Urgent appeal for funds

THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS’ executive committee last week launched an appeal to its branches for £5000.

The present struggle of the miners, the occupying workers at Fisher-Bendix and many other disputes have presented us with unlimited possibilities to spread socialist ideas and to build a fighting socialist organisation.

Already this week we have printed 20,000 copies of a Socialist Worker “Miners’ Special”. Kirkby and Messineside branches have produced 5000 copies of a Fisher-Bendix special.

We are handicapped severely by lack of funds for even the bare essentials. There is an urgent need to place full-time organisers in key provincial cities where progress can be made.

The target date for the appeal is 29 February. We urge all branches to send in their levies as quickly as possible.

Just as important, we ask all our readers who support the aims of Socialist Worker and the International Socialists to hold collections and to send individual donations to our funds.

As socialists, we must grasp the tremendous opportunities that now exist.

JIM NICHOL
National Treasurer
Send donations to: IS Fighting Fund, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 7JH. Cheques, postal orders should be made out to the International Socialists.

Sit-in ends

MOULD, Flintshire. 120 workers at Albus-Chalmers, who had occupied the plant for two weeks in a sit-down strike against closures, voted on Tuesday to end the occupation.

B成都市的Union-based concern which had brought the manufacturing rights for cultural machinery previously made at the Mould works, has agreed to take over the Welsh factory for a trial period of three months. Most of the Albus-Chalmers machinery will be transferred to Wuhan and the workforce will be cut to about 50.

Miners’ wives took part in the lobby of parliament on Tuesday. The tremendous unity of the miners has been re- enforced by support from their wives. In Staffordshire, wives have joined the picket lines. PICTURES: JEFF PICK
Black militancy grows in Rhodesia

by Roger Tembo

AN INCREDIBLE tragi-comedy is being performed in Rhodesia.

The setting is right in the middle of the 19th century's great Victorian era of empire building. The main character is the British Empire, of which the United Kingdom now has a colony in East Africa. The Empire is being ruled by a man named George. He is known for his efficiency and his ability to get things done. But there is a problem: the native people of the colony are up in arms against the British, and they are winning.

George is determined to put an end to this insurrection. He calls a meeting of the colonial officials to discuss the situation. The officials are divided. Some of them believe that the only way to deal with the natives is to use force, while others believe that a more diplomatic approach is needed.

George decides to take a more forceful approach. He orders the military to suppress the rebellion. The military is armed and ready to go, but they are not sure how to proceed. They are afraid of the natives, who are armed and ready to fight.

George is frustrated. He orders the military to take action, but they are hesitant. They are not sure what to do.

In the end, George is forced to take matters into his own hands. He orders the military to take the offensive. The military is given a clear mandate: to crush the rebellion and restore order.

The military is successful in putting down the rebellion. The natives are defeated and the colony is once again in peace.

The people of the colony are grateful to George for his leadership. They know that without his determination and courage, the colony would have fallen to the natives.

George is hailed as a hero and he is appointed as the new govern of the colony. He is determined to ensure that peace and order are maintained in the colony for years to come.

In George's words, "We have overcome a great challenge. We have stood strong and we have prevailed. This is a victory for all of us, and I am proud to be part of it."
Sheppard's flock

THE MAIN TASK of exerting the pressure on the mines is the job of the miners and their unions. Mr W V Sheppard, the Coal Board's deputy chairman, has been taking up enthusiasm by Mr W V Sheppard, the Coal Board's deputy chairman, in the past week. Mr Sheppard has been especially active on the advisability of the employers who do not work. Mr Sheppard has been very active on the advisability of the employers who do not work.

Mr Sheppard started his career for the Coal Board in his native East Midlands (Nottinghamshire area). In the early 1960s he was the Coal Board's Production Director, and as such was appointed chairman of an arbitration panel to settle the disputes over whether pit props ordered by the Coal Board from several companies were in fact pit props and were ordered by the Coal Board from several companies. The panel decided that the pit props were constructed to order and should be regarded as pit props and should not only be regarded as pit props but should be regarded as pit props.

Mr Sheppard 'found' that the Coal Board's claims were ridiculous, and the Coal Board decided to order props from another company.

No one pointed out that at the time of the 'independent arbitration' Mr Sheppard had over 30% of shares in the company.

Later, in 1967, Mr Alfred Robens, son of Lord Robens, chairman of the Coal Board in the world of mining, said that Mr Sheppard never looked back. For some reason, more and more orders seemed to come from the Coal Board.

Go, Joe

RANK AND FILE MINERS are eagerly supporting the Labour Party's campaign to send a delegation to Rhiwdaen to investigate the Peace Commission's handling of the proposed settlement with Smith. The miners' keenness is not unexpected with the fact that NUM President Joe Gormley is a member of the delegation and they would prefer him to be several thousand miles away while the strike is in progress.

SEE YOU! Coal Board ad in the advertising magazine Campaign. Coal—the fuel that can't be cut off.

Jules' robbery

WORKERS sitting at Fisher-Bendix at Kirkby may have to know the following facts about Sir Jules' Thor, chairman and managing director of Thor Electric Industries which owns Fisher-Bendix since 1937.

Together with other individuals and on his own account, Sir Jules owns a total of 5,684,444 shares in the company. (He may own a lot more under the names of nominees.) Seven months ago, when the last closure of Fisher-Bendix was announced, the value of one Thor Electric share was 54.5 pence. The value of Sir Jules' little holding was, therefore, £7,494,400 approximately.

Today the share price is 493p—Sir Jules' holding is worth £18,101,000.

In the intervening time, Sir Jules' holding has risen in value by £6,707,000, or approximately £1,215,270 a month. Every week, in other words, Sir Jules grows richer, just from the increase in value of his shares in his own company, by approximately £300,000.

THE French firm of Moulins is alleged to be interested in buying the Fisher-Bendix site at Kirkby. Moulins' top representative in Britain is a Monsieur Bourgeois. Looks like being a classical struggle on Merseyside.

Unfair Co-op

ONE of the stalwarts of the Labour Left for many years has been Robert Edwards who, until recently, was the general secretary of the Chemical Workers Union. Mr Edwards is in the Labour and Co-op MP for Bistol in Stafford.

Delegates to the TUC and Labour Party conferences have been heard for many years by Edwards' "moving appeals on behalf of the exploited peoples of South Africa, Spain etc.

Strangely, he has never spoken in public about his association with Ellis Seilion, an international swindler of considerable skill who was convicted last week of cheating several banks of some £1.5m.

The bank which was swindled

must was the Co-operative Bank, which is now among the most cautious in its investment.

For some reason, which has never become clear, the Co-op bank believed in 1972 that Ellis Seilion had loaned him millions of his clients money.

At one stage, these loans can only have been advantageous to Edwards. As late as 1974, he still owned some 12,000 shares in Seilion's crooked company, Mount Concorde. He was also a director of Corton Beach (the "beach" brother of Sir Jules), and Seilion had founded as a cover for his other dealings.

Smart talk

HOW NOT TO MAKE friends and influence people. The St Michael's Immigrant Centre in Bradford has produced a leaflet for Asian students that must take the chapattis for bad taste and insensitivity. The idea is to encourage the students to conform to the British way. Sketches of two boys show one dressed like the Sneak from the 1970s public information film with the legend: 'This boy is very smart for school. He is wearing a shirt and tie. England is it best to wear a tie with a shirt. It looks like this.'

Next to him is a grotesque sketch of a boy with red hair. Look at this boy! His hair is too long and very untidy. His shirt has many colours. His jacket is very untidy. His trousers are very tight, very long and pointed with high heels. He is smoking. This is a bad school boy. This kind of boy will get into trouble. You must not come to school looking like this.'

Turning to the girls, they instruct them to remove their hangings and necklaces, take off their "fancy" garments and to switch to "heat and tidy" blouses and skirts. But worse is to come in a section on hygiene that shows a boy and girl standing by themselves because they have no friends. They are not clean. They do not wash or bath themselves properly. They are dirty. No one wants to be near them.

As the Times Educational Supplement points out: 'Just the thing to make newly arrived immigrants feel that the British are waiting for them and that we have some understanding and admiration for their customs, and, of course, hygiene, when Muslims have extremely careful rules and standards.'

NICEST thing seen on television last week was a brief interview with an interview on 24 Hours with Menachen Begin, Israeli right-wing fanatic and former leader of the terrorist Ingar that massacred hundreds of Arabs in the struggle to create the Israeli state. As the song almost said, the BBC couldn't begin to the Begin.'

TUC leaders must be forced to fight

IN THE MIDLANDS lorry drivers in the Transport Workers Union have been instructed not to deliver coal to power stations. In Plymouth dockers claim to have had no instructions from the union to stop handling coal. Swansea and Newport dockers are effectively blacking out coal imports but German coal is on its way to East Anglian ports in the expectation that it will used in the steelworks.

The overall picture is of a magnificent response by rank and file trade unionists to the miners' cause. Militants have done a fine job in many cases but in too many others less persuasive elements are attempting to undermine the strike instructions. The blame lies fairly and squarely with the trade union leaders.

It is no use expressing 'unanimous support for the miners' as some union executives have done. What is needed is a total blacking of the handling of coal. The TUC General Council must be made to face up to its responsibilities and issue the call for a complete boycott on the movement of coal.

Feather and the right wing will do their best to evade their plain duty to give real support to the miners. That goes without saying. But what are the 'left wingers' on the General Council doing?

It is no use them saying they are in a minority. A firm call for total blacking by the TGWU and the Engineers would put Feather in his place. A conference of trade union leaders to organise solidarity should be demanded. After all, such conferences have been called before for less important reasons.

It is no use making or breaking a deal with the trade unionists in 1972. Not just the miners' claim is at stake, important as that is in itself. Every claim in every section of the trade union movement is involved.

The employing class and its political representatives, the Tory government, are determined to drive down real wages and prices. Last year, the trade union leaders in practice that they preferred the defeat of the postmen to a real fight with the employers and their government. This time they must be forced to fight.

The magnificent stand of the miners can mark the turn of the tide. Each and every conscious trade unionist must do his utmost officially and unofficially to co-operate in building the whole movement behind the miners. Organise blacking, directly where possible, press resolutions demanding action by your executive and by the TUC General Council. Encourage your workmates that the miners' fight is their fight.

A defeat for the miners would be a defeat for the organised working class. A victory for the miners will be a victory for every working man and woman.

Mess the system leaves

POLLUTION isn't new. Take a look at the countryside around Wigan or Broxburn. The hideous scars left by the profit-hungry capitalists of earlier generations are plain to see.

What is new is that the increased scale of operations and the rapid technological changes of the last decade have produced a situation in which massive pollution is no longer confined to the working-class areas. The new pollution affects the rich as well.

It doesn't affect them equally of course. It is still true, as it has been for a century and a half or more, that the expectation of the industrial worker is materially shorter than that of the wealthy suburban or country dweller. Bath or Scarborough are still a lot less polluted than Battersea or Smethwick.

All the same the problem is a serious and growing one. The recent manifesto by a group of scientists is a welcome sign that many people outside socialist circles are realising that it is first of all a political problem.

The point needs to be stressed. There are no technically insoluble problems that cannot be overcome. The ingenuity, energy and resources that go into capital accumulation, product differentiation and sales promotion could equally solve pollution problem. The snag is cost and its effect on profits.

Avoidance of pollution is like industrial safety. It costs money. An organised campaign for the outright ban of profit for will be a polluted world. Profits come first.

Certainly it is necessary, as so many well meaning people say, to change our social priorities. But the priorities are not 'outrage against the priority right of industry'. The only thing effective about the growing menace of pollution means to challenge the power of big business. It is yet another reason not to join in the struggle for socialism.
On-the-spot report of the dramatic occupation of the Fisher-Bendix factory

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT: the words are spelt out in giant black letters along the wall surrounding the Fisher-Bendix factory in Kirkby, near Liverpool. It is 0:30 a.m. in the morning, workers, 1000 manual and staff, who are occupying the plant 24 hours a day to stop its shutdown. The vote to start a sit-in was made at a meeting in the plant yesterday when management refused to withdraw their notice of closure and redundancy.

They were given 10 minutes to leave the premises last week. It was a generally bad week for the workers. Another decision to refuse to accept the bosses' deal that profits are more important than people. The factory has been closed down in order to make way for a new factory to be built in a more modern location which has spread south from Scotland with the realisation that these workers are no longer needed. The factory managers have the right and the power to take such action to stave off their operators.

And with each occupation there comes a growing militancy, a greater determination to resist. The workers on the Clyde with friendly relations between workers and management have been cited as the model. The Fisher-Bendix workforce, with its broken relationship, could be one of the most important stories in the country as the workers attempt to fight the plant.

CHEATING

But even if there were such opponents as there might be, they were never unmasked. "The unemployment benefit is the only union who do not know their company at the present position to that of the Kirkby and the work is shorter, but we know they are not prepared to take away jobs from the redundant workers."

The Union statement that these allegations are due to the workers are due to the workers, and to the statement in the statement.

If someone somewhere in the management is going to be seen to be cheating, it is nothing new in the recent history of Fisher-Bendix, which is a multinational company, with 5000 workers in the world.

The Kirkby factory was built 11 years ago but the workers do not believe that the plant will be expanded and that the plant will be closed.

BMC sold the firm in 1968 to purchase the factory in a deal by Sir John Thors's incident.

PRODUCTION OF WASHING MACHINES AT KIRKBY

The workers were being told that Bendix machines were being put into the plant. The story about the workers in the plant was being spread by the management that they closed the plant.

The story about the workers being told that Bendix machines were, as was, a new, state-of-the-art highly automated machine was being spread by the management.

"Dear Bendix Customer. This letter is to inform you that the Bendix washing machine has been selected as the future of Bendix in the Domestic Appliance Industry. It has been deliberately decided to cease the manufacture of Bendix washing machine at the Fisher-Bendix plant. This does not mean the department of Bendix from the washing machine; Bendix products will still be marketed and the range will be expanded."

With some excitement, Mr Booth said that a new tumbler dryer would be on sale.

And at the time of the Thorn take-over, Mr G A Bolland from head office wrote to Kirkby asking for full details of 'your tumbler dryer, dishwashers and washing machines' which I understand are to be the main items immediately involved in next year's selling programme. I also hear that two additional washing machines are likely to come into production in the future."

"We are not working their machines. They are not using their machines until they guarantee our job." The reaction to the threat of redundancy for the workers was electric.

CECILIANA and the Clyde with friendly relations between workers and management have been the model. The Fisher-Bendix workforce, with its broken relationship, could be one of the most important stories in the country as the workers attempt to fight the plant.

Bosss' lies exposed by sit-in strike at Kirkby

by Roger Protz

And the management's disregard for its workers' livelihoods is not matched by its concern for the machine. When supplies of oil for heating the plant were cut off after the occupation began, the workers threatened to light fires under the press. Oil supplies reached; and they were supplied.

The workers know that the plant will not work unless the machines are fired up. Six unions are represented at Fisher-Bendix: AUEW, T&GWU, ESFU, ASTMS DATA and CAWU. We were down round by Archie Bruden, the electrician's, stewards, now in charge of organizing signs to raise support and money for the occupation.

Facilities and building sites throughout Merseyside have been visited. Support has come in the form of donations to the strike fund and promises and letters of support if Thorn attempts to evict the workers.

REDUNDANT

I told Archie Bruden that I had arrived for the authority and efficiency of the occupation. What did they feel about the 'nonsense' role of management now? "Management are redundant," he said.

"We could run the factory. Of course, we would have problems, but we would get assistance from other experienced trade unionists."

"People become immediately redundant. They no longer feel substitutes."

"But there is no romanticism about this struggle. The workers know this is not a fight for socialism in one isolated factory, but it is a battle, first and foremost, for the right to work."

"The key to victory is a solidarity campaign that will hit at the heart of Thors empire. The first step was effective action within the combine and all Thorn shop stewards had been invited to the Kirkby last Saturday to discuss the situation."

"The Kirkby workers struck last year when 500 were threatened with the sack, but they seemed isolated until workers at the Birmingham plant responded to their appeal and threatened to strike themselves. They backed down within hours."

"The Kirkby workers are being included in the wider trade union movement and to housewives' boycott and Thorn products, which include Bendix, Tricity, Moffett, Kawfson, Wim, Radio and Broadca.

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"Kirkby are also leading to the wider trade union movement and to housewives' boycott and Thorn products, which include Bendix, Tricity, Moffett, Kawfson, Wim, Radio and Broadca.

"Thorn can be defeated by trade union solidarity action."

Along with the other factory occupations, it is a demonstration that working people, whose skill and enterprise creates the profits and wealth of the minority, will fight for the most basic of democratic rights—the right to work. It is a demonstration, too, of the necessary enterprise and organizing ability of working people, a pointer to a new society where production is for use and not profit.

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT is a sign that needs to be hung on every factory gate in Britain. It is not the workers who are redundant but Sir John Thors and the rest of his class.
It's not just council tenants who are under attack from the Tories. Private tenants, already harassed by landlords, face a jump in rents

The major objective of the new Tory Housing Act is to force a doubling of council house rents in the next two years. But council tenants are not the only group whose housing rights are coming under government attack. There are 1.3 million families who rent from private landlords and whose rents are at present controlled by law. This group of tenants includes many old age pensioners and families on very low incomes. Yet, next year, the Tories intend to scrap controls altogether and rents will rocket.

MR GILLESPIE of Holloway Road applied to a rent tribunal and had his rent reduced. His complaint was that he didn’t have a place to park his car on the street, and its tyres were cut with a saw.

A man with which the Gillespie had been allowed to use ceased to be available for parking and, of course, the electricity was cut off.

This story of harassment was reported recently in the House of Commons, but Mr Gillespie and any other private tenant just doesn’t have the law on his side. If he could get physically assaulted the police might do something, but otherwise...

Only an average 56 people a year were convicted for harassing tenants in 1965-66. A year ago there was a year for conviction for begging in the street. Seven people were convicted over the year for illegal eviction: twice as many as convicted for running brothels.

The police say they are too overworked to bother about protecting tenants. But there are tenants concerned with protecting property owners — there are more than 40,000 convictions for shoplifting and 1400 for poaching each year.

With the advance of the laws against harassment and eviction in 1965, Richard Crossmen boasted that if they were the first class of a Victorian gents, landlords’ Labour’s almost invisible rent controls are to be stripped away by the Tories.

Property

The ‘Fair Rents’ law will put the 1,300,000 controlled tenants — including those at the mercy of the government-appointed lawyers and professional values who have a hatred majority on the local rent assessment committees.

Who then will come first: property or people?

The reverence for property of the present rent tribunals — which are the appeal courts for thousands of furnished tenants — was clearly shown in evidence to the Francis Committee on the Rent Acts. The Thames Valley Rent Tribunal chairman, Mr D. Yardley, told how the tribunals value worth more than £25.

‘Even when furniture would fetch nothing but £5, the assessment increased to a sort of figure of £10 for a bed and mattress, and evening low as £0.50 if it is ghastly, and for an armchair £2 to £3 anyway whatever it looks like, and a complete desk for the taxi, though it is fowl — that kind of thing is the sort of thing the tribunals would place rent at a rate of £40, £50 or £60 as our total capital value for the furniture.’

Furniture valued at £60 means a extra £1.50 on the monthly rent, for, on an average, it will cost people to pay a quarter of the estimated value of the furniture.

The last Labour government allowed an enormous loophole to develop in the rent control laws, which apply only to tenants renting unfurnished from a private landlord. The Wilson government tolerated a situation where if a landlord could get rid of a sitting tenant whose rent was controlled, these premises could be let furnished and the rent pushed up high.

Especially in London, the switch to furnished lets has been happening with fantastic speed. In 1963, 90 per cent of houses and flats advertised in London for let were unfurnished. By 1970, only 5 per cent were unfurnished.

In the furnished sector the landlord holds all the cards. A few sticks of tatty furniture are sufficient to make a flat ‘furnished’ in the legal sense. A pound or two invested in some local workshop puts the landlord in a position of overwhelming strength.

Press

Legal protection of the unfurnished tenant is virtually non-existent. Labour’s 1965 Rent Act introduced rent tribunals to which tenants in furnished flats or houses could appeal for a reduction in rent. But tenants’ case is to ask an application to a rent tribunal for fear of reprisals from the landlord.

In England and Wales, each year only about 15,000 out of 500,000 furnished tenants apply to a rent tribunal; and a third of these applications are withdrawn under pressure from the landlord before the tribunal has finished processing the case.

The ‘Tenants’ Magna Carta’ is practically invisible. Harassment of tenants and illegal eviction occur on a massive scale. Recent studies show that eviction by private landlords is the biggest single cause of homelessness among the thousands of families who each year are forced into local authority hostels.

Undoubtedly, the laws against harassment and illegal eviction cannot be used to evict a tenant. The indifference of the police is matched only by the leniency of the courts. The maximum fine for eviction or harassment is £100, but landlords convicted of eviction were fined only an average 23.50 in 1966 — and this had dropped to 1.575 in 1970. For harassment fines in 1966 averaged 20.50, and only 1.675 in 1970.

The latest Tory housing legislation contains nothing at all about furnished tenancies. The Tories are content to leave the furnished tenant exactly where the recent Labour government left him — exposed to the crudest exploitation, backed by a system of laws and tribunals which is fixed to the advantage of the landlord.

Happy old year for profiteers

The capitalists moaned so much in 1971 about inflationary wage settlements, wrecks striking and international money problems that you might think they had a hard year. But according to official government figures, profits soared.

In the City share prices had a merry time most of the year. Some rose by more than 200 per cent. There is only one thing that makes share prices go like that: bigger profits. And it wasn’t because speculators were looking to 1972 for their bumper profits; businesses were turning them in all through 1971.

According to the Central Statistical Office, gross trading profits of UK companies were up 10.3 per cent in the first quarter of 1971 and up 14.8 per cent in the second quarter, at a mere £1,424,000.000. The third quarter figures are expected any day now and will probably be much higher.

Now remember these figures are reached after paying those ‘grubby inflationary wages’ that are so deriding to profits and the health of British industry. But it is even better than that for the capitalists: three other things have happened this year to help them.

FIRST, interest rates have fallen. That means it is cheaper for them to borrow money to reinvest, and that comes out of those gross trading profits.

SECOND, Corporation Tax has been reduced from 42% per cent to 40% per cent.

THIRD, most important, the government has introduced a new system of depreciation allowances. This is the system whereby the government says: ‘It’s costing you a lot of money to buy new machinery that will fall in value (just like a car so we’ll let you have some money to make up for what you will lose when you replace the machinery.

Interestingly, the worker doesn’t get any allegiance for the depreciation on his car. The company director, because his car is owned by and paid for by the form, does.

Cash

Previously the government gave a cash gift to companies and the company depreciated the machinery over a period of years. Now the government gives a tax rebate of 40% per cent of the value of the machine in the first year of its life.

This change alone will make a phenomenal difference to a company. If the company was making £1000 gross trading profit in 1970, it would be making £818 after tax, assuming an average amount of investment in new plant. In 1971 the same company would be making about 23 per cent more after tax profits. And that means the cheaper money it borrows and is after all (those wage bills have been paid).

Two other things: when the Tories announced the new depreciation system they said it would save millions in investment grants. Which it will — but it will also slice the revenue from Corporation Tax. Second, many companies will never again pay full tax, because of the big allowances they get from the government. They publish accounts, noes to say, won’t show that, but their accounts to the taxman will.

So profits were up phenomenally and so was unemployment. Quite simply, money that could have been given to the workers has been given to the capitalists and the workers have been put out of their jobs. It puts the lie once and for all to the idea peddled around by trade union bosses and the Labour Party that when it is good for business it is also good for the workers. The City meanwhile continues to rejoice.

with T.H. Rogomorton
When the TUC betrayed miners

THE LAST STRIKE to close down every coal mine in the country was in 1926. Despite that, it remains full of lessons for today.

The strike was simple. In June 1925 the coal employers told the union — then called the Miners' Federation of Great Britain — that the existing national agreement was ended in four weeks.

It would be replaced by wage cuts and by area agreements, which meant miners in different coalfields would face a race to another company to see who could keep the pay and get a better wage. Miners were earning between 14s and 16s a week, the lowest wages. That was about the same as a one-roomed seaside cottage, or a tent, if you were on strike.

It was this that made the 1926 general strike different. The miners were not only striking for better pay and hours and better conditions for their colleagues, but for the very existence of their union. This was the first time in the history of the TUC that the major trade union had called a strike for its own very survival.

Bitter

The Employers' Federation Act was invoked. Reserves were called up. "Special" defence corps of strikebreakers were formed. Machine guns were posted at pit-heads.

The official leaders of the union were no match for the hardened men, prepared to snub anyone in the name of profit, who ran the capitalist government. The sympathy strikers were called off the mines and left to fight alone for eight weeks. In those months the government acted as if it had been given the miners' union and the leaders of the TUC... and the trade union movement.

The leaders of the big railway and transport unions had promised action in support of the miners, but the notices were carried out by the miners to their faces.

Frightened

The TUC kept to their schedule. In April 1926, the union announced that the lock-out of the miners would end on May 15. At the beginning of April, the miners refused to accept the terms. Because of the deep sympathy for the miners' case among the working class the TUC was compelled to make terms, and to refuse to support the miners' union. Yet those same employers were frightened of a strike and were privately asking the miners to accept the terms.

The general strike lasted nine days. In those nine days the government allowed the miners' strike to be broken.

Forced back

After the nine days, each leader had had enough. They called off the strike with no terms in all that any of their demands would be accepted by the employers or the government and without any guarantees that their trade union would not be victimised.

That was the end of the strike and we have since had no more. That is why the government forced the employers to accept the terms. The government had made the employers agree to these terms.

By Chris Harman

Eventually, however, they were forced back to work on the miners' terms. The cost of the defeat was immense. Tens of thousands of miners were not taken back and many did not get jobs until more than ten years later.

The wages had both longer hours — up to 49 hours a week at the face — and lower wages imposed on them.

Losses

But it was not only the miners who suffered when the leaders of the other unions sold them out. The whole trade union movement was damaged. Thousands of militants were victimised in almost all industries. Standards of work in the miners' union were lowered, wages were slashed everywhere. Above all, the faith of millions of workers in their ability to fight back against the bosses was destroyed.

The defeat was not inevitable. The TUC government did not have the power in 1926. 

The only way to ensure that the working class never has to mine that battle堑, experience, that revolutionary workers' organisation has to be built that can co-ordinate the battles of the workers and enable them to cut through the old trade union bureaucracy that divide the class and frustrate its efforts to fight.

TORY GOVERNMENT and its big business allies have launched a massive attack on the wages and living conditions of working people. But the labour movement is fighting back with a militancy and a determination unmatched in the post-war period. The miners, who have seen their industry cut back savagely since the war, are fighting for a living wage. Many of them take home less than £18 a week — which puts them below the official poverty line.

We have interviewed Vic Feather, the current TUC general secretary, about the miners' strike of 1926. He has told us about the lessons we can learn from the miners' struggle.

THEORY FIGHTS ALONG THE BOSSES' CHOOSEN LINE

by ROGER ROSEWELL

NEARLY two million engineering workers could be involved in wage disputes during the next few months because of the total breakdown of the industry's national wage negotiations and a firm refusal by the employers to offer more than a small amount.

The national pay claim was for a £5-a-week rise, 35-hour week, increased national minimum rates, equal pay, cheaper holidays, more lay-off pay and all without any productivity strings.

The employers, encouraged by the Tory government, rejected this and replied by offering a mere £1.50 away on the skilled rate and even less for the lower grades. No other offer was made, every other part of the claim, presented because the last three-year agreement ended in December, was refused.

The last agreement had given only an average annual increase of about four per cent, and the increasable rise in the cost of living last year alone almost completely eliminated any benefits from this settlement. So the unions demanded that the last claim should only last for one year.

Apart from rejecting it, the Engineering Employers have also condemned it and pompously declared that the submission of the claim was wrong and that it should "lead many trade union members to doubt if their best interests are best served by such aggressive policies."

In November the unions decided there was no point whatever in continuing to try and negotiate with the bosses.

But the labour movement is fighting back with a militancy and a determination unmatched in the post-war period. The miners, who have seen their industry cut back savagely since the war, are fighting for a living wage. Many of them take home less than £18 a week — which puts them below the official poverty line.

We have interviewed Vic Feather, the current TUC general secretary, about the miners' strike of 1926. He has told us about the lessons we can learn from the miners' struggle.
IT WAS the week before Christmas that Socialist Weekly went to see Victor Feather, Commander of the British Empire and General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress.

Victor Feather is in charge of the working class movement's general staff which brought the 'settlement' at Pickstonia, the postal workers 'on the books' and refused even to call a meeting to decide upon union action in support of the miners.

It was the day that the November unemployment figures were announced, and the newspapers were jubilant because they had not risen yet again.

Of course Victor Feather was concerned. His whole imagery is drawn from the thirties. He talks really of 'Britain goes out', and other scenes from a desperate Yorkshire childhood. He sees unemployment as a new war, as a 'denial of citizenship'. And that's why, he says, he<br />

Then, but when you're faced with unemployment you are probably lost. The post of Generalissimo of the trade union movement, it might be expected that you identify your own uphill climb with the general progress of the whole working class. Victor Feather does just that.

Semi-socialist

He is convinced that the battle against the Tories and the society that produces them, is gradually being won. Energetic lobbying from the trade union movement in the shape of Victor Feather is altering the Tories' path.

The Tories are being driven down a semi-socialist path, he claims.

Unemployment is not part of a deliberate political attack on the working class movement, he says. "After all, the Tories want to be re-elected!"

"Ask why the trade union leadership continued to cause unemployment by signing productivity deals. There was no policy for shorter hours and better wages in the 30s. No, those were two of the 5 year plan. It is just as Victor Feather points out. It might be the beginning of a recognition that expansion does not mean more jobs.

VICTOR FEATHER: union leader of the workers' general staff

As Edward Heath is believed to have said: "Victor Feather may</p>
The ‘socialists’ who betrayed
the cause at the
wave of a flag

‘I AM NOT a capitalist soldier; I am a proletarian
revolutionist. I do not belong to the regular army of
the regular class, to the regular army of the
regular army of the people. I refuse to obey any command
to fight from the ruling class . . . I am opposed to every war but
one; I am for that war heart and soul, and part in this war
of the socialist revolution. In that war I am prepared to fight in any
way the ruling class makes necessary.’

These were the words of the great American socialist Eugene Debs. When he spoke them, the workers of Europe had already been involved for over a year in butchering each other for the greater profits of their masters.

And ‘socialists’ leaders who for years had passionately repeated the same exalted sentiments as Debs were busy saying the workers into trenches, supporting ‘their own’ governments, and turning out arguments to prove that victory for the other side would further the cause of socialism.

In 1917 the socialist parties of the world, meeting together in a congress of the Socialist International, had all vowed to oppose any attempt by their ruling classes to involve the workers in a new war, and to use the war, if it came, to prepare the overthrow of capitalism.

But when they were put to the test in 1914, only a small minority stood by their principles. The rest co-operated in the war effort.

The Tzar

The First World War started when Germany invaded Belgium, and her ally Austria invaded Serbia. In France and Britain, the right-wing socialists leaders argued that the Kaiser must be defeated, as France was fighting to defend small national against aggression. In Germany, the right-wing leaders argued that Germany should be supported in order to prevent Russia being shot out of her rightful place in the world and in Europe, France and Britain had fought against Germany in 1914 was right.

Anyway, Germany was also fighting to the end of her existence.

Disaster still looms, but the press has got bored with it

Barricades

But at the same time, the growth of modern industry had produced modern working class, which was fighting for its existence. The war had brought about the development of the working class. As a result, the war brought about the growth of the working class. The working class had gained a new sense of purpose, and for the first time in history, the working class was able to stand alone.

Carve up

But this is not nearly as true, the war is the continuation of politics by other means’ said a great German military strategist. And in the years before the First World War, such views dominated. It was the belief that the war was a struggle for survival, and not a war for survival, for the working class.

Now that the much-publicised Conservation Year has passed away, pollution continues unabated, little-publicised, but not unnoticed.

The local Labour MP remarked that the land, formerly used as a sewage farm, was a danger to children who played on it. The area of a mile square off the Kent coast put out-of-bounds to fishing vessels after trawlermen reared 20-100000 gallons of cyanide and potassium dichromate.

Poisonous

Metal contamination expert Professor D. Bryan-Schmidt announced that lead which Leicester City Council is trying to sell to property developers was so heavily contaminated with toxic zinc waste that it would be better sold to Rio Tinto Zinc.

by DALE FOX

OUR NORMAN

WAGES

FEES

Fees

Surprising, how much it hurts them — to pay out so little!

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GUSTAVE COURBET was an extra-ordinary man, a revolutionary artist whose hatred for the ruling class of the 19th century was only equalled by their fear and hatred of him.

Napoleon III was so incensed by one of his most famous works, "The Stonebreakers," (1850) that he ordered it to be knocked off the walls of the Louvre where it had been hung for over 100 years. Courbet must be kept out of all exhibitions and his name was never to be mentioned in the official Guide. The authorities were quite willing to use this as a means of showing how much they disliked the artist. He was also a revolutionary in the true sense of the word. Born in Ornans in 1818, he was a self-taught painter, but it was not until 1845 that he exhibited his work. His first one-man show was a critical success and earned him the "Lamartine" prize of 200 francs, the highest prize for a work of art in France.

The artist's most famous work is "The Stonebreakers," (1850), which is now in the Louvre. It is a large, realistic painting of three men and a boy working at breaking stones, with a woman and a child watching. The painting is a powerful statement of the artist's beliefs about the role of art in society and his desire to depict ordinary people as they really are. Courbet was later found guilty of sedition and spent two years in prison.

Tyranny

Would you preserve in your own bed room the bloodstains of a murder? Let the body tell (the bronze ornamental pewter decorating the column) be transferred to an admired man, from that place he set up in pains on the walls of the court of the benefactors, I see no harm in that. Those more men captured there cannon by the secete of their lords: the night will remind them of their victories—since they called victorious—especially of their suffering."

The Vendome Column was a symbol of imperial tyranny. Its bronze was needed by the Commune for reconstruction into guns. The artist Courbet had put himself at the service of the Commune. According to: "The Commune of Paris, considering that the imperial columns in the Place Vendome will be demolished."

The Théâtre de la Salle, where the Commune was in session before the beginning, was where the Commune would have been if it had not been arrested. The columns would have been turned into cannon."

The statue of Napoleon, records a woman who has fallen before a column, having brushed the pavement into splinters. The artist Courbet had put himself at the service of the Commune. According to: "The Commune of Paris, considering that the imperial columns in the Place Vendome will be demolished."

Drunkens priests

It wasn't just that Courbet had chosen brawlers as his models; other artists had painted workers—in various guises. But the thrust of the painter's revolutionary conception of the distinguished visitors seemed a threat in the eyes of the public. The faces and statues of the famous and the unknown were blurred with drink or tan and hidden by the cut-tight, heavy drapes that covered the stage."

The van Gogh exhibition at the 1855 International Exhibition was outraged. They were used to the airy and harmonies colours of artists like Ingres, whose swampy paintings were then called "understanding." They were used to the ultimate in drawing-room refinement."

"I am a socialist," Courbet would have told his stonebreakers' friends, and after their first visit, wrote an article in the new periodical." Our main concern, our chief aim, is the development of the undeveloped."

The 1871 Commune, in contrast, had a different aim. It was established to provide work for the unemployed."

"The Café Courbet" was a gathering place for artists and intellectuals."

"It's not just that Courbet had painted workers as his models; other artists had painted workers—in various guises. But the thrust of the painter's revolutionary conception of the distinguished visitors seemed a threat in the eyes of the public. The faces and statues of the famous and the unknown were blurred with drink or tan and hidden by the cut-tight, heavy drapes that covered the stage.

For anyone interested in a completely stupid interpretation of Russian history immediately before the revolution, the film "Nicholas and Alexandra" is a must."

The story traces the life of the last Tsar and his lady from the 17th century until their execution after the 1917 revolution, and tries to convince the audience that there would have been no revolution if the Tsar's son had not been a hemophiliac (he'd have been a rotten little bleeder, anyway) or if Rasputin had been sane.

The real causes of the revolution, the ruthless exploitation of the workers by new-born Russian capitalists and the age old bloody slavery of the peasants, do come out in this film on occasions. There are the death scenes in the St. Petersburg sweat shops and the massacre of peacefylly demonstrating men, women and children on Bloody Sunday in 1905, but we are asked to ignore these incidents and accept that if the Tsar had been a little bit brighter and a little bit more in control there would have been no fight against his corrupt regime.

The film makers make their case for the Russian working class by indicating that the Tsar's only mistake was not to throw enough crumbs to them. That belief that the worker is stupid, precisely and easily controlled is strengthened by the fact that they expect British workers in 1972 to accept that load of rubbish as the truth.

The ridiculous approach to history, which sees events in terms of individuals and not classes, is carried on by the vicious character assassination of the revolutionaries portrayed in the film.

On one level this approach is simply silly, particularly the first scene in which the Bolsheviks are involved when Lenin says something to the effect of "Hello Trotsky, I'm Lenin, this is Stalin, and then goes on to treat all present as mere puppets. Later on the distortion gets more serious and Lenin is portrayed as a power-mad opportunist who never even mentions the working class. This is pro-capitalist propaganda in its crudest form."

Despite all the efforts of the writer, however, there are moments when the truth shines out from the film. There is one scene where Lenin (one of the heroes, of course) is raging that the Bolsheviks are only a handful who must be put down by the troops immediately. The real situation breaks through when a minister replies that there is not one regiment in St Petersburg that can be used against the Bolsheviks because of the popularity of Lenin's policies.

In this film there are other instances, far too numerous to mention, of deliberate distortion falling completely to make the truth about the Russian revolution. But on balance the film achieves its aim of anti-working class propaganda. You have to approach this film in a critical way to avoid being influenced by its anti-soviet message.

This fact was forcefully brought home to me when I saw the film. A woman sitting in the audience was so pleased that her son was being portrayed with such fidelity that she burst into tears and could not keep her emotions under control."

"Nicholas and Alexandra" is well acted, well photographed in beautiful colour, a tedious three hours and utterly tiresome. However, given the present fashion for unhappily end-ings in current cinema, readers may want to see it just for the rare pleasure of a happy ending. The Tsar is shot!

Glyn Carver

Phil Evans

Review of "Nicholas and Alexandra"
When papers come across the truth

MOST NEWSPAPERS responded to the story of widow Ann Hemmingsway’s suicide when she was presented with an £18.50 electricity bill after her husband died. Typically they couldn’t really get to grips with the issue.

It was difficult for the highly-paid left-writer and features staff to understand what a actually going through this lonely, impoverished, miserable world of work and debt.

Oddly it was the Daily Express that published the only attempt at any kind of examination into the questions Mrs Hemmingsway’s bills, and even so Robert Millard’s hastily conceived and written piece was more of a knee-jerk than the in-depth work we needed.

He managed to take up a few other fake demands and was able at least to appreciate ‘that it is the old and sick who are least likely to be able to cope with the threats’.

The Sun and Mail printed empty leaders, rehearsing the facts and stirring them into a maelstrom of irate letters. The Express gave up quarters of a column of Sunday insinuations under the inadequate headline INQUARY INTO FAKE POWER BILL and the Guardian contented itself with a lacquered version of the bare facts in two back-page pars.

Incredibly it didn’t attract any of the usual news editors in Fleet Street to attempt to understand the plight of such a desperately poor woman being denied the support of friends to fund the demand for money. None of them thought for one moment that the kind of life she led before an electricity bill pursuit was hers to eat.

Lower

The degrading Telegraph, in an edition that gave almost a column to King Frederick’s obituary, a large picture of a disco jobby and the fiascos, a quarter of a page to the love-lives of a year and a baronet, used Mrs Hemmingsway’s death as a platform to attack nationalised industries.

This was by way of an editorial two days after the original report of the suicide were published. I often tend to believe that the Telegraph can think no lower, but it seems that if you give them a couple of days a paper can always come up with something to degrade itself further.

The TIMES on Saturday gave a hearty front page report to the suicide and hemmed in the hopes of Gerald Maulling by investors of the Real Estate Company.

A story filed by Peter Strafford in The Scotsman described Maullings being at any time president of the RIBA when he was president of the Institute of British Architects and his newspaper claims that the effect it was his president who may have been responsible for the Real Estate Management Company distributing Mrs Hemmingsway’s death.

In the Telegraph the story was buried on its back page and reduced to a couple of paragraphs. It was even given three paragraphs in the Law Journal. EVEN MAULLING SAYS LAPS. SAY SEARS.

The Daily Mail was too cool to be able to find space for the embarrassing case. There was no trace of the story in the Guardian either and the Weekly News and even brand new heading MAULLING BLASTS THE RIBA AGAIN for not worrying about informing its readers on the accusations of Mr. Strahan of 28. November 1972. The Scotsman, at last, found at least some space for a couple of paragraphs on page four to note that the case was being heard.

The Observer has become an formidable office and dull paper over the past few years, but it still managed to cover it with a few bright spots now and then. Witness its coverage of the last Royal Variety Performance. The Observer had a few bad spots too.

His Rhodesia cartoon last Sunday was superb. A pathetic Lord Pearson, looking like a million dollars, was promised by Smith, who is holding a half of a pound and a rifle in the other. The gun is aimed at a group of armed politicians.

You wanted to ask something?

IS NEWS

THE INTERNATIONAL Socialists’ industrial committee held a meeting of its branches in Birmingham last Saturday with a view to overcoming the problems facing many small branches, and to making the nationalIS more effective in its work.

Against secret regulation, we believe that all branches should be able to agree or reject by mass meetings.

For 100 per cent trade unionism and the defence of shop stewards.

Against anti-trade union laws and any curbs on the right to strike, wherever the strikes are ‘officially offensive’.

Against productivity deals and job cuts, and in particular against union unity and joint shop stewards control of the plant and on a combing basis.

For equal pay and a better deal for young workers.

For a minimum wage of at least £25 a week.

Against unemployment redundancy and lay-offs. We support the demand: Five days’ work or five days’ pay.

For all workers in struggle. We seek to build militant groups within industry.

Against racism and police victimisation of black workers.

Against immigration restriction.

For the right of coloured people and all oppressed groups to organise in their own defence.

For real social and economic equality for women.

Against all nuclear weapons and military alliances such as NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

Against secret diplomacy.

Against all forms of imperialism. We unconditionally give support to and solidarity with all genuine liberation movements.

For the nationalisation of the banks, the underpaid and underemployed, and of all large industries.

We are opposed to all ruling class racist and imperialist organisations. We will work to build a revolutionary workers’ party in Britain, unites the affinity of all revolutionary groups.

The struggle for socialism is the central theme of our time. Workers power and a world based on human solidarity, in the increasing of man’s power over nature, with the abolition of the power of the state, is a global worth fighting for.

It is no use talking about it. More than a century ago Karl Marx wrote: ‘The philosophers have merely interpreted the world. The point is to change it.”

IS will continue to fight this struggle and work for the world and build socialism, join us!

THREE IS BRANCHES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

SCOTLAND

Aberdeen

Birmingham

Cardiff

Edinburgh

Dundee

Glasgow

IN IS NEWS

Sheffield

Isle of Man

Leeds

MILTON

Birmingham

Leicester

Limerick

London

Loughborough

Wolverhampton

London’s north east

London’s south west

Luton

Sheffield

York

NORTH WEST

Blackburn

Bolton

Crewe

Lancaster

Manchester

Merseyside

Cumbria

Portsmouth

South Shields

SOUTH

Adelphi

Birming

Chesterfield

Leeds

Liverpool

Dundee

Edinburgh

Dundee

Glasgow

Grimsby

Halifax

Hull

Lancaster

Leeds

Leicester

Liverpool

Manchester

Newcastle

Nottingham

Oxford

Portsmouth

Shrewsbury

Swindon

Wolverhampton

YO rehearsal

York

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MEETINGS

CRISIS IN Ireland. Claire na hEireann, 127 St. Vincent St., Glasgow, 24th, 9am.

LAUNCH MEETING. The UK is a Community of Nation states. A unique opportunity to campaign for Britain to remain in Europe. Tickets from 15 members, or write to LEBES DAY SCHOOL on the Fair Play for Life (Scotland) campaign.

LEAS GREEN Welcome to the British Steel Strike Action Committee. Action organised by Somerville, 100 Tuam Street, 26th, 7pm.

NOTTINGHAM 1 public meeting: Albert Hall, Nottingham, 23rd, 21st at 9pm. Paul Foot.

LAMBERT 1 public meeting: The Miners’ Gala, 18th, 6.30pm. Ely Place, London, W1.

PORTSMOUTH 1 public meeting: The Miners’ Gala, 18th, 6.30pm. Ely Place, London, W1.

TRACELANDS MEETING. Two general meetings to discuss the prospects of organising a national meeting. Tickets from 15 members. 26th, 7pm, and 27th, 7pm. Venue to be announced.

EAST LONDON 1 public meeting: Support the掠夺ive campaign. Westminster Hall, 27th, 7pm.

EASY LONDON 1 public meeting: Miss C. Conley, president of CADA, on Support for the Library Workers strike, 27th, 7pm.

IN ALL MEMBERS invited to address a school to discuss the campaign on 26th, 7pm at East Ham College, same time as the meeting.

Women in Action

Conference of tenants, landlords, and Housing Associations.

The Hyatt Regency on 26th February 8.30pm.

WOMEN IN ACTION


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WOMEN IN ACTION

Conf
Tough time in student fight

STUDENT Reporter
TORY-led. It is 60 minutes, over with Margaret Thatcher has postponed her plans for shackling student unions out of a sense of what must be a desperate attempt to cool off student militancy. But the government has not in reality declared a hostage. They are talking of a ‘regal’ for students unions outside any measure which would be as much as any other to enforce state control over union funds and to prevent students from fighting in an organised way against the Tory campaign of education. At this stage it is crucial that the determination shown in the massive one-
day protest strike by students in December is kept up and intensified. This is an enemy that we have to keep pinning to the ground. If the government and the chief danger is that they will sell out in the summer when the rank and file is not able to organise properly.

The Liaison Committee for the Defence of Student Unions is important. At a national conference last Saturday it was decided to maintain a serious challenge to the leadership at the NUS emergency conference on 29 January. Among other things it was felt that a campaign should be made to the NUS over student political payments and that the supporting organisations of the committee should vote students union money to the miners’ strike.

All this means that the struggle is long and drawn out battle during the coming year of government and against the NUS leadership.

The demonstration called by the NUS for 22 January must be a major response of the government’s plans and a warning to the NUS leadership that it must wholeheartedly resist them.

United fight at Parsons

Rents LABOUR COUNCIL RESISTANCE TO

by Hugh Kerr

HARLOW COUNCIL in Essex is the first Labour council to vote to overturn the DTO’s vicious ‘Political Rents’ plan into effect. It is a surprising development, for the Labour group has supported the struggles of tenants and council workers in the past. It is a warning to all tenants not to put any faith in the noise other Labour councils are still making.

Two and a half years ago the council froze the rents of its 1200 tenants in sympathy with 18,000 Development Corporation tenants—not under its control—who were on partial rent strike.

But last year a local TORY complained to the District Auditor about the rent freeze saying: ‘That shouldn’t be happening’. The Auditor held a public inquiry. He decided not to make the councilors pay the amount that would have been raised by the increase, but he warned them not to repeat their rent-freeze.

The result was that when the ‘Fair Rent Bill’ was published and tenants began to organise against it the councilors and some Labour Party members raised the scheme of the Auditor.

When the local Engineering Union branch sent a resolution to the Labour Party demanding that the council refuse to implement the NUS New Plan, a Labour MP and Tipton supporter, amended it to read that the council should ‘oppose the bill after careful study of the implications’. In other words, he got the councilors on the hook.

HECKLED

When the local council discussed the Tory rent measures last week it was no surprise when they voted to increase average £5 a week, some as high as £8. The meeting was filled with a demonstration of 30 tenants organized by the local International Socialists and the Communist Party, who forced their way into the meeting and heckled.

The councillors’ excuses were pathetic. ‘We can implement more humanely than the Tories’, said one. ‘If we don’t nobody else will.’

Thirteen Labour councilors had the guts to vote against the rates, and one resigned over the decision. Ten councillors decided to organise to make sure that the rates bill is unimplemented.

The whole incident reveals deeply how incapable Labour councillors are of fighting to defend working-class interests and how wrong people are who pretend that socialism is being popularized by working class Labour parties.

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 Builders fight for closed shop site

by Gerry Kelly

Sackings start strike

SOUTHERN-80 carpenters at the Higgs and Higgs Hospital building site began a strike last Friday after three men were sacked for ‘bad workmanship’ and ‘not being conducive with a happy site’. This was the management’s second attempt to get rid of the men. Last November they tried to sack them for being ‘influential characters’, but were defeated by a strike.

NOTICES

ALL 15 branch place notice, changes in address will be published in the next issue. The new address is 115 Cato Street London SE1 2TE. All branch reports will be published in the next issue. The new address is 115 Cato Street London SE1 2TE.
Growing discontent among rank and file

POWERS BAN IS A GESTURE

THE POWER WORKERS’ leaders threatened an overtime ban last week as a gesture towards the growing discontent among the union rank and file at the slow progress of pay negotiations. The ban is to start on Saturday 29 January.

Nationally the power workers are in much the same position as the miners. The labour force has fallen by one-third in the last four years, while productivity has shot up. Wages are rising slower than the cost-of-living.

Negotiation action now, with the miners on strike, could ensure victory both for the power men’s 12 per cent claim and for the miners, but the official call for an overtime ban is not the sort of militant action that can succeed on its own.

Average overtime in the power industry is only 75 minutes a week, so the ban will take a long time to have any impact.

No wonder that, as one leading militant told Socialist Worker: “There is quite a feeling among the rank and file in the way at which the unions have been hiding their time and not pushing the claim.”

This feeling has to be translated into action. The demand must grow from the local shop floor until national action is agreed. This thought must be given to effective unofficial militant action—especially a work-to-rule.

The power men could help their own claim and give the miners backing by refusing to repair broken down coal plants, by stopping the movement of coal within the power industry, and by short stoppages in power stations in support of the miners.

SOUTHWALES

Miners’ picketing has been very successful. Dockers have refused to unload coal from two coalships and railway workers are respecting picket lines. Bill Thomas, the NUM area agent, said NUM help had already brought four open coal washers to a standstill.

As the strike began, the NUM believed that under which miners’ work would be graphically illustrated on four boards. By Tuesday, at least 120 miners’ safety workers, some of them taking orders, were on the picket lines.

The NUM has been very successful in stopping coal being shifted, but if the miners stop for more than 200 pickets will move into action.

UNION members have been given the power to stop any movement of coal. But there were rough scenes at Grimesthorpe last Wednesday when scabs lorry drivers, paid £50 per week, tried to drive straight on to picket lines. One miner ended up in hospital with both legs broken. The miners nevertheless succeeded in stopping coal going out, except to hospitals, pawnbrokers and schools.

There was success too at Rawmarsh, where workers at the colliery agreed to refuse to work until the miners had been brought into the picketing. The NUM has been very successful in stopping coal being shifted, but if the miners stop for more than 200 pickets will move into action.

Kent

The NUM leadership at Kent coalfield is being held up by the miners’ concern. It is understood that the miners are not prepared to strike as long as the NUM leadership is not prepared to face the miners with a clear position.

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YORKSHIRE

Union members have been given the power to stop any movement of coal. But there were rough scenes at Grimesthorpe last Wednesday when scabs lorry drivers, paid £50 per week, tried to drive straight on to picket lines. One miner ended up in hospital with both legs broken. The miners nevertheless succeeded in stopping coal from anywhere to anywhere, and the key Thorton branch of the union has called for industrial action on their own pay claim if there is no reasonable offer by 21 January.

Oil tanker drivers have pledged not to supply fuel to stations in Fife with oil if there is an attempt to switch fuel, and the NUM have backed this up with a similar pledge.

The NUM has been very successful in stopping coal being shifted, but if the miners stop for more than 200 pickets will move into action.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

A hundred per cent support for the strike continues, and so does picketing. At Gedling Colliery, which has the problem of a highly dispersed labour force, a number of the NUM strike committee reports that support for the strike is beyond all expectations, with men on the picket line he had never thought he would see there.

At Harworth pit, which is threatened with closure, the men have refused to allow NUM men down to light spontaneous fires. The local TAGUW and AELF have pledged full support, as have GMBWU workers at the Fosse pit, but employers continue to try and move fuel. At Mansfield a lorry marked ‘hospital delivery’ which took coal from a yard went to a Coal Board building.

WARWICKSHIRE

The men are in good spirits after the first week on picket. Picketing in the Midlands has been 99 per cent successful in stopping traffic.

Most of the confidence of the workers stems from the fact that they have refused to continue to maintain sophisticated equipment. One local miner insisted that if mechanisation was not used in a fortnight it would be useless.

How to get to the IS Industrial Conference 30 January

MANCHESTER TOWN CENTRE

HOLDWORTH ROAD

Full details page 10

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