

Socialist Worker

FOR WORKERS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

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NURSES

Strike action by key workers needed to win living wage for hospital staff

by Richard Kuper

THE NURSES' DEMANDS for a living wage and decent working conditions should be supported to the hilt by every section of the labour and trade union movement.

Strike action by key groups of workers in support of the claim would ram home to the government the disgust felt by the great mass of people over the way the nurses' dedication is abused by the hospital authorities.

A first-year student's wage is £7 a week for 42 hours, rising to £8 at 21 years or in the third year of training. A qualified state registered nurse gets £13 a week for a 10 or 12 hour day.

We all know through personal experience or through visiting friends and relatives in hospital just how crucial the nurses are to our general welfare. To give them a substantial pay increase would be the minimum recognition of their importance.

Their conditions spotlight once again the twisted values of our society and its failure to meet the basic needs of workers such as nurses, teachers, dustmen and firemen who provide essential services for all of us.

Decay of Health Service

The capitalist system downgrades the people's needs to the demands of private property and production for profit. This is seen most clearly in the decay of the National Health Service in the last 20 years.

Aneurin Bevan's post-war plans included many of the deepest desires of the socialist movement in Britain when free health was introduced. But what Bevan never realised was the impossibility of maintaining such a small island of socialism in a hostile capitalist society. Private medical and pension schemes have eaten away at the system Bevan built, egged on by successive governments that have starved the health service of vitally needed funds for improvement and expansion.

Workers in essential services such as the hospitals have been super-exploited. Their dedication to serving society is used as an excuse for paying them starvation wages. They find it very difficult to organise effectively and come under unbearable moral pressure when they consider strike action, for no nurse can lightly contemplate withdrawing her labour from the over-crowded and under-staffed hospital wards.

Other workers must take up their fight. Every trade union branch should send messages of support and financial aid to the nurses. Any section of the working class that takes militant action in support of the nurses would have a tremendous morale-boosting effect. If any group of car workers or dockers or engineering workers downed tools for half a day in sympathy, it would both cut through the isolation of the nurses and show the Labour government that they can't pick off sections of the working class one by one.

Something to fight for

The British labour movement is rediscovering its class solidarity. The strike by all miners in support of lower-paid surface workers was a stirring example of this. Strike action for the nurses would show that our idea of socialism, a decent, humane society, is something we will fight for.

Such a move could go along way towards uniting the working class and making it aware of the power of its actions and its ideas. At one and the same time, it would bring to everyone's attention the social values for which socialists are willing to fight and it would serve as a clear warning to those in power who exploit others that they do so at their peril, and will not get away with it for one moment longer than we are able.

It is asking a lot of any section of the working class to come out in sympathetic action with the nurses. The sacrifices imposed in our own struggles are difficult enough to bear. Yet if we can't support the weakest sections of the working class, who will? And if we don't, are our own struggles really worthwhile?

'RAISE THE ROOF' CAMPAIGN

THE 'Raise the Roof' campaign organised by the City Memorial Hall, Thursday, 29 January, 7.30pm. For further details of the campaign by hospital workers contact Jack Sutton, 11a Rowan Avenue, Manchester 16

Support the Black Panthers

IN AMERICA the Nixon regime that is responsible for the mass slaughter in Vietnam is now systematically attempting to wipe out the militant Black Panther Party at home.

In recent raids by heavily-armed police in Los Angeles and Chicago, Panthers have been killed or wounded as they fought back against a hail of bullets.

On page 4 of this issue, Socialist Worker prints an important article from American International Socialist David Friedman on the repression against the socialist movement.

In Britain, maximum solidarity must be organised for the courageous Panthers. Send your messages of support NOW to: Minister of Information, Black Panther Party, Box 2967, Custom House, San Francisco, Ca. 94126.

More school strikes

AFTER the breakdown of talks on Monday, the National Union of Teachers announced that it would levy all its members £1 a month in preparation for a new wave of strike action early in the New Year to press the demand of £135 a year more on salaries.

The employers' side of the Burnham Committee, the negotiating body, offered an increase averaging 4½ per cent to keep within the government's 'guiding light' on pay increases. The offer was a crude attempt to split the teachers by offering £100 a year more to young teachers earning up to £1000, with the increase diminishing by £5 to reach just £60 a year for those earning more than £1525.

The NUT rejected the offer and then prepared to make plans for extended area strikes next term. The talks followed a two-week strike involving 4500 teachers in selected schools up and down the country. Militant teachers say that more widespread action would have a better chance of success.

Xmas break

SOCIALIST WORKER will take a break next week. We wish all our readers an enjoyable and restful Christmas and extend to you all our sincere thanks for your support during 1969. We end the year with our circulation rising encouragingly after the increase to six pages every week.

Our next issue will appear one day early on 31 December to give our staff a holiday on New Year's Day. If your boss makes you work on 1 January, why not organise now to take the day off? Happy New Year!



Solidarity say European dockers

DOCK WORKERS raise their arms in the clenched fist salute, the sign of socialist solidarity throughout the world. They were pictured by Socialist Worker in Antwerp last weekend during discussions on closer collaboration between dockers in Britain and Belgium. In the centre is Tilbury militant

Terry Barrett, who also spoke to dockers in Rotterdam and Amsterdam in Holland. The talks were a significant step towards building links between militants in ports throughout Europe who face similar problems of speed-up, redundancy and containerisation. FULL REPORT PAGE 5.

Union banners missing on anti-Springbok march

by Nigel Walby

CARDIFF saw its largest demonstration of recent years on Saturday when 1500 people marched to the Arms Park, scene of the Cardiff-Springboks rugby match. Marching abreast under the giant banner emblazoned 'Wales Rejects Apartheid' the demonstrators, including International Socialists, brought traffic to a halt in the City centre and were watched by thousands of Christmas shoppers, many of whom joined the marchers.

Only 25,000 people attended the match, but there were many weaknesses on the march. The organisers fell over themselves to point out that the demonstrators would not harm the police - what would happen if the police harmed the demonstrators was never explained! Indeed the police seemed to

far outnumber demonstrators at some points.

A feeling of futility was expressed by some demonstrators as stewards marshalled them into side streets to peacefully picket ticket holders on their way in. Although the banner of the South Wales Area of the Mineworkers Union was on the march there was no other trade union banner and the Labour Party and Welsh Nationalists stayed away.

The growing resistance to the Springboks' tour is to be welcomed but the political lessons surrounding it have still to be drawn out. Condemning racialism in sport and apartheid in South Africa is not enough. Condemnation must be backed by using the power of the working class to link up with the Africans to fight the common enemy - British capitalism with its investments in South Africa that help prop up Vorster's vile regime.

March against apartheid this Saturday

Join the march in protest at the Springbok-England rugby international on 20 December.

Assemble 1.30 pm at Twickenham station for march to ground.

A FAMOUS WRITER AND HIS WORK

D H Lawrence, the miner's son, afraid of love and the workers



Jennie Linden and Alan Bates in a scene from Women in Love

by Kathy Sims

KEN RUSSELL'S FILM of D H Lawrence's *Women in Love*, now showing at the Prince Charles Theatre, Leicester Square, prior to general release, is no mean achievement. It takes some talent to turn Lawrence's preaching, slow-moving novel into a film which is beautiful to look at and thoroughly enjoyable, particularly for those who are unfamiliar with the narrow undertones of Lawrence's philosophy.

The film could have been one long bore, like the book, if Russell was a man without imagination, because it is wit and imagination, together with the flawless camera work, which make the film a gem. Through the medium of the film Russell injects life into the characters where it was non-existent in the novel.

If we try to understand the basis of Lawrence's ideals and if we have read the novel, we can see that although Russell follows Lawrence's dialogue almost directly, the film is not a true interpretation of the book. Russell has injected humanity into the story. We become aware of a certain sympathy with the workers as they sit tired out on the tramcar on the way home from work, or as they stream out of the pit, contrasting shockingly with the industrial magnate's shiny white car. It is scenes like these that enable Russell to keep a sensible balance between the real world and the world Lawrence has created for himself in his mind.

Alan Bates, who plays Birkin (Lawrence himself) succeeds very successfully in getting across Lawrence's contradictory nature. We also get good glimpses of his patronising attitude towards women and the relationship between men and women is really the main theme of the film. Lawrence could accept that women wanted fulfillment up to a point, but this very need frightened him, just as the potential undercurrent of violence in the working class frightened him.

He hates violently the new, emancipated, middle-class women who at the period in which he wrote the book (1915) had just won the vote. He saw them not as women striving to release themselves from the pressures put upon them by society, but as

dangerous castrators of men, female tarantulas whose only desire was the biggest orgasm in the world. He would not admit or even tolerate the idea of women being equals in friendship of men — men would satisfy the choking and suffocating desires of their women, but it was not enough.

Only men together could find the ultimate satisfaction through true, deep and lasting trust — something women could never understand! Gerald Crich refuses Birkin's love and so perishes, just as the young husband is drowned because his whole existence centred around his lustful young bride. We can see from all this what a disaster the film would have been if Russell hadn't decided to inject into it colour, life, frivolity and, significantly, humour.

Lawrence is at his worst when he uses his writing as a vehicle for preaching his social ideas. How doleful, how boring, how religious is this business of love. Everything is deep, dark and satanic as stifled middle-class characters wrestle with their narrow conflicts. Every response, every sensation is magnified out of all proportion and analysed out of existence.

Laboured and pretentious

Lawrence's attempts at using 'obscenity' in order to rob it of social stigma are so laboured and pretentious that it is a complete failure. Certain passages in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* become ludicrous. The vision of a member of the aristocracy and a gamekeeper sitting on the floor, winding violets in and out of each other's pubic hair is so hilarious that any 'message' is completely obscured. A sense of humour was one thing which was alien to Lawrence.

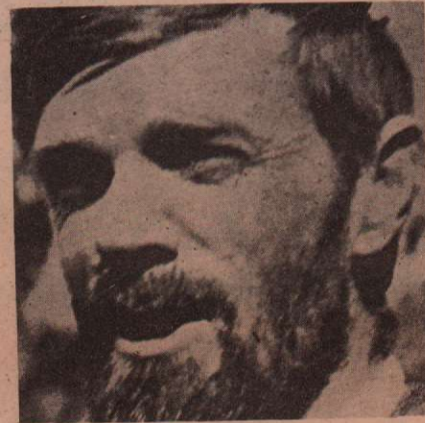
Indeed, for a writer who is supposed to be such an outrageous and honest author, Lawrence is extremely narrow and puritan. He used obscenity not to broaden our horizons but as a means of narrowing them. His 'daring' was an instrument through which his confined and insular views could be expressed. He tried to inject a new kind of purity into the minds and culture of society instead of trying to change the very roots of that society. In short, he was an intellectual reformer, except his reforms did not concern the working class. They concerned 'Man', whoever he is.

Lawrence had nothing new or constructive to say, only a new way of saying it. During

his life time he had had ample opportunity of listening to people who did have something useful to offer — and he hated these people.

Revolutionary socialists seemed to bring out all Lawrence's pent-up hatred. Some of his most bitter poetry was written after hearing socialists talking at outside meetings. It was more than he could bear to see people with passions that more than matched his own — passions that embraced other men immediately — passions that urged men into action. How Lawrence hated the socialists! How he failed to understand them.

The real world of exploitation, hunger, overwork and early death were things for which Lawrence blamed the working class. His mind was repelled by these things only in that he considered it beneath him to allow himself to be occupied by such basic, materialistic thinking. He despised the working class because they lacked 'the courage' or 'nobility' to rise above their situation. And yet he recognised that the



Lawrence: distaste for 'commoners'

workers were not basically to blame for their situation. This is obvious in his poem *How Beastly the Bourgeois Is*.

Instead of fighting for improved material conditions, the working class should be fighting for the right to revert back to their basic instincts. Thought should be secondary to physical demands.

'For the living of my full flame — I want that liberty, I want that woman, I want that pound of peaches, I want to go to sleep, I want to go to the pub and have a good time, I want to look a beastly swell today, I want to kiss that girl, I want to insult that man. Instead of that, all these wants, which are there whether-or-not, are utterly ignored, and we talk about some sort of ideas.' What Lawrence didn't seem to realise was that the very nature of the social system prevents people from doing exactly what they want and in order to do such things the structure must be replaced.

But in any case, what makes him think that we would be satisfied with such things? It is his so-called 'basic instincts' that sound so ordinary and dull. It is 'ideas' that raise the level of our expectations and it is capitalism which refuses to allow us to express these ideas. The creativity and the spontaneity of the workers in a revolutionary situation is always a source of great surprise to the ruling class. D H Lawrence's own aspirations are nothing compared to the potential and ambition of the workers.

Glaring contradictions

Because Lawrence was so bogged down and restricted by the narrow, decaying thought of the day his writings are full of glaring contradictions. In the face of such contradictions it is impossible to take any of his ideas seriously. But we see all too clearly the results of his conflicting ideas; his dark moods of depression, his sudden surges of elation, his cruelty and lack of feeling towards his dearest friends. How could it be otherwise when his mind was so filled with such antagonisms? Indeed, many of his ideas seem to verge on fascism — state control of all industries, recognise that some men are born to lead while others are meant to do menial jobs.

In a letter to Bertrand Russell in July 1915 he says, 'The idea of giving power to the hands of the working class is wrong. The working man must elect the immediate government, of his work, of his district, not the ultimate government of the nation. There must be a body of chosen patricians. There must be women governing equally with men, especially all the inner half of life. The whole must culminate in an absolute Dictator and an equivalent Dictatrix. . . the idea is that every man

shall vote according to his understanding and that the higher understanding must dictate for the lower understandings.'

I doubt if Lawrence really understood the full portent of what he was suggesting, but his writing and his ideas were so immature that it is easy to imagine him coming under the influence of the fascist ideal, an ideal which is so easy to believe in because it appeals to the prejudices and bigotry which capitalism nurtures.

Lawrence lost touch with his own class at an early age when he went away to study. This early rift from the working class, before he had a chance to really understand the nature of class struggle, coupled with the fact that Lawrence's mother always emphasised that she had married beneath her, probably contributed to the boy's distaste for 'commoners' and his terrible snobbery and priggishness.

Plunged as he was straight out of the gloom and misery of a mining village and into the 'higher' world of study and ideas, was it any wonder that Lawrence began to hate the working class? It was natural for one so young to be disgusted and confused with the degradation of such work and such a way of life. If Lawrence had returned to his own class he would almost certainly have been mature enough to appreciate the nature of the class struggle and would probably have turned all his hate and ferocity into a condemnation of capitalism. Indeed, he may even have become one of the very revolutionaries he so despised!

Roamed the world

But he did not return. Instead he roamed the world — but travel does not necessarily broaden the mind. Everywhere he went he carried with him the empty, meaningless philosophies of the middle-class intelligentsia of his day. His whole life was spent in a cloud of unknowing.

But we must not condemn Lawrence for his blindness. Instead, we must condemn capitalism, a system that not only takes from us our freedom of movement, our right to determine the course of our own destinies, but also through condemning us to a life of drudgery and boredom, limits our very minds so that we do not realise what great potential lies dormant within each one of us. Once we free ourselves from this parasite which feeds upon us, body and soul, our physical and mental limits will know no boundaries.

Trotsky understood this. 'Man will become immeasurably stronger, wiser and subtler; his body will become more harmonised, his movements more rhythmic, his voice more musical. The forms of life will become dynamically dramatic. The average human type will rise to the heights of an Aristotle, a Goethe, or a Marx. And above this ridge new peaks will rise.'

The road towards these peaks lies through the working class — the very class which Lawrence despised. In a dynamic, ever-changing society — in a socialist society — men such as Lawrence will use their talents for the furtherance of the perfection of society and not as weapons against themselves.

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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 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.

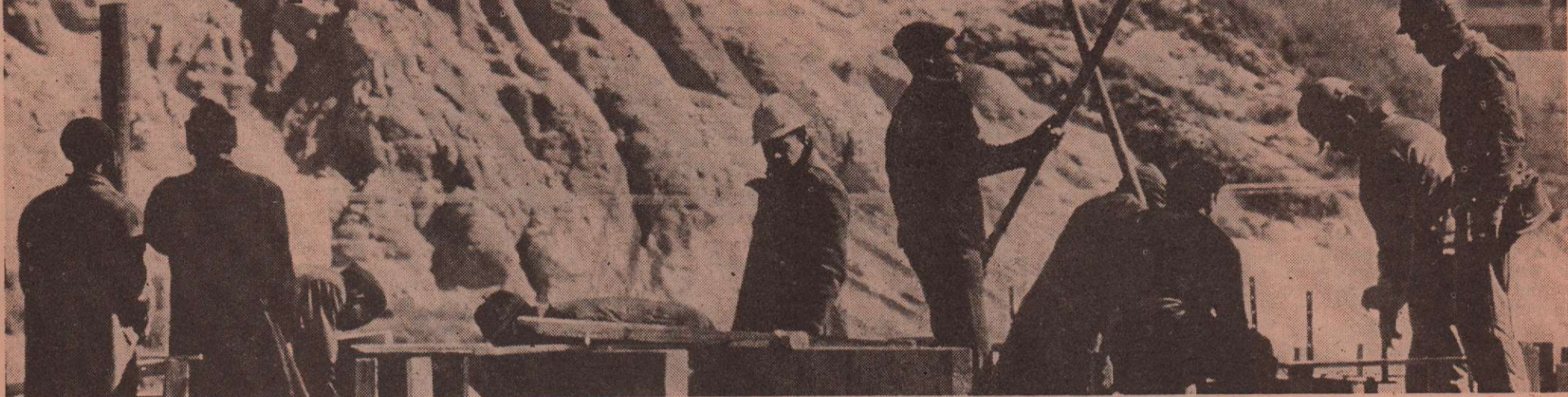
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South Africa: racist tyranny uncompromised by British investments



African workers are terrorised into not joining trade unions. The difference in wage rates between white and black is enormous and South African capitalism flourishes from the super-exploitation of black workers.

JEFF COULTER talks to a rugby fan

Fan: Sport for me is politically neutral. Sure, I think that the only consideration for selection in sport ought to be skill and ability. But South Africa discriminates on other, non-sporting grounds such as race — and our job is to lick 'em on the field and show them what a lot of privileged lily-whites they really are.

JC: Do you really think so? Most international sporting associations, such as the Olympics committee, cycling and boxing already refuse to have anything to do with racially-segregated teams precisely because this violates sporting principles.

To play a South African all-white team invokes a flood of press comment inside South Africa where the press is overwhelmingly racist, to the effect that the international arena accepts their domestic policies without murmur. Besides, as it is South Africa that brings 'politics into sport', shouldn't we be talking about what South Africa stands for in a larger context?

Fan: But surely having their people over here involved in sporting activities gives us a good opportunity to build bridges of understanding with the South African government so that we would be better placed to let them know what we think?

JC: The South African regime that you want to build bridges towards is the regime of the Sharpeville massacre where peaceful protesters were mercilessly mowed down by armoured cars.

It is the regime which has consistently practised apartheid in every walk of life, classifying people from birth in ludicrously arbitrary 'colour designations', preventing freedom of movement for the majority of the black populations, uprooting thousands of Africans from their homes to make way for lucrative white-owned businesses (The Land Apportionment Acts).

Churchill would have been called a communist

It regulates freedom of political activity through the 1950 Suppression of Communism Act which defines 'communism' so broadly as to include Sir Winston Churchill, were he still with us. Both Verwoerd and now Vorster, Premiers of South Africa, were Hitlerite sympathisers in the last world war. Balthazar Vorster is the honorary president of the Society for Ex-Internees, persons incarcerated in Koffiefontein Internment Camp during the war for openly declaring sympathy with Hitler's objectives and attempting to obstruct South Africa's involvement in the war.

Vorster himself was a Kommandant General of the Ox, Wagon and Sentinels organisation, a militantly fascist outfit. This is part of what you are dealing with.

Fan: What else is there? I'm not advocating appeasement alone — rather a policy of constructive criticism from within.

JC: The second main point is that within South Africa, political unrest is greeted with massive repression. You have only to survey the number of political prisoners there, from Vuyisile to Mandela, thousands of them with yearly reports of tortures and suicides from their goals.

And the regime recently prevented a leading liberal journal from reporting its findings of prison conditions. It is here where your 'constructive criticism' ends within South Africa. From outside only so much is allowed to filter through that does not fit in with the regime's racist ideology.

Fan: In that case, why is there so much international tolerance of apartheid, if it really is that bad? And what about the large-scale African immigration into the country? Isn't the economy doing well?

JC: Sure, the economy is doing well. But for whom? When Verwoerd was Minister of Native Affairs in 1953, he proclaimed: 'There is no place for him (the African) in the European community above certain types of labour... Until now he has been subject to a school system, which drew him away from his own community and misled him by showing him the green pastures of European society in which he is not allowed to graze.'

Africans are reservoir of cheap labour

And so, by 1965, only 0.1 per cent of the economically active population was educated to matriculation standards. The African population is looked upon as a reservoir of cheap labour. White university enrolment outnumbers African enrolment by 25 to 1 in a population where the white man is outnumbered 4 to 1. Expenditure on education per annum per child declined from £8 in 1954 to £6 6s in 1963/4 for African children while for white children the annual expenditure per head is £78 18s in secondary schools and £56 4s in primary schools.

The gold and tin mines are staffed by African labourers from surrounding Nyasaland, Basutoland and even from the northern states, whose prospects are grim indeed given the world market bias against single-crop economies and the growth of synthetics in the advanced capitalist countries. But the differences in payment between African sweated labour and white surface labour is enormous, as it is generally throughout the South African economy.

The regime's consistent attempts to undermine the organisation of African workers into trade unions have been highly successful. Brutal suppression of strikes, indiscriminate use of the 'communist' bogey and outright imprisonment of organisers have featured in the regime's heavy-handed measures. As a result, the total number of trade union members is around 450,000, of whom barely 3 per cent are Africans, 6 per cent are Asians and 18 per cent are 'coloureds' (seen Ioan Davies, African Trade Unions, Penguin 1966).

Given this weakness in organisational strength in collective bargaining, job, housing and educational discrimination, you find that a flourishing South African capitalism operates to the benefit of the white nationalist ruling class, to a much lesser extent to the benefit of the white working class, on the backs of the African masses.

Fan: Yes, I will agree that South Africa is fascist. But at least Britain and other states have branded her as such. What else can we do?



Wilson: in opposition he opposed arms sales to South Africa. In office he honoured the Simonstown agreement which supplies arms for 'internal defence'.

JC: Certainly, Britain paid lip-service to her liberal 'abhorrence' of apartheid in a United Nations debate in 1963. But actions speak louder, as I'm sure you would agree. One year before, 67 countries voted for sanctions in the United Nations, 16 against and 23 abstained. Britain was among those who voted against, along with France and the United States. Again, in the Security Council in 1963, Britain and France abstained.

Why? Let us examine the underpinnings to apartheid given by Britain. British capitalist interests in South Africa include the following: Barclays DCO (bank), Lloyds (bank), Standard Bank of South Africa, (well over 70 per cent of South Africa's domestic bank deposits are held in British-owned banks); Rio Tinto (mining), British South Africa Co (general raw materials), Distillers Co., Bowater Paper, Bells (asbestos), Cape (asbestos), British Cocoa and Chocolate, Schweppes (soft drinks), AEI-GEC (along with BIC and Henley, electrics), English Electric, Tube Investments and British Aluminium, Steward and Lloyd (steel), John Brown (engineering), BMC (motor cars), Leyland and ACV (engineering), Metal Box Co (light engineering), De Havilland (engineering and aeronautics), Babcock and Wilcox (engineering), Imperial Chemical Industries, Boots (chemicals), Fisons (chemicals), Courtaulds,

British Plaster Board, Low and Bonar (packaging). Companies with only sales organisations are excluded from this list.

Britain has more than £1000 million invested in South Africa. The lion's share in the South African mining industry alone — approximately £250 million — is British. Ever since Rhodes opened up the Kimberley Diamond fields in the 1860s Britain has provided the capital, skill and the markets for the sale of South Africa's gold exports (worth some £490 million a year). 80 per cent of the world's diamond output (including nearly all South Africa's diamonds) are marketed through London.

Cyril Lord, the now bankrupt Lancashire textile capitalist, transported an entire factory, workers and all, to a development site offered him by the South African regime as part of its Transkei 'borderlands' development project. Between 1958 and 1962, British capitalist profits from investment in the Republic of South Africa averaged 10.9 per cent compared with an average profit in the rest of the world of 7.9 per cent.

Bulwark against Black Africa

Only one-sixth of British private capital investment abroad goes to the capital-starved Third World. British capitalism's stake in South Africa is greater than her stake in the whole of the rest of Africa. Andrew Kopkind has commented on American investments in South Africa as follows: 'American business makes profits of about 19 per cent on their South African investments, on the average, as against 11 per cent elsewhere in the world and much less at home. Ten of the largest US banks are in consortium to give South Africa a revolving dollar credit and although rarely used, it is there to give South Africa the security it desperately needs' (Kopkind, New Statesman, 23 December 1966). Kopkind estimated the figure for US capital investment there at about \$800 millions.

As an imperialist bulwark in black Africa, the Republic has been heavily armed by Britain among others. The Cepturion tanks, Westland Wasp helicopters, the ships of the south African navy, the Canberra bombers, the Shackletons, the Viscount transports, the Havards and Vampires and the Saracen armoured cars are all Brit-

ish-made — and perhaps most instructive of all, the 16 Buccaneer bombers supplied to Verwoerd in 1965 and explicitly excluded from the arms embargo. Britain has also accepted an order for three submarines from South Africa, worth £13 million, apparently in accordance with the 'secret clauses' of the Simonstown Agreement.

In February 1966, it was announced that the British firm of Hawker-Siddeley had sold to South Africa its first HS-125 jet — an allegedly 'civil aircraft' first demonstrated to the regime in 1965. At precisely the moment of the conclusion of the deal, General Hiemstra, chief of South Africa's defence forces, suggested that light aircraft owned by civilian farmers and businessmen could augment the air force in the special role against guerrilla fighters.

I could continue to list such examples of Britain's supporting role for apartheid. The task of socialists in the West is to identify the capitalist links and tie these up with work among their employees. Only by a long and determined attempt to politicise workers who are involved directly with apartheid through the companies that employ them can any real action be taken against this cancerous regime by British militants.

Fan: And what do you expect from the Africans?

JC: I cannot see any other path than a long, armed struggle. We must give support to guerrilla movements both by materially assisting them and by activating the British working class to the nature of the situation.

If there is to be a boycott of South African goods, let it be by dockers here. And if we are serious about linking the south African issue within a larger condemnation of Britain's role abroad we must continue to stress the importance of the lucrative investment that backs up reactionary regimes all over the world.

A clear line of attack demands concentrating in Britain on industries which support such regimes. Industrial action by workers to demand no trade with South Africa could force the bosses' hands. Such activity must be geared to a perspective that clearly shows the way forward for the South African masses towards unity of black and white and multiracial socialism.

Free speech for fascists?

BILL TURNER of the ILP last week raised the question of the tactics adopted by socialists against fascist and nazi groupings such as the National Front. He was complaining that debates organised by the ILP and the Socialist Party of Great Britain with the NF had been disrupted by left-wing organisations, including the International Socialists, and he advocated, as a principle, the right of free speech for all minorities.

Comrade Turner's principles are different to ours. It has long been a principle in the marxist movement that revolutionaries do not debate with fascists. It is quite astonishing that while he is anxious to convert National Front members to the pallid politics of the ILP, he

smears IS and other groups as 'hooligans'.

As marxists we stand for a society that will extend and broaden democracy through working-class control. We fight also to preserve the limited freedoms available to the mass of people under capitalism.

The National Front, led and financed by old Mosleyites and jackboot-strutting Jordanites, stand for the gas chamber and the concentration camp. It is quite indefensible for any group claiming to be socialist to provide a platform for such animals.

Of course, we must argue where possible with people attracted to the NF, who, however ambiguously,

may be looking for a way out of the chaos of capitalism. In particular, we must lose no opportunity to discuss with working-class youths whose frustrations with the system send them into the blind alley of racist politics but who could be won to revolutionary socialist ideas.

But we will challenge the leaders of the NF whenever they attempt to spread their poison in public. And when they share platforms with the ILP and the SPGB, we will vigorously criticise the 'socialists' who participate in such grisly charades.

ROGER PROTZ

American socialists face life and death struggle for survival against repression

by David Freidman

THE RADICAL MOVEMENT in America is increasingly preoccupied with the repressive campaign being waged by the state with the support of both major parties, press and television. This question is literally a matter of life and death, freedom or suppression, for individual revolutionaries and radicals and for leading organisations.

In one sense, the repression can be seen as a measure of the growth of the movement. If there were nothing to repress, there would be no repression. However, this does not end the matter. The need of the establishment for repression is obvious; the question is, will they be able to get away with it. How best can we resist?

What we are experiencing is a shift in the political nature of the time, a stiffening of ruling-class attitudes, with the support of the working class. On top of that, the radical movement in recent months has, through its own actions, become unnecessarily vulnerable and isolated from its own base.

The ruling class always seeks to divide the people, the better to deal with the separate parts. Its aim today is to divide the blacks from whites, workers from the jobless, students from the general population, radicals and revolutionaries from the mass of students and black people. The severity of the repression will depend on how successfully our rulers can exploit these divisions, thus gaining popular support for the wholesale use of police power and legal atrocities.

DANGEROUS

One response to this threat on the left has been to cry 'fascism'. This approach confuses the business-as-usual repression of the capitalist state (which is bad enough, of course) with totalitarian fascist terror. It is the reverse side of the idea that the revolution is just around the corner. Such estimates are extremely misleading and therefore dangerous.

The left is under attack from the normal channels of the capitalist state. The ruling class is not yet in such dire straits as to encourage a right-wing mass movement. The social crisis may be deepening but society is by no means in danger of imminent collapse. The George Wallace presidential campaign, despite its appeal to racialism and its attack on rising prices, taxation, war policies, big business and big government, had only a limited impact. The ruling class backed Nixon and Humphrey.

The purpose of the current repression is to destroy or hamstring the more militant and radical organisations, those that will not compromise with the system. This is quite different from fascism a fully-fledged attack on an entire section of the population and all its organisations. German fascism waged unrelenting civil war against the working class. Such a development is not at all impossible in the United States, beginning with an attack on the black community, but it is not on the agenda at this time.

No one should deny the possibility of a race-war development in a situation of increasing economic hardship. However, current establishment policies are designed to avoid civil conflict, if possible, and to keep the black people down with minimal disruption. Independent action or organisation of any kind on the part of whites is not encouraged, indeed it is actively discouraged throughout the country. The ruling class do not want a race war, just as they do not want a nuclear war. They have a good thing going and don't want to blow it up.

At the same time, the very real danger represented by the growing repression should no more be underestimated than equated with fascism.

One of the accepted myths of the 1950s was the theory that capitalism had solved its basic economic problems (at least in America), and that as a result mass struggle and radicalism had no relevance for the majority of people. The 'stability' of the 50s was based on a sustained



Nixon regime attempts to wipe out Panthers

THE MILITANT Black Panther Party is bearing the brunt of the attacks on left-wing organisations by the United States' government and police machine. In the last 18 months 28 Panthers have been shot by the police and more than 200 arrested on trumped-up charges.

The picture shows two Panthers in Los Angeles being led away after a gun battle last week when a force of 300 cops attempted to blast their way into the party's local headquarters. With incredible courage, the 11 Panthers in the building refused to surrender and fought against the police using tear gas, dynamite and rifles.

The week before, police in Mayor Daley's Chicago raided the home of Fred Hampton and Bobby Rush, leaders of the Illinois section of the Black Panthers. The police claimed that the Panthers opened fire first, but the bullet-riddled

body of Hampton was found in a blood-soaked bed. Another Panther, Mark Clark was shot during the raid.

Bobby Seale, national chairman of the Panther Party, is in jail following a trial for conspiracy in which he was gagged and handcuffed to a chair when he answered back to the judge. A recent report says Seale has been brutally beaten in jail.

The Black Panthers are militant marxists. Unlike other 'Black Power' organisations, they have not turned their back on the working class or white socialists. It is this potential threat of a mass revolutionary organisation linking up black and white workers that has unleashed the armed terror of the Nixon regime in the 'land of the free'.

period of prosperity apparently free from the economic crises which had plagued capitalism.

World War II resulted in immense advantages for America. Western European capitalism was in ruins, threatened by Stalinist expansionism and, until they were betrayed and crushed, by revolutionary working-class movements. America invested heavily in the reconstruction of the European industrial powers, as a strategic necessity for the preservation of capitalism. From this position, the United States gained domination of markets and raw material sources in the Third World, strategic military bases and advantages on the world market, not the least of which was the acceptance of the dollar as the medium for international transactions.

The post World War II prosperity affected the nation as a whole, through a 'trickle-down' process which reached at least as far as the organised workers. Due to the change-over from war production, there was an unprecedented availability of consumer goods. The union bureaucracy contributed to the decline of working-class militancy, leaving whole sections of the working class unorganised and unable to share in the prosperity. For blacks, unorganised workers and the unemployed it was a false prosperity but they were in no position to make that point.

STABILISER

Out of the period of war production came a new stabilising mechanism, the permanent arms economy. The arms economy has become a major economic stabiliser in Western capitalism in the last two decades. But this method of solving the overproduction problem has its own contradictions, which are now beginning to be felt. As arms become an ever-larger part of total production, a growing percentage of the nation's productive capacity is devoted to waste. This leads to economic stagnation and to inflation and soaring prices.

Insofar as Western Europe has let the US lead in the arms race and 'defence of the free world', their economies have taken a competitive lead on the world market, cutting into American prosperity. They in turn face the twin devils of overproduction and stagnation, leading

to ever more precarious balances in international economic relations.

These tendencies have been accelerated by the Vietnam war which turned a gradual erosion of US privilege into a sharp decline. The fact of this decline is apparent to anyone trying to run a household on a budget. American capitalism has slowly used up its post-war advantages, giving rise to increasing economic difficulties and simmering discontent spreading throughout the major sections of society.

AUSTERITY

The cost of the war in Vietnam has been transferred to the working class and within the working class to its least organised sections and to racial minorities. A general austerity exists in both public and private sectors of the economy. Inflation and taxation run rampant, squeezing students and many professionals as well as both blue and white collar workers. Loss of income and worsening working conditions have revived and stimulated efforts at union organisation in many areas such as teaching and triggered a nation-wide rash of wildcat strikes and wage contract rejections by the rank and file. These in turn have led to widespread use of court injunctions against union activities, new anti-strike and anti-labour legislation.

The economic stability of the 1950s was reflected in public

conservatism and general satisfaction with the system. The majority believed that their hopes would be satisfied. At the same time a mass of people existed in a state of poverty and apathy, especially black people in the rural south and urban ghettos. This includes the unorganised section of the workforce, in unskilled and marginal occupations which had been abandoned by the trade-union leadership. They had few organisations and no audible voice on the national scene. The official myth - that poverty was disappearing in America - went unchallenged, except for the weak appeals of a few liberals.

Forces of social unrest gathered very slowly in the 50s and early 60s, as working-class expectations and illusions were only gradually dispelled. Struggle still went on at the shop-floor level, but it was weak, unco-ordinated and purely economic. It took a particularly sharp issue, the conflict between a rising Negro middle class and the out-dated South segregationists, to set the stage for the first real breakthrough - the shift in the period which distinguished the political 60s from the silent 50s.

The civil rights movement forged a nationwide coalition, with progressive businessmen in the urban South and with the forces of Northern liberalism - the Walter Reuther wing of the trade union bureaucracy, the Democratic Party leadership and a vast base of white

middle-class liberals motivated by vague ideals and the desire to Do Good.

Despite its origins, the movement rapidly turned toward economic issues, as the militant youth sought a base among their own people. The bankruptcy of the Negro-liberal coalition soon became apparent. The liberal leaders were unwilling to split the Democratic Party by breaking with its Southern wing, and they were cool to the economic demands. Unwilling to break with its liberal 'allies', unable to provide leadership for the awakening mass of blacks, the civil rights movement subsided, splitting into a number of distinct political tendencies.

But the years of struggle and agitation had left their impact. Out of the civil rights experience came a new level of social and political consciousness among the mass of black people, a sense of solidarity as an oppressed minority and a new movement whose rallying cry was Black Power.

At the same time, in part as a sympathetic response to the black struggle, a militant student movement has emerged, highlighted by mass demonstrations against the war in Vietnam and a series of explosions on campuses (and increasingly in high schools) all across the country. However, the growth of a new militant and radical consciousness in the United States in the 60s has been an uneven process. Unlike the black community and most students, the vast majority of the white working class, despite the emerging current of rank and file militancy, remains imprisoned by racist attitudes and political passivity.

CONFUSION

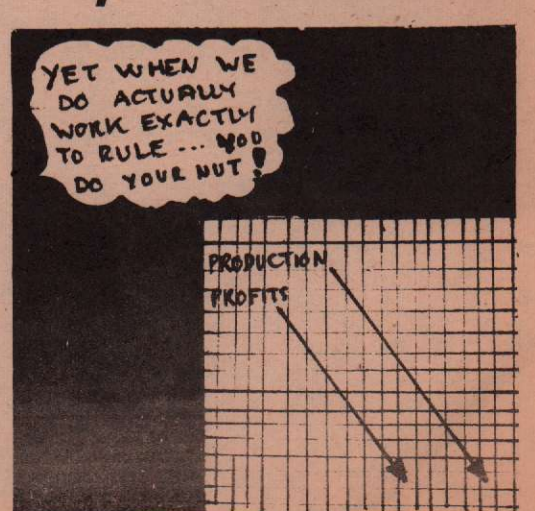
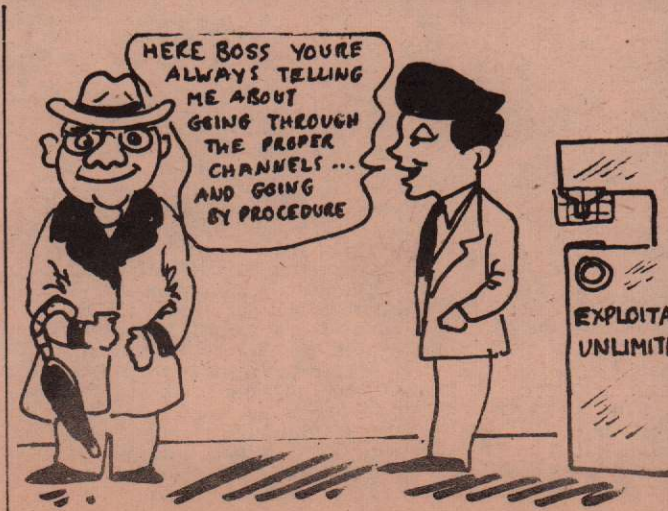
Given this dissatisfied but unpolitical and racist working class, the prevalent mood of anxiety over war, inflation, smog, riots - the general deterioration of the standard of living and the quality of life - leads to a confusion of causes and effects. Student radicalism and black militancy are seen not as symptoms but as problems.

The white worker sees no solution to his troubles. Certainly his bureaucratized union offers no answers. More and more, he sees blacks as a threat to his job, and the prospects for his son. He receives exaggerated reports in the press of welfare expenditures and concludes that 'the blacks are getting everything'. He rarely hears from the radicals, who do not have access to the mass media, but when he occasionally does, they seem to be attacking his hopes for a better life and speak a strange language.

At the same time, it must be stressed that to focus on the current shape of radical organisations in this country and to analyse the climate of repression solely in that context would be to over-emphasise the gravity of the present situation. A deep well of oppositional sentiment and unrest has developed - among students, among black people, and increasingly, among the working class. The radical movement is isolated partly because it has failed to reach out to that sentiment and organise it.

The task before the left is to build a genuinely revolutionary-democratic movement - to grow up and get itself together. It is up to the radical left to wage a political war (not a street fight) against racialism and conservatism in the working class. To undermine the isolation of the left is to undermine the repression.

BERT the socialist worker by TJH



From Belgium and Holland, moves toward united action by European workers...

Dockers' solidarity vital in container battle

From Terry Barrett, Tilbury Docks TGWU

AT THE INVITATION of Revolutionnaire Socialisten, the Flanders' section of the Belgian Socialist Workers' Confederation, I visited the ports of Antwerp, Rotterdam and Amsterdam for three days last weekend. I addressed six meetings at which I spoke of British port workers' problems in general and the danger of containerisation in particular.

At the meetings, which were well attended, were dockers, ship-repair workers, engineers, teachers and students. I explained fully the reasons for the union ban on the OCL-ACT container at Tilbury: that British dockers were using the ban to force the employers to sign an agreement based on equality of earnings, conditions of work, sick pay and pensions for all dock workers, including those who have been injured during their working life and who are still employed in the industry.

The Belgian and Dutch press had been full of the distortions of Sir Andrew Crichton (Chairman of OCL - ACT) and the dock workers were very vague and confused on these issues. I soundly refuted the British port employers' misleading propaganda.

A Belgian shop steward told me that the Antwerp dockers had also been kidded by their Transport Union leader, Heer Van De Crum, who had told them that if they took solidarity action too far the Australians and Americans would totally stop the export operation to Europe. Therefore, De Crum and the British TGWU were not in favour of too much resistance.

Similar conditions

From 1947 to 1964 the Antwerp docks labour force was reduced from 20,000 to 12,000 by gradual sackings of the casual men. The labour force has been maintained over the last five years. No severance payments were made because the trade unions had agreed that if security was given to the remaining labour force they would allow the cuts. At present, the wages are 590 Belgian francs per day (approx £5) Unemployed get 70 per cent of this in fall-back pay. The employers have full rights of labour allocation of men from conventional to container berths and vice versa. On containers, the gangs are reduced from 14 to eight. The trade union structure is even less democratic than the British set-up. The

conditions of work are very similar to those of British dock workers.

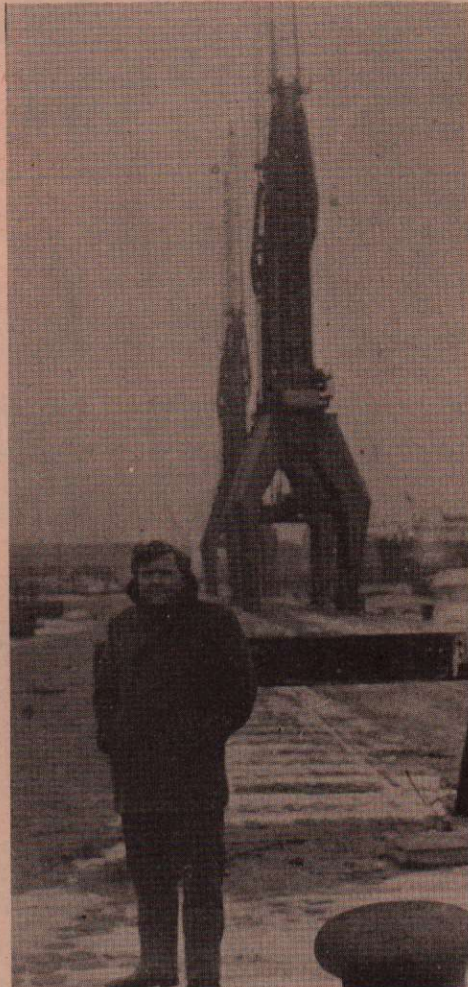
In Rotterdam, conditions of work on conventional jobs are much worse than in London or Antwerp. The port trade unions are seriously split. There are four unions: Social-Democratic, Catholic, Protestant and Syndicalist, all divided against each other. Approximately 40 per cent of dock workers are unorganised. Pay is about £16 basic with small additions for skill or bad job conditions. The propaganda in the British press regarding Rotterdam is grossly exaggerated. The trade union set-up is very complex which adds to organisational problems. The private employers have been heavily subsidised by the public authorities.

The situation makes it very easy to organise international scabbing. I have made many contacts, both industrial and political, for future common action. The solidarity visit has resulted in setting up links which make it possible to organise common policies, such as international wage bargaining and common working conditions between British and continental dockers.

Ford militants forge links

From Sabby Sagall in Ostend

AN IMPORTANT MEETING of trade union representatives from Ford factories in Britain, Germany and Belgium took place on Sunday (14 December) at Ostend. British Ford convenors took the initiative in organising the meeting, which was held under the auspices of the Belgian Metalworkers'



Terry Barrett pictured in Antwerp docks during his visit last weekend. Another picture on page one

Union under the chairmanship of their national secretary Mr De Coster. It was the first ever international conference of Ford representatives and marks the first stage in the creation of a permanent unofficial European Ford combine committee.

Reports were given by British convenors on wage rates and the trade structure and on working conditions such as the shift system, mobility of labour, tea-breaks and relief time. Information was also provided on trade union facilities and organisation within the British plants and on the system of fringe benefits, pensions and holiday bonuses. Accounts were given on the way Ford penalty clauses operate and of negotiating and grievance procedures.

It was decided to hold another conference soon to enable the Belgian and German convenors to give similar reports, to have

mutual exchanges of experiences and to begin to co-ordinate rank and file strategy on an international scale. But a crucial part of Sunday's meeting was a pledge given by both the Belgian and German convenors to stop any attempt on the part of Ford to weaken a future struggle in Britain by increasing production schedules on the continent or by transferring machinery to Genck or Cologne. The British militants made a similar solidarity pledge to their continental brothers.

The long-term significance of Sunday's meeting lies in the vital step forward that was taken to unify workers in the face of the threat represented by increasing international concentration of capital. Ford's are the world's second largest motor manufacturers (3,784,864 private cars in 1968) and the multi-national scope of their operations has enabled them to constantly raise their profits through the strategy of setting one national group of workers against others.

When the Genck factory was first built in the under-developed Belgian region of Limburg, there was a permanent surplus of labour. The union leaders accepted worse working conditions for Genck than at Cologne or at the Antwerp assembly plant (which had a shorter working week) for fear that Ford might withdraw their promise to invest in that region. One giant employer negotiating with workers divided into many nationally separate groups is in a position to impose terms, to weaken particular struggles by threatening to transfer production and future investment, and therefore to isolate and break particular strongholds of militancy.

Transfer threats

During the 1968 strike at Genck for equality of working conditions with Antwerp, a threat was made to transfer output to other countries. And recently Ford attempted to transfer dies for the Escort and Capri models from Genck to Cologne.

The great strength of the working class has always been their capacity to unite in the face of employers who, by the very nature of the capitalist system, can never completely eliminate competition among themselves. The possibility of continuing to maximise profits depends on competition between bosses even in a period of growing international monopolies. But clearly such unity can only develop if workers and trade unions in the various countries reject their own governments' attempts to impose incomes policies and productivity bargaining in their 'national interest'.

The ultimate aim of this international rank and file co-ordination should be to achieve international bargaining on wages and working conditions. This could be done on the basis of adjusting all existing levels to the ones most favourable within the multi-national corporation.

For example, British Ford workers receive substantially less money than Ford workers in Belgium, Germany and the United States and they should demand international parity. This strategy can be taken even further by gradually including workers in all the major firms in the demand for such international bargaining.

LETTERS

PEANUTS FOR THE POSTMEN

I WAS SURPRISED to read in Frank Campbell's otherwise excellent article on building workers' pay (4 December) that postmen have won a substantial increase recently.

The fact is that we have fared no better than the builders, receiving only 3½ per cent during the past year, although over 100,000 postmen took part in an overtime ban and a one-day token strike in solidarity with 1000 telegraph operators. Now the UPW executive has submitted a claim for all Post Office staff which they say is substantial. But postal workers should remember the great struggle in 1963 during which thousands of postmen came out on strike spontaneously, thereby smashing the 'no strike' principle for postal workers.

Such action will undoubtedly be required again if we are to win anything better than peanuts. DAVE PERCIVAL (UPW), London SE25.

CP not neutral

MY CRITICISM of Jim Higgins' reports of the Communist Party congress was not that he 'incorrectly attributed a statement on productivity bargaining actually made by Mick McGahey to Bert Ramelson', but that he attributed to both of them a statement that neither had made. In so doing he sought to present the Communist Party as having a neutral or even sympathetic attitude to productivity deals.

This is demonstrably false. The party's attitude has always been a firm and unequivocal opposition to productivity agreements. It has criticised and criticises trade union leaders who negotiate them, although it does not treat those on the left who do so as 'traitors' to be written of. McGahey, as I showed, urged that more attention should be given to the 'danger' of such agreements. The congress resolution on productivity, carried with one abstention, 'rejected the conception that advances of wages and working conditions will be brought about through productivity, work study and rationalisation policies in industry'.

It continued: 'The whole purpose of productivity deals within industry is to bring about the highest possible profit for the employers and monopolists by increased pressure on the workers and a reduced labour force... Congress reaffirms the principle of resistance to changes in the system of wages bargaining at shop-floor level with the introduction of work study and other related productivity methods.'

Ramelson, in his reply to the debate on the trade union resolution, presented the struggle against productivity deals as occupying a crucial position in the struggle against the government's incomes policy and promised that the party would produce a pamphlet making the case against it.

A reading of Gollan's speech (published in Comment of 29 November) shows Comrade Higgins to be completely wrong in his extraordinary reiteration that it contains 'no mention' of mass working class struggle, workers' power and socialist revolution. Throughout the speech Gollan referred to 'mass struggle' and 'the organised power

of the (labour) movement, in which strikes and the threat of strikes' have been 'the decisive factors', as well as to tenants' and squatters' struggles, the opposition to racialism and Powellism and mass actions against the Vietnam war.

The resolution that he moved, like his speech, stressed that 'the role of the working class is not confined to winning victories within capitalism, but is to end capitalism, win political power and carry through the Socialist revolution.' Likewise Jim gives a false impression by saying (correctly) that, in moving his resolution, Gollan said nothing about immigration controls, but in failing to indicate that a separate resolution on racialism took a stand specifically on them. Unfortunately such 'nits' overshadowed everything else in Comrade Higgins' reports, which lamentably misrepresented the whole line of Communist policy.

With regard to his jeers (unsubstantiated) at the 'pathetic' British Road to Socialism, it might not be out of place to ask what long-term programme IS or any other left organisation in this country has produced outlining its political perspectives for leading Britain to socialism - or when they intend to elaborate one instead of just picking holes in ours. Marx, Engels and Lenin, some of whose writings he mentions, attached great importance to producing programmes advancing perspectives related to the specific historical conditions of their time. Any organisation claiming to be marxist should strive to do the same today. -MONTY JOHNSTONE, London SE3.

Ireland must be free

BARRY HUGILL, in his review of Bernadette Devlin's book (4 December), is right to criticise her tendency to dismiss 'book marxists'. He is particularly right to insist that an internationalist perspective is essential for the development of a revolutionary socialist movement in Ireland.

But in making these points Barry poses a formulation on the right for a workers' republic which could be represented as a concession to 'British chauvinism'. The point is that Ireland is entitled to be free from Britain (that is British imperialism). Socialists support this anti-imperialist struggle for self-determination unconditionally. In fact today the only form this can take is as part of the fight for a workers' republic in Ireland.

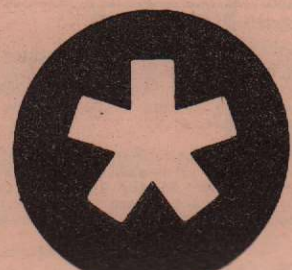
Equally the achievement of a workers' republic in Ireland cannot await the success of the British working class in taking power in Britain. For this reason to suggest that a workers' republic has to be 'of the countries of the British Isles' is quite wrong. Under conditions of working-class power in Ireland, Britain and Europe there will of course be a development towards a United Socialist states of Europe - and ultimately of the world. This should not be confused with the need for the Irish working class and their small farmer allies to settle accounts with imperialism in Ireland now. - JOHN PALMER London SW19.

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c/o 2 Montpelier Road
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26 Elmdale Road Bristol 8
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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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Barrett 20 Belswaines Lane
HORNSEY Chris Russell
131 Alexandra Park Rd N22
HULL Dave Gate 90 Bristol Rd
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Please send further details of the meetings and activities of the International Socialists:

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Socialist Worker

TENANTS GET READY FOR NEW BATTLE OVER RENTS

SW Reporter

MILITANT TENANTS in Greater London are preparing for a New Year battle over rent increases. The Tory-controlled Greater London Council decided on Tuesday to increase rents by an average of 7s 6d a week from 2 March.

Hundreds of tenants invaded the GLC headquarters on Tuesday evening and the council proceedings were disrupted by barracking and booing from the galleries. The lobby was organised by the United Tenants Action Committee, which represents estates throughout London that have refused to pay a previous rent increase introduced in autumn 1968.

With heavy fare increases on buses, trains and underground, council tenants face a stiff rise in their cost of

living in 1970. The Tories are forcing working-class families to pay for the ever-rising level of interest rates charged by the moneylenders who provide the cash for council building.

At a UTAC meeting last weekend, tenants decided to campaign against further rent increases and to launch a recruiting drive in South London. The immediate aim will be to get tenants to refuse to pay increases, though the campaign may be broadened into a call for a total rent strike from 2 March.

UTAC already has substantial backing from important sections of the trade union movement in London. Workers have pledged to take industrial action if any tenants are evicted for refusing to pay increases.

'We'll stay out until demands are met' say locked out Cov-Rad men

by Chris Ryan

COVENTRY:- 200 locked-out press operators at Coventry Radiators have decided to stay outside the factory gates until their demands are met by the management. Earlier in the week, attempts by the Department of Employment and Productivity to start talks between the two sides failed.

The men were sent home a month ago following a dispute over the introduction of new machines at lower rates of pay. The workers stuck to agreed procedure by following a standard production rate on disputed machines, but the management locked them out.

Pressure on the men is beginning to mount. Christmas

Crabtrees go back

LEEDS:- 500 AEF members at Crabtree Vickers printing works returned on Monday with major concessions after a three week strike. The strike was caused by the management's refusal to pay the full amount due under the national engineering pay agreement.

The men were offered 6s on the basic wage of £15. The other 19s was to come from bonus to make up the full rise of 25s.

The men stuck out for the full 25s, even offering the bosses some concessions on productivity. During the strike, which was completely solid, the strike committee were offered a number of alterations in the bonus schemes but these were rejected out of hand by the stewards and men. Last week the previous offers were dropped and the men were offered a straight 20s.

Workers at Crabtrees now face a battle against productivity, which the management are slowly trying to introduce. Many of the men have said they will fight against increases in individual work loads.

Things have changed in the factory since it was incorporated into the multi-million pound Vickers group. Militancy has pushed the wage rates up from the bottom of the local engineering league. But as one militant pointed out, 'We won't stop till we get to the top'.

expenditures are having to go by the board as the possibility of an early settlement becomes slimmer.

Workers are being laid off at Standards, Automotive Products and other smaller firms as a direct result of the lock-out. If the Cov-Rad bosses whose combine made £6½m profit last year, think that they are going to starve the lads into submission then they can think again.

Money is short

The Transport Workers Union have not recognised the dispute. Money is short, yet this week when the 10s per man lock-out money donated by workers in Jaguars, Rootes, and as far apart as York and London was being distributed, a considerable amount was collected to help a widowed press operator who has been really feeling the pinch with two children to feed.

The bosses may be using the dispute to re-emphasise through the Coventry car trade that their commitment to imposing a much stricter shop floor discipline will not be blunted even when they break procedure. The locked-out workers are guilty of trying to work to the company's standard rate of production on disputed jobs. Yet it is a well-known rule in capitalist society that, when the crunch comes, right is wrong where a dissident working class is concerned.

Rush donations to: The Secretary, Cov-Rad Lock-out Committee, 7 Norwood Grove, Potters Green, Coventry.

Transport shut-down in London on New Year's day

A MASS MEETING of London Transport workers voted on Tuesday to strike on New Year's day in protest at rising fares and cuts in services. The decision was an historic one, for it marked an end to the division between members of the two main unions, the Transport Workers and Railwaymen, that has always weakened past strike action.

The decision also witnessed the growing solidarity of key groups of workers and their determination to fight without personal gain for less organised groups, in this case the travelling public in London, who face ever-rising fares and deteriorating services.



London tenants on a recent demonstration.

Pensions: 2000 old people get 6d a week

by Jim Kincaid

THE GOVERNMENT have recently admitted that there are some 2000 old age pensioners who get a pension of precisely sixpence a week.

This group have missed out on the main flat-rate pension but instead qualify for a useful tanner under the graduated pension scheme introduced by the Tories in 1961.

Condemned

When they were in opposition, Labour leaders used to condemn the 1961 scheme as a 'bucket-shop swindle'. But after five years of Labour rule the Tory graduated scheme still operates without any change.

The 2000 sixpenny pensioners do however enjoy one big concession. If your pension is as low as this, you are not obliged to turn up at the Post Office every week to collect it.

In a statement to the House of Commons on 20 October, the Minister of

NOTICES

FULHAM: Paul Foot on Racialism and Powell Sun 21 Dec 7.30pm. The Weatherby Arms 500 Kings Road, SW8. Buses 11, 19, 22. Tube: Fulham Broadway.

ERITH: Demonstrate against all aspects of Powellism, Frid 19 Dec meet 6pm Sidcup Sun. March to Marlowe rooms where Powell will speak. Followed by counter mtg.

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New £7m handout for Clyde bosses

by Peter Bain (DATA)

TECHNOLOGY MINISTER Anthony Wedgwood Benn's announcement that the government are loaning Upper Clyde Shipbuilders a further £7 million is another indication of Labour's commitment to capitalism and of the UCS directors' assessment of the company's prospects.

The money is needed for 'working capital', that is to pay impatient suppliers and the 13,000 workers' wages. The government is also guaranteeing completion of ships to nervous prospective shipowners. UCS's closure would hardly do Labour's prospects in the next election much good.

The government has now invested £20.2 million in UCS since the company's formation two years ago, while the Shipbuilding Industry Board is known to be considering additional capital equipment loans. The £4.5 million allotted to the company last June for investment in the yards has not so far been used to replace the ancient machinery and ramshackle sheds which characterise Clydeside shipyards.

The £5½ million which UCS received in loans and grants in January 1968 was distributed as follows: £1.2 million to Yarrow's for a covered berth, £1 million for investment in the other yards. The rest? Well, here's where some of it went, according to the authors of the recently published book *Whatever Happened At Fairfields?*

Yarrow's remained a separate company, Yarrow's (Shipbuilders) Ltd., but the new UCS group bought 51 per cent of its shares for £1 million. This was for the "amortised loss of profits" because Yarrow's would be carrying over £400,000 profits per annum and could not expect any dividends for the UCS group for some years.

This meant however that the Yarrow shareholders still would own half (49 per cent) of their yard's profits and would benefit from the finance to be granted by SIB for expanding and modernising its facilities. The £1 million compensation, therefore, represented about half of the profits of the yard for a period of five years, paid in advance for the privilege of making it a subsidiary. Yarrow's were allocated 20 per cent of the UCS equity.

Guaranteed

Connell's received 200,000 of the UCS £1 shares, giving them a 5 per cent holding. In addition, the company was paid £400,000 for profits on contracts which Connell's had negotiated to an advanced stage.

Furthermore, Connell's were guaranteed a commission on future orders obtained by the UCS group from a specified long list of potential customers, which could be counted as arising from the goodwill created by Connell's in former business contracts. This commission could amount to several hundred thousand pounds.

Yes, they're a great bunch the Clydeside shipbuilding bosses! Their greed and devotion to profits is surpassed only by their arrogance and short-sightedness.

With the present boom in containers and tankers, not to mention the government's £400 million in cheap loans to shipowners placing orders in Britain, UCS can hardly avoid getting orders. But the boom is likely to be of short duration and it is because they can see little role for



WEDGWOOD BENN

UCS in the future, that the directors are so obviously hedging their bets.

Some, like Yarrow's with its reliance on naval orders, and Connell's with a shipping company behind it, would not be unhappy to see UCS go to the wall. After all, they've received millions in grants and cheap loans and they could pick up machinery cheaply if Fairfield's or Brown's closed.

Reduced

But the yard workers must bear in mind that although new orders will be announced soon, the workforce is supposed to be reduced to 10,000 by next August as part of the deal to keep UCS from liquidation.

Demands which expose the owners' record and their plans for the future, have to be put forward. At the same time, wages and conditions must be safeguarded and this means a fight against blackmail of the 'Accept this or we close' variety which succeeded in the past.

On previous occasions some militants have been stranded between a commitment to socialism in the dim and distant future, and a complete lack of demands applicable in the objective situation of threatened closure. One of the most encouraging features developing from the recent struggles in UCS has been the realisation by some workers that the management's victories in the past cannot be repeated.

Only on a basis of relating day-to-day activities to a perspective of raising workers' consciousness, can militants in the yards defeat the UCS bosses.

CORRECTION

In last week's article on the Ford pay situation it was suggested that the management's penalty clauses 'seek to fire workers for unofficial action'. The word 'fire' was a printing error and should have read fine.

INTO THE SEVENTIES

Don't Miss this important analysis of the prospects for the socialist movement in the next issue

Blasts used to crack down on Italian Left

by Norah Carlin

LAST FRIDAY'S bomb explosions in Milan and Rome have been used as an opportunity to step up the policy of repression against the left in Italy.

About 150 'extremists of left and right' have been hauled in for questioning in Milan and Rome and about 50 of them placed under 'continued arrest'. They include members of worker-student groups such as Potere Operaio (Workers' Power) and Lotta Continua (Continuing Struggle) and of the various Maoist groups.

It is highly unlikely that

the explosions, one of which killed 14 people in the National Agricultural Bank in Milan, were the work of left-wing groups. There is a vast difference between the violence of workers on strike who smashed machinery at Fiat in September and were supported by the left-wing paper Potere Operaio and placing expertly-made bombs in banks full of farmers.

Whoever the culprits may be — and there are several groups in Italy to the right of the official Neo-Fascists (MSI) who may be guilty — the deaths in Milan have been used by all political parties, from the Neo-Fascists to the Communist Party, to

call for 'law and order'.

The right-wing parties clearly hope to come to power on the slogan, perhaps as part of a Right-Centre coalition which the President, former Social Democrat Saragat, is rumoured to favour. The minority Christian Democrat government hopes to rally to itself the remnants of the old Centre-Left coalition, perhaps for the first time including the Communist Party.

For all the parties, repression of the left as well as of the extreme right is necessary to keep or win the confidence of Italian big business, without which they cannot rule.