

Socialist Worker

No 406 4 January 1975 7p

PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

Aston Martin sackings, Chrysler lay-offs ...

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

FOUR HUNDRED Aston Martin workers in Newport Pagnell arrived for work on Monday. But their jobs had just walked out the back door. Their case has been well publicised, but they stand on the tip of a hidden iceberg of sackings.

Over the past few weeks redundancies have been announced at Singers, Cincinattis and Honeywells on Clydeside. Clerical workers at Ford and Chryslers are threatened with the chop. At Chrysler Linwood a long Christmas lay-off is being followed by short-time working.

There's been a lot of hullabaloo about the crisis over the past year. But for many workers it was something you read about in the papers, saw on the television.

Now it's landing on the living-room floor.

And the truth is the redundancies and sackings of 1975 are going to wreck a lot of workers' lives, unless there's a fight back.

The papers, the TV, the politicians talk about this crisis as if it was some kind of natural catastrophe, an economic typhoon you just have to let roll over you.

Take the Daily Mirror last Tuesday: 'The lush days are over . . . There will be for the immediate future falling living standards . . . Lavish wage settlements cannot improve that . . . There will be more unemployment . . . More firms will follow Aston Martin into bankruptcy.'

Why? Have the workers, the factories, the raw materials been blown away since last year?

They are all still there.

But 400 jobs at Aston Martin aren't. What's the excuse we get? 'Insufficient funds,' says Aston Martin's chairman.

He blamed the government for not giving him £600,000 to keep the company going. But only a couple of years ago the four Midland speculators who bought the company sold a few acres of land at the back of the factory for £500,000.

Other industrialists are moaning they got

'low profits' last year. But they don't explain why. Did they leave their cash register open so the money just blew out of the till?

No. They paid out record amounts to banks in interest payments and shareholders in dividends. The cost of interest payments was the death-blow to virtually all the companies that went broke in 1974.

And they paid those record interest payments over to other profiteers, quite often themselves under a different name or rather on a different board.

Certainly, they are not on the breadline. Dennis Lawson, ex-Lord Mayor of London,

has had trouble with his business affairs. His companies are being investigated by the government and the police. So what's he doing? Buying himself a sou'wester? No, he's gone on a world cruise at a cost of £28,000.

And it isn't just unhappy bosses who've gone in search of the sun. They've sent their money ahead of them. There's a vast flood of funds into South Africa from Britain (where, you'll remember, 'we're short of funds') to buy gold as a 'hedge against inflation'. It's not a hedge you'll be invited to shelter under.

The head of Aston Martin gave the game away. He pointed out that in this time of

crisis there's been a 20 per cent increase in demand for luxury cars. Who's buying them? Chrysler track workers on short-time?

The money's there all right. But there's a crisis because its owners will not put it into industrial investment. They say it will not bring them high enough profits, so they'll let millions suffer while they hoard it as gold or use it for speculation.

By their control over the wealth, they create a vicious circle, which hits one group of workers after another. Building workers are made unemployed because car workers cannot afford to buy the houses they build. And car workers are laid off because unemployed building workers cannot buy cars.

ABSURD

So absurd is the present system that even some sections of big business are groaning under the impact of the crisis they themselves have created.

But for workers, groaning will do no good. We must fight now to ward off the worst effects of the crisis and challenge the system that has produced them. Fight for:

- Five days work or five days pay.
- The 35-hour week without loss of pay. This is the best way to force the bosses to take on more workers, instead of laying workers off as the crisis grows.
- Prevent the movement of work and machinery from factories threatened by closure. Build combine committees so that the fight is carried on throughout the whole firm, not in one plant at a time.
- Nationalisation without compensation and under workers' control of any firm that claims it cannot pay its way without redundancy.



1974: YEAR OF THE CRISIS
Survey starts page 4

Free the Two!

ALL OUT ON 14 JANUARY!



Workers picketing the TUC just before Christmas demanding action.

Picture: Chris Davies (Report)

trade union leaders have left undone.

The lobby is only ten days away. There are only a few working days to bring the issue home to your workmates and ensure the maximum turn out on 14 January.

Open

The Labour government is already embarrassed on the Shrewsbury issue, and on other such issues. A good turn-out on Tuesday 14 January will embarrass them some more and perhaps compel them to open the gates to Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson's cells.

These two men, with 22 other North Wales building workers, their wives and families, have been persecuted by the law since autumn 1972.

They stood trial for three

months on charges specifically selected by Tory government law officers to secure convictions. These charges, as a new Socialist Worker pamphlet *on the Shrewsbury case and its implications for trade unionists shows, gave the prosecution enormous latitude.

Mr Justice Mais, who jailed four' as a deterrent' gave a perfect summary of the menace of the conspiracy charge. 'You know perfectly well that it can be conspiracy when they never met and never knew each other', he told a defence lawyer.

● Release Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson now.

*Workers against the Law—the truth about the Shrewsbury trials is available, price 10p plus 5p post, from Socialist Worker, Corbridge Works, Corbridge Crescent, London E2.

ROGER COX, Secretary of the National Rank and File Conference Organising Committee, called for support for the 14 January lobby.

'Today the trade union movement which has freed the dockers, broken the wages freeze and brought down the Tory government has the strength to free the Shrewsbury Two.

What is required is action and action requires leadership. The TUC have issued the call and every trade unionism must support it not just by joining the lobby but by fighting for full strike action on the day. This way rank and file trade unionists can make it clear to both government and trade union leaders that the Shrewsbury issue must be brought to a satisfactory close by freeing Eric Tomlinson and Des Warren.'

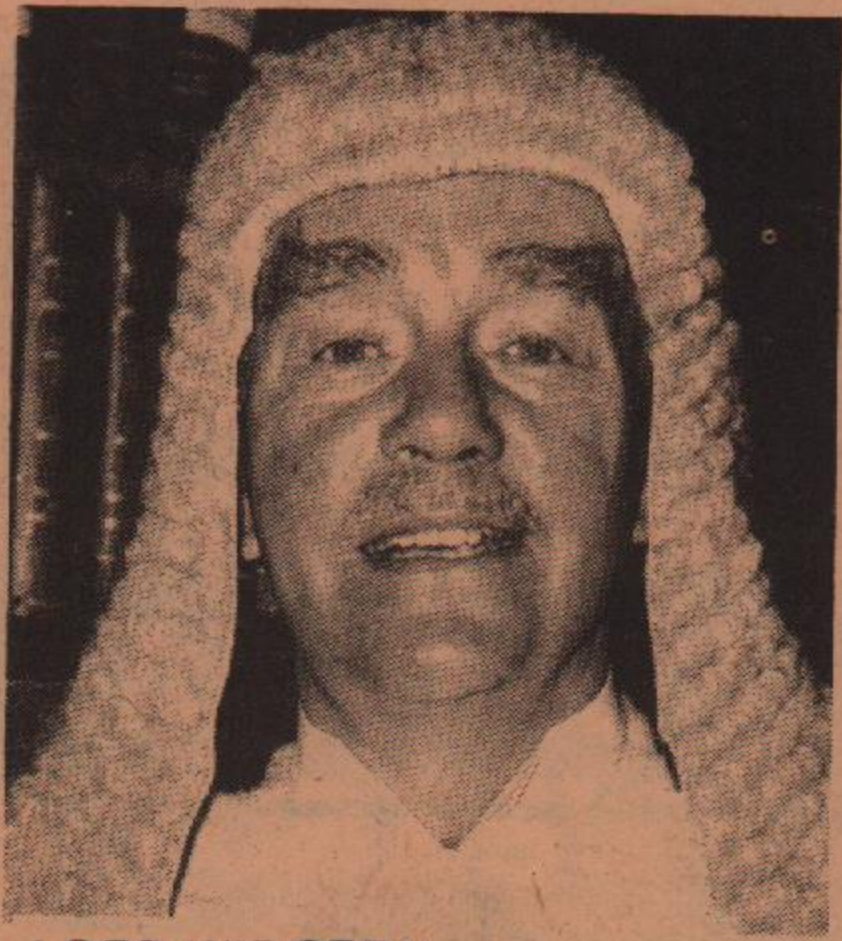
AT long last the TUC has been compelled to do something about the jailed Shrewsbury pickets. The General Council has called a lobby of parliament for 3pm on Tuesday 14 January.

The purpose, in the TUC's own inimitable language, is 'to continue the campaign to urge the Home Secretary to intervene to bring about the release of the Shrewsbury pickets'.

Jenkins is going to need some urging. He has repeatedly declared his total lack of sympathy for the Shrewsbury pickets and indeed his dedication to keeping them in jail.

In their usual half-hearted manner, the leaders of the TUC have done very little or nothing to bring the issues home to workers on the shop floor.

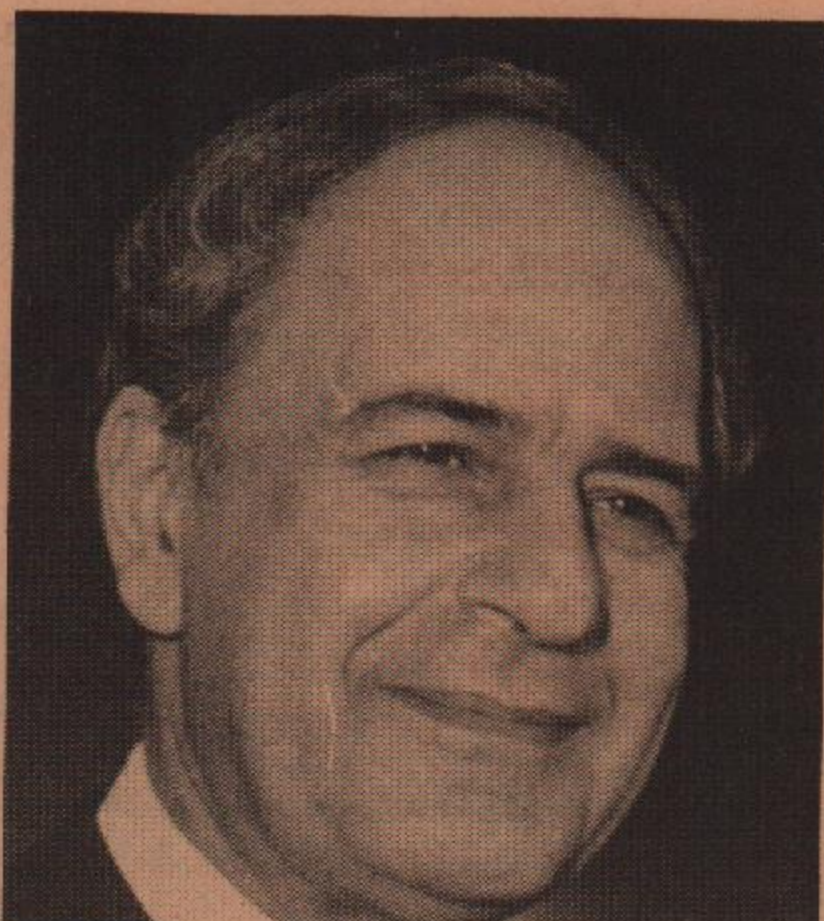
This makes it even more vital that militants do the job the



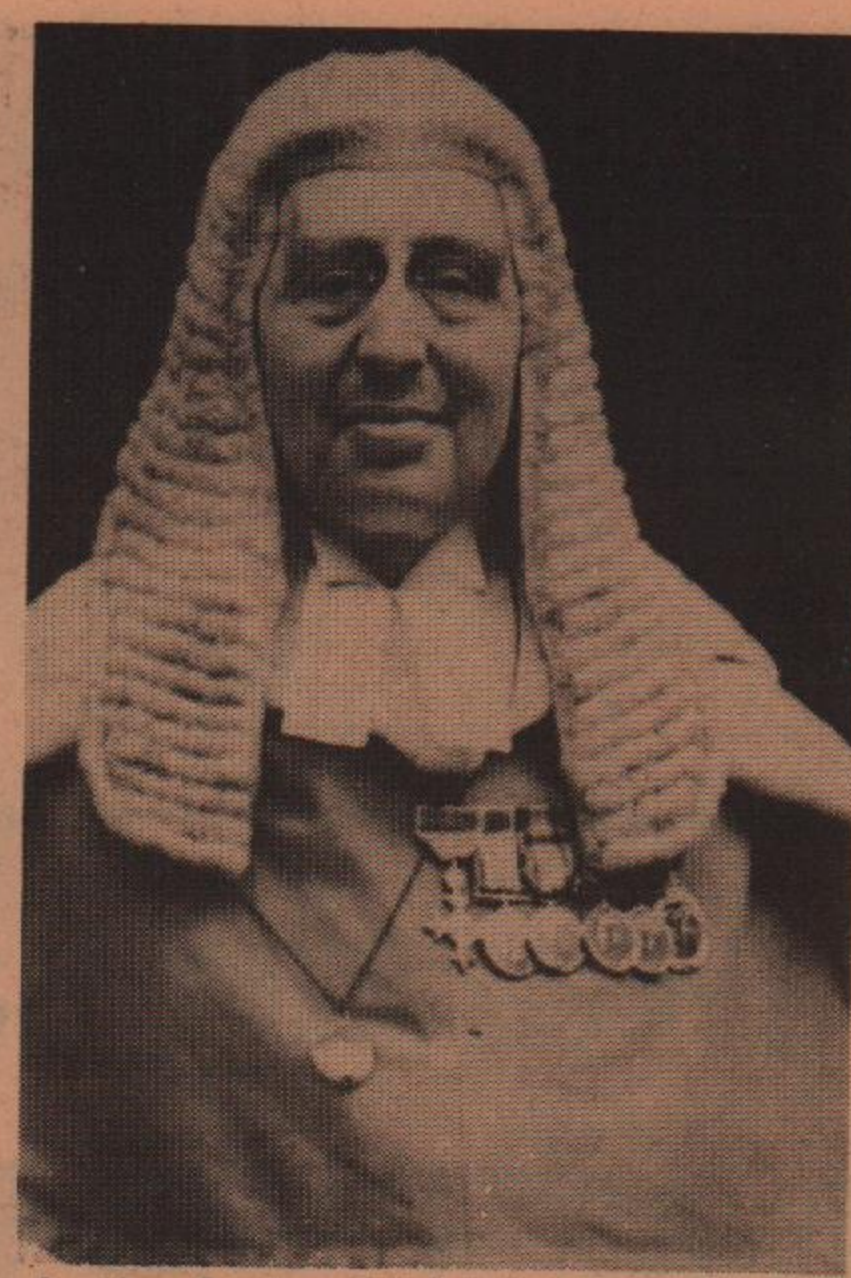
LORD WIDGERY
Another £7,900 a year



Army chief General Michael Carver:
Another £7,250



The NCB's Derek Ezra: Told to make
do with £23,000—for the moment



Justice Sachs: With his High Court
cronies he gets another £100 a week

THERE'S BRASS FOR THE BIG KNOBS



THERE is, believe it or not, one Social Contract for the poor and quite another for socially useless big knobs like Admirals of the Fleet, Air Vice Marshals and Generals.

To prove it, the Labour government gave all such top people a Christmas hand-out to ensure that their living standards are in no way reduced by the ravages of inflation.

The Head of the Civil Service got a £115-a-week wage rise in two stages which will take his wages before tax to a mere £260 a week by 1 January 1976. All Admirals, Generals and Air Chief-Marshals got an extra £125 a week to keep the flag flying. And sundry judges, Masters of the Rolls and Lords of Appeal raked in similar increases for keeping the country safe from avaricious trade unionists and lawless Clay Cross councillors.

The granting of these massive increases at a time when government ministers are increasing the volume on their hypocritical appeals to workers to accept reduced living standards was of course carefully stage managed.

As The Guardian put it: 'Suspicion will be increased by the timing of this report, which was published on the last day before the parliamentary recess... This is an old governmental device for dishing out embarrassing decisions.'

The report also envisages massive increases for state industry bosses. Coal miners cannot possibly have a £30 a week increase, for the money is needed to give NCB boss Sir Derek Ezra and his kind rises up to £200 a week, giving them salaries of £700 a week.

The indulgence of the already rich is not some accident in the make-up or performance of the Labour government. It follows inevitably from their acceptance of the big business system.

Michael Foot, Labour Minister of Employment, instances this better than anyone else. He tore into the Scottish Rolls-Royce workers' £8-a-week rise. But he had not a word to say when the Labour government endorsed the decision to pay back former Rolls shareholders 58.1p per share.

This fantastic hand-out, totalling £38 million, was criticised by the Public Accounts Committee of the House of Commons. But the wealthy parasites who bought up RR shares after the

collapse at 5p a time were still paid off. The £38 million involved would have given the Scottish Rolls-Royce workers an extra £119 a week for a year!

These squalid episodes are further illustrations of the basis on which the capitalist system is founded. Workers are constantly under attack while shareholders and their friends and protectors, in the army, the air force and the law laugh all the way to the bank.

Army anti-picket document 'secret'

STATE officials are now redoubling their efforts to ensure that no one knows anything about the advanced state of army preparations for active intervention in British politics.

Just before Christmas Time Out, the London entertainments guide which also specialises in expose journalism, published a story about an army counter-subversion training manual, Land Operations, Volume Three: Counter Revolutionary Operations, Part One: Principles and General Aspects. This document details some of the methods Britain's leading military minds have dreamed up to deal with mass picketing and other such acts of treason.

The article, based on a report in the Irish paper the Sunday World, was illustrated by a copy of the cover of Land Operations taken straight from a cutting from the Sunday World.

But on Tuesday 17 December, one of the paper's editors had a telephone call from one Inspector Dennis Kelly of the Metropolitan Police. This man came to meet the paper's editors on Friday.

He formally cautioned them that technically paper's editors had a telephone call from one Official Secrets Act by communicating a secret document to unauthorised persons. Inspector Kelly then went on to develop the all embracing logic of the Act. Anyone who had sight of the document, he explained, was also technically committing an offence. This makes all of Time Out's 49,000 readers guilty of an offence under the Official Secrets Act.

This may seem ludicrous at first sight. But the Official Secrets Act was specifically designed to be the biggest catch-all since the Conspiracy Acts were coined in the 18th and 19th centuries. It was passed just before World War One in a wave of anti-German hysteria and has since been used by virtually every government department to hide their dirty dealings.

It could be that the police will take no further action against Time Out on this matter. But they have already arrested two socialists John Russell and Mila Caley for possession of the Land Operations document. They will come to trial later this year.

One of Time Out's editors David May, still faces trial on another charge of handling stolen property. The 'stolen property' is an item May had been given by its owner to authenticate a photograph—a routine journalistic practice.

Doubtless by sheer coincidence May is one of the journalists who was closely involved in unravelling the Littlejohn saga, a story which proved most embarrassing for the British authorities. The stolen property charge may enable them to wreak their revenge.

Thug tactics cause Front split

THERE are signs that the National Front is in a bad way. For a long time now there have been splits between the more violent and the less violent racists, with the latter trying to cash in on the ex-Tory image. But now there are signs that the splits are getting out of hand.

Martin Webster, the ex-Nazi who is NF national activities organiser, gave the go-ahead for increasing violence when he called on members to 'get tough with our enemies' at a Remembrance Sunday Rally. Since then Front members at the Intex factory in Lancashire have slashed and intimidated strikers, in Crawley they beat a demonstrator about the head with a hammer, in Ramsgate three people ended up in hospital after a beating at a meeting, and in Willesden, London, similar violence was used at a council meeting called to discuss a ban on NF meetings in council halls.

But other members of the National Front are obviously frightened of this thuggery, and are working hard to pretend that the National Front

is not what it is, a neo-Nazi organisation. Respectability is the key, and ex-Tory Roy Painter has had one success in getting rid of the too well-known Nazi John Tyndall as chairman, and replacing him with the seemingly more respectable Kingsley Reid.

Now he has even been to see the leaders of the established Jewish community in England to try to come to some deal with them. This will hardly please the racists and anti-Jewish leaders of the National Front.

It is important that socialists continue to expose the National Front for what they really are. Respectability will only help them to grow. All are Nazis, no matter how hard they try to change their image.

THE National Front's outrage at the bombing of innocent civilians is not very convincing. Lindsey Mason, National Front organiser in Belfast, said of recent car bombings in Dublin: 'This time it was 31 dead. Next time it will be 331.'

WHEN TO SWITCH ON

FRIDAY
ITV (London area only): 11.25pm. The rise of the Black Power movement in the 1960s was accompanied by a new kind of black writing. DUTCHMAN written by Leroi Jones is a good example, the film was made in 1967.

MONDAY
BBC-1: 8.10pm. THE NEW MAN—CUBAN STYLE is a PANORAMA report on Cuba on the sixteenth anniversary of Fidel Castro's accession to power.

TUESDAY
ITV: 10.30pm. A FAMILY DOCTOR is a profile of the work and life of a Welsh general practitioner.

WEDNESDAY
BBC-2: 8.10pm. LOOKING IN—JAPANESE STYLE is on the role of TV in that country which has 'the world's greatest variety of TV programming.'

THURSDAY
BBC-2: 10.10pm. The occupation of the Triumph motor cycle factory at Meriden and the subsequent attempt to establish a workers' co-operative is examined in MAN ALIVE'S WHOSE SPANNER IN THE WORKS? On BBC-1 the PLAY FOR TODAY at 9.25pm, the first of a series from Birmingham, is GANGSTERS, about that apparently thriving local industry.

FRIDAY
BBC-1: 11.22pm. The film of Edna O'Brien's novel THE GIRL WITH THE GREEN EYES starring Rita Tushingham and Peter Finch.

Connoisseurs of Claret weep for Stonehouse

THE NEWS that John Stonehouse MP has been representing Walsall North under a name stolen from a dead voter and from a holiday hotel and detention centre in Australia has created a stir. It has been generally agreed that even for a 'high-flying' Labour MP this is going too far.

Stonehouse was born into the Labour movement. His mother is an ex-mayor of Southampton and a progress through the RAF, the London School of Economics, an ill-fated business venture in Africa and a few parliamentary candidatures led him into parliament in 1957. In 1964 it led him into government as a junior aviation minister and by 1968 he had become the parliamentary supreme at the Post Office.

A career of which many MPs could be proud of, but there was one thing missing. Money.

While the Labour Party may not be able to transform the lives of its supporters, it has been notably successful at transforming the lives of those they voted for. The careers of Lord George-Brown, Lord Robens, Ray Gunter and many others bear ample testimony.

Initiative

The prestige of being an MP may not bring the walls of capitalism tumbling down, but it does provide a useful ladder for scaling those walls for personal advantage. For Stonehouse, prestige plus moral indignation—over the plight of Africa and the starving of Bangladesh—has meant money.

Through all these ventures the local Labour Party at Walsall has stuck doggedly by him. Did anyone ever stop to ask why their local MP should spend his time setting up such working-class organisations as Connoisseurs of Claret Ltd? Or Global Imex exports?

Or why he should delight in recruiting Sir Charles Forte to the board of his British Bangladesh Bank? Or why he should spend the last parliamentary session in the Lebanon attempting to sell Roman cement to the Nigerians?

Stonehouse was attempting to build up a fortune in seven years in order to make a determined bid for the leadership of the Labour Party—claimed his wife. Seven lean years for the party would be the seven fat years Stonehouse needed to prepare.

A seven-year working holiday was apparently permissible—after all he had visited local constituents, if only to steal their dead husbands' names for fake passports.

If John Stonehouse hadn't gone for a swim off Miami then he would still be helping the Labour Party in the way he knows best—by helping himself. The moral for MPs is simple—by all means be a businessman, but try not to go broke, it's bad for the image...

SOCIALIST WORKER FILM TOUR

Ireland: Behind the Wire

Showing in Britain for the first time, an important new film about what is really happening in the North of Ireland and why. Banned by Irish TV and raided by the Ministry of Defence. Keep a date clear in your diary and judge for yourself. Full details next week.

MANCHESTER: Friday 17 January
GLASGOW: Saturday 18 January
TESSIDE: Monday 20 January
HULL: Tuesday 21 January
LEEDS: Wednesday 22 January
BARNLEY: Thursday 23 January
BRADFORD: Friday 24 January
LIVERPOOL: Sunday 26 January
BIRMINGHAM: Monday 27 January
BRISTOL: Tuesday 28 January
SWANSEA: Wednesday 29 January
OXFORD: Thursday 30 January
COVENTRY: Friday 31 January
EAST LONDON: Saturday 1 February
CENTRAL LONDON: Sunday 2 February
WEST LONDON: Monday 3 February

THE REAL THREAT

EVERY DAY 'civil liberty' becomes more of a sick joke as Roy Jenkins' 'anti-terrorist' law takes effect. Political opponents of British policy in Ireland are being deported and Irish people, apparently at random, are regularly being arrested and held for long periods simply to let them, and everyone else, know that it is now dangerous to be less than wholehearted in support for British activity concerning Ireland.

● A month after her husband Albert was arrested, Mrs Mary O'Rawe still does not know when or where she will see him next.

Albert O'Rawe is a 51-year-old father of six who has worked for the past seven years as a porter at the Ministry of the Environment. He was arrested early on the morning of 30 November, taken to Guildford police station and questioned about the Guildford and Woolwich pub bombs. Three days later the police told his solicitor that no charges would be preferred. Despite that, after seven days Mr O'Rawe was served with an exclusion order deporting him to Ireland.

His solicitor, Stephen Gilchrist, lodged an appeal. But as he explained: 'It's an impossible task. One is not told what one is supposed to be appealing against. There was no

No evidence, no charge, but you're deported

evidence against Mr O'Rawe, so how could we refute it?' The appeal was turned down.

Mr O'Rawe, given the choice of being deported to Belfast or Dublin, opted for Dublin. Unfortunately the Irish minister responsible for the matter is on holiday and will be for the next fortnight. So Mr O'Rawe lies in jail, charged with nothing, and not knowing on what shore he will eventually be dumped.

And his family pack their bits and pieces and wonder where they will have to go to live and how they will manage when they get there...

Actually, Albert O'Rawe's crime is well-known in the London-Irish community. He lived in Quex Road, Kilburn, opposite the church where the body of hunger-striker Michael Gaughan lay for a night. And, be-

cause it was convenient, Mr and Mrs O'Rawe allowed Gaughan's parents to stay in their home the night before the body was taken back to Ireland. A desperately foolish thing to do as it turned out...

Jim Flynn and Noel McComb, the first two men deported to Belfast, have been released after questioning by the RUC Special Branch. They were deported because, in the words of the Act, Roy Jenkins was 'satisfied that they were involved in the preparation or commission of terrorist acts.'

● Jim Flynn was a member of the Official Republican Movement in Bristol, active in opposing the British presence in Ireland but bitterly critical of the Provisionals and particularly of the bombing campaign.

Noel McComb had left Belfast two years ago, after his mother, a Protestant, had been shot dead by the UDA for associating with a Catholic man. He was a member of no political organisation.

They were both released in Belfast because, even by the standards of 'proof' which operate there, they were innocent. Which makes it crystal clear that they were arrested, locked up for three weeks and then deported, not for anything they had done, but to buy off bigoted anti-Irish feeling, or to get rid of political activists, or both.

● Twenty people are being held in Southampton under the law after what the capitalist press described as 'a crack-down on suspected terrorists'. In fact the police freely admit that none of those in custody are wanted in connection with the much-publicised 'bomb-factory' discovered in a flat in the city. But no doubt the fact that 20 Irish people are being held gives every local fascist a warm glow of satisfaction that law and order is on the up and up.

Thirteen dead £42,000, an OBE, and an £8000 pay rise

pigs. The medical journal, The Lancet, condemned the use of CR in November, saying that research on it had been incomplete and carried out in a 'security straight-jacket'.

There was no response from Rees to the Provo truce.

■ ■ SUNDAY 22 December: The Provisional truce began at midnight and was effective. No incidents were reported, but in the Derry Journal a Creggan housewife exploded George Lynch's claim to be the most raided person in Ireland.

Mr Lynch's home had been searched 37 times in the previous four months, but Mrs Peggy McLaughlin, mother of ten, has counted 58 raids, during none of which was anything found.

■ ■ MONDAY 23 December: Mr Rees released three internees out of nearly 600. The general reaction in Catholic areas was 'He must be joking', a feeling reinforced by the news that he had simultaneously signed nine new internment orders.

■ ■ WEDNESDAY 25 December: Christmas dinner is served cold in Long Kesh because of 'organisational difficulties'. Among those making the best of it is Michael Donnelly from Derry. He has never been in a court in his 22 years. This is his fourth successive Christmas in a prison camp.

Corps were jailed for causing explosions in the town. They had bombed an Irish club, a Catholic Friary and Ruskin College. They got from six months to two years.

Explaining the sentences, incredibly lenient compared with those being handed down to Irish bombers, Judge Mynett said: 'There was no evidence of any political motive,' thus contributing to our understanding of what constitutes a 'political' target. The Old Bailey is political and, like the Price sisters, you get life sentences twice over for bombing that. Irish clubs are 'non-political' and you stand a good chance of getting away with six months if you bomb one of those.

■ ■ SATURDAY 21 December: It was announced, and ignored in the British press, that army doctors had taken blood samples from all the prisoners in Long Kesh. Camp authorities said this was part of 'normal health checks'. Republican sources maintained that it was a follow-up investigation into the effects of CR gas, canisters of which had been dropped from helicopters into the camp during the October riot when the huts were burned down.

Many of the prisoners were temporarily paralysed, others experienced something akin to epileptic fits. CR is authorised for use only in Northern Ireland and only in prisons and there is widespread suspicion in Ireland that the prisoners are being used as guinea-



THE WEEK IN IRELAND

NEWS THE BRITISH PRESS DOESN'T PRINT

THURSDAY 19 December: The relatives of the Bloody Sunday victims were told they would receive a total of £42,000 compensation, amounts ranging from £250 for unemployed youths to £16,575 for the family of a man with eight children. The awards were the first official acknowledgement that, despite the lying Widgery Report, the men were murdered.

The relatives did not contest the amounts, saying that their main concern was to clear the victims' names. But Catholic leaders made the point that no one has ever been charged with the deliberate killings, and that Lt-Col Derek Wilford, the man who commanded the Paras that day, was awarded the OBE in the 1973 New Year Honours list. Lord Widgery, of course, has just been awarded a £8000 a year pay rise.

■ ■ FRIDAY 20 December: The Provisional IRA called an 11-day Christmas and New Year truce and indicated that it might be extended indefinitely if certain demands were met. The most crucial of these was: 'That the British government avails itself of the opportunity for bringing to an end the evil of internment.' It was generally assumed that if Northern Ireland Secretary Merlyn Rees freed a substantial number of internees over Christmas the truce would at least be extended for a month to encourage further releases.

The same day three ex-members of Oxford University Officer Training

WHAT WE THINK

The row over the Common Market

DEMOCRACY is in danger, says Mr Tony Benn, menaced by the faceless bureaucrats of Brussels, the Common Market Commission.

'The parliamentary democracy we have developed and established in Britain,' he says, 'is based not upon the sovereignty of parliament but upon the sovereignty of the people, who, by exercising their vote, lend their sovereign powers to MPs... Five basic democratic rights derive from this relationship and each of them is fundamentally altered by Britain's membership of the European Community.'

What are the 'basic democratic rights' that concern Mr Benn?

Not the rights of free speech or freedom of publication. The government of which he is a member has just made it a crime to support in speech or writing any organisation which the Home Secretary claims is 'terrorist'. Not the right of workers to organise industrially or politically. Mr Benn was a member of the government that tried to introduce the 'In Place of Strife' anti-union laws and is a member of the government that is keeping the Shrewsbury pickets in jail.

No, the 'rights' he speaks of are all concerned with the fiction that this country is a democracy in the real sense, that ordinary people actually rule themselves.

'State secrets'

As it happens a book has just been published about the decision to produce atomic bombs in Britain. An important and controversial decision. Who made it? Parliament? Parliament was not consulted or even allowed to know what was happening. The Cabinet then? The Cabinet wasn't told either. The prime minister and four other ministers, plus a handful of top bureaucrats, generals, admirals and air marshals, took the decision to join the nuclear arms race and commit vast sums of money to it.

Naturally the 'sovereign people' were the last to know what had been done in their name. And if anyone had tried to tell them he would have landed in jail because it is a crime to reveal 'state secrets' until long after the event. Incidentally the government in question was a Labour government.

This case is only an extreme example of what happens all the time. The vital policy decisions are taken by tiny groups of big businessmen, senior politicians and top bureaucrats. The average MP, let alone the average member of the 'sovereign people', has little or no say in any matter of importance except by mass direct action against the government. 'Democracy in Britain' is a myth.

What we do have are certain important democratic rights, wrested from our ruling class in the past, and constantly threatened. And the threat comes first of all from the British governments (Tory and Labour) which run the country in the interests of capitalism. Only very secondarily does it come from Brussels. Those Labour Party 'lefts' who try to conceal these truths are aiding the enemy.

Workers republic

At the same time we are opposed to the 'renegotiation' fraud and the whole Common Market set-up. The Common Market is a bureaucratic racket run in the interests of West European big business, including British big business.

We opposed British entry and if there is a referendum on 'renegotiated' terms we will call for a No vote. We will take part in all movements of working-class opposition to the Common Market, irrespective of our differences with the Labour lefts and the Communist Party. But only of working-class opposition. We will have no truck with 'popular fronts' with dissident Tories, Powellites or fascists.

Benn (and the Communist Party) express a nationalist opposition to the Common Market. Our opposition is internationalist. We are against the Common Market because it is capitalist, not because it is European. We are for a SOCIALIST United States of Europe and, ultimately, for a Workers' Republic on a world scale.



1974: YEAR

GOODBYE 1974—AND DON'T CALL AGAIN headlined this week's Sunday Times Business News. As the employers sigh with relief that 1974 is over, they fearfully face the prospects for 1975.

The renewed militancy of traditionally strong sections of engineering and car workers and the new militancy of others, such as the lorry drivers and bakery workers, alike demonstrated the strength of the working class.

The flying picket was adopted by teachers, bakers, lorry drivers and textile workers in sharp contrast with the passivity of the trade union leaders. The strikers since the return of the Labour government were almost all unofficial—and in defiance of trade union officials.

JANUARY

TORIES introduced three-day working in most of British industry and power cuts. *Socialist Worker* 5 January: 'We must reject the Tory lies and insist on FULL WORK OR FULL PAY.'

'No one should accept less than five days' pay. Opinion in the unions must be mobilised to fight for this basic demand.'

'The Tories can be beaten. They can be driven out of office. A victory for the miners and a refusal to accept pay cuts will do it.'

The AUEW 'postponed' industrial action on its national pay claim 'until after the crisis', and then limited action to an overtime ban. *Socialist Worker* 12 January: 'An overtime ban after several weeks on half pay. What a pathetic joke.'

FEBRUARY

THREE-DAY week used by managements like Armstrong Patents in Beverley, Yorkshire to victimise militants such as Jean Jepson, TGWU Conventor.

The miners' strike. Heath calls General Election. Gormley tries to call strike off and fails. NUM Executive decides on maximum of six pickets and a passive strike.

Socialist Worker 16 February: 'Mass pickets are protection against the only genuinely threatening outsiders—the police, who are either prone to or encouraged to harass small numbers of pickets.'

Heath loses 'Who governs the country' election issue. But Wilson doesn't win it either. A minority Labour government.

MARCH

MICHAEL Foot given good launching as Employment Minister by NUM Executive who leave surface and



Manchester bakery workers voting to strike

Picture: John Sturrock (Report)

No wonder the prospects for 1975

In February the solidarity of the trade union movement behind the miners brought down the Tory government. The miners, like the Ford press shop workers during the November election, refused to return to work during the election campaign to make things easy for Labour. Their own industrial strength was a more powerful weapon for 'reforming' wage packets than the Labour Party and the House of Commons.

Industrial action, having forced a General Election and defeated one government, forced the next (albeit temporarily) to abandon legal wage controls. The engineers' official strike in May finally smashed the Industrial Relations

Act, and now we are the only major working class in the world to exist virtually free of legal shackles.

1974 saw the first major white-collar workers' struggles in London councils and Scottish classrooms. A new National Rank and File Movement embracing militants across an as yet small number of industries held its first two conferences.

No wonder 1975 and the prospects of a continued world-wide slump, rapid inflation and a powerful working-class continuing to fight for wages and jobs scares the pants off the ruling class.

But the price paid for these victories has

been heavy and the missed opportunities many.

In the first three months of 1974 working-class families ate less than at any time since the end of rationing in 1953. The minority of us who have won wage rises of £14 a week or more have just kept our heads above water. The majority have seen real cuts in our living standards.

And the 'social' services—health, welfare, education, housing and transport—are getting desperate.

The widespread hatred of the Tories and overwhelming support for the miners—despite the three-day week and electricity cuts—did



Nurses, supported by their families and by other hospital workers, demonstrating in Lancaster for higher pay

non-face workers short on full claim.

Con-Mech strike broken with a little help from the NIRC. Strachans workers occupy their Eastleigh factory and discover their employer, Grand Metropolitan Hotels, got information on militants from both the Special Branch and the Economic League.

First Conference of National Rank and File Movement.

APRIL

AUEW National Committee sell-out national claim after two weeks' overtime ban and a speech from Michael Foot. British Leyland invent 'Cowley wife' and launch attack on job organisation at Cowley.

NALGO calls first all-out strike action in selected areas in London in pursuance of London weighting

claim. 20,000 teachers march in London for London allowance.

MAY

AUEW funds sequestered by NIRC and Donaldson. AUEW executive calls all-out strike which lasts for one day before an anonymous donor (believed to be acquainted with the Engineering Employers Federation) pays the outstanding fines. The NIRC is killed.

Nurses' militancy hits headlines. Black workers at Imperial Typewriters in Leicester strike and expose racist influence in TGWU.

Retail Price Index shows April had biggest post-war leap in inflation. Phase 3 threshold clause triggered. About 10 million workers end up receiving 40p for each point triggered until November. Though less than real cost of inflation, rises cushion its full ravages.

JUNE

DES Warren and Ricky Tomlinson released on bail pending appeal. C A Parsons workers, Newcastle, and Manchester dockers strike in support of nurses.

Chrysler finally victimise leading Coventry militant John Worth. Strachans workers sold out by full-time officials. Threshold strikes spread—growth of combine organisation is encouraged.

NALGO sells out London allowance fight. Rank and File teachers force unofficial strike action. SOGAT lower-paid workers and women workers win real victory after support by Fleet Street workers. Class Four 'women's grade' abolished.

JULY

NATIONAL nurses' co-ordinating committee set up on joint initiative

of Hospital Worker and Rank and File Organising Committee. 1000 South Wales miners strike for day in response to appeal for solidarity by Swansea Nurses' Action Committee.

Rank and file teachers force NUT to call official action in London. Pay Board report on London Weighting creates new anomalies between 'Inner' and 'Outer' London. London Airport workers win £4 straight away. Fisher-Bendix, Kirkby re-occupied.

AUGUST

SHELL workers break Social Contract by getting second major rise in six months. Hospital workers in North-East and Hammersmith begin socialising Health Service by 'blacking' pay beds. Millions of workers go without their summer holidays abroad. Some book by Court Lines—and also go without their summer holidays abroad.

SEPTEMBER

FOOD shortages manipulated by Tate and Lyle who get injunction to gag Paul Foot. *Socialist Worker* 7 September: 'The Hull dockers gave their answer this week. Because of the sugar 'shortage' their canteen was without sugar—while 80 tons of the stuff lay piled on the quay outside ready for profitable export to the Persian Gulf.'

'So the dockers refused to load it, and ordered the Labour Government to distribute it to people who needed it.'

Ferranti adopt lame-duck posture and crawl to Wedgwood Benn. Ford press shop workers strike and refuse to work despite Wilson's announcement of another election.

Socialist Worker 28 September: 'A Ford worker spelt out the issue that faces every worker in Britain: "If the Social Contract means our



Miners last January

lads have got to work for less money, it means the Social Contract has got to go." TUC, Scanlon and Gill endorse the Social Contract.

OCTOBER

WILSON 'wins' General Election with Labour's lowest vote since the 1930s. Fight against Social Contract hot up. Lorry drivers, Rolls-Royce refuse, sewage, teachers and Wills all strike in West of Scotland.

Jack Jones speaks in Motherwell in defence of Social Contract. Scottish strike wave spreads South. Everyone wants a tenner. Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson sent back to jail.

NOVEMBER

40,000 on strike in Scotland. More come out in England and Wales. All unofficial and all against Social Contract. The TGWU, UCATT and TUC try to forget their pious resolutions on Shrewsbury pickets.

Propaganda campaign in support of local productivity deals for miners fails. Asian and white workers strike together at Intex against ICI's victimisation—supported by the Dyers and Bleachers Union—of a militant. Second National Rank and File Conference.

DECEMBER

CLAUDE Lavender, executive member of Dyers and Bleachers, expelled for supporting Intex strikers—who are attacked with razors by fascist thugs. Unofficial strike action by bakers forces union into official strike, which is then sold out.

Liverpool bakers victimised after return to work. Much of motor industry put onto short-time working.

Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson spend their second Christmas in jail. Aston Martin goes bust. 500 sacked.

OF THE CRISIS

frighten the pants off our rulers

not survive as a unifying force. Hundreds of thousands of workers took strike action, many occupying their factories, against the crumbling edifices of Phase Three and later the 'Social Contract'.

Sections taking action, such as the Shell workers, the lorry drivers or the bakers, were bigger and showed more industry and combine-wide awareness than in 1968/69 when wage laws were last burst apart, but there was less class-wide feeling than six months earlier.

The threshold payments, London allowance, other special awards, the fact that many workers have received their biggest-ever nominal wage rise, all played their part in

maintaining the sectionalism of most workers.

With few exceptions, lasting links have not been forged. In the West of Scotland strike wave there was not even a joint shop stewards' meeting organised, let alone one pooled strike fund. Weaker groups, such as the Glasgow sewage workers, were isolated and defeated.

The lack of a common response has also allowed the laws against picketing to be stiffened by the courts and the two Shrewsbury pickets to go back to jail.

Sectionalism took an upturn in 1974 because of the weaker national class response. Narrow craft consciousness and demands for

increased differentials between workers, rather than for large across-the-board rises for all workers, have increasingly played into the hands of employers and union officials. Black and women workers, often moving into action for the first time, have been repeatedly denied the basic support from the rest of the movement which they needed for victory.

So the balance sheet has both plus and minus marks on it. But it is the sum that counts—and that the employers fear most. There is less class-wide action, less political consciousness of the need to take on the employers as a whole, but many workers are much readier to take action and have had

experiences they won't forget. They have been steeled for the battles that are coming.

Within months the ruling class will demand that Labour re-introduce wage controls. Redundancies will become the order of the day, especially in the crucial motor and domestic consumer goods industries. The 'national interest' will be invoked to claim the loyalty of workers for still further sacrifices in the interests of British capitalism.

The International Socialists have an important role to play in this situation. Firstly we must put all our energies into strengthening the existing movement towards rank-and-file organisation. That is the key to building a leadership that can give the needed overall confidence to workers as they face the challenges ahead. We must support fully and work for a National Rank and File Movement within the unions which campaigns for union democracy, defence of jobs and living standards, and elementary solidarity in defence of trade union rights.

Unite workers

All our members and readers of Socialist Worker should work in 1975 to forge these links nationally and locally between different groups of workers.

The surrender of the left trade union leaders to the Labour government and its voluntary wage restraint policies gives the National Rank and File Movement fantastic possibilities when the Social Contract becomes social controls. Whether it is in a position to use these possibilities depends on you.

We must campaign openly and loudly for policies to fight inflation and redundancies which unite workers against the capitalist class. When ideas like 'workers' co-operatives' or 'worker directors' come up, we must argue clearly against them. In the motor industry, for example, we must fight hard to popularise our demands for total nationalisation of the entire industry, without compensation and with shop stewards' control over track speed, manning levels and working conditions.

Any notion that the working class should accept sacrifices must be firmly rejected. But to argue this case, for nationalisation, for the ability to negotiate when the workers decide, for five days' work or five days' pay, leads to the complete rejection of the anarchy of capitalist society. We must be even more prepared to argue directly for an alternative, planned, socialist society.

Here comes Equal Pay Year...or does it?

1975 is the year of Equal Pay. Legally, that is. The law provides, by the end of the year, for all women to be paid the same as a man for doing the same job.

Yet, though the employers have had six years to prepare, there has often been slow, and sometimes no progress towards equal pay.

Figures published by the government in September showed that between March 1972 and March 1974 about 40 per cent of small firms had made no progress at all towards equal pay—and that although nearly two out of three wage agreements provide for women to receive at least 90 per cent of the male rate, this still leaves an enormous gap to be made up in the coming year.

Some industries with many women workers are making notably slow progress—women in banking receive four-fifths of men's rates. In textiles they receive even less.

In the year up to last May women's average minimum rates as a percentage of men's rose from 88.2 per cent to 95 per cent, an increase of 3.8 per cent. Yet more than a third of industry still has to make up a difference of more than ten per cent next year.

Engineering has made least progress. The women's rate had increased by only two per cent to 91 per cent of the men's. The policy of the AUEW will need to change dramatically if anything is to be achieved. In 1972 and 1973, the equal pay demand was dropped from their claims.

Effects

But even these figures conceal the real difference. Actual earnings for women in manual jobs are 63 per cent of men's and 55 per cent for women in non-manual jobs.

These figures are calculated by excluding the effects of overtime pay and hours, and they are not changing very fast.

They show that many women who are supposed to get equal pay with men, actually work in low-paid jobs which are restricted to women workers.

The government has done little apart from promises in a publicity campaign, which so far has involved them in circulating employers to tell them that 1975 is Equal Pay year! Proposals against discrimination were laid out in September in their white paper on Equality.

There are no sanctions in the Equal Pay Act against employers that don't pay up, and there is still the possibility that managements will try and introduce the most



The growing militancy of women workers in 1974: Top left, a picket outside Kenilworth Components in Leicester; Right, strikers at SEI, Heywood, jeer as blacklegs go to work; Bottom, police see blacklegs through the picket at Wingrove and Rogers, Liverpool.

massive regrading and job evaluation schemes in 1975 to wriggle out of it altogether.

The Act was introduced when there was a boom in the economy and it was possible to think of improving women's rates. Now the story is different.

A jump to close the gap will be inflationary, and no employer wants to pay out large lump sums to women when they are already fighting to contain threshold payments and the big increases which need to be fought for to keep up with inflation.

But inflation hits women, too, and a rise in militancy in the last year promises that the employers won't enjoy 1975.

The militancy has shown itself in all sorts of ways. Women in Woolworths in Glasgow went on strike for the threshold in September and won. Evening shift women workers at Potter and Brumfield in Oxford were made redundant but reinstated after a united factory-wide strike.

Sacked

But at SEI in Heywood, a ten-week strike ended in defeat, partly because the men in the factory wouldn't recognise the women's struggle as theirs. Even the AUEW failed to instruct its men members to come out in support.

At Kenilworth Components in Leicester the workers were starved back to work last October after striking in support of seven women who were sacked. The strike was official, but in name only.

At the National Switch Factory in Keighley, women workers earn-

ing £9.13 a week came out for an increased basic rate and the men came out in support.

One woman said: 'When we first came out, the men were amused. They thought we didn't really know what we were doing or what we wanted. We were all afraid. It was unknown ground to us. We decided that without the men the whole cause was lost so at another meeting we all came out again'.

They lost—but there have been two important victories. SOGAT, the Printworkers' union, used its strength in Fleet Street to back the claim with the British Federation of Master Printers. As a result of the strike, which lasted for three weeks, a deal was agreed abolishing class four, the women's grade.

At Wingrove and Rogers in Liverpool the women, after a 17-week fight with the bosses, the scabs, the police and the press, went back to work victorious.

They had got the support of rank and file trade unionists in the area, who blacked goods and voted to hold a one-day stoppage in support. Management caved in.

More strikes and more defeats is not a recipe for success. More strikes and more victories has to be the story of 1975.

Women are one of the most badly organised and under-paid sections of workers, yet they are almost a third of the work force.

It is in their own interest—and the interests of their fellow workers—that they organise to win.

International survey-over page

International Socialism 74
Monthly Journal of the International Socialist, January 1975, Price 20p

Rise and fall of a rank & file movement

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1974: YEAR OF THE CRISIS

IN 1974, the world began to be hit, for the first time in years, by a crisis affecting every major country.

Workers found prices storming ahead of wages, with price rises of 18 per cent in Britain, 15 per cent in France, 25 per cent in Italy. Unemployment increased by 50 per cent in France, by a quarter in the United States, by 100 per cent in Germany.

In the Third World, the effects of the crisis have been catastrophic. Prices of essential foods have soared out of the reach of all but the rich. Tens of thousands of people are starving to death in Bangladesh. In the next few months, millions will die of hunger in India.

But 1974 was not only a year in which capitalism moved into crisis and people suffered. It was also a year in which workers fought back against the system and began to show their power.

In Britain, the Heath government was forced out of office by the miners. In Italy there was a succession of demonstrations and strikes. In France, the long postal workers' strike made the government and the employers afraid of a repetition of the events of May 1968. In the United States, the mine-workers struck to force wage increases from the coal owners.

This new militancy was not confined to the advanced industrial countries. In India, Burma, Thailand and Brazil, workers have been rediscovering the strength of strike action. In Southern Africa, the successes of the guerrilla movements in the Portuguese colonies, on the one hand, and the growing revolt of black workers on the other, have begun to upset the whole pattern of white rule.

Nowhere are the struggles that begun in 1974 completed. As inflation and unemployment grows through 1975, workers are going to have to fight back even harder. Even in countries like Greece or Portugal, where dictatorships were overthrown, the question remains: who is going to benefit from the political changes—the workers or big business?

What is clear, however, is that almost everywhere workers have begun to learn important lessons over the past year. They have begun to challenge the power of the minority which in each country controls the production of wealth.

In each case, the employers are urging workers to accept lower living standards and increased unemployment, so as to be able to compete with foreign competitors.

But, as they fight to defend living standards, workers everywhere can begin to see through this argument, to see what is needed is not to undercut the wages of workers in other countries, but to unite with them in a struggle against all employers, for a world based upon production for need and not for competition.

Portugal dumps fascism

TWELVE months ago Portugal was still a reactionary dictatorship, with all the trappings of a fascist regime. Hundreds of people were held in political prisons.

The political police, the PIDE, were torturing socialists and trade unionists, as they had been for 46 years. In the Portuguese colonies in Africa, the army was waging a bloody campaign of terror aimed at crushing the black liberation movements.

But the vicious repression of the Caetano dictatorship concealed its real weakness. Already, at the beginning of the year it was crumbling at the roots.

In Guine, the liberation movement was already in control of the overwhelming part of the country, inflicting defeat after defeat on the troops.

In Mozambique, FRELIMO was stepping up its attacks, despite a number of wholesale massacres by the Portuguese, until it was threatening the key communication links between Mozambique and Rhodesia.

So successful was it that white settlers rioted in January and February, blaming the army for failing to quell the guerrillas.

Hoped

Meanwhile, in Portugal, workers were prepared to risk police repression to fight over wages and conditions. The first four months of the year saw strikes in the factories of IIT, Plesseys, Leyland, Signetics as well as a go-slow in the giant Lisnave shipyard.

Under these circumstances, even big business began to turn against Caetano. They saw he was losing the war in Africa and hoped instead to negotiate a settlement with the liberation movements that would leave undamaged the massive investments in the colonies.

So when army officers began to make rebellious noises, big business supported them.

Finally, on 25 April, the main sections of the army moved to overthrow the dictatorship. Hundreds of thousands of workers went on to the streets to support the change. The political prisons were torn open.

The mass of the population hounded the secret police, until the army was forced to put them in prison for their own protection. On 1 May, Lisbon celebrated its first free May Day for 46 years with a huge demonstration.

But, if the dictatorship had been overthrown, it was still not clear what was going to replace it.

The main section of big business, the senior army officers and the new president, Spínola, had a simple answer. Wages should be kept down, profits increased and the army must fight on in Africa until the liberation move-

ments would agree to join governments that would protect foreign investments.

Workers in the factories had a different answer: to fight now for the higher wages and shorter working hours that the dictatorship had denied them, and to force out those managers who had been most vicious to the workers in the past.

Fight

Hardly had Caetano been overthrown than one group of workers after another struck for these demands—the Lisnave shipyard workers, the steel workers, the textile workers, the transport workers, the bread workers, the engineering workers and the postal workers.

Those waging the guerrilla struggle in the colonies wanted immediate independence and were not prepared to give up their fight until they were promised it.

Between Spínola and big business, on the one hand, and the workers and liberation movements on the other, stood the people who had actually taken the initiative in overthrowing Caetano, the middle ranking officers in the army.

These were quite happy to see Portuguese capitalism continuing, but did not relish the idea of having to continue to fight a losing war in Africa. And so, though they were prepared to move against strikes like that of the postal workers, or demonstrations like that of Lisnave workers, they were not prepared to back Spínola 100 per cent.

In the early days after 25 April, Spínola tried to strengthen his position by bringing members of the Socialist and Communist Parties into his government. He told them, in effect, that they could be part of the government provided they kept the workers under control.

They did their utmost. They

slandered striking workers, claiming the transport and bread workers were led by 'fascists'. They organised meetings to denounce the postal workers' strike. They made no protest when the army moved against strikers at Lisbon airport.

This was not good enough for Spínola and his big business friends. On 27 September he tried to organise another military coup, designed to weaken the growing workers' movement. He got the shock of his life. Workers and rank-and-file soldiers blockaded the roads around Lisbon; railway workers blacked trains bringing Spínola supporters to the city; the streets were taken over by hundreds of thousands of workers—led by those workers from Lisnave, the post office, TAP, and so on who the government had called 'fascist'.

Spínola was forced to resign and 200 of his supporters found themselves in jail. Since then, the extreme right has been on the retreat.

Break

But the main sections of big business are still untouched—and still sacking workers and pushing up unemployment to protect their profits.

The secret police have disappeared, but other sections of the police who broke strikes in the past still remain to break them in the future.

The new president and the prime minister are prepared to collaborate with NATO and the US government.

The question raised by the coup—who is to rule Portugal, big business or the workers?—still remains unresolved.

As the crisis grows internationally, the question will get more and more urgent. And it won't be solved by those 'workers' parties that continue to sit in the government alongside the friends of big business.



SPORADIC peasant clashes with the police, student demonstrations, a background of poverty, unemployment, are real features of the Indian scene. But the past year is out as a year of organised working-class militancy, reaching gigantic proportions with the struggle of 80,000 Indian railway workers.

The response of the government has been ruthless: 200 trade unionists jailed during the strike, troops called in to the railways, families of strikers evicted from government-owned houses, water supplies, gas, electricity cut off, wives



GREECE: Junta bites the dust

AT LEAST one event in 1974 was good news for socialists—the military Junta in Greece fell to pieces after its adventures in Cyprus.

The Junta came to power in 1967 with the co-operation of the King, the local bosses and the CIA. They immediately tried to patch up the failing Greek economy by jailing workers and torturing all opponents.

For six years, they managed to hang on until the stagnation of the Greek economy and roaring inflation caught up with them. By last November the growing opposition came to a head.

Students in Athens occupied the Polytechnic and demanded an end to the Junta. They were joined by workers from the big construction sites in the area. The army broke the occupation with tanks, leaving many hundreds dead. There was a 'coup within the coup' which brought a new and even nastier set of Generals to the front. In particular, Brigadier Ioannides, head of the secret police, was more and more openly the man who made the decisions inside Greece.

Imprisonment and torture continued to be used on a wide scale, but repression failed in its objectives. The Junta were unable to

solve their economic problems through lower wages and increased productivity.

By last July, the Junta was desperate for a popular issue to win it support. They tried the old faithful ruling class trick of a foreign war to divert attention from the class struggle at home. The issue they chose was Cyprus.

In collusion with the right-wing Cypriot group EOKA B, the Greek officers of the Cyprus national guard staged a coup and installed a puppet president.

The Turkish government, which shares many of the problems and methods of the Greek government, saw its own opportunity and invaded Cyprus.

The Greek ruling class saw no profit in losing a long war with Turkey and turned against the Junta.

The Junta handed over power to Karamanlis, an old-time right winger and

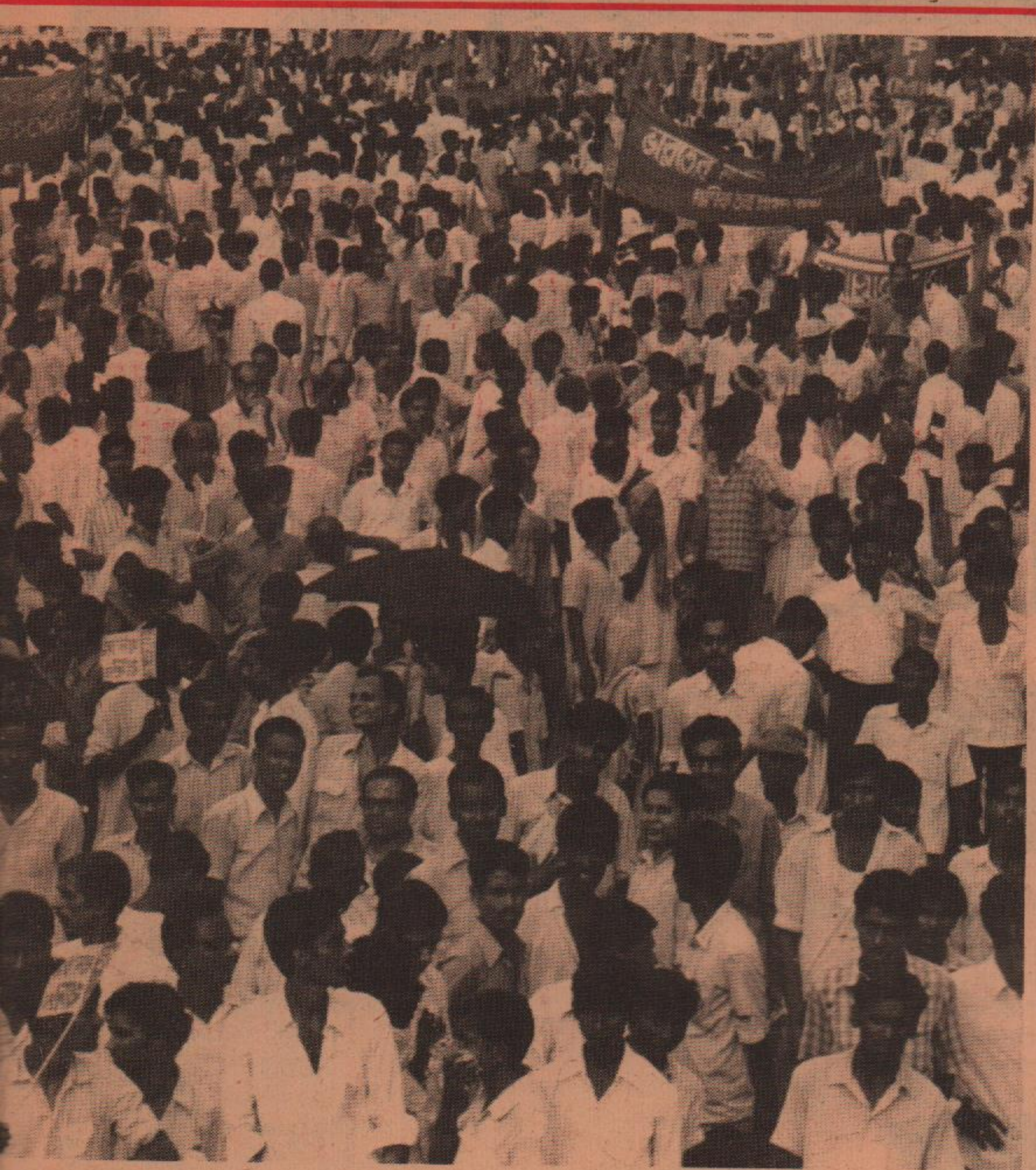
loyal servant of Greek capitalism. But while the army officers moved out of the presidential palace, the tanks remained handy, just in case.

Karamanlis ran an election. His slogan was: 'It is either me or the tanks'. The usual bribery and police terror which has been part of every election in Greece since 1945 was used in full measure.

Not surprisingly Karamanlis won. But his parliamentary majority will not solve the problems of Greek capitalism. A wave of demonstrations has been taking place as students and workers demand more than Karamanlis is prepared to offer.

Sooner or later, there will be a showdown. The real choice in Greece is not between Karamanlis and the tanks but between the tanks and workers' power.

Workers

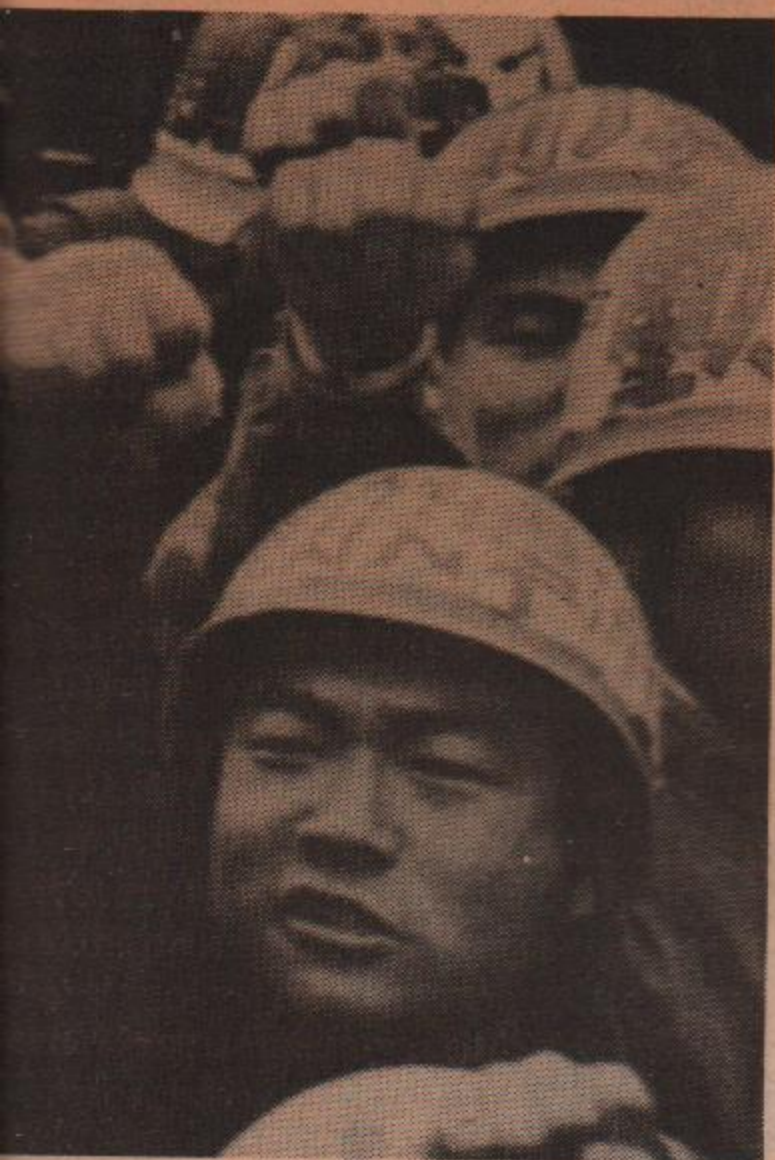


India: The workers move

strikers beaten up by the police. Socialists in India must not let the lesson go unheeded: there is a tremendous potential for working-class activity in India, but the party capable of leading the class does not exist. Today more than 35,000 political prisoners rot away in Indian jails. The facade of democracy is crumbling and Jenkins' attack on civil rights pales next to Mrs Gandhi's new law: police can now detain a person for two years without trial.

In Pakistan, factory occupations in Lahore and Karachi culminated in a mammoth working-class demonstration on May Day. This is extraordinary since only 10 per cent of the industrial workforce is unionised. Police opened fire and a worker-leader was killed. Now repressive labour laws have been introduced by Bhutto's government. 1973's government-instigated language riots were followed by religious riots in 1974 and the slaughter of a small orthodox Muslim sect.

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JAPAN used to be the 'miracle economy' of the capitalist world, but now unemployment is soaring towards the million mark, prices are rising at 25 per cent a year and the economy is stagnating.

But the workers have not been sitting back and accepting any punishment. In April a three-day general strike involving more than six million workers forced the government and employers to concede wage increases of around 30 per cent.

Later in the year many of the strikes and demonstrations became clearly political, being directed against the government and against the visit of President Ford as well as against inflation. The picture shows railway workers demonstrating in downtown Tokyo in mid-November.

SOUTH AFRICA

1974 was the year in which the regimes of white domination in Southern Africa began to crack. The guerrilla war in Mozambique and Angola forced the Portuguese government to promise independence. In Rhodesia the South African police decided that in the long run they would lose a guerrilla war there, and the South African government urged Ian Smith to try to negotiate a settlement with the black leaders.

The South Africans hope that while they put pressure on Smith, the black governments in Zambia and Tanzania will put pressure on the Rhodesian black leaders to compromise. For Vorster knows that these governments collaborate with the same big business interests that exist in South Africa and Rhodesia—A compromise in Rhodesia would prevent revolutionary change there and prevent any upheaval that might spread into South Africa.

But a slow fuse has been burning in South Africa itself which could well undermine all Vorster's hopes. All year the revolt of black workers has been continuing. There have been repeated clashes in the mines between workers and armed police, with several workers being shot.



JULY: Black workers' picket line in East London

France: The glamour fades

THE KENNEDY-STYLE 'glamour' of Giscard D'Estaing, elected to the French presidency, did not last long.

The left may have only got 49 per cent of the votes in the presidential election (with the revolutionary left getting 700,000 votes) but by the autumn workers were showing they had a more effective means of influencing events than the ballot box.

Already, before the election there was a long strike of bank workers. The attempt by the government to continue with 'anti-inflation' policies led to a growing wave of strikes. In November there were stoppages by miners, power workers, gas workers, radio and television journalists and technicians

and printers. A 24 hour general strike shut much of industry.

But, most significant of all, the army had to be moved in to deal with a dustmen's strike in Paris and with a two-month postal workers' strike.

But the end of these strikes has by no means been the end of the French employers' problems. A secret memorandum by General de Boisseau, chief of staff of the French army and son-in-law of de Gaulle, complains that demonstrations staged by rank and file soldiers in September show how low morale is in the army.

The French paper Le Monde was moved to comment that there is the possibility of another revolutionary May 1968—but this time inside the army!

ITALY: Four general strikes in one year!

ALONGSIDE Britain, Italy is the country in Europe most hit by the economic downturn.

There has been an almost continual governmental crisis, as the main parties argue among themselves on how best to restore profits without angering workers too much. And a section of the ruling class and key figures in the army and secret police have been supporting fascist groups that have been bombing workers and shooting at the left.

Italian workers have responded to the political and economic crisis with a wave of strikes and demonstrations and by refusing to pay higher fares and electricity charges.

27 February: General strike against the government and the cost of living.

February-March: Mass occupation of empty flats and houses.

March: Resignation of govern-

ment; wave of repression and arrests of revolutionary left.

May: Referendum on divorce, arranged by right wing in the Christian Democrat Party to strengthen their position. But result is a defeat for the right.

28 May: Fascists explode bombs during left wing demonstration in Brescia. Six people killed, 94 injured. There is a four hour general strike in protest and 1½ million workers join in demonstrations against the fascists. The government promotes the head of the secret police, General Miceli, and puts him in charge of a tank regiment.

June: Strikes all over Italy against wage restraint and unemployment.

11 June: Government resigns again.

26 June: Six million on strike against anti-working class measures of new government.

7 July: Government announces a whole number of price rises—three day general strike.

24 July: General strike—trade union leaders (including Communists) are booed by large demonstrations of workers.

Killing

4 August: Fascists explode bomb on Rome-Munich express at Bologna. 12 people killed. There is an anti-fascist demonstration of 150,000 in Bologna.

September: Police attack people occupying flats in Rome, killing one person. Beginning of electricity and fare reduction 'strikes'. 15 September: 100,000 demonstrate in Rome and Milan over Chile.

October: Government resigns again. Fiat factory in Turin occupied after threat of redundancies.

10 October: General strike in Turin.

17 October: General strike throughout Italy. 10 million workers involved. All universities shut. Miceli (ex-head of the secret police) is arrested for 'subversion'. Two more generals arrested shortly after. Left wing parties and unions on alert in case of attempted right wing coup.

8 November: General strike of 10 million in industry.

23 November: 25,000 workers and students demonstrate in Savona against fascism.

1 December: 70,000 students on one of largest demonstrations since 1968, against government decrees.

4 December: 8-hour general strike.

5 December: Demonstrations after fascist squad shoots and wounds a student.

SPAIN: Strikes rock Franco

FRANCO'S dictatorship has not yet followed Caetano's into oblivion. But it seemed more unstable in 1974 than at any time in its 35-year history.

All year, the representatives of Spanish big business have been arguing among themselves as to what they should do to prevent social upheaval when Franco finally dies. One section wants to keep the working class in order and wages low by crude police methods.

This group is still dominant, recently using its power to force from office two government ministers who favour slightly different approaches and to arrest, if only temporarily, even pro-capitalist opponents of the regime.

Opposed to it stand another section of the ruling class who favour forming links with Communist, Socialist and Catholic political leaders to establish a parliamentary regime which will protect capitalist control.

Most sections of big business hold a position between these two groups, which are continually manoeuvring against one another for positions of influence in the armed forces and the state bureaucracy.

But while this argument has taken place on high, quite different struggles have been taking place at the grass roots.

A wave of strikes in recent months has put Spain near the top of Europe's strike rate, even though strikes are illegal. This autumn has seen big disputes running simultaneously.

At the SEAT plant in Barcelona, 19,000 of the 26,000 labour force were locked out last month for taking part in strikes.

And in two stoppages in the northern Basque region of Spain, first 30,000 workers and then up to 200,000 workers struck for a day in support of political prisoners.

This growth of an independent workers' movement lies behind much of the confusion within the ranks of the ruling class. As the Financial Times recently admitted: 'Spain's industrial growth during the last decade and a half was based upon a relatively low cost and officially well-disciplined supply of workers.'

But now this is all changing and the employers do not know what to do. So while the government has been jailing some leaders of the underground workers' commissions for an average of 15 years each, the governor of Barcelona has been forced to negotiate with these workers' commissions.

1974 has seen the Franco regime in crisis. 1975 could well see it in collapse.

of all lands unite!



WHAT'S ON

ENTRIES for this column must be posted to reach *Socialist Worker* by Monday morning—and remember the 'first class' post takes two days as often as one. Due to pressure of work we cannot take *What's On* entries over the phone. Entries here are free for IS branches and other IS organisations.

POST-XMAS JUMBLE SALE: Please look out jumble, bric-a-brac etc over Xmas for South West London District Jumble sale on Saturday 11 January. Further details from 673 6500.

CAMBRIDGE IS public meeting: Socialists on the shop floor. Speaker: Roger Huddle (NGA), Monday 6 January, 8pm, Duke of Argyll, Argyll St. (off Mill Road).

CENTRAL LONDON WORKERS IS public meeting: The Crisis—Social Contract or Socialism? Speaker: Tony Cliff, Thurs 9 January 6.15pm, The Roebuck, Tottenham Court Road (near Warren St. tube).

IS Latin America School 25-26 January. Venue to be announced. **WOMEN'S VOICE** No 14—special January edition. Price 6p. Order now from Maggie Newall, Business Manager, 8 Cottons Garden, London E2 8DN

IS National Student Advisory Committee. Saturday 11 January 11am, North London Poly. Holloway Road (nearest tube Holloway Road). All student cells to send one delegate. Agenda: Discussion on last term, perspectives for this term, NOISS perspectives.

MEETING for IS members in British Leyland Plants. Saturday 11 January, 2-6pm in Birmingham. Everyone should make an effort to attend. Agenda and details from IS Ind Dept, 8 Cottons Gardens, E2. All comrades should send as soon as possible details of wage agreements to the Ind Dept so they can be made available in compact form at the meeting.

IS TEACHERS ALL-LONDON AGGREGATE: Sunday 5 January 11am, Earl Russell pub, Pancras Road, NW1. All teachers to attend.

Classified

Open Letter for a Revolutionary Regroupment

The Open Letter calls for a revolutionary regroupment, lays down 12 points as political guidelines and maps out practical steps towards unity. Copies from Workers Fight, 98 Gifford St, London N1 ODF. Please enclose 4½p stamp.

SOUTH LONDON TOM branch education meeting: Why a Troops Out Movement is needed now. Monday 6 January, 8pm, Stockwell Hall, Stockwell Park Road.

THE REVOLUTIONARY DYNAMICS OF WOMEN'S LIBERATION. New pamphlet by the League for Socialist Action analysing the roots of women's oppression from the marxist point of view and presenting a strategy for taking the women's movement forward. 15p from 103 Glencairn Road, London SW16.

LATEST ISSUE of GKN Worker out now. Copies 2p plus postage from IS Books, 224 High St, Deritend, Birmingham 12.

THIRD WORLD ROAD SHOW MUSIC AND DRAMA GROUP needs roadie/technician. Also driver/performer. Low wages. Stimulating work. Phone Cambridge 54312.

Nationalisation—is it socialism? Libertarian Communism meeting. Saturday 4 January, 3.30-6pm, Conbro Iberico, 86a Haverstock Hill, London NW3 (near Chalk Farm tube).

Farmhouse holidays in North Wales. Reduced winter rates. Children welcome. Phone 069186 2272.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY aims at building a moneyless world community without frontiers based on common ownership—with production solely for use—not profit. It opposes all other political parties, all leadership, all racism, all war. Write for specimen socialist literature to: One World (SW) The Socialist Party of Great Britain, 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4.

The Black Worker in Britain

ब्रिटन वाशगाली कामिक

Anwodudu To Wa Ni Iru Oyibo

O Trabalhador Português em Inglaterra

मिसायत मा गुजराती महरौ

O Κύπριος Εργάτης στην Αγγλία

ਬਰਤਾਨੀਆ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਮਜ਼ਦੂਰ

Ndi Ojie No Na Obodo Oyibo

برطانیہ میں پاکستانی مزدور

Essential reading for all immigrant workers, the new IS/Chingari pamphlet in English. Available from IS Books, 265 Seven Sisters Road, N4. 15p plus 4p postage.

1974: YEAR OF THE CRISIS



Racism—cancer we must erase

BAD PAY, bad conditions, bad union organisation—or no union organisation at all—that was the recipe for racism behind the strikes of black workers in Britain in 1974.

There were plenty: Art Castings in Nunaton, Perivale Gutermann in West London, Delta Mouldings, Punfield and Barstow, Kenilworth Components and Imperial Typewriters in Leicester, among others.

Union organisation in many places provides a defence against the attacks of management. Where it is poor and wages low, the employers take full advantage.

In these badly-organised, badly-paid factories many black workers have had to take jobs.

But time after time last year they showed, in defeat and in victory, the ability to fight and to organise. With all too little official union backing, organisation has been thrown up in the course of struggle, with workers finding for themselves the ways of fighting the bosses.

The efforts of the union officials have ranged from too-little-too-late to nothing—or to deliberate sabotage.

Militancy

It was too little, too late in West London at the start of 1974. Perivale Gutermann had been built up on the backs of the largely Asian labour force—with rotten wages. The first attempt to build a Transport Union branch, in 1968, was broken. By 1970 the union was established—but weak.

The anger of the rank and file in the factory centred on the bonus system. One-day token strikes were met with victimisations and eventually by a lock-out.

Support came from the TGWU. But their 'advice' was to go to the infamous Industrial Relations Tribunal—set up by the Tory Industrial Relations Act. The result was a defeat.

The role of the TGWU at Gutermanns was to be repeated by that union and others throughout 1974.

At Imperial Typewriters it was sabotage. The Asian rank and file had to fight the bosses and the local union leadership, who slandered them and did their best to break the strike.

Other strikes in Leicester followed a similar pattern. At Kenilworth Components, it was made official. But for six weeks, there was no money from the union.

The strike, sparked by the sacking of seven women, ended with local TGWU official Ken



Hempstead ignoring a unanimous decision by the 50 strikers to fight on and forced through not seven but 17 sackings. Over Christmas a similar story unfolded at Delta Mouldings—a few hundred yards from the Kenilworth factory.

The battles of Asian TGWU members in Leicester have been frequent—and the role of the local union branch has been such that during the Imperial dispute the union's Birmingham district was forced to call a regional inquiry into the dispute.

It did not report until months after the strike had ended—and then conceded much of the strikers' case. On the infamous 'two year rule'—under which members can become stewards only after two years' membership of the union, the report recommended:

'The 5/221 branch re-examines the standing order which obliges shop stewards to comply with the two year membership rule governing their election.'

And what has been the Leicester TGWU's response? They have reaffirmed the two year rule! And what has the TGWU done about this? Nothing!

Bad pay and bad unions go together—and provide a fertile seedbed for that ally of management, racism. In the struggles of bus-workers up and down the country, many advances have been made

Asian and white strikers stand united at Intex, Ashton-under-Lyne: so often in 1974 they were divided—and fell easy prey to vicious managements.

where the real issues of pay and conditions have been taken up and fought militantly.

While in Glasgow busmen were fighting for higher wages, the busmen of Leeds—on £25 a week—were split on whether to allow Sikh busmen to wear turbans.

An 18-week battle culminated in white busmen striking against their Sikh brothers! The result? Bitterness, division, continued low wages—and a management with plenty to laugh about.

But alongside these struggles are ones like Combined Opticals of Slough. There, management locked out the predominantly Pakistani workforce for six weeks, brought in 32 scabs—many of them white South Africans—and paid them three times the rate.

Nevertheless management were smashed, the scabs ousted and all the workers' demands met.

At Intex in Ashton-under-Lyne, the victimisation of white shop steward Dave Hallsworth has been a long and bitter battle, but unity between the white and black strikers has been maintained.

As the Social Contract has been peddled across the factories of Britain, it has been the poorly paid, whether sewage workers in Glasgow or injection moulders in Leicester who've been in the forefront of the fight back—black and white.

In these poorly-paid factories, the struggle has come from the shop-floor. Magnificent battles have developed spontaneously out of years of frustration.

The dedication at this level hasn't been matched by the union officials and has all too often been left isolated.

The crucial element is solidarity and organisation.

To build and win in 1975 means more than the will to fight. Black workers have inherited some of the worst conditions of British capitalism.

To change these conditions the union leaderships should have provided more than just token support. But often they haven't even given this.

So the task is one for the Rank and File Movement. If the organisation being built by the Rank and File Organising Committee is to mean anything it means the ability to help these workers, black and white, in the run-down sectors to win decent conditions and wages and to link up with the struggles of other workers against the system.

International Socialists marching in Leicester earlier this year: 'If militant workers are to win the arguments with their workmates and counter the plans of big business, then they have to be organised as well,' writes Cliff.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Midwife of Socialism

FOR generations, millions of workers believed that the economic or trade union struggle was separate from the political struggle. When they wanted improvements in wages or conditions or work they joined a trade union.

When they wanted to bring about more general, political changes they looked towards the Labour Party.

But the harsh reality of the last few years has hammered this concept of the separation of politics from economics into the ground.

Politics invades every corner of the life of working people. When they demand a wage rise they meet not only the resistance of the employer but also that of the government.

Rent—the Housing Finance Act—was politics. Prices are politics. The Industrial Relations Act was politics. The employing class uses two weapons to exploit and oppress working people—the economic one and the political one.

To fight back, workers need to use their industrial power, not only against individual employers but against the employing class as a whole—its government.

Where does the power of workers lie? It cannot lie in the ballot box. Big business does not abide by the decisions of the parliamentary vote.

years, between those who wanted to drive the revolution forward to its limit, and those who aimed at its compromise.

A bitter struggle was required against the party of compromise, the allies of yesterday. The conscious leadership of this great undertaking was supplied by the Jacobin Party.

Nor was the October revolution in Russia a spontaneous Act. It was organised in practically all its important particulars, including the date, by the Bolshevik Party.

The events of May 1969 in Paris showed clearly that while a few hundred students or workers can build a barricade, to overthrow the capitalist regime and seize state power a much larger centralised organisation is necessary.

Apparatus

If only the workers in Paris in 1968 had remembered the experience of Paris in 1936 or of the Italian workers in 1920; if only they had a revolutionary party, for such a party is also the memory of the class, the store of experience of class struggle internationally.

The ruling class is easily able to organise its affairs according to a coherent strategy. It is highly centralised with a massive state apparatus at its disposal, many newspapers, massive research organisations.

If militant workers are going to win the arguments with their workmates and counter the plans of big business, then they have to be organised as well. They have to be able to refute every piece of employers' propaganda with arguments of their own, and to suggest tactics that will lead to unity and victory every time the employers try to divide the workers.

None of this is possible without a revolutionary party, linking together the most militant workers in every factory, mine and office. Through such an organisation, militants can develop the experience of working together and of relating every struggle to the overall aim of overthrowing capitalism.

Because of the instability built into capitalism there are going to be many sharp changes in objective economic conditions. Because these changes do not find immediate expression in the consciousness and activity of the class, impeded as they are by tradition and by reformist organisation, we must expect many turns in the struggle, from economic strikes to political battles and vice versa; from semi-revolutionary situations to reaction; from lulls to mass strikes whose scope and temper is insurrectionary.

Elastic

The unevenness in experience and activity between sections of the class, between different factories and industries, is going to continue, with sometimes a levelling up, and always an upset of whatever equilibrium is achieved.

What is necessary under such conditions is a revolutionary organisation that is able not only to distinguish between a revolutionary situation and a counter-revolutionary one—that is quite easy—but between all the nuances in the intermediate stages between them, an organisation that would be stringent in its principles, yet highly adaptable and elastic in its tactics, and always aware of the sharp turns in the situation.

Such a party has its mainspring in workplace branches. That is where workers' power lies. And that is why last year IS built 38 factory branches and the last IS Conference decided to aim at 80 factory branches plus a number of white collar branches by autumn 1975.

In every place of work the real socialists



are few in number. They are isolated and naturally often feel depressed and moody. Frequently one socialist militant does not even know others who will share the same views and attitudes. The IS branch will aim to bring them together.

The IS factory branch will also relate the advanced socialists to the majority of the workers. In every large workplace there is a tiny minority of scabs at one extreme and a tiny group of militant socialists at the other. In between stands the big majority—not right wing but simply uninformed and conservative.

■ The IS factory branch, with the help of leaflets, bulletins and the rank and file papers relevant to the industry, will try to influence that majority of workers.

■ The IS branch in the factory will plan the local adaptation and execution of policies laid down by the national organisation.

This could mean, for example, gaining a pledge for solidarity strikes with any worker fighting the Social Contract.

■ The IS branch will hold regular meetings to plan how best they might express and represent the interests of the workers in the factory.

■ It will hold regular political meetings to discuss current events and socialist theory, as featured in the organisation's press and publications.

There are thousands of workers who buy *Socialist Worker* regularly in many large places of work. It is their duty to join us in the effort to build factory branches.

In this period of rapid change, there is a danger that revolutionaries will drag behind the movement of the class. There is only one way of dealing with that: by building a strong revolutionary organisation, with branches in the factories, pits, docks and offices, so that tactical demands are not arrived at arbitrarily by isolated militants, but reached through discussion by workers with a sharp perspective.

We have to face the fact that there is a yawning abyss between the greatness of the task facing us and the actual poverty of our movement. We need to bridge this abyss.



THE CRISIS Social Contract or Socialism

Part 3 of the series

Tony Cliff

Was it parliament that allowed Lonrho to transfer thousands of pounds to the Cayman Islands? Is it parliament that dictates the production, pricing and plans of the multi-national companies?

But spontaneous action, like the dockers' strike in 1972 which freed the Pentonville 5, is not enough to bring about socialism. Without a revolutionary party there can be no victorious working class revolution.

Revolution often starts as spontaneous acts. The French Revolution started with the storming of the Bastille. Nobody organised it.

The same is true of the Russian revolution of 1905 and of February 1917. The 1905 revolution started with a bloody clash between the Tsar's army and police and a mass of workers—men, women, and children—led by Gapon, a priest and agent provocateur. The workers were far from being organised by a clear decisive leadership with a socialist policy of its own.

However, after being triggered spontaneously, revolutions move forward in a different way. In the French Revolution, the people of Paris, spontaneously and leaderless, rose up against the King, after decades of oppression.

But they were too conservative, too lacking in historical experience and knowledge, to distinguish, after only two or three

A Socialist Worker publication

TONY CLIFF
THE CRISIS
SOCIAL CONTRACT
OR SOCIALISM



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LETTERS

Send your letters to LETTERS, Socialist Worker, Corbridge Works, Corbridge Crescent, London E2. Please try to keep them to not more than 250 words. Let us have your name and address but specify if you don't want your name published.



Asbestos being removed: unprotected worker, unprotected beer

How they make TETLEY'S asBESTOs BITTER

TETLEYS BREWERY of Leeds, part of the giant Allied Breweries Group, are having a large keggling and bottling plant built. The extension no doubt comes from last year's record profits.

I was employed at Tetleys by an outside contracting firm, Heating Design Partnership. This small firm employs obvious tactics to keep the men split: different hourly rates, bonus schemes and no safety precautions. Improvers, semi-skilled men, who for a few coppers above the labourers' rate are expected to do skilled work but cannot refuse to do dirty labouring jobs, are exploited to their fullest.

Myself, another skilled fitter and two improvers were stripping out old pipework. We had to remove an asbestos covered 12 inch diameter steam pipe that ran through the final processing room where just before the beer is despatched finings are added.

Before work started I drew the attention of my three colleagues to the fact that we had no breathing masks for protection against the highly dangerous asbestos dust or scaffolding to assist in the removal of the extremely heavy 12 inch pipe.

The other fitter agreed and went to see the supervisor. Meanwhile, although the dangers of asbestos dust had been explained to them the improvers continued working. Having not been supplied with wire cutters or scaffolding these two sources of cheap labour were perched on top of an oil drum, tearing frantically at the wire netting which holds asbestos in place.

Within a couple of minutes the two unfortunates were engulfed in

asbestos dust and resembled snowmen and seemed quietly amused at my concern for their health.

When the other fitter returned with breathing masks and a 'manage the best you can' message, work had moved into the department where beer gets its final additives. By this time we were all wearing masks, that is except the Tetley process workers.

No precautions were taken to stop the beer contaminated by the asbestos dust even though it was brought to the attention of the Tetley engineers.

So the pipe came down and the asbestos dust came up, giving a generous covering to men and machines alike. Heaven knows how many thousands of gallons of beer were processed under these conditions, but we were at it for three days. Had Heating Design Partnership been prepared to pay double time the work could have been done when processing ceased at three in the afternoon. On the other hand if Tetleys had been prepared to halt production for a while 'Tetley Bitter Men' could have enjoyed asbestos-free beer.

But, as readers know, business is run for profit. From tuppence halfpenny outfits like Heating Design Partnership who're prepared to fill your lungs with asbestos to giants like Allied Breweries who're prepared to fill your stomachs with it in the shape of Tetley's asbestos bitter!

I don't suppose the fact that I advocated trade union membership and tried to sell Socialist Worker had anything to do with me being on the redundancy list a week before Christmas?—G W GOOD, Wakefield.

Women take on bully boss

I'M writing to tell you about the women workers' strike at Yarnolds in Wolverhampton.

At this factory the women were totally unorganised, non-unionised and kept that way by a threatening, bullying management. The firm employs about 80 workers, nearly all women, nearly all Asians. They approached the management some time ago about becoming unionised and were met with a blank refusal. They suggested a workers' council and the women agreed to give it a try.

The council proved utterly useless so the women again approached the management to be allowed to join a union. The reply was another refusal and they were told anyone who joined would be dismissed.

The feeling was very strong and so two of the girls acquired and distributed Transport Union membership cards. About 90 per cent of the women workers joined. The next step was to elect representatives—two were elected.

As soon as management got wind of them they frogmarched them from the premises and dismissed them.

The following day the two girls and a union official went to see the management but they couldn't get re-instatement. The TGWU official did get 14 women, all white, to withdraw their labour for their victimised sisters.

The official couldn't get the Asian women to stop in the street to talk to him. Their customs, I believe, don't let them talk to strange men.

At this stage the official appealed to the Indian Workers Association for assistance and a mass meeting was set up for Yarnolds workers.

At this meeting the women voted overwhelmingly to strike for the dismissed girls. In the subsequent talks with management they have offered to take the girls back at a considerable loss in wages. The girls turned it down.

So by late December there were over 60 women on strike, mainly

Asians and they were picketing the plant.

Support is needed from other trade unionists to help them picket and a blow to the bosses which would really hurt would be a picket on the shops in the Wolverhampton town centre.—NAME SUPPLIED, Wolverhampton.

Labour: Then as now

I AGREED WITH your 'Vote Labour But No To Social Contract' message at the time of the election. Some said a 'working class' party like Labour would see the rank and file through but we all see by the budget and the many price increases that they can do nothing.

I thought you might be interested to hear what John McLean, the great Scottish revolutionary, had to say about the Labour Party in 1910. It still applies to them today.

'What did not become them to perform on the behalf of the class that put them into parliament and kept them there, seems plainly to suit them now that their personal interests are not affected.

'The political hypocrisy of the whole thing certainly will not blind the rank and file who so frequently have been betrayed this last four years by the group of swelled-headed mediocrities whose sole object seems to be to grovel at the feet of one of the most tyrannical governments of modern times.'—RICKY WEBSTER, Glasgow.

Rank inefficiency

I THOUGHT you might like to know about the management inefficiency in the Ranks bakery where I work.

A divider/prover was installed about six years ago and after causing the breakage of another machine was never used. After about 18 months it was removed—at more cost.

Last summer it re-appeared and was set up again. Three more ovens were put in to deal with the extra work. One of them, a prototype, never worked properly and now it has been taken out along with the other two ovens, and the divider/prover is being dismantled.

There's a long history of defective machinery being installed and removed, frequent re-wiring to accommodate the constant moving machinery, not to mention machinery which is never used.

Large quantities of bread are ruined because of defective machinery and management doesn't blink an eye. Loaves that are overcooked or underweight are sent to feed pigs—a man was sacked for stealing a pig loaf. I wonder he wasn't hung.—BAKER, Devon.

POSTAL POINTS

A PLACE TO AVOID . . . In their desire to make sacrifices in the national interest, the ruling class held a conference in December on that patriotic subject—tax avoidance. It was attended by 500 tax-advisers and businessmen who paid £40 each to discover 140 ways of not paying their taxes . . . It was organised by Investment and Property Services who made around £20,000 from the lectures . . . It's nice to see our rulers making big sacrifices to help us all and that they've all got their belts well pulled in and their noses to the grindstone to help the country through a bad patch.—CHRIS DABILL, Sheffield.

RED FLAG OR WHITEWASH? . . . I'm pleased to see an attack on the National Front by the Transport union. Their recent publication Fascism and the trade unions is an excellent account of who, what and where are the NF . . . Jack Jones, TGWU General Secretary, says in the forward, 'Although they may deny it the NF is a modern version of Britain of the Fascism of Hitler, Mussolini and Mosley.' I hope these views will become TGWU policy and not just a white wash for Imperial Typewriters and other strikes involving Asian workers.—NAME & ADDRESS SUPPLIED, Wolverhampton.

A FEARLESS EXPOSE . . . I read your story on Caren Meyer and her crusade against the International Socialists, in which you quoted in full a comment from a National Union of Journalists newsletter . . . The newsletter emanates not, as you stated, from the Northampton but the East Northants Branch . . . You might be interested to hear the sequel to the branch's decision to investigate the role of IS within the NUJ. That decision came after a Luton journalist, Dick Dawson expressed his fears about IS and called for support. He, and an IS representative were invited to speak at the next branch meeting, and both agreed. Later Dawson wrote to the Branch Secretary saying he had decided not to come. Saying he had been told that the meeting was a 'set-up by the International Socialists', and that anything he said would be written up 'in a distorted and unfair way for the Journalist and other publications'. In the light of that the branch decided, not surprisingly, that it was not terribly interested in pursuing its investigations.—MARK HEIDENSTAM (NUJ, East Northants).

NOT QUITE THAT EASY . . . A friend, a worker at British Leyland (Triumph) at Coventry, pointed out to me last week that the track workers have been on strike not for wages—but for a guaranteed 40 hour week. Their average working week is 28 hours, cutting wages in half. It's caused by strikes at subsidiary supplies. If one section stops so do the others. We all know about the capitalists' crisis of over-production. What's the use of intervention in BLMC if cuts in production are necessary to maintain profits. The bosses' answer is lay-offs—which the bosses and the 'country' can't afford . . . But how easy it is to foment a strike hoping other sections will give unofficial support . . . Thus the workers give unwitting support to the bosses' crisis—unemploying themselves . . . If they take over the factory they're still up against capitalism . . . The only solution is to smash the state and flood overseas markets with ridiculously cheap cars providing a means of exchange for socialist Britain until we're part of a socialist world.—DAVE PORTER, Fawley Power Station, Hants.

REAL INTERNATIONALISM . . . After watching the BBC Man Alive programme on the black man in Africa, I noted down just a few of the companies . . . who were operating in South Africa. All were paying below the subsistence level, Ford, IBM, Dunlop, ICI, Chrysler, . . . It's a field day for the big boys, no nasty unions, no strikes, big profits. I believe pressure must be applied in this country and others by all trade unionists whose companies operate in South Africa, to force these cruds to pay a decent wage to our black comrades. Let's see an international struggle to defeat an international enemy—capitalism.—JOHN COCHRANE, Manchester.

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Maggie's mine

I was talking to a miner at Hem Heath Colliery in Longton about Princess Margaret's recent visit to his pit. He told me that after the improvements in the pit's scenery for her tour it could have been put on a Christmas card.

All roads to the face were levelled, the manholes filled in with stone dust and a new shearer had to be more or less built.

The cables on the face she visited were lifted above floor level—in case she tripped over them. Normally they are all over the place. The haulage rope was slackened and tied up, the derricks on the main level were painted with white gloss paint. A new bathroom and showers were built and all the walls from the lamp-room to the shaft were painted with royal blue paint.

Thousands of man-hours were wasted on preparations. On the face she visited work was stopped for a fortnight before so it would look tidy. On the day of her visit the day-shift finished at midday and the noon shift wasn't allowed to go down until 4pm.

She saw a cross-section of miners—handpicked by management to keep out anyone with left-wing sympathies. All this time and money was wasted while miners' real conditions remain appalling.—GERRY HOGAN, Stoke on Trent.

Courtaulds Christmas on the dole for 1100

GRIMSBY:-1100 men faced Christmas on the dole after Courtaulds closed their Grimsby plant and exposed the weakness of the union.

In November, work on new plant was postponed though almost complete. Some builders pointed out that the plant was being funded by the government and Courtaulds' cash shortage wasn't a problem. But the struggle evolved around redundancy payments and not action to keep the site working.

With hindsight we realised it would have been harder to force redundancies with new plant still being built.

Despite drastic cut-backs in production, management still assured the unions that no jobs were at risk. Then came the bombshell.

Management asked for approximately 150 redundancies. The workers countered with work-sharing proposals.

After a mass meeting rejected both redundancies and short-time working, the regional secretary of the T&G, Bro D Cairns, intervened.

A ballot was held offering either redundancies or short-time working. When it proved indecisive, management arbitrarily introduced short-time working. All the men were to lose one week in seven. After three weeks, the company announced the shutdown claiming that industrial unrest and lack of co-operation were the causes.

By this they meant the refusal of men on short time to work overtime and complaints about safety on the undermanned line. Bonus payments were also withheld, though in terms of production per man they were earned.

Test

One Courtauld worker watching a Christmas Carol on TV aptly described Scrooge as Lord Kearton the Second. Because Courtaulds described the lock out as an industrial dispute there has been difficulty with dole and social security.

The unions are bringing two test cases before the Department of Employment. Courtaulds are still holding the men's cards and redundancy payments are not due if the factory opens up by the second week in January.

There is a suspicion that Courtaulds are solving their short-term market difficulties at the workers' expense. When they want to reopen, it will be interesting to see what terms they exact and what sort of victory the unions claim for themselves. The only losers will be the Courtaulds workers.

The closure could have been fought. Courtaulds Fibro plant at Grimsby is still operating. There would have been a sympathetic hearing from lorry-drivers and dockers for blacking.

PRESTON:-70 Courtaulds workers came to a meeting called by the local International Socialists branch to hear speakers from Counter Information Services and Courtaulds factories in Lancashire. They discussed the setting up of a textile workers' group within the Courtaulds combine.

Bill Ridges, of CIS, introduced the report, Courtaulds Inside Out*, and explained how Courtaulds profits were made at the expense of the workers. In the first six months of 1974 they made £660 profits from each worker.

M Yousouf, from Red Scar factory, spoke of the dangerous conditions there and the need to organise workers, black and white, to improve them. George Green, senior steward at Courtaulds Skelmersdale, described the management's tactics since the plant opened four years ago.

Their favourite manoeuvre was to frighten the workers by threatening closure whenever they met any opposition. His works committee was calling for a meeting of shop stewards in the combine later this month in Wigan. Delegates were expected from Carlisle, Lillyhall, Skelmersdale and Preston.

The meeting set up a small committee to arrange further meetings of workers within Courtaulds. Other Courtaulds workers wanting to send delegates to the Wigan meeting should contact the Secretary of the Works Committee, Courtaulds, Skelmersdale, Lancashire.

*Courtaulds Inside Out is available, price 30p, from CIS, 52 Shaftesbury Avenue, London W1.

80 SACKED

POOLE:-80 NATSOPA members at Southern Print have been sacked while on strike against the victimisation of a colleague.

Management have chosen their time to confuse the fight for a £3.21 comparability wage claim, and of course have used the Christmas holidays. Redundancy letters arrived with the Christmas mail. There has been no publicity about the sackings because the same company own the local newspapers.

FARMWORKERS: NO MORE BEGGING!

by Chris Thompson, NUAAW

AT LAST, rank and file farmworkers seem to be making progress in their struggle to push their stagnant union leaders into action. Judging from my own wages, it's not a minute too soon.

Before thresholds, the basic for a farm craftsman over 21 for a 40 hour week is £25. Thresholds took it to the princely sum of £29.40.

The Agricultural Wages Board produced their highest possible offer for a 12 month agreement starting this month. It was an extra £3.80. What a cheek. Just to rub salt in the wound they said they would cut off the last £1.20 threshold payment.

The cost of living has already gone up enough to give us another 80p threshold if it was still operating. So the new offer of £2.80 only gives us 80p more than what thresholds would yield. And thresholds are wildly below what you need to stand still in the struggle to live.

With this as the background, it is hardly surprising we gave our union leaders Reg Bottini and Bert Hazell a rough ride when they spoke to a farmworkers' demonstration outside the December wages board meeting.

Houghton author gives game away

THE HOUGHTON Report on teachers' pay, published just before Christmas and welcomed by the press, the Tory party and most of the official spokesmen for the teaching unions, represents a slap in the face for most teachers.

Despite talk of 'a 29 per cent increase in pay', it offers a bare £4.40 or 15.7 per cent for half the country's teachers. Really massive pay increases are reserved for a small minority like head teachers who would get 'rises of 32 per cent, which should bring them within the top 10 per cent of salary earners in this country', and principals in polytechnics who get rises of £3,700 (twice the total annual pay of a teacher at the bottom of the scale in a school).

In recent years there has been growing militancy from teachers, specially from young, lower-paid teachers who carry most of the burden of teaching in the large cities.

The Houghton Report rules out any notion that these teachers should receive a wage comparable to that of workers in industry. It claims that teachers should be prepared to accept such low starting pay because they are in a so-called profession.

Running through the report's findings is fear of the growth of militancy. One of the authors of the report, Maurice



Houghton: slap in face for teachers

Kogan, wrote of its aims in the Times Education Supplement: 'In the colleges and the schools there could now be a decisive move by the teaching profession to combat the yelling and striking and bullying that is becoming all too prevalent . . . Our children are being taught to lodge arguments on posters and in demonstrations . . . The Houghton Report ought to bring peace into an area of public life which would give the whole of society the leadership it needs'.

The aim, in other words, is to try to reduce teachers to little more than rubber stamps for the ideas of the ruling class. And to do that it is necessary to undermine the militancy in the class room.

This is to be done by divide and rule. The mass of teachers are to be left on a miserable wage, while there will be the inducement of 'promotion' and higher salaries to those who please the head teachers and do not make trouble.

The head teachers and the college principals, in turn are to get salaries designed to make them identify completely with the rich and powerful in society at large.

Majority

The official leaders of the teachers' unions have played along with the Committee's plans. In secret negotiations with the committee, they accepted the idea of 'restructuring', despite previous decisions to the contrary by the biggest union, the NUT.

And they have commented favourably on its findings before the vast majority of working teachers had any chance to discuss the question.

No doubt, like the authors of the report, they hope 'restructuring' will divide teachers and sap their militancy. And, since most of the union leaders are head teachers, they are probably looking forward to enjoying their own rises.

But among many rank and file teachers there is seething anger. The Report is even worse than militants expected and there could well be unofficial strike action when the schools reopen after the Christmas break.

Union officials trick hospital workers

by Jim Barlow, TGWU

IN THE same month that huge pay increases have been voted for senior civil servants, judges and the army generals, hospital workers throughout the country are being asked to accept a miserable rise.

The difference between my wage and Lord Chief Justice Widgery's will be £479 a week before tax, if we both accept the government's offer.

My branch in Dundee has been asked by our local official to accept a rise of £3.23 and consolidation of the

threshold payments of £4.40 into the basic. This would mean a basic wage of £30 for grade 'A' porters.

Our claim for a new threshold payment, four weeks' holiday and a 35-hour week was turned down.

The offer is being accepted in many parts of the country because of the way officials are presenting it. In my branch, our local official claimed COHSE and the GMWU were mandated to accept the government's offer provided they

got the threshold consolidated and equal pay for women.

In fact, neither COHSE nor NUPE nor any of the four unions in our area had meetings beforehand so the officials cannot have been mandated.

The only effort to publicise and fight for the claim came from the Dundee Hospital Worker, a local rank and file paper, which produced special leaflets calling for the full claim of £30 basic and £4.40 consolidated on top.

But to add to the confusion of rank and file members, our local TGWU official maintained at the branch meeting that the full claim was £30 basic with the £4.40 consolidated inside that figure. There is no mention of this in the claim as publicised by our regional office in November.

In this confusion my branch—and many like it—accepted the offer.

With four different unions negotiating for ancillary workers, and officials prepared to act like ours did this time, we need to strengthen the spread of rank and file papers inside the hospitals.

With the help of the National Rank and File Organising Committee, we hope we can win the support of the rest of the trade union movement, and get the sort of help the nurses got last year from miners in South Wales.

Journalists strike against sackings

EAST LONDON: Journalists on the Stratford Express group have voted to stage an all-out strike from next Monday against threatened redundancies. Those selected for the axe include chapel (office branch) officials who fought hardest for the members in the recent Newspaper Society case—a clear case of victimisation.

Messages of support and donations to: Jenny Dawson, MoC, 53 Queens Head Street, Islington, London N1.

MINERS: NOW IT'S UP TO THE RANK AND FILE

THE decision of the Miners' Union executive to abandon any meaningful wages claim this year was partly in response to the pressure of the anti-miner press machine that is always flung into action against us.

But there were other factors. Minister of Employment Michael Foot devoted a party political broadcast to appeal to miners' leaders to drop the claim. Before and during the 1974 miners' strike, Foot was reported as saying that miners deserved £120 a week.

The rank and file has known for a long time that the first loyalty of some of their leaders is not to the members. So despite the fact that the 1974 annual conference resolved to reject all forms of incomes policy under the capitalist system, we still hear plenty of talk about a settlement within the Social Contract.

Now the hysteria has subsided a little, it is worth having a look at the claim so widely publicised as being £30 a week.

The £30 was arrived at by the amalgamating three distinct sums, £4.40 consolidation of threshold, a £12.50 interim increase and £13.10 to be paid from 1 March.

We should have had the £4.40 long since. So it is fair to discount it. And there is widespread dissatisfaction at the idea of splitting the rest of the claim so that it would be paid in two instalments.

The whole framework of the claim bears a striking similarity to what miners writing in the rank and file paper the Collier predicted would be adopted during the productivity deal debate.

Admittedly the productivity deal has, fortunately, been rejected. But where does the £12.50 sum come from? That same deal? Some people say that £13.10 does not represent a miserly increase.

But bearing in mind present-day price increases, and also that the figure is subject to negotiation, it is hardly enough to keep our heads above water.

But the NEC majority wouldn't even pursue this claim. It seems likely they are going to try and foist an even worse one onto the membership. They are going to have to be careful that the rank and file don't walk all over them though.

There is a distinct feeling among rank and file miners that a wage settlement around £30 is essential. Unofficial action to secure our demands is a possibility.

Take this law into your own hands

by Ivan Crane, AUEW shop steward,

Howard Rotavator, Halesworth WITH the Health and Safety at Work legislation now in force, it is vital that all trade unionists decide what steps to take to make it as effective as possible.

Our present system, which is more than 60 years old, is totally inadequate and consistently abused by big business in the pursuit of profit. But the new legislation gives us little. And, in some cases, it takes away what we already have, or at least makes our position more vague.

It provides for joint management-worker safety committees. In effect it says we can have a say in things but make no decisions. Management will still make these.

Once again, the Act is riddled with the phrase 'what is reasonably practical'. To management this means 'what is profitably practical'.

Clearly we can't put up with this. We must take things at least one step further and form independent shop floor safety committees. We must make the decisions on our health and safety. These committees must push along the following lines:

Danger

FOR thorough inspections of the place of work in the interests of the safety and health of the people they represent. Such inspections to be carried out at times to be determined by themselves.

TO order the suspension of any work operation or process which appears to constitute a danger to health and safety.

TO order the evacuation of employees from any work area when it seems to the committee that continued presence in it threatens health and safety.

TO refer cases involving suspension of work or evacuation of work areas to the employer and to conduct negotiations for the introduction of safe and healthy conditions.

TO inspect the scene of any accident and any nearby machinery or plant.

TO receive copies of all reports and inquiries related to their place of work on the question of health and safety.

TO secure the payment of agreed earnings to all employees affected by a suspension or evacuation of work.

TO ensure every facility is afforded to the committee including time off without loss of pay and time off from their place of work to inspect areas of the factory.

This is a framework to build on to ensure that our action reduces the appalling toll of workers killed and injured in the pursuit of profit.

Hoover's put boot in again

PERIVALE:-Hoover's management have added a cruel twist to their threat to sack 100 workers a week if the toolmakers' strike was not called off.

Without warning, 40 production workers and five toolmakers received letters terminating their employment on Christmas eve. More letters are known to be on the way.

With the Sunday papers warning of a general contraction in the domestic appliance market, shop stewards fear Hoover's are using the deadlock with the toolmakers as an excuse to cut down the labour force.

The toolroom strikers and the laid-off production workers are bitterly divided and so it would seem easy for the company to make some of the redundancies permanent following a return to work.

A delegation will be going to the firm's factory in Cambuslang to link up a campaign against the redundancies.

It is not before time. Not only have Cambuslang announced more than 400 redundancies, but last week eight massive containers bound for Cambuslang with motor parts slipped out of the Perivale warehouse. Fortunately, shop stewards at Cambuslang imposed blacking immediately.

'THIS STRUGGLE IS AS IMPORTANT AS FINE TUBES'



The mass picket at Intex: more were planned this week. Picture: John Sturrock (Report)

IN SPITE of thuggery against the strikers by the National Front, in spite of the mafia-like tactics of the Dyers and Bleachers' Union, in spite of ICI, who own the company, the strike of the shift workers at Intex Yarns, Ashton-under-Lyne, is still on.

It is a vital battle too, with Asian and white shift workers struggling to defend themselves against the attentions of management and union.

Such a battle is tough-going. So support from the Labour Movement in Manchester is vital if the strike is to carry on.

Before Christmas, more than a 100 trade unionists attended a meeting in support of Intex called by the T&G Chemical Branch, 6704, and the Rank and File Organising Committee.

Pochins Building Site has put on a weekly levy of 50p on all the workers. Hospital workers are calling a blacking of all ICI products in the hospitals.

The meeting also gave offers of physical protection to the strikers, and a committee of nine trade unionists was elected to co-ordinate support activities, almost all of them shop stewards and branch officials.

Roger Cox, Secretary of the Rank and File Organising Committee, pointed out that the committee had to try and become a delegate committee with powers to co-opt sympathetic shop steward committees.

Jim Shepard, URTU senior shop steward from Watney Manns, said: 'This struggle ranks in importance with Roberts Arundel and Fine Tubes. The Labour movement must help keep the lads out.'

Following the meeting a mass picket of more than 100 confronted nearly as many police. Another picket has been called for the morning and evening of Thursday 2 January and the evening of 3 January.

Your support is vital if militant union members—victimised by management and their creatures in the union—are to be reinstated, and if the dirty work of thugs and policemen is to be defeated.

For further information about the solidarity pickets contact: Intex Shift Workers Strike Committee—061-330-7231.

Socialist Worker

PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

Chrysler: How to fight back

by Peter Bain, TGWU steward, Chrysler Linwood
LINWOOD:—More than 5000 production workers at Chrysler are being put on short time when they return to work on Monday.

Only sections of the machine shop will work five days. For the rest, it is four days in the first week, then three days until the end of January when 'the position will be reviewed'.

Already, production of cars has been slashed. 60 an hour were produced in September 1973, 55 an hour in most of 1974 and 45 an hour currently.

Last month, Chrysler told Linwood convenors and national officials that to maintain production at 55 cars an hour in 1975 would mean a 15-week lay-off for vehicle assembly workers.

Reduction to 45 an hour still means a 12-week lay-off, and a Christmas Eve company statement claimed the position had worsened.

Throughout the world there are massive lay-offs of carworkers. The production speed-ups and new plant of the boom years have been followed by economic recession and chaos and hardship for millions of workers.

Chrysler are the weakest of the three giant American motor

manufacturers who dominate the world market. In the US, 70,000 of their 86,700 workers have been laid off since November.

THE responsibility for unemployment is the bosses'. We've got to make clear we're not carrying the can, and that we're taking action. We should fight for the following:

NO redundancies or concessions on working conditions.

FIVE days' work or five days' pay.

FACTORY occupations and a rigorous offensive against the company if Chrysler try to carry out sackings.

NATIONALISATION of the car industry, without compensation and under workers' control.

JOINT action with other workers threatened with redundancy. Action by the whole trade union movement in support of these demands.

The shambles of the car industry is part of the current shambles of the economic system.

There is a world-wide 'rationalisation' of the car industry. The need is for clear, alternative policies to defend jobs and conditions—but there is little sign that union leaders realise this.

Engineering union national official Bob Wright, Grenville Hawley of the Transport Union and Roy Sanderson of the Electricians' union strongly

advised Linwood convenors against any action before the Christmas shut-down.

The Linwood leadership's reluctance to fight was underlined by their withdrawal of a week's notice of strike action and their lifting of an overtime ban.

Further cuts are certain. Indeed Chrysler's future is in balance. The fight back has to be based on links with the thousands of other workers with the same problems—at British Leyland, Vauxhall, and on Clydeside with multi-nationals like Singer, BSR, Honeywell and Cincinatti who've announced redundancies and short time working.

Your support Now it's more vital than ever

TO celebrate the New Year, our suppliers of paper have put their prices up 10 per cent. British Rail freight charges are going up by 12½ per cent.

There's a crisis. This year, more than ever before, Socialist Worker has got to be able to report it, and help in the battle against the system that has created it. It is an exciting challenge—but a difficult one.

Rising prices hit your pocket—and your paper. We're not going to trim our budget, or our coverage of the battles of 1975. We want to increase the power of the paper, to build it within the movement.

We want your opinions, your muscle, and, unfortunately that other crucial ingredient: your money.

It's not something you're going to have much to spare of this year. But if we're going to build a movement which can get us out of this system's shambles once and for all, your cash will be vital.

We want £2000 this month, and every month. It's one new year resolution you can't afford to forget...

Send donations to: Mel Norris, IS National Treasurer, 8 Cottons Gardens, London E2.

Bakers plan campaign

LIVERPOOL:—The 17 bakers 'sacked' by Scotts bakery are continuing their fight for re-instatement and are planning a campaign around the issue. The sackings followed their refusal to work with non-unionists and management labour. They subsequently occupied the dough house and were evicted by Alsations and security thugs.

The matter is going through union procedures. Social Security are refusing to give them dole money since they are 'in dispute'—although the management have publicly sacked them.

TRIUMPH STRIKE SOLD OUT

COVENTRY:—The strike of 1000 track workers at Triumph Motors, which halted production at the plant, ended before Christmas. At a stormy two-hour meeting, the convenors declared their motion to resume work carried on an evenly split vote.

The new lay-off deal falls far short of the original demand for 40 hours' work or 40 hours' pay. It gives 80 per cent of basic earnings for a maximum of 15 days in the next six weeks except for where laid off by a dispute of the Coventry shop floor.

A long-term agreement is to be negotiated in the next few weeks. In addition, the shop-floor's traditional differentials over the 40-hour staff have been eroded by 55 per cent. The company increased its 1975 offer from £3.50 to £8 when the 40-hour staff threatened to stop the tracks as soon as the track workers returned.

The disappointing outcome of the strike is the result of the rank and file allowing the initiative to pass to convenors McGarry and Griffin. Despite setting out with great determination the strike was organised passively. No attempt was made to draw in the rest of the 8000 men made idle. Inevitably, enthusiasm waned. Militants must organise now to ensure the same doesn't happen in the next dispute.

Locked-out 600 fight on

N W LONDON:—600 AUEW members at Associated Automation are now in the seventh week of their lock-out. The dispute now looks like becoming one of the area's longest and most bitter for years.

The workers are more than determined not to go back under management's terms. Just before Christmas, after a meeting with AUEW officials, management offered a further 40p as a way out of the dispute. A mass meeting resoundingly rejected the offer and instructed stewards to continue their demands for a better settlement.

Despite having to go through Christmas with very little money, the workers are prepared to carry on. As the length of time that they are locked out grows, so does their determination not to settle for any small amount.

A lot of workers are discussing the view that now they have been out for such a long time they want a big increase before they will return. The Ministry of Social Security is still refusing to pay them benefit, despite accepting an appeal against their decision from the strikers which is to be heard by a tribunal. Their strategy

appears to be to prolong the date of the appeal so that benefits will not be paid so soon.

These workers are in an appalling financial plight. It is up to all other trade unionists to aid their magnificent stand against the powerful GEC Combine. Donations and messages of support to Bro A Ford, 21 Stanley Park Drive, Wembley, Middx.

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