

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

RENT STRIKE!

Mass action ready to fight the Tory swindle

by HUGH KERR

THE LONG-SMOULDERING STRUGGLE over the Tories' Housing Finance Act—the 'Fair Rents' fiddle—will break out into open warfare next week. In place of mock battles in parliament and debates in council chambers, the fight moves onto the council estates, the streets and the rent offices.

Four million tenants are faced with rent rises of up to £1 a week from Monday. This is the start of the process that will double rents, remove all control of housing from the tenants and subject them to a vicious means test.

But the tenants are not sitting back, waiting to be attacked. In many areas they are going on to the offensive. More than 60 towns and cities in England and Wales will be the scene of rent strikes from Monday (see panel).

These areas, housing some two million tenants, will see intense activity. Rent offices will be picketed. Rent collectors will be 'escorted' round the estates.

Rent strike stickers will be placed in every window. Newsletters will be produced regularly. Loudspeaker vans will tour the estates and street meetings will be held regularly.

As well as the 60 areas reported to Socialist Worker, there are likely to be many smaller towns on rent strike as well. And there are some half a million tenants under Labour-controlled councils whose rents have not yet been increased.

It is only a matter of time before these councils surrender to the Tories or the government will send in a Housing Commissioner to try to force through the increases. In either case, tenants in these areas will join the others on rent strike.

EXPLOSIVE

In Scotland the battle is likely to be even more militant. 22 of the 47 councils there have refused to put the rents up (see panel).

When rent increases are imposed in these areas the resistance from the tenants is likely to be explosive. Scotland's long tradition of militancy on rents looks certain to be surpassed in the next few months. In all the major areas, the tenants' movement is preparing for strike action.

While the tenants are moving into action, the trade unions in a number of areas are mobilising their strength in support. In Liverpool on Monday 10,000 dockers will strike in support of council tenants who start their rent strike on that day.

Liverpool and Birkenhead Trades Councils have called for industrial action from the rest of Merseyside on Monday. A number of building sites are expected to join the strike and two sections at the Standard car factory have pledged support.

Yorkshire miners have promised industrial action to back tenants.

In many areas, trade councils and union branches have pledged firm support. In dozens of factories, shop stewards have given guarantees of industrial action to back tenants if they are threatened or intimidated by their councils.

RENT STRIKE—St Pancras 1960:
see page 5

STRIKING MERSEYSIDE building workers voting at a mass meeting at Liverpool Pierhead last week. They returned to work at the end of the week but during their strike they pledged support to the tenants and many major sites are expected to stop on Monday.

The tenants' battle is one of the most important struggles of working people since the last war. It is vital that socialists and trade unionists give maximum assistance to the rent strikes in the coming weeks.

They should help maintain picket lines at rent offices, get on the doorstep and persuade more tenants to join the strike, encourage their union branch or factory to pledge strike action in support of the tenants and demand that Labour councils

take no action against rent strikers.

If we can show the same solidarity and determination that brought the miners their victory then we can force the Tories to retreat on the 'Fair Rents Act'.

It is an Act designed to increase rents year by year, to cut even deeper into working-class families' living standards and to force many of them into private housing where they will be at the mercy of the moneylenders and speculators.

With a massive wave of rent strikes, backed by industrial action, the Tories can be beaten.

The International Socialists are giving their full support to the rents battle. The IS executive committee on Monday called on all branches to give maximum effort to the campaign in the weeks ahead. Tenants' organisations needing help or assistance should contact local IS branches or through the head office—01-739 1878. Reports to Socialist Worker should be phoned to 01-739 9043.

Bigger paper—month to go

JUST ONE MONTH to go to the new Socialist Worker! On 28 October the paper will expand to 16 pages a week.

The aim of the bigger paper is to have an improved and expanded news coverage and analysis of industrial battles. There will be a regular slot on the trade unions and their internal structure and development to aid militants.

And the paper will be the spearhead of the vital Fight the Tories campaign being organised this autumn and winter by

the International Socialists.

Our editorial team will be strengthened by Paul Foot who, through his work on the magazine Private Eye, has built a reputation as the most outspoken, best-informed journalist on the lies and corruption of the Tories and their system.

We confidently expect the new paper to go from strength to strength. But we need YOUR help—help to increase the paper's influence and circulation. As we prepare to launch the 16-page paper we appeal to all our readers to take more copies and win more readers

ENGLAND AND WALES:—Areas include Manchester, Liverpool, Bristol, Greenwich, Swansea, Stockport, Hackney, Wrexham, York, Lewisham, Llanelli, Gateshead, Kirkby, Nottingham, Barnsley, Hounslow and Sheffield.

Expected to join if Labour councils surrender or Housing Commissioners are sent in:—Birmingham, Doncaster, Walsall, Clay Cross, Halstead, Camden, Salford, Canterbury, Llantrissant, Merthyr Tydfil.

SCOTLAND:—Glasgow, Clydebank, Dumbarton, Edinburgh, Midlothian, Falkirk, Lanarkshire, Fife and Dundee.

Heath's two quid con game

HEATH's 'anti-inflation' plan is nothing more than an attempt to con millions of workers into accepting a cut in their living standards. The fact that trade union leaders like Vic Feather have seen fit to praise the plan shows only how far they have moved from any real concern with the welfare of their members.

The idea that everybody's wage increases should be restricted to £2 a week for 12 months while price rises are restrained is presented in the Tory press as 'aid to the lower paid'. Even Vic Feather has said the scheme contains 'a good deal of fair play'.

But the opposite is true. A £2 a week pay increase will in no way allow a lower-paid worker to keep up with the cost of living, even if it is held back as the Tories claim.

Consider the case of a married man with two children living in a council house and earning a meagre £20 a week. Under the Tory plan the most he would be allowed to earn for the next year would be £22.

WIPE OFF

But the moment his wage goes up, so do the deductions from it for tax and national insurance contributions. These would wipe out 70p of the £2 before he has even opened his wage packet.

Then next week's council rents rises would wipe off another £1 a week. That leaves a mere 30p of the £2, or a percentage increase of 1.5 per cent. Yet according to the Tories, prices in the shop are going to rise by 5 per cent.

For those on even lower wages, the situation will be worse. Although their wages might not be subject to income tax, every pay rise automatically leads to loss of entitlement of rebates on rents, rates and health charges, as well as to losing the right to Family Income Supplement and free school meals. In some cases a rise as small as £2 a week will mean that people are actually worse off than before.

And the plan contains in-built guarantees that the easiest way to cut the level of unemployment, by reducing the working week, will not be adopted. For every hour cut in the working week, you would lose your entitlement to 75p of the £2 rise.

GET ROUND

It is claimed that the restriction on wage increases to £2 will hit all of us, rich and poor alike. But it will not hit the very rich at all. It will not hit those who have been making millions overnight out of property speculation, or those who daily watch the value of their shares rise. The directors of the big companies will quickly find a way of getting round the limitation with a larger company car, more costly expense account lunches, and 'promotion' to the same job.

Those who will be hit are the slightly better off sections of working people, those who labour for their living and have no property to speculate with or company cars. If the government's plan is accepted, anyone earning around the average industrial wage can expect to see the value of this take-home pay fall steadily from now on.

Where will this buying power go? Not to the lower paid, as we have shown. Instead it will automatically boost company profits and serve to increase dividends and profits. And the Tories have not even made the pretence of restraining these.

Dictator on the Tightrope

NEWS from Uganda is at present highly unreliable because of government distortion and harassment of newsmen, but it is now certain that on Sunday 17 September 1000 armed Ugandan exiles attempted to invade and seize power from President Amin on behalf of ex-President Obote.

Probably they expected pro-Obote elements in the army and population to rise in support. There have been reports of such risings in Jinja and two other towns.

Amin claims to have got the situation under control, but if Obote's soldiers have failed to make an impact with conventional methods they will probably switch to guerrilla warfare.

It is also certain that Tanzanian troops were not involved. President Nyerere is too wise a diplomat to make such a blunder.

But the bombing of Bukoba, a town on the Tanzanian shores of Lake Victoria, could provoke a disastrous full-scale confrontation between the two countries. Bukoba has been a base for pro-Obote men ever since the army coup in January 1971 when Amin took power.

Uganda is now on the verge of disaster. The British policy of divide and rule is about to bear dreadful fruit.

Lord Lugard, the famous colonial administrator, perfected his method of indirect rule through chiefs and kings in Uganda before moving on to Nigeria. He kept the kingdoms and many chiefships intact, in order to play them off one against the other.

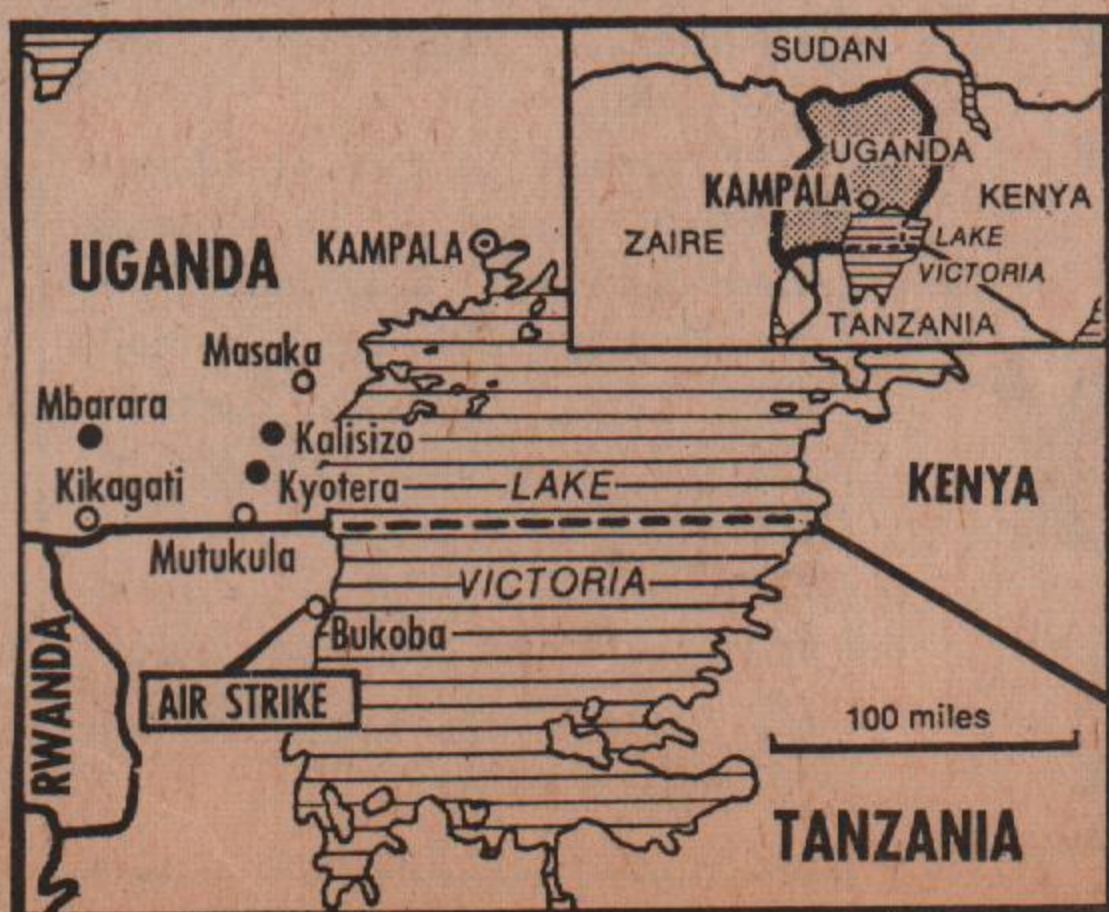
The expulsion of the Asians was an attempt by Amin to distract attention from the continuing power squabbles within Uganda and especially within the 20,000 strong army.

BOOTY

Amin had hoped to placate the Ugandan middle class by dishing out the Asians' property and businesses to them. The army too would have got its booty.

The few Asians who have so far run the gauntlet to the airport have told of the looting of their jewelry and small possessions at army roadblocks. A horrible fate awaits the thousands who, in the view of the Ugandan authorities, have not yet produced enough cash to purchase exit permits and therefore cannot get to the charter planes.

The Obote forces had been waiting in the wings for over a year, looking for the



The Uganda-Tanzania border area



GENERAL AMIN: desperately trying to keep his balance

by W. Enda

right opportunity to invade. Amin knew this and had frequently threatened to invade and bomb Tanzania for harbouring them.

The 'right moment' they have chosen sees Amin isolated from the sections of the population which cheered him after the coup.

The court of the million-strong Baganda people—whose semi-autonomous kingdom was abolished by Obote in 1967—thought that Amin would restore the kingdom. Amin freed the five Bagandan Ministers imprisoned by Obote and brought back the king's body for a state funeral.

But while he feted Prince Ronald, on holiday from his English public school, he did not crown him. Last week's imprisonment of the Chief Justice, an important Bagandan, continues the split. But it does

not endear the Baganda to king-breaker Obote.

The lower officer ranks in the army were also pleased when Amin took power. Soon after the coup there followed the massacre of officers and men who came from the same region as Obote. Two thousand died, and others fled to Tanzania. Rapid promotion of pro-Amin men followed.

LOYALTY

In Africa internal army massacres create their own dynamic. Any officer who tried to prevent looting was likely to be shot. Promotion by the gun was likely to lead to demotion by the gun—a process which Amin could not control.

Workers' struggle grows in Ceylon

by Edward Crawford

IN Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon), the continually deteriorating economic situation has led to an upsurge in working-class struggle.

In the capital, Colombo, two of the best-organised sections of white-collar workers have recently been on strike. A strike by technicians in the government Department of Irrigation, Power and Public Works, which started at the beginning of September, has now ended. But the bank clerks, who came out on 1 August, are still on strike.

Both strikes were declared illegal, and the government has banned the distribution of leaflets by the bank clerks. Nonetheless the bank strike remains absolutely solid, with only seven scabs reported. These seven signed a letter opposing the strike—apparently on the personal advice of renegade Trotskyist N M Perera.

A special parliamentary committee has been set up to deal with labour relations. It consists of Perera and another renegade, Colvin de Silva, the prime minister's brother-in-law, Felix Bandaranaike, and Peter Keuneman, the ex-secretary of the Communist Party.

After the rebellion last year Keuneman voted for the Criminal

Justice Commission Bill which gave enormous powers to the government. When the Party paper, Aththa, criticised him, he suspended it, sacked the editorial board, then restarted the paper with a new editorial board.

The recent Party conference replaced him by S A Wickremasinghe, who was the only Communist MP to vote against the Bill.

This is symptomatic of a confused political situation in Sri Lanka. Not only the Party, but also the Maoists are split, and there is growing discontent among the unions attached to the formerly Trotskyist LSSP at being called on to blackleg. While nothing is clear as yet, it is possible a new left grouping may emerge.

Meanwhile 14,000 detainees still rot in the concentration camps. The government has announced that it will release 10,000 and try the other 4,000 who are presumed to be the most 'guilty' of charges of rebellion.

Trade union and human rights organisations have called a nationwide hunger-strike for 18 October and the jailed detainees will take part. The Ceylon Solidarity Committee has called a public meeting in London for the same day (details to be announced later in Socialist Worker).

So Amin needed to have troops he could rely on, and he brought in 5000 or so black mercenaries from Zaire (the former Belgian Congo). These would be loyal as long as the cash flowed in. They were regarded with loathing by the local population, whom they treated brutally.

Others who welcomed Amin included the British and—ironically—the Ugandan Asians. The British were relieved of their fears that Uganda might—as Obote had declared in 1968—'move to the left'.

Obote (following examples in Tanzania and Zambia) had drawn up the 'Common Man's Charter'. This talked rather vaguely about preventing the gap between rich and poor from widening. It proposed co-operative banks and the nationalisation of any privately-owned enterprise 'for the benefit of the people'.

Needless to say, Obote hadn't managed to do any of these things, but the British were relieved anyway. Also Obote had been planning to expel the Asians with British passports. Britain thought Amin would reverse this.

Instead Amin has produced a situation where British interests are continually threatened—not by nationalisation, but by chaos. And he is expelling more Asians, more rapidly, than Obote had said he would.

The Tories, fearing an imminent program against the Asians, cannot make the same sort of racist deal that the Labour Party made over the Kenyan Asians—to let them in a few at a time.

CORRUPT

The Ugandan working class numbers only 80,000 in a population of eight million and so, unfortunately, plays little role in national politics. Strikes were made illegal under Obote and continue to be so under Amin. Nevertheless, last year 4000 copper workers and 4000 Kampala council workers struck—against the wishes of their corrupt union leadership—but they were beaten.

Amin's policies are inconsistent; one day he is pro-Israel, the next pro-Arab, one day he is pro-South Africa, the next he supports the Organisation of African Unity.

But he is not mad. Rather he is desperately trying to balance between the different forces and opinions of the many ambitious groups in Uganda.

He constantly tours the country to meet the people. He sits as chairman to try to settle squabbles between Catholics and Protestants.

But he shoots disloyal colonels and the army is beginning to crumble. It is suffering from internal bleeding and Obote's men are trying to take advantage of the hemorrhage. While no-one can predict what will happen, socialists and the common people of Uganda can take no comfort from having either Amin or Obote in power.

THE TWO Japanese railway workers' unions ran a seven-day 'go slow' last week to protest at management disciplinary measures against nearly 35,000 men.

The punishments were reprisals against workers who had taken part in strikes and 'go slow' struggles in the past. 22 men were sacked and about 30,000 received pay cuts.

On the first day of the 'go slow' in Tokio alone, some 190 trains had to be cancelled, and 2000 were delayed. The unions have a combined membership of 300,000 railwaymen.

WORKERS in the Spanish port of Vigo, striking in support of workers at the Citroen factory there, have met vicious repression at the hands of the authorities. On 21 September more than 4000 workers in various factories who had refused to accept an ultimatum to return to work were dismissed.

On the morning of the same day about 2000 workers gathered to demonstrate outside the Citroen factory but were dispersed by a police charge. More than 60 workers have been arrested and some 20 are to be brought to trial.

AN IMPORTANT act of international solidarity opposed the power of the multinational companies last week.

The Dutch Akzo company had planned to close five plants in Holland, West Germany and Belgium. But on 18 September workers in the Breda plant in southern Holland occupied their factory; and the following day the Wuppertal-Barmen factory in West Germany was occupied.

At the end of the week Akzo withdrew the closure plans, thus saving 5000 jobs.

IN DENMARK the ruling class is so anxious to win next week's referendum on the Common Market that it has roped in the astrologers. The newspaper Boersen (more or less equivalent to the Financial Times) has published a horoscope to show that on 1 January next year, when Denmark is due to join, Mars will be entering Sagittarius, a favourable omen.

AT LEAST someone is doing well out of the Common Market. Moves are being made to raise the salaries of top bureaucrats employed by the European Commission. The directors-general already get around £12,750 a year, but the British government, which clearly doesn't believe charity begins at home, is asking for a 15 per cent increase for them.

Of course, some unfortunate bureaucrats may be made redundant in the shuffle caused by the expansion of the Common Market, but the Commission is proposing they should get full pay for two years, and 80 per cent for a further two.

It is to be hoped this will become standard practice for the several million unemployed in the Market.

THE SO-CALLED 'socialist' countries in Eastern Europe are just as dependent on customs control as the West. In January Czechoslovakia and East Germany decided to abolish the need for passports to travel between the two countries. Since prices were lower in Czechoslovakia, East Germans flocked over the border and emptied the shops. Within weeks customs were restored, and the export of some products was banned altogether.

ANGELA DAVIS is at present visiting Eastern Europe. Before she left she was asked by a group of Ukrainian exiles and by former Czech television director Jiri Pelikan to make some criticisms of political repression in Russia and Czechoslovakia. She has, however, refused to make any statement of criticism.

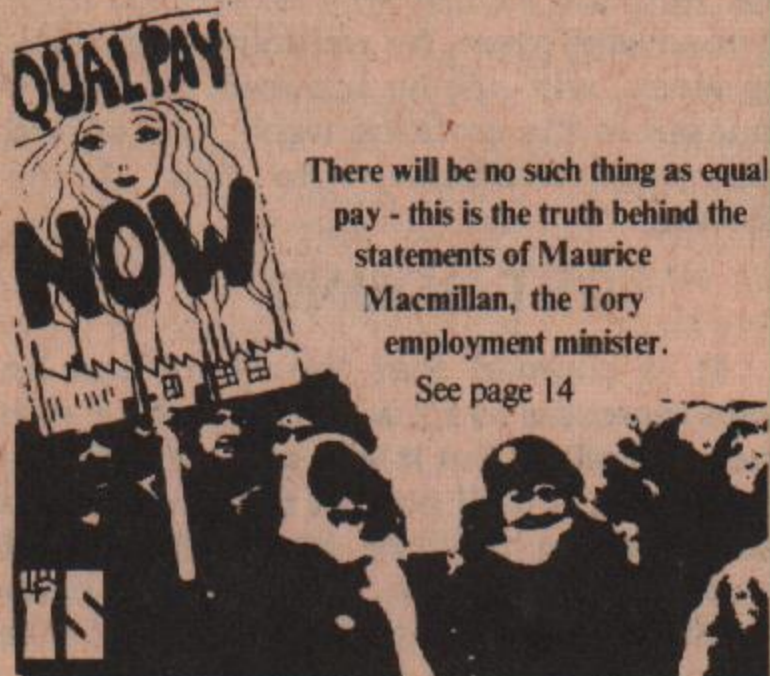
CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS in West Germany are campaigning for the banning of a primary school civic instruction textbook which they claim is a 'marxist manual'. Among features they object to are a photo of Karl Marx and a picture of a school blackboard bearing the words 'the teacher is an idiot'.

In the second edition the authors have bowed to criticism by changing the statement that 'almost all' American blacks live in poverty to merely saying 'very many'.

SINCE 1971 the French National Union of Students (UNEF) has been split into two groups, one controlled by the Communist Party, the other by the Trotskyists of the AJS tendency, each claiming to be the sole legitimate organisation. The Trotskyist wing have now proposed reunification.

Womans Voice

number 2 5p



There will be no such thing as equal pay - this is the truth behind the statements of Maurice Macmillan, the Tory employment minister. See page 14

LATEST ISSUE includes articles on Equal Pay in engineering, The Housing Problem, Why Unions? Consumer Power, and Equal Pay Victory at Havant.

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Thieves fall out

ROY JENKINS is at it again. The Labour Party, he tells us, 'cannot hope to put its ideals into practice as a class party, appealing solely to class interests and class emotions.'

But all parties represent class interests. The Labour Party was started, as the resolution at the founding conference stated, with the object of 'working class opinion being represented in the House of Commons'. That contradiction in terms, the 'Labour' member of the House of Lords, had not then been thought of.

Eighteen years later, when the party came to adopt a new statement of aims it described its purpose as being 'To secure for the workers, by hand and by brain, the full fruits of their industry . . . on the basis of the common ownership of the means of production'. That is a class aim.

But hasn't the Labour Party long since abandoned that aim, if indeed it ever took it seriously? Of course it has. Labour in power has proved in practice that it is the second party of big business.

What then is Jenkins on about? The dispute between the extreme right wing of the party around Jenkins and the Wilson leadership, which is supported by the pathetic Tribune 'left', is concerned with how best to recover the fruits of office and get on with the job of showing that the Labour Party can do better for British capitalism than the Tories.

Jenkins wants to rely on the Tories continuing to make themselves so unpopular that the Labour Party is returned almost automatically. He wants to avoid 'dangerous' promises about housing, rents, wages and so on.

Wilson, on the other hand, knows very well that there is widespread scepticism about Labour among millions of regular Labour voters. He sees the need to recover a leftish image for the party. He is all for a great deal of sound and fury in parliament to persuade people that Labour is a real root-and-branch opposition. And he is not much worried about making promises. After all he has plenty of experience in breaking them.

Kidding opponents

The Wilson method is perfectly illustrated by an item on the Housing Finance Bill—the infamous 'Fair Rents' scheme—that appears in the report of the National Executive Committee to next week's annual conference. 'An all out attack was launched on the highly controversial Housing Finance Bill' it states. 'It was organised in the same way as the very successful fight in the previous session against the Industrial Relations Bill and met with even more gratifying results.'

A 'very successful fight' against the Industrial Relations Bill? But it became law. How on earth could the parliamentary fight against it have been successful?

Because the 'success' the executive speaks of has nothing to do with killing the Bill. It has to do with kidding the Bill's opponents that the Labour Party, which had tried to bring in just such a law itself, had had a real change of heart and was now absolutely against anti-union laws.

And so with the Housing Finance Act. There is not the slightest shadow of a doubt that the Labour Party could have killed it stone dead. The party controls the great majority of the big local authorities and a great many smaller ones too. Many Labour councillors had been returned on the specific pledge to refuse to implement the law.

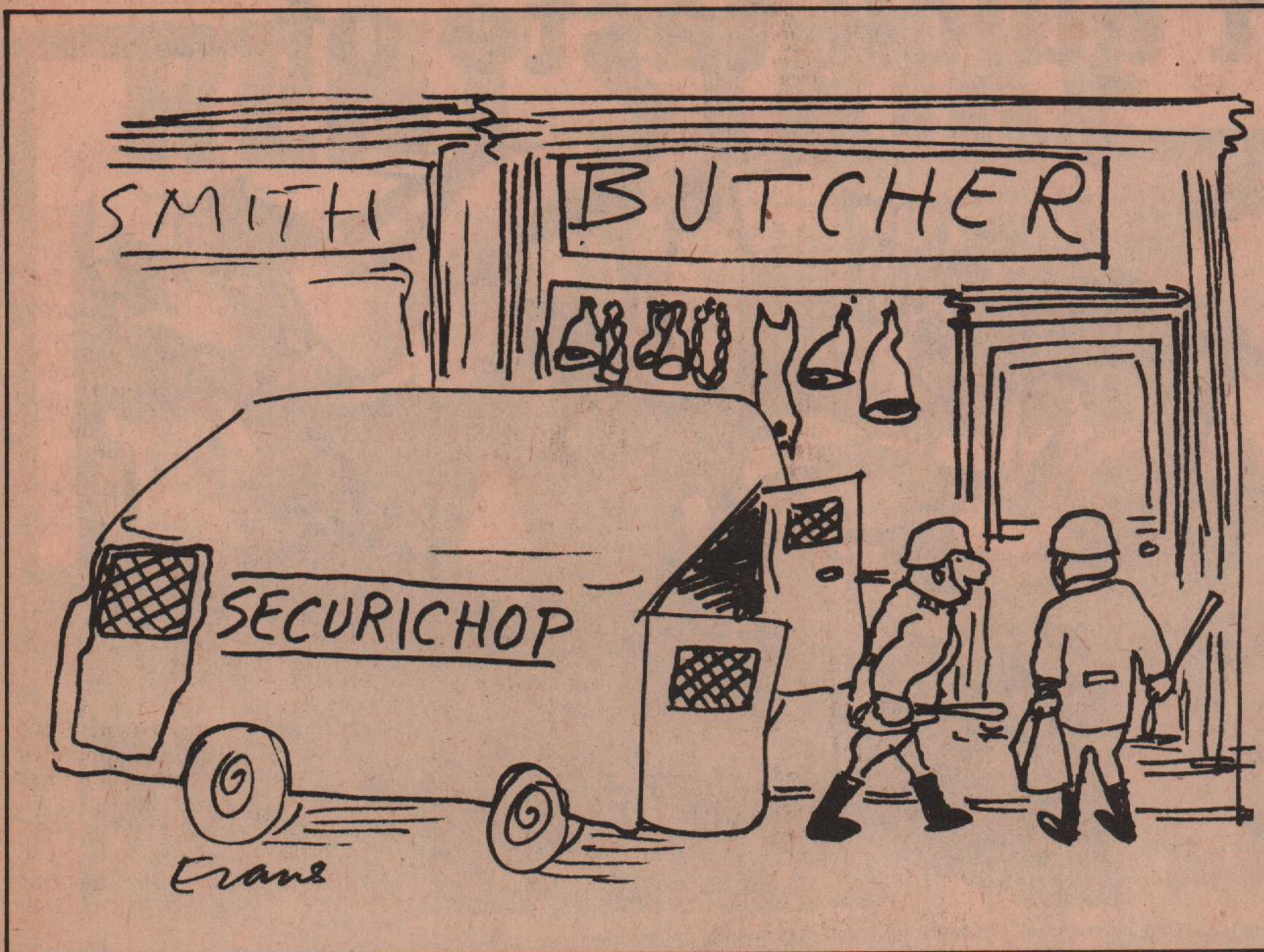
A concerted refusal by the Labour-controlled councils would have made it impossible for the government to get away with the increases. However, 'the NEC decided, after great consideration not to recommend a national policy of total non-implementation by Labour councils.'

Wilson is no less determined than Jenkins that the opposition confines itself to shadow boxing. Speeches and votes in parliament are one thing. Action is quite another.

The Tory Frankenstein

GENERAL AMIN of Uganda looks like God's gift to the Tory Party. How convenient it is to have somebody whose policies are even more reactionary than their own and who, to cap it all, is a black man. As somebody has said, if General Amin didn't exist, the Tories would have had to invent him.

And that is the truth of the matter. All the Tory horror over Amin's brutal policies is just so much hypocrisy. The British government connived at the downfall of Obote for fear that his timid 'left' policies might hurt British investment. The Tories helped and welcomed Amin to power. They created the Frankenstein.



NOT ONLY WARRIORS

Masked truth

LATEST anti-union hysteria in the press concerns 'violence' from faceless gangs of militant extremists. No names, no pack drill, of course, because the press have no facts to go on, just fantasy.

Last week's brutal attack on Midlands building union organiser Mike Shilvoek was seen by the press as a marvellous booster to their campaign. The Express, frothing with simulated wrath, declared on Saturday that once upon a time the militants had sent moderates to 'Coventry' but now they sent them to hospital.

The implication in nearly every press story was that Mr Shilvoek, chairman of the Midlands Building Workers Strike Action Committee, had been beaten up by workers who were angry at the decision to end their strike and return to work. The Mirror's front-page piece last Thursday was quite explicit: 'The raiders, believed to be building workers themselves, broke his arm by forcing it up behind his back . . . Last night police began a massive hunt for the men, who, they believe, may be rebels bitter over the decision to end the 11-week national strike.'

After 10 paragraphs depicting the vicious assault and liberally dropping hints that the attackers were building workers, came a final one-line disclaimer: 'But union leaders—and Mr Shilvoek—said they thought the men were hired by a "Mafia-type employer".'

In fact union officials, including the regional secretary of UCATT, Ken Barlow, strenuously denied that building workers could have anything to do with such an attack. They stressed that the style of the assault gave every indication of being organised by professional thugs.

Gerry Kelly, a UCATT militant who has written for Socialist Worker during the strike, told us that the idea of workers attacking Shilvoek was nonsense because Shilvoek himself is one of the leading militants

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DEAR old Tribune is organising an 'Any Questions?' session in Blackpool this Sunday on the eve of the Labour Party laugh-in. One question any passing trade unionist might care to ask is why Tribune is currently running an ad from the Union of Kodak Workers. Kodak is a notorious anti-union firm and the 'union' is a management-run affair. It is registered under the Industrial Relations Act.

Even the lack-lustre TUC has supported the campaign by the Association of Cinematograph and Television Technicians to organise Kodak workers into a genuine union. With little help from Tribune, which gives the Kodak yellow union a semblance of credibility by accepting its ads.

in the area and won the respect of fellow builders when he was convenor at the Woodgate Valley site.

These are the facts of the case: Last Wednesday, 20 September, four masked men knocked on the door of Mike Shilvoek's home in Stourbridge and said, 'We have an urgent message for Mr Shilvoek'. When he opened the door they went for his face with a knife.

Shilvoek dived for the floor, thinking they might have a gun as well. The men dragged him into a back room, bent his arm behind his back and broke it, then jumped on his stockinged feet, breaking his toes. In less than five minutes they did extensive damage to his body.

Apart from their initial 'message', the men did not speak again. One would have expected genuine building workers to have made some comment about the ending of the strike.

So where did the 'theory' that the attackers were building workers come from? A reporter from a national paper told this column that he wrote the theory into his story because he was told it 'off the record' by a top Midlands police officer.

When the police were tackled officially about the theory they denied making any such statement. But the damage had been done. Millions of newspaper readers believed, because the press told them, that militant workers, wearing masks and carrying a knife, had

sent a 'less-militant' trade unionist to hospital with severe injuries.

It is all a monstrous lie. It would be nice if a few reporters at least treated police 'theories' in future with the same scepticism that they reserve for comments from on-the-spot trade unionists.

MEMO to devout Christian Lord Longford: We have just read a passage in a best-selling work of fiction that we think is a border line case of obscenity. It's about this chap called Moses who asks permission to see God's face. God declines him this privilege but shows him instead 'his back parts' and speaks to him 'as a man speaketh with his friend' (Exodus, xxxiii, 2,3). We can imagine Longford's reaction if a modern novel had a passage about one man showing another his bare backside while having a friendly chat with him.

Eye, eye

MUCH outrage at the killing last week of an Israeli official in London who was sent an exploding letter. The mass media naturally blamed Arab guerillas but no Arab organisation had admitted responsibility.

Who are the experts in exploding letters? Why, none other than the Israelis. The first recorded example was by the Zionist terrorist organisation, the Irgun, who sent one to a British official in London in 1948.

In recent months a large number of exploding letters have been sent to Arab leaders and diplomats. As the official policy of the Israeli government is 'an eye for an eye' they can hardly complain if somebody follows their grisly example.

There is another practioner in the field, that well-known mayhem organisation, the American government. They have been dropping the detonators used in exploding letters over Vietnam by the thousand. They are thrown from helicopters and look like innocent tea-bags. When a Vietnamese peasant steps on one, he or she has a foot blown off.

Someone, somewhere, doesn't want a letter from Richard Nixon.

POSTER outside Shoreditch Church: 'GOD IS FAITHFUL'. Which is good news for Mrs God.

White lies

IF your trade union branch receives an invitation from an innocent sounding organisation called Counterblast Films, offering to lease you a movie called 'England—Whose England?', beware. Counterblast Films is a front for the extreme right-wing Tory group, the Monday Club, in the thick of the racist anti-immigrant campaign.



Asians get quick taste of

'apartheid'

HOMELESS ASIANS from Amin's Uganda are not long settled at the former RAF camp at Stradishall, in the Vestey-owned territory of West Suffolk, before they come across their first taste of racial discrimination.

As they arrive at the mess quarters they are separated from the white British staff and army of enthusiastic volunteers. The Asians eat downstairs: upstairs is for whites only.

When I and another reporter tried to eat with an Asian family we were interviewing we were refused service. 'Upstairs,' the staff ordered us. 'You can't eat here.' The meal-time apartheid, it should be added, has official sanction.

The bosses have already moved in to con the Asians eager to find work.

A director from Ford's at Dagenham interviewed several and promised to let them know about £45-a-week jobs within a few days.

'You will have to join the union if you get a job there,' I advised one of the hopeful candidates.

'Oh no,' he replied innocently. 'The man told us there are no unions, no strikes at Dagenham.'

It took me some time to explain my convulsions.

They may be innocent about industrial affairs in Britain, but they are not so naive about Uganda.

They count themselves lucky to be among the first to get out—penniless

and without possessions though they are.

'At least we are alive,' said Kassim Osman, who fled with his mother, wife, two brothers, their wives and their six children.

One of his brothers explained the corruption that is a way of life in Amin's Uganda. The first question every petty bureaucrat asks the hapless applicant is: 'Will you give me a parliament?'

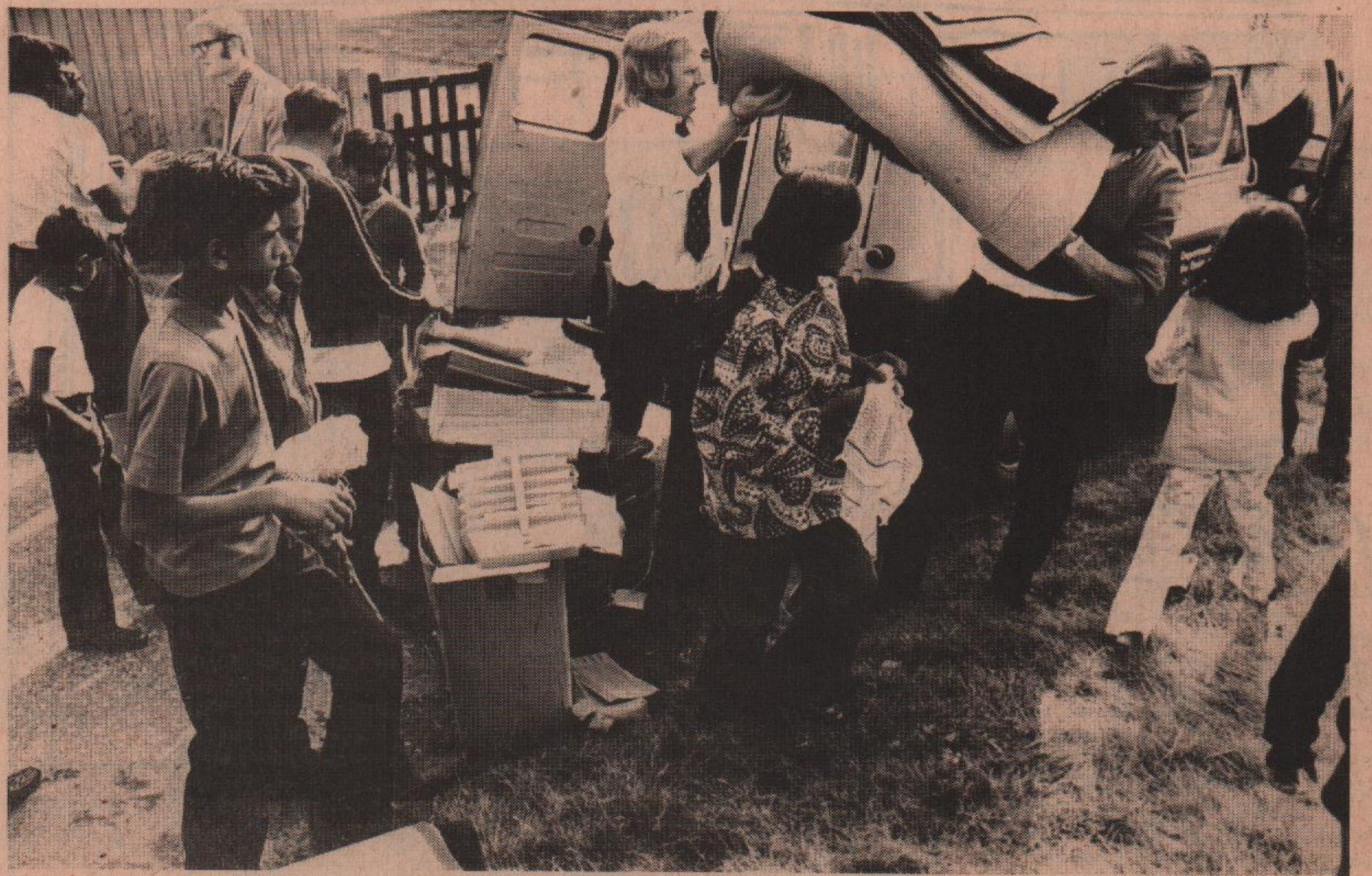
The 'parliament' is a £5 note which bears the motif of the Uganda parliament. And 'parliaments' by the score are used by everyone to lubricate their way through the bureaucratic machine to get flight tickets to sanctuary.

Several Asians said that their plight was rosy compared to that of the tribes who supported the deposed President Milton Obote. Amin is taking terrible vengeance against them.

Since he came to power he has had thousands of them systematically massacred outside the town of Mbarara. They have been shot with their hands tied behind their backs.

Their bodies were left to rot and spread cholera. Their bones can still be seen.

Another favourite sport of Amin's slaughter troops is to take their rival tribesmen—particularly members of the police force—to a 100ft-high bridge above the Nile. Below there is a further deadly drop as the water cascades over a spectacular falls into a crocodile-infested lagoon.



Asians arriving at Stradishall last week, with volunteers unloading bedding

The victims, trussed helplessly, are perched on the parapet of the bridge and, after suitable baiting, are nudged to their ghastly doom.

In material terms the Asians at Stradishall are treated well and they acknowledge this. Clothing, food, heat-

ing and bedding are all provided.

But they do not want to be dependent. They are as anxious to get away to a job and a home of their own as the authorities are to see them go.

Of the original 102 who were taken to Stradishall, 67 remained at the week

end but they were joined by more than 400 as things hotted up in Kampala and Amin's 'deadline' drove increasing numbers out.

R K Nelson

LABOUR: IT'S A LONG HISTORY OF BETRAYALS

I WAS extremely happy to see that Harry McShane (23 September), an old comrade, is still alive and active, for it reminded me of the great Hunger March of the 1930s.

He may not recall me, as organiser of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement, meeting him and Peter Kerrigan, the leaders of the Scottish contingent, as they entered West Bromwich, with the news that the police were out on horseback, with the intention of forcing them to walk the back streets, so as to lessen publicity in our fight against the Means Test.

The police soon realised they were on a losing battle and allowed the marchers up the town centre.

Looking back, do you not agree that the workers of today are in a weak position chiefly because of the lack of fight by the leaders of the Labour Party and the trade unions?

In the 1930s they condemned the march. In the 1945-50 government they introduced prescription charges, among other things, on the workers, and broke the heart of Aneurin Bevan.

In the 1964-70 government, with a huge majority able to bring in any socialist plan they wished, they attacked us in many ways. Income tax rose, wages were frozen but not profits, they re-introduced medical charges, attempted an industrial Bill to put unions in chains and even now, having seen how disgusted the workers are over their betrayal, allow such traitors as Jenkins and other Common Marketeers to remain in the party.

Then we have Vic Feather drinking and dining at No 10 with the greatest enemy living at the present time, instead of organising the millions of frustrated, but eager, workers who are ready and anxious for battle with the only enemy they know, the bosses and the Tory government.

May we live to see the day when all these traitors have been swept aside and true socialists and the workers are in control.—S SMITH, West Bromwich, Staffs.

Leap backwards

THE FIVE Pekingologists who wrote from Manchester last week to complain about Our Norman probably think that the purchase of three Concorde's by China is a great leap forward.

The Chinese revolution was not carried out by the working class but by an alliance of peasants and intellectuals. It is unlikely that workers in China, if they ran the country, would put Concorde very high on the priority list.

Incidentally, BAC here in Bristol, who help make Concorde, have just declared 300 men redundant, but the Chinese government aren't worried about that!

It is not, as our complainers say in best 'Any Questions' language, 'scandalous' to imply that representatives of the Chinese government work hand-in-glove with British bosses'. They do. They sent delegations round the aircraft factories so

LETTERS

that the Concorde project bosses could point out all the luxurious fittings of the obscene white elephant.

Only one detail of Our Norman was wrong (for artistic purposes). The Chinese delegates didn't wear Mao-type uniforms on their visits, but executive-style suits like our own native businessmen.—PHIL EVANS, Bristol 8.

IN answer to a letter from five Manchester readers you wrote that 'IS has taken and maintains the view that China is a state capitalist regime no more deserving of support than regimes based on private property.' We were disturbed by the crude analysis revealed in this statement.

It would appear to indicate that support cannot be given to any state other than a bona fide workers' state. This ignores the possibility that in their historical context, some states, though not under workers' control, may play a progressive role. In underdeveloped countries, where the working class is minute, no more is possible.

To deny those countries support against their reactionary enemies because they are judged not to be workers' states is comparable to the Stalinists' inability to distinguish between fascists and social fascists.

China, despite many disturbing features, is far more progressive than regimes such as the Nationalists of Taiwan, or other Asian US puppet states. Whether or not

Letters to Socialist Worker must arrive first post Monday. Type or write on one side of the paper only. Letters should be not more than 250 words

China is state capitalist is a question that requires more space. However it is certainly different from the Eastern European countries—the effect of the war of liberation cannot be ignored. The development of China, protected from US imperialism, has surely been to the benefit of its people.

IS has previously recognised such factors in its support, although critical, for the NLF in Vietnam, to the extent of accepting the slogan 'Victory to the NLF'. Would our support vanish on the assumption of power by the Provisional government?—ELLIOT GINGOLD, DAVID EVANS, Leicester.

Socialist Worker will reply next week.

THIS is a minor point in reply to the critics of the Our Norman cartoon, but I would like to describe the conditions when I worked for the People's Republic in one of their London offices to try to illustrate the truth behind the cartoon.

Although I didn't go there with ideas of working for a 'socialist firm' I did expect reasonable conditions: no petty rules, strong union organisation and a fairly friendly atmosphere. I was

disappointed.

If you were late twice in one week you were told off. One of the people in my department lived in Essex and had to get two trains to work. One day his first train was late and he missed his connection which meant he was half an hour late.

Did the representatives of the People's Republic understand the difficulties we faced with the transport system? No—they sacked him.

What about the union, didn't they do anything about it? You might well ask. During my first week I asked about joining the union. I was told there wasn't one and I'd probably get sacked if I set one up.

Other conditions were just as bad—you were told off for being a few minutes late back at dinner-time and you weren't meant to talk during working hours. Still, it wasn't all bad: while we were slaving away we could take quick glances at the many posters on the wall with quotations of Chairman Mao.

But their inconsistency showed itself here as well. When trade talks started between China and America, the poster complaining of the 'American running dog imperialists' was removed.—MARGARET FALSHAW, London E13.

Travesty of facts

I MUST comment on Peter Rankin's article on overpopulation (23 September) which is a travesty of the known facts which are simple and not in serious dispute:

- 1 The population of the world is increasing rapidly and in geometrical progression.
- 2 The world supply of basic raw materials is finite, not infinite.
- 3 Britain has to import half of her necessary foodstuffs.
- 4 There will be at least 10 million more people in Britain by the year 2000.

Even a cursory study of the literature on ecology should convince Rankin that, no matter how egalitarian and socialist our society is made to be, no matter how rational and humane, without a serious policy on population (world-wide, Mr Rankin—white and black!), resources and pollution, the end result would be

Sowing seeds of doubt

I AGREE with Rosalind Goss (23 September) on the need to show women how they are duped and exploited by the capitalist system. A fair share of female interest on the front page and inside would help remove the isolation which women experience far more than men.

Regarding sport, certainly try to show how little real sport we get compared with the pseudo-sport fostered by capitalism.

Finally, it seems to me that the main function of Socialist Worker is not to erode the cherished beliefs of conservative men and women. This is what the socialist should do through his or her personal relations.

Socialist Worker can only be expected to take over once this has been started by people like us. Conservatives don't like to be made to feel dissatisfied by the direct approach of a newspaper and will avoid 'revolutionary rubbish' like the plague.

But once the seeds of doubt have been sown in the course of everyday talk then comes the chance for Socialist Worker to take over and the broader the field of capitalist corruption it exposes the better.—JOHN SOMERSET, London SE9.

disastrous.

We must aim at a socialist society, but it must be a live society.—DR HARRY F BUGLER, Leicester.

PETER RANKIN fails to see that in attempting to disprove Malthus he has managed to disprove his own argument. He gives us two sides of an equation, but fails to connect them up.

Refuting Malthus' claim that population would inevitably outstrip food supply, he writes: 'In 1798 the United States had a population of five million people and more than enough food to feed them. Today it has a population of 200 million and still has enough food.'

The reason, he explains, is that the tractors of the industrial revolution and the fertilisers of the chemical revolution have increased food production in a way Malthus did not foresee.

But he goes on: 'But still there is poverty: a United Nations survey has shown that nearly three-quarters of the world's children suffer from starvation. This is not due to some Malthusian law, but to the economic system called imperialism, whereby the rich nations loot the poor nations.'

This is the REAL reason why the United States still has enough food to feed its 200 million people. For all the increased farm productivity since 1798, the Americans would go very hungry were it not for the food they loot from the world's poor.—PETER MARSDEN, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

Orange and Green still divide Scots workers

YOUR ARTICLE on Glasgow (23 September) relegated the Orange-Green split in the working class in Glasgow to past history. However recent events have shown this to be nonsense. The basis for its continuation, i.e. the segregated educational system, continues to flourish and it is up to trade unionists and socialists to attack it and help to destroy the hold of Orangeism and of the reactionary social policies of the Scottish Catholic Hierarchy.—D. TIERNEY, Livingston, W. Lothian.

RENT STRIKE...

AT 4am on 22 September 1960 bailiffs, aided by 800 police, broke through barricades to evict Camden Council tenants who had been refusing to pay rent for nine months in protest at Tory government laws which were doubling some rents and raising all by an average £1.50.

But the St Pancras rent strike didn't end in defeat because of the actions of bailiffs and police, nor because it lacked

by Lee Kane and Richard Reiser

fighting spirit—but because it was an isolated struggle, because the tenants' leaders deliberately reduced the struggle to a few martyrs who could easily be picked off, and because they put their faith in a Labour council which then betrayed its tenants.

And because the Tory government was determined to smash the strike and

was ready to use the whole of state power to do so.

But today's Tory government is not fighting 5000 tenants but five million. If the tenants' movement today can repeat on a national scale the fighting spirit of St Pancras, if the trade union movement will show the mass solidarity it gave to the jailed dockers, then the double-talk of the 'Fair Rents' Act will be just more waste paper.



St Pancras tenants marching on the town hall during the strike

Council tenants defy Tory law

THE EVICTIONS of Don Cook and Arthur Rowe were both victory and defeat for the St Pancras tenants who had created a movement capable of involving 10,000 people on demonstrations and marches and 4000 tenants in a partial rent strike against the differential rent scheme.

The crux of the scheme was the 'new idea' that tenants should pay a 'reasonable rent' ie rent related to the inflated costs of land and loans. In this it was an important forerunner of Labour's 1965 Housing Act and the Tory 'Fair Rents' Act.

In May 1959 the newly-elected Tory Council of St Pancras presented the differential rent scheme designed to cover the £300,000 deficit on its housing account. It was a pretext to get more council income from tenants, and less from big business—for the rates were reduced by 4d in the £1 the following year after the council had got another £700,000 from the rent increases.

The deficit had arisen as a result of the previous Labour council's decision to freeze rents at a level which most tenants could afford, at a time when housing subsidies were abolished, the cost of land and building were rising and councils were forced by a change in government policy to borrow money for new building at market rates.

Previously, under the Labour council, the deficit had been met out of the rates, but 70 per cent of the rates were paid by industry and commerce, where the bosses took exception to subsidising housing.

Shift the cost

The import of the rent rises was obscured by rebates for 'the less well off' were to pay the 'full cost of their housing'. The rebates operated on a six-monthly means test based on gross income, taking account of overtime and wages earned by other family members.

A quarter of the tenants were eligible for rebate, but few could claim the full amount. Meanwhile rents were to be raised by £1.50 on average and some were to be doubled. The impact was to be reduced by spreading the increases over a

Overall the scheme effectively shifted the cost of land speculation and interest payments firmly on to tenants.

In response to the scheme a strong organisation of tenants and trade unionists grew within weeks where no organisation had previously existed.

Of the four tenants' associations already in the borough only one was really workable. Yet by September—four

'The first we knew about the raid was when five bailiffs came in through a hole in the roof. They came down the stairs and forced open the sitting room. We retreated to the kitchen and re-barricaded . . . The bailiffs used crowbars and hacksaws. Those which came through the roof let more bailiffs in through the window . . .'

'Suddenly the police arrived in seven cars. They jumped out and ran upstairs with two bailiffs. We immediately realised what was happening. We all ran into the flats screaming and trying to get the residents out to prevent the bailiffs evicting Mr Rowe . . . Hundreds of policemen arrived and cordoned off the flats in Silverdale House, front and back. We could not get there to help Arthur and his son.'

months after the scheme was announced—the United Tenants Association was a central co-ordinating body for more than 30 tenants' associations and could launch a demonstration of 6000 tenants.

There were frequent marches, rallies, demonstrations, and by November the associations had got 3000 tenancies withdrawn from the rents scheme. These were requisitioned and non-council built properties, and left only about 4200 tenants still eligible for rent increases.

On 4 January 1960 about 3000 tenants withheld the increase. Within a fortnight the council issued 800 notices to quit. Rent collectors and bailiffs began threatening and intimidating tenants. Many tenants, unsure of the real strength, unity and possibilities of their movement succumbed to these pressures and paid up, leaving only 624 still on strike by the end of January.

The next few months whittled them down to 300. This disintegration of the strike, with its effect on morale and the tenants' fear that they might lose their homes, led the United Tenants' Associations to decide it could not defend all the tenants at once. So they chose only two tenants, and prepared to resist the evictions, hoping to use the struggle that

would follow to boost the rents strike.

Tactically this may well have been the wrong move, since it enabled not only the tenants but the state to concentrate their forces. But this tactic rose both from the strength and weakness of the tenants' movement—many tenants, even those who paid up, still wanted to fight but fear of using the only effective weapon, the rent strike, led to defeat.

Later, faith in 'democracy' rather than their own and their neighbours' action was to lead many tenants to vote Labour in a vain attempt to repeal the differential rents scheme. By this time the United Tenants Association was too weakened to force Labour to keep its pledge.

Stormed the flats

Don Cook of Kennistoun House and Arthur Rowe of Silverdale House were taken to court.

The judge agreed with the association's criticisms of the scheme but nevertheless granted eviction orders.

His comments resulted in another 2000 tenants going on rent strike. Barricades and defence systems were erected and after three weeks of expect-

ancy the flats were stormed at 4am on 22 September by bailiffs aided by 800 police and the tenants evicted.

The areas were cordoned off and angry tenants kept at bay.

Various trade union branches played a less prominent role than had been expected, mainly because the evictions were so early. Railwaymen from Camden No 2 NUR branch had held a 24-hour token strike on 29 August. Council workers had struck on 30 and 31 August and local firemen had refused to be involved.

Later on the day of the evictions building workers from the Shell site on the South Bank struck and marched to join the tenants and 100 men from Camden goods yard who also struck in protest.

The flats were not retaken—this would have only been a gesture as they were by now uninhabitable. Instead, tenants and workers marched to the town hall where there was a battle with the police and many tenants were injured or arrested.

Caution on the part of the United Tenants Association leadership had dissipated the militancy into useless street fighting. It is arguable that if the Association had fought specifically to rehouse the evicted tenants they would have been in a much stronger position to carry on and intensify the struggle, particularly as rents had risen by another 12s a week since July.

The Association called for a new rent strike, but by December its central committee had changed direction and was giving most of its efforts to support for a 'Labour and progressive council' rather than carrying on direct action. Several of the tenants' leaders, including Don Cook, were to stand as Communist candidates.

The Labour council came to power pledged to get rid of the differential rent scheme—but months dragged on with no change. Eventually the council announced it had taken legal advice and could not reduce rents without risking the threat of being surcharged by the government's district auditor.

It seems unlikely that both the Labour and Communist Parties did not know this before the election—in which case they and the United Tenants leadership simply sold out the tenants of St Pancras, for a bit of opportunist electioneering.

GEC: The 'thirty sackings a day' bosses

THE damning indictment of Rio Tinto Zinc published a few months ago by Counter Information Services has now been followed by an Anti-Report on GEC-AEI, a report that should be required reading for every shop steward in that giant electrical combine and will be of immense interest to militants in other fields.

The core of the report is an account of how the 'rationalisation' of GEC-AEI factories has been based on deliberate redundancy and unemployment. In the past four years an average of more than 30 people have been made redundant by GEC-AEI every working day. Meanwhile, the average profit made from each employee has doubled.

This policy of throwing workers on the scrap heap to boost the profits of shareholders began in earnest with the merger of GEC and AEI in 1967. This was brought about by the efforts of that darling of the Labour government industrial policy, the Industrial Relations Corporation, with the full assistance of the Minister of Technology, Anthony Wedgwood Benn.

Ruthless

At the time of the merger it was clear to everyone concerned that its aim was to concentrate production in some factories and close the rest. As The Times commented a few months later: 'Benefits can be achieved only if GEC manages to proceed as it intends—ruthlessly to some ideal of efficiency . . . Factories will be closed and men made redundant. But the result, hopefully, will be a company which makes profits at home and . . . overseas.'

Government money was also used to make the redundancies easier.

For example, when the company closed down its works in Woolwich, it sacked 5500 people and moved production to Scotland, where it took on a mere 2000 to replace the Woolwich workforce. For 'creating jobs' in Scotland GEC-AEI received £1.7 million of government money in 1968 under the Labour government's 'regional employment' policy—even though it was increasing the total unemployment nationally.

The report reveals how, at every stage in its redundancy programme, the company used deliberate lies to prevent united opposition from its workers. For example in April 1969 it issued a list of factories and their redundancy prospects to the unions. 'Among the "secure" factories appear Harlow, Lincoln and several others where redundancies and closures have since been announced,' says the report.

Critical

That favourite 'honest broker' of the trade union leaders, Sir Jack Scamp, is a director of GEC-AEI, owning £126,000 of its shares. In June last year he told Harlow Town Council that fears that the company would end all its manufacturing activities in Harlow were 'groundless'.

Two months ago the GEC-AEI management announced that it is 'now making a critical examination of the prospects for the continuation of the Harlow unit'.

Such lies certainly seem to have been effective. The Sunday Times has been able to point out that 'the unions did not succeed in stopping a single closure'. Indeed, they hardly seem to have tried.

For the fuller story, read the report, which also deals with the origins of the merged company, its price-fixing activities and its international connections. It is a valuable addition to the propaganda armoury of any socialist.

GEC-AEI Anti-Report is available from Counter Information Services, 52 Shaftesbury Avenue, London W1, price 25p (10p for GEC-AEI workers, 15p per copy for orders of more than 10 copies).

...St Pancras 1960

ON THE EVE OF THE PARTY CONFERENCE, MARTIN BARKER DEMOLISHES...

Labour's charade: it's time to check the record

'WE ARE a democratic, socialist party and proud of it. We put the principles of democracy and socialism above consideration of class and market economics. We aim to bring about a society based on co-operation instead of competition, where production is for people's needs not for private profit.'

These are the opening words of Labour's 1972 Draft Programme. Fine, brave words. They would be excellent, if true. In fact they represent the most dishonest, hypocritical statement imaginable.

Labour's 1972 Manifesto has one clear purpose:

Whose party is this?

'WE ARE a democratic, socialist party', says the draft programme, and spends a long time spelling out what this is supposed to mean. 'Tory policy is developed in private, and handed down from the top... The Labour Party does not work like this, and has no wish to do so.'

Check the record. In 1965, Labour presented its National Plan to the public. It was intended to set the course for the country until 1970. The plan was prepared in consultation with industrialists and financiers. Not one Labour MP outside the Cabinet saw it until the morning of its publication.

The draft programme says: 'The basis of the National Executive Committee policy on Vietnam is in the 1967 Conference resolution', which condemned the bombing of North Vietnam and called for the withdrawal of all foreign troops.

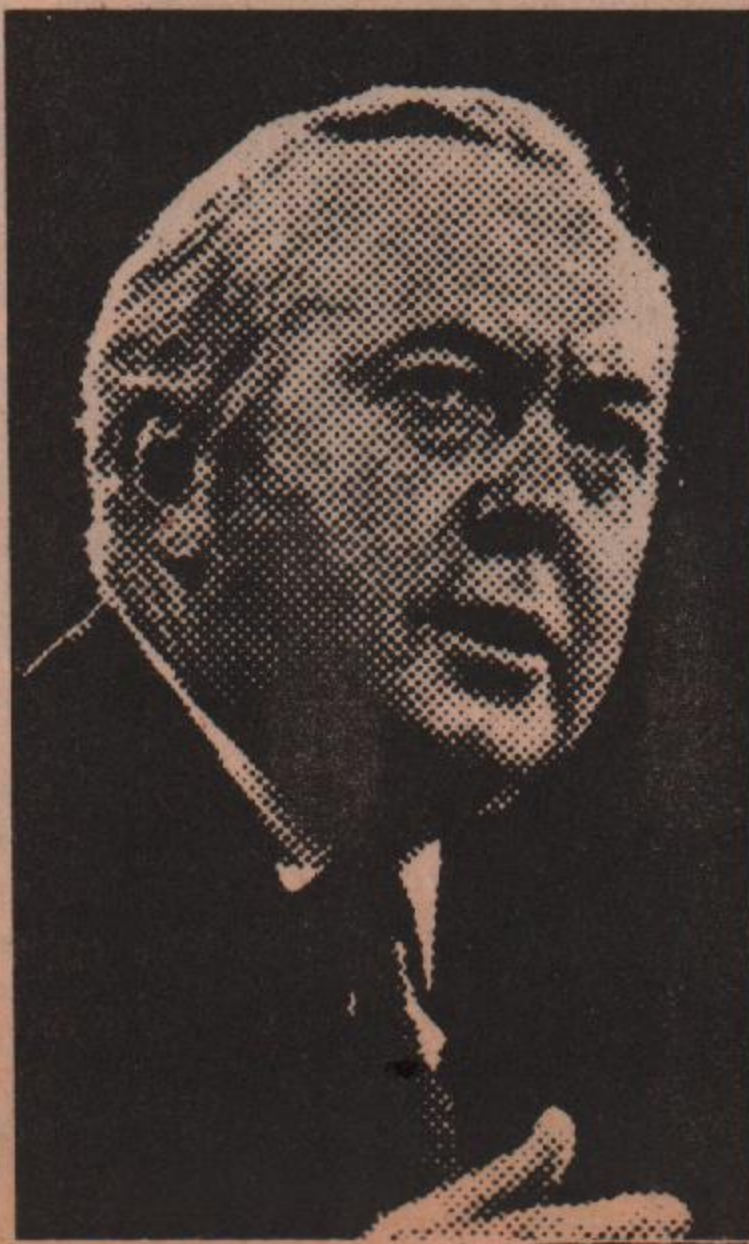
Check the record. Throughout Labour's term of office, the leaders refused to end Britain's support for the war in Vietnam. It is only now, in opposition, that they take any notice of a resolution passed five years ago.

The fact is that from the day of its

to patch over the huge divisions that have appeared in Labour's ranks. For that, they need a programme that has all the trappings of radical intentions, and commits them to nothing.

Nonetheless, it is being pushed by the Labour Left and the Communist Party. Eric Heffer MP wrote in the Morning Star: 'There is no doubt that the programme... is a recognition that the party has moved and continues to move left.'

It is time to check the record. Labour in power, with the chance to put through their fine-sounding policies, are nothing but the employers' bully-boys. Anyone who wants even minimal reforms in this country, let alone a full-blooded socialist system, need not join the Labour Party.



HAROLD WILSON
The man who brought us such great shows as 'The Pound in your pocket'

Poverty: brazen hypocrisy

WHEN Labour won the election in 1964, hopes ran high. Tribune asserted: 'Socialism is back on the agenda'

The speeches of the Labour leaders were designed to encourage this euphoria: 'Given a Labour victory, the test will be: will there be, 12 months from now, a narrowing of the gap between rich and poor, quite apart from any upward movement that there might be as a result of increased national production? The answer is, quite simply, that there will.'

The answer is, quite simply, that there wasn't.

By 1967, the Child Poverty Action Group was pointing out that poverty had actually increased under Labour. There were at least 500,000 families living in poverty. Another 130,000 lived only £2 above the meagre official 'poverty line'.

Now the draft programme has the cheek to argue that 'one of the most important means of tackling poverty in the low-income groups is by changing the tax and benefit system.'

Now this is rubbish. The only real means of eliminating poverty is to eliminate 'low income groups'. In this situation under Labour was so bad that when figures in 1967 showed that at least 140,000 men in full-time work could not reach that official poverty line, even The Times was forced to protest: 'It is intolerable that in these days of the Welfare State a working man cannot bring up a family of two in reasonable comfort.'

Appalling

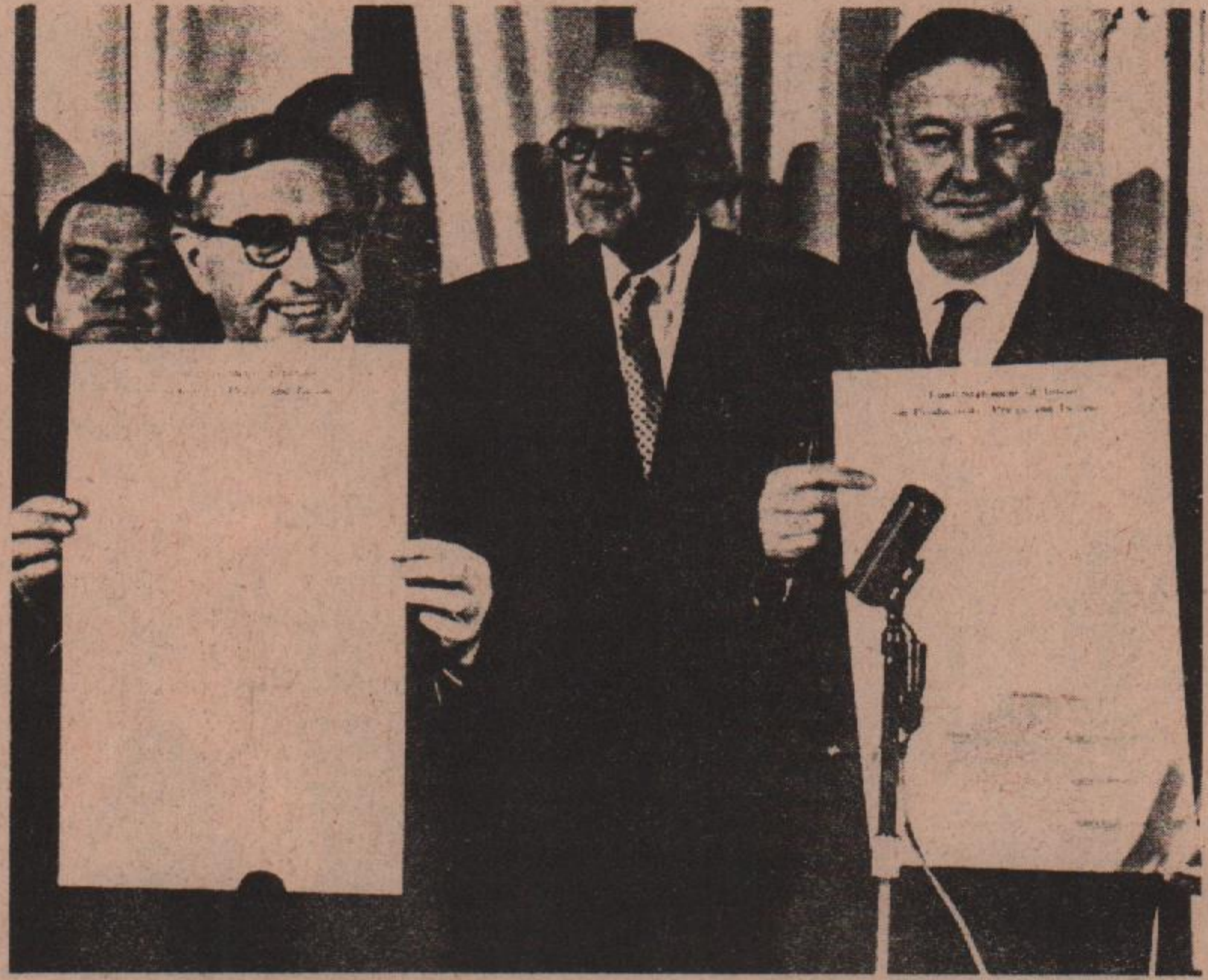
Labour had in fact made promises about incomes: 'What we are going to do now—we are going to do it early because it is urgent in the first few weeks of a Labour government—is to provide a guaranteed income below which no one will be allowed to fall.' (Harold Wilson 1964).

Perhaps they did set such a figure. But it must have been around £7 a week, because in 1967 the Prices and Incomes Board, set up by Labour, ruled that women shop assistants could not have a pay rise because they were not 'lower paid'. They earned £8 10s 6d.

But let's suppose they were right. Suppose taxes and benefits were the means of tackling poverty. Labour's record on these is equally appalling. Taxation has always leaned much more heavily on the poor than on the rich. Under Labour the situation worsened considerably.

Between 1950 and 1968, taxes on all incomes rose from 20 per cent to 33 per cent, while tax on profits and dividends fell steadily, from 50 per cent to 34 per cent. It didn't matter which party held office, the change went on unchecked.

Take the even more shameful situation of the Welfare State. In March 1966, in the run-up to the general



The Labour treatment for wages—George Brown with CBI and TUC leaders and the Prices and Incomes policy

election, Harold Wilson declared that if the Tories won they would 'put up the cost of food, and have a plan to destroy the Welfare State and replace it with a Means Test State'.

Labour then did it for them. Prescription charges were brought in. (The draft programme brazenly states: 'Health charges have been massively increased by the Tories'). The price of school meals went shooting up (The programme announces: 'School meal charges have been jacked up by the Tories!')

In 1968 Labour abandoned free school milk for the over-11s. This was a direct result of pressure from the farmers, who saw a more profitable outlet for milk by churning it into butter.

In the same year, the Social Nutrition Research Unit at London University found that a quarter of all children in the East End of London were short of nourishment. They said that the main cause was the withdrawal of free school milk.

The Means Test State, that threat from the Tories, was here to stay. In 1968, Labour instigated massive checks on three million Supplementary Benefit claimants. Thousands of pounds were spent looking for fraudulent claims.

A grand total of 88 were found, and the massive sum of £169 recovered.

Means tests were pushed into more and more areas by Labour, because they are designed to make it more difficult for working class families to claim benefits. Long complicated forms and procedures, bureaucratic officials, demands for confidential information—all these scare off claimants.

That is why the highest rate of take-up of any means tested benefit was only 47 per cent. That was the Family Income Supplement—and only after £300,000 worth of advertising.

Industry: aid for the boss

IN THE draft programme there are many mentions of 'public ownership'—of the docks, of development land, of shipbuilding. It talks of 'moving forward the frontiers of public ownership'.

With all this talk of nationalisation in the air, what has Labour done in the past both on nationalisation and on industry in general? The answer is simple: it has carefully and exactly served the needs of profits.

There was nothing anti-Tory about Labour's nationalisations. Indeed, Lord Melchett, later boss of ICI and a high Tory, introduced a Bill in to the House of Lords in 1935 to make nationalisation possible 'to eliminate wasteful competition'.

Massive compensation was paid for nationalised industries. For the mines, £164 million was to be paid by the year 2005. Meanwhile, more than half the mines they were paying for were closed. The pit owners were delighted.

Many of the old managers remained. Boards of directors continued to be dominated by private company directors. And ever since, Labour's policies in power have been the same as any private employer.

Under Labour, the miners slipped

steadily down: their jobs abolished. In October 1964, the industry employing 505,000 workers in those 283,000 miners.

Labour's nationalisation was worth nothing: it carried out their workers in those the majority of the

The responsibility has been no different: gave £25 million merger with Al declared 5500 redundant. Not a government.

In its regional Labour handed to industry. Yet in the regions still shot up

Shake

One of Labour helping industry: Incomes Board. Its workings: 'In earners in this country make sacrifices: salaries are not going to be raised. She was a bit of profits of all some £6981 million to the

The PIB and its designed to encourage a socialist labour. To help the rises causing high: ran: real wages: as fast that we are: world markets.

Yet only a few MP Norman: detailed statistics comparing prices: real wages had no in many cases they

But Labour repeated this myth: the tune changes: not caused today's

But in 1966: 'The only way to policy in 1966: out-facing the national wages: the message. 'Wills a high-water mark smashed a strike: memoirs.

The seamen: chopping blocks: £15 a week for the sacrificial lamb Prices and Incomes

In 1962 Wilson opposition: 'Was from springing to trade unions who conditions prejudicial a government dep

But the sheer shown again by Anthony Wedgwood parliament: 'It was fault when, in technological trend was taken over by

RACIALISM IN BRITAIN

Derek Humphry
POLICE POWER and Black People
With a commentary by Gus John

'To many blacks in our cities, police harassment has become a way of life. The police are viewed as the army of the enemy, which is the immigration-controlling, arms-to-South-Africa-selling, friend-of-lan-Smith British government.'

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The shambles they call a housing policy

'STARTING from last year's total of 380,000 houses and flats, we shall go on year by year exceeding this total, and reach by 1970 no less than 500,000 new dwellings. This is not a lightly given promise. It is a pledge. We shall achieve the 500,000 target and we shall not allow any development, any circumstance, however adverse, to deflect us from this aim.' (Harold Wilson, March 1964).

By 1969 this pledge was in tatters. A grand total of 367,000 new houses and flats were built, lower than the 1965 total. Labour's record on housing is one of the worst.

In 1966, the Ministry of Housing carried out a survey on overcrowding. The evidence it collected was so horrifying that the Minister, Anthony Greenwood, ordered its suppression. To this day it has not been published.

By 1969 the government had to

admit that there were 1,800,000 people living in places that were 'unfit for human habitation'.

Between 1964-70 council rents rose by an average 65 per cent. Councils spent an extra £130 million—most of it collected from the rent—on new housing. But 82 per cent of that went straight to the moneylenders in interest charges.

'Gifts'

What about the private tenants? In 1965 Labour introduced a Rent Act, which they claimed would re-introduce some of the controls the Tories had abolished. It established the system of rent officers and tribunals, and only made matters worse.

Only in one year (1966) did the rent officers actually reduce more

rents than they had in the previous three years.

Was this because rents were too low? No, as it was revealed that Freshwater Group property group had bottles of whisky selected rent office

Under this system average fine furnished from a pathetic £5 in 1970.

What does it have to say about it has fine words: 'Fair Rents' Act. It has been done about reducing level. And it never moneylenders who £1 rent in interest



Wedgwood Benn with UCS stewards Jimmy Airie and Jimmy Reid: when Labour's in opposition it's all pals with the workers, when in power all pals with the bosses

Why Labour surrenders

WHAT made the Labour Party rat on all its fine promises? Can they be stopped from ratting again?

When Labour came to power in 1964, the first thing they did was to try to prove to the employers they were going to be good boys. After all, they had some radical speeches to live down. They had talked about some dangerous things, such as 'justice', 'equality', 'redistribution of wealth', even 'socialism'.

So within a few days they were hard at work buttering up the bankers. 'We in the government want private enterprise to flourish,' announced George Brown.

To prove their sincerity they froze pensions until the following spring. (Thousands of old people die each winter because they cannot afford heating.)

But the real test came with the run on sterling that came soon after Labour were elected. At first they resisted the demands of the bankers for a

devaluation. But eventually they gave way.

'The pound in the British housewife's purse will not be worth less through devaluation,' declared Wilson. Food prices rose by 25 per cent between 1964-70.

Labour were toeing the line. So effectively, in fact, that Sir Frank Kearton, chairman of Courtaulds, declared in 1966 that he had changed his mind about politics: 'Labour is better for business,' he said. They made him Lord Kearton, in gratitude.

Vicious

Why did Labour rush to the aid of the employers? Peter Shore, ex-Minister in the Labour government, in his book *Entitled to Know*, says that the City was quite prepared to 'veto government decisions that it disliked'.

But then Harold himself, in an honest moment (in other words in

opposition) has said as much: 'You cannot go cap in hand to the central bankers... and maintain your freedom of action... The central bankers will before long be demanding that Britain puts her house in order, and their idea of an orderly house usually means vicious inroads into the Welfare State and a one-sided pay pause.' (October 1964).

The truth is that there are two radically different Labour Parties. One exists in opposition. It is a vote-catching machine, full of fine slogans that the employers never take too seriously. No one better typifies this split than Anthony Wedgwood Benn.

In 1969 he was booed by 15,000 Clydeside shipyard workers when he visited Glasgow: as Minister of Technology he had been responsible for the reorganisation and rundown of the shipbuilding industry.

Then in 1971 he was in Glasgow again, this time arm-in-arm with the shipyard shop stewards. He was announcing the solidarity of the Labour Party with the UCS workers, who were fighting the very company he had set up.

Sickened

In opposition the Labour Party talks about 'socialism' and 'equality'. In power, Labour is the party of organised capitalism. It is essential to the survival of capitalism in Britain. In 1945 millions of voters sickened by war profiteering, by useless slaughter, elected a Labour government with enormous enthusiasm. As one militant put it: 'We voted for revolution and got the Labour Party.'

The Labour Party siphoned off that enthusiasm and created disillusion and despair in its place. Because Labour, working within a system of profit, could not help but run it for the employers.

The Labour Party is an essential safety valve to the system. So now that millions of workers are looking at the system and seeing its shabbiness and corruption, Labour turns its leftward face towards us.



By 1969 two-thirds of rents were raised. In 1969 it was £100 million. The government, through its 'rent control' programme, has managed to reduce rents by 65p of every £100.

LABOUR'S PARLIAMENTARY THORN

DENNIS SKINNER is the Labour MP for Bolsover, a Derbyshire mining constituency. President of the Derbyshire miners from 1966 to 1970, he is sponsored as an MP by the National Union of Mineworkers.

In the two years since he was returned to parliament he has been just about the only parliamentary thorn in the Tories' side. During the miners' strike Skinner went on to the picket line and paid over a substantial proportion of his MP's salary to the miners' strike funds.

He was the only member of the Parliamentary Labour Party to see the significance of the increasing attention of the army and the police are giving to the trade union movement and their new tactics for breaking picket lines.

I've always held the view that real power lies outside the House of Commons. Even with a sympathetic government, people outside would still have to find their own remedies.

The central policy of the Tories over the past two years has been to confront the working-class movement. They are the open agents of big business and they are carrying out instructions in the drive for higher profits. But the net result has been that after a few early reversals, the working class movement decided to use its own industrial power.

This was the meaning of the miners' strike. And no matter what they say, the miners' struggle resulted in a massive defeat for the Tories. And since then the railwaymen and the dockers got to work.

STRENGTH

The dockers took the words of Labour and trade union leaders and did something with them. They put words of opposition into practice when they refused to recognise the law. The dockers forced Heath to make the biggest climb down any Prime Minister has had to make in front of the might of organised labour.

It is quite clear that there is only one way to stop the Tories in their tracks, that is by unleashing the industrial strength of the working-class movement. All these things that have happened recently have reinforced my view that real power in society lies outside the House of Commons. By and large all we do here in parliament is to interpret events outside, generally after they have taken place.

You just cannot expect trade unionists to hear all the arguments about how bad a law is going to be from the leaders of the Labour Party and the trade union movement and then forget the fine words and do nothing. We have long since reached the point where the Tory offensive has to be resisted in a practical sense.

Certainly the House of Commons is a club, a very good club—there's no entrance fee and as a member you are paid handsomely for coming through the doors. I get very angry when Labour or Tory governments talk about absenteeism in industry. There's more absenteeism in the House of Commons than in any plant or mine in this country.

CONCESSIONS

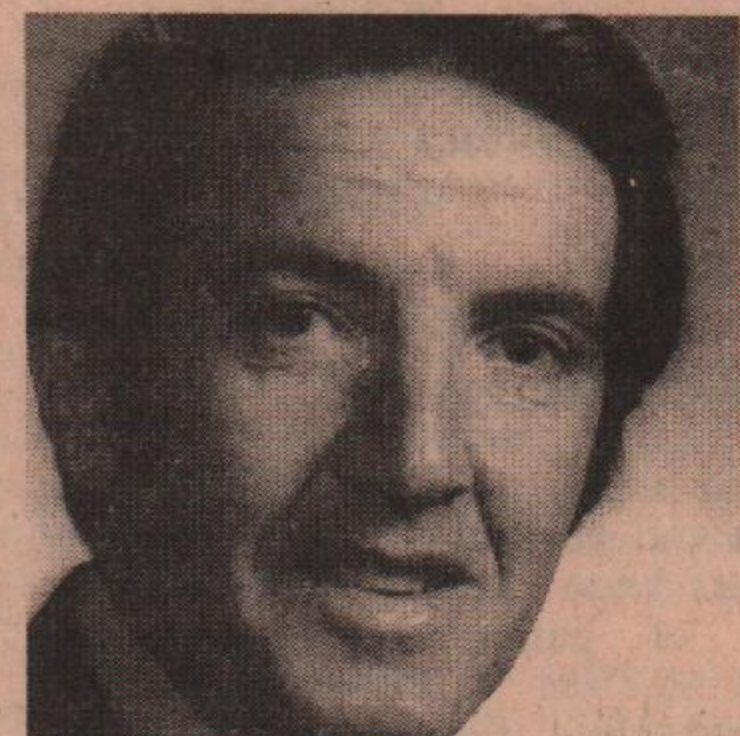
Of course you can make it easy on yourself—you get a Tory MP to pair with and you need hardly ever come into the place. It is not my job to enable Tories to pair off. I'm for the long speeches to keep them up all night when the occasion arises.

If no Tory MP was paired then there would be serious problems for the Heath government. But you suggest this to your Labour colleagues and they say that while it's a good idea, if Labour did it while in opposition, then so would the Tories.

You just have to recognise that you have to make very immediate concessions to say anything within the House of Commons. But it's also true that most Labour MPs are completely caught up in the whole business. They deliberately refrain from doing anything to upset it.

If you say that a good number of Labour MPs see their role as nothing more than social welfare officers, then I agree, I do these things too, but that is not the nub of the job as I see it.

A great deal of my time recently has been spent in trying to educate tenants on what the Housing Finance Act is and how to fight it. The truth



DENNIS SKINNER MP
'The real power lies outside the House of Commons'

is that the only way for tenants to win on this issue is to take a line from the miners and the dockers and force the Tories to change their minds.

I'd hope that the next Labour government would be very different from the last one. We must set out to return enough committed people to the House of Commons to provide the basis of a real socialist government.

In all honesty a very substantial number of Labour MPs are totally committed to upholding the society we see around us. They regard taking on business directorships as perfectly normal.

I'd like to see a ban on all outside interests for a start. We all get a very handsome wage—£90 a week. This is a great deal of money. Right before the miners' strike MPs voted themselves a rise. I was the only MP to oppose this.

I was staggered to think anyone could need any more. MPs are very well done by indeed. Long hours, you might say. But it's certainly not at the same intensity as a day's work on the shop floor.

Many Labour Party people are really glad that the Tories have moved towards an Incomes Policy. They see it as yet another election pledge abandoned. Or they believe that it supports the Labour Party view that wages cause inflation and that an Incomes Policy is the only way to deal with the situation by diverting wealth from the poor to the rich.

SERIOUS

There can be no doubt that a great many people in the working-class movement are terribly disillusioned with the traditional notions of the road to socialism. And certainly I can see new kinds and conceptions of socialist politics developing outside the Labour Party.

If the next Labour government is still part of the consensus then there will be very serious repercussions on the movement outside. People will abandon the idea that parliament is the way forward. Significant numbers already have.

The main strand of the Parliamentary Labour Party accepts the idea that if you don't have a Prices and Incomes Policy there will be unemployment, that inflation can be cured if only the workers would tighten their belts. For these people socialism is some sort of rainbow which you come across at the end of all these courses in self sacrifice. You never get to the rainbow, far less socialism, that way.

I don't think there can or will be a discreet reform of capitalism, through parliament or otherwise. You have to aim for real power in society and overcome the sheer weight of the establishment, of its press and its media. They won't give way politely. They will make bloodthirsty attempts to hold on to their world.

Dennis Skinner was talking to Laurie Flynn

A GRAVEYARD ROAD TO SOCIALISM
see page 8



A whiff of burning books...

THERE could be no better example of the cheap sensationalism of the national press and its lack of serious analysis than the vast coverage given to the Longford committee's report on pornography.

The report has no official status. The

committee is made up of a weird collection of cranks, moralising humbugs, and religious do-gooders without any qualifications for their task.

And yet their report—printed in paperback form with a lurid cover designed to appeal to the very people the committee wants to protect—has been greeted by the press with fulsome enthusiasm as though it

were a serious, scientific study of a problem instead of a rag-bag of half-thoughts and repressive demands.

However well-meaning some individual members of the committee may be, its attitudes and conclusions are profoundly reactionary. It is a product of the middle-class, middle-aged backlash appalled by the growing rejection of the values of capitalist

society.

The report is not a crusade against sleazy bookshops and dirty magazines but a call to clamp down on dissent, free discussion and the right to challenge the prevailing ideas of the ruling class.

This is made clear by the committee's sweeping definition of pornography to include not only 'obscene' publications but films, television and radio. That's the give away. It is difficult to imagine pornography on steam radio (animal copulation on The Archers?) unless you consider talk about sexual matters and frank, honest language in plays to be 'obscene'.

The proposed law suggested by the report would prosecute when 'an article or a performance of a play is obscene if its effect, taken as a whole, is to outrage contemporary standards of decency or humanity accepted by the public at large.' Who decides what 'contemporary standards' are? What is this strange beast 'the public', made of different classes and a multitude of attitudes? Who speaks on their behalf?

If Lord Longford or Mrs Whitehouse were to be judge and jury we can imagine the effect on television. Not only would the occasional coy glimpse of breasts and bum disappear but along with them the dramas and documentaries that attempt to grapple with the problems of real life.

The 'reality' that Longford and company would legally permit would be of the variety in which a flanneled fool bursts through the french windows with a cry of 'Anyone for tennis?' We would be back to naice plays about naice people and the small band of dramatists who have managed to break out of the middle-class straitjacket would be silenced.

Stripped of all the verbiage, this is an attempt at thought control, to impose the views of a minority on the majority, to drive not just sex but all nonconformist ideas firmly underground and to turn our already feeble and commercialised mass media into a puritanical graveyard.

Major threat

Tucked away in the legal proposals of the report is a suggestion that defending the publication of an 'obscene' article on the grounds that it is in 'the public good' should be scrapped. This suggestion, if put on the statute book, could constitute a major threat not just to the publishers of dubious sex books but also to the socialist and underground press. We can imagine how loosely the police would interpret 'obscene' in any crackdown on newspapers that challenge the entire nature of capitalist society.

But what of 'hard' pornography, the dirty book trade that Longford and his committee are so concerned with?

In the face of a flood of evidence to the contrary—including the findings of a commission set up by that well-known rip-off merchant Richard Nixon—the Longford committee insists that pornography is emotionally and sexually harmful.

What is their solution? You outlaw it, drive it underground, create a vast black market with inflated prices to boost the profits of the publishers. Socialists will agree with Longford that there is a real obscenity here—the exploitation of sexual and women in the sordid pursuit of financial gain, but driving the trade underground will not cure that evil.

But what of people who need pornography? Longford's team of quacks, with no knowledge of real people, just a mystical concern for the 'public good', are blind to the fact that many sad people for a variety of emotional reasons are incapable of personal sexual relations and seek release through sex magazines.

Cold bath

It is not the perfect remedy, but capitalist society offers no other solution to their problems. Until we achieve a society that will care for them, it seems essential to defend the right of people to seek release through pornography. No doubt Lord Longford would tell them to take a cold bath.

The most revealing glimpse of the minds of the writers of this rubbishy document is the call for sex education to be taken away from the schools and left to parents. For them sex is dirty, something to snigger about in dark corners.

Encourage ignorance and fear, rear a generation of children who think they were born under a gooseberry bush. Do not prepare them for the difficult years of adolescence. Do not help nurture in them a firm belief that sex is beautiful and enjoyable, a magnificent release.

Some critics have said that the Longford report is a call to return to the primitive and hypocritical moral attitudes of the Victorian middle class. Not so. This is a modern phenomenon, a desperate cry of a class that is losing its grip, closing the bolt holes of dissent and lashing out at all opposition, industrial, political and sexual.

The historical similarities are not Victorian. They are more recent: the smell of burning books and the sound of marching jackboots.

David East

PARLIAMENT: A RULING-CLASS WEAPON FOR BLUNTING THE WORKERS' STRENGTH

A GRAVEYARD ROAD

'THERE is nothing more interesting than the growth of moderation which unconsciously takes place in the minds of violent and narrow men after they have taken a parliamentary position,' wrote Lord Houghton, a well-known politician of the last century.

The noble peer was more outspoken than modern Tory politicians would care to be, but the ruling class and their representatives have always been keenly aware of the role of parliament in blunting working-class representatives and transforming them into obedient supporters of a system they were once determined to fight.

But in spite of 70 years' experience of the abysmal failure of Labour MPs and Labour governments to make any meaningful inroad into the power and wealth of the capitalist class, the delegates to the Labour conference in Blackpool next week will once again pin their faith in a blind belief that socialism, in some shape or form, can be won through parliament.

It is an attitude that ignores the class realities of life. The ruling class, through its economic domination of society, has enormous power to browbeat, to flatter and to bribe.

REDUCES

There is only one certain guarantee against workers' representatives at any level giving in to such pressures—and that is by being subjected continuously to close scrutiny and control by those who elect them.

The parliamentary system is based on a denial of such scrutiny and control. MPs are raised to a position that reduces rank and file pressure to a minimum and ruling class influence to a maximum.

Elections normally take place only every five years. In between there is no way in which workers can call their representatives to account, still less replace them by others more in tune with popular feeling. Any attempt to do so is regarded as 'unconstitutional' and 'in contempt of parliament'.

The parliamentary form of elections also prevents close-knit ties between the MP and the voters who put him there. An MP represents all the electors in his constituency—the factory owner and the worker he employs, as well as people from a variety of occupations and industries, housewives, pensioners, shopkeepers and so on.

The more marginal the seat, the stronger the pressures on the MP to water down his policies in order to appeal to the multitude of interests in the constituency.

If a parliamentary candidate wants to be sure of being elected, his safest bet is to pander to the existing level of the majority of his electors. Even if he is more left-wing than most of his constituents, as long as a candidate accepts the 'parliamentary road to socialism' and the need to win seats at all costs, he will remain a prisoner of the



Macdonald, Attlee and Wilson: Labour governments have taken office—they have never taken power

TO SOCIALISM

by Sabby Sagall and Chris Harman

system, unable to use his position actively to fight for socialist ideas.

But in capitalist society, where the crucial divisions are those of class not geography, the more an MP seeks to represent everyone in his constituency the more his ideas and policies will reflect the pressure of the ruling class.

That is why socialists find it much easier to gain influence in the factories as shop stewards than in parliamentary elections. The workers are bound together by a common experience and a steward who is more militant than most of his members can prove in practice that his ideas are of value to them through day-to-day struggles over wages and conditions.

He can also expose the claims of the moderates by showing that their ideas in practice mean accepting lower wages and redundancies. And he is subjected to constant control and can be replaced at any time.

In the geographical constituency there is no such natural arena for clarifying ideas. The conditions in which workers vote in isolation from one another encourages them to forget the many lessons of collective struggle they learn in the factories and leaves them open to the ruling-class ideas put out by press and television.

Parliament bolsters the existing society by fostering the illusion that it is based on the rule of the people who elect its members. In reality, electors can expect to vote perhaps 10 times in the course of an average life time. This means that, in 50 years of adult life, the sum total of their effective political participation amounts to just two minutes.

But, say the supporters of parliament, the system is fair because everybody has one vote and therefore we all have an equal say in running society. Edward Heath has one vote, so does Arnold Weinstock of GEC, Lord Stokes of British Leyland—and so, too, does a redundant GEC worker and a Coventry car worker.

To concentrate on this formal equality actually covers up the real location of power and the massive inequalities of wealth and influence.

With the growing concentration of wealth into fewer hands and the rise of the giant monopoly firms, the power of parliament has declined steadily. The crucial decisions affecting all our lives are taken not in the House of Commons but in the boardrooms of big business and in the Cabinet. Parliament is more and more just a rubber stamp for vital decisions taken by industrialists and financiers who are subject to no democratic control.

PRESSURE

Labour governments have taken office from time to time but they have never taken power. While the ruling class remain entrenched in industry, the City and the civil service that runs the various ministries, it can bring enormous pressure to bear on Labour governments to carry out its wishes.

Even a left-wing government that left untouched the real power of the minority who control the wealth would inevitably give way to its pressure. The ruling class could easily produce conditions of crisis and hardship to undermine the government's intentions.

It could stop such sabotage only by taking over the economy at every level. But more than a parliamentary majority is needed to do that.

There has to be a force capable of intervening throughout industry and

commerce to put its wishes into effect. The 'impartial' state machine will not implement socialist policies because a government tells it to, for that state machine—the army, the police, the courts and the civil service—in the final analysis serves the interests of the ruling class, with a chain of command controlled by the owners of industry.

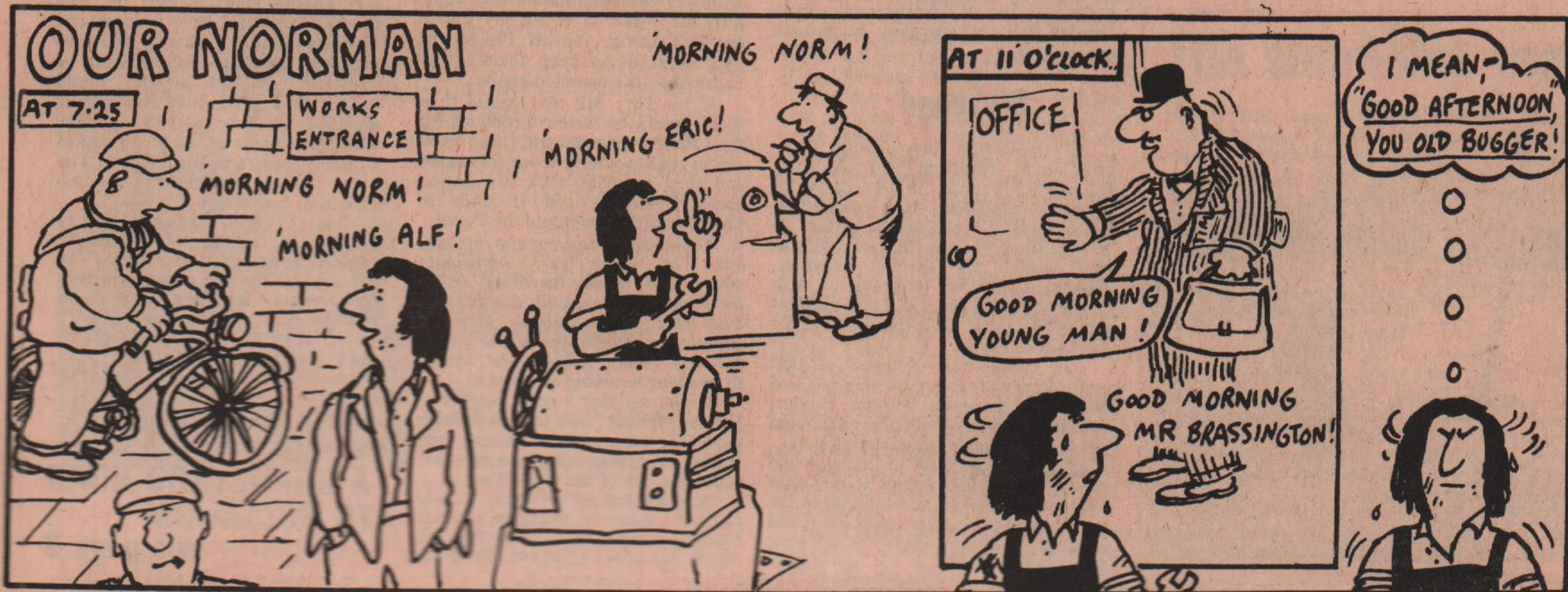
The history of capitalism is shot through with examples of that class overthrowing parliamentary democracy—as in Germany and Italy—to defend its own minority interests. Such ruthless steps are not necessary very often, because long before that point is reached the parliamentary government, cut off from any real mass base, will give in.

To really change society the working class must organise outside the parliamentary system. Parliament creates the illusion that if workers rely on someone else then things can be improved. It perpetuates the myth that capitalism proclaims as an eternal truth—that the great majority of people are incapable of making decisions or running their own affairs.

The way forward is not through parliament—though on occasions revolutionaries will use it to make propaganda—but by smashing the existing state machine and replacing it with one in which those who create the wealth determine the organisation of society.

That means a system of workers' councils with delegates subject to recall by those who elect them, delegates who represent the collective interests of groups of working people, in factories, offices, shipyards, housing estates and so on.

Such a system can develop only as part of a massive upsurge by the working class in which the ideas of a revolutionary socialist party start to have an impact. It is the only way in which working people can begin to build socialism.



REVIEW

THE 'crisis of British Capitalism' is a common phrase among socialists. But there are crises and crises.

The authors of this book have performed a valuable service to the working class movement in showing that the present condition of British capital is critical to a degree that hasn't been widely appreciated.

Since the mid-sixties the profitability of British industry has dropped sharply. Between 1964 and 1970 the share of profits in the total of profits, wages and salaries fell, after allowing for things like the depreciation of capital equipment (that is, wear and tear on machinery), from 21.2 per cent to 12.1 per cent. The share of wages and salaries had correspondingly risen.

But since 1970 profits have got back some of the lost ground. So the Tories have done some good for their system.

But, argue Bob Sutcliffe and Andrew Glyn, for the bosses to roll completely back the rise in wages there will have to be an all-out effort by the employers and their government to weaken trade union grass-roots organisation.

And the effort is being made... Profits are the lifeblood of the capitalist system. If your profits as a capitalist are on the slide, then you buy less new equipment, you accumulate less—and in this system if you accumulate less you're going bust.

This is an important point. On Friday nights on BBC2 is The Money Programme. It's a good series, for when the bosses get down to telling each other how to run business they tell each other their version of the truth, and save the garbage about 'the Dunkirk spirit' and 'rallying around the flag' for us. A couple of weeks ago Sutcliffe was on this programme with Norman Atkinson, 'left' Labour MP for Tottenham.

Atkinson settled down for a cosy 10 minutes arguing the toss with the

THE EXTENT OF THE CRISIS

'BRITISH CAPITALISM, WORKERS, AND THE PROFITS SQUEEZE'

by Andrew Glyn and Bob Sutcliffe, Penguin Special, 55p.

bosses about what constituted a 'decent' profit and what was the nicest way to put people out of a job. Sutcliffe soon pointed out that it was not the task of the Atkinsons of this world to convert the bosses away from making profits, for they're not going to be converted, but to get rid of a system that depends on profit—and wreck the world in the process.

Looking back over the past few years it seems amazing that wages and salaries have knocked into profits at all, especially in view of the meagre increases in living standards. But the nation's output has either not grown or grown only slowly. So if wages hadn't grown, then the standard of living wouldn't even have risen the pitiful amount it did.

Anvil

The book's central argument, impressively supported by statistical evidence, is that profits in Britain have been squeezed between the hammer of working-class militancy and the anvil of intensified international competition.

The basic competitive weakness of the British economy can be traced back to 1875-1900. In 1875 British industrialists had it all going their way and completely dominated world trade, but

then along came the Germans, and the Americans, and the French, and the Japanese...

Every now and then during the past 70 years this raw nerve has been exposed: in the economic stagnation before the First World War, again in the 1920s, and yet again since the late fifties. Each time the result has been the same—massive battles between capital and labour, between the bosses and the workers, and each time the system moves a little closer to the precipice.

The present crisis in profitability is seen by the authors as a particularly concentrated eruption of this hundred-year story. The key cause of the explosion has been the growth of working-class militancy—and of a more fighting kind even than was seen in the hungry thirties.

If wages are low, or if you're out of work, if your kid's got rickets, you may fight, or you may just leap off a slagheap or get drunk. But if you're in a well-paid job, and you're used to a well-paid job, then you don't take kindly to being slung on the scrapheap.

For most workers in this country wages rose faster in the early fifties sixties than they have ever done. There were plenty of exceptions, of course, but a large section of workers now expect continued improvement and have the

self-confidence and ability to fight for it.

The government and the employers realise that if the workers go on thumping on their door, then the door is going to fall down—and Edward Heath, Harold Wilson, Lord Stokes, Lord Robens, Lord Kearton and friends are going to find themselves on the scrapheap.

So they've fought a long battle. The bosses' army changed its flag from palest pink to true blue, changed the name of its wages policies from 'guiding lights' and 'wise men' to National Economic Development Council and the late National Incomes Commission, imposed 'wages-freeze', 'stop-go', and made 'Declarations of Intent'.

Rivals

It was frustrating to watch and read the rubbish pumped out by Home, Wilson, Brown, Barber and Heath, and frustrating to look at your wage packet. For all the policies were designed to hold down wages—and up to a point they succeeded.

Up to a point. For the response was a determined drive for higher wages reaching a climax in the 'wages explosion' of 1969-70. Profit margins have shrunk as British firms, faced with more intense competition from foreign rivals, have become less able to pass on as higher

prices the increased wages they have been forced to concede.

The authors conclude that the current conflicts between capital and labour—over wages, prices, unemployment, welfare, the Common Market, and the Industrial Relations Act—have become less like moves in a war of manoeuvre and more like battles over the survival of capitalism itself.

The book isn't without faults. The writers argue that their book isn't just about the British economy but too often it is.

It's too simple, for example, to say that the Industrial Relations Act was just introduced because of the profits squeeze. The thinking behind the Act has deep roots in the outlook of the rulers of this country and its introduction now wasn't casually decided.

Mess

Similarly, the profits squeeze doesn't automatically transform the class struggle into a war of survival. Whether this happens or not depends precisely on the political awareness and strategy of the working-class movement.

And this doesn't just mean making people aware of the mess the bosses are in and acting on it. Being a socialist means understanding the way people think now, assessing the balance of power between the ruling class and the working class, and, having understood it, acting to change it.

The book's shortcomings don't make it any the less worth reading, even if it is hard going at times for the non-economist.

It contains a wealth of detail and the historical origins of the crisis are especially well analysed. It is a sign of the revival of marxist political economy, a revival which must continue if we are to succeed in developing a coherent revolutionary strategy.

David Purdy

That bloody old idiot,
lifetime
dupe of
the bosses



ALF GARNETT is a socialist realist nightmare, an anti-hero who combines every reactionary vice, a monster who becomes likeable only because he is so singularly unlucky.

Garnett's view of the world froze somewhere around the First World War. He has never moved on since then: his moustache, his grovelling to Royalty, yet the latest Queen is too modern for him.

He nurses his snobbery, a kind of hand-me-down from the more refined nastiness of the nobs who make him feel he has a place in the world. In the tiny world of his family he attempts his own pathetic rule.

Alf the white supremacist, Alf the deferential Tory voter, Alf the nigger-hater, stomping and roaring with an audience of wife, daughter, son-in-law and, new addition, mother-in-law, who endure and provoke him in turn. The new series (Till Death Us Do Part, BBC1, Wednesdays 9.25) seems to be getting out more, however, with Garnett and mate blind drunk in the Liverpool-London buffet hammering the Scots, the Irish, Welsh, Indians, Americans.

Stock

Garnett's creator, writer Johnny Speight, was interviewed a couple of weeks ago on BBC2. He said that he'd like to show Garnett in bed, but an Alf in a moment of passionate intimacy teeters on the edge of something that is at once mawkishly sentimental and too near the bone.

The success of Till Death Us Do Part resulted in an American copy, All in the Family with Archie Bunker as the transatlantic Garnett. The American version underlines the competence of Speight's creation, for All in the Family is far more a stock family comedy.

Alf has so many familiar

'ideas' buried in him, that he's like someone you've known sometime and can't quite put a name to. The pattern of his arguments awaken scores of memories of past disputes.

The key to the programme is Mrs Garnett. Against her endless ignorance, misunderstanding and stupidity all her husband's prejudices crash hopelessly, as does the 'enlightenment' of her progressive son-in-law. Against Alf the conflict is more one sided, experience against abstract theories.

Idiot

Son-in-law always tries to be 'reasonable', standing up for Black Rhodesians, the younger generation, or insisting that there are good and bad on both sides. Speight pointed out that he intended to make the son-in-law the goody but Alf took over.

Interesting goodies are hard to find, but really Speight's woolly political outlook makes Alf's dominance inevitable. If Garnett was to meet a class-conscious militant of his own age he would come over as a bloody old idiot, duped all his life by the rulers of this society.

But the programme would probably cease to be funny, for Alf would have no means of escape. He wouldn't be able to shuffle out of responsibility for his own prejudice and intolerance.

It is very hard to be funny and express explicit political ideas. Very often we laugh at the parts of ourselves we like to cover up.

Alf touches these uneasy chords of all those buried responses. Responses that are never quite uprooted by what we consciously say and think ought to be.

Susan
Barnett



DO YOU SINCERELY WANT TO KILL PEOPLE?

ARE you dreading those long winter evenings? Have you nothing to look forward to except nights in front of the telly watching murder, genocide, rape, pornography and Lord Longford?

Do you want to get a bit of the action for yourself? Do you feel that you're missing out when you could be shooting Irishmen, expelling Ugandan Asians or napping South East Asia?

Well Socialist Worker has found the ideal way to involve you in the events that have turned the world into the blazing shambles it is today!

Don't get worried though, you'll still be safe in your front parlour thanks to Infinity Communications Limited of Chalton Street, London NW1, the proud inventors of 'The Pentagon Game'.

Infinity, says director Kim Cuthbertson, is one of a group of companies producing games for 'adults'. 'We've designed the game for people in this country to find out and understand what is going on in Indo-China.'

And of course to make a few shillings on the side for the directors of Infinity Communications Limited.

The 'Game' consists of a book, decorated with Central Intelligence Agency symbols, MOST SECRET slogans, containing a chronology of the war, a glossary of terms, and the rules for fighting the game. With the rules the purchaser gets a page of cardboard cut-outs of American, NLF, North Vietnamese and the Saigon Regime's armies and a map of Vietnam...

Miss Cuthbertson (a sociology graduate from the London School of Economics) feels that adults are tired of games which don't involve the issues of today. You've got to be really adult to be an adult.

Did she have any moral qualms about making a game of the war? 'Not at all.'

Well, why stop there? Why not have a game about the Warsaw Ghetto? She wouldn't do that. Why not? 'Well, that's in the past isn't it?'

The first page announces that this game supersedes all previous games.

Nigel Fountain

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.

THERE ARE IS BRANCHES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

SCOTLAND

Aberdeen
Cumbernauld
Dumfries
Dundee
Edinburgh
Fife: Dunfermline/
Cowdenbeath
Glenrothes
Kirkcaldy
Glasgow N
Glasgow S
Greenock
Stirling
St Andrews

NORTH EAST

Bishop Auckland
Durham
Hartlepool
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
South Shields
Spennymoor
Sunderland
Teesside E
Teesside W

NORTH

Barnsley
Bradford
Doncaster
Grimsby
Halifax
Huddersfield
Hull
Leeds
Ossett
Scarborough
Selby
Sheffield
York

NORTH WEST

Barrow
Blackburn
Bolton
Crewe
Kirkby
Lancaster
Manchester
Merseyside
Oldham
The Potteries
Preston
Salford
St Helens
Stockport
Wigan
Wrexham

MIDLANDS

Birmingham NE
Birmingham S
Coventry
Dudley
Leamington and
Warwick
Leicester
Loughborough
Mid-Derbyshire
Milton Keynes
Northampton
Nottingham
Oxford
Redditch
Rugby
Telford
Warley
Wolverhampton

GREATER LONDON and HOME COUNTIES

EAST

Basildon
Beccles
Cambridge
Chelmsford
Colchester
Harlow
Ipswich
Leiston
Lowestoft
Norwich
Peterborough

Acton

Bexley
Camden
Chertsey
Croydon
East London
Enfield
Fulham and
Hammersmith
Greenford
Hackney and
Islington
Harrow
Hemel Hempstead
Hornsey
Hounslow
Ilford
Kilburn
Kingston
Lambeth
Lewisham
Merton
Paddington
Reading
St Albans
Slough
South Ealing
Tottenham
Walthamstow
Wandsworth
Watford
Woolwich

WALES and SOUTH WEST

Bath
Bristol
Cardiff
Exeter
Gloucester
Llanelli
Mid-Devon
Neath
Plymouth
Swansea
South
Ashford
Brighton
Canterbury
Crawley
Eastbourne
Folkestone
Guildford
Portsmouth
Southampton

UCS split endangers the struggle

A SERIOUS split has grown among workers at UCS on the question of continuing the struggle. It is a danger which has been on the cards for some time.

The 4300 workers at the old Govan, Scotstoun and Linthouse divisions of UCS, now employed by Govan Shipbuilders, are guaranteed jobs. But Marathon Manufacturing, the new owner of the Clydebank yard, and Govan together will provide only 900 jobs for Clydebank workers. This leaves 1000 men for the dole queue.

A mass meeting of all ex-UCS workers last week to discuss the problems at Clydebank was boycotted by virtually the entire Govan Shipbuilders workforce.

The meeting decided to continue the 'work-in' and to reimpose the 50p a week levy abandoned in July. Govan Shipbuilders' shop stewards who attended the meeting will try to get these decisions accepted by their members at departmental meetings this week. Jimmy Airlie, chairman of the UCS stewards committee, has announced that he will resign if the Govan Shipbuilders' workers abandon the fight to save the Clydebank workers' jobs.

There are several reasons for the split, apart from the obvious one that the Govan Shipbuilders workers have jobs.

Firstly when Marathon took over the Clydebank yard, the workers there received redundancy payments since they were to be re-employed in a different industry (Marathon build oil rigs), while the Govan Shipbuilders men got nothing. Secondly, the refusal of the boilermakers to sign the Govan Shipbuilders agreement brought serious divisions to the surface.

The 1300 boilermakers demanded redundancy payments from UCS and an earlier starting date for their wage claim than that accepted by other unions. They also objected to other men being trained as boilermakers.

Lastly, and most importantly, was the way in which the UCS struggle was dragging on.

It is now 15 months since UCS went into liquidation. At that time the Clydeside labour movement would have jumped into the Clyde if the shop stewards had told it to, such was the esteem in which they were held. At last, it was thought, someone was really fighting unemployment.

Had the government been confronted then by the UCS workers sitting-in and refusing to release ships, they would undoubtedly have got massive support.

Instead the leading stewards, who are immensely proud of their ability to 'box clever', encouraged the intervention of the official leaders of the labour movement and shied away from any direct confrontation with the Tories.

When Marathon decided to take over Clydebank in July, the 'work-in' was stopped and separate discussions took place with Marathon and Govan Shipbuilders over wages and conditions. Later Marathon was able to blackmail the unions into accepting an agreement which lays down compulsory arbitration and penalty clauses, and removes wages from the field of negotiation.

Now, with the workforce already 2200 fewer than at the time of liquidation, another 1000 jobs are threatened. Marathon has said that it hopes to be able to employ everybody by January 1974, and that there is the chance of obtaining a conversion order before then. These figures depend on orders flowing in and since there are an ever-growing number of companies entering the rig-building business, they are almost certainly over-optimistic.

Glasgow already has one man in nine out of work, and that is before the winter increase in unemployment. A serious fight on the question is long overdue, and a start could be made by translating the pious resolutions of the TUC into practice.

Such a fight, linked to support for the Clydebank workers threatened by Marathon, is possible. It is the task and responsibility of socialists to make it a reality.



McGARVEY: Secret ballots

TYNESIDE STRIKE GOES ON

NEWCASTLE Upon Tyne: 3800 boilermakers are continuing their three-week-old strike at the Swan Hunter shipyards in spite of intense pressure from their union executive.

The strike is in support of a 17½ per cent cost-of-living claim. Both stewards and men have shown they are not prepared to work without substantial increases.

Dan McGarvey, president of the Boilermakers Society, imposed two secret ballots in three days in an attempt to break the strike, but the stewards voted unanimously to defy the executive and their own ballot of the members gave them five-to-one support.

The war of nerves is on. Management has offered a £1.50 cost-of-living bonus to other sections of the labour force—an obvious manoeuvre to isolate the boilermakers.

McGarvey claims he is more 'militant' than the stewards—but his brand of militancy is reserved for the conference hall. Faced with a real struggle he resorts immediately to attempts to split the members and break the strike.

WHAT'S ON

Copy for What's On must arrive by first post Monday or be phoned Monday morning. Charges are 5p per line, semi-display 10p per line. CASH WITH COPY. No insertions without payment. Invoices cannot be sent.

MEETINGS

POST OFFICE WORKER GROUP meetings: Sunday 22 Oct, 2pm. Speakers on The Struggle against Productivity Dealing, and Why the Unions don't fight—the Struggle for Rank-and-File Control. Details from Tom Dredge, 3 Godric Crescent, New Addington, Croydon, Surrey.

SWANSEA IS: Jumble sale to help raise money for tenants' work, factory bulletins, etc. Townhill Community Centre, Fri 6 October, 5pm.

EALING IS Rally and Social: To launch and raise money for the new branch. Paul Foot—Disco—Live entertainment, and bar. Fri 6 Oct, 7.30pm, at the George and Dragon, Uxbridge Rd, Southall. Admission 40p. For further details phone 579-1682.

LONDON IS Teachers' Meeting: Sunday 8 Oct, 10.30am, at 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2.

Huddersfield public meeting: Anna Paczuska on The Fight for Equal Pay. Fri 6 Oct, 7.30pm, in The Plough, Westgate.

CAMDEN IS meeting on housing: Tues 3 Oct, 8pm, at Abbey Tavern, corner of Kentish Town Rd and Bartholomew Rd.

LAMBETH IS public meeting on Racialism: Wed 4 Oct, 8.15pm, South Island Library, South Island Place, Brixton.

CROYDON IS public meeting: Ugandan Asians and The Fight against Racialism. Speaker: Mike Caffoor at Stanley Halls, South Norwood Hill, South Norwood. Wednesday 4 October, 8pm.

MERTON IS public meeting: No to Powell! The Question of the Ugandan Asians. Thur 5 October, 8pm, William Morris Hall, Wimbledon Broadway.

GLASGOW: The General Will, Billy Connolly and Alex Glasgow give An Evening's Entertainment. Sunday 8 Oct, 7.30pm, Woodside Halls, St George's Cross. Tickets: 50p from IS and SW Books, 64 Queen St, Glasgow C1.

HORNSEY IS public meeting
PAUL FOOT
BASKER VASHEE
Fight Racism—No Immigration Controls
Hornsey Town Hall, Crouch End, 8pm, Tuesday 3 October (Buses W2, W7, 41)

Tenants, trade unionists and councillors!
STOP THE RENT RISES! RALLY
to Trafalgar Square
Sunday 1 October, 3pm
Organised by the National Association of Tenants and Residents

Anti-Apartheid Meeting at the Labour Party Conference
SOUTHERN AFRICA—POLICY FOR A LABOUR GOVERNMENT
Monday 2 October, 8pm
Blackpool Catholic Club, 20 Queen St. with
Lawrence Daly, Judy Todd, Frank Judd, MP, Abdul Minty, Joan Lester MP, (chairman). There will be no entrance charge—a collection will be taken. Organised by the Anti-Apartheid Movement, 89 Charlotte St, London W1, phone 01-580-5311.

IS MIDLAND REGION CONFERENCE
Sat 7 Oct, at Lanchester Polytechnic, Coventry.
11am: Fraction meetings
2pm: General Perspectives—Duncan Hallas
Creche—Social in the evening
Details from local branch secretary or IS, 327 Prestwood Rd, Wolverhampton.
ALL MEMBERS TO ATTEND

NATIONAL ATTI IS FRACTION MEETING
Sunday 8 October, 11am-5pm
Room 14, Lanchester Polytechnic, Jordan Well (opposite Odeon), Coventry
Bring your own food
All IS teachers in further education should attend.

NOTICES

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM 53 now out! Articles on The Decline of Reformism, Communist Party Industrial Policy, Chile, India, the Fourth International. 20p, or £1 for a year, from IS Journal, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

COMRADE requires room in Colchester from beginning October: phone Ken Jones at Slough 21542.

WANTED:—A short history of the Communist Party, by Tom Bell; Pioneering Days, by Tom Bell; Unemployed Struggles 1919-36, by Wal Hannington; Never on our knees, by Wal Hannington; The Stormy Years, by George Hardy. Please quote prices, write to Industrial Sub-Committee, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

IS National Office requires experienced typist/secretary to work in administration office, from among IS members. Details available on request/application. Apply to National Secretary, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

COMRADE, with car, needed to take Socialist Worker to Central London bookshop every Thursday morning. Must be reliable. Please phone 739 2639.

ADVANCE, rank and file supply workers' paper—from 68 Fountains Rd, Stretford.

WILL any tenants' associations interested in forming an East Midlands Tenants Federation please write to Bob Errington, 27 Caledine Rd, New Parks, Leicester.

CLERICAL HELP needed for two days a week in London; some office experience preferable. Phone SW Business—Margaret Renn, 01-739-2639.

GIRL REQUIRES ROOM in mixed socialist flat from end of September or later
Phone Sandra at 01-459-4295

WHEN writing to Socialist Worker please mark envelopes clearly either EDITORIAL or BUSINESS.



THE RENTS BATTLE

Row over 'unfair' rent ad

A BIG ROW blew up between the Independent Television Authority and the Tories last week over advertising for the 'Fair Rents' Act.

The Tories, in a desperate attempt to sell the rent rises, have spent hundreds of thousands of pounds of our money on newspaper and television advertising extolling its virtues.

But Anthony Crosland, Labour's spokesman on housing, complained to his old mate Herbert Bowden, ex-Labour MP and now Lord Aylestone, head of the ITA, pointing out that to call the Act the 'Fair Rents Laws' was hardly objective!

So after being shown for only three days the ads were suspended on Wednesday. No doubt they will be re-introduced this week in a new 'cleaned up' version.

NEATH: Tenants are 'going it alone' against the Tory rent attack after the council decided by one vote to implement the increases.

Nine tenants' associations have formed a federation which last weekend held a 800 strong march through the town. A mass meeting voted for a partial rent strike throughout the area.

Dai Haywood, an executive committee member of the South Wales miners, told the meeting that they were committed to industrial action if any individual was penalised or evicted. Ben Davies, leader of the Labour group on the Ystradgynlais Council, which is still refusing to implement the Act, said: 'We as an authority are not going to be lackeys on behalf of the Tory government, which is reducing the living standards of the people.'

GOOLE: The council is dithering about implementing the second rent increase this year, but the tenants are preparing for action. Old Goole Tenants Resistance Association has elected street representatives to cover the estates and delegations of trade unionists have been formed to meet union officials and branches. The Drax power station construction site stewards have pledged support.

BIRMINGHAM: The Labour council last week put off yet again a decision to put the rents up. Despite Environment Minister Peter Walker's threat that they would be in contempt of court, the council voted by 70 to 54 to postpone the decision until 3 October.

Meanwhile tenants and trade unionists prepared plans this week to fight rent rises, whether imposed by the council or a Housing Commissioner.

DONCASTER: A tenants' march in Doncaster last weekend backed the Labour council, one of the few not implementing the rent rises. The march was supported by local trade unionists, who heard a speech from Percy Riley, secretary of the miners' union joint tenants association in Yorkshire. He said that thousands of miners in Yorkshire would be on rent strike and would give industrial support.

SHEFFIELD: Tenants on the Birley Moor and Hackenthorpe estates in Sheffield have decided to withhold their 67p increase. They hope to rally support in other areas of the town where the tenants are not as well organised. The tenants were lulled into a false sense of security by their Labour council, which led the fight against implementation and then collapsed in August.

LONDON: A rally against the rent rises has been called in Trafalgar Square this Sunday (1 October) at 3pm. It has been organised by the National Association of Tenants and Residents, the weak national tenants organisation dominated by the Communist Party and not noted for its militancy.

NOTTINGHAM: Tenants on the Bulwell estate in Nottingham have joined the rent strike movement. 190 voted to withhold their £1.04 increase.

GATESHEAD: St Cuthberts and Chambless Tenants Association has voted to withhold the increase.

BARNESLEY: At a large meeting on the Athersley estate last week, Arthur Scargill, a leading militant in the miners' union in Yorkshire, spoke in favour of rent strikes. He stressed that with the solidarity and determination shown by the labour movement in forcing the Tories to release the five dockers, let alone the miners' victory, the Tory rent act could be smashed.

Percy Riley, secretary of the NUM Joint Tenants' Association, criticised the NUM's response so far. 'We must stop the NUM dragging its feet on this issue, for a rent increase is a wage cut,' he said.

NEW COURTS JUST A SMOKESCREEN

from Mike Miller, Belfast

THE introduction of special courts as the 'alternative' to internment has been welcomed by every newspaper and political party outside the republican and socialist camp.

Although the Social Democratic and Labour Party has also rejected the idea we can be certain that it is not from principle or out of any great concern for the prisoners but rather out of concern for its leaders' future as politicians dependent on electoral support.

When these courts were introduced to put away republican activists in the South of Ireland the SDLP stayed silent. When some republican prisoners on hunger strike in Jack Lynch's Curragh concentration camp nearly died last week the SDLP made no moves on their behalf.

The SDLP silence on repression in the South is an indication of their belief that the ruling class there must be preserved in power if British economic imperialism is to be maintained in Ireland.

British readers should not be fooled by the huge propaganda campaign that has been launched to sell special courts as a liberal alternative to imprisonment without trial. In fact they open the door to even greater repression.

The absence of juries will ensure that upper-class professional magistrates totally committed to maintaining the status quo will have a freer hand to repress their political enemies. The holding of trials in secret will enable that despicable class of bounty hunters, informers and police spies to come into their own. The relaxation of the laws of evidence will enable the special branch torture teams to begin extracting confessions and information once more in the knowledge that they will be now accepted where they had been previously rejected in open courts.

VIOLENCE

Now that Whitelaw has a widely accepted alternative to internment he is free to step up the arrests of republican activists once more. Such arrests have already begun. The extending of the Special Powers Act to cover the written and spoken word will also give the state forces an added incentive to pick off their political opponents.

Whitelaw has stated that the special courts will be better suited to deal with those who advocate violence as well as those who allegedly take part in it. In recent months the most public and consistent advocates of violence have been within the Unionist camp itself.

Craig has promised to eradicate the enemies of Unionism and has admitted that he is in control of a heavily armed body of men, whose task will be to resist



Ian Paisley addressing a meeting. The impartiality of the new courts can be judged by the fact that Paisley was first to call for them.

any settlement with which they do not fully agree. John Taylor has called for the distribution of guns to even more people than have them already, and has publicly threatened rebellion and widespread bloodshed if Unionist Party demands are not met.

The Ulster Defence Association, according to the army, has been engaged in gun battles with the British forces. Yet the chairman of the UDA appears freely on television, and still spends much of his time in the company of British officers.

Several Ulster Defence Regiment men are facing attempted murder charges in cases where Catholics have been gunned down in cold blood.

The UDR is not only legal, but is also armed and trained by the British government. The UDA is legal and on friendly terms with the army. Vanguard is legal. The Unionist Party is legal.

Yet all these organisations are deeply implicated in some of the most savage sectarian violence there has ever been.

No anti-Unionist for one moment imagines that special courts are going to deal with Craig, Taylor, Faulkner, or any

of the other thugs of the extreme right wing. Far from being designed to come to grips with the 'men of violence', these courts are simply going to be internment with trial instead of without it, aimed as always at republicans and socialists alone.

Last Sunday, in one of the biggest demonstrations to have taken place here, the nationalist minority expressed their total rejection of these new repressive institutions, which were first demanded by Paisley, and then called for by the Unionist Party when they realised that they could no longer use internment proper to keep the 'Fenians' down.

But although the opposition to special courts is widespread within the Catholic community, much of the drive has gone from the resistance movement.

NEED

This is because many people are still not clear just why Whitelaw is here and what he is doing. Many express sympathy with his 'dilemma' of trying to placate the Catholics while dealing with the Provos and not alienating the loyalists too far. The fact is that few recognise the need to go beyond anything that Whitelaw might have to offer.

Many people are saying that Whitelaw will have to talk to the republicans at some point, but few have any idea what they should say to him, other than that he should get out of Ireland.

You cannot negotiate imperialism out of existence, nor can you bomb it out of existence. The only way imperialism will ever be defeated in Ireland is when the working class of all the 32 counties get power into their own hands.

Imperialists and non-socialist republicans may attempt to arrive at some mutually beneficial arrangement which stops short of this, but it will not mean an end to imperialism.

It is not the task of the working class to fight for the short-term solutions to the problems of imperialism—which is what civil rights or reunification would be. There can be no genuine civil rights or national independence this side of socialist revolution.

Setback for car workers' jobs fight

WHILE British Leyland workers at Basingstoke are continuing their occupation, other workers in the combine have suffered a setback in their fight against the company's attempt to cut the workforce and introduce speed-up in its factories.

Last week 3000 workers at the Coventry Morris engine plants accepted the flat rate system of payment known as measured day work. The production workers will be on £44.80 for 40 hours, increasing in November next year to £48.

A few miles away in Birmingham, 350 workers on the van tracks at the Common Lane body plant accepted a similar deal.

With the recent Jaguar strike ending in acceptance of flat rate payment system, the champagne must be flowing in the British Leyland boardroom.

While the press plays up the size of the wage packet, they don't say that workers in the motor industry used the piecework system to gain such high rates in the first place. Leyland management is determined to depress real wage levels by taking wage bargaining off the shop floor, and putting it into the hands of union officials.

Profits

At the Austin factory, the heart of the British Leyland empire, the days of the piecework system are numbered. The factory leadership's failure to lead a combine-wide fight to keep piecework is rebounding on them.

But it is a different story at the Thornycroft occupation in Basingstoke. Here the workers are questioning the very right of British Leyland to make profits at their expense.

Their occupation has lasted six weeks already. They know that if they accept Leyland's sale of the transmissions plant to Eatons, they accept more than

the redundancies of the 350 men engaged in other work on the site. They will face an immediate productivity drive by Eatons which will make an estimated one-third of the remaining 750 redundant. As Eatons have been granted only a three-year lease there will probably be no one employed there in three years time.

The redundancies at Thornycroft's are the tip of the iceberg. The workers there are fighting back. The whole combine must be mobilised in their support.

Donations and messages of support to: Roy Jones, Joint Occupation Committee, Transport Equipment (Thornycroft), Basingstoke, Hants.

Keeping tabs on the bosses

WHAT size wage rise will keep up with current price increases? What are XYZ Ltd's plans for redundancy? What's the cost to us of private property in drug manufacturing?

Last Saturday 20 International Socialists met in London to start ISIS—an IS Information Service geared to answering such questions.

The meeting opened a research register and launched a few pilot projects for later publication in Socialist Worker and its sister papers. It also decided to invite questions from organised sections of the movement and applications for enrolment on the register from individuals with easy access to libraries and other sources of information.

All communications should be addressed to ISIS, 118 South Hill Park, London NW3 2SN (phone: 01-435 5633).

Bid to deport victim of US frame-up

AN ATTEMPT was made this week to deport to the United States a Taiwanese opponent of dictator Chiang Kai-Chek. Tzu Tsai Cheng, who took part in a New York demonstration two years ago against a visit by the dictator's son, would face a 30-year prison sentence on trumped-up charges if deported.

Cheng was seized by the police during the demo after he went to the help of another demonstrator they were beating up. During the demonstration one shot had been fired, and someone else later admitted to the assassination attempt. Nevertheless, a year later Cheng found himself in court charged with attempted murder and illegal possession of a gun.

To avoid this virtual life sentence, he jumped bail and fled to Sweden. But the Swedish government decided to deport him back to the US and he was carried on to a plane, although he was unconscious and seriously ill after a hunger strike. When the plane landed in London, he was considered too ill to continue the flight.

He has been recovering from his illness, but the Tory government seems determined to send him back to an American jail.

When his wife, Cecilia Cheng, arrived in London on Monday for the extradition hearing the next day, she had to face three hours of harassment and interrogation by the immigration authorities.

Funds and contacts are needed now. Write to Tzu Tsai Cheng Defence Committee, 313/5 Caledonian Road, London N7.



I would like more information about the International Socialists

Name _____

Address _____

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

Socialist Worker

Bosses attack key building sites

ALTHOUGH most building workers returned to work 12 days ago, after their three-month struggle, at several key sites men are being forced to keep up the struggle to defend their conditions and union organisation.

In Birmingham 1500 workers on Bryants sites stayed out after management said it was refusing to keep to an agreement made before the strike which guaranteed a minimum bonus of £10 for craftsmen and £5.80 for labourers.

In London, workers at the big Cubitts site of World's End, Chelsea,

have been on strike after returning to work for only a few hours. One subcontractor tried to sack a steward and another, Mark Prince, refused to pay the rise which was agreed at the end of the strike.

The London building workers' action committee, which is appointed, not elected as in other areas, had said that if was any victimisation or continued use of 'lump' labour, joint site and company action would be officially taken. But after hearing a delegation from World's End put their case last Friday, it has still made

no reply to a request for such action.

Even worse, during the first few days after the return to work, the committee has issued several hundred overtime permits, including some to both Mark Prince and Cubitts jobs.

The financial situation is desperate, particularly for single men who have received no social security benefit since the national dispute began.

Donations (postal orders only please) to John Fontaine, Treasurer, Worlds End Strike Committee, 25 Westbank, London N16.

STRIKING ENGINEERS TAKE OVER OFFICES

by John Deason, AUEW

WIGAN:—The Walmsley workers who seized their factory a fortnight ago after 10 weeks of conventional strike have been backed by the firm's workers at Bury, who occupied their factory's office block this week.

All four factories in the group—at Bury, Bolton and Wigan—have been on strike since the Bolton workers were locked out. What began as a fight for a wage increase has developed into one for job security.

In the past 18 months the group has shut the Barley Brooke works in Wigan and destroyed 500 other jobs—and the closure of the Lodge Bank works in Bury has been announced since the strike started.

The seizure of the Wigan works followed two days of mass picketing and police harassment. George Naylor, Engineering Union shop steward, said: 'The takeover was not planned, it was a spontaneous action of the rank and file. Early that morning a lavatory attendant accidentally left a side door open. The 50 or so pickets simply took the initiative and charged in.'

GUARD

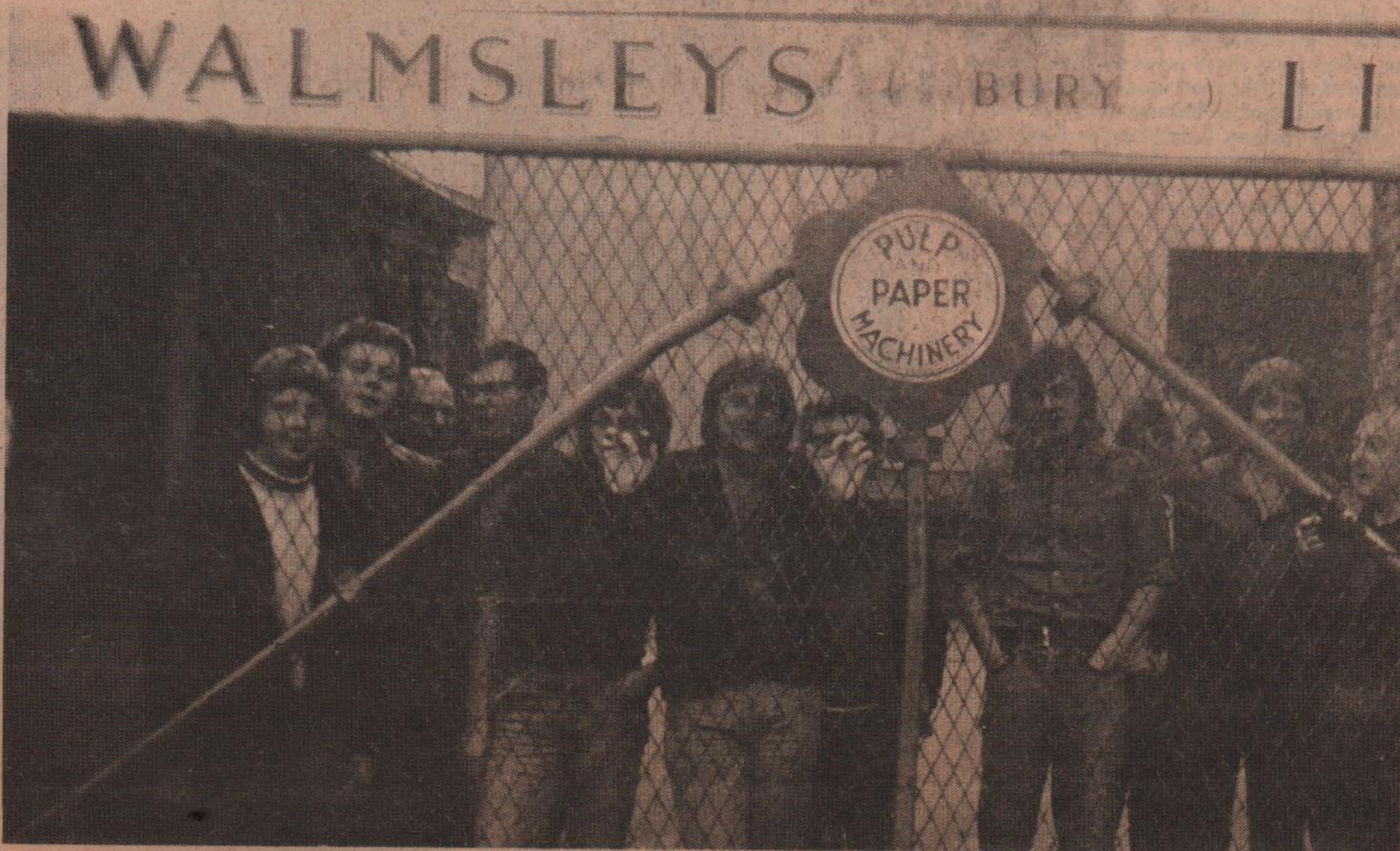
'The police superintendent made it quite clear that they were prepared to come in and forcibly eject us. But a member of higher management who was present restrained the police. By midday we had complete control of the factory.'

'For the first day or two things were a bit chaotic, but we are now well organised into shifts and quite determined to stick it out.'

This dispute is an important test case for the future of shop-floor organisation in engineering in this area. The Employers Federation are backing Walmsley management to the tune of £10 per employee per week. At the Bury works, police kept a constant guard outside the factory to prevent another takeover.

In response, the Bury and Bolton district committee of the Engineering Union have organised official levies. Militants in other factories are pushing for a series of one-day solidarity strikes.

But the union's Wigan district committee has been particularly slow in



Walmsley workers man the gates

moving. In spite of resolutions from branches, they still have not organised an official district levy.

The role of Wigan district secretary Bill Broxton, JP, has been disgraceful. He lives only 100 yards from the factory, yet has not visited it once since the occupation. When stewards visited him on the morning of the takeover at 8.30, he told them: 'Don't bother me, I don't start work until nine o'clock.'

Thankfully, the strikers themselves recognise that winning such struggles is not a nine to five job.

A mass meeting of workers from all four factories rejected a meagre management offer on Tuesday and voted to keep up the fight.

Support is urgently needed. Donations and messages to: AUEW office, 12 St Mary's Place, Bury, Lancs.

Vestey may stir up docks again

by Bob Light, TGWU, London Royal Docks

THE BATTLE against the Industrial Relations Court could be about to boil up again on the docks. Once again Midland Cold Storage is the eye of the storm.

Its owner, Lord Vestey—who a fortnight ago threatened the jobs of hundreds of dockers who work for another of his companies, Thames Stevedoring, if they did not increase productivity by 50 per cent—seems to be preparing to use the law

again to stop the blacking of Midland.

His lawyers have written to Jack Jones, of the Transport Workers Union, asking whether the picketing is official or unofficial. In other words, he wants to know to whom he should address his next writ.

So far there has been no reply from Transport House. Jack Jones' problem is that, although he will not admit it, the picketing is OFFICIAL.

Last year there was a campaign of one-day strikes in Hull against the use of non-registered labour on containers. To head off a potentially explosive situation, Jones recalled the Docks Delegate Conference, which came up with a compromise. A couple of firms were selected for an official national blacking campaign.

One was Midland Cold Storage. That decision has never been reversed.

Rich

Now Jack Jones will undoubtedly try to get off the hook. But that means he would have to point the finger at his own shop stewards, and falsify the union's past decisions. The alternative is a head-on legal clash between Jones and the Vestey organisation, something the Transport Union leaders have been doing their best to avoid.

Meanwhile, wharves which used to be worked by dockers are continuing to be turned into playgrounds for the very rich. Three years ago Vestey closed down the Customs House Wharf, sacking 70 men, to make it free for property speculation.

Next month Lady Rosalind Pease, 17-year-old debutante and granddaughter of Dowager Viscountess Portman, is throwing a party there. Just in case you have not received your invite yet, we can reveal that it is going to be a Tutankamen party. All the debs and their men friends are going to dress like ancient Egyptian mummies, and the old wharf is going to be tarted up to look like a pyramid.

The whole thing should cost a cool £10,000.

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

Flying picket succeed for Fine Tubes

by Colin Barker

LAST WEEK, for the eighth time in two years, two delegates from the Fine Tubes strike committee were staying in Manchester.

Jock Greenlees and Dave Edwards were three weeks out from Plymouth, after a week in the West Riding and another round Teesside. They were tired out after day upon day of non-stop travelling, speaking, visiting factories.

When they stopped to count, they had visited 73 factories, four quarterly stewards' meetings, two district committees, 11 district secretaries, 19 union branches, three trades councils and the ICI stewards combine committee—all in three weeks!

It had been one of their better delegations. At eight o'clock the first Monday morning, with seven other Fine Tubes delegates, they had stood outside Low Moor Steel, Bradford, on picket.

Low Moor are the chief British supplier of high-grade stainless steel. Fine Tubes' most vital raw material. For more than two years the steel has been getting through to Plymouth despite appeals, letters, phone calls, personal visits, and approaches to the TUC. Low Moor seemed impregnable.

There was one trick left—the flying picket. They tried it.

By 3pm that Monday they had stopped the Royal Mail, telephone engineers, oil and raw material supplies, and various transport firms, from going in. At 3pm they were sitting in the Low Moor offices with the steel stewards.

Management tried the usual trick: claiming 20 per cent of output went to Fine Tubes, they threatened sackings. Lies, replied the stewards, and voted their support.

At 12.30pm on Tuesday a mass meeting decided unanimously to black Fine Tubes and any firm dealing with them. The Fine Tubes boss has made no comment, but if Low Moor can hold he'll need an airlift.

As well as reporting their Bradford breakthrough, the delegates have been publicising their Birmingham conference. The response they have met has been tremendous. Everywhere they've had promises of support and delegations.

A Manchester member of the ICI combine isn't just going himself but is organising coaches for other local trade unionists. Middlesbrough and Leeds Trades Councils have joined the list of conference sponsors along with the Darlington AUEW stewards quarterly, the Newcastle Breweries stewards, the South Wales miners, Glasgow TASS divisional council and other union bodies.

The initial leaflet for the conference states: 'Our fight is important not just for ourselves but for workers throughout Britain.'

The aim of the conference is not just to have another talking shop, but to organise co-ordinated action to ensure a speedy victory—a victory that is already two years too long in coming.

FINE TUBES CONFERENCE

Saturday 28 October
Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham
11am-5pm

Admission by union card
Further details from the
Strike Committee, c/o 65 Breton
Side, Exeter Street, Plymouth
All trade union officials
should ensure that their
organisation is well represented

Textile occupation goes on

GREAT YARMOUTH:—The sit-in in defence of jobs continues at the Gainsborough Cornard factory, owned by the Carrington-Viyella textile combine. Last Saturday there was a march and a coffin bearing the inscription 'RIP 340 workers' was placed on the town hall steps, to comments of 'We're not dead yet'.

The occupation committee is now trying to contact the Sudbury factory to which Viyella is trying to remove work, and stewards of ICI, which owns half the shares in Viyella.

A leaflet put out by the committee argues that this struggle is part of the national fight against unemployment, a

fight which is growing more and more important in East Anglia. It points out that the profits made by the company last year were big enough to pay everyone in the factory £35 a week for the next 15 years for doing nothing.

'It is not the £30,000 chairman of Carrington-Viyella who will be doing without this Christmas, but our wives and children.'

Some dubious politicians have been trying to jump on the bandwagon at Yarmouth. Anthony Wedgwood Benn sent a message of support—although, of course, he did not mention that as Labour Minister of Technology he pushed through policies that led to thousands of sackings in GEC-AEI and on the Upper Clyde.

Right-wing Monday Club Tory Anthony Fell also visited the factory. He told the workers they were using the 'wrong methods'. No doubt he would prefer them to be on the dole queue.

90 sacked for joining strike

BLACKPOOL:—All 90 apprentices at Duple Coaches have been sacked for joining the 600 other workers in their six-week-old strike against lower piecework rates. Management says work must begin at the new lower rates before any negotiations over the claim for £3 on the basic and a 37½-hour week.

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