

# Socialist Worker

PETERLOO

Special feature  
on the massacre  
of Manchester  
workers in  
August 1819

For workers control and international socialism 135 28 August 1969 every Thursday 3d

McCann calls for ending of Unionist regime

## DERRY DEFIES THE ARMY: 'BARRICADES STAY UP'

From FRED MILSON

**DERRY:-** The first public meeting to be held here since the fighting started took place on Sunday at the Wellington Street barricade. Despite the pouring rain, 1000 people heard Eamonn McCann reply to Prime Minister Chichester-Clark's statement that the Derry barricades must and would come down.

McCann made it clear that the barricades will come down after the fall of Unionism and not before. Free Derry was won in three days' fighting and it will not be sacrificed, he stressed.

At another meeting, Sean Keenan of the Derry Citizens' Defence Association stated that the British Army would not enter Derry unless it was invited in.

Later, the Defence Association voted unanimously to reject terms for the removal of the barricades put forward by the British Army. This has gone some way to silencing the fears roused by the talks between Paddy Docherty and Michael Canavan of the Defence Association and the Army.

The mood of welcome for the Army has changed. People now ask what the Army is going to do in the long run.

And the Army has answered by assisting the Royal Ulster Constabulary in a raid on two farm houses near here. Nothing was found but the raid means the Army has been authorised to enforce the Special Powers Act, a major part of the Stormont police state.

### DOUBT

The authorisation must come from Westminster. The raid throws doubt on the role both of the Army and Wilson, for at the moment 24 people are detained under the Special Powers Act and there is no sign of their release.

Bogside is under constant surveillance. A helicopter daily patrols Derry and the valley of the Foyle. Carloads of police have been observed driving through and a Det-Sergeant Drew was turned back on Saturday from the Rossville Street barricade.

The B-Specials and the RUC have not finished with Derry, if they have their way.

Neither has the Unionist Party, whose right wing are piling on the pressure and appear to be carrying Chichester-Clark with them. John Hume, moderate civil rights' MP for Foyle at Stormont, has been trying to re-establish contact with Chichester-Clark for days but is getting the brush-off.

The liberal wing of Unionism wants to involve men like Hume in peace conferences as the first step to a coalition between Catholic Tories and Protestant Tories.

Chichester-Clark's 'iron-fist' tactics will not attract capital to Ulster, but the logic of Unionism will drive it still further to the right.

MP for Woodvale, who says 'We have got to start thinking about illegal force and that is where the guns and men from the B-Specials should be going.'

Against this, the old Republicans grouped around the IRA are contributing nothing. It is the Republicans in the north with local links who are aiding the struggle and working closely with the various socialist groups.

This is particularly the case in Belfast, where People's Democracy and local Republicans are forming local committees.

In the South, Sinn Fein is content to merely try and pressure the Green Tories, led by Prime Minister Jack Lynch, into doing the job for them. There is no question of then taking direct action against English capital in the South, where it dominates the country as much as in the North.

This job has been left to the Citizens' Action Council in Dublin ground which are grouped both trade unionists and those Republicans willing to seek ways out of the impasse of the last 50 years.

There are powerful forces at work on both sides. John McKeague of the extreme right Shankill Defence Association in Belfast has said: 'We only began the job last time. This time we've got to see it through, if necessary against British troops as well.'

Between this and the determination of Bogside and Falls Road to overthrow Unionism and its police state, Wilson and Chichester-Clark are tossed about.

Unionism is fighting for its life and without the allies it had in 1921 when the Stormont state was set up. The value of its industries has dwindled since then and the maintenance of a British standard of living there is costing an annual subsidy of £130 million.

The long-term future of the shipyards is doubtful, the aircraft company only survives on government money, the linen industry is irrelevant and the Republic is at least as good a reservoir of labour for capital.

Ulster is ripe for rationalisation in economic terms, which suggests that Wilson and Chichester-Clark will not only clash over the B-Specials but over many other issues as well. The problem for Chichester-Clark is that the Green Tories of the Republic have shown themselves at least as careful with foreign capital, as willing to subsidise it, and also able to keep the standard of living much lower than in Ulster, which means considerably lower labour costs.

So the situation rests between the determination of Bogside and the Falls Road to overthrow the police state and the determination of the Shankill Defence Association to finish their pogrom.

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Demonstrators in Prague last week, denounced as 'counter-revolutionaries'

## Czech 'reformers' capitulate as resistance rises

Chris Harman

A YEAR after the invasion of Czechoslovakia by half a million Russian troops, the people are still not crushed.

Last week hundreds of thousands protested in Prague and Brno against the Russian occupation. They were met with the only response their rulers - like those in Derry or Chicago - know: tear gas, baton charges and machine gun fire.

But there have been changes in the last year. Then it seemed that all sections of Czech society were opposed to the Russian invasion.

'Reformers' in the governing bureaucracy, like Dubcek, Svoboda and Cernik, seemed to be leading the resistance. True they warned against 'provocations' and urged passivity but many saw this as good tactics.

Today the Russians remain, although carefully hidden from view. Old Stalinists who were

discredited with Novotny a year ago are back in the important positions in the bureaucracy.

But those 'reforming' bureaucrats like Dubcek who seemed to lead the resistance and were accordingly portrayed in heroic terms by the western bourgeois press - are now on the other side.

On Sunday the Czech government issued a decree increasing sentences for those 'disturbing the peace' (ie demonstrating against the Russians). It was signed by Dubcek, Svoboda and Cernik.

What has happened in the last year is that the degree of resistance to the Russians has come to reflect the basic

class structure of Czech society.

At the time of the invasion, the ruling class, the bureaucracy that alone has any control over the state apparatus and therefore collectively owns through the state all industry and collectivised agriculture, was split down the middle over the question of how to protect its interests.

A substantial section of it, represented by Dubcek, thought it could only do this by carrying through changes in the economy and by asserting a degree of independence from Russia.

What they wanted was a regime similar to that of Tito's in Yugoslavia, where 'communist' bureaucrats still rule but in a less centralised way than in the rest of Eastern Europe and independently from Russia.

The reformers were prepared to partially mobilise other sections of Czech society against their opponents, but only on their own terms. When the Russians invaded they called for token strikes.

But they feared any movement of the mass of workers and students that might start to assert demands independent of any section of the bureaucracy. This explains their opposition to the idea of an

## Militant on murder charge

John Strauther

**BERKELEY, California:-** Bobby Seale, chairman of the Black Panther Party, was arrested here by FBI agents on Tuesday August 19, as he left the wedding of two Black Panther Party members.

He was taken to the San Francisco jail and charged with murder, kidnapping and conspiracy to commit murder and kidnapping, in connection with the killing of a Black Panther Party member in Connecticut.

At the Federal Court in San Francisco on Wednesday morning, members of the Students for a Democratic Society and Independent Socialist Club demonstrated against the arrest.

Seale was released on \$250,000 bail but he was immediately re-arrested on State charges. Seale has denied all knowledge of the alleged murder.

The Independent Socialist Club distributed a leaflet outside the Federal Court which said:

This is only the most recent in a long line of attempts to crush the Black Panther Party - attempts which have included the murder of Bobby Hutton, efforts to put away Huey Newton permanently, to commit Eldridge Cleaver, and a constant

guttings of offices, legal indictments - and now this latest atrocity.

There can be no doubt in anyone's mind that this is the latest in a long series of acts which reflects a tendency in America for repression to grow more serious as the contradictions in American society once again surface and the movement begins to grow which has the potentiality of overturning and transforming



# LETTERS

## How to break down religious barriers

WHILST I WOULD welcome the vast coverage given to the situation in N. Ireland in your last issue, the contribution it made towards leading the working class here or in N. Ireland in the direction of socialism is almost negligible.

Although I support the general positions taken by the paper, I found your articles last week a simple guide in how to further entrench the sectarianism which is rife in Ulster.

The article by Duncan Hallas was reasonable and fair. The conclusion to his analysis, a quote from James Connolly, that the Irish struggle would eventually resolve itself in a 'fight for the means of life, the sources of production in Ireland', is one with which no socialist could disagree.

From your editorial: 'For us the immediate priority must be to give as much support as possible to this beleaguered minority' (fair enough). However, 'We can hope that Protestant workers will see their own interests and fight alongside them and socialists must ceaselessly press for Protestant-Catholic workers' unity.' No wonder the editorial board is left to the pious 'hope' of Protestant workers joining the fray.

But the remainder of the article reduces this hope to 'not a hope in hell' in reference to the Dublin government (perhaps with sarcasm, which we can ill afford) your article read .... 'They should open the arsenals of the 26 county army for the oppressed people of the north and those southern volunteers who want to go to their aid.' As you correctly pointed out 'in fact the Southern regime is a good friend of British capitalism'. In the interests of the united socialist democracy advocated by Duncan Hallas, the energies of the southern workers would be more effectively spent if they were directed against the no less evil Eire government.

If you would only follow your article to its logical conclusions, you will recognise immediately that in one fell swoop you have removed any possibility of convincing Ulster's Protestant working class of our (non-sectarian?) interests.

Furthermore, should there be any possibility of such an event taking place, how much more near to socialism is a 32 county republic compared to a 26 county republic? The only viable republic in Ireland is one where the interests of Protestant and Catholic workers are seen to be identical, on a socialist basis or at

least a move in that direction before republicanism, lest we should make the tragic error of repeating history and betraying the Irish working class.

The policy expressed in your editorial is understandable. It would be very hard after all that has taken place in Ulster to stand up and say that so far the civil rights movement has only marked time and that if it is to resolve the disgraceful conditions which exist in Ulster it must recognise we have not yet left square one. The Protestant workers must see the direct participation of socialists and civil rights in their struggle for improved conditions.

The only way is to recognise (as did James Connolly) that the immediate battleground of politics does not hold the answer to Catholic-Protestant unity. Perhaps it is not entirely irrelevant to point out that your quote from James Connolly is completely dependant on the following:

'Failure to unite politically the forces of labour is the inevitable outcome of the policy of division on the industrial battleground. The natural lines of thought and action lead from the direct to the indirect, from the simple to the complex, from the immediate to the ultimate. 'Labour leaders ignore this natural line of develop-

ment and they expect the workers to heed the call to unity on the less direct and more immediate battleground of politics. They inevitably fail as even socialists would fail, if they remained equally blind to our evolution into class consciousness. That natural law leads us as individuals to unite in our craft, as crafts to unite in our industry, as industries in our class, and the finished expression of that evolution is, we believe, the appearance of our class upon the political battleground with all the economic power behind it to enforce its mandates.

'Until that day dawns our political parties of the working class are but propagandist agencies, John the Baptists of the New Redemption; but when that day dawns, our political party will be armed with all the might of our class; will be revolutionary in act as well as in thought.' (James Connolly, Socialism made easy - my emphasis)

You might well ask which is the road forward for the civil rights movement. It is not the way implied in your article! I am very much afraid that we are out of touch with the lessons of Connolly and the answer is basic: back to the trade union movement to find our solidarity as a class, not as a divided political movement. - MOIRA EVANS, Glasgow South IS.

## THE ROLE OF JACK JONES

I CANNOT fully understand the letter from John Fossick and Phil Settle (July 24) which criticised Sabby Sagall and Laurie Flynn for attacking Jack Jones of the TGWU.

During the national seamen's strike, 1966, due to the fact that many scab ships were breaking the strike and thousands of tons of black cargoes were being diverted from port to port, dockers wanted the TGWU to call a strike.

To this end, I led a 300-strong delegation of dockers to Transport House.

We begged Jones to intervene and support the seamen. He merely paid lip service to giving sympathy to seamen at that time.

In the last three Liverpool Dock strikes Jack Jones has opposed the dockers' views. In the London Dock strike of November 1967, Jones gave no support at all.

When Frank Cousins left the government to rejoin the TGWU, Jack Jones, to herald his master's return, organised a campaign for a national minimum wage of £15 a week. He made several widely

reported speeches on the issue, then quietly dropped it.

At the TGWU's recent conference, Jack Jones stated that in future the union would have a new democratic outlook, that no agreements would be signed by paid officials (who are selected, not elected) without rank and file approval. He omitted to say that shortly before the conference he and Tim O'Leary, OBE, TGWU National Docks Officer, signed an agreement, which provided that lorry drivers do registered work in container depots.

No docker knew of this agreement which was the cause of 8000 Liverpool men staging an unofficial strike.

Surely Fossick and Settle must realise that in the economic situation which prevailed just after the war, and into the 1950s, it was relatively easy for Jack Jones to gain advances for the Coventry workers.

Jack Jones, like all reformist union leaders, will be as militant as his members force him to be. - TERRY BARRETT, Tilbury Dock IS Branch.

# PETERLOO

## The massacre of August 1819 burned itself in



HENRY HUNT

the radical consciousness. The of the yeomanry were to glint hundred years or more. They gl again today behind the loaded and the truncheons and water-

by Gwyn A. Williams

Tw as on the sixteenth day of August, Eighteen hundred and nineteen, A meeting held in Peter Street Was glorious to be seen; Joe Nadin and his big bull-dogs, Which you might plainly see, And on the other side Stood the bloody cavalry.

With Henry Hunt we'll go, my boys, With Henry Hunt we'll go; We'll mount the Cap of Liberty In spite of Nadin Joe ...

MOUNT IT they did, in spite of Manchester's earthly devious bully of a Deputy-Constable, Nadin, despite the convulsive coercion of enraged, frightened and (perhaps most crucial) nonplussed authority, despite an atmosphere of civil conflict swelling to panic.

Anything from 60,000 to 100,000 strong, the working men marched into St. Peter's Fields with their music and their banners and their female reformers (prettiest girls in front) in drilled contingents from all Lancashire, whose very discipline terrified their rulers the more.

They marched to salute their hero, Orator Henry Hunt in his white Jacobin hat, and to demand their basic rights as freeborn Englishmen—the franchise, manhood vote and a democratic parliament.

## Eleven died under sabre

Authority sent its constables to take their leaders and its yeomanry (manufacturers, merchants, publicans and shopkeepers on horseback) and hussars against the crowd. In the windy sunshine of that August afternoon, 11 people died under sabre and hoof and trampling clog; hundreds of wounded crowded the refugee roads and littered the field ...

The hustings remained, with a few broken and hewed flag-staves erect and a torn gashed banner or two drooping; whilst over the whole field were strewed caps, bonnets, hats, shawls and shoes ... The yeomanry had dismounted — some were easing their horses' girths, others adjusting their accoutrements, and some were wiping their sabres ...

It is a scene with which we are again familiar: Grosvenor Square, Latin Quarter, Bogside on the Morning After. There had been worse repressions than Peterloo; there would be worse.

Yet it was this massacre which captured the radical, the populist, indeed the English imagination. The very name, in its mockery (Waterloo was only four years back in a 'glorious' past; many of the crowd leaders were war veterans) was a stroke of genius. The new

Jacobins in the 1790s, developed a brilliant and often unscrupulous campaign; government, with its spies and gagging acts, its nauseating evangelicalism and its total lack of imagination, was biliously Bourbon.

But it went deeper than that. Peterloo touched the very nerve of the freeborn Englishmen; it affronted every instinct, however primitive, every tradition, however mythical, of that free English commoner who was being coerced, cajoled, squeezed and machined into the first industrial proletariat.

The degradation of free man into object, into a thing, a hand, a commodity, under the institutionalised violence of the new capitalist order, his expulsion from community, found a sudden blinding image. Radical conversions by the hundred date as precisely from 16 August 1819 as any Methodist rebirth. Richard Carlile, preacher of the pure doctrine of Thomas Paine, who had launched his journal as a Register, rode nonstop back from the stricken field and defiantly made it The Republican.

Peterloo burned itself into the radical consciousness. The sabres of the yeomanry were to glint for a hundred years and more. They flash in some surprising minds still.

A.J.P. Taylor, the historian, publicly and repeatedly salutes his ancestor John Lees, cut down that day. Howard Spring in his classic novel on a Macdonald socialist, Fame is the Spur, builds the book around one of those swords.

They glint again today, behind the loaded capes and the truncheons and the water-cannon. They rank with the workhouse as a master-symbol for the English working class in its age of formation.

WHEN Harold Jackson of the Guardian and Max Hastings of the London Evening Standard were asked to report in the BBC World at One programme on what they had seen in the Falls and Crumlin Roads during the week, they were particularly asked by the producer in London to talk about what they had seen of the activities of the B-Specials.

When they turned up at the studio, raring to go, the BBC in Belfast told them that they were no longer needed. It appears that Major Chichester-Clark had told the BBC that these two reporters were not being 'very helpful' in the present situation and that it would really be better for everybody if the BBC did not

But there's the rub. The tradition was subject to that distortion which seems built into English history: history of the society which produced the first classic bourgeoisie and proletariat and yet experienced neither a bourgeoisie nor a proletarian revolution.

The new working class blundered into history equipped with no ideology of its own, but with a set of pre-industrial values, traditions, outlooks, a passionate nostalgia, a defensive reassertion of its human worth, which found as focus only the political creed of 18th-century democracy, the democracy of artisans, professional men, Dissenters of an essentially pre-industrial society.

The political programme of the Chartists — full but expressly political democracy — was first proclaimed as early as 1780; the first popular movement worth the name, the corresponding societies of the 1790s, was essentially an artisan (crafts-men) movement. In its tone and manner, Tom Paine's explosive writing made itself a foundation text for the British working class movement, but its content was that, which the 19th century called middle-class radicalism. (Paine's economics, in fact, are not far removed from Enoch Powell's).

As late as 1831, Bronterre O'Brien, the Chartist theorist, was complaining that the working class movement lacked any ideology of its own; it shouted middle-class slogans in a harsher accent; this,

even after the silent insurrections of the 1820s, when working-class anti-capitalist communitarianism of the form of O shape.

The British in its formative period as its political creed of individualism in essence to its real nature.

The fragmentary movement, its journals, each individual, full wit and satire, personal eccentricity, apparent dependence, 'charismatic' leaders, Orator Peter Porcupine, point to a kind of situation, in which developed, collated, and distinguished consciousness, satisfying political.

## Resistance to violence

Characteristic immediate sequence was a bitter quality of its heroes, ordered by the seeking to use violence as a vehicular success, his Republican sea-green and the creation of a society; both futile.

This is not a loo had no behind the political lay the whole of new working-classness — a moreover, born to violence.

## Waldo Maguire, makes the Corporo

better for that true blue Ulster Unionist, Waldo Maguire, who is the local boss of BBC Belfast. He personally vetoed the appearance of Jackson and Hastings on the World at One.

But this is not the first time that Waldo Maguire has been called in by the government to make sure that not only the BBC in Belfast, but also the BBC in London is helpful to the Unionist Party.

Before October 5 last, year it was a joke in the BBC in London that the Six Counties were Waldo's fiefdom and any British TV producer who dared to penetrate the Six Counties could only do so with Waldo's personal go-ahead.

When 24 Hours made a series of seven programmes only one was allowed to appear.

## From Our

national program together. But he ing. Here are ways he has help the govern October.

## Evict

November The evision programme Concern decided feature on a Call in Dunganon evicted from a c while the next do allocated to a single girl. The amme was first s BBC in Belfast it because they s ination in housin at the roof of a

# Socialist Worker

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## WHERE WE STAND

mand of no victimisation of trade unionists. Redundancy should be opposed with the demand: five day work or five days pay. Shop stewards organisations should strengthen and extend their in-

fluence by linking up on an industrial and ultimately a national basis.

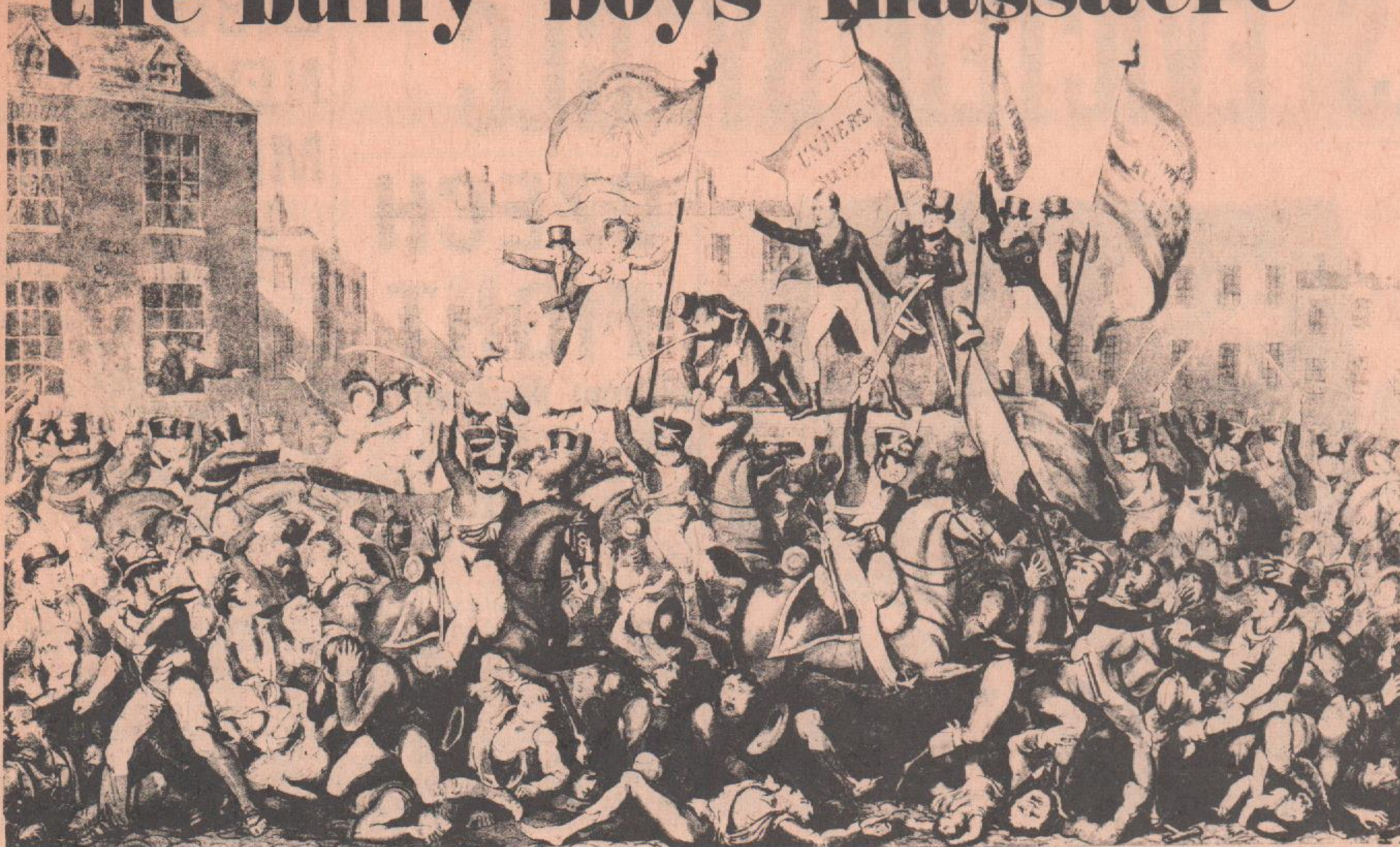
We are opposed to racial discrimination, a weapon used by the ruling class to divide the labour movement. Immigration control must be ended, ensuring the free movement of peoples regardless of race and colour. Black and white workers must unite and form their own defence organisations to fight fascism and racialism. The labour movement must demand the immediate recall of British troops from abroad as the first step towards ending colonial exploitation.

The task of revolutionary socialists is to join workers in their struggles with socialist ideas that will link up the various sections of the labour movement and help create a force that will lead on to workers' power and international socialism.

SOCIALIST WORKER is the paper of International Socialism, a movement of revolutionary socialists who believe that the present form of society, with its blatant inequalities, its periodic crises, wars and racialist hysteria must be replaced by one based on a planned economy under full workers' control; those who produce the wealth should own and control the means of production. International Socialism is opposed to any incomes policy that seeks to restrict the wages of the workers in order to boost the profits of the employers. We unconditionally support all shop stewards and rank and file trade union members in their struggles for better wages and conditions and oppose all reactionary laws that threaten the liberties of the labour movement. We support all strikes in defence of workers' interests with the de-



# the bully boys' massacre



# Death sentence for one more Welsh mine

## John Larke: Swansea

WHEN AVON colliery closes on September 26 it will be the thirty-first pit to shut down since 1965. The axing of Avon in the Port Talbot valley will put more than 300 men out of work and turn Aber-gwynfi and Blaengwynfi into virtual ghost towns.

The National Coal Board says the pit is unprofitable and yet Avon's output per man shift has risen to well above — and sometimes double — the regional average since the first rumour of closure.

A call for strike action by the executive of the South Wales area of the National Union of Mineworkers was turned down last week by a delegate meeting. Although the issue will now be voted on in the union lodges, it is unlikely that the rank and file will reverse the decision.

future of the mining villages. But, having accepted the NCB's talk of productivity and profitability, local union leaders were in a position where pit after pit was closed and they could offer no alternative except to ask the rank and file to work harder and cut out absenteeism.

The closure of Avon should make it clear to all miners that the only way they can defend their living standards and their jobs will be by their own militant opposition to the Coal Board. Avon men increased their production, but to no avail. On September 26 another pit will die.

THE SCENE at St Peter's Fields, Manchester, on August 16, 1819 as the cavalry attacked and slashed at the defenceless demonstrators. The meeting had been called by working-class reformers throughout Lancashire 'for the purpose of taking into consideration the most effectual legal means of obtaining a Reform in the Representation of the House of Commons'. In other words, they wanted the right to vote, which was denied them. Most of the marchers were weavers who had been told by their leaders to show 'cleanliness, sobriety, order and peace'. Sam Bamford has described how the marchers practised drill for weeks before in order to march with military precision. The authorities like the whole of the English ruling class, lived in terror of the impact of the French revolution. They called the marching weavers 'Jacobins', asserted that they were preparing for armed insurrection and sent in the yeomen and troops to smash the rally. But none of the marchers — men, women and children — had a brick or a cudgel, let alone a gun.

is as monstrously irrelevant as the thinking of those dinosaurs of magistrates. One might as well ask whether the Royal Ulster Constabulary are provoked by Catholic crowds demanding elementary human rights.

Let Sam Bamford, who marched with the Middleton contingent to Peterloo and left us a fine 'radical myth' description, tell it like it was. For he fought at Sandy Brow, when the men of the powerful Stockport Union defended their flag and their Cap of Liberty against the yeomanry and, months before the Manchester 'massacre', asserted that working-class presence which Peterloo was to register indelibly in British history:

Ha! han they ta'en our cap and flag; Wot! han the Dandies ta'en 'em? And did Reformers' courage lag, An' could they not regain 'em? And did the Gentles ride so gay, Wi' Birch and Loyd afore 'em? To sweep the 'Gruntin' herd away, Or bravely gallop o'er 'em?

Then proudly let our banner wave, Wi' freedom's emblem o'er it, And toasted be the Stockport lads, The lads who bravely bore it, An' let the 'war-torn' Yeomanry go curse their sad disasters, An' their sad in rueful agony, Their bruises and their plasters.

\* The making of the English Working Class, Penguin, 18s.

\*\* Peterloo: the case reopened Robert Walmsley, Manchester University Press, 90s.

See also Peterloo and Radical Reform, Jackdaw, 12s

The institutional violence of a society which dragged artisans and working men into barrack operatives and time-clock serfs, which drilled them out of community and drummed them into a highly instrumental religion, which during the long French wars systematically destroyed old craft defences and new amateur political organisations, which during the Luddite insurrection deployed against workers an army bigger than Wellington's in Spain, which turned enclosures and game laws and gagging acts and transportation against them — this almost instinctive violence (which many historians fail to analyse or even observe as fish neglect to analyse the water they swim in) was countered by a powerful assertion of the working class presence.

For, riding the tide of post-war depression and anger, working-class radicalism asserted itself as a force which could no longer be ignored or easily suppressed. It fought for political organisation, in its myriad union clubs and political protests, owing something to Methodist example but more to that of friendly society and trade union; it fought for free speech in its firework display of marvellous fighting journalism, with, at this time, the Black Dwarf, even more than Cobbett's Register, leading the van and prefiguring its modern namesake in its satire and bite.

This is the meaning of Peterloo. It was an exemplary conflict, it polarised opinion and allegiance; it was a class conflict in the fullest sense, which both expressed and formed a class consciousness. Manchester, the 'shock city' of the new England, 'the sooty capital of the cash nexus' was an appropriate theatre. The publicity, the

massiveness of the meetings, the defiant assertion of status and presence, the discipline of the crowds, signified the end of deference and the end of an old regime.

For within 10 years of Peterloo, the reform crisis, powered by an effectively-mobilised working-class movement and directed by a middle class whose radicalism in part stemmed from a frightened reaction to the kind of conflict which Peterloo presaged, broke the dam.

It is precisely this central meaning of Peterloo which has been ignored by liberal and labourite historians through to the Hammonds and G.D.H. Cole when they depict Samuel Bamford and his Peterloo comrades as victims and innocent martyrs and nothing more (it has taken Edward Thompson\* to rescue the activist and revolutionary tradition from such friends).

### The meaning is slurred

It is this meaning which is slurred, too, by their opponent. A new book\*\* devotes nearly 600 pages to a 'rehabilitation' of the Manchester magistrates and a refutation of the 'radical myth', spending laborious hours on minute reconstruction of events.

Did the crowd carry cudgels? When was the first stone thrown? Was the shift in the hustings position which left the constables exposed in a human sea deliberate? Did the yeomanry slash with their sabres before or after provocation? And so on.

The book, without doubt, is accurate and does explode many propaganda details; it correctly indicates confusion rather than conspiracy. But as an exercise in history, it

checked with the BBC in Belfast.

August Once again the BBC is acting as a publicity machine for the Unionist government. When Major Chichester-Clark's farce of a press conference was shown on the BBC we got all the clap-trap about the IRA and not one bit of the very tough questioning by journalists which followed. In the present situation it has consistently mouthed the official party line.

Not even during Suez did the BBC ever have to answer to anyone for what it said, though it was often severely critical of government policy. BBC TV takes a lot of pride in the way it has resisted government pressure, particularly those of Harold Wilson. It has taken Waldo Maguire to turn the BBC into the obedient tool of a rotten government at Stormont.

### Inflamed

April The day after the riot started the BBC World at One team was pulled out of Northern Ireland. They were told that in the present inflamed situation it was really better for the BBC to take the advice of the people on the spot and to use Belfast radio and television material to cover the crisis.

At the same time a directive was sent out to all departments that in the present inflamed situation all plans for programmes should be

# the BBC's Belfast boss, operation toe the Orange line

## N. Ireland Correspondent

ame said 'Exactly. That, strangely enough, is why we want to do it.' Despite all kinds of obstructions put in their way by the BBC in Belfast, aided and abetted by John Taylor, the programme was filmed.

It was due to be shown in January just after the long march. At this stage the BBC in Belfast made very strong representations that 'the situation was very inflamed' and it would be irresponsible to show the programme.

It has been scheduled twice since. On both occasions Waldo stepped in. The programme has now been junked and will not be shown.

November At the march in Amagh a Panorama reporter Richard Kershaw was beaten up by the police. He didn't take it very well and insisted

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# STRIKES MAY HIT LONDON IF RENT REBELS EVICTED BY GLC

Sean Dunne

**COUNCIL TENANTS** in the East End of London are talking about barricades, defence squads and large-scale industrial action to prevent evictions by their landlord, the Greater London Council.

The GLC had hoped that the protests that started nearly a year ago following rent increases of 70 per cent would fizzle out. Instead, not only the GLC but the government and employers as well are faced with a strong movement opposing them.

## Sack for 600 is BSA holiday 'treat'

John Setters

**BIRMINGHAM:** BSA Motor Cycles at Small Heath declared 600 workers redundant last week on the eve of the works' annual holiday.

At a special local conference with the trade unions concerned, the company gave out a statement explaining why 30 per cent of the firm's workers had to be fired. It laid most of the blame on poor sales due to 'snowstorms, heavy rain, etc' but during the meeting the company admitted that the sackings were due to Japanese competition.

After further separate meetings with representatives of manual workers, staff workers and foremen, the company announced its compensation terms:

For men with more than two years' employment, the minimum compensation. For those with less service, one day's pay for each completed year. For a fitter with six months' service, the compensation for the loss of his job will be less than £3.

## Little resistance

Weak and collaborating shop stewards have controlled BSA for many years. They voted to accept the redundancies even though some sections of workers were opposed to the sackings.

Little resistance was put up by the full-time union officials at the local conference. Among them was Norman Cartwright, right-wing AEF district secretary who wants to expel stewards who struck on May 1st.

The union officials finally agreed that the redundancies should be referred to the next central engineering conference at York, which meets on the same day as the 600 workers are due to be sacked by BSA.

The staff trade unions demanded a statement of the firm's current financial situation. The company rejected this and said instead that the unions should 'trust them'. The so-called 'right' of such people to run and own industry has been revealed for the menace it really is.

The collaboration of the right-wing union officials and their supporters in the factory has also spotlighted what 'responsible trade unionism' means in this case—the refusal to fight the sacking of hundreds of members they are supposed to represent.

## MERSEY CALL FOR FACTORY TAKE-OVER

**THE JOINT ACTION COMMITTEE** of shop stewards from the three English Electric plants on Merseyside decided on Sunday that their members will occupy the factories from September 19. The take-over, along with a ban on overtime, is part of their campaign to stop the General Electric Company, which owns EE, declaring thousands of Merseyside workers redundant in their drive to boost profits by screwing more work from a smaller labour force.

The factory occupation could pose one of the most serious threats to the employers since the war. Watch for a full report next week, plus the first part of an analysis of Arnold Weinstock's electrical empire.

More than 5000 tenants according to the council, are still withholding last October's 10 shilling rent increase.

The GLC will find it increasingly difficult to back down from its recent 'get tough' policy of court action and eviction. It needs to recover £100,000 in rent arrears before it can impose new increases of £1 a week next year.

Up to now the GLC has relied on threatening letters in an effort to whittle down the number of rent rebels. But the council recently issued the first notices to quit, 15 of which expire on September 15. The remainder are promised shortly.

## BAILIFFS

The next step will be to take tenants to court for possession orders, which bailiffs will attempt to enforce. The GLC may obtain these orders in spite of moves by the United Tenants' Action Committee to challenge the legality of the increases on technical grounds.

But the legal case, which may be heard in the autumn, is seen as only a secondary weapon by the tenants. UTAC has organised defence squads to maintain barricades where necessary and confidently declares that not one tenant will be evicted.

Other tenants' organisations have been forced to accept this policy and join an anti-eviction co-ordinating committee.

The most significant move is the increasing promises of industrial support and the recognition that the fight involves the whole of London's working class.

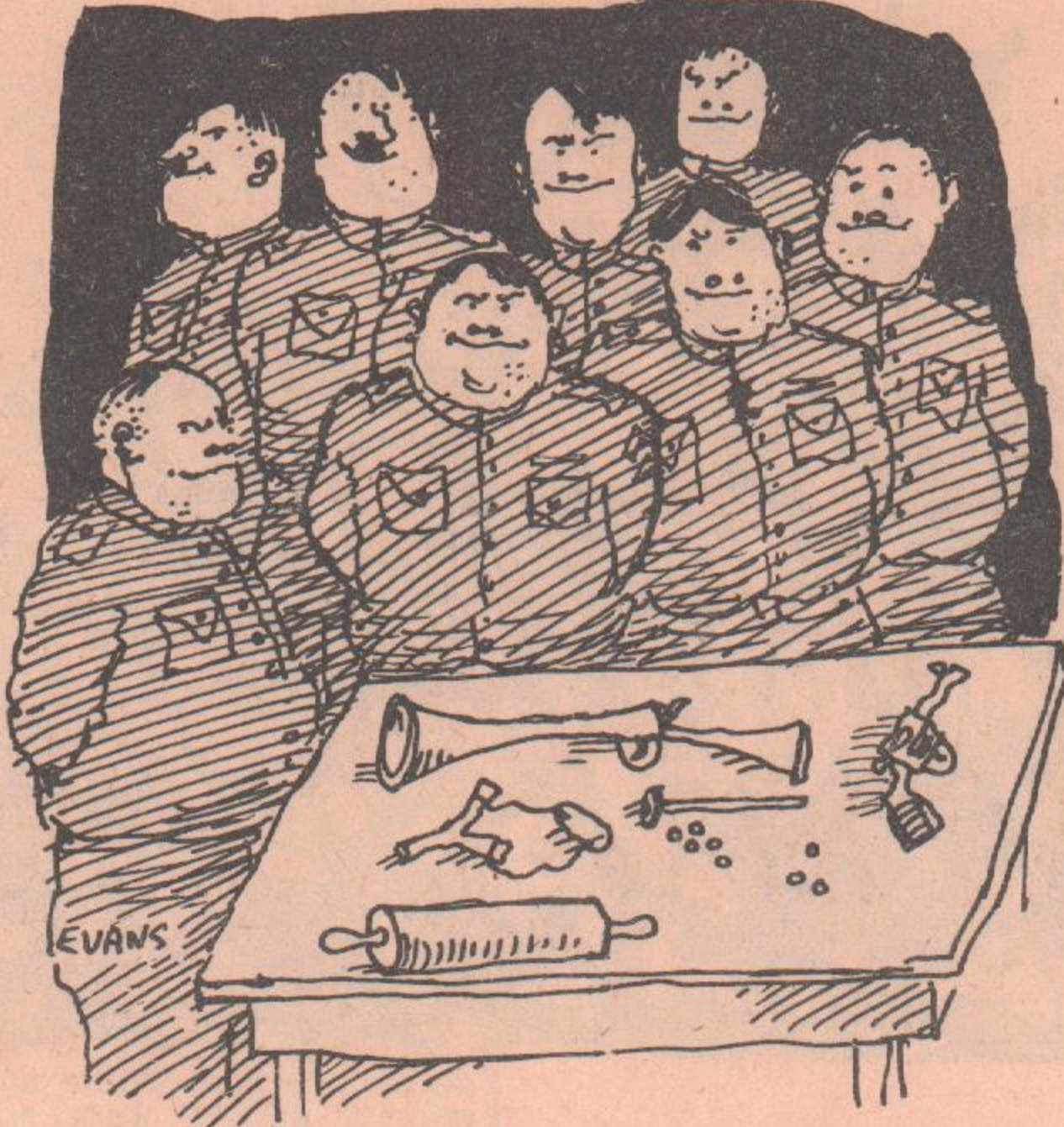
## STRIKES

At official and unofficial union level, dockers, postmen, printers, engineers and market porters have promised support, including strike action.

A lot could still happen to prevent a battle on the streets, but the tenants are prepared for one if it comes. They distrust 'politics' because politicians have always failed them in the past, but they are quite clear who the enemy is — the system by which housing depends on the money market.

Socialists have a duty to enlist the support of other tenants and industrial workers to ensure the maximum backing for the East Enders in their fight to stop the moneylenders, Tory council and Labour government from taking a further slice from their wage packets.

\* If you want to help, contact: UTAC, Friends' House, Bamel Grove, London E2.



THE HANDING-IN OF ARMS BY 'B' SPECIALS IS SAID TO BE PROGRESSING "SLOWLY"....

## Steel men triumph but face productivity

Les Pick

**PORT TALBOT:** Blastfurnacemen at the Steel Company of Wales returned to work this week after their magnificent victory which won them a £1 a week increase after nearly two months on strike.

Only 200 labourers were involved in the pay dispute but they defeated the management because of solidarity action by 1200 men who stopped work without strike pay.

The men's victory has been a slap in the teeth for the management, who refused to pay the nationally agreed increase, for the TUC, acting as the bosses' trouble-shooter and the Blastfurnacemen's Union, which refused to back its members and has now been torn wide open by the demand for the election of all its officials.

But the report of the official enquiry into the dispute is spiked with bias. It whitewashes the management and raps the strikers on the knuckles.

It is the strike which has been responsible for the loss of output and earnings. The responsibility for the strike rests upon the strikers and their leaders... it is not at all possible for us to condone their actions.

The 'loss of output' caused, for example, by closing the No 5 furnace was not at all the fault of the strike. It had to go out because it was being repaired.

## DISPUTE

The new Basic Oxygen Plant stayed unopened not because of the strike but because of another manning dispute. And as for the responsibility for the strike resting with the men, if the steel bosses can pay the rise now, why not eight weeks ago?

Here lies a major hidden cause of the whole dispute—the fact that the bosses wanted to smash the solidarity of the blastfurnacemen in order to ram the Green Book on productivity down their throats. Here, too, is to be found the real sting of the report, not only in its unfair blaming of the strikers but in its insistence that the pay rise must be accompanied by productivity negotiations.

This means the blastfurnacemen must sign the Green Book, something which they, along with the TGWU and the AUBTW have so far refused to do.

The Green Book certainly

makes sick reading for the workers at Port Talbot.

It uses the vocabulary of double-talk familiar to workers in many industries who have had 'productivity' deals foisted on them. 'Reducing overmanning' means massive unemployment — 5200 will be sacked in Port Talbot by 1971.

'Mobility of labour' means complete loss of security in the men's jobs, 'time and motion study' equals speed-up of the job, and the removal of 'restrictive practices' means abolishing the workers' last-defence methods.

Let the men ask the management to open the books, to show what share of savings from the productivity deal they will pass on to the men. It's the workers who will be making the sacrifices.

The fight at Port Talbot is not over. The blastfurnacemen stood up for themselves against the boss and TUC alliance and now they will continue to fight for real democracy within their union and to tear up the Green Book

## CZECH FIGHT

from page one

limited general strike or an armed insurrection.

Over the months, popular opposition to the Russians has grown. In November, a sit-down strike in the universities received massive support from workers' organisations. The death of Jan Palach similarly produced widespread demonstrations, as did the defeat of the Russian team in an ice-hockey match in April.

While high-ups in Czech society were prepared to compromise with the Russians, it became increasingly clear that the mass of workers were not. Towards the end of last year the trade unions began to show their independence of the government. More recently, the rank and file in the factories have begun to assert their independence of the trade union bureaucrats.

The Dubceks and Svobodas, frightened of being overwhelmed by a movement from below that they could not control, have hastened to the same side as the Russians. They give willing support to the government of Husak, which used Czech police and troops against demonstrators while preparing economic measures that will cut workers' living standards.

The national struggle of the Czechs and Slovaks for independence from Russian imperialism becomes more and more identical with the class struggle of the workers for control over their own lives. It is this that frightens bureaucrats of all varieties both inside and outside Czechoslovakia.

## JIB threat to Scottish sparks

**THE NOTORIOUS** Joint Industry Board agreement that caused widespread opposition when it was introduced to English and Welsh electricians in 1967 now looks like being inflicted on Scottish sparks as well.

After months of negotiations, the Scottish Electrical Contractors' Association has finally seen the obvious advantages to the employers of such a scheme and has agreed with the Electricians Union to form a Scottish JIB in September.

The agreement will allow electricians to be graded with different wage rates and will include an employment — or possibly unemployment — pool and fines of up to £100 for unofficial strikers.

## New LSE crackdown on student Left

John Simmons

LSE lecturer Robin Blackburn, who supported students when they dismantled sit-in control gates in January, has been finally sacked by London University.

An 'independent' tribunal set up by Vice-Chancellor sir Douglas Logan, who believes all student protesters should be expelled, has confirmed the sentence. It argues that one who 'believes in violence' should not be in authority over 'the young'.

This is a political sacking, designed to warn every student or lecturer prepared to oppose the authorities. It is one of a series of incidents at LSE this summer: sackings of lecturers, suspensions of students, banning of a Socialist Society meeting (the Living School), and denial of the Student Union's right to decide the use of its own premises.

In addition, the LSE authorities are foisting on students a new code of discipline which will effectively outlaw all militant action.

This incorporates fraudulent student 'participation': five students out of 12 on a rules committee, to be elected not by the Students' Union but by a postal ballot by the administration, and two out of seven on a Board of Discipline, chosen from a disciplinary panel made up by random selection.

It is clear the LSE authorities want to straitjacket the students and the governors' actions may well be a model for other hard-line administrations. The LSE moves may be endorsed by the Parliamentary Select Committee which will report on student unrest in September.

The committee will also have considered other proposals to strengthen legal sanctions against student militants, to tighten controls on students' unions, and to modify the basis of financial support to students.

## LITTLE WORD THAT LABOUR NEVER MENTIONS

'THE WHOLE EMPHASIS in our economy today is a concentration on productivity, efficiency and industrial output.'

With these bold words, the Labour Party's planners set out to write Labour's Economic Strategy, part of their Into the Seventies series.

Unfortunately, the writers get into some difficulty in trying to explain how they propose to overcome the problems created by their streamlined economy of the future.

On the question of nationalisation, for example, the document does not even bother to explain its step backwards from Clause 4 of the party constitution which speaks of taking over the 'commanding heights' of the economy.

Talking of the difficulties created by the emergence of huge industrial corporations, the document says: 'Traditionally the Labour Party has seen these problems of the distribution of industrial power in society in terms of achieving an increasing measure of social control, whether in the form of nationalisation or some form of co-operative ownership. But we are confronted with a new industrial power structure.'

## Take fright

In the face of these vast multi-national industrial giants the authors of the document take fright. Bold cries of nationalisation are replaced by weak whimpers about 'consultation'.

The document warns on the recent spate of mergers that 'in most cases the Labour rationalisation plans which follow have still to be formulated and implemented'. But all that is needed, apparently, is consultation with those affected and a 'Code of Conduct' to ensure that sackings are done in a respectable manner.

The report states proudly that 'a deliberate and sustained attack on existing inequality has in fact been underway since Labour came to power.'

But it concedes that 'the overall picture however for both income and wealth, remains one of stark inequality.'

And the answer it comes up with is a wealth and gift tax. In case that might be thought too dangerously radical, the document points out that a tax of this kind is successfully levied in the whole of Scandinavia, Germany, Luxembourg, Holland and Switzerland.

But the authors of the document do deserve a pat on the back for honesty. In all the 80 pages of sparkling statistics and brave plans for the future, the word socialism is not mentioned once.

The struggle of students and staff at LSE against the regime must be the spearhead in the autumn of a fight-back against any national measures proposed to parliament. The fight is of major significance not just to socialists but to all who work in higher education.

A major reorganisation of higher education is in the air, with proposals for three 15-week terms per year under serious discussion by government and vice-chancellors.

The aim is obviously 'expansion on the cheap', at the expense of already meagre educational standards, and the interests of students and lecturers. The fight against such measures will be more difficult if the political rights of students and employees are not defended now.

IS students' conference to discuss campaigns in new year, Friday Sept 5, 10 - 6, 6 Cottons Gardens London E2 RSSF meeting, Sept 13-14 Keele University. Details: IS Student Committee, 6 Cottons Gardens.