

* Socialist Worker

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

Uganda threat brings out the racists

THE anti-immigrant lobby is on the march again. Just as their policies in all fields are meeting increasing opposition from working people, right-wing politicians and the Tory press have seized on the issue of the Uganda Asians in an attempt to create a diversion.

They are screaming about a 'threat to Britain' of 'opening the flood-gates'.

The pretext they are using is a speech last weekend by the ruler of Uganda, General Amin. In it he threatened to throw out of that country all those people of Asian descent who opted for British citizenship when the country became independent.

There are wildly conflicting estimates in the press about the numbers involved. The real figure seems to be about 40,000—a figure that, far from leading to massive overcrowding as the right-wing press is claiming, would leave an average size football ground with ample spare room.

It ill becomes the same Tory politicians who are responsible for a million unemployed in Britain, and a level of house building a third lower than in other countries such as France and Germany, to claim that an 'influx of Asians' would be a 'threat to jobs' or cause overcrowding.

In both Uganda and Britain politicians whose policies do nothing for the mass of the population are picking on the Asians as scapegoats.

The main problem facing Uganda, like so many other formerly colonial countries, is that mass poverty is being made worse by continued domination by great Western monopoly companies.

Plight

But now Amin feels the need to ward off popular resentments. The Asian community make a natural target, for although they do not own the main wealth, they are generally better off than the Africans.

The Tories in Britain are trying to exploit the plight of the Asians for the same purpose.

People like Duncan Sandys and Enoch Powell have little or nothing to say about the urgent issues facing British workers today, but they remember the easy popularity they earned in 1968 when a similar issue arose in the case of Asians from Kenya.

At that time the organised labour movement offered no resistance whatsoever to their racist propaganda. The Labour government capitulated to their hysteria in a few days and rushed through parliament in one afternoon a law depriving Asians of their rights.

Socialists and trade unionists must resist the tide of racist propaganda and prevent the same fate hitting the Uganda Asians as hit those from Kenya. We must make it clear that the solution to unemployment, low wages and bad housing consists in fighting the Tory politicians who raise the racist scares, not by giving in to their arguments.

These problems will only be solved in a socialist Britain, and in such a society there will be plenty of room for anyone who wants to come here—although not for the Sandys, the Powells, the Heaths, the Aldingtons, the Vesteyes and other parasites.

Mike Caffoor

PRESS LIES TO BACK DOCKS PROFITEERS

by SW Industrial Correspondent

THE NEWSPAPERS' wailing campaign over the docks strike is now growing to symphonic proportions.

The wailing, of course, has not been for the dockers knocked to the ground after a vicious police baton charge in Scunthorpe, nor for the three pickets arrested without justification in Colchester.

Nor has it been for the Aberdeen and Liverpool dockers cheated out of Social Security payments after they had voluntarily handled special ships and given their pay to charity.

No, the press campaign has been directed against the dockers' efforts to avoid

the dole queue and to stop the assassination of a whole industry in the pursuit of profit.

The papers have been full of stories about the fate of little Guernsey and its tomatoes, of fifteen white rhinos which might get stuck in the docks, of vats of priceless wine that might explode, of thousands of tiny battery hens that might go to the slaughterhouse a bit earlier than usual unless troops are moved in to shift supplies.

And everywhere it is argued that the dockers are to be blamed for this situation.

No one points the finger at those wealthy firms and individuals who have run down the docks and threatened the

livelihoods of thousands of men. Nowhere is it explained that the Jones-Aldington agreement takes for granted a continuation of this profiteering and its price—further redundancies and longer dole queues.

The container and cold store firms have also been crying bucketsfull. They claim that they just cannot afford to pay the wages and take on the numbers of workers that would be demanded of them if they used registered, organised dock labour.

Of these firms, the most determined to maintain poor wages and conditions is Hays Wharf. This firm has taken its struggle against the dockers well beyond paying workers to man counter-pickets.

When 16 workers at its UK Cold Storage depot in Dagenham struck in support of the Pentonville Five, it sacked them all.

Now the container workers too are on official strike in defence of their jobs.

In a recent letter to The Times, Sir David Burnett, chairman of Hays Wharf, wrote that: 'What Britain needs is the courage to refuse to accept intimidation.' This message the press and politicians have been only too glad to take up.

Burnett's ploy is truly contemptible. Those whose memories stretch beyond yesterday's headlines will know something about Hays Wharf. For this is the firm that has schemed systematically to sack dockers, to transfer their work elsewhere and to make millions out of property speculation.

SACKED

In June 1969 the company shut its Mark Brown Wharf, ignored the instructions of the Dock Labour Board to employ its dockers elsewhere and sacked the men. In doing so it defied the statutory regulations and established procedures that Burnett so proudly upholds today.

All in all, Hays sacked 2000 men that year, and land previously valued at £4 million in the company accounts was suddenly worth £4 million EACH AND EVERY YEAR in rake-offs from hotel, casino and office block development. Yet Burnett claims that Hays Wharf cannot afford to employ dockers.

This is not his only departure from the facts. At his company's annual meeting this year several questions were raised about Hays' agreement to allow a firm called Hotel Investments and Development Associates to build a £10 million, 1700-bedroom hotel on its land.

The questions concerned the involvement in the company of Demetrio Kolzoff, an associate of Elias Fahamian and Ellis Seillen, who are serving jail sentences for defrauding British banks of £13 million. Burnett said he knew nothing of this alleged involvement. Payment of a 5p search fee at Companies House would have told him that Kolzoff was a former director of HIDA and is still a shareholder.

FALLEN

Burnett no doubt regards such facts as of minor importance. For on the completion of the hotel, Hays Wharf will get 27.5 per cent of the profits, which will doubtless be large. And part of these will be based on a £2 million government grant the hotel is to receive.

Hays Wharf cannot afford registered dockers, it is said. In truth dockers and the rest of the working class cannot afford the Hays Wharfs of this world.

It has fallen to the National Ports Shop Stewards Committee to raise these issues, issues that reach right to the heart of the society in which we live: is technical progress to be organised for the benefit of those of us who toil day after day to create the wealth, or is it to rebound to the benefit of the one per cent who own 80 per cent of the industrial wealth, while a million or more workers are consigned to a human scrap heap?

The Tory government has already taken emergency powers to back the employers against the dockers. Its police are already on the rampage against peaceful pickets. Now is the time for millions of trade unionists to make it clear that any attempt by the government forcibly to move supplies through the dockers' picket lines will lead to massive solidarity action.



Builders vote in Hyde Park, London, to reject the employers' offer. Picture: MIKE COHEN

Builders stop union retreat —now all out for full claim

TENS of thousands of building workers all over Britain have joined in an unprecedented struggle for decent pay in an industry for too long marked by miserable basic wages, a low level of union organisation and an accident rate even higher than that in the pits.

Like the postal workers, the miners, the railway workers and the dockers before them, they have stood up and said they will tolerate it no more. Hundreds of sites where labour only subcontracting had previously prevented union organisation have joined the struggle as workers see the chance to change their dangerous working lives.

At the end of last week, the main union involved, UCATT, tried to end the struggle—which until then had been based in the main on strikes on a minority of selected sites only. But before the union leaders had completed their manoeuvrings, a wave of protest shook the industry from end to end and foiled their moves.

Now the UCATT executive has been forced to change its mind. On Tuesday they declined to settle on the terms they had earlier agreed.

On Monday and Tuesday protest meetings and stoppages were organised in every major city. At most of these workers took up the lead given by centres such as Birmingham and Bristol a fortnight ago or more. They voted for all-out stoppages and sent 'flying pickets' to call out all the sites in their areas.

Militants pointed out that the 'settlement' agreed by the UCATT leaders would do nothing to achieve the demand of a 35-hour week—essential in an industry with hundreds of thousands unemployed. And the so-called new basic of £23 is actually only £21 when it comes to bonus calculations.

The lump

Finally, another £2 supposedly guaranteed on top of the £23 comes accompanied with vicious penalty clauses and can be withdrawn for 'poor' timekeeping or for holding union meetings during work time.

Such terms are far short of the £30 for 35 hours the union is supposed to be demanding and if accepted would compel large numbers of building workers who have joined the strike to return to the iniquities of the 'lump' system as the only way of getting the sort of wages

needed to support their families as prices soar.

That explains why in London 8000 building workers met in Hyde Park to reject the offer out of hand; in Glasgow 4000 workers ignored the instructions of the UCATT regional secretary on Tuesday and struck, sending flying pickets to bring out more sites, why in Edinburgh hundreds of MacAlpine workers on the Fountainbridge site marched on the UCATT offices, bringing out the giant St James Square complex and two other sites on the way, why in Southampton 700 building workers gave overwhelming support to the regional action committee's call to continue the struggle.

In Birmingham, Bristol, Wolverhampton, Stoke, and other towns there is already a complete paralysis of the industry by an all-out strike. Militants in London, previously held back by a policy of waiting for the officials, are using the tactic of throwing pickets round unorganised sites.

Massive, unofficial action alone has stopped the union leaders from ending the strike. The pressure now has to be kept up to break with the timidity of many of the union officials and extend the strike into an all-out stoppage for the full claim.

THE ROT ON THE SITES,
by Laurie Flynn—centre pages

1972: Corruption Year

BEHIND THE POULSON
AFFAIR, by Paul Foot—back
page

WORLD NEWS

Allende's retreat is turning into a rout

by Vic Richards

THE continuing retreat of Allende's Popular Unity government in Chile is now in serious danger of turning into a rout.

For the first few months of his term in office, Allende had a relatively easy ride. The largest party in parliament, the Christian Democrats, permitted most Popular Unity reforms to go through.

At that stage the Christian Democrats were tied to their own electoral promises; they agreed to the reforms in principle, although most were worried about the speed of change and the growth of social unrest. But they still thought that the reforms would benefit Chile's wealth owners more than it would harm them, and that it would release pent-up grievances in a relatively harmless way.

As demands from below grew, calling for more sweeping reforms, and land and factory occupations spread, the majority of the Christian Democrats went against the Popular Unity reforms. The left wing joined the Popular Unity parties, while the right wing and centre of the parties entered into a firm alliance with the parliamentary opposition to the government.

The capitalists, emboldened by the government's refusal to support and encourage land and factory seizures, started to resist and even to go on the offensive. The capitalist parties responded, and organised large demonstrations in all major towns, with the active support of large

numbers of extreme right-wingers and fascist groups.

In parliament they started using their majority to stop any serious reforms from going through.

The Popular Unity government was faced with a choice between parliament and socialism. Rather than support the actions of workers and peasants against their employers, they chose to 'abide by the constitution'.

It is no secret that the constitution was written by the ruling class, to suit its own interests. On top of this, the capitalists control parliament, and most of the state and the economy—which means that Allende will not be able to carry out any major reforms.

Allende did not recognise that the alternative is not between reforms and revolution, but revolution or defeat.

'Honesty'

The Communist Party then went further, seeking to justify the retreat. It urged government supporters to slow down, saying that it was necessary to 'consolidate the gains' and reach agreement with the Christian Democrats.

To prove their honesty, they have since then been leading the attack against the left, including members of the majority Popular Unity parties, the revolutionary MIR, peasants and workers, for threatening the understanding with the Christian Democrats.

Party stops left newspaper

THE French Communist Party has shown just what it means by 'a genuinely free press', which it calls for in its election programme and its joint programme with the Socialist Party.

For several years supporters of the revolutionary socialist paper *Lutte Ouvriere* have been putting out a socialist bulletin for the workers at Charolais, one of the depots of France's biggest newspaper distributors, the NMPP, which has a virtual monopoly of sales from newspaper kiosks and handles the national distribution of *Lutte Ouvriere* to hundreds of kiosks.

On 6 and 9 June groups of supporters of the CGT, France's major union federation which is dominated by the Communist Party, tried to

prevent the leaflets being given out. This was reported in *Lutte Ouvriere* 10 days later.

Mysteriously, most copies of this number of the paper never reached the newstands outside Paris—in the areas served by the Charolais depot. A fortnight later *Lutte Ouvriere* received a letter from the union informing them that the workers had decided not to handle the paper as long as the bulletin continued its 'attacks on the union' (in other words its criticism of the Party).

The date given for the workers' meetings was two days AFTER the paper was published, so the Party must have made the decision not to distribute the paper before the workers were able to discuss the issue.



Chilean farmers occupy land seized from big landowners. Allende's government has failed to carry out promised land reform.

Despite protests by the rank and file, Allende's Socialist Party sided with the Communist Party. The cabinet was reshuffled, with a new Communist minister, Pedro Vuscovic, the most left-wing of the former cabinet, was sacked. Negotiations then started with the Christian Democrats.

But having sensed the government's weakness, the Christian Democrats soon wanted no less than total surrender.

With the breakdown of the talks, and with proof of the cowardice of the Popular Unity coalition in struggle and in print, the right wing is going on the offensive. The Minister of the Interior, Hernan del Canto, has been forced to resign by the Parliamentary opposition, after three weeks' suspension. He was charged with not evicting peasants from the farms they occupied, having detained a (right-wing) newspaper editor, and corruption.

There are other less newsworthy but more serious events.

Popular Unity government mayors and agents have been overruled by parliament and in some cases taken

to court. The courts are becoming increasingly repressive against all left-wing and popular mass actions.

The US is again exerting pressure over Chile's foreign debts.

A law is being passed through parliament to authorise the army to 'control armed groups', in other words revolutionary and peasant self-defence groups. The government has halted agrarian reform, so landowners are now moving all stock and equipment to safe places (there is now no legal constraint to prevent them).

Workers' control has become a bad word.

Rally

Allende's retreat has led several Popular Unity parties, or sections of them, to dissociate themselves from the attempt to negotiate an understanding with the capitalist parties. This may be a positive sign, but despite fine words, and criticisms of the Communists, no clear break has been made in practice.

The problem now is whether the MIR can rally enough strength among the workers and peasants to force the government to stop retreating, and itself prepare the ground for further advance.

Otherwise, there is a serious danger that demoralisation will really take root. The advances made by the Christian Democrats in recent union elections are a serious warning of worse things to come unless the revolutionaries succeed.

And this is the strategy of the right wing: to wait for defeats and retreats to pile up, with the consequent loss of heart by Allende's supporters. As Allende is not likely to use his undoubted popularity to lead a real attack on capitalism that could stop the rot spreading, he will probably go the way he came—by the ballot box, in a blaze of publicity.

Meanwhile, the army waits. None of the parties has ever attacked it, and it is as united, and better armed, than ever. To defend the constitution, of course.

Romance

RUMANIA may be the most independent of the East European states, but it is not the one which has moved furthest from the Stalinist tradition. At last month's Communist Party congress, the Party journal published a poem containing the verse:

The rustle of the forests
and the murmur of the streets
repeats one name:
we all know which
- the young, the proud, the valiant,
the well-beloved name
Ceausescu.

LETTERS

A journalist's appeal to Fleet Street

I WRITE in my personal capacity as a working journalist who has followed the docks strike through the newspapers (when they have appeared). Already there has been 'reds-under-the-beds' talk in certain sections of the press, and if the Transport Union withdraws official support from the strikers, red scare stories will probably increase.

It is also possible that journalists will be 'persuaded' to write about the 'irresponsibility' of the rank-and-file leaders, because those journalists are scared of section 96 of the Industrial Relations Act and its restrictions

about comments about unofficial action.

I hope that journalists will not only give the strikers' case the fairest possible presentation, but will also remember that the basic questions in the docks strike are the fight against unemployment and redundancy and the fight against cut-price labour.

The first of these struggles is one that journalists in Fleet Street are keenly sensitive about, in view of closures and redundancies on national newspapers. The second—well, journalists would never tolerate cut-price labour on Fleet Street and they

should not expect dockworkers to put up with it either. ERIC WINTER, member of the executive council of the National Union of Journalists, London SW17.

Letters to *Socialist Worker* must arrive by first post Monday. They should not exceed 250 words and should preferably be written or typed on one side of the paper only. Letters may be cut for space reasons.

THANKS FOR HELP WITH FINES

THE Glasgow Area Committee of the International Socialists have asked me, through your columns, to thank all those who so generously contributed to the Irish Fines Appeal we set up at the beginning of July.

Thanks to the magnificent response of your readers, the total £70 of fines imposed on the four who protested at the action of British troops in Derry back in February has now been reached.

This response has made us even more determined to maintain our efforts here in Glasgow in support of those fighting British imperialism in Ireland. STEVE JEFFERYS, Glasgow CI.

All's not well in Ladywell

IF you ever pass through the south-east London borough of Lewisham, keep clear of the Ladywell police station. And if you're black, proceed with extreme caution.

That is the conclusion drawn from the study of a report produced by the South East London Group of the National Council for Civil Liberties. The report, presented to the Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration, quietly demolishes the alleged commitment of the police force to improving 'community relations' with black people.

It documents the reality of life in a decaying working-class suburb with a large black community: harassment of blacks, planting of evidence and drugs, racist abuse and the hounding of youngsters who have fallen foul of the law.

And it says that the officer in Lewisham who acts as the Community Liaison Officer is a 'disaster' who sees his job as acting as a public relations man for the police, white-washing any criticism or complaints.

It calls for the abolition of such officers and adds that the system whereby the police investigate complaints against themselves is treated with open derision and contempt by many blacks.

Cynical

Analysing the outlook of the black community, the report says: 'Black people who have never previously come into contact with the police change their attitude dramatically after having done so . . . Many West Indians from the immigration of the 1950s are extremely religious and as 'middle class' in their attitudes as most of their white contemporaries.

'To them the thought of conflict with the police is as ridiculous as it is to their white equivalents. But time and time again we have seen their attitude change into bitterness and a harsh cynical attitude to each and every policeman.'

Police activities are detailed as:

THE 'STOP': a police car following black people in the streets, with questions barked at them, often in an abusive manner. This practice creates offences when people react against the police's manner.

ASSAULT: lawyers attached to the NCCCL group accept that police attacks on black people are now inevitable when they are held for questioning.

PERJURED EVIDENCE: many blacks complain that the police in evidence manufacture completely false statements allegedly made by people being questioned.

DRUG PLANTING: allegations of cannabis planting are common enough to be highly disturbing, the report says.

Stopped

HARASSMENT: particularly of young blacks who are known to have been in trouble. Boys 'known' to the police do not expect to get home without being stopped. Searches, detentions and enquiries follow.

FORCED DETENTION: following arrests, blacks are kept for long periods before bail is allowed and bail is often refused until fingerprints are taken. The police are unwilling to tell people of their basic rights.

CAUTIONS: the police have scant regard for the Judge's Rules in cautioning people.

After detailing such a brutal picture of the police, the report's call for better training of policemen is naive, to say the least. It demands a full-scale public inquiry into the Ladywell police station but its own conclusion stresses that the problem cannot be confined to just one station:

'It is easy to say simply that the officers there are particularly prejudiced but it is clearly unlikely that all the racially prejudiced officers become stationed in one place.'

Copies of the report are available from David Barnard, 28 Wellmeadow Road, London SE13.

David East

Socialist Worker

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

The TUC plays poker with a gangster —wages are stakes

ONE VICE the leaders of the TUC could never be accused of is bearing grudges—particularly against those they meet across the negotiating table. A fortnight ago the House of Lords decided that unions were liable for massive fines because of the actions of their members defending their jobs in the docks.

That decision received unanimous praise from employers their press, their organisations and their favourite political party.

Yet exactly seven days later the TUC General Council was prepared to sign an agreement with the main employers' organisation, the Confederation of British Industry, to set up an 'independent conciliation and advisory service'.

Despite the fines hanging over the unions' heads, Vic Feather was able to say that 'this agreement was reached in a very short space of time, with a complete absence of rancour'. According to Feather, 'confrontation means bloody noses for everyone. We want conciliation and settlements.'

To prove the point, the General Council even included in the list of names suggested as 'conciliators' the leader of a union that had been suspended from the TUC for remaining registered under the Industrial Relations Act—John Bonfield of the National Graphical Association.

The TUC stance is most amazing because the government and employers have made no concessions at all. The Industrial Relations Act remains in force. Plans to force up the rents paid by millions of working-class families now have the force of law. Only the day after the agreement was signed, the government took emergency powers to deal with the docks situation.

In aid of profits

Talk of 'independent conciliation' in such circumstances, whether from the right wing or the left wing of the General Council, is rather like talking of a 'fair' game of poker when one of the players has a revolver in his hand under the table.

The fact is that the various anti-working class measures taken by the government over the past two years have not been accidental, some strange aberration that better communication and mutual understanding between the 'two sides of industry' can overcome.

They have flowed from the urgent need of big business to boost its profits at a time when competition from its foreign competitors is getting more bitter. It has no other way to do this than by somehow making a dent in working-class living standards.

The miners, the railwaymen and now the dockers have shown that this policy can be resisted. The magnificent response to the builders' strike in many parts of the country has shown that even those previously outside the orbit of trade unionism can be drawn into the struggle for better wages and conditions if they are given the lead.

The lessons of this period have not been lost on those who live off the backs of the rest of us. For instance, the major stockbroking firm of Simon and Coates writes in a duplicated circular to its clients:

Proving militancy pays

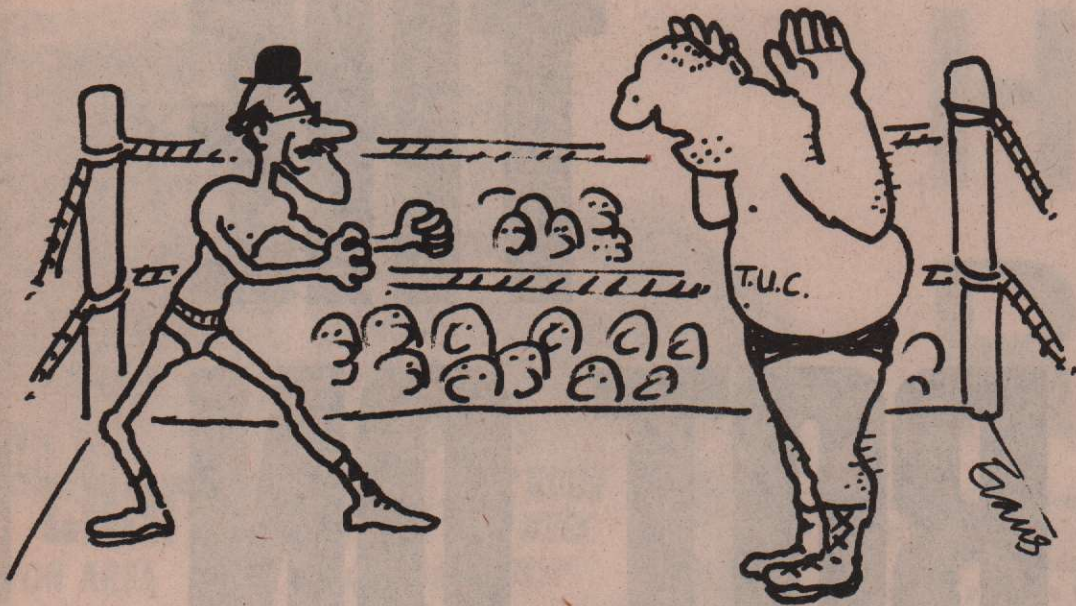
'Now three major industries, the mines, the railways and the docks, have taken on the government and won. Although these are all declining industries, their workers have shown their fellow trade unionists that militancy pays... The prospects of each highly inflationary wage claim being successfully pursued by means of strikes and general disruption can hardly appeal to either government, employers or responsible trade union leaders.'

It is to these 'responsible trade union leaders' that the government and employers are turning to save the situation. The deal they are offering is not to beat them too heavily with the knout of the Industrial Relations Act if they agree to push for lower wage increases than otherwise. And the trade union leaders, almost to a man, have accepted the deal.

But that is no reason for the rank and file to be fooled. The government and the employers have no intention of reversing their plans for solving the problems of British big business at the expense of the working class.

The deal shows that the fight to ward off these plans necessarily involves a struggle to establish genuine, democratic rank and file control over the unions—a struggle not only against right-wing leaders, but also against many of those who make militant speeches at the conference rostrum and then return to negotiations as usual.

1 SUBMIT!



COTTONS WARS

Easy Ryder

ONE of the latest voices to join the chorus of top people demanding that unions and industry unite to hold down the level of wage rises is Sir Don Ryder, chairman of Reed International, the £300 million paper, printing and publishing group which controls IPC, publishers of the Daily Mirror, Sunday People and most weekly magazines.

At the company's annual meeting Ryder declared that 'without response from the unions price restraint could not continue in the face of rising wages.' But if anyone thinks that is a fair point, they should look at the rest of his speech. According to the Financial Times 'he disclosed that group pre-tax profits in the first quarter to 30 June of the current year had risen by 35 per cent.'

On the same day it was reported that in the same period wages were rising by only 11.7 per cent a year—a comparison worth remembering next time the Mirror complains about wage inflation.

THE story that workers are responsible for all the ills of the world is not, of course, confined to Britain. Mr Toni Scurria, an Italian-American who opened a factory in the village of Ballygar, in Galway in the West of Ireland, several months ago, is now closing it down. He claims that the girls he took on were lazy and production was slow.

Not only that, but the despicable, idle creatures insisted on getting 50 per cent more in pay than was suggested by the town's industrial development association. So their wages were at the quite inflationary level of £6 for a 45-hour week.

Exposure?

WHEN Harold Wilson raised the question of the ownership of Midland Cold Storage in the Commons last week, he really got stuck in. Here, it seemed, was Harold, brave and bonny fighter for the truth.



London dockers unloading a barge: dangerous work done in all weathers

'NOT only is socialism wonderful, it can even perform miracles!' was the comment of one reader when he saw the picture above printed in our 26 July issue. Certainly the caption makes it look as if dockers have found a way of reversing the law of gravity. It should, of course, read: 'London dockers loading a barge.'

Except that Colin Ross, chairman of the T Wallis shop stewards' committee in London's Royal Docks, wrote to Wilson twice early in July telling him he suspected the Vestey's owned Midland. Harold said and did absolutely nothing until the commercial press started reprinting Socialist Worker's expose of the Vestey's.

Harold could of course have made the allegation without the proof that any newspaper requires. He, like all MPs, is protected by the rules of parliamentary privilege. Still, better not to get involved with battling dockers. After all, it might have been Harold's anti-union laws they were defying.

THE City of London is building the most expensive-ever council flat. On top of the Cromwell Tower on the Barbican site, it will cost a modest £4750 a year.

For that sum, plus £1000 a year rates and £100 for parking, the lucky tenant will enjoy four bedrooms, a dressing room, three bathrooms, one shower, a minstrel gallery (!), living/dining room, breakfast area, kitchen, utility room, store room, conservatory and roof terrace. So far nearly 700 flats and houses have been let on the Barbican at astronomical rents. They are much sought after by tired businessmen whose firms pay the rent for them to have 'a little place in town'.

Breakable

MANAGEMENT of English China Clays, known for its devastation of the countryside in Cornwall and giv-

ing workers several nice varieties of lung disease, have been actively stirring it for the dockers in the West Country.

They've got their employees so frightened for their jobs that they have been 'persuaded' to take 'positive action' unless the dockers open up the three Cornish ports. It has even been suggested that the china clay workers should load and unload ships themselves.

Lord Aldington, chairman of the London docks' employers and a close friend of Edward Heath, also doubles as a director of English China Clays. Very handy.

Black eye

PRIVATE EYE, the radical magazine, printed during the recent newspaper shut-down, and the gay young things on the business side were not slow to seize the chance afforded by the absence of the national newspapers. The print order was boosted by 10,000 copies, giving a nice little extra profit of at least £800.

London docks shop stewards were quick to find out about the goings on and asked editor Richard Ingrams for that issue's extra profits to be turned over to the dockers' strike fund. It took a couple of days, but the answer came through. No. Or was it 'piss off'? It fell to the three National Union of Journalists' staff members at the Eye to save something of the magazine's tarnished honour. They did send a collection to the dockers.

LAURIE FLYNN
reports on

THE ROT ON THE SITES



BRITAIN's building workers have been engaged in a two-month-long struggle, including selective strikes, for a basic wage of £30 and the 35-hour week.

Construction workers are among the most exploited and oppressed in this fair land of ours. A modern-day system of slavery, the union-busting 'lump', has been spread wide at the instigation of the employers. This allows men, frightened and intimidated by being outside the law, to be exploited with ease.

Building workers toil long hours, depending on their overtime to get anywhere near a living wage. The accident and death rate is the worst of any industry, including the mines.

In short, construction is a jungle of misery and corruption, kept that way for years by the ruthlessness of the employers and the spinelessness of the union leadership.

But Britain 1972 saw a completely new mood abroad. The miners, the railwaymen and now the dockers proved to hundreds of thousands of workers that struggle paid. And

in construction the many fine militants saw their will to organise and fight spread to whole new layers of the workforce previously thought to be beyond organisation. In recent weeks a massive head of steam was building up for an all-out struggle to settle with the employers.

But in the past ten days, it became increasingly clear that the leadership of UCATT, the building workers' union, was moving fast for a settlement to the strike, a tuppenny ha'penny sell-out.

They have reverted to type, to the pursuit of sweetheart deals with their chums the building employers. In so doing they have done their best to sabotage an unprecedented opportunity to build the basis of a real movement that could begin not only to regulate the industry's appalling conditions of labour, but could start to tackle the many broader social issues that arise right out of construction's relationships of production.

ROBBERY

For this was not just a struggle about money. The only reason the strike got such a marvellous response from lump and other unorganised workers was that they saw the struggle could bring deep changes in the quality of their working lives.

But UCATT's leaders are keen to get back to 'normal working'.

Who is it that they have chosen to side with? Who are the firms they are prepared to treat with to maintain their regime of robbery and exploitation? And what is 'normality' in construction?

Building: Britain's jungle of corruption

For more than two years I worked as construction journalist on a commercial newspaper. At the time I was already committed to the cause of the working class, to socialism. So I knew something of the poverty, misery and exploitation that lies just behind the myths of modern, humane Britain.

But that equipped neither myself nor the other young men and women with whom I worked for what we were to learn. We began to understand and write about the realities of UK construction. It was like passing slowly through the lower depths.

For Britain's construction employers are unrivalled as pitiless exploiters. It is not that they are any nastier than the others, just that the whole nature of the operation makes for the exercise of naked and corrupt power.

Construction in Britain is dominated by two large outfits, the McAlpines and Laings. Both are family firms of obscure origin but now of immense economic and political power in our society, and set the style for all types and sizes of construction firms. Between them they have the two employers' associations carved up, with Laing's orchestrating the National Federation of Building Trade Employers and McAlpines fronting the Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors.

McAlpines emerged rich and powerful from nineteenth century railway building and endeared themselves to songwriters for their habit of exploiting the navy to the full. A century later the situation is little changed, except that the operation is more profitable nowadays.

McAlpines exercise a quite unbelievable influence in the industry. This can be shown by their ability to pick up plum contracts in spite of the formalities of bidding and competing for jobs.

When the British Steel Corporation got ready to build its new basic oxygen steel-making plant in Scunthorpe, the biggest civil engineering contract ever awarded in Britain, McAlpines came in second on the bid prices, after a smaller civil engineering outfit called Mitchell Construction. But all sorts of extras were added to the Mitchell tender by the BSC's consulting engineers and magically the contract was awarded to... you know who.

Every major redevelopment job on London's South Bank has been handled by McAlpines, who just seem to have a way of obtaining all the juicy contracts. They are now building the New Covent Garden market. They are building the new National Theatre. They built the Shell Centre.

They are also building the last part of the Barbican, that famed scene of alleged communist subversion 'exposed' by a witch-hunting Labour government committee of inquiry, which was in fact an employers' ploy to raise their contract payments by stalling the job.

KILLED

The Barbican is now the single most expensive housing project in Britain. Each flat is subsidised to the tune of £800 a year from public funds. The level of rents, before subsidies, ensures that only city gents, bankers, architects and the odd trade

Building worker

union boss can live there.

John Laing is pitiless. But the more often. A in Whitehaven, six years ago loading. Two st

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Throughout, made by all th deprive the tw and meagre rig pensation for men.

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SELECTED POLITICAL WRITINGS

Rosa Luxemburg

Edited and introduced by Dick Howard

Rosa Luxemburg, revolutionary genius, fighter and thinker, murdered in her native Germany in 1919.

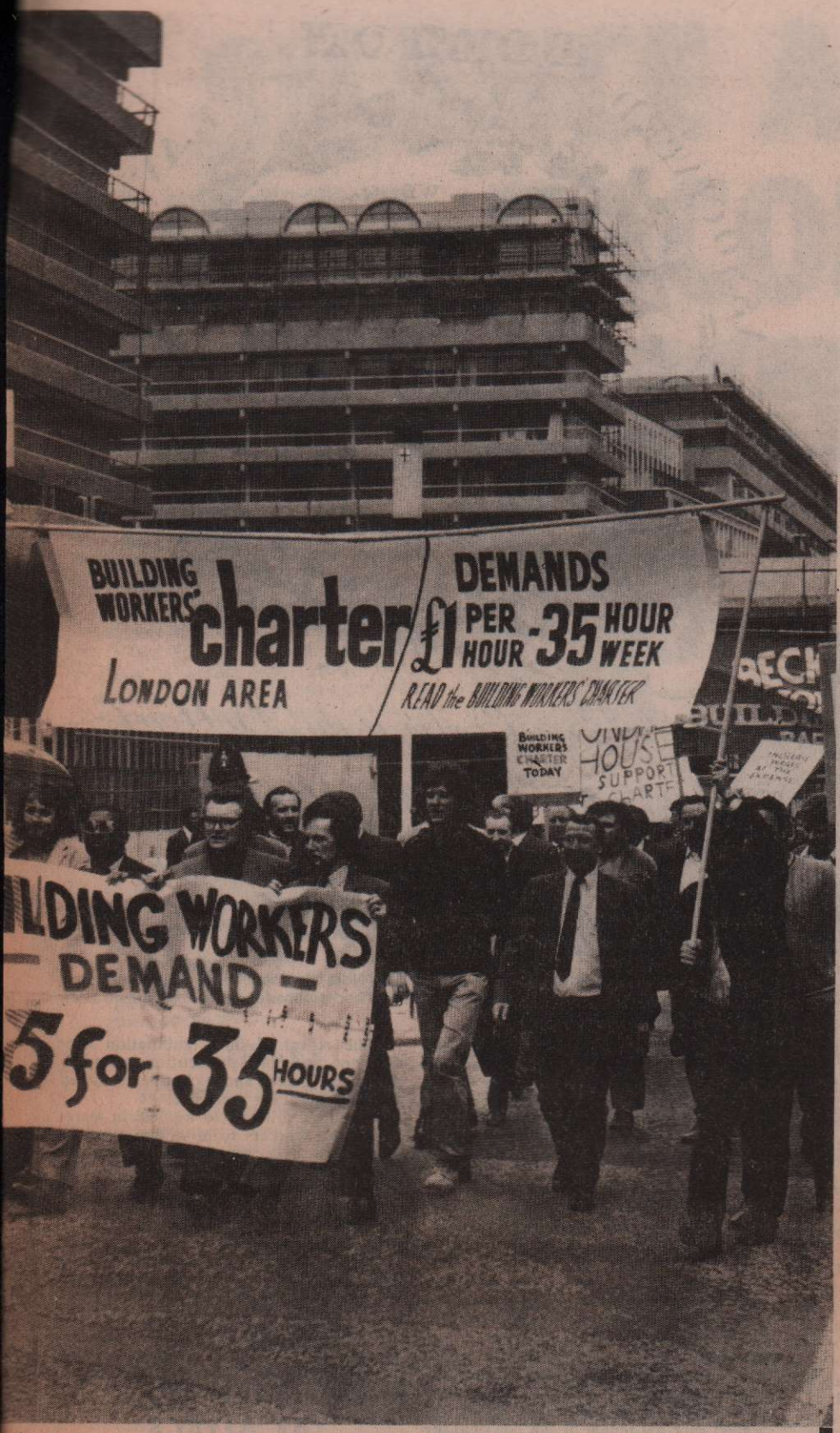
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FROM: IS BOOKS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.



THE HOLIDAY RACKET



in the march: they are among Britain's most exploited workers

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in, a firm of lumpers who paid the union rate and behind the scenes gave secret pay cheques to the chosen few. Laings (and Sir Keith Joseph's family firm, Bovis) were involved with the great system building scandals recently. They had a freelance agent who gave bribes to Sydney Sporle, corrupt Labour ex-Mayor of Battersea, where Laing got lucrative contracts.

They were close to Dan Smith, who was found not guilty of giving a bribe to Sporle while Sporle was found guilty and imprisoned for accepting one from Smith.

Bending the law, malpractice, corruption, is not some unfortunate extra in private enterprise construction. It flows inevitably from the competitive system, where turnover and rate of profit must be maintained, where the overwhelming majority of big contracts are paid by the government or local authority.

It is more and more widely recognised that the priorities of private enterprise construction are fundamentally anti-social. There is beginning a serious discussion about the insanity of urban motorways, the need for free public transport, the need to take land and building into social ownership and control to put an end to property speculation which is despoiling city centre after city centre in the pursuit of profit.

SCANDAL

But, so far, that argument is conducted without concern for the people who are actually at the centre of the production process and who alone have the power to change the priorities—the building workers as part of the working-class movement.

What the system does to the building worker—accidents and deaths on the sites, the avoidance of the Factories Act, the scandal of the lump—is becoming more widely known.

One event condenses all the many sides of the situation.

The Milford Haven bridge collapsed in March 1970, killing five building workers. It was designed by Freeman Fox, the same firm that was later to have its Yarra box

girder bridge in Melbourne, Australia, collapse with 45 deaths. The Milford Haven bridge is literally a parable for our times.

All aspects of engineering design and construction techniques were submerged in the effort to cut costs, because of the massive interest rates on the capital borrowed to build such projects. The bridge was built beyond the absolute risk limits during construction and it collapsed.

But special evidence given to the inquest into the five dead showed that even if construction of the bridge had been successfully completed it would still have fallen down the first time traffic tried to cross.

Immense efforts went into hushing this up. It was like a remake of the Whitehaven operation. The coroner returned a verdict of accidental death and that was that. Not one national newspaper reported the staggering truth of the mathematics lodged with the inquest. Not one bothered to inquire why the hush up took place.

It was not because of nasty men. The reason was that British engineering was just breaking into the world export market. If the truth got out this would damage 'our' reputation and lose valuable foreign design contracts which would worsen the sacred balance of payments.

In the event the truth did not get out and the Yarra bridge collapsed some few months later with more deaths.

It is possible to write on and on about such details of the havoc wreaked by private enterprise construction. What matters is that over recent weeks a force has begun to emerge which can tackle the problem rather than record endless scandals.

And the one thing that this movement will have to deal with if there is to be further advance is the nature and policies of the union leadership. Never again can construction workers afford some spurious unity with those who look militant and then sell the pass.

HOLIDAYS and weekends are for workers like oases in the desert of capitalist society. 'I'll be all right on Friday' is the attitude to the working week, and 'Roll on the holidays' just about sums up the attitude to the rest of the year.

Both are a chance to relax from the boredom of working to make someone else rich, a chance to give family and children the attention they deserve but are denied. For shift workers, it's a chance to see the family. Both offer a few precious days for genuinely creative work or hobbies.

But the capitalist system, though ready enough to keep a million workers idle, is less generous when it comes to giving holidays. Millions still do not have the right to paid holidays, and millions more get the shortest possible 'break'.

For the lucky ones, there is a whole industry that makes profits from offering the chance to 'escape' for a few days, usually to some sunny dictatorship where wages are low, unions banned and costs minimal.

Different from the boss's villa perhaps, but still something. The idea is that, if nothing else, it is cheap and reliable. That idea, like most things in the bosses' brochures, is false.

The Financial Times said last week: 'It is generally accepted that package holiday prices next year will be as much as 20 per cent higher'. But the holiday firms won't tell you about that in their brochures. 'Clarksons, Blue Sky, Horizon Midland and the Castle Group are going ahead with brochure prices based on pre-inflation [of the pound] exchange rates', continues the Financial Times. In other words: Let them think the holidays are cheap—and tell them the real price after they've booked.

Cheap

Further on the FT comments drily: 'The Tour Operators Study Group has met to debate the situation, but as so often happens when it debates financial matters, the group of 22 operators agreed to disagree'. Small wonder.

The trick is simple. By making you pay for your holiday well in advance, the firm can use your money to earn interest. The worker sacrifices spending power thinking he's getting a cheap holiday, but the firm uses the money for profit and then, when the profit margin is threatened by a floating pound either puts up the price or lies to its customers about next year's price.

Just remember that 20 per cent figure when you next look in a travel agent's window.

And don't run away with the idea that you can escape from the boss that easily anyway. Most of the major travel firms are part of the network of big business. Skytours, for instance, is owned by Lord Thomson, who also owns The Times, the Sunday Times, 40 provincial newspapers, a large chunk of Scottish TV, Britannia Airlines and the yellow pages in the phone book.

Maudling

A nice set up. You can read an ad for a holiday in one of his papers, look it up in his yellow pages, fly there on his airline and pay his holiday firm. That's what's meant by being had coming and going.

And so it goes on. Clarkson's, who have a fifth of the holiday market and are under heavy challenge from Thomsons, are owned by Shipping Industrial Holdings. Until recently, the chairman of SIS was... Reginald Maudling.

Last August the SIS auditors said, after looking at the books: 'In our opinion records (including computer records) were not properly kept by the company during the year up to December 1970 with regard to revenue and debtors.' When one remembers how tame most auditors are, that is a damning statement.

In that same year, the name Clarksons was made to stink in the nostrils of hundreds of holidaymakers who found themselves stranded in half-built flyblown hotels in Spain and Greece. (No good asking a friendly policeman there.)

But Maudling was able to tell the parasitic shareholders that profits in this cost-cutting consortium were up from £318,000 to £418,000. Beaming all the way to the bank, he told them: 'An essential part of our business is company satisfaction'.

Men who make a packet out of package deal trips

Satisfaction for whom? For the shareholders maybe, but not the family who had their one chance of a holiday ruined, or for the grossly underpaid servant class in Spanish and Greek hotels.

Horizon has three subsidiaries: Horizon Midland, Far Horizons, and Four S Travel. All are owned by one man—Victor Raitz, who, as the Financial Times remarked recently, 'picked up a bruise or two in bringing Horizon Midland to the market'.

He has also picked up a bruise or two in trying to get the S S Phoenix afloat—its cruise has just been postponed for the third time.

Malcolm Horsman of Ralli International has just joined the board of Horizon and Horizon Midland. He gave as his reason that 'I am fascinated by travel'. With 10 per cent of the market and growing, who wouldn't be? The people who wanted to cruise on the S S Phoenix are probably fascinated as well.

Cosmos Tours is not so well off just now, though it has eight per cent of the market. It lost about £100,000 last

year in a disaster over the cruise ship Galaxy Queen, owned by the Galaxy Company which went into liquidation in December having taken the precaution of registering in Malta. And they still say there are no sharks in the Mediterranean!

If you spend your year sweating for Great Universal Stores, owned by Sir Isaac Wolfson, then you can relax on a Global Holiday—Global is a GUS subsidiary.

Vicious

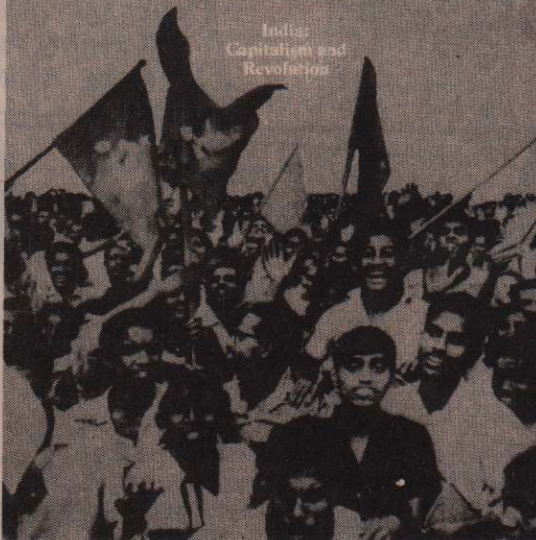
Similarly Sunair Lunn-Poly, which is a subsidiary of Trafalgar House and Cunard, the famous purveyors of wasteful luxury liners. Lunn-Poly was taken over from the government-owned Transport Holding Company in June last year, during the big carve-up which saw the hiving off of nationalised Thomas Cooks.

Cooks, which had a reputation for thoroughness and efficiency if nothing else, with its profitable charter and travellers' cheque business was sold, after vicious competition, to a group consisting of the Midland Bank, Trust Houses Forte and the Automobile Association. Between them they paid £22 million. So the last honest travel broker passed into the hands of the big money boys.

The holiday which could widen the horizon for the working man has now become part of the same system that cramps and limits his horizons the rest of the year round. The boss can still give the lucky ones a package tour but, as we have seen, it can be only at the expense of less fortunate workers in more exploited countries.

**MARTIN
PIPER**

International
Socialism 52



Labour, from the safety of opposition, once again proclaims its commitment to a 'fair society'. **Raymond Challinor**, in 'Labour and the parliamentary road' strips away the party's reformist pretensions and the Labour 'left's' hopeless dedication to evolutionary change. **PLUS** Nigel Harris on India, Tony Cliff on Lenin, David Widgery on Mayakovsky

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UNIONS AGAINST THE LAW: IT HAD TO BE BROKEN

A SINGLE THEME has run through the statements of both Tory government ministers and their Labour counterparts since the jailing of the Pentonville five—that the law in Britain has safeguarded basic democratic rights from time immemorial and that no section of the population, however large, can be justified in defying the law.

Harold Wilson was saying, even as hundreds of thousands of workers were ensuring by direct action that the dockers were released from jail: 'We have always said that a law, even a bad law, must be obeyed.'

But in fact none of the much-vaunted 'liberties' of which our rulers boast would exist if working people had not been ready to break the law in the past.

Freedom of speech, freedom of the press, the right to form trade unions, these were not handed down from on high because of the benevolence of parliaments and governments. They were won only because from the start the working-class movement was prepared to defy governments and the law and to fight long and bitter struggles against court judgments and Acts of parliament.

The first working-class trade union and political organisations to be formed, at the end of the 18th century, invariably found themselves defined as behaving 'illegally'. The experience of London bookbinders in 1786 and 1787 was typical. Fed up with working an 84-hour week, they demanded that an hour be cut off their 14-hour day and even had the temerity to go on strike to enforce the demand.

The Glasgow Mercury of 19 May 1787 reports what followed:

'IMPARTIALITY'

'Yesterday the journeymen bookbinders were brought up before the Judges of King's Bench, in order to receive judgment, they having been convicted of a conspiracy against their masters by demanding of them an abridgment of their hours of labour, and leaving their work when refused.

The Judges on the Bench were Messrs. Ashurst, Buller, and Grosse, who, upon this and former occasions on this cause, acted with great impartiality, and at the same time shewed a proper resentment against such daring attacks upon the liberty of the State and the laws of the constitution.

Mr. Justice Ashurst took the lead in the business, made many trite and judicious

HAD TO BE BROKEN

Workers won freedom —despite the courts

observations, and very candidly spoke of the lenity of the masters towards their journeymen, there having been twenty-four indicted, and only five of them, at the request of their counsel to the masters, received sentences as hostages for the rest. The sentence passed upon them was two years' imprisonment in Newgate, which the wise and learned Judge could not think too severe, in order to check the growing evils in combinations in a trading and free country.

'The masters who were present, still possessing the same feelings of humanity, were shocked to think the misguided zeal of the body at large should be so severely felt by a few individuals. It is to be hoped that this sentence will be a warning to artificers in general, and prove the means of their avoiding such combinations in the future.'

Even the ability to exact such penalties was not good enough for the ruling class. In 1799 they passed through parliament still more stringent laws, the Combination Acts, which made trade unions illegal.

The aim was to prevent the workers of the new factory and mining areas created by the industrial revolution from organising any form of resistance against their

employers. Yet it was in this period that trade unionism was really born.

A police informer wrote from Sheffield even while the Acts were being passed that there was 'a general spirit of disaffection created in every class of artisans and mechanics by the late Bill... which I am afraid has caused more to combine than would otherwise have thought of the measure but for the Bill.'

It has been estimated that in London skilled trades had never been more completely organised than between 1800 and 1820. Such was the strength of this mass movement that often the authorities did not dare use the Acts to defeat them. When a massive strike of textile workers spread through Lancashire in 1808 after a minimum wage Bill had been rejected by the government, the law was not used.

JAILED

Other workers were not so fortunate. Two years later miners in the North East struck to improve their conditions. They were forced into submission by military force and their leaders were jailed.

Again, in 1812, a strike of Scottish weavers was broken and their union was smashed when the leaders were jailed.

Even when the Acts did not lead to



The bearer is a Member of the Bolton Operative Weavers' Association

ESTABLISHED Sep. 4, 1824.

N. 1345 J. W. Wigglesworth

A union card for the Bolton Weavers' Association. Note the date: 1824, the year the Combination Acts were repealed. The weavers had had unions for years—but they'd been illegal until then.

prosecutions, they gave the authorities ample chance to brow-beat and intimidate workers. A report to the Home Office from the West of England described how 'the Combination Acts provide a very convenient excuse for summoning and examining upon oath any suspected person.'

Yet the workers' organisations continued to grow. At secret meetings working people would come together to give one another mutual support and to defend their conditions.

By the 1820s middle-class reformers like Francis Place were beginning to argue that the Acts should be repealed because they 'induced working people to break and disregard laws... They make them hate the employers with a rancour that nothing else could have produced.' In a tone reminiscent of Harold Wilson today, he argued that the repeal of the law 'was the way to prevent disputes'.

Place has often been credited with obtaining the repeal of the Acts through parliamentary manoeuvrings, but his own testimony proves this was not so. The ruling class only listened to him because of the growing workers' movement against the laws.

The repeal of the Combination Acts did not end the persecution of trade unionists. Strikes and picketing remained virtually illegal for years after.

Meetings still had to be held in secret to protect workers from victimisation by employers. This too was illegal as the Tolpuddle Martyrs found to their cost eight years later.

At a typical union meeting in Yorkshire 'extraordinary precautions were used to prevent what passed in the room from being overheard, the undersides of the joists were planked with inch boards and the interstices filled with wood shavings, and during meetings a guard was stationed on the outside of the door.' It was reckoned that if all those engaged in such activities were arrested it would depopulate the West Riding of Yorkshire.

TAX ATTACK

The same strictly illegal activities were necessary to win the freedom of the press.

Parliament had decreed that all newspapers should be taxed, in a deliberate attempt to drive working-class and radical papers out of business. As one government minister openly admitted: 'It was not against the respectable press that this Bill was directed, but against the pauper press.'

If the left-wing press had fought back 'constitutionally' it would not even have been able to survive to keep fighting. Instead, it defied the law and appeared without paying tax. For selling such papers 740 men, women and children were sent to prison.

But for each seller jailed, two or three others would arise to take their place.

By 1835 one magistrate had to admit that the government was 'totally powerless' to enforce the law. A year later the tax was reduced. Twenty years later it was abolished.

THREATENED

Under mass illegal pressure the ruling class eventually granted workers the right to fight for better conditions and to express their opinions freely.

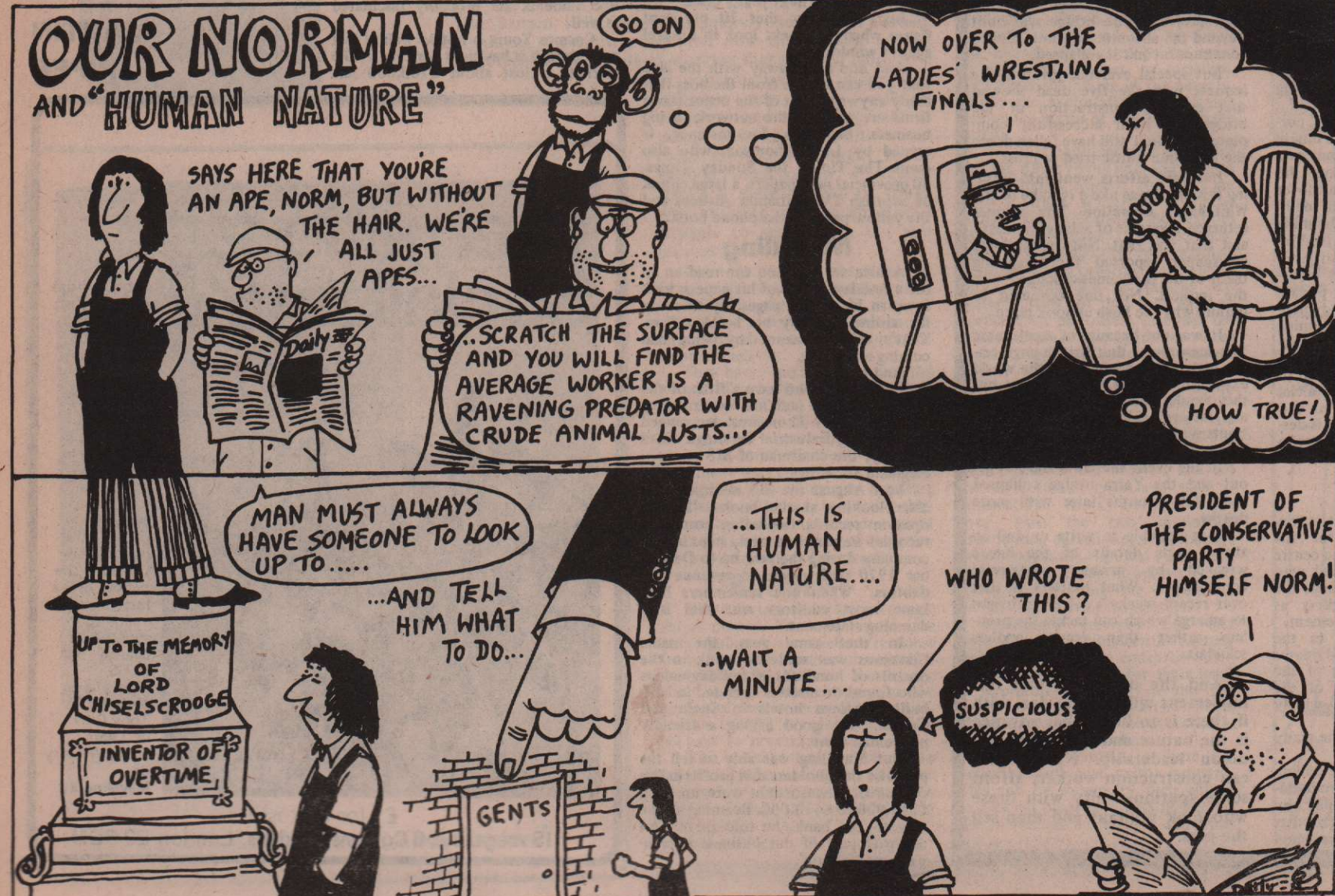
But when the mass pressure has subsided, those rulers have often felt tempted to try to encroach on such rights—particularly when their profits have been threatened.

Even today the government can, if it chooses, abolish freedom of the press overnight, merely by invoking certain clauses in the Emergency Powers Act of 1920, which make it illegal to possess a document 'containing any report or statement... calculated to cause disaffection among the civilian population.' During the General Strike of 1926 hundreds of people were arrested for this offence.

And the government is certainly trying to weaken the ability of rank and file union members to act together to improve their conditions.

Such onslaughts will only be ended when the rule of a small minority of big property owners over the rest of us is ended. Until then, it would be foolish indeed to pay any heed to those who tell us to 'obey the law, even a bad law'.

JOSEPH BLACK



SILENCE AS RENTS BILL BECOMES LAW

AMID the noise of the dockers' battle against the Industrial Relations Act, the Housing Finance Bill has quietly become law. Already a million council tenants have had a 50p rent rise since April.

Another four million face £1 rises next month. They will be joined in January by 1½ million private, controlled tenants, who can expect their rents to treble.

The Labour Party's leaders have made a great noise about the iniquities of the Act, while saying that it is now the law and must be obeyed. But for the collaborationist policies of these leaders, the Act would now be worthless.

If every Labour council had decided not to implement the law, had refused to raise rents, and had refused to co-operate with Tory housing commissioners, the government would have found it impossible to make this Act work. But the Labour leaders exerted all their energy to whittle down and weaken the resistance of the councils.

Now only 37 Labour councils out of 279 have said they will not implement the rent increases, and many of these are shaky on the issue.

STRIKES

Some councils are claiming that they are 'working within the framework of the law' to get rent increases of less than £1. But the gains for tenants in this approach are small. Of 12 councils allowed increases of less than £1, the average increase is still 75½p.

In Huddersfield, this policy has won a reduction of just 2p.

This leaves the battle against the Act in the hands of the seven million tenants it is supposed to hit—with their families, they make up well over half the population.

Already the tenants' movement nationally is more active than it has ever been. There have been rent strikes in more than 20 towns since April. There are tenants' associations or action committees in virtually every major town or city. Many thousands of tenants are already committed to direct action when the rent rises hit them.

Police arrest 19 on shipyard picket

GREENOCK:-The Lower Clyde shipbuilding giant Scott Lithgow has been using both local Boilermakers' union officials and police in an attempt to break the strike by 750 engineers.

The men, who have been fighting for the national engineering claim, which is rather higher than that Boilermakers' Union leader Dan McGarvey accepted for his shipyard members earlier this year, have intensified their picketing.

Local militants were shocked when a leading Boilermakers official suggested to a stewards' meeting that they should organise counterpickets against the engineers. Some stewards alleged that this proposal was first suggested by Ross Belch, managing director of Scott Lithgow. Nevertheless, the stewards meeting accepted the proposal.

Fortunately, when this 'divide and rule' policy was put to a vote of the workers at various meetings, no more than 50 of a total 600 supported it.

Scott Lithgow last week hired a 'cow-



Tenants in Halifax demonstrating against the rent rises when Housing Minister Julian Amery visited the town recently

THE RENTS BATTLE

The next two months will be critical for the tenants' movement.

There has to be maximum activity on every estate to involve all tenants and commit them to a rent strike in October. The full co-operation of the trade union movement has to be sought and pledges obtained to back with strike action any tenants that councils try to intimidate.

Only a militant fight now can resist the rent rises. If sufficient people become involved and the rent strikes spread, then the Tories can be forced to retreat on this Act as the dockers forced them to retreat on the Industrial Relations Act.

NEATH:-Nine tenants' associations in the area are trying to make the council reverse its decision to implement the Act. Councilors have had to attend meetings of 150 people in Resolver and 300 in Glynneath, and last week Glynneath tenants went down the valley in a bus financed by the local Miners' Union lodge to picket the council meeting in Neath.

An emergency meeting of the council's finance committee is now being recommended, as a result of the pressure, to reverse the previous decision.

Rowley Thomas, of Glynneath Tenants' Association and treasurer of the Blaengwrack NUM lodge, told his local councillor that if he went to jail every pit in the valley would be out on strike.

STEVENAGE:-The local federation of tenants associations has pledged its full support for the decision of the council not to implement the Act, and has called for a rent strike of all tenants if any attempt is made by the government to victimise councillors.

boy' local transport company to break the pickets and take the compressed oxygen into the company's Ferguson yard in Port Glasgow.

The pickets refused to allow the lorries in and sat down in front of one. When police arrived, summoned by the company, the men still refused to budge. Finally, after holding the lorry up for several hours, 15 engineers were arrested and charged with obstruction.

Marched

The situation was repeated on Saturday when, undaunted, four more engineers were arrested.

More than a thousand engineers, electricians and coppersmiths marched in protest to the Port Glasgow Court when the arrested pickets came up on Tuesday. The local full-time official of the Engineering Union, Ian McKee, spoke to the demonstration, telling them that the picketing would be intensified.

The pickets' case has been adjourned until October.

Boilermakers sign and UCS yard is sold

GLASGOW:-With the Boilermakers Union's 11th hour signing of the Marathon Labour Agreement, another chapter in the long struggle at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders has ended.

Marathon Manufacturing will now finalise their arrangements with the government to buy the Clydebank division of UCS for the knock down price of £1¼ million.

During the conversion Marathon will gradually build up its labour force from an initial 500 men. When it gets into full production, according to Wayne Harbin, Marathon's president, in two years time, it will employ between 1500 and 2000 workers.

Jimmy Reid, UCS co-ordinating committee spokesman, asserts that the agreement 'does not break any of the traditions of the British labour movement'.

Dan McGarvey's last minute showmanship was put on for the benefit of his members in the rest of the shipbuilding industry precisely because the agreement did break with one such tradition—the one that has always given the craft-conscious boilermakers differentials over other workers.

Socialists and active trade unionists will be more concerned about other aspects of the agreement. These include a specific pledge to avoid strike action for four years, a penal clause that forfeits a 10 per cent six-monthly bonus if production schedules are not met, or if for any reason a worker takes too many 'unauthorised' absences, a promise to accept the outcome of compulsory arbitration by a government nominee in the event of a disagreement.

It is true that these points can all be found in some corners of the movement's 'traditions'. But the tragedy is that until last week in Clydebank, they were only welcomed by the most reactionary stewards and officials or were imposed on well-organised workers only after losing long and bitter struggles.

Workers fight anti-union bosses

WORKERS in three factories in East Kent, an area where trade unionism is weak, have started a fight against the employers' arrogant anti-union attitudes.

When two Transport Union men tried to recruit workers at the Pride and Clarke depot of the Toyota car firm at Lydden, near Dover, they were immediately sacked. The company refused to negotiate with union representatives in London and a fortnight ago 27 workers walked out. The firm then sacked them too.

On the same day members of the engineering and electricians' unions at the Pfizer factory at Sandwich also struck. The management had sacked the chairman of the works committee in a desperate attempt to break an overtime ban and work-to-rule.

A similar battle has been going on at J Griffith, part of the Mixconcrete group, in Chartham, near Canterbury. Six maintenance engineers struck when management brought in non-union labour after a ban was put on overtime.

Strength

The men had cut their working week from 75 hours to 40 in pursuit of a wage improvement. When a union negotiator arrived for a pre-arranged meeting with the company he was told that he was trespassing.

Workers involved in the three disputes are in constant contact with one another and with dockers in Dover. This is giving them a strength they would not have otherwise. Nevertheless, they all need the strongest possible help from elsewhere.

Messages of support to: Toyota—E MacDonald, 63 Tower Hamlet Street, Dover; Mixconcrete—B Manchester, 50 Nicholas Road, Faversham; Pfizer—G Buckingham, 56 Gordon Road, Margate.

Belfast riot is 'first of many'

by Eamonn McCann

DERRY:-As the talks between Northern Ireland overlord William Whitelaw and the Social Democratic and Labour Party get under way, the action in the streets is once again gathering its own momentum. The riot outside Casement Park, Belfast, on Sunday is the first of many.

Despite the softly-softly approach of the soldiers on the ground, the Catholic working-class communities are still bitterly and justifiably aggrieved and in no mood to accept assurances of good faith from the administration.

Internment remains, and it is being pointed out that the 300 men who have now spent a year in Long Kesh are probably the 300 most innocent men in Ireland, the only ones, perhaps, with a cast-iron alibi for every violent incident and 'crime' since August 1971.

They are held as hostages, nothing else, and while they are held there can be no peace.

The very presence of the troops in such massive numbers is intimidation in itself. In the Bogside and Creggan, the New Lodge Road and Andersonstown last week it was impossible to walk for more than a hundred yards without being stopped at gunpoint, searched and, if you were unlucky, taken to an army post and held all night for 'checking'.

On being released early on Sunday morning after spending the night spread-eagled against a wall in Fort George in Derry, I made my ritual demand to know why I had been arrested and held. 'Why not?' said the officer in charge, shrugging, which is as much of an explanation as anyone gets.

The next stage in the 'pacification' programme will be the attempted re-introduction of the Royal Ulster Constabulary into the ghetto areas. On Friday two policemen walked about 50 yards into Bogside. But that is as far as they got.

The RUC are correctly seen as part of the Orange machine, and the Catholic ghettos will never accept the rule of that machine again.

This problem will be occupying the minds of the SDLP and Whitelaw as they talk. Whitelaw may make concessions because the main thrust of Tory policy now is to buy off sufficient Catholics without alienating too many Protestants, and thus move towards a cosy, Tory Ireland in which Orange and Green capitalism can co-exist, to the benefit of each.

The admirable intransigence of the Catholic workers has been preventing this for the past year, and while internment and military occupation persist, this will continue.

Strike over £55,000 fine

COVENTRY:-More than 500 Transport Union shop stewards and branch officers met last week to decide what action to take over the Industrial Relations Court's £55,000 fines on their union.

The official leadership of the union and the TUC were roundly condemned for their abject retreat over the Industrial Relations Act and a motion from the district committee calling for a one-day strike and demonstration on 14 August was carried overwhelmingly. A demand that the union's leaders be forced to explain themselves before a recalled bi-annual delegate conference was included in the resolution.

This means that the whole of Coventry will be paralysed for one day as 50,000 Transport Union members come out.

WHAT'S ON

A BUILDING WORKERS' SPECIAL ISSUE OF SOCIALIST WORKER will be published by the weekend—price 1p. 15 branches should order copies as soon as possible—phone Margaret Renn at 01-739-2639.

STEVENAGE: Paul Foot on 'Can the Tories smash labour?' Public meeting 31 August, 8pm, the Swimming Pool Hall, Organised by North Herts IS.

THE FIGHT FOR JOBS Dockers v The Tory Government Speaker: Bob Light (Tory) London Royal Dockers Tuesday 13 August, 8pm Duke of Edinburgh pub, Fenchurch Rd, London W4 (near Finsbury Park tube station)

STREET AID needs volunteers to help renovate terraced houses for legal/welfare advice centre. Ring 01-240-1714/5.

NOTICES

WOMAN'S VOICE No 1. Copies still available from Margaret Renn, 90 Mountview Road, London N4. 5p a copy, post free.

IS BOOKSHOP is closed to retail sales but the mail order side of the business is expanding and a new booklist is available on request. 15 branches can still arrange to collect bulk orders. IS BOOKS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.



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Socialist Worker

Cleaners strike spreads

by Sara Trask

LONDON: Twenty cleaners from the Admiralty building in Whitehall joined those on strike at the Ministry of Defence building in Fulham on the picket line on Sunday.

The cleaners, employed by J M Rhoda, of Clean Agents, want £3.50 on their basic wage of £12.50, better equipment, more staff and union recognition.

At a meeting with the Fulham cleaners on Friday, Rhoda demanded that the cleaners' union, the Civil Service Union, comply with the Industrial Relations Act before he would recognise it.

A spokeswoman for the Admiralty

cleaners said Rhoda spends little on equipment and two girls have to clean four floors, of 46 offices, two toilets, the corridors and stairs with only brooms, mops and buckets. The cleaners have to sweep the carpets with brooms, so suffer chest complaints from rising dust, and polish tables with dusters but no polish.

There are often complaints about the toilets but without disinfectant or brushes the girls have no chance to do the job properly.

Their hours are 9pm to 6am.

At Fulham, where the strike was in its official last Wednesday, the cleaners have been joined by workers from the neighbouring Earl's Court exhibition and pickets from building sites.

Their case has attracted a lot of sympathy from civil servants working in the building, who tell pickets of the worsening conditions since Rhoda cut the staff from 25 to 11 last year, from which Rhoda benefitted by £8000.

His contracts come up for renewal on 21 August at the Admiralty and in October at Fulham.

DIRT IN HIGH PLACES

1970 was United Nations Development Year, 1971 was the Year of the Environment and 1972 is Corruption Year.

Suddenly, the British press has become interested in 'allegations' of corruption in central and local government. Their interest has been aroused by revelations made at the bankruptcy hearing in Wakefield of John Poulson, whose architect's business was one of the biggest in Europe.

In the mid-sixties, Poulson formed a powerful ring around his architect's practice. The key figure was T Dan Smith, formerly 'Mr Newcastle', who once described himself as 'the greatest'.

The Smith-Poulson partnership cashed in on one of the most important developments in Harold Wilson's technological revolution—systems (pre-fabricated) building.

The complicated building systems involved opened the way for local councils and ministries to 'negotiate' contracts with individual firms, rather than put them out to tender.

Smith's 'expertise' as public relations man and Poulson's 'expertise' as architect and surveyor were brought to bear on local councils, particularly in Yorkshire, Teesside, the North East, London and Scotland, to 'persuade' and 'advise' them with which firms to negotiate the contract.

Smith persuaded and Poulson advised.

Huge sums were paid to anyone who might help with this persuasion or advice. Tory MPs, Labour MPs, government officials, hospital board advisors, selected trade union bosses and of course local councillors received regular or irregular payments.

HUGE PROFITS

The entire local council at Eston Grange, where Poulson designed a housing estate and a swimming pool, was taken out to dinner at about £6 per head. The former Mayor of Battersea, now in prison for corruption, was taken on the Dan Smith payroll. The head of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries in Scotland had a house and a Rolls at Poulson's expense. And so on and so on.

Curiously enough, the builders and developers who benefitted from the advice of Smith and Poulson always seemed to be the same ones.

In Scotland, it was Crudens. In England, it was Bovis, the family firm of Sir Keith Joseph, now Secretary for Social Services, and F G Minter and Company. In Yorkshire and London, it was Town and City Properties, who last week announced huge profits and a dividend of 33 per cent.

The Poulson affair is explained by the press as an unfortunate but isolated exception, which proves the rule that British public life is clean and pure.

On the contrary, the Smith/Poulson story fits closely into the pattern of technological development in the construction industry, which leads necessarily to increasing monopolisation, which in turn leads to greater involvement by the state and by local authorities.

The 'backhander' and the PR man's glamorous dinners are necessarily part of the standard construction scene. Poulson and Smith merely led

Behind the Poulson Affair —a report by Paul Foot

the way (and went too far) where other developers have progressed more cautiously.

And now the Poulson hearing has disclosed that Taylor Woodrow, fourth biggest UK contractor, talked openly of local councils they did 'control' and those they didn't yet.

There is, after all, no need to break the law or to end up in a bankruptcy court when making a 'killing' out of property. The stakes are enormous.

The London Property Letter, which is 'circulated privately to businessmen' announced in its introductory issue after the last general election: 'Since the Tories have returned to power for the first time since the early sixties it's possible to make real money out of property...

MAKING A KILLING

'Many factors are benefitting property, not least inflation, which is making bricks and mortar a safer hedge than ever for the investor. And the biggest bonanza of all may well be our entry into Europe...

'Someone is going to make a killing out of all this, and it might as well be you.'

Two people chosen at random have agreed with this estimate. Lord Carrington, Minister of Defence, who is strongly tipped to step into the shoes of Reginald Maudling as deputy Prime Minister, is developing some of his estate at Princes Risborough, in Buckinghamshire. The cash value to him personally from the development is estimated by the Daily Mail at £500,000.

The noble Lord followed this coup with the sale of two charming residences in the Kensington district of London which he had bought for £100,000 two years ago. The sale price is £270,000—and the profits are to go into a trust fund for Lord Carrington's children.

Lord Sandford, Under Secretary at the Department of the Environment, is also a family man. He wants to sell his delightful country house at

Roundwood Park, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, to his brother Anthony Edmondson, who is a property developer.

Edmondson wants to knock down his brother's house, wipe out most of the surrounding woods, and build some 30 houses, which he could sell at between £20,000 and £30,000 each.

The brothers' scheme has met with a little local difficulty. Harpenden Urban Council has refused it planning permission because of the destruction it would inflict on the local environment. Lord Sandford's brother has appealed against the decision to Lord Sandford's Ministry.

Lord Sandford, needless to say, is the Minister with special responsibility for preserving the beauty of the countryside.

None of this, of course, is corruption. Nor is it against the law. Any more than it was corrupt or illegal for Sir Desmond Plummer, leader of the Greater London Council, to buy shares in two of the companies developing Piccadilly Circus, a third of whose land is owned by the GLC.

Plummer sold his shares as soon as they were publicised, but he still owns a substantial holding in Town and City Properties, the biggest developers in the GLC's plans for destroying Covent Garden.

If it all sounds a little odd to the uninitiated, that is because the laws about corruption are framed to preserve an economic system which is based on robbery.

Every penny made in property speculation by Lord Carrington's children, or Lord Sandford's brother or Sir Desmond Plummer, or any of the thousands of speculators who read the London Property Letter, represents the robbed labour of men and women who rely for their living on wages and salaries.

That robbery goes on all the time, and as long as it goes on, particularly as technological advance leads to greater monopolies, the tendency to blatant corruption will increase.

In a forceful speech in the House of Commons last week, Arthur Lewis, Labour MP for West Ham North, slated the Department of Trade and Industry for taking no action against hundreds of

proved breaches of the law, when companies do not give the correct and updated information to the public, as they are legally obliged to do.

He accused officials of openly ignoring case after case. He mentioned the Real Estate Fund of America (First President: Reginald Maudling), the Pinnock Finance fraud and 11 other cases.

He told the House of 'an arrangement' in the notorious Rolls Razor affair, 'entered into by John Bloom, that provided he pleaded guilty to lesser offences he would merely be fined £30,000 and the government would drop all the other charges'.

In other words, even when the flimsy laws against swindling and corruption are broken, no action, or only light-handed action is taken.

Arthur Lewis also spoke of the Vestey affair. Socialist Worker first broke the news as long ago as 19 July that Vestey was the owner of Midland Cold Storage. At that time a Vestey spokesman vehemently denied that the company owned Midland.

But the truth is out. Vestey do own Midland Cold Storage, and they have made a false entry in the companies register, by not stating that Midland Cold Storage shares are owned by nominees.

FRAUD SQUAD

The Vestey's rapidly-hired public relations spokesmen are telling the world that they had 'never made a secret of the fact' that they owned Midland Cold Storage, and the Companies House entry is 'standard practice'.

This is a lie which will not be punished by the courts or the government.

Yet this same government, whose own Home Secretary and deputy Prime Minister has been forced to resign because he is wanted for questioning by the Fraud Squad, is talking the while about fighting an election on 'law and order'. This same government lectures the public and the dockers about the importance of obeying the law of the land.

Dockers in contempt of the Industrial Relations Act go to prison, but swindlers, crooks and frauds in contempt of the Companies Act are ignored, often encouraged by the law-abiding officials of the Department of Trade and Industry and the Attorney-General's office.

Police arrest pickets at strike-breaking wharves

POLICE attacks on dockers' pickets at wharves still working during the strike have highlighted another serious threat to dockers' jobs and trade union organisation apart from containers shifted outside the docks labour scheme. This is the unregistered wharf where men do dock work for pitiful wages and in appalling conditions.

Dockers from Hull and Goole in Yorkshire have launched a mass picketing offensive against several such wharves on the rivers Ouse, Humber and Trent. Hull has lost 1800 docks' jobs in the past four years and Goole's labour force has been cut by a fifth. These unregistered wharves boomed phenomenally as trade was transferred.

These wharves are often owned by the same companies which have been sacking dockers in Goole and Hull. Goole employers Oughtred and Harrison and Limbs and Company have opened up in Selby, generously assisted with an £88,000 grant from the local council and the Yorkshire River Authority.

Quays

Some very big fish indeed are involved in the operation. Powell Duffryn, the engineering giant, has a wharf at Howdendyke, and the state-owned British Steel Corporation has one on the Trent.

The advantage to the employers is clearly evident at Flixborough where unregistered dockers working for the BSC toil for the princely basic wage of £19 a week, about half what a registered docker would earn.

Exactly the same situation exists in Colchester where registered dockers are picketing the Hythe and Rowhedge quays.

Police there arrested docker pickets, including Conny Clancy, one of the dockers freed from Pentonville just over two weeks ago by the massive wave of solidarity strikes.

What has angered London dockers is the appalling working conditions at Hythe and Rowhedge. There workers shift cargoes like coal and fishmeal with absolutely no protective clothing. There is no canteen either, and no union.

'This is an attempt to put the clock back 100 years', said one picketing docker. 'The employers would like all workers to be in these degrading conditions which our fathers fought against years ago', he added.

Mass pickets mounted by Whitstable's 17 registered dockers with dockers from Tilbury and the Medway have forced the Westland outfit to stop its unregistered operations in the harbour. Westland has moved its business to the boss's farm near Sandwich and this is now being picketed.

Uno Bohlman, secretary of the militant Swedish Harbour Union which organises about a third of all dock workers, has been on a solidarity trip to the National Port Shop Stewards Committee. He brought substantial contributions for the dockers' strike fund collected through the Scandinavian Solidarity Committee for British Dockers.

PICKET LINES

GLASGOW: After six months on strike and six weeks in occupation, the workers at the Kinning Park forge of Charles McNeil have at last forced the parent company, Anderson and Marshall of Motherwell, back to the negotiating table.

Last week, after the end of the Glasgow annual holiday fortnight, the occupation committee announced that they were going to start completing orders.

The company reacted sharply, issuing one statement threatening legal action, and another saying they were now prepared to negotiate without conditions.

WOLVERHAMPTON: Workers at the Tarmac Engineering Plant depot, after six weeks on strike, have won a £3 rise and a £25 lump sum payment. Management have also been forced to drop redundancies.

WEMBLEY: Unless there is some positive blacking action in the next few days it looks as if the long struggle at Stanmore Engineering will be defeated. The locked-out workers decided last Friday that they were fed up with waiting round the factory listening to empty promises from union officials.

Although union officials continually promised that Zenith carburetors sent to other factories would be blacked, the action was never taken.

KIRKCALDY and GLENROTHES: 3500 workers at GEC's two telecommunications factories went on unofficial strike on Tuesday in pursuit of the national engineering claim.

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