

workers' fight

No.32

August 18th - 31st 1973

5p

LICENSED TO KILL



Kenneth Littlejohn

ONE WAY TO SEE how sick a system is, is to look at the people it uses to keep it running.

Only a system based on maintaining the power and profit of a few parasites needs to rely on people like the Littlejohns - the two British secret police agents now imprisoned in Ireland for bank robbery.

On every point where they have been checked, their state-

ments about the British Government are true. It is true that they met Defence Minister Geoffrey Johnson Smith. It is true that they were given the phone number of an Inspector Sinclair in the Special Branch.

There is little doubt that two known crooks were given a licence to spy, assassinate Republicans, and to commit provocations, even petrol-bombing police stations or (if needed in their work) killing British troops

Just like Nixon's White House with its "plumbers", "Dirty Tricks" Department, hired thugs and agents provocateurs, the British Government employs a whole network of undercover agents. It also has a whole undercover regiment in Ireland - the Special Air Services - which specialises in murders, explosions and other "dirty tricks".

So much for the 'rule of law'. So much for 'democracy'. So much for 'fighting terrorism'. So

much for 'keeping the peace'.

The truth is that the Government will use **any means** it thinks necessary to protect its interests in Ireland.

The same thing happens in Britain. The preachers of "industrial peace" are the same men who rely on the crawler, the mercenary, and the toady. For them, any method is good for witch-hunting militants and depriving them of their livelihood.

In fact, we, the militants, also use **any means necessary**. We do not claim to confine ourselves in the enemy's rules and regulations which the enemy himself does not obey. We would be stupid to do so.

But because socialists in Britain, and Republicans in Ireland, are fighting for the **majority of the people to control**, and not the few rich parasites, we do not and cannot gain from Watergate or Littlejohn tactics.

Any militant worker in Britain will recognise that the violence of a picket line upholding the will of the majority against a scab is different from the violence of a gang of bosses' hirelings terrorising a militant. The Littlejohn case should remind us that the violence of the Republicans fighting for Ireland's freedom is equally different from the violence of British rule in Ireland.

CLAY CROSS DEFIANT see back page



Unions must support 24 pickets

3rd October, In Shrewsbury.

That is the date fixed provisionally for the trial for 'conspiracy' of 24 building workers arrested last February in connection with incidents in last year's building strike.

Encouraged by the fact that eleven of the 24 have already been found not guilty of 'affray' and 'intimidation', the Defence Committee is calling for stoppages and a demonstration on that day.

It will be a vital test of whether the Tories are allowed to get away with their attacks on picketing.

Ipswich and Norwich Trades Councils have sent money to the Defence Committee, and Edinburgh, Brighton, Coventry, and Middlesbrough Trades Councils have also voted support. The Defence Committee have called for a lobby of the Trades Union Congress on September 1st and 2nd.

The Scotland, North East, and North West Regional Councils of the building workers' union UCATT have called on the union to support the 24. The other main union involved, the T&GWU, has already declared support. UCATT and the T&G are to put out a joint statement by August 22nd, and pressure is mounting for it to be a statement of support.

Beyond the 3rd October, a main question is - what if the

court finds the 24 'guilty'. As yet there are no settled plans for a response. But if preparation is started **now**, we can make sure that any conviction is met by an upsurge of working class anger like the one which swept away the charges against the Pentonville Five last July.

CYNTHIA BALDRY

Money and messages of support to: MR Williams, 1 Fford Pentre, Ocean View, Carmel, Flintshire.

IN IRELAND the struggle continues. According to some estimates there are still about 700 'detainees' rotting in the prisons of the North — this despite Whitelaw's recent releases. Attacks on police barracks and the seizure of a train have been reported as the Provisional I.R.A. spread the conflict into the rural areas in order to relieve pressure on the ghetto population of Belfast.

Despite attempts to persuade the world to the contrary, Internment has not ended. Far from it! The Diplock report of December 1972 merely suggested that it should be re-named 'detention'. Accordingly those held are known as 'detainees'.

But it comes to the same thing. Conditions are harsh, especially in Long Kesh, which has been deliberately overcrowded. Already there has been one suicide among the inmates, and five other attempts have been made. Prisoners are stripped and searched before every visit, and protests bring a hail of blows and rubber bullets.

The Commandant turns a resolute deaf ear to complaints, despite the fact that a number of U.N. rules for the treatment of prisoners are being deliberately flouted. Cases are handled by the so-called Commissioners often without the accused being present at all: 'evidence' is given by a mysterious voice behind a red curtain.

Now, as trial without jury is introduced, internment without trial will be superseded by internment with a mock trial: about as big an advance as 'Detention' replacing 'Internment'!

Civilian protests have been widespread, and as the second anniversary of Internment drew near (Thursday, August 9th), Whitelaw decided to try to 'take the sting' out of protests by releasing 100 people.

Prominent among those released

AS INTERNMENT CONTINUES INTO 3rd YEAR — NOW IT'S MOCK TRIALS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND



Soldiers firing rubber bullets at anti-internment demonstrators in Belfast

were Michael Farrell and Tony Canavan of the People's Democracy. These two, who had been on hunger-strike for over a month, had become symbols of the whole system of unjust imprisonment without trial. The notorious Orange Judge Topping (one-time Home Secretary of Northern Ireland) turned down their appeal against sentences of six and eight months respectively for "behaviour likely to cause a breach of

the peace". Such is the penalty for those who protest peacefully against the police state regime in the Six Counties.

Whitelaw revealed, in releasing the two P.D. activists, that he had been holding 100 people for no justifiable reason. This did not stop big protest marches in Belfast last week, as well as an anti-Internment march of 2000 in London.

CHRIS GRAY.

400 in Coventry protest

OVER 400 PEOPLE joined the demonstration organised by the Coventry Prisoners' Defence Committee against continued internment in Northern Ireland and the continued detention of the Coventry 7.

The demonstration ended with a meeting. Gerry Lawless (IMG) and the speakers from Coventry and Blackburn Defence Committees stressed the need to link the Defence Committees throughout the country, and to support the growing campaign to withdraw the troops.

Michael Gallagher (Sinn Fein) in a stirring speech, reminded the audience that the British Empire had invented the concentration camp when they starved 40 500 to death in the Boer War. The British Empire is now in decline and the Irish people were determined to give it its final kick.

Andy Enever (I.S.) stressed that British workers were also suffering from the Tories with Conspiracy Laws and so on when the real conspirators are the government.

Eric Harrison (Workers Fight) stated that he was on the demonstration because he was a socialist and as such wanted to show solidarity with those fighting imperialism in Ireland.

A bulletin was distributed on the demonstration by the Defence Committee set up in Northampton, on the initiative of Workers Fight, to defend a recently arrested local Irish republican activist. This comrade is accused of 'demanding money with menaces', with evidence such as letters in handwriting which does not fit his own. This attempt to witch-hunt a republican militant has recently been followed by another similar arrest.

This was the first sizeable political demonstration to take place in Coventry for many years.

DAVE SPENCER.

THE GOVERNMENT SPONSORED HIJACKERS

THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT has once again embarrassed its allies, wringing reluctant condemnation even from its prime backers, the U.S. imperialists, after it had forced an Iraqi plane to fly to Israel, with the intention of 'arresting' some of its passengers.

Last week's outrage is the latest in a long series of Israel-inspired international terrorist incidents.

In December 1968, an air attack on Beirut airport (Lebanon) blew up and destroyed 13 civil airliners. Hundreds of people could have been killed.

Then in February 21st this year, a Libyan civil airliner was shot down over Sinai by the Israel air force. 106 people were killed. The same day, more than 40 people (including 13 women and children) were killed by Israeli raids on villages and refugee camps in northern Lebanon. Two months later, Israeli killers invaded Beirut in the night and slaughtered 16 people.

On August 14 an Israeli diplomat was expelled from Norway. The man, a 'security officer', was said to have recruited members of a 'liquidation squad' suspected of murdering a Moroccan on July 21st in a small Norwegian town.

As well as murder, Israeli agents have stepped up kidnapping activities, after a new law was passed in Israel enabling its courts to try people for alleged crimes

committed anywhere in the world. On August 8th, a seven-year sentence was passed on a Turk kidnaped in Lebanon, who was admitted never to have even entered Israel.

What most upsets Israel's allies (no strangers to such methods themselves — see p. 6 for 'America on Trial') is that Israel is so open and unashamed in its terrorism and piracy — "defiance of international law and international opinion seems to have become a habit ... which many Israelis positively enjoy" (The Times).

Yet, despite their blushes, Israel's imperialist friends continue to pour in military and financial support; and the British gutter

press has no inhibitions about carrying on its lying propaganda campaign on Israel's behalf, with headlines like "How terror chief escaped".

The "terror chief" they referred to was not Dayan, Israel's 'Defence' Minister, who directed the hijacking of the Iraqi plane. No, it was his intended victim, Dr George Habash, leader of the left-wing Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, one of the organisations fighting for the abolition of the racist, expansionist, pro-imperialist Israeli state.

"Our aim", Dr Habash stated last week, "is the dissolution of the Israeli state and the establishment of a secular state in which both Jewish and Arab Palestinians would live side by side. We are not anti-Jewish; we are not aiming to throw the Jews in the sea, as the Zionist movement says... we and the oppressed Jews in Palestine who are against this Government, have to fight together (for) one democratic Palestinian state... We have the full right to ask for all free people, all over the world, to understand us and to back us in our struggle."

British militants and socialists must include themselves among those people, and fight to oppose the lies of the right-wing pro-Israel propaganda machine in this country.



Intended victim, Dr. George Habash

RACHEL LEVER

Low wages and overcrowding in the

DEATH TRAP

BUILT FOR

PROFITS

EVERY WEEK, in the factories, the mines, the building sites, working people are killed or maimed, as safety is subordinated to profits.

For two or three weeks a year, we escape on holiday. But even there the search for profit has claimed its victims.

The death toll from the Summerland, Isle of Man, disaster, now stands at 49. The gutter press has had its usual sensational headlines, the blame will be placed on certain individuals or committees, and then we will be expected to quietly forget about it.

The hundreds at Summerland, and the friends and relations of those killed, will always remember: being burnt alive by molten plastic is unforgettable.

Whatever the police want to say about "three boys running away" or someone else "looking guilty", we can definitely list the following as among those responsible — whatever the direction they are running in:

1) *Rohm and Haas*, the American company who patented the plastic Oroglas and pushed it onto the British market via *W J Cox* of Tring

who manufactured it.

2) the architects, *J Phillips Lomas Ltd*, who allowed the building to go up without adequate combustion tests.

3) the *Isle of Man Government* and *Douglas Corporation*, who ignored their own antiquated fire regulations in order to complete the building as quickly and cheaply as possible.

The Manx Fire Chief, Mr Cyril Pearson, has admitted that he was unable to combat the authorities or Summerland, or to update fire regulations, because of the business interests involved.

Mr Byrd in *Construction News* writes: "... gross deviation from basic building control principles — with recognised local authority requirements seemingly ignored for economic reasons — have played a part in Summerland's tragic fire."

Let us look at the management of Summerland, the Trust House Forte chain. Mr K Paston, deputy managing director of THF leisure division, has said that they had never:—

— checked the materials used in Summerland;

— heard of Oroglas when they took it over;

— given most of their staff any fire training this year;

— had a single general staff fire drill.

Nor could THF explain the four-minute time lapse between the first alarm at Douglas Fire Station, and the general alarm sounded in Summerland which registers automatically in the Fire Station. When the whole building was engulfed in flames in ten minutes, those four minutes could have saved lives.

It is not surprising that the staff knew no fire drill. Like many Northern resorts, the labour force is made up of kids on school holiday, and casual labour from Glasgow and Ireland. In 1972 Summerland paid 28p per hour for women and 33p for men. There are no overtime rates or shift rates, and conditions are bad. Hiring and firing is done at the personal discretion of mobster-type sub-managers in each department. Turnover is high.

In the height of the 1972 season, the underground disco was regularly packed over its fire limit of 400 by 100 or 150 people. When employees on the door pointed this out, they were told to shut up.

To make money, THF — like Butlins, like any big business concern — would run any risk with the safety of holidaymakers and of its staff.

JOHN RIMINGTON



New, smoother Tories — not such a good buy

"CLASS consciousness in the factory, on the housing estate, or in politics, must give way to a new spirit of partnership". So said the 1964 Liberal election manifesto.

It is no accident that the basic programme of the Liberals is so similar to the latest 'democratic' policies of the Tories and Labourites: 'worker participation', 'profit-sharing', absorption of the trade union movement into the role of a state institution... in short, making the labour movement take responsibility for the running of capitalism.

The working class — if we are so foolish as to go along with this ruse — will be allowed to 'control' only in the leading-strings of the capitalist state, of course: the legislature and the administration remains in the hands of the crowd at Whitehall, not to mention economic power.

But the Liberals now realise that their importance at present springs from people's expectation of something better than wage freezes and rising prices. Unlike their elder brothers of the Tory party, they have room to manoeuvre opened by the fact that they are not in government, nor likely to be. They can afford empty promises. Thus the aim to make every policy sound that bit more radical under the general wishy-washy slogans of 'community politics' and 'people count'.

What would the Liberals do if they did manage to boost their vote in a general election and hold the balance between Labour and Tory? Jeremy Thorpe has spoken of a coalition with either party.

The Tories would continue their present policies, while the Liberals moan "we would like to do something different, but we're in a minority". Or Labour would continue its 1964/70 policies, saying "we would like to do better, but we have to rely on the Liberals."

The 'spirit of partnership' — their partnership in pulling the wool over our eyes. Remove the wool, and the Liberals turn out to be nothing but smoother Tories.

ADRIAN HALL.



IMMIGRANTS

POLICE STEP UP WITCH HUNT

ONE OF THE MOST SINISTER aspects of the current witch-hunt for so-called 'illegal' immigrants is the recent discovery that the police have — since mid-March — had an Illegal Immigration Unit. It was this unit which was responsible for the seizure of 27 immigrants in Calais last week.

So far the unit has been collect-

ing a list of those suspected of illegal entry. It claims to be aiming at the racketeers, who make vast sums of money out of bringing people in to the country. But they have made it clear that any illegal immigrants they do come across in the course of their search will be dealt with by local police forces.

The Unit is cooperating with

Special Branch and refuses to say how many names are on its files. There is no doubt that its main effect will be to further increase insecurity and fear for immigrant workers, and to make racism and witch-hunting against blacks more respectable.

BRUCE ROBINSON.

KICKED INTO DARKNESS

H.M. Prisons

A world beyond the Law

IF YOU EVER THOUGHT that being a guest of Her Majesty involved merely loss of liberty, livelihood and fun, an atrocious diet and hideous accommodation, you can think again.

PROP (Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners) has recently issued a statement listing 24 demands. Each one belies the organisation's name; prisoners in fact have no rights to preserve — none at all.

Just listing a few of these demands shows how little this society has moved from the dark ages in its vindictive treatment of those who step out of line.

The right to belong to a prisoners' union and be represented by it; the right to be represented at negotiations on pay and conditions; the right to vote in national and local elections; the right to institute legal proceedings without the special consent of the Home Office; the right to consult legal advisers in confidence, without interference or censorship; to be legally represented and call defence witnesses in internal disciplinary proceedings, to which the press should have access; to be legally represented at parole applications, to have expert assistance in making applications for parole, to have access to reports considered by the Parole Board and the opportunity to refute allegations of misconduct or unsuitability, and the right of appeal to the High Court against Parole Board decisions.

All these demands show up the helplessness of the prisoner. Once convicted, he is totally denied any civil rights, and in particular those which probably affect him most keenly, that is, the rights of access to the legal process. With sentences varying by several years acc-

ording to conduct, the fact that a man can be 'judged' on the say-so of any nark or screw who has it in for him, without the right of reply, is quite scandalous.

Why, PROP says, should not "the rule of law" (such as it is) not apply in prison.

Then there are the petty, personal harrassments which deny the following rights —

The right to be visited by and communicate with the press and the public; to send and receive as many letters as desired without censorship; to be allocated to institutions within their home region; to adequate and humane visiting facilities, including the ability to exercise their 'conjugal rights'; the right to enter into marriage and to attend funerals of all near relatives; to consult independent medical advisors; to own and sell the products of leisure activities such as hobbies, fine arts, and writing; to receive gifts for personal use.

A third group of demands show how the prison regime works against all real chance for the prisoner to start his life anew. They include —

The right to start educational or vocational training courses at the beginning of any sentence, to sit examinations, and to have all appropriate facilities; the right to have home leave; pre-release courses; an equal right with all other applicants to employment in state concerns; the right to a fully-franked insurance card on discharge.

Most of the people who end up

in prison should never be there.

The big bosses who live off profits, that is by robbing and plundering exploited workers, are considered pillars of society. When they kill workers through inadequate safety precautions, a mild fine is considered suitable.

Ordinary people who resort to one-man-war tactics to fight back against those bosses are jumped on. The big criminals sit in judgment over the small 'criminals'.

They are not given a chance to earn a reasonable living at a decent job. Those who have been so battered by the system that they need psychiatric care are rarely given sympathetic treatment.

Instead, they are thrown into a brutal and brutalising environment. They are deprived of any real chance to take a place in society — and perhaps learn the need for collective, rather than individual, war against the system.



Doing time— on the outside

IT IS NOT JUST prisoners themselves who are treated as sub-humans. Our 'welfare' state gives the same treatment to their wives and children.

My husband was arrested when I was 7½ months pregnant. The police arrived at 2 in the morning. Without a search warrant, so I refused to let them in — but they pushed their way in, four of them

I was informed that my husband was being held by them. They turned the place upside down and even went into the children's bedroom.

I told them to leave the house. One of them said the others would go and get a search warrant, but he would wait with me until they came back. Meanwhile he was stroking my hair in a sadistic manner. By the time they left I was near hysterics.

Then there was the waiting. When we went to visit my husband in prison, they would make us wait for hours on end. In the Social Security they made us wait at the very least three hours.

The bureaucrat behind the desk seemed to enjoy humiliating me. One thing he would do was pass loud remarks about my husband being in prison. I took this for four weeks, and then the powers that be decided that I should have an allowance book for the magnificent sum of £9.90, plus 90p family allowance.

We tried to manage on that — but three weeks after my baby was born, they came and disconnected

the electricity supply. This was in late October.

I went to the 'welfare system' for help. They gave me the usual lecture on how to eat grass instead of food, and in that way I would be able to make the money go further.

I asked the probation officer who had been dealing with my husband's case. Yes, he was helpful! He asked me if I could borrow the money to pay the electricity bill!

Eight weeks went by without light or heating. What was my husband guilty of that three young children should be made to suffer in such an inhuman way? Their father had been punished for trying to make life a little more pleasant by committing a 'crime against property'. He had tried to wage a one-man war on this oppressive system and had been caught. He had dared to attack the ir God, Property.

One night, three weeks from Christmas, I sat feeding the baby, by candlelight. In the darkness I dropped some candlewax on her. She screamed. That did it for me.

I became a 'criminal'. I went and switched the electricity back on. Fortunately they never found out.

But I wouldn't have cared if they had. This oppressive society had turned me into a 'criminal' by their standards, standards that said that three little children should live without warmth or light.

ROSE SPELLMAN



PROP demonstration outside Brixton Prison in support of 300 prisoners on strike for basic rights — see above.



SCRAPING THE BARREL.

"THE SOCIAL SECURITY system is based only to a very limited extent on the vertical redistribution of income — from richer to poorer. At present social security is a system whereby the State redistributes income from certain parts of the individual's life cycle to other parts."

Jim Kincaid's book, *Poverty and Inequality in Britain* (Penguin 60p) shows that some 2 million people in Britain live in acute poverty, and that the rich, rather than financing better benefits, have been allowed by successive governments to grow richer.

Let us take some examples. The taxation system, for a start. These are some figures for the proportion of income paid in taxation (1969):

£11-13	31%
£13-16	33%
£16-19	35%
£19-23	35%
....	
£50-60	36%
£60 plus	39%

Today, means-testing benefits can mean that a married man with two children and a wage of £21 per week would end up 78p per week worse off if his wages go up to £22

per week. The family would lose through loss of tax concessions, loss of welfare benefits, and loss of exemption from welfare charges.

Likewise, for example, a family with four children where the father's wage rises from £23 to £24 is 80p worse off.

In fact, the welfare system never granted adequate support for those in need. At the creation of the modern system in 1948, National Insurance was supposed to be only sufficient for the subsistence of those claiming it, while further benefits were means-tested and awarded on a discretionary basis. In practice, N.I. was defined so as to be inadequate for the subsistence of most people.

The burden of financing the scheme was supposed to be shared by employees, employers, and the state (via payments from general taxation). In practice, governments have always tried to keep the Treasury contribution as low as possible. This limits the size of redistribution from rich to poor (via taxation). Most of the employers' contributions, too, are simply passed on in the form of higher prices.

In a further attempt to keep the

burden on general taxation low, earnings-related schemes have been introduced for pensions by the Tories and for sickness and unemployment benefit by Labour.

These schemes take a varying proportion of all incomes within certain limits, increasing as the incomes approach a ceiling of £42.

They suck in money now, and proportionately more from working people than from the rich. The benefits are small and far in the future: £3.10 a week if you contribute from 1961 to 2008.

As Kincaid points out, it is quite possible to change this set-up. "To anyone familiar with the mood of rank-and-file workers in 1971 it is clear that a properly prepared campaign — especially on the issue of old-age pensions — would evoke enthusiastic support from workers, extending possibly even to a willingness to take some form of strike action on a national scale." But, as he notes, "British trade-union leaders would move in this direction only under the strongest pressure from the mass of their union membership".

Such pressure is not impossible. "In Italy in the past two years there have been major strikes over housing and pensions." But any concessions forced from governments by the threat of working class militancy will be rapidly taken back as soon as struggle dies down — unless one thing happens. Unless, that is, the militancy goes forward to overthrow the vested interests that keep inequality in place, to break the capitalist state and build workers' power.

BRUCE ROBINSON

...AND CREAMING IT OFF

LIFE CAN BE COMPLICATED for those unfortunates who can't fit their money under a mattress. The more you have of it, it seems, the less you can 'afford' to manage it yourself.

So it comes about that these people have to pay four different professional types to look after their affairs — solicitors, accountants, stockbrokers, and bankers! And, to keep tabs on what they're up to, it's necessary to learn the sort of arithmetic that isn't taught in your average state school; it's not just a matter of knowing how to tot up the pounds and pence, but knowing what on earth "irredeemable debenture stock" is, or what "convertible loan stock" or "9½% Treasury Stock 1992/7" are worth.

Then there are the worries about the CGT (no, not the French trade union federation: Capital Gains Tax), Estate Duty (whether you can expect to live for seven years after signing over your money to your wife to avoid the taxman), and the Surtax Office.

While the rest of us only have to work out what our yield from overtime, piece rates, or dirty job bonus might be, these poor people have to plough through Chairmen's Statements to see if it's been an 'encouraging year'. They have to watch to see if the Market has got bears

or bulls in it, and whether buying has been 'brisk' or 'sluggish' from day to day.

And how frustrating it must be, to have thousands of pounds and only live off the income it brings in dividends, for fear of killing the Golden Goose — and actually having to go out to work for their living!

There are problems we wouldn't dream existed: as if a family isn't enough to support in these inflationary days, one aristocrat recently bewailed to his solicitor that "I also have my daughter's horse to support".....

And while we toil on, minding our own affairs, they've got the problem of watching us. Imagine getting a report like this from your Stockbroker:

"We don't know how militant labour will react, but the miners in Derbyshire refusing to work during the luncheon interval, as they normally do, and refusing to work overtime because they want to solve unemployment by employing more workmen to do the same job, isn't exactly helpful. There may be other trouble too. The dockers are always ready for trouble, although we hope they will be peaceful."

The amazing thing is that, clever as these creatures are at knowing how to fill in three different

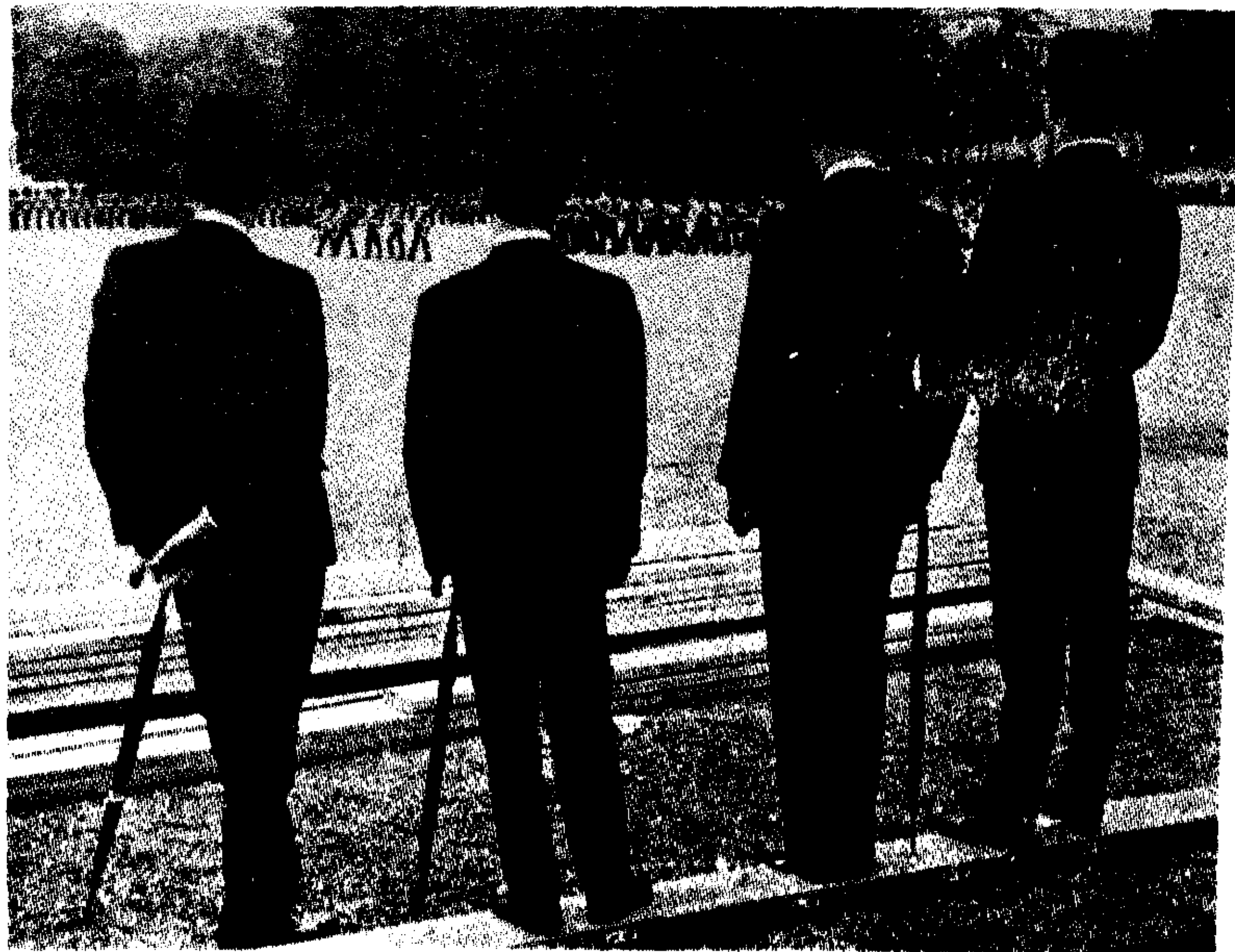
tax returns every year — how not to get trampled to death on the floor of the Stock Exchange, and how to buy the right 'securities' respectively for high income or high accumulation, they all live in a fairy-tale world of thinking that money is some sort of plant or animal that just grows.

Ask any of them where the profits actually come from to pay them the dividends on their holding of Anglo American Tobacco, or Turner

& Newall, or GEC or Marks and Spencer, and a blank glazed look will come into their eyes.

Perhaps they will never understand that they are parasites, living off the wealth produced by the people who do all the work. Never, that is, until the day when we show them in practice — when we show them that workers can quite well control industry without them and their dividends.

Rachel Lever.



AMERICA ON TRIAL

COSTA-GAVRAS, who directed *Z* and *The Confession*, has teamed up with Franco Solinas, who wrote the script for *Battle of Algiers* and for *Queimada*, to produce an explosively good political film.

STATE OF SEIGE (as yet only showing at the Curzon in London) is both politically far more important than *Z*, and a much richer film.

In *Z*, Costa Gavras told the story of the murder of Lambrakis, a Greek liberal leader, by the right wing. In *State of Siege*, the arena is far bigger; instead of exposing one 'plot', the film is concerned to expose a central aspect of the relationship between the USA and South America — the measures taken by US imperialism to ensure the continuation of its economic exploitation of the South American continent.

It has been said that Costa-Gavras and Solinas have each made their own film. That is true. The events of the film, the 'shooting script', take us through the week in which the Tupamaros urban guerrillas kidnap and execute a US official of the Agency for International Development (AID) — the 'arrest' of the official, his interrogation in the "People's Prison", the reactions of the Government, the speeches in Parliament, the press conferences, the police searches, the state funeral.

Meanwhile, moving solidly through the centre of the action, we are given an in-depth examination of just what Philip Michael Santore, the obscure official of an apparently benevolent and charitable American agency, was really doing in Uruguay.

Police

Starting with a suspicion that Santore was up to no good (the cynically flippant treatment of his funeral and the knowing enquiries of the old journalist are enough to tell us that) we find out that under the cover of being a "communications and traffic expert", his job was to train the local police in techniques of counter-subversion.

1000 policemen were trained locally, another 600 went on courses in the USA; high officials attended the international Police Academy in Washington, along with 'colleagues' from every country in the 'Free World'; others were selected for a special course on explosives in Texas. "You are familiar with our subjects", they are told at the Academy, "Strikes, student unrest, demonstrations, guerrillas, and so on".

The interrogation of Santore in the Tupamaros' People's Prison

builds up a picture of the training syllabus he has taken his pupils through: how to apply electric shock torture; how to gather intelligence; how to use explosives to create panic and confusion in a demonstration, "and so on".

Santore's job of defending the "foundations of our society, the Christian civilisation, the Free World" does not stop at the technical level, nor is it confined to Uruguay alone: he had already been behind the overthrow of the parliamentary regime in Brazil and had also helped to establish the "law and order of the United Fruit Company" in a counter-revolutionary military dictatorship in Santo Domingo in 1965.

He hasn't only been organising the police, but also the Fascist Death Squad, which specialises in quietly killing off left wing activists in the night and blowing up radical bookshops. In another flashback scene, trade unionists are shot down by the police: and we have no doubts about Santore's role here, too.

Tupamaros

The interrogation of Santore by the revolutionaries, which brings out what he was doing in South America, forms the central core of the film, and Santore its central 'character'. But the film is also about the Tupamaros, their methods and their tactics, and, more obliquely, their relationship to Uruguayan politics and society.

They have their strengths. They are well organised and equipped, mature, rational, and self-possessed. They influence public opinion and enjoy sympathy and respect, if not wholehearted approval, from workers. But their actions are self-contained, isolated, and not coordinated with other struggles, and they seem to lack a coherent overall programme for actually taking power.

Their effectiveness is examined in the film only in the context of what they set out to do in the time-span of the film, that is, kidnap a man important to their enemies and use him as a bargaining counter for the release of political prisoners. The fact that the failure is not inevitable (at one point they nearly succeed) means that the method is not inevitably wrong.

What's wrong is not that they carry guns, 'expropriate' cars, and take hostages (that doesn't even need to be justified, it goes without saying when we've seen unarmed leafletters shot by fascist snipers, the uselessness of the students' defiance, the trade union-



(Above) Revolutionary arrested. (Below) Trade Unionists shot.

ists shot down defenceless). What is wrong is that, having failed, their lack of control of the wider political situation lands them in a position of impotence; their isolation from other forces confines them within the 'mechanism' of hostages and counter-hostages.

But it isn't the revolutionaries who are on trial in this film. It is US imperialism. First, the sham of benevolence and economic assistance is challenged: "It is we who are aiding you and contributing to your economic growth" the Uruguayan journalist tells an amazed American official.

Later, the same character gives us a running commentary on the country's leaders and dignitaries, every one of them tied up in big American corporations and banks. The only one who "isn't a banker and isn't even rich" is the General — and he is there to protect the banks and the property.

And that is what Santore is doing there, too.

The fictional framework is only celluloid deep. The incident on which the film is based happened in 1970: only the names have been changed. The facts are substantially documentary.

In the confrontation between Santore and his captors, what matters isn't personality, but political choice: for capitalism, for privilege, for inequality (Santore's Christian civilisation), using "whatever means are at one's disposal"; or against these things, using whatever means are necessary and effective.

Urbane, self-controlled, and intelligent though Santore is, he is the practitioner of unspeakable

barbarity: in Costa-Gavras' words, "he is as sincere as were the Inquisitors of the Catholic Church". If, in their interrogation of him, the revolutionaries do not rough him up, that's not because the film is idealising them: it's because they don't need to. They have all the information they need and the interrogation is in fact a trial, a process of stripping away his lies and evasions, until he knows he's caught by their knowledge and spells out his credo as a confession: "You are people to be fought by every means."

Necessities

His death is also a matter of political necessity, not retribution. Though it is an element in their personal attitudes that he deserves to die, the important question is that, having made an ultimatum, it would be a demoralising show of weakness to release him when an exchange is refused: a demoralisation all the more significant and damaging in that the struggle isn't confined to one country.

The film is particularly relevant to socialists in Britain in relation to their attitude to the struggle in Ireland, where politics is as naked and violent as the situation depicted in *State of Siege*, (for the fascist death squad read SAS and UVF, for Santore and the undercover provocateurs he recruits read Littlejohn et al.) where an occupying power is ruthlessly determined to suppress the revolt of an oppressed people, and where an armed underground force fights with whatever weapons are at hand and effective.



THE FASCISTS IN WHITE SHIRTS

FOLLOWING their 5000 votes in the recent West Bromwich byelection, the fascists of the National Front are mounting a racist and anti-communist campaign in the West Bromwich and Smethwick area.

In an attempt to gain respectability they have thrown away their swastikas and burnt their portraits of Hitler and copies of 'Mein Kampf'. Instead of black shirts and jackboots, they're wearing white shirts and grey suits.

Pick up any edition of the 'News Telephone', the local weekly newspaper, over the past couple of months, turn to the correspondence page, and there they are, with

their facts and figures to prove that there are 'too many' immigrants in Smethwick and West Bromwich. Of course by 'immigrants' they mean blacks.

They talk about 'humane' repatriation (humane for whom?) And they go to great pains to prove that they are not fascists, because fascism is dictatorship and the National Front believes in democracy. The political respectability they desire has been boosted by the implicit support Enoch Powell gave them at West Bromwich when he refused to speak for the Tory candidate, who lost. Their confidence is growing.

But — don't be conned. Remember the 1964 General Election? Remember what happened in Smethwick? Peter Griffiths, a racist of the first water, gained the seat for the Tories. Fascist gangs roamed the streets. Heavies broke up meetings.

The Labour candidate, Patrick Gordon Walker (a notorious right-winger) was accused of being a 'nigger-lover'. The demagoguery resulted in a victory for the fascist candidate. Some blacks were intimidated against voting; others turned away in contempt. Some white workers were taken in by the racist propaganda. The scars of that election still remain, and the bosses can still count on splitting white workers from black workers in Smethwick.

For instance, during a recent

dispute at Birmid Qualcast Foundries over the closure of a plant, white workers crossed a mainly Indian picket line.

The fascists may have put on a different face now, but they haven't changed their nature.

To quote an example. The Warley branch of the International Socialists (Smethwick is part of Warley) recently organised a public meeting in a pub run by an Indian. The National Front threatened to blow up the pub if the meeting went ahead as planned.

I.S. didn't give in, they went on with the meeting. The fascists didn't blow up the pub, but they did send along a few thugs — who were soon evicted from the meeting.

And they must be 'evicted' wherever they appear — whatever face they go under. KEVIN CROWE

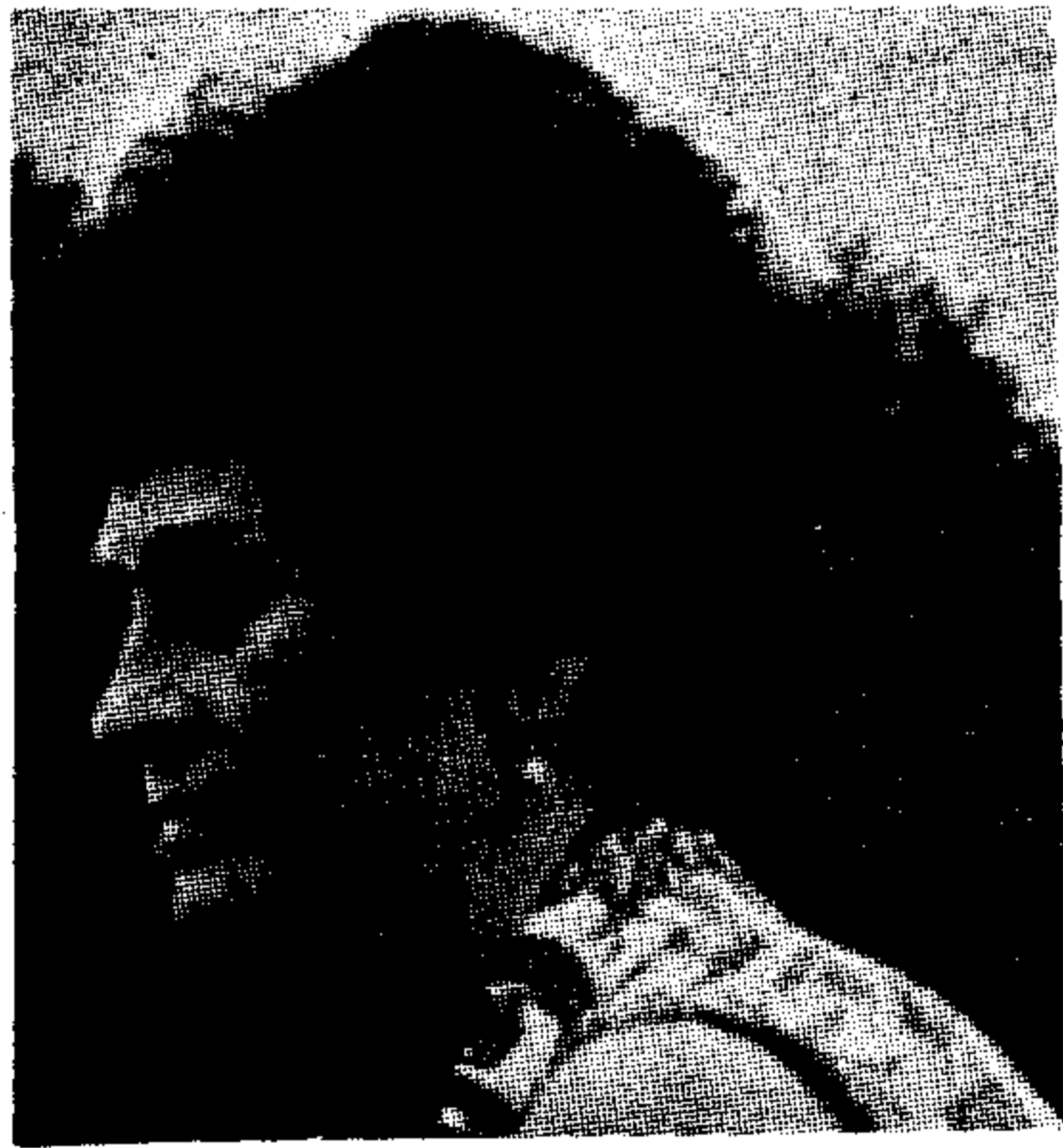
POLICE THREATEN WOMEN PICKETS

POLICE gave women pickets at GEC (Coventry) Spon Street works five minutes to disperse or be thrown in the black maria. The order came after police escorted a load of meat for the works canteen through the picket line. Shop steward Carol Knapp replied "We are here to stay and will lie down in front of the lorries if necessary". So far no arrests have been made!

The strike of over 150 women is about piece-work retiming for six girls on printed circuit work. Their job has changed drastically, over the past year, and their wages are as much as £5 a week down as compared to other workers.

This is the second time in three weeks that the women have been out. After the first strike they went back for negotiations to take place and to give notice of strike action in order to make the strike official. Albert Beardmore, the union convenor in the plant, was soundly booed and jostled when he announced that the strike was unofficial.

D.S. 13.8.73



Elsie Moles, strike leader

Chrysler: bosses' bluff

CHRYSLER have once again threatened to abandon production in the UK and to sack their 31 500 workforce. This time the threat is directed against 155 electricians at the two Coventry plants who are on strike over a pay claim.

The electricians won a pay deal last year similar to that of the Chrysler toolroom, giving them £2500 a year and staff status. But the deal, unlike that of the toolmen, was caught by the pay freeze.

They accepted a pay rise last February of £1 plus 4% with a promise from the company to pay the £2500 from July this year. The company are now refusing to pay up.

The electricians' union local official Maurice Crofts bleated pathetically "We have always cooperated with the company and have never been strike-prone. It is not our Union's policy to fight the government on the industrial front."

With friends like that... and therein lies the rub. Chrysler workers just back after the holidays and their four week strike are not very sympathetic to the 155 staff status seekers who have not been noted for their support hitherto.

Hence the Chrysler threat is designed to divide the workers, as indeed is the staff status deal. The need for a united stand by the Shop Stewards' Committee on all pay deals is clear. D.S. 13.8.73

EDITORIAL BOARD:

Rachel Lever (Managing Editor)
Sean Matgamna
Martin Thomas
Andrew Hornung
Stephen Corbishley
Bas Hardy
Tony Brockman (Business Manager)

Published by Workers' Fight, 98 Gifford St, London N.1
Printed by voluntary labour



Tenants defy courts

KIRKBY CCUNCIL has recently taken further steps against the rent strike on the Tower Hill estate. Three weeks ago they decided to go to the country court to get earnings attachment orders against those on rent strike. This application for attachment orders, which hasn't yet come through, will affect the tenants selectively — dealing first with those with the highest arrears, and then working down.

The continued effectiveness of the total rent and rates strike, started last October, can be gauged by the officially admitted figures. Arrears for the estate are now supposed to stand at £125 000 and are rising at £2300 each week.

And the Kirkby housing manager said they had instructions from Downing Street that no evictions were to take place of those on rent strike.

The reaction of the Tower Hill Action Group to this latest move has been the same as their reaction to previous legal moves against them — refusal to have anything to do with any court proceedings. As their secretary, Tony Boyle, said: "The courts will not get no satisfaction from us. We will not fill in their forms and will not attend any hearings."

The Rent Action Group are also planning to leaflet local factories

calling on them for industrial support, and they have called a national demonstration in Tower Hill for Saturday, September 1st. This demonstration will leave from the 'Windmill' (Tower Hill) car park at 2 pm
JOHN BLOXAM

FIGHTING FUND IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

READERS will have noticed that our price went up to 5p. with the last issue. We have delayed this increase as long as possible, but with the prices of materials going up for us just the same as other prices, it can't be avoided.

This issue is rather thin, at 8 pages, because of the holiday period. And it will be followed by a three-week gap before issue 33.

But in that three-week gap we will be getting a new printing machine installed. And with the new machine we hope to be able to go over to a bigger format.

With the bigger hire purchase repayments on the new machine, our FIGHTING FUND will be more important than ever. The total no stands at

£602.92

S.E.I. VICTORY!

BOTH ECCLES AND HEYWOOD plants of S.E.I. have agreed to go back to work on 13 August, with a mass victory picket at Eccles.

The terms of settlement are £2 increase for the men, across the board, and £1.60 plus £1.47 for the women, again across the board. The strikers hope for further increases from negotiations to take place after return to work.

The strikers say they will work with the scabs, but try to pressure them into joining the union.

Sue Annall 10.8.73

A NEW PAMPHLET...

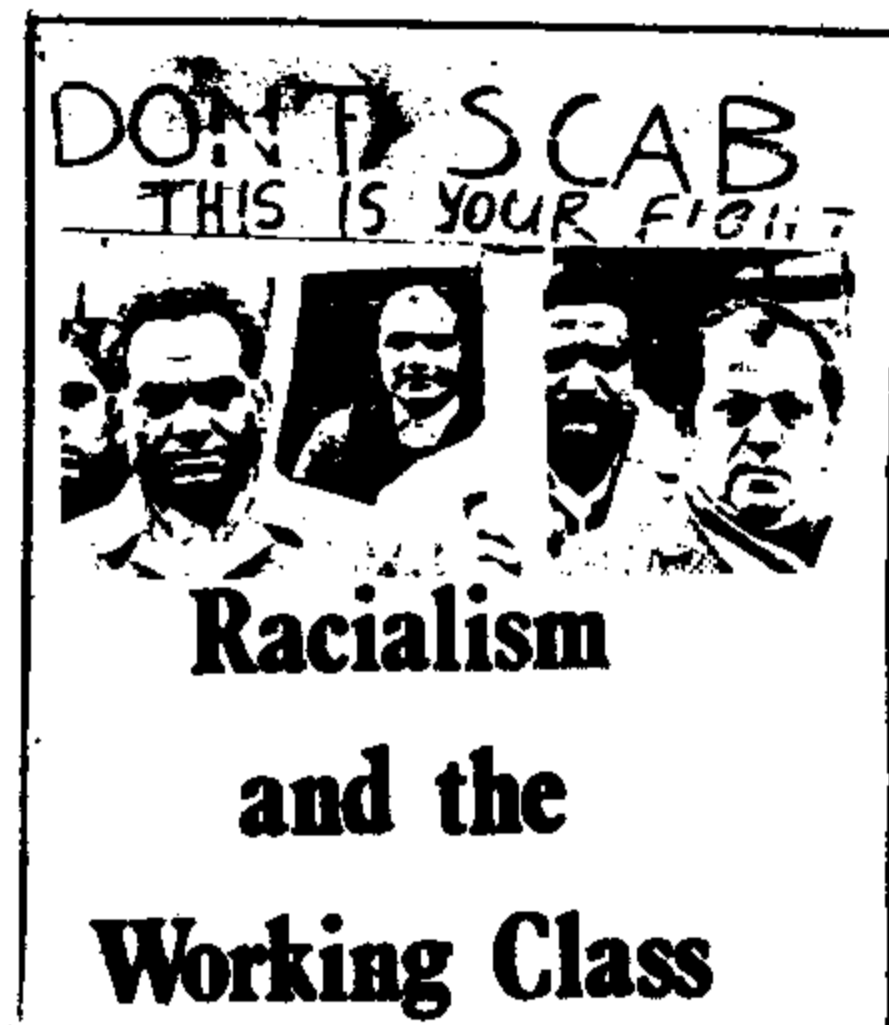
THE STRUGGLE AT SIMCA

In the factories of Simca — the French branch of the international CHRYSLER company — the union is a fascist union, the CFT. This pamphlet gives details of the activities of the CFT, the oppression of Simca's immigrant workers, and the fight back.

From Coventry Workers Fight: D. Spencer, 17 Winifred Avenue, Earlsdon, Coventry. 15p including postage.

Use this Pamphlet ▽

To help campaign against racism, Workers Fight has produced a 20-page pamphlet which takes up the 'reasonable-sounding' racist arguments. Single copies 10p & postage. Bulk: 50p for 6; 80p for 12.



The Industrial Relations Act and the fight for a GENERAL STRIKE

Just out, a collection of reprints from Workers' Fight on the general strike. A short introductory section deals with the events of July 1972 and the situation leading up to them. The central section contains articles on the experience, including Britain 1919-26; France May 1968; the 1972 Quebec general strike, and a new translation of Rosa Luxemburg on Belgium, 1902. A third section deals with the question of trade unions and the State, and an appendix discusses the positions of the left groups on the General Strike and the July Crisis of 1972.

Price 20p plus 5p postage from: 98 Gifford St. London N.1

Port stewards call fight for registration

THE RECENT MEETING of the National Port Shop Stewards in Preston showed that registered dockers are regaining their confidence. They are breaking out of the defeatism which followed the series of defeats suffered at the hands of the government and employers.

The meeting decided to black containers not 'stuffed and stripped' by registered dockworkers. The dockers are to insist on knowing who has done the work — whether registered men or not. And if the container had been worked by unregistered men then it could be in danger of being left on the quayside

The meeting voted against Hull's proposal for a strike against unregistered ports. The proposal was defeated mainly because stewards were uncertain if the men would follow.

Before the men can follow, the stewards must lead. The first thing is information: the men must know about the issues. The stewards must campaign to tell every single dockworker what the issues are, what the solutions are, and then lead the fight for those solutions.

The key issue is whether the National Dock Labour Scheme sur-

vives or does not survive. The issues of containers, unregistered ports, and manning scales will be no serious problem if the National Dock Labour Scheme is firmly in the hands of, and controlled by, the rank and file dockworker.

One of the main discussions at the next meeting of the NPSSC (on September 15th) will be on casuals and what to do about them. For that reason it is worth looking at what is happening in Bristol.

This port was one of the first to recruit temporary labour. Nearly 250 men now work on the dock. Recently the registered men have

begun to agitate for these 'temporaries' to be made permanent.

There is a possibility that the men will refuse to work the machinery designed to boost productivity if the temporaries are not transferred to the full register. There is a lead!

It is important that militants in London, Liverpool, Hull, Preston, Manchester, and Tilbury fight to draw other ports into this meeting on September 15th.

Remember that the fight to keep the NDLS as a weapon of the dockworker is the fight for the survival of the dockworker.



David Nuttall on steelworkers' demonstration

CLAY CROSS PLANS 'SHADOW COUNCIL'

Cllr. Dave Nuttall talks to Workers' Fight

CLAY CROSS council is still defying the Housing Finance Act — and now it has come out against Phase 2 as well, by giving the council workers £5 to £6 increase. They are still giving free milk to schoolchildren (paying for it out of the Council chairman's allowance!)

TREVOR CAVE asked Councillor DAVID NUTTALL what the councillors' plans were.

TC: The High Court has decided against your appeal over the £7000 surcharge ordered by the District Auditor. What happens next?

DN: The decision means that all rights will be taken away from us, even the right to vote, since we will refuse to pay. But we can still actively refuse to implement the Housing Finance Act by setting

up a Shadow Council.

TC: Just what do you mean by a Shadow Council? How will this relate to the new council which will be elected?

DN: All decisions will still firstly be taken at meetings of the Labour group, and we shall still be members of that.

TC: So there will be an enlarged Labour group — the new councillors, and the present councillors who have been disbarred?

DN: Yes. We'll be there in an advisory capacity and at the same time take part in decision-making. But I feel sure the new councillors are already committed to the same policy.

TC: Part of that policy be to continue to defy the Housing Finance Act — in short, no rent

risers, no rent rebates. What effect will that have?

DN: We have initially been surcharged with about £7000 plus £2000 costs. However, a further surcharge is most probable, accounting for the rent increase money not collected since the date of the last audit.

TC: So the national papers are all wrong when they talk in terms of £9000 in all.

DN: Yes, that's right — it's such a high amount I'm not sure what it is, but it's over £1600 a week.

TC: After next April, under the local government reorganisation, Clay Cross will come under a North East Derbyshire District Council. What then?

DN: The Labour group for the new District Council has declared that it will not implement the Housing Finance Act.

TC: Outside the courts after the hearing I was struck by the

lack of support from all but a very few other people. Why do you think there was no support from other Labour councillors?

DN: The National Executive Committee of the Labour Party is all for law and order, and we have known right from the start that we should be breaking the law. We felt justified in doing this, as it's just another piece of anti-working class legislation. We don't believe that it is our law.

Most Labour councillors would seem to have more regard for their pocket than for their principles. While we were there, no-one turned up from Transport House or the London boroughs.

Don't forget that the theory behind the Housing Finance Act is not originally Tory, but, like the Industrial Relations Act, the brainchild of the 1964/70 government.

TC: When you are disbarred, a Housing Commissioner, or the County Council, may be sent in as a caretaker instead of electing a new council. Suppose someone tries to evict tenants for non-payment of rent or to seize property from councillors refusing to pay the surcharge. What then?

DN: Tenants should organise to defend each other and the councillors. This could be difficult at the moment due to lack of a formal tenants' organisation, but, on the other hand, Clay Cross has a history of spontaneous action with regard to this.

When we had a total rent and rates strike on before, we had street committees which Arthur Wellon, David Percival, and myself were responsible for encouraging.

AUEW TO SUPPORT CLAY CROSS?
Teesside District Committee of the AUEW has sent up to the E.C. a resolution from Redcar No.2 branch, calling on the EC to put into practice its line at the last Labour Party Conference (when it pushed for non-implementation of the Housing Finance Act) by giving industrial support to the Clay Cross Council.

FIGHT THE RENT RISES
Public meeting. 7 pm, 29 August.
Magnet Hotel, Grangetown, Teesside

ase shouldn't be protected from inflation.

3) No reliance on government statistics. Trade unions should set up committees of workers and housewives to work out increases in the working class cost of living.

4) A cost of living clause shouldn't act as a foot in the door for long-term agreements which inevitably take control away from the shop floor.

5) Lump sum rather than percentage increases. This gets round the disparity between basic wages and actual earnings and would also reduce differentials.

Such a clause would not only provide a genuine economic gain for the working class (which is in itself justification), but would also involve workers in seeing the production process as a whole and not just from the restricted view as wage earners. Also if pensions, unemployment benefits and family allowances were tied to the same cost of living index then unity could be forged between all those who are oppressed by the government policies of inflation and wage restraint.

ANDREW ROBERTS

DISCUSSION

COST OF LIVING AGREEMENTS CAN BRING GAINS

PAUL ITIZE (WF 31) is quite correct to point out that the carrot of a threshold agreement for phase 3 doesn't in the least change the fundamental aims of Tory pay policy, which is to contain wages so that profits can expand. However, he is wrong to reject altogether cost of living agreements.

True the demand for a sliding scale of wages has traditionally been seen as a defence against an absolute fall in real wages in a period of slump. True we are not in such a period now. But we are now in a situation where expansion is running hand in hand with the rate of inflation normally associated with a slump. In such a situation is it not perfectly valid to demand that wage increases are protected from inflation so that the real

value of the increase remains the same for the duration of the agreement.

Now the many holes in the threshold as at present operated are pointed out well enough in the article; but rather than simply saying 'no to thresholds' shouldn't we be demanding a cost of living agreement which establishes real gains for the working class?

Any such agreement should be based on the following principles:

1) Negotiations for the basic increase should be seen as separate from the cost of living clause. I.e. a cost of living clause shouldn't be used as an excuse for demanding low increases.

2) A threshold of 0% (or as near to 0% as can be won). There is no reason why the whole of any incre-