

Workers' ACTION

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10p

RALLY AGAINST THE NATIONAL FRONT

The Nazi NF are calling a march on Remembrance Day, November 12th. According to unconfirmed reports, they plan to march from the Cenotaph into East London. The Anti-Nazi League has called a counter-mobilisation assembling at:

1.30pm at Central Hall, Westminster

Workers' Action calls on all its readers to be there.

DOWN WITH THE SHAH!



Zanjan, northwest of Tehran, 21st October: More than half of the town's population of 100,000 protest at killing of a 17-year old demonstrator two days earlier.

The revolt in Iran has taken on the proportions of a revolution. The new military government is the Shah's last throw.

The top military officers, hand-picked by the Shah, will be ruthless in their efforts to put down the opposition. They have the biggest army in the Middle East: Iran is the only country in the world where more than a quarter of the gross national product is spent on arms. The Shah and his generals have since 1973 taken 40% of the world total of US arms exports. Chieftain tanks are supplied by Britain.

But all the military spending in the world will not be sufficient to suppress the revolution in Iran if the troops refuse to fire on their brothers and sisters.

Short

Before the 'Black Friday' massacre on 8th September in Tehran, and in the early stages of 'Black Friday' itself, there were many cases of soldiers siding with the anti-Shah demonstrators, or refusing to shoot. Some turned their guns against their officers.

Now the *Financial Times* reports: "There are firm indications that some army units are sympathising with the demonstrators. A truckload of troops posted next to the British Embassy, to guard

the premises, made no attempt to interfere... Near the university area, witnesses watched soldiers standing by while rioters broke into a Government office... demonstrators embraced soldiers and climbed onto their trucks."

Banks and Government buildings were also burnt down, without troops trying to stop the demonstration.

Outside Tehran, right-wingers have resorted to mobilising mobs of backward peasants against the anti-Shah protesters — showing that they have no confidence in the Army's ability to repress the opposition. One band of peasants was paid £35 a head to come into Tehran to 'deal with students'.

The Shah promises that more political prisoners will be released and free elections will be held — some time after the revolt has been crushed! — also show his weakness.

The Shah's main strength is the unanimous support given to him by the USA, by Britain, and by the USSR and China.

At the end of October Jimmy Carter made a new statement of support for Iran's "progressive administration", and Leonid Brezhnev sent a telegram of friendship to the Shah. Chinese leader Hua Kuo-feng made a special point of staying over in Tehran to show his backing for the Shah. David Owen and Jim Callaghan both praised the dictatorship... and continued supply-

ing tanks to the Iranian army.

The key to this friendship and support is Iran's oil riches, 9% of world production. Most Iranian oil production is controlled by a consortium which is 40% owned by British Petroleum, 14% by the Anglo-Dutch firm Shell, and 40% by various American firms.

Huge profits are made from the oil industry and from other foreign interests in Iran. Profit rates have been 20% or 30% a year: one British businessman told a French journalist, "I make 40% more profit here than in Britain".

Profits

Britain and the US are supporting the Shah for the sake of those profits. France, which has fewer economic links with Iran, has adopted a more neutral attitude, allowing the Muslim opposition leader Ayatollah Khomeiny to operate near Paris.

The USSR and China are supporting the Shah for the sake of maintaining the status quo in the area. In neighbouring Afghanistan the Daud dictatorship was overthrown in April, and the new regime has made promises of radical land reform which have yet to be carried out. In Pakistan the military dictatorship risks unleashing mass opposition if it goes ahead and executes former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

For the conservative bureaucracies of the USSR and China the prospect of widespread revolutionary ferment ranks as the No.1 danger to be avoided.

Despite all the telegrams of support — and, more important, all the arms shipments — the Shah's position is far from secure. Since early October, strikes have affected almost every important sector of Iranian industry. Since the oilworkers' strike began on 31st October, the government has faced severe economic difficulties. And the army cannot run the oil wells and oil refineries.

There have been demonstrations of 100,000 or 200,000 even in relatively small towns; in some cases, the numbers on the demonstrations have been over half the population of the town. Machine-guns and tanks have been used against these demonstrations again and again: the only result is that the next round of demonstrations is even bigger.

If the Shah's last gambit in the policy of repression fails, the next resort for the Iranian bourgeoisie and for imperialism is the bourgeois opposition, represented by the 'National Front'.

The imperialist powers do not want to see the 'National Front' replacing the Shah, for they fear that under mass pressure it could do no less than take some nationalist measures against British and US control of Iran's oil wealth. They may even resort to

direct or covert military intervention in support of the Shah.

Nevertheless, they will certainly prefer the 'National Front' to the prospect of a workers' revolution which would bring Iran's wealth under the ownership and control of the people of Iran.

The 'National Front' leaders are playing a slippery role. At the beginning of October, their chief, Sanjabi, said: "12 months ago, you had to have courage to criticise the sovereign, today you need it to speak up for him". He offered to form a new government under the Shah. Today, under the pressure of mass militancy, Sanjabi says the Shah and his accomplices must go; but the National Front responds to the imposition of military rule by calling for 'calm'.

Threat

These treacherous leaders are a real threat for the mass movement. But by all accounts they have little organisation in Iran. If they succeed in gaining control of the mass movement, it will be largely thanks to the assistance of the Muslim clerics.

The role played by Muslim clerics in the opposition movement does not mean that it is reactionary. Many progressive

continued on page 2

IRAN

continued from page 1

movement have had priests playing a prominent role: the civil rights movement in the USA, the nationalist movement in Ireland, or even the first stages of the Russian Revolution of 1905. It means no more than that the mosques have been the only possible meeting places for the opposition, and that the clerics, partly protected from the ruthless dictatorship by the religious respect they are granted, have until recently been almost the only people able to speak out against the regime.

There is no trace of religious bigotry or backwardness in any of the main demands of the opposition: down with the Shah; release of political prisoners; an end to martial law; the right to organise genuine trade unions; free elections. Even the call for an 'Islamic Government' does not (for the demonstrators who raise it) mean religious bigotry, but a drive against the corrupt luxury of the oil-rich Iranian middle class.

Ayatollah Khomeiny, the chief leader of the Muslim opposition, has declared many times that he does not want the barbarities of 'Islamic law' as practised in Pakistan or Saudi Arabia, where thieves are supposed to be punished by having their hands cut off; nor does he oppose equality for women.

In contrast, under the laws of the so-called modernising and liberalising Shah, women suffer monstrous inequalities. Their wages are much lower than men's. No woman, whatever her age, can marry without the consent of her parents. Mothers have no rights in relation to their children. It is not a serious criminal offence for a man to "kill his wife for the defence of his dignity" (i.e. if he finds her with a lover). The law allows a man to forbid his wife any work interfering with the 'benefit' or 'dignity' of the family.

Women have been in the forefront in the mass demonstrations,

crying 'Death to the Shah'.

The real danger presented by the religious leaders lies in the credit they can give to the bourgeois opposition politicians. To carry their movement through to final victory, the Iranian workers and peasants will have to find their own leaders, revolutionaries who will offer them a socialist programme and not the consoling phrases of the priests.

The last year has opened the lid of Iranian political life, and must have allowed many currents of political thought to emerge and contest the Muslim clerics' monopoly of opposition to the Shah. Reports from Iran speak of leaflets being circulated by underground organisations. The vast scope of the demonstrations and strikes, and the fact that they have consistently proposed more far-reaching demands than the clerics, shows that these underground organisations must have some real strength.

News reports give no clear picture of how far political differentiation has progressed among the opposition in Iran. Radical currents generally gain their first base of support among students, and that is how it seems to be in Iran.

So far — judging from press reports — socialist slogans have not been heard on the mass demonstrations. The opposition's demands have been confined to the issues of democracy, workers' wages, and, more recently, the demand for Iranian rather than imperialist control over the oil. Workers' power, workers' control, and nationalisation of industry have not been among the slogans.

The fact that the Iranian working class has not yet found its independent voice is not surprising, after 25 years in which all political life in Iran has been mercilessly suppressed. But the emergence of socialist demands among the workers is the logical next step in the radicalisation in Iran. The question is whether it can come soon enough, and with sufficient clarity, to prevent the bourgeois opposition selling out the mass movement for a few miserable reforms.

The green flag and the red

IRAN had a relatively strong and active working class movement before 1953. In that year the nationalist government of Mohammed Mossadeq was overthrown by a coup organised and paid for by the CIA. The oil industry, nationalised by Mossadeq, was handed back to imperialism, the only difference being that the Americans, and others, now had shares alongside BP, previously the exclusive owner of Iranian oil.

Under the Shah, strikes and genuine trade unions were banned. The jails were filled with political prisoners, up to a total of between 25,000 and 100,000. The notorious

SAVAK secret police was set up with help from the CIA and the Israeli secret police.

Especially after the 1974 rise in oil prices, a ruling class minority became very rich, while the working class suffered on wages a quarter or a tenth of British wages [with a similar cost of living], and many peasants existed in even worse conditions.

According to 1973 figures [and inequality has got worse since then] half the population accounted for only 17.5% of consumption.

In 1976, however, the oil boom started to recede. The new industries introduced into the country were almost all oriented towards

the luxury consumption of the rich — as opposed to capital-goods production, mass consumption, or export. They quickly exhausted the available market and began to run into problems of overproduction.

Dissent first appeared in bourgeois circles. Intellectuals began to speak out for democracy. In January this year the dissent spilled over into mass opposition, after scores of demonstrators were shot dead by troops in the city of Qom.

Thereafter there was a cycle of demonstrations and protests every forty days, in line with Muslim customs of mourning for the dead: in mid-February, in late March, and in early May.

In June and July, the movement ebbed slightly. In August it revived, and then exploded after the burning of the Rex Cinema in Abadan, on 19th August. The 377 deaths were blamed by everyone on the Shah.

In Tehran in early September, demonstrators fraternised with troops. The Shah imposed martial law. 8th September was 'Black Friday': literally thousands were shot down on the streets of Tehran.

Since 'Black Friday' there has been a mounting wave of demonstrations and, most importantly, the working class has moved into action with an enormous strike wave. At first the demands were for wage increases, to offset the ruinous inflation. Now the oilworkers are continuing their strike for political demands, even after their economic demands have been granted.

Iran's working class is relatively larger than in many 'Third World' countries: there are three to four million industrial workers in a population of 35 million. However, the majority of these workers are in small workshops.

The crucial oil industry only employs about 50,000 workers. These workers are the most concentrated and powerful section of the Iranian working class, and they have now taken the lead in the fight to bring down the Shah. The future of the Iranian revolution depends on their ability to unite the rest of the working class and peasantry behind them, with the help of the Marxist students.

The duty of British workers is to do everything we can to help them, and to campaign against Owen's and Callaghan's support for the Shah.



Intercontinental Press (6th Nov) quotes an Iranian press report of a student demonstration on October 25th:

"It gathered in two different contingents — one under green banners, the symbol of Islam, and a slightly larger group under red banners.

"Those under the red banners carried slogans reading 'For a revolutionary democratic republic of Iran, under the leadership of the working class...' After the march, the Muslim and socialist students divided. The Muslims went to pray. The socialists held a rally where 'representatives of workers from different factories spoke and voiced their solidarity with the students'.

A student who has recently left Iran, interviewed in the same issue of IP, reports that many of the left students, whom he describes as 'communists', have gone into the

factories. And many Iranian militants understand that 'communism' is something different from the bureaucratic systems of China and the USSR.

"The demonstrators chanted, 'Viva Palestine, Eritrea, the Philippines, Iran'. Also 'Death to the Shah', 'death to China', 'death to Russia', 'death to America' and 'death to Anwar Sadat'..."

Demonstrators, this student reported, ripped up leaflets of the Tudeh Party — the Moscow-oriented 'Communist' Party — but not for anti-communist reasons. "All the people remember the betrayal of the Tudeh Party when Mossadeq was overthrown in 1953. People say the Tudeh Party was responsible for the success of that coup, which brought the Shah to power. The Tudeh Party didn't defend the Mossadeq government, this is well known".

Eanes moves against land reform

IN the week ending on 14th October hundreds of riot police of the National Republican Guard, in full riot gear and armed with truncheons, sub-machine guns and dogs, riding horses and "Shortland" armoured cars; began the recent series of violent attacks on the agricultural workers' cooperatives of Alentejo, Southern Portugal.

These cooperatives were formed by the agricultural workers in 1974-5 following a wave of occupations of the huge estates belonging to absentee landowners which began at the end of 1974.

The aim of the police attacks is to secure the return of large areas of land, up to 1700 acres, livestock and farm machinery, to the former landowners.

The first victims of the attacks were the cooperatives named It is difficult but it is ours and Freedom, in the district of Portalegre in northern Alentejo. After that, it was the turn of cooperatives in the Beja and Évora districts. So far more than 18 cooperatives have been attacked.

The police have everywhere been met by determined resistance on the part of the agricultural workers. For instance, on the 28th October the police attacked the cooperative of St. Bartholomew in the district of Évora. They were met by 3,000 agricultural workers and their families, in the resulting battle, 50 workers were injured and had to be treated in hospital. In the Black Star cooperative, 40 workers were injured including a pregnant woman who was bitten by a police dog.

Altogether more than 120 cooperative workers have been injured by police.

The attacks have been continuing, despite a wave of protest and revulsion which has spread through Portugal. On 24th October a protest strike called by Intersindical was supported by workers in the industrial belt of Lisbon. During the strike workers remained in the factories and held mass meetings. Lisnave shipyard workers res-



Demonstration in defence of land reform

ponded massively, despite management attempts to forbid the strike. Protest strikes have also taken place in many other parts of the country, notably in many Oporto factories.

In the Alentejo a general half-day strike took place with demonstrations in the main towns. At Beja, 80,000 people demonstrated.

The attacks on the agricultural workers of Alentejo, the most combative section of the Portuguese working class and the most exploited workers under the fascist regime which was overthrown on 25th April

1974, was ordered by the administration of Prime Minister Nobre da Costa, despite the fact that his Government had been defeated in Parliament on a motion of confidence. The government was therefore acting on the sole authority of the President of the Republic, General Ramalho Eanes.

This gentleman will be in London on a State Visit on the 14th, 15th and 16th November. The Portuguese Workers' Coordinating Committee is planning to greet him with the same message he got from the

workers of Lisbon, Oporto and the Alentejo. A picket of the Portuguese Embassy (11 Belgrave Square, SW1 — Hyde Park Corner tube) at 7pm on Thursday 16th November will demand: Republican Guard Out of Alentejo and Defend Agrarian Reform in Portugal.

PWCC are also asking British socialists and trade unionists to show their solidarity with the Alentejo cooperatives by sending letters and telegrams of protest to the Portuguese Embassy — and to join the picket.

...and chooses another PM

EVER since 1976, Portuguese governments have been making threats against the cooperatives established by agricultural workers who seized large areas of land during the revolutionary upheavals of 1975. Usually, however, governments have pulled back from decisive action, fearing the results.

The government which has made the most drastic moves against the agricultural workers so far is, strictly speaking, not an authoritative government at all. Alfredo Nobre da Costa's administration was defeated on its first parliamentary vote of confidence, on September 14th. Asked by President Eanes to stay on as a caretaker regime, it decided that it had little to lose, and sent in the Republican National Guard.

Meanwhile Eanes has come forward with a new nominee for prime minister: Carlos Mota Pinto.

Mota Pinto, a former member of the rightist Social Democratic Party (PSD), is a man of the same stripe as Nobre da Costa, and has promised to pursue a similar hard policy towards the agricultural cooperatives.

However, Mota Pinto seems likely to win the vote of confidence when he presents his programme to parliament, in the next week or so. Although Mario Soares' Socialist Party has said it opposes forcible eviction of agricultural workers from the occupied land, it has pledged support to Mota Pinto, and so has the conservative CDS. The PSD is divided in its attitude, and the Communist Party has not come out with a clear position yet.

Rudolf Bahro - victim of 'real existing socialism'



IT WAS grimly inevitable that the supreme court of the GDR would reject Rudolf Bahro's appeal. In July 1978 the East German economist was convicted of 'espionage' after a ludicrous secret trial which followed a long term in prison.

His real crime: writing a book — a massive, learned, serious, well researched book — in which he attempted as a Marxist to lay bare

the laws of motion of what he called 'real existing socialism', the 'socialism' of Russia and the East European states. The most offensive part of this crime: the fact that the book does not confine itself to description or analysis, but puts forward a strategy for transformation, for an anti-bureaucratic revolution.

The Committee for the Release of Rudolf Bahro (in Germany) has made it clear in a recent open letter: "We never were in any doubt as to the value of such efforts to free him [as appeals to the GDR authorities]. In conversations and in collaboration with others we have always stressed that if there is any chance of putting enough pressure on the GDR authorities to gain the release of Bahro, that pressure will come as a result of the broadest possible political mobilisation of world public opinion, in particular within the international workers' movement".

As an act of solidarity, and as an attempt to give Bahro's work its due consideration, the Committee has organised an International Congress for and about Rudolf Bahro. It will take place in West Berlin from November 18 to 19. For further information, write to Komitee für die Freilassung Rudolf Bahros, Postfach 3005, 1000 Berlin 30.

An English translation of Bahro's book, 'The Alternative', is to be published on 7th December.

SCLV in East End SELF-DEFENCE, THE ONLY ANSWER

LAST WEEK the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory organised a meeting in East London with a clear message. Racism will not be defeated by the police. It will only be defeated by mobilising the community for self-defence and by organising politically against the racist policies

of successive governments.

There was an audience of 70 or 80, half of them Asians, at Toynbee Hall, near Brick Lane. They heard Mr Dhesi of the Virk Brothers Defence Campaign detail the daily abuses and attacks on Asians in East London. The Virk brothers were attacked

"There, workers are often separated by hundreds of miles from their families on distant Bantustans. That's apartheid". Britain's immigration laws have separated workers from their families, too — and the distance between East London and Bangladesh is not hundreds but thousands of miles!

On the Labour Party, comrade Kodikara made it clear that "One can't really say the Labour Party in the last few years has done anything which smacks of socialism... But the Labour Party is still the focus of the working people of this country... To vote for the Tory Party or the Liberal Party is to vote against yourself".

Tassaddaq Ahmed, editor of *The Asian*, did not have this clear class attitude. But he did see the need for community self-defence, he said. White anti-fascists had made a big contribution to the defence of the East End, he thought: now it was time for the Asian community to organise itself. "In Gerrard St [the West End's Chinese centre] let anyone go and hit a Chinese... That's the sort of community defence we need".



by a group of white youths, and for their 'crime' of self-defence they got sentences of between three months and seven years!

Ignoring the racist attack, relying on witnesses that had themselves participated in the assault, and even arresting Sukhvinder Singh Virk, who had telephoned them for help, the police proved their racist sympathies beyond all doubt.

People have been attacked while shopping, while waiting for a bus, sitting in a park or driving a car. Merlyn Rees, Mr Dhesi pointed out, pathetically appeals to Asians to "report these cases to the police". But the police don't want to know.

In fact one local superintendent's only solution was to recommend 'no-go areas' — no-go for Asians. He actually advised Asians not to go into the local park if they wanted to be safe!

Mr Dhesi's conclusion was simple: "What do we have to tell Mr Rees? ... We are here to stay. We are here to stay as dignified people. We produce the wealth. We work from the age of 16 to 65... We will have to defend ourselves".

That was also the conclusion of Patrick Kodikara, a Hackney Labour councillor and chairman of the Hackney and Tower Hamlets Defence Committee. Racism, he pointed out, does not come only from the National Front, "it starts for immigrants at the point of entry".

That is why our number one demand on the Labour Government is to repeal all immigration laws, he said. And he attacked the Anti Nazi League for failing to come out clearly on this issue.

"The so-called progressive movement in Britain is quick to criticise South Africa", he noted.

LAST WEEK

WOMEN ATTACKED BY THUGS IN BLUE UNIFORMS

ON TUESDAY October 31st, sixteen women were arrested following a police attack on a 'Reclaim the Night' demonstration through Soho.

At 10.15pm, about 200 women left Leicester Square, chanting slogans demanding the right to walk through the streets at night without harassment, without fear of rape, and free from the insult of overt sexual exploitation, most grotesquely portrayed in Soho. It was the third such demonstration to be organised.

The march stopped outside a sex cinema in Brewer St. Seconds later, a thuggish bouncer appeared brandishing a chair. Suddenly the street was overrun with police from Black Marias parked round the corner.

Far from preventing the attack on the women, they joined in, hitting them about the head with truncheons, kicking them, pulling their hair and twisting their arms. Three women were taken to hospital with serious head wounds.

Those arrested were taken to Vine St police station and then on to West Central. The abuse continued: "You fucking slags, we'll make sure you don't do this again".

One woman smoking a cigarette had it smacked from her mouth. They were refused the chance to go to the toilet. Some women were lined up along the wall, arms twisted behind their backs.

The 16 women were charged with obstruction, threatening

behaviour, insulting behaviour, and assault.

A meeting on Wednesday November 8th will discuss defence of the women arrested and plans for further action. Women will not take intimidation, harassment and attack by the police. We will fight back.

LAST WEEKEND [5th November], at the Anti-Apartheid Movement AGM, it was revealed that the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the AFL-CIO have penetrated some trade unions in Rhodesia and used their hold to undermine the liberation struggle.

The Zimbabwe Information Group demonstrated how these organisations have attempted to implement 'non-participation in politics' — which means, in effect, support of the Smith regime.

The ICFU representative in Salisbury has lived untouched in the wealthy suburbs, cooperated closely with the Ministry of Labour, set up 'non-political' education schemes, and tied aid to opposition to the liberation movement.

A motion from the Zimbabwe Information Group to the conference demanded a workers' inquiry into these activities, a full disclosure of the work of the TUC International Department, and action to force British firms to reveal information on their subsidies' treatment of African workers in Zimbabwe.

This motion, alongside one from Coventry AAM criticising the Labour Government, was rejected by the AGM, in their stubborn refusal to see any class struggle in Southern Africa or the solidarity movement here.

Rank and file trade unionists must still take the issue up. Over one million Zimbabwean workers are denied trade union rights by British companies or British-linked multinationals.

PERHAPS YOU think the problem of police racism could be helped by recruiting more blacks into the police force? Consider the experience of Alphonso Deal, of Philadelphia, USA.

Deal is a black policeman, and also the president of the North Philadelphia branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP). Recently, a local black activist, Delbert Africa, was arrested by Philadelphia cops.

Delbert Africa offered no resistance, but he was smashed in the face with a police helmet and kicked and dragged by the cops. As the socialist weekly *The Militant*

reports, "Deal... demanded the arrest and firing of the cops who beat Delbert Africa. In response, [Philadelphia's mayor] Rizzo told a news conference that his police commissioner would 'get a piece' of Deal..."

"Deal found his police radio jammed, realised he wasn't getting 'back up' from other cops, and started touring his beat with a body-guard of off-duty Black cops."

"At an October 3 meeting of the Fraternal Order of Police, which is trying to expel Deal, the NAACP president was threatened by a white cop, who told him he would 'blow out your brains'."



The cops attack Delbert Africa

THERE WAS another knock for the majesty of the law last week in a report from Missouri, USA.

In that state, right-wingers are campaigning for a law to ban union shop contracts. Virtuously, they denounce the blow to "the right to work" which compulsory trade unionism represents.

The campaign needs a lot of money, so its organisers have been combing lists of people thought likely to support right wing causes. Their most generous donors came from a list of businessmen found guilty of violating the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

IF ANYONE is still not convinced about the advantages of cost of living clauses as part of pay agreements, a recent report should persuade them.

There has been no publicity about it up until now, but 10,000 lockmakers have been getting pay rises linked to the cost of living index for the last four years, under an agreement signed in October 1974.

They have notched up a total of 86% in those cost of living rises — while the average worker in manufacturing has got only 60-odd per cent.

ANL calls a TU conference

THE ANTI Nazi League is calling a trade union conference on December 2nd, 10am to 4pm at the TUC headquarters, Congress House, Great Russell St, London WC1.

According to the *Morning Star* (November 1) "Bona fide trade union and workplace organisations are invited by the ANL steering committee to send three delegates to the meeting..."

"There will be no binding resolutions at the conference... Application forms for the conference can

be obtained from the ANL, PO Box 151, London WC2".

Workers' Action urges all its readers to press for their trade union branches, shop stewards' committees, and trades councils to send delegates to the conference... and to couple this with resolutions evaluating the experience of Carnival 2 and the simultaneous NF march on East London, and calling on the ANL to take a clear line on immigration controls and on dealing with the fascists on the streets.

EQUALITY reigns in Rhodesia: the whites have half the land, and the Blacks have half the land.

This division is of course a grotesque caricature of equality. For 6600 white farmers, aided by government handouts and aid, cultivate the fertile part of the country; while 680,000 black farmers, hampered by various bans and restrictions, exist on the barren half of the land.

In a country that is rich in agricultural potential and has a well developed capitalist agricultural sector, we find 4 million of the 6 1/2 million blacks struggling at subsistence or sub-subsistence level in the poor and unserviced half of the land. The extreme poverty of this area produces malnutrition, diseases characteristic of 19th century Britain, and high mortality rates.

Racial division of the land has been integral to the history of the Rhodesian settler state. Now Smith and his black quislings must make a show of changing all that, if they are to gain any black base for their regime. But who will benefit from their changes?

Since 1896, measures have been taken by the white administration to expel blacks to Reserves, later to be called Tribal Trust Lands, and to reserve the fertile soil and rights to commercial agriculture for whites.

Until 1930 this was done in an ad hoc fashion; sometimes by force, sometimes by measures such as forbidding the sale of African produce for money.

Blacks were also driven off the land by levies of taxes and rents, which they could only pay by leaving their land to work in the mines or as labourers for white planters.

In 1930 the Land Apportionment Act reserved about half the land for exclusive white use, and blacks were systematically expelled from these areas. 'African Purchase Areas' were also established, where African farmers could buy and develop their own land. But

Formally, the epoch of unrestricted white minority rule in Rhodesia ended in March this year, when the Internal Settlement was signed. Ian Smith now shares the leadership of the government with three black representatives: Sithole, Muzorewa and Chirau.

Yet every important decision has been made by Smith alone. The black ministers are only there for show.

A week after the agreement was signed in March, the Rhodesian army attacked Zambia. Sithole made no comment; Chirau's ZUPO dec-

lared that "The interim government will find it difficult to interfere with decisions made by the commanders of the security forces"; and Muzorewa's UANC condemned the action.

The Smith regime has continued its air attacks on Zambia and Mozambique. The result? Muzorewa quickly swung round to saying that guerrillas who 'harass the country' should be 'severely dealt with'.

Control of the army and the police still rests firmly with the old white commanders. The whole apparatus of the state and the administration re-

mains in white racist hands, When the black ministers to swear allegiance to the 1 constitution, which guarant minority rule.

Under the Internal Settlement supposed to be made by con restricted Smith, but it serve for reform which the black lei fact, when one black min started talking about refor dismissed.

SMITH'S RHODESIA

LAND OF POOR LAND OF PEOPLE

much of the land in these areas is still unused for lack of African capital to develop them. Only one per cent of African peasants were ever able to settle there, and these remain at subsistence level hedged in by regulations designed to prevent them entering into competition with white farming.

In 1969 the Land Tenure ensured the final removal of Africans from white lands to Tribal Trust Lands, and was accompanied by the takeover by white farmers of the only productive side of African agriculture, maize growing. The African share in this market declined tenfold.

The Land Reserve system has played a dual role in the white

economy. It enables white settlers and multi-national companies to monopolise the most fertile land and the commercial agriculture sector. And it forces blacks to sell their labour for a low wage to white-owned mines, industry and agriculture.

The Tribal Trust Lands do not represent a pre-capitalist zone of subsistence farming alongside the capitalist sector; rather, they are the means by which proletarianisation has been forced on Africans.

The Tribal Trust Lands have not been a haven for a pre-capitalist, 'tribal' mode of production. Rather, we see in them the racialist and wretched form in which capital has imposed itself on the entire

Zimbabwean people.

Within the Tribal Trust Lands, the mass of the people have either no land, or too little land and too few cattle to survive. The majority are more like a poverty-ridden and often unemployed proletariat than a class of small peasants.

There is also a much smaller class which does resemble a 'middle peasantry', having enough land and resources for their own subsistence. And finally there is a tiny group of 'rich peasants', who employ wage labour themselves and are incipient capitalist farmers.

The relative privileges of the richer peasants have been reinforced by the system of 'com-

munal ownership' of land in the Tribal Trust Lands, whereby all land is communally owned and government-appointed 'tribal chiefs' are responsible for allocating land-holdings. The result is an increasing concentration of such holdings in a few hands.

But this class has remained tiny and economically weak, in face of the severe obstacles placed by the white regime in the way of the growth of a black petit-bourgeoisie. The colonial state discriminates massively in favour of white farmers in terms of subsidies, credit, levies, and the provision of services like transport.

The squeeze on African farmers

POLICING THE PEOPLE

Smith's regime had an armoury of repressive laws to use against the black people of Zimbabwe even before UDI was declared in 1965. The African Affairs Act of 1928 banned political meetings on the Tribal Trust Lands. The Unlawful Organisations Act of 1958 has been used, at various times, to ban every black political party.

Two other key laws used by the Smith regime date from 1960: the Emergency Powers Act, and the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act. Three days before Smith declared UDI the then Governor of Rhodesia declared a State of Emergency, and it has been in force ever since!

The various emergency powers regulations allow detention without trial, forcible removal of populations, and the setting up of protected villages, as well as the destruction of property, the designation of curfew areas, the imposition of forced labour and the confiscation of crops.

The Law and Order (Maintenance) Act states that meetings of over 11 people can only be held if a permit is obtained 14 days previously from the police or local authorities. If a meeting is held the police can demand that the organisers provide facilities for them to tape record it, and give them a full agenda and a list of the speakers.

Restrictions imposed on meetings can include the banning of amplification equipment, banning of questions from the audience, and assurances that speeches will not be political in content. No public meetings are allowed in the Tribal Trust Lands.

Police can enter private houses and break up conversations involving three or more people if they have 'reasonable grounds' to believe anyone will make a 'seditious or subversive statement'.

And anyone found guilty of making a 'subversive statement' is

liable to a prison term of up to five years.

Scarcely any foreign paper is on sale in the country. The press and radio are tightly controlled by the regime. All news material is subject to 'voluntary censorship', under which it is submitted to the Ministry of Information for vetting before publication.

In 1976 a National Security Committee was established by the regime with the power to impose 'D' Notices on local editors. The decisions of this committee cannot be challenged in any court, and offenders can be fined R\$10,000 or sent to jail for 5 years.

Newspapers, books, records and tape recordings can also be prohibited by the regime under the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act. Even papers such as the Catholic weekly *Moto* and the Christian Council of Rhodesia's *Umbowo* were banned (in 1974 and 1976).

A Censorship Board, established in 1967, concentrates on the banning of books and magazines declared to be pornographic or violent. Works by authors including Simone de Beauvoir, Jean Paul Sartre and Doris Lessing are claimed to fall into this category.

Detention without trial was imposed prior to UDI under the Law and Order Act, and more recently it has been carried out under the Emergency Powers Act. Many Zimbabweans are detained under this law after having been acquitted of charges in the law courts. This practice was explained by the regime's law and order minister in 1976: "the fact that a person is found not guilty does not mean he has not done what he has been accused of".

In May 1977 at least 1,450 people were detained without trial. They can be held for any period and it is an offence to publish the names of such detainees.

In July 1977 there were over

1,000 convicted political prisoners in Zimbabwe. As well as captured guerrillas, these prisoners include people who have spoken at meetings in Tribal Trust Lands, people alleged to have sheltered guerrillas, and people who have attended public meetings called by the liberation forces.

Virtually every political prisoner is black. They are allowed no correspondence or facilities for study. Conditions in prison camps are reported to be so bad that many die from lack of food or medical facilities.

English version of curfew notice distributed by the regime and dated January 1978

TO THE PEOPLE OF MARANKE TTL AND MUKUNI APA

For a long time you have continued to feed, shelter and assist the communist terrorists to carry out their evil deeds.

You have disregarded previous Government warnings of the bitter times that will fall upon your land if you allow these communist terrorists to carry on deceiving you. The Security do not want to allow you to be deceived by these people any longer.

You are now warned that as from Dawn on the 20th January 1978 the following restrictions will be imposed upon all of you and your TTL and Purchase Land.

1. HUMAN CURFEW FROM LAST LIGHT TO 12 O'CLOCK DAILY.
2. CATTLE, YOKED OXEN, GOATS AND SHEEP CURFEW FROM LAST LIGHT TO 12 O'CLOCK DAILY.
3. NO VEHICLES INCLUDING BICYCLES AND BUSES TO RUN EITHER WITHIN, FROM OR TO EITHER THE TTL OR THE APL.
4. NO PERSON WILL EITHER GO ON OR NEAR ANY HIGH GROUND OR THEY WILL BE SHOT.
5. ALL DOGS TO BE TIED UP 24 HOURS EACH DAY OR THEY WILL BE SHOT.
6. CATTLE, SHEEP AND GOATS, AFTER 12 O'CLOCK, ARE ONLY TO BE HERDED BY ADULTS.
7. NO JUVENILES (TO THE AGE OF 16 YEARS) WILL BE ALLOWED OUT OF THE KRAAL AREA AT ANY TIME WITH DAY OR NIGHT, OR THEY WILL BE SHOT.
8. NO SCHOOL WILL BE OPEN.
9. ALL STORES AND GRINDING MILLS WILL BE CLOSED.

Only if you co-operate and assist the Security Forces in eliminating the communist terrorists will any consideration be given to lifting some or all of the above restrictions. The Security Forces have already told the communist terrorists that they are FREE to give themselves up and their lives will not be endangered.

YOU TOO CAN ASSIST
The communist terrorists can then return to their ancestral lands and you will have PEACE.

The Smith government has consistently refused to allow the Red Cross to visit the main political prison at Khami, near Bulawayo.

The regime has decided that it can only prevent black villagers from aiding the guerrillas by placing them under permanent guard. For years now it has been establishing hundreds of 'protected villages' on the Vietnam model. Existing villages are destroyed and their inhabitants moved to 'keeps' surrounded by high chain link fences surmounted by barbed wire and guarded by troops. The people in

them are only allowed out at specified times and curfews are strict.

The Roman Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace estimated in August 1977 that over half a million people had been moved into about 200 of these camps, and their own villages destroyed.

Under the Internal Settlement, plans to dismantle the villages will only be carried out "as the fighting dies down and peace is restored". Meanwhile, it is reported that new villages have been set up in the north west of the country in the last year.

book office, they had 1969 Rhodesia Front... indefinite white... all decisions are... This has not... to block any moves... might make. In... Byron Hove... he was simply

Recently Smith announced that the elections provided for under the Internal Settlement would not be held on the previously promised date of 31st December 1978. The black members of the government, as usual, protested feebly but did no more. In fact the Internal Settlement only proposed "the earliest possible date" for elections.

The chief effect of the Internal Settlement has been to strip the black leaders taking part in it of the popular support which some of them, particularly Muzorewa, had before. The people of Zimbabwe want a real end to white racist rule.

WEALTHY, POVERTY

was intensified after UDI, when African commercial maize production was virtually destroyed and employment of Africans by Africans fell drastically.

Thus even the African petit-bourgeoisie has always been in sharp conflict with Smith, as the representative of the white farming areas. And that, for all the well-advertised cosmetic changes, is what Smith and his regime remain.

Within these white farming areas, about 40% of the smaller farms, owned by settlers, are reportedly insolvent, and survive only because of the massive subsidies provided by the Smith regime. Though highly privileged compared to the richest African farmers, they have been squeezed by the giant multinational companies, and rightly identify their own survival with that of the white regime.

Multinationals, like Anglo-American, Lonrho and Liebig, totally dominate Rhodesian agriculture, taking over 70% of all profits. The biggest seven per cent of all farms cover half the total white land area, and the vast corporations that own them do not depend on any handouts or economic protection from the racist state in the same way that the settler farmers do.

With his back to the wall, Smith last year dismantled the Land Tenure Act, and a few weeks ago ended racial residence qualifications. Smith's stooge Bishop Abel Muzorewa greeted the measures as 'the end of racism' and declared he was so happy he could jump on a roof! But, after nearly a century of economic and political repression, few blacks are in any position to benefit. Only two African farmers are reported to have bought land in white areas; and residency qualifications add further restrictions to the economic constraints.

Smith's position as leader of the white settlers makes him incapable of taking any more serious measures towards de-racialising land ownership. Such measures (like the ones advocated in different forms by Muzorewa, Chinamano, the Whitsun Foundation and David Owen) would rationalise private ownership of land by locating richer Africans on the unused or under-used land of whites, on the basis of loans and subsidies provided by such bodies as the proposed Zimbabwe Development Fund, while paying full compensation to the white farmers. Land in the Tribal Trust Lands would be handed over to private ownership, so that the land can be bought and sold on the market.

The African petit-bourgeoisie has much to gain from these proposals; for them, it would effectively break the shackles of colonial rule. But such a development would intensify, among Africans, the concentration of land in a few hands, increase inequalities, and do nothing to alleviate the poverty and dependence of the mass of the Zimbabwe people.

The land programme of both wings of the Patriotic Front is unclear. The ZAPU representative in London says that they have a

joint political programme which is awaiting ratification by ZANU.

Alternative 'socialist' strategies have been advocated, for example in a recent book by Roger Riddell.

He advocated a long-term goal of collective ownership of land and farming, and transitional measures to maintain production in the interim period.

He suggests:

a). Nationalisation of all land;
b). Nationalisation without compensation of the holdings of small white farmers who do not cooperate with the new regime;

c). Nationalisation with compensation over a number of years of the holdings of more productive settler farmers, compensation being graded according to their co-operation in maintaining production and training African personnel;

d). The multi-nationals should keep their holdings, but an assortment of governmental pressures should be exerted on them.

Riddell's programme is similar to that adopted in Angola and Mozambique: a cooperative land programme based on the mobilisation of the poor peasantry that leaves the imperialist grip of the multinationals basically untouched.

The feasibility of such a programme in Zimbabwe, where the disintegration of the peasantry is much more advanced than in Angola or Mozambique and where capital has penetrated much more deeply into the rural economy, is not clear.

It is however clear that in a fully capitalist society like Zimbabwe, a socialist strategy must take on the dominance of the multinationals. This would be conditional on the political mobilisation not only of the poorer peasantry but also of the working class of Zimbabwe, and of neighbouring South Africa.

It is to the alliance of workers and poor peasants in southern Africa, under the leadership of the working class, that we must look.

Bob Fine



NO MONEY, NO JOBS, AND NO STRIKES ALLOWED

Zimbabwe is one of the most economically developed countries in Africa — but most of the black population have no jobs. Under one million of Zimbabwe's six million black population has regular employment in industry, domestic service or agriculture.

The Smith regime claims unemployment doesn't exist. There is no unemployment benefit. The mass of the black population is expected to survive by subsistence farming in the Tribal Trust Lands.

In these impoverished and backward areas blacks have to struggle for bare survival. While credit facilities for the 6,000 white farmers amounted to R\$100 million (about £95 million) in 1977, the 600,000 black farmers got only R\$1 million. That is, R\$1.67 for each black farmer — and ten thousand times as much for each white!

In reality many thousands of black Zimbabweans are unemployed and have no means of support. The Financial Mail of Johannesburg in 1976 reckoned that 131,000 African men aged between 16 and 60 were unemployed.

For those blacks who have a job, wages are often below poverty level, and are around one eleventh those paid to white workers. In 1976 the average wage for black

workers was R\$517 a year (about £500). For white, Asian and 'coloured' workers it was R\$5,583. The gap between black and white workers is growing. In 1970 the difference between the average wages was R\$2,809; by 1976 this had risen to over R\$5000.

In fact, many black workers are far poorer than the overall average figures suggest. The wages for black agricultural workers in 1976 averaged only R\$200 a year, and for domestic servants the average was less than R\$400. These wages fall way below even the official poverty level of R\$478 for a couple without children. In fact over half the black non-agricultural workers in Zimbabwe in 1975 were earning less than official poverty wages.

Over the last few years prices have risen sharply for basic essentials such as food, fuel and rents, driving even more black workers below poverty level.

Black workers have almost no chance of changing their conditions through trade union action. Laws exist which make it almost impossible to establish union rights for black workers or to go on strike.

Workers in agriculture and forestry are forbidden under the 1901 Masters and Servants Act to form or join a union. They can be imp-

risoned or fined for 'disobedience' or 'negligence'.

Black workers in manufacturing industry are allowed to join unions, but only if the unions are officially registered. The Industrial Conciliation Act allows the Registrar of Trade Unions to impose severe conditions on union activity. In March 1976, the Rhodesia Commercial and Allied Workers' Union, one of the oldest black unions in Zimbabwe, with 8,000 members, was struck off the register, making its existence illegal.

Only 5% of the black workers of Zimbabwe work under agreements negotiated by black-led unions.

It is also an offence, carrying a possible 5-year jail sentence, to take any industrial action which "hinders or interferes with the carrying out of any essential service". All strikes are banned in the light, power, water, sanitation and fire services.

In December 1976, 800 black bus drivers, conductors and mechanics were arrested and imprisoned in Salisbury for taking part in a strike. The workers had walked out after negotiations on wages had broken down. They were all charged and fined under the Industrial Conciliation Act. Almost all lost their jobs.

GOING OFF TO JOIN THE GUERRILLAS



Of the 3 million Zimbabweans under 15, only 846,000 attended school in 1976. Only just over half the black children admitted to school complete primary education, and only one in two hundred reaches the sixth form. Education remains segregated. Though it is compulsory for white children, it is not for blacks. Many black families cannot afford to pay the fees that are charged them.

While the regime spent R\$46 per head on education for black children in 1977, it spent over ten times that, R\$567 per head on white children. Many schools have been closed by the authorities for security reasons, and many thousands of black children have boycotted school in protest at the regime or fled across the borders to neighbouring African countries.

HIGH NOON AT THE TIMES

Victor Matthews took the whole front page of the Daily Express to vent his rage on the "red wreckers" of Fleet Street.

For the bosses, ownership of a newspaper is useful not only for its profits, but also for getting over their messages to the working class. For that reason, strong trade union organisation within the media has more severe repercussions for the ruling class than perhaps in any other section of industry.

The whole ruling establishment weighed in against an NUJ closed shop.

In every revolutionary situation, control over the media has taken on immense importance. The struggle over Republics in Portugal in 1975, and the demand that it should be opened to workers' organisations instead of pouring out exclusively the politics of the Socialist Party, inspired thousands of workers throughout Europe.

At the moment, trade union organisation itself is being threatened in Fleet Street, as 4,300 Times workers face an employers' lockout threatened for November 30th.

CLARE RUSSELL describes the run-up to the dispute and its importance for other workers

THE management at Times Newspapers have said that if the unions do not concede their demands over the introduction of new technology, they will cease publication on November 30th.

Such threats have been issued before. But this time all the indications are that the Times management are not bluffing. They have fixed electronically-operated locks to all the doors, which are controlled from a central security office.

Fleet Street bosses have prepared the way for what could be a historic battle at the Times. They have run an orchestrated campaign against the print unions, labelling them as "wreckers" and "anarchists" who are bringing the industry to the brink of collapse.

The reality is of course very different. No national newspaper has closed since the Daily Sketch in 1971, and last week the Daily Star was launched, obviously in the expectation of fat profits and advantages for its owners.

Newspaper bosses have in fact had problems, however. The rocketing price of newsprint has caused them to look to cutting ... labour costs — which has involved them in several stoppages over staffing levels.

The employers are very eager indeed to introduce new technology which will enable them to sack workers en masse and save on their wages bill.

TYPE

Such new technology will mean the disappearance of hot-metal machinery — the preserve of the National Graphical Association (NGA) — and the introduction of computer-based typesetting. This means that copy can be typed straight onto a visual display unit, sub-edited and automatically set into type.

The most important advantage to the employers is that if new technology is introduced into the industry on their terms it will mean disaster for trade union organisation.

Under socialism, new technology could benefit not only the workers in that industry but the whole working class. It could greatly increase the variety of newspapers and make the press accessible to ordinary working class people. The working day could be reduced and much of the heavy and laborious work involved in hot-metal composing eliminated.

To introduce new technology on the workers' terms would mean a cut in the working week, a big increase in the number and variety of papers produced, and an opening-up of Fleet Street facilities to working class organisations of all sorts. A printworkers' 'alternative Plan' could draw inspiration from the Lucas Aerospace shop stewards' Alternative Plan. But right now the printworkers are caught in a battle to defend their jobs, their health and safety provisions and most of all their union organisation.

The American experience, which the Fleet Street employers watched with keen interest, is a horrifying example of what can

full-time officials.

The print union bureaucracy — particularly NATSOPA — have done a grand job over the years in policing the membership and banning left wing militants from official union positions. This time, however, they failed to deliver the goods. The membership of all the print unions rejected the Programme for Action (or reaction, as many printworkers re-named it).

LOCKOUT

Now the Times management has decided to use the other tactic: the lock-out.

All the things that they wanted to achieve through the Programme for Action now reappear in the ultimatums given to the print unions at The Times. The unions found out about the Times plans to close on October 15th. Natsopa has received no less than 27 documents which they have to negotiate before November 30th. The Times' demands would

the closed shop, and a means to stop pressure being put on management to raise the salaries of secretaries.

In short, The Times bosses want the destruction of trade union organisation in Fleet Street. One of their main aims is to emasculate the chapel structure and only to involve the full-time officials.

The document relating to secretaries has caused uproar in a previously un militant section. It includes no less than 27 paragraphs on the duties of secretaries, including the making of tea and coffee and standing in for other secretaries during absence, holidays and sickness.

Just in case they forgot anything, the last clause state: "Management reserves the right to add any other reasonable secretarial or administrative task to the above list of duties." The management, of course, to determine what is reasonable or not.

It is not clear as yet if everyone will be suspended on the 30th and who exactly is for the chop. The management has de-

every other employer in Fleet Street to do the same. Yet hardly any of the workers — especially on the clerical side — know what is happening at the Times, and what the introduction of new technology is going to mean.

There are moves afoot to start a fightback. There is a meeting this week at St. Pancras Town Hall, of all the chapels in the Times newspapers; and people are trying to organise within the clerical chapel for a special delegate meeting to discuss the situation. Motions have been passed at the Natsopa clerical delegate meeting asking for the union to withdraw from the discussions with the management.

The NGA and AUEW refused to discuss with the management while under duress, and decided to give full support to the Times workers, including stoppages and action to completely isolate Thomson Newspapers.

However, among the clerical section there is a strong feeling that the affair is the fault and the concern of the "machine people". Yet nothing could be further from the truth — the next field to be affected by new technology is the clerical, in the form of word processing.

What this means is that, at the most sophisticated stage, a typewriter can be replaced by one or more visual display units which, connected to a central computer, can provide a large-scale-storage centralised editing facility.

Word processing can be a very attractive proposition for employers. For about £5,000 they can replace a typist. Over 5 years, therefore, they can reduce costs by £2,500 a year. A recent Times article on word processing was entitled "The Four Thousand Pound typist substitute that will soon pay for itself".

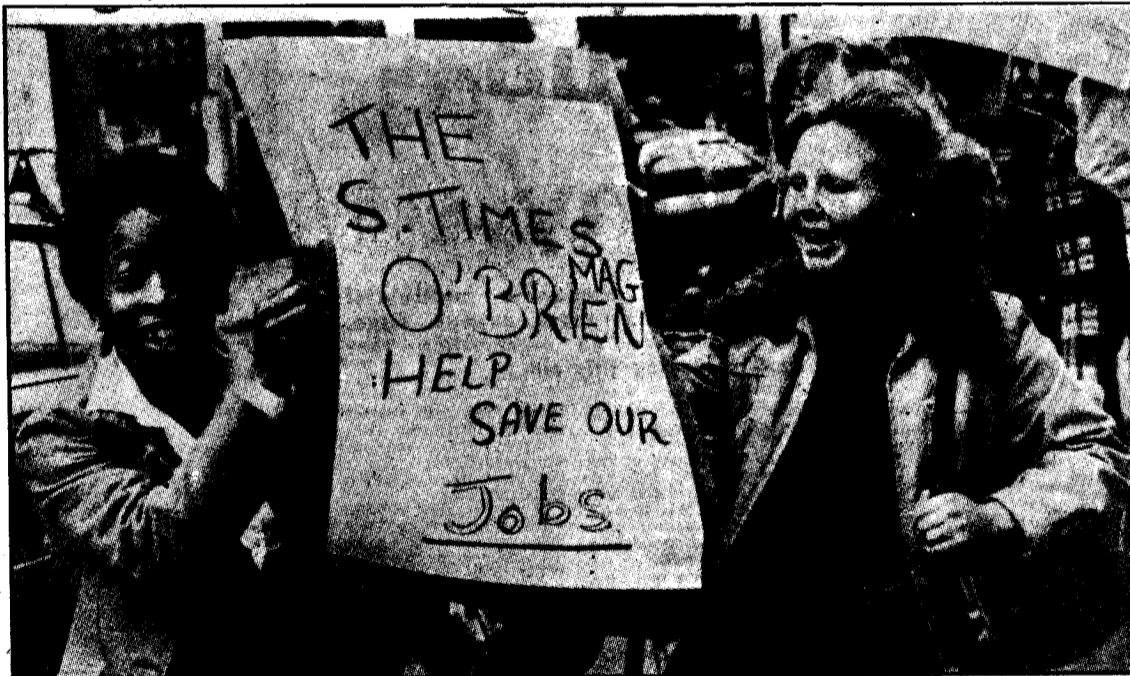
The elimination of the typist will have enormous consequences — not least in almost eliminating the main employment area for women. It will, as one report said, "bring a similar fundamental change in the nature of clerical work to that brought about by the introduction of the assembly line into manufacturing industries."

Again, in a society which was geared to workers' need, it could mean tremendous advances. But the prospects in a capitalist society are massive redundancies among women and the possibility for management of keeping a tighter discipline over those workers left.

CONTROL

Although the union leaders are now making fine noises in response to the Times threat, when the crunch comes it will need a massive response by the rank and file to stop a sell-out. (Last year in a dispute at the Times by members of the Natsopa machine chapel over staffing levels, the union ordered the strikers back to work and attempted to expel all those involved.)

The response to the Times will need an informed membership which understands the consequences of the new technology and which will fight for control of that technology to be in its hands: for full control over the running of the new machinery; no redundancies; for work-sharing with no loss of pay, and for stringent health and safety protection.



happen. The NUJ pamphlet *Journalists and New Technology* outlined what happened in Richmond, Virginia.

"In 1970 this company announced plans for a new financial daily to be based on computerisation and photo-composition. In preparation for disputes with the printing unions the company had trained non-union labour — secretaries, advertising and management personnel — to operate the new equipment which it had already installed.

"When the unions walked out the paper was produced by this non-union labour: few of the 180 print workers who went on strike ever got their jobs back. Since then the paper has been produced by cheap, non-union labour with a turnover of 30-35% a year in the composing room."

The UK employers tried a different approach. It was called "The Programme for Action". It was drawn up by management and union officials together. The results of it would have been redundancies, speed-up, no-strike clauses, and the elimination of shop floor organisation.

One of its main aims was to completely liquidate the powers of the MOCs/FOCs (shop stewards) and place the power to negotiate entirely in the hands of the

change completely all existing agreements between union and management, and in all of them the message is clear: total control by the management over the work process.

- The Times demands:
- The right to hire and fire at will.
 - If one chapel takes any action all other chapels will not be paid.
 - Compulsory overtime; 24 hours' notice for changes in shift arrangements.

STAFFING

- The total destruction of demarcation rules and complete flexibility.
- Management to define staffing levels and thereby to define the number of redundancies they think necessary.
- No payment for covering for sickness and holidays. (The management have said that in return for agreeing to the demands, workers will get extra holidays; this clause will mean that it will cost the employers nothing and the burden will be borne by the workers themselves.)
- The right to use agency temps — a massive blow against

mandated 43% redundancies in one chapel and has asked those left to cover for those sacked, as well as covering for people on holiday or sick. There is no doubt that the Natsopa Machine and NGA unions will be badly hit.

The Times have offered a year's pay to all those workers who have worked for the paper for over five years, and 6 months' pay for those who have worked less.

Whether the Times management get away with their plans will depend on how many groups of workers will knuckle under and sign the agreements. There is no doubt that within the Natsopa clerical, RIRMA and the NUJ, a hard fight will have to be waged to stop many of the members just giving in and taking the redundancy pay.

Whether or not this happens will depend on the position that the unions take nationally and the amount of support and solidarity that can be given to the Times workers, not only from workers in Fleet Street but from other groups of workers.

At best the attitude of the union leadership can be described as complacent. A more accurate description would be: criminal.

If the Times management win, then it is the green light for

BL fight against the 5% begins

British Leyland workers have shown their willingness to fight the government's 5% limit and management's plan for speed-up and redundancies. But the union leadership has again done its best to diffuse the rank and file's militancy.

At the moment the Tractors & Transmissions plant at Drews Lane in Birmingham is out, after a near-unanimous vote at their mass meeting on Friday 3rd. By the end of this week the whole of Longbridge and Cowley plants are likely to be laid off as a result.

Until Thursday 2nd, management had not even replied to the Cars Division claim — due for settlement the day before, November 1st! When the reply did come, it was even worse than expected: 5% on the basic rate, and even that was conditional on the company's highly contentious parity proposals being accepted by every plant in the Cars Division.

The parity 'offer' caused even more anger among the workforce than the 5%. For a start, parity was supposed to have been agreed in last year's settlement. Now they have the gall to turn round and offer the same deal again, but this time with some

new strings!

String one: that each plant loses the 'required labour', a total of 7000 jobs.

String Two: that each plant achieves production levels equal to the best month in 1977, i.e. before some 5000 jobs were cut in the last round of de-manning.

String Three: the new grading structure has to be accepted by every plant.

If these conditions are met, say the company, they will be willing to introduce parity in three stages — this November, next May and next November. Similarly, the Company agreed to implement the new 'minimum time rate' (on which overtime and shift allowances are paid) in the same three stages, although the Engineering Employers' Federation had agreed that it should be paid from 1st November this year.

At Longbridge the Works Committee adopted a ruse to avoid an immediate strike. On Thursday 2nd a shop stewards' meeting was held, to discuss the following day's mass meeting. At it, convenor Derek Robinson proposed a resolution which most stewards understood to mean that three proposals would be put to the mass meeting: option 1, immed-

iate strike; option 2, give management to December 1st; option 3, leave the negotiating committee to get the best deal it can, with no strike threat.

The stewards agreed to this, although the mood of the meeting was clearly in favour of immediate action. But at the following day's meeting, instead of presenting the three alternatives, Robinson recommended option 2 — and the vote was taken on that option first, so that militants who wanted an immediate strike were put in the position of either voting for option 2 or voting with the right wingers who wanted no strike at all.

Militants who shouted for immediate strike action were denounced by Robinson as 'lunatic leftists', and throughout the meeting Robinson stressed that BL workers had to show themselves 'reasonable'. The result was that option 2 was carried by a large majority. **PETE LEYDEN**

◆ ◆
AT COWLEY, a mass meeting scheduled for Friday was called off because the company's offer had only just been received; but there, too, workers are angry about the 'parity' swindle. Rover Solihull had a mass meeting on

Friday — but the trade union leadership has been so sluggish that the agenda of the mass meeting was to endorse the claim which the bosses had already replied to!

The Drews Lane strike deserves full support, but British Leyland workers cannot afford to place confidence in the Drews Lane leadership as a spearhead for the whole Cars Division's pay fight.

Drews Lane convenor Arthur Harper's main stated objection to the bosses' offer was not so much the fact that it was only 5%, or the 'strings' on speed-up and job loss, as the clause saying every plant must ratify the parity scheme before any plant gets anything. He even called for the reintroduction of piece work. He has also said that he intends to call no mass meetings during the strike.

United action for the full claim — £100 for line workers and a 35 hour week — will still be necessary in British Leyland. BL workers need higher wages and a shorter week just as much as Ford workers do. If the BL bosses are more incompetent than the Ford bosses, then BL workers should not bear the cost.

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SEND TO WA, Box 1960, 182 Upper St, London N1.

ONE WEEK'S STRIKE THREAT ENDS TWO YEAR DISPUTE

THE THREAT of strike action by workers in Haringey Council's Housing Department has brought to a speedy conclusion a dispute which had been going on for nearly two years.

In January 1977 three Housing Action Centre workers were warned of pending disciplinary action following their refusal to do visits connected with applications for GLC housing. They claimed it was not part of their job.

They got no real support and it was easy for the three of them to be downgraded.

By the beginning of January 1978, one of the three had left the Council, one had been reinstated, but Ivan Dixon was still being disciplined. In March 1978 he invoked the grievance procedure.

The Grievance Panel decided that Ivan should be reinstated. The Borough Housing Officer refused. He argued that the Panel did not have the power to authorise such a thing.

The secretary of the NALGO branch contented himself with writing letters, while Ivan's case was tossed back and forth between management and council members. The NALGO departmental representatives made no effort to act on Ivan's behalf.

On Wednesday October 25th, workers in the Housing Action Centre and Housing Action Areas decided that the dispute had dragg-

ed on too long without action. We held a meeting from which a statement was sent to management (with a copy to the secretary of Haringey NALGO) saying that unless Ivan were reinstated by November 6th we would strike on that day and discuss further action then.

News spread round, and a meeting on November 1st was attended by more sections of the Housing Department. Some people felt that we should wait to get official support for the action, as we had had a request from the NALGO secretary not to strike without going through the official procedures.

A strong core of people, including the majority of Ivan's immediate co-workers, knew how long that would take. Management had had one and a half years to reach a conclusion, and the union one and a half years to act. We felt strongly that we should go ahead with our decision to strike.

By the next day we had our answer. Ivan was to be reinstated. It took a week to make that decision.

Within that week we sensed our own strength, and showed that we were not afraid to go against the express wishes of the local Union executive. We saw even more clearly the need for strong departmental representatives, prepared to act on behalf of the people who elected them.

MARY CORBISHLEY

Just to inform you: your job's gone

*790 redundancies have been announced at Cammel Lairds shipyard at Merseyside.

Those mainly threatened are members of the Boilermakers' Society, 620 in all. But there are also a number threatened in the other unions at the yard.

On Monday 23rd October the TGWU and the GMWU members held separate mass meetings. The GMWU appears to have taken a position against the redundancies, and is appealing to others in the yard to do likewise. The T&G made no decision.

On Wednesday November 1st, the Boilermakers held a mass meeting which was advertised as being 'for information only'. This meant that when concrete proposals were put from the floor on such things as an overtime ban and a shorter working week, no votes were taken on them.

The Boilermakers stewards had not even come up with any suggestions about what to do about the redundancies, despite the fact that it was obvious months ago that redundancies were going to be announced.

The only decision that was taken at the meeting was for the stewards to present their proposals at another mass meeting in one week's time, on Wednesday 8th November.

The introduction to the meeting was done by Harry Murt, the full-time district delegate. He put the stress on negotiations with the management and accepting that it was all right for 100 or so over-65s to go without being replaced, as well as accepting voluntary redundancy.

On Friday, mass meetings were held by each section of the Boilermakers to decide on their attitude on the management's proposal to bring in selective overtime. At most of these meetings the question of the redundancies was hardly even raised, and one section, the caulker-burners, had people working on Saturday. Many workers still see the redundancies as inevitable.

A mass meeting of the Confed. has been called for Monday 6th November, but it will not be attended by the majority of the boilermakers: most of the sections voted not to attend, as this meeting is taking place before the boilermakers' mass meeting on the Wednesday. Another reason for the vote against attending the Confed meeting was that it was billed under the 'for information only' heading.

Workers Action supporters will

be arguing for a Confed meeting to be called after the boilermakers' meeting, for united action on the redundancies.

Obviously what we need in the yard is more meetings for action and less 'for information only'.

L.O.L DUFFY

Some people working in nationalised industries say 'you can't fight the government and win'. In the shipbuilding industry, that will have to be shown to be untrue if jobs are to be saved.

A dozen workers from Cammel Lairds and Westerns shipyards attended a Workers' Action meeting in Merseyside called last week to discuss the redundancies and closures threatened in the shipyards. A Workers' Action supporter from Cammel Lairds opened the meeting by stressing how it was necessary to 'fight the government' on the issue and that it was possible to stop redundancies if a fight was organised in the yards.

The Confed's policy of accepting voluntary redundancies, which many stewards are tagging along with, will lose many jobs in the yards for good.

Tom Cashman, [Birkenhead T&G] said it was necessary to link the fight against redundancies with the fight against the five percent limit. He pointed out that the Ford and BL Cars claims both called for a 35-hour week. If it was won, that demand will provide more jobs.

A worker from Westerns agreed that the fight had to be taken up nationally in the shipbuilding industry. Westerns workers are calling for a recall conference of the Confed to discuss closures and redundancies.

TORIES ATTACK DIRECT WORKS

UCATT AND T&GWU members have been out on official strike for two weeks at the Foxley Road site in Lambeth. This was reported to Lambeth Trades Council on Monday 6th by Bro. G Flynn, the Brixton UCATT delegate to the Trades Council.

The GLC Direct Works department originally secured the contract, but the Tories are trying to pass it on to a private contractor, Mowlems. The members are striking against this political move.

EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Paid ads (including ads for publications) 8p per word, £5 per column inch — payment in advance. Send copy to Events, Box 1960, Rising Free, 182 Upper St, London N1, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

Saturday 11 November. Connections: Britain and Southern Africa. A one-day conference for trade unionists and youth. Sponsored by North West TUC, chaired by Colin Barnett. Workshops on: Action in the workplaces, Action in the Labour Party, an ABC of Southern Africa, Soweto and Youth, Women under Apartheid, the Media. Venue: Abraham Moss Centre, Crumpsall, Manchester. 10am to 6pm. Creche provided. Details from Manchester Anti-Apartheid, 59 Tintern Ave, Manchester M20 8ND (061 434 7549).

Saturday 11 November. "Occupations, criminal trespass, and the use of the law" — national conference of the Campaign against the Criminal Trespass Law. At Conway Hall, London WC1. Credentials £2 from CACTL, c/o 35 Wellington St, London SE2.

Thursday 16 November. Merseyside SCLV public meeting, 7.45pm at the Feathers Hotel, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool 3.

Thursday 16 November. Picket Eanes — defend agrarian reform in Portugal. 7pm at the Portuguese Embassy, 11 Belgrave Sq, SW1.

Saturday 18 November. Manchester and Stockport Chile Solidarity Committee demonstration. 12 noon, St Peter's Square, Manchester. Speakers to include Andrew Bennett MP and Frank Allaun MP.

Sunday 19 November. Merseyside Anti Nazi League day-school. 10am at Stanley House, Upper Parliament St, Liverpool 8.

Thursday 23 November. London Workers' Action meeting: "Zimbabwe: After Smith's defeat, whose victory?" 8pm, 'The Metropolitan', Farringdon Rd/Clerkenwell Rd.

Saturday 25 November. Trade union conference on abortion, organised by the National Abortion Campaign and the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign. At Carnton Hall, London SW1. Delegate forms from NAC, 30 Camden Rd, London NW1.

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FIGHTING CHAPPLE'S LAW

Plumbers threatened with the closure of their EETPU lodges by hatchetman Frank Chapple are organising a meeting to fight the closures.

In 1968, there used to be 50 branches of the Plumbing Section in London; today there are just 17. There used to be six elected officials — now there's just one non-elected one. The elected District Committee has been abolished.

And now the 17 branches are to be reduced to just four by Christmas, if Chapple has his way.

The meeting's organisers say: "Uninvited EETPU officials have been visiting branches all over the country to inform them they will close by Christmas. Some are among the best organised in the country. If shut it would mean members travelling up to 30 miles for a meeting.

"Some of the worst branches have been left alone because they voted the 'right' way in the past.

"If Chapple gets away with this without a fight, we might as well forget about being union members. And it's not just Plumbers who will be affected. Any-Engineers who are still wondering whether amalgamation with the EETPU is a good idea or not should think again. You could be next."

The fightback has started already with a flood of resolutions from the branches facing closure. The meeting is the next step.

It will be on Thursday 16th November at 8pm at Carnton House Community Centre, St. John's Way Archway, N19. It is open to all plumbers, electricians and engineers.

Out to beat the pay curbs

Ford: no penalty clauses!

FORD'S 'FINAL' offer of 17% consisted of 9.75% on the basic hourly wage, 1.9% in a new holiday pay scheme, and 5.15% for a so-called 'attendance allowance'. It has been decisively rejected by Ford workers.

Only five out of the seventeen plants voted in favour of acceptance, and the majority of those were small ancillary plants employing less than 1600 workers.

Halewood led the way in rejecting the offer, with an overwhelming vote against. Both there and at the Dagenham plant, speakers concentrated on attacking the 'attendance allowance'.

This 'allowance' is an attempt

to push through a penalty clause. Workers could lose £3.50 for six minutes' lateness, for absenteeism, for unofficial strike action... or for someone else's strike action.

This attendance bonus was Ford's formula for offering some money in return for union cooperation on productivity. Ford may now try a re-jigged version of the same idea, or they may concede some or all of the 'attendance allowance' money as a straight increase. But with Ford operations grinding to a halt all over Europe, the workers have the power to win the full claim.

£20 on the pay, an hour off the day: no retreat on the claim!

WORKERS' ACTION

Bakers: £10 now!

THE BAKERS' pay claim calls for the basic rate to be raised to £51.85 a week for top line production workers, from £41 now.

Even that increase is way below what we need for a decent standard of living. But the bosses offered 5% on the basic pay plus a 6% productivity deal. So we struck.

Though the strike officially started on Tuesday 6th, many bakeries had walked out on Sunday. Every bakery covered by the Federation of Master Bakers agreement is now out. Support for the claim is 100%.

The bosses threatened that if the strike happened, there would be closures, but their threats are being ignored. As one worker at Merritts Bakery, Cardiff, told *Workers' Action*: "If they're using statements like that, they must be worried".

For their miserable 6% productivity deal, the bosses demanded stricter time keeping, increased mobility of workers within the bakeries, permanent night work (including for women workers, at present excluded by the Factory Acts), and an end to premium payments for shift changes.

At present, with the three shift system, a 20% premium is paid for working over into the next

shift. We would lose that and move closer to the type of two-shift system the employers want to see.

Union negotiators rejected the 5% offer and the productivity deal, and we are pressing for £10 on the basic and £3 outstanding as consolidation of previous increases under the pay controls.

In Cardiff, Merritts bakery workers have organised a strike committee which includes representatives from the shop floor as well as branch officials. At least three women workers and a number of black workers have been drawn onto the committee. The old myth that women workers hold back on strikes is being shown up as nonsense. Their militancy is giving a big push to our organisation.

We have received a lot of support in spite of the bosses' attempt to whip up 'public opinion' against us. Though they claim we are hitting the public as well as them and the Government's pay policy, we have offered to work voluntarily to produce bread for hospitals and old people's homes.

Management rejected our offer. They said they would produce that bread. But our suspi-

cions that they would try to produce far more are being confirmed.

AUEW members who service machinery in the bakery had agreed to cooperate in maintaining machinery only if it were used to supply these essential needs, and asked management to say how much they would produce. The bosses refused to say, and the AUEW branch responded that once production at Merritts reached 3000 loaves a day they would stop maintenance work.

The managers have threatened to send home AUEW members who take that action. The AUEW replied: 'Do that, and we'll be on the picket lines with the bakers!'

GEOFF WILLIAMS

Picket injured

ON THE SECOND day of the strike — Wednesday 7th — Merritts bosses [ABF] showed the spirit in which they intend to conduct the struggle.

With a manager guiding it forward, a scab van knocked down a picket, seriously injuring him. It was only by good luck that the picket was not killed.

The strikers are now doubly determined to wage the battle against the bosses without any concessions.

Who really wants workers' democracy?

WHILE FORD workers have shown what they think about the company's offer, the opposition has been rather perplexed. The Government has said very little, so has Ford.

But the bosses' press, from the *Sun* and the *Mail* to the Sunday heavies, have not stopped slinging abuse at the strikers.

Most of the papers, being straight Tory rags, see the Ford strike as a death blow for the Labour Government. In the early stages of the strike, ranting about mindless militants was too much like backing the Government — and, after all, weren't the workers following true-blue Tory policy of free collective bargaining?

As the Ford workers began to show what they meant by free collective bargaining, the press has jumped on Thatcher's get-out clause: you can have free collective bargaining as long as I win... The direct campaign against the strike has been stepped up.

First they tried a 'back to work' campaign, with a small band of dedicated moderate wives. That failed miserably.

Now there is the hue and cry for a secret ballot. The press paints a picture of a handful of 'mindless militants' controlling the factories. Honest Joe Soap who only wants to earn his daily bread is terrorised by these politically motivated people, and stopped from showing his true devotion and deference to his boss and going back to work at the first opportunity.

While all these terrified workers were scared to put their hands up at mass meetings, they certainly weren't bashful about

speaking to the TV. On the early evening news after the vote, no less than four out of five short interviews showed workers saying there should have been a secret ballot. How many workers said mass meetings were the way to decide things and were subsequently edited out of the short clip?

Why do votes at mass meetings sometimes turn out differently from secret ballots? Not because militants 'intimidate' mass meetings. In any big strike one or two creeps can always be found who will make vague insinuations about intimidation. But there are never any proven examples — with name, time, place, and details — of militants injuring or mis-treating anyone for voting the wrong way.

In any case, how are these militants supposed to be able to intimidate people? They don't have machine guns or torture chambers. On the contrary, the intimidation during strikes runs the other way.

Press and TV pressure, material hardship, and often also the threat of police action against the picket lines or sackings after the strike, all tend to sway the indecisive or confused striker towards going back to work. In a secret ballot system, the whole weight of that intimidation makes itself felt on each isolated individual.

The collective strength and solidarity of a mass meeting can outweigh that intimidation, by giving strikers an idea of the power of the working class. It can remind wavering strikers of their duties and responsibilities to their fellow-workers, and their



common interest in maintaining their dignity against the bosses. And it allows the strike leaders to counteract, to some extent, the lies and distortions of the bosses' press.

Mass meetings can also do something that secret ballots can never do: they can allow the strikers to call their leaders to account.

Mass meetings are more democratic than secret ballots. They are not always models of working class democracy. They are open to bureaucratic control and manipulation, and this is practised from right to left.

Militants should fight against this, and argue for such things as the elementary right of rank and file members to put their opinions on the strike to any meeting — including workers

who believe in a return to work. To go against this basic democratic principle is like the Labour MP who believes in mandatory re-selection as long as it does not apply to him.

Bureaucratic manipulation of mass meetings is most often used by right-wingers and anti-strike union officials, but also, sometimes, by militants. In normal times, the shop stewards' committee and the trade union militants do all the work for the union, while the majority of the members are passive — and this routine can develop into a "we know best" attitude.

Particularly during strikes, it reinforces the passivity of the members at a time when their support for the strike could be turned into active involvement, through strike bulletins, more open and democratic strike committees, mass meetings, and sending delegations to other factories and workplaces to gain more support.

It is this sort of working class democracy that the militants organised round the Ford Workers' Group have been pushing for, while the Communist Party say everything should be in the hands of the stewards.

The real fighters for working class democracy are not the right-wingers (still less, the Fleet Street press-hawks), but militants who argue for greater mass involvement at all levels of the strike, from the picket line to the mass meeting. For the standard bearers of the bosses' system, such action is not newsworthy, ... it would be too much like giving the game away.

MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN

BOC SET TO BUST THE LIMIT AGAIN

LAST YEAR British Oxygen Company workers were one of the groups that bust the pay limit wide open. Their strike posed a big threat to industrial profits, as BOC has 80% of the gas cylinder market.

This year the BOC bosses started off with the same stubborn refusal as last year. When it became clear that the five per cent limit was about as strong as a sandcastle at high tide, they upped their offer to 8%.

At the 46 depots up and down the country this miserable offer was refused by the 3,000 industrial gas cylinder handlers. The company's next offer was a big improvement — one lousy per cent, with productivity strings attached!

According to T&GWU Chemical division national secretary John Miller, the union wants a deal worth about 15%. The claim is for a substantial increase on the basic rate without strings, consolidation of last year's "supplements", increases in shift allowances and night-out and subsistence allowances, and a 35 hour week.

The claim is worth twice as much as the sometimes militant-sounding Miller says he is prepared to settle for. Last year, when the BOC workers' strike forced layoffs at many firms, it was Miller and his then chief, Jack Jones, that forced a poor deal on BOC stewards without the stewards even knowing exactly what the offer came to. Obviously the bosses are not going to be the BOC workers' only obstacle.