Labour's 'New Britain' exposed

THIRTY years ago the first ever majority Labour government promised in its manifesto to abolish poverty. That promise has been repeated in every Labour manifesto since. What are the facts today?

A Child Poverty Action Group report out this week gives some of them:

- Four and a half million people need state benefits to bring their incomes up to the 'poverty line' of £25.70 a week.
- At least another one and a half million live below this line.
- Six and a half million workers, four million of them women, earn less than £30 a week.

The report quotes a single parent assaying: 'Wednesdays and Thursdays are poor days for me, so I do without food so the children can have some.'

A mother of four children said: 'I have been trying for school clothing for John, aged 12, and Melvyn, aged 14, since November 1973, but I have heard nothing. They are losing a lot of education as it's mostly coats and shoes they require and they have none, only plimsolls.'

The report concludes: 'For the period under study, there has been no marked overall improvement in the position of the poor. In some instances, the gap between the poor and the rest of the community has widened.'

These are the shocking facts of Britain under Labour. They prove just how pathetic have been Labour's efforts, in three periods of government since the war, to 'wipe out poverty'.

What remedies do the Labour government propose? A £6 wage limit, permanent unemployment of more than a million, and heavy cuts in spending on the welfare state.

The £6 wage limit increases poverty. For all six million workers who receive less than £30 a week, it means lost rebates, lost family income supplement, lost free school meals—and less money in their pockets.

Unemployment at the present rate increases the poverty outlined in the Child Poverty Action Group report by more than 30 per cent.

The cuts in the public services mean more and more families landed with the full cost of looking after old people, sick people, disabled people and children.

Labour are not the champions of the poor, as they pretend. They are the champions of the Confederation of British Industry and the City of London, who have forced all these policies on them.

Next time any trade union leader or television back tells you to accept the £6 limit in the interests of the poor and needy, just flog these figures right back in their faces.

JAPAN: OTHER SIDE OF THE ECONOMIC MIRACLE

IN a Tokio station last week—a great strike rally. Yes, in the land of the economic miracle where capitalism works, the railwaymen are on strike. So are the busmen. So are all corporation workers. 600,000 public service workers are on strike.

What for? The right to strike. In Japan, public service workers are banned from striking by law. Now they are breaking the law—to gain basic trade union rights. Miki, the Japanese Prime Minister, said on Monday that he would fight the strikers to a finish. If he gave in, he said, 'it would be tantamount to destroying parliamentary democracy as we know it'.

Now where have we heard that before?
CONGRESS HOUSE, the TUC headquarters, on the night before the demonstration. Twenty unemployed trade unionists, led by Ricky Tomlinson, the freed Shrewsbury picker, occupied two rooms of the building.

Ricky told Socialist Worker: 'We are occupying to protest against the TUC General Council's lack of action in the fight for the right to work and in the campaign to free Des Warren.' Then, at 10pm—after five hours of the occupation—TUC General Secretary Len Murray ordered 40 police to use crowbars and axes to break down the doors into the occupied rooms.

Once the police had broken in, Murray ordered them to take the names and addresses of the demonstrators and escort them from the building.

Ricky Tomlinson said: 'Using the police against us was the only positive action Len Murray took on a day when unemployment reached new heights. It's disgusting.'

TWENTY THOUSAND workers, employed and unemployed, marched through the centre of London last Wednesday in spite of every effort to stop them by the official trade union leadership.

Not a single national newspaper carried any reports of the preparations for the march. The TUC General Council issued a special circular telling all affiliated bodies not to support it.

From the balcony of the TUC headquarters Congress House, protected by lines of policemen, TUC General Secretary Len Murray told the press about his solution to unemployment.

MARCHED

'The best way of overcoming this problem is by the TUC working together with the government—not by taking part in anti-government demonstrations,' he said.

Despite Murray's denials, delegates came from every area. More than 300 Chrysler workers from Coventry marched behind their shop stewards committee banner. The Islington branch of NALGO, the local government workers' union, showed what white collar workers can do and stopped for the day.

One of them, Gordon Peters, told Socialist Worker: 'More than 400 members of the branch are on this demonstration. It's exhilarating for all of us. It's magnificent.'

Special trains came from many parts of the country. From Manchester came 85 unemployed workers, given free seats on the train, by the local branch of the TUC to the Local Right to Work Committee. Secretary Bobby Burns told Socialist Worker: 'Not only are we not angry about getting unemployed workers down.'

FIGHT

'Trang the Trades Council, I rang all the unions. The only thing to do was to get shop stewards committees, branches and individuals to agree to pay for seats for the unemployed. And it worked. It's our fight as well. The official machinery just forgets about you once you're on the scale.'

As part of the efforts to create a united march, the Right to Work Campaign organised a platform and loudspeakers at Euston Station and invited speakers from the numerous delegations.

Ricky Tomlinson, the freed Shrewsbury picker, talked about the continuing fight to free Des Warren and said the fight against unemployment was part of the fight for socialism.

Among dozens of speakers were the secretary of the Chrysler Stowe shop stewards committee, Eddie McCluskey, who is also a member of the executive committee of the Communist Party.

Speakers were also invited from the committee of the London Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions. Unfortunately they refused to speak from the platform and preferred to address a far smaller meeting at the head of the march.

Many bodies contributed to the magnificent turnout. It was a pity, then, that the repeated calls for a united march and meeting made by the Right to Work Campaign were attacked.

SUCCESS

And a greater pity that the Morning Star failed to report the enormous efforts of unemployed workers from the local Right to Work Committees to make the march a success.

The Morning Star also failed to report that thousands of trade unionists carried the National Right to Work Campaign's placards.

They demanded: Fight for the Right to Work! Save Jobs! Occupy! Overthrow the 305. Overthrow—25 hours without loss of pay! Nationalise the building industry.

These placards became the slogans of the whole march.

The enthusiasm of the march was dampered by the way it ended. The police broke it up into small groups which were allowed to go along the riverside for a mile-long walk to Parliament.

Of those who got to Parliament, few were allowed in. One who was, Gail Cartmail, an unemployed clerk from Norwich, told Socialist Worker: 'It was a bloody waste of time. These MPs don't have a clue. All they said was: "I voted the right was on the amendment and that amendment". I've never known a use is that? We still don't have jobs.'

As the crowds dispersed outside Parliament the police charged in on horses. 'I don't know why they did it,' said one injured girl told Socialist Worker.

People were going away and they charged straight in. It was a shambles.'

Part of the Rank and File contingent: Now we must build Right to Work committees

'Now build Right to Work campaign'

JOHN DEASON, of the National Right to Work Campaign, said: 'The march was very good. It was a real achievement to get so many people out.'

The march had involved the work of a few extremists. 'He's never worked in a factory or on a site. He doesn't know how workers feel,' he said.

'It's not a foot 30,000 people, leave alone the tons of goods which were loaded, delegations, and paid for collections to send others. The Rank and File Organising Committee, through the National Right to Work Campaign made a real impact. We're beginning to get known and supported by more workers in the movement. But what was missing on the march was the anger of the unemployed. We are going in have a fight much harder to involve unemployed workers in the campaign and in the trade union movement.

The march helped establish the campaign, but now we have to concentrate on detailed hard work in the areas, bringing together unemployed workers with the power and strength that led to so many shop stewards' committees being represented on the march.'

Ready to march off: the 20,000-strong protest

ABOVE: Some of the speakers on the Right to Work platform: Mark Brightman, an unemployed engineer, and unemployed building workers Frank Dixon, from London, and Tommy Dowsett, from Liverpool.
WHY THE HANG'EM BRIGADE ARE WRONG

THE CAMPAIGN to hang 'bombers' and 'terrorists' is being led by Margaret Thatcher and the Tory press. But it seems to make sense to workers who have never voted Tory in their lives.

They feel something has to be done to stop bombs going off in the streets. The call to eradicate the terrorists' seems to them the instant answer.

Socialists are against the planting of bombs. We have repeated that again and again. We are also against the assassination of individuals, no matter how unpleasant they may be.

Acts of individual terrorism turn such people into instant martyrs for workers who would never support their political ideas if they were not widow-makers. The answer to such losses of life and limb does not lie in the application of even harsher punishment. There would be no end.

For it does not in any way deal with the causes which drive people to turn to random bombing.

Eight years ago, there were no bombings, although capital punishment did not exist then either. But people from the Catholic areas of Northern Ireland did not feel driven to engage in such acts.

Only with the stepping up of the struggle in Northern Ireland, and the consequent increase in repression—more and more people thrown in jail, hundreds of others murdered by Protestant sectarian groups against whom the British army takes little action—have some Republicans come to feel so bitter that they are prepared to bomb and kill British people at random.

Repression has produced that bitterness, with the bombing of civilians. It is a by-product. It will not be stopped by more repression. The real answer lies in ending the conditions that have made many Irish people see the 'people of Britain'—including ordinary British workers—as their enemy.

Threats from the Tory Party or Margaret Thatcher will not change their views. After all, they know the Tories have always been prepared to justify the bombing of civilian populations by Britain's armed forces.

They are now supporting the parachute regiment when it murdered 13 civilians on Bloody Sunday nearly four years ago.

Sections of the IRA believe that they, as 'soldiers this bad', are entitled to do what British soldiers have done in the past. The threat of death will deter them no more than it deters other soldiers.

There is only one way to stop this vicious circle of repression and reaction to it. It is to end the 600-year-old attempt of the rulers of Britain to dominate Ireland.

FORTY lovers of law and order, members of the National Front, went on an outing last Sunday. They went by bus from Blackpool, back to Manchester, where they dived into a National Council of Civil Liberties meeting. They walked in, the Law and Ireland were there. As solicitor Tony Casson introduced the meeting, these supporters of Roy Jenkins' anti-Terror Act got to work.

"Fenian bastards," they shouted. "Get back to Ireland," One of their number held up a letter from the chairman. Then these believers in hooliganism and the hench of hoodlums got to work on the furniture and fittings. They wrecked the place, causing upwards of £300 damage.

A member of the audience, 60-year-old Mr. O'Hara, was hit over the head with a bottle. Graeme Atkinson got a broken bottle in his face, causing wounds which required 19 stitches. Malcolm Peach got a serious eye injury and a broken arm.

The police were called but claimed at first that the meeting wasn't on their beat. And so, with the job done, the National Front members moved off back to their hired coach in military formation, giving the Seig Heil salute.

Finally, one lone policeman was sent 'to find out what had been going on'. Others eventually joined him and, in all, 30 arrests were made.

But the 30 Nazis hadn't dug up a cricket pitch in protest against the imprisonment of an innocent man...

The National Front passed this way...

like the supporters of the George Davis is Innocent campaign. They had only beaten up a 60-year-old woman and pushed a few socialists' faces in. Accordingly, there were no conspiracy charges and they were allowed bail immediately.

In the week before, the NCF had received several threatening phone calls. But no preparations to defend the meeting were made. And even now NCF members are looking to the police to do the job. When, as is evident from this case, the police are only too happy to see the left attacked.

Pat Arrowmith, the pacifist campaigner against British troops in Ireland, who arrived after the meeting had been wrecked, even went so far as to suggest, we understand, that the remedy was to invite the Front to speak at future meetings.

In fact, the Front and all their ilk represent so deadly a threat to the socialist and working class movement that the exact opposite tactics apply. You have to organise against them.

You have to prevent them from speaking at, intervening in and if possible in any way attending or participating in trade union and socialist meetings.

There should be no free speech for fascists.

PREVENTION OF TERRORISM ACT

Meeting of trade union delegates and observers

Tuesday 16 December 7pm
Blythe Hall, Blythe Road, London, W1A

Speakers: Eamonn McCann (Troops Out Movement), a legal expert who will answer questions on the Act, and trade unionists arrested under the Act. Chairman: Bill Geddes (NUPE) shop steward, Hammersmith Hospital.

Called by Rank and File Organizing Committee, 46 Prince George Road, London N1. Sponsored by Hammersmith Hospital NUPE shop stewards committee.

A trade union bodies invited to send delegates or observers. Credentials available from 46 Prince George Road. Admission by trade union card only.

Fifteen years ago there were many acts of 'terror' committed in France by Algerian nationalists. Today there are none.

The withdrawal of French troops from Algeria achieved what no amount of repression ever could. The lesson applies to Ireland.

The Tory press and the Tory politicians will never learn that lesson.

The so-called 'Prevention of Terrorism Act', which the government is now seeking to make permanent, has led to more than 1,000 arrests of chiefly trade unionists, being held for days on end without charge and without contact with their families or lawyers.

The police have later recognised that 95 per cent of these have been committed no crime.

The introduction of hanging for 'terrorists' would add to the repressive powers at the hands of the police and the courts.

It would lead to people being arrested, and in the bombing campaign being threatened with a fate similar to, for instance, Brendan Harrarty.

But it would not stop the bombing campaign, because they will say that...
WARNING TO ALL STUDENTS: THE RIGHT ARE ON THE MOVE!

They want:

- Rag weeks
- Rigger
- Insurance and travel rackets
- Money from the CIA
- Assistant European Commissioner in Brussels

The labour government has broken all its promises to women—and it is up to us to fight back, said MARGARET RENN of Socialist Worker, introducing the first session of the conference.

The worst disaster area was jobs. Unemployment, up 48 per cent for men in the last year, had risen 121 per cent for women. But there was no fight from trade union leaders.

There was a fight from working women, as strike after strike from Yarnolds to Ladbrokes had shown. 'These struggles are our strength,' she said.

MARGARET RENN: We know what we want

The present executive would be quite happy to win the vote against the ballot at the conference on the grounds that it costs too much and leave the matter there. That's been their attitude all along.

Organise

But if we are to preserve a fighting union, we have to take the argument back to the colleges. We have to discuss the arguments in the light of every situation in each college. We have to organise people to put the argument clearly at union general meetings. We cannot rely on the arguments being put spontaneously.

We need to mount an assault on the ballot at the conference. But we will not win the argument just by conference manoeuvre.

The present executive would be quite happy to win the vote against the ballot at the conference on the grounds that it costs too much and leave the matter there. That’s been their attitude all along.

We want:

A fighting union!

Hey there, Mr President, what are you going to do when you grow up? Exactly what we’re doing now, of course!

ONCE a union bureaucrat, always a union bureaucrat, as the saying goes.

DIBGY JACKS, NUS President two years ago, is now a full-time official for ATMS.

JOHN RANDALL, last year’s President, has become assistant general secretary of the civil service union without ever going near the civil service. He was working for an employer.

He moved straight into the CSU office after leaving the NUS office in London’s Endell Street.

HUGH BAYLEY, an NUS executive member two years ago, is now full-time officer for CLO.

Which union will take Charles Boggles’s Clark—current President?

The President, incidentally, is very well paid. He and the secretary, treasurer and assistant President are on about £3200 a year.

They all get ‘free travel abroad once a year’ when the privilege was stopped this autumn: after the officers had lost their travel!

It’s never been clear why these officers should get about three times as much as the London grant. Mr Stewart, replying to Mr Storlton’s question, it was the ‘freight for the job’. But it isn’t.

Union officers should get what their members get. Then they would identify more closely with their members’ problems.

Workers in Britain’s paper mills are under attack. A couple of mills have been closed this year, there is talk of widespread redundancies in the fibrebond mill industry, and reports of job losses for 40 years in plants in Britain.

In September, 7800 workers were out of work, and 5000 were on short time.

And yet the response of our union, Sogat, is to campaign for import controls on foreign paper.

Import controls would put workers in other countries out of work or on short time. With less money to buy British exports, unemployment would go up here.

British paper mill workers are entitled to full time employment—but so are Austrian, Dutch, Japanese and Australian, as the East and Western European countries have been saved up by the multinational companies—plants like Bowaters, Wiggins Teape, Bowsers, Ulluver and Wiggins Teape, Bowaters, for example, produce over 40 plants in Britain, producing newsprint and packaging and are similarly involved in USA.

Canada, the Far East and Western Europe. Russia produces about a sixth of British paper in mills alone, 1,900,000 tons of paper and pulp a year in America, and are not producing fine grade mills in South Africa (where all the cheap labour is).

Sogat really wants to protect the jobs of its members, we will have to prepare ourselves for all out battle with the multinational companies—by building national and international links.

Of course, the industry was properly planned and controlled, the tonnage of paper sold or recycled, and the waste from recycling paper from recycled waste was included.

We protect our jobs we must demand no overtime except holiday and sickness cover. We will turn work that is 10 hour per week or a full week’s pay. We will fight to keep our basic rights.
in struggle

We're women, we're workers and we're fighting: some of the 600 women at Salford.

in bringing in the Sex Discrimination Act and, in the same breath, announcing massive cuts in nursery education.

In Camden, it cost £2 a day to feed a child in a nursery.

In Hillingdon, there was a strong fight back against these cuts. The NILAG Action group managed by strike action to stop them.

At Ett Brown's, and she was 'terrified' of speaking — and then went on to give a brilliant account of the difficulties of organizing playing groups of women in Newcastle.

HEALTH CUTS

SHEILA PARKIN, an auxiliary nurse from Leeds, said: '40 nurses in her hospital who had just qualified were not being kept on. In Liverpool, qualified nurses were being asked to stay on — as student nurses. If this goes on for another 12 months,' she said, 'there won't be a health service.'

The most important thing was unity. Management was always trying to split auxiliary nurses from staff nurses, porters from domestics and so on.

Jill HERRI in Manchester emphasised the point. She had spent some time as a patient in Walton hospital. The problem was not overcrowding. Half the wards were empty — but the nurses were working round the clock.

The junior hospital doctors often only get two and a half hours' sleep out of 24. These doctors were health workers just like any others — and should be supported.

EDUCATION CUTS

Jenny Brook, an unemployed teacher from Bradford, told how she was 'flying solo' in countess applications, gone tocountless interviews.

'That's just the real reason I can't get a job is because of the education cuts, denormalisation.

CAROL DOURASS opened the evening session on jobs and redundancies with a magnificent speech.

A convenor in a Liverpool printing firm, she told how difficult it was to get women to branch meetings.

We had factor floor meetings. Even if you only get five women out of 300, to support an idea, that's a response. Those are people who you can talk to, you can go to, you can fight with.

We fought voluntary redundancies. We said: you're selling those jobs out of the labour movement forever. When your kids come out of school next year, there won't be a job for them because you've sold it.

We got a response.

'Don't struggle up to the left-wing men in the union.' You may think they can help you. But the moment you raise something that means they're going to have to fight, they'll all shut you down. I'm sorry to be so crude, but that's just what they do.

At the beginning of the year, I asked Simon Fraser on the Liverpool Trades Council to arrange something
don't want no stamp!' And tell them what we do want.

Kathy Finn of Glasgow spoke of the 200 Ladbrokes workers— mostly women — out for union recognition for six months now.

'SHEILA ROBIN told how 68 part-time women workers had been sacked to guarantee overtime for the men at the Birmingham Post Office.

S.jms Warwick spoke of the difficulties trying to unionise women at Sunlight Laundry, Brighton.

After Chris Gwenter spoke of Lambeth NILAG and a member of the Rock and File Organising Committee's Right to Work Campaign committee who outlined the campaign's policy, the rally heard another fighting speech from an AEU member.

JUD'S Norris from Portsmouth, who described herself as a 'mechanic—that really means a screwdriver-lasher'— said she wasn't working for pin-money. Her husband was unemployed.

She worked in an unorganised shop, and many women were frightened of unions, because they were worried about their jobs.

Part of the job of the Right to Work

We've got to say, 'Listen pal, I

unemployment and the cuts, Saturday's rally at Belle Vue, Manchester, was a triumph. 600 women attended one of the most articulate expressions of revolutionary feminism in Britain since the 1920s.

And they came to grips with the desperate crisis affecting working women all over the country.

With 39 different speakers, this has to be a milestone. We're holding readers who want to find out more should get hold of Women's Voice, out this week.

How we're fighting

We've missed a lot of things. Take the Post Office women in Birmingham—68 sacked by agreement with the union. We should have picketed every Post Office.

Tom Jackson, staffing himself with muskets and shingles and talking about women's equality, we should picket him too. We should stuff the muskets and shingles down his throat.

If they sack workers at Chrysler, we should react. The wives should take their children down to the Chrysler offices and tell the bosses:

'Well, here you are. We can give these children their Christmas dinners because of your decisions. You take the responsibility for them.'

Finally, said Sheila, 'we have to fight for the socialist revolution: for a new society where women can have their children can be a pleasure not a burden where we can control our lives. We can have decent schools and nurseries, not bombs and Concorde.'

'We've got to lead the struggle for socialist revolution. We don't want just to be a voice in the movement.

'We want to be central to the movement so we can be central to the socialist revolution.'

Report: Jenny Jackson and Paul Foot
Pictures: John Sturrock (Report)
The tragedy of Spain, 1936

I WROTE LAST WEEK that the Spanish Communist Party, with the aid of the right wing of the Socialist Party, thwarted the Spanish revolution in 1936-37 and so paved the way for Franco’s victory.

A contrariest has criticized the articles on the grounds that it does not explain how this was possible.

Contrariest Stalin’s government in Russia was determined to sabotage the revolution for foreign policy reasons. It appears that the collapse of the Popular Front government in Spain was the goal of the Soviet Union’s foreign policy of ‘democratic unity’ with the ‘left’ bourgeois parties. This is a fair criticism and it raises some basic questions, not only about Spain but about revolutionary politics in general.

First of all, it will not do to refer to the ‘futuristic illusions’ or ‘immaturity’ of the Spanish workers. This, the blanket explanation for every failure, advanced by some ‘revolutionaries’, is a libel on the Spanish workers of that time.

The Spanish proletariat stood, in the first days of the revolution, not below but above the Russian proletariat of 1917, wrote Trotsky at the end of 1937. It was true.

In the first week of the military-fascist coup of July 1936 the workers, often under the local leadership of anarchist and left-wing socialist militants, neutralized, won over or destroyed the army units in the majority of the city’s streets. They did so in spite of the attempts of the Popular Front government to paralyse resistance. That government, when it knew that the coup was well under way, declared:

The government acknowledges the offers of support which it has received from (the workers’ organisations) and, while being instructed for them, declares that the best aid that can be given to the government is to guaranty the safety of daily life, forward as an example of serenity and confidence in the means of the military strength of the State.

If the working class which broke the first fascist assault still held its ground, if the workers’ power was and never will be a revolutionary working class. But, of course, to go forward from the first spontaneous resistance, to consolidate the power won and to develop a genuinely accurate force, a leadership—a party—was needed.

Understanding this, tens of thousands of working-class men and women turned to the Communist Party, the Party, as they believed, of revolution. The result was the formation of a very small organisation with a very leftist, indeed ultra-leftist, position.

Until 1934, it had described the Socialist party as ‘Social-Fascist’ and the growing Socialist Party left wing as ‘Left Social-Fascist’—the most dangerous kind! It had repeatedly called for workers and for revolution.

It now grew very quickly, from a few thousand members to 117,000 (its own figures). The Communist Youth grew from a few hundred to several thousand, overrunning the whole of the Socialist Youth in the process.

It grew on the basis of its reputation as the ‘true’ left party of internationally known parties and also because of its association with ‘Red Russia’—still a powerful attraction at that time.

And the popular appeal of Russia, ‘the land of the Soviets’, was greater and strengthened because only the government of the Popular Front had promised to sell or give to the townspeople the arms of the anti-fascists.

France, under the Popular Front government of Leon Blum, and Britain, under the Tories, Japan under the new regime of Hirohito’s father, and Fascist Italy to enforce the Montebello Agreement.

This meant a blockade of Republican Spain by its joint fleets while Hitler and Mussolini sent not only arms but also regular troops to prop up Franco’s farcical rebellion.

It is not surprising that the prestige of the Communist from the Spanish Communist Party rocketed.

Blockade

But surely the masses of radicalized workers (or peasants) must have become disillusioned with the capitalist policies of the Popular Front, which was increasingly dominated by the Communist Party? They did; and as Trotsky’s assessment of the stage of the war, summarised the result.

The republican military commanders were disheartened with the crushing social revolution than with the political deadlock.

The soldiers lost confidence in their commanders, the masses lost confidence in the government the peasants stepped aside, the workers became increasing defeated, demoralisation grew apace.

In short, the task of rescuing the capitalist regime the People’s Front doomed itself to an eventual defeat.

Partly because there was no significant revolutionary organisation—the P.O.U.M., which claimed to be the one, was actually part of the People’s Front. But also because the time was ripe for the social revolution.

Wall street—the biggest joke

DURING the Great Wall Street Crash of 1929 many a doubler in stocks and shares was ruined. One such unlucky man was a British citizen, Mr. Arthur Balfour, who had invested a large sum in the crash.

But Balfour is not in the Stock Exchange. He is still living, and he has won back the money he lost.

The stockbroker took a deep breath, and told him:

"You were very fortunate. We have found 235 shares, screaming at £1 each. and a voice was heard from the capitol.

The speech of the need for economy.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

"Send your Christmas card to an ex-soldier of the First World War. £1 for 10 postcards to enable us to give £1 cash help. Please include s p for postcard. And don’t forget协同 war widows and others in similar distress.

Capable of giving a cheery Christmas to a soldier or ex-soldier with just £1. Why not put Christmas cheer in a postcard?"
Reaction: I won a battle

THE Portuguese revolutionary movement suffered its first major defeat last week since the overthrow of fascism.

Its base among the military units in the Lisbon area has been destroyed and scores of left-wing soldiers and officers are in jail. The ruling class has regained a more or less complete monopoly of armed force.

The leaders of the revolutionary socialist PPR, the Movement of the Socialist Left (MES) and other revolutionary organisations are being hunted and arrested by the authorities. But the defeat for the revolution is not yet total. Army units have been dissolved, but the workers’ committees and the trade unions are more or less intact. The right wing does not yet feel strong enough to take them on directly.

The months during which victory won a notable battle, but full-blooded counter-revolution is not triumphant.

Why did the defeat happen?

Prime responsibility for the defeat lies with the Communist Party leadership, which initiated the rebellion and then abandoned it to its fate.

Communist Party officials agitated for the paratroops to seize airbases and the radio and TV station.

The party leadership admitted it the next day when it wrote that the left had underestimated its strength. Only a few days later it began to blame the ‘ultra-left’.

That leading supporters of the Communist edition of the PPR were arrested or are in hiding bears the point out.

The revolutionary organisations, such as the PPR, MES, the LC, seem to have been quite taken by surprise.

But once the paratroopers had taken control of the capital, they needed support. It was then that the PPR and MES issued a joint statement that the hour has come to give a lesson to the bourgeoisie and that the Fourth International group, the CI, announced: ‘This is the moment when the revolutionaries must make the revolution face another one in a fight within the factories, in the barracks and in the localities’.

But within hours, the Communist Party leadership had copped out of the struggle.

It called to strikes to back up the paratroopers—though it had been able to initiate a successful two-hour general strike the day before—then issue a call to the workers to stay calm. It left the revolutionaries, and even some of its own officers, isolated in the face of attacks from the right.

Dupe

We wrote six weeks ago—in the Portuguese edition of the Proletarian at the Crossroads—that the bourgeoisie would attempt to strangle the revolution by provoking it to engage in battle before there existed either sever or a mass revolutionary party.

The right will do everything in its power to disrupt the working-class vanguard.

The defeat occurred last week through the Portuguese Communist Party.

In Paris in 1839 a minority of a few thousand could take power because the rest of the population was unorganised. This cannot be repeated in Lisbon. The Communist Party is too well organised to allow it.

Party

Although many of the conditions for an insurrection existed in Lisbon last week, the most important was the missing. There was no mass revolutionary party capable of fighting the betrayals of the reformists who were in opposition in every section of every factory.

So the enthusiasm for general strike action of the Monday could give rise to passivity on the Tuesday when the real fight was on.

The revolutionary left did have influence in a few of the leading workers’ committees. But when it came to the class as a whole, its influence was much weaker than that of the Communist Party.

What next?

The revolutionary left has suffered a serious defeat, but the struggle is not over.

The military authorities have not left strong enough to make a frontal assault on the workers’ movement in the factories. The left has been defeated, but not smashed. Historically there have been much worse defeats from which the working class has recovered in a few months, sometimes in a few weeks.

The Portuguese ruling class will use its victory to make the working class bear the cost for the present economic depression. The generals hope that the Communist Party will pay for its position in the government by persuading the workers’ committees and the unions to accept this.

Anger

At first the workers, demoralised by the defeat, might give way. But as prices rise, factories close and wages are held back, anger will grow. Every rent rise, every eviction, every handing of land back to the big landowners, will add to it.

Indeed, it is likely that more workers than ever will be involved in economic struggle.

As the great revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg pointed out 70 years ago, ‘in every great revolution political struggles pass into economic struggle, and economic struggle forms a still wider base for political struggle.’

Through economic struggle the Portuguese working class will recover its strength. If it does so with the Communist Party in government, the opportunities for revolutionary change will be immense—despite the repression.

The political will is unlikely to last long. The generals and the police are much divided and the moderate right will play a major role in the government. The moderate right will make it difficult for the workers’ movement to organise and to overcome its isolation and broaden its base.

The revolutionaries will have to learn to engage in forms of open, legal activity in order to avoid any temptation to engage in illegal, armed activity, and risk severe consequences for themselves and the factories around economic demands.

To do this adequately, the revolutionaries will have to learn to organise and prepare for the next struggle, to be able to demonstrate the power of the workers, to break the conservative EU, and to organise the factories around their own economic demands.
HEALTH care in East London is desperate: more than 1000 TB cases on the register, but no chest clinic in the borough. Infant deaths 18 per cent higher than the English average, and very high rates of whooping cough.

Most parents see are taking 'nervy' pills, Librium and Valium, which in Hackney are as common as Smarties.

In the geriatric ward in the Hackney hospital, some patients have to go to bed at 5am because there aren't enough staff. No day centre either. And we have nearly 30,000 over-65s in the borough.

As a health visitor, I had to deal with the other day with a small Cypriot boy who lived with his brother and parents in two rooms. Nowhere to play. He pulled a man off the bus. He had just hit it in, and the whole side of his body was burned. He is scarred for life. I tried to get a cooker guard for them from the council, but only fire guards are available.

I used to be able to get inexpensive pads for children who wet their beds. Now I am told they are 'too expensive'.

A small thing, but think of the number of sheets that have to be washed by some hard-pressed mothers in the area, and you'll see it's not a small thing at all.

I'm amazed when I read all this stuff about how we health workers—junior doctors, nurses, health visitor, domestics—are all 'non-productive labour' and so can be sacked. My husband has been off work for a few weeks after having his appendix out. I was surprised to see him back at work on Saturday. He said that he was losing £5 a week while he was off, had an electricity bill overdue, and he had to go back to work. Even then he had not healed. His 'concession' to be lifted was only once a cradle at a time instead of three.

You can't separate the health of the worker from the production. Who's going to make sure that the workers are in good health if you sack nurses and close hospitals in one of the most desperate working-class areas? It is nonsense.

We're all productive workers. In any sensible society, the health workers would be seen as essential workers, along with the police and the production of wealth as any other workers. Only in a society that runs for the profit of a few, do we start making distinctions between 'productive' workers who produce things which we sell on the market, and the 'non-productive' workers who just help people when they're sick.

The 6,000 hypocrites who

by a junior doctor

CONSULTANT to junior doctor: I don't think much of them. You couldn't even tell them to the nearest £1,000 how much I have in my current account.

It's funny how rich the done are: telling us to tighten our belts because the country is living beyond its means—take the hospital consultants for instance. They are outraged each time we hospital workers take industrial action. They never miss a chance to tell us that we're killing patients, ruining the health service and so on.

But now those same consultants on £10,000 a year, who live in big houses, ride on expensive cars—guess what they're doing? They're taking 'industrial action'. Why? Because their freedom is threatened. Freedom, that is, to exploit people and to get away with it. That's exactly what the consultants did. Have we lost respect for the Health Service? A small number of us, of course, can go on piling on the pressure for the workers' freedom, but who can we go to for the patients? They are the ones who are being destroyed. Freedom, that is, to exploit people and to get away with it.

Power to the Oligarchy!

It is an amazing thing but tiny differences of emphasis and degree can and do lead to major political storms. There is evidence that one such storm is on the brew now over 'Devolution'.

In a bid to head off the growing support for nationalism, particularly in Scotland, the Labour government published in White Paper on the subject last week.

It sees the setting up of elected assemblies in Edinburgh and Cardiff which will have even less power than the wind tunnel in Westminster.

Naturally enough, this has caused outrage in the ranks of the Scottish National Party. They want every bit as much wind as you can blow out from the Calvin Hill as from Westminster. They want more control over the police force and law and order. Not that all or even most Scots working people see the battle between the Nationalists and the Labour Party as a battle over degrees of wind.

The desire for some form of 'devolution' feeds off a genuine concern for more control over their own lives, for a democracy that is not so inaccessible as the Westminster parliamentary variety.

It is unquestionably this sense of lack of power that fuels the nationalist cause. It is boosted further still by an appreciation of somewhere, somehow, all the great hopes put in Labour and reform have been betrayed or gone astray.

Nevertheless the idea that what has failed us in Westminster is going to work when it is upon us in half and removed to the £500 of Edinburgh's Calvin Hill is utterly threadbare.

Devolution and nationalism will not work for the workers of Scotland. For devolution is, in the words of the great Scots writer Lewis Grassie Gibbon, a scheme for children without gain, and without a child.

Just as real power in London does not reside in the Palace of Westminster, neither does or will real power in Scotland reside in Edinburgh.

The Scottish workers' hopes for the future lie in themselves, their own organisations and communities. They want control over their own lives, through the direct democracy of the factories and tenants' committees. They need to make themselves the rulers of the wealth and resources of the land, just as the workers of Wales, Ireland and England used to do.

In that struggle the workers of Scotland need each and every ally they can get. The SNP is a party of Glasgow needs allies when Scottish workers were used against them. They didn't get them and they lost.

But the West of Scotland farmers drivers did get the solidarity they needed. And they won.

In truth only socialism from the bottom up will do the trick. Only working-class self-organisation, uniting workers in Linkwood with workers in Cowdenbeath, will enable us to challenge the power of the multinationals, the Nobles and the Fraser.

The scheme for children may involve some pain. But at least there is the definite prospect of a child, and a healthy one at that.

The 6,000 hypocrites who
WHAT WE THINK

Service like us. We are all one hundred per cent behind them.

We fully support the junior hospital doctors who are now refusing to work overtime. This attitude of lukewarm support for consultants and vicious attacks on junior doctors has been adopted by most of the unions.

The junior doctors’ dispute is a straightforward pay demand by hard-working people. It is being resisted by the government for one reason only: the £6 pay limit.

The junior doctors deserve the support of all hospital workers. As a nurse told the Women’s Vote rally this Saturday: They are workers like us. They work in the Health Service just like you and me.

And the 19,000 workers who work up to 120 hours a week

By Dr Gerty Dawson

The British Medical Association, the Royal College of Nursing and the National Health Service are all trying to stop the country to ransom. They are not the only bosses who are trying to stop the country to ransom. They are certainly not, with all other bosses, that they are trying to stop the country to ransom.

What is happening in the hospitals is, according to the National Health Service, a real crisis. A real crisis is happening. The 19,000 workers who work up to 120 hours a week are working without the protection of a contract. They are working without any guarantees of a living wage.

The £6 limit has meant that there is no new money on the table. So the employers have simply taken the present overtime hours that some doctors will take a cut in overtime pay to finance some increases for the rest.

In their determination to enforce the £6 limit, some Labour MPs are using crude and inaccurate anti-doctor prejudice, as if the juniors, who are relatively low-paid state employees, were anything like consultants in private practice who are independent businessmen.

The proper trade union attitude is clear: clear opposition to the consultants, clear support for the junior doctors—and practical help too.

DEATH FROM ‘NATURAL CAUSES’

by Len Chanter, an East London junior hospital doctor.

The government’s plans to cut back the National Health Service are bad enough, especially in working-class areas. The following case shows just how bad.

A young boy had trouble with his breathing and was taken to the local casualty ward of an East End hospital. The casualty doctor realised he was very ill and needed emergency, expert care from a child’s specialist, a paediatrician. Although this hospital is meant to provide all emergency services for the area, one of the most densely populated areas in the country, no paediatrician is available immediately to deal with emergencies.

The usual arrangement is that sick kids are transferred to the local children’s hospital a mile or so away. That hospital is not registered as a casualty hospital and 999 ambulances cannot take children there, however sick they are.

The boy’s breathing was becoming worse all the time as the ambulance raced to the other hospital. The child’s heart stopped as he was carried into the hospital.

The doctors at the children’s hospital tried to revive him. But for that boy the expert help had arrived too late. His heart was never to beat again. He had died from a serious, but potentially treatable condition.

I had to break the news to his parents. I have never felt to helpless before. The consultant paediatrician who was rung up at 3am said: ‘Oh dear, never mind. I’m sure you all did your best.’

The local coroner said that he might have to hold an inquest to question the parents, but the post mortem had shown the child had died from ‘natural causes’.

That child died from lack of help—a hole in the system that is to become worse.
IS SCIENCE SOCIALIST?

MEMBERS of ATTI, ASTMs and other trade unionists got together on Saturday to discuss the idea of forming a scientific socialist party. Speakers showed how, under capitalism, scientific knowledge and products of human activity can be used creatively—or abused with horrifying effects as in Northern Ireland.

Considering British industry, everyone was encouraged by events at the Lucas Aerospace components factory where the social usefulness of the products being made was being questioned. In some cases, the right to work was seen as a right to be given a proper job, to be paid and to be treated with dignity. John Macleod described the activities of the International Socialists Study Group. Scientists have been invited to work with the Rank and File safety campaigns, but the concern of health and safety is being given a higher priority for those who work on this campaign (in addition to the campaigns of the other groups). The science group can help in such campaigns with information and advice. If you want more information or help, contact the Study Group, 5 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

WOMEN'S VOICE OUT NEXT WEEK

THE latest issue of WOMEN'S VOICE is being printed and should be out next week. The Socialist Worker on page three.

SOCIALIST WORKER NEWS

...AND WHAT'S ON

AT last we have made it—just in time to pay for the photo setting and the reproduction which has now been installed. It's taken us three months to raise the £6,000, and we want to thank everyone who has contributed or ordered it; it made it possible, a list too long to run this week. The last £36 has been raised thanks to:


STEP FORWARD FOR GERMAN WORKERS' GROUP

THE recent conference of the Socialists' Action Committee in Frankfurt was the most significant event in its organisation's history. It was a national organisation of Socialist Worker and International Socialists. Sheila McGregor and Dave Peers, who represented the committee on behalf of the International Socialists, were able to take part in the debates in which such a major step towards breaking out of the academic ghetto of the German revolutionary left.

The revolution in Portugal has thrown the largely Marxist left in Germany into confusion and has provided the SAG with the opportunity to attract socialist comrades from the general public. As long as the economic crisis opens the possibility of breaking down the barriers between the revolutionary and the working class.

But to take advantage of this situation the SAG has to be active in its own right. It has to be clear that the traditions of passivity, transform itself into an organisation capable of initiating and leading a workers' movement and that the SAG has to work out the form of the revolutionary and the working class.

Revolution not reformism

The most important decision taken was to transform the SAG's monthly journal, Klavernkampf (Clue Struggle), into an agitational workers' paper around which the group could focus and build a political audience for its ideas. From the New Year the paper will appear monthly. It is hoped that it will allow the SAG to extend its political activities to the working class. Local organisations should be formed in new areas where there is space for an independent political movement.

Revolution not reformism

On Saturday 10 December there will be a meeting at the International Socialists' office, 25 New Oxford Street, London WC1. From 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. All are welcome.


SOCIALIST WORKER

CENTRAL MANCHESTER SW public meeting, 7.30 p.m., Tuesday 5 December. The latest trend in the political situation, and the role of the political parties. 333 Abercorn Street, Manchester, NW5 2SW.

NORTH WEST LONDON SW public meeting, 7.30 p.m., Thursday 7 December. The role of the trade unions in the current economic situation. 35 Whitecross Street, London W1.

SOUTH LONDON SW public meeting, 7.30 p.m., Thursday 7 December. The role of the trade unions in the current economic situation. 135 Old Kent Road, London SE1.

BRADFORD SW public meeting, 7.30 p.m., Tuesday 5 December. A meeting of socialist women. 224 Garden Street, Bradford, BD1.

INNER FIRST LONDON public meeting, 8 p.m., Tuesday 5 December. The role of the trade unions in the current economic situation. 20 town Hall, Reading, Berkshire.

Oxford public meeting, 8 p.m., Tuesday 5 December. The role of the trade unions in the current economic situation. 24 Midsummer Road, Oxford.

Cambridge public meeting, Thursday 7 December. The role of the trade unions in the current economic situation. 125 High Street, Cambridge.

HEALTH WORKERS national meeting for SW supporters and members, 2 p.m. Wednesday 6 December. In the health service. More details from Socialist Worker, 12 Cambridge Works, Cambridge Crescent, London E3.


CAMBRIDGE WOMEN'S VICE public meeting, 8 p.m., Tuesday 5 December. The role of the trade unions in the current economic situation. 57 St John's Terrace, Cambridge.

CANTERBURY and district any SW reader or supporter in the area who would like to get in touch with all active organisations in the area, please contact the Socialist Worker, 57 St John's Terrace, Cambridge.

MEDINA HOUSE public meeting, 8.30 p.m., Tuesday 5 December. The role of the trade unions in the current economic situation. 57 St John's Terrace, Cambridge.

SOCIALIST WORKER CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

Friday 19 December, The Bank pub, Hampstead Road (off Tufnell Square), London NW1 (nearest tube, Warren Street). Socialist Worker Christmas Draw to be made after midnight. Real ale! Disco Tickets 50p

SW organizer must make sure that all the rules and all the money is sent in now. Rule 1: no socializing before 12 December can enter the draw—get them in now. Send them to SW, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2.

SW What we stand for

SOCIALIST WORKER is a revolutionary socialist paper that we believe that democratically and independently by the independent action of the working class. We stand for the working class, against the ruling class of capitalists. We stand for the working class in order to change the world. We are against all forms of imperialism, against all forms of oppression, and for a revolutionary socialist society.

SWGW Christmas Social

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GEORGE III died in 1820. He was a fairly typical sort of king—mad, blind and reactionary—and his death was followed by a fairly typical sort of poem from Robert Southey, the poet laureate, announcing the king's arrival in heaven.

Southey's drivel stirred Byron, then living in Italian exile, to write The Vision of Judgment. In it he imagines Southey at the gates of heaven begging for George III's admission and ending his plea by reciting the poem.

By the fourth line, the whole assembled multitude of angels and saints had slopped off in bored panic and stepped up into heaven during the confusion. Things hadn't changed a great deal since. You could still empty a room pretty quickly by standing up and starting to recite a poem that you happened to have brought along in your suit-case.

But Southey's poem is not just a piece of document in some ways a pity. If the choice of poetry makes for itself even a quarter—true—that it represents men and women using language at its most stretched and articulate to come to terms with nature, with themselves and their world—then sometimes poetry is going to say things that are startling, subversive and worth remembering.

William Blake, the John engraver born 218 years ago this week, wrote that kind of poetry. One line from his Marriage of Heaven and Hell is perhaps the most grimly and wittily expressed in any language:

"Prisons are built with stones of law, broken with ricks of religion.
One law for the lion and ox oppression.
The great thing about lines like these is that they can and have been scribbled on walls, blackboards, bill-sites, and a lot of them are worth quoting and chewing over.

A few examples:

Without courtesies is no progress.
The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.

I WENT to Portugal for a holiday—and the experience straightened out a lot of my doubts about workers power.

I'd always wondered about workers control, the kind of doubts our elitist society makes inevitable.

My dad left school at 13 and worked at Ferranti's for years. He wasn't stupid or anything, but he'd never really been able to see him running the factory efficiently with his mates.

In Portugal, the school-leaving age for people now working in the factories was ten. Even with so little schooling—most working class children left before there were ordinary working people setting up commissions, running factories without the bosses.

Knowing the jobs as well as they did, they were able to improve efficiency and increase production, and at the same time improve the general 'quality of working life' in the factories.

Privilege

Another doubt was the use of arms. I think most of us finally learnt from Chile that the workers must be armed.

Are the Workers—a fine-answering phrase. But what does it mean? There are lots of practical problems—who to arm, how long for, where to get the arms, where to keep them, how to control the use of them?

While I was in Lisbon, this question was being tackled by the revolutionary groups and the workers. Establishing links between factories and local barracks was obviously an important step.

But the questions were still going on when I left. Questions of who exactly should be issued arms, questions of skill, courage, common sense, reliability and trustworthiness, all to be weighed against each other.

Visiting factories in the Lisbon area, I also saw the problems of the economic boycott and the power of international capitalism.

In spite of all the convincing intellectual arguments, I'd always had a feeling it might be possible for a country to survive on its own after a revolution. But everywhere, the strangulations of international big business was evident.

In many ways, the economic boycott and sabotage seemed overwhelming. There just didn't seem any solution.

But the workers didn't feel helpless. They were determined that there was no going back, no matter what.

But the need to spread the revolution, to think about what was going on in Spain, to build international solidarity between the working class, was obvious. I'd never taken our international work seriously before.

Come on the oddest demonstration, of course, but thought the international solidarity campaign should be left to the students and the middle classes, who could speak foreign languages and go on holidays abroad.

The relationship of party and class also become much clearer. At home, it had just seemed a boring title for a boring talk at a boring meeting about something which seemed fairly obvious.

Love

In Portugal, the working class had felt some of their power and strength. Everyone seemed confident.

And yet they seemed very disorganised, with dozens of small sectarian groups putting, it seemed, more energy into fighting each other than into fighting for the revolution, and so alienating many true revolutionaries among the working class.

The absence of a strong revolutionary party seemed the greatest tragedy of Portugal. The formation of the United Front offered a glimmer of hope if it could unite the rank and file of the organisations with the support of the mass of the working people.

Many people heaved the feelings of anti-climax on returning from Portugal to organise mundane paper work.

For my visit to Portugal had the opposite effect.

The emotional experiences involved in shouting Portuguese slogans with Spanish comrades on solidarity demonstrations in Lisbon raised my consciousness far more than all the meetings on the question of Revolution ever had.

The necessity and importance of the trade and industrial work we are involved in at home became real as never before. The need for a strong rank and file movement bringing together workers throughout industry, fighting together for basic rights seemed far more obvious and important.

If only Portugal had a strong rank and file organisation. If only the little revolutionary groups had more influence on, and roots in, the working class.

And if there were only a single revolutionary party to show the necessary direction and lend the necessary cohesion to the struggle.
IMPORT CONTROLS: WE MUST THINK AGAIN

AS AN IS member I am somewhat dismayed over our attitude to import controls, especially after reading the SW description of President Mogae as the new “Robin Hood” in South Africa. British Leyland is starting car plants in South Korea, British Steel in South America, British Aluminium in Hong Kong.

We can’t stop the outflow of British capital but we could stop these companies bringing their capital investments back into the industrial muscle of this country.

We would have to come from British and multinational companies not from the IS organisations.

We also have to ensure that we get over to more of our people that it’s not the ‘wogs and chinks’ that import cheap labour to do clothes and cars, but British and multinationals that don’t care about the working conditions of the people in the Third World... BILLY HYDE, Abertillery.

Brijnshaw in Iran

A scandal, Brijnshaw

IT WAS with astonishment that we received the recent news that Lord Mitchell, an ex-TUC leader, is to act as a middleman between British firms and the fascist regime of Iran.

Iran’s disregard for human rights has factored in that the Soviet African and Spanish regimes.

According to Amnesty International, it has 40,000 political prisoners in the country. The opposition to the gallows during the past few months.

His Lordship is acting as a middleman for reasons which, as well as the above atrocities, has denied the people of Iran all democratic rights and the right to engage in trade union activities.

According to Amnesty International, it has 40,000 political prisoners in the country. The opposition to the gallows during the past few months.

The regime gives batches as a reward to workers’ demands, however, ordinary people may be. During the past three months, workers have been engaged in three large strikes. These were two among other events. The third strike came around a few months ago. They spent some days on the streets but were ‘shot while trying to escape’.

The regime gives batches as a reward to workers’ demands, however, ordinary people may be. During the past three months, workers have been engaged in three large strikes.

A similar clash between the regime and the workers has been in Iran, where 17 people were killed and a great number of workers arrested.

The activities of the Iranian regime have been extended to the immigration of the British government, the agents of SAVAK. It has set a precedent for the regime to treat the workers and students resident in this country.

Iranian students in this country have been galvanised into action by the 21 students charged with conspiracy to trespass (in fact they had gone into the Iranian Embassy) and sought their protest against the massacre of the students.

They had appealed to the TUC and trade union leaders in Britain for a delegation to Iran to investigate trade union conditions and find out the number of workers’ prisoners in the country for political activities.

Now, these ‘political prisoners’ have been answered in that a delegation headed by Tony Benn has been sent to Iran, but not to investigate the living and working conditions of the deprived workers of Iran but to serve a fascist regime to prevent the class conflict... CHAIRMAN, Committee for Defence of 21 Iranian Students.

This was disgraceful!

I AM A MARRIED man and if I were on strike I would expect my wife to mind the kids and do all the housework while I gave all I could to the struggle.

If she were on strike I would naturally do the same. Your article on women workers in South Wales (22 November) which accepts that women strikers are stuck with the ‘responsibility of the home and the shopping’ is disgraceful.

SW should always argue that where the conditions of householders are to wash dishes and too often work without pay, and specially SW should offer whatever child-minding and housework is needed.—JOHN BLAIR.

RIP...Rest In Profit

SIR DENYS Lowson, once head of Oxfam and the White Ribbon League and reputed to be one of the richest men in Britain, was technically broke when he died two days ago. As a result, no death duties will be paid on his estate.

During his lifetime, he made a personal fortune estimated at £54 million and only a few months before he died on a £250,000 world cruise on the luxury liner, the QE2.

Sir Denys, who employed some of the best tax and legal experts managed to escape death duties by passing on the bulk to his wife and family trusts during his lifetime.

One example of how the capitalist class manage to avoid paying death duties is by setting up life assurance policies in the name of a close relative.

The scheme, of course, is merely a freeze on existing property to avoid capital gains tax.
WHY ARE YOU now asking people to vote in the Socialist Worker Party election. What is wrong with IS nowadays, and what is its so-called sectarianism.—J.KNOLLES, Keswbury.

WILL THIS CHANGE OF NAME make SW supporters fully paid-up members, who work the week under hand of increasing the membership, who do not fully agree with IS. But if IS is to be the gutter press continually rant and rave about the co-operative, the 1950s democracy and honestly with fellow comrades within and around IS, the type of manwriting can only lead to the demise of IS into small isolated and radical. Have you investigated Socialists.—P FORTUNE, SW supporter, Dumbries.

WHAT RELIEF to read Gathercole’s letter (1 November). After years of bombing, we are now “daffy, horrid and conser- vative” leaders, and IS supporters are encouraging the wages system by paying for work instead of fighting the wages system, because all voluntary workers are unpaid.

Mr Prior, the shadow Em- ployment Secretary, has con- cealed privately that the Con- servatives have given £2,000 to facilitate postal ballot papers for the election. Political unionism is in ruins.

The truth about union elections: from The Times 27 November

THE FLEET STREET press lords have been working all out recently on behalf of their fellow employers.

They have run articles after article on the IS Workers’ Unity candidates, with engineering and electrical union members in particular being bombarded with advice on how to keep the unions ‘safe’.

The advice ‘boins’ down to lies and slander about left-wing candidates and people who think of themselves as ‘white working-right’. The word ‘right-wing’, of course, is never questioned.

The term preferred is ‘moderate’. Woodrow Wyatt, writing in last week’s Sunday Telegraph, even goes so far as to say in a piece telling his readers to vote in the building union, UCATT, that the IS Workers’ Unity candidates are ‘anathema’ to Labour government supporters.’

Wyatt’s sudden interest in the unions coincides with the current voting as a number of unions. The most important is for the union’s general council and for two regional organizational elections. So-called ‘white working-right’ candidates that have not yet been adopted by UCATT. Vendors unite in opposition to the candidates takes place instead of branches as proper district and branch.

By C Minton, UCATT

With this in mind the London Evening News ran a piece in its 25 December edition. As the 25 December is the 25th anniversary of the General Strike, Meyer devotes most of his article to ‘notorious freebooter’ Frank Taggart and ‘unofficial Communist agent’ Lewis Lewin.

Suggests as a difference between as ‘unofficial Communist’ and as ‘official Communist’ on a postcard only. Lewin seems to be the main target and his use of the nickname ‘Toni’ instead of his ‘correct name Richard is exposed in the defiant method used to get through the employers’ blunders. There’s another working class myth shut down in London.

Until I read Meyer’s article, I always thought only the call the employers the ‘fair’ news.

EXPOSED

Several ‘dirty tricks’ whereby ‘Moscow Workmen’ candidates are elected by the establishment, are exposed.

These ‘are exposed by ‘some’ who knows and are their job to call elected by left-wing leaders to elect the will of the ‘moderate’ in the branch. How secretaries and chairs get elected and the first place is not explained. All illegal method is that of a chairman failing to read out the list of branches nominating the candidates.

After reading Meyer’s eloquent plea for the decent trade union to stand up and fight for democracy, I feel obliged to list the following candidates for regional organization.

Mr Prior, the shadow Employment Secretary, has concealed privately that the Conservative Party are giving £2,000 to facilitate postal ballot papers for the election. Political unionism is in ruins.

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JOIN NATIONWIDE PICKET AND HELP BEAT LADBROKESTR

GLASGOW: If the Ladbroke strikers are to win they need your help. On Saturday 13 December every Ladbroke shop around the country must be picketed—while the workers are fighting, job losses must stop. Solidarity action for the Ladbroke strikers is simple to organise; because Ladbroke have a betting shop in every major town and city. The Ladbroke struggle must be raised at every TGWU branch and district. Most important, it should be raised on every shop stewards' committee. No trade unionist should place any bets with Ladbroke.

Every trade unionist who reads Socialist Worker should set aside an hour or two on Saturday 13 December to come and picket.

Then Ladbroke won't become another Fine Tube, where the strike lasted for three years without a victory. Ladbroke have been out for over six months now. But every member of the committee, representing the 280 strikers, is confident they can win.

"I'm on strike for trade union recognition and anything else is a sell-out," Gavin Kelly, a member of the strike committee, told Socialist Worker.

Help make sure there is no sell-out. Picket Ladbroke on Saturday December.

For more details in Socialist Worker next week. Send us details of picketing planned in your area.

Send donations and messages of support to Ladbroke strike committee, 10 West Regent Street, Glasgow.

TFHEDER

Glasgow Right to Work Campaign

Meeting for delegates from local shop stewards committees and for all unemployed workers

FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO WORK

Wednesday 10 December, 7.30pm. Kingston Halls, Glasgow.

Sponsored by the shop stewards' committees at Scottish Cables, Renfrew.

The occupation faced another test last week. Management made an offer through the government's Conciliation and Arbitration Service. It proposed to return to work on 5 January. In January we'll review the whole offer.

For the workers at Personna either the offer is a joke or the management are liars.

Mike McQuaid, AUEW convener, told Socialist Worker: "It's a bloody ridiculous offer. We want the factory to be sold to the workers. We want the factory is piled high with blankets and there are several hundred workers over the globe. It's clear they want us to go back to the same place, to the same profit. And after that they'll just attack us again and maybe even try to close the place down.

"Well, they're definitely not on. We're not going back until they say, 'Right, you're the masters of this place.'"

Helen Gallacher, TASS shop steward said: "We're not interested in any offer. It would be madness. It would mean that we'd been fighting for 10 weeks for nothing. They think we're mad, but it doesn't matter. They can't take our profit!"

The occupation needs support. Please send messages of support to Personna occupations' committee and to all other workers. Already the Mull dockers have agreed to support the strikers. That kind of support must be maintained.

Please phone sponsors and messages of support to Personna Occupations Committee, 20 Bowen Crescent, Glasgow.

Ansell's crack under mass strike threat

BIRMINGHAM. The Ansell's dispute is over. Last Thursday was the first full meeting of both clerical and manual unions at Ansell's. It voted for industrial action throughout Allied Breweries if a settlement was not reached by the weekend.

After a 15-hour meeting that same day that the deal is now in effect.

The original dispute to organise pub managers into ACTU, the sectional of the Transport Union, instead of the management-led National Association of Licensed House Managers, has now gone to the TUC for arbitration.

Ansell's management has agreed to a 12 million expansion for its Birmingham depot. This will provide more jobs in both clerical and manual departments.

Throughout the dispute the right-wing Birmingham Evening Mail has been printing all manner of lies and distortions about the situation. Peter Kirk, ACTE branch chairman, said that Socialist Worker's letters have been helping to keep the dispute honest. He said: "If only more letters have been happening was a great morale booster for the strikers."

"It's the only paper which has given us any sense of what's really been happening," he said.

Alcoa offer: Sack the Scots!

SOUTH WALES. N G Bailey, the contractors whose sackings of electricians two months ago led to a strike of all 56 workers at the massive Alcoa steel project, now seem to have proposed a settlement on Monday which amounts to shames victimisation.

They proposed to offer jobs to 57 of the 63 men sacked. The other six are still on the blacklist.

The employers pretended that they do not want the six because they are 'not local men'. This avoids the fact that one of the 'non-local men' is Stevie Stevenson, return of the joint shop steward committee, which is leading the strike.

The employers offered this deal on the Thursday, then enlarged it. BA was then joined by Smullen, who remarked: "It's the best we can do.

But it is extremely dangerous. It gives the workers the job offers. It also threatens the activities of all militancy in the whole of the Alcoa district. The pickets at Alcoa Crossing are a clear example of this. The peace formula is gross victimisation. A point at which we believe to discuss the matter after we go to press Wednesday.
Inside the occupied plant in Milan

Innocenti workers take on British Leyland

We’re not just fighting Innocenti and furnish Leyland. We are fighting the government. We are fighting not just for our jobs. We are fighting for the right to work, for everyone.

Ryton is closing. Last Friday was our last day. We won’t be back. We haven’t been given any starting date by Chrysler for the coming year.

STEWARDS in some sections said there was no cause for concern. The company police had promised to let nothing go out through the gates over Christmas!

But this blithely-sanctioned of our stewards proved itself ridiculous when all over the weekend men were being turned away at the gates. Everyone was being turned away with unfinished cars. What worse sign of a closure?

It has been obvious for a long time that Chrysler intended to shut down Ryton. The stewards’ delaying tactics have got us nowhere except on the wrong side of the factory gate. The truth is, it’s too late now. The announcement cannot be reversed.

On Monday they struck on the solution of holding a Chrysler Support Meeting in the Willenhall Workers’ Club this Saturday. The convenors, Fox and McCafferty, had visited the Ryton stewards and the local MP as well as the trade union officials to this eleventh-hour jamboree.

But jamborees and last-minute jamborees to fight should be there and make that point quite clearly—this is one of the few chances we’ve had. Playing power games with officials and MPs won’t work on the shop floor. Only on the shop floor will we ourselves, forget the wait-and-see philosophy and fight.

We must organise now to occupy the plant and resist all further attempts to move anything from it.

The only alternative is the dole queue.

‘Occupy Chrysler’ call spreads at Linwood and Stoke plants

The Chrysler Stoke stewards’ committee is being pulled by events into verbally declaring support for militant tactics to save jobs. Last week news that Chrysler is preparing to occupy, coupled with the tremendous response to the 26 November Rights to Work demonstration in London, have forced the senior stewards into seeing that the Stoke plant will be occupied in the event of closure.

In contrast, threatened with a strike of an additional 8000 workers in its other factories, are being forced into the negotiating table.

SMELTERS UNITE

A STAFF strike at Smelting is now in its fifth week. The metal workers, of course, are demanding to return to the eight-hour week and to taking back those men who were sacked.

A direct result of the strike, stewards in all the major chemical works at Avonmouth are meeting. This covers Commonwealth Smelting, International Smelting, Fisons, ICI, Sevelon and Tate & Lyle.

John Miller, Transport and General Workers Union national secretary for chemicals, told a joint meeting of stewards that all fights such as those against rising unemployment should get the union’s full backing. We must hold the union to that statement.

Twenty-five strikers, their wives and children, are occupying the offices of the Department of Health and Social Security last Monday. Thirty others picked the main gate of the social security office. They are protesting against a code which means no striker can claim sickness benefit.

Without a win, we’ll be glad to call failure. But at work, the strike is going well. We must organise now to occupy the plant and resist all further attempts to move anything from it.

The only alternative is the dole queue.

KEIGHLEY: Three tunnel miners, members of the TUGW miners’ union, were on strike last week. Their employers were the owners of the Fordham building site, who have been blockading, for some weeks, the entrance to the Fordham site.

The next day they were called on to the police station and released but asked to do some stimulating, without benefit. A demonstration to Fordham, however, was refused.

They refused an offer of mediation, the police asked them to do some stimulating.

THE South East London Right to Work Campaign mounted a picket of three hundred workers outside the ITT factory in Cray on on the 5th of December. Members of the全日 Moundings facing 80 job and to the 350 workers from another factory on the site.

Peter Long, son of miners (Despall), who is to speak at the South East London Right to Work meeting, has been arrested. His last days of massive demonstration in London gave a great boost for the campaign against unemployment. A united strike to achieve an end to the labour movement is crucial in the fight for work.

FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO WORK public meeting, 6 December, 8.30pm, Charter House, Hornfair Road, Barking.

BIRMINGHAM: The administrative block at the Polytechnic Edgbaston Centre has been occupied by students in an effort to stop evictions. The students have occupied because of the refusal to pay another massive increase.

Messages of support to Occupation of Polytechnic Edgbaston Centre, Birmingham B15 2TT.
PORTUGAL:

From Socialist Worker reporters in Lisbon

THE British press were last weekend celebrating the collapse of what it claimed was a 'left-wing coup' in Portugal. There was little for workers in Lisbon to celebrate, however. The 'defenders of liberty' who control the government and armed forces have suspended right-left wing state-controlled papers while they re-organise the editorial boards. The radio and TV are being censored, and more than 100 left-wing soldiers and officers are in jail. Anyone entering Lisbon from the airport has to pass through six military roadblocks, each manned by leather-jacketed commandos. Two unarmed civilians who disobeyed their orders were shot dead last week.

The leaders of Mario Soares' Socialist Party are boasting victory. But they may soon be shoved aside by right-wing upholders who now hold a monopoly of military power — and who long for a return to the trappings of fascism.

The soldiers were betrayed. No to repression.

With that headline, a special edition of the worker-controlled paper Republica appeared on the streets on Sunday, for the first time for five days.

But how was the battle lost?

Already a myth is being pushed that the military simply lost its nerve. The real sequence of events was rather different. The revolutionary left groups, the PRP and the MNS, had been arguing that an insurrection was necessary to avoid the danger of another Chile. But they expected it only after some weeks of building support for it in the factories.

However, on the night of 24-25 November, right-wing military figures made a number of provocative moves — putting commandos outside the military police barracks and removing Osvaldo da Carvalho from his command for being too tolerant to the left.

The paratroops, who had only just come over to the left, seized airbases and the main radio station in retaliation. The authorities in Lisbon are now claiming that elements of the Communist Party and the extreme left participated in the rebellion.

But when the paratroops moved, the revolutionary groups were as surprised as everyone else. The CP seems to have been directly involved. It issued an hysterical call for 'vigilance' and bodies it influenced called people to the barracks. Only after these calls had been made did the revolutionary left join the movement.

Late on Tuesday morning, Fifth Division officers sympathetic to the Communist Party visited the PRP offices to persuade them to join in. However, at that point the CP did an about-turn and abandoned the fury of the right those who had followed its initiative — including some of its own key people in the armed forces.

The marines, who had initially supported the paratroops, withdrew to the sidelines. CP-influenced officers in key military units began negotiating for surrender, creating general demoralisation.

The Metal Workers' Union, which had called for a general strike on the Tuesday, did nothing to work for it the next day. The Intersyndical, the CP-led trade union federation, did nothing. A CP leaflet called for 'serenity.' Suddenly, the left wing soldiers and the revolutionary groups found themselves isolated.

The left wing army units were divided and confused. Although they were opposed by as many as 100 right wing commandos, the CP-influenced officers advised surrender.

But why did the CP leadership do a somersault that amounted to more than betrayal of its own military supporters?

The reason in Lisbon is that, at the height of the rebellion, Cunhal, the leader of the CP, made contact with the President of the Republic.

Jointly they agreed that the CP would be allowed to remain in the government, providing it would oppose strikes in future and would work with the government to clamp down on the revolutionary left.

Certainly, the evening the revolt was crushed, Melo Antunes, one of the leading 'moderates' appeared on TV to say that the CP should still be in the government.

The tragedy was that the revolutionary left did not have the foresight to see the scale of the treachery, nor the strength in the factories to gain support for the soldiers once the CP had changed sides.