

WORKERS' FIGHT

No 17

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UDA Gangs and British Army fall out

"PEACE" BETWEEN THE PROTESTANT Ulster Defence Association and the British Army seems to have been re-established, for now, after a series of shootings, riots, and killings which very nearly became a full-scale confrontation between the Belfast Protestant community and the forces of the British Government. William Whitelaw almost fell off his tightrope as Protestant gunmen fired on the British Army and gangs of Protestants attacked Catholic streets and set fire to a Catholic church.

Baffled and perplexed by the force and tenacity of the Catholic revolt, the working class Protestants are still determined to maintain themselves as the dominant community and to keep the artificial Imperialist puppet state of Northern Ireland (with its 40% Catholic minority) as the best framework in which to do so.

Their problem is that Protestant domination within the Six County state boils down fundamentally to privileges regarding homes and jobs and social services on a British (rather than 26 County) level - and, they believe, this in turn depends on the British connection, on the British Government.

But that Government is determined to keep a tight grip on Northern Ireland and knows that 'normality' can never be restored in Northern Ireland until the more blatant forms of Protestant sectarian domination of Northern Ireland society are ended.

Thus the Protestants 'need' the British connection - and at the same time bitterly resent and oppose the British policy in Northern Ireland. That's why

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Members of the Ulster Defence Association marching in Belfast last May

INCOMES POLICY:

LOWER PAID FIGHT BACK

ON OCTOBER 6TH HOSPITALS IN Manchester staged a mass meeting and voted overwhelmingly to - support those on strike in Bristol; back industrial action in support of their claim; demand that the TUC break off talks with the government; and oppose incomes policy.

On October 20 there will be a half-day strike and a march. This action is supported by the Trades Council, Manchester University medical students, Manchester Royal Infirmary works dept. shop stewards committee, the University branch of the National Union of Public Employees, and the Manchester Rents Action Group.

It is only a few days since the Tory Party conference managed to squeeze in a few words about "helping the lower paid". But it only takes that long to expose the Tory hypocrisy for the lie it is. One of the biggest concentrations of the "lower paid", the local government and health workers, are now being fought tooth-and-nail by this fat-cat government over a £4 increase on the basic.

The Manchester meeting, and militants elsewhere, have demanded a £8

increase on the basic - and the scrapping of those parts of the claim that call for a £1 lead-in payment (productivity bargaining, ie selling jobs) and a threshold clause (that is, an incomes policy).

Even the £8 increase would only bring the lowest grade male manual worker up to £25 basic. Other vital parts of the claim are a 35 hour week and four weeks holiday.

The take-home pay of many male hospital workers is only £14 or £15 a week. And the women workers are treated in an even more atrocious manner - seen by management often just as skivvies working for pin-money.

This low pay situation has arisen for a number of reasons: partly it has been the abuse by management of those sections which in the past have been poorly organised - women and immigrant workers (which form a large part, particularly, of the hospitals' workforce); but substantially it has been the ability of management to act as vultures preying on the devotion of the hospital workers to the patients and to the egalitarian idea of a National Health Service.

And, of course, it is on this question of "What happens to the patients if the workers strike?" that the double-chinned businessmen and ladies in flowered hats who "peopled" the Tory Party Conference really get worked up. Earning a decent living has never been their problem so, to quote from a Gloucester militant (see p. 12) they talk of "sadistic militants"

Working class people, however, must give full support to industrial action, including strikes, by these workers. The fact is that when Manchester went on token strike they left a skeleton staff, when Gloucester came out they agreed to 50% of those prepared for duty staying at their jobs.

The vile accusations of sadism and callousness come from the Press and the mouths of the real callous men.

RENTS

Councils must defy

THE FIFTEEN LABOUR councils in England and Wales which are defying the Housing Finance Act have been sent a threatening letter by the Government, stating that unless they raise rents within a month they will be declared "in default".

In Merthyr Tydfil, tenants are already organising a mass demonstration for 4 November (the eve of the deadline for Merthyr council). In Walsall tenants are also organising to support their "no surrender" council.

If the councils remain solid, with the mass organised support of tenants behind them, they can defeat the Government.

For meanwhile the tenants movement is snowballing, particularly in Liverpool and Manchester. There are areas - Teesside, for example - where it has not got off the ground, and others where it is as yet not very strong. But new Tenants' Associations are

being formed daily, even in the weaker areas.

NOT A PENNY ON THE RENTS!

REPORTS p.11

ALDERSHOT TRIAL

IN WINCHESTER THREE MEN are charged with the February 22 bombing of the British Parachute Regiment in Aldershot.

The bombing occurred right after the Bloody Sunday massacre in Derry and within a context of British Army terrorism in Ulster.

Workers Fight fully supported this bombing action taken by the Official Irish Republican Army and directed not against civilians but against the army. It was an act in the guerrilla warfare which the IRA is waging against the massively superior forces of the British Army.

30 HOUR WEEK!

ON OCTOBER 31 THE NATIONAL Ports Council will present a report to the Minister of Transport, John Peyton, on the future of the small ports, wharves, and jetties.

The report, which stems from the promises made by the Jones-Aldington Committee to help end the national docks strike, will investigate "the traffic handled by the non-Scheme (National Dock Labour Scheme) ports; their significance for the capacity of the ports industry; and whether in the national interest such undertakings should be brought within the control of the larger ports".

The report is unlikely to hold much hope for dockers. Already one in eight dockers have left the industry, drawn away by the bait of £4000 redundancy pay. There are plans to cut the labour force by another 15000 in the next ten years, leaving only 10000 dockers to unload all of Britain's cargo.

And as the pattern of trade between Europe and Britain shifts, and fewer but larger ports come into operation (eg the MAPLIN scheme) so even this number will fall.

The victory claimed by Jack Jones was hollow from the first day he announced it. He claimed to have won 10 points - not one of these was a clear victory.

TEMPORARY UNATTACHED REGISTER

On September 29 the Temporary Unattached Register - the 'pool' for dockers not registered with an employer - was officially ended. On the same day one of the most dangerous attacks on the National Dock Labour Scheme began. A number of ports, some small, others bigger, began to recruit 'casual labour', or considered doing so.

On Teesside and Plymouth permission to open the dreaded casual register was given. In Bristol, Immingham, Southampton, and Preston, the labour force is below strength at the moment. In Preston, before the strike, there were 53 men surplus to requirements - now the port is short and the port NDLB manager has been told by the London National Dock Labour Board office to take on only casuals.

What is worse is that some cargoes have been transferred from port to port. For example, a cargo of citrus fruit from Israel formerly went to Liverpool. It is now being unloaded in nearby Heysham by unregistered and non-unionised labour. The Jones 'victory' has put nearly 5000 dockers out of their jobs, and weakened the NDLB in the face of even greater attacks.

PORTS UNDER NDLS

The argument put by Jack Jones to the dockers was that the National Ports Council inquiry would attempt to discover ways of obtaining work for unemployed dockers on the TUR through the elimination of the ports not in the National Docks Labour Scheme, and somehow ignored the question of the four major non-Scheme ports - Dover, Shoreham, Felixstowe, and the railway ports.

But any suggestion that the profitable, smaller ports should come under NDLB rates and conditions will be implacably opposed by dockland employers' interests.

And to an extent the issue of the small ports is a red herring, since if the four major non-NDLB ports are excluded there is little left in the way of employment opportunities.

Thus the National Ports Council report will more than likely suggest that no real change is brought about in the status of the small ports. It may suggest that the most blatant, and possibly unimportant wharves could be closed; but it will also say that the larger ports must become more effi-

ent and productive to attract and keep trade. The report is more than likely to offer advice on how the small ports can be integrated into a national, and thus European, transport system; the main aim will be to preserve the small ports as one of the most important weapons against the NDLB.

The report will help shift the balance of forces in dockland away from the dockers towards the employers (who now represent the consortium stretching from the shipowner to the Inland Container Depot operator), and thus against the NDLB, which, with 50% trade union representation, serves as a defence of dockers' interests to some extent.

But the report will also reinforce the strength of the Trade Union officialdom on dockland. The threat Jones made about punishing militants for what happened at Transport House when the docks strike was abandoned is now being put into practice.

Already branch secretaries have received letters asking for information, and dock officials have been told to

enforce their authority on dockland.

DOCKERS' REPLY

How will dockers respond?

The ending of the picketing of Midland Cold Storage by London dockers pinpoints some of the difficulties. The pressure on Lord Vestey and all his cold storage depots through the picketing of MCS was relieved by Jack Jones. The struggle for jobs in the cold storage depots as promised, but not guaranteed by the Jones-Aldington Committee report, could only have been won by united action between dockers and road haulage drivers. It was the action of Jones in repeatedly refusing to make the picket official which helped the increasing split between the two sections.

However, the tactic of picketing depots one by one was limited, and only successful during the days of the mass movement of dockers before the strike. Since the ending of the strike the struggle shifted from offensive action to defensive action - when nearly

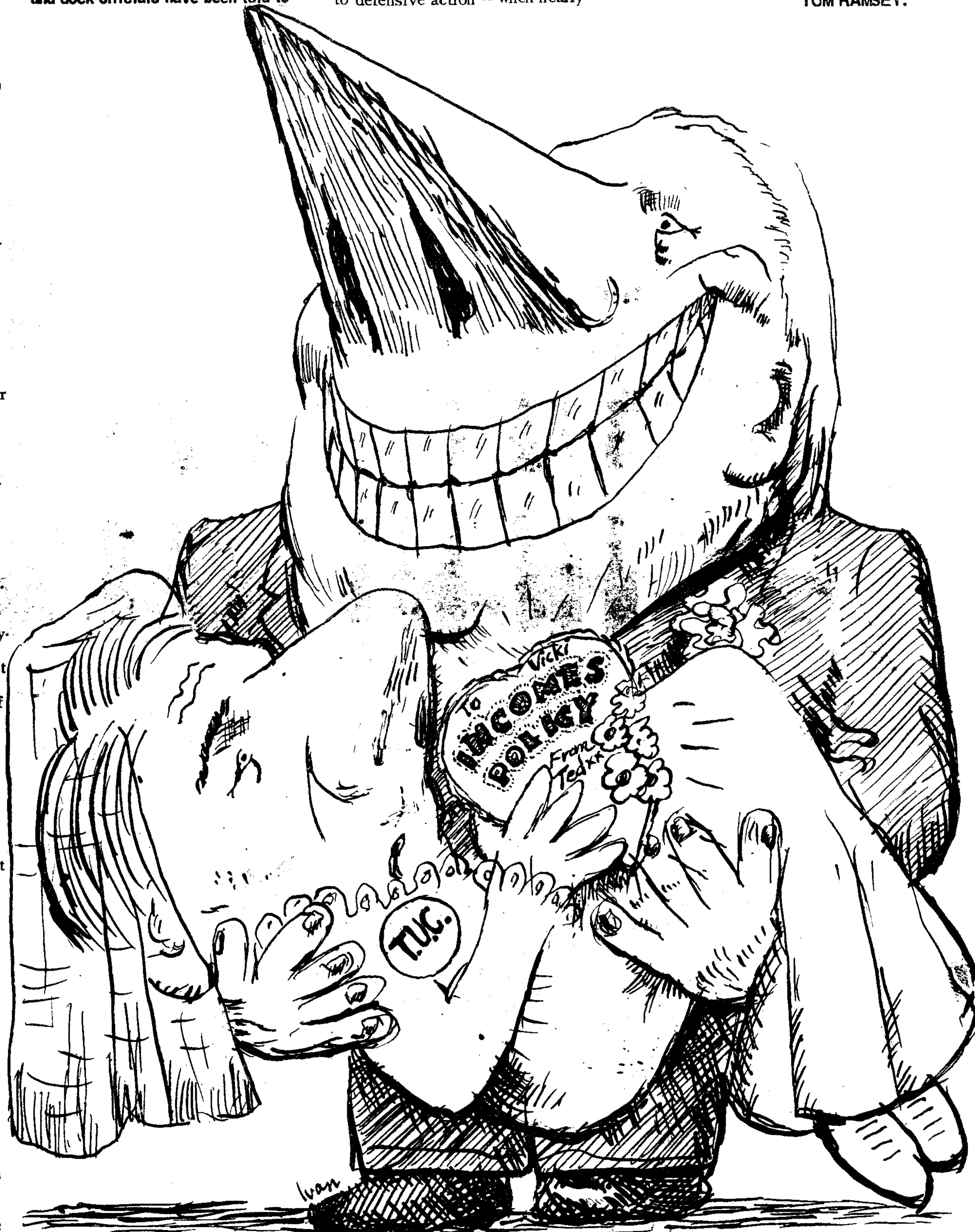
5000 dockers accept the money, no amount of picketing will replace those 5000 jobs. Only a fight for a shorter working week can show the way.

At present the struggle is run down. London, Liverpool and Hull are all drawing in their blacking on certain local container transport firms.

The National Ports Council report will show the real balance of forces; meanwhile the Jones-Aldington Committee enter into Phase 2 of their report - looking for alternative employment for dockers outside the dock industry. Dockers must prepare.

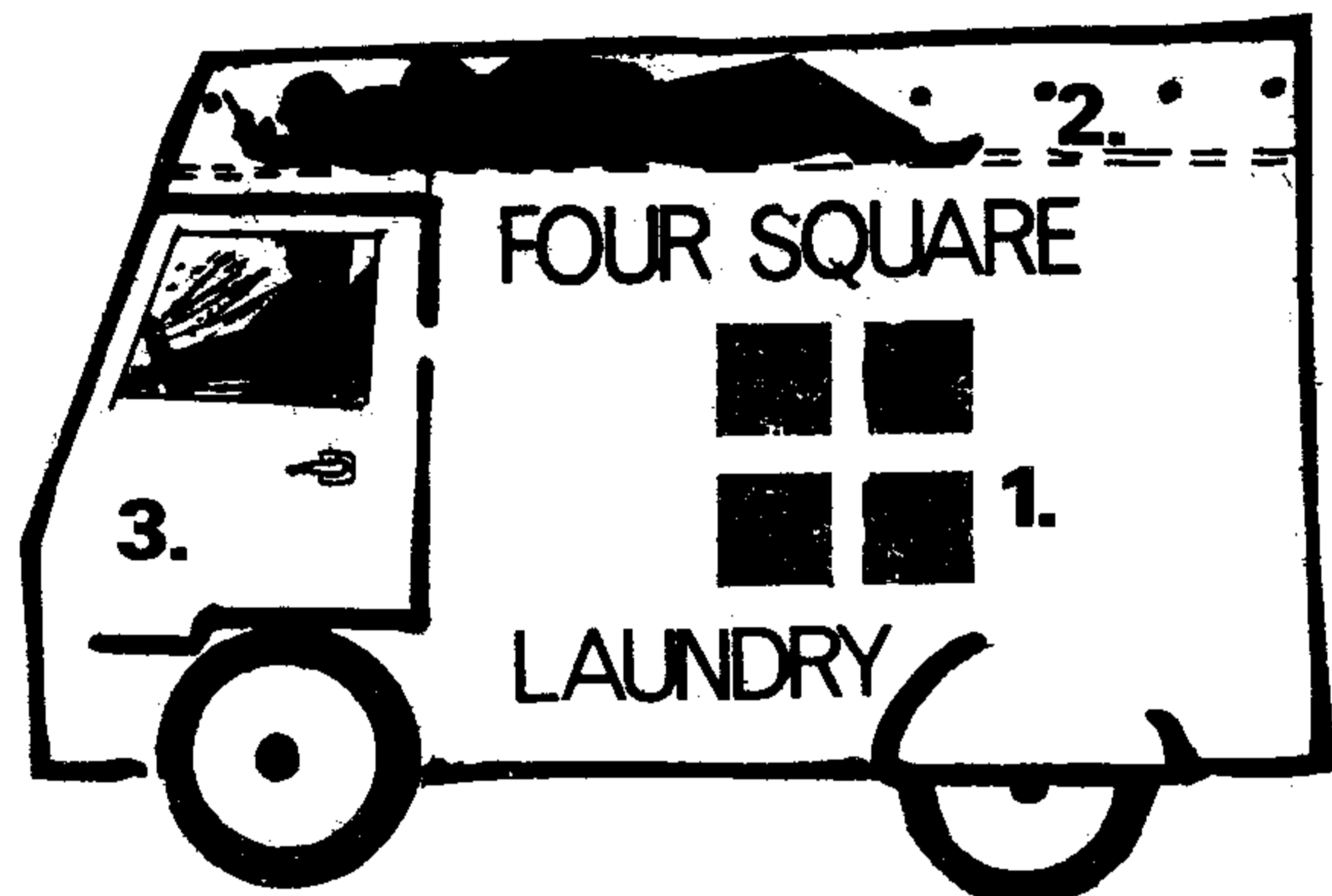
The National Ports Shop Stewards Committee is concentrating on four of the nine points of its dockers' charter. But even though Jones-Aldington made concessions on all those four points, the 5000 jobs have gone. If the NPSSC is to single out points to concentrate on, the crucial demand is one of the five points at present left in abeyance - the 30-hour week. It is the demand necessary to launch a counter-offensive.

TOM RAMSEY.



THE GREAT THRESHOLD AGREEMENT

From AN PHOBLACHT, paper of the PROVISIONAL IRA



1. 'Four Square Laundry' was the cover for the MRF spy network
2. Secret compartment built into 'Laundry' van. Camouflaged peepholes were bored in compartment sides. Two MRF agents hidden in secret compartment opened fire on the IRA unit which executed Stuart and were killed in return fire.
3. MRF agent T. Stuart was driver of bogus laundry van.

S.A.S. MURDER SQUADS SHOT BY I.R.A

BY AUSTIN MORGAN

AT 11 a.m. ON MONDAY 2nd. October in the Catholic Twinbrook estate on the outskirts of Belfast the driver of a "Four Square" laundry van was killed by gunmen from a following car.

These bare facts were shortly afterwards reported on a BBC news bulletin. The impression was given, that it was 'another IRA killing — part of the terrorist campaign'.

It was only when journalists attempted to contact the "Four Square" laundry and found that no such business existed in Belfast, that the real story began to emerge.

The van driver, the British army then admitted, was a soldier, a member of the Royal Engineers. He was, along with a female companion a member of an army "non aggressive" surveillance group. This van had operated in the area for several months. Clothing taken away was checked for traces of arms handled and fired and then returned, having been cleaned.

In this way the Army was able to observe closely the local houses and residents, and build up a profile of the local IRA units.

The Provisional IRA, who carried out the execution, later claimed that they had killed five soldiers in all — two others who had been hidden in the roof space of the van from where they could observe unseen, and a man and woman in a private flat in the Antrim Road area.

Local journalists have produced much circumstantial evidence to substantiate this claim.

According to Provisional Coun-

ter Intelligence, the five executed soldiers were members of an MRF unit, which is attached to the notorious undercover 22nd SPECIAL AIR SERVICES (SAS) Regiment.

PEACEKEEPING?

The Army has repeatedly claimed that this regiment is not based in Northern Ireland. Many so called 'mysterious' and 'unexplained' incidents which have occurred here over recent months, however, bear all the hallmarks of the SAS.

This Regiment, who HQ is at Bradbury Lines Camp in Hereford, was well known to have engaged in similar 'counter terrorist' activities in Aden, Cyprus and Kenya.

The activities of these British Army murder gangs gives the lie (if that is still necessary) to the carefully fostered notion that the British Army is in Ireland to protect civilians and 'keep the peace'.

SAS-type activities have been in fact regularly reported. Several bombings, such as McGurk's Bar and the Abercorn Restaurant, where no warnings, are likely to have been SAS jobs. The IRA claimed it was not responsible for these bombings, and they are believed by many including those politically opposed to them, who nevertheless have experience of how the IRA traditionally operates. It is the policy of the IRA to admit to all operations they carry out, even when they go tragically wrong as at Aldershot.

British Army undercover groups are known to have been responsible not only for bombings but also individual killings.

UNMARKED VAN

Recently in Leeson Street in the Falls an unmarked van opened fire on some local residents. The van was later seen returning to an Army post in the grounds of

the Royal Victoria Hospital.

A couple of weeks back, 18 year old Daniel Rooney was murdered and Brendan Brennan wounded at Broadway in the Falls when they were shot at from a similar van as they stood talking at a street corner. The Army later admitted that this was one of their patrols.

Several months ago a car was stopped by vigilantes in the Bawnmore estate on the Shore Road. The occupants, in plain clothes, claimed they were British soldiers, and one who was detained by the vigilantes stated clearly that he was a member of the SAS stationed at Hollywood outside Belfast. These soldiers had to be rescued by an Army patrol.

More alarming has been the spate of so called 'motiveless' or 'sectarian' murders, now numbering some 70 or 80, which have taken place since Direct Rule last March.

The rate has further increased since the No Go Areas in Belfast were taken over by the Army.

The RUC has been noticeably reluctant even to acknowledge that many of these murders have taken place.

Some of these have undoubtedly been executions by the IRA of informers and police and army agents. Others have been carried out and admitted to by the UVF and other Protestant freelance murder gangs.

But most of the victims, both Catholic and Protestant, have been innocent people in no way connected with political or military organisations.

The SAS does not murder and bomb in order to exact revenge on the people who have sheltered and supported the IRA, which is responsible for so many army casualties. The SAS is a highly trained and disciplined part of the British Army — an army which can shoot at innocent civilians from unmarked

In June this year the following account of one of the actions taken by the S.A.S. in Belfast was published in An Phoblacht.

"But not alone is there danger from groups such as the U.V.F., there are also British assassination squads in action in the North. Incidents here and there and bits of information picked up, when compiled, point to this being a definite fact. One of the most recent incidents which illustrate the existence of such specialist squads happened on the same day that Sean McConville and Joe McCann were shot dead.

Two brothers, Gerard and John Conway were shot in the legs in Whiterock Gardens, Belfast. A man and his wife awakened by the shooting, rushed to the window.

As the wife pulled on some clothes, the husband heard a man shouting: "Help me, I'm shot," and he saw a man staggering and crouching on the road holding a coat in front of him.

When the wife ran out to help him, the husband saw a gunman with a heavy pistol in his right hand, crouching at a hedge. He was wearing a blue pullover, jeans and suede shoes. As the woman came on to the street, the man approached her and ordered her at gunpoint to get back inside.

The husband shouted: "For God's sake come in, or you'll get shot." Just then, an army Saracen came down the street and to the man's amazement, he saw the gunman running towards it, waving the gun in his right hand and gesticulating with his left.

His first thought, that the man was going to try to shoot the soldiers, was quickly dispelled when he saw the gunman talking on friendly terms to the soldiers in the Saracen, as if they all knew each other very well.

Then another gunman appeared and a red-haired soldier, who appeared to be an officer, got out of the Saracen and began arguing with him. The second gunman was dressed in a fawn pullover with beige slacks and spoke with an English accent.

"You bloody so-and-so, you shot the wrong man. That's not him at all," the soldier shouted. The other soldiers put the wounded man into the back of the vehicle and drove off leaving the two gunmen behind.

A few minutes later two army foot patrols arrived and took up positions on each side of the street, five on each side. The two gunmen strolled down to a blue/green BMC 1100, got in and drove off. The witness noted the number of the car."

Whitelaw puts the seal of 'peace' on terror



cars one day, and put on concerts for old people the next.

'COUNTER TERROR'

The army are employing what they call 'counter terrorist' techniques. The IRA, largely an urban guerilla organisation, has not been defeated by orthodox military strategy. They are therefore trying to get the residents of the Republican areas of the North to do the job for them.

The IRA will only be defeated when Catholic workers and their families stop supporting actively and passively the volunteers of the Official and Provisional IRA. With the 'motiveless' murders the Army is attempting to instil such a sense of fear into those who oppose imperialism in Ireland that they will give up the fight.

The Republican population has rejected the apparatus of the Northern State and continues to resist any attempt at reconstituting it, even in a modified form. It is this situation that the British Army is trying to bring to an end. And to accomplish this it is, under its political masters Heath and Whitelaw, engaging in a campaign of terror against those areas resisting British control.

Tory overlord Whitelaw remained noticeably silent on the series of 'motiveless' murders until very recently. In a statement he said that such incidents would 'only end when people living in working class areas of the city gave information to the army about those holding arms and explosives.'

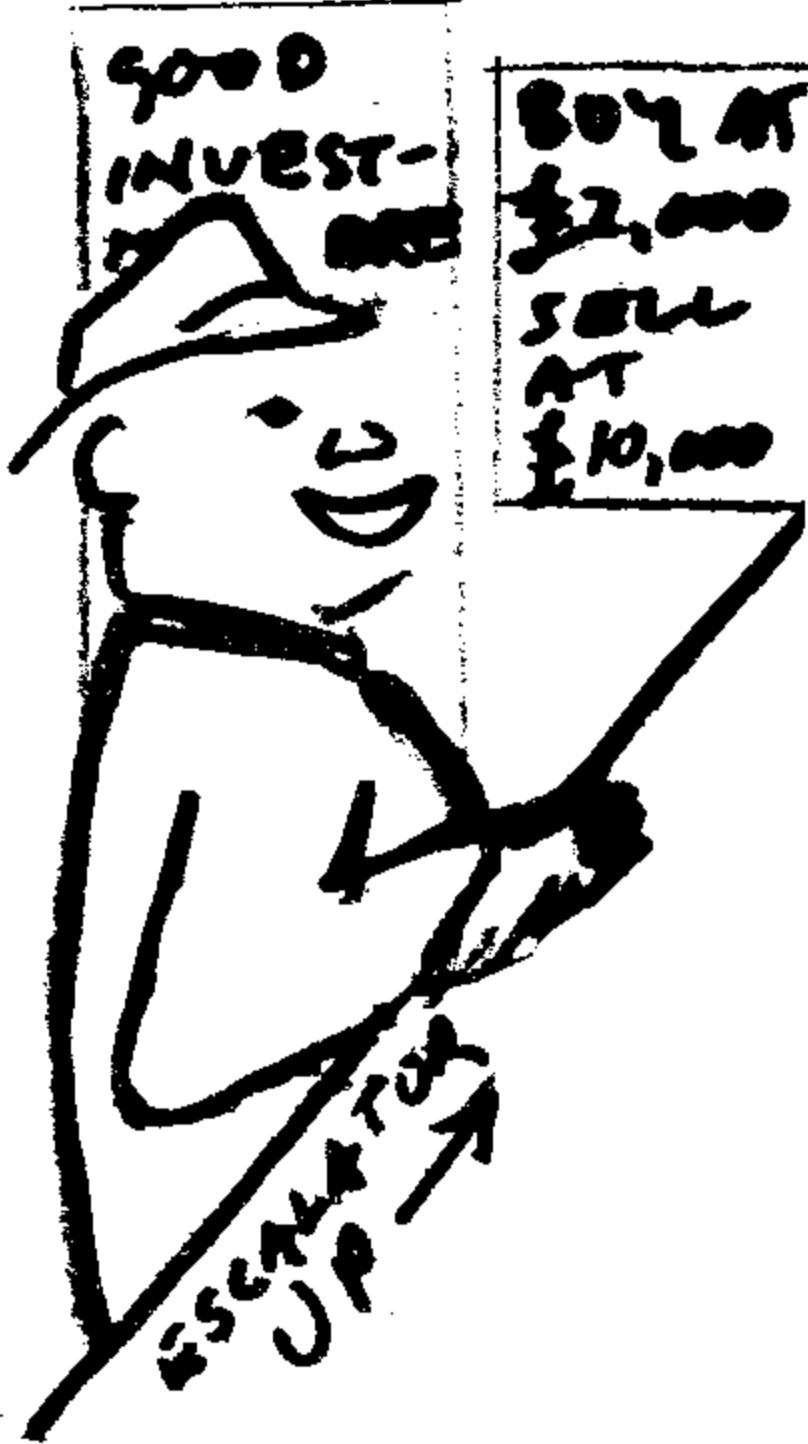
His game is quite clear — it is simply cold-blooded blackmail. He is saying that every civilian will be a potential target for army undercover agents until such time as the Catholics of Northern Ireland give up their resistance campaign and surrender their weapons to the army.

TENANTS OR
OWNER OCCUPIERS:

'IT'S THE POOR WOT GETS THE BLAME

TAX
RELIEF
FOR
OWNER
OCCUPIERS

INVEST
IN A
HOUSE
AND BE
PROTECTED
AGAINST
INFLATION



Soaring prices are a comfort to no-one. Or are they? Surely they are a comfort to the seller, or the owner of the object to be sold.

Sky high house prices are therefore not a plague to the owner-occupier (after all he's making money on his property) but only to the council or private tenant who wants to buy a house and become an owner occupier.

The fact that so many tenants wish for the status of owner occupier is not because of the reason usually given, that "it's natural for people to want their own property". It is because, to quote ex-President of the Board of Trade, Labour MP Douglas Jay - writing recently in the Financial Times - "Unthinkingly and unintentionally we have created a situation in which nobody who could afford to be an owner occupier would wish to be a tenant. The contrast between the situation of the tenant and the owner-occupier has become socially indefensible."

Whether this situation occurred "unthinkingly" or "unintentionally" is open to dispute, to say the least. What will not wash, though, is to say that "we have created a situation". Have the readers of this paper "created a situation"? Of course not! There's no "we" in it - unless Jay means successive Lab-

our and Tory government. If Jay wants to refer to Labour and Tory together as "we", that's his business.

But, aside from such sidestepping of Labour's record by including all and sundry in his "we", Jay makes some valuable points. He goes on: "Consider the concessions heaped on the owner occupier. First, Schedule A income tax was abolished. A tax on property considered right and just by the younger Pitt, Peel, Gladstone, Harcourt, Asquith, Baldwin, two Chamberlains and Stafford Cripps was ... removed as too harsh in the 1960s. Secondly, and most lavish of all, full income tax and surtax relief is granted for mortgage interest without any maximum - a sweeping concession in the present age of high interest rates."

And the bigger the mortgage (i.e., the richer the buyer and more lavish his property) the more is handed back in tax relief.

CAPITAL GAIN - NO TAX

Of course this is by no means the whole story, because after paying out that subsidised mortgage, the owner-occupier has got a house. In other words he has gained capital (in the business sense of the word) which he can later sell for even more than he paid out. In all this he is the recipient of profits on the deal - and these profits are wholly free of capital gains tax.

But that's not all. If the owner occupier wishes to improve his property - and thereby improve his profit prospects if he sells the property - he actually gets an improvement grant.

Thus the owner-occupier is helped to buy a property out of public funds, he is then helped to improve the property out of public funds, and then is allowed to sell the property for profit without contributing

(through tax) to public funds.

The immensity of discrimination against tenants becomes clear when you realise that only in a very few cases (involving registered disabled persons in extreme difficulties, if they can pester the authorities long and hard enough) can council tenants get any kind of improvement done on "their" homes - not to speak of actually profiting from such a development.

If it ended there the tale would be bad enough. But it doesn't. We have still not included in the extent of this discrimination the question of inflation. The owner-occupier is not only helped to make a profit, he is thereby helped to evade the problem of falling money values.

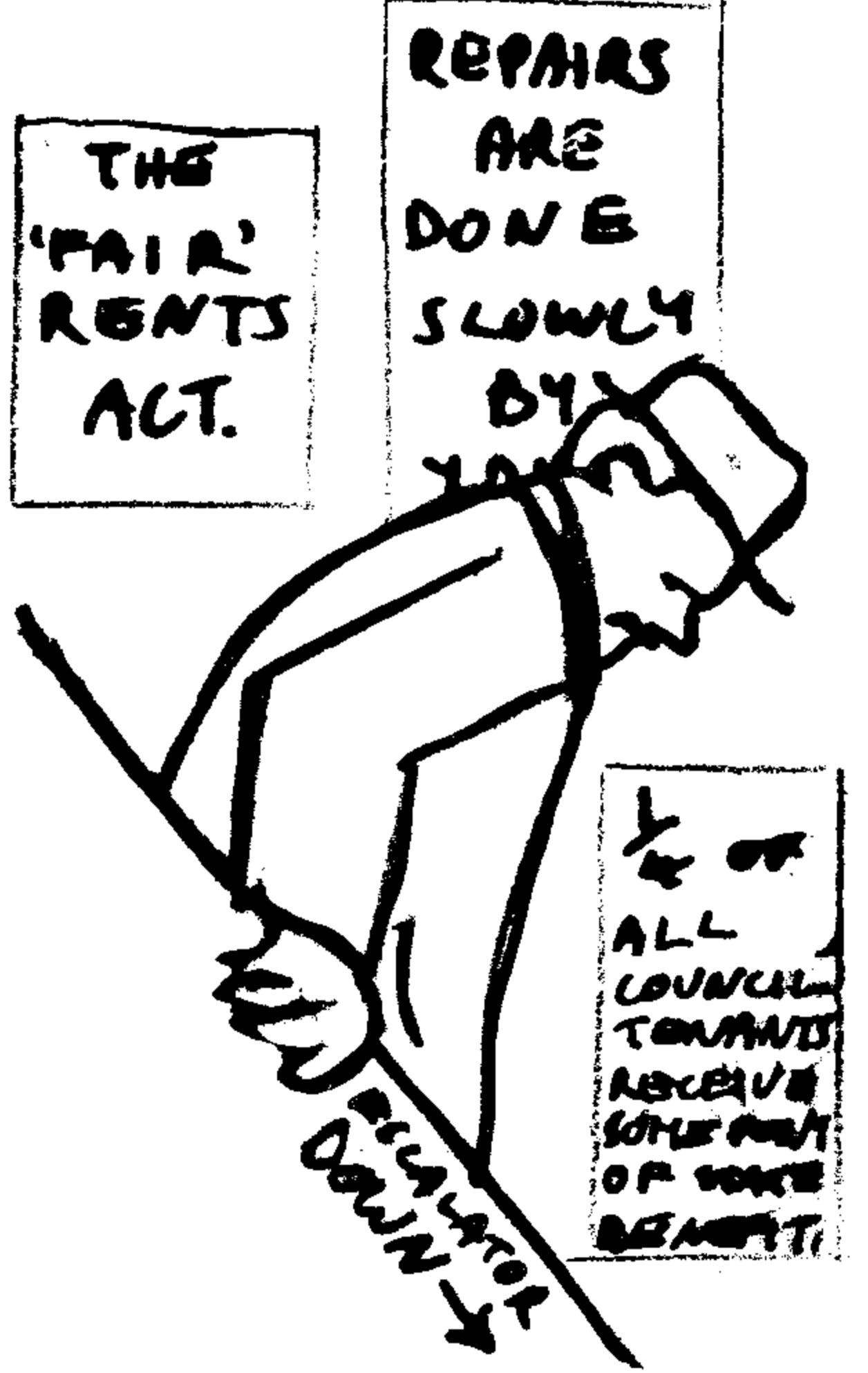
And the tenant? As far as he is concerned, it is just a case of falling money values (ie his wages can buy less and less) and rising rents (i.e. his actual freely disposable income is less).

SUBSIDIES

Just in case anyone thinks that the amount of tax relief on mortgage interest doesn't amount to much, just consider: the £300 million a year paid out under this heading roughly equals the total housing subsidies, and it vastly exceeds the housing subsidies that come from the Exchequer. So bang goes the myth of the "subsidised" council tenant.

And when you remember that insult was added to injury recently when tax relief on all overdraft interest was restored (not just on mortgage interest), the sheer brazenness of the ruling class defies description.

The usual smooth-tongued reply to criticism on this score is that this tax relief should be allowed because it is a recognition of the merit of saving. This is downright rubbish. First of all, if concessions



are to be made, then they should be to those not rich enough to have anything left over to save..

second, in many cases no saving takes place at all (e.g. the 'interest only' mortgages). All that is necessary to qualify for this handout is that one has to be able to borrow. And that is hardly the same as saving - it is, in fact, the opposite!

Some owner-occupiers are workers. But these aren't the people whom this regulation is chiefly meant to help. If that was the idea, why not use that £300 million to provide an abundance of good, cheap housing to rent, thus incidentally also removing the demand for privately-owned housing and knocking the bottom out of the boom?

But that's rather a different story from the present, where tenants are victims of rent increases, of inflation, of monstrous bureaucracy and of a pernicious discrimination that has increased with every successive government.

Bas Hardy writes on

THE SCANDAL OF CHAUCER HOUSE

"... all the agencies of a rotten system determined to condemn them to such a miserable, sub-human existence ..."

Isolated, living in fear at night like caged animals, they wait to be rehoused. They smell the stinking drains and garbage strewn across the courtyard. The dustmen don't come and the Council has not provided them with their regular quote of disinfectant. The only drains which have been disinfected are those outside the rent office.

A month has passed since the television documentary "The Block" was screened. The subject of the film, Southwark's half-way house for homeless families, called Chaucer House, still has people living in it.

The council promised to rehouse the tenants by March 1970. This wasn't done. They issued similar promises in April 1971 and April 1972, both proving to be as empty as the first one. The headline in the local right-wing press early this year, 'April Fool Chaucer Tenants', evoked anger from two years of frustrated hopes and aspirations. The barricades went up!

From morning to early afternoon the occupants of Chaucer, 87 families in all, demanded the right to a decent home. Despised, degraded, caught in the so-called 'Inner London poverty trap', they shouted at the tops of their voices against the Council, police, Social Security, property speculators, employers - in short, all the agencies of a rotten system determined to condemn them to such a miserable, sub-human existence.

The police who had removed the barricades turned up on the following day with two bailiffs and a council official to carry out an eviction. They were met with the cry from 40 tenants "How can you evict someone who is homeless?". Outnumbered by more than four to one the police failed to carry out the order.

Frank Partinston, whose wife was pregnant and apoplectic, had to try living on Social Security

hand-outs. He was caught by the police attempting to break into a food shop. If a Chaucer tenant does resort to crime, then it is as an act of desperation in order that he and his family may live.

"Chaucer House always gets the blame" said John Richies, who was at that time chairman of the tenants association. "If ever there was a break-in in the vicinity, you could guarantee that someone from Chaucer would be picked up for questioning."

Apart from the obvious presence of the police on "The Block", there are less obvious, but equally unwelcome, visitors. These are the Social Security spies. Social Security special investigators have, they claim with the special permission of Southwark's housing department, spied into the sex lives of Chaucer House tenants from unoccupied flats.

This practice has now ended, having, during its entire period of operation, managed to prove just one 'case' of cohabitation. Rather than providing a sum of money to claimants to ensure that they can at least live a life which embodies some form of human decency, the Social Security employ such obscene sleuths, paid five times as much as those whose pittance they are out to remove.

Trade Unionists in the Common Market are at last beginning to organise against the plant closures and redundancies following on takeovers.

The most notable victory so far has been achieved by workers in the Akzo combine — the Dutch chemicals and synthetic fibres manufacturers. The firm planned to close five plants in three countries, sacking 5000 workers.

Immediately 850 workers at the Enka-Glanzstoff plant in West Germany sat-in in protest, and were joined by workers at the Breda plant (Holland) and Wuppertal-Barmen plant (West Germany).

Now Akzo have withdrawn their restructuring scheme because of "opposition". A Common Market "independent inquiry" into the affair strongly criticised the "social implications of closures" and demanded that the workers' interests be put first.

There is no doubt that this conclusion came as a result of the militant, uncompromising stand of the Akzo workers — and will be used by other workers as a lever against the multi-national giants. The 'Financial Times' looked on the development with great alarm and called the inquiry report a capitulation to "modern Luddism".

Since the Akzo affair, workers from Zanussi Electro-domestici (Italy), Europe's largest domestic and electrical appliance manufacturer, have visited West Germany for talks with workers from AEG-Telefunken (based in Frankfurt) which is rumoured to be ready to

From The Militant, weekly paper of the US Socialist Workers Party

E.E.C. WORKERS LEARN FROM AKZO INTERNATIONAL SIT-IN



take over Zanussi.

Zanussi lost nearly 19000 m lire (£12 m) last year and is heading for more this year. Since 1964 AEG Telefunken has taken appliances from Zanussi for sale under its own label and now owns over 25% of Zanussi's shares. With 30000 workers on its books, Zanussi is second only to Fiat in Italy's engineering league and once again closures and sackings are sure to be planned.

All of Italy's electrical appliance firms, once pacemakers for the economy, are now in a mess. Philco Ford Italiana has been sold by its US owners to Robert Bosch (West Germany) and Ignis has sold out to Philips (Holland). Clearly Italian workers are worried and are determined that Zanussi — AEG Telefunken will be another Akzo.

These actions of international trade union solidarity are a hun-

dred times more relevant to the real working class issues raised by the Common Market than the cries of 'get Britain out' which dominated the Labour Party Conference. Our interest lies not in trying to prevent international mergers and takeovers (as if small British businesses never exploit anyone or make anyone redundant!) but in combatting the employers' international cooperation with workers' international cooperation.



Workers at Schirmeck in Strasbourg, where in March the announcement of 150 redundancies was met with a sit-in strike.

Black activist faces frame-up

By HARRY RING

LOS ANGELES — The trial of Black activist Gary Lawton and two codefendants, charged with murdering two policemen, is now under way in the desert town of Indio, about 120 miles from here. The initial legal moves reinforced the fears of the defendants that the court is in league with the prosecution to railroad them to prison on trumped-up charges.

The two cops were shot in ambush in April 1970 in the town of Riverside, some 50 miles from here. Shortly afterward, Lawton, a leading activist in Riverside's Black community, was charged with the killing. Then two youths whom he did not even know, Larrie Gardner and Nehemiah Jackson, were charged with conspiring with Lawton to commit the killing. All three insist on their innocence.

Lawton first came to prominence in Riverside at the time of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. Lawton proposed to the city council that the public library be renamed after Dr. King as a memorial to the slain rights leader. His proposal infuriated the racists who dominate town politics, and the local daily has been running a campaign of smear and slander against Lawton ever since.

When Lawton emerged as the principle leader in a series of community struggles, the racist campaign against him intensified.

The night the cops were shot, Lawton was one of many Blacks stopped and searched by police. While holding him, they radioed headquarters and then released him because he did not match in any way the description offered by area residents of those they saw fleeing the

scene of the shooting.

The witnesses reported seeing several youthful Blacks with naturals and white teen-agers. (A later police version changed this to all Blacks.) Lawton is in his thirties, partially bald, and at the time weighed 200 pounds.

Several days later police came to his home and took him to headquarters.



Militant/Harry Ring

Chukia Lawton, whose husband faces murder charge, describes racist frame-up at Sept. 8 meeting of Los Angeles Militant Labor Forum.

He voluntarily submitted to a lie-detector test. The test verified the truth of his insistence that he knew nothing of the shooting. The cops decided the machine must not be working and tried him again on another one. He passed that test and a third one as well.

Yet shortly afterward he was indicted on the word of two Black youths, one of whom is reportedly a police informer, the other, a narcotics addict. They asserted that they had previously sold Lawton a gun found at the scene of the shooting.

The police also claimed that Lawton's voice print matches that of a tape recording of the telephone voice that lured the two cops to the ambush.

Nehemiah Jackson and Larrie Gardner were later indicted on the word of a 14-year-old white woman who had had personal relations with Gardner. She has told at least three different stories to officials. The latest, to a grand jury, was that she had actually witnessed the shooting.

The trial was moved to Indio, a small, date-growing community, on the grounds of alleged "security." The three are being held without bail. Lawton was originally denied bail because California law permitted this when a person faced a possible death penalty. When the state courts struck down the death penalty, the judge found some fine print in the law providing denial of bail in an "horrendous" crime.

Ironically, in the very next courtroom to the one in which Lawton and his codefendants are being tried, a policeman is on trial for killing a Chicano while off-duty. Witnesses allege that he shot the defenseless man in cold blood. He is being charged only with manslaughter and is free on \$5,000 bail.

When the trial of Lawton, Jackson, and Gardner opened, the defense moved for a change of venue on the grounds that the defendants could not obtain a trial by their peers in largely

white Indio. They cited the fact that the panel from which the jury is to be drawn is highly unrepresentative in terms of Blacks, Chicanos, and youth.

They also moved to repress as evidence a notebook police seized illegally from Gardner's home during a search made without a warrant.

All defense motions were denied by the presiding judge, Warren Slaughter.

Another move by Slaughter provided an ominous indication of how he will function during the trial. Ten days prior to a Sept. 15 court session, the defense advised him they would have in court that day several expert witnesses to testify on the validity of the lie-detector tests administered to Lawton and why the results should be weighed as evidence. The day these witnesses were brought to court — at substantial expense to the defense — Judge Slaughter announced he would consider the matter at another date.

This added to the tremendous financial difficulties faced by the defense. The defense staff is functioning on virtually no money and the defense attorneys, David Epstein and John Mitchell, are meeting essential legal costs with borrowed funds.

Contributions to fight this frame-up are desperately needed and should be sent to the Gary Lawton Defense Committee, P. O. Box 5154, San Bernardino, Calif. 92412.

Defense committee speakers are available to appear at meetings and fund-raising affairs. For information about speakers or literature on the case, phone (714) 684-8131.

The trial is being held in the Indio Court House.

INTERVIEW:

Geordie Barclay (on the extreme right of the photograph) is a member of the Stanton Action Group, and a G&MWU steward in the steelworks. He is also a supporter of the rank-and-file steelworkers' paper Real Steel News.

Workers' Fight: The fight against redundancies is obviously important for Stanton, but do you see it as having any meaning for workers elsewhere in the steel industry?

Geordie Barclay: I think so. Apart from the local employment problems the real point is that to defeat the BSC's policy of shut-down the fight needs to be waged nationally — throughout the industry.

The trouble is that every area seems to be waiting for someone else to give the lead. That was the trouble at the NCCC (National Craft Co-ordinating Committee) Conference at Motherwell, it was a case of "after you".

WF: But isn't that because although there are conferences like the Motherwell one, there is no rank and file co-ordinating body and no united policy for fighting?

GB: Yes, as I said just now, the fight needs to be carried out on a nationwide scale. What we really need is a National Shop Stewards Committee — after all it's a question of solidarity in action the same as the dockers. We're losing jobs which are being replaced by a different type of job at lower pay.

What we ought to be demanding is a 30 hour week with no loss of pay. If necessary worksharing — but there again there should be a minimum wage that would not mean a loss of pay. I think earlier retirement at, say, 60 with a progressive pension and a lump sum might help, but we'd have to beware of a sell-out on that one!

WF: What sell-out do you mean?

GB: Well, there are two obvious ones. First of all they could make sure that they made the older workers redundant and gave them money but didn't replace them. Now that'd be bad because although those men would not be on the dole we'd still be that many short on the job. In other words the so-called rationalisation would have gone through all the same. Unemployment for the next generation would simply be disguised as early retirement for the previous generation.

The other sell-out they try to work is on the pensions side. Because of the miserable level of pensions early retirement could mean not only a cut in jobs but also a cut in pay five years early.

But still I think retirement at 60 is a good idea. It is just that that demand has to be supplemented by demanding no cuts in establishment so that there are always the same number of jobs going and pensions at the level of the minimum wage.

WF: There's a lot of talk in Stanton, I believe, about calling for an inquiry by the BSC into the Stanton closure. What's your attitude to that?

GB: That's more complicated. You see even this Tory MP has been saying that he fully supports us until the Corporation can prove that Stanton isn't economically viable. See, his game is this: he says that he supports the workers until he can see the working party report on Stanton in the hope he will be refused it. That way he really avoids taking a stand. Of course you don't expect any better from the likes of him. Anyway what this shows is that the BSC's inquiry into Stanton has been the focus of attention, instead of

rank and file action.

At the same time the Labour MPs like Fletcher and Skinner are trying to ride two horses at once. They say that they're trying to get the Stanton decision reversed and at the same time they're trying to get us made into a grey spot or a black spot or something.

This way if Stanton stays open they claim it as their success, and if it doesn't and we get this special status they will claim that as their success.

WF: In other words both the Tories and Labour are calling for an inquiry and saying that the BSC should "open the books".

GB: That's it. But the danger with "open the books" is that they can make their figures say what they want. It's all right if "open the books" means that we can look at their goings on because the inquiry always means that they look at our goings on.

If there are redundancies at Stanton it is them that we should be investigating. The other trouble is that lots of people think that if there's an inquiry we have got to accept their figures and what they want — more profit. But that's not it. Where the BSC say they are going to close down plants they should be made to redevelop the site rather than "hiving off" to private enterprise.

We should demand that they maintain employment as their responsibility.

WF: What do you think of the BSC's employee-director system?

GB: a sheer waste of time. It gives us, the shop floor, no real say or power in the industry. Employee-directors themselves don't seem to me to represent the shop floor. Very few appear even to work on it!

There's no real democratic links. One of them can attend a Joint Consultative Committee but he only reports back to his own union branch. At Stanton that means only 500 out of 6000 are entitled to hear it.

Some of the lads see the employee-director scheme as a confidence trick to allow massive redundancies to go through smoothly without opposition.

WF: Where have the Union leadership been while you've been fighting against these redundancies?

GB: They've been so busy trying to help management make the industry "healthy" whatever that means, that they've been prepared to sacrifice thousands and thousands of their members in the interests of profits. They've forgotten who put them where they are and who pays their wages — sorry, I should have said fat salaries!

I'll give you an example. As you know the work from Stanton is planned to go to Workington. Now Hector Smith of the NUB (National Union of Blatfurnacemen) spoke to his Stanton members and he told them he couldn't lead their fight as he also had members at Workington!

We said all along that our fight was not with the lads at Workington but with BSC. Smith of course doesn't want to know that. He prefers to use what he said as an excuse to do nothing.

Then he tried to cover himself by saying that he would get his

members the same redundancy pay as the dockers. That hasn't materialised of course — but he did keep his promise to do nothing.

WF: If he's doing nothing, what are the workers at Stanton going to do? There has been a definite lull recently hasn't there. Does that mean the struggle might be over?

GB: No, certainly not. In fact the Action Group's meeting on Monday. But the real crunch will come next July when the majority will realise that they have no alternative job to go to. Any work provided on the industrial Estate which isn't even built will probably be in light engineering for very low wages. And in any case these industries are capital intensive and so they won't employ many. When that happens there'll really be a fight on and that's a fight we are going to win. We've got to and we're going to.

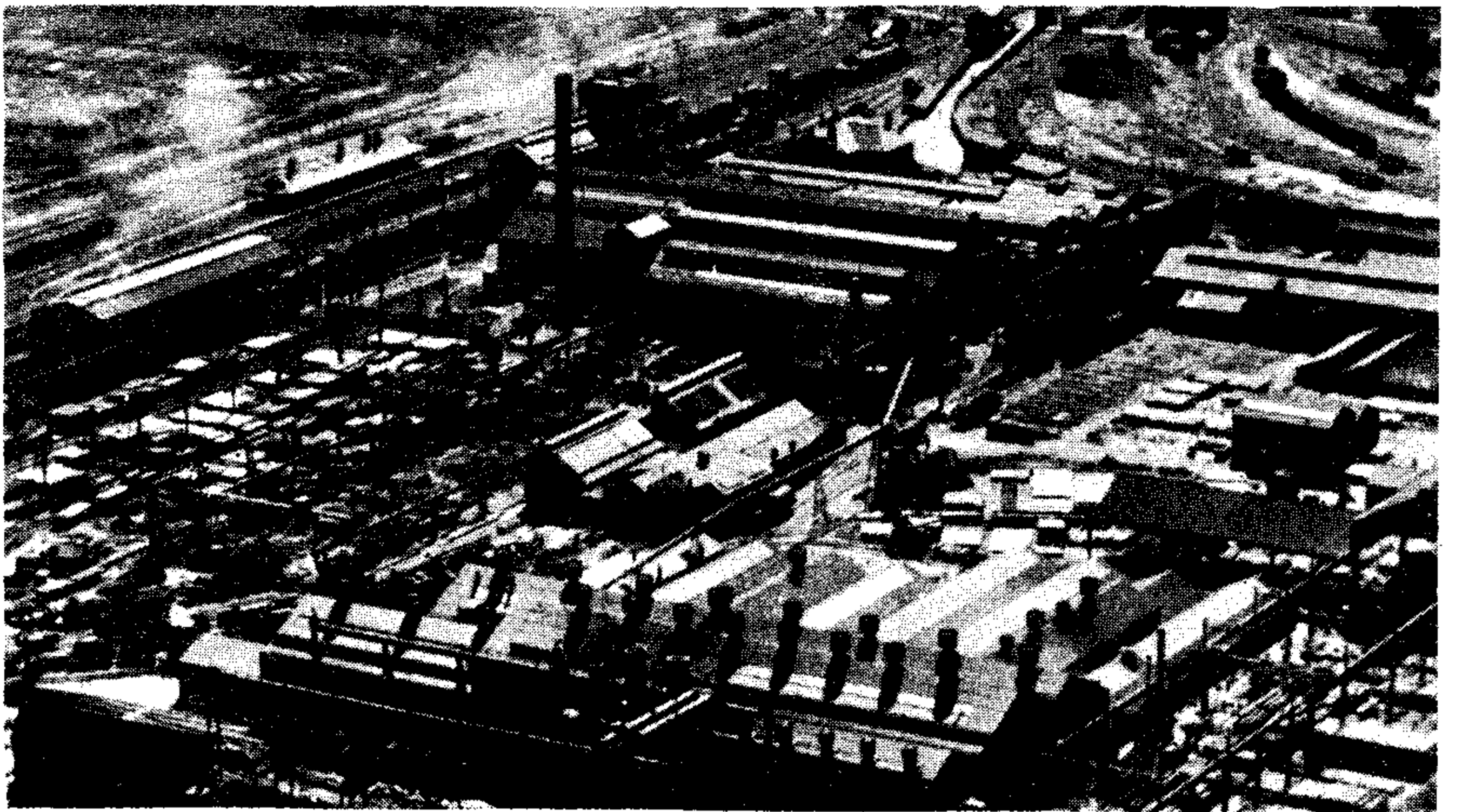
Workers from Stanton at a recent lobby of 'Steel House', the BSC's headquarters in London. Although they quite correctly said "No War on Workington" (where the iron-works were being transferred) they were asking for an inquiry.

Stalling with the inquiry proposal was just then one of the tactics BSC could use in playing down the struggle. Also, the "inquiry" issue provided an all-party bandwagon for local MPs.

The inquiry demand shows more than anything else that the mass of the Stanton workers were not yet willing to say that the state (through the BSC) should take responsibility for keeping them in a job whether it is viable or not.

Any "inquiry" if there were one should have been an inquiry into the collusion of BSC with private industry — in other words an inquiry by Stanton workers into BSC, not by BSC into Stanton.

HOW THE WORKERS ARE FIGHTING TO STOP THE STEEL CORPORATION FROM SACKING



THE SECOND-TIME SACKINGS

WORKERS' FIGHT spoke to one of the workers threatened with redundancy, David Jenkins.

He told us of the situation of many of the workers at Stanton who are faced with the prospect of joblessness for a second time. Many of the Stanton men, he said, were over 40 and had come from other places where they had been made redundant. The main forces of Stanton's "redeployed" labour seem to be the pits round Ilkeston, Staveley near Chesterfield (where the pig-iron and pipe plants closed) Holwell in Derbyshire (where iron-making has now

ceased), Cochrane's of Middlesbrough (picture above) and the iron-making plant at Riddings near Alfreton.

"Ninety per cent of the foundry" said David Jenkins, "is made up of ex-Riddings men."

In this lies an important lesson. The experience of going down without a fight before is bound to leave a mark on Stanton workers who are up for 're-redundancy'.

The task of the Action Committee must set itself is that of spreading the lessons of struggles against job loss which have been successful — Plessey, Fisher Bendix, UCS.

read Real Steel News

Order from 3, Heather Close, Stockton on Tees



EUGENE V. DEBS, VOICE OF THE OTHER AMERICA

A FEW WEEKS FROM NOW THE US electorate goes to the polls to decide which candidate of the boss class will be President of the USA. And after that the sub-theatrical ballyhoo of the US political circus will subside for another 4 years. US elections are indeed an almost pure brand of show business, with money buying the all-important 'glamour', money buying 'good' speechwriters and their rhetoric, money buying 'brainstrusts' to produce 'plausible' well tailored consensus politics, and money buying TV time for advertisers to sell the "package".

All in all the result is a 'creation' put together in the manner of a Broadway musical. The only firm element is the drive for power of the candidate and his backers, and the fact that the hard reality of capitalist rule is never questioned or placed in jeopardy.

Thus are born politicians like the Kennedys — by money out of Madison Avenue, with Hollywood as Godfather. And the Nixons and McGovern's try to fit themselves into the mould, posturing and grimacing on the stage, espousing causes they don't care about, saying what will please in hypocritical words that usually aren't even their own.

The disgusting antics of these political whores appear to be the whole of American politics. They are not. They are merely the politics of the dominant American bosses.

THE OTHER AMERICA

There is another America — that of the working people — which has had, and still has, its own politics: the politics of socialism and the working class struggle against capitalism. Eclipsed for two and more decades, it nonetheless exists and is now reviving because its roots are dug deep, and the corruption and decay of American society constantly testifies against the capitalist system.

A book published recently allows us to hear the authentic voice of American socialism in the words of one of the greatest revolutionary socialists America has so far produced: Eugene V. Debs.

Debs was five times the candidate of the Socialist Party for US President, the last time, in 1920, while serving a savage 10 year jail sentence imposed on him when he was already an old man, because he had made a speech opposing the First World War.

Socialism then, ably and nobly personified by Debs, received

nearly one million votes — the highest vote ever for any sort of socialism in the USA. And there was nothing tepid about Debs' socialism. He stood for the most militant class struggle of the working class, industrial and political, and stood openly under the banner of the socialist revolution.

Debs was one of the greatest socialist agitators in the English speaking world, an untiring fighter for the socialist revolution, propagator of industrial unionism and friend-at-first-sight of the Bolshevik revolution.

EARLY YEARS

Debs was born on November 5th 1855 in Terre Haute, Indiana. At the age of fourteen he dropped out of high school and went to work in a railway paint shop.

In 1875 he joined the "Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen" at its organising meeting. He was straight away made secretary of the Terre Haute branch.

Debs was to remain active in the trade union movement as an officer, organiser, editor and strike leader — officially and unofficially — for some thirty years.

Then in 1905 he helped organise the "Industrial Workers of the World" (IWW — often known as the "Wobblies".)

But if Debs was schooled in the class struggle, he was in particular a graduate of the prison system. It was in Woodstock jail that he first came in contact with socialist ideas while serving a term of imprisonment for being a strike leader.

The times in which Debs delivered the message he had learned were very different in some ways from today. American capitalism was still expanding inside its own territory up to the beginning of this century, transforming the country at a tremendous pace.

Immigrants were still flooding in — but there was only a very small stable working class. The internal conquest of the country, the extermination of the Indian peoples, the ceaseless opening up of new lands had meant that very many immigrants could become their own masters, get hold of land or engage in trade. Their period as workers was usually transitional.

The trade union movement was consequently tiny and organised only the skilled craft (i.e. permanent) workers in conservative and hidebound unions. An attempt to organise a union for all workers, the Knights of Labour ("The Molly Maguires") was smashed in the 1880s, and the American Federation of Labour which succeeded it had been built on an entirely different philosophy, of 'Business Unionism'.

This was narrow, craft-centred and without an inkling of understanding of the class wide, above-class interests of the whole working class.

Politically the working class was amalgamated within the populist movement of small farmers and "small people" generally which swept America in the latter part of the 19th century, and echoes of which continued even into the '30s and '40s and characterise many of the films of that period. The populist tendencies were incoherent revolts against the growing domination of the great capitalist monopolies. They revolted in the name of democratic control by "the people". But they were impotent because "the people" were still largely an indifferentiated mass, with the modern industrial working class only just crystallising out of it.

There was tremendous ideological confusion (usually the populist upsurge would be gripped by a belief in some panacea for all ills, as for example the proposal to make silver equal to gold as a money standard — 'bi-metallism'). Marxism, imported from Europe, shrivelled into sectarian impotence in the social crucible that was late 19th century America. Continued p.11



THE RED SPECIAL: Debs leans out window; man standing second from right is Tom Mooney.

REVIEW OF THE LEFT PRESS

Socialist Worker

I.S. ON THE TENANTS' WAR

Last issue we commented on the attitude of the Workers Press towards the tenants struggle. For the Workers Press, as we pointed out, the 'only way forward' for tenants is to 'kick out the Tories'. The particular struggle of the tenants is dissolved into the general struggle to kick the Tories out. It merits no specific analysis or tactics or slogans but, once again, kick the Tories out.

In its 7 October issue, Socialist Worker had a centre page article summing up its views on the tenants struggle. The article ends as follows:

"At the same time, we should draw the political lessons of the tenants' struggle.

"There is no such thing as a 'Fair Rent' under capitalism with housing tied to the profit system. Until housing is under the control of tenants and trade unionists, we will be exploited.

"The tenants' battle is only one part of the struggle of working people to change society and establish a socialist system, where we take the decisions and not the landlords, profiteers and speculators or their representatives, the Tory government".

Substitute "to kick the Tories out and elect a Labour government pledged to socialist policies" for "to change society and establish a socialist system", and the views are almost identical to those of the Workers Press.

But Socialist Worker is not quite the same as the Workers Press. The Workers Press line is: kick the Tories out and the rents issue will come out in the wash. The Socialist Worker line is: fight the rent rises, and changing society will come out in the wash.

The fundamental approach is similar, but the Socialist Worker, unlike Workers Press, contains some valuable tactical advice for tenants. For example, it discusses the question of evictions usefully:

"A new factor in the rent strikes from October will be that many of the tenants will be in areas where there is a Labour council.

"Tenants' organisations should get a pledge that there will be no action taken against tenants withholding their rents. A number of Labour councils have given this pledge and few of them are likely to take any action against tenants on rent strike.

"If a council does take action, it will be over a long period. First they will send progressively more threatening letters - one council has 14 different types of letters - then they may send the bailiffs round to intimidate tenants into paying up.

"Then as a last resort they can go to a court for a possession order. But this takes six weeks and the court always gives 28 days' notice.

"Few councils are in favour of evicting because in the case of families they have a legal obligation to look after the mother and children.

"The only way to stop the council taking action is through the strength

and solidarity of the tenants' movement. A threat of eviction should be met by a total rent and rates strike by tenants plus industrial action from local workers, including council workers.

"Where the movement is not so strong you may have to employ other tactics, such as individuals paying up to stave off the order then immediately going into arrears again."

As Socialist Worker says, "Some of the important points in building the tenants' movement can be gained from experience".

But what about the points - of vital importance to revolutionary socialists - which will enable us to take the tenants' movement beyond the experience of the past, beyond simple defensive action against the latest Tory attack, into an offensive against the landlord-property speculator-moneylender-private profit system?

The problem of linking the tenants' struggle to defend their living conditions within capitalism to the struggle to overthrow capitalism can't be solved by defining it out of existence. It is simply not true, as it stands, that "the tenants' battle is part of the struggle of working people to change society and establish a socialist system". We have to fight to make it so.

How do we fight to make it so? By putting forward demands which relate the felt needs of millions of tenants, but go forward to strike at the very roots of the capitalist system. Not just 'stop the rent rises'; we also demand - cut rents; take the land and the buildings off the big property owners; nationalise the banks, the building societies, and other money-lending institutions; nationalise the building industry; form flying pickets to defend tenants against capitalist 'law and order' in the shape of evictions.

However, for Socialist Worker, this approach - the approach of transitional demands - is "old-fashioned Trotskyism". In their "new thinking", they go forward - to the level of the pre-1914 Social-Democratic parties. From day to day they conduct the struggle to defend and improve conditions, saying all the while that this is "part of the struggle of working people to change society". Socialism is always the distant beacon in the future.



pose I can understand that. I'm in the police for the excitement. I suppose I'm lucky. My excitement is legal. Theirs isn't."

SINGERS OF THE NATIONAL ANTHEM . . .

We have commented before in this column on the "Communist" Party Daily 'Morning Star's blatant chauvinism. Another recent example was its reporting of the Singer affair in Glasgow.

The Singer company attempted to throw its weight behind the Tories and help them to enforce the Housing Finance Act. It threatened to withhold its rates if the Clydebank Council didn't implement the Act.

If ever there was a case of ruling class solidarity coming to the fore, this was it. The Morning Star, however, didn't see it that way. It wasn't a question of class against class, but . . . a national question! "This US-owned firm should be told to keep its snout out of the country's internal affairs, and pay up."

THAT'S PROGRESS!

Reading further through the 'Star', we came across another choice bit of London Illustrated Newsery. Reporting the biennial National Women's Conference of the Communist

Party, Star reporters approvingly quote Mabs Skinner, a Communist councillor from Inverness. She "asked younger women who were complaining about lack of progress in their fight for equality to remember the big advances that had been made in women's status since Victorian times."

Now that's an interesting idea. Perhaps Mabs would like to recommend that, say, the black people "who are complaining about lack of progress" should "remember the big advances since slavery; or maybe Mabs would recommend this to strikers who could remember the "big advances" in pay "since Victorian times". Etc. etc.

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS

Do you believe in British coal? It seems that there are 300,000 people in this country who not only "believe in British coal" but are being "mobilised as 300,000 salesmen and 'ambassadors for coal'".

Such is the boast of the National Coal Board, the National Union of Mineworkers, and other unions who put it in an advertisement in many papers last week. The advert regurgitates the rubbish this august front put before the government two weeks ago. (See WF 15).

And where did we read this disgusting piece of productivity-dealing, class collaborationist, nationalist pomp? In the Morning Star!

What can it be like to be a Communist Party miner fighting against this joint Unions-NCB scheme and

then opening 'his' paper only to find that, too, advertising the deal? And what does it feel like after a grinding shift in the pit to come to the surface and read that "coal has begun to climb back" - not because of the exhausting work of the miners but "with help from the Government, effective management, good conditions and rewards for all..."

DESPAIR - OR REVOLUTION

A group of teachers were discussing on the BBC's Study Session the problems arising from "Work Experience" schemes. Under such schemes, kids in their last year at school are sent out to factories, shops and (sometimes) offices, to work for a week or a month (unpaid) to "get the feel of things". This sort of conditioning is apparently spreading and is much in favour since the extra school year was introduced.

"But", objected a Tyneside headmaster "what about areas with high youth unemployment? Wouldn't it be more realistic to train them to cope with a dole queue?"

"But that", said another "is the counsel of despair".

"But it is a fact of life" replied the headmaster; "If we want to educate them in real citizenship, we should let them see the truth and then perhaps they can work to change the situation."

"Oh no," that would be preaching revolution!"

"Perhaps you're right"...

IN BRIEF

Bovver Bobby

While the bover boys in blue are giving Heath a bit of aggro and refusing anything less than a 20% pay claim, one of the force gives an explanation of his relation to the soccer "hooligans". Sunday Times reporter Hunter Davies recalls commenting to one of the boys in blue - "It was crowd excitement. I'd already felt it when they were stampeding off the train. I said they were all in rotten jobs, from rotten homes, all the usual things. There was no other excitement in their lives."

The policeman replied: "I sup-



WHERE WE STAND

workers fight

□ CAPITALISM is inseparable from the exploitation by the bourgeoisie of the working class 'at home' and (since 'advanced' capitalism became imperialist) of the workers and peasants in the colonies and neo-colonies abroad.

It is a vicious system geared to buttressing the strong against the weak, to serving the handful of capitalists against the millions of workers, and to keeping many millions in poverty so that a few may prosper. Capitalism exalts property and degrades life. It is at the root of the racialism which poisons and divides worker against worker. It is a system of massive waste and social disorganisation, at the same time as it forces the working class to fight every inch of the way to better or even maintain its wages and conditions.

Having once been progressive, in that it at least developed, in the only way then possible, the productive resources of mankind, it is now a totally reactionary force in history. Its expansion after World War 2 gave it merely the appearance of health: in reality the boom was like the flush on a sick man's face. And already economic expansion has given way to creeping stagnation.

□ TODAY the ruling class can keep their system going only at the cost of large scale unemployment and attempts to cut the living standards of workers in the 'rich' parts of the world, of massive starvation and bloodshed in the 'poor' two thirds of the world, and of the ever-present threat of the destruction of humanity through nuclear war.

□ THE ONLY WAY OUT is for the working class to take power and to bring the resources of the modern economy under a rational working class plan, in place of the present unplanned and blind private-profit system. Having overthrown capitalism and established social ownership of the means of production, the working class will build towards a truly communist society, in which at last the principle will be "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."

□ The working class has created political parties for this purpose — LABOUR PARTIES, COMMUNIST PARTIES, SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES. — But in country after country these parties have joined capitalist governments and managed capitalism. They have betrayed the socialist aspirations of their working class supporters, tied the labour movement to the bosses' state, interest and ideology, and destroyed the political independence of the working class.

□ The task is therefore to build a socialist party which will stand firmly for the interests of the working class. WORKERS' FIGHT is a group of revolutionary socialists, aiming to build that party: a party which is democratically controlled by an active working class membership, which preserves its political independence and fights the ideological domination of the ruling class.

□ The basis of our activity is the scientific theory of MARXISM, the only theory which gives a clear understanding of present day society and of the necessity of revolutionary change.

□ Although they cannot organise the struggle for workers' power, the TRADE UNIONS are indispensable for the defence of workers' interests. We fight for the independence of the unions from all state control, and within the unions for militant policies and for democracy. We see the trade union bureaucracy as a distinct stratum which acts as a broker between workers and bosses. Its life and work-situation is quite different from that of the working class. Lacking a direct, necessary allegiance to working class interests, or any fundamental historical interests of its own, its general tendency is to work with the bosses and their state against the working class.

Only a mass national rank and file movement, linking up the different industries and guided by the ideas of revolutionary Marxism can, in this period, turn the trade unions into reliable instruments of working class interests, independent of the bosses' state.

□ We fight against the INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT, against any incomes policy under capitalism, and against any legal restrictions on trade unionism.

□ We fight against UNEMPLOYMENT; for a national minimum wage; for work or full pay; against productivity bargaining.

□ We fight to extend the power of workers to control the details of their own lives in industry here and now. We stand for the fight for WORKERS' CONTROL with the understanding that it can be made a serious reality only in a workers' state. We are against any workers' 'participation' in managing their own exploitation under capitalism.

□ We believe that the "PARLIAMENTARY ROAD TO SOCIALISM" is a crippling illusion. The capitalist class will not leave the stage peacefully; no ruling class ever has. Socialism can be built only by smashing the capitalist state machine (army, police, civil service) which is the ultimate defence of the bosses' power in society, and replacing it with a state based on democratic Workers' Councils.

□ The LABOUR PARTY is a capitalist party in its ideas, its policies, and in its record in government. At the same time, the bedrock organisations of the working class, the trade unions, support and finance the Labour Party. There is an open valve connection between the Labour Party and the unions, allowing the possibility of large-scale active working class participation in the party.

We relate to the Labour Party, therefore, not by simply denouncing it, but by attempting to advance the working class towards outgrowing and breaking through the stage in its own development — ideological, political and organisational — represented by Labourism.

□ We fight for full and equal rights for WOMEN, for female emancipation from the male domination which has co-existed throughout history with class society and which has its roots in such society. We fight, in particular, for the emancipation of women of our own class, suffering a double and triple exploitation, who have been most accurately described as the "slaves of the slaves."

□ We fight against RACIALISM and against immigration controls. We fight for the integration of immigrant workers into the labour movement and for a united fight against capitalism, whilst supporting the right of black minorities in Britain to form defence leagues or independent political organisations.

□ We give unconditional support to the struggles of oppressed peoples everywhere fighting against IMPERIALISM, and to their organisations leading the fight.

□ British workers have — fundamentally — more in common with every single worker throughout the globe, irrespective of race, religion, nationality or colour, than with the whole of the British ruling class. We see the fight for socialism as a world wide struggle, necessitating the creation of a world revolutionary party. We give critical support to the FOURTH INTERNATIONAL.

□ We stand for a political revolution of the working class against the bureaucracies of THE U.S.S.R. and the other countries called 'communist', which we consider to be degenerated and deformed workers' states. The social regime of the different Bureaucracies has nothing in common with socialism, let alone with real communism. At the same time we defend the nationalised economy in these countries against capitalism and imperialism, unconditionally: that is, irrespective of the selfish, usually anti-working class and anti-revolutionary policies of the ruling bureaucrats, and against those policies.

□ There are OTHER POLITICAL GROUPS (including the official British section of the Fourth International) which have generally similar aims but methods differing from ours, or differing conceptions about what needs to be done here and now. We consider all these groups to be seriously — sometimes grossly — inadequate in theory and practice. We favour unity in action with these groups where possible, and a serious dialogue about our differences.

A BOOK YOU SHOULD READ

FORD STRIKE

FORD STRIKE — The Workers' Story
by John Mathews. Panther Books price 40p

"The first and only book to be written on the subject from the 'inside'." This is the claim made for this detailed analysis of the Ford strike.

True to his word Mr. Mathews guides us through the complicated and devious manoeuvres of the Ford management and some of the union officials, always from the point of view of the Ford workers themselves. Beginning with the infamous 'Blue Book' which every new started at Ford receives, the campaign for Parity is traced until the conclusion of the nine week strike on 8th April 1971.

The book conducts us through an intense class war between ordinary men and women and a powerful financial giant with nine factories in Europe, which employ a staggering 90,000 employees. As Mr. Mathews states on page 20 — "When Ford workers go on strike they are not taking on your average boss, with the state, the Press and the Sunday sermon on his side. What they are up against is an international organisation with enormous economic and political power."

ASIAN MODEL T

In the first chapter of the book some interesting information is given on the motor industry in general as the giants engage in fierce competition with each other for the available markets, and of their plans for creating new ones. For instance Ford would like to expand in the Far East making a new 'Asian Model T'. With a small engine and canvas seats the car would sell for £350 and "would have a virtually unlimited market."

Naturally at such a price this could not be made in Europe or the USA, so the major centres of production are planned to be the Phillipines, Thailand, South Korea etc. The finances for this expansion are to come from the World Bank. And who is the current Director of the World Bank? None other than Robert McNamara, ex US Secretary of 'Defence' and . . . Ford Chairman! Mr. Mathews does well in this book to remind us of the real nature of the American commitment in South Vietnam — as front-line protector for this sort of industrial operation, which can be mounted with great profit in such repressive and reactionary, and of course US-dominated, regimes as those of Thailand, South Korea and Phillipines.

The major portion of the book is of course given over to an examination of the 'Parity Campaign' and the nine week strike

Before the war Ford workers were the best paid in the motor industry, but they gradually slipped behind, and in 1964/65 Ford workers began asking for parity with other motor workers. In 1969 the fight for parity became a defiant struggle.

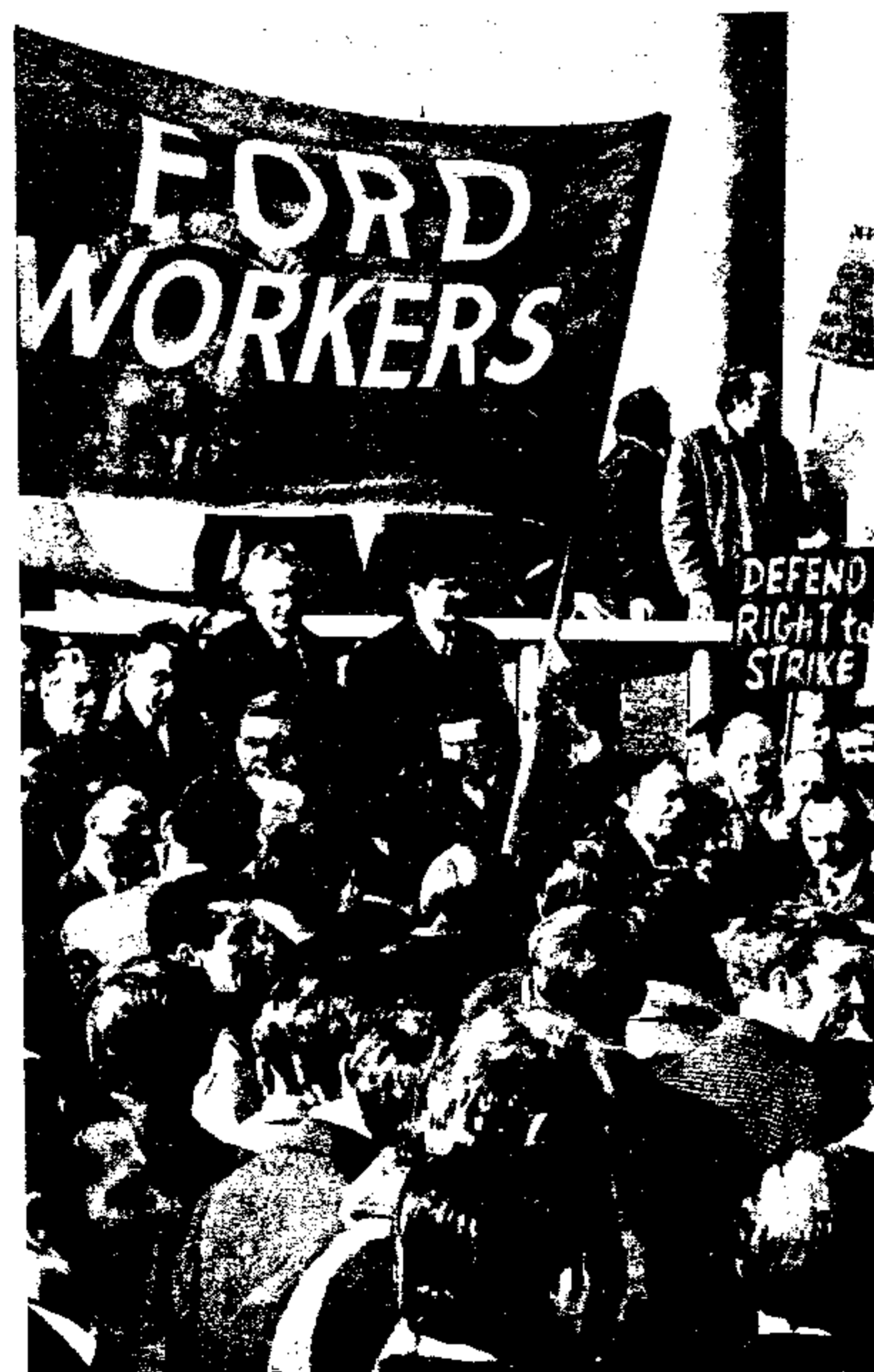
DETERMINED

Of course, the Ford management claimed that it would be 'commercial suicide' to pay what other manufacturers were paying and they tried unsuccessfully to prove it. But Fords' own calculations showed value added per employee (i.e. the value created by the Ford workers) to be £2,764 a year, which was £1,000 more than the average of the other three major British car firms!

It was patently clear that Ford of Britain could afford to pay parity, but to do so would have put them on the same level as

their competitors and so they were determined to resist.

But equally determined were the Ford workers who were producing fat profits for their bosses. And so the action unfolded. Chrysler workers had just settled a £5 rise, and British Leyland had settled for 21/- (£1.05) an hour, so Ford workers' expectations were rising. At a meeting of management and the National Joint Negotiating Committee the management offered £2. Spontaneous walkouts greeted this paltry offer. This was the beginning of the nine week strike.



Particularly interesting in this dispute was the role of Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon, and John Mathews does workers everywhere a valuable service in giving us a detailed account of the way these two 'left' union leaders sold out the Ford workers.

On the fifth week the Ford NJNC rejected on behalf of the men an offer of 8p an hour. In the ninth week, and behind the men's backs, Jones and Scanlon accepted a 9p an hour offer. This episode displays the reactionary and deceitful role of the union leaders whose actions so often display nothing but contempt for their members.

According to Mathews, Hugh Scanlon — the darling of the reformist 'Left', sat through a meeting of the AUEW Executive Committee without mentioning the settlement he and Jack Jones had just 'engineered', because it would have leaked back to the rank and file!

Well after the Jones/Scanlon settlement Moss Evans, chairman of the Ford NJNC, received a phone call from Jack Jones on Tuesday evening 30th March, saying that approaches had been made to him by the management, and should he go ahead?

Evans, not knowing that a deal had already been made, said that if the management was talking money, they should go ahead.

Finally on Wednesday Jones and Scanlon told the men of the deal. They had kept it secret for two days in order to give the management time to get ballot papers ready so that the stewards could not insist on factory gate meetings and a show of hands to decide whether or not the men accepted the offer.

"Ford Strike — The Workers' Story" assembles a lot of useful facts and presents them in readable form. Workers and stewards in other multinational companies and trade unionists in general would undoubtedly benefit from reading this factual and interesting account.

Steve Boyd

In Manchester and Liverpool the tenants' movement is forging ahead....

MANCHESTER

There are tenants associations springing up all over Manchester. As of 11 October there were 20000 tenants on partial rent strike in the Greater Manchester area.

In the last two weeks the Commando Squads have got tenants associations going in Miles Platting, Clayton, Sale, Spath Lane, Ashton-under-Lyne, and on 15 October they are going out again to B lakeley and Burnage.

At Droylsden tenants meeting on the 11th October, 200 tenants turn-

ed up. Connie Fahey, Secretary of the Manchester Rents Action Group was the main speaker.

Three councillors turned up to the meeting. Their spokesman, Cllr Ridley, said we had the backing of the Labour controlled council (even though it is implementing) and that there would be no evictions.

The official figure for the total on rent strike is now 300. Tenants are picketing the council offices and will probably follow the rent

DEBS from p.8

Out of this populist mixture, two distinct tendencies emerged. One ended in the Democratic Party, which snuffed out any radicalism that wing contained; the other moved towards socialism and formed part of the base on which the Socialist Party was founded.

In 1901 Debs helped to organise the Socialist Party, of which he was to remain a member until his death in 1926.

I.W.W.

Debs' next great step was to participate in the founding of the I.W.W. in 1905. The IWW was a revolt, initially, by a coalition of revolutionary socialist organisations against the narrow craft self-centredness of the existing American "business" unions organised in the American Federation of Labour. It attempted to organise 'One Big Union' of the whole industrial working class without distinction of colour, craft or creed, a union that would unite the class in the day to day struggle and simultaneously build up, through the industrial union, the scaffolding and framework of the future socialist direct rule of the working class.

In practice the IWW became a very militant minority organisation of, mainly, 'unskilled' migratory workers.

But trade union affairs were not the sole subjects of this great proletarian agitator. He fought tirelessly against racialism, bans on immigration, the war in Mexico and imperialist pillage. Most of all, though, he is likely to be remembered for those clarion calls of outrage to which he gave vent against the horror and injustice of capitalism.

His enthusiasm never abated. For him, as he said, "the crusade seemed fairly to glitter with possibilities." He here is, for instance, speaking on June 16th 1918 to a crowd of 1,200 at Canton, Ohio:

"How good it is to look into your glowing faces this afternoon! ... And I am glad there are so many of you. Your tribe has increased amazingly since first I came here. You used to be so few and far between. ... It is different now. You can hardly throw a stone in the dark without hitting a socialist. They are everywhere in increasing numbers; and what marvellous changes are taking place in the people!"

WAR

But this Canton speech was not all pleasure and exhilaration. It was deadly serious - a part of the campaign against the War. In it Debs lambasted the 'patriotic' American ruling class that was then sending workers out to fight German workers

"You remember that, at the close of Theo-

dore Roosevelt's second term as President ... he was wine and dined, dignified and glorified by all the Kaisers and Czars and Emperors of the Old World ... He and the Kaiser were soon on the most familiar terms. ... He knew that he was the Kaiser, the Beast of Berlin. And yet, he permitted himself to be entertained by that Beast of Berlin; had his feet under the mahogany of the Beast of Berlin; was cheek by jowl with the Beast of Berlin. And while Roosevelt was being entertained royally by the German Kaiser, the same Kaiser was putting the leaders of the Socialist Party (of Germany) in jail for fighting the Kaiser and the Junkers of Germany."

But of course, the Beast of Berlin as he was called, was not the only one who was busy jailing socialists. In that same speech Debs reeled off the names of the martyrs of the anti-war movement of those days who had been jailed by the American ruling class. Many of them, like Tom Mooney and Warren Billings, were to die in jail.

And with that speech Debs was to add his own name to the list: shortly after, at the age of sixty-three, he was imprisoned for making that speech. He was sentenced to Ten years' imprisonment (commuted in 1921) for "violating the Espionage Act".

Even upon his imprisonment, this impressive fighter spoke what was on his mind - "Upon his release from the Kaiser's bastille - the doors of which were torn from their hinges by the proletarian revolution - Karl Liebknecht, heroic leader of the rising hosts, exclaimed: 'The day of the People has arrived!' It was a magnificent challenge to the junkers and an inspiring battle cry to the aroused workers."

Fitting words indeed for Debs himself - great organiser and inspirer of three generations of American labour. Shortcoming he had. He did not understand the need for a tightly knit revolutionary party on the Bolshevik model; he put a little too much faith in some of his Socialist Party collaborators; he did not see the need for a sharp organisational as well as political break with the imposters of socialism who had supported the War. But none of this can diminish the flaming arrow of his oratory.

In this book you can find the most famous of his speeches and the most famous of his articles from the daily "Appeal to Reason". Every inch is packed with class hatred for the capitalists and class love for the workers. This is the work of the man who was (and in memory remains) America's greatest ever anti-war and prison-release campaigner, and trade union and revolutionary agitator.

* Eugene V. Debs Speaks Merit Book published by Pathfinder Press, available in this country from Pathfinder Books, 47 The Cut, London S.E.1

man round, not because he has been harrasing the tenants, but to give tenants confidence in refusing to pay the increase.

Clayton: there was a public meeting in the local park on Sunday 8th October. 400 tenants turned up and the vote was unanimous to refuse to pay the increase. The police tried to tell the tenants they could not use the park for their meeting. One man said "we pay for this park, it is ours", so the people went in, and the speakers addressed the tenants from outside using loudhailers. The police gave up and moved off.

Salford: The Council have sold out. But the tenants have long since prepared for this. The Salford Central Committee have written to the press, condemning the action of one Labour councillor who publicly stated that tenants and rents don't matter - his own political career does! They have written to local union branches, calling for industrial action in the case of evictions.

Altrincham tenants are really well organised, they have street stewards and a telegraph system of banging tin cans when the rent man causes trouble. Squads come running.

On Colshaw Farm estate, tenants are putting out a leaflet the night before the rent man calls, saying that he is likely to be telling lies about the strength of the strike, and giving the facts.

In Partington, gasboard maintenance workers have promised industrial action if there are any evictions. In Wilmslow the Cleansing Department have pledged the same assurance.

Other reports: Ardwick - Heywood House 100% support, Bennet street 90%. Ashton - 95% support on one estate of 300 houses.

Warrington - protesting tenants mounted a demonstration of 400 and broke up the council meeting for one hour. Irlam - 95% support. Oldham - increases coming on 5 November, 16 Associations organised.

Finally: on Friday 20th October the Manchester Rents Action Group will be supporting a National Union of Public Employees half-day strike and demonstration for their wage claim and against incomes policy.

Liverpool

The Trades Council has organised a rents action coordinating committee. In Vauxhall a no-go area has been set up, where the rent collector is not allowed in.

In Bootle 75% of tenants are on a total rent strike. In Birkenhead nearly 50% are on total rent strike, 30% on partial rent strike. On Cant-rill Farm Estate the partial rent strike has 99% support. And the very recently organised Tenants Association on Netherley estate has 2400 tenants on partial rent strike.

Meanwhile, students are on rent strike at Liverpool University, as well as Bristol, Exeter, Keele, Loughborough, and Surrey.

The pattern elsewhere is more uneven.....

the
rents
battle...

Bolton

In Bolton 500 tenants are definitely not paying the increase. With this relatively small number, some tenants are asking: can we win?

They should remember:

1) Evictions are likely to be few, and quite probably none (see "IS and the tenants war", p. 9). And evictions in the present militant mood of the working class are likely to provoke an angry, militant response, forcing a Council retreat.

2) Even if only a nucleus of militant tenants can last out six months (and 300 tenants in Drogheda have been on rent strike for three years now), they can be joined by fresh forces spurred into action by the April increases.

3) New forces will be coming in. For example, the newly formed Deane Rd Estate Association is committed to a partial rent strike.

Tenants are picketing the rent office and have put out a leaflet outlining the situation on evictions. New Tenants Associations are being formed, with the help of "Workers Fight" members, at Tonge Moor and Johnson Fold.

Militants are advocating that Tenants Associations should campaign for a large tenants' meeting, with trade unionists invited, and should arrange factory gate meetings.

London

Woodberry Down tenants, Hackney have called on town hall and other workers not to send out notices to quite and to have nothing to do with evictions.

Lambeth Council's scheme to evade the Housing Finance Act by putting all the rent increase on one house has been ruled invalid by a High Court judge.

So, did the Council then resolve to defy the Housing Finance Act? No: they knuckled under and have imposed a 55p increase. This underlines the need for tenants to organise independently from even anti-implementation councils.

In Tower Hamlets 15 Labour councillors have been threatened with disciplinary action by the Labour Party. But what is a Labour council meant to stand for? Isn't it meant to be part of the labour movement? Isn't it meant to put the interests of labour, of the working class, above Tory legality?

Coventry

The Coventry Federation of Tenants Associations has set itself the target of organising one new Tenants Association each week. At present the Federation has five well-established Tenants Associations and three new ones.

Some 500 or 600 tenants are on partial rent strike, and the number is increasing, despite a big effort by the local press to play down the struggle.

The one "no surrender" Labour councillor, Joan Shortland, is being pressured by the local Lab-

LONDON HOSPITAL STEWARDS

PLAN FURTHER ACTIONS

A meeting was held at the Westminster Hospital on 15 October to found the **LONDON ALLIANCE OF SHOP STEWARDS IN HEALTH.**

An account of token actions in support of the claim at a small number of hospitals was given, but the highlight of the reporting was the speech given by Bro. Bloomfield from Gloucester. There the recent strike, which had been faced with an almost complete press black-out, had shown the militancy of health workers when they are well organised. The hospital workers struck over demands relating to grading under the Common Craft Structure agreement (concerning painters, plumbers, etc).

At Bristol tremendous solidarity was shown, but here the main demands related to low pay. The real message was "Your power lies with your members. You will find the support you don't think you've got". Bro Bloomfield ended by raising the question of national action. This was possible now he said, "Whatever London decides to do, Gloucester, Bristol, Wales, Bournemouth, Exeter and Basingstoke will back you. You'll not be alone".

With this example set the decisions on the present claim took on a new di-

mension. Despite the claim by a TGWU official at the meeting that no resolutions had been received from branches demanding more than the £4 claimed, the meeting affirmed that certainly in other unions, like NUPE, such resolutions had been sent in. Again in the face of this official's "it's a non-starter" attitude, the meeting went on to vote for a minimum acceptable level of £8. After all, it was pointed out, the present claim would succeed if met in full in only two things: getting health workers back to the earnings level they were at 12 months ago and maintaining their position in the wages ladder - 127th out of 129.

There is to be a follow-up meeting to this one to expand the Alliance while at the same time it is hoped to link up with others throughout the country. A start has already been made with the West Country and Manchester, and, from Bro Bloomfield's report there is plenty of support in other places. In the meantime the Alliance will publish a broadsheet of facts on the present claim.

Information and copies of the broadsheet can be obtained through Workers' Fight at 98 Gifford Street, London N.1

BLACKBURN DEMO: A CORRECTION

We have received a letter from the Manchester District Committee of the International Socialists about our coverage of the Blackburn anti-fascist demonstration of 30 September.

Our report (WF 16) described the end of the demonstration as follows:

"It was at this point that the magnificent unity and solidarity shown by the demonstration was shattered. A member of the International Socialists announced through his loudhailer that the IS contingent was to make its way back to the coaches and that the demonstration was over! Despite the fact that the fascists and the police had been effectively beaten by united action earlier on in the demonstration, the IS speaker said 'we cannot beat the fascists' and withdrew".

The IS District Committee letter argues that "By the time the fascists had got into the Regency Hall it was clear that we were so dispersed that any further attempts at confrontation with them and their police protectors would inevitably result in useless arrests and demoralisation".

We accept this correction entirely and withdraw any criticism of IS tactics at the end of the demonstration. We apologise for the error of judgement in the WF 16 report, based on incomplete information on the part of the comrade who wrote the report.

RENTS from p.11

our Party. Despite the fact that she was re-adopted some months ago, she is being made to come before a reselection meeting.

In nearby Bedworth, however, it is nine right-wing, pro-implementation councillors who have been expelled from the Labour Party. The council originally voted against implementation, then for, then, on 17 October, against.

RED SCARE STARTED - BY "REDS"!

THE UGLY SPECTACLE OF A 'red scare' has been raised in the Manchester Rents Action Group.

Militants are used to this sort of tactic from the right wing. But it is ten times worse when it comes from

those who claim to be 'reds' themselves.

The witch-hunt was led by Chris Duncan, a "libertarian" leftist, and backed up by Rick Sumner, a member of the 'Solidarity' group, together with a number of Communist Party members (who had not previously been seen at Rent Action Group meetings), and supporters of the International Socialists.

A.I.L. MOBILISATION FOR 12th. NOVEMBER

The annual conference of the Anti-Internment League, on 9 October, voted overwhelmingly to reaffirm the AIL's "solidarity with all those socialist and Republican organisations struggling against British imperialism in Ireland".

The AIL also called for support for its demonstration in London on 12 November.

At the present time, with sharp clashes between the militant Protestant Ulster Defence Association and the Army, the myth of the Army being a stern but just referee in Ireland is easier than ever to sustain. It is up to those who understand that the Army's real purpose is to keep Ireland divided, subordinate, and therefore inevitably not at peace to direct the attention of British workers to the basic issue of whether the people of Ireland, taken as a whole, should determine their own destiny, through a massive mobilisation on the 12th

do not win wage rises in this period.

New tactics must be devised to maintain a decent standard of living. At the nearby dispute at Walsleys (Bury Ltd) the employer adopted the same tactics but after nine weeks the men retaliated by occupying the factories. It was only after this that the management began to talk.

Bradbury Saunders are undoubtedly receiving a 'pay off' from the Employers Federation Strike Breaking Fund, and are prepared to wait it out. The Radcliffe factory is one of a number of subsidiaries manufacturing a wide variety of engineering products, associated with the manufacture of colour print machinery for the wallpaper industry. The employer has issued the 'standard' threat used in these cases of "We'll close the place down and take the jobs abroad".

The skilled men in this factory receive £24.04 and are among the lowest paid in the district. The lads at Bradbury have shown a remarkable degree of solidarity and courage in this dispute, but to win it may take more than courage.

The lads must try to contact their brothers in the other member firms in the group, and secure solidarity from them. In addition they must seriously think of occupying the works.

Financial aid and requests for speakers to: Strike Committee, Bradbury Saunders, c/o AUEW office, 12 St Mary's Pl., Bury.

ROY RATCLIFFE

LIAISON COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENCE OF STUDENT UNIONS. CONFERENCE

Sunday October 29, Imperial College, London. Affiliated Socialist Societies and Students Unions may send delegates, and observers are welcome. Delegates fee 50p. Further details from 182 Pentonville Rd, London N.1: 01 837 6954

RADCLIFFE ENGINEERS: STRIKE STILL SOLID

IN THE SMALL TOWN OF Radcliffe in Lancashire, Engineering workers have completed the ninth week of a wages dispute.

The dispute, now 'Official', started on the 7th August after the Employers 'refused' to discuss pay issues at a Works Conference between management and men. The men gave seven days notice of their intention to withdraw their labour.

Since the expiration of that deadline the men have been on strike, with official backing. So far the management have shown no sign of wanting to discuss the issue. This 'hard line' attitude of the management is typical of the trend of wages disputes in the engineering industry.

With a £2 million fund the Engineering Employers' Federation is out to break the militancy of engineers by financing long disputes. Engineering workers must recognise this trend and realise that the old tactics of the 1950s and '60s

UDA from p.1

they came right to the brink of an all-out clash with the British Army, and then desperately patched things up. And why the Protestant factions (UDA, LAW, Unionist Party) divide and redivide on the issue of UDI and their relation with Britain.

Despiteclashes they support the British Army as on their side against the main enemy - the Catholics. Even when some of the savagery and brutality inseparable from an Army of occupation spills

over into the Protestant community

For British socialists there can be no ambiguity. The Protestants remain the reactionary dupes of the bosses - albeit very unhappy ones just now. The Catholics and the IRA fight for National Freedom, that is an end to British rule in Ireland and an end to the Six County State which has perpetuated the savage Protestant sectarianism which we have seen in the last few days. We support the Catholic Republicans and their armed militia against both the British Army and the would-be pogromists, the UDA.

The background was this. The Secretary of the Rents Action Group, Mrs Connie Fahey, is a supporter of the Socialist Labour League. As Secretary, she had been round to speak to tenants on a number of estates, and the complaint was that she had used her position to advertise the "Workers Press" (paper of the SLL) as "the only workers' paper" implicitly giving tenants to understand that the Rents Action Group supported the "Workers Press".

Now it is true that the SLL has a general habit of sectarian antics which assist the right wing greatly in discrediting revolutionaries. But that is no reason for leftwingers to do the job of the right wing for them. And they gave no evidence that the SLL's activities actually had disrupted the tenants' movement. It is, on the other hand, certain that the campaign against Mrs. Fahey has been disruptive.

On 9th October Duncan proposed a motion of no confidence in Mrs. Fahey.

Sumner distinguished himself by saying that "I won't have the Workers Press on my estate". ("My estate"? And this man attacks Trotskyists as elitists!)

The rank and file tenants were, however, solidly behind Mrs Fahey. Whatever her political views, she has worked well to help build the tenants' movement.

The ordinary tenants outvoted the motley bloc of Communist Party-'Solidarity'-International Socialists.

The meeting then voted unanimously (only a few "libertarians" abstaining) for a Workers Fight resolution opposing any misuse of the name of the Rents Action Group, but affirming the right of members and officers of the Rents Action Group to hold and express political views.

There was worse to come on 16th October, Mrs. Fahey was violently abused, not for failing as Secretary, but on the grounds (so suddenly discovered - and irrelevant if she works well as secretary) that she is not a council tenant and has not yet organised a Tenants' Association in her own area.

Unfortunately, Mrs Fahey's reply was on the same level as the attacks - personal abuse. In the end she was as disruptive as her opponents.

Finally, Mrs. Fahey walked out, accompanied by tenants representing Ardwick, Gorton, West Gorton and Brunswick, as well as by long-standing Socialist Labour League member Ralph Williams.

We cannot fail to criticise the Socialist Labour League: firstly for their attempt to misuse the name of the Rent Action Group; secondly, for their weak-kneed tactics in simply walking out of the meeting. It is their duty to return to the Rent Action Group and stand up in the fight against the 'red scare'.

But we nevertheless support them against the CP - IS - Solidarity attack.