Exclive: strike pictures smuggled from S. Africa

THESE pictures have been smuggled to Britain by the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), which had its headquarters in the Ovambo region. The area is occupied by the South African apartheid police state, which is now being shaken by a significant illegal strike by Ovambo and other black workers against the anti-slavery conditions. In spite of massive police and army attacks and the arrest of strike leaders, latest information indicates that the strike is still spreading. Left-hand picture shows police vehicles moving in on the Katutura compound for Ovambo contract workers, one of the main centres of the strike. Right-hand picture shows workers in the sealed-off compound. STORY: PAGE 2

SCIRPM

And the average wage-earner will not benefit from the economic improvement the Torries are boasting of. In the last few months, wages have been rising more slowly than prices. And lower paid groups of workers, like the council and hospital workers, have been forced to accept wage increases of only 4 1/2 per cent while prices rise at 10 per cent a year. As they scrap and save on necessary spending they know that the most meagre of welfare measures designed to protect the health of their children, the provision of free school milk, has been done away with.

Nor is that the end of the tale. In April council house rents will shoot up by as much as 50p a week — more than is likely to come next year.

All these facts add up to one thing: the months ahead will be one of hard and bitter struggle if working people are going to even begin to hold their own.

As we go to press the miners are due to strike against the meagre pay rises the Torries are permitting them, and power and engineering workers will have to think of similar action.

There are thousands of miners throughout Britain who are starting to discuss ways of preventing the next round. And the struggle against unemployment is expanding as workers fight to settle redundancies in Clydeside, in Alexandria, in North Wales, in Newcastle and in many other places.

The organised working-class movement has the strength to win all these battles. No force could be stronger than the united efforts of 10 million trade unionists and their families.

But in recent months such success has not been forthcoming. The chief reason is that those who direct the strength of the labour movement have not been prepared to fight. The leaders of the steel workers, the council workers, the teachers, named but a few, sacrificed their members' living standards in order to avoid conflict.

In the past few days union officials have been trying to persuade Fine Tube strikers in Clydeside to abandon their historic 85 weeks' strike for basic union rights.

The miners and power workers' leaders would like to follow suit. Only last week the Engineering Union sent its members at Rolls-Royce, Bristol, back to work after nine weeks' strike without any gain.

And in the past few days union officials have been trying to persuade Fine Tube strikers in Clydeside to abandon their historic 85 weeks' strike for basic union rights.

The official political representatives of the working class have a record that is even worse. Not one Labour council in the country was prepared to defy the Tory law in defence of the welfare of working-class children.

The lesson is simple: Working-class organisations can beat the Tory government, but only by unity at rank and file level for militant and co-ordinated action, without reliance on those above who refuse to fight.

Such a development will not take place on its own. It has to be argued for in every shop and every factory.

Militants have to draw together into a revolutionary organisation in which they share their experiences, learn the lessons of the past and prepare for action for the future.

Only in this way can they begin to show the possibility of defeating the Tories and resist any tendencies towards defeat and demoralisation.

ON THE EVE of what could be the first national miners strike since 1926, miners in the militant Yorkshire area have called on their leaders to link their pay claim with that of the power workers. They feel that a united front of both sections would be the most effective way to beat the Tory government's plan to drive down wages in the public sector.

The Yorkshire miners are anxious to avoid a repetition of last year's power dispute when the workers were isolated, witch-hunted by the press and television and finally saddled with a miserable increase below the rise in the cost of living.

One leading militant, John Martin of Bredworth pit, Doncaster, said this week that the NUM should turn their paper The Miner into a weekly if the strike goes ahead, in order to answer the inevitable lies and slanders of the bosses' press.

Other suggestions being made to the NUM executive include calls for demonstrations in every area to intensify the feeling of solidarity and for frequent mass meetings.

Call for miners-power pay unity

The miners' claim: FULL ANALYSIS CENTRE PAGES
American dockers fight to save their jobs

LAST OCTOBER, after President Nixon's personal intervention, the Federal Court issued an injunction ordering the West Coast dockers back to work. This broke the first nationwide dock strike in U.S. history. Six weeks later, the East Coast and Gulf longshoremen were victims of a similar injunction under the Taft-Hartley law.

Today on the West Coast, as the 30-day cooling-off period ends soon, the 31,000 dockers are more united than ever. Members of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) still wage a grim struggle of long-term unemployment as the employ- ers use every stratagem short of coercion to prevent the unionization of their workers.

The employers' main target is the hiring hall system, which ensures equal opportunity for work to all longshoremen in America, as well their basic freedom from job discrimination.
Royal debaged

A BUSY CHRISTMAS for Prince Philip. After appearing on a BBC television programme on the need to save the world’s wildlife, Paul the Greek hurried off to the Royal estate at Sandringham to slaughter a small portion of the said wildlife.

It was His Highness’s annual hunting get-together, although the 1971 shoot was a trifle disappointing. In 1970 the Royal party disposed of a record “bag” of 15,500 birds but thunderstorms last June killed 20,000 chicks on the estate and so cut down on the numbers for Philip and co to hang about at.

If he turns his attention to saving human life, head for the hills.

Vote altered

CAPITALISM works in a mysterious way, its horrors to perform. British workers on the RB 211 engine at Rolls-Royce may like to know that their jobs were saved last year by an American wedding.

E S Bishop, MF, writing in the December issue of Plant Engineer, says that when Rolls-Royce went bust, the future of the firm hung on a small agreement going to bail out Lockheed, similarly bankrupt, whose work was due to be powered by the RB 211.

Bishop discussed the problem with an American Congressman shortly before the vital Congress debate. He was opposed to the government helping Lockheed. If the firm couldn’t get funds from private sources, the government shouldn’t help, he said.

Bishop says the Congressman was impressed by the threat to British jobs posed by the collapse of Lockheed.

In the ensuing debate, the decision to subsidise Lockheed was carried by a cliff-hanging 49-48 vote. When Bishop saw the Congressman again, he asked him how he had cast his vote. The American said he would have voted against if he’d been there, but he had had to attend a family wedding instead. If he had used his vote, it would have been a 49-49 tie and the motion would have fallen.

GUTTING VIVAS

WE’LL FIGHT— BUT SOMETIMES I WONDER ABOUT HYM

spit of the work-in tactic which workers decided redundant carry on working on ships. "If I was made redundant today, I’d still be here tomorrow as usual. The men would still take our orders and work with us."

The report singles out for praise aboard the Royal Yachts, Reid as the main motivator of the new worker-management set-up. He certainly wasn’t lily-white when he demanded that something be done to workers’ control.

LABOUR MP Alfred Morris has recently got through parliament a Bill designed to aid disabled people, including a provision for free parking for those who get a special driving permit from their local council. One local council is already attempting to scupper this small, humane step forward, it told a blind woman that she couldn’t have an orange permit as her husband could park free because she wasn’t the legally disabled person covered by the Bill. Just how disabled do you have to be, she asked?

KO at the PO

A LEEDS reader, anxious to get booked up on the Common Market, went to his local Post Office to get some information on Europe—the thinly-disguised Tory propaganda machine. Baffled by Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, he requested an "information pack", they’ve been withdrawn.

"But", said our astonished reader, "the government doesn’t usually withdraw pamphlets."

Aye, said the PO man, "but what do this lot want them for now? They’ve got into the Common Market so they don’t need to persuade anybody any more.

As the Tories might say, let the facts speak for themselves—but not once the vote has been taken.

THE LABOUR PARTY has announced that it is setting up a party museum. We understand they are negotiating with Madame Tussauds’ for space in the Chamber of Horrors.

More in sorrow

ON BBC2’s Late Night Line Up last week television critics announced their awards for the best programmes of the year. For the prize for the documentary of the year went to Max Ophuls’s brilliant programme on the French occupation. The Sorrow and the Pity, banned from French television but shown twice on BBC2.

There was one dissenting voice, very much an object. It’s a foreign programme. Should be promoting programmes made in Britain.

Who was responsible for such nauseating chauvinism? Why other than Mr Stewart Lane, fable critic of the Communist Party’s Morning Star.

Violence condemned by the men who unleash violence

OVER THE new year we have had yet another government campaign aimed at the use of violence, the use of violence confirms time from Home Secretary Maudling. As he was speaking the government’s American allies launched a massive, brutal air strike against Vietnamese civilians in Cambodia that the US Air Force mounts practically every day.

The North Vietnamese managed to shoot down a couple of US aircraft over Laos. For this impertinence they were severely punished.

Now any honest or even half honest man who was really concerned about political violence would be energetically condemning Nixon and the Pentagon. But not Maudling, not against Wilson. The violence they talk about is that used by the IRA.

No protest

The sheer impudent hypocrisy of NATO-supporting Tory Ministers and front bench Labour Party spokesmen on this side of the Atlantic is breathtaking, the breath away: British bombs dropped in Vietnam between 1964 and 1968 than on the whole of Europe during the whole of the Second World War.

Since the time of the bombing of Laos and Cambodia has actually been intensifi ed. Far more explosive is dropped on these countries in one day’s attacks by the US Air Force than has been used by Imperial in the whole of the Second World War. Men, women and children are killed and mutilated wholesale.

There is not a murmur of protest from Heath or Wilson because they actively support this slaughter. They defend the US war against Indo-China. And not only Indo-China. As committed supporters of NATO they are involved in the use of force to maintain the status quo all over the world.

Heath’s government is stepping up another nasty little colonial war in Arabia. The Sheik of Muscat and Oman is keeping up a month without British armed forces, British officers, British pilots and now British regular troops as well.

This little known war is a bitter book away. In the fifties British forces intervened to impose the rule of the Sultan of Muscat upon Oman. The people of the territory happened to prefer the rule of the Imam of Oman. That gentleman, however, was a client of the King of Saudi Arabia and hence of the Aramco—the Arabian American Oil Company. He was not acceptable to Shell-IBP and so he had to go.

Military intervention

Today the crumbling Sultanate is important to the British oil interests mainly as a base from which the quite artificial and unwelcome Trucial Sheikdoms can be supported. They were maintained by hectic British intervention for more than a century. Now that is so provocative and expensive as to be counter-productive. Hence the current stepping up of British military intervention—’the use of force for political ends’—in Muscat and Oman. What is at stake is not oil as such—there is plenty of oil to be bought: it is profits, the profits of Shell-IBP.

There are people, not many but a few, who genuinely and wholeheartedly oppose the use of force for political ends. Until recently, the Maudlings and the Wilsons they are entitled to the respect due to consistency. But they are fundamentally wrong. The mentality of peace at any price is a slave mentality, The man who condemns equally the violence used by a Hitler or a Nixon and their opponents is certainly none, no doubt against his will, an accomplice of the gangsters.

All political life—all social life—in class societies is beset, in the least resort, on force. Armies and police forces are organically the instruments of the ruling class. To use force is justified in any particular case depends on the political aims of those who use the forces. We oppose the use of force for reactionary ends, for colonial wars, for the suppression of working class interests. We support the use of force, where necessary, for progressive ends. We are revolutionaries, not pacifists.
YUGOSLAVIA has been going through a major political crisis for the last few months. The government is facing the crisis of "counter-revolution". In Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, one of the most important of the six republics that make up the federal state, more than 500 people have been arrested, many dragged from their beds in the early hours of the morning.

The leaders of the Croatian government have been replaced. There have been repeated clashes between police and students in the streets. Only three weeks ago there was a 10-day long strike by 40,000 students.

The central Yugoslav government has been taking these actions in response to what it sees as the threat of increased national feeling among various national groupings that make up the population. In the past these feelings were very intense, as in the Second World War when Croat fascists, the Ustaše, murdered hundreds of thousands of Serbs and Serbian fascists murdered large numbers of Croats and Muslims.

It was because it alone resisted these divisive and murderous activities that the present ruling group in Yugoslavia was able to come to power at the end of the war.

But now, after 25 years, the old nationalistic sentiments seem to be coming to the surface. And not only in Croatia. There are reports of similar unrest among the million people of Albanian origin who live in the southern republic of Kosovo.

To understand why this is the case, it is first necessary to have a clear idea about the real nature of Yugoslav society.

The government claims that Yugoslavia is a "socialist" state where workers' control exists. Many people in the West accept this claim. But it is far from being true.

Real political and economic power in Yugoslavia lies in the hands of a small minority ruling class, just as much as to the West or in the orthodox communist countries.

ARRESTED

At a congress of "workers' self-managers" called last year the head of the trade unions was able to declare that "Yugoslavia has one of the highest income differentials in Europe." Not are those who benefit from this state but those who are in a position of governmental discretion. When shifting Belgrade students began to criticize the government in 1969, their leaders were arrested and their papers, Student Voice, were confiscated.

And there is an extensive secret police network, agents who strike to arrest the "counter-revolution". In 1966, when the government was still in power, it was revealed that he had gone in one of the population, that is, one member of each family. In Croatia alone the police had files on 1,000,000 people out of 4,200,000.

And, for those at the bottom, life is tough. There is a permanent post of unemployment of 400,000 or 10 per cent. And another 800,000 workers have to go abroad chiefly to West Germany, to get jobs. In other words, one worker in three cannot get a job in his own country.

The aim of the ruling group in Yugoslavia is the same as that of most capitalist states of the West and the state bureaucracies of Russia and Eastern Europe—to force up production and to hold down wages in order to continue an extended industry. The aim of the operation is not to improve workers' living standards, but to ensure that workers' misery must lead to a capital reduction of the working class to compete with another.

The appearance of "workers' control" was introduced in the 1950s. At that time the scale of industrial development and the degree of its mitigation was such as to verify the productivity of the country's resources and to threaten economic collapse.

Then there was introduced a whole number of reforms. In the countryside, collective farms were disbanded and peasants were allowed to produce food for the market. Individual factories were allowed a greater degree of control over their own affairs and more independence from the central government in Belgrade. And workers' councils were told they would be running the individual factories, in competition with one another.

But there was a big limitation on the powers of the councils. They had to pay most of the funds obtained by the enterprise to the government in the form of taxes or to the banks as interest.

In 1962, for example, it was calculated that the worker's councils disposed of only a mere 16 per cent of the total funds of the enterprises. Workers' control did not extend to the other 84 per cent. Today it is estimated that the central bank, in which there is not even the presence of workers' central control, control more than half of Yugoslavia's industrial assets.

With so little real power, it is not surprising that most workers cannot be bothered to waste their time arguing about the affairs of the councils. The workers' councils are under very strong external compulsion even when they come to spend the small portion of their funds that may be saved. When they save more, their funds cannot survive in business because of the most difficult and cheapest of all others will then go out of business. And they will do it just to make sure that the vaults of the unemployed.

The funds in the hands of the funds council are used to be spent on continuous production, not on improving workers' miserable living standards.

It is not surprising that Yugoslavia has a higher proportion of its national income spent on investment (8.3 per cent in 1964) than in most other countries, and a lower proportion going to wages (39 per cent).

The government or a general picture shows that workers' councils have every incentive not to use the expansion of industry, provide jobs for the unemployed. The Yugoslav economy, Todorovic, who supports the system, has written that "workers find it in their interest that the workers' collective number falls as far as possible... because they must share the jobs." The workers' councils have, indeed, a very successful enterprise, are actually buying up the less successful enterprises, so that some workers seem to be exploiting others.

The system is continually divided between the workers of one enterprise and those of another. Meanwhile the workers and the central bureaucrats walk off with the profits from the enterprise. It is because such divisions exist that some of the workers have been ready to respond to the slogan of local nationalism.

Within Yugoslavia there are immense differences between the levels of development of the different parts of the country. While Macedonia, Montenegro, and Herzegovina are very backward, Croatia and Slovenia have a fair amount of industrial development.

BEHIND

The republic from which the central government is run, Serbia, finds itself where between the two extremes. The national income averages twice as much in Slovenia as in Macedonia and Montenegro. The state takes a considerable portion of the wealth produced in the advanced areas and uses it to support the backward areas. However, given the organization of industry in the more interests of competition, not raising living standards, this is fact has done little to help backward areas—indeed, in some ways they are even more behind than they used to be. Life for the workers and peasants of the backward republics is increasingly miserable.

At the same time the Cossack and Slovene workers themselves have two different conditions. The majority of the Cossack leave their families and go abroad to find work are from these areas. They have been accused of "stealing" the work and the job opportunities. They also claim that funds are not being used most efficiently. The state would rather build up Serbia, where the conditions of industry are far better. There is some evidence that this has been done. The state has a legal restriction against the people who run the enterprises, the police, the army, the central banks and so on—who tend to go to Serbia.

However, it has not been the feelings of the Yugoslav workers that have produced the recent crisis, but a growing trend towards nationalism within the ruling bureaucracy itself.

The official and government officials in Serbia feel that their power and influence would be nothing if it were not for a constant flow of money from the central government in Belgrade towards their republic. First of all, economic difficulties are just an excuse for the workers to go back into industry all of the political parties in the West, instead of having to pass a large part of their lives in the bureaucracy.

And so, for example, when the banking system was on the point of collapse at the beginning of last year, there was a bitter fight for its assets between the central government and the local republic and those bureaucrats continuing to run Workers' Council in Belgrade. Each republic is beginning to favour its own interests and to see the other republics as foreign.
1971: year of Tory attack and union weakness

by ROGER ROSEWELL
SW Ind. Industrial Correspondent

1. The outwearing of unofficial strikes, sympathy strikes, blacking and closed shops.
2. The introduction of a National Industrial Relations Court that could fine trade unions up to £100,000 for every offence and jail those who wouldn't pay.
3. The setting up of a new Registrar who would be empowered to demand all details of the democratic and declined rate books of those trade unions who had refused to submit them.
4. The decision to oppose those proposals for the statutory recognition of a trade union at Trafalgar Square on 21 February, 20,000 workers marched through London on that day and their spirit was one of fighting confidence.

Potential

Many of those who came to London felt their strength, declared their solidarity with the postal and Ford strikers and realised that they had the potential to smash the Tory laws.

But the success that was possible was not to be. The case was marked by an intransigence which had allowed the Tory victory over the pensions and led to the wage row. It was the role of the trade union leaders.

Despite the intensity of the Tory offensive and in part even because of it, the trades unions refused to break the Bill and consequently offered no serious resistance to its finally becoming law.

As a result of this more and more trade unions have been driven to settle below the line and on the floor. It was a fatal blow for the trade union leaders.

The TUC general conference on 18 March rejected strike action and adopted an alternative policy of non-co-operation with the Bill once it became law.

The day before the conference took place a number of union leaders submitted a resolution to the September conference of the TUC demanding the immediate expulsion of any union that registered or co-operated with the Act.

As was to be expected in an assembly where principles are trivialised the resolution was overwhelmingly defeated by a combined vote of postal and Ford and left wing trade unions. But in an attempt to head off the Paper Workers' challenge, Congress decided to instruct unions not to register, instead of merely advising them not to.

The refusal to really fight the Industrial Relations Bill was connected with the trade union leaders' confidence over wages and the government's efforts to cut them. The postal union's strike was defeated through lack of funds. They urgently needed money and although the trade union movement had the capacity to pay it, the TUC deliberately refused to do so.

But the TUC's confidence was not misplaced. As did the Tories, the significance of the dispute. While not basing it to be utterly smashed, they nevertheless had mixed feelings about it being an obvious success. For they knew that if the pensions row, then millions of other workers would be encouraged to expect higher wages and would be prepared to fight for them.

The union leaders, despite their Trafalgar Square speeches, repeatedly wanted to avoid a showdown with the government and the postal workers suffered as a result.

Betrayer

This contradictory attitude also led both leaders and shop stewards to presently intervene and betray the Ford strike. The union leaders refused to build a fighting alliance of public sector workers and negotiated crop settlements which prices rose by 5 per cent. At the same time the TUC refused to organise the government, and the postal workers suffered as a result.

1971 WAS JUST 20 days old when the postal workers' strike began and right from the beginning it was clear that the outcome of that dispute would be vital. Even before the Trade Union Act had taken power in 1970 they had demanded that wages should be forced down below the stopping point in the country. The postal worker's strike gave them the best opportunity to deliberately demonstrate their determination to do so and they grabbed it without a moment's hesitation.

Opposed by all of the government's resources, the postal workers won magnificently. They braved tremendous hardships and difficulties and fought for seven long weeks. But finally courage alone wasn't enough and, with their morale exhausted and heavily in debt, the strike collapsed.

The defeat of the postal workers was a major triumph for the Tories and a serious blow to the living standards of millions of working people.

For in the months that followed, the memory of that defeat frightened the trade union leaders, demoralised sections of the working class and led to a sharp decline in the level of militancy and the size of wage increases.

1971 will be remember by steel workers as a year of battle. In the first eight months of the year, with metal trades leaders consistently refusing to support steel workers, the government was defeated.

In August the compensating rate for wage raises, which had been brought down below 10 per cent, however, another round of claims is just getting under way and it is of crucial importance to ensure that the average level of settlements is brought down still further if we are to avoid another unemployment crisis.

But even that was not enough for big business. Faced with the obvious success of the steel workers, and with an increased level of militancy in the public services, TUC leaders unwisely decided on 11 November: 'To meet the Government's rate of settlement for wage increases we have been brought down below 10 per cent, however, another round of claims is just getting under way and it is of crucial importance to ensure that the average level of settlements is brought down still further if we are to avoid another unemployment crisis.'
ANGER IN THE PITS
AS CASTLE BOSSES
DENY A LIVING WAGE

What the union wants

88,000 men in the mines today (one third of the total workforce) earn less than £20 a week, before tax and deductions. They are officially classified as "in dire poverty..."
The National Union of Mineworkers' claim for £5 a week extra for surface workers, £9 for underground men and grades A and B in the national daily wage structure. The claim also seeks a new power loading rate (for the men who dig the coal) of £55 for the whole country. This claim, if granted in full, would raise the miners to the average industrial wage.
The NCB is offering £1.90 to all grades of workers with the exception of the most lowly-paid surface men, who are being offered £2 a week. This offer, made just before Christmas, was made with the condition that the union put it to ballot. Three weeks' holiday was also claimed. The NCB said they would consider introducing the third week in November 1972 if the union would accept the wage.

LAURIE FLYNN ON THE FIRST CRUCIAL PAY CLASH OF 1972

THE NATIONAL COAL BOARD has had considerable difficulty for some years in recruiting enough people to man Britain's highly-mechanised mining industry. Now at last, thanks to unemployment, they can get enough miners, men who will go down shafts into the bowels of the earth, clear the way for the cutting machines, service them, dig the coal, get the coal to the nation and organise its distribution.

The very people who are going down the pits now, to work on their knees or on their stomachs in a two-feet six-inch high area, often with water lapping round them and in very high temperatures, are the same people who a couple of years ago would have cussed when the NCB recruitment films were shown in their local cinema. They would have laughed because they knew that the talk of a secure future in the pits was a lie, a lie compounded by the baby wages that accompanied the worst conditions of any industry.

BLED DRY BY MONEYLENDERS

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Productivity, Dealing and the Miners' Next Step

An expert analysis of the crisis in the coal industry and a programme of action to help the miners win.

SP post free

S. Basset  

CREAMED OFF

The mining industry the coal owners left behind as they calculated their compensation and fixed it (if it has been fixed at all) on the mine's back and out of his pocket.

Every year since 1948, the industry has turned in an operating surplus, after allowing a fair amount for the equipment and the owners turned off their cut. Once that had been taken, the NCB were only too glad to tell the mine that there was nothing left in the kitty to pay a living wage.

For years they said it and for years the national union accepted they were being told the truth.

And for those same years the policy of the National Union of Mineworkers was to strive to maintain the size of the industry. The success of their leaders can perhaps be judged by a fall in the numbers employed in the mines from 700,000 in 1950 to less than 300,000 in the year since nationalisation. There will be fewer yet if the NCB has its way.

FEWER MINERS, FEWER PITS, MORE COAL

In 1969, the NCB passed a resolution that the number of mining areas be reduced. The NCB have cut down the number of mining areas from 36 to 15, a reduction of over 50% in the number of pits and miners.

The NCB's justification for this reduction is that they believe it will improve efficiency and reduce costs. However, many workers and their families feel that this is an attack on their livelihood and a sacrifice of social services in the mining areas.

The NCB's plans to reduce the number of pits have met with opposition from the miners and their unions. The miners argue that reducing the number of pits will lead to job losses and a decline in the living standards of those remaining.

SLIPPED

The union had back as wage increases in 1970, when miners were granted a 13% rise. As a result, miners' wages have slipped behind the rate of inflation, and many miners are struggling to make ends meet.

The NCB's stance on wage negotiations is that they are willing to negotiate, but only if the miners accept their proposals. The miners, on the other hand, are demanding a wage increase that keeps pace with inflation.

The miners' demands for a living wage, which would cover the cost of living and provide a decent standard of living, have been rejected by the NCB. The miners are consequently planning a series of strikes to demand better wages and working conditions.

The miners' struggle for a living wage is a struggle for justice and dignity. They are fighting for a fair share of the wealth created by their labor, and for a society that values their contributions to the economy. The miners' struggle is not just about their wages, but about their rights and their humanity.
Death and disease stalk the coalfields

FOR SEVENTEEN MINUTES one October morning in 1970, the men on the way to the face in Yorkshire's New Stubbing mine were hanging on for grim death. The skip had suddenly unpeeled, ready to spill them to the shift bottom and to injury, even death in pursuit of less than £20 a week before tax and deductions.

They were saved, brought to the surface and went home to recover from a fairly normal incident in the coal industry. Next morning as they presented themselves for another shift, they asked the management to pay them for the shift they had lost as a result of the incident.

Shock

Management refused, and there was a week-long strike of the men involved in support of their demand. 6000 tons of the NCB's beloved production was lost to avoid paying the £20 the men demanded.

And every one of the men could quite legitimately have worked off the shock certified by a doctor as due to the upending of the cage. This would have given them the standby day wage.

They did not do this. Instead they asked the management to pay.

The only conceivable explanation for this situation is that the NCB at top level felt that if the men were paid that shift, it would be tantamount to an admission of liability for the incident and the miners might have a legal case.

When it comes to reckoning the real price of cost, it is these incidents which never make the Coal Board's annual report and accounts that tell the true history of coal mining.

Since nationalisation, 6494 miners have been killed in industrial 'accidents'. During the most intensive period of mechanisation, in the mid-1960s, the accident rate soared to 60 and 70 per cent above previous averages. Only this year is it back down to the 1950 figures.

Negligence

And last year alone 595 men died from the dust disease, pneumoconiosis, contracted in the coal mining industry. It is estimated that nearly one-tenth of the present 100,000 men left in the industry have a basis for a claim against the NCB for pneumoconiosis caught thanks to the NCB's negligence.

In fact so closely was the union integrated into the NCB as the local and national level throughout the 1950's that miners' health was told in the union that there would be less pit closures.

Last year an ex-miner called Pickles sued the Coal Board with the assistance of his new union, the AUEW. Outside the court, he was told that the NCB was pumped up to £7500 within 10 minutes. This was excess of the saving of the facts of the NCB's disregard for health and safety never reached the light of day. It was this saving which would have meant smaller claims in the NUM.

Afterwards, Donald Baydell, the chief insurance officer, had this to say: 'I wish I was foolish to deny that we were surprised at the results but we accepted the judgment of the court (when the Limitations Act had to be taken) but why should we tell the union?'

MEN FOOT BILL FOR STATE TAKEOVER

WHEN THE MINES were rationalised after the last war, the feeling that a new day had dawned at last. The hated coallowners were disposed of.

But in the back of the mind of the mining communities that the coalowners had been lavishy compensated for 'their' industry which they had left in a shambles. It mattered little that their years of neglect, their debts, their work-out collective handover were paid for.

It was not clear who would pay the debt. It is clear now who has paid it: the miners. It didn't take long for the miners to discover that the NCB was a welfare state system it had inherited from the employers. It agreed a day wage structure but used all its local forms of bargaining for the second promised last.

Though sweet in parts, the deal has turned sour as socialists and militants warned.

As the productive workers produced more in ever fewer numbers, so supervisory staffs swelled. Work discipline increased and less and less could be settled at the point of production. Everything was centralised in London, an area not famous for its coherency.

MASSIVE

And through all this, the industry was turning in massive operating profits. Not once since 1948 has the industry been in the red before the owners were compensated, before the bankers were paid their slice for putting up the money to pay the owners and install the machinery.

'Offer the operating profits are really massive—£7 million in 1963. But in fact it has paid the whole of society it is only the money to pay the men who actually did the work which cannot be found.

The coal industry is compelled by the cost of the five big merchant banks at every turn of interest. These five made £125 million profits last year alone. The data came from the exactions of the miners' wage.

The National Union of Mineworkers estimates that £2000 million is milked out of the industry and paid to the government to service the debts incurred to compensate the workers and pay the interest on the money borrowed to mechanise the industry.

REMARKABLE

It has been a marvellous gravy train for private industry, with big firms getting nearly three times more than the old age pensioners with a slot machine.

When there was a coal shortage after the war, the NCB was compelled to import coal from abroad and sell it at 50 shillings per ton less than it cost for it. This total loss incurred in this subsidy to private industry was £24 million between nationalisation and 1952. This was £3 a ton more than the old-National Union of Mineworkers take the Hill for a week's work, better wages and higher productivity.

PLANNING

In a shaky sort of way, the NUM recognises that this is a policy of bankruptcy. It has pamphlets about the lack of a national fuel policy.

Experience after conference passes resolutions about the need for a nationalised industry, a social solution to a social problem.

In 1964, the NUM supported a Labour government and an incomes policy in the vain hope that Labour would do the job.

What it did was run the mines down ever faster, giving generous financial benefits to miners to keep their morale up to a rapidity growing work cut.

The wages of those who remained in the industry declined still further.

Revolution after resolution of no small union men go into their own communities and the labour movement at a whole and fight for a solution that would act society free from the debt and the disease, the robbery and their own is the mining industry.'
Rent strike hits Orange police state

The introduction of internment in Northern Ireland in August 1972 produced not only a military reaction but also a massive and spontaneous non-violent reaction from the whole anti-Unionist population. Large sections of the community refused to have anything more to do with the Stormont regime. That day rent strike notices appeared in all the houses all over the North, terminating an effective rent and rates protest which had lasted for the past five months. Organisations at local level were driven through the streets, where committees have been elected to run the estates.

In Armagh there has been a total boycott by the anti-Unionist population. Local matters are dealt with by a democratically elected committee. Originally a group of people drew up and distributed the following petition in Armagh: "We appeal to you to support the right of our children to the same educational opportunities that are open for the children of the loyalist community in this country."

A number of delegations from estates committee, based on the number of houses represented, are elected to a central body for the whole of Armagh. This body co-ordinates activity on a more general scale such as allocation of houses, collection of money to support, unemployment assistance, and so on. A new building fund is being organised.

Show town

It is also a mandate to take action against any anti-social behaviour in the district and has the support of republican military units in the area. The scheme is a great success and can be gauged from the fact that the 1,000 houses so far got into the display, some in the anti-Unionist estates, more than 900 are on the waiting list. The gross loss of £3000 a week to the Stormont Executive is his greatest concern.

In the near-by "show town" of Armagh, where houses with high rents and no rents—rent strikers—have taken over, the rents have been reduced to nearer £2,000 a month.

The situation is all over the province. In Belfast where buses are cut from the Orange estate after 6.30 p.m., taxi services are organized at high rates. In parts of the town, rent strikes of £300 a week are common as August.

In Co. Londonderry, as a reply against the civil resistance campaign, the army came into the Protestant areas and knocked and rapped out the public telephones. As a result, the people there immediately had to rebuild the telephones and substitute portable telephones. By organizing the people in the localities the government is declared "whipped".

Such complex destructive acts by the British Army are now the law of the crimes they have committed against the innocent people who attempt to defend their area. In October, two women policemen were shot in the Lower Falls district of Belfast because they were driving around the area warning people of their hypothetical "gun run".

In Unity Flats, Christy Quinn, well known in the union of the most active resistance in the area, was picked up by an enemy marksmen and shot dead.

The tremendous solidarity among the locals is only strengthened by every move by Stormont to break their resistance. Last month a new set of repression laws were passed so that the government could deduct rents from areas of passive resistance, including children and orphan pensioners, cut off gas supplies, vehicle and all public services.

All these moves are made direct from Westminster but this does not bother Stormont. In their frantic efforts to retrieve some of the money lost they have created a new phenomenon of the "tenants to the payers" phenomenon. And for that reason alone they have succeeded in their aim. All this money is spent, the 21,000 are still existig a gigantic hole in Stormont's coffers and this does not include the cost of implementing the set.

A new government department has been set up, manned by fleets of civil servants who are continually trying to beat the bucking-bolters. More and more they are feeling it impossible to trade state paytrates to rent strikers.

Although they want not to admit it, the rent strike situation is far from being a Civil War situation. Because of the withdrawal of the state, the community of the towns in Ulster is bankrupcy and a government apppoinee now controls the whole situation.

The struggle of the working class of people who are no longer prepared to pay for the upkeep of a tyrannical and fascist regime is a-fight. The IRA's military campaign and strikes and the increasing numbers of militant workers had brought near the end of the working-class community.

But to assure this objective, the government must be co-ordinated or stranghened. The armed struggle will not be defeated by the mass movement.

This plan to escalate the campaign by a series of demonstrations, wildcat strikes and other forms of passive resistance. The fight to maintain the "red coat" at the present stage of the political situation and the local resistance must be made to answer the government's demands.

The Northern Resistance Committee which has been set up in Belfast to co-ordinate all local resistance committees were invited to a meeting and declared democratically. This committee was called on to co-ordinate all resistance movements throughout the Six Counties against the current mass repression and against the complete co-ordination.

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The struggle continues and in 1920 Congress called for a campaign of non-co-operation against the British. But the people of Ulster did not take part in the Congress' boycott of local elections, law courts and trade. The position was that if they affected mainly the middle classes. A mass strike which brought the traders to their knees would have involved the masses, and was very much to be desired.

Despite this, the non-co-operation campaign proved highly successful. Congress again, special mention was made in the report that moderate men were involved as well as Hindus. Indeed it was Muslim leaders who went furthest in the non-co-operation campaign.

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The Muslim leaders called off the movement at its height, on the pretext of "the absence of the support of the native Chauq Chau" where peasants had stormed a number of points and so forced the policemen, Nehru, who had a habit of looking to the British government for the government then accepting his decisions, later wrote: "It is possible that this sudden bottling up of a great movement contributed to a tragic development in the country. The divestment of spittle and futile violence in the political struggle was stopped, but the suppressed violence had to find a way out, and in the following years this perhaps aggravated the communal troubles." The statement by the Congress leaders calling off the struggle after Chau Chau denounced three of its seven slums to be used for needs for peasants to abandon non-payment of rents. Yet what could be more non-violent than a rent strike? Gandhi and his associates really called off the movement because it began to thrash the propriety of the position which they themselves represented or were closely linked with.

Refused

Once the movement had ended, the British moved and arrested the Congress leaders, Gandhi included. By then the craze was over.

A similar process occurred in the early 1910s. Another mass movement over, with further strikes and occasional refusal of rent and work. In April 1920, the Muslim League called for a mass movement over the Muslim people, who then took it over for a week to fulfil powerful forces, with air support, were sent to recognize it.

The success of the "mulitners" was sent to violent extremes of joy or despair. Few things, you might think, could be more non-violent than soldiers refusing to fire on a crowd. Gandhi thought otherwise. When, yet again, he called off the movement, he refused to include the "mulitners" in a clause on release of prisoners.

As he said finally at the time: "Soldiers who desist in an affair for which they have carried a large sack to break the oath that they have taken and renders himself guilty of criminal disobedience, I cannot ask soldiers and officials to disobey, when I am in power I shall in all likelihood make use of the same officials and the same soldiers. If I taught them to disobey, I should be afraid they might do the same when I am in power."

As he also said at the same period: "The success of the movement over the Indian people would have been far better if it had been carried on to the maxima, and it would have been far better for the British government to be everything."...
World War Two: why 'victory' spelt defeat for workers in Britain...

IN THIS MODERN, well-managed and media-saturated society, very few books on World War Two are able to provoke genuine, deep-felt emotion. The scale of the destruction of human lives and the suffering experienced by thousands of people are too distant and not immediately personal to provoke similar sentiments as people complain about the activities of企业家

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WHEN HALF-TRUTHS EQUAL AN INQUISITION

THERE is a great deal of difference between arguing out a case skilfully and arguing by skill, well-argued questioners, and presenting the glibly glossed "public relations statements". Northern Ireland government, insensitive to all else, is well aware of this fact.

The British press has similar misgivings—particularly when its own abysmal coverage of the Ulster situation might well be exposed.

It was no surprise, therefore, that the story of the Stormont regime's refusal to take part in a BBC 'in depth' examination of the Ulster tragedy should be so generously ignored in the British papers, notably the Times, and in the papers of Faulkner and his cohorts.

Manipulated

The technique of mute censorship—the art of saying nothing to ensure that others with something to say are silenced, is also one that Northern Ireland has mastered. And the press has been manipulated in this way for years.

It is all part of the myth of fair play, balance and objectivity that if someone with an ax to grind, no matter how spurious the attack is spiked, so to speak, it would represent a re- sided, unbiased view of the situation.

Unfortunately for the public good and

IS NEWS

DESpite little advance publicity it was standing-room only on Tuesday 21 December as 40 people packed a meeting of Blackburn 18 to hear Naim Nazem speak about his experiences in Israel, in the form of a letter to Lord Jennet, a West-Pakistani who courageously supports Bantam and pointed out that the next fight for the peace and workers of the world is the battle one fronted by the Middle Eastern people to win a truly independent, socialist Lebanon.

A collection at the meeting also raised £16 for the front line fighters in Millington, Wigan, where the men have been out for 20 weeks.

JOHNN HOGAN, DOUG FOGG of Harleion, writes: Every socialist in the trade union movement should insist on a resolution for 1978: fight for the release of Naim Nazem. Write him quickly before the British troops from Northern Ireland, who are now on the way, clear a path. Soon it will be clear that these men, interred without trial, are existing in intolerable conditions.

It is also a good idea if stalkers and militiants could get an individual interest adopted by their branch or shop stewards committees. In this way, actions could be mounted to press Leal for man in Leal. A word of warning though! Fellow trade unionists, members of the Harleion Labour Club, raised £14 for a fund which was sent to Leal before Christmas. We still have had no acknowledgement and it begins to look as though the paper was intercepted by the internal security department.

LACKENBY SHOPI STEWART writes: The death occurred shortly before Christmas of a miner with a shocking fine record as a fighter for better wages. He was a militant with a socialist and steel industry. Until the day of his death he was involved as a member of the BBC Lackenby shop stewards committee in the fight to save jobs, improve pay, build an opposition to the reactionary executive of BIS(A)T(K) and a number of other issues.

It is better known that he was killed because of lack of proper safety procedures at work. The week prior to his death he had spoken to his management to take no man on by use of an own pay deal.

was wait a perusal opportunity to action, who attempted to unite the Shropshire miners with a political alternative to the TUC. The Shropshire miners, who for many years, he eventually came to the conclusion that this was not his purpose and was incapable of representing the miners at the national meeting.

He left the CP and after a while came to the conclusion that he could not work with the International Socialists, his vast knowledge and experience the trade unionist's skill as a negotiator and debater, his contacts with the tail-enders, will Gerson and condições to young miners who could not find a firmer inspiration.

Lucy WILSON on

SPICE RON KNOWLES press column

the press misdirects to evade its readers about such matters, and takes a great deal of give from the embarrassment of the BBC over issues of censorship.

The Times Mail headlined the Stormont-BBC row—CLIMBDOWN AFTER PROTEST BY ULSTER— BBC DROPS TRIAL. The Telegraph referred to the proposed programme as an 'inquisition', and accused Lord Hill of being unreasonably irresponsible.

The Telegraph, which is used to buttressing its assertions with logic, followed the rest of the press—with the single exception of the Guardian—by having one of its better days— in effect, ignoring the issue of sack with Faulkner.

NOTICES

ALL MEMBERS: Members of the Leeds Section of the British Steel Workers' Union have written to the Leeds Tribune

BLACKBURN is a public meeting. Roger Fould of Blackburn, and a member of the British Steel Workers' Union, is a member of the Blackburn Labor Club, and raised £14 for a fund which was sent to Leal before Christmas. We still have had no acknowledgement and it begins to look as though the paper was intercepted by the internal security department.

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Union panic sinks R-R workers

BRISTOL.—7000 Rolls-Royce workers voted to end their nine weeks' strike last week. They had shown tremendous fighting spirit throughout, despite their lack of militant traditions and a condition which cannot be helped.

But fighting spirit alone did not stop them from finally being sold out.

The strike began after the management at the Derby works, after a three-week Plymouth strike, had refused to improve conditions. The Derby workers were later to strike too, after a three-week strike. The Derby strike was called off by local managers through the engineering industry. The strike was called off by the same offer being accepted.

Every since Rolls-Royce was taken over by the government last year, their new board has ruthlessly attacked trade unionism. They have announced huge redundancies, and in 1950, when they were forced to make the announcement, it was only because they thought the strikers would stop fighting. They should have thought again.

The strike was held by the Derby management, and the strike leaders were the trade union leaders of the strikers. The strike was held by the derangement of the strike leaders, who were trying to make sure that the strikers would stop fighting. The strike was held by the derangement of the strike leaders, who were trying to make sure that the strikers would stop fighting.

The strike was held by the management, who had clearly stated their determination not to make the strike a success. The strike was held by the management, who had clearly stated their determination not to make the strike a success. The strike was held by the management, who had clearly stated their determination not to make the strike a success.

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Empty talk from soft left in N. Ireland
by Eamonn McCann
1 FTT OR HONE or anybody else does all down and talk with the British government before the last interests are released from Long Kesh we will campaign across Northern Ireland to expose them and call on the people to regard themselves as our kith and kin. By November, December, we will not be satisfied with the British government's rights demand of a "Bill of Rights." Such a measure would merely put Britain in the role of a colonial master in Northern Ireland, out of the way of political development, and condemn thousands of thousands of workers, unemployed, low wages and miserable conditions.

But as Gerry Fitz of the SDLP and Raymond Faulkner of the Protestant Tory government study the political map together, the road to independence and the mass of people are making it clear that they will not stop this side of a conclusive victory. For British imperialism is a illusion.

Many of the younger activists are turning towards the Civil Rights Resistance Campaign, organised by a committee of the Ulster Resistance, and the Provisional IRA, who have a number of organisations which have realised as every teenager in the province is as aware as any people of Birmingham,"as if Birmingham was also a seat of." Whatever criticisms we make of the "Alliance," I am not suggesting that Northern Ireland cannot organise democratically and that all those who are involved in our organisation are to be believed in this illusion. It is the Camden and Northern Ireland's Republican organisations, who dominate the IRA, that are not realising.

The first step for the republicans and revolutionary socialists must be to see the struggle as a struggle for the independence of the Northern Ireland from Britain and the Southern republic to its foundations.

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IN A BOUTO
SAVING JOBS

Pressmen's leaders break union policy on local deals

DESPITE unprecedented unity in the ranks of provincial journalists for strike action and support from the other press union, the executive of the National Union of Journalists is now building a ballot of the membership on the latest wage offer from the Newspapers Society, the provincial press barons' organisation. The terms of the new offer are in fact worse than the first offer which was overwhelmingly rejected, with the union agreeing to strike in support of the first £1 applied to the wages package.

The strikers have come up with a revised offer which pays 20 per cent more, and the newspapers are now suggesting that this offer is not acceptable, but the union is not prepared to give up the fight for better wages and conditions, and to return for a shorter time.

The agreement is due to last for two years. Since it is an open secret that there will be no wage increase over this period, it is a significant step towards better conditions and a more constructive approach to working with the newspapers. The union is now demanding a review of the terms of the agreement and is ready to accept a new offer that is fair to all concerned.

International Socialists' Industrial Conference

The Struggles Ahead for the Working Class Movement in 1997

The International Socialists are a political party and trade union that campaigns for the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of a socialist society. They are a member of the Socialist Workers Party and the Alliance of Radicals and Socialists. The party is based in the United Kingdom and has branches in various countries.

The party's main program is based on the following principles:

1. The struggle against imperialist domination and colonialism.
2. The struggle against unemployment and poverty.
3. The fight against the exploitation of workers.
4. The struggle against racism and discrimination.
5. The struggle for the recognition of workers' rights and the protection of workers' interests.

The International Socialists' Industrial Conference is a meeting of the party's industrial sections, which is held annually. The conference is an important event for the party, as it provides an opportunity for the party's members to discuss the current political situation and to plan for the future.