

Socialist Worker

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

Rank and file must demand end to talks with Tories

NO RETREAT OVER PAY!

WHEN The Times—the 'top people's newspaper'—speaks excitedly of a 'promising new phase in industrial co-operation' it is a safe bet that something nasty is being cooked up for the working class.

Last week, 16 members of the TUC hurried to Downing Street for top-level talks with Heath and his ministers on how they could jointly tackle Britain's economic problems. The discussions were described as friendly, the whisky flowed in generous measure and the understanding was reached that government and unions would attempt in unison to sort out unemployment, inflation and low growth after next Tuesday's Budget.

Present at the talks were TUC general secretary Vic Feather and other leading opponents of militant trade union action, including George Smith, Alfred Allen and Jack Peel.

Joining them in the general back-slapping and boozing were Messrs Scanlon and Jones, leaders of the giant engineering and transport unions, who claim to be tough, uncompromising opponents of the Tories and any notion of an 'incomes policy'.

UNCOMPROMISING

This happy get-together is one of the most ominous developments since the Tories returned to office in June 1970. In particular, it marks a clear attempt by the leaders of the TUC—both right and left—to undermine the magnificent breakthrough by the miners on the wages front.

The miners' uncompromising determination to beat a government responsible for a million-plus unemployment, soaring prices and rents and a wholesale attack on working-class families' living standards showed the way forward for the entire trade union movement.

In place of pussyfooting in the corridors of power, an all-out, united fight by the trade union leaders could bring this big businessmen's government to its knees and force it from office. The rank and file are willing to fight—the massive solidarity action for the miners showed that.

And that is what frightens the TUC tops. They are terrified of organising a real showdown that would disrupt their friendly relations with industrialists and cabinet ministers.

They refused to organise any meaningful action to back the miners in their

SW political correspondent

crucial battle. And now they are straining at the leash to help the Tories hold back other sections of the workers ready to fight.

Next week's Budget may offer a few crumbs. All manner of charlatans and frauds—from Roy Jenkins rightwards—have suddenly latched on to the need to help 'the poor'. Chancellor Barber is being prompted to look into this problem next Tuesday.

Why this sudden concern? After all, as the cynical Tories have said for a century, 'the poor are always with us.'

The answer is that the miners' success has badly shaken the Tories. If they had stuck out for total victory, then Heath and co might have fallen.

And so we get a new strategy: pennies for the poor, whisky for the union bureaucrats and, when the dust has settled, a government-TUC agreement to 'encourage growth'. Behind that empty phrase lie all the well-known dangers of productivity bargaining, restraining wages and halting strikes.

This miserable, cowardly retreat must be stopped. The rank and file of the trade unions have the power to do it.

In every trade union, but especially in Scanlon's AUEW and Jones' TGWU, the call must go out for an end to any talks with the Tories. The working class have the power, the numbers and a growing

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Plymouth strikers get £550 booster

THE 92-week-long strike at Fine Tubes factory in Plymouth received a great morale and financial booster on Sunday when a benefit concert raised £550 for the strikers' funds. Organised by the International Socialists, the concert in Camden Town Hall was attended by a capacity audience of more than 1000. The artists who gave their services free included Alex Glasgow, Jake Thackray, East of Eden, The Critics Group, Bobby Campbell, Gordon McCulloch and Trevor Hyett and the David Cliffe Amalgam. Picture shows Bernadette Devlin, MP, who compered the concert, IS treasurer Jim Nichol and Fine Tubes strike committee spokesman Frank Clark, who thanked the audience for their collection. More pictures: page 4.

Anti-Internment League

**Mobilise
on 26 March**

Withdraw British Troops from Ireland
Release the Internees
March from five districts
Clapham Common, 1.30
Hammersmith Broadway, 1.00
Tower Hill, 2.30
Archway, 1.30
Crown, Cricklewood, 1.00
All March to Trafalgar Square

POVERTY AND WEALTH: THE FACTS — pps 6&7

WORLD NEWS

Sudan shifts to the right

by Nimule Kareima

THE CIVIL WAR in the Sudan, which has dragged on for the past 17 years, has come to an end. After negotiations between the Sudanese government and the South Sudan Liberation Movement, there has been a cease-fire.

The proposed settlement will give the South Sudan a regional government with control of police, education and economic development, and southern representatives will sit in a national parliament controlling foreign affairs and defence.

The southern guerrillas, who have faced vicious repression from a series of Sudanese governments, will be merged with the Sudanese armed forces.

Why has Sudanese leader General Nimeiry accepted this peace? Certainly not on humanitarian grounds or from a belief in the right of self-determination.

Nimeiry came to power after a military coup in 1969. Soon after the coup he told a French journalist: 'We want to make the new democratic republic a beacon of socialism on our continent, just as Castro's Cuba has become in Latin America.'

The Sudan is a poor country, and depends largely on cotton exports. Nimeiry accepted technical aid from Russia.

From early 1970 he came increasingly into conflict with the Sudanese Communist Party, which had a strong trade union base and is one of the biggest in Africa.

Last summer a military coup against Nimeiry was overthrown after three days. This gave Nimeiry the excuse to try to smash the Communist Party. Party and union leaders were executed and many militants imprisoned. There are still at least 1500 political prisoners in the Sudan.

But the Communist Party was not crushed. It remains active and even more hostile to Nimeiry, although Russia made only polite criticisms of Nimeiry's butchery and did not withdraw the 2000 technical advisers in the Sudan.

'Eliminate'

After the coup Nimeiry made an effort to build support in the countryside, and therefore stressed anti-communism and the Muslim religion. His declared aim is 'to eliminate for all time the last trace of the Communists from Sudanese soil'.

But he also needed to end the war in the south, which was an economic drain and a source of political instability. The Sudanese Army has been doubled in size during the past three years to deal with this struggle.

Nimeiry has had political support from China as well as 80 million dollars aid. But China is unlikely to give the Sudan all the aid it needs.

The agreement with the southern liberation movement will almost certainly mean an end to possible federation with Egypt, Syria and Libya. The recent resignation of the pro-Egyptian Vice-President Abbas is evidence of a move by Nimeiry towards Western imperialism.

Already Oxfam, Christian Aid and many other Western agencies are getting ready to move into the southern Sudan.

Nimeiry's road can bring neither independence nor development to the Sudan. Only when the Sudanese working class breaks with the manoeuvres of the Communist Party and organises itself to fight imperialism and its own rulers will there be real hope for the Sudan.

WHAT NOW FOR THE FRENCH LEFT?

by Ian Birchall

THE EVENTS following the murder of the Maoist Rene-Pierre Overney by an armed security guard at the Renault factory have clearly shown both the enormous potential and the deep weaknesses of the French left.

The crowd at Overney's funeral was at least 100,000—some estimates put it at more than 200,000. This is remarkable not merely because it was the biggest demonstration since May 1968, but because it was organised not only without the support of the Communist Party, but against its positive opposition.

The role of the French Communist Party has been quite scandalous throughout the whole affair. It has made a token criticism of Renault's armed guards, but its whole attack has been on the leftists.

Worse still, the Party has not merely criticised the tactics of the leftists, which might be legitimate, but has openly attempted to label them as agents of the right.

TRADITIONS

The whole operation represents a return to the worst traditions of Stalinism, with its accusations of fascism and treachery directed at any political opponent.

Thus, on the evening after Overney was killed, the Renault branch of the CGT (the union controlled by the Communist Party) issued a statement including the following:

'A serious provocation has just taken place. The management, the government and their Maoist accomplices must take full responsibility. Thus for more than two years leftist groups have been used outside the factory to create an unhealthy atmosphere, with the aim of slowing down the struggle for our demands and of discrediting nationalisation.'

'Therefore on various occasions the CGT at Renault has denounced this collaboration of leftists and management. Fascist toughs, under Maoist labels, have been specially employed and carried out a series of



Marchers carry flags at Overney's funeral

provocations at the company.'

The following Tuesday, after the first demonstration of protest, the Communist Party paper L'Humanite commented:

'The self-styled 'revolutionaries' have carried out an anti-Communist demonstration. One which the government expected of them. One which corresponds to the true nature of their groups. One which explains why they exist and why the press and radio credit them with an importance they don't really have.'

SLANDERS

Why does the Communist Party stoop to such implausible slanders? Even the corrupt careerists of the French Socialist Party put on a better display of concern at the practices of the Renault management.

The answer lies in next year's parliamentary elections. The Party is aiming for an electoral agreement with the Socialist Party and other 'progressive' parties.

Such an alliance, on present trends,

could win the election. For this the Party is willing to sacrifice everything.

For in order to prove themselves worthy to re-enter the mainstream of French politics, from which they have been excluded since the beginning of the Cold War 25 years' ago, they must prove they are 'respectable'.

The Socialists, on the other hand, are eminently 'respectable'. What they need is support from militants. They can afford a few crocodile tears for Overney.

Overney's funeral showed that the leftists are capable, without and against the Communist Party, of organising a massive turnout of young militants. The revolutionary left has not declined since May 1968. It has indeed grown stronger.

Yet the past two weeks have also shown that the weaknesses that were present in May 1968 are still there.

Too many revolutionaries still believe it is possible to by-pass the real work of developing working-class consciousness. They think that striking gestures or acts of courage are enough.

But the tragedy of Overney's death is that while it mobilised a huge response on the streets of Paris it did not provoke the workers inside the factory to take decisive action against the management and its reign of terror.

The incident during which Overney was killed was just one among many where Maoists from outside tried to enter the factory to carry out agitation. A correspondent of Lutte Ouvriere inside Renault describes the reaction to one such invasion by a delegation including writer Jean-Paul Sartre:

'However spectacular it may have been, this raid into Renault left nothing behind, and could hardly have done so. Half-interested, half-amused, the workers consider this kind of action as spectators, not wanting in any case to be associated with the Maoists for fear of getting the sack.'

EXCUSE

The kidnapping of Nogrette, a Renault manager, was just another sign of the same attitude. Nogrette was released after two days. Little was achieved except that the police were given a good excuse for searching the homes of many left-wingers in Paris.

In fact the Nogrette kidnapping helped to draw the line between the gimmick-chasers and the serious revolutionary left.

A joint statement was issued by seven left-wing organisations (the PSU, Lutte Ouvriere and other Trotskyist groups) criticising the kidnapping as 'an action contrary to the united mass movement launched at the time of Pierre Overney's funeral, which enables the middle class to step up its policy of repression, and enables the Communist Party leadership to try to justify its methods of exclusion and splitting.'

India's forgotten war

by Norah Carlin

EVERYONE knows about the Indian Army's liberation of Bangladesh from the torturing and massacring troops of West Pakistan. The role of that same army in Nagaland, an area to the north east of Bangladesh, is not so well-known.

In Nagaland it is the Indian Army which is doing the torturing and massacring.

The Nagas are a people of about one million, living in a style not far from primitive communism. Their country was never conquered by Indians, but became part of the British Empire in the 19th century, and was annexed to an Indian province.

In 1948, when India was partitioned, the various states were given the so-called choice of joining India or Pakistan or remaining independent. The Nagas (like Kashmir, Nepal and Bhutan) wished to remain free.

Gandhi made fine-sounding speeches, promising them freedom, but Nagaland remained a part of India, and the Indian Army has carried on a relentless struggle against the underground

Naga Federal Army, which still goes on despite the cease fire of 1964.

Last summer the Indian Army carried out a series of atrocities which strongly resemble colonial wars elsewhere, such as in Malaya and Vietnam.

The guerrillas are accused of an ambush or attack, and this is made the excuse for harrassing villagers in the surrounding area—torturing, raping, looting, and preventing the villagers from transplanting their rice crop, so next season they starve or are forced to depend on Indian food handouts. These events were reported only in the local press.

India's war in Nagaland shows the readiness of the army to use imperialist methods against a less developed people. It also shows the Indian government's determination to dominate the sub-continent.

There can be no free areas, no self-determination for the peoples of India—not for the Nagas, nor, in reality, for the people of Bangladesh—while the Indian state remains tied to world imperialism.

IN ITALY not even children are spared the attacks of repression.

A few weeks' ago the children's department of a big hospital in Southern Italy came under attack as police and special troops tried to break up a picket line of hospital workers at the gates. They had been called by the hospital director (a big Christian Democrat magnate) in response to a strike over a wage claim.

In the clash CS gas was fired and several children were injured. Others, still in need of medical treatment, were taken away by their parents. Premature babies had to be removed from the incubators and one died.

AN AMERICAN ex-serviceman returning from Vietnam got a special welcome ceremony at Oakland Army Terminal. He was the 1,750,000th serviceman to come home from Vietnam since 1961. (The 50,000 dead are not included in the count).

The figure 1,750,000 was chosen because it is hoped that with the present run-down of the war there will not be a two millionth home-comer to welcome.

It is easier to provide ceremonies for ex-servicemen than to find jobs for them. In Detroit last summer nearly 18 per cent of Vietnam veterans (and nearly 30 per cent of black veterans) were unemployed.

Doubtless worried by the presence of so many combat-trained men with time on their hands, Detroit businessmen launched a 'Jobs for Veterans' programme, and about a third of the unemployed were found jobs. But in November and December many factories had lay-offs, and the newly-employed veterans were soon unemployed again.

GREEK musician Mikis Theodorakis, composer of Zorba's Dance, has announced his resignation from the Greek Communist Party. Theodorakis, who said he hoped a new left-wing movement would be created

in Greece, declared that he was still a Marxist-Leninist. But, he said, Communism could not be separated from 'what has happened in Russia, Eastern Europe and People's China... as far as I'm concerned, I'm not satisfied with what has happened.'

BRIEFING

ECONOMIC problems in Sweden are producing a wave of discontent. Unemployment has been rising, and is approaching five per cent (a high figure by Swedish standards). Taxation levels are getting higher, and above all inflation is causing a

serious cut in living standards.

Between January 1970 and January 1972 food prices rose by 22 per cent—much more than wage increases. In Sweden Value Added Tax is applied to food and this has not helped the situation.

In mid February a housewife from Skarholmen, a suburb of Stockholm, made a brief television appearance in which she called for a shoppers' boycott of milk and beef.

A 'Stockholm Committee against rising prices' was set up, and on Saturday 26 February 6000 people demonstrated in Stockholm. The boycott began to bite rapidly; milk sales fell by six per cent in Stockholm and by 35 per cent in Skarholmen. One chain of stores has already decided to cut the price of milk by six per cent.

THE US government has produced figures which show that the average black family earns about the same as the average white

family. The same, that is, if the white family has one adult male only out at work, and the black family has three persons (mother, father and eldest child) all at work.

TWO Spanish shipyard workers were killed on 9 March after violent clashes with the police in El-Ferrol del Caudillo in North West Spain.

The workers had occupied the shipyards after the management had sacked six workers for trade union activity. The management announced the yards would be closed, but more than 200 workers refused to leave.

The next day there was a demonstration of at least 3000 workers. Shopkeepers in the town closed in sympathy.

Street demonstrations are illegal in Spain, but when the police tried to disperse the workers, they fought back with sticks and stones. As well as the two dead at least 100 workers were taken to hospital.

Socialist Worker

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Announcing Labour's featherweight fight

THAT GREAT new political soap opera, the Jenkins Saga, is being launched with enough column inches in the millionaire press to do justice to a world heavyweight contest. Will our hero knock out the ageing champion Wilson? Can he unite the Labour Party? What exciting new policies will he propose?

The policies are as new and exciting as yesterday's college pudding. 'Our only hope is to appeal to the latent idealism of all men and women of goodwill—irrespective of their income brackets, irrespective of their class origins, irrespective in many cases of their political affiliations,' Jenkins said on Saturday. Any leader of the Tory Party over the past half century could subscribe to that.

It must be admitted that Jenkins has at least two of the qualifications needed in a Labour Party leader: a complete lack of shame and a neck of brass. After inflicting this stale garbage on his audience he had the effrontery to add 'We need a new kind of politics'. Of course, Mr Jenkins' 'new politics' are Mr Wilson's old ones in new plastic wrappings.

There is a widespread myth eagerly peddled by Tribune and the Morning Star, that Jenkins represents the right wing of the Labour Party and Wilson, in spite of everything, stands further to the left. The Star on Monday called the Jenkins' speech 'a desperate attempt by the right wing to halt the growing movement to the left in the labour movement'.

It is as well to set the record straight. Jenkins is a right winger all right. So is Harold Wilson. The Labour government's policies of deflation, wage freeze, cuts in welfare services, means testing and In Place of Strife were supported by Jenkins. They were directed by Harold Wilson.

Today there is one serious political difference between Jenkins and Wilson, and one only. Jenkins still advocates entry into the Common Market, as Wilson did when he was in office. Wilson now thinks that there is a vote or two to be won by posing as the enemy of the faceless bureaucrats in Brussels. Jenkins fancies that in the longer term there is more to be gained by masquerading as an 'internationalist'.

On all other questions they are as one. They both talk of 'lack of adequate and sustained growth' in the economy as the source of all our troubles. They both want to run capitalism better than the Tories. And they are both firmly committed to the preservation of the exploitation and inequality that is built into capitalism.

But one useful point was made by Jenkins. 'The pattern in which wage incomes before taxation are distributed has remained unchanged since 1886, the first year for which the Department of Employment has adequate records—in spite of trade unionism, in spite of universal education, in spite of two world wars and in spite of unprecedented technological change'.

An honest man would have added 'and in spite of five Labour governments'. But never mind, the essential point is there. No amount of economic growth, not even enormous growth since 1886, will abolish poverty and social conflict. For that you have to abolish capitalism.

There is indeed a growth of the real left wing in the labour movement, a growth that has little to do with the antics of so-called Labour MPs in the Palace of Westminster. And that is precisely what is worrying both Jenkins and Wilson—and Heath. Jenkins speaks of 'an ominous threat to social peace', about the need 'to prevent social chaos'. He means the threat to the bosses created by the miners' victory, growing militancy and the growth of the revolutionary left. He seeks to persuade 'car workers in my constituency' to stop fighting for better wages and conditions with the grotesque suggestion that this will help 'low paid workers in the public sector'. And this from a member of the government that tried to smash the strike of the seamen.

The fight between Wilson and Jenkins is, to a large extent, an exercise in shadow boxing. It will not make a scrap of difference to the policies of the next Labour government which of these men heads it.

There are those who believe the Labour Party can be 'reformed', can be made to fight for socialism. We disagree. Those Labour Party supporters who entertain the idea will, we believe, discover in practice that we are right. Meanwhile, we support them in any real fight against right wing policies. That does not include any support whatever for the Wilson leadership or any acceptance of Wilson as 'the lesser evil' to Jenkins.

MAUDLING'S VICTORY

MR REGINALD MAUDLING, the Home Secretary, can at last claim one major achievement: Pauline Jones is safely back behind bars. One 'lame duck' has been given the type of harsh treatment that Maudling and his colleagues backed down from inflicting on Rolls-Royce and Upper-Clyde Shipbuilders.

Miss Jones, aged 23, kidnapped a small baby. It was clear to all save Mr Maudling and his hang 'em and flog 'em brigade on the Tory backbenches that a young girl who had suffered a broken love affair and a miscarriage before the kidnapping was in urgent need of all the help and kindness that a modern civilised society could provide. Instead she was locked up in Holloway jail and denied adequate medical attention.

Last week she escaped from an 'open prison' in Yorkshire. She was recaptured and put back behind bars even though it must be abundantly clear to the authorities that her continued incarceration in jail will lead only to a further serious decline in her physical and mental health. The treatment of Miss Jones falls below even the far from sympathetic laws of the 19th century which stressed that a woman in pregnancy could not be charged with murder for killing a baby. Miss Jones in great emotional distress, kidnapped a baby which was returned in good health to its parents. Maudling and his lackeys act as though she had carried out a premeditated crime of violence.

Pauline Jones is one individual. She is not the only one at the receiving end of Tory justice. But the spotlight thrown on to her case serves to underline the essential barbarism and inhumanity of a system of which Mr Maudling, friend of financial swindlers and creator of concentration camps in Ireland, is such a fine and inspiring figurehead.



COTTONS WARMS

Air lift

COST-CONSCIOUS bureaucrats at the BBC may care to have a close look at the financial outlay on this Friday's 'Man Alive' special programme on Northern Ireland. 65 members of the community—both Catholic and Protestant—are being ferried across by special plane for a 55-minute debate on the problems afflicting the Six Counties.

We do not know whether or not the British Army insisted on having a barbed-wire 'no go' area in the centre of the plane, but why go to all the expense of bringing the protagonists to London when there are BBC studios in Belfast?

According to Man Alive editor Desmond Wilcox, he needs four cameras to record the discussion and there are only two available in Belfast. So wouldn't it be cheaper to transport two cameras across the Irish Channel than 65 bodies on a return flight?

Or is it not more likely that the choice of venue has been determined by the fact that the Orange boss of the BBC in Northern Ireland, Mr Waldo Maguire, has not been too happy at the thought of a major programme involving implacable opponents of the Stormont police state?

Speak up, fearless and forthright Desmond.



Stonehouse: heading for Tsardom

Redhouse: 'Sponsorship is very much the wrong word.' He declined to say what the real word should be.

Purle dumping

IT IS only a matter of months since the entire business press was talking in glowing terms about Purle Bros, the most forward looking and efficient waste disposal firm in the world.

At the time, go-ahead Purle was the subject of a takeover bid by Redland, the building materials giant headed by socially conscious Lord Beeching.

Purle was boosted and became one of the glamour shares on the London Stock Exchange. It had all the attributes—making fat profits, tackling the terrible pollution problem and identifying big business with social progress.

But then the terrible saga of widespread cyanide dumping broke in Britain. In every British newspaper this was put down to small pirate lorry drivers who alone were doing the illegal and highly lucrative drops in the middle of the night.

It now transpires however that systematic fly-tipping was a highly organised operation as far as go-go, socially conscious Purle Bros was concerned.

Mr Peter Newman, a director, convened a meeting to announce a bonus scheme for illegal tipping. While in operation around 10.8 million gallons of the stuff were illegally off-loaded by anti-pollution Purle. The men were offered £25 for every new illegal site they could find.

Purle Bros new laboratory was opened last May by Peter Walker, Minister for the Environment, and old friend. Walker of course made much play of the big business and social progress theme in his speech. This was nearly a year after the illegal tipping was put into operation by the firm.

Buster John

MOST STOMACH-HEAVING piece of financial news last week was that Mr Andrew Scott had resigned from Lonrho, the sanctions-busting firm that has been busily dealing with the

Smith regime, to take up a new position. He is to be full-time director of Imex, a new import-export business that will deal mainly with Africa.

Co-partner in this venture aimed at boosting investment, trade and profit with the unspeakable regimes of Smithy and Johannes Balthazar Vorster, is Mr John Stonehouse, former Minister of Posts and Telecommunications in the late Labour government.

But Stonehouse and Scott are not restricting their activities to Africa alone. In Lima, Stonehouse already has an agent working for him. He is Prince Emanuel Galitzine, one-time member of the Russian royal family.

AGRICULTURAL Minister Jim Prior—the one who looks like a walk-on actor from *The Archers*—gave as one reason for the cut in the price of sugar the hope that it would help promote more competition between sugar firms.

He was clearly thinking of those two cut-throat competitors Tate... and Lyle.

Easy lay

LATEST example of 'socialist emulation' from Yugoslavia comes in the shape (!) of a special 'girlie island' set up by Penthouse magazine, the British version of Playboy, which promotes the ultimate in the degradation of the female form.

Three years ago, the Yugoslavs began importing Penthouse 'to make Western businessmen feel at home'. Not to be outdone, Yugoslav businessmen launched their own girlie magazine. So successful is the trade in female flesh (so far confined to the printed version) that Penthouse has been given official permission to set up a special resort on the island of Krk. It will have two hotels, 1750 beds and a casino.

The island will be banned to Yugoslavs. Penthouse boss Bob Guccione will fly out 'tired' businessmen for holidays on the island, costing as much as £8.10 a day.

Any 'ideological problems'? No, says Guccione, 'The workers' council is a joke. They've agreed to everything we want to do. They're really anxious to learn our business tactics. They bent the rules as much as they could to let us in. The Yugoslavs are really ideological soulmates.'

Guccione will fly out Penthouse Pets to train Yugoslav girls in the skills of their trade. And if Krk is a success he plans to spread the Big Boob Business to Dubrovnik, Belgrade and Zagreb.



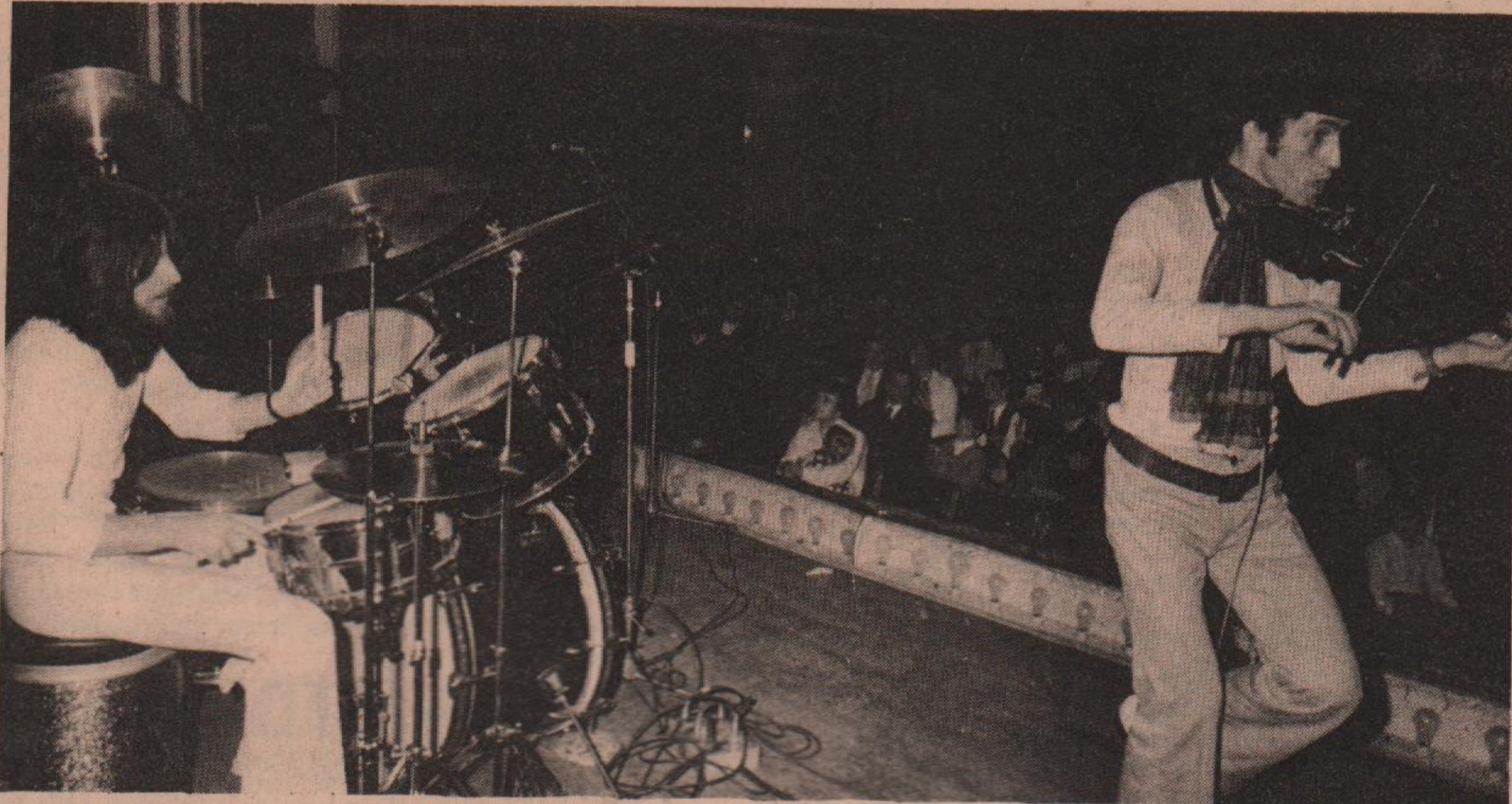
ARTISTS SALUTE FINE TUBES STRIKERS



1 Alex Glasgow



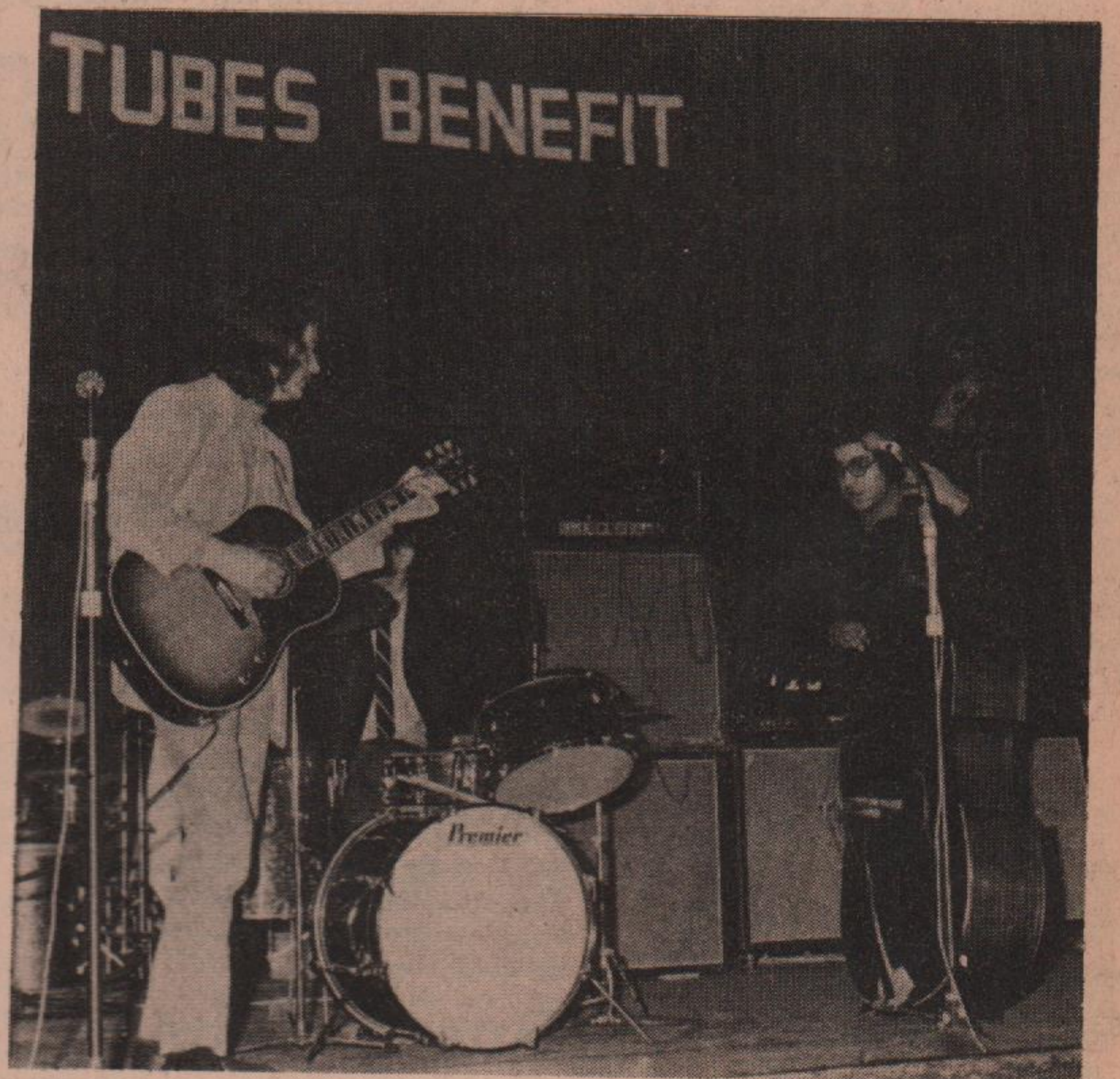
2 Sandra Kerr and John Faulkner of The Critics Group



3 East of Eden



4 Trevor Hyett, Bobby Campbell and Gordon McCulloch



5 David Cliffe Amalgam

Glossy prints of these pictures and the page one picture are available from Jeff Pick, 55 The Wick, Bengoe, Hertford at £1 each including postage. Indicate clearly which prints you require.

A LEADING PIT MILITANT SPEAKS ON THE LESSONS OF THE GREAT STRIKE

'Miners showed a united movement could kick out the Tories...'



JIMMY MILLER, miners' union branch secretary at Kellingley in Yorkshire and a member of the Yorkshire district committee of the Communist Party, had a harsh reply when I asked him if he thought the miners' strike had been won completely.

'All the objectives of the strike were certainly not won,' he said. 'In the first place the strike could have achieved the full demands of the miners—a wage that gave them some dignity and allowed them to live like human beings.'

'As the strike developed, it became clear that other objectives were possible. Collapsing the government was definitely on the cards.'

He attacked the union leaders for giving in to Heath when total victory was in their grasp. 'They should have said: "We're in for the full demands and the only strings we're prepared to attach to any agreement is your resignation".'

What were the most important parts of the settlement?

'We've gone some way towards the full wage at 18,' he said, 'even though it will take two years to fully implement it. We've been fighting for that for more than 40 years.'

He thought the elimination of the bonus was the biggest victory of all. Fear of losing the bonus in the past had restricted the militancy of the miners.

'The lads knew that if they walked out of the pit they were going to lose not that day's wage but another day's wage as well. Now for me, as a revolutionary, it makes it easier for the miner to come out on token stoppages with other workers.'

Ridiculous

THE MAJOR SETBACK, he declared, was the acceptance of a £23 weekly wage for surface workers. 'It's absolutely ridiculous. Many of them, if they work no overtime, will have gained no increase at all. All that will happen will be that they will be saved the indignity of going to FIS (Family Income Supplement) to have their wages made up. That part of the settlement was a bloody sell-out.'

He had been in favour of holding out for the full demands but after discussion with his members it seemed clear that to attempt to fight a rearguard action would have been suicide. The overwhelming majority had made up their minds to accept the settlement and to have attempted to carry on the struggle would have meant breaking up the unity achieved during the strike.

'I had the feeling that if we had continued a rearguard action we would have lost the support of the AUEW people, who had given us tremendous support, because the settlement would appear to them to be honest and fairly reasonable.'

'And the right wing, having emerged with a fairly substantial victory—almost 90 per cent—would have been able to isolate and discredit us. The leadership had the trump cards this time.'

I thought one of the most worrying

BY AUBREY GORDON

aspects of the settlement was the agreement to talk about productivity. Jimmy said that talking about productivity was likely to be the only thing the miners would accept.

Instead of the incentive system of payment by results, he thought there should be a bonus on everything above a certain norm, divided among all the workers in the industry.

'I'm in favour of going over to the system that I've seen in East Germany. The miners were earning sometimes more in bonus payments on the total volume of output than they were actually earning in wages. That's a good system because if the miners are increasing output they should demand a share in the increase.'

Jimmy felt that the Wilberforce report had opened the door to such a system. But if it meant just another productivity deal, with pit-closures and reductions in manpower then he thought the miners would have nothing to do with it.

Why did he think there had been such little official support for the miners from the leaders of other unions?

'I've been trying to understand why men like Hugh Scanlon and Jack Jones were men of straw in this situation. I believe they were not ready to commit their two unions to sacrifices in assisting the miners when other unions were not prepared to even consider it.'

He thought Jones and Scanlon were worried about losing members to the GMWU, but he thought they had completely misread the situation.

Power

'IF THEY HAD MADE the call, all workers would have joined the fight. A great opportunity was lost by the left leaders of these great unions. I'll have to re-evaluate my attitude to Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon.'

Jimmy thought that keeping the deputies out of the pits was an empty gesture. Bringing them out had no effect on compelling Heath to negotiate.

'It was when we stopped the factories and when we stopped the power—that's what made the negotiations possible. If every pit in the country had concentrated all its fire power on the factories and the power stations, the crisis of the blackouts would have come a week earlier.'

What were the lessons of the strike?

'We have to understand that the TUC and the Labour Party are determined that

the attack on the working class will be carried out and that each union will have to fight on its own. They are not going to organise any united resistance to the government's policies and against its wages policy in particular.'

The second lesson, he said, was that a growing grass-roots movement, committed to struggle, had been revealed by the miners' strike. Other workers felt the miners were a 'special case' not just because of their wages but because they had the courage to challenge the government. Workers, students and housewives rallied to their side.

'Mass movements can do what parliamentary parties have no intention of ever doing, nor can they. The weight of a mass movement with working-class unity and solidarity can impose its will on the government. If everybody learnt that then we could change the face of this country very soon.'

Capture

HE STRESSED the need for a united front of the left forces on an agreed limited programme fighting for the defeat of the government. It should also demand the ending of all forms of wages and incomes policy, preventing British entry to the Common Market, a solution of the Irish prob-

lem, a conclusion of the Rhodesia situation to the satisfaction of the black majority and Britain's withdrawal from NATO.

'I think that on a programme of that nature, based on a united front, we could begin to capture the height of power in this country. Unless the left learns to work together, then the ruling class will go on running rings around us.'

He thought the development of the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions had been a step forward in building a united front. The need now was to draw more people into the fight. He had thought for some time that the left needed to build an organisation based upon the limited objectives of the Minority Movement in the 1920s.

'If the miners' strike has not created the understanding then I have no doubt that the fight for the agricultural workers and the AUEW will give rise to the formation of such an organisation very soon.'

Jimmy was confident about the strength of the left in the NUM. 'During the strike the mood was of complete opposition to the government and a totally cynical attitude towards the parliamentary Labour Party. There has been a dramatic swing to

the left among the rank and file.

'This will be reflected, I believe, in the elections for the union's chairman and treasurer this year and in the votes that will be cast at the annual conference. I don't think there is any doubt that this year we will get a new rule saying that all officials will have to come up for five-yearly re-election.'

Mass pressure

'While some of the right wing have come out of the strike with an appearance of militancy and have gained some credit, it was mass pressure from the rank and file that assisted the militants in compelling such a policy. The militants on the executive became the voice of the rank and file.'

'Having won the victory, the rest of the working class will have taken the lesson that when they move they must seek the grass-roots support of all other workers, as we got.'

'The miners must live up to their historical responsibility of coming to the assistance of any group of workers who are in struggle with the government.'

Discussion on the many important points raised by Jimmy Miller is welcomed. Send your comments—not more than 250 words—to Socialist Worker, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

Strike laws are a direct attack on working class

THE new strike laws contained in the Industrial Relations Act are an outright attempt by the ruling class to take the working man's most useful defence against exploitation out of his hands.

But they do not do this directly. There is no interference with the worker's right to strike. The courts are given no power to order anyone to end industrial action and return to work.

The attack is more subtle. The new law says only **AUTHORISED** officials of **REGISTERED** unions may call strikes. If your union is unregistered, if you are a shop steward or official of a registered union but are not 'authorised', if you are just a rank-and-file worker: call a strike and you are an outlaw.

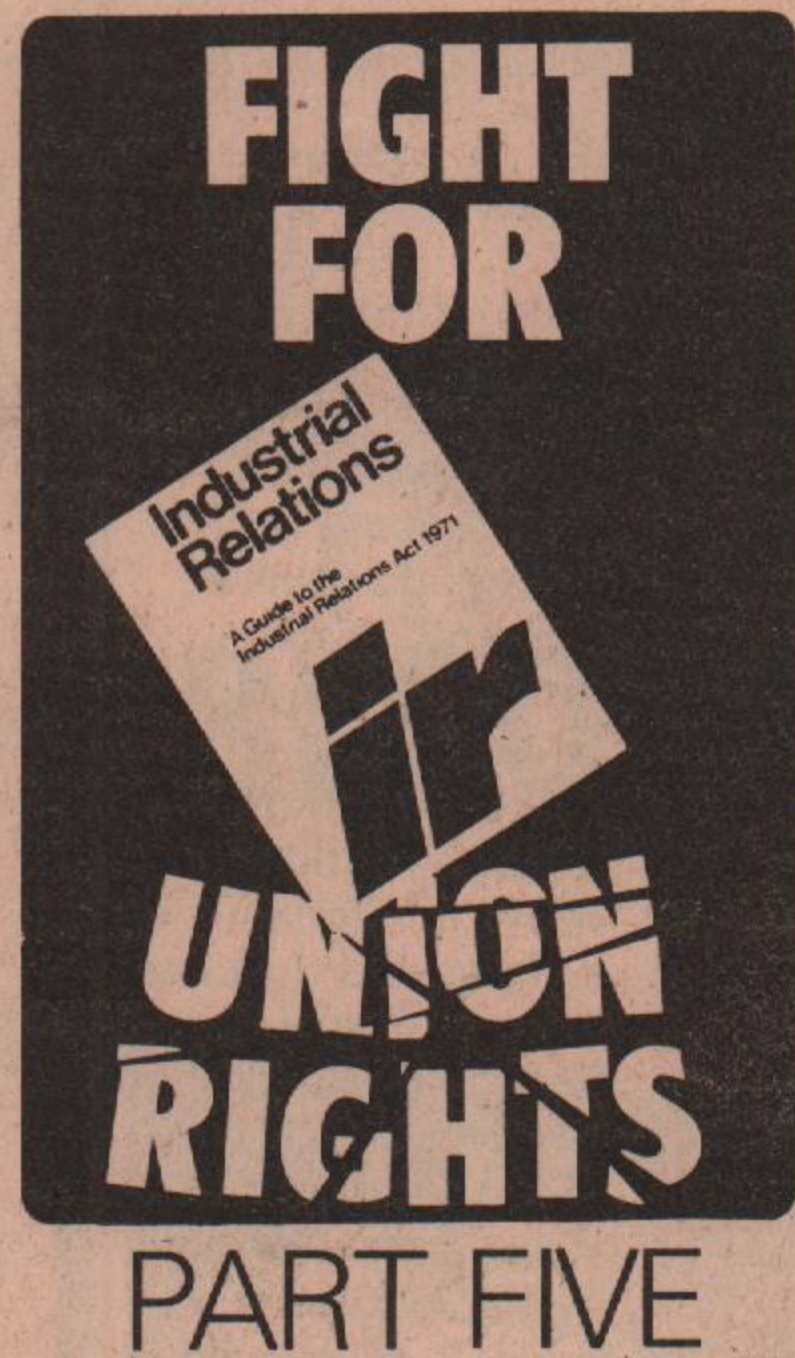
Outlaws

At once you can be sued by the boss for any money he has lost because of breaches of contract by strikers.

Anyone who backs such a strike—by giving a few bob to the strike fund, by supporting it in print—can also be sued.

The strike, or other industrial action, needs to be in breach of contract. This outlaws go-slows and unofficial mass meetings in working hours, for example, and leaves it open to the boss to include a 'no strike' clause in the contract.

The new law also says action is in breach of contract unless 'due notice'—the notice required to end the contract—is given. This at once outlaws the vast majority of local strikes and gives the boss an open chance to give reciprocal



notice of the sack.

Thus the law is a direct attack on working class organisation, and the closer this is to the rank-and-file the more vicious is the attack. The ruling class has set up a register for the organisations of workers, and union rulebooks are to be vetted to see who is to be 'authorised' to call strikes.

Even these chosen few can be out-

lawed. The strikes they call can be declared 'unfair' under other sections of the act. 'Political' strikes such as the 'Kill the Bill' stoppage are included here.

But if union leaders are prosecuted, won't this get massive publicity and public sympathy against the new law?

The Tories have undermined that one from the start. The 'authorised' union official cannot be prosecuted. Action can only be taken against the union itself. So there can be no martyrs to gather public support.

Strangest

But if the union is **NOT** registered, then the officials themselves become liable. And this is what will happen if unions follow TUC policy and do not register.

If these unregistered unions leave their members and stewards to be picked off one by one then the Tory attack will win. But if the union leaders declare such strikes official then they too are liable—and the attack can be taken where the union is strongest.

But this is an attack on the working class and will only be defeated if workers unite to fight it.

Many employers will be reluctant to prosecute for fear their workers will hit back.

When Clarrie O'Shea, leader of a tiny union in Australia, was jailed, a million people came out on strike and an anonymous donor paid his fine. The legal system only works when people accept it. As soon as we ignore it in large numbers it becomes powerless.

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WorkerWallchart

IN THE WAKE of the miners' victory, big business is again talking of the need for a 'planned growth of incomes' and an incomes policy. This would, they claim in their newspapers, put an end to the brutal rough and tumble of the wages jungle, where the strong succeed and the weak go to the wall.

The society in which we live is littered with these myths of fairness, of just rewards, of controlling wage rises and making sure that the poor and needy are not cast aside.

In the 1950s we 'had never had it so good'. In the 1960s we were living in 'the humane society' according to Roy Jenkins, the former Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer. And today this society can survive, according to the Heath formula, only if 'we all pull together.'

In the harsh world behind the myths and the slogans, life is vastly different. In the early days of the Labour government, when the trade union movement did support an Incomes Policy, the poor didn't get any the less poor.

But the rich did get richer. The people who gained were the stock exchange speculators, the owners and rulers of big industry.

They used Wilson and co as a mouthpiece to put over their need for more, for higher rates of profit to encourage more investment.

Wilson and Heath cover up their real intentions with notions of fairness. They have to present the policies that suit a tiny section of society as though they were favourable to all.

When one section of the working class takes action to improve their situation, they are rounded on. The whole battery of politicians and newspapers is unleashed to tell everyone else that they are greedy, a threat to Britain's future.

To put over these and other lies so successfully is an astonishing feat. The truth is somewhat different. Last week we reported that one fifth of the population was living in poverty. Other facts fill out this picture.

Forty two million people in Britain today own less than £500 worth of property each. From the broken gas rings and damp quilt of the old age pensioner to the family man with a car and a house on the never-never, they have one thing in common: Only their ability to work for someone else stands between them and desperation.

CONTRAST

Everything about them is in marked contrast to the rich and powerful who own this society and pretend that all is well.

In 1966 11 per cent of all families lived in houses with broken windows, damp and difficult to heat. Another 8 per cent lived with holes in the roof, rats, rotten flooring or in houses that were never built for long-term residence. Another 1 per cent were in houses that officially 'are in a dangerous state of decay.'

Nothing has been done since 1966 to alter this situation. It has got worse.

Written and researched by LIONEL SIMS and ARTHUR MALONE

Even now the Heath government is introducing its Housing Finance Bill to assist the 'impoverished landlords'. This amazing measure, which will double council rents over the next five years, is presented to the world in the guise of 'fair rents' legislation.

Bad housing goes hand in hand with sub-standard diet. In 1950 the British Medical Association drew up a table of what people needed to eat as the very minimum necessary for a healthy body.

BOOSTED

In 1967, 12 per cent of all families had diets in which calcium was well below that BMA minimum. 20 per cent were below the minimum protein level. Those with low calcium levels were also short on protein.

The response of the Labour and Tory governments to this situation has been to stop free milk for schoolchildren, withdraw milk subsidies to pregnant women and jack up the price of school dinners.

Perhaps the most telling statistics of all in exposing the 'humane society' are those dealing with the numbers of people who are seriously ill and yet receive no treatment. Studying the year 1962, medical scientists discovered that one-fifth of the total population of the UK were suffering from serious physical

or mental disorders. Yet less than half were receiving treatment.

Despite this there has been no crash programme of hospital building. After all there's Concorde to be paid for.

The reality of the situation in 'the humane society' is that some 10 million people go to bed every night in bad houses. They do not eat properly and they are not healthy. Poverty and inequality are increasing.

Over the past year the Tory government has deliberately added to their number. Following Labour's lead, they boosted unemployment to more than one million.

In an attempt to cope with the insane problems of the present system of production, they condemned another 500,000 workers and their dependents to a life of misery and despair. Perhaps they will bring in a bill to establish a 'fair' level of desperation.

REPORT FROM THE SHEFFIELD STAR January 1970

'The old woman's deterioration was such that her condition was desperate. She was found slumped in a broken, urine saturated arm-chair in front of an empty fire-grate. The day was bitterly cold and she had no fuel for the fire and no other means of heating. Nor had she any food. She gazed from blank, uncaring eyes and gave all the appearance of waiting for death to overtake her'.

AN ADVERT IN THE TIMES November 1971

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THAT'S ALL WE GET PRODUCING THE

The 'humane' got lost profits

THE PROFITS OF PUBLIC COMPANIES BETWEEN 1955 AND 1963

NEWSPAPER BOSS Lord Thomson was no lord when he came to this country from Canada. And he had only one million. Now he has many millions.

He hasn't conjured the extra out of thin air. He and his cronies organised other people's ability to work. Those other people created his extra millions.

There is no particular purpose to the Thomson operation. In a biography of the good Lord, Russell Braddon quotes him as saying: 'I buy newspapers to make more money to buy more newspapers, to make more money to buy more newspapers . . . And so on.

The purpose

Lord Thomson cares not one single damn for the humane society, for the plight of the old and the sick. Even if he did, it would make no difference.

He and his kind function in society for one purpose and one alone—to accumulate capital, to move further along the never-ending spiral of investment and reinvestment.

Thomson's life was driven on by one ambition—to become a peer of the realm, to receive recognition from the aristocracy, who really know how to be gentlemen. He bought their newspaper, The Times, and promised to keep it going as a gesture of respect and an entry ticket to their paddock.

Lord Thomson is a good example of the relentless, profit-hungry capitalist, but he is not the nub of British big business. This is centred on the large industrial undertakings, nominally in competition with one another but in reality subject to ever increasing concentration and more and more interlocking directorships.

The power

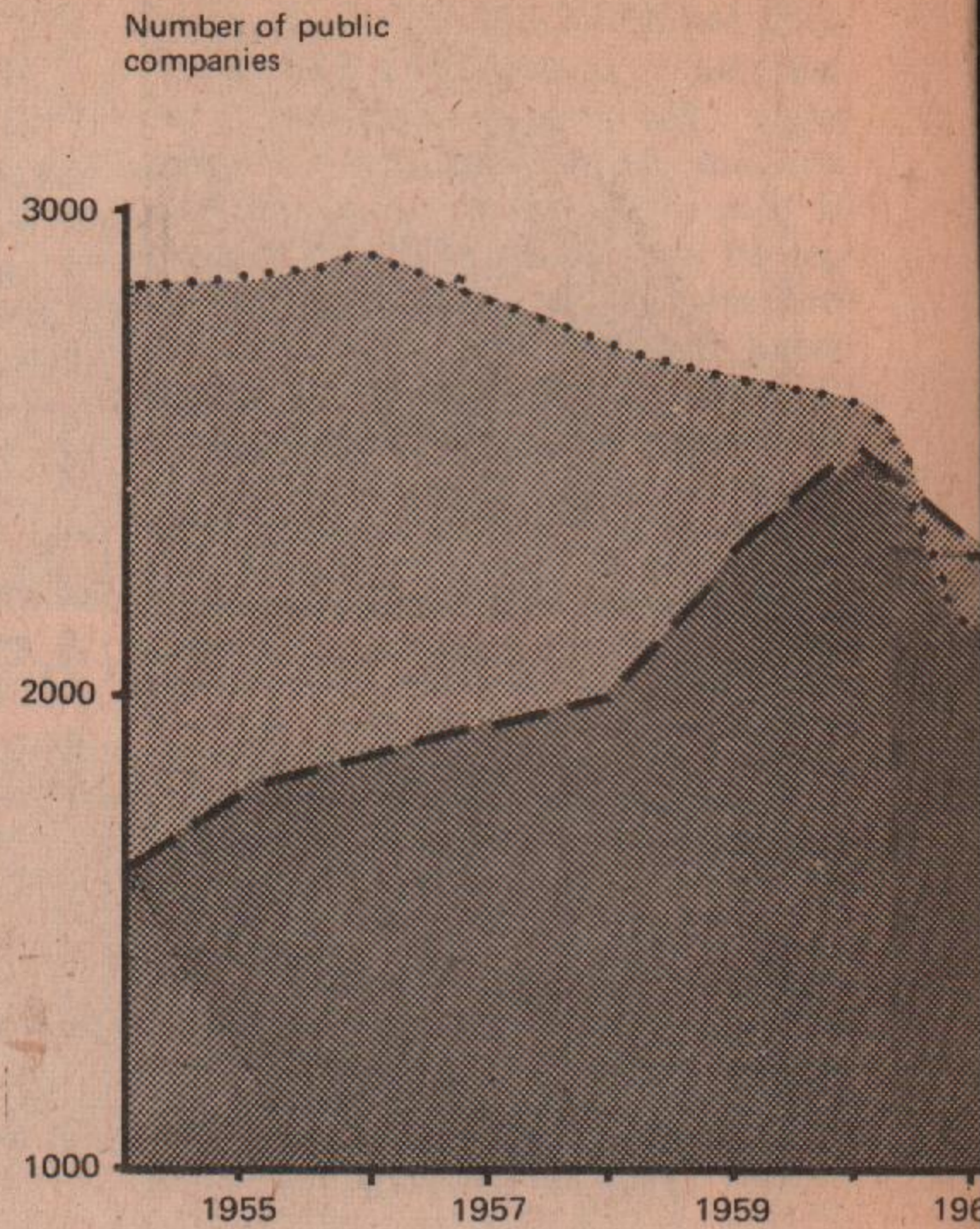
This is how a mere one per cent of the adult population owns more than 80 per cent of the industrial wealth.

Through their ownership and control of the means of production, this group of less than 400,000 people has the power to run a country of more than 55 million. They employ a vast bureaucracy of officials and policemen to assist them in this task.

Through this machine they are able to monopolise the decisions that affect all our lives. They, not parliament, are the power.

Of the chairmen of the 50 biggest companies in Britain, 28 of them went to public schools, 21 went to Oxford or Cambridge.

In all cases their weekly income after tax was greater than the yearly gross earnings of the average worker. This statement takes no account



- The number of public companies has declined by 30 per cent.
- The average profit for each public company in 1963 has increased by 129 per cent.

whatsoever of private fortunes, tax fiddles, expenses, company houses and cars, and countless other little extras.

Their power is stupendous. When Harold Wilson was faced with the currency crisis in 1964, he went to see the Governor of the Bank of England. He records in his memoirs:

'I told him that government expenditure was committed far ahead: schools which were being built, roads which were part way to completion, had been programmed by our Conservative predecessors in 1962-63.

'Was it his view, I asked him, that we should cut them off half finished?' Lord Cromer's answer was yes, and that is exactly what Wilson had to do.

Even where there is competition

and conflict of interest have been devised very real kind solidarity.

A telling example done is the British industry. Early on made agreements not to produce more amount of bulbs e

The

They agreed a certain privately of of such an agreed drive for closer emergence of mor In 1950 the light bulb industry (brandname Ecko cent of the market combination of

SELECTED POLITICAL WRITINGS Rosa Luxemburg

Edited and introduced by Dick Howard

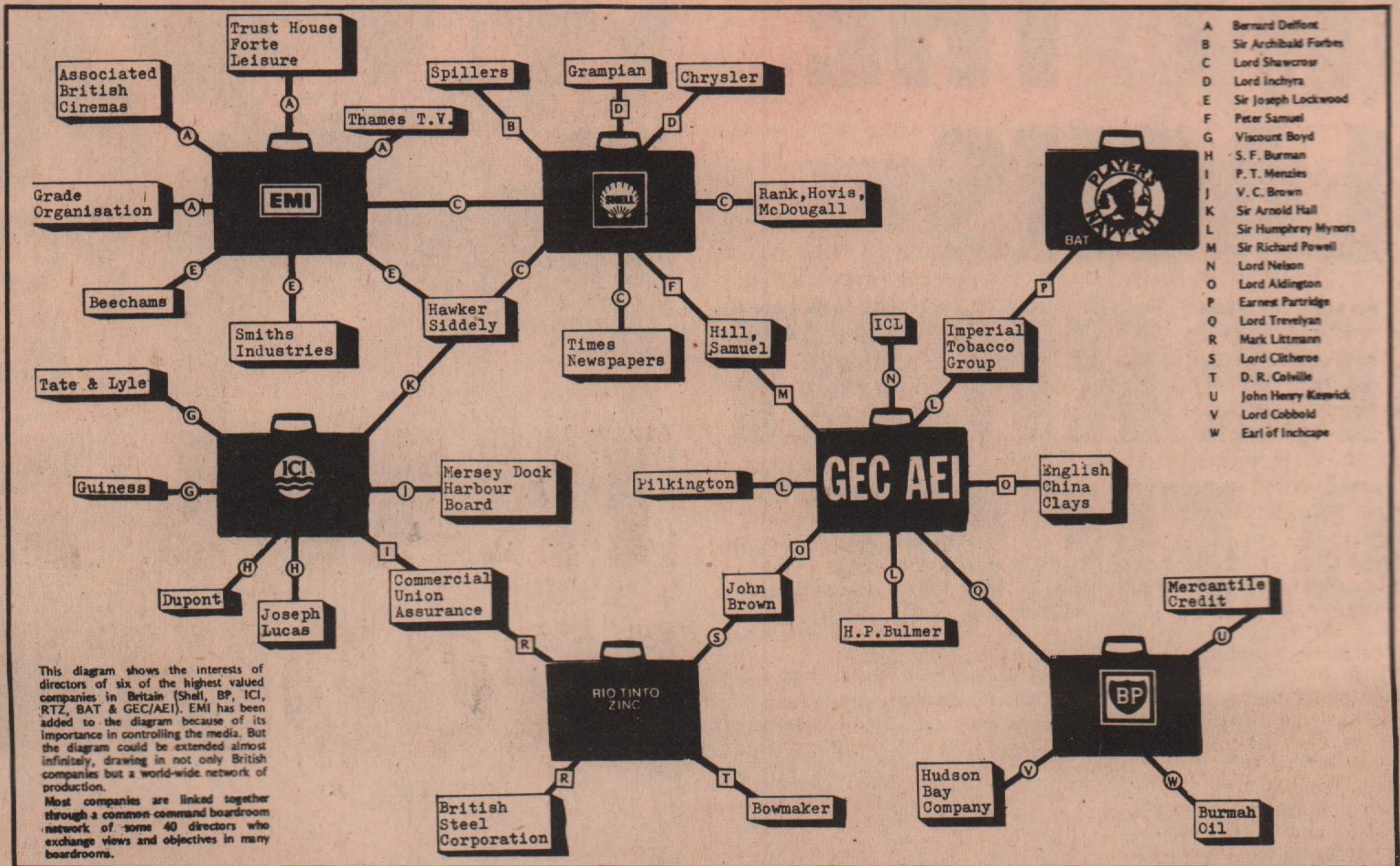
Rosa Luxemburg, revolutionary genius, fighter and thinker, murdered in her native Germany in 1919.

This selection of her writings includes essays on Woman's suffrage and the class struggle, Social Reform or Revolution and The Beginnings of the German Revolution. Edited by Dick Howard. Price £1.80 plus 5p postage.

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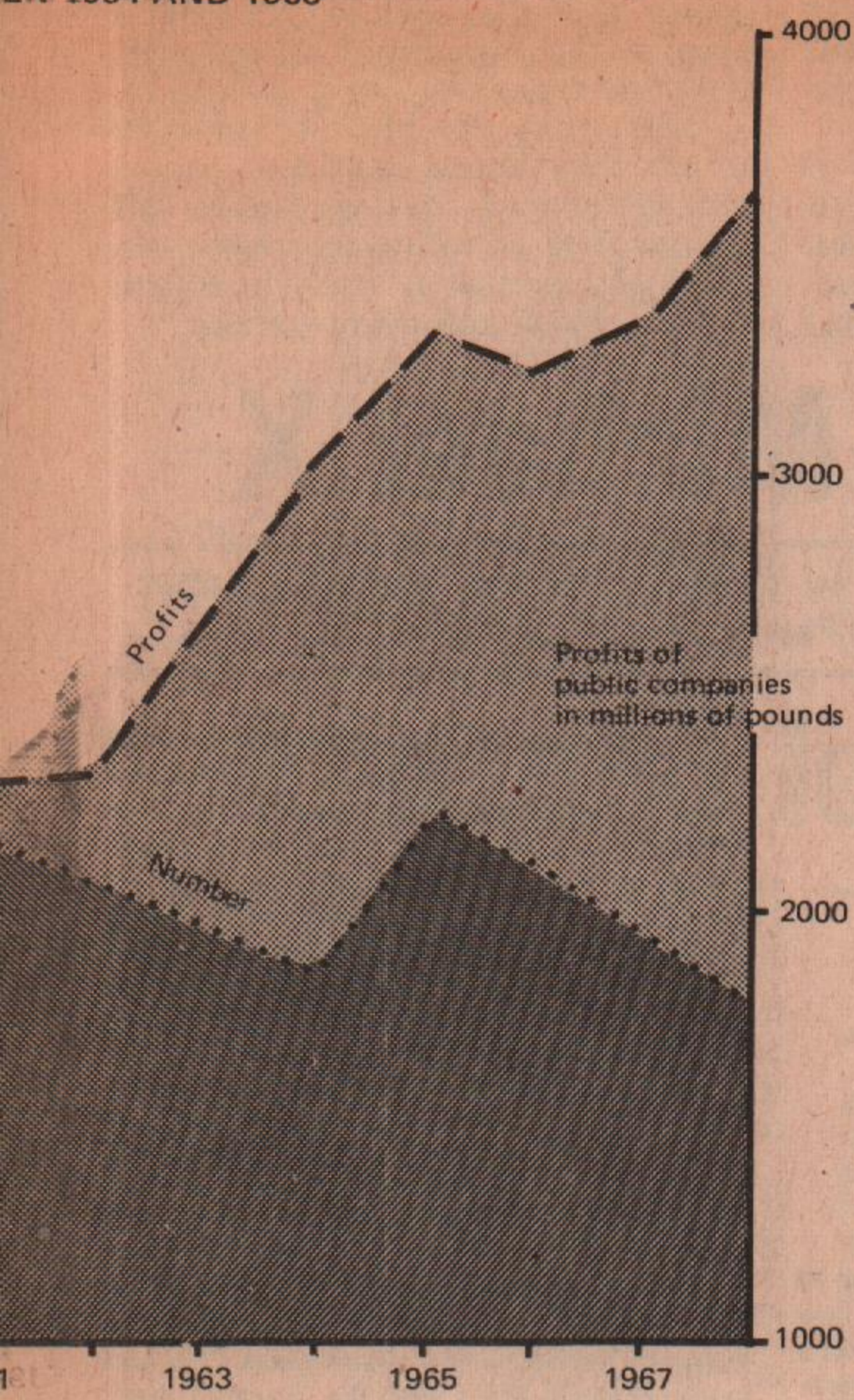
ET FOR WEALTH



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society' t in the jungle

EN 1954 AND 1968



7 per cent, while the profits of these companies has
was £561,400. By 1968 it was £2,029,000.

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AEI and Thorn

Electrical (Mazda) lighting interests into British Lighting Industries held 41 per cent of the market.

Then the 1968/69 merger of GEC (Osram) and AEI, linked with Thorn through the BLI, concentrated 62 per cent of the market under monopoly control.

On top of all that the 1968 Monopolies Commission Report revealed that GEC/AEI and Thorn had a 'price ring' agreement with the one remaining seller, Philips. Under this 'ring', 90 per cent of the market in light bulbs was, and remains, under the joint control of three companies.

The 'ring' is so effective that it has been able to stop the invention of a long-life bulb reaching the ordinary family. This is for sale only to industry.



The 'national cake': then...

THERE IS SOME truth in the famous Macmillan remark 'You've never had it so good'. After the war, the British economy was in a shambles, rotting and lacking in investment.

But the Labour government from 1945-51 launched a programme for revitalising it, re-organising its rotting structure.

Poverty did not disappear however. For the people at the very bottom of society, the old, the chronically sick, the people of the depressed areas, things became worse in many senses. They were denied any access to what they knew was available to others.

But for the majority of the working class, the growth in the amount of wealth being produced meant their standard of living did improve.

IN VAIN

But in terms of their relative share in what was produced in total they were proportionately worse off. In a carefully argued Tribune pamphlet, *Whatever Happened to Your Wages?*, the Labour MP Norman Atkinson has shown that the relative share of wealth going to labour has not changed since the 1930s.

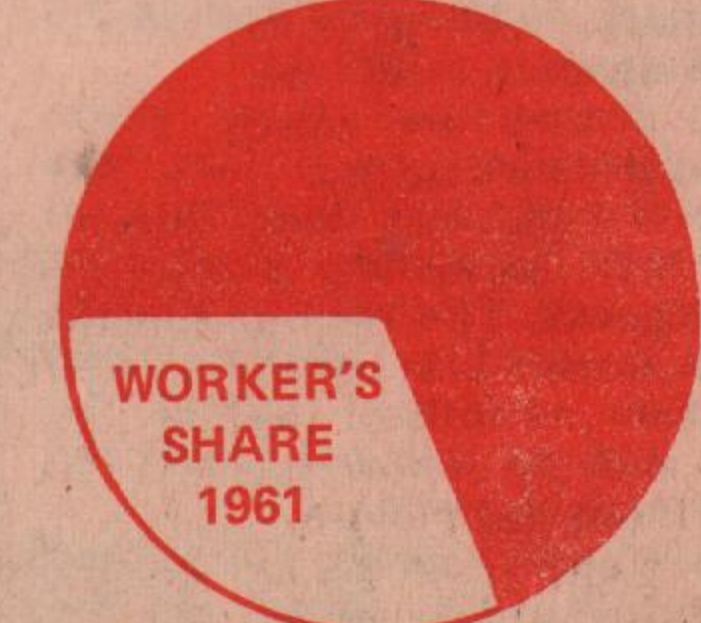
All the constant battles for wages and conditions have been in vain. They mean that the trade union movement has run very hard to stand absolutely still.

According to our own calculations, taking a rather longer period of time, the share of wealth going to the working class has declined significantly. In 1861, the share of the national cake going to labour was a half. One hundred years' later, that share was down to a third.

In 1961 the 14½ million productive workers earned £9081 million after all deductions. Yet they created a national income of £24,139 million. In other words, for every £100 of wages, a surplus value expropriated by the employers of £193 was also created.

This means that for every working hour spent in creating wages for themselves, the work-

NEVER BEEN HAD SO GOOD -AS MACMILLAN ALMOST SAID...



... and now

working class has been magnificent, the stuff that honest history books are made of.

At *Fine Tubes*, in the pits, at *Roberts Arundel*, the *Barbican* and a hundred other places, workers have been prepared to fight the attacks. And in their midst, socialist ideas have begun to flower.

But the official leaders of the movement, the political and trade union operators who are so completely tied to their own prospects within this system of society, have done nothing to lead the movement forward for a real fight.

This is the basic reason why the national income has multiplied four times in the last 100 years and why, at the same time, the relative share of the producers has in fact declined in relative terms.

But there are ways through that problem too. It is in the fight to broaden and deepen the knowledge and fighting ability of the working-class movement, to direct these energies in a political organisation concerned with the overthrow of this twisted system, and the creation of one centred on organising human ability for human need and human freedom.

ing class spent a further two hours creating profits for the boss. Almost unbelievably, the contemporary worker is exploited at twice the rate of his downtrodden Victorian forbears.

Not all workers are actually productive. Those in industry, agriculture, construction and crafts and parts of transport are. But between them and the half million or so who actually own and control society's wealth is a significant section of people doing quite unnecessary labour.

A traffic warden works for example. But it is not the activity of working alone that makes one productive. A traffic warden in common with all types of wardens—the foreman to the policeman and the high court judge—do not produce anything useful. They serve one function only, reinforcing the power and authority of the rich half million who own Britain.

The difference between the total wage bill of productive workers and the total wealth produced in any one period is the surplus value created by workers.

The owners of factories, docks, shipyards, mines, mills and the land, whether they be private owners or a bunch of government bureaucrats, take this surplus value and use it against the interests of those who create it.

An increase in the size of the surplus value does not result in a higher quality of life for those who work, but in a higher standard of waste for those who do not work. The more surplus value created and taken by the bosses, the more the working class is exploited.

This is not a fixed order of things. In earliest societies any surplus product was divided in common according to need. There were then no exploiters as today.

During brief periods in the history of the working class, in Paris in 1871 and Russia in 1917 until the rise of Stalin, the ex-

ploited were deposed.

And there is no full and final reason in the world why they should not be removed in Britain in the 1970s. The working-class movement is probably in better shape than it has been for close on 50 years.

REDUCE

Various sections of the movement have introduced exciting new ideas about their position in society. UCS, Fisher-Bendix and others are fighting a one-way ticket to the scrap heap.

But with each step forward, the ruling class changes its tack and its strategy. From Wilson through Heath, we have witnessed a determined employers' offensive. It has one purpose: to reduce the amount of wealth going to labour and give more to the rich.

Run along its present lines, there is no other way out for British society. It must make investment more attractive, and more profitable.

In the face of this offensive the response of sections of the

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WHY THE BLACKS ARE RIGHT TO FIGHT

THE Tory press is currently rubbing its hands with glee. The arrest of Michael De Freitas, alias Abdul Malik, commonly known as Michael X, provides an excellent opportunity to discredit 'black power' and the movements that have sprung up around such ideas.

In this situation it is absolutely vital for socialists and trade unionists to be clear what 'black power' really means.

In the fifties and early sixties, movements campaigning for basic civil rights for black people were led by the black middle class both in the United States and in Britain.

What characterised these movements, particularly in Britain, was their total passivity. Their political actions were confined to pleading with Tory and Labour governments to make concessions on how strict immigration controls should be applied, and to demand legislation against racial discrimination.

If politicians failed them they would turn to the clergy and the white liberals. In the main such people achieved nothing for the black community, not even for the black middle class.

The emergence of the 'Black Panthers' in the US, with the ideas of 'black power', struck a chord within the black community in Britain.

RACIST

No longer were blacks required to sit idly by while middle-class leaders fraternised with politicians, clergymen, and white liberals. The liberation of black people would only be achieved by the conscious activity of black people.

Within the framework of what is happening in Britain this message is particularly relevant. Far from black people winning basic civil rights, their situation has deteriorated. The past ten years has seen an unprecedented escalation of racist legislation, accompanied by an intensification of racist ideas.

Tory and Labour politicians now agree about the need to repatriate large numbers of black people from Britain. The only debate is whether such repatriation should be voluntary or compulsory.

In such a climate racist violence has increased tremendously. Black communities have been terrorised in the streets, their homes have been attacked often by fascist thugs, occasionally by misguided youth.

Nearly ten years ago, Tosir Ali was knifed to death as he was walking home through Stepney.

The state too is increasingly involved in trampling upon the rights of black people. Police harassment

by
MIKE CAFFOOR

has increased enormously in recent years. When David Oluwale was driven to death in a river by two policemen from Leeds, the press that frequently preaches on the evils of violence remained silent. After the trial was held nobody called for an inquiry into the questionable activities of the Leeds police force and the issue was quickly forgotten.

It is in this situation that 'black power' ideas are quickly seized upon by sections of the black community as a way out of the blind alley. Black Power means the right of black people to control their own lives, their own futures, their own destiny.

For them as for all other sections of workers who are exploited by capitalism and others who are oppressed by it, such liberation will only be achieved when the system responsible for racism is destroyed.

The advocates of black power certainly realise this. But in the process of struggle for basic rights black people will learn important lessons about the nature of the system and the kind of fight which is necessary to overthrow it.

British capitalism developed as a result of the slave trade, enriched itself through the pillage of imperialism and held back the political and economic development of black people throughout the world, justifying such actions on the basis of white supremacy and black inferiority.

URGENT

Because of this, large sections of the working class are infected with racist ideas. These ideas unfortunately hold back the working class from developing a unity with black people which will achieve their common liberation.

In such circumstances black people have to take the lead, instead of waiting for the white working class, in fighting against discrimination, racist ideology, and for their own liberation. This is the significance of black power.

In Britain today it is faced with



Protesters in Liverpool demanding the freedom of Angela Davis

several urgent tasks. The increasing racist violence against black people has to be fought.

This can only be achieved by black people forming defence groups which will protect the black community. Of course white workers and socialists have a duty to participate in such defence organisations, but the initiative must be taken by 'black people.

Discrimination against black people is still widespread. They are usually forced to take the worst jobs, at the lowest rates of pay, with little chance of promotion and often the first to be declared redundant.

They are forced to live in bad housing conditions whilst paying extortionate rents.

In education, schools with a large proportion of black children are neglected by the local authorities. A large number of these children are classified educationally subnormal to cover this neglect.

Black power means the need for black people to organise their own communities to fight such discrimination by taking direct action against employers, unions, landlords, local authorities, and others who victimise the black community.

TOOTHLESS

This is the only way in which discrimination can be tackled. It is pointless to believe the Race Relations Board will in any way take effective action. Its past record has shown it has no such intentions. This is hardly surprising, for it was conceived as a toothless sop to the dejected white liberals by a Labour government which had introduced racist immigration laws.

Another important task that is being done by black power groups is to educate black people about their own civilisations and their own cultures. This is crucial, because ruling

class ideology has been quite successful in convincing black and white workers that the imperialist interpretation of history, which subordinates black people to an inferior role and portrays them as savages, is correct.

A challenge to such ideas is essential. Destroying such myths and giving the black community an understanding of their own cultures, gives them confidence and a sense of pride, out of which will grow a fighting spirit.

Black power seeks to raise the black people off their knees and mould them into a fighting force against capitalist society. As such it deserves the support of all socialists and trade unionists.

Only when the black community are off their knees, confident, proud and determined, having thrown off the shackles of ruling-class ideas can a real and permanent unity be forged between black and white workers.

The rise and fall of Michael X

THIS article first appeared in Freedom News, the newspaper of the British Black Panther Party.

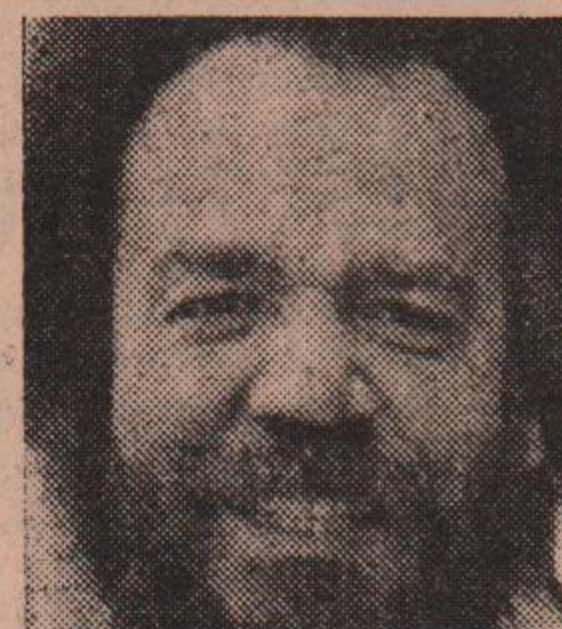
THERE has always been a difference for us between the Michael X we know and the one projected by the British press.

With the active support of the mass media, Michael De Freitas exploited the image of Malcolm X, the black revolutionary who emerged from ghetto life in America to give a new insight into the problems of black people in the United States, and political leadership to the black struggle in the world.

Contrary to Michael being a leader of black people in Britain—or anywhere else—his actions have always been against our interests, starting with his use by Rachman, the slum landlord, in 1964 to evict black tenants, right through to the so-called Black House he set up as a smoke screen for his continued hustling.

But even with the press willing to project him at every turn, overall Michael X could have no more than an irritating effect when operating in Britain. This is because the society has been relatively stable over the past few years.

This has not been the case in Trinidad. For eight weeks in early 1970, the population of Trinidad & Tobago took to the



Michael X

streets and brought the Williams regime to its knees. Since then the entire society has been thrown into chaos. There has been a massive rejection of the present government, whose members desperately seek to break the resistance of the population in order to retain their stranglehold on the

society.

The government has welcomed Michael X's return in a situation in which he needed them and they needed him. He needed them to protect him from extradition to Britain, having jumped bail on charges of robbery and blackmail. They needed him because they believed that his 'Black Power Image' would assist them in confusing those elements who were opposed to them.

This explains the statement he made on his return to Trinidad in which he gave support to Dr Williams and his regime. He added that there was nothing wrong with the society that Williams could put right!

He established himself as a friend of the regime. Its members were seen to frequent his home for 'discussions'. He had made definite links with the 'hatchet man' section of the government. It is that section that concerned itself with terror against those areas organising for radical change in the structure of Trinidad society. They operated outside of the law.

Michael X was chosen to infiltrate the unemployed youth, who were in the forefront of the 1970 rebellion. His brief was to eliminate the leading members of that social group if he saw fit.

Growing in confidence, Michael X travelled to the street corners in the East Dry River area, where the strongest elements of the revolutionary movement are based. In September last year, he issued threats stating that he had a licence to kill revolutionary brothers. On another instance, he drew a revolver on a brother in the open street and threatened to kill him. He said then that he was a powerful man in the country and was free to eliminate opposition to the regime.

The fact that the British government never sought his extradition from Trinidad and that he was an honoured guest of both the Trinidad and Guyanese governments reveals that Michael X was an agent of those who seek to suppress and exploit black people rather than the 'leader' of black people they try to make him out to be.



REVIEW

MARX AND ENGELS ON IRELAND:

Lawrence and Wishart, £1.50

A HISTORY OF THE IRISH WORKING CLASS, P Berresford Ellis: Gollancz, £3.50

IF THERE is a dearth of marxist writing on modern Ireland, it is not for the lack of attention paid to that country by the founders of marxism. Friedrich Engels started to write an ambitious history of Ireland, but got no further than the 11th century. Marx wrote extensively on the landlord system in Capital. They were both active in raising the Irish question in the International.

This new collection of Marx' and Engels' writings on Ireland brings together apparently every mention of Ireland or the Irish made by the two men. Some of it relates only indirectly to the Irish question, but the majority of it is not only of historical and theoretical interest, it is also politically relevant, even today.

Writing most of this material in England, Marx and Engels emphasised the responsibility of the English ruling class for the backwardness of the Irish economy, the mass poverty and emigration. Marx relates the accumulation of capital from rent collected on estates in Ireland to the growth of industrial capitalism in England. The changing structure of Irish agriculture in the mid-19th century is brought into relation with the pressures on the London government of competing social interests, as well as with its effect on the social classes within Ireland.

Marx refers constantly to the emigration from Ireland and its effect on the working class in England. In this he saw a concrete demonstration of the way in which the system oppressed both Irish and English.

'In relation to the Irish worker he feels himself a member of the ruling nation and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists of his country against Ireland, thus strengthening their domination over himself.'

The lever

Only months before writing this, Marx had changed his view on the relation of the English workers to the land struggle and the national struggle in Ireland. From believing that Ireland would only be freed by the action of the English proletariat he came to the view that:

'The English working class will never accomplish anything before it has got rid of Ireland. The lever must be applied in Ireland. That is why the Irish question is so important for the social movement in general.'

On that basis, Marx argued consistently for the right of the Irish to self-determination, supporting, for instance, the Fenians against the establishment's attacks, even when

he thought their politics inadequate and some of their actions 'very stupid'. The amnesty campaign for Fenian prisoners mobilised 30,000 people for a demonstration in 1872. Marx and Engels were almost euphoric in their enthusiasm about this.

One hundred years later we face many of the same questions. We face the same challenge of overcoming the prejudices which the system has fostered, and gaining the support of English workers for the Irish struggle.

The character of that struggle has changed, the precise content of Irish self-determination has changed, but the positions of the first marxists are still a lesson to us. Like them, socialists today view the Irish

question from the perspective of international socialist revolution.

But if it was true 100 years ago that the withdrawal of troops would lead to a social revolution, as Marx thought, it is also true today. That is why they are there, not only to maintain the status quo in the North but, in so doing, to prevent any upheaval in the South. And that is why we call for their immediate withdrawal.

The facts

Ellis' book consists largely of a compilation of material from other books, including material from the writings of Marx and Engels. His quotes occasionally go into three full pages. It is done fairly

intelligently, and is a useful collection of facts and arguments.

The book might more properly have been called 'A History of Popular Movements in Ireland'. It is not based on any scientific concept of the working class and actually omits several important chapters on Irish working-class history.

There is no adequate account of what has been called 'the breaking of the Irish working class' the fostering of the religious/political divide in the Northern working class and the strength of the sectarian and clerical influence among the workers. Nor is there any treatment of Dublin craft unionism in the 19th century or the Irish Soviets movement, 1920-23.

In the contemporary period Mr

Ellis hardly touches on the rapid growth of the working class in the last 20 years, gives passing mention (in a half sentence) to the formation of breakaway unions, and none to the major confrontations between workers and state, and workers and private employers in the last few years.

This is all for a good reason. Mr Ellis relies largely on easily available material and goes no further than the dominant radical but not revolutionary consciousness in the Irish republican and labour movement.

The questions

But the problem today is that there has been no consistent socialist presence among the urban working class for many years, possibly not since the Irish Worker sold 90,000 copies of one issue in 1911 (as Mr Ellis informs us).

This 'history' is unable to relate the enormous increase in trade union membership in the decade after 1911, and the equally rapid decline of an independent working-class struggle in the national struggle. The key questions of political organisation and of class consciousness are not touched on.

With Connolly, Ellis is convinced that 'the Irish working class [is] the only secure foundation on which a free nation can be reared', but he does not understand how the Irish working class is to lead the struggle for independence.

Get hold of this book, it contains useful facts and quotes, such as the following from Marx (also contained in the other reviewed title):

'The political separation of Ireland from Britain is indispensable as much in the interests of the British workers as in that of the Irish workers and working farmers'. 'Ireland is the only excuse of the English government for maintaining a big standing army, which in case of need they send against the English workers, as has happened after the army became turned into praetorians in Ireland'.

Both books are worth a read. Marx and Engels is essential.

BRIAN TRENCH

All the books reviewed on this page are available from IS Books, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.



'The Irish Citizen Army places its reliance upon the only class that never betrayed Ireland—the Irish working class' (from an Irish Citizen Army poster)

The workers: Ireland's only secure foundation

A strong left hook but weak with the right

IT IS my sad duty to report that Tariq Ali has written a stinker. The case for revolutionary politics needs to be argued to the widest possible audience and it is all to the good if respectable publishing houses are willing enough or stupid enough to aid us in this task.

But it does our cause some damage if ill-written and ill-conceived books are tossed on to the market. Tariq's book seems to be a badly edited amalgam of late-night tape recordings and extracts from old internal documents of his organisation, the International Marxist Group.

The best indication I can give of the book's priorities is that 15 pages are devoted to 'The problems of British capitalism' and 37 to a meandering stroll down sectarian lane, called 'The Revolutionary Left in Britain'.

The chapter on British capitalism is grossly inadequate. Tariq is clearly licking his chops at the prospect of getting on to the real meat of the book—the attack on other left organisations—and cuts more corners than Jackie Stewart in a grand prix. The analysis of the problems of the system is so crude, oversimplified and often downright wrong that it reads like a pastiche of marxism and is unlikely to convince those in need of convincing.

After a comparatively gentle attack on the politics of the British Communist Party, Tariq can at last roll up his sleeves for a verbal punch-up with those who refuse to swallow the truth as seen by IMG. I am not crying 'foul' because he has the temerity to attack the International Socialists: vigorous criticism and polemic are healthy revolutionary traditions.

THE COMING BRITISH REVOLUTION, by Tariq Ali: Jonathan Cape, 95p
HAYTER OF THE BOURGEOISIE, by Teresa Hayter: Sidgwick and Jackson, £1.95.

My complaint is that the criticism should occupy such an enormous proportion of the book, is full of grotesque errors, and records the small change of forgotten mini-battles that have no possible relevance to current problems.

If you slaver at the thought of finding out just how the Socialist Labour League organised dances for young people in Wigan in 1962, this may well be your book, but the information is unlikely to arm you in the future struggles within the labour movement.

Readers familiar with the turgid preoccupations of the IMG and the Red Mole will know what to expect from the section on IS: we 'capitulated to imperialism' during the Korean War, we fail to understand the 'Leninist concept' of the party and, of course, we are a 'centrist' organisation.

Wallowing

This last epithet is currently much in favour among the political pigmies who explain their own failure to grow and IS's small but encouraging successes through our alleged willingness to abandon marxist principles in the struggle to build our organisation.

'Centrism' is a disease inflicted on those who wallow around in the marshy land between revolution and reformism. Tariq sets out to prove that IS is sick beyond redemption by quoting the demands which Socialist Worker has suggested trade unionists should fight to impose upon a future Labour government.

These include: unqualified repeal of

the Industrial Relations Act, no incomes policy under capitalism, restoration of all welfare cuts, work or full pay for the unemployed, and re-nationalisation without compensation of all sections of nationalised industry returned to private hands.

It is perfectly legitimate to disagree with these demands, but to say, as Tariq does, that they put us to the right of the Communist Party and could be supported by most left MPs and trade union bureaucrats shows that he lives in a cosy world of his own.

IS and any others who attempt to grapple with reality, who understand that reformism will be defeated not by shouting boo from the sidelines but by getting stuck in to the living movement and fighting there for our ideas, are condemned and dismissed. But what is the 'correct', 'principled' alternative?

It is, says Tariq, to break the mass of the organised working class from the Labour Party (how?) and, with the trade unions, to create a 'new party, not revolutionary but in which revolutionaries will be able to operate with ease.'

While some of us are trying to smash one barrier to the building of a genuine socialist party, Tariq and Co advocate constructing a fresh one. That, comrades, sounds suspiciously like centrism.

Teresa Hayter, at the age of 32, has written an autobiography. It is, understandably, a slim volume. It recounts her birth into a leading family of the liberal establishment (her father was British

ambassador to Russia) her radicalisation through Oxford, world tours and firsthand knowledge of imperialism and her current commitment to the IMG.

Marxists, their belief firmly rooted in the need for mass action, have a traditional distaste for the autobiography as a political weapon. Even Trotsky begins My Life with a disclaimer for having to descend to this literary level to defend himself against the ocean of lies and distortion dredged up by Stalin.

But Trotsky had helped to lead a revolution, he had forged the Red Army that beat back the invading forces of world capitalism.

Miss Hayter, I am reliably informed, has yet to notch up similar achievements and might well have waited just a few more years before applying herself to paper.

She concludes with a precis of Tariq's attack on other left groups, plus a few more untruths thrown in for good measure. In Northern Ireland, readers of Socialist Worker will be surprised to learn, we 'call repeatedly for Catholics and Protestants to unite immediately for a workers' state' (in Six Counties!).

Top man at her publishers is Lord Longford. This devout Christian is much concerned with sins of the flesh but is clearly less worried by aiding and abetting the 'bearing of false witness', once equally condemned in the circles of the godly.

ROGER PROTZ

WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We fight:

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

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

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

Against anti-trade union laws and any

curbs on the right to strike, whether the strikes are 'official' or 'unofficial'.

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

For equal pay and a better deal for young workers.

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

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

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

Against racialism and police victimisation of black workers.

Against immigration restriction.

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

For real social, economic and political equality for women.

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

Against secret diplomacy.

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

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

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

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

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

The system thrives on those left splits

IT IS A TRAGEDY to me that in these times when capitalism is becoming more and more repugnant to decent human beings and forcing increasing numbers of people to turn to thoughts of socialism that parties and organisations of the left still remain divided against each other. They remain as separate factions soliciting support for their individual interpretations of the social, economic and political philosophies of the great teacher, Marx.

Surely Marx intended only one interpretation of his philosophy and all political philosophies of the left are based on the 'public ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange'. From this emanates the emancipation of civilised man.

I have read often in this newspaper 'that capitalism thrives on the splits and divisions in society'—and so it does. And what greater example of this than left-wing endeavour? While the left remains split in fragmentary sections little, if any, progress can be made. But if the left unites against the gigantic opposing forces of capitalism—what then?

If International Socialists, Communist Party, Maoist, left-wing of the Labour Party, etc, unite then the days of capitalism would certainly be numbered.

Leaders of the left unite. Form this one great party, harness your combined forces to institute the public ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. And having achieved control in the corridors of power then present candidates for the separate ideologies in subsequent elections.

As it is, while disunity remains one might just as well try to plough the ocean than advance one inch along the road to socialism. Let unity be the watchword and capitalism the cause.—IRIS M ASHFORD, Winchester, Hants.

BOSSSES COME BEFORE BUSES

CHRIS DAVISON's feature on urban transport (11 March) was of particular relevance to the situation here in Exeter, where congestion is such that the city council are proposing to spend £5 million on road improvements. This sum is so large that interest charges alone equal the cost of providing a free bus service throughout the city. Thus we have here a choice between two alternatives, which in a true democracy would be made by a majority vote of those who foot the bill—the ratepayers. Unfortunately, we live in a representative democracy—we elect representatives who decide for us how our money should be allocated between the competing claims of rival interest groups.

In this case we have on the one hand the British Road Federation, which exists solely to transfer as much money as

living is and what increase in wages is necessary.

The policy of a rising scale of wages would be impossible without such committees but their importance can extend much further.

By raising the question of the direct interference of such rank and file committees in the sphere of consumption it becomes a means of mobilising workers in the broader struggle for workers control of production.—KEVIN WHITSTON, London NW6.

Aldershot

YOUR statement immediately after the Aldershot blast was decidedly shaky. The editorial in the following week's paper was, in our opinion, shameful.

Two things must be said. Firstly, if you claim that the IRA are terrorists in the Leninist sense of the word, you are wrong. Both wings of the IRA, whatever their lack of working-class politics, do represent—and have their roots in—a mass movement against imperialism and you must surely recognise that if this starts defensively and goes over to the offensive it does not qualitatively change the nature of that movement. On the contrary, it is a sign of its developing strength.

Seen in this context, ie that of a military battle between the Catholic working class and British imperialism, socialists should defend the shooting of creatures like John Taylor, who is one of the most active and militant representatives of British imperialism in that battle. The accusation of indiscriminate terrorism is nothing short of slander and does nothing else than strengthen the more gutteral outbursts of the British press.

Secondly, at a time when the bourgeois press are making hay over Aldershot it should have been Socialist Worker's role to stand firm over the political and military right of the IRA to attack an absolutely legitimate target, while obviously expressing regret over the disastrous *operational mistake* which caused the deaths of innocent working-class people. Would Socialist Worker have been so classically marxist in its reaction to the incident, had it successfully killed several top Para officers? Hopefully not.

One can only hope that the statements in question were a superficial over-reaction to the issue and do not truly represent IS politics.—PAT PRENDERVILLE, ALAN WOODCOCK, London W5.

LETTERS

Prices battle

HOW was it possible for F J Corbett (11 March) to reply to my article on prices without reading it? The article did not defend Threshold Agreements. On the contrary the TUC was given credit for seeing the necessity of linking wage bargaining to price inflation, but attacked for trying to do it with Threshold Agreements.

In fact Vic Feather understands the matter better than Corbett when he sees that at the present time only the strongest and best organised workers are able to defend their standard of living. A policy is needed to mobilise the strength of the labour movement.

Two thirds of my article—which Corbett ignores completely—was devoted to the question of how this can be done. Even the most politically backward workers can see the power of their wage packet shrinking daily, while the problem is most acutely felt by the working-class housewife.

All these sections can be drawn into a united working-class struggle through committees of housewives and trade unionists to determine from the point of view of the working class, what the cost of

WHAT'S ON

possible from the public to the shareholders of its constituent companies, and is perhaps the most powerful pressure group in the country. On the other hand are the unorganised, apathetic bus passengers. The result, a foregone conclusion, illustrates very well the priorities of monopoly capitalism.

If I might extend the argument to rural transport, the state-owned National Bus Company is currently engaged in withdrawing loss-making country services and making drivers redundant, some Cornish villages being already 10 miles from the nearest bus stop. At the same time, hundreds of millions of pounds of public money are being given to private companies in an effort to create more jobs in the regions.—ANTHONY COLLINGS, Exeter.

WHAT'S ON

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

MEETINGS

MARXISM VERSUS REFORMISM. Scottish Region Day School. Saturday 25 March 2-6.30pm. Speakers: Jim Higgins and John Palmer. Two sessions: 'Trotskyism and Leninism', 'Contemporary Reformism: the Labour and Communist Parties.' Details of venue and accommodation from your nearest IS Branch.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE PRESENT CRISIS. Public meeting. Glasgow Area International Socialists. Saturday 25 March, 10.30am, McEllan Galleries, Sauchiehall St. Speakers: John Palmer, EC member IS, and Jim Higgins, National Secretary.

LEWISHAM IS public meeting: The Tory Offensive And How To Fight It. Speakers: Jimmy Coughlin, former AEI shop steward and Roger Protz, editor of Socialist Worker. Thurs 23 March, 7.30pm. Ladywell Baths, Lewisham High Street.

LONDON BRANCH SECRETARIES' meeting: Sat 25 March, 2.30pm, at 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2. All branch secretaries must attend.

RUGELEY IS public meeting: Roger Rosewell, SW Industrial Correspondent, on Unemployment And Productivity Deals. Mon 20 March, 8pm, White Horse, Rugeley.

WOLVERHAMPTON IS public meeting: Roger Rosewell on The Industrial Relations Act. Tues 21 March, 8pm, Old Still, King St, off Princess St, Wolverhampton.

SWANSEA IS: What Happened To The Labour Party? Discussion led off by Len Arthur. Swansea Workingmen's Club, Alexandra Rd, Thurs 23 March, 7.30pm.

THE FIGHT AGAINST PORTUGUESE COLONIALISM. Film: Behind The Lines. Speaker Tony Gifford. Monday 20 March, 8pm—Ecumenical Centre, Denbigh Rd, London W11. West London Anti-Apartheid Movement.

BRISTOL IS Day School: Sat 18 March, Students Union, Queen St, 10.30am, The Labour Party, Kevin Whitston. 2pm, The Revolutionary Party, Colwyn Williamson.

REAL TIME, Radical Computer Group: Meeting of trade union working group at The Hand and Flower, Kensington High St, London—opposite Olympia. Thurs 23 March, 7.30pm.

TO ALL COMRADES IN NORTH WEST REGION: The strikers from Millingford Engineering Co have been out on strike for 31 weeks. All trade unionists and IS members are asked to support a solidarity demonstration on Saturday 18 March outside Millingford's factory in North Ashton, near Wigan. Assemble in Rectory Rd, (opposite, Millingford's) at 10.15am, and march to a rally in North Ashton Village Club. Nearest railway station—Bryn.

LAMBETH IS public meeting
The Industrial Relations Act
And How To Fight It
Speaker Roger Rosewell
Wednesday 22 March, 8pm
Brixton Training Centre,
2 St Matthews Rd, SW2,
(100yds from Lambeth Town Hall)

TRADE UNION CONFERENCE ON SOUTHERN AFRICA
18/19 March
Plaw Hatch Trade Union Club,
East Grinstead, Sussex
Present situation in Southern Africa—
Trade union solidarity action in Britain
Delegates and individual
trade unionists welcome
Apply Anti-Apartheid Movement,
89 Charlotte St, London W1 (580 5311)

NOTICES

SOUTHAMPTON IS and Colleges Socialist Societies: Social on 18 March, Kingsland Hall, 8pm. Bar, food, disco, and the Kerry Ceilidh Band. Tickets: 50p double, 30p single.

HILARY and LES SMITH, Lancaster IS, announce the birth of their son, Judah Owin, on 29 February.

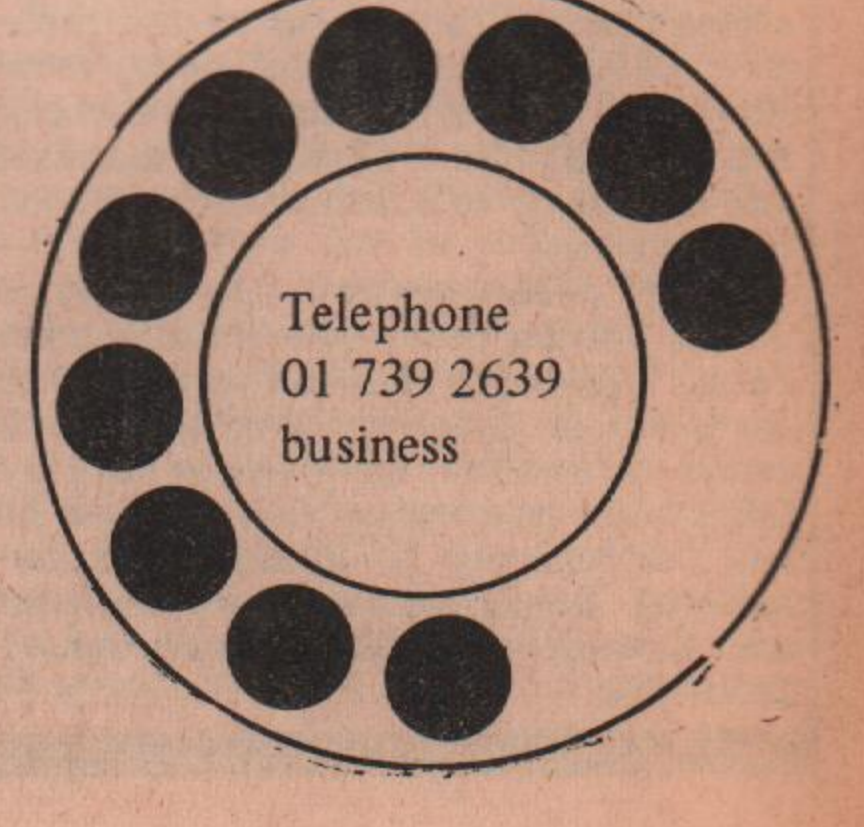
IS WOMEN'S NEWSLETTER No 6 now out. Articles on women workers, women's lib, the welfare state. Price 5p. Money with orders please to: M Renn, c/o 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

STOKE NEWINGTON 8 Conspiracy Trial: On 25 January the eight comrades accused of being members of the 'Angry Brigade' were committed for trial at the Old Bailey. This trial will probably begin on 6 June and it is vital for the defence that we have details of all raids and police activities in connection with bombings and explosives since January 1968. Statements should contain as much detail as possible and will be treated in the utmost confidence. All replies will be acknowledged within 10 days.
Write to: Box 359, 240 Camden High St, London NW1.
**Smash the state conspiracy!
Free the eight!**

STOKE NEWINGTON 8 BENEFIT: Northern Poly, Friday 17 March. The People Band, Leon Rosselson, and others. Films and speakers. Admission 30p.

LAW AND ORDER IN THE SHOP FLOOR. The Industrial Relations Act And How To Fight It
20 pages, illustrated, 5p + postage
30p for 10 copies, + postage
from WORKSHOP BOOKS,
30 Primrose Hill St, Coventry
tel: 51723

WEST LONDON IS SOCIAL
organised by Acton IS
Place: Ealing Tech
Date: Saturday 18 March
Time: 7pm
Bar and music



THERE ARE IS BRANCHES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

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

Ireland waits for the offensive

by Brian Trench

THERE HAVE BEEN rumours and counter-rumours of a 'political initiative' on Ireland for several weeks by the Tory government. Northern Ireland Premier Brian Faulkner has said all rumours of an initiative are 'without foundation', but since then most of the national daily newspapers have carried details of the initiative supposedly being discussed in the Cabinet.

Some of the points had been anticipated in Harold Wilson's latest proposals on the Northern Ireland situation, which included a phased programme of releases from internment.

Wilson and Callaghan have been pushing the Tories to make some statement and have been only too anxious to advise them about such a statement. Tory MPs, too, have been emphasising the urgency for an initiative.

Now, however, the lobby correspondents report that the plans put forward by Heath and other senior ministers have been shelved because of opposition from Tory back-benchers.

All this might be comic if it were not that it concerns the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in the Six Counties.

Offensive

It might even be worth waiting for the difficulties to be ironed out if we did not know that no initiative by a British government which maintains military domination of part of Ireland, and economic domination of it all, can in any way solve the problems of the Irish people.

To some extent, the expectations built up around the much-heralded 'initiative' have been caused by the use of that term. A more accurate term might be 'offensive'.

What the Tory government wants to do is to stabilise political and economic control of the Six Counties, and in so doing prevent the Northern crisis spilling over into the South. To do this, it is prepared to risk losing support from the more extreme Unionist factions.

But the more the political moves are delayed, the greater the pressure from the far right. Last week the Loyalist Association of Workers organised a half-day stoppage opposing any political changes, and demanding the tightening of security.

As the crisis deepens and the polarisation between the communities in Northern Ireland increases, the chances of making the kind of initiative that is rumoured steadily decline.

The other factor in the situation is the continued militant resistance of the Catholic community. While the policy of internment continues—last week 24 men were arrested in one day—and the daily military repression remains high, there is no chance of that resistance abating.

Any 'political initiative' depends on bringing the Catholic moderates of the Social Democratic Labour Party to the conference table. In present conditions, they could only do that at risk of losing all popular support—which is weak enough as it is.

Threat

This is where Wilson comes in. He has just been to Dublin where, no doubt, his main topic of discussion with the government has been how to persuade the SDLP to take part in all-party talks. The Wilson-Lynch-SDLP axis is as important in the present circumstances as the Tory-Unionist axis. It could represent an equal threat to the Irish people.

Wilson has consulted frequently with Heath and Maudling on the Irish question. When he visited Ireland in November last, he took a secretary from the Home Office with him.

The proposals which Wilson makes for a 'solution' are made with the same purpose in mind as any Tory 'initiative': to make imperialist domination of the whole of Ireland more 'rational', and more exploitative.

The difference is that the Tories have closer ties with the Unionists. Their freedom of movement in the Irish political arena is therefore more restricted.

No matter what 'initiative' is made, the basic problems facing Irish workers will remain the same: to build the kind of revolutionary movement which can force out the occupying troops, overthrow both Irish states, and build a Workers' Republic.

TORIES' UNION LAW STARTS TO LASH OUT

THE TORIES' anti-union laws were brought into action last week. Four workers from a south-east London factory were rushed to the National Industrial Relations Court after their boss had complained that they had gone on strike in defiance of the Industrial Relations Act.

Last Wednesday 150 workers at the Kaymet engineering works walked out in support of a pay demand. Hours later summonses were pinned to the factory gates ordering the shop stewards to appear before the NIRC.

Next day, Kaymet's managing director, Mr Sydney Schreiber, complained to the court that the strike was an 'unfair industrial practice'. He

SW Reporter

applied for an order to be made compelling the men to return to work.

The court did not accept this appeal. Instead it impressed on both sides the need for more talks on the pay claim before any orders were issued.

But the speed with which the Act was used against the Kaymet workers shows that many other strikers may now be threatened with legal action. In the face of this danger, the trade union movement should be fighting the law and

defending its members against prosecution.

Instead, further retreats are taking place. Several unions have effectively decided to co-operate with the Act.

Equity, the actors' union, has announced its intention to register under the law.

The National Union of Seamen is going to the NIRC to ask for an approved closed shop. The union has already registered.

And last weekend, Clive Jenkins' Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs decided to defy the TUC and give evidence to the NIRC and the Commission on Industrial Relations.

This decision was particularly important. TASS, the draughtsmen's and technicians' union, is fighting to maintain its closed shop at the Newcastle-upon-Tyne engineering firm of C A Parsons.

The management and a bogus trade union, UKAPE, are challenging TASS. They are attempting to use the anti-union Act to demand an end to the closed shop.

Demand action

The draughtsmen have boycotted talks on the issue and have refused to give evidence to either the NIRC or the CIR.

ASTMS has decided to ignore the TUC and TASS and to unilaterally present as much evidence as possible. As a result it is expected that the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers—which includes TASS—will demand disciplinary action against ASTMS.

On Tuesday, the Kaymet workers put in seven days' notice of strike action after they rejected a seven per cent pay offer.

Print bosses launch attack on closed shop

PRINTING employers are already preparing to attack the closed shop under the Industrial Relations Act.

A large print firm in the South of England is already preparing new contracts of employment to be introduced in April. These include a passage which draws workers' attention to section five of the Act and informs them that this includes 'the right not to belong to a registered trade union or an unregistered organisation of workers or to any particular union or organisation'.

The National Graphical Association has instructed its members not to sign any contracts of this sort, and the other print unions will no doubt follow suit.

But the employers are clearly not wasting paper and ink. They intend to introduce the new contracts and the unions are far from ready to fight back.

(9) Trade Union Membership

Under Section 5 of the Industrial Relations Act 1971 you have:

(a) The right to belong to a registered trade union of your choice.

(b) The right to choose not to belong to a registered trade union or unregistered organisation of workers, or to any particular union or organisation.

If you belong to a registered trade union, you have the right to seek and hold office in it, and to take part in its activities outside working hours. Employees may only take part in trade union activities during working hours if special circumstances apply, and permission has been given by the Management.

In the event of any Agency Shop agreements being established within the Company, your rights under Section 5 of the Industrial Relations Act 1971 are modified as follows:

(1) It would be a condition of your employment that you became a member of the relevant registered trade union,

OR

(2) You pay a sum of money equal to the union dues without becoming a member of this trade union,

OR

(3) In the case of conscientious objection you pay a sum of money equal to the dues shown above to an agreed charity.

Section of print bosses' contract

NALGO slap in face for Tories

THE annual conference of NALGO, the local government officers' union, is to be recommended by the union executive to refuse to register under the Industrial Relations Act.

The union's national executive council agreed to this recommendation by 54 votes to two last week.

This is a slap in the face for the Tory government, who were hoping that NALGO would be the first major union to register.

The battle is not yet over, however. The resolution must be fought for in the branches to see that it is carried with an overwhelming majority by conference delegates. There is some danger of a right-wing attempt to sabotage the vote.

Recently the executive council gave £1000 to the miners' union strike fund. Reactionaries in some branches organised petitions and wrote letters of protest to head office.

Clearly, activists in NALGO must direct their efforts to the rank and file of the union to raise the level of trade unionism in the organisation.

Strikers get poor support from TGWU

WOOLWICH: A strike at the factory of Hunter Plastics Industries is now entering its sixth week. It is a struggle that already shows considerable similarities to the much longer Fine Tubes, Millingford's in Lancashire, and Brannan's in Cumberland.

At stake is the basic question of union organisation, and as in the other cases one of the biggest unions in Britain seems unwilling to deploy a fraction of its full strength to defeat a small anti-union firm.

The issue that brought about the strike was the sacking of two men—one for giving out a transport workers' union leaflet, the other for backing him up against the management's threats. Immediately 34 other men on the night shift walked out in sympathy.

The transport workers' union made the strike official and instructed its members to black the factory, but has done little effectively to ensure victory.

The result has been that while some drivers have turned back at the gates, many others have ignored the pickets, either because they were from non-union firms or because they believed the management story that there was no strike on.

Rally ends Right to Work marches

WEMBLEY: A 5000-strong rally greeted the completion of the four Right-to-Work marches, organised by the Young Socialists and the Socialist Labour League, at the Empire Pool, Wembley, last weekend.

The dedication of those who marched for up to five weeks to hammer home the situation of the unemployed deserves the admiration of everyone on the left.

For the organisers to get so many people to a protest meeting in London was no mean achievement, but regrettably the rally and marches were not up to the grandiose claims made by the main speakers.

For instance, Gerry Healy of the SLL greeted the marchers as 'the most decisive section of the working class', and Christine Smith, leader of the Liverpool march, argued: 'The march was not part of a protest march. We were rallying the working class to force the Tory government to resign.'

The fact is that the considerable number of experienced industrial militants who need to be brought together into a revolutionary organisation, if the Tories are really to be defeated, were hardly represented at the rally. No doubt this was

because of the sectarianism of the organisers in refusing to allow organised participation in the campaign by other revolutionary organisations besides the SLL.

Even more disappointing was the failure of the speakers to put forward any real programme for linking the fight against unemployment to the day-to-day struggles of organised workers on the shop-floor.

There was hardly a murmur about such key issues as occupations to prevent the run-down or closure of factories, resistance to unemployment-producing productivity deals, overtime banning and work sharing to prevent sackings, the struggle for higher minimum wages to make possible a real campaign against overtime working, and the struggle for a 35-hour week.

Yet it is only by a unified fight on all these issues that it will be possible to build a movement rooted in the factories, which can go beyond fine words towards really resisting the employers' offensive and forcing the Tory government out of office.

Sit-in goes on

ST HELENS: Workers at St Helens Plastic have made a dramatic advance at the beginning of the second week of their sit-in. On Saturday night they ordered the security guard and his dog off the premises and took over the whole of the factory.

In doing so they called the bluff of the management who had tried to give the impression that there was a much bigger security force there.

The extension of the occupation has strengthened the men's position considerably. In a leaflet they have put out they say they refuse 'to be the victims of the wheeling and dealing of big business' and put their demands for the right to work, continued recognition of their union by the factory's new owner, Lin-Pac, and no victimisation.

Builders locked out

LONDON: 35 carpenters and labourers working for the subcontractor Grant on Cubitts World's End site were locked out last Wednesday after a meeting they held to discuss management plans to cut their bonus. The next day the management said they were prepared to take the men back, but the men decided to stay out for a guaranteed £1 an hour.

STRIKE CALL DEFEATED

LONDON: A call by supporters of the Rank and File teachers' group for a one-day strike was rejected by the Inner London Teachers Association on the chairman's casting vote last week.

The motion called for a strike on 23 March in protest at the union executive's decision to put the union pay claim to arbitration. It would have been overwhelmingly carried but for the action of supporters of the Communist Party.

Acting with the association's right-wing officers, they put forward amendments which clouded the issue behind the strike

call, the demand for a flat-rate pay increase. They introduced the issue of the reference to compulsory arbitration in the Teachers Remuneration Act and called for the date of the proposed strike to be deleted.

The amendments were defeated, but succeeded in confusing the meeting, so that when the resolution was finally put the vote was tied. The association president, Joe Finch, a leading member of the Communist Party, then used his casting vote to defeat it.

If the Communist Party members had voted with the real left the strike call would have been easily passed.

LEICESTER IS public meeting: Engineers' Pay Claim. Speakers Gerry Jones, Bently Group stewards, Mon 20 March, 8pm, Queens Hotel, Charles St.



I would like more information about the International Socialists

Name _____

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Socialist Worker

Dockers locked in a cold war

AFTER months of cold peace, the docks industry is now locked in a cold war.

In Tilbury last week an 'independent' tribunal rejected appeals by 50 dockers against their being sacked by employers Wallis-Smith Coggins. All the appeal machinery has now been tried and failed, so in one month the 50 condemned men will join 560 other port workers on London's Unattached Register. In effect, the Unattached Register will become a graveyard for ex-dockers.

Only the National Port Shop Stewards Committee has shown the determination to fight this threat up till now. It has agreed on a nine-point programme:

- No redundancy.
- No interference with the Dock Labour Scheme.
- Stuffing and unstuffing of containers to be classified as docks work.
- Recall of the union dock delegates conference.
- Retirement on full pay at 60.
- Reduced working week with no loss of pay.
- Improved holidays.
- Nationally-agreed manning scales.
- 100 per cent nationalisation under workers' control.

The shop stewards have already called a successful token strike nationally and two solid strikes in London to support these demands. They are absolutely determined that not one man will be sacked

Wrecking

But in this as in any war—hot or cold—propaganda plays a crucial part. The employers, the press and the government will spend the next month screaming that the ports are in crisis, that dockers are wrecking the economy and that they are standing in the way of inevitable progress and modernisation.

The truth is very different. With trade increasing every year the mammoth companies that control the ports industry make gigantic profits out of containerisation.

The employers are using technological advances to slash the strength of the dock labour force. Already about 20,000 jobs have been wiped out since the Devlin Report, and now dockers are saying: 'No more'.

They are asking why containers should not be used to benefit the dock workers. For this reason alone, this is a struggle that affects every docker in every port. More than that, dockers are standing up for the whole working class—against unemployment, against this Tory government and against the evil Industrial Relations Act. It can now be only a matter of time till this cold war boils up. If the national shop stewards are then given the support they deserve, if the labour movement can respond as it did during the miners' strike, the dockers can win another splendid victory against the employers, the Tories and their system.

No union help in lock-out

SOUTH WALES: 57 members of the Constructional Engineering Union employed by Simon Litwin at the BP site in Llandarcy have been locked out for nine weeks.

They have received no help from their union and have accused the full-time officials of collaborating with the management. Despite this, support has been forthcoming from construction workers all over South

Wales, with both token strikes and collections in defiance of the Industrial Relations Act.

The struggle began after the employer had victimised two members of the union. The rest were then dismissed for holding a meeting and the employer attempted to fill their places with unemployed union members.

In a statement, the men's works

committee points out:

'In nine weeks the leadership of the union has not tried to resolve the situation, but instead have obeyed the command of the employer and agreed to the filling of our positions without even visiting the site.'

Messages of support and donations to: c/o Brian Rees, 90 Bryn Road, Swansea.

ENGINEERS READY TO CALL BOSSES' BLUFF

by Roger Rosewell

MANCHESTER: In a militant declaration, more than 800 engineering shop stewards have decided on a district-wide campaign in support of their demand for higher pay.

At a meeting on Monday they agreed unanimously to tell the Manchester employers that unless they get a £4 increase by 27 March all piecework will be ended and an overtime ban organised. The immediate response of the employers

has been to announce that they will declare a lock-out if industrial action takes place.

At the stewards' meeting George Harrison, AUEW convenor at Ruston Paxman Diesels, part of English Electric, warned, as he seconded the resolution, of possible retaliatory lock-outs and demanded that these be resisted by a policy of occupation.

The decision of the Manchester stewards is in sharp contrast to the national leaders of the engineering unions. These are divided among themselves and have been recently clamping down on militancy.

Last week Danny McGarvey of the Boilermakers told the executive of the Shipbuilding and Engineering Confederation that he had negotiated

a separate deal with the shipbuilding employers.

This agreement is in direct defiance of the confederation policy. It is to last two and a half years. There is a ban on such long-term agreements, but McGarvey has chosen to ignore it.

The executive meeting rejected the deal 15-7. But McGarvey has since announced that if this decision is repeated at the full confederation meeting next month, he will probably defy it and ballot his members with a recommendation to accept the employers' offer.

This split seriously undermines the pay demands of the engineers. Militants should demand the expulsion of McGarvey from the confederation if he goes ahead with his ultimatum.

National pay talks between the engineering unions and the employers broke down towards the end of last year and in January it was decided to end national negotiations and press the claim at factory level.

Several weeks ago in Sheffield 600 stewards decided on a militant policy to fight for the claim. They submitted a district-wide demand and told the employers that unless they received a satisfactory reply they would organise a joint mass meeting of all their members and recommend an all-out district strike.

Blow

The national leadership of the engineering union has sabotaged this correct policy. The union's president, Hugh Scanlon, told a meeting that the proposed Sheffield strike would be 'unconstitutional' and ordered that it must not take place.

This was a severe blow to the whole fight. It must not be allowed to happen again. Every militant must now demand that the union give full support to the Manchester workers and organise national solidarity action if the employers resort to lockout.

While the Manchester workers are going on the offensive, the confederation has written to the employers asking them if they have any second thoughts about national talks. No reply has yet been received, but it is clear that the engineering union leaders are looking for a compromise.

Such an approach must be resisted. The claim will not be won by meeting the bosses to beg a little more, but by organising effective district-wide action like that proposed in Manchester. That is the way forward.



Millingford pickets: settling in for a long hard fight

Strikers now out 32 weeks

THE battle for trade union recognition at Millingford's Engineering at North Ashton, Lancashire, goes on. Engineering union members at the factory have been on strike for 32 weeks since management tried to smash the newly-organised union by dismissing stewards and others.

Police have constantly harassed the strikers and the AUEW executive and officials have done next to nothing to finish off the dictatorial Millingford management. Picketing has been scaled down after direct discussions between union officials and the

police, and no official approaches for blacking are being made because of fear of infringing the provisions of the Industrial Relations Act.

A solidarity demonstration has been called this Saturday. All socialists and trade unionists should attend to uphold this vital struggle. (For details see What's On, page 10.)

Money is desperately needed and donations, made payable to B Eden, should be sent to Wigan AUEW District Office, 100 Chapel Lane, Wigan.

No retreat over pay

●From Page One

determination to throw out this reactionary government.

We must redouble our efforts to build powerful rank and file movements in the unions that will force the present leaders to take militant action, or replace them by men and women who will.

Such a movement must be linked to a political strategy that recognises that poverty, unemployment and growing inequality can only finally be stamped out when we defeat not just the Tories but the system they represent.

We are tired of the crumbs. We want the whole loaf.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

SCOTLAND: Car workers at British Leyland's Bathgate factory have ended their nine-week strike after forcing the management to increase its pay offer to £4. The initial offer was £2 and £1.50. The management has also been forced to drop productivity clauses.

Lord Stokes previously tried to blackmail the men into returning to work with talk of closing the factory. They were able to call his bluff by threatening to occupy the factory if he did so and by getting support from the combined shop stewards committee.

NORWICH: Workers at Sexton Sons and Evrards' shoe factory have abandoned their plans to occupy the plant after hearing that at least 500 of the 700 jobs will be saved.

Property speculator Jack Tubman is to buy the company from the receiver. He will put his son-in-law N Glassman in as

director and promises to keep it going as a shoe firm. Glassman is already managing director of a Lowestoft pram firm and is no lover of unions.

The immediate battle is over. But in the weeks and months ahead the workers will face a continuous effort by the new employer to force them to accept an increased pace of working, redundancies and lower wages.

SCOTLAND: The two power workers who were being victimised for organising solidarity action with the miners, Ron Brown (AUEW) and Rab Jeffery (EPTU) have lodged appeals, but the electricity board, although admitting misuse of the disciplinary procedure, is sticking to its original decision to sack them.

Advance, the national rank-and-file power workers' paper, has launched a campaign to get the two men reinstated.

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