

CLASS STRUGGLE

Paper of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain.

Incorporating

NEW AGE

PAPER OF COMMUNIST WORKERS' MOVEMENT

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UNEMPLOYMENT ...

TWO MILLION!

HOW MANY MORE ?

Over 2 million out of work, and the end is not in sight. There can be no mistake. There is no "light at the end of the tunnel". 2 million thrown on the scrapheap, lined up into the dole queues, pushed into poverty, and forced to bear the insults of the media and humiliation from the newly-expanded forces of the Social Security snoopers.

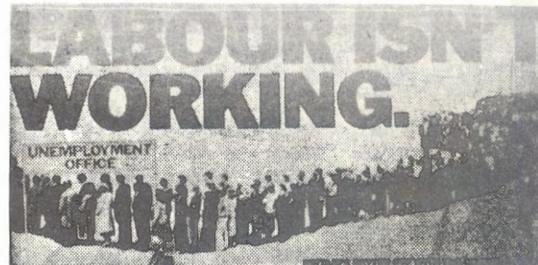
There is more to come.

2 years ago a prominent group of economic researchers at Cambridge predicted 4 million unemployed in the mid 1980s. Many other reports have made similar forecasts. The criminal waste of human resources will continue and will get worse. That is the reality of the crisis of capitalism.

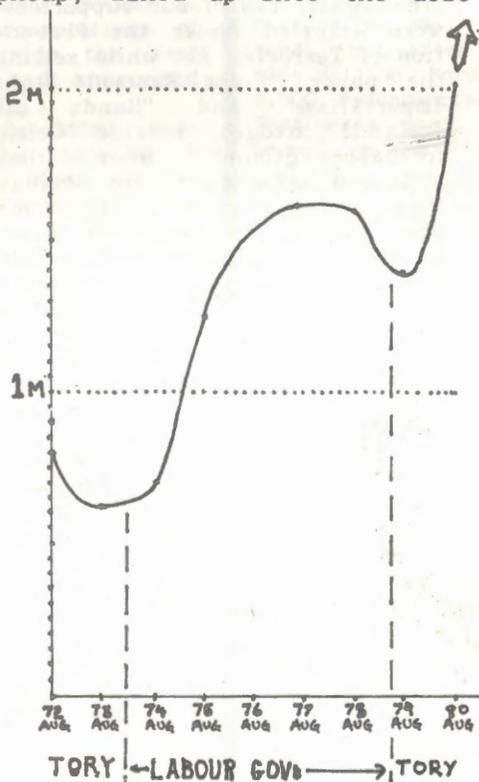
THE FRYING PAN AND THE FIRE

But we are given a 'choice'. If the working class and the working people don't like unemployment, they can always choose unemployment! How do they do it?

They tell us that "British goods are too dear". Therefore, they say, you must work harder - for less money. But is this a solution? We are told that the solution is to push Japanese, French or German workers out of work instead, and the workers of those countries are told the same. The capitalists everywhere call on the workers to line up behind "their" own imperialistic Capitalist masters in an international battle for markets in the third world, and in each others' nations. The capitalists fight for maximum profits, and we are given promises of employment if we back them in this vicious scramble. Meanwhile international tension grows and the scenes of the '30s come back not only in unemployment and growing poverty, but with the horrific memo-



"Labour is n't working". Remember this poster, put out as part of the Tory Party's election campaign? The Tories made great play of the massive increase in unemployment during the Labour administration. "Get Britain back to work" was another of their vote-catching slogans. Well, now over 2 million are out of work. Labour or Tory - the result has been the same.



each item with less work. So - more unemployed. And the introduction of new technology, combined with production which is falling anyway, screws up the rate of redundancies and throws more and more hard-working people out onto the scrapheap - and onto an evergrowing mountain of human misery.

The "victorious" companies, who win the fever-pitch competition between the millionaire moguls and monopoly combines, win through throwing out workers and cutting wages. The losers are forced to the wall - factories close, the ranks of unemployed swollen again. So Ford, the strongest car-manufactures in Britain, is bringing in new technology, pushing redundancies, and swelling its profits, while Leyland and others are crumbling. Whichever combine wins, one class is the loser - our class, the working class.

The sickness of the system is there, apparent for all to see. While workers are forced to stand idle, while factory machinery rusts, we are expected to sit at home in poverty. The people and equipment exist to produce goods to smash that poverty, but the capitalist system, in its scramble for maximum profit cannot create wealth for the people. We can see it all around us. Capitalism is destroying productive capacity, it is creating poverty - and that is its biggest crime.

ries of what the end of the thirties brought to the people of the world.

COMPETITION THROUGH SACKING WORKERS

And what does such a course bring us immediately? "Accept productivity", they say, "and keep wage rises to 10%" - while prices rise by 17%! As overall production falls (see table) we are expected to produce

April 1980 production output...
 ...down on 1975.....
 by 3% in engineering
 15% in metal manufacture
 11% in textiles

"Our policy is absolutely right". That was Maggie Thatcher's smug comment on hearing the news of 2 million unemployed. Her vicious disregard for the human misery that lies behind cold statistics has justly earned her the hatred and contempt of the bulk of the working people. The Tories and their headmistress trip happily off to their clubs, where they tut-tut to each other over our "laziness", while they tuck into their dinners, having cracked open a bottle of wine. "They really must learn to tighten their belts," the business magnates will complain from the comfort of their green-belt, six-bedroom, three bathroom houses.

Yes our anger at the moguls and their true-blue public advocates is justified a thousand times. We know these open enemies of our class. But in our struggle we must not forget lessons of the past.

Much of the so-called "left" press describes Thatcher as "mad"; or they say she is creating redundancies to "punish" our class. This rubbish only serves to conceal the strength and nature of our enemies. Thatcher is not mad, she just doesn't hide her total support for the capitalist system. Redundancies are not caused by a whim or a wrong policy, they are the inevitable result of a crisis of capita-

lism. The crisis itself is not caused by an individual, a party or one policy; it is built into the system. And it is the system that must be smashed to solve the problem. Figureheads, like Thatcher, may be loathsome, but they are only representatives of the animal, not the animal itself.

We will fight every redundancy, we will fight the laws that are meant to weaken us; we will fight for jobs, we will fight the Tories, but we will not forget that in all this we must have, as our long-term aim, the building up of a revolutionary movement around a new Party that is capable, in the end, of tearing down the capitalist system and building socialism.

And that means that we will never forget that the last Labour Government increased unemployment from ½ million to 1½ million whilst simultaneously cutting wages. Nor that the predictions of 4 million unemployed were made before the Tories were even elected. And we will not promote enemies who have crocodile-tears in their eyes as though they were a real 'alternative' to the enemies with smug, self-satisfied smiles on their lips. Nor will we sit back and say nothing about those 'left' groups who prefer to keep quiet about uncomfortable facts and merely feed their readers with simplistic clap-trap rather than a real consciousness of the class struggle today.

From our postbag

CIVIL DEFENCE. From RS: You recently made a passing reference to the increase in Civil Defence spending to £45 million by 1984, a figure of 90p per head. You were right to point out that they are not interested in safeguarding the people of this country, as evident by "allotting nuclear bomb-proof shelters for our rulers and mattresses and kitchen tables for the rest of us".

The inadequacies of preparations was shown recently when the war-warning sirens were accidentally activated in some areas of Essex on August 12. The sirens were ignored - people did not recognise them as a warning. If the capitalist state was serious about civilian defence then the present secrecy that surrounds "civil defence" measures would be unnecessary and counterproductive; obviously it would make sense for everyone to know what is expected of them.

The truth of the matter is that the only nuclear-proof shelters provided by the state are exclusively for its own use. Communal public shelters are not ruled out purely on the argument that they are too costly. "Civil defence" is seen as fulfilling a dual role. The 'enemy' in emergency planning is not just Russian troops and weapons; for the capitalist state the enemy is a dissenting populace - that is why the "civil defence" network was activated briefly during the miners' strike under the Heath administration. In the case of war, general strike or rebellion, safely hidden in their underground lairs the state officials plan to reassert the control of the capitalist state.

PTA ARRESTS IN GLASGOW. We have received the following letter from the Revolutionary Communist Group (abridged): On Saturday 9th August, two of our supporters were arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act while selling the paper "Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!" and "Hands off Ireland!" badges outside Celtic football ground. When they appeared in court on Monday they were charged 'That you both did on 9th August in Jane-field Street, Glasgow solicit and invite financial or other support for a proscribed organisation namely the IRA'. The penalty on conviction of this charge, under the procedures of Scottish law, is up to five years in prison or an unlimited fine.

This charge is the most serious ever brought against supporters of a British socialist organisation under the racist, anti-Irish Prevention of Terrorism Act. It is a clear attack on the democratic rights of all those who oppose British imperialism. The charges are blatantly political, designed to lock our members up and bankrupt our group in order to drive us out of existence.

These arrests bring to 22 the number of our supporters arrested in the last sixteen months. The latest arrests are the most serious development yet in an escalating campaign of political harassment and intimidation mounted against us. The police are no longer using the evasive charge of obstruction. Instead they are mounting an openly political attack. We are therefore writing to you to appeal for your support and help in fighting off this attack by the police.

Donations to: RCG, 49 Railton Rd, London SE 24 OLN.

DEFEND WORKERS' HEALTH. From a medical worker. Last year the DHSS issued a circular called "Health Services Management if Industrial Relations break down". In the circular advice is given to management on how to scab. This includes: sending staff home if they take part in any industrial action, i.e. if they do not do the work of another worker who is on strike; where to get scab labour from using voluntary help, existing staff, agency staff, and contractors; and how to deal with staff who object to these measures.

Even though many people within the health service have objected to this circular, there has been no sign of it being withdrawn. In fact contingency plans are being made. For example, one hospital in Manchester has just formed a 'League of Friends' when they have managed without one for years. Also there are moves afoot to 'streamline' the kitchen services, e.g. micro-wave ovens, and the closure of the butchery departments, replacing them with outside contractors.

As cuts continue in the Health Service, so will the workers within be forced closer and closer to industrial action, in order to try and maintain some standard of care. 40% of nurses recently voted "No" to their pay offer, knowing that this could lead to industrial action - an unheard of thing a few years ago.

We too must fight to prevent circulars like this from being implemented because only by doing so can we hope to maintain our rights to a health service for ourselves.

Midlands march

NF OUT!

It was announced in the middle of July that the National Front were to stage a march in West Bromwich in a month's time to propagate their line that unemployment is caused by immigration. The Sandwell Committee Against Racism and Fascism immediately began to organise a counter mobilisation to prevent the NF from spreading its propaganda. In Birmingham the Campaign Against Racist Laws branch joined with the Local Anti-Nazi League to mobilise people in Birmingham.

Fearing 'disorder' the West Brom police obtained an order banning all marches in West Bromwich whereupon the Front declared that they would march instead in one or more of six other towns in the West Midlands. However the police again successfully applied via the local councils to the Home Secretary to ban all marches in these six towns. The NF's national activities organiser, Martin 'Toady' Webster announced that in response to this the Front would march in some other undisclosed town in the West Midlands, but outside the West Midlands County (wherein, because of a by law, advance notice of marches had to be given to the police), while he would hold a symbolic march accompanied only by two unemployed youths.

By the Sunday morning of the marches the ANL national officers had received information that the Front would be marching in Leamington Spa, and organised the national mobilisation to assemble in that town. Meanwhile the Sandwell CARF and Birmingham organisations were organising to stop Webster and also mounted a symbolic picket of seven unemployed people and representatives of national minority organisations outside the West Brom job centre to which Webster had announced he would be marching.

During Sunday morning and lunchtime over one hundred anti-racists lined the route which it was expected Webster would take. When Webster arrived at 2.30 pm he found a few score of police unable to contain the anti-racists and offer him any protection. Looking extremely nervous, Webster asked the local police commander if he would tell him not to go through with his march, and when he obliged he thankfully got back into his car and left town! The anti-racists then marched to the job centre (when one Asian youth was arrested) to hold a brief rally.

By 1.45 pm the anti-racists gathered in Lemington Spa knew that the Front were in fact due to march in Nuneaton at 4.00 pm. The police had given the Front coaches an escort into Nuneaton, but stopped the anti-racists' coaches on the road from Leamington to Nuneaton. In the event about 350 NF members staged a short march with massive police protection amid barracking by about 500-600 local people and anti-racists who had managed to evade the police road blocks.

While the National Front were marching some anti-racist skin-heads found themselves approaching the NF coaches. When stopped by some police officers they told the police that they were NF members and were let through to the coaches. As soon as the police had disappeared they set about smashing the windows of a number of the coaches.

After the NF march, anti-racists held a counter march ending in a rally in Pingles Park attended by over a thousand people and addressed by a number of speakers.

A WORKER'S NOTEBOOK

LORD LEW GRADE is known for his 'entertainment empire'. He must be pretty amused at the details of his last year's salary that have just been released. He earned £4,000-a week! With a salary of £207,854 (part of it paid in America - no doubt for tax reasons) he's the best paid man in Britain.



HEROES OF THE INDIAN PEOPLE who died in the struggle against British imperialism were commemorated in an event organised by the Indian Workers' Association in Birmingham Town Hall on August 16th. This Martyr-Day Celebration was attended by about a thousand people. As well as political speeches pointing to the continuing struggle of the Indian people both in India and here in Britain, there was also a wide variety of poetry, dancing and songs.

THE PREVENTION OF TERRORISM ACT is clearly being used by the state principally to harass and intimidate Irish people in Britain rather than for its stated purpose. This is shown by the fact that since 1974, 90% of those detained under the PTA were not subsequently charged. The Act is used particularly against those lawfully engaged in opposing the British occupation of north-eastern Ireland.

DEFENDING UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES released last month, Thatcher commented that "unemployment is made worse in so far as people pay themselves more than the value of goods they produce. Until we stop that and pay ourselves approximately the value of the goods we produce we shall not cure unemployment." How come, then, that after doubling their profits in 1979 to £586 million, Ford (UK) last month announced a further 2,300 redundancies this autumn? It's the value of Thatcher's goods that's low, and the sooner she's unemployed the better.

FOUNDRIES in Britain are operating at only 65% of capacity. The effects of decreasing demand for steel have been seen in Shotton, Consett and many other places. Problems of iron and aluminium foundries are even worse, since while steel is needed throughout the mechanical engineering sector, demand for aluminium is very largely confined to the crisis-ridden car industry, which is also the largest consumer for cast iron.

AS CONSETT STEELWORKERS received official notice of the September closure of the plant, Sir Charles Villiers was opening a £45 million private steel plant 12 miles outside Shotton. The plant, owned by Guest, Keen & Nettleford (GKN), is designed to produce the steel billets which were Consett's main product. Incidentally, GKN were "the biggest single contributor to Tory Party funds last year" according to the Durham Street Press.

OF 350 COURTAULD SITES in the UK, 50 have closed in the last year, resulting in a 10,000 reduction in its workforce to 90,000. This compares with 123,000 in 1975. Courtaulds made profits of £64 million and sales totalling £1.82 billion in the last financial year.

PRIVATE MEDICAL CARE will get another boost in the next budget, says Sir Geoffrey Howe. The Chancellor plans to provide tax relief for private health insurance. This is an increasing popular fringe benefit for the highly paid. Making company schemes non-taxable will cost the treasury £30 million a year, at a time when the private health insurance schemes are booming even without such encouragement. The big three (BUPA, Private Patients Plan and Western Provident) have recorded an increase in membership of 14% since last year, and now provide cover for 3 million people. And where will Sir Geoffrey find £30 million? From continuing to slash NHS funds, no doubt.

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ABROAD

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In this issue we are publishing two further contributions that have been sent to "Class Struggle" by members of the recent Troops Out Movement (TOM) delegation to Belfast. Other articles were published in our last issue.

BAD BEHAVIOUR

SWP visit Ireland

“ I went to Belfast with the Troops Out Movement on the weekend of August 9/10th to protest at the appalling conditions of the H Block prisoners, and to commemorate the anniversary of Internment.

I was very proud to be there that weekend but I must make a severe criticism of the trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) members who made me feel ashamed.

THE NIGHT BEFORE

Firstly, they were disruptive in the hut we were billeted in for the night. This hut was used by all the delegation women and men as a base to put our sleeping bags on and spend the night. The SWP members had gone to the social held by Sinn Fein in the evening and they came back very drunk and disturbed everyone as they fell all over the other people who were spread out asleep on the floor. When they were shouted at by many women comrades, the SWP shouted sexist remarks to the women and



Belfast August 10th: "We publicly bear arms, not to hijack attention away from this march, but to show the world we are a revolutionary people's army."

commented on the lack of clothes they were wearing, which was mainly because it was a hot night and many had no other clothes to change into, so they slept only with their underwear on. They were not exposing their bodies and yet the SWP had to taunt and make their remarks to intimidate the women who wanted to get up and forcibly throw the disturbers out. The SWP also made racist remarks and cracked racist jokes. Eventually they shut up although not before they had woken all the others in the hut who had been asleep.

ON THE MARCH OR IN THE PUB?

Secondly, the SWP who should have been supporting the Sinn

Fein march up the Falls Road apparently went boozing in the local pubs. I heard this from an SWP member who said that it was understandable some of the lads viewed the weekend in these terms, and he felt it was not a criticism of serious dimensions but a small fault. I personally felt disgusted by this attitude as the SWP who had only two people carrying their banner thrust it to the front of the demonstration, and when the TROOPS OUT MOVEMENT banner broke at the rally; the SWP hoisted their banner with their slogans on, for the local lads to raise up above the platform as though they were amongst the organisers who had done the work for the weekend of action.

IWA STATEMENT

The following statement has been issued by the Indian Workers Association (GB):-

The IWA (GB) held its seventh national conference on 3rd August 1980 in Derby, East Midlands. Delegates from 14 branches, representing thousands of members and supporters attended the national conference.

The conference condemned the Government White paper on Nationality as another piece of state racism - an addition to the present racist laws on Immigration controls and on SUS.

The conference decided to wage a vigorous campaign against the White paper by uniting with all those organisations and individuals who are against the White paper.

In order to conduct its campaign, the IWA will organise lobbies of Members of Parliament in their constituencies, a national petition, hold public meetings and will play

an active role in the Campaign against Racist Laws. It will campaign against racism in all other institutions including the trade union movement.

The Conference viewed the present recession, deliberately created by the Tory government, with grave concern. The recession is hitting black workers much harder than white workers.

Banking on the present recession, Nazi organisations, and the National Front in particular, are trying to revive themselves in areas of high unemployment. The conference considered, that whilst making all efforts to stop the Nazis marching in our streets, it is absolutely essential that the IWA's members and supporters play an active role in the trade union and labour movement against the Tory government's anti-people policies.

The Conference condemned the reactionary domestic and foreign policies of the government of India, in particular its oppression of

the national minorities in India and its recognition of the Vietnamese supported Heng Samrin clique in Kampuchea. It also condemned its pussyfooting policy on Soviet aggression against Afghanistan. The conference also condemned all the secessionist movements in India which are trying to divide the entity of India.

Further on India, the IWA (GB) will continue its support of the people in their economic and social struggles and in their struggles for civil liberty and for a People's Democratic India.

The conference expressed solidarity and support for the National Liberation struggles of the Palestinians, Azanians, in Northern Ireland, and of the Afghan and Kampuchean people and all other National Liberation and National Independence movements throughout the world.

The National Conference elected a 25 strong central committee with T.S. Sahota as president and A.S. Juhl as general secretary.

POLITICS AND PETROL

The members from Hatfield were apparently the drunken disorderly members who had not been participating in the demonstration and one of their own members refused a lift back in their coach as he said they constantly pissed over each other and out of the windows. The members who had been drunk in the hut woke up to find they had pissed on their friends jeans. This behaviour is intolerable if people are to be educated to learn the necessary political lessons of why we must support the Irish people in their struggle for self-determination. How can anybody take the SWP seriously if they allow their members to behave in this way? My friend who had sat listening to this commented, well the SWP cannot take the Irish issue seriously if they cannot even be bothered to go on the demonstration but just stayed drinking. To which an SWP member said "Oh but they do take it very seriously, but we find many of our members are like this and after about three years or more they change".

The person who disturbed us in the hut was recognised by a girl on our coach who said he was always like that and had been three years ago when she was a member of the SWP. She has since left, and the reasons she gave was their lack of politics.

A SERIOUS MATTER

Whilst many readers may think this is a small number of insignificant points about the SWP, I would like to stress that after the demonstration I, along with other members of the TOM delegation, were fired at with plastic bullets by the British army. They were firing in retaliation to the stones thrown by the young boys and girls of about 15 years or less at the saracen cars patrolling around and picking up people for arrest after the demonstration. I was just standing waiting for the minibus to pick me up with the other members of my group when bullets were fired at random and screaming girls and boys were running in all directions to escape the bullets. These are the same bullets which were fired at two people on the Friday before we arrived for lighting fires to protest against the British presence in Ireland, and these two people were not as lucky as me, one was killed by the plastic bullet and the other was maimed severely. This is the seriousness of the politics, and whilst this was happening those who were not on the demonstration were enjoying themselves in the pub!))

On Saturday 9th August I witnessed Nationalist youths angered by the bloodshed of the previous night set up roadblocks outside the Andersonstown Leisure Centre, on the Andersonstown Road, Belfast. This had the effect of slowing traffic down to single file. An RUC Landrover tried to remove the road block, but was beaten off by the fearless Nationalist youths, who defied the rifles and plastic bullets of the RUC with hails of stones. Some of these brave youths had barely reached their eighth birthday. Four times more the 'impartial heroes' of Ulsterisation were put to flight as they attempted to return.

Having given up all attempts to remove the road blocks the quaking 'heroes' returned in a snatch squad convoy (three landrovers). Passers by had to scatter for their lives as the convoy screeched and skidded to a halt on a shopping precinct opposite the Leisure Centre. From the armoured plated landrovers issued four rifle-swinging upholders of British 'democracy', led by a hysterical, baton-wielding thug who mouthed obscenities and struck at anything that moved.

The Nationalist youths had fallen back to an alley-way at the side of the precinct which led to some densely overgrown wasteground and tried to draw the RUC after them with a hail of stones. Here the courage of the guardians of British 'justice' left them. But not for long. Flushed with 'heroism' which in any other war would have earned them a VC, their gallant leader led the attack on a crowded sweetshop, where some youths not involved in the battle had understandably taken refuge. Fearing neither hardship nor death, our brave RUC proceeded to batter anyone unfortunate to be within reach of their batons or rifle butts. Grabbing three youths they retreated back to their landrovers. But only having room for two of their prisoners, they had to content themselves with murderously kicking the last of the youths and promising they would get him next time.

Later, as it grew dark, I was attracted by a bonfire burning in the middle of the Andersonstown Road, near where the battle had taken place that afternoon. Here Nationalist youths were sitting on a scaffolding pole which straddled an alley-way between a shop and an empty house. Here we got talking about

football, music, and of course politics. They told me they planned to ambush an RUC landrover with petrol bombs. The light of the bonfire would allow accuracy of aim to the axles of the vehicle

Using windproof matches, they attacked with two petrol bombs a passing landrover, but due to the time it took to strike the matches the vehicle was out of range, so the first attack failed. The RUC did not fire on us. We returned to the road and the youths lay in wait for the next one, having borrowed a lighter.

The second attack was successful. Four bombs were thrown, this time at a Brit Saracen, one hitting the back axle, two hitting the windscreen and the last hitting the front tyre. The vehicle, enveloped in flames, skidded out of control, coming to rest in the middle of the bonfire. At this point everyone legged it, myself included, expecting the Brits to be blasting bullets into our hides. But they would not open their doors to fire on us, frightened that the youths would throw more bombs. The vehicle limped smouldering down the road to the safety of the fort on the Falls Road. The youths said their actions were over for the day as they had no more petrol.))

NEW ERA BOOKS

New Era books sells progressive books and periodicals from Britain and around the world, including:-

Trade Unions and the H block. A background to the protest. 50p + 21p post.

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The revolutionary press in Britain and what is to be done to rebuild it. Sums up the history of the revolutionary press in Britain with the aim of rebuilding it. CWM. 80p + 16½.

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Address: 203, Seven Sisters Rd., London N4. Phone 272 5894.
Open Mon-Sat 10-6 (Thurs 7.30).

Poland:

WORKING CLASS STANDS FIRM

The continuing strike movement of the Polish working class is now posing a major challenge to the Kremlin chieftains in the very heart of their empire.

The strike movement began in early July when the government announced a big increase in the price of meat, already expensive and in short supply. Previous attempts by the government to raise the price of meat had led to workers uprisings in 1970 and 1976.

The government quickly rescinded the price rises as the strikes spread across Poland, but it was already too late. What started as a simple response to an attack on living standards quickly grew into a major struggle for democratic rights, trade union freedom and national independence. Nearly all major industrial centres from one end of the country to another have been wracked with strikes. One report speaks of over 800 separate strikes, many involving large groups of workers - 16,000 at a helicopter factory, the Warsaw bus and tram system, a general strike in the city of Lublin etc.

NATIONAL FOCUS

The strikes gained a national focus in the middle of August when the workers in the huge Lenin shipyard in the Baltic city of Gdansk went on strike and occupied their yard. This followed the sacking of crane driver Anna Walentonowicz, an activist in the Committee for Free Trade Unions, who had played an important part in the 1970 uprising.

The Monday after the Lenin shipyard workers occupied, a United Strike Committee, representing 21 workplaces and 120,000 workers in Gdansk, was formed. Despite the fact that the authorities quickly agreed to give the shipyard workers wage rises and to build a monument to those killed by the police in 1970, the overwhelming majority voted to stay on strike until all the demands of the workers in Gdansk had been met. Local peasants have supported the workers' struggle. Representatives from 20 nearby villages voted to halt their normal deliveries and divert them to the Strike Committee.

THE 21 DEMANDS

The United Strike Committee has put forward a series of 21 demands which include:



Demonstrators outside the Polish Embassy in London demand trade union freedom and national independence.

- * The right to strike and security for all strikers.
- * Freedom of speech and publication. The abolition of censorship.
- * Release of all political prisoners.
- * The right to establish free trade unions.
- * Access to the media for all religious groups.
- * Involvement of the people in discussing and solving Poland's economic problems.
- * Abolition of privileges for the security forces and members of the revisionist party through the abolition of special shops and the institution of equal family allowances.
- * Reduction in meat prices. Only surpluses to be exported.
- * Increases in pay, by an average of £34 per month to compensate for higher prices.
- * Strike Pay.
- * Wage increases linked to inflation.

Far from being reactionary and anti-socialist, these demands speak for themselves - the Polish workers are calling for democratic rights for the people, and workers democracy in particular.

The Polish government, shaken by the strength and organisation of the revolt, has made major concessions, even sacking the Prime Minister and half the Politbureau. But the one thing they refuse to hear of is Free Trade Unions. They know that their reactionary rule, propped up in the final analysis by Russian bayonets, will crumble if faced by the united and organised power and initiative of the working class.

Much has been made of the religious influence on the strikers but this should be viewed concretely. Firstly, the church in Poland is a symbol of national independence. Secondly, it is by no means the only influence on the strikers. Whilst many factories display pictures of the Pope, others have been flying red flags and displaying revolutionary slogans. When the government has tried to divide strikers it has been accused of playing "capitalist tricks" and a television appeal to end the strikes by a catholic cardinal has gone unheeded.

THREAT OF SOVIET AGGRESSION

The growing struggle in Poland raises the danger of direct Soviet aggression. The Kremlin is very worried about a workers' revolt in the very heart of its empire, and right on their borders. Hence the rapid exchange of visits between Polish and Soviet leaders.

Even amongst the Polish ruling class there are elements who stand for a degree of national independence, and certain of these have tried to make concessions to the workers whilst warning the people not to provoke the Kremlin. One commentary even warned of a repetition of the historical tragedy when Poland was divided up amongst its larger and more powerful neighbours and ceased to exist as a separate state.

SUPPORT THE POLISH STRIKERS

Whatever the final outcome of the current struggle in Poland it will constitute an important chapter in the struggle against Soviet social imperialism. It has shaken revisionist rule as no other movement in Eastern Europe has, not least because of the major role played by the

organised working class. It provides great inspiration to the workers in other parts of Eastern Europe - a number of reports speak of workers in other East European countries going on strike. And the next time the Polish bosses want to try something they have to look behind their shoulders to a politicised, militant and increasingly organised working class.

All working and progressive people should support the struggles of the Polish workers for national independence, democracy and genuine socialism. In particular, we must demand:

NO RUSSIAN INTERVENTION IN POLAND !

TUC fights unionism

"The General Council of the TUC has reaffirmed the decision to go to Poland". With these words Len Murray has put two fingers up at the Polish workers who are fighting for Trade Union rights. Now the General Council after a 3 to 1 vote is to go to the TUC annual conference and call for support for the official trip timed to start on September 8th. They will be visiting the area of Sopot near Gdansk, and Warsaw.

The delegation from the Economic Committee has been invited by the official Central Council of Polish Trade Unions. Whether or not they meet one or two of the strike leaders there will be no doubt whose guests they are. They are not the guests of the free trade union movement. That is for sure. Vladimir Brus, Professor of Economics at Wolfson College, Oxford, a socialist exiled by the Polish authorities described the TUC decision as "quite incomprehensible". What was needed, he pointed out, was an expression of solidarity with the strikers. Vladimir Brus's suggestion that the TUC go on its own as a fact-finding mission, not as official guests, has been ignored.

The union leaders who oppose the visit do not exactly have a record of fighting for democracy in the trade union movement. Frank Chapple of the electricians' union is hardly renowned as a champion of the people. Joe Gormley, the miners' president, is certainly not a fighter for the working class. But then neither is Murray, a major architect of the visit. The reasons why

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INTERNATIONAL NOTES



MALAYA: The radio station, "Voice of the Malayan Revolution", recently reported that the liberation army had smashed the enemy's 20 month-old encirclement and suppression campaign in Northern Perak, bordering Thailand, and had eliminated 350 enemy soldiers. The government had mobilised a 1,000 strong ground force to attack in co-ordination with the air force and artillery. The liberation army laid mines, carried out running battles, set ambushes, shot down a helicopter and damaged another eight. The reactionary forces have now withdrawn from the area.

BERMUDA: British imperialism was recently placed in the dock by the United Nations General Assembly's Special Committee on Decolonisation for its continued oppression of the people of Bermuda, in the West Indies. The Committee called on Britain to grant the Bermudan people the right to national independence and condemned the presence of British military bases on the island.

CHINA: Xinhua News Agency reports that artificial blood developed in China has been used successfully in two emergency cases at a Shanghai hospital. According to Chinese research institutes, the blood substitute has the same oxygen-carrying capacity as natural blood but can be stored for longer. It can be used on patients of any blood type.

NIGERIA: Workers at a Michelin tyre factory at Port Harcourt, eastern Nigeria, caused extensive damage to the plant causing it to be closed for a month recently. This occurred after a series of labour disputes earlier in the year. Michelin has been criticised as anti Trade Union by the Footwear, Leather and Rubber Products Union, which the company for long refused to recognise. The workers went on strike in March to protest the dismissal of several of their colleagues. The company finally recognised the Union.

The growing Nigerian working class is beginning to flex its muscles. Earlier this year all railway workers in the country went on strike to demand better pay and conditions.

UGANDA: Over 2,500 workers went on strike in Uganda in early August, and defied government appeals to return to work. The textile workers were demanding a change in management, wage increases and a productivity bonus for last year. They also complained of management's failure to supply them with uniforms despite repeated requests. The strike was the largest since the overthrow of the Idi Amin regime last April.

ZIMBABWE: The Republic of Zimbabwe was admitted to membership of the United Nations Organisation by unanimous vote on the morning of August 25. Zimbabwean Prime Minister, Comrade Robert Mugabe, received a warm welcome as head of the Zimbabwean delegation to the U.N. session. In a speech Comrade Mugabe dwelt on the history of the Zimbabwean peoples' national liberation struggle and called for the establishment of a new international economic order. Progress in the developing countries required a fundamental restructuring of existing relationships in international trade, financial and monetary spheres, he declared.

Comrade Mugabe reiterated his country's support for the national liberation movements in Palestine, Namibia, South Africa and Western Sahara and stated that Zimbabwe was ready to establish relations with all countries that respected her national rights and sovereignty. But, "We will not let our friends choose for us who should be our other friends," he declared.



NO UNIONS AT NICHOLLS

As you have probably seen from the television, there is an industrial dispute going on at Nicholls (Concentrates) on Merseyside. Twenty-eight workers walked out of this non-union factory (total workforce 90) in North Liverpool, and then joined the TGWU. I am particularly interested in the non-unionised sector of the economy, and I went along to the factory to see what was going on. I met the managing director, told him I was thinking of writing an article for the newspapers (this is it), and he gave me an interview. I must say I didn't expect it, and so wasn't very well prepared. But what I discovered seems to me to explain very clearly why the dispute should have arisen.

A FAMILY BUSINESS

Nicholls (Concentrates) supplies the ingredients that go to making the drinks one can buy from drink vending machines - coffee, instant tea, orange juice. They supply 60% of the national market. They supply 56 League Football Clubs, and if you get a drink at Arsenal, Celtic, Aberdeen, etc., you are almost certainly consuming their product. They also supply most of the large factories. On Merseyside for example, they supply Ford's. They are in a cut-throat market, and are in direct competition with monopoly giants like Nestles and Brooke Bond.

Nicholls is a family business, completely independent of the multinationals in terms of actual ownership. Mr Peter Unsworth, who gave me the interview, is owner and managing director, and his 3 children work in the firm. The firm really is commercial rather than industrial, as he does very little to the raw materials he gets. These raw materials are mostly imported from Third World Countries. The coffee comes from Brazil, the tea from Sri Lanka and the tea, incidentally is "instantized" in Sri Lanka, which is an interesting example of the transfer of industrial activity away from the metropolis. In the factory in North Liverpool, the workforce do little more than load it into boxes and pallets to be ready to take away for delivery to ARA etc. The workforce is 90% unskilled, with a couple of electricians etc to watch the automatic machinery, and lots of (mostly female) unskilled packers.

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certain TUC leaders oppose the visit are not the main concern.

The main issue is the visit itself. If Gormley and his friends are backing opposition to it, that is good. It's certainly far better than the contented comment of one TUC leader on the General Council, who said: "If the tanks roll we'll call it off". That'll please the Polish workers.

Of course, we should expect such voluntary blindness by TUC leaders who were happy to welcome Alexander Shelepin to Britain as head of the Soviet Trade Union movement. The fact that he was appointed to the post on completion of a tour of duty as head of the KGB was to them an irrelevance. So, today, is the extensive strike action of Polish workers.

Recently the TUC General Council expressed support for free Trade Unions in Bolivia. Murray himself stated, "The General Council are naturally sympathetic to wishes and attempts by working people in any country who are trying to establish their own democratic Trade Union Centres." Murray we presume, would not back an official visit to Bolivia. Excellent. For the same reason we should demand that official links with the state unions in Soviet dominated Eastern Europe should be cut.

You can help by putting forward resolutions in your branch condemning the visit, calling for backing of the struggle for free Trade Unions, and demanding that your own union and the TUC break their links with the official fakes.

VULNERABLE

Mr Unsworth had some extremely interesting things to say about how vulnerable a firm like his is to fluctuating market forces. He reckoned that his sales were almost a barometer of the level of industrial activity. For example, he said, if Ford workers work from 8 until 5, they drink "two cups of my coffee", if they work from 8 until 6 they drink "three cups". He thought the drop in overtime hit him very hard indeed. In particular the long holiday shutdown and then partial shutdown at Fords hitting him very hard. I would imagine the sales of vended drinks at Ford would amount to several thousand pounds a week, but he gave no figures. He then went on to tell me that market conditions were very poor. This he said, was a very tough year: "Anyone who survives this year is doing very well." This struck me as an amazing admission.

It is clear why a firm like this should be so concerned to avoid union recognition. They are working at the margin of the economy. The monopolies find ways to insulate themselves from competition, and one of the ways is to so arrange the ownership of industry that the really risky aspects of operations are pushed outside the formal framework of the monopoly.

UNCIVILISED

From what I gathered from talking to the strikers afterwards everything was very nice until about 18 months ago: "The wages were low, but there was a good atmosphere." Then "they began to scream at you". This was put down to the placing of the son of Mr Unsworth in charge. I should imagine that there may have been economic reasons for putting him in that position. It is obvious from the description given above of the basic structure of the firm that they are no longer in a position to have a "civilised" approach to unions, as have the big monopolies who insulate themselves from the kind of market forces that Mr Unsworth has to face so directly.

The likes of Mr Unsworth are unable to dodge the worst effects of the laws of capitalism, the way the monopolies can, by shoving the burden on elsewhere. Such a factory-owner can only sift the burden inside his own operation - onto his workers of course.

Forthcoming events

Saturday September 6th.

Support Anwar Ditta's campaign to have her children join her in Britain.

Demonstration assembling at 12 noon, Mere St., Rochdale.

Organised by Anwar Ditta Defence Committee.

Donations to 127 Crawford St., Rochdale.

Sunday September 7th.

Meeting to discuss the White paper on Nationality.

3.00 p.m. Chapeltown Law Centre, Leeds.

Sunday September 14th.

Commemorate the Scottish peoples' uprising of 1820.

Assemble 2 p.m. Sighthill Cemetery, Glasgow. Followed by meeting in Huntershill House.

Organised by 1820 Society and Scottish Martyrs Committee.

Saturday September 20th.

Fight racism! Stop police raids!

Public meeting and cultural function organised by Asian Youth Movement (Manchester).

Speakers: Anwar Ditta, speakers from Bangladesh Workers' Association, Kashmiri Workers' Association, Pan Africanist Congress (UK) and Asian Youth Movement. Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi musical groups. Asian folk dances.

6 p.m., Birch Community Centre, Brighton Grove, Manchester 14. (Off Wilmslow Rd.)