

Workers' fight

3p

No. 70. Sept. 28th to Oct. 5th 1974.

WORKERS FIGHT AND THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL — Report of the Special Conference on the 4th International held in January 1973. 10p plus 5p postage.

RACIALISM AND THE WORKING CLASS — produced to help in the campaign against racism, this 20-page pamphlet takes up the 'reasonable sounding' racist arguments and traces the history of working class racism. Single copies 10p & postage; Bulk, 50p for 6, 80p for 12.

THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT AND THE FIGHT FOR A GENERAL STRIKE — 11 important articles from Workers Fight, with introduction and appendix. They form an invaluable collection on the history, experience and theory of the General Strike. 20p plus postage (5p).

JAMES CONNOLLY AND IRELAND'S STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM — articles from Workers Fight, with introduction. 10p plus 5p postage.

SUBSCRIBE to Workers Fight and have every copy delivered to you. New subscription rates are as follows: One year: £3; six months: £1.50. From The Business Manager (WF), 98 Gifford Street, London N.1

FORD WORKERS ARE RIGHT: VOTE LABOUR BUT KEEP ON FIGHTING

HEALEY BACKS DOWN ON PRICE CONTROL

THE CHANCELLOR of the Exchequer announces a drop in food prices. The Shadow Chancellor declares his statistics to be fiddled. The accusations mount, and then the issue fades out of the news. But one important issue is never touched on. It is this: the figures were based on the results of Labour's system of price control — such as it is — called the Prices Code. But as Denis Healey was parading his figures, he failed to mention that the Prices Code was going to be "revised"... that is, scrapped.

The fact is that the Labour Government is decreasing the degree of control it has over prices (while, of course, through the 'social contract' trying to increase control over wages). Speaking on BBC's 'Panorama', Healey said he felt it necessary "to relax in one area or another price control", and added that "there are areas where control is bearing too heavily on industry, and that is why we instituted our review of the Prices Code"

Stick-up

The Labour Government's move is significant not so much because the feeble price controls were some tremendous boon to the working class, but because of what it shows about Labour's relation to the masses of big business. It shows again who really rules British 'parliamentary democracy'. Throwing off the reins of government control is just what Ralph Bateman,



DENIS HEALEY

president of the Confederation of British Industry, wants. The Government, he thinks, should "lift the threat of state control": he wants price control and dividend control scrapped too. Unless this happens, he claims, there will be a whole series of bankruptcies and a dramatic rise in unemployment.

That's the stick-up: drop your controls and hand over the money! And the bosses are being helped by Labour. Harold Lever, one of Wilson's economic advisors, has suggested that a Government pool of finance — possibly of up to £1,000 million — could be fed to industry through the banks. Whether it is done via the existing banks or through

RALPH BATEMAN

a specially created medium-term credit bank (as *The Economist* magazine suggests), the message is plain: not only will we be paying hand over fist to keep private industry going, but the money must be free of even the most loose and feeble 'strings'. Clearly the fact that it recently came out that hundreds of companies are having the interest on their loans paid by the Government under the terms of the Industry Act 1972 has served to concentrate the imaginations of the employing class on means and ways of receiving the cash without any form of scrutiny.

At present large amounts need parliamentary approval,

while smaller amounts are funded by the Department of Trade and Industry. The new system advocated by Harold Lever, and reportedly supported by Healey, would remove all controls from this procedure.

Labour should be moving in the opposite direction, 'opening the books' fully on where government subsidies go. And if the Labour government won't act, workers at rank and file level must and can act. The Hull dockers' refusal to ship out sugar, Glasgow workers' impounding of hoarded lentils, and the countless daily complaints about rising prices are a pointer to the kind of control that ought to be exercised.

Shortages

It is no good saying, as the Government does, "If we don't support these firms with funds, they'll go bust, and then we'll neither have what they produce nor the jobs they provide". That's always the blackmail. Only last week, delegates of the Food Manufacturers' Federation gathered to warn the Government that price controls would have to be removed and cash handed out if food shortages, rationing, and large scale unemployment was to be avoided. What this is saying is: either industry is run on capitalist terms, or not at all. Instead of giving in, as Healey has done, the reply should have been: if you can't produce the goods with a small amount of government control, then clear out and



WILSON WITH PRESS SHOP LEADER

THE STRIKE of 1,800 Ford press shop workers, at Dagenham and Halewood, is a serious threat to the 'Social Contract', and thus to Labour's hopes of using it to win in the coming election. For behind these strikers stand a possible queue of millions, who will see no use in a 'Social Contract' which possibly gets a Labour Government elected, but certainly gets their living standards chopped.

The struggle of the press shop workers is for a united claim of £4 increase on premium rates for three shift working. Elsewhere, other workers are in struggle challenging the Social Contract. Strikers at the Hawker Siddeley factory in Broughton, Cheshire, have thrown out a local deal between management and the convenor for a £3 increase, and are instead demanding £6 increase on the basic pay. Within the car industry, the recent settlements at BLMC and Chrysler will push Vauxhall workers into fighting for an interim award from their local bosses. Hull dockers have put in a claim for £25 per week, and have just rejected an offer of £5.

Lay-offs

The Ford workers' struggle has so far seen production losses of over £28 million, and the Company preparing plans to lay off over half its workforce in Britain and many thousands in the European Ford plants. But in the light of the looming crisis in car sales — in some cases the demand for cars has fallen over 10%, and could fall by 25% — and the need to defend profits in this situation of crisis, Fords will only look to lay-offs and speed ups as ways of attacking the car workers and getting them to carry the biggest part of their burden. Ford bosses have agreed to negotiations on the national wage

agreement only seven months after the last settlement. But the press shop workers see this tactic as a way of avoiding talks on their dispute.

As the election campaign mounts, the Ford strikers' threat to the social contract has severely embarrassed the TUC, and one of the Social Contract's most eager supporters, Jack Jones, leader of the carworkers' own union, the T&GWU.

It has also disturbed the Labour Party leaders, who are afraid that the strike will be used by Tories and Liberals to attack Labour's plans to sell the idea that 'voluntary wage restraint', policed by the TUC, will be a better contribution to solving the bosses' problems, than the chosen Tory solution of increasing unemployment to cut inflation.

Darkly

Labour leaders and the TUC may mutter darkly about a conspiracy to wreck the Social Contract by Ford's US bosses. But socialists can have nothing to do with such chauvinist rubbish. It is very possibly true that Fords, with low order books, are not too unhappy about having a strike now. But fundamentally what is involved is no 'plot' but the inescapable conflict between workers' drive to maintain living standards and capitalist attempts to keep wages down.

When it comes down to it, socialists are not prepared to purchase election victory for Labour at the cost of sabotaging workers' struggles. The Social Contract may sound better than the Tories' threats. But what it amounts to is only giving the bosses more rope (paid for out of workers' living standards) with which to drag us into crisis. Vote Labour — but fight against the Social Contract. T.R.

Contd. on back page.

The second National Rank and File movement conference has been called for November 30th. JACK PRICE looks at what kind of Rank and File movement we need — and what we've got....

IF THE LEADERS WON'T LEAD...

"If the leaders won't lead, then the rank and file must!" was one of the well-remembered slogans of the National Minority Movement, the great left wing trade union opposition which grew up in the British Labour movement in the middle twenties.

Founded in 1924, the Minority Movement had a number of famous precedents within the living memory of even its younger activists. The Shop Stewards' Movement, the Amalgamationist movement (which stood for industrial unionism and an end to the policy of class collaboration), trade union reform movements, "Hands off Russia" Committees and local militant movements as on the Clyde and in South Wales — even workers' educational movements — were the brightest blazes in the general fire of militancy in the post World War One period.

These movements were truly mass movements, with their publications, pamphlets like "The Miners' Next Step" (a text of militant South Wales amalgamationists) having a circulation of tens of thousands. These were not the bookshelf property of a few "politicals", but the shop floor and lodge, branch and club manual of a whole mass of class conscious workers.

nearly a million workers

Early in the '20s the widespread popularity of the mood and message of these rank and file organisations became reflected also within the official trade union movement. The "triple alliance" of miners, railwaymen, and transport workers had its roots in those militant rank and file movements which opposed class compromise and divisive sectionalism.

By the time the Minority Movement was officially founded in March 1924, not only had the fragile "triple alliance" collapsed, but also the mass movements that were its herald. The success of the National Minority Movement in mobilising within a fairly short time large groups of workers in 1926 its affiliated trade union organisations

represented nearly one million workers — was not, therefore, simply the natural carry-over from the past. It was a result of the concerted efforts of the then young and revolutionary Communist Party.

Every complacency and every element of braggadocio was rejected. The hard and sometimes baffling struggle to get down to the grass roots was well summed up in these words by J.R. Campbell (who in those days was a revolutionary):

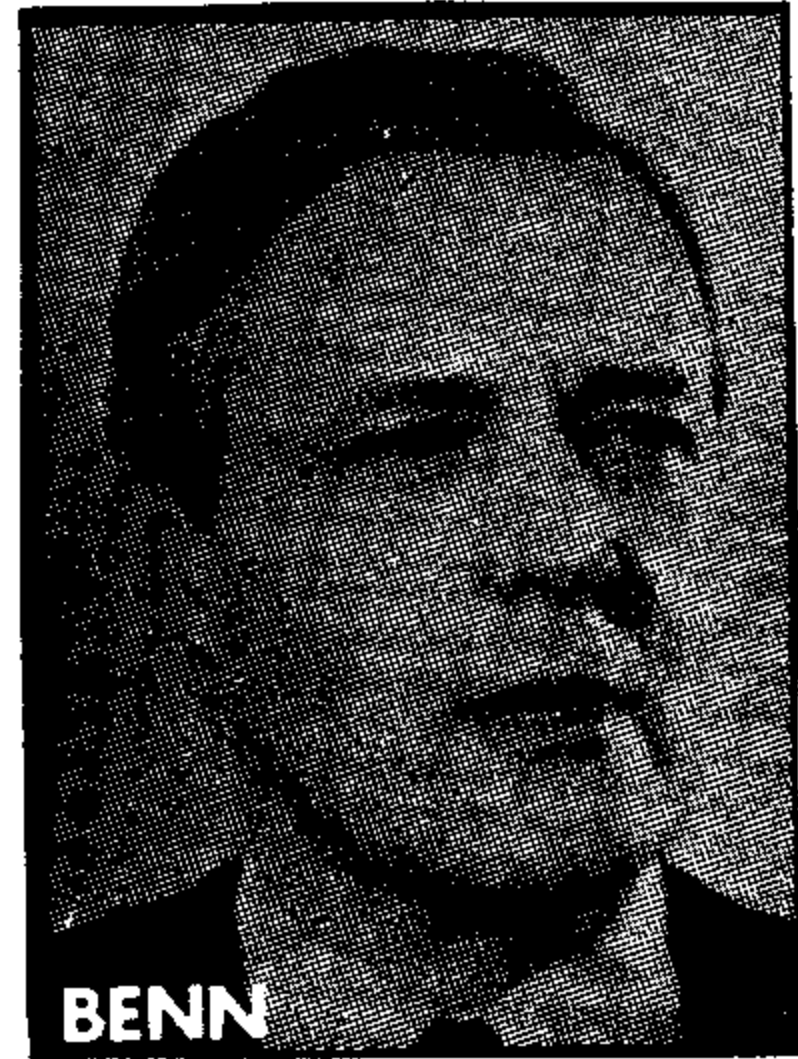
the real propaganda

"It is astonishing how even the most intensive campaign undertaken by active men in an industry merely touches a tiny minority. Resolutions will of course be passed by various branches, conferences will be held; the workers in the trade union branches will have a few more talismanic words at their disposal, but the mass will remain untouched.

"If we are going to create, not only a change in organisation, but a change of outlook amongst the rank and file, then we must get contacts with the rank and file in the workshops, and there carry on the real propaganda...."

Then the Communist Party had worked among the rank and file with a seriousness that no revolutionary organisation in Britain has managed since.

Without doing that there will be no possibility of "leading" when the official leader refuses. No one can deny this. But equally, we must see to it that it is indeed "the real propaganda that we carry on amongst the rank and file. And a line of propaganda that is not capable of



BENN

meeting the challenge thrown down to the working class, slogans that are empty, misleading or inadequate, is simply not worth carrying on in the work place or anywhere else.

A rank and file movement needs to have its ear close to the ground. But not so close that it can't see what is going on around it. The National Rank and File Conference held in Birmingham last March had a detailed policy, for instance, on trade union democracy (one that did not include the right of recall of officials, though), but no policy on nationalisation or workers' control.

union leaders gave no leadership

And yet before the chairs got stacked away at the end of the meeting, the bosses were bellyaching about "Commisar" Benn's proposals for greater state intervention and "workers' participation".

The debate on Benn's



VOTING AT LAST MARCH'S CONFERENCE

proposals did not remain theoretical or confined to the small print of the Tory press. Within a short time it dominated discussion within the trade union movement. And with the Ferranti collapse and the harvest of small company crashes the issue became at least as important as the "social contract".

And yet the Rank and File Movement had no policy on the question. All right to wish to emulate the National Minority Movement, but how could the rank and file lead without a policy. Sure enough, when it came to the "battle of the Benn" or the Ferranti affair, the trade union leaders gave no militant leadership. Instead they clamoured for more investment, state aid and state commissions to fill up empty order books. But without the Rank and File movement showing its capacity to give a lead, and this it has failed miserably to do (with the possible exception of the small successes in the health service) it has no right to complain, or to puff up with pride.

"How could such a small organisation influence events, though", some might ask. That of course is a long job, but the vacuum left by the last Conference can be seen equally vividly in situations where influence could have been exerted. For instance....

Within a few weeks of that Conference, one of the leading members of the Organising Committee of that gathering, Arthur Affleck, the BISAKTA checkweighman (convenor) of the huge Lackenby steelworks in Teesside, faced the threat of 1,000 redundancies amongst his own members by calling for a "government enquiry". Not only the local Teesside rag, the "Evening Gazette", credited Affleck with this solution — a 'solution' only for those who believe in the willingness of capitalist governments to conduct "impartial" enquiries. "Socialist Worker" also reported it under Affleck's by-line.

cutting corners gets you nowhere but lost

The policy that the Conference rejected, advocating workers' enquiries, was in fact the only one that was relevant and adequate in the situation. Cutting corners when it comes to outlining a precise policy gets you nowhere but lost.

But what was the reason for cutting corners, for ejecting a resolution — it came from the G&MWU branch at Stanton steelworks where they learned

WORKERS' CONTROL AND NATIONALISATION

Recognising that every factory occupation raises in a practical way the question of who is boss of the factory — capitalist or workers? — and that every militant picket line raises the question of whose law and order shall prevail — capitalists' or workers' — we fight for workers' control.

a) For the right of effective picketing, including mobile pickets. For the right of workers' self-defence, recognising the class nature of the police and armed forces as a weapon of the capitalists.

b) For the abolition of business secrecy, giving workers the right to investigate and expose publicly the operations of the capitalists, not just in one branch of industry or firm, but in all their financial and state connections. To the demand for parliamentary, employers' or 'independent' inquiries into proposals for factory closures, we counterpose the demand for a workers' inquiry.

Further, where hoarding, speculation and crass profiteering drive up prices, we advocate inspection committees which take on powers, based on rank and file action and demanding full legal authority, to regulate distribution in conjunction with price committees and drawing in (and where possible based on) groups of housewives.

c) For workers' factory inspectorates with full legal powers and full training paid for by the state.

d) For workers' control over work conditions, over hiring and firing, over the actual aims of production and distribution.

e) Against all schemes of participation where workers take responsibility for maintaining profitability and capitalist conditions of production.

f) Recognising that workers' control cannot exist on a serious and stable level while profit remains the chief regulator of the economy, we fight for the nationalisation without compensation of the key branches of industry, finance, transport, distribution and land. This programme should in no case hinder us from advancing, when the occasion warrants, the demand for the nationalisation of this or that individual enterprise or group of enterprises.

about "government enquiries" the hard way — which raised not only a problem which had to be faced within weeks, but one which will be a central topic in the coming Conference.

the gate receipt game

The answer is simple. Those who rejected the resolution were playing the gate receipt game. They preferred numbers to politics. Now that's not something the Minority Movement did. It didn't underestimate the difficulty of winning workers for a militant line on trade union questions and international questions (the Dawes Plan, anti-imperialist movements, etc.) but it didn't see the point of ducking the fight just to gain numbers — many of whom would drop when the real fight started.

This is "fly paper" politics: the thinnest glue to catch the greatest number of flies.

To make matters worse, this policy of declaring the policies that were necessary to be "too advanced for the workers" — a patronising-snobbish line if ever I heard one — was coupled with a light minded attitude to the official leaderships and the more established rank and file groupings (Builders' Charter, etc....)

When someone got up and said that he thought that "Labour should be given a chance", he was jeered at. All that proves is that those workers that gave him the bird were intoxicated by the left talk in the meeting and forgot that what they were jeering was a view held by millions of the more class conscious workers; and given the number of paper airplanes thrown I fancy the others were developing a talent they learnt in the lecture rooms of their not too distant youth.

The brother who wanted to give the Labour government a chance was wrong. Yes. But he needed to be argued with constructively. If you've no time for that view, then you've no time for the mass of better organised workers.

aristocracy of the strong shop

The forthcoming conference must not make the mistakes of the last one. While rightly rejecting the taunts of those who argue that without its being immediately a mass movement it is worthless or "splitting" to found such a movement, the Rank and File Conference must make itself worthwhile by facing the tasks of the working class head on... and it must avoid losing a sense of proportion, a sense of how far

MAO AND MACAO

THE CHANGE of government in Portugal has been like a political earthquake. One effect has been a particular embarrassment to China — that is, the demands for reform in Macao, no doubt influenced by the Moscow line Communist Party. The new developments have upset the years of agreeable trading between Peking and the old Portuguese authorities in Macao.

This unrest has now spread to neighbouring Hong Kong where recently the police have been batoning down workers protesting about rising prices and unemployment. The situation is particularly serious here because of a

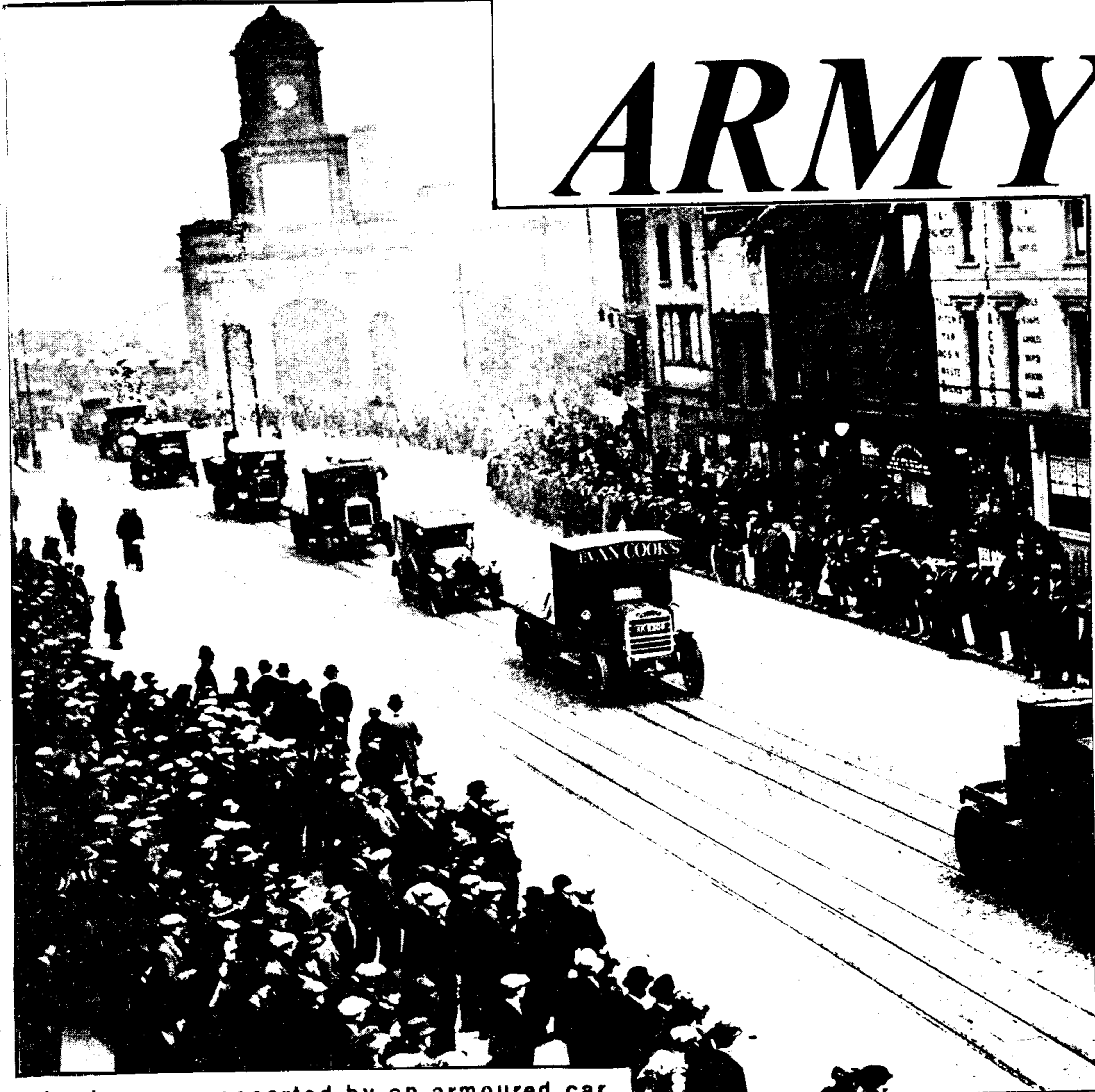
by Dave Spencer

recession in the textile trade, which accounts for 40% or 50% of Hong Kong's exports. New orders are down by 30% and production has been reduced by 20%, throwing workers and their families into even worse conditions than hitherto. A Hong Kong government representative was in London last week trying to borrow £160 million to tide the country over.

The Peking Communists' attitude to the workers' protests has been hostile. Their leading paper in Hong Kong, "Ta

Kung Pao", referred to the demonstrators as "juvenile delinquents and ultra-leftists". The logic of stalinist "socialism in one country" shows here again. The foreign policy of China comes before the independent struggles of the workers. Thus Hong Kong workers are condemned the same day as Sra. Imelda Marcos, wife of the notorious dictator of the Philippines, arrived in Peking on an 8 day visit, sussing out the possibilities of diplomatic ties along the lines of those agreed between China and Malaysia earlier in the year, after China had cooled down its support for the guerrilla fighters in Malaya.

O.M.S. THE 'PRIVATE' ARMY OF 1926



food convoy escorted by an armoured car

THE ridiculous image presented by some of the retired 'blimps' talking about 'private armies' has made it easy for the leaders of the organised workers' movement to scoff at them and the image of pukka colonialists in their long shorts and pith helmets which they evoke. But the convergence of the ideas of these people (who as it happens have proven records as extremely able military organisers) with the ideas and actions of the fascists of the National Front and the proposals of shadow cabinet member Geoffrey Rippon shows how what seems outrageous one minute, mere kite-flying the next, soon becomes 'legitimate' and 'respectable'.

That is exactly what happened in the period leading up to the 1926 General Strike. Then a similar organisation to what Rippon recommends, the Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies, was set up.

THREAT

In 1925 the coal owners tried to force the miners to accept a wage cut — threatening them with a lock out if they refused. The miners, however, realising that the low level of coal stocks made the threat of lock out premature, rejected this merciless robbery. They were given immediate backing by the Transport and General Workers' Union, who agreed to strike in support of the miners if necessary. The railmen in ASLEF and the firemen's union added their strength to this pledge.

Realising that their coal owner friends had played their cards too soon, the Tory Government decided to retreat — but only so long as it took to prepare an attack. They agreed to grant a subsidy which would allow the miners' wage levels to remain at their usual level for the following nine months.

But the forcing of this retreat, 'Red Friday', was only a very partial victory. In a sense it was no less an ultimatum than the threat of the mine owners; it was just that there was nine months before the ultimatum would come into effect! Speaking on behalf of the ruling class, the Prime Minister coldly admitted: "We were not prepared".

GROWING

The ruling class immediately got down to preparing for a head-on clash with the trade unions and the miners in particular. While the Government did not take the Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies into the state force itself officially, it operated parallel with and in concert with it. Both agreed, as an early OMS communique put it, "There was a growing need for organising those citizens who would be prepared to volunteer to maintain supplies in the event of a general strike".

The OMS was the main organisation created on a large scale to operate as a

scab labour force, but it wasn't the only one. Other strike breaking groups of lesser importance included "The National Citizens' Union", "The British Empire Union", and "The National Guard". The OMS leaders were all men who had retired from official participation in public affairs (military, civil service and diplomatic), and who felt the need for a force to help "save the nation" in a time of crisis. No doubt they appeared at first as farcical to some then as the Walter Walkers, the Colonel Stirlings, and others today.

While appearing officially not to be backed by the Government, the OMS had a lot more room for manoeuvre than if it had been directly backed by the Tories. On the other side, the Government could not be accused of provocations on the basis of the actions and statements of the OMS, thus managing to maintain a superficial show of "neutrality". However, the men who made up the leadership of the OMS included Lord Hardinge (President), ex Viceroy of India, Lords Ranfurly, Falkland, and Jellicoe, and many other such 'national leaders'. Like today's pensioned privateers, their headquarters were no less effective for being the upper-crust London clubs and the drawing rooms of the wealthy and titled nobility.

CLOSED

Sir Rennell Rodd, outlining the ideas of the OMS, explained that there were five categories according to which volunteers would be classified:

1. For 'protecting public services' and if necessary enrolling as special constables. (It is interesting to note that a fascist group in the '20s offered to be 'specials', and this was taken up in Liverpool).
2. For the railways, tubes, trams, handling of food, etc.
3. For drivers of vans, lorries, etc.
4. For messengers in the event of postal or telephone services being affected.
5. For clerical workers.

In preparation for such tasks the OMS organised training sessions and driving lessons behind the closed doors of factories at night.

In case any of the middle class were unsure that the OMS had government approval, the Home Secretary, Joynson-Hicks, stated: "It would be of great assistance to us to receive from the OMS or any other body of well-disposed citizens, classified lists of men in different parts of the country who would be willing to place their services at the disposal of the government".

NON-PARTY

It was continually emphasised by its leaders that the OMS was a strictly non-political and non-party organisation. The OMS drew a distinction between 'legitimate' trade union activity — i.e. small scale and ineffective

— and the "unconstitutional" general strike. It aimed its efforts against the latter. This is precisely the distinction made by all those today who want the unions shackled by the state.

What was the reaction of the labour movement at the time? Just as today, the union leaders all expressed their opposition to the OMS. But only in the form of sarcastic comments, without any serious preparation to counter strike-breaking. C.T. Cramp, the Industrial Secretary of the NUR, for example, said: "I haven't the slightest fear of these jokers. They are people who have never worked in their lives before. If they started to do it in a strike, they would make a very poor job of it."

In 1925 only the trade union militants and the Communist Party warned of the real nature of the OMS. The CP *Workers Weekly* said: "(the OMS)... represents the most complete scheme of organised black legging and strike breaking yet devised". Remembering the origins of Italian fascism in urban and rural strike breaking forces, it further described the OMS as "the most advanced form of fascism yet reached in this country".

MERGED

The *Sunday Worker*, a left Labour paper, denounced the OMS as "a fascist-type organisation directly linked with the government". In one headline, it warned "Boss Class gets ready for the Big Fight".

When the CP began agitating for the setting up of a Workers' Defence Corps to combat the danger from the OMS, the idea was rapidly condemned by the General Council of the TUC and by the Labour Party.

Just before the General Strike the OMS had collected a register of 100,000 scabs. In the build-up to the Strike the OMS offered a platform of respectability to British Fascists, who just before the General Strike merged with the OMS. Secondly, and more importantly, they served as a smokescreen for the government as they made more serious preparations. On the eve of the General Strike the OMS handed over its list of members to the Government.

REDUCED

The plans of the government and the OMS (whose volunteers were in practice not as well trained as their leaders boasted) were thwarted by the solidarity of the workers. More and more joined the strike as it went on. The railway system, for example, almost completely broke down. Only the betrayal of the TUC General Council, on the ninth day, when the strike was still growing, defeated the workers.

We cannot just rely on any modern equivalent of the OMS being as ineffective again, though. Learning from their past, the ruling class is quite capable of rectifying its mistakes of yesteryear. In two important ways, in fact, the possibility of those shortcomings recurring has already been reduced. Firstly the troops have received a more thorough training in the running of civilian operations than before — and secondly, at least in the plans of certain important Tories, the 'volunteer force' would this time work under State direction (the Home Office) and do without 'neutralist' disguise.

PHYSICAL

The experience of 1926 should put movements like GB 75 and 'Unison' into perspective, showing that behind the comedy, the "Dad's Army" jokes, and the taunts of "old soldiers playing games", is something more serious. We should understand the connection between the 'private armies' and the regular Army, between the Walter Walkers and the Brigadier Kitsons, the Stirlings and the Clutterbucks, and these military men and the ruling class and their politicians... by actually preparing for the physical defence of the picket-line against the military and private para-military strike breaking forces.

CHRISTAYLOR

300 years after his birth EVERYBODY REMEMBERS WATTS'S NAME

Birds in their little nests agree
And 'tis a shameful sight,
When children of one family
Fall out and chide and fight.

WHAT about the cuckoo, you may well ask! And who the hell is Isaac Watts?

The fact is that great poets may come, and great poets may go, but Isaac Watts stays with us, for he produced the first hymn book for children "Divine Songs" (1715), and many of his hymns are still sung every day in our schools.

VALUES

Do you remember, "Our God, our help in ages past", "When I survey the wondrous cross", "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun"? These are from the pen of Isaac Watts, and are probably better known to the British people than any speeches from Shakespeare or poems of Shelley.

What is particularly bad about Isaac Watts is the ruling class values in his hymns — the stress on obedience, on the family,

on the imperial mission. True, some of his hymns have been dropped. Kids no longer sing "Thank God I'm not a Heathen or a Jew", or "They (foreigners) call us to deliver Their land from error's chains" — but these are just the excesses trimmed off, basically the message is still the same.

EXAMPLE

Some people assume that all folk in those days thought Isaac Watts' way and today we are more progressive. Not so — the great revolutionary poet William Blake wrote his brilliant "Songs of Innocence and Experience" as an answer to Isaac Watts.

These poems are less well known. Read them and you will see why. In "Holy Thursday", for example, Blake pinpoints the hypocrisy of the Church:

*Is this a holy thing to see
In a rich and fruitful land
Babies reduced to misery
Fed with a cold and
usurous hand?*

"A Little Boy Lost" could have been written about the smug non-conformist minister Isaac Watts. It is

also a fairly accurate picture of the brainwashing children still get in ruling class values. This is part of the poem, just after the boy has questioned the system:

*"The Priest sat by and heard the child,
In trembling zeal he seized his hair:*

*He led him by his little coat,
And all admired the priestly care.*

*"And standing on an altar high,
Lo, what a friend is here!" said he,*

*"one who sets reason up for judge
Of our most holy Mystery".*

*"The weeping child could not be heard,
The weeping parents wept in vain;*

*They stripped him to his little shirt,
And bound him in an iron chain;*

*"And burned him in a holy place
Where many had been burned before.*

*The weeping parents wept in vain,
Are such things done on Albion's shore?"*

For those who speak out, particularly in schools, watch out! Let Isaac Watts have the last say, from one of his "Divine Songs for Children", and very divine it is too.

*"But lips that dare be so profane
To mock and jeer and scoff
At holy things or holy men
The Lord shall cut them off.*

D.S.



These trailers were driven by a private scab force to break the Chrysler strike.

shop, the well-organised site's self-confidence, but it does not give a class-wide answer to the question of inflation from the workers' point of view.

The refusal of the organising committee so far to put forward a more detailed policy on the relation between nationalisation, workers' control, and unemployment, shortages and price rises, suggests that the lesson provided by the irrelevance of the last Conference has not been learned either.

We would rather be wrong on both these counts than right.

there still is to go.

A precondition for this is that the 'Rank and File' stops pretending that only left-wingers and strongly organised shops exist. A sign that the organisers have not learned that lesson is that they have in their discussions rejected the slogan of a sliding scale of wages in favour of the idea of a "30% across the board increase for everybody". Nice work if you can get it... but for all but the very best organised shops (and hardly any of those, in fact) this demand will be seen as 'unrealistic'. It reflects the aristocracy of the strong

Solidarity organised for W & R strike

ON Thursday September 19th, a motion was passed by Liverpool Trades Council calling for a meeting of Merseyside trade unionists to discuss ways of helping the women strikers at Wingrove and Rogers to win.

There was, however, no definite date fixed for the meeting. The motion, in many ways, sums up the existing state of trade union support for the strike — fine words, but little concrete support at the moment beyond backing. The need to get a daily mass picket outside the gate still remains

Barbara Wojciechowska

an immediate necessity.

The morale of the 200 strikers still remains solid, despite the fact that the scabs are getting in. They are getting in solely because of the large police contingent every morning — whose purpose is to intimidate the strikers. The fact that such intimidation is allowed to go on is a criticism of the labour movement, and particularly of its leadership on Merseyside.

On Monday September

23rd, Wingrove and Rogers' other factory, in Kirkby, came out on a one day strike in support of the factory in dispute, in Old Swan.

Pickets

The picket line is the key. It is the duty of trade unionists and socialists to support it every day (Dornville Rd, off Edge Lane, 7.15 to 8 a.m.) Send messages of support and donations to Miss Smith, Treasurer, Strike Committee, (W&R), 46-48 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool.



W & R STRIKERS JEER AT POLICE-PROTECTED SCABS

Parkinson strike now in 11th week

The strike on the M153 motorway at Ellesmere Port is now in its eleventh week. The strikers, who are members of UCATT, AUEW (Construction Section) and T&GWU, are demanding that all strikers should be re-instated and that a proper bonus scheme be introduced.

"Sir Lindsay Parkinson" a notoriously anti-union firm, is the main contractor on this site. In the past they have adopted a policy of dragging out negotiations as long as possible. No doubt with unemployment — particularly in the building industry — on the increase, they hope to demoralise the workforce,

Len Collinwood

and either force them to give in or recruit a new lot of workers.

As we reported last week Parkinson's are no newcomers to harassment of shop stewards.

Representatives of the strikers attended a conciliation panel in London last Tuesday. It seems, though, that the panel had decided to 'do a Parkinson'

and not make an immediate decision. The representatives waited overnight in London for a decision but there was still none the next day.

Given their past record, however, it is quite likely that Parkinson's will pay no attention to the panel if its decision is in the men's favour.

Many of the men think that the company is not eager to settle until the spring anyway...unless it is forced to.

Donations and messages of support to:

R. S. Walls,
24 Crescent Road,
Wallasey,
Merseyside.

LONDON Workers Fight forum. "The Chinese Revolution". Speaker — Sean Matgamna. 8pm, Sunday 6th October, at the 'George', Liverpool Road, N.1 (near the Angel).

HARD TIMES ALL ROUND FOR DOCKERS

A MASS meeting of Liverpool dockers, after a return to work on Monday September 23rd, first voted to come out on a one day stoppage, and then to postpone any further action on their local claim for a threshold agreement with backdating.

The employers, the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, offered £2.80, plus a lump sum of £20, but refused the threshold claim.

Manning

The MDHC seems to have come off best this time. There has been no settlement on the pay issue; the bosses have introduced an extra demand for the dropping of local pay awards, such as the impedance awards; and the men agreed to let the stewards negotiate over the opening of the Royal Seaforth Grain Terminal. A dispute over manning scales for the Grain Terminal has been running for two years, but was resolved when a figure midway between the union's and the bosses' was agreed.

The overall problems of the bosses' system are rebounding on dockers' conditions. In London, PLA dockers are in dispute over the threat of the loss of certain South American trade to Southampton. While on Humber-side the struggle to contain the BACAT system, which bypasses all ports through a system of barges, and goes direct from Amsterdam to Sheffield, continues, the Hull dockers have just rejected an offer of £5 made in reply to their demand for an extra £25 per week.

Crucial in organising a response to these problems, and in maintaining the unity between ports often so important to winning local struggles, is the revival and rebuilding of the National Port Shop Stewards Committee. Labour's plans to nationalise will confront dockers with rationalisation plans and other dangers. A meeting of all shop stewards is the first step to take, the next step is to organise the fight.

LEFTS OUT RIGHT-WING CANDIDATES

ONE important aspect of this election is the way left wingers in the Labour Party have used the occasion to replace right wing sitting candidates.

In Sheffield, Brightside, for instance, Mr Eddie Griffiths has failed to get the Labour Party NEC to reverse the local Party's decision to dump him and support left wing trade unionist Joan Maynard for the seat.

The only surprising thing about this is that it took so long. After all, Griffiths has been an MP for the area for a long time — and although it is a locality entirely dependent on steel has consistently voted against nationalisation of the industry.

A similar situation has arisen at Nottingham Central, where the sitting member is Jack Dunnett, who according to Cllr Stephen Evans "is a director, or former director, of 13 companies, many of them property companies. He has business interests directly opposed to the objectives of the Labour movement."

In Blyth, Eddie Milne will be standing against the official Labour candidate.

HOSPITAL ancillary workers have joined local government workers at the head of the pay queue with an eleven point claim. This was drawn up at a meeting of National Health Service Unions on Friday September 30th.

The main plank is for a £30 minimum basic rate with threshold protection. The claim also wants the present threshold payments to be consolidated. On top of this main demand come a 35 hour week, four weeks holiday a year, and equal pay as soon as possible.

A sour point is the call for a penalty payment to be paid to staff who are not receiving money from a bonus scheme paying more than 10%.

NUPE put in a new claim

It is scandalous that this demand is included. The last annual conference of NUPE rejected productivity dealing, and in some areas, negotiations on bonus schemes have now been stopped. But on the basis of this demand in the claim, local management will be able to restart their campaign for bonus schemes and work study.

The claim is unlikely to be

negotiated until after the election, but whether there is any action or not depends on the feeling of the ancillary workers. Many workers in the health service are looking for a Halsbury-type payout, and Liverpool catering workers' recent 48 hour black on doctors' and nurses' canteens shows some of the determination that could win this claim.

...and loses £50,000 in share deals

"How to beat rising prices" was the title of a mildly satirical piece of writing which appeared in issue No. 10 (1972) of *Public Employee*, the NUPE journal. The article advised readers to invest in stocks and shares as one way of beating inflation. It was a joke of course and not meant to be taken seriously, but obviously somebody forgot to tell the NUPE leadership this. For unbeknown to the membership, NUPE has recently been indulging in a bit of wheeling and dealing on the

CPSA CAMPAIGN AGAINST AGENCIES

TUESDAY October 1st, sees the conclusion of the anti agency campaign, led by the Civil and Public Servants' Association (CPSA), against the use of agency staff in the Civil Service.

The CPSA wants agency staff removed from the Civil Service. The union argues that the agencies make large profits from their fees, as well as providing a 'service' to local management who are not keen to see strong union organisation grow up amongst typists and clerical officers.

Certainly the issue of agency staff is very closely linked with the issue of low pay in the Civil Service. The action from October 1st is aimed at reducing the number of agency staff used by 50%. The action will include a ban on overtime, refusal to cooperate with agency staff, and backing of all work done by agency staff.

The agencies are clerical lump labour, and as in other industries make fantastic profits while giving employers non-unionised labour at their own convenience. The CPSA can learn from the success of the local government workers' union NALGO, who in their struggle for a London weighting threw out all agency workers from Inner and Outer London Boroughs.

Stephen Corbishley

GREETINGS TO COVENTRY WORKER

THE FIRST issue of *The Coventry Worker* has just come into the Workers Fight offices. It is "a bulletin for trade unionists by trade unionists" which will try to provide "information about the activities of the Trades Council... and a forum for debate among local trade unionists."

This first issue contains an article by Labour MP Audrey Wise on the record of the Labour Government — an article from the local Socialist Women's Group on the Working Women's Charter, a criticism of Wedgwood Benn's proposals by a machine tool industry shop steward, Eric Harrison, and many other articles and reports.

We not only advise Coventry trade unionists to buy and circulate *Coventry Worker*, but also workers elsewhere who feel that they could get their trades council to follow Coventry's example.

Copies from Colin Lindsay, 14 Wren Street, Coventry.

ALAN FISHER



help recover the hard-paid subs of many NUPE members. Still, Alan Fisher & Co. Ltd. may yet find a way of cutting their losses. The NUPE E.C. has been invited to make a tour... of the Stock Exchange. No doubt they'll be banking on picking up a few tips to assist them in their next foray into the world of high finance.

FORD WORKERS REFUSE TO BE LAID OFF

As we go to press, more than two thousand workers at Ford's Halewood plant have decided to refuse to be laid off.

One of the reasons for this is the feeling that the employers have decided to play tough so as to embarrass the Labour Party in its electoral activity. It is felt that a continuation of the strike is being used to counter Labour's claims with regard to the social contract.

John Meikle, the senior plant convenor, said "we

intend to do our normal work. We feel that we are being used as political pawns in a very big game of politics.

AND AT I.M.I., WITTON

Production workers at IMI's Witten plant — all members of the T & GWU — have also refused to accept being laid off.

PICKETING CONTINUES AT PREBBLES DESPITE INJUNCTIONS

THREE pickets protesting outside the offices of Prebbles, a large estate agent in North London, have been served with an injunction to stop picketing.

In the past pickets have been sued by Prebbles for

criminal libel — a charge for which they could not get legal aid.

In defiance a picket will be mounted outside Prebbles office in Upper St, N.1 (opposite St Marys Church) on Saturday 28th.

Healey FROM P. 1

We'll take over.

Firms that impose shortages on the public, firms that can only offer redundancies or lower wages to their workers, firms that can only manage on state subsidies should be nationalised without compensation. We can't have our livelihoods and our jobs following the fate of failed profiteers or any other freebooters.

Labour's back-down to the threats of big business is no new thing. It is the logic of their attempt to "regenerate British Capitalism", as "Commissar Benn" puts it.

Workers faced with threats of redundancy or cutbacks cannot afford to place their trust in Labour's plans to nationalise... and rationalise.

Yes, we support nationalisation. Yes, we want a Labour government. But the answer when the bosses drag industry into crisis is not to pump more money into their pockets so that they can carry on. It is for workers to take control. The great spread of factory occupations is witness to this truth. But workers' control cannot stand still as a socialist island in the stormy ocean of capitalist Britain. Workers seizing control face a choice: retreating to capitalist control, or fighting to extend workers' control wider and wider — and that will mean fighting against the government, Tory or Labour.