

MILITANT

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SIX PENCE

ACT AGAINST BIG BUSINESS "CONSPIRACY"

By Peter Taaffe



Throughout
all
history
no
privileged
group
has
ever
surrendered
without
a
fight
...no
holds
barred"
George
Brown

George Brown, the Minister of Economic Affairs has openly denounced the conspiracy of the City bankers, the millionaire press and Big Business against the Labour Government. The Economist, in its issue of June 12th refers apologetically to the way in which the City financiers are incoherently denouncing "this extremist Bolshevik Government." The quotations in the article on page two from Sir Halford Reddish indicate the hysterical public attacks by the ruling class, their comments in private must be even more unrestrained and aggressive. This in relation to the Government which the Economist terms "extremely conservative in its measures."

It is the difficulties of the system which have provoked these outbursts. For a generation now British capitalism has been in decline. 13 years of Toryism have underlined that decline. Now under the Labour Government the diseased British capitalist system continues on its downward path. In May the trade deficit was £49 million, the largest since the crisis burst in November. Imports were the highest ever at £501 million compared with £477 million in April. Exports were actually £8 million lower in May compared with the previous month at £379 million. It is true that there were special factors in that many merchants waited for the cut in the imports surtax and delayed importing till the Chancellor's announcement of the 5% cut.

But the main factor remains that British capitalism despite the highest tariffs in the world after America is incapable of preventing a flood of manufactured goods and machinery being sold from foreign suppliers on the British home market. They are being defeated by their rivals even at home. Despite Commonwealth preferences it is the same story in this favoured British market. For example in the last five years Britain increased trade with the Commonwealth by only 3% while the United States increased her trade by 46%!

pose an incomes policy... on the workers to limit and restrict consumption. They approved the taxes which take £600 million out of "consumption" i.e. largely taxes at the expense of the working class. But any suggestion of limiting their profits by however small a margin is received by the ferocious outburst of which George Brown has complained. The modest suggestions of Capital Gains Tax and Corporation Tax were received as if they really reduced the ruling class to beggary and destitution. Unfortunately under this onslaught the Government has retreated through a whole series of amendments which nullify the effect originally intended. To give one example the suggestion that managing directors salaries should have a limit of £25,000 a year has been dropped and now the limit is 15% of the profits! This is "lusher living" that the Sun hypocritically condemns in its editorial. For decades the capitalists and their hirelings have talked about "equality of sacrifice", "we're all in this together" at each successive economic or political crisis which they faced. Only by promising measures of this character could the Labour leaders succeed in persuading the trade unions and the rank and file of the constituency parties of the need to accept sacrifices.

INDUSTRIAL INEFFICIENCY

The whole of the capitalist press including those supposed to be friendly to Labour has sounded the alarm. The Sun in its editorial of June 16th declares "But the basic weakness remains: Britain still lacks a clear and ruthless policy which gives first priority to economic development and industrial efficiency. This is what the Wilson Government promised. This is what they still have to bring about."

"But brutally, British industry as a whole is not equipped to compete in the modern world. So long as we have to buy computers from America because we cannot produce anything so good; So long as sophisticated tools of all kinds have to be imported because British firms cannot cope; So long as imports of chemicals jump wildly because our own chemical industry is short of plant capacity; So long as these deficiencies continue, Britain is on the edge of disaster..."

PRICES RISE
Now the increase in prices the biggest for many years has nullified the effects of the wage concessions which the workers in many industries have managed to wrest from the employers. The official retail price index jumped over two points in the month to mid-April. For the last four months it has been over 4 points, the biggest increase in a like period for more than a decade.

Continued on page 4

EDITORIAL:

Vietnam: End Imperialist Intervention

Desperately attempting to extricate itself from its impossible position in Vietnam, U.S. Imperialism twists and turns, and abandons one "principled" position after another. Convinced that Military victory is impossible olive branches and the soothing "come let us reason together" are extended by the hypocritical Johnson. At the same time the world is horrified at the brutal public execution of a young Vietnamese guerrilla in Saigon callously shown in the Press and on Television in this country.

When every serious correspondent of the Capitalist Press has shown that the basis of the National Liberation Front is found in the impoverishment and brutal conditions of the Vietnamese people, the Labour Government continues to slavishly support U.S. Imperialism. Alongside this Wilson attempts to play the role of the rebuffed Gordon Walker as "peacemaker". Wilson and the Labour Government with the sterile "Commonwealth Peace Mission" attempts to impress the workers that the war in Vietnam can be solved diplomatically.

Government only stays in power by virtue of the massive backing of U.S. Imperialism. And even then militarily and politically they are already defeated.

As the Times correspondent pointed out on 9. 6. 65: "By almost any standards, the war there has already been lost. The Vietcong hold most of the countryside, and its strength is increasing. The South Vietnam Army is weary and weakened by desertion. In Saigon there is little hope of establishing a viable civilian government, and the United States is treating with war lords."

The "teach ins" and demonstrations in this country have indicated the opposition of millions at the role of U.S. Imperialism in Vietnam. Inside the Labour Party and Trade Union Movement the demand grows that the Labour Leadership break from its policy of supporting the U.S. Imperialists against the Vietnamese people. Dozens of Constituencies including Foreign Minister Stewart's own C.L.P. have condemned the policy of the Labour Government.

Instead of the "peace Missions" and great power con-

ferences to decide the fate of Vietnam the Labour Movement must press for the adoption of an Internationalist Foreign Policy by the Labour Government and demand the total withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam. Wilson and the Labour Government must raise now the demand for the right of self-determination by the Vietnamese people.

CAPITALIST BARBARISM

We lead the World in wealth and power. But we also lead in pollution and blight and despoilment.

We have the most cars and the worst junkyards. We are the most mobile people on earth and have the most congestion. We produce the most energy and have the most polluted air.

Our factories pour out more products and our rivers carry the heaviest pollution. We have the most goods to sell and the most unsightly signs to advertise their worth.

Mr. Stewart Ullah—
U.S. secretary of State for the Interior

DIRECTOR SHOWS THE REAL FACE OF CAPITALISM

By TED GRANT (Part II)

While demanding that the consumption of the workers be reduced, naturally Sir Halford, in common with his class is screaming piteously against the attempt to limit the racket on business expenses. "Yet another burden to be borne by the shareholder is the proposed disallowance for tax purposes of 'entertainment' expenses." With hand on heart Sir Halford virtuously declaims "I know nothing about the grouse moors, the yachts and the penthouses airily mentioned by the Chancellor, I can speak only for our own company. We have always refused to buy business." Sir Halford can speak this way, as his firm controls a virtual monopoly; naturally they are not in the position of having to "buy business". But nevertheless "Of course it depends on what is meant by entertainment. I confess that I try to extend the working day, particularly in London, by a business discussion over lunch or dinner (as the Prime Minister himself does) and often over breakfast as well. Quite recently I had visitors to breakfast on three consecutive mornings... On each occasion I paid (that is, in due course the company paid) a few shillings for the other man's breakfast. Is that 'entertainment'?"

DIRECTORS CANTEENS

Sir Halford can sleep easy. His friends, just as they employ people to find ways for tax dodging, have already found a way round this restriction. The Financial Times cynically reports the appearance of "Directors Canteens" where the cost of a meal is anything up to £10 a head. The wages of good chefs in the West End has soared, and company directors are making inquiries in Switzerland, France and Germany for top chefs because of the resulting shortage! All this on business expenses of course! A far cry from the miserable meals served in the workers canteens. If there is to be any limitation on "consumption" it certainly will not be on the part of Sir Halford and his class.

Sir Halford complains, as do consistently all the capitalists at the "excessive government expenditure" "High prices are not the cause of inflation; they are the natural effects as the inexorable law of supply and demand comes into play. If the bath is overflowing it is not much good baling out with the soap-dish. The thing to do is to turn off the tap. And the tap in this case is excessive government expenditure." Naturally the high price of cement is a law of nature! It has nothing to do with the monopoly which has been established by concentration and amalgamation in the industry. What Sir Halford wants is a slashing of expenditure on the social services, education, house-building and such "luxuries". Naturally his class would not want a cut in the arms estimates, which are intended to defend the loot at home and abroad. One has only to remember the howl that went up when it was sug-

gested there should be a cut in the expenditure on aircraft production. Arms production is expensive but highly profitable!

What Sir Halford means is indicated by his contemptuous references to the electorate "...it is difficult to imagine any government, whatever its political colour, and much less a Socialist government, resisting the temptation to bribe what is so largely an uninformed electorate, as long as there is universal suffrage." The reference to universal suffrage has sinister connotations. So long as the capitalist economy is in the process of capitalist upswing, and so long as the electorate continues to vote Conservative, with only occasional regrettable lapses in voting Labour, and so long as the Labour leaders do not launch really radical measures against capitalism, the capitalists are prepared to tolerate the continuance of democratic institutions. While they are making record profits they are prepared to tolerate this inconvenience. But as the impatience of Sir Halford indicates, despite this, any attempt to take serious measures against capitalism would provoke their implacable resistance. Like the German, French, Italian and Spanish capitalists before the war, they would turn to other means to maintain their domination. In Britain too, before the war big sections were preparing to back Mosley.

Representatives of the capitalists like the Opposition leader and "civilised gentlemen" like Home and Enoch Powell, not to speak of Sir Cyril Osborne, can use in however surreptitious a fashion racial prejudice, in their attitude to immigration, for the purpose of gaining support and misleading the working class even at the present time. What base and dirty methods of repression would this class stoop to if they felt their position really threatened? If they react in this way to not a diminution but a limitation of their profits one can imagine the rage and the hysteria with which they would greet any real threat to the sources of their wealth and income.

INCOMES POLICY

So far as the ruling class is concerned the Incomes and Prices policy of the Government is already dead. The Financial Times, cynically explained the real purpose of the policy as the restraining and limiting of the increase in wages of the workers. With Full Employment the workers had a sellers market for their labour and only by such means could the rise in wages be restrained. The capitalists, as already explained were not interested in either limiting their profits or incomes. Thus the crime of the Labour Government not only lies in trying to check the super profits being made by the capitalists but being unable to restrain sufficiently the attempts of the workers to gain increases to match the increases in the cost of living, and a small increase in their share of the wealth they are producing. As



Sir Halford explains "The much publicised Incomes Policy is in my view an unrealistic conception and in any case has been shot to pieces by the large wage increases granted during the last six months. Our so-called full employment really conceals much under-employment, with far too many cases of two or three men doing work which could and should be done by one man. A little more work all round and less talk of leisure and our export problem would soon be solved".

SACK 3 MILLION

There speaks the brutal voice of capitalist reaction. Sack three million workers at least, and discipline the rest with fear of the sack. Speed up the intensity of the work, and lengthen the hours, then "we" i.e. the owners of industry, would be able to compete with our rivals, and of course, increase our share of the swag. There's only one trouble with this pleasant solution to the problems of the capitalists... the working class in Britain would not stand for it! Every time there has been an attempt at mass dismissals, the workers have demanded alternative work for their mates, brothers and fathers, or have responded with determined strike action. Not yet with their backs to the wall the employers have seen that at this stage it would cost them more than it was worth in mass strikes and social unrest. But what they really think is blurred out in this unadorned statement.

Sir Halford does find words of praise for one Labour Minister. No trade unionist would be given a prize for guessing his name. "I applaud the present Minister of Labour for his courageous call for more discipline in industry and for 'an honest day's work for an honest day's pay': for his outright condemnation of 'unofficial' strikes and flagrant breaches of contract. Without sanctity of contract, the honouring of agreements freely negotiated, the whole fabric of our civilisation must sooner or later fall apart."

"BED OF NAILS"

Words of praise from this enemy of the Labour Movement are sufficient condemnation of the role which has been played by Gunter, since he became Minister of Labour. Gunter intends the working class to be pushed onto his "bed of nails."

The Government staggers on from one expedient to another. All the forces of capitalism are exerting pressure upon it. Their senior partners in the "Alliance" American Imperialism join with the rul-

ing class in demanding cuts in "consumption" and "Government expenditure". But together with the ruling class they implacably reject any question of a reduction in defence spending. The bowl that went up over the modest increase in taxes represented by the Finance Bill shows where they consider the taxes must be directed. They are not satisfied with Wilson's boast that consumption had been cut by £500 million through the taxes on beer, cigarettes and income tax introduced by the Budget. They demand further attacks on working class standards.

What remains of the practical realistic programme of working hand in hand with Big Business? It is not the hand that Big Business wants but to grab Labour by the throat.

Thus the measures of the Labour Government cannot satisfy the working class, nor placate their enemies. How could it be otherwise? With 20% of the economy only under state ownership, it is the more productive and profitable 80% of industry that calls the tune. This is the insolent taunt of the Institute of Directors, in their campaign against the Labour Government. Sir Halford Reddish has spoken for his class.

END COMPROMISE

The workers in the Labour Movement will have a different reaction. The Incomes Policy must be ended. Let there be real and drastic measures against the 400 monopolies, the private banks, insurance companies and the landowners. If anybody's income is to be limited let it be theirs!

Take the economy from out of the hands of this parasitic clique by nationalising this vital section of the economy! Let the Labour leaders cease cringing before the Halfords of this country and abroad. Let them mobilise and rely on the power of the working class in the Labour Movement and in industry and the situation would soon be transformed. Plan industry under the democratic control and management of the trade union movement and the shop stewards.

Attempting to compromise with the capitalist class only ends in compromising the Labour Movement. It demoralises the workers and throws the politically backward layers of the workers and the middle class into the hands of the Tories. Big Business is moaning about "Socialism". Give them a real taste of Socialist measures, so that they can have something genuine to moan about!

FOYLES

FIGHT CONTINUES

The second Foyles strike that started on May 29th for a living wage and the right to negotiate is still supported by nearly 100 workers and is receiving active support from USDAW and other sections of the Labour Movement, especially the deliverymen and the postmen. Despite the £3 a day that Miss Christina Foyle is handing out to blacklegs, the loss in business alone, from people stopped by the pickets who are overwhelmingly sympathetic to the strikers, is costing her thousands. Large donations have been sent to the Strike Fund. Two hundred pounds has been received just from two branches of NATSOPA, and one USDAW member came all the way from South Wales to help on the picket line, and contributed £5 from his own pocket.

On the 24th of June the Management met the strikers at the Ministry of Labour, but requested an adjournment until the 29th of June. Once negotiations get under way, the strikers feel confident of victory, but since their last "victory" turned out to be a trick by the Management, they have learnt to take nothing on trust.

BUSINESS MANAGER

ALL OUT FOR £500

The response by readers and supporters to the appeal for donations to the MILITANT fighting fund has met with a good response over the past month. We have received donations from Merseyside, Brighton and we have been promised donations from other areas. However, every supporter of the paper must step up collections, raffles, encourage Y.S. branches, wards and C.L.P.s. to give donations if we are to extend the size and the influence of the paper. We receive monthly more than enough material to produce an eight page paper. There are a whole number of issues which we would like to comment on, which cannot be dealt with in a four page paper. The need for a paper like MILITANT to reach every worker in the Labour Movement becomes daily more urgent.

Make sure that we be given the opportunity to reach these workers by a massive sales and finance drive.

When selling Militant ask for a donation, get your organisation to make a donation, make a collection at your work-place, college or school.

Organise a Militant Readers Forum in your area. We can supply the speakers if necessary.

Write to us for any assistance you require.

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EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN

By BARBARA CRACKNELL

RHODESIA MOVES TO SHOWDOWN

By ROGER SILVERMAN

The question of Rhodesia hits the headlines once again, threatening the Commonwealth Conference, with which Wilson had hoped to restore some prestige, as one African delegate after another insists on the convocation of a constitutional conference to impose universal suffrage and the British delegation half-heartedly looks for yet another delaying compromise. Nyerere of Tanzania voices the feelings of the majority of most outspokenly: "The British African prime ministers are now pleading so much weakness that you would think they were on the verge of collapse. We will find out whether Mr Wilson wants the Commonwealth to give economic aid. We are ready to try... if Britain feels shaky about the use of troops to prevent any unilateral declaration of independence by Mr Smith other Commonwealth countries should be ready to send forces to Rhodesia."

INSOLUBLE PROBLEM

Rhodesia presents an insoluble problem for British capitalism, because it exposes in the clearest possible light all the glaring contradictions of modern imperialism. African nationalist leaders, who succeeded in signing their deals with imperialism stay in power today by playing off one class, one section of the population against another in their own countries. In the world diplomatic arena, one power bloc is pitted against another, with phrases like "non-alignment", "independence", and "African socialism" (which has been defined by one African politician as "African capitalism"!)). They are carried along on the crest of the nationalist wave and have to clamour loudly for "majority rule" (i.e. universal suffrage) in the last outposts of naked colonial oppression. British and Western imperialism generally, which are forced today to hide their true nature, are placed in an impossible position. Either they give way, and send in troops to Rhodesia to remove the white capitalists from political power, thus jeopardising the whole delicate balance all over the continent that keeps British investments safe, or they resist the pressure, and expose the real interests of the British ruling class. In the process, this would weaken those already precarious "independent" leaders that they can do good business with, and cause their overthrow by popular anti-imperialist revolts. And so Douglas Home at the last conference, and, less successfully, Wilson at this, desperately think up delaying tactics. Bottomley, the Commonwealth Secretary, went so far as to tell the Commons that "Mr Smith is sincere in a desire to find a lasting and just solution... People

who advocate force sometimes do not appreciate the consequences."

Imperialism would certainly prefer to be in a position to deny all political rights in its colonies. But the "Economist" explains the dilemma to its businessmen readers with typical frankness. "All of them (Commonwealth leaders)—even Nkrumah—are, by comparison with their potential alternatives, men who, while embodying Africa's own aspirations, represent no threat to the West's true interests, and have claims to its support. President Johnson might be happy to see their equivalents in Central America. At least he would hardly feel a need to use his marines on any of them. But the fact must be faced that many of the African leaders' more naive possible successors would be really likely to throw open their gates to the Chinese communists, or to chaos, or to both. Realisation of this made President Kenyatta stay at home during the Commonwealth Conference. To him, Mr Chou En-Lai's dictum that Africa is ripe for revolution at once prompts the question: revolution against whom? The answer is, of course, against Mr Kenyatta. And his enemies' main propaganda weapon is the charge that he is a tool of the British and the Americans. A good way to get young Africans to believe this falsehood (sic!) is to brand him as ineffective in the face of what they regard as western support for the white governments of southern Africa." The conclusion is that "every western decision in regard to Rhodesia, or to other parts of southern Africa, must be related to clear western long-term aims, with full awareness of the effect of every such decision on all African minds."

BARBARIC LAWS

The attitude of the white Rhodesian capitalists is one of panic in the face of the growing wave of revolt. Since the Central African Federation split up after Whitehall sold "independence" to Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, they have tried every known trick to hang on. The new barbaric emergency laws make flogging and, in cases of sabotage, hanging, mandatory sentences—a practice almost unique today. 800 militant African leaders languish today in detention areas. But such harsh measures are fraught with the danger of new waves of riots, strikes and sabotage. So at the same time they have legalised a "moderate" and treacherous parliamentary African opposition, hated by the masses, and elected on ballots rigged by property and educational qualifications. Combined with this is a cynical plan to buy off the anachronistic tribal chiefs,

whom they recently sent on a luxury tour of Britain, and who responded gratefully: "No government is ever satisfactory to the chiefs. We have never been as well off as we were 20 years ago, and we can still do with more money. But Mr Smith's government is the first to bring us to Britain... In Parliament we will have the power that really belongs to us, the power we used to have." The Europeans "are our friends and we must understand them..." The men who pose as the "civilisers" of darkest Africa are digging up old and forgotten tribal systems and trying to foist them on to the Rhodesian people.

INTERESTS AT STAKE

So much is at stake that they will stop at nothing. The magazine "At Home in Rhodesia" gossiped recently that "the building of a private pool is now within the reach of most property owners". There are 4,000 swimming pools in Salisbury, and the average number of servants is 4, each paid an average of £4 a month. If the white woman feels bored playing tennis all day, she can work as a secretary for £60-100 a month. But this is chickenfeed compared with the vast profits extracted by the banks (minimum interest rate 8%), the landowners (hundreds of pounds per acre), the large tobacco and sugar farmers, the industrialists, and British and American investors generally.

But a unilateral declaration of independence has been almost abandoned except as a slogan. If they pushed it so far, then British imperialism (especially represented by Wilson who would be bound by repeated pledges) could not afford to jeopardise investments all over Africa by its indifference. If the government, bearing in mind the "clear western long-term aims", stopped the flow of capital from London and withdrew imperial preferences (1/6 in the £ for tobacco) it could strangle Rhodesia's economy even if it was still buying. The 1964 balance of payments surplus could, it is calculated, turn into a £50m. deficit after a complete break with Commonwealth links. Currency would devalue in foreign exchange, exports might halve, and output could drop by 40%. Even the U.S. would not help. A member of Johnson's administration stated recently that, in return for Wilson's "loyalty" over the Vietnam war, the U.S., which has 56 million dollars invested in Rhodesia, would agree to sanctions. Meanwhile the neighbouring "independent" countries, like Zambia (N. Rhodesia), which does busy trade with its brothers' oppressors, would have to stop buying the present amount (66%) of Rhodesian manufactured goods and freeze Rhodesia's considerable assets there. In the event of a

The facts about the employment of women in this country can be shown quite clearly in the following illustration (taken from "Women", a Civil Liberties pamphlet): a woman employed as a "catcher" in a tobacco factory—a subsidiary role on a cigarette-making machine—receives six weeks training, she is unable to progress any further. She can operate the machine as well as a man—she frequently takes over when the operator goes out for a few minutes. Often she helps to train the man by explaining the machine, its special snags, to him. The woman's basic pay is £3 a week less than the man's. The situation is unaltered by her experience, skill, length of service or any other qualification. This example is typical of the whole field of women's employment. On the shop floor she is doomed to an uninteresting and badly-paid job, in the professions she is unable to rise above a certain level unless outstandingly well-qualified and ambitious—only 83 out of 11,000 practising chartered accountants are women. The ratio of women dentists in one in ten. Seventeen per cent of those on the medical register are women.

Certain fields of employment, the civil service, for instance, do boast equal pay, but the same problem arises here. There are no women at all in the higher levels of the executive class in the Ministry of Defence, or the Admiralty, or H.M.S.O. This situation makes a farce of the old argument about women's "special skills". On the shop floor she shows that she can do the job as well as a man. In the professions, her qualifications will be as good as, or better than, a man's, but in both cases her promotion will be negligible or non-existent.

EQUAL PAY

This is only one aspect of the place of women in society today. The far more publicised aspect is that of equal pay. The teaching profession, Civil Service, B.B.C., and a few others do have equal pay. The vast majority of women workers, however, get something in the order of 75% of the pay of men doing the same job. A Ministry of Labour Survey in February 1963 shows that in a specific week the average weekly wage of all women was almost exactly half that of men. Of course, these figures do not take into account the difference in hours, but nevertheless they show the double standard that employers in this country have.

Trade Unions have in general been unable to negotiate more than three quarters of the men's rate for their women members, so that the gap, instead of closing with each pay rise, gets ever wider. The CAWU, AWU, T&GWU,

unilateral declaration of independence both the West and the new African states would turn against Rhodesia, and even that bastion of tyranny on the southern borders would be too busy with its own troubles to afford material assistance. So the desperate men of Salisbury, deterred by threats they recognise to be practicable, will have to sit tight for the moment.

But Wilson must not let them. Instead of the fence-sitting and the playing for time, the Labour Government must prepare to introduce the "one man one vote" principle in Rhodesia. Let the Rhodesian people themselves determine their own future.

NUGMW, have all proposed resolutions for this year's Conference of Unions catering for women workers, urging the implementation of the Government's Election promise of equal pay. The Government, in spite of pious words in the Election pamphlet, "Talking Points", so far show no signs of acting.

The importance of the principle "equal pay for equal work" cannot be overstressed in the Labour Movement. It is well known that many employers will employ women or youth doing the same job as men, for less money, and will sack the men first if the question of redundancy comes up. Where a section of the working class is discriminated against in this manner, the effects are felt by the whole of the working class. Where a woman will do the same job for less money, the man's job is jeopardised, and the union's bargaining strength is minimised.

SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS

Women in this country, as throughout most of the world, are still regarded as second-class citizens. They are educated for a domestic role—the kitchens at most girls' grammar or secondary modern schools are far superior to the science laboratories. They are kept out of the higher branches of all trades and professions. They are paid less for the same work as men. When they marry, their husbands automatically take over responsibility for their wives' income tax and National Insurance contributions, as well as being legal guardians of the children. A woman may not sign an H.P. agreement without her husband's consent, she is unable to regard the money her husband gives her for housekeeping as hers by right.

Women in this country constitute one third of the labour force. If they decided on mass action to obtain their rights they could bring the economy to a halt. The task of all workers in the labour movement—whether in Trade Unions or the Labour Party—is to make the movement and especially the women aware of this situation and to demand equality of pay and opportunity in every branch of industry, trade and the professions.

IRISH BUILDING WORKERS IN ENGLAND

By TOM SKELLY

I am an Irish worker who has worked for many years on building sites, road-making and cable laying. I must point out the terrible conditions that still exist in these industries.

Irish workers are employed in great numbers on the buildings. They work long hours under the continuous watching eyes of the Irish gangers, who get a few coppers extra to carry out the whipping. The gangers are occasionally allowed into the general foreman's office at tea-breaks, whilst the labourers and other workers must resort to the supposed canteens. Now these canteens are without any facilities for washing one's hands before eating, and they are almost always in a filthy condition; the cups are dirty and cracked and mostly without handles; the tea is brewed in a black bucket in most of them, and is served in a most crude fashion; and the canteen is often a changing room as well, so that floor is thick with industrial dirt, donkey coats and old socks.

The toilet provided comprises an old elsan bucket with a few sheets of galvanised around it, and is left for days before being emptied: this is the only convenience provided, to serve a working force of 80 to 100 men. Yet the Irish workers are scared to demand decent working conditions. It has long been known that it is the practice of some of the big building contractors in England to sack Irish workers who demanded proper working conditions—and not alone sacked but black-listed afterwards.

"OUR OWN"

Irishmen who work at cable laying for Irish contractors are subject to the crudest form of treatment. Lorries pick them up and take them to work and dump them like cattle on the job. No protection whatever from the weather is provided. Young country lads are subject to Irish gangers who are specially picked to extract an incalculable amount of toil, sweat, blood and suffering out of these poor lads. These gangers contrive to set one against the other to speed up the working pace, and as a result it is not unusual to see workers struggling to out-dig, out-shovel and out-carry their fellow workers. And they are

BIG BUSINESS CONSPIRACY (from p. 1)

Not only are the capitalists trying to limit the incomes of the workers while profits increase. They want an onslaught on the social services and a bar to further expenditure by the Government in this direction. The Times genteely chides the Government in its editorial of the 16th June about "perilously overspending its resources... however justified they were, greater social services could not be afforded until Britain was paying her way in the world." The buying of the capitalist hounds in the City, the banks, the business clubs, and in their offices is not so polite.

Cut Government expenditure they all shriek! Not of course the arms programme of nearly £2,200 million which is necessary to defend their loot especially "East of Suez". Keep down workers wages, limit the social services, cut the power of the unions to defend the workers and increase their share of the wealth they are producing.

This is the crux of the problem. In a sense all these

often made to believe that it is a privilege to be employed by an Irish boss, and that he is better than the stranger to them; this often results in the young Irish worker from the green fields of Ireland working an extra hour a day free just because the boss is Irish, or, as the saying goes, "one of our own".

ONE WONDERS AT "OUR OWN" who allow our workers to be crushed to death in trenches because "our own" won't go to the expense of getting proper or sufficient timber. How good are "our own" who gang up and threaten trade union members, and use every means to brand them as undesirable. Yet the villains who do these things for the bosses will creep, sneak and crawl in the presence of the boss who in physical appearance, in comparison to them, may look like a squirt.

Many of our elderly Irish workers today carry the marks of weariness because of long years in these conditions. But to all Irish workers I say: work for socialism; do not crawl; demand proper conditions; unite in a great common band; stand up and make every hour and every day a turning point in your aspirations towards freedom. Your weakness is their strength. Your unity will be their destruction.

worthy gentlemen are right... if you accept their premises: the maintenance and expansion of the capitalist system and thus the power, privileges and incomes of the capitalist class. It is this they are ferociously defending.

The attempt to "plan" capitalism, by its very nature a system where the market dominates and there is a struggle of each against all is completely impractical, as the reactions of the capitalist gentry have shown. But how much water there is in these alleged plans is indicated by the statement of Mr J. A. Hunt chairman of the West Midlands Regional Economic Planning Council on the 15th of June "The national economic plan to be announced later this year was likely to be 'not so much a plan as a statement of objectives'. In other words so much wind and water and pious exhortations to the industrialists to modernise.

They are only interested in £sd! If it pays o.k. if not so much the worse for the country.

Brown has attacked the conspiracy. What is his solut-

Readers' LETTERS

Dear Sir,

One of the most disturbing things I find in 'Militant' is the way lively and provocative articles descend into a mass of cliché. In your June edition, Bab Edwards effectively demonstrates the need for land nationalisation. But what else does he offer? 'Compensation to be decided by workers' and housewives' committees'—a problem that has taxed economists for several decades. 'Regional committees of trade-unionists to plan the use of land'—on what basis can he justify land planning skills exclusive to trade-unionists, often unable to solve their own demarcation problems?

Surely Mr. Edwards you are aware that a workable and satisfactory solution lies in a modification of the 1947 Act. Development rights would be vested in the State. When land was wanted for development, it would pass to the local planning authority at the existing use price to be eventually sold after planning permission to a developer at market price. The State collecting development value. In this way demand could remain free, a very important consideration, but supply would be a monopoly of the State and the State judge of its allocation. Compensation would come from a global sum but it would be only paid at existing use value for land compulsorily acquired.

The 'land scandal' is an immensely complicated problem and wild, soap box argument, brimful with cliché will not further our cause. The argument needs to be presented with clarity and some recognition of practicability.

Yours faithfully,

Nigel Moor

ion. The workers should make more sacrifices! They should work harder and abstain from strikes. As for measures against the conspirators, of this there is never a word, from him or any other of the Labour leaders.

On this path there only lies cynicism, despair and bewilderment for the workers. This way cannot convince the politically backward workers who vote for the Tories, nor the middle class and small business men who support their worst enemy in Big Business.

The Labour leaders should have accepted the challenge from Big Business. They should have announced a programme of nationalisation, with a wide participation of the trade unions and the working people. A plan requires the control of the economic resources of the nation. The Confederation of Engineering Unions has shown the way. Introduce drastic reforms such as equal pay, the nationalisation of engineering and computers, the taking over of the banks and insurance companies.

If the capitalists cannot afford decent conditions, social services and a living wage, then away with capitalism. Audacity, audacity audacity, is the only way forward for Socialists. Cease cringing before Big Business. Operate a socialist programme.

THE N.U.R. AND LINER TRAINS

By LEN FOX (N.U.R.)

The attitude of the N.U.R. to the proposed operation of Liner Trains has been described as stubborn and reactionary, but the reasons for their opposition has never been clearly stated.

The policy of the Union with regard to these trains is defined in the following resolution sent to the British Railways Board and discussed at a recent meeting with them.

"We urge the B.R.B. to publicly declare its intention of introducing the Liner Train Service in the Summer. In the best interests of our Industry we insist that:—

- 1) These trains are worked with a Brake Van and Guard.
- 2) There be Free Terminals for B.R.B.C. and D. Service, B.R.S. and 'C' Licence holders only.
- 3) Suitable safeguards for those members of the staff who may be involved in redundancy."

INCREASE T.&G.W.U. PENSIONS

By Dai Jones

For nearly three decades the Management Committee of the Transport & General Workers Union has carried out a calculated "cold war" policy against Union Pensioners.

They resist all proposals for equal pension for equal service. They support no wage freeze for themselves but for their retired colleagues a wage freeze already exists, although the great majority of the members agree with the basic policy of parity.

The General Executive Council should take action to ensure that their old employees receive fair play and a fair pension. This would mean that the Union would have to show the way by giving a pension to their old employees based on a sliding scale to meet the cost of living. In this way, as the wages of the Industrial Worker rises to meet the increased prices of goods the pensioner would also have a similar rise to meet the same situation.

Whether the General Executive Council will act will depend on what the rank and file think and do about it. They will have a chance to do this at the B.D.C. at Portsmouth in July 1965. They must realise that some of the Old Guard with 30 years service in the Union have to depend on National Assistance. This is not good enough. We want equal pension for equal service to end the present "Twilight" Robbery.

This is a Priority Matter.

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No agreement was reached on these proposals. The resolution quite definitely rejects any accusation that the Railwaymen are stubbornly opposed to Liner Trains.

The conditions requested can be examined in more detail. To understand No. 1 condition, it will be necessary to explain briefly the difference between the ordinary freight trains and liner trains; in the ordinary freight trains, brake power was only provided by the Engine and a brake van at the rear, which necessitated a Guard to operate; the Liner Train has continuous brake power throughout the whole train to allow high speed travel, as in passenger trains, thus eliminating the need for a van and Guard at the rear of the train according to the B.R.B. The Union, however, insist that in the interest of safety, it is essential that the van and Guard remain.

No. 2 condition asks that the declared policy of the T.U.C., the Labour Party and the Union, for a publicly owned Co-ordinated Transport Service be complied with. The Union is opposed to millions of pounds of public money (£300. m. is to be spent in the next two years, according to Mr. Stanley Raymond) borrowed at high interest rates, to make the Nationalised Railways Sub-Contractors to the Private Road Hauliers, which Open Terminals mean. The success of the "Condor Trains", 750 of these are being run each week, for 50 firms, for the carriage of Oil, Cement, Frozen Foods and cars are proof that the Railways, with their well maintained fleet of lorries and B.R.S. can provide a much more efficient service for the benefit of industry and the public.

No. 3 condition is to be expected from an organisation whose sole existence is to protect the interests of its members. 40,000 jobs have been lost through redundancy in the last year and a further 18,000 will be redundant this year if these trains are operated with Free Terminals. It is surprising the small amount of publicity that has been given to these large numbers, in comparison with the indignation of the Capitalist Press over much smaller figures in the Aircraft Industry.

Finally, it has always been the Policy of this Union to work for the superseding of the Capitalist System by a Socialist Order of Society, where problems of this sort could not arise. It is therefore obvious that the N.U.R. could not be expected to agree to the prostitution of State Owned Industries to Private Enterprise.