Big threat to steel jobs

by Rob Clay

Over the past three weeks, ISC has issued a series of statements saying that a secret forward planning document, leaked from inside the corporation and detailing the planned jobs butchery, is a forgery. ISC's attempt to wipe out an internal working document from one of its own most high-powered committees as a fake follows publication of a detailed analysis of its implications in the current issue of the rank and file newsletter the Steelworker. The Steelworker disclosed that over the next eight years ISC wants to slash steel job losses to the tune of 100,000, from 200,000 to 100,000. The document obtained by the paper includes a virtual annihilation of the Scottish and Welsh steel industries and the application of this target to the rest of the United Kingdom. Every single plant in Scotland, with the exception of R Ravenscraig and Innerglen, is to be closed. In North Wales most of Shotton and Brymbo is to go. In South Wales not a single one of the many plants in South East Wales. Everywhere but the cold mills is up for the chop. As in Wales, in all regions of the United Kingdom, the whole of Steel Penz and Tofzer will be axed except for the 12-inch bar mill. On Teesside, Hartlepoo is to be demolished along with massive reductions in plant throughout the whole region. And in Corby, North Humber—a town almost totally dependent for employment on steel—10,000 redundancies are envisaged. The forward planning document 'The Pattern of Development at each works', which ISC published and analysed is not the final word from the ISC on the forthcoming job butchery. The study is only one of several forward planning studies carried out by the ISC Economic and Future Planning Committee, 'Low Cost', which ISC detailed and analysed, is based on a 1980 UK steel output of 35 million tons. This is the most optimistic estimate and other internal ISC planning documents have been drawn up on the basis of much lower levels. The Tory government and the other Common Market governments which are wary of ISC's size would prefer a capacity much closer to the 1972 level. Each step nearer to this figure will increase still more redundancies and closures.

Essential

The reason for the high-powered ISC operations to demolish the Steelworker's document is simple. ISC's stated policy is to operate closures and redundancies on a plant-by-plant basis. The purpose is to float the industry-wide job cuts in opposition to the growing redundancy programme. Secretary of State only announced the success of this huge exercise in deceit.

Between March of 1971 and March this year, 22,700 jobs were axed in the steel industry, 'The Pattern of Development at each works' document first drawn up late in 1970 foresees the closures for the next period. Every single one of the closures it predicts was carried out or is on schedule—a very accurate 'forecast'. The manipulation of the competition and major problems in industry, like the drive to annualize, have been necessitated in the run-up to renewal of a steel treaty. The Tory government is preparing the way. Steel is a large part. Each week the price of the seven key steel producers in England increases in line with the steel price. ISC is squabbling over the range of the cut. The East Moors and Penydarren teams are out to make massive reductions in the workforce and the number of operating plants.

Redouble

Rank and file resistance is growing in the face of weak trade union leadership. But the rank and file stewards' committee will have to redouble their efforts to break down the craft barriers between workers and the lack of union democracy that has prevented a united struggle for our jobs. All redundancies should be opposed, the tactics of overtime ban, sympathy strikes and factory occupations to prevent closures should be adopted. The massive reorganization of previous owners (250 million last year) should be stopped as the policy of supplying private industry with steel at unconscionable prices. All steel workers should join a national steel workers' union and right from the beginning in the short term there are no stop-gap solutions. The policy of building a new and independent British steel industry, whether it is run to meet the grab bag of priorities of private or state-owned enterprises, or planned to meet the needs of working people.}

BNZANZA

From these profits, a larger proportion than ever before has gone straight into the pockets of shareholders. The prospect of a 'freeze' on dividends has stumped a number of companies into giving dividends to shareholders. Lord Beeching, chairman of Redland, told his shareholders on 28 September that they were getting back home to the value of one share for every, just in case the government decided to put a freeze on dividends too.

But shareholders in Redland, or, for that matter, at British Steel or any other firm, are not allowed to lose money. The real bonanza has been in property. On 4 October the Guardian reported that 'at least 11 new millionaires' had been created 'a direct result of the boom in the property market. The boom is expected to last to back page
**WORLD NEWS**

**Electoral campaign begins amid bribery accusations**

The West German parliamentary elections, the Bundestag, have been dissolved before the end of its term and on 19 November a general election will decide the end-of-the-fight campaign for votes.

The SPD (Social Democrats) and the CSU (Christian Social Union) are still at the top of the leaders' list, according to the latest opinion polls. However, there is a sense of crisis over the government's foreign policy after its farm has got into debt. The Prime Minister will be questioned in the Bundestag about this.

One of the main points of SPD elections is to be the government's foreign policy and this has been a problem for the government. While the treaties have increased, the government's position on these issues has not been clear.

Sudetenland: Right to vote in referendum?

The referendum in the Sudetenland has been a contentious issue. The government has been criticized for its handling of the situation.

**Ceylon: Big protests against repression**

by Edward Crawford

In Sri Lanka (Ceylon), the government is faced with more anti-repression protests in the last few weeks. Two demonstrations, both packed out, at the university and at Cinnamon Town, have provoked a response from the defence minister, who has threatened to use force if necessary.

Two documents now circulating give details of a confidential report on the women's prison and descriptions of the torture they have undergone.

Kohinoor Wijewardena, who has accused the government of using women as a weapon for political aims, has been arrested.

Other news is ambiguous. In the third week of September there was a report in the Ceylon Times that a body of armed rebels had killed two soldiers in the eastern part of the island. The report was denied by the government.

In Britain, there will be a public meeting of the Labour Party at the Royal Albert Hall in London on 11 and 12 November. The meeting is being organized by the Ceylon Solidarity Committee, which is supported by the International Solidarity Committee.

Sudetenland: Right to vote in referendum?

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**Seaport**

The right-wing press has been using the Seaport as a pretext to seek action against the government. Several demonstrations against the police have taken place.

In fact, political repression has been on the increase in recent weeks. The government has been accused of using force against protesters who have demonstrated against the police.

If the foreign workers can be made a political issue, there is a good chance that the government will be forced to make some concessions.

**Radical**

Yet the SPD would really prefer to be more radical. The SPD would like to see more public action, the steady build-up of the police apparatus and the leadership of the labour movement. The opportunity for the SPD to seize the day is clear.

All this cannot be used as an argument for the SPD to make a political move. The SPD is not ready for a change and this is why we are voting for the SPD.

The SPD's main goal is to support the trade unions and the Social Democratic Party, but this is not the same as supporting the government.

The strike of workers in South Vietnam is already beginning to hit. Within days workers have been on strike in several daily newspapers. Several papers have been confiscated by a Saigon military court in wars.

The editor of one paper has been given a suspended sentence of two years jail and fined $1500. Several members of the trade union delegation or members of the newspaper have been given similar sentences. Several hundred young people demonstrated in solidarity at the streets of Saigon.

**BRIEFING**

**Three men arrested by the Israelis**

In Sudan, three men were arrested by the Israeli authorities. They were accused of putting up a poster warning the government of the situation in the Sudan. They were to be tried in the International Court of Justice.

**NEW press law in South Vietnam**

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**BLACK CHILDREN are now to be allowed to vote in the elections. Several hundred young people demonstrated in solidarity at the streets of Madras.**

**A press conference at the end of the second day of the French revolution, Lague Lyonnais announced that it would not be possible to call for a strike on the eve of the coming elections, probably in January, in the face of the pressure of the unions and the groups, the Ligue Communiste International.**

**One of the main reasons is the government's action against Palestine. The government has been accused of being pro-Israeli and pro-American.**
Andy capped

YOU'Ve think from reading the press last week that Michael Foot's election to the Labour Party executive had brought the notion testing to the edge of the Red Revolution--a not inappropriate term, as most of the press coverage of the conference seemed to have been written through a Bah-Lassian prism. Foot's sweeping victory was evidence, it seemed, of the growing leftwards drift of the party and the grip of the unions.

Strange then that block votes--with one exception--helped elect a staunch pillar of the extreme right wing of the party, none other than our old friend Alderman Andrew Cunningham, North East regional boss of the General and Municipal Workers Union.

Alderman Cunningham was named in the Poulson bankruptcy case. He enjoyed a fine holiday in the sunny police state of Portugal and his wife was employed briefly by Poulson. There have been rumblings of discontent among trade unionists in the North East over Cunningham's connection with Poulson, together with a chain of part-time jobs, including the police authority and the airport authority, which they feel, neutrally compromise his role as an independent union trade negotiator.

But up went the card votes for Andy at Blackpool last week to keep him on the executive. Among the block votes was that of the Transport Workers, led by that left-wing dragon Jack Jones. The only major union among the giants that couldn't stomach supporting Cunningham this year was the Engineers.

THE Chinese government pulled out all the stops on Sunday to greet a visiting group of Westerners. A vast bouquet was laid on by the People's

English hotels are bursting at the seams, prepare to be disillusioned in June, only 59 per cent of bedspace was occupied according to figures from the English Tourist Board. In July the figures went up to 65 per cent. The London average was much higher, up to 75 per cent in July, Greater London had an extra 4500 rooms this year thanks to the building bonanza. Only two government statements would suggest that the thousands of empty rooms up and down the country could be used to provide rooms for families. It isn't possible--the government would have to subsidise the hotel that is totally contrary to their principles.

MAKE LOVE, not war, the famous slogan of the American peace movement, understandably was never popular among service chiefs but its brand application among the ranks is now viewed with as much concern as the contracts of $500 million to build new Libyan hospitals. The story is that the government is considering the possibility of sending a new force to the Middle East.

Daily, China's main newspaper, who were visiting revolutionaries who will return home to write glowing accounts of the wonders of Mao's China! Lord Thomson of Fleet and seven other hacks from Times Newspapers.

Bed sores

The Tories are so concerned about the political state of the country's finances why are they throwing away millions to help build new hotels? It's a purely rhetorical question: don't bother to write in.

The government's grant scheme for new hotels runs out next March and there has been a flood of applications from building contractors not to miss out on the free sweets from Ted 'Stand on your own feet' Heath.

Since the scheme started three years ago (that's right, under the Labour government) a total of 97 million has been paid out to 840 applicants, including £2 million to date in the current financial year. The scheme applies to new hotels of 10 or more bedrooms or 25 bedrooms in the Greater London area. By 20 September, the largest number of grant applications (323) came from the Greater London area, with a total of £22.57 million applied for.

If you imagine from all this that

Socialist Worker

Labour lets of steam

MANY left-wing supporters of the Labour Party are arguing that Blackpool 1972, as new NEC member Joan Maynard put it, represents a 'move to the left not only in this party but in the Labour movement as a whole. It is a move towards socialist policies.'

On the face of it there is some justification for this claim. For example, conference called for 'public ownership of the commanding heights of the economy' (though with minimum compensation) and also for nationalisation of major monopolies, building industry and finance houses and threw in the implementation of Clause 4 in full for good measure. If taken seriously these are very drastic plans. But how seriously will they be taken?

One important pointer was the NEC's attitude to this bloc-nationalisation resolution. They put up a well known left wing NIP, Ian Mikardo, to say that they 'liked the resolution very much' but they couldn't guarantee to support public ownership of the building industry. In other words they didn't mind the delegates leaving off a little steam provided that the party leadership was committed to anything too clear and specific.

True, the NEC was beaten on a card vote on this issue but it is safe to predict that this defeat will not worry Harold Wilson too much and that the resolution will join the many other socialist resolutions left on the table and left with no effect at all on the actions of Labour governments.

Left-wing face

It is certainly the case that the easy passage of such a resolution is likely to encourage the move to greater political consciousness by workers. Unfortunately it does not indicate any change in the nature of the Labour Party. When the party starts to develop its own programme of action and to develop its own political consciousness, its leaders find it expedient to try to show their best 'left wing' faces, their aim is to try to head off the development of a real Left within the Labour Party.

Barley two and a half years ago many of those who decorated the platform at Blackpool were ministers in a government that was promoting just such policies. They hope to utilise this present discontent to get back into office and one in office as all previous experience shows, they will go back to their old ways.

Some sincere but misguided people see the main task for socialists as pushing left-wing resolutions that, they hope, will commit a future Labour government to socialist policies. It is a path away from Labour. The real job of socialists is to participate in and try to give leadership to all the actual struggles that workers are engaged in on wages and every other field where direct action is possible and to build a genuine socialist organisation--that means a revolutionary socialist organisation.

We cannot ignore the Labour Party of course. It has to be discredited in the eyes of the working class. Its 'socialist' pretensions have to be ruthlessly exposed.

So, too, do its pretensions to be the party of social reform. Showing the real record of Labour in power is part of this process. Supposing the return of another Labour government is equally important. In the last resort the test of all arguments is practice. By their deeds shall ye know them, and it is completely condemned that a future Labour government will expose the futility of mere resolution mongering by carrying on where Ted Heath leaves off.

Better means worse

ONCE upon a time the railway track mileage in this country was 26,000 miles. Come nationalisation and the railways were to become 'a public service'. Vast sums of money were paid to the former shareholders of the half bankrupt railway companies. Not surprisingly British Rail never recovered from this staggering burden.

Then a Tory government brought in a very highly paid 'management expert', Mr. Beeching, to 'make the railways pay'. His method was to cut services. The track mileage, after Beeching's surgery, was reduced to 11,500 miles.

Naturally this meant less passengers and service as well as less railwaymen and British Rail stagnated into fresh difficulties. Now there are plans for still further cuts.
China: check the record not the rhetoric

The recent debate over China has raised the question of whether the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is acting in the best interests of its own credibility. The ICRC has consistently criticized the Chinese government's human rights record, but it has also been criticized for its concessions to Chinese demands for greater control over its foreign policy, which some observers believe may have compromised its independence.

This is the rhetoric of the Chinese government, which frequently criticizes the ICRC for its interventions in the affairs of other countries. But the ICRC is an international institution established to protect the rights of civilians and prisoners of war, and its decisions should not be influenced by the political pressures of any government.

The ICRC has a responsibility to uphold the principles of neutrality and impartiality, and to provide assistance to those in need of protection. This includes protecting civilians and prisoners of war from violence and abuse, regardless of the actions of the government of the country in which they are located.

In conclusion, the ICRC must remain independent and neutral in its work, and not allow political pressures to influence its decisions. The Chinese government should also be held accountable for any violations of international law, and the ICRC should continue to monitor and report on the human rights situation in China.

Opponent of Taiwan terror faces 32 years in US jail

Tzu-Tsai Cheng awaits trial in this country on an extradition order from the US. His 'crime' was to have been executive secretary of the World United Front for Independence, an organisation fighting the Chiang Kai-shek regime in Taiwan.

At a demonstration organised by WUFI in New York, to protest at the chidn Chengkoung, son of Chiang Kai-shek and Vice Minister of the regime to proclaim lands as 'Chinese territory,' Cheng was arrested. He had gone to help his brother-in-law Peter Huang, who had just faced a shot at Chiang Kai-shek's secret police.

Cheng has now been refused to a political prisoner in the hands of the US. As a refugee from Taiwan, the US government demanded his extradition from Sweden even though it was not a year after he was granted political asylum in Sweden last year.

The Swedish government has not新中国和台湾的关系。Why did they return? What will they return to? What is the situation in China today? These are all important questions that the Swedish government should answer before making any decision about the extradition of Mr. Cheng.

In conclusion, the Swedish government should consider the human rights situation in China and the political implications of extraditing Mr. Cheng. The extradition would further endanger a China-US relationship that has already been strained by the recent dispute over the missile crisis in the Taiwan Strait.

Tzu-Tsai Cheng is a peaceful opposition leader who is being unfairly persecuted by the Chinese government. He should be allowed to return to Sweden and continue his work for democracy in China.

LETTERS

Sectarian violence in Six Counties: redressing the balance...

MY REPORTS of events in Northern Ireland were said to be partly from the point of view of Catholic sectarianism. I am happy to be accused of sectarianism for the benefit of the Provisional IRA, according to some Walbrookites readers last week.

I would ask the US to retract my articles for they appear to have overlooked the continual criticisms I have made of the Provisional IRA's lack of working-class politics, which is responsible for their apparent sectarian actions. I have criticised the increasing number of Protestant sectarian actions in a similar manner. It is not the understanding of the Provisional IRA's actions that lie behind them and this is what I have attempted to do.

The reason I have concentrated in more detail on Catholic sectarianism in the British press has almost totally ignored this phenomenon, implying that all the violence comes from one side only. It has been necessary to emphasise the Protestant ones.

But in doing so I have been at pains not to diminish the importance of sectarianism against another. Unlike the uttering of the attack on me. I do not blame the Provisional IRA for sectarianism, I blame the British state for sectarianism in Northern Ireland.

The IRA is not a Direct consequence of the Provo campaign, no matter what the official IRA may say. The UDA and the PIRA are the inevitable products of the disintegration of Unionism as a political and economic force, in the absence of a revolutionary socialist party.

The UDA have unified the Protestant and Catholic working class in common struggle against capitalism and imperialism, overcoming the Loyalist workers' belief that the British state is their saviour. The British trade and the Catholic workers' belief that their future lies with simply removing the British army.

There are currently being sectarian actions from members of supporters of the Provisional IRA, but these do not amount to the total content of their campaign, unless one argues, as the Walbrookites readers appear to do, that sectarianism is nothing but sectarianism in the first place.

Although the Loyalist workers may be subjectively pro-imperialist, their objective interest is not and never can be on the side of the British state. The Provisional IRA can be seen as a form of revolution not in the sense of a reworking of social relations, but in the sense of developing the capacity for mass self-organisation.

However, the Provisional IRA is not a revolutionary force, it is a gang of mercenaries who have been given a new lease of life by the British state in order to try to solve its own problems.

Dear Letters to Socialist Worker:

While reading your paper, I want to add some comments on two articles in the paper.

The first article is about the situation in Six Counties, and it talks about the sectarian violence in the area.

The second article is about the sectarianism in Northern Ireland, and it criticizes the Provisional IRA for its sectarian actions.

I agree with the first article in principle, but I think the second article is based on a misunderstanding of the Provisional IRA's role. The Provisional IRA is not a revolutionary force, but a gang of mercenaries who have been given a new lease of life by the British state.

In conclusion, the Provisional IRA is not a revolutionary force, and its actions should be condemned. The Loyalist workers may be subjectively pro-imperialist, but their objective interest is not and never can be on the side of the British state. The Provisional IRA can be seen as a form of revolution, not in the sense of a reworking of social relations, but in the sense of developing the capacity for mass self-organisation.

We are laughing at the nastiest jokes.

SUSAN BARNETT is right to remind us of the reality of violence in Bosnia (see her review, The Death of Us All, 30 September). Not just comedians, but the whole of humanity, is being assaulted by violence.

Recently, I was at a comedy night in London, and the audience were laughing at jokes about the war in Bosnia. However, I noticed that the audience seemed to be laughing more at the nastiest jokes about the war, such as those about the mass killings and atrocities.

I think the audience were laughing because they wanted to escape from the reality of the war. It is a form of denial, and it may be understandable, but it is also dangerous.

In conclusion, I think that comedians and audiences should be aware of the reality of violence in Bosnia, and that they should not laugh at nastiest jokes about the war.

Dear Letters to Socialist Worker:

I want to add some comments on the article in your paper about the situation in Six Counties.

The article talks about the sectarian violence in the area, and it criticizes the Provisional IRA for its sectarian actions.

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HEATH’S PAY FUEL MUST BE SMASHED

BADLY BRUISED by its confrontation with such key groups of workers as the miners and the dockers, the Tory government has turned to ‘prices and incomes policy’—the tired old weapon used by the Wilson government.

If the unions will accept that wage increases should be restricted to not more than £2 a week in the next year then the government has offered in exchange to maintain price rises at their present level. It has called for a ‘threshold’ agreements that would give 20p more for each percentage increase in the cost of living above 6 per cent.

The plan has been presented by the Tory press as ‘aid to the lower paid’. Vic Feather agreed, saying that the scheme contained a ‘good deal of fairness’. And there is no doubt that the problem of the lower paid is serious. Three million men and four million women are paid less than £30 a week before stoppages. But they will be helped by Heath’s package deal.

First, workers are not promised a £2 wage rise. Instead they are promised a £2 wage rise. They are promised to be restricted to £24 a week for 60 per cent of their pay. If the government workers manage to keep their pay within this limit then they will not be subjected to any additional deduction.

But, for argument’s sake, assume that the government workers do. Then the lower-paid workers get a rise of £2 a week. Because of the ‘poverty trap’ the advent of a £2 a week will be worse off straight away, without taking into account future price rises. The reason is that they will lose many means-tested benefits.

EQUAL PAY FREEZE

A report in the latest issue of the Political Quarterly shows that a man with four children earning £22 a week now has a net income of £26.39. If he is paid £24 a week, his net disposable income will fall to £33.75. He will be worse off £7.36 a week. This is because he will have to pay his wife more for the same amount of work. The government will then have to give him a £2.37 benefit and make him eligible for income tax.

The High Tory weekly, The Economist, was not slow to show that Heath’s scheme would undermine still further the efforts of working women to achieve equal pay. The freeze freezes further progress towards equal pay for women and women would have to work half as long again in the coming year, since by law their wages are to be brought up to 90 per cent of men’s rates by the end of 1973.

The miners’ strike raised the ‘unofficial’ wages norm.

A dividend freeze for a wage freeze is not a bargain at all. Wages are the payment of things to get for the sale of their labour-power but dividends are not the payment of things to get for their ownership of capital. Dividends are only part of the payment to the shareholder. If a worker gets a rise of £2 a week instead of £3, the extra £1 is not saved for him to collect later. It is lost forever.

It is different for a shareholder. If he gets a dividend of £2 from a profit of £5, the remaining £3 is probably transferred to investment and will come back to him as a capital gain a few years later. A dividend freeze would not suppress capital gains but would increase them.

TAX FIDDLES

And the rich have other ways of getting around the £2 limit. If they are directors of big companies they will get fatter expense accounts, own bigger company cars, have trust funds, golden handshake taxes and tax fiddles.

Profit is the driving force of capitalist growth. The higher the rate of growth, the higher profit in proportion. Productivity of labour in July was 8½ per cent higher than a year ago. Heath forecasts a rise in output of 5 per cent in the next year and, with prices increasing by another 5 per cent, profits are bound to soar from a rate of increase of 9 per cent.

Price control is a central feature of Heath’s package. It is as phoney as the real. Wages are negotiated and wage standards apply to a multitude of workers. But prices are not negotiated.

Three million price changes are made each year. It is unlikely that the government could keep track of them all. And there are many ways to cover up price increases. As The Economist puts it: ‘Because consumer goods are not homogeneous [one distinct item], it is always going to be possible to argue that an apparent price rise is due to an improvement in quality, a change in technology or simply the cost of restyling.’

And the government itself is pushing prices up. Value Added Tax comes in next February and will be levied at 10 per cent on the price of most goods. The government expects to receive an extra £160 million a year from VAT and most of it will be paid by the consumer. Millions of tenants are already having their incomes slashed by the Rent Acts and joining the Common Market will push prices up even more.

SOCIALISTS in the trade unions should develop a well-argued offensive to the Tory thumbs.

1 Even if the TUC or separate unions agree to some form of amended pay-price deal, the rank and file must make sure that the union leaders cannot deliver the goods for the Tories. There are one million local government workers and a claim for £4.62 a week. 200,000 road workers have a claim for £4.80. 280,000 miners are looking for £4.50 to £7.

more. 320,000 agricultural workers are seeking £8.80 and 380,000 teachers have a claim for £5 to £6 a week. If any of these claims breaks through the £2 norm, then Heath’s policy will be in a complete shambles.

2 Massive propaganda is needed to expose the phoney nature of the Tory policy. Millions of trade unionists are being caught by its appeal to ‘fairness’.

3 The struggle against the Tory scheme must be independent of the union bureaucracy. The Labour leaders haven’t won the deal with open arms. They would like to revise it and have prepared their own strike scheme. It is the principle they accept the need for incomes policy if the price of any deal is to survive. The argument with Heath is not over principles but over how much say the union leaders will have in running the policy.

4 The fight against incomes policy demands a struggle independent of the collaboration policies of the TUC and the trade union leaders.

5 We must not leave it to the Tories to talk about the ‘poverty trap’. The plight of the lower paid and the pensioners while trade unionists benefit from their own sectional interests. A campaign for the £2 minimum wage, equal pay for women and a £10 pension must be at the centre of our agitation. And we should organise to use our industrial power through demonstrations and strikes to achieve these demands.

THE UNEQUAL

By talking in terms of the ‘national interest’, the ruling class is attempting to divert attention from the crucial distribution of income and wealth between the classes.

One reason why many workers are prepared to accept price control is because the inequalities of wealth are either taken for granted or not really argued. The low-paid worker meets the printer or docker getting £35 a week and does not see the man who gets £50 a week for doing nothing.

One reason why the meaning of inequality with a wealthy few and figures that over they are grasped, no worker about hammering the employers for every penny.

The only workers who have any real experience of capitalism’s other class but practical experience of that workers that the ‘different parts of the economy are interwoven’. It is impossible to concentrate on wages alone without paying attention to employment policies, government and monopolies price policies and indirect taxes. The activities and priorities of the state–market economy are to be face up to, not avoided. Rank and file agitation in a time stress that these problems have alternative, socialist solutions.

Socialists and trade unionists must oppose completely any incomes policy under capitalism, no matter how ‘fair’ it is dressed up to look. It serves only to increase the burden of the worker to the interests of a system which they have no control over.

We have to counter to capitalist exploitation the idea of a socialist society where the means of production will be the property of all working people. Only when those who produce the wealth can trust the government to talk about a truly equitable incomes policy.
Vicious Animal! Scream a recent Daily Mail headline, dutifully echoing the opinion of a named judge who had sentenced a Hull docker for defending a picket line against the police. The police, it seems, had not forgotten how nearly two years ago one of their number, interviewed on the David Frost TV Show during the Winter of Discontent, brazenly boasted of their alleged "undemocratic" action. In the eyes of many of the mass media, we seem to be grateful for havens in which we can "call them the press", and a TV system untrammeled by state control. As the Duke of Edinburgh once put it: "A genuine democracy can only flourish if it is exposed to the scrutiny of a free and unfettered press."

It is doubtful whether the noble duke has ever had an article turned down or censored by any newspaper. But when 29000 Guardian readers, recently treated to a piece by Humphrey Berkeley, wrote to him to reply to scurrilous attacks on the person of the guard, he was told sharply that their views had already been represented in print. In September, Sir Richard Fraser, former head of the Independent Television Authority, defended the introduction of commercial television by arguing that "the old system of monopoly in Britain was carried away by a wave of hyperbolic and unsubstantiated feeling."

The "democratic thought and feeling" were no doubt virtuous attributes, coming as they did from such stately defenders as Mr. Harold Wilson and Mr. Beresford, whose TV companies made millions of pounds profit from their work.

Millions

The mass media reflect the way in which, under capitalism, today's giants have concentrated within their hands nearly all the wealth and power of society. Nine out of ten national and local newspapers are owned by seven powerful combinations, which, for all practical purposes, control the mass media, made millions last year.

Associated Newspapers (Daily Mail, Sunday Express) made £7 million before tax, Rupert Murdoch's News International (The Sun, News of the World) made £6 million, the Thomson Organisation (The Times, Sunday Times) made £9.5 million. These profits don't merely own the press, but have subsidiaries in add-on fields such as television, publishing, transport, publishing, and bank- ing and merchant banking.

Sword of Propaganda

The result is the same. The political and social effects of the mass media are in no sense political activities, yet they clearly they are a paragon of anti-communist violence.

In a TV show such as Dixon of Dock Green, the police are portrayed by the common man, a picture that hardly squares with their real role as the armed defenders of capitalist property. In a show such as The Persuaders, the image projected by Curtis Hume was one of charming, amiable chaps, always ready to help anyone in distress, especially� the good. This image conceals the fact that such men count only the top rungs by class exploitation and cheating their fellow men.

To make money, the mass media must appeal to the lowest cultural tastes and the conservative prejudices of the majority. The result is that much of the material processed for mass consumption—cheap thrillers, sex and violence stories, trivial family sagas—reveals a systematic debasement of cultural standards.

This is usually justified by the media owners who claim that the majority of people are ignorant and stupid. Cecil King, former head of the International Publishing Corporation said: "It is only by the manipulation of news that every newspaper...we have any idea what is happening...it is how stupid the great bulk of the British public are."

The houses of newspapers and TV also perform a useful function for the ruling class in this way. By offering workers a constant diet of triviality, murkiness and sensationalism, they systematically conceal the most crucial aspects of capitalist society and at the same time attempt to maintain workers in a passive and uncritical role.

This is why the mass media can only be transferred as a result of the working class taking control of the TV and newspaper industry. Under socialism the media would control its social ownership, and so would be jointly controlled by its contributors and representatives of working people.

Forget the '3'

by SABBY SAGALL

This is a personal account of reporting, and watching other journalists report, a difficult political story for the British press.

By "difficult" I mean a story which powerful political interests—government, business—are anxious to suppress because their own line of public opinion is generally unfavourable to them and their opponents.

By "difficult" I mean a story which is not an easy story to explain how, in practice, the press presents news in a light favourable to the ruling establishment, and why journalists go along with it when so many of them see themselves—and the press—going in the opposite direction, the line taken in the face of a spoken critic of society.

The story I have been covering is the conflict in Northern Ireland. It could easily have been any of the recent big industrial disputes, a distressing story or a trail of political activity, anything where the official version of what is going on was likely to be in stark contrast to the occurrence of the ordinary people involved.

In Northern Ireland it seems that the theme was to portray the government as a law in order to protect the views of the ordinary people involved. In this the government was successful. In the Journal of the British Academy, in the Broadcasting Association, in the Catholic Church, and in the Irish Times, the conflicts which have taken place in Northern Ireland have been kept quiet and unreported.

In Northern Ireland, the conflict is not a conflict of ideas. It is a conflict of power. It is a conflict of state power, of the state power of the British government, against the state power of the Irish government. It is a conflict of interests, of the interests of the British government, against the interests of the Irish government. It is a conflict of lives, of the lives of the British people, against the lives of the Irish people.

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WHEN, two years ago, the press and TV brought out the big guns against the miners, they had an advantage: they knew they were right. The miners were left to fight for their lives. It was then that the strength of the union and the solidarity of the miners was tested, and it proved that they are not only strong, but that they are determined to fight for their rights.

MINER'S WORK AND LAW ORDER

The Daily Mirror, February 1972: "Their course of action is plain: get back to work. Then Britain will start to get on the move again. But the miners have won, what do they want now?" asked the Sun. "Welfareforce offered them perhaps the most generous pay award in history and still they ask for more. The Sun will not back them any further. Nor will the people of Britain."

The cry of 'Law and Order'

On 17 August the Sun invited Tory MP Sally Oppenheim to write in the opinion column: "As many of us relax and enjoy our summer holidays there really any need to be concerned about law and order? I believe there is, and I am not talking about the more obvious forms of lawlessness. What I am talking about is recent events in Britain's dockland. Possibly the most disturbing example was when a policeman was knocked unconscious. (This was at Scunthorpe, and several dockers ended up in hospital, though Oppenheim fails to mention it.) 'As a woman I am not at all surprised that it was the women of Scunthorpe who demonstrated against the picketing dockers.' In this way the government smokescreen of selected information with talk of 'public opinion' of 'vandals', of 'greediness' and 'thuggery', singled out national interest at stake, that fascism is coming in a 'red' cloak. Where they cry, 'have the loyal defence of the public good gone?'

So much for the Tory Telegraph, but what did the newspapers of the people have to say?

CARLA GREENE

SAYS THE WORKERS

Newspapers attack the workers

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FORD: NOTHING LESS THAN £1O WILL DO

WITH five months to go to the end of the present Ford agreement, the 'shopping list' for the 1973 claim is already drawn up.

It was decided in Coventry last month by a conference of shop stewards from the 21 Ford plants in Britain, and apparently endorsed a week later in its entirety by a conference of joint works committee members and trade union officials on the national joint negotiating committee.

Already there has been criticism of the vagueness of the wage demands—which calls for a 'substantial increase'.

Some trade unionists apparently believe the official negotiators should not be tied to a fixed sum so as not to embarrass them.

This attitude causes even more amazing when you bear in mind the Scallon-Jones behind-the-scenes deal that led to the ending of the 1971 strike.

It is vital that the negotiators be tied to a fixed sum and that this be £10—the approximate difference between the wages paid to the Midlunds and those paid in Ford.

For years the miners allowed their representatives to demand a 'substantial' wage increase—and the miners got very little. Earlier this year they insisted on a wage demand for a fixed sum—and won a tremendous victory in the face of a vicious campaign by government and press.

The 35-hour week has been banded about at trade union conferences and the TUC for several years. Quite recently Jack Jones, president of the Transport Workers' Union, wrote in the union's newspaper, The Record, that he was in favour of the 32-hour week with no loss of pay. We now have a chance to put these fine words into practice.

Ford were one of the first companies to concede the 40-hour week in 1963 after a long fight. Never to say the negotiators then tried to sell the afternoon tea break for it.

And of course the 40-hour week, in Dagenham anyway, is somewhat theoretical given that the agreement stipulates a 'reasonable amount' of overtime—and some work more than 60 hours, the real picture is of course the relatively low wages being paid.

It is a real necessity that the four week holiday on average earnings is won. People on the line doing the same thing day after day, week after week, night shift in summer, are quickly turned into robots—and four weeks away from this is a top priority.

Ford have always refused to pay the average earnings, taking into account shift payments, as holiday pay. This injustice must finally be ended.

The present pension set-up also needs drastic reform. The demand is for the same terms as supervisory and staff workers. Many feel that the '30 years and out' would have been more appropriate.

Real criticism can be raised at the way in which the demands for mutuality and a status quo clause have found themselves at the bottom of the list again.

Ford have always believed that 'management has the right to manage' and this crude undemocratic attitude has always been accepted by the official negotiators. Any day of the week will find Ford operating this reactionary rule and many disputes have centred around this issue.

No agreement on this issue can be of course guarantee anything, but it can become the basis for a long campaign to achieve something near human conditions inside the plant.

Is this value for money?

1. A substantial wage increase
2. A shorter working week of 35 hours
3. A four-week annual holiday on average earnings
4. The same pension rights as staff
5. 100 per cent lay-off benefit
6. No time limit on the agreement
7. Opposition to a 'non-economic' demand clause as in the present agreement which stipulates that the unions cannot demand anything which would increase Ford's wage bill
8. Mutuality on line speeds
9. A status quo clause in the agreement so that if mutual agreement is not reached the work situation would remain as it was before negotiations took place

So much work has to be done if this claim is to be won. We must avoid a repeat of the 1971 events. A real effort must be made to involve the 50,000 Ford workers in the campaign for the claim. It is a pity that the 'comrades' bi-monthly Ford Workers Bulletin has so far only appeared once, last June.

The concessions made so far are not deep enough. They lie with the property speculators, who, with a government grant of £200 a room, prefer to build hotels to houses. With the last Labour Government, the council worked back the housing programme. And with firms like the Ranken, who closed down their London factory for the merger with Ranken, it's simple to say.

There were no Asians on the board of directors when Ford took over the company—it was closed down in the interests of 'protecting' the expensive directors. Profit makes more than workers in the dock.

The influence of the National Front and their ilk can be heard by pointing out the real cases of unemployment and working shortages.

A demonstration is planned in Leicester on Sunday 22nd April at 'Races and jobs—the real flight', on 21 October. Further details will appear in next week's Socialist Worker.

City where immigrants are made the easy scapegoat

LEICESTER has recently been in the news over the issue of the Ugandan Asians. The city's Labour council sent delegations to Uganda to see that no more Asians be allowed to go there, and even placed an advertisement in the Kampala Times pointing out to Asians in Uganda that even leave their land that they will not be welcomed in Leicester.

It is so stark contrast to Expo 72, which has just finished and whose aim was to encourage countries, industry and investment to move to Leicester. So kare are the city council's street with visitors that they leave half a million square feet of office space empty for them, and are putting up all luxury hotels.

It is a question of priorities, and not shortage of space and resources in Leicester, the National Sixth, the British Movement and other such fascist and neo-Nazi groups.

Leicester has always been a ripe breeding ground for gutter politics—since 1905 there was even a branch of the Ku Klux Klan, and crosses were burned in public. Now the National Front, with its new style 'working class appeal' has moved on to Leicester and set up offices.

There are more than 300 supporters, although the majority are card members of only the key factories. Leicester has always been their strongest base outside London—now it has become their centre.

The past history of the Front's leaders makes portentous reading. Yvandall and Wheeler, who are both members of the World Nazi Organisation, although both deny membership publicly since 1962, have both "stated: The SS man has been our model; an SS-style movement is the answer.

Other national figures have in the past banded about the 'British Jews' banner. One even has a shrines to Hitler in his living room. How they have not heard what appears to be a large appeal to the working class.

Racism

Leicester is a city with little heavy industry and demands from workers and local and national government. There are no strong traditions, and few factories of any importance, so Leicester is far from wealthy. And Leicester, the spread of racism, famed by the popular press and exploited by the National Front, is much easier. There are more Asians and Africans in the city than in most towns in the country, and the few jobs and houses. So it's easy to look for no further justification for the Leicester racism, where the immigrants congregate, for the country is overcrowded and overburdened resources.

The reasons are quite deep, they lie with the property speculators, who, with a government grant of £200 a room, prefer to build hotels to houses. With the last Labour Government, the council worked back the housing programme. And with firms like the Ranken, who closed down their London factory for the merger with Ranken, it's simple to say.

Price B5, plus 7p postage
IS BOOKS, 6 Cotswolds Gardens, London E2 6DN.
In every worker there is a human being trying to get out

 Strikes, by Richard Hyman, Fontana Books, 50p

By Colin Barker

"PUBLIC OPINION" is certain that strikes are a bad thing. They are ruining Britain. And even if some sections of "public opinion" don't agree about that, they all know that strikes, especially unofficial strikes, are a 'problem'.

A couple of years ago, a Professor Turner wrote a book titled Britain Really Strike Prone! in which he argued that the British strike record isn't all that bad. Other countries are much worse. So, he concluded, we don't really need all this oppressive anti-union legislation.

The professor's argument was a liberal one. He said that if Britain had more strikes than Australia, and if the strikes were destroying the economy, then anti-union legislation would be justified. Richard Hyman's very useful book goes well beyond this.

It is a book that is full of detailed, interesting and fascinating factual information. Changes in Britain's pattern of strikes are well described.

The beginning of the Second World War represents a kind of watershed in the history of strikes. After 1945, we find that the typical strike tended to be brief, brief, localised, and less concerned with wages than with other matters to do with control of the job, discipline, union rights and so on. Until recently, that is.

In the past few years, wage unemployment, increasing state intervention in industrial relations and the employing class getting more and more 'disorganised', strikes have been getting longer and more bitter. Larger numbers of workers have been involved and wage issues have once again become central. In 1968 the average strike lasted two days. Last year the average was 11 days.

At least until the mid-1950s, excluding mining, dominating the strike statistics. Well over half the strikes listed by the government took place in mining. But the main closures and lockouts, and the smashing of picket lines in the pits, had reduced the number of mine strikes drastically. In 1957 there were 2,242, in 1970 165.

But outside mining, the number of strikes has been mounting.

More and more workers, in tradition-dominated industries, manual and white-collar alike, have been turning to the strike weapon. The past few years have seen all manner of workers suffering injustices (whether brought on by their trade-union militancy or by the 'government', or both): miners, railway workers, teachers, nurses, everyone.

Some of them have been vast, some have been very small. Most have been bitter, and all have softened the climate of capitalist relations. The best known was the leadership of the miners in the national strike of 1972-3. Less famous has been the leadership of the hosiery workers at Prestige in Manchester, the hosiery workers at Rare Breed in Rochdale, the teachers in Merseyside, the nurses and teachers in Newcastle, the car workers in Staines and the bus drivers in York.

Poverty, that does the chief job of agitation

For socialists, this is a development of profound importance. It signifies that the British workers are becoming more and more aware of the need to utilise the means of production to their own advantage.

Unofficial strikes, of course, have been a problem for "public opinion", especially among employers. Department of Employment waited long and listened about them.

Why? Essentially, because for a long period they were very effective. They forced concessions from the bosses.

A Glasgow sheetmetal worker explained to us in the mid-1960s how his factory had kept 200 strikers: 'I worked our shift, and they were victorious. For the 20th, they made the mistake of bringing in the officials, and they lost.

Today, the unofficial strike is perhaps declining as a weapon. The bosses are much bigger, and the union full-time officials are much more involved in strikes - and in sell-outs.

For different situations, workers find different forms of struggle. The strike is only one weapon of the workers. Go-slow, overtime bans, sit-ins, are all tactical responses to particular circumstances.

Nonsense

Where workers, for whatever reason, cannot or will not engage in collective action, then they use 'illegitimate' means to express their frustrations and their demands: absenteeism, labour turnover, sabotage, lock of enthusiasm.

Hyman reviews the major ideas, both 'popular' and 'academic', about the causes of strikes. One old favourite is the idea that red agitators cause all the trouble - which appeals to employers. Another is the belief that the "influence of" the trade unions on individual workers is too small to have any significant effect.

Yet there are no red agitators - at least not in this paper! That kind of a thing, I mean it. And because, as any good agitator knows, you always need something to agitate about. There are more unsuccessful agitators than successful ones.

It's the capitalist system itself, with its profit-making bosses, its living working conditions, its accident rates, its economic poverty, that does the chief job of agitation.

The more 'liberal' managements explain strikes in terms of a 'failure of communications'. Only, if they believe workers were properly informed, if managers were only more enlightened in their approach, no warm and cuddly, strike would disappear.

But in fact, points out, if workers ever really did just get good communications, they would have gone out, and found out what they were going on, the country would explode!

The hierarchy of industrial relations is the direct product of the anarchic capitalist system. Within this system trade-union leaders play a very special role. They are 'the managers of dissolution'.

Some writers have suggested that now the unions have won acceptance by the government and management, now our leaders get birthday honours along with other respectable folk. As a result of capitalist society is safely contained. The spectra of bloody uprisings of workers is only examined, the union leaders have been incorporated into the system. To that extent unionists have been made safe and free. Business.

There is some truth in this. Is there, to the real role the union leaders play. But they can do other things, too. They can give the goods fully, especially when business is demanding more and more concessions from the working class.

The 'institutionalisation' of industrial relations, much discussed in the 1960s, is not a very shabby thing.

Within every worker, Hyman writes, 'there exists a human being trying to get out. Capitalist production forces the worker the possibility of humanity, his potentiality to the work of a commodity. But that commodity has flaws and footings, it asserts its own value as a commodity, or it destroys its very identity and in so doing threatens the very status quo. And the more capitalism is driven by technological and economic change, the harder it is for the trade-union bureaucracy to hold down the hitches on working-class struggle.

Nonsense, there is a luc and cry about strikes. Public opinion is driven by them. Why? Hyman's last chapter is especially interesting on this.

It's a combination of strikes that gives them so much bad publicity. Every new strike, on a goes to a building site, there is no boss and cry about that. It's when, somehow, some things get defined as 'problems', while other things are not.

How is 'public opinion' itself created? Why do workers say what they do? It is 'important' and which are not? Clearly, we have to ask ourselves what the ruling class own and control, at the edge of the world. It is an agreement on the ruling class to impose on us their view of the world, and we accept their view.

Just as the world 'shares' the Israeli attitude, the 'national interest'; who is who? He says that women and children in the Palestine refugees, are one weapon of struggle, and that the women are using the same weapons of the modernising capitalists. It is the countryside.

Politics

Of course, there is a 'strike problem' for the working class. The strike, by definition, is a temporary stoppage of work. When the strike is over, even if it is totally victorious, we go back to work for the same organisation.

The strike is a weapon for fighting the everyday struggle, for seeking out bad conditions, employer 'efficiency'. But it is also a direct attack on the causes of our problem. Absolutely trade-union methods of struggle in the Alice-Through-the-Looking-Glass situation of running round and to no end in the no-motion.

At the same time, strikes and other methods of fighting the results of capitalist society, as we develop. As trade-union activity we learn our own strengths and weaknesses. We learn to estimate who are our friends and our enemies, we learn a sense of tactics. Finally, in the final analysis, we cannot avoid politics.

During the French general strike in 1968, a French worker said to a British father and his grandad: "We fought all our life for better wages, we got nothing. And now the old man looks about 100, and the young man says no, I still live like a pig."

The question is: what is the 'problem' of strikes. The solution is revolution.

Richard Hyman's book is well worth reading. It is not only a detailed book, rather a Lucid explanation for a highly sensitive issue.
THE INTERNATIONAL Socialists is a democratic socialist organisation whose membership is open to all who accept its main principles and who are willing to pay contributions toward the work of its organisations.

We believe in an independent working class action for the abolition of capitalism and the construction of a classless society by a class struggle with the working class of all races and in all parts of the world.

We work in the mass organisations of the working class and are firmly committed to a policy of internationalism.

Capitalism is an international phenomenon. The giant firms have investments throughout the world and owe no allegiance except to themselves and the economic system they maintain.

In Europe, the Common Market has been formed to further the purposes of increasing the trade and profits of these multinational firms.

The international power of capitalism can only be overcome by international action by the working class.

A single socialist state cannot indefinitely survive unless workers of other countries come to its aid by extending the socialist revolution.

In addition to building a revolutionary socialist organisation in this country we also believe in the necessity of forming a free and voluntary sister organisation in each country of the capitalist world.

In this way we hope to develop a class movement throughout the world.

We believe in the necessity to unite with all workers in the struggle against the slave drivers of the world, and the need to improve the position and self-confidence of the working class.

We fight:

• For rank and file control of the trade unions through the regular election of all full-time officials.

• Against secret negotiations. We believe that all working class committees should be agreed or rejected by mass meetings.

• For an advanced trade unionism and the defence of shop stewards.

• Against anti-trade union laws and any curbs on the right to strike, whether the strikes are ‘official’ or ‘unofficial’, whether legal or illegal.

• Against production methods separating jobs and examining and dividing up a militant trade union active and combine with workers committees both in the plant and on the combine bands.

• For equal pay and a better deal for young workers.

• 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 brutality to black workers.

• Against immigration restriction.

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

• For real social, economic and political 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 support and actively work for the complete and unconditional liberation movements.

• For the restoration of the land, banks and major industries without control and under workers control.

We are opposed to all ruling class policies and organisations. We work to build a revolutionary workers’ party in Britain and all this to support the unity of all revolutionary groups.

A single world revolution is the central struggle of our times. Workers’ power and a world based on human solidarity, on the increasing of man’s power over nature, with the domination of the power of man over man, is certainly worth fighting for.

It is not true just talking about it. More than a century ago Karl Marx wrote: "The philosophers have simply interpreted the world. The point is to change it."

It is not to build a world that will build socialism, join us.

THERE ARE BRANCHES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

THE RENTS BATTLE

Irish tenants call for big strike

from Michael O’Connor in Waterford

Tenants in Southern Ireland are preparing a massive protest at rising rents.

The executive of the National Association of Tenants Organisations has decided to call for a national rent and rates strike at a special delegate conference of all tenants’ associations in late October.

This action has been called to force the government to meet the demands of the associations. The government introduced the 1966 Housing Act, which is almost identical to the Tory “Fair Rents” Act, in Britain. This Act has caused numerous local rent strikes in large towns, including one in Dublin, where the strike has continued since.

The main cause of the tenants’ grievances is the differential rent system, a means test assessment of rent. Under the Act a tenant’s “gross income” places the income of other family members is assessed, before tax. Therefore tax deductions are deducted. Over-time, bonuses, shift differences and any other income not taken into account are also assessed.

The association has instructed its members to include only their basic or take-home pay when filling local authority forms. But in some cases the department of housing have told them that local rent offices by their employers. The leadership of the Irish Trades Union Congress has done little to support the demands of the tenants.

Although the local rent strikes were fought against mortgage evasion and many tenants face severe stress, including Mark Larkins, the association’s general secretary.

Tenants are now calling for a major confrontation with the government through a national rent strike is the only way to resist this vicious rent system.

For the strike to succeed the rank and file must be kept informed of all developments during the strike. The morale and fighting spirit must be kept high through protests, demonstrations, and the picketing of landlords.

The association should seek the active support and solidarity of the trades union movement. Tenants and trade unions can jointly rent rent increases and all other attacks by the bosses on their living conditions.

At the association’s annual convention in September, messages of support and solidarity were received from tenants’ associations in Belfast. The British rent strikes now in progress against the Tory Fair Rents’ Act have brought the message home that the struggle of all tenants is a struggle for the emasculation of the working class in all countries.

KIRKBY-Joint action by tenants’ associations and rank-and-file workers was a significant feature of last week.

The management at the Bird’s Eye factory in Kirkby where they back two stewards and suspend 32 other workers for joining the national rent strike last month.

As soon as the Tower Hill rents action group heard of this they contacted other action groups, in Boodle and the Scotland Road area, and organisedfly appealed to pickets the factory.

Two hundred tenants, with the victimised local workers and other trade unionists, marched together and the movement of traffic in and out of the factory.

They consisted of Liverpool dockers, who blacked all Bird’s Eye lorry drivers and products. At Barmehall, a local woodworking factory, all pallets destined for Bird’s Eye were also blacked.

Victory on the picket line

Solidarity

Within 10 hours the management was forced to give in. The two victimised stewards were reinstated and the suspension lifted.

Billy Casey, one of the sacked stewards said: “To all my 14 years at this factory I have never seen anything like the solidarity which has been shown between tenants and trade unionists at these gates here today. It is obvious that the tenants’ group played a vital part in winning this battle. I hope it is the sign of things to come.”

Kenneth Welch, chairman of the Bird’s Eye Joint Action Comité, said: “This is the second stage of the battle. We have blacked the factory in his private plane the next day, the British rent strikes is an example of the struggle for the emasculation of the working class in all countries.”

Workers at Singers have responded it the organisers. They ploughed full support for Kirkby tenants and called for industrial action if any attacks were made on the councilors.

WHAT’S ON

Copy for What’s On must arrive by first post Monday or be phoned Monday ahead of publication date, display 15p per line. CASH WITH COPY. No artwork, no phone payment, invoices cannot be sent.

MEETINGS

WALTHAMSTOW ISlington

Speakers: Lewis Spratlin, Bob Wilfus

Thursday, 4 September, 8pm, 19b Grove Terrace, Grove Road, London E17

LAMBERT Public Employers Alliance Williamson Court, and others, including the local council set up the rent strike group: Croydon, 10 September.

SWEENEY Ian Poul, Mike Carbone

FIGHT THE TORY LAND Tenants’ strike. See magazine.

Wednesday, 24 September, 8pm, Unitarian Church, 55-67 Roman Road, London E2

SOUTHWARK Sydenham

Wednesday, 29 September, 8pm, Unitarian Church, 55-67 Roman Road, London E2

SOUTHWARK Southwark

SOUTHWARK Croydon

SOUTHWARK London

SOCIALIST MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Scandinavian Sunday, Friday evening, 20 September, Unitarian Church, 55-67 Roman Road, London E2

FINE TUBES conference: 28 Oct, in East London, Brent Lough, 2:00-5:00pm, 28 Oct, in East London, Brent Lough, 2:00-5:00pm

PRENTICE-KNOTTLEY LEAGUE

Public meeting.

Post Office workers in Scarborough, Swindon, etc. on strike.

FIREPROOF TENTS Relief Agency

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AS MORE tenants went on rent strike last week, there were signals that their ranks will soon be swollen by many others who have not yet had their increases.

Around half a million tenants are in arrears or refusing to pay their rent, according to the National Residential Tenants Union. This has led to a wave of threatening noises. Four English and five Welsh councils have issued a three-month’s notice to say why they should not be judged as defaulting on the Act.

The present housing commissioner being appointed or acting being taken through the courts by tenants requiring the council to carry out the Act. In either case, rent relief will follow shortly.

It is estimated by local authorities this week, and a rather different figure for the same effect is being taken in Scotland. Written protests from local councillors have been heard and some are being taken to court.

STUDENTS' DEFEND LECTURER

NORTH LONDON—Students at the North London Polytechnic have taken militant residential action in the town of Hendon, in the Rhondda, the joint miners’ lodges have arranged a meeting to discuss the situation. A rent strike is being planned.

In Merthyr, a joint committee consisting of representatives of the trades unions and tenants’ associations decided on a rent strike when the housing commissioner was asked to withdraw rents.

In Oldham the United Tenants’ Association is also organizing tenants to refuse to pay rents. It has received considerable support.

In the mining town of Thorne in Yorkshire, tenants are refusing to pay the rent. In some cases 300 tenants on the halls of residence are involved.

In Newcastle, street tenants are also refusing to pay their rents.

At Warrington last week demands for the rent strike were met by the police. The only action they got was the arrest of the tenants. The tenants were taken to the police station and decided on a rent strike.

In Northallerton tenants barbecued armies arriving at the hall for the meeting last week, and then went into the council chamber, where a petition was presented.

Tenants on rent strike have been refused entry into the police station, at the instigation of a group of tenants.

The police have promised to pay the rent, but the tenants are determined to continue their action.

In Salford 40 social workers, members of the local government unions, NALGO, have signed a statement opposing the police because of its effects on thousands of tenants, increasing the pressure on the police.

The statement pledges support for non-co-operation with the housing commissioners and local government workers to ‘take no part in helping to split up tenants’ families as a result of eviction.’

Leyland: crucial talks continue

NEGOTIATIONS crucial to the future of all British Leyland workers are taking place in a high class pub in the Midlands.

That is where representatives of the Longbridge workers have been bolstered with management since the beginning of October in an attempt to come to some agreement on a change in the payment system.

In a relentless drive to increase profits, British Leyland is replacing the traditional piecework system with a flat-rate structure often referred to as ‘going for the ponies.’

This is designed to encourage the company much greater control over rates of pay and work-conditions. Leyland offsets slow, low-skill, piecework, and considerably boost production per worker, per day. The new system is proving a big success. The piecework, for a large section of its workforce, has been viewed at the heart of its empire, the giant Austin factory in Longbridge, and his fellow directors still face an uphill battle when they meet to discuss the agreement.

Little has been decided so far, certainly nothing about money or materially over working conditions. But there are fears that some of the 77 shop stewards, representing about 12,000 pieceworkers, will press the pace and reach an agreement, rather than finding out what the management can prepare to offer and reporting back to their membership.

It is vital that the shop stewards do not become involved in any conflict over the negotiations—especially money, manhours, and length of agreement. The days of working for kickbacks will be over, and the pattern will set the terrain for the future.

Car workers on strike

DUBLIN—Eight hundred car workers are on strike in the assembly plants of the British group which makes the British Leyland cars and commercial vehicles. The strike is over pay, hours, and conditions.

In the same shop stewards’ union, the TGWU, the situation is the same for the rest of the country. lively talks are being held between the company and the union, the TGWU Vehicle Building and Automotive Group, to make the strike official.

Talks from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions for a return to work were reported by a spokesman from the TGWU.

The workers have called on workers in the British Leyland works to accept a pay demands for by stopping exports of fully-built-up cars to the UK.

Ish branch formed

A meeting of 16 members and sympathizers of the International Socialists in the Boundary area decided to set up a regular meetings. This brings together the mass of unorganized workers set up to East Lancashire in the past two months. The others are Rochdale and Southend.

ANVIK BOOKS

Irish Revolutionary History

THE MacGREGOR PAPERS Revolutionary struggle for national unity in Ireland and America 1968

BRIAN FAULKNER and the crisis in Ulster 1970

THE RISE OF IRISH TRADE UNIONS 1720-1920

Available from Britain from Aggrip, 248 Baker Street, London W1, or from progressive bookshops everywhere.

I would like more information about the International Socialists

Name

Address

Send to: IS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN

Marcher beaten up by police

STOKE-ON-TRENT—A strike by 13 men in a number of plants of the Michael Tyre works is now in its third week. The strike is over the company’s decision to employ non-union labour, under the guise of a system of ‘all-disabled’ trade union members.

Michael Tyre workers, with more than 7000 workers, are in a state of shock, with the loss of 1500 jobs over two years. All recruitment has been stopped and the company has asked the unions to co-operate by introducing increased flexibility and mobility of labour.

In the department affected there is a shortage of labour but management has refused to employ men on the temporary suspension list, saying there is no work in the plant.

The men in the stores then came out. Management refused to negotiate so before a return to work, or to observe the strike and stop the two week’s suspension.

This is Wigan International Socialist Anna Pazucka after a beating by Blackburn police. Anna was arrested on an anti-fascist march on 30 September and was savagely attacked by the police in the van taking her to the station.

The police, who attacked the marchers and defended a rally staged by anti-militarian and other vigilante groups, handed out beatings to several other arrested socialists. Some of them—including Anna—face charges under the Public Order Act as amended by the Race Relations Act.

The Public Order Act was supposed to be brought into operation after the Race Relations Act is supposed to clamp down on incidents like this.

One Pakistani arrested on the march has been charged with assaulting a police officer, threatening behaviour and possession of offensive weapons. He was only 18 years old and could be deported under Immigration Act if he is found guilty.

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Fifteen people have been charged following the march. Heavy fines are expected and the defence committees are raising £1000 to cover fines and legal costs. Please raise donations to: Pat Horne, 16 Oakenwoorl, Blackburn, Lancs.
Profit boom for big business

from page one

house prices'. That's not counting the McKipple family, three of whom become millionaires the day 1 October—the firm was sufficient to give the impression of a major house growing bigger and bigger.

Will the new Tony 'socialists' stop this bonanza, and redistribute these fortunes to the workers, or to the pensioners whose fate has caused so much sorrow at Blackpool?

Or will they hang on to what they have got, sue for peace with the trade unions, and then quietly start making more?

For the answer turn to Julian Amery, Minister of Housing, and a leading exponent of the new Tory 'socialism'.

The government will not take any special measures to curb rising house prices, as part of its new counter-inflationary proposals... We do not regard housing at a commodity in the same way as shirts and food (Times, 28 December, 1977). One group of estate agents in Southwark, London, are delighted by the news. They manage eight brokery-owned houses in Cloisterfield and four in Gladstone Street.

The houses have not been improved with the use of the new government funds, but have been sold, approximately, to central London means that their value has been doubled. In 1960, this one is now up for sale—£2,500.

The owner of these houses will benefit hugely from the decision of Julian Amery not to freeze house prices.

LIVERPOOL:—1200 workers at the CAV (Civil Aircraft) plant in Fazakerley have occupied their factory to prevent producing military aircraft. They were ordered to leave on Monday morning, but a few days after announcing that the place would be closed next April.

Dennis Martin, chairman of the Engineering Union, was told local workers: 'We shall stay here until we get what we want.'

Workers at the Lucan factory on the same site on Monday afternoon and decided to levy £1 a man per week to support the occupation.

A meeting of shop stewards in other Lucan plants was also planned for this week, and workers

da solution to the housing crisis. The government is clear in its aim to provide adequate housing for all. The scheme was introduced in conjunction with the local authorities to ensure that the needs of all residents are met.

-NEWCASTLE: After six weeks strike, the mood of the boilermakers of the Swan Hunter shipyards has hardened to grim determination.

Last week’s mass meeting decided no further meetings would be held until Swans made a substantial offer in reply to the claim for a 17% increase on basic rate.

Only now do the Tyne-side men realise just how badly paid they are in comparison with boilermakers elsewhere. The strike delegations brought back information about wage rates in other shipyards which the full-time officials would not reveal.

The facts were a revelation: the Tyne-side rates of £27 and £29 for the two grades of boiler maker, plus the average £4 bonus, leave them £10 to £15 a week behind other yards. Now the strikers have demanded parity with other shipyards on top of their original claim.

The threat of a mass movement in the strike over the past fortnight. Apprentice boilermakers have applied sanctions in support of the strikers and many men have been expelled for apprentice victimisation.

Despite the presence of International Socialists and clampdown union members, Social Security officials are hardened by their experiences of unmarked strikers, regardless of the level of their claims. In these circumstances, the funds to which the men are entitled is a mass sit-in demonstration at the regional Social Security headquarters, but the stewards’ leaders are too timid for such action at present.

Another weakness in the strike is the isolation of the boilermakers from other workers in the yards. Except where they are laid off, the 7000 or so other workers at Swans are not involved in the strike. There is practically no money or support for the strikers from other trades.

The threat of mass action at Swans is real for this time the workers are fighting the same claim, and this strike is not a local battle.

The stewards of other sections have turned down the Swans offer of £1.50 increase despite pressure from their officials. But this was made after any settlement of the claim for other sections that has set a limit for the boilermakers.

Short of an unexpected capitulation by Sir John Hunter, the stage is set for a strike on a larger and increasingly bitter scale.

Send messages of support and donations to: T. Dyer, 6 Kent Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 3US.

Sticklers stage union sit-in

LONDON: Building workers from the giant Civils' World's End site in Chelsea staged a sit-in yesterday, occuping the CISU, on Monday. They demanded an increase in the wages promised

The stewards demand the reinstatement of a discharged worker and the subcontractors to return to the housing payments agreed before the occupation. They add that the newly-negotiated national increase. Workers was one of the figures of an agreed increase in London, timetabled for a month. The contractors tried to keep the site under lock and key.

Two other major London sites are also still occupied. One in Putney, Fawley Hotel, is out of the use of the illegal and anti-social workers. The other in Rotherham, is under the same censure in protest against the lump just before the start of the nationwide struggle.

Putney workers fight closure threat.

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nationally, especially those in other Lucas plants, are urged to give their support.

Workers at the Fazakerley plant started four years ago when Lucas bought the Wash group after announcing that the place would be closed next April.

When Martin told an Engineering Union convener, told local workers: 'We shall stay here until we get what we want.' The management reconsidered their plans to close the factory.

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