OUR ADVICE TO THE ANTI-UNION CLOWNS OF HOLBORN CIRCUS

BELT UP!

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON? screamed the Daily Mirror on Monday. It went on to tell us, on page one and most of page two as well, in several thousand words of ignorant hype and against experts, trade unions and workers in general.

The question should be: Who the hell does the editor of the Daily Mirror think he is? What gives him the right, from his plush office in Holborn Circus to slander ordinary working people trying to keep abreast of rising price increases.

The Mirror pretends to be the paper of the working man. It has made a vast fortune from its working class readers.

But all they get in return is the old bosses' message dressed up in racy language-Stay in your place. It's not for you to question the way society is run. Just on pumping out the profits for the parasites who live on your backs.'

NO RIGHT TO DECIDE

Listen to what the Mirror thinks about you: 'The strike by a thousand workers at two Dunlop plants at Skelmersdale, who would not agree to have tea breaks at set times, is the same in months.' In other words, workers have no right to decide when they can have a tea break. That right belongs solely to the bosses and the editor of the Daily Mirror.

The Mirror is yelling abuse at strikers. It is telling the TUC that unless it puts its house in order then the Tories will bring in anti-union laws. It is yelling and giving orders because the economy is in a mess.

So what is the Mirror's editor talking about at the usual soapbox — the working man. The Mirror doesn't use its enormous resources to wage an enquiry into why the economy is in a mess, because it knows what the answer would be: that the tiny group of people who own the country's wealth, are interested only in making bigger and bigger profits at the expense of the great mass of the people.

In the Mirror's eyes, the financiers and the ruling class wideboys who are solely responsible for the country's economic mess.

There is no campaign in the Mirror against the fostering of slums that disfigure our towns. No campaign against the run-down schools and badly staffed hospitals. No campaign against the crime of 600,000 people forced onto the dole as a direct result of government policy.

SLIPPING INTO POVERTY

There was no mention at all in Monday's Mirror (they were too busy attacking strikers) of a conference held last week-end on housing and poverty at which respectable professors and sociologists—no reds or radicals—said that millions of workers in Britain on low incomes were slipping further and further into poverty because they couldn't keep pace with inflation.

The conference discussed figures produced by Income Data Services which showed that 39% million workers covered by wages councils had fallen far behind the cost of living in the last five years.

No, Mr Hugh Chadill, £33,000 a year editorial whizz-kid of the Mirror, you didn't report that. Your job, as a mouthpiece of the bosses, is to attack and demoralise working people in order to stop them from taking what is rightly theirs.

We are glad to report that fewer and fewer workers are taking any notice of you — your declining circulation shows that. We have had a bellyful of strikes, says the Mirror. And strikers have had a bellyful of the Mirror.

Our advice to the Mirror, in its own short, sharp and pithy language is: BELT UP. The workers are on the move, fighting now for higher wages, tomorrow for a new, socialist society. They will need a paper to help them in that struggle. And we'll keep a keen eye on the whole of Holborn Circus that it won't be the Daily Mirror.

Release Palestine prisoners

THE MILLIONAIRE PRESS has flooded the people witharger over the latest crop of plane hijackings. Words such as 'illegal' and 'law and order' leap from front pages every day.

While all socialists will be concerned at the fate of the hostages, we must not be swayed by the barrage of lies and distortion from Fleet Street.

The Palestine guerrillas have seized the planes of the giant air corporations in order to draw attention to the plight of their people in the Middle East and also as a bargaining measure to demand the release of Palestinian prisoners.

The atrocities of Fleet Street have never been concerned about the illegal, practical way in which tens of thousands of Palestinians were driven from their homeland with scant regard for 'law and order'. Now they are out in the refugee camps and their plight goes unrecorded in the western press.

Socialist Worker renews its unconditional support for the struggle of the Palestinian people. We demand the immediate release of Leila Khaled and all the other courageous guerrillas struggling for a Middle East free from imperialist control.
Militant May doesn’t mind a dust-up with the bosses

MAY HOBBS is a militant who has tried to organise women office and factory workers in North London for several years. May has been given the sack several times as a result of her attempts to defend workers’ rights and conditions. Her last job, cleaning at Hornsey College of Art, ended in the same way.

When most of the wages and conditions do women cleaners have to put up with?

The largest group of cleaners and the most exploited, are the night cleaners. Typical pay is £5.50 an hour for 16 to 18 hours for a 60 hour week worked between 11pm and 8am. For this a woman is expected to clean 40-50 offices including stairs, corridors and toilets. Most of the work is done in office blocks, government establishments, embassies and hotels. The charge is, of course, one supervisor — one of the cleaners who is given an extra 6d so as to be able to clean the bathrooms quickly anded out the others. Rates are higher for morning and evening cleaners but the hours are shorter.

On top of the mucky mornings, there are no fringe benefits. No one is entitled to holiday pay until they have been in the same job for at least a year, and you often get the sack before the year is up.

You can be given the sack on the spot — the supervisor just tells you that you won’t be needed next night, and no wages in lieu. Maybe she doesn’t like your face.

Of course we have to give them the week’s notice if we want to leave. As you can imagine, this gives the employers enormous power over unorganised workers. They can dismiss whomever they want, immediately.

Interviewed by Margaret Renn

Were you employed directly by the college?

No, nearly all night cleaners are employed by contractors like Ace or General Cleaning Contractors, who then contract the workers on a weekly basis. A contractor usually has about 150 cleaners, and the only link up is that they are all paid by the college.

We refused to do the potting room, cleaning up all that clay and dust was a job in itself. For all this we were paid about £12 10s a week, and that only after a fight.

Then first went the salt which they rejected, but we kicked up a fuss and eventually gave us a written warning and a small ‘in lieu’ payment, but not as much as we were entitled to.

That was just before the summer term, so they took us on for the whole of the holiday. We turned up at the cleaning supervisors. They wouldn’t have to keep more than 10 of the cleaners if they wanted. The major cleaning up job was done. In that way they saved themselves the few weeks’ wages and time, and course, our holiday pay.

We were employed directly by the contractor.

The rate for a cleaning job is fixed according to the floor space to be cleaned—about half of our shifts are low wages, and almost nothing in overheads, and the rest in all profit!

GREEDY

But the contractors can be even more greedy than this; they use the lack of power of the cleaners to extort money from them. When a girl is off sick, they will pay the contractors to send a cleaner to the others who have to cover for her.

From what you have said it seems that the wages are low, the conditions bad and there is absolutely no security. Have you tried to organise the women?

A few years ago we began organizing groups of cleaners into the Transport and General Workers Union. But as a result of an unofficial strike I and eight others got the sack, as there was no support from the union and its officials were nowhere to be seen.

Provisionally the cleaners could easily outbid our £4 a week subs. After that the thing gradually collapsed. We militantes were blacked by the contractors. It was years before I could get another cleaning job, even though there was usually a shortage of cleaners.

This is the difficulty with organizing against the large contractors—they have all of their money and often when a girl is off sick, they will pay the contractors to do the cleaning for the others who have to cover for her.

We have any plans to organise cleaners again?

It’s not easy to do, but there are many women who are already prepared to join, and many others who would follow if you are sure, if they know that they will have control over the union.

What we need to do is to get one group fully organized and ready to take on the employers if necessary.

What sort of demands do you think a union should make of the employers?

Well, firstly we want a guaranteed minimum wage of 16 a week plus holiday pay equivalent to one night’s pay for each month worked. Then we also want some security of our jobs. No on-the-spot sackings and the minimum of one week’s notice from the employers.

We also want full cover money for women off sick — if we are expected to do this extra work we should be paid for it full time.

Finally, we want one main cleaner on every building. Women cleaners shouldn’t be expected to clean out men’s toilets, for instance, but men cleaners are paid more than women so that they often get a job without a man on it.

SUPPORT

How can other workers and organizations like us help you?

First, anyone already in a trade union should get their branches to commit themselves to support the night cleaners in their place of work. Where possible they should demand that the night cleaners should be unionized.

In parts of the print industry the cleaners are organized due to the insistence of the existing unions that non-union labour would not be allowed.

Second, all university and college students at places like Hornsey College of Art must black holiday office cleaning because, without realizing it, they are being used to undermine the cleaners’ jobs. They should also back the unionisation of their cleaners.

Third, if we can help in putting over our case to a wider audience and helping us out in the problems that arise in our struggle.

Finally, will readers of Socialist Worker who have contacts with cleaners, or are cleaners themselves, or can help us organise against the employers to better our standard of living, please contact May Hobbs at 02-548 3817.

Vital pamphlet for all militants

by PAUL FOOT

HOW TO FIGHT THE TORIES

6d a copy including post from:
8 BOOKS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN
MILITANTS in the motor industry have been attacked hystically in recent weeks. The press has condemned strikes at Lucas, Dunlop and OKN Snaeky. The press has taken their cue from Lord Stokes, chairman of British Leyland. Last February he made a bitter attack on the militancy of motor workers.

He said that strikes were creating a 'state of anarchy' and called for anti-union legislation. Since then, Stokes has again attacked strikers. At a special shareholders' meeting on 4 Aug., he blamed them for the low profitability of British Leyland.

Motor workers have been accused of preventing production and causing Leyland losses. They are alleged to be responsible for the rising number of foreign cars imported into Britain and of creating financial losses for the motor owners.

But the fundamental problems of the motor industry are more than the militancy. For some years now the British market has been in surplus. The industry has been losing part of the value of its production in the form of payments. It has devalued the pound and it has run up huge debts to the world's banks.

British cars have been castigated basically by the car producers of the former imperialist colonial markets.

There is a growing recognition of competition, as Japan and Germany.

The wasteful spending of over £3,000 million a year on defence is also under attack.

The battle for the 'white colonial markets' is also being lost.

The effect of these deflationary policies, together with higher petrol costs, increased road taxes and tougher hire purchase restrictions has directly led to a reduction of demand for British cars.

This has shown itself in full car manufacturers and the repeated warnings from the Motor Dealers Association that many of their members firms are threatened with closure due to lack of sales.

The Sunday Times of 30 August explained the position as follows: 'The plain fact is that to meet the new level of demand, the British motor industry, even with total industrial peace, is running at about 80 per cent capacity.'

Although Lord Stokes speaks constantly about the damage of strikes, his company is appealing for voluntary readjustments and preventing the employment of new labour. It has employed 1,000 workers. The battle for the 'white colonial markets' is to try to achieve bigger profits by an unsympathetically demand and that the government can defend the industry.

But most of all, they know they.

CRISIS IN MOTORS: 1

A four-part series by John Setters

So much so, in fact, that when unions flew round international banks in an attempt to get the help of Barclays, Wilson had himself as Prince Philip had been given the medal of the pound as a panic reaction.

The effect of this was an avenue that Wilson later stated. The lesson on that day was greater than the lessons of exports as a result of the strikes that we have had in the motor industry in the last six months.

The effect of the British economic crisis, the government carried out a series of deflationary home policies. The deliberate intention of this was to cut the value of wages from buying goods and services into exports.

DEVALUED

To help in this process, the Labour Government devalued the pound.

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Although Lord Stokes speaks constantly about the damage of strikes, his company is appealing for voluntary readjustments and preventing the employment of new labour. If these fail, he is talking about the introduction of 'blue - collar Monday' as Stokes and his supporters claim, no redundancies would ever occur and more labour, not less, would be employed.

The effect of these deflationary policies together with its result, under-capitalization (lack of modern machinery etc) has meant that the British car industry is less competitive than in its major international rivals.

According to Lord Stokes, 58 per cent of the machine tools in the British motor industry are more than 10 years old, compared to 42 per cent in West Germany and 36 per cent in Japan.

The only way this problem of under-capitalization can be resolved is by the massive accumulation of huge profits — and yet, owing to the present deflationary situation, these are not forthcoming.

The Financial Times of 13 October 1968 listed the dilemma as follows: "It is no accident that Ford, BMW and Mercedes, which are the companies that have shown the most impressive increases in exports in the last five years, have also enjoyed strong and fairly consistent expansionary home markets.

PROFITS

'Profit surge on the home market and a steadily increasing demand enable a company to invest more money in new models and in new manufacturing plants than would otherwise be possible. This in turn makes the companies' products more competitive to the motor buyer and the result is to try to achieve bigger profits by an unsympathetically demand and that the government cannot defend the industry.

But most of all, they know they.

NEXT WEEK: BOSSES ON THE WARPATH

Big business profiteers put Irish fishermen's jobs in jeopardy

by Damian Duffy

FOR HUNDREDS possibly thousands of years, the people who lived in the River Bann in the North of Ireland, have had a miserable existence by fishing.

As recently as 1911, 700 fishermen could scare some kind of livelihood on Lough Neagh. Today there are 600.

This tough existence is not made easier by the exploitation of the fishermen by the London-run big business interests that now control all the fishing rights on the lake.

Unless they hold a company licence from Toome Eel Fisheries, the fishermen are denied access to the lake. They are forced to sell the fish they catch to the company's price without question. At present the fishermen

The lives of the Lough Neagh people, through their control of Toome Eel Fisheries. The full story of the shameless exploitation and the men, responsible to hold in a new PD pamphlet The Great Eel Robbery by Michael Farrell.

People's Democracy, the militant socialist movement, has organized a series of actions in support of the fishermen. PD has raised the demand for the fishing to be run on Lough Neagh by a fisherman's cooperative.

Unless the fishermen win, they and their families will join the already disgracefully long emigration queues to London, Birmingham and New York. These men and their families have a right to live and work in their own country.

Solidarity

People's Democracy is asking the International Socialists and other left wing organizations to mount solidarity demonstrations against the faceless business interests who manipulate

DOWN WITH THE ROBBERS BARON!!

The Great Eel Robbery

Fielding including post fours: B BOOKS & Cottons Gardens London E2 BN.
PEOPLE AGAINST
THE SYSTEM

A THEORY spread in the 1950s that widespread poverty no longer existed in Britain. So convincing was this story that all the rich people decided to tell it to all the not so rich people.

A campaign was started to convince us all that we had 'never had it so good' and that we were privileged to live in the 'affluent society'. But unfortunately for those involved in spreading the story - bosses refusing wage increases, politicians seeking votes, the rich in general - the facts don't quite fit the rosy picture they painted.

Ken Coates and Richard Silburn in their book Poverty the Forgotten Englishmen (Penzlin, 6s) have produced a shattering counter-blow to the lies told by the press and television. They make even more disgusting the hatred and self-satisfaction of all those who would deny that want and poverty exist in our country.

In 1968 7½ million people were living in poverty in Britain. In 1969, 2½ million men were forced to support themselves and their families on less than £1 a week.

The realisation of the national wealth far from being spread more evenly, has been concentrated increasingly into the hands of the rich.

But to the poor, poverty cannot be represented by 'statistical' Coates and Silburn talked to the residents of St Ann's, a slum district of Nottingham, an area of deprived and squatter, conditions to be found in every large city or town.

Their reportage is sad but predictable: there is an endless list of bad housing, underpaid jobs, overcrowded schools and hospitals.

In St Ann's, it is an asset to have your floor laid directly onto the earth since you cannot wipe it yourself, and no one wants to wipe. The damp and the cold are constant inflammations in comparison with the threat of a broken neck. FB takes the time to kill, a broken neck is immediate.

'Just large mice'

In St Ann's you invariably keep a pet. Large dog is the best protection against rats.

One council official is legendary in the area for his description of extremely large and aggressive rats as 'just large mice'. The sewers and, at nights, the streets, are full of just such 'large mice'. And there are always the minor irritants such as cockroaches and the smaller breed of mice.

Coates and Silburn claim that the housing conditions have substantially deteriorated over the last few years and are getting worse. One tenant with an outside toilet suggested that Ministers of Housing should be committed to live in such conditions for a while in order that they would come to learn the heaping values of fresh air, or for that matter, oil as fog as they scuttled up and down the yard in the middle of the night.

Areas like St Ann's are not a local boutique, a new trendy shop, or even a slum. They have 'Cub Row' - the bottom end of the market where you can pick up a three-piece suite for £5, a fine pair of shoes for 5s or perhaps a battered fridge for a couple of quid.

Pay more for everything

A good houseman can earn an entire house from down the market at less than a tenth of shop prices. Whether or not the equipment lasts a tenth of the normal time is another question.

One word describes poverty - hand-me-down, second-hand clothes, second-hand furniture, second-hand life.

To be poor is to pay more for everything. Food costs more at the corner shop, but the corner shop gives credit. In any case, without a frugal or frugal, you can't buy in bulk.

Old, gaudy houses cost more to heat than new suburban semi- detached. Cheaply repaired roofs and floors need constant work. Constant work means constant cost.

In the depressed area, poverty is not confined to the individual and his house. Poverty is all around.

Poverty is in the overcrowded school, the children playing on the streets and rubbish dumps...
ALL THE LANDLORDS in Britain fell a-sighing and a-sobbing when they heard of the plight of poor Mrs Elsie Rauz of Penge. Mrs Rauz spent two and a half days in Holloway Jail for breaking the Rent Act.

As a result, she has received £100 from the Fair Rent Association to cover her legal costs and several hundred pounds from the Daily Sketch and the Daily Express. Her house, which she is now going to sell, has gone up in value by some £250.

The terrible misery suffered by Mrs Rauz had to be compared with the behaviour of her evil, money-grubbing tenant, Mr Charles McCready.

Mr McCready and his family had lived in Mrs Rauz's house much longer than Mrs Rauz. They had never caused anyone any trouble. They had put in a rent rebate and paid out in rent for a five-room flat at some £1,500 per annum.

Last month Mr McCready went to work. His family stayed at home.

Mrs Rauz broke into his flat and seized all his food and clothes, taking the carpet off the floor and stripping his bed of the bedclothes she picked up from her cellar. She changed the locks on his door and told Mr McCready at the restaurant where he worked that she would have him evicted. He came, she explained to the hungry peas, that was he was a controlled tenant, pay only £3 a week and that he was also fond of the peas, 'arrogant'...

But the rent officer was in the flat protected by the law, and found in the value of her large house which she sold at a vast profit.

Refused to obey

Naturally enough, Mr McCready and his family intimated to get into his house, which he was evicted. He was, however, evicted to obey the injunction. She would, she said, rather have the tenant, not his money.

At once, she became the means businesswoman of 1970. All the newspapers, which had been attacking students and demanding for breaking dubious common laws about demonstrations, started to encourage and promote the breaking of the Rent Act.

Hardly a day went by without the following 'fancy dress' attack, 'covered-up' flat in the newspapers' front pages. These cases were an instant success. Mr McCready hounded the tenant's, and the papers gave up their attempts to get back their house, and dropped their criminal proceedings against Mrs Rauz under the Rent Act. In fact, the law had been left off almost without protest.

Meanwhile the Fair Rent Association, organisation for landlords, who find it difficult to run more than two or three on controlled rents, had been cashing in on the publicity.

Mr Phillips Goodheart, Tory MP for Beckenham, went to see Housing Minister Peter Walker, who had earlier in the same week refused to issue a Labour MP, Ron Brown, about 250 shillings. In the Daily Sketch, Goodheart gave a promise from Walker that rent control would soon be removed.

The press had proved that people like Mrs Rauz with the kind of support they had obtained. They did not break the law, but changed it.

Most kinds of cases are made to keep working people in ordre, according to the press, must be obeyed.

Some laws were by working people in struggle, protect them from the more visible attacks of landlords, bosses and governments.

Ruling class orgy

One such law is the Rent Act, which dates back to 1915. Introduced by an act of ruling class propaganda from the newspapers, the landlords are hoping to sweep this case away.

It looks as though they might succeed without opposition. The most tragic aspect of the Rent, McCready has been the devastation of the official labour movement.

Mr McCready has been completely underdetermined, especially by the local Labour parties which have remained consistently alien throughout the controversy.

Nor has the Labour Party nationally, which raised such hell in 1963 and 1964 at the arrest of Rachman in London, made one official statement about the prospect of Fair Play for Rachman now proposed by Peter Walker and his friends in the Fair Rent Association.

Rachman was fought by combined tenants committees and the Labour Party. Mrs Rauz escapes with a cheer and a cheque signed by Lord Blandford.

Black in Britain

Don't miss this important article next week

Join the International Socialists

There are branches in the following areas:

SCOTLAND
- Edinburgh
- Glasgow

NORTH
- Aberdeen
- Inverness
- Dundee
- Paisley
- Motherwell

MIDLANDS
- Coventry
- Birmingham

SOUTH
- London
- Oxford
- Newcastle
- Leeds
- Bristol

GREAT LONDON AND HOME COUNTIES
- London
- Thames
- Kent
- Essex
- Sussex

Wales and South West
- Cardiff
- Swansea
- Newport
- Bristol
- Exeter

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

Name
Address

Send to B. C. C. Garden, London E2.
Government out to crush revolt of lower-paid workers

by Chris Devison

THE GOVERNMENT is determined to pick a fight with lower-paid workers. The only criticism that can be made of the union claim for a £1 10s minimum basic rate for council workers is that it is too timid. The same goes for the demand being put forward by the railways and provincial boroughs. This adds up to more than a million of Britain's lowest-paid workers who are being refused a realistic wage rise in their standard of living.

The demand is supported by their faithful echoes in the daily press who have denounced these "inflationary" wage claims. It is about time these people were called "socialist" by those who accept the concept of an open suffrage for sectarian parties.

The government is not interested in reason. It knows very well that better wages for lower-paid workers is bringing a wave of industrial unrest. It might be predicted that the railways and provincial boroughs will be the next to be attacked by the government. We might hear a few more echoes in the Daily Telegraph and the Daily Mail suggesting that a "socialist" strike action then.

But in reality, the government is not interested in reason. It knows very well that better wages for lower-paid workers is bringing a wave of industrial unrest. It might be predicted that the railways and provincial boroughs will be the next to be attacked by the government. We might hear a few more echoes in the Daily Telegraph and the Daily Mail suggesting that a "socialist" strike action then.

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Swansea.

Alcoa strikers solid against 'faceless moguls'

by Jill Branson

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by Jill Branson

Sweeping: 250 Alcoa metal workers

maintenance men on strike for five

weeks are still faced by what they
call the 'faceless moguls'.

Union leaders who have been

honoured by the Alcoa canals after

plans to cut 10 per cent of its

workers' wages.

Before the strike was provoked, stewards met the personnel director, and asked one of his officers, who had been present at the 1966 pay negotiations, what his interpretation of the agreement was.

The strike has continued since then, and no attempts have been made by either side to contact the stewards or to settle the dispute.

Please send donations and messages to the strikers at 19, Newydd Rd, Cefnphile, Swansea.

MILITARY RESOLUTIONS on salaried, class size, minority, education, school working conditions and teacher participation were carried at the conference last weekend.

Main influence was the conference were representatives of the full-time union leaders and the Independent Teachers' Association. The conference called for a special conference to discuss the necessary action, including strikes, if the demands are not met by the government.

A millennial time was adopted on the basis of the principle that it is the duty of all citizens to promote the common good, and that the government is not acting in the best interests of the country.

The resolution was passed by a large majority, and it was noted that the government had refused to meet the demands of the teachers. The teachers are calling for a day of protest, and it is urged that all citizens should support the action of the teachers.

THE GOVERNMENT is determined to pick a fight with lower-paid workers. The only criticism that can be made of the union claim for a £1 10s minimum basic rate for council workers is that it is too timid. The same goes for the demand being put forward by the railways and provincial boroughs. This adds up to more than a million of Britain's lowest-paid workers who are being refused a realistic wage rise in their standard of living.

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