In the next two issues, Sabby Sagall will draw on the lessons of the Shop Stewards Movement in discussing the need for a revolutionary



REVIEW

SPAIN 1936

How close was the socialist revolution?

THE WAR AND THE REVOLUTION IN SPAIN, by Pierre Broue and Emile Temime, translated by Tony White, Faber £6.

THE Spanish Civil War has long been engraved in the memory of the left.

But it has usually been presented as a struggle between decent parliamentary democrats and Franco's fascists. The fact that Spain in 1936 saw developments that came close to producing a socialist workers' revolution of the 1917 sort has usually been obscured.

The appearance of an English translation of this book by Pierre Broue and Emile Temime should rectify the situation. They show that Spain in the early 1930s was a society more and more torn apart by bitter class struggles.

At one extreme was a parasitic ruling clique—a mere 50,000 people owned half the total cultivable land—closely linked with the army officer corps and the church hierarchy.

At the other extreme were eight million workers and impoverished peasants. The small and weak middle class would have liked to reduce the power of the ruling clique so that Spain could develop like the rest of Western Europe. But they were afraid to do so in case they prompted the organisations of the workers to action.

Early in 1936, a 'popular front' of middle-class republicans, socialists and Communists won the elections and a government of republicans was formed.

The new government released from prison thousands of left-wing militants, but took no real action to deal with the miserable conditions of the mass of the people, or with the ruling clique's stranglehold over society.

But the organised workers began to take things into their own hands to fulfil the government's meagre promises. A wave of strikes shook the towns, while in the countryside peasants began to seize the land.

The representatives of the old ruling clique viewed the movement with increasing alarm and prepared for an army coup that would destroy the middle class republic which they believed was incapable of containing the growing working-class militancy.

The liberal government knew of the plottings, but merely swapped around individual army officers.

When the army coup came, in July 1936, it would have been immediately and overwhelmingly successful had it been left to the government, whose members tried in vain to reach a compromise with

the generals. Only when this failed did they agree, under mass pressure, to arm the workers to fight the coup.

But the mass of workers did not wait for this. In every Spanish city except Burgos and Pamplona the generals were confronted with mass strikes and armed demonstrations. In some cities, sections of the police and the army went over to the workers. The navy mutinied and shot their officers.

Broue and Temime show that at this point the key to the failure or success of the coup was the extent to which the workers' organisations were prepared to take independent action.

Where they placed their faith in promises by representatives of the official government, they were usually betrayed. Where they ignored such pledges and acted for themselves, they enjoyed overwhelming success.

Yet the opposition to the generals was not able to rush home its advantage. The reason is the disorganisation of its forces and its lack of a coherent strategy.

The old official government was completely unable to organise any decisive action to smash the generals. As Broue puts it: 'The state, caught between its insurgent army and the armed masses of the people, had shattered to pieces.'

In the major cities, the workers, with effective local power in their hands, instinctively went far beyond just opposing the generals. Here was a chance to begin to remove all the indignities and sufferings they had had to put up with from capitalists and landowners for so long.

They began to take the factories and the land for themselves and to enforce a new order in social life.

SLIGHT

The first thought of those state officials and groups of capitalists who opposed the generals was to find some way of restraining this social movement, not of mobilising it for military victory.

The chances for such restraint being successful must have seemed very slight indeed at first. But they were enhanced by the left's lack of understanding of what to do.

In autumn 1917 Russia, in a somewhat similar situation of massive social dislocation, faced an imminent threat of armed counter-revolution. Lenin and the Bolsheviks put forward the only programme capable of overcoming this—the demand

bread, or nine loaves and one copy of the Communist Manifesto.'

The Sunday night when I saw 'Lefty' I was almost alone in the theatre (which could have been offputting if the performance hadn't been any good). Sitting there one couldn't avoid feeling the tragedy that the only working-class theatre in London, built and managed by workers, should be empty.

The reasons for this are many. Unity has been through a bad period. There have been witch-hunts, sectarian squabbles, and embezzlements.

Most of the plays put on in recent years have misjudged the mood of the working class. The standard has been appallingly low. In fact so bad that its main finance came from the bar and its talent from resting professional actors, who were keeping their hands in.

While groups like Red Ladder (Agit Prop) and CAST have been playing to large and varying working-class audiences. Unity has had to be

Citizen Army volunteers on the way to the front during the Spanish Civil War



for the revolutionary unity of the progressive forces in the country around the power held by a unified structure of workers' councils, workers' control in the factories, and the division of the land among the peasants.

By pushing this programme they were able first to defeat the seemingly all-powerful army of General Kornilov, and then to overthrow the middle-class government of Kerensky.

The tragedy in Spain in 1936 was that there was no coherent working-class organisation willing to put forward such a programme. The four main tendencies in the working-class movement all resisted it in one way or another.

The traditionally most radical section of the Spanish labour movement were the anarchists. They controlled the one-million-strong CNT trade union organisation.

Their distrust of the state had saved them from many of the traps of reformism in the past.

But now it also meant they opposed any idea of the revolutionary working class establishing the centralised state of its own which was needed if the forces of the counter-revolution were to be defeated.

At first the anarchists in each locality tended to make a virtue of particular actions. But when it became clear these were inevitably leading to military defeat, they jumped to the opposite extreme and supported the existing centralised state.

The other main union in Spain, the UGT, had traditionally been reformist. Its leader, the socialist Cabellero, had even been in a coalition government with the middle classes a few years before. Under pressure of events both he and the union began to move rapidly to the left.

ARGUMENT

But on one essential issue, as Broue shows, its leaders deviated from the Bolshevik line of 1917. They believed it was possible to establish a workers' state on the basis of the coming together of the existing workers' parties without the formation of workers' councils representing the mass of workers in each locality regardless of party.

Finally, the Communist Party was far to the right of the other organisations. Under instructions from Stalin, it put forward from the beginning the idea that the revolution was an embarrassment. The main task, it argued, was to fight the generals, and all talk of socialism should be left until that was completed.

But it could not explain how the heavily compromised middle-class politicians were to be relied upon to fight fascism consistently, nor how workers and peasants, who had suffered enormously under middle-class politicians, were to be expected to fight enthusiastically just to defend them.

This book shows what was to be the inevitable consequence of this lack of a party posing the real alternative of workers' power.

When the first military defeat for the republican side occurred, the need for a central direction in the struggle with sufficient prestige to unify the different forces became obvious. But the forces of the extreme left could not even suggest what form that should take.

The only alternative was for the left to turn to the existing state and get their followers to accept its commands. In September they did this. A new republican government was formed with Cabellero at the head and with anarchist members.

At first this government seemed very radical indeed. But those who accepted it also accepted, although they did not realise it, that all those forms of authority and subordination that characterise and protect capitalist society would inexorably be strengthened as it was strengthened.

Such a state, based upon a privileged caste of civil servants and army officers, was completely incompatible with the organised revolutionary enthusiasm of the

masses, even with a leftist like Cabellero at the top.

The police machine, built up on the prestige of the left, would still continue after its leftist leaders were replaced by ones much more hostile to working-class interests.

Yet the leftist parties exerted all their efforts in the first few months to give new life to this old state machine. Even the POUM leaders did their best to gain acceptance for it among the revolutionary committees that previously ran much of Catalonia. And one of their leaders, Andre Nin, became a minister for the bourgeois state in the Catalan provincial government.

Such a stance was justified by the left-wing parties, and in particular by the Communists, on the grounds that it was necessary to win support from the middle classes, to win the war and not to antagonise foreign powers—France and Britain—who might come to the aid of the Republican side.

One can argue indefinitely about what would have happened if another policy had been followed. But it is beyond doubt that the middle class, far from giving increased support to the republican government because of its moderation, vacillated at every decisive point, putting fear of destruction of their property above fear of surrender to Franco.

The policy of moderation also had its own destructive logic. Its lack of military success led to the demand, from the Communist and middle class parties, for still more moderation and for sacrifices from workers to this end.

In Barcelona in 1937 the sacrifices were to be extracted at gunpoint. In the months that followed those who defended the remnants of workers' control were to be imprisoned or even, like Andre Nin, murdered by the followers of Stalin.

The POUM leaders, the anarchists and the Cabellero socialists were to find that the middle-class state they had thought they could run in the workers' interests, was a Frankenstein's monster, quite prepared to devour them.

DEFEAT

The revolutionary spirit which had been the impetus behind early victories of the republican forces was destroyed.

For a time Russian arms could provide a poor substitute. But even these dried up after the summer of 1938 and Stalin laid the ground for his pact with Hitler. The republican forces went down to a bitter defeat and the Spanish working class to 35 years of fascism.

Rarely can there have been a clearer historical example of the disastrous consequences of the illusion that it is somehow possible for the existing state to be reformed to represent the working class.

The authors of this book, have particularly in its first half, shown how these various processes worked themselves out. That is why the book should be read by as many socialists as possible.

Its price is high, and few people will be able to afford to buy a copy for themselves. So try to ensure that your local library at least has one copy. And read it.

CHRIS HARMAN

Nine loaves and a copy of the Communist Manifesto

IF YOU'VE got time this weekend make an effort to go to see *Waiting For Lefty* by Clifford Odets, at the Unity Theatre, Goldington Street, in North West London. It's certainly the best effort they have made in years.

This revival of the 1935 American agitational classic never offends, is acted with confidence and feeling and has about it a strange and ironic feeling.

For here is a play which measures for us how far we have travelled in 37 years. It is set in a period of acute class conflict, when American capitalism was investing in the coming war and cab drivers were paid six dollars a week. When union leaders (protected by thugs) openly collaborated with the bosses and men contemplating strike action feared being labelled Reds.

Clifford Odets wrote in the crisp style of Hollywood, but his lines carried the voice of the people: 'One dollar can buy 10 loaves of

content with an ageing but loyal handful.

So it comes to pass that Unity finds a good director, in Mike Kaye, with a group of good actors around him, a fine play and, so far, the audience has never exceeded 60 people, in a theatre which seats more than 200.

There is a crying need for a theatre of the labour movement that will bring out the talents of our class, and which will enable workers to express themselves in the way only theatre can.

Unity has a fine well-equipped stage. Unity has a constitution based on workers' control. Unity has had the experience. Unity has the responsibility. Unity, after all, is what we're talking about.

Go to see their plays, join their association and criticise what you don't like. Tickets are 40p and it's the play's last weekend before becoming a mobile.

ROLAND MULDOON

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 restriction.

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 man'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.

Will Labour council splash out profits?

THE CITY is beginning to get excited because it looks as though Manchester's Labour council is about to give the shareholders of the Manchester Ship Canal Company and city speculators a massive property and investment bonanza.

Back in 1970 the Labour government had decided to take over the Manchester Ship Canal. They said they would pay 162½p a share. This caused much indignation on the board of the Manchester Ship Canal Company.

They said the company had assets of between £6 and £7 a share. Furthermore, over £7 million of the company assets was in cash and investments and £10 million was in property.

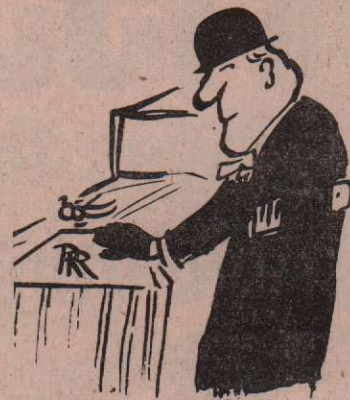
Election

In other words, the company owned assets other than the canal that could be usefully exploited to make large profits and they were a bit sore that the Labour government wasn't going to overpay them in the same way that they overpaid for the coal mines, railways and steel industry.

But the Tories were elected, nationalisation plans were dropped and the share price leapt.

Now, if the directors wanted to

IN THE CITY



with T.H. Rogmorton

exploit the company's property successfully, the share capital needed reorganising to free the company's non-canal interests from the possible danger of nationalisation.

This is where the council comes in. The company owes the corporation £10 million, and one condition of the loan is that while it is unpaid the council nominates 11 of the 20 members of the board of directors.

So the council has a majority control in the company.

After the 1971 election the new

Labour council appointed 11 members to the board.

Previously the parties had been represented among these 11 in proportion to their representation on the council. But the Tories got worried in 1970 and appointed 11 Tories. So the following year Labour copied this, much to the annoyance of the Tories.

The Tories had worse problems still. Only a quarter of the council will stand for re-election each year, so it will take them at least three years to regain control of the council—and of the canal company.

Only then will they be able to vote for the loan to be repaid and get on with the job of successfully exploiting the company's property.

For the council, being Labour, saw no reason why they should help City speculators to make a fortune.


At least, that is how the situation stood until the company's report and accounts appeared recently.

This is the statement that lifted the City from its depression and exasperation: 'The board accepts that there must be a correct balance between the company's port and non-port activities. Accordingly they are working on proposals which are designed to develop the non-port assets for purposes of increasing revenue from non-port activities.'

In other words, it sounds as though the Labour council has relented and accepted the Tories' proposals. We can confidently look forward to an announcement soon that the non-port activities are to be either hived off into another company or redeveloped by some City finance house.

The people who benefit will not be the people of Manchester—for the corporation owns no shares—or the company's workers, who will probably be slowly sacked as the canal is run down.

The people who will benefit will be those City speculators who have pushed the share price up from 160 to 275p in the last two years. And the people who are helping them are the 'socialist' councillors of Manchester.



IRELAND'S HISTORY OF REPRESSION

by JAMES WALKER

James Walker's highly-praised series in Socialist Worker has now been reprinted in handy pamphlet form. It is indispensable for socialists and trade unionists involved in the struggle to free Ireland from British domination.

10p a copy including post from
IS BOOKS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN

WHAT'S ON

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

MEETINGS

WANDSWORTH IS public meeting: Fight The Unfair Rents Bill. Speakers: Hugh Kerr, Harlow Tenants Assn; Wandsworth Labour councillor; chairman Duncan Hallas 8pm Thursday 27 April, St John's Methodist Hall, East Hill, SW18.

LAMBETH Public Employees Alliance: public meeting. 8.15pm Thursday 27 April Speaker Wally Preston, secretary North West Electricity Supply Shop Stewards' Committee, Room 119, Lambeth Town Hall.

WOLVERHAMPTON IS public meeting: The Engineers' sit-in and pay claim. Speaker Bill Davey. 8pm, Tuesday 25 April, Old Still, King St, off Princess St.

SWANSEA IS public meeting: Pollution—what can we do? 7.30pm Thursday 27 April, AUEW House, Orchard St, Swansea. All welcome.

BRIGHTON AND SOUTH EAST Weekend School: Saturday 22 April, The Prince George, Albert St, Brighton. Economic Perspectives—Andreas Nagliatti. International Perspectives—Ian Birchall. Sunday 23 April, The Labour Party and the trade unions—Duncan Hallas. Building the Party—Jim Higgins. Sessions run from 1pm to 6.30pm both days.

HULL IS public meeting: Roger Protz, editor of Socialist Worker, on The Millionaire Press, Thursday 27 April, 8pm The Bluebell Inn, Lowgate.

HACKNEY and ISLINGTON IS public educational meeting: Whatever Happened To Communism. Speaker: Mike Heym. Mon 24 April, 8pm, The Rose and Crown, corner of Stoke Newington Church St and Albion Rd, N16.

IS LONDON REGION CONFERENCE
Sat 22 April, 10.30am
Sessions on
The Industrial Struggle
Campaign Against 'Fair Rents' Proposals
Details from branch secretaries

NORTH BIRMINGHAM IS public meeting on Ireland. IS and Republican speakers. Thursday 27 April, 8pm The Bluebell Inn, Lowgate.

MAY DAY RALLY
Bring The Tories Down
Why Labour Does Not Fight
Monday 1 May, 7.30pm
Islington Town Hall
Upper St, N1
(nearest tube—Highbury and Islington)
Speakers: Bernadette Devlin MP
Paul Foot, Tony Cliff
Wally Preston
plus international speakers
Organised by International Socialists

FIGHT THE TORY RENT BILL: Crawley Rents and Rates Action Committee, Mass Rally 1 May. Speakers include Jack Dash. 3pm, Starlight Ballroom, Crawley New Town.

HARLESDEN IS public meeting: Engineering Pay Claim—report from Manchester. Speakers: Wally Preston (Editor of Advance, and power workers convenor), John Deason, steward at Ruston Paxman, St Matthew's Church Hall, St Mary's Road, NW10 (200 yards along St Mary's Road from Craven Park, opposite Harlesden Odeon). Wednesday 26 April, 8pm.

IS NORTH EAST REGION CONFERENCE
The Fight Against the Tory Rent Act
Workingmen's Club, Crossgate, Durham
Sunday 30 April, 3pm
ALL IS MEMBERS SHOULD ATTEND

RANK AND FILE CONFERENCE
Education in capitalist society
'The role of the Socialist teacher'
Saturday 13 May 10.30 am to 5pm
and Sunday 10.30pm to 5pm
Council Chamber, Aston University
Union, Birmingham.
Accommodation and details:
Colin Falconer, 25 Beechwood Rd,
Birmingham B43 6JN.

NOTICES

THE council tenant and the Tory Housing Bill—5p. An IS in Scotland pamphlet for Scottish tenants. Order from your local IS branch or from M Dougal, 2 Elm Row, Edinburgh.

IS BOOKS opening hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday: 2-5pm. Thursday: 2-7pm.

FRENCH HOLIDAY: Room to let in June and July, cooking facilities, takes two adults and a baby. £20 a month. Small village near Nice, very hot. Write E Widowson, 19 Chatfield Road, Manchester 21.

THIRD WORLD CINEMA at the Collegiate Theatre: 15 Gordon St, London WC1. Box office, 387-9629. Inquiries: The Other Cinema: 734-8508. Seats 30p and 50p, season tickets £2.50. Thurs 20 April, 9pm: Lucia. Fri 21 April, 8pm: Prophet of Hunger, 10pm: What is Democracy? Sat 22 April, 8pm: The Hour of the Furnaces, part 1, 10pm: The Night of San Juan. Sun 23 April, 4pm: to be announced, 6pm: The Jackal of Nahuelito, 8pm: The Hour of the Furnaces, parts 2 and 3. Mon 24 April, 6.30pm: It's Time for Violence, 8.45pm: Blood of the Condor. Tues 25 April, 6.30pm: Climate for Revolution (to be confirmed), 8.45pm: to be announced. Weds 26 April 6.30pm: The Hour of the Furnaces, parts 1, 2 and 3.

COMRADE (female) wanted for large, furnished room in flat near Streatham/Tooting Bec. Rent £4. Phone Siri Lowe 01-739 1870 (during day).

COMRADE seeks place in W London flat. Phone Philip Hutchinson 437-0895 weekdays between 4.30-5.30 or leave message with Paul Hutchinson, 743-3577 weekends and evenings.

THERE ARE IS BRANCHES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

<p>SCOTLAND Aberdeen Cumbernauld Dundee Edinburgh Fife Glasgow N Glasgow S Stirling St Andrews</p> <p>NORTH EAST Durham Newcastle upon Tyne Spennymoor Sunderland Teesside (Middlesbrough & Redcar)</p> <p>NORTH Barnsley Bradford Doncaster Grimsby Halifax Huddersfield Hull Leeds Mid-Derbyshire Ossett Scarborough Selby Sheffield York</p> <p>NORTH WEST Barrow Blackburn Bolton Crewe Kirkby Lancaster Manchester Merseyside Oldham Potters Preston St Helens Wigan Wrexham</p>	<p>MIDLANDS Birmingham Coventry Leamington Leicester Northampton Nottingham Oxford Redditch Rugby Telford Wolverhampton</p> <p>WALES and SOUTH WEST Bath Bristol Cardiff Exeter Gloucester Mid-Devon</p> <p>Plymouth Swansea</p> <p>SOUTH Ashford Brighton Canterbury Crawley Folkestone Gurdford Portsmouth Southampton</p> <p>EAST Basildon Beccles Cambridge Colchester Harlow</p>	<p>Ipswich Leiston Lowestoft Norwich Peterborough</p> <p>GREATER LONDON and HOME COUNTIES Acton Camden Chertsey Croydon</p> <p>Dagenham East London Enfield Erith Fulham Greenford Hackney & Islington Havering Harrow Hemel Hempstead Hornsey Hounslow Ilford Kilburn Kingston Lambeth Lewisham Merton Newham Paddington Reading St Albans Slough South Ealing Tottenham Walthamstow Wandsworth Watford Woolwich</p>
---	--	--

Telephone
01 739 2639
business

THE STUDENT SCENE

Militant challenge to NUS leaders



NUS president Digby Jacks

BIRMINGHAM: Last week the National Union of Students Conference saw the emergence of a strong and militant left-wing challenge to the union executive.

The Liaison Committee for the Defence of Student Unions, which was set up to fight the Tory government's proposals for shackling student unions, led a major challenge against the Community Party dominated executive.

On a wide range of issues, from autonomy for student unions to the James report on teacher training, the executive has shown that its main interest is in being a respectable pressure group which discusses the political issues of society as a luxury, after its real business of educational reform. On every issue, it was prepared to bow to the right wing, which now keeps it in office.

The liaison committee argued that the Tory attack on education was part of an overall political offensive designed to cut state expenditure and force up profits.

The attack on student unions was an attempt to gag the political voice of students, who have come out in support of workers' struggles on issues such as the miners' strike, and the postmen and the dustmen, last year. Before cutting down on standards, the Tories want to smash any organised opposition.

The liaison committee was in a minority. All but one of their candidates for the executive were defeated, as were the motions they put forward on union autonomy, the James report, and support for the IRA.

But a large number of delegates voted consistently for a revolutionary socialist position, and the constitutional manoeuvres adopted by the executive to gag speakers shows how they fear for their political futures.

The conference was deeply split over most major issues, and this was clearest in the debate over autonomy itself.

The question was whether the executive should be allowed to negotiate with the Tories without a mandate from conference. After no fewer than seven recorded votes, the executive finally won.

A further amendment, sponsored by the so-called Communists on the executive, recognises the right of the state to control the use of student union funds by 'democratic channels'.

This is like saying that the Industrial Relations Act is all right as long as it is

run democratically. Militants must recognise that the 'democratic state' is the bosses' state, and that any talk of 'democracy' is a cover-up for the people who take the real decisions: sacking workers, sending the police to break picket lines, and troops to Ireland to shoot down unarmed workers.

The tasks of socialists in the student movement are now clear: the fight for our policies in the NUS will continue, but, more importantly, the liaison committee will be built at local level, around the struggles which are developing in the colleges.

Sit-in broken

PORTSMOUTH:—Police were used to break a five-week long sit-in at Portsmouth Polytechnic at 6am last Saturday, acting on an order from the High Court.

The occupation was over a plan to expand the polytechnic without providing more accommodation or better facilities. The students countered by demanding the right to decide on any future plans themselves.

In these demands, they are supported by the trades councils of Portsmouth and Havant. Their next step will be to organise a demonstration through the city centre.

This occupation shows that the Department of Education are prepared to force through expansion of higher education on the cheap and use the courts and the police to destroy student opposition.

Nine charged

LANCASTER:—University authorities have asked the Director of Public Prosecutions to charge nine students, including IS members, with 'conspiracy to trespass' after they led a one-day sit-in. This followed a ten-day 'strike' in March over the victimisation of three lecturers.

The vice-chancellor has said he is prepared to expel large numbers of staff and students, and to withhold money from many more, as a result of the fight. What started as a struggle against the victimisation of Dr Craig, a Communist Party member, is now a full-scale fight to prevent the vice-chancellor using the law to enforce mass expulsions.

BLACKING GOES ON DESPITE COURT THREAT

by Steve Emms

MERSEYSIDE:—When attempts at a compromise settlement in the Liverpool docks dispute between the Transport Workers' Union and St Helens' haulage firm Heaton's broke down earlier this week, the prospect of a confrontation between the union and the Industrial Relations Act came one step closer.

Heaton's are applying to the court for further action against the union, in addition to the fine of £5000 already imposed.

But the dockers are refusing to be cowed by such threats. Dennis Kelly, a leading transport union steward, said last week: 'They can stuff their bloody law in a container.'

The press tried to give the impression that this is a dispute between different groups of workers, in which transport firms like Heaton's are the unfortunate victims. But this is far from being the case.

The struggle is one in defence of jobs and against get-rich-quick merchants who would profit by destroying them.

Meetings

The dockers' case is clear. When containerisation was finally agreed after a seven-week strike in July 1969, agreements were made with the dock board that dockers would continue to handle all work traditionally done by them.

This agreement has been blatantly broken by Heaton's, which now finds itself blacked at five docks throughout the country after giving the evidence for the National Industrial Relations Court to fine the transport union.

By employing their own men to fill and empty containers at their own inland depot, Heaton's (which is by no means the only guilty firm) can employ men at one third of the cost of dockers' wages.

Act, these firms have met the dock workforce head-on.

The blacking of container lorries, started by Liverpool dockers, has spread to Manchester, Preston, Tilbury and London, following the decision of the National Docks Shop Stewards Committee.

'In Manchester dockers are solidly behind the Liverpool men,' said Manchester Transport union docks shop steward Bill Dooley. 'We do not object to progress, but these container bases will mean fewer jobs for dockers.'

Commenting on the blacking, he said: 'To further our cause, the battle has to be fought nationally.'

Free Derry still solidly behind IRA struggle

by Eamonn McCann

NORTHERN IRELAND:—The murder by the British Army of the unarmed republican, Joseph McCann, and the series of shootings that followed it, have shown how little has been changed by the introduction of direct rule.

Those who thought three weeks ago that the 'Irish problem' was being solved are having to think again. The Tories' attempt to restructure the machinery through which they rule Northern Ireland has, as socialists and republicans forecast, failed.

One of the biggest issues in the next three months will be the existence of 'Free Derry', the 35,000-strong community behind the Bogside barricades. The British Army has said that to take Free Derry would need the biggest land engagement it has fought since Korea.

BROKEN

At the moment Northern Ireland's Tory overlord, William Whitelaw, is hoping to avoid such a holocaust. He is depending on moderate, middle-class politicians such as Gerry Fitt and John Hume, and on the hierarchy of the church, to woo the Catholic population away from the only forces that have so far defended them, the IRA.

All the signs are that he will be disappointed. The 'Officials' in Derry have begun a series of 36 street meetings to counter propaganda by the so-called moderates and the church. The 'Provisionals' are trying to win support for the idea of a 'free council' to run the area.

Both wings of the IRA have their political limitations. But despite that, it is clear that the people are unanimous in supporting the

republicans as opposed to the British Army.

They will not hand the area over to the Tories and so let hundreds more be interned.

The contradiction between the interests of British imperialism and the aspirations of the mass of the Catholics is as acute as ever. The struggle in Ireland is not nearly over. The need for solidarity action in Britain is as great as ever.

Irish TUC calls in strike-breakers

DUBLIN:—The Irish Congress of Trade Unions last week instructed its members to scab on unofficial strikers in the power industry by doing their work.

The strike was called by a rank-and-file organisation, the Shift Workers Association, with members in five Electricity Supply Board unions, which has been pressing for improved wages. The government has been determined to resist the claim, because it is in defiance of an agreement between the unions and the government which limits wage rises to seven per cent.

The impact of the strike was immediate, with tens of thousands of factory workers being laid off, power supplies cut for 12 hours at a time, and half the telephones cut off.

The congress instruction to break the strike has been largely ignored by other electricity workers, but there have been no large scale protests against it.

The only public statement in support of the shift workers on the first day of the strike—when the press shouted of 'irresponsibility', 'ruthlessness', and 'sabotage'—came from the recently-formed Socialist Workers Movement.

Later members of the SWM picketed Congress House and issued a statement opposing 'official, organised scabbing.'

Tenants' action brings heavy pressure on Labour councils

DONCASTER:—Last Wednesday a stony silence greeted Tory Alderman Gregory when he opened a debate on the Tory Rent Bill at a meeting of the newly formed Cantley Tenants Association.

His claim that rents would not rise very much was dealt with by members of the audience and the Labour chairman of Doncaster Housing Committee, Roly Williamson.

Doncaster City Council is likely to follow the lead of Castleford in Yorkshire and Clay Cross in Derbyshire in refusing to collaborate with the Bill when it becomes law. Ford worker Ralph Green, chairman of the Tenants Association, said the association stood for rent strikes if the Bill became law.

BARROW-IN-FURNESS:—Six well-attended public meetings were held on council estates last week to protest at the rents Bill. Labour Party and IS speakers addressed the meetings.

Some Labour councillors stressed that Barrow's Labour Council should refuse to operate the Tory rent increases. It refused to raise rents in April and there is a possibility that it will refuse to do so in October.

The estate meetings heard IS members Nigel Todd and Jonathan Kceley—secretary and present secretary of Lancaster Tenants' Action Committee—call from the platform for the formation of strong, democratic tenants' committees. Some meetings elected tenants' committees. The suggested policy of rent strikes was warmly applauded.

LANCASTER:—Council house tenants are starting a campaign against rent increases introduced under the Tory Housing Bill.

THE RENTS BATTLE

Tenants are demanding a commitment from the local Labour Party to refuse to collect rent increases, which began two weeks ago and to refuse to raise rents by 50p per

week in October.

Although Lancaster City Council is Tory-controlled at present, it is almost certain that Labour will take control on 4 May in the local elections.

Lancaster Joint Tenants' Action Committee secretary—IS member Jonathan Keeley—has announced that public meetings will be held on two council estates during the same week as the local elections, at which tenants will ask for the Labour Party's rents policy to be made clear.

Printers fight lock-out

LEICESTER: Several hundred trade unionists marched last Saturday in support of members of the printing union SLADE who have been locked out from six firms for 19 weeks. On the march were SLADE members from as far as London and Manchester.

The dispute began when workers at Leicester Photo-Litho Services started applying sanctions to back their demand for better pay and hours. Management then began systematically sacking SLADE members and a strike started. Members at the five other firms were locked out when they refused to do 'black' work from Leicester Photo-Litho Services.

The men were told that they have been sacked and would have to apply individually to get their jobs back. The union rejected this move as a clear attempt to break the union in the Leicester area. The latest management 'offer' has been to say that 50 of the 62 men involved can have their jobs back. But among those excluded from the offer are seven convenors and deputies.

The men are determined to resist such manoeuvres. In an attempt to break down sectarianism the locked-out workers have organised a meeting for rank file printers next Tuesday at the Leicester Trades Hall.

Donations and messages of support should be sent to SLADE strike committee, Barley Mow, London Road, Leicester.



I would like more information about the International Socialists

Name _____

Address _____

Send to: IS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN

Socialist Worker

Ferranti attack union rights

EDINBURGH: 6000 Ferranti workers last week found themselves in the front line in defence of union rights against legal attack.

The management of four Edinburgh factories took out injunctions against the convenor, deputy convenor and 16 shop stewards forbidding them to call meetings on company premises. The judge who granted the order was Lord Milligan, Tory MP for Edinburgh North from 1955 to 1960.

In the same week company officials tried to trick workers into signing new conditions of employment which would

have been binding under the Industrial Relations Act.

Workers were told that signing the forms 'committed them to nothing'. Fortunately the forms had to be withdrawn because of a technicality—an Employees' handbook to which they referred had not yet been printed.

The banned meetings were to mobilise support for a five-week-old strike by maintenance workers that has been halting production.

The response of the rank and file to the bannings was immediate. One shop walked out, and another was only kept

by the intervention of the convenor.

Before the injunction came into force one of the factories had already decided at a meeting to work to rule and ban overtime in support of the maintenance men. Unfortunately, the militancy of the rank and file was not matched by the stewards committee, who called off meetings planned later for other factories.

Ferranti militants, speaking through an IS bulletin circulating in the factories, are demanding that future meetings in support of the maintenance workers be held on factory premises in defiance of the ban.

SACK THREAT SETS PARSONS ALIGHT

THE long-smouldering powder keg of C A Parsons, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, exploded last week when management tried to distribute 250 redundancy notices in the drawing offices.

Pandemonium erupted before more than a few had been handed out. 250 members of TASS, the technical and supervisory section of the engineers' union, left their desks and marched, shouting, to the chief draughtsman's office.

Said Terry Rodgers, the office committee

by SW reporter

chairman: 'We demanded that Frank Kraus, the managing director, come down to us to do his own dirty work'.

Management then tried to overcome shop-floor opposition by mailing redundancy notices direct, by special delivery, to the men's homes. Among those who received notices were Harry Blair,

secretary of the office committee, who has been at Parsons for 17 years, another worker who has been there for 43 years, and a third who had only just returned to work after three months off sick with a nervous complaint.

But the workers threw the challenge back at the management. A mass meeting held in the drawing office on Monday decided to go immediately, en masse, to the executive suite.

When they entered the managing director's office he sat there stone-faced, flanked by two other directors. The TASS members clapped and shouted: 'Kraus out', and many tossed the redundancy notices on to Kraus' desk.

Meanwhile, TASS members from Grubb Parsons were swarming from their building cross the road to join in and Radio Newcastle, invited into the premises by the workers, relayed the events in a broadcast.

STRENGTH

The background to the dispute is Parsons' attempt to break the closed shop that TASS has built up. Last week the company threatened to sack all members who maintained sanctions to defend the closed shop agreement and the firm's office in Erith, Kent, which is threatened with closure.

This is clearly a conscious attempt by the employers to break the strength of a militant union at one of the places where it has been most powerfully placed. The TASS executive regard it as by far the most important struggle the union is involved in and are prepared to pay more than £23,000 of its £25,000 weekly income to support it.

Contributions and messages of support to Terry Rodgers, 12 Bainford Avenue, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE15 7AN.



Some of the Sexton's workers demonstrating at the local dole office

Shoe factory occupation now in fifth week

THE occupation of the Sexton's shoe factory at Fakenham in Norfolk is now in its fifth week.

The women workers, who are trying to prevent the management closing the factory, have organised the machinery in the factory to produce leather skirts and jackets to raise money to support their occupation.

They have been refused dole by the local office, but have forced their union, NUFLAT, to pay unemployment benefit.

400 protest at parade

BRISTOL: 400 people marched through the city centre on Saturday in the Anti-Internment League's protest against the Gloucester Regiment's 'victory parade' two days earlier. Supporters came from London and Oxford and included a large IS contingent.

Local press had whipped up a wave of pro-army feeling around the Gloucesters' parade. Anti-Internment League members leafletting it were attacked by ex-soldiers and at one stage a policeman joined in.

The reception of the League's demonstration on Saturday was remarkably less hostile. The end-of-march rally was addressed by AIL and trades council speakers.

Scanlon stalls as engineers' wage struggle spreads

by Glyn Carver

MANCHESTER:—Engineering union officials and stewards met last week for the first time since the struggle for the industry's wage claim was launched a month ago.

But it was not the sort of meeting at which the stewards could question their officials about the dispute. Indeed, some of the stewards involved were not even invited.

Instead, under the glare of television lights, AUEW president Hugh Scanlon spoke in defence of the union leadership's record.

For four weeks the Manchester workers have been fighting for the wage claim which the unions have refused to fight for nationally. 23 factories are occupied, 27,000 men are involved, and only now have the official leaders got down off the fence to offer dispute benefit and verbal support for the struggle.

Scanlon tried to argue that the union had intended to mobilise the well-organised factories behind the claim, rather than throwing the weakest into the fight through district action. No-one asked why this plan had not been put into action weeks ago.

His credibility slipped a few more points when he spoke of the need to spread the Manchester action. He is one of the men who could do this—and so far he has done next to nothing.

But perhaps the most interesting point in Scanlon's speech was his admission that the union's national negotiators had offered to drop the 35-hour week demand if the bosses would make an improved offer on holidays and wages.

The foolishness of this retreat on hours is clear to many militants in the Manchester area who have been stressing the hours

demand at a time when a million workers are on the dole and inflation is eating up wage rises.

John Tocher, Manchester district secretary of the Confederation of Engineering Unions, spoke to the meeting on the question of settlements already negotiated. 21 agreements have been signed and another dozen are in the pipeline.

Details of only three have been given. With slight variations all give a £3 wage increase, one and a half hours off the working week and a couple of extra days' holiday.

These are not even half the Manchester claim, which is itself a watered-down version of the original national claim.

If these are the best agreements, it is clear why the union officials want the others kept secret. Only complete openness, with steward meetings vetting agreements, can prevent damaging retreats.

Inside the occupied factories there are signs of deadlock. The crunch that seemed to be coming has not yet materialised.

At some factories the management have tried to escalate the struggle. At Viking Engineering, Stockport, they tried to sack the convenor.

The most important development has been the decision of the engineers in nearby Oldham to join in the action with sanctions and lightning one-day strikes.

SIT-INS CROSS PENNINES

LEEDS: Workers at several factories are working to rule in support of the engineering pay claim.

At Hoe Crabtree a sit-in followed an attempt by the management to break the work to rule by suspended workers. The attitude of the 500 workers was summed

up by a shop steward who said 'We are now out for the full claim.'

At another factory, Cattons, 600 workers have been locked out and iron bars put across the factory gates following an overtime and piecework ban.

PICKET LINES

Toolroom strike goes on

LONDON:—Toolroom workers at Smiths Industries, Cricklewood, are now in their third week on strike. They rejected a management offer of £2.40 and put in for a demand of their own combining an annual 'domestic' claim with the national engineering claim.

Most other sections of the factory had accepted the company offer, while some skilled sections then put in separate claims. The shop stewards committee has refused repeated demands for a factory meeting.

SHEFFIELD:—British Steel Corporation management has refused to reveal future plans for the River Don Steelworks. Last autumn workers agreed to the 'hiving off' of drop forge and other machinery to a private firm, Firth Browns, after promises were made to keep River Don open.

A mass meeting last Friday decided to prevent any more machinery being moved with a sit-down stoppage of the whole workforce.

The future for British Steel plants in Sheffield looks grim.

GLASGOW:—Nearly 700 building workers marched through the city last week to the Construction Union offices, demanding £30 for a 35-hour week and an end to 'the lump'. Several large sites were stopped.

The demonstration was organised by the Glasgow Building Workers' Charter group of militants.

At the meeting after the march workers voted unanimously in favour of another strike on 1 May and 100 will attend a campaign-organising meeting on 22 April. All sites represented are to send delegates to the Building Workers' Charter Conference in Birmingham on 29 April.

OXFORD:—At a mass meeting on Monday 2000 workers at the Cowley car body plant gave seven days strike notice. Management has refused to improve their offer to the men on a form of measured day work, and told union officials they would not honour the present agreement.

During the previous week the management suspended the men every morning. For the first four days they sat in, and on the fifth they walked out. The shop stewards recommended the meeting to continue to walk out if management continues to suspend them.

SALFORD:—Four members IS who were arrested during a demonstration last November, when Edward Heath's car was splashed with milk in protest at the ending of free school milk, were found guilty of using 'insulting words and behaviour'.

The two-day trial proved an embarrassment to the police. One by-stander gave evidence that Superintendent Parry had kneed defendant Ken Keating in the groin without provocation, and a Daily Mail cameraman refuted police claims that Keating had used obscene language and spat in Parry's face. All four were given relatively light sentences—three absolute discharges and the fourth, Keating, a £10 fine.

BIRMINGHAM:—650 engineering union members at GEC Blackheath are on strike demanding £5-a-week increase on their basic rate of £20.

Management, who have only given them 75p in the past three years, have offered £1.50 with productivity strings. Such productivity deals have resulted in 100 redundancies in the past year. Many skilled women workers earn the princely sum of 30p an hour. GEC profits are soaring.

Picketing is preventing goods from moving in or out.

TOWARDS SOCIALISM IN BRITAIN: Discussion with speakers from Tribune, International Socialists, International Marxist Group, Communist Party, Saturday 29 April, University of London Union, 10.30am

Subscribe Now!

I enclose £ _____ for one year's/six months

Socialist Worker

(£3.40 per year; £1.70 six months)

Name _____

Address _____

→ Socialist Worker 6 Cottons Gardens London E2 8DN

Published by the International Socialists, 6 Cottons Gdns, London E2. Printed by SW (Litho) Printers Ltd (TU all depts). Registered with the Post Office.