

Socialist Worker

FOR WORKERS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

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Police violence grows at Springboks' matches

RUGBY FANS in Scotland voted with their feet last Saturday by staying away in their thousands from the international match with the all-white Springboks touring team. Fewer than 22,000 were in the ground, compared to 60,000 when the South Africans last played at Murrayfield, Edinburgh. The hundreds of police and unofficial stewards had a hey-day

against the anti-apartheid demonstrators who got into the ground. The front row of demonstrators suffered a continual barrage of punching and kicking from the police and any one who managed to climb the barricade was savagely beaten. At the end of the game, the marchers linked up to disperse but a few who ignored this advice were isolated by the police and

knocked to the ground. There were 26 arrests

Face covered in blood

A young worker from John Brown's Clydeside shipyard was carried up the terraces by the police his face covered in blood from the

beating he had received — and was arrested for 'assault'.

A spokesman for Glasgow International Socialists, who organised coaches to the match, said that at future games the demonstrators should all link arms at the end of play to stop indiscriminate arrests and police violence. After the Murrayfield game, 150 people went individually to the police station to

protest at the police activities. THIS SATURDAY: The Springboks play Cardiff. NEXT WEDNESDAY they will play Combined Services at Aldershot. SATURDAY, 20 December: Springboks versus England at Twickenham. All Greater London IS branches will give maximum support to the anti-apartheid march. Bring your banners. Full details next week.

NEW ATTACK ON PUBLIC SERVICES

by Chris Harman

THERE HAS BEEN a growing revolt in recent weeks against the abominable pay and conditions suffered by workers manning the essential services.

The 4000 teachers who have been on strike for the last two weeks and the tens of thousands more who have taken part in one day strikes and who are prepared to strike for much longer if necessary are following the example set by dustmen and firemen. Now the nurses, earning as little as £7 a week in training and £13 a week when qualified, are again campaigning for improved conditions. In all these cases the mass of people have shown overwhelming support for the demands put forward.

Last week, however, the Labour government showed once again how little such feelings affect its own policies. Its plans for government spending in the next three years make it clear that it will not provide the necessary resources to make any real improvement in the conditions of those who work in the essential services. Nor will it do anything to carry through the badly-needed improvements in these services.

Of course, reading the press you might not get this impression. The Times, for example, had the headline 'More to be spent on social services'. But close reading of the figures reveals just the opposite.

No help for slum schools

For example, spending on education is going to increase by nearly 3.8 per cent a year. But this will not be used to improve the standard of education, only to cover the cost of schooling for an increasing number of children. In other words, the government intends to do little or nothing about the thousands of children educated in overcrowded classes in buildings left over from the Victoria age. Neither does it plan any improvement in the real earnings of teachers nor in the conditions under which they work.

In the health service, the apparent increase in spending of 3.8 per cent a year 'will be necessary mainly to meet the needs of an increasing population' (Guardian, 5 December). Little will be done to improve the rate of hospital building (a mere £6m increase) even less to improve conditions of nurses and other health service workers, let alone to improve the standard of services.

All this is in striking contrast to what will happen to 'the services' which the government provides not for the mass of the

population, but for a privileged minority. The one per cent of the population that owns 80 per cent of private industry can expect to receive an increase of £118m in government aid. At the same time the immense sums spent on defence will scarcely be reduced. Defence spending will still total £2189m in 1971-2. Another £2025m will go into the pockets of moneylenders as interest on the national debt.

Nowhere is the nature of the priorities of government spending more apparent than in the area of transport. The amount spent on roads is going to increase by £148m but public transport — buses, trains, underground — will actually get £4m less.

Car bosses want roads

The reasons are clear. There are powerful and influential people who want more roads, particularly the big motor manufacturers and haulage firms. On the other hand, the only people who benefit from public transport are the millions who have to travel to work every day, who have to join ever-lengthening queues for the privilege of paying higher fares to catch less frequent buses or trains.

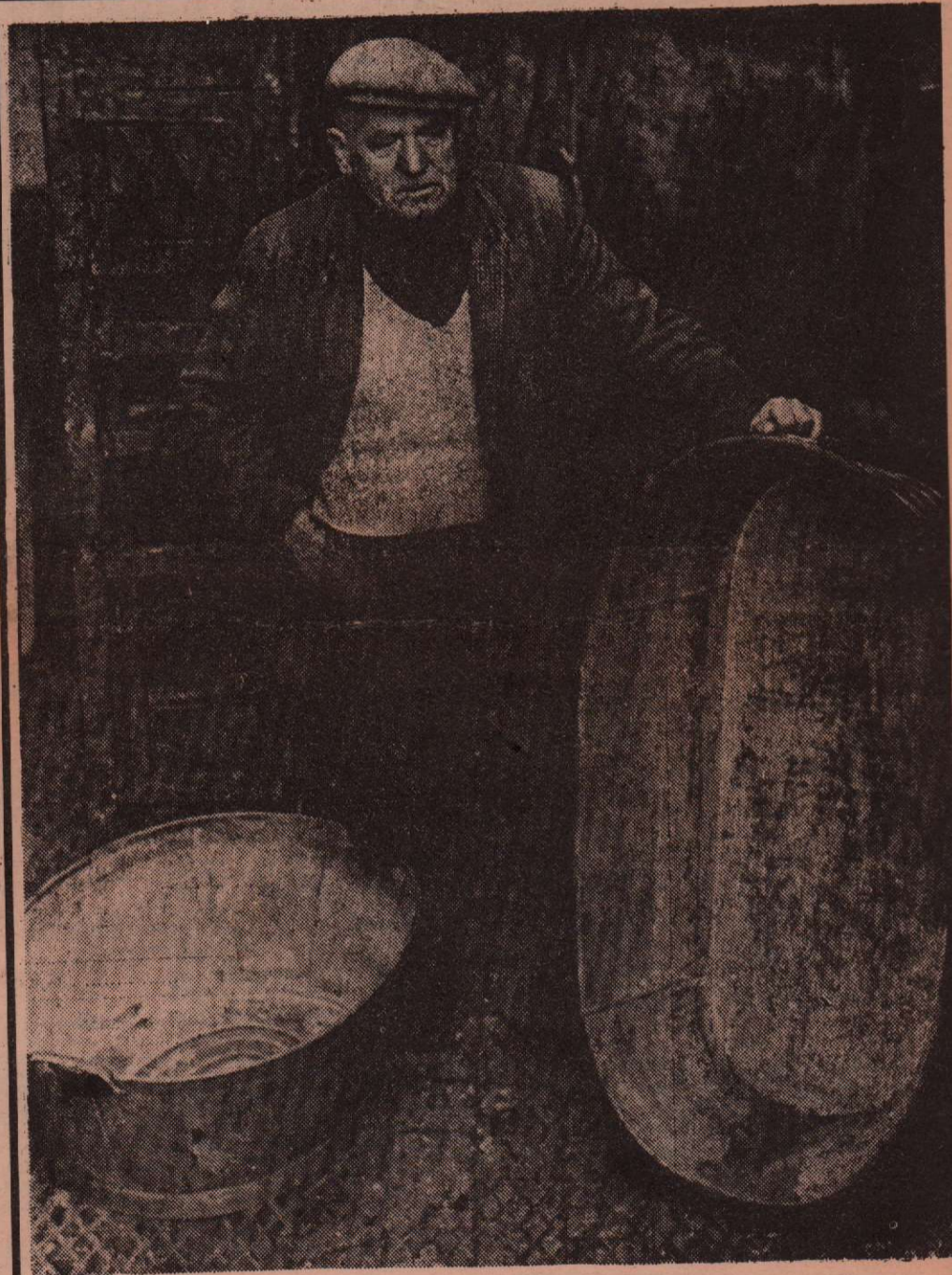
So three times as much will be spent on roads as on transport. This will mean a continued run-down in services, forcing more people to buy and use cars. The new roads will be even more crowded than the old. Road accidents and air pollution will increase. But never worry, the car manufacturers will be happy. They are much more important to the government than the 90 per cent of the population who will endure increased discomfort.

There was a time when the Labour Party criticised just such priorities as these. When the Tories were in power, Labour called for increased spending on the Health Service and education and criticised the 'capitalist begging bowl'. But once in power their policies have been exactly the same as the set they used to criticise.

Property is sacred

They respect the essential demands of the capitalist system. They accept that private property is sacred which means that only a privileged minority can make crucial economic decisions. And Labour also accepts the sanctity of the parliamentary system that makes sure that the mass of the population cannot change political decisions. Labour accepts whether it likes or not (and it increasingly seems to like it) the absurd, inhuman and anti-social priorities of the system.

This state of affairs will not change until the mass of the working population take action for themselves, until they take control of industry and government and impose their own priorities. Meanwhile, the conditions that confront the mass of people in the educational system, in the hospitals, in housing and in travelling to work will hardly change and may well get worse. Only militant and decisive action, like that of the dustmen, the firemen and now the teachers, can win any improvements.



Meet a lucky miner with two baths

THIS IS South Wales miner Percy Cook in his 'bathroom'. He's quite lucky — he has two baths, one for himself and one for his wife. The only snag is that both tin baths have to be kept in the backyard of their Coal Board house in Senghenydd as they have no bathroom and have to wash in the kitchen. It is the same story for all the NCB tenants in the area, whose nationalised landlord has allowed their tiny homes to slowly rot and sink without repairs. But the South Wales miners are marginally more fortunate than their brothers near Coventry who have found that the NCB has sold their houses over their heads for £500 each to a private property firm that has offered them back to the tenants at double the prices. Yet last week Social Services Minister Richard Crossman declared that the Labour government had swept away many of the abuses and indignities of capitalist society. When did you last bath in the kitchen, Dick...

Don't miss these talks

THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT ends the year in typical anti-working class fashion with the announcement by Mrs Castle of plans to operate part two of the Prices and Incomes Act.

This will give her authority to continue to hold up and freeze wage increases negotiated by the trade unions. No such restraints are made against the privileged few who live off the backs of the workers — the government has recently lifted its restrictions against dividend increases.

There has been a growing revolt in major sections of industry this year against the government-employer-union drive for productivity bargaining and measured day work, designed to cut down on the size of the work force and screw more profits from those with jobs.

The struggle against productivity bargaining will be at the centre of the industrial struggle next year. The Industrial Committee

of the International Socialists has plans to step up its work around this important issue

It is launching a series of discussions in London for industrial workers and IS members. The first will be held this Sunday when Jim Higgins, leading militant in the Post Office Engineering Union, will speak on the role of the Communist Party in industry. It will be held at 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 at 7.30 pm (nearest tube Old Street or Liverpool Street).

Make a note of these following discussions now: 11 Jan, Roger Cox (AEF) on the skilled worker in industry; 25 Jan, Mike Cooley (DATA) on white-collar militancy; 15 Feb, Vincent Flynn (SOGAT) on inter-union disputes; 1 March, Tony Cliff on productivity deals; 15 March, Roger Rosewell (ASTMS) on the motor industry. All at the above address at 7.30 pm.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

STORMING OF THE WINTER PALACE/LENIN (1970 anniversary card) 1s (inc envelope) each or 10s a doz. Cash with orders to Socialist Worker, 6 Cottons Gdns, London E2.

Containers: facts behind the Tilbury dispute by NIGEL COWARD

CONTAINERISATION on the docks: is it a threat or a benefit? Under capitalism, it is the first. Under socialism, it would be the second. If that sounds like sloganising, then let it be spelt out.

1. **Standardisation.** There has been an amazing variety of units in which goods have been transported. Stanley Turner should know: he's Chief Docks Manager of the Port of London Authority.

The port operator has had to 'receive, sort and stow in a loaded vessel or discharge, sort, unpile and deliver at importation, cases, cartons, crates, bags, drums, tons, hundredweights, quarters, pounds.' (Guardian, 27/5/68).

Containers rationalise all this welter by including cargoes in standardised boxes which conform to internationally-agreed measurements. As such it is a sensible advance that could have been applied to lighten men's load and improve everyone's welfare. Instead of these human ends, however, the reasons for introducing the 'container revolution' have been very different.

2. **Motives behind containerisation.** Ever since the decline of the Grand Old British Empire, the Grand Old Shipping Companies like P&O have fallen on lean times. The average return on capital in this sector of the British economy has been 3 per cent for years and those with surplus funds to invest have shunned such low-yield industries as these. The P&O may be the biggest shipping group in the world but its family directors have missed out in 20th century terms.

Missed out, that is until the Americans showed the way, via containerisation, towards bigger profits.

Changes in shipping had occurred before, of course, but they were pioneered by the more modern oil companies via bulk tankers. General assorted freight continued to be carried in what were bigger editions of tramp steamers.

Realising both the possibility of making money and spurred by the fear of other companies making inroads into their share of the market, the owners acted with unusual speed. Dr J J McMullen, Chairman of United States Lines, put the position clearly when he stressed that he knew 'of no other industry which in the last five years had gained such a significant increase in productivity as a result of containerisation in shipping' (Financial Times 7/9/69).

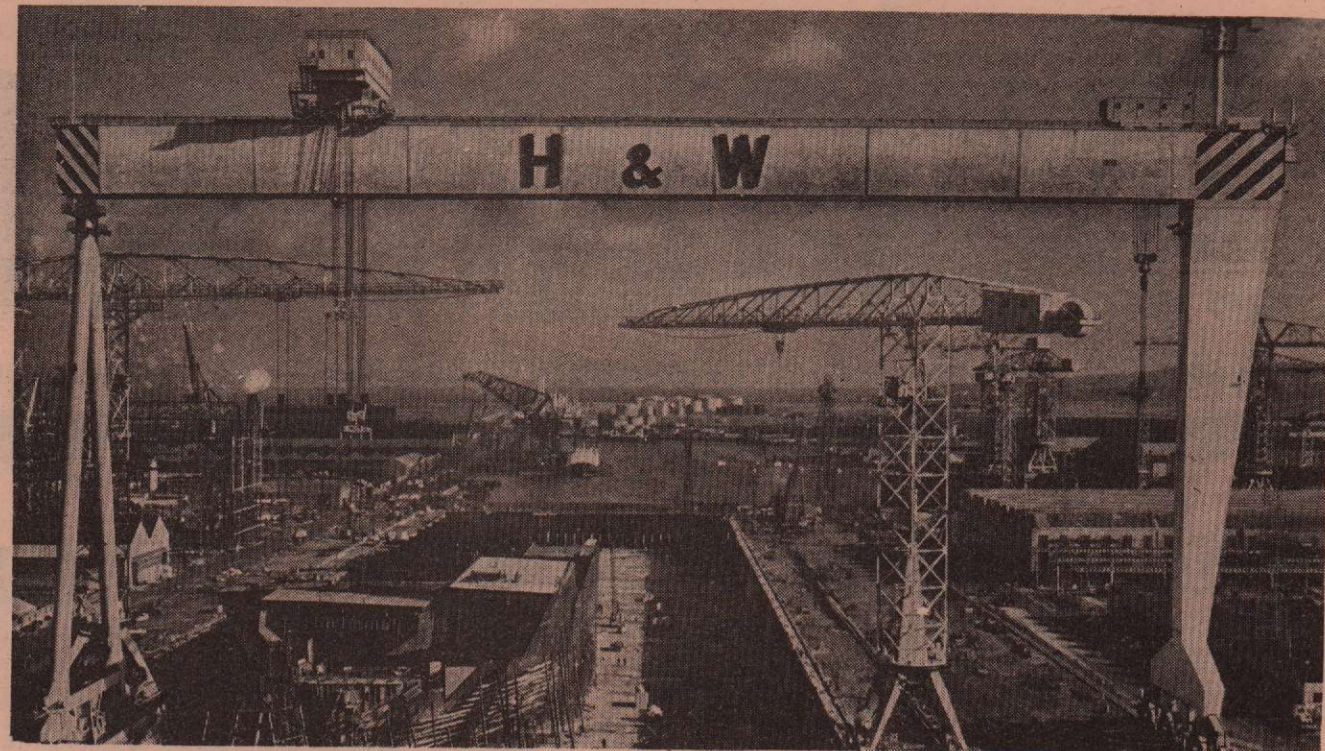
INVESTED

3. **Capital costs.** The US Lines had already matched action with words: £66m had been invested in six container ships and a further 10 costing £90m were under construction by last September. The six container ships on the Atlantic run would replace 23 large fast conventional cargo ships. Our own Ocean Steam Line has predicted that 40 fewer ships would be required on the Far East routes and at least £75m has been invested by British companies in ships, containers and land terminals.

With containers at £1000 a go, container ships from £3m, and land terminals costing £20m and more, the total costs of equipment are vast. Crane Fruehauf expects to get the lion's share of a £250m market for containers in the UK alone over the next 10 years. And United Dominions Trust offers its credit facilities for a small fee to those needing finance to get under way.

Such capital costs as these can only be met by the big companies, the smaller lines are likely to be squeezed out. Even for the massive concerns, the costs and the risks produce mergers and price and rate agreements. This process of monopolisation is politely called a 'conference system' and no one seems too worried that it represents a departure from the ideal of 'free competition' which only the small bosses and Enoch Powell love.

In Britain, the OCL and ACT consortia have been formed and, after initial hostilities, have begun to co-operate. Overseas Containers Ltd. consists of P&O, British and Commonwealth, Furness Withy and Ocean Steamship. Associated Container Transport is the offspring of Cunard,



A giant container berth nears completion in Belfast, designed to boost profits, not lighten the workers' load

Catching up with the 20th century —at the cost of dockworkers' jobs...

Ellermans, Blue Star, Ben Line and Harrisons. Between them, they've poured £75m into the container race.

These groups are quick to remind striking dockers of their patriotic duties, but conveniently forget their national interest when placing orders for new ships in Germany and Japan.

4. **Productivity and Containerisation.** Hard-headed business calculations underlie all this activity: no employer invests money without expecting a return. McMullen said: 'A container ship carries a crew bigger than a conventional vessel, while spending only one day in port compared with 5-7 days spent by conventional ships'. (Financial Times 7/9/69).

SPEED

Ships only earn money while at sea. From the bosses' point of view, time spent in loading and discharging is unprofitable. The greater the throughput, the speedier the turn-round, the richer the owners will become.

But the owners face a problem, for since they only hold pieces of paper saying 'my ship', 'my goods' and neither they nor their

legal documents do the actual work of loading and operating the machinery, they must employ workers before a single item is moved.

Stanley Turner sees these problems in the Guardian review: 'Labour is the biggest problem of all... We must not fail since in this area lies one of the most important prizes of all. The fully mechanised berth employing a small labour force of technicians offers the opportunity of introducing the new working conditions and methods of payment which are an essential step towards the ultimate goal of a streamlined, mobile and technically qualified labour force employed on staff conditions. If this is achieved, it could well

eliminate the strikes and stoppages which have been such a disastrous part of the port industry in recent years'

VICTORIAN

What the bosses are going is to change the economic basis of port work from labour-intensive to capital-intensive. Like shipping, the docks have remained Victorian in buildings and, until the Devlin Report, in relationships. The drive for modernisation was heralded by Devlin offering 'permanency in exchange for loyalty' and now the full price in terms of redundancy, closure, flexibility and mobility and shift-work are to be paid by the workers.

As in other industries where productivity deals are resisted, the press sides with the employers and the issue is presented as though Luddite wreckers are selfishly ruining Britain's chances of making a recovery and expanding exports. Unfortunately, dockers may believe what the mass media say about the car workers resisting speed-up. And car workers may believe it of the dockers.

But each knows that a deal is as good as your organisation and solidarity make it and that you struggle or go under. In this struggle between the forces of labour and capital, any division in one of them strengthens the other.

LETTERS

CP: NIT-PICKING, NOT ANSWERS

MONTY JOHNSTONE'S letter, criticising my articles on the 31st Communist Party Congress, is very much like the Congress he seeks to defend. It skates around the principled questions and subjects problems to a sort of nit-picking criticism.

He is right, however, when he says that in the first short report (20 November) I incorrectly attributed a statement on productivity bargaining actually made by Mick McGahey to Bert Ramelson. For this error I apologise to all readers. The point however is that neither McGahey nor Ramelson, both leading CP industrial spokesmen, showed more than a passing interest in a problem of central importance to industrial militants.

The Congress debate on the subject gave no lead to the party's militants or any analysis of the way to fight productivity bargaining. Fortunately these militants will not be without this lead or analysis much longer.

IS will shortly be publishing a major work on productivity bargaining and how to fight it

The important question, raised in my article, is why the CP does not have a policy on productivity? The answer I gave, and I stick by it, was that a thorough-going co-ordinated attack on this question would immediately bring the party into conflict with its own members in leading positions in the trade unions and, more importantly, with the 'left' trade union bureaucrats.

The 'mass working-class struggle, worker's power and socialist revolution' that Monty Johnstone (and apparently the Morning Star and Comment) saw at the heart of the discussion were noticeably missing from the platform speeches. The closest thing to a general analysis, in Gollan's speech, contained no mention of these things (nor did he mention immigration control—as I said in my article). Nor did they appear in the speeches from the floor.

The evasion on productivity was carried through to the debate on Czechoslovakia. The case against the Russian invasion was firmly and coherently made (among others by Monty

Johnstone), but the simple, obvious question, Why? received no attention at all. The platform and their supporters were at some pains to indicate that although they deprecated the invasion it would not alter the warm fraternal feelings they held for Russians and their Warsaw pact partners in Crime. Why?

Monty is upset by my references to the decline of the CP. But he must explain how it is that his party (he fondly imagines it to be a revolutionary organisation) at a time of rising radicalism in the working class and the youth, is alone (on the left) in suffering a declining membership, declining sub payment and declining circulation of its press.

This is not a strange historical accident, but a logical culmination of the post-1956 attempt to gain respectability by loosening the Russian leading reins without abandoning the class collaborationist policies that derived from Russian tutelage or attempting, in a marxist sense, to analyse the reasons for Stalinism.

In his concluding paragraph comrade Johnstone suggests that my report was 'designed only to confirm preconceptions of the Communist Party's so-called "tradition of class collaboration" . . . I must confess that I have not thought of the CP as a revolutionary party dedicated to the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of workers' power for some years now. Indeed it was not necessary to go to the Congress to have this confirmed.

A brief comparison of any serious revolutionary document (Communist Manifesto, What is to be Done?, State and Revolution, etc.) with the pathetic British Road to Socialism will find ample proof of the demise of the CP as a revolutionary party and its class collaborationist practice. - JIM HIGGINS, Wembley, Middlesex.

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CAPITALISM has nothing to offer mankind but exploitation, crises and war. The ruling classes of the world—a tiny minority—subordinate the needs of the vast majority to the blind accumulation of capital in the interests of competitive survival.

Imperialism condemns two-thirds of mankind to famine and calls forth movements of national liberation which shake the system and expose its essential barbarism. The constant and mounting preparations for war and the development of weapons of mass destruction place the survival of humanity itself in the balance.

The increasing intensity of international competition between ever-larger units drives the ruling classes to new attacks on workers' living standards and conditions of work, to anti-trade union and anti-strike laws. All of these show capitalism in deepening crises from which it can only hope to escape at the cost of the working class and by the destruction of all its independent organisations.

The only alternative is workers' power — the democratic collective control of the working class over industry and society through a

WHERE WE STAND

state of workers' councils and workers' control of production.

Only thus can the transition be ensured to a communist society in which the unprecedented productive forces thrown up by capitalism can be used to assure an economy of abundance. Only the working class, itself the product of capitalism, has the ability to transform society in this way, and has shown its ability to do so in a series of revolutionary struggles unprecedented in the history of all previous exploited classes.

The working class gains the experience necessary to revolutionise society by a constant struggle against the

ruling class through the mass organisations thrown up in the course of that struggle.

To overcome the unevenness with which this experience is gained, to draw and preserve the lessons of past struggles and transmit them for the future, to fight against the pressure of bourgeois ideas in the working class, and to bond the fragmentary struggles against capitalism, into a conscious and coherent offensive, a revolutionary Marxist party of socialist militants is required, embracing the vanguard of the working class.

The struggle to build such a party is only part of the wider struggle to create a World Revolutionary Socialist International, independent of all oppressors and exploiters of the working class, whether bureaucratic or bourgeois.

International Socialists therefore fight for:

Opposition to all ruling-class policies and organisations.

Workers' control over production and a workers' state.

Opposition to imperialism and support for all movements of national liberation.

Uncompromising opposition to all forms of racialism and to all migration controls.

Chaos in Italy as the militant strike wave enters its third month

from Andrea Savonuzzi

WITH TREMENDOUS courage and determination, the Italian working class is entering the third month of the wave of strikes and agitation which has thrown the country into almost complete political, administrative, economic and social chaos.

In spite of repeatedly losing more than half their pay, the strikers have not budged from their basic demands for the recognition of their new democratic organisations in the factories, the right to local negotiation, reduction of working hours to 40 a week and the upgrading of their insurance, pension and social benefits to the level of white-collar workers.

The strikes were allegedly called to 're-negotiate' wage agreements, but the only point on which the strikers have been prepared to negotiate has been the exact amount of the increases. Threats and intimidations have failed to dishearten them and have instead led to a widening of the struggle.

Now the protests include the increases in the cost of living, high rents, the chaos of urban transport, the inadequacies of the welfare state and governmental corruption. The resistance, it is rumoured, might include the withdrawal of rent, gas and electricity charges and transport fares. The struggle now is as much against the state as it is against the bosses.

Rank and file pressure

The movement has been directed by the official union apparatus only to the extent that it has accepted and advanced the genuine demands of the rank and file. This pressure from below is best illustrated by the unprecedented unity of all trade unions, (Christian Democrat, Social Democrat and Communist), an alliance which has been formed first at rank and file level and then mirrored at the top. The real leaders of the struggle have been the new factory base committees and local assemblies.

This tremendous militancy has terrified the middle classes. The killing of a policeman in Milan has given them an excuse to unleash their revenge. The mass media and some politicians, ignoring the many losses which the working-class movement has suffered at the hands of the police this year alone, now raise the spectre of red violence.

The results are clear for all to see. Fascist gangs have been active in a red witch-hunt in a number of Italian towns and the

policeman's funeral ended in Milan in what could easily have become a mass slaughter of the left.

An atmosphere of crisis has been artificially whipped up to justify political repression. The Prime Minister and the Minister of the Interior are known to have considered outlawing all extra-parliamentary opposition under a law which outlaws para-military organisation. The 17-month sentence given to Francesco Toain, editor of the weekly *Potere Operaio* (Workers Power), guilty of having printed articles that expressed solidarity with the striking workers even when they took violent action, is a clear indication of the extent of the repression.

The attempts by some armed policemen on the day of the killing to take revenge against the left, was prevented only by the use of tear gas and the intervention of a number of officers. Yet this mutiny, which could have had the gravest consequences, is treated with extreme indulgence by the state.

The Communist Party has not been slow to express its disapproval of those forces of the extreme left which it can neither control nor lead. The party has exploited these events at the same time to make it understood that the only 'guarantee' of social peace for the country is the entry of the CP into the government.

In order to offer even greater guarantees of 'responsibility' to the Italian ruling class, the CP has expelled its left group, guilty of expressing in the pages of their journal *Il Manifesto* mildly revolutionary aspirations. And yet the left-wingers posed no great threat. Their journal was highly theoretical and read only by intellectuals.

Even today, after their expulsion, the members of the *Manifesto* have not attempted to pursue the logic of their position by attempting to bring the controversy to rank and file level and create a split.

Their dialogue with the leadership will now be conducted from the outside but still in the elitist fashion of debates in the party.

The dilemma for the ruling class is a real one. The unexpected militancy of the working class has deeply shaken their preconceived ideas and strategies. Everything seems to have been thrown once more into the melting pot. Piece-meal acts of repression are engaged in while overtures are made to the CP.

The problem is that even before all sections of the ruling class had become convinced of the need to include the CP in the government, to guarantee social peace, doubts are being raised about the real extent of the CP's control over the masses.

Unfortunately, the revolutionary

Police lashing out at strikers during a recent march in Milan



forces of the left have been unable so far to make real gains. It is inevitable that most of the left groups should have been slightly pushed to the side once the mass movement had got under way. But it must be said that most of them have pursued a wrong strategy in these crucial weeks.

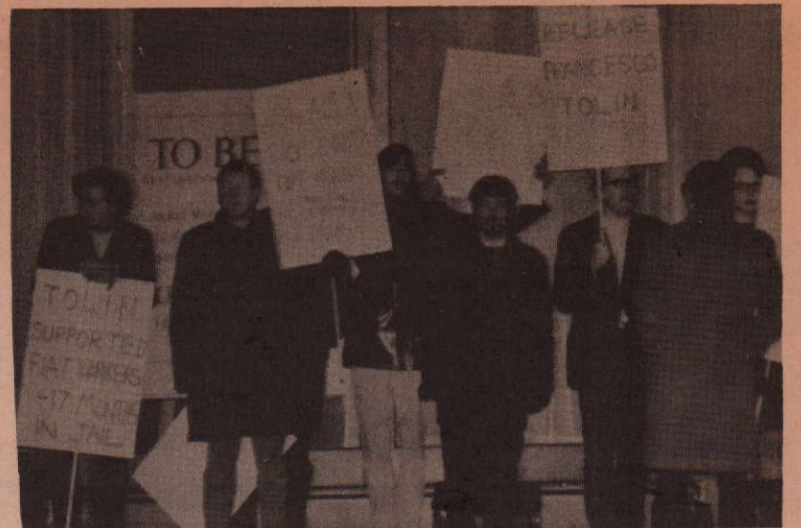
They have all been hopelessly 'far left'. The new-found unity of all trade unions, which means a diminishing of the political influence of all the traditional parties on the working masses, opened up great possibilities. The base committees and local organisations gave the revolutionary left groups a chance to introduce their strategies and perspectives into the wider movement.

Accusations of splitting

But this meant recognising the importance of the official trade unions. Most, if not all, of the left groups refused to do so. Instead of raising sets of demands for democratic control from below of the strikes and negotiations, they simply raised the utopian call for a 'revolutionary trade union'. Thus they left themselves open to accusations of splitting the working class and have effectively removed themselves from the centre of the battle.

The problem today is not the setting up of new trade unions but drawing up and fighting for a set of demands which will effectively attract around the left groups the most conscious elements in the class in a programme of internal opposition to the existing union bureaucracies.

The groups have also taken an ultra-left attitude to the police. And yet there are signs that discontent is spreading in the ranks of the police. It is true that the immediate aims of the police mutiny were attempts to smash the left. But this attitude was contradictory.



members of the International Socialists and Italian socialists living in London seen picketing the Italian embassy last Friday. They were protesting at the 17 months' jail sentence passed last week on Francesco Toain, editor of *Workers' Power*.

At one and the same time the protest was against the exploitation of the policemen themselves. The weekly paper *ABC* has printed a number of letters from policemen. Most complain about wages and conditions. Some are very explicit: 'We suffer hunger, we cannot strike, we cannot ask for our human rights we are worse than slaves... We are the first to hope for a revolution. These youths are doing too little. They should burn everything in this Italy of privilege.'

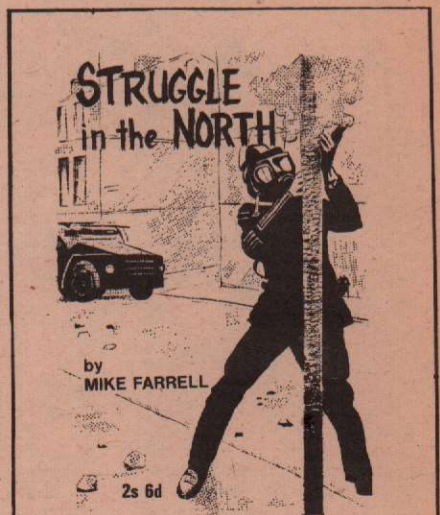
It is essential that strikers and demonstrators should differentiate between the role which policemen play and the policemen themselves. Demands for their trade union rights, higher wages, etc. should be raised but it is not done.

An even more significant proof of the failure of the left so far has been their inability to work for a serious regroupment. Some of the groups are splitting even today, at the time when the pressure of mass events should be pushing them together. This is an unhealthy sign.

The unity of the left and the rethinking of their politics is essential for any real hope of a socialist solution to the present turmoil. The situation could become very serious indeed. The present dismay of the middle class could well give way to active support for the fascist groups.

No doubt the press and television overemphasise the role of the new fascist bands to justify repression of the left and to bring the CP into the government sooner. Nevertheless, the new fascist terror does enjoy some sympathy among the middle classes.

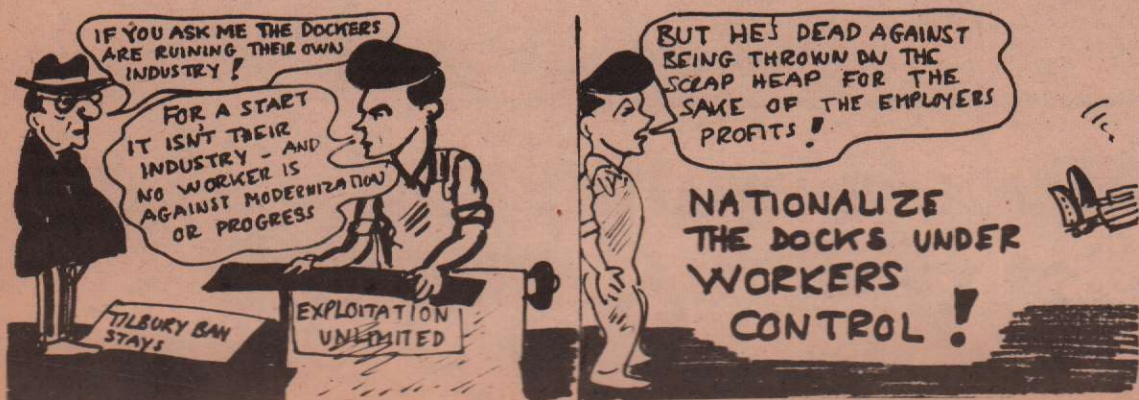
The key to the present situation lies partly with the left and partly with the economic situation. If the Italian economy should prove unable to expand at its normal rate and the present flight of capital abroad continued, a real turn to the right might well take place. Only the revolutionary left can make sure that this does not happen.



An analysis by a founding member of the militant People's Democracy movement in Northern Ireland of the country divided and dominated by British imperialism and controlled, north and south, by reactionary, anti-working class regimes. The author vividly describes the struggle for civil rights in the Six Counties. 3s post paid.

PLUTO PRESS
6 Cottons Gardens London E2.

BERT the socialist worker by TJH





IN 1910 CONNOLLY returned from the USA to a changing Ireland. Jim Larkin had been at work for three years organising the dockers, carters and other trades misnamed 'the unskilled'.

The 'new', general unions which grew in Britain after the 'matchgirls' and dockers' strikes of 1889 had been feeble in Ireland. Now labour was stirring itself again in Britain and in Ireland as well.

In Britain, where the general unions were already in the grip of self-serving officials, the labour upsurge created a rank and file 'unofficial' movement. In Ireland a 'newmodel' union was being built: the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union.

Connolly became an organiser for the ITGWU. A chastened Connolly, reflecting perhaps his experience in the American SLP, had written before leaving the USA: 'Perhaps some day there will arise a socialist writer who in his writings will live up to the spirit of the Communist Manifesto, that the socialists are not a sect, but are simply that part of the working class which pushes on all others, which most clearly understands the line of march.'

Yet he remained a 'De Leonite' in his basic conceptions; the workers must build industry-wide unions which would act together against the capitalist class. As the organisational strength and class consciousness of the workers grew it would be reflected in the ballot boxes, until finally a sort of dual power in society existed with the militant workers organising and mobilising, to confront and finally expropriate the capitalists. Should the capitalist state attempt to use repression its limbs would be paralysed by the industrial power of the workers — and bloodshed would be minimal.

THE STRENGTH

Whether the workers, once a majority wanted socialism, were to be helpless before the bosses' state, or the bosses helpless before the workers, would be determined by the industrial strength and cohesiveness of labour.

Both Connolly and Larkin saw their trade union work — and the ITGWU itself — in this revolutionary light. Connolly became a member of the Socialist Party of Ireland, the successor of the ISRP, as the other plane of the labour army they were mobilising.

As ITGWU organiser in Belfast from 1911 Connolly came up against the division in the working class which is still rampant today. In 1907 Larkin had allied with Protestant radicals (who had split from the Orange Order to form the Independent Orange Institute) and had briefly succeeded in uniting Catholic and Protestant workers in Belfast. But the rising wave of anti-Home Rule agitation (during which the original Ulster Volunteers were organised) swamped what was a promising beginning of class unity. Connolly got to the heart of the problem when he wrote, in 1913:

'Let the truth be told, however ugly. Here the Orange working class are slaves in spirit because they have been reared up among a people whose conditions of servitude were more slavish than their own. In Catholic Ireland the working class are rebels in spirit and democratic in feeling because for hundreds of years they have found no class as lowly paid or badly treated as themselves. At one time in the industrial world of Great Britain and Ireland the skilled labourer looked down with contempt upon the unskilled and bitterly resented his attempt to get his children taught any of the skilled trades; the feeling of the Orangemen of Ireland toward the Catholics is but a glorified representation on a big stage of the same unworthy motives.'

Connolly looked to a future unity of all Irish workers in struggle against capitalism for the Workers' Republic — a unity which was to be postponed more than 50 years by the grip the British Empire kept on Ireland with partitions its weapon and the Irish capitalist class, North and South, as its

James Connolly

Irish revolutionary/by Sean Matgamna



garrison. In their movement the North and South will again clasp hands, again it will be demonstrated as in '98 (1798) that the pressure of a common exploitation can make enthusiastic rebels out of a Protestant working class, earnest champions of civil and religious liberty out of Catholics and out of both a united socialist democracy.

In contrast with the North, the workers in the South, led by Larkin were making big advances. The standard of living of the newly organised rose substantially, so did their self-confidence. They had found a new weapon — class solidarity. No trade, no workplace was isolated in its struggle. The policy of sympathetic strike action was applied by the union with tremendous success.

And of course the employers hit back. Led by William Martin Murphy 400 Dublin employers organised to break the union. The famous Dublin Labour War of 1913 followed. Those workers who refused to sign a document repudiating the union were locked out. But all the union's members stood firm.

For eight months the bitter war dragged on. Before it ended strikers had been bated to death by police, Larkin and Connolly (recalled from Belfast to help) had been arrested and the Citizen Army, the strikers' militia that grew to be the first Red Army in Europe, had been organised to fight back against the cops.

After eight months the labour war ended. The workers were not defeated — the union remained intact. But it was not a victory either: after that the union was more cautious and less able to bring full pressure to bear on the bosses. Connolly blamed the semi-defeat on the isolation of Dublin — on the fact that the British trade unions had merely given financial help while withholding the decisive aid of direct industrial action which they had in their power to give. This failure of solidarity was a big blow to Connolly.

However, as late as November 1913 he had written: 'We are told that the English people contributed their help to our enslavement. It is true. It is also true that the Irish people contributed soldiers to crush every democratic movement of the English people... Slaves themselves, the English helped to enslave others; slaves themselves, the Irish helped to enslave others. There is no room for recrimination.'

But after the strike Connolly had less confidence in the immediate revolutionary potential of the English workers, seeing them, correctly, as tied too tightly to their imperialist ruling class. The support of the British labour movement for the 1914 war reinforced him in this bitter conclusion.

With the end of the strike in 1914 Larkin went to the USA (where he remained until 1923) and Connolly took charge of the union and the task of rebuilding its strength and confidence. And the Citizen Army was maintained and strengthened as labour's independent armed force. This was made possible by the fact that the northern Unionists and

the Green Tories also had their 'private' militias: the Ulster Volunteers and the Irish Volunteers.

When the English Liberals and the Irish Home Rule Tories, in face of a virtual rebellion by the Unionists and their Ulster Volunteers, agreed to the partition of Ireland, Connolly wrote the most tragically prophetic words he ever penned:

'The proposal to leave a Home Rule minority at the mercy of an ignorant majority with the evil record of the Orange Party is a proposal that should never have been made, and... the establishment of such a scheme should be resisted with armed force if necessary... Filled with the belief that they were after defeating the imperialist government and the Nationalists combined, the Orangemen would have scant regards for the rights of the minority left at its mercy.'

'Such a scheme would destroy the labour movement by disrupting it. It would perpetuate in a form aggravated in evil the discords now prevalent and help the Home Rule and Orange capitalists and clerics to keep their rallying cries before the public as the political watchwords of the day. In short, it would make division more intense and confusion of ideas and parties more confounded.'

THE TORCH

With the outbreak of war the issue was shelved 'for the duration' and the Home Rulers became recruiting agents for Britain. Their Irish Volunteers split, with a minority adopting a revolutionary nationalist stand.

Connolly now recalled — publicly — the Irish truism that Ireland could only hope for a successful rebellion against Britain while Britain was at war. And he vowed not to miss the chance to strike at the Empire. In August 1914, to avert the expected threat of a wartime famine, of high prices in the towns, he advocated guerrilla resistance, strikes and sabotage to keep enough food in Ireland to feed the people.

The article (Our Duty in this Crisis) ended on a note which showed that he did not see it as merely an Irish struggle: '... starting thus, Ireland may yet set the torch to a European conflagration that will not burn out until the last throne and the last capitalist bond and debenture will be shrivelled on the funeral pyre of the last war lord.'

He began to plan an insurrection. After initial conflict, an alliance was entered into with the nationalist volunteers of Padraig Pearse. (The Communist International was later, in 1920, to encourage communists in countries where genuinely revolutionary nationalists existed to join with them — 'to strike together, while marching separately'. Connolly's well known remark to some Citizen Army men before the Rising — 'The odds are a thousand to one against us but in the event of victory hold onto your rifles as those with whom we are fighting may stop

Pictured above: flag of the republic that flew from the Dublin Post Office at Easter 1916 and British troops occupying a 'rebel' barricade

before our goal is reached — snobs he had a similar conception to the International.

As early as 1910 Connolly had come close to an understanding of the process of permanent revolution. In his foreword to his book Labour in Irish History he wrote: 'In the evolution of civilisation the progress of the fight for national liberty of any subject nation must, perforce, keep pace with the struggle for liberty of the most subject class in that nation and that the shifting of economic and political forces which accompanies the development of the system of capitalist society leads inevitably to the increasing conservatism of the non-working class elements and to the revolutionary vigour and power of the working class.' The



Padraig Pearse

Irish bourgeoisie '... have a thousand economic strings in the shape of investments binding them to English capitalism... only the Irish working class remain as the incorruptible inheritors of the fight for freedom in Ireland.'

If Irish labour between 1916 and 1923 had adopted this perspective, maintained its political independence and fought for its own class goals, then history could have taken a very different turn. To examine why it didn't is to explore the great weakness of Connolly: the inadequacy of his understanding of the organisation needed to fight for socialism.

He had understood that labour's real strength is industrial. But he had lost sight of, or perhaps never fully grasped, the fact that the potential social strength of labour, however militant on economic issues, would only be real to the degree that it was ideologically prepared: and in turn that this must be expressed in a political organisation, which knew its own mind, a party like Lenin's party.

Connolly's SPI was (until its old leaders were expelled and it

was reorganised as the Communist Party of Ireland in 1921) an old fashioned and ramshackle affair, over-recoiling from De Leonite 'purism'. The compromisers, the Lib/Labs, the 'mensheviks', were not outside it, looking in — some of them were its leaders, as they were also of the ITGWU.

In the post 1916 period they set themselves up as a bureaucracy within the ITGWU, and betrayed socialism by timidly trailing after the bourgeois leaders who has seized control of the national struggle.

This was the flaw in Connolly's design. Not seeing it, he felt no inhibitions. Relentlessly he pressed for an armed rising, outdaring even the nationalist idealists around Pearse.

In 1910, in Labour in Irish History, Connolly had told the endless story of the lost chances and the botched risings, that succeeded each other like monotonous days of mourning and depression in Irish history. Bitterly he wrote — and the bitterness attested to his determination to do better himself it the chance came.

Nor did he believe there was such a thing as a ripe revolutionary situation. Revolutionary action would make it ripe: 'An epoch to be truly revolutionary must have a dominating number of men with the revolutionary spirit — ready to dare all and take all risks for the sake of their ideas... Revolutionaries who shrink from giving blow for blow until the great day has arrived and they have every shoe-string in its place and every man has got his gun and the enemy has kindly consented to postpone action in order not to needlessly hurry the revolutionaries nor disarray their plans — such revolutionaries only exist in two places: on the comic opera stage and on the stage of Irish national politics' (November 1915).

The plan finally agreed on was for simultaneous risings in a number of areas. But at the eleventh hour the titular head of the Volunteers called of the Easter Sunday manoeuvres, which were planned as a cover for the rising.

Faced with this catastrophe, expecting that European peace, believing that European peace was imminent and that, through their failure to act, Ireland would miss the chance of an independent voice at the coming peace conference, the leaders in Dublin had to make their choice.

THE CHOICE

In 1914, Connolly had indicated what his choice would be in such a situation. He had written: 'Even an unsuccessful attempt at socialist revolution by force of arms, following the paralysis of the economic life by militarism, would be less disastrous to the socialist cause than the act of socialists allowing themselves to be used in the slaughter of their brothers.'

On Easter Sunday 1916 their choice lay between one kind of defeat or another. Either a defeat in battle, that might help rouse the forces for a new struggle. Or defeat without a fight, which would bring discouragement and demoralisation in its wake as so often before in Irish history.

Connolly and Pearse decided to fight. They went out to try to start that fire Connolly had written about at the outbreak of the war.

But today, the bonds and debentures, the capitalists and their war lords, still exist. In Ireland they rule — for themselves and also for British capitalism. 'Connolly' has been made part of their canon. His name is that of a national hero, while his ideas are either suppressed or heavily toned down.

For us, living in Britain where the labour movement has only begun to emerge from stagnation and where the worst pedants still pass for the best revolutionaries, Connolly can be a bridge between ourselves and the only real tradition of revolutionary action in the British Isles. It is as vital for British revolutionaries to link up, however critically, with this tradition as it is with the combatants of the 'Third World' epitomised by the heroic figure of Che Guevara and by the unconquerable people of Vietnam.

South Africa's brutal, racist tyrannical

Don't miss this important article next week on the eve of the Springbok Twickenham match

Depressed areas: how Labour subsidises bosses

by Dave Peers

SINCE THE LATE 1950s, when the long post-war boom began to run out of steam, the problem of the depressed areas has re-emerged. In the slump of the 1930s the main burden of unemployment fell on the industries thrown up by the Industrial Revolution of the last century: on the coalfields of Northern England, South Wales and Scotland steel, shipbuilding, textiles, heavy engineering.

Now the same pattern has re-asserted itself and for the last ten years the unemployment rates in these centres of declining industry have stubbornly remained at double the national average.

This has happened in spite of impressive outpourings of government money, numberless committees, fact-finding missions and plans, not to mention a variety of public relations artists and comedians ranging from Quintin Hogg in cloth cap to 'Mr Newcastle' - ex-Trotskyist Dan Smith.

The problems of areas of high unemployment in the midst of general prosperity is not unique to Britain: France, Italy, Belgium and the USA all have similar areas and have had no more success than successive British governments. If anything, the problem is getting steadily worse, for this is part of a general crisis of capitalism and the fringe areas are feeling the pinch first.

This year the government will have spent more than £250 millions in aid to the development areas (last year it was £156m), over and above normal road building programmes and the like. All of this money goes as a direct subsidy to the profits of firms located there.

Outdoor relief

There is no evidence to suggest that costs of production are any higher in these regions. In a small country like Britain, transport costs are not influential and even where distance from major markets may add a fraction onto transport charges, it is more than compensated by low land prices, rents and wages.

This outdoor relief to Northern capitalists makes the Queen's dole of £9000 a week look positively stingy. It is made up of the following elements:

Investment grants of 45 per cent on new plant and machinery (£85m last year).

Employment premiums of 37s6d per week per man employed (£100m).

Advance factories - two years rent free in some cases - building grants of 25-35 per cent, and loans (£50m).

And training grants of £10 per week for men and £100 a year for apprentices (£3m).

As this money is largely raised in general taxation it represents a direct subsidy to the bosses from wage and salary earners. What they do with the money is anyone's guess.

As Jeremy Bray pointed out in a recent speech in the Commons, it would be cheaper, and certainly more useful to pension off redundant miners to the South of France. A firm like ICI has received £106m in investment grants alone in the last three years - without increasing its labour force by a single worker!

In fact the majority of the £55m of government aid to the Northern Region last year went to the chemical, oil and steel industries. Not only are these industries already highly capital-intensive, but the effect of the government investment subsidies is to make it cheaper for them to invest in even more labour saving machinery, thereby reducing job opportunities in the area.

Repel new jobs

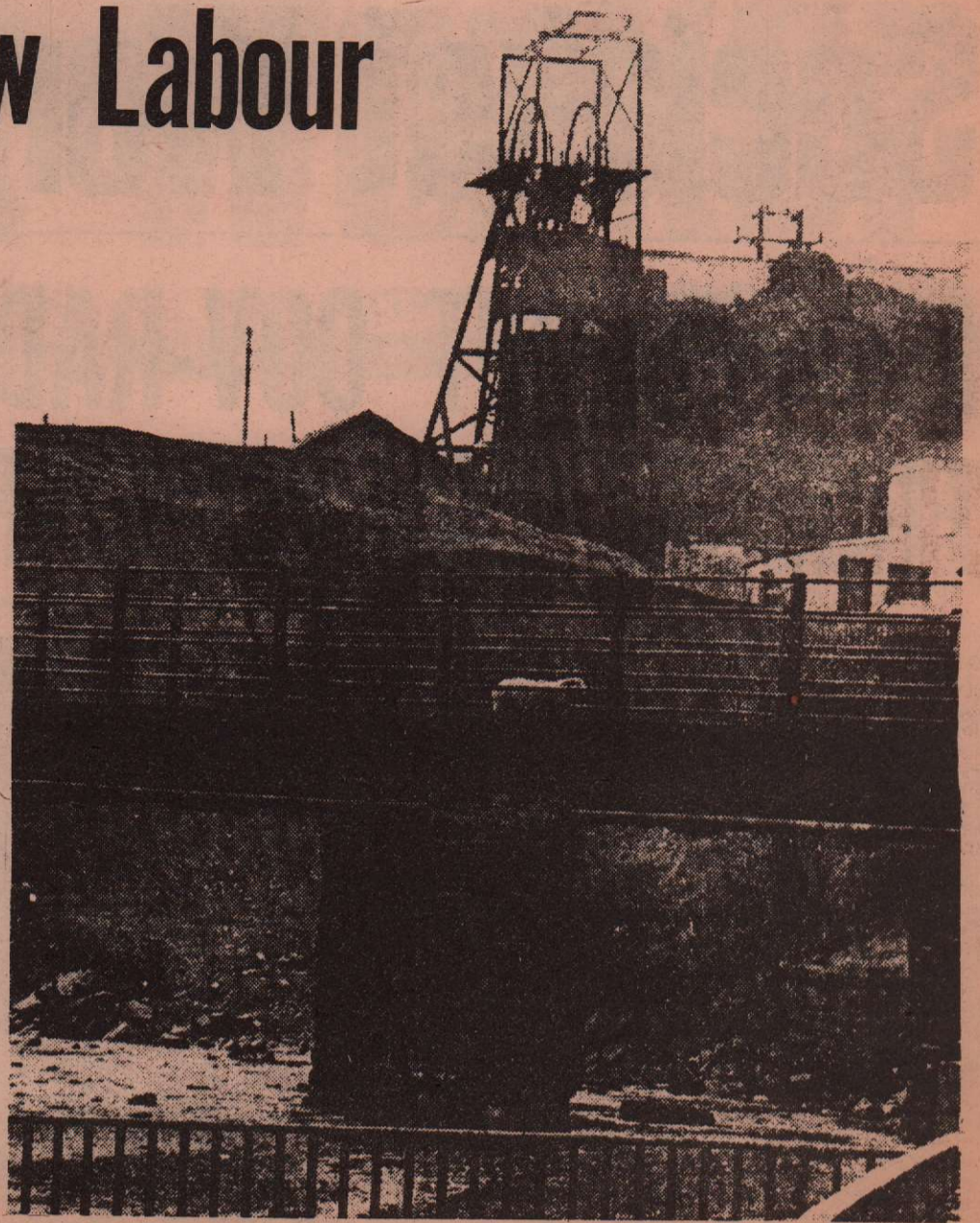
Nor is there any evidence to support the widely-held belief that such industries attract other, more labour-intensive firms. Not only do oil refineries, chemical plants, steel mills and aluminium smelters poison the immediate environment with industrial pollution, but their relatively high wage rates also repel fellow capitalists.

Nevertheless this gravy from the state does attract firms to the development areas, and no doubt prevents a lot of existing businesses from going to the wall. But it is not enough to stem the rundown. Nor is this surprising, for while the government pumps in funds with one hand, it speeds up the basic forces which cause the rundown with the other.

Harold Wilson's 'white-hot technological revolution' that he promised in 1964 has boiled down to state-aided rationalisation (and, where the returns are doubtful, nationalisation) of British industry into the large scale units that can survive in the intense competition of the world market. An inevitable part of this strategy is the wholesale slaughter of declining industries.

Since 1964 employment for the country as a whole has declined slightly while industrial production has increased some 20 per cent. In the Northern Region there are now 66,000 fewer jobs than when Labour came to power - despite the net loss of over 30,000 people through migration. For men the situation is even more desperate; a decline of 20,000 jobs in 12 months, and in black spots-like Sunderland there are 82 unemployed for every vacancy.

Behind the statistics is the human



The mining valleys die - and the jobs die with them

material that capitalism wastes so extravagantly - tens of thousands of ex-miners who know they will never get another job because of age or disablement, spending their days looking for weeds in their immaculate allotments, watching the racing every afternoon on the telly or just hanging around.

At the same time and in the same area, there are shortages of certain types of skilled workers such as boiler-makers. However, this contrast is not lost on the government - 'an important

observation is that the increased unemployment of 1967-68 does not, as could have been feared, seem to have provoked resistance to productivity measures.' (Employment and Productivity Gazette, August 1969 p724).

That was just before the miners' strike. As the problems and the contradictions within the declining regions intensify the resistance will become more determined and more widespread, and the government can expect some more unpleasant surprises.

Join the International Socialists

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ANGEL Barry Huggill
154 Downham Road N1
ASHFORD Phil Evans 'Eastside'
Ham St W Ashford Kent
BARNSELEY Joe Kenyon
120 Standhill Crescent
BATH John Whitfield
17 Burlington Road
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9 Alton Gardens Copers Cope Rd
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BIRMINGHAM Godfrey Webster
128 Yardley Wood Rd B'm 13
BRADFORD Neil Patterson
25 Fernhill Grove off Park Rd
BRIGHTON Andrew Moir
c/o 2 Montpelier Road
BRISTOL B R Horlock
26 Elm Dale Road Bristol 8
CAMBRIDGE Tony Needham
12a Metcalfe Road
CAMDEN EAST Richard Kuper
45 Falkland Rd NW5
CAMDEN WEST Robert MacGibbon
22 Estell Rd NW8
CARDIFF Nigel Walby
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COLCHESTER Ian Noble
12 Coach Rd Arlesford
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Street Glasgow SW1
GRAYS & TILBURY Alf Waters
c/o 1 Russell Rd Tilbury Essex
HAMPSTEAD Chris Barker
36 Gilden Road NW5
HARLOW Hugh Kerr
70 Joiners Field Harlow Essex
HARROW Kevin Simms
56 Salisbury Road
HAVERING Terry Ward
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HEMEL HEMPSTEAD John
Barrett 20 Belswaines Lane
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SHEFFIELD Rick Osborn
159a Rustlings Rd Sheffield
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STOKE NEWINGTON Mike
McGrath 28 Manor Road N16
SWANSEA Dick Jones
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72 Mersey Rd Redcar:
Rob Clay 33 Pasture Lane
Lazenby Teesside
TOTTENHAM Laurie Flynn
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WANDSWORTH Mark Hutton
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Wandsworth Common SW17
WATFORD Paul Russell
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34 Whiteside Ave Hindley
YORK Bob Looker 22 Hobgate
VICTORIA Tony Dunne
14 Carlisle Mansions
Carlisle Place SW1

OBITUARY

Carron - the noble knight

by Geoff Carlsson

WILLIAM CARRON, ex-president of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, died last week with most of his life's work unfulfilled, although his influence still dominates the thinking of many of his colleagues in the trade union hierarchy.

He above all typified the 'respectable' trade unionist. His loyalty to the Labour government, combined with an ability to understand the employers' problems, were his greatest attributes. His unswerving hostility to militants who fought to improve their standards of living was appreciated and rewarded by the bosses and their servants who hold political office.

In 1963, he was appointed a Director of the Bank of England and in the same year Her Majesty graciously knighted him for his services to trade unionism. (Who better qualified to judge these services than the Queen, who has herself lodged a claim for a considerable increase, though no unofficial action is yet contemplated by her.)

As a reward for 'his conspicuous work within the church and constant witness to Roman Catholic principles in everyday life' that other great judge of trade unionists, the Pope, appointed Sir William a Knight of the Order of Chivalry of St Gregory the Great. Many other honours were accorded him, culminating in perhaps the most apt for a working-class 'champion' - a life peerage in 1967 allowing him to take his place in the Upper Chamber where so many anti-union decisions have been passed.

He was outspoken against opponents. 'Saboteurs' was his term for those who

he likened them to 'werewolves who are rushing madly towards industrial ruin and howling delightedly at the foam on their muzzles.'

He constantly tried (not without some success) to destroy the democratic structure of the AEU, to lengthen the term of office of officials, and to have others appointed instead of being subject to election. At the Labour Party Conference he frequently ignored the decisions of the union's policy-making body and cast the vote of 800,000 members contrary to union conference decisions. He blatantly described such action as 'Carron's Law'. In his blind hatred of Communism, Carron was quite prepared to use the same Stalinist methods which he so vociferously opposed.

Carron is dead. The opponents of the Incomes Policy have multiplied and those who support the 'werewolf' policy of 'do it yourself' to improve wages and conditions have increased considerably. It would seem that workers now place more reliance on their own actions than allowing noble Lords and bankers to handle their problems. It is the finest answer that can be given to those officials inside the AEF and other unions who aspire to follow the example of Sir William.

He will be missed by those who look for a paradise in the next world. For those who are concerned with building a better life now, let it be remembered that Carron's Law still holds good for many who still hold office within the trade unions.

Geoff Carlsson is a member of the AEF.

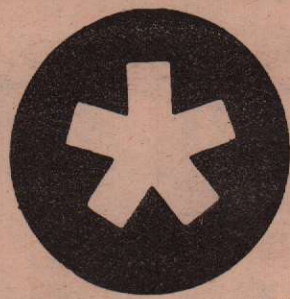


Please send further details of the meetings and activities of the International Socialists to:

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Socialist Worker



WHAT WE THINK

LOCKED OUT COV-RAD MEN FIRM AS LAY-OFFS SPREAD

by Chris Ryan

COVENTRY:— To a barrage of abuse from the Birmingham Post and the Coventry Evening Telegraph, the 200 workers at Coventry Radiators who have been locked out of the factory for three weeks have decided to stand their ground.

In a letter, the firm, a major supplier to the car industry, asked the workers not to turn the factory into a battle ground of either right or left—this from a company reputed to donate to the extreme right Common Cause.

The workers' case is clear. They were sent home for working to the company's standard rate of production on disputed jobs. Convenor George Anderson says: "The management's punitive action in sending the men home at midnight was not only brutal but was flouting procedure in an attempt to force the men to agree to unacceptable terms."

The main grievance over work rates is considered by the bosses to be a 'red herring'. They argue that 200 men, a few weeks from Christmas, with children posting letters asking for bikes and dolls, are just expressing 'a grievance' over being sent home in the middle of the nightshift three weeks ago.

This action comes at a

time when Cov-Rads have taken over London Aluminium and are preparing to bring in the extra machines they have acquired at a lower rate per job. Management attempted to isolate the newly elected convenor over a skirmish on the interpretation of the negotiated agreement.

The men answered with such a show of unity that the bosses have had to resort to crude, old-fashioned 'reds under the beds' witch-hunting.

FORCED

The dispute has already forced Standard-Triumph to lay off 150 men. Automotive Products is 'assessing the position' and it is possible that some Rootes lines could soon be affected. The men are prepared to stand firm because they realise that if they give way on this issue then the management will drive the press operators and the factory as a whole to the wall and pick them off like flies.

The University of Warwick and Manchester College of Technology have passed motions of support and made collections on behalf of the Cov-Rad men.

Donations and messages of support should be sent to: The Secretary, Cov-Rad Lock-out committee, 7 Norwood Grove, Potters Green, Coventry.



A section of last Saturday's march

1000 march in Devon to back turbine strikers

by Granville Williams

AN IMPRESSIVE march through Newton Abbot in Devon was staged on Saturday by 1000 trade unionists, students and Young Socialists. They were expressing solidarity with the four-week old strike of workers from the Centrax plants at Newton Abbot, Exeter and Heathfield.

The South West has for a long time been an area for low wages. Centrax came to Devon in 1955 and the work produced — turbine blades, axles and generator sets — requires a trained, skilled labour force.

Unions were accepted at Centrax only three years ago. Negotiations have been going on for 18 months to bring wages up to the same level as the Bristol area, which will involve 4s an hour rise.

The management claim that the average wage is £19 10s but this is wildly inflated. Pay slips show that lower-paid workers go home with as little as £9 10s for 40 hours and operators take home a basic £12 plus bonus which does not average more than 30s a week.

Dave Ferguson, chairman of the strike committee said: "The strike is for this substantial wage increase right across the board."

The management proposed a productivity deal in an attempt to end the strike in their favour. The Centrax strikers burnt the letters containing the proposals. Dave Ferguson commented: "We don't want any airy-fairy promises of average bonuses, we want a decent basic wage. Eight unions at Centrax

CORRECTION

We regret that incorrect figures for the decline in the dock labour force were given last week. They should have been: 19.9.67: dockers 18,464, Lightermen 2817; 29.10.68: 17,068, 2567; 7.1.69: 16,568, 2559; 28.10.69: 14,777, 2117.

'Local issue'

The NUHKW has done nothing except 'negotiate'. They have considered it to be a purely local issue and refused to recognise that the sackings can only be fought by involving the other Pex factories in the south.

As long as the struggles are isolated in small factories in areas of high unemployment then the management are bound to win.

The sacked men realise that they cannot fight simply on the issue of getting their own jobs back. They know that the problem is of ending unemployment in the under-developed areas. On a march through Durham last Saturday, with other unemployed workers and students, the main slogan was 'We want jobs in the North East. Now!'

* Depressed areas: see page 5

Hosiery firm sacks 22 sit-in strikers

by Pete Gillard

BRANDON, Co Durham:— 22 men from Pex stockings factory have been made redundant after staging a factory sit-in last week.

The men, members of the Hosiery Workers' Union (NUHKW), were protesting against the decision to close down the trimmers' section. The management's response to the protest was to sack the men immediately, instead of phasing out the redundancies.

Pex came to Brandon less

Engineers out for 3 weeks

LEEDS:— 500 engineering workers are in the third week of their strike at Vickers-Crabtree printing machinery works. The men stopped work over the method of bringing in the second phase of the national engineering wages agreement negotiated by the AEF.

The men want the full 25s a week due to them under the agreement. This would increase their pay packet from £15 to £16 5s. But the management want the extra cash to come from bonus pay and have offered only 6s more on the basic rate.

The strike was made official last week. Donations to the strike fund to: D Bridgemount, Treasurer, Crabtree Strike Fund, 15 Garnet Terrace, Leeds 11.

NOTICES

MANCHESTER: Demonstrate against Pinkville massacre, Sat 13 December, 1pm. March starts Albert Sq to University Union where meeting will inaugurate VSC branch.

ERITH: Demonstrate against all aspects of Powellism, Fri 19 Dec meet 6pm Sidcup Stn. March to Marlows rooms where Powell will speak. Followed by counter-meeting.

WANDSWORTH: Demonstrate against National Front councillors at Wandsworth Town Hall, Wandsworth High St, 6.45pm 16 Dec. Bring banners and posters.

LAST WEEK'S COMMON MARKET summit meeting reopens the possibility of Britain joining the European Community. Wilson and the Confederation of British Industries are still being cautious. But what does it mean to British workers?

In spite of the objections of some sections of the ruling class, the long-term expansion of the Common Market is in the interests of Western European capitalism. Modern industry needs bigger markets; it needs more international co-operation in research.

Many people on the left would like us to campaign against British entry. Some tell us about the 'national interest'. We've heard that phrase before, used to justify wage freeze. We simply reply 'whose interest?' Others talk about 'loss of independence'. After five years of boot-licking support for American foreign policy, we can hardly take that seriously.

Ruling class problems

Much more important is the argument that Common Market entry means rising prices. Maybe those 'left' MPs who are so concerned about our pockets haven't noticed — we've got rising prices already. We'd be more convinced if they were leading a campaign against price and rent increases here and now.

In or out of Europe, the ruling class will try to solve its problems at the workers' expense. In or out of Europe, our first task is to fight to defend workers' conditions.

Europe isn't the private property of sleek politicians like Brandt and Pompidou. There's another Europe — the Europe of 10 million French workers who occupied the factories last year. The Europe of Fiat workers, of West German trade unionists rapidly learning militancy.

Chance of alliance

In many fields, notably paid holidays, these workers have won conditions way ahead of British workers. They offer us not just an example but the possibility of alliance.

We must explore every opportunity of bringing together workers of different countries, especially those in the same industries and big international companies. International trade union contacts must be more than an excuse for expense account trips abroad by bureaucrats. This is our road ahead, a road that leads to a United Socialist Europe.

BRITISH RAIL SACK TWO MILITANTS

ASHFORD, Kent:— Two militant workers at the local British Rail works have been sacked in a bid to break the rising tide of militancy there. The official excuse for the sackings was 'persistent lateness and absenteeism'.

But the two workers, Andrew McConnell and Phil Evans, both qualified welders, have not been less punctual than most other workers.

The decision to sack the two men is not unconnected with the fact that both were on the editorial committee of a works broadsheet called The Rocket. The paper not only accused the union

officials of selling out the workers and called the officials 'bosses men', but also dared to attack the management, suggesting that they were guilty of being interested only in sheer profiteering.

The two sacked men are appealing against this arbitrary decision. But they are unlikely to win their appeal unless the management is given some kind of indication of the feeling that has been aroused in the works over this victimisation. Workers should consider the possible effect of one-day strike action.

Ford pay offer move to stop militant action

by Jim Lamborn

WORKERS at the 22 plants of the Ford car empire were left in a state of bewilderment after Bob Ramsey, chief Ford negotiator, gave his reply to the unions' claim for parity of wages with the Midlands at the last national negotiating committee meeting.

He ignored the claims for mutuality and the request for abolition of the penalty clauses that seek to fire workers for unofficial strike action. He painted a pitiful picture of Ford struggling against European and Japanese competition and proudly announced that Ford workers did so much overtime and shift work that it brought their average hourly rate to 13s 7½d.

No mention

The fact which Mr Ramsey did not dispute is that most of his production workers are on an hourly rate of 10s 6½d. Not only did he not dispute it, he did not even mention it.

Mr Ramsey dwelt very fully on the fact that there was short-time working at Rootes' plants and other motor factories and he

blazoned Ford as the champions of full-time working.

One wonders if the point really escaped him that the Rootes' production worker on 17s 5d at Ryton or 16s 11d at Stoke earns more for his four days than the Ford worker earns in a full week.

It was agreed to meet again on 23 January after the union side had considered Ramsey's reply. On this date Ford has promised to make an increased wage offer but the date for the introduction of the increase will have to be negotiated separately.

This choice of date, which seems to have been agreed by both sides, is designed to take the steam out of rank and file action. There is a long-standing commitment to a meeting on 18 January of all shop stewards to decide on appropriate action if their wage demands are not met.

If Ford's make any offer that is not completely derisory it will necessitate another meeting of the negotiating committee, so that the rank and file can either accept or reject the offer. But so far there are no plans to postpone the 18 January meeting.

There have already been stewards' meetings at both Dagenham and Halewood where resolutions have emphasised the solidarity of the workers and their determination to succeed in winning equal rates with the Midlands. Whether Ford can avoid a showdown will be seen in January.

Message

The workers, disillusioned after decades of betrayal by full-time officials, remember the words of some of the officials at the Dagenham meeting of 23 November. 'Forget the past, look to the future' was the message from the platform from those who had been parties to previous Ford fiascos.

The Ford worker is looking and with two adjournments of talks and a wage offer without an effective date, the picture of the future looks very similar to that of the past.

It is clear that leadership must again come from the shop stewards and in the Ford empire it is becoming noticeable that the drive and initiative in the workers' struggle is passing from Dagenham to Halewood.