WORKERS FIGHT MINERS' SOLIDARITY ACTION CAN TURN THE TIDE ON THE TORIES

OVER A QUARTER OF A MILLION miners are out in the first official strike since 1926, and the first major official strike since the Industrial Relations Act became law. It is a test case for the whole labour movement.

Mass pickets of miners are appealing for support from Transport workers, power workers and all fuel workers. No strike pay is being paid but the strike is so solid that right-wing NUM President Joe Gormley has had to rebuke the "excessive militancy" of miners refusing "safe parties" duty.

Miners know they face either a long and bitter strike, with the NUM pulling its punches—or else that they must hit as hard as they can, as fast as they can, drawing upon the solidarity of all other workers to gain a quick victory.

THE CASE

The miners' case is simply made. In 1961 miners were 20% better off than the average today, with £2.58 a week, they average 4p lower all industries.

88,000 (out of 230,000) miners have wages so low that on a 5-day week in one of the most dirty, difficult and dangerous jobs in industry, they are entitled to Family Income Supplement! Take-home pay can drop as low as £12.70 a week.

Since 1958 the NCB has closed over 500 pits, and got rid of 400,000 men—while output per man shift over the last 6 years alone has risen by over 20%.

The miners have been the victims of two things. Of a sustained sell-out policy by the Union leadership, which let miners' standards slump down and down.

And the fact that too many men fell for the propaganda of the NCB, that the miners could only survive if the miners achieved a massive rise in productivity, and simultaneously allowed more and more mining jobs to disappear. In return their relative value fell—basic rate £15—while output bounded upward.

Now the Union is claiming a minimum of £28 for sustenance workers, £78 for underground workers, and £85 for men on power-loading agreement.

The NCB has offered... £21. It isn't that the NCB can honestly plead poverty. Last year it made £24 million operating profit out of the miners.

But, standing behind the NCB, and calling the tune, is the Tory Government intent on restoring the profit-level of British industry by keeping all workers' wages down. For them the miners' strike is a test case.

And so must it be for all workers. It is in our direct interest that the miners should smash through the ceiling on wages increases set by the Government. But there are problems: the half-heartedness of the NUM leaders, and the danger that the miners will remain isolated.

THE N.U.M.

The record of the NUM leaders gives little cause for confidence in either Right-wing Gormley or Left-wing Daly.

Since November the Union has run an overtime ban to reduce stocks of coal and thus ensure that a strike would have an immediate impact. Miners are bitter at the unseemly way this was applied by the Union leaders.

First, they allowed overtime on "essential safety work", and then on even "associated preventive maintenance". Now they are asking the NCB to drive a coach & four through the so-called overtime ban. In local disputes over the ban the Union is generally aided with the NCB. Habit dies slowly.

Such leaders won't fight the sort of strike the militant miners want. Gormley has said an offer of 23p with working time in would have bought off the strike. Probably any compromise will involve productivity deals—and with the terms of the redundancies.

An unnamed Union leader was quoted in The Guardian as saying: "we could always go for 100 pips employing 120 men, earning 80by on the Government sort out the social problems." No name, but the cynicism and short-sightedness were remarkably genuine.

SOLIDARITY

Miners' isolation will play into the hands of such leaders. In the last year the power workers and Post Office workers have gone over the top in bitter struggles.

Instead of class-side action, with the full weight of organised labour swinging into active support of those in the forefront—those, where appropriate, strike action—there was isolated sectional action. Defeat followed defeat: one defeat prepared the way for the next.

All the weight of the employers, their State and their witch-hunting Press and especially (particularly against the power workers) on one side, solid— and only a section of the real strength of labour mobilised on the other side.

The miner's strike may become a test case under the Industrial Relations Act. Yet the TUC and its left wing has done pitifully little to back up the miners. It appreciates his readiness to look for a settlement if called in "by either side"!

This "general", in a serious conflict, is under the delusion that he is the referee.

A solid front of all workers in any way involved with the transport and distribution of coal, together with workers in other fuel industries, could bring a swift, decisive and startling victory to the miners.

Power workers have a claim at the present time. A national strike is brewing up on the docks. If dockers, power workers and miners could be co-ordinated, all acting together at the same time, the tide could be turned against the Tories.

But if we allow the miners to be defeated, that will be one more blow to the miners' struggle to turn the tide on the whole of organised labour in Britain.

BRITISH TROOPS IN ACTION IN NORTHERN IRELAND: THE NEXT ISSUE WILL CARRY A SPECIAL FEATURE ARGUING THAT BRITISH WORKERS MUST FIGHT FOR IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF TROOPS AND MUST, SO LONG AS THE WAR GOES ON, ACTIVELY SIDE WITH THE IRISH REPUBLICAN ARMY. SUPPORT ITS FIGHT FOR VICTORY AND ITS JUST STRUGGLE TO DRIVE OUT THE ARMY

DOCKS: STEWARD SAYS A 30HR WEEK

ON JANUARY 8th THE NATIONAL Docks Shop Stewards Committee met in London to make plans to counter the major attack which the Port Employers are preparing to launch against the National Dock Labour Scheme.

Because of the widespread unemployment the Port, pressure is building up to get rid of the N.D.L.B.—and the job-security the dockers have won under it.

Established in 1917, it employs all dockers, and hires them out to the various companies. It is controlled by a 50-50 basis by the employers and the Unions. Under its "surplus" dockers are not automatically made redundant, but are released by the employers to the N.D.L.B.—a sort of leper colony where unwanted labour is condemned to live on the fall-back pay of £20 a week.

The employers find the N.D.L.B. inconvenient and expensive, and want the option of simply sacking men altogether. They are already bypassing the old docks industry by organising container packing away from the Ports—and away from dockers' wage rates and conditions.

Amidst talk of a one-day national strike if any men are returned to the Pool, the Stewards decided to fight around the following demands: 1. No redundancies.

2. For all Ports, including the new inland container ports, to be in the N.D.L.B.

3. Retirement at 60.

4. A 30-hour week, and longer holidays.

5. Nationalisation of all Ports under workers' control.
workers fight

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Why do we publish WORKERS' FIGHT? There is one very simple answer. The bosses' press lies, distorts and conceals facts, says unemployment is due to "excessive wage demands". It says that the I.A.R.A are "hunger-gatherer terrorists". It says that strikes are "ruining the economy".

The working class needs papers which put OUR side of the news - which are based on common sense, which are based on real events, which are based on real events which elucidate the reality of the struggle against unemployment which show that in many of the stories about "IRA atrocities", there is no firm evidence at all to connect the events with the IRA; which show that the I.R.A. fight against employers imposing a police state on Ireland; which shows that strikes are in fact the only way to save Old economy, i.e., the workers and Old conditions.

But there's more to it than that. Take the post office workers strike, for example. Very many people were convinced of the justice of the postal workers claim. But still they were defeated. SYMPATHY IS NOT ENOUGH.

ORGANISE

The purpose of our paper is not just to give facts and explanations. It is to be an ORGANISER of a CAMPAIGN. In the first few weeks we will be concentrating on the struggle against unemployment - assessing experiences and trying to point a way forward. Our paper is meant to be a CALL TO ACTION, not just a commentary on the world.

With an ordinary paper, the situation is this: THEY produce the paper, WE pay our subscription, THEY think this paper is any good, if you think the ideas in it are basically right, then do not bother to read it, or to read only one issue, or to subscribe to it. We don't publish this paper just in order to sell as many copies as we can. We produce it as a weapon in the workers' struggle. The effect we want is not simply to inform the Irish public and the Irish workers, we want people to get involved. We want people to discuss the issues involved, to listen to the Irish workers' ideas in your own workplace. If you have a group of people reading the paper regularly, organise meetings among yourselves to DISCUSS the paper. WRITE TO us, letters, comments, reports.

We want your paper to be a workers' paper.

We would prefer a paper which is a bit scrappy, a bit rough-and-ready, but which reflects the real experience of the working class, to a paper which is very smooth, very professional - but lacking in content. So, whether we can make WORKERS' FIGHT into a useful working tool, will depend on how we regard it as a weapon. Paper. Discuss with us what you think of it and how to act on its ideas. Write for it. Sell it. Organise meetings! But only if you have a SOCIALIST paper. Our aim is not just to improve the lot of the working class within the capital/ big business system, but to overthrow the system. So the paper will not simply reflect a mirror to the labour movement as it is at present.

The established labour movement, from Lord Cooper to Vic Feather, is committed to working WITHIN the capitalist system. Perhaps they prefer Wilson's Tories to Heath's Tories. Perhaps they make a few left wing speeches.

But, really, what the right wingers are against is "excessive" profits or "excessive" repression. They're not against profits or repression at all.

And the Left, who in their own minds are against profit and repression, are unable to fight it effectively. They pull their punches, leave workers in the dark, go to the Right. It's time to exalt their chances. They retreat when they should advance and keep silent when they should speak out to mobilise the workers to fight back.

THE FUTURE

WORKERS' FIGHT will try to report the future, as well as the present, of the working class. Capitalism deprives workers of a proper education and feeds with mindless propaganda through the Press and TV. We have no intention of bowing to this pressure. We will report, as we see it. What workers are doing. What they are thinking. Can you imagine an "official" paper doing that? Workers are doing that, and we will report it to you.

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WHY WE WERE EXPELLED FROM I.S.

On October 26th, Peter Graham, a Communist-Republican militant, was assassinated in Dublin. At his death, he was a member of the Fourth International. From shortly after he joined the Trotskyist movement in 1967 until his death, he worked closely with the Workers' Fight group.

He lived for 25 years, the last 6 of them as a revolutionary militant. Amongst socialist militants his dedication and controlled subversion of all else to the revolutionary cause marked him out very clearly. He organised his life, his entire existence, around the political tasks which he had at first perceived almost instinctively as a young Dublin apprentice, and then learned to understand consciously and with shapening clarity as a young man; he made the world his career in the manner of course that that life was entirely credible.

In these traits he was remarkable but not unique; many republicans of political dedication, revolutionary seriousness, and even socialist conceptions, have died and are fighting and dying now in Northern Ireland. But Peter's life is unique in one aspect.

Peter Graham's life, like those in the barren half-century that followed the death of James Connolly, and that saw a rupture between Irish revolutionary socialism and Irish Republicanism — and the emergence of socialists and the sterility of non-socialist Republicanism. His life like all Irish life was dominated by the consequences of that.

Politically, Peter Graham is important to us because he was in the vanguard of a struggle to reunite the genuinely revolutionary traditions of the society and nation into which he was born, with the traditions which were carried on by the successors of Connolly's socialism — the internationalist revolutionary tradition that is the mainspring of the working class, by the names of Lenin and Trotsky. He was such a fighting communist-republican revolutionary party that will be built on its basis, the Irish workers class cannot fully and finally emancipate itself.

Peter's personal traits, his personal dedication, thus had a more than personal significance. They were part of a drive of the Irish working class to cut a road out of the bloody impasse in which imperialism and its bastard offspring, Irish capitalism, have laid them.
The Old Bailey trial of the Mangrove Nine took the fight of Notting Hill’s black community against police harassment right into the nerve-centre of the British legal system, challenging the Judge, the Police and the Court procedures, and disrupting the smooth routine of Police repression. Neither the unexpected help of a mainly white, working class jury, nor the won at least a partial victory; they were cleared of 25 out of 31 charges, including the most serious ones, 5 were acquitted, and 4 got suspended sentences.

The judge simply decided that the Police were liars. And, indeed, the evidence in support of this view was overpowering.

The charges were of Riot, Causing an Affray, and Causing Groviers Hostly Harm. The Police brought these charges in order to hit back at the Notting Hill Black Community, which had dared to stand up to them.

RAID

In June and July 1970 the Mangrove Restaurant was raided 9 times by Police supposedly looking for drugs, which they never found, and its licence to stay open after 11pm was revoked when the Police lodged an objection. Thereafter, those who ran it were repeatedly dragged into Court, accused of serving food after hours.

On August 9th, 1970 the local black people marched in protest at the constant harassment. Without any ‘provocation’ – other than the outrageous night of black people being targeted – police baton-charged the march. The marchers naturally fought back.

The charges against the Nine arose from this battle. The first time the Police brought the charges they were thrown out by a local magistrate, and it is pretty certain that it was on the initiative of Scotland Yard, backed up by the Director of Public Prosecutions, that other charges were then substituted and a decision to press ahead with prosecutions taken. Later by a legal trick, more serious, charges were re-introduced at the Old Bailey.

NEITHER the harrassment by local Police bully-boys, nor the intervention of the higher Police authorities in pressing the charges, as accidental. The Police must protect the private property system of the wealthy against its victims. To forestall trouble they tend to pick most on those who stand out, who have the rawest deal, and are to be terrorised and intimidated.

The first targets are the homeless, the unemployed, the Irish labourers, the black People. And when such people fight back, it worries the Police.

The Mangrove was and is a community Restaurant, one of a network of community organisations. The Nine included men and women, youths and adults, workers and housewives, the highly political and the politically inarticulate; the restaurant and its clientele were harrassed so as to stamp out a centre of black consciousness.

This sort of insolent thuggery and racist provocation is a regular part of the sporting life enjoyed by the honest-copper-on-the-beat in all the cities of England. When the Mangrove Blacks responded militantly, refusing to be cowed, the Police countered first with a baton charge and then by mobilising all the power the Police and Judicial Establishment could muster.

Because the police threw all they had at the Nine, the result of the ten-week trial is a personal smack in the face for the Police. The trial itself was not quite what the Police had bargained for. The accused did not act like frightened and malleable pawns of the Court, silent and low-cowering. Instead, they turned the trial into an indictment of the Police and the system. Three of them, Darkus Howe, Rodan Gordon and Albie Lecointe, conducted their own Defence. They all refused to shut up when told to, rejected the judge’s rulings that statements about Police brutality in Notting Hill were irrelevant, and evoked ‘thisHonour’ on several occasions into walking out of his own Court.

RITUAL

With these tactics they broke through the hidebound rituals of Court procedure and managed to actually talk about their lives and experiences, and about their conflict with the Police, to the ordinary men and women of the Jury.

Normally the Jury is segregated in its box, silent and forbidden to ask questions. The accused are in the prisoners’ dock, silent and forced to explain themselves or be silenced by the Jury directly; they answer only when spoken to, and only to the point of questions put to them. Both Jury and accused are in the hands of the Judge, the lawyers and the Police, who understand each other well and are accustomed to the rituals of the courtroom – rituals change and inhibit to the layman involved.

The officials and Police are members or servants of the ruling class, either hostile to, or without real understanding of, the lives and experiences of most accused and also of most juries, the majority of whom are from the working class. The Marcos jumbo and the ancient rituals of the courts serve to block direct contact or real communication between the accused and the Jury.

Page 8

The Mangrove Nine cut thru’ the barriers of courtroom procedure.

They refused to behave as individuals charged with crimes, unsure and apologetic. They acted instead as representatives of a militant black community challenging Police and Court intimidation.

And their community backed them every day of the 49-day trial they packed the public gallery to give solidarity.

The acquittal prove that it is possible — sometimes — to beat the Police frame-up system, and to disrupt the machin- ery of the courts. But not only that.

A majority of the Mangrove Jury were workers, and only two of the 11 were black. It is known that they were from working class lines, with the middle class members inclined to believe the Police. The two young black members of the Jury knew better. They were the most serious ones, 5 were acquitted, and 4 got suspended sentences.

SOLIDARITY

Whatever element of accident there may have been in the Mangrove verdict and in the composition of the Mangrove Nine, the cases show that the Jury System can be a weak link in the chain of bourgeois control, which can sometimes be used to the benefit of the workers.

Nor is this new. In 1794 a London jury acquitted Hardy, the Republican, of treason — and the London crowd continued in triumph through the streets. And in 1838 a Jury of Clerkenwell tradesmen took a direct protest of a trial, insisted on asking the victim’s own questions, and acquitted him. The Jury, ABLE HOMICIDE on the killers of a Policeman who had taken part in a gangster’s automobile. They were themselves feted as popular heroes.

That is why in times of social crisis the Rulers can no longer use the Jury system and must substitute the biggest repression of interference without trial or martial law.

Meanwhile the courts are the courts, the law is their law. And OfStrength — the strength of the white oppressed minority groups — is in the factories and on the streets. But when we are forced onto THEIR ground, we must know how to fight there too.

That’s the lesson of the Mangrove Trial for all workers. At a time when bosses are hitting workers with the Community Relations Acts, the Industrial Relations Act aims to bring the Police and Lawcourts directly into the struggles of ordinary workers, the Blacks of Notting Hill have given a lead to the movement. They have shown that militancy pays — even in Court.

continued p.4
The crisis had been a long time coming. The late Labour Government's reaction- nary and ultimately unsuccessful attempt to maintain the value of the pound at the rate of the pound was widely regarded at the time as the first line of defence of the dollar.

After the devaluation of the pound in 1967 the Dollar rapidly became the sick man of world capita- lisms. In selling its products, US business was losing ground to its competitors, notably from West Germany and Japan. At the same time European firms began to succeed, in the export of capital (overseas investment), which had for long been a serious down payment on the great US corporations. Confidence in the Dollar as the international reserve currency--"as good as gold"--was gradually undermined as the US conti- nued to run a huge balance of pay- ments deficit. US gold reserves were depleted as countries which had previously been too happy to accept and hold "safeguard collaboration" and now began to exchange their Dollar holdings for the safer gold.

The official explanation for the crisis, vigorously promoted by US spokesmen, was that the Dollar had become "overvalued". Nixon spoke of "exorbitant" and "unfair competition" and how the panic broke and "not money" started to pour out of Dollars into Marks, Yen and even Pounds he suspended the convertibility of Dollars into gold, imposed a 10% surcharge on imports into the USA and imposed a 90-day wage and price freeze.

By thus turning into the selling post the entire international mon- etary system established at the end of the war, The US threw the whole of the Bretton Woods Agreement, and by threatening a prospect of permanent protection for US industry against foreign competition, the US Government aimed to force other powers to yield to the "overvalued" dollar, which was devalued, by way of the "overvalued" dollar, by way of an upward revision of the Yen and D-mark competitiveness.

**Imperialism**

The US's overall payments deficit was cited as inevitable in order to avoid the commercial overvaluation of the Dollar. But in fact the deficit was overwhelmingly a manifesta- tion of American Imperialist expansion.

For the past few years the US's current balance of payments has been in surplus (to the tune of $5.8 billion in 1970). This has been due to a small surplus in the balance of trade (exports of goods, less imports) and a large additional surplus stemming principally from a huge net inflow of interest and divi- dends on private foreign invest- ments owned by US business (over $6 billion in 1970).

The cause of the overall deficit was military expenditure abroad ($4 billion in 1970) and direct overseas investment by US firms ($4.4 billion). In addition the US Government paid out $4.5 billion in so-called "federal aid," which serves to protect American military and political interests abroad.

In short, the deficit represented a major cost item in the balance sheet of American imperialism. In addition, it is true for the US's strictly commercial position has been deteriorating. The US share of world exports of manufactur- ing fell from 27.5% in 1960 to 18% in the first half of 1971. A flagging domestic growth rate, persistent price inflation and the intensified challenge of foreign competition has combined to erode the USA's former supremacy in world trade, not just in old established industries such as textiles and footwear, but increasingly in cars and new science-based industries.

**Deficit**

In the first half of 1971 the US balance of trade was in defi- cit for the first time since 1957. If the balance of trade was now reported only as a rather than an in order to make up for the deficit arising from the overseas military expenditure, the US private in- vestment and "federal aid," it was something just had to give. The pull from Germany, which, with a large in the aid program and demands that America's NATO partners bear a greater share of the expense of defend- ing world capitalism, had now to be compensated by commercial overvaluation of the Dollar in order to improve the competitiveness of US capital.

The economic and political reluc- tance of the other capital powers to this "solutions" of the crisis rep- resents for them a choice of the lesser evil. There is no doubt that Japan, for example, with its 30% of its exports going to the US mar- kets, will be severely hit by the up- ward revaluation of the Yen.

West Germany's industrialists had already been voicing loud complaint about the effects on their exports of the previous revaluation of the Mark in 1969, Others, including the UK, will also suffer marginally. (Britain's case the revaluation of Sterling in terms of the Dollar is compensated by the devaluation of Sterling in terms of the Yen, and certainly other currencies.) But the countries with most to lose are the US placed to stand lose, since for the most part their exports to Europe are strong. Moreover, most trade losses are preferable to the uncertainty of floating exchange rates and an indefinite continuation of the 10% import surcharge.

**The Last 4 months**

The last 4 months have brought an unpleasant echo of the disorgan- ized economic conditions of the 1930s when the capitalist powers manipulated their currencies and raised protective tariff barriers in attempts to gain a competitive edge in their markets. In addition the de- valuation of the Dollar has been taken as the occasion for all-round currency readjustments of varying amounts, this has enabled govern- ments to manoeuvre for interchange.

It is important to be clear however, that the re-arrangement of currencies is essentially a stop-gap solution to the crisis.

Although the role of that barbarous relic, gold, in international pay- ments is officially to be phased out, it is by no means certain that the process will happen, and a new agreement on a fundamental reform of the international monetary system remains as far away as ever.

The basic conditions which gave rise to the present crisis will remain. The requirements of the world capitalist system place limits on any substantial increase of America's overseas military effort and on any significant increase of the export of capital across state frontiers. The European and Japanese challenge to American superin- remacy has receded. The problem of the "overvalued" Dollar remains.

**Class Struggle**

On the domestic front neither the US Government nor any other can contain inflation without either creating and maintaining high lev- els of unemployment at wage restraint and associated cutbacks in social services.

Either way the class struggle in every capitalist country will be sharpened.

Moreover, different degrees of inflation in different countries will still continuously disarm any temporarily achieved world trading equilibrium and thus generate the balance of payments and accumulative strength.

Even more serious in the long term is the steady slowing down in the rate of expansion of the leading capitalist economies. Profit rates are falling, more steeply in some countries than others and there is no sign of any decisive new indus- trial development of the type which sustained previous booms in capita- list history like railways, motor vehicles, nuclear power stations etc.

In conditions of long-term creeping stagnation, measures such as the devaluation of the Dollar will become increasingly in demand, but increasingly ineffective in stabilizing the system.

MIANTROSE  5 (from 29)

**RE-ARRESTED**

But still only partial victo- ries can be won. There can be no solution in the courts: it is a continuing struggle.

The Police and the State ret- alliate. Within 24 hours of his acquittal, DANNY GOODIN was re-arrested on charges of ob- structing and assaulting the Police. He was one of the 3 men given a 15-month suspended sen- tence--and the Police evidently didn't want it to remain suspend- ed for long.

The liberal Press has com- mented widely on the obvious frame-ups of the case, and a Labour MP has called on Mauley for a special inquiry into the case.

What needs is a drive to mobilize the active support of the labour movement, the struggle of the Blacks. It would be polemical and stupid to deny the existing commonalities between the labour movement. It is the job of socialists to break this down--not to pretend working class racism doesn't exist.
According to the latest official figures, unemployment now stands at 920,000, an increase of nearly 500,000. The figures themselves are not surprising. Despite the widespread unemployment, the government's system of calculating the number of unemployed people is closely related to its economic policies. The figures are calculated as those who have not worked for at least 12 weeks. It is in fact very many more than the official figures are out of work.

The government's system of calculating the unemployed is close to falsification. A drop of 250,000 in the number of workers with jobs between October 1970 and October 1971 produced a rise of only 2,000 in the official unemployment figures.

And the figures themselves completely ignore the fact that, very many people such as women who are not registered as unemployed, would work if they could. If anything, unemployment figures were calculated as those of the USA; there would be closer to 1/2 million than to the one million registered unemployed in Britain today.

Whole families are being plunged deep into despair, uncertainty and destitution. The effects on family life are corrosive. With rising prices and little money coming in, food, fuel and rent to pay out, tensions develop and yet people want to keep going. Non-stop work is the only way to keep on top of the problems. It is in fact a crime against the unemployed workers.

In truth, the unemployed are more than just so many workers and their families victimised and forced to bear the brunt of the present economic policies. They are also a potential threat to the government and those who support them. They are a threat to their own safety. They are a threat to society. They are a threat to the economy. They are a threat to the government. They are a threat to the capitalist system.

The government has not a single solution to unemployment. Its solutions are only to increase the rate of unemployment and make it worse. The government has not a single solution to unemployment. Its solutions are only to increase the rate of unemployment and make it worse. The government has not a single solution to unemployment. Its solutions are only to increase the rate of unemployment and make it worse. The government has not a single solution to unemployment. Its solutions are only to increase the rate of unemployment and make it worse. The government has not a single solution to unemployment. Its solutions are only to increase the rate of unemployment and make it worse.

In fact, if the workplaces with strong unions which can keep up higher wages resist redundancies, the movement will be stronger. It is in fact a crime against the unemployed workers.
Marching Alone....

THE ORGANISED UNEMPLOYED - 1920-1939

by Pam Shanks

DURING WORLD WAR I LLOYD GEORGE'S GOVERNMENT promised that there would be "a land fit for heroes", with prosperity and full employment, after the war was won — and many workers believed it.

But by May 1919 the illusions had vanished and there were over a million workers unemployed. And the numbers continued to rise, especially in the years following the war. The next 20 years were better years of mass unemployment and deep economic slump.

Unemployed existervicemen immediately organised themselves into groups. But these groups were more against unemployment, and concentrated on appeals for charity for their members. Charity, however, could not deal with unemployment, and many unemployed workers gained. It became clear that there was a real need for united action to compel the Government to take action to provide either employment or adequate standards of maintenance.

The mass of the unemployed had to rely on Poor Law Relief. To get that they had to be destitute and have no means of support. Officials inspected the homes of claimants, anything of value had to be sold, and any member of the household who was working was expected to support the rest of the family. Relief when granted was often in kind, and was barely sufficient to keep the claimant and dependents alive.

T.U.C. COLD-SHOULDER

The leaders of the working class, the TUC and the Labour Party, failed to do even that. By the police, and the unemployed realised that they must unite to fight for their rights: A London District Council of Unemployed was formed immediately after the demonstrations, based on local committees which had sprung up with the onset of unemployment.

This body asked the TUC Conference of February 26th, to hear a speaker. This was refused on the grounds that the delegates assembled represented the unemployed through their Unions. And so, the TUC, the Party, and the Government, failed to do even that.

A large demonstration against unemployment on October 13th, 1919 was called by the police, and the unemployed realised that they must unite to fight for their rights: A London District Council of Unemployed was formed immediately after the demonstrations, based on local committees which had sprung up with the onset of unemployment.

This body asked the TUC Conference of February 26th, to hear a speaker. This was refused on the grounds that the delegates assembled represented the unemployed through their Unions. And so, the TUC, the Party, and the Government, failed to do even that.

As a result of the demonstration, a National Unemployed Workers' Conference was formed.

This movement was able to maintain between 200 and 300 local branches and carry out a militant campaign for the right of the unemployed and for the furloughing of union members, by assisting striking workers at Sticker in a number of disputes. The movement also produced an excellent fortnightly paper called OUT OF WORK, which addressed the need for a united working class policy, and urged the unemployed to resist all attempts of the employers to use unemployed workers as blackleg labour during strikes. A united unemployed movement, on a national basis and with a consistent programme of working class demands had thus been organised by the unemployed themselves, without any "relief" from the TUC.

For the next 18 years the N.U.W.C. organised a militant campaign against unemployment, with mass demonstrations in the mass number of unemployed towns against the Government's "Poor Law Relief "Starvation policy".

HUNGER MARCHES

Aiming to awaken the majority of the workers to the plight of the unemployed, the first National Hunger March was organised in 1923, and many more were to be held in the following years. These marches were of great international value, a dramatic weapon at all times, for the whole working class.

The N.U.W.C. demanded that the government provide either employment or adequate benefit for the unemployed and they did succeed in preventing the Government from introducing some more savage legislation.

When a Labour Government was elected in 1929, a 12 point charter was drawn up for the Government of the "workers' party" to be refused to even meet a deputation of the unemployed who came to London to present the charter.

Mass unemployment got much worse in the "Hungry Thirties". The unemployed suffered degradation and poverty. Still they marched on protest demonstrations, and scuffle, were fought against the police who attempted to suppress them, battles that made the recent "battle of Westminister" look like the warming up session that it was.

And still there was no assistance from the TUC or Labour Party.

In 1941, against the opposition of the TUC General Council and the Labour Party NEC, the N.U.W.C. organised a National Conference of Employed and Unemployed workers. A joint committee was formed to develop working class unity calling for a plan of public works schemes at trade union rates, for a shorter working week in industry, and for a training scheme for youth, whom mass unemployment had deprived of the chance to learn a trade.

By 1939 the movement had found it necessary to change its tactics. In the UK, in the war, the number of unemployed gradually fell. Many firms, in line with their usual practice, started overtime rather than employ more workers. This even more unemployment fell, the Unemployed Movement had to go on fighting. It attacked firms that introduced this scheme, and went to factories trying to close down and demanding from managers an assurance that overtime would not be worked. The campaign was very successful, and many firms were forced to take on more workers and stop overtime.

With the onset of war, unemployment rapidly diminished, and the N.U.W.C. became redundant. The miserable waste of the Civil Stupid has now even over to the miserable waste of the Second World War.

The N.U.W.C. started and run by the unemployed themselves, had led the struggle of the unemployed in Britain for the right to live. It organised a National Hunger Marches, its greatest victory being a victory over the N.B.P. and the local agents. By persistent and militant action it compelled the granting of concessions which amended the conditions of the men, and forced the government and London plans for worsening these conditions.

Its great failure was its inability to unite in fusing unity of employed and unemployed for a full scale assault on the system that causes unemployment. But that was a failure of the whole organised labour movement, which was then in a state of deep demoralisation and demobilisation.

Today there is no demonstration — yet. This time it can be different. We must make it different.

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A Strategy the Dole

THE VITAL THING ABOUT THE Dole is to stop fighting before it's too late. depriving the working classes main tool to labour. There is important work to be done

Organised Workers Unions, and in the labour movement. But the DECISIVE

work will come first.

The first demand must be: NO MORTGAGE. Then time to offend. Whatever the conflict, the basic message is very simple: more work by less workers, and in return is "given" as a wage increase. Sometimes volatile redundancies. Even then we must be prepared for increased productivity with the possibility of extra workers being untered.

Secondly we must demand A SHORTER WORKING WEEK, with 8 hours at 5 days, or when instead you could have all 108 6 week. Despite enormous advances in 52 hours a week, workers are down 20 years. Through years of struggle the day to 14 hours, to 12 hours, to 1 hour shorter, it's time we held our sights.

Thirdly: NO OVERTIME. Despite figures show 13.5 million hours of overtime industry, reduce that, and you've got on the other hand of living.

This is, of course, not a popular de-
ers rely on overtime to bring them up to situiation doesn't only contribute to under better wages by giving workers the free time instead of pressuring for a stabil also necessary to demand A NATIONAL

The minimum wage must apply to ev-

does. The boss's ultimate determinant is the money they can make from the factory. Nine times out of ten it is about the tenth time, when it co- means of workers to produce redundancy. What then?

OCCUPY FACTORIES THREATEN

demand NATIONALISATION UNDER WORKERS. Lay, or closing down a factory, is to make work for the workers. This is the ideal type of industrial action, where workers control the means of production and have to decide the way forward.

When we talk about a national minic workers' control, we're not talking abut workers in a single factory acting on working class represented by unemployment attack. It demands a response from the w

On the most basic level, this means tees, militant left wheeling and spinning on the right wing and organise unions' councils of Action in the local:

But more than that is needed.

A serious battle against unemployment movement is not only to show the better parts of the working class as a whole. The concept of the unemployed figures during that period, which mobilise its forces in an aggressive way, not that party. We must build a revolution.
“A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A WALKING APOLOGY”

Dave Brodie DESCRIBES WHAT HE CALLS

V.I.P.

I am led to the office of the Production Manager. How many V.I.P.'s will I see, before this day is done? How can a face like a robber's dog "Good morning". As humbly as I possibly can.

"You're seeking employment?"

"That's right."

"Perhaps I should say Sir."

"You've done any work of this kind before?"

I don't know what kind of work it is."

"He peers at me suspiciously."

"I am seeking work."

"No! But I can learn."

"We haven't got round to the most important aspect of the job, but better broach the subject."

"What's the rate of pay?"

He stiffens slightly.

"The rate?"

"A shilling."

I think he's one of those people who think that to discuss money is rude.

"The basic rate for forty two hours in thirties pounds, to my own delight new price."

I don't remember seeing this character on The Comedians. I try to pull myself together.

"How much did you say?"

"Thirteen pounds, forty eight shillings."

"Do you get paid three times a week?"

End of another interview. I continue my trek towards the city. Having been beset upon by thieves four times already today, it comes as no great surprise when a good Samaritan, hearing my tale of woe, supplies me with a pound note.

He tells me of his journey to the dream of Carey Springs works. Even the strongest souls feel a chill of fear as the mention of Carey's name are hard, not to say desolate. But Carey Springs!

GESTAPO COURSE

The owner is a Manchester Member of Parliament, who once took a business management course run by the Gestapo. The choice is not easy. The furies of Carey's or the pangs of hunger on the dole. I decide to starve, for the time being.

"I'm wondering! If I've made a wise decision. My good Samaritan tells me that he knew a man who drew almost twenty pounds from Carey's and only worked fifty four hours to get it."

What would a simple soul like me do with so much money?

Thanking my benefactor I continue my journey. I come to the potato warehouse in Ancostas, "Men Wanted!" with muscles in their urine. I don't have any muscles at all that I know of, but here goes..."

He is set for a week to be going on, report at four o'clock in the morning, (Is there really such a time in the morning?) Anyway, it must be better than dole money, and it's very interesting work, stacking potatoes.

So now I will celebrate my good fortune by spending my newly acquired wealth on a couple of pints and a packet of Park Drive. The last of the big spenders is back in business.

Dead Weight on YOUTH

A.S 1972 OPENS, THOUSANDS OF young people find themselves out of work, with no prospects of getting a job. All they have been taught in their schools are about "hard-working, industrious, responsible citizens". All down and nation which the schools incite about 'getting on in the world' has been falsified.

Particularly hard hit are areas like Kirby and towns in the north-east like Gateshead, where dole queues stretch right out of the Youth Employment office down along the pavement.

In London and the south, the problem is not so much there are no jobs for young people, but that the choice of low-paid jobs, pushing brooms and menial, pointless tasks. In a situation where thousands of unskilled, untrained workers are out of work, the employers do not need to embark on training schemes to meet their requirements for skilled labour. They cut back on the intake of apprentices — and to hell with any future prospects.

What this means for many young people is that they are being denied the right to make the living in a skilled trade. Once past the age of sixteen or seventeen, they become ineligible to start an apprenticeship. What are they to do? To do college. Many don't even get full dole and have to fail. A dole of less than a shilling they themselves feeling the full brunt of the Tories' attacks on living standards. This situation creates conflicts between the youngsters and their parents, and it is this conflict which is the pressures on them to accept virtually any job and for any wage. Those who have left school and have no stamp cannot even claim the few shillings allowed to youth in unemployment pay.

Young people who have grown up in a period when living standards and wages have been forced up by the strength of the trade union movement, have grown up believing that this is the natural course of things and that they could look forward to a future, now the Tories are saying to the youth that they can have no future.

Young workers stand largely out side the Trade Union movement. Their interests have been neglected by the union leadership for too long.

Today's youth is tomorrow's working class. The organised workers' movement must demand a future for youth. We must not allow young workers to be used as cheap labour and demoralised on the dole. 'Left trade union leaders must put the youth's struggle into action by fighting for those rights, drawing young workers into the trade union movement, ensuring young workers full democratic rights within the trade unions.
The BENEFITS of UNEMPLOYMENT
for the bosses by Phil Lewis

PRESSURE

This has the effect of putting greater pressure on the capitalist to hold on to every last piece of the surplus possible, if he is to accumulate and grow and sustain his operations. He struggles to keep the rate of profit up. If he invests £100 and makes £20 profit in a period, then the rate of profit is 10%. If the investment is £200 and he ends up with only £215, at the end of the period his rate of profit falls to 7.9%. It is only if the added productivity of labour made possible by the increased investment is sufficient to keep the rate of profit can be kept up. And if the capitalist can hold on to the surplus.

Here too the struggle with the workers intensifies. There is no escape from the struggle for the surplus.

The effect of the permanent revolution in production techniques and machinery towards greater and more and more workers out of production in technological redundancies. However, in an expanding and dynamic economy, most are absorbed again before long into the econ.m.

CYCLES

Superimposed on this tendency to technological redundancies are the effects of the cyclical slump cycle which, though its periodic time has varied from period to period, has been a permanent feature of capitalism.

The capitalist system is divided against itself. It produces goods for consumption and economic activity, but it is the production of machines, ultimately produces goods that must be consumed. The rich are limited in such as value, no matter how much waste and luxury they indulge in their consumption is limited. The capitalists must consume a large part of society’s product. To consume in a market economy they must buy. What they can buy depends on their income. The workers have only their wages.

As an organis of one side of the capitalist system the capitalist must, as explained above, right to keep wages as low as possible. But as the seller of what is produced, he is crippled by the resulting limited buying power of the masses.

What prevents the system from sinking into a permanent slump of overproduction? The fact that for a period, the productive activity is not directly concerned with mass consumption goods: the production of means of production, machinery, and the lag between investment in equipment (or production) and the point at which most of it starts producing goods that depend for sale on the buying power of the masses.

This has meant that capitalism has developed in a lurching, irregular way, in boom-slump cycles. The cycles begin with new investment, production and employment and effective demand in the consumer goods sector. As the investment in means of production matures there is an added flow of goods and less demand, as workers employed on the finished goods (for example, builders) are laid off or go on short time. Other aspects of all work, such as imbalances and disproportions, combine with these cycles to create more of the slump cycle. The slump cycle, devastation of capital (as in the ’58’s), this eventually creating the precondition for a new upward cycle. But the longer the wait, the more creates the need for new building.

In the boom-slump cycle unemployment is a vital necessity for capitalism’s continued existence. The boss needs to treat workers like other raw material, and to be able either use them or leave them unused as his interests dictate.

RESERVE ARMY

And in ‘normal’ times the opening up of new markets, the creation of new industries, the construction of new plant and the like, solutions in conditions which are best served by a system with a pool of workers, that is to say, by capitalism. This is immediately driven in the production process during a boom, the whole new capacity built up is burnt with the necessary actions.

The value of this is that the sacrifice of many human lives, the struggle and sacrifice of millions of workers can be made in the interests of the benefactors, workers and employers. The value of this is that the sacrifice of millions of workers can be made in the interests of the benefactors, workers and employers.

UNITY

Thus we see that the fight against unemployment is not only the fight of those already out of work, because the existence of a large number of unemployed threatens the wages and conditions of work of those who remain in work. If the unemployed are reorganised, they will be able to compete for jobs and, hence, lower the wage rate.

The trade union movement must link up both the employed and unemployed workers in the one struggle.

The demand for the right to work is a serious challenge to the system which relies for its very existence on the human wastage of permanent unemployment. The bosses will say the demand is unrealistic.

But, as Leon Trotsky put it in 1928, “If capitalism is an economic system inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish, realizability or not, in the general catastrophe in which it gives the illusion question of the relationship of forces, which can be decided only by the struggle. By means of this struggle, by the sacrifices of the working class, and after the workers’ state succeeds, the workers will best come to understand the necessity of liquidating capitalist slavery.”
BUILDING BOOM, 1972-STYLE
Not so long ago a would-be joker commented that the right stuff, seeing some imaginative new proposals from the Government to create the right environment to build new ... Labour 6 changes, a church of England and a joke about this government. In the week before Christmas it did come up with bright new proposals for giving farmers (jobhunting), Labour Exchange, will be made brighter. Some of the "lower depths of the atmosphere may disappear - the hard benches, bad ventilation, the long waits for bad service.

In the future, unemployed industrial workers may even be given some of the amenities which have always been available to the better class of unemployed person, the genteel unemployed on the Professional & Executive Register - who get comely chairs, good ventilation, potting plants and even magazines to read.

No doubt it's all part of the preparation for the next election. Think of the slogans: "Unemployment Better With The Conservat..." I.R.A. BRAINWASHES KIDS...
The IRA really is becoming an all-time bogey. A Colchester stamp dealer, Thomas F. among a recent batch he had bought, some with handwriting on it. He had the "DAIL ULADH 1971" and "SUPPORT BERN FENN", comments, and thought that a little child had come into my shop at this time of year to buy stamps.

PIG PRODUCTION UP
Pickers, strikers, black people, Irish militants and unemployed youngsters - BEWARE!

Red Biddle

In all the turmoil of recent years, nothing shook academic professordom quite so much as a threat to their money. A couple of years ago, there was a proposal that lecturers' pay should depend on their teaching ability, as assessed by students. Now there is a new threat, to fund research, and the academics' response, though a good deal less vigorous and dramatic, has been almost equally united.

The Government has published a report (the Rothschild Report), which recommends that part of the money at present going to scientific Research Councils should go to government departments instead. Although the report is meant to be a suggestion for discussion, not a definite Government policy, the Government has stated that it approves of the basic principle of the report.

$1200 million
At present about $1200 million a year is spent on scientific research in Britain. $280 million of this comes from government. Of that $94 million is distributed through five Independent Research Councils for pure research which has no definite immediate practical application. The Rothschild Report pointed out the inadequacy of the money of three of the Councils - the Agricultural Research Council, the Medical Research Council and the Natural Environment Research Council - should go instead to government departments. Those departments will then use that money to finance research on particular projects, perhaps through the Research Councils.

The argument is that much of the research done by those three Councils is in fact research with definite practical applications in view. This "applied" research is at present directed in whatever fields the Research Council chooses.

The Rothschild Report claims that the principle ought to be "the customer (i.e., the Government Department) says what he wants, the contractor (the Research Council or any establishment) does it (if he can) and the customer pays." Social Control

On the face of it, there is sound value in the Government's attack. Why should scientists be considered as some sort of supermen who can dispose of millions of pounds in whatever direction they fancy? Surely "society" has a right to control over scientific research, which is supported by society, and which can have big effects on society, for good or evil. Pure" research is, it is argued, the role of the council is necessary.

But there is a difficulty that no one has asked "society". The question is one of control of science by the Government, which is quite another thing. We can see how control over the Government might affect science if we look at the figures. (230 million out of $280 million spent by the Government on research goes to military purposes. At the same time, very little is done on cleaning up the pollution poisoning our environment or on developing techniques to help the starving two thirds of the world. (Not, of course, that lack of research is the main cause of pollution or starvation, but it is a factor.)" "We are therefore faced with the problem of how to implement social responsibility.

UNEMPLOYMENT
The main motive behind the Rothschild proposals is probably unemployment. Though the cold wind of economic crisis, it may be more money-waving in the field of scientific research. In the USA, already, research and development spending in 1970 was down 8% in real terms between 1969 and 1970. In Britain, the prospect is that even less money will be spent in 1975 than in the present year.

A rise of 4-5% in spending on science is necessary each year just to maintain the complexity and cost of scientific equipment. So what happens when spending is cut?

In the USA, 12.6% of new graduates are unable to get a job. 10.3% of new graduates in 1975 were unemployed.

A survey of graduating engineers showed that 10% had no job.

In Britain, at least 5000 graduates - roughly 10% of British universities' 1975 output - are unemployed, or in temporary jobs not using their qualifications.

These 5000 include many scientists. According to the Secretary of the Oxford University Appointments Committee, "post-doctoral scientists" (i.e. students who have done full course of research after their degree) "are almost unemployable."

Thus we have the absurd situation of people being given elaborate and expensive advanced training, and then not being able to use that training.

It was the capitalist private profit system that first harnessed the potencies of science to any large scale. But today that system is shown to be itself incapable of using the resources of science.

Only a socialist society which does away with the absurdities of capitalist economic crisis can do that.
BANGLA DESH: Roots of the conflict

THE INDIAN VICTORY IN EAST BENGAL HAS DESTROYED PAKISTAN AS IT WAS ESTABLISHED BY THE BRITISH EMPIRE IN ITS RETREAT FROM THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT 25 YEARS AGO. THE INDIANS HAVE CLEARED OUT THE MURDEROUS PAKISTANI ARMY WHOSE SLAUGHTER OF THE EAST BENGALIS DROVE 12 MILLION REFUGEES INTO INDIA.

EAST PAKISTAN HAS BECOME THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF BANGLADESH. BUT HOW INDEPENDENT IS IT? AND WHAT SORT OF LIBERATION HAS SO FAR BEEN ACHIEVED BY THE PEOPLE OF BANGLADESH?

Jim Webb EXPLAINS WHAT HAS HAPPENED — AND WHY.

DURING the days of British rule in India it was in Bengal that the terrorist and revolutionary movements against it were born, Bengal East and West, has always been in the forefront of anti-imperialist and anti-boss class struggle. Today, in spite of the retreat from East and West Bengal in Pakistan and West Bengal in India, the Bengali tradition of militancy lives.

It’s no accident that revolutionary ferment has erupted in both the East and West. Why does this revolutionary struggle of the Bengali masses, a struggle which threatens to light the spark of workers’ revolution throughout the Indian subcontinent, that is so much feared by both the Indian and Pakistani ruling classes, by their imperialist backers, and by the bureaucrats of both Russia and China. (The Chinese have closely backed the ultra-reactionary military dictatorship of Yahya Khan and denounced the Bangladeshis as “fascist provocateurs.”)

“PAKISTAN”

For years East Pakistan lived under the almost colonial yoke of West Pakistan, where the wealth of the country was transferred from it by 1,000 miles of Indian territory. Over the past 10 years the hopes of the East and West have swelled steadily, with East Pakistan’s help has swelled massively.

In fact, even according to an official report by the Pakistan Government Planning Commission, there has been a net transfer of resources of $1,000 million from the East to the West in the 20-year period since Independence.

In the last 12 years during the period of military dictator- ship, the situation worsened and the East Bengali workers and peasantry took to the streets. In this situation the AWAMI LEAGUE built up its support with a very small and non-militant nationalism. It was able to gain the support of the masses only because the pro-Moscow tilted East held the Awami League while the pro-Peking left tilted West had been the struggle due to Peking’s long-standing support to the pro-Moscow tilt in India.

But the workers and peasants of the East would not lie down. A general strike in 1969 which engulfed both wings of Pakistan brought down Ayub Khan and ushered in Yahya Khan, who survived only because he promised elections and a swift transfer to power. When the elections came in December 1970 they dealt a hammer blow to Yahya. The Awami League’s People’s Party won a majority on a programme of sweeping national reform (and political anti-nationalism). In the East, the years of frustration of both Hindus and Moslems save the Awami League a 90% major- ity.

AWAMI LEAGUE

The programme of the Awami League, expressed in its Six- point Charter, was for a Paki- stani federation, not for independ- ence from the West.

Nevertheless, the ruling West Pakistan military clique was un- able to recover its lost face in the eyes of the people. Apart from the crippling effects on the West Pakistan economy, it had also backed the ultra-reactionary military dictatorship of Yahya Khan and denounced the Bangladeshis as “fascist provocateurs.”

The character of the Awami League’s leadership is such that it is linked to the Sepoy mutiny of 1857, 1867, and 1947; it has far fewer tendencies than does the League to advance the masses into East Pakistan’s soil. Because they feared the masses, they made no effort to arm them. Instead, Mujib fervently looked for a compromise in negotiations with Yahya, while the latter quietly moved his troops in for the kill.

The tragic results are well enough known. Bangla Desh was declared after tens of thousands had been massacred, multitudes taken prisoner, and the Awami League leadership had skipped to India. After the invasion, the League in exile appealed to everyone but the massess to look for a place to go, and insisted on the Awami League leadership.

MUKTI BAHINI

But the Bangla Desh masses founded the party had no such place to go; they had to fight. The Mukti Bahini was set up, at first with the help of any East Pakistan Rifles. Workers, peasants, unemployed graduates, students and even schoolchildren flocked to the newly formed Mukti Bahini. This brave force fought for national self-determina- tion with few weapons against tremendous odds.

 Until the outbreak of the war between India and Pakistan they received few weapons, and only through the back door. “Friends” Russia and India, who feared that a well armed guerrilla army might fall out on the capitalists, was a threat to private property in East Bengal, that it might spread, had been humiliated by their archenemies and by the economies of European and American bank- ruptency. Even prior to the war, given the disruption in the East, economic chaos was in process of being set up. Now that a large source of their raw materials is lost, the Pakistanis areHit by a frenzy. Bhutto has replaced Yahya and nursed promises of a thousand year’s war with India and sweeping nationalizations.

BANGLADESH

The Indian Army justifies its continuing presence in Bangladesh by posing as a peace-keeping force, preventing the Bengalis from massacring collaborators. Though the very wide publicity given to certain revenge incidents might seem to show that the Indian Army has been a success, this is not the case. Indian bureaucrats and police were already moving into Bangladesh as part of the withdrawal of the Indian forces. This was done quite openly, with the blessing of the Indian Army leadership.

The Indian Government wants to help the East Bengalis to get back in the saddle by the gurillas are not going to be satisfied after all the hardships by the brand of “socialism” offered by the Awami League.

Thus the “law and order” line of the Indian Army conceals definite anti-revolutionary aims. The Indian ruling class must have stability in Bangladesh if they are to have any hope of keeping control in West Bengal. It is obvious that Bangladesh, and despite the window-dressing this has in fact been acknowledged among the Indian top brass.

Although Aurora, Commander on India’s Eastern Front, first said “I imagine it will be a matter of weeks not months before the Indian troops get out of Bangladesh, other military leaders were more blunt. Maj Gen Richard Medford, the British chief of staff to the Indian Army, said: “We are taking territory and we are not ashamed of it.” Bangladesh must simply be sure that if it remains in place, some semblance of democracy can be created but not one of any
New Plant, Less Jobs

The Tory offensive on jobs has really 2"a2"e2: The steel industry. Dozens of figures can be quoted to show how steel works are being "rationalised", with thousands of workers being paid off, prematurely 'retired' or put on short time. Productivity deals have been introduced to give some workers higher rates of pay, at the expense of losing traditional rights which were won to safeguard their jobs.

Nationalisation of steel is being used as a weapon in the "rationalisation and re-equipment of the industry. The largesse of the running class is through taxes and price rises. Thus they hope to make British Steel work hard enough to compete with foreign steel combines such as U.S. Steel and Nippon Steel.

The Tories will push Nationalisation to the limit, bringing about even more cutbacks, redundancies and the building of new concentrat- ed steel complexes which can be run with a minimum number of men.

T E E S S I D E

On Teesside, the loss of workers is pinning their hopes on the building of a new steel complex at Redcar. But with the recently built Basic Oxygen Steel plant showing a "loss of £15 and a hundred pounds or so" created at the expense of thousands lost, as steel local works close one down or cut back.

The new nor terminal and blast furnace at Teesside would create some jobs: but nearly all the other steel workers in the area will be down, so that job opportunities would again be far less than now.

During the 1980s an efficiency expert paid by the bankers' insurance firm, which owned the local steel plants had the power to sack thousands of workers and was later nicknamed "the Hangman", because everywhere he went there were mass redundancies, cutbacks, and closures.

The Tory hangmen are butchering not only steel but all major industries. They plan to make steel workers dig their own pools, and sell it back to their financial backers on the cheap. Steel workers must fight all attempts to enforce further redundancies, to step up rationalisation or to denationalise (moral)."}

MACHINE TOOLS

"no good news"

JUST BEFORE CHRISTMAS, a delegation of convenors and shop stewards from the Coventry area machine tools industry went to the Coventry Labour MP's office, Nicholas Ridley, junior Minister responsible for the machine tool industry. They told him of the "disaster situation at an industry threatened with dislocation."

He replied: "I'm afraid I have no good news for you. Nothing can be done for this industry, and there will be a review in 12 months' time."

In December 1989 the workers struck. They were told that a joint committee to work out savings would be set up and that there would be a pay review in 12 months' time.

Last year the workers refused to do overtime in the annual stocktaking. The workers then laid off all the manual workers for the time the stocktaking took up. They also threatened to bring the executive "monthly" staff to do the stocktaking.

The workers had meanwhile arranged for national officials to meet the management. At first the management agreed, but then refused to let the stocktaking take place. In December 6 clerical workers were told that they would work in another department for the time of the stocktaking - or else ...

Disaster

To say that last year was disastrous for the machine tool industry is to put it mildly. Most of the established firms (notably for 1971) and the Machine Tools Trade Association stated that new orders are 25% down. The result has been large scale sackings of highly skilled men who have spent a lifetime in the industry.

For example, Alfred Herberts the largest machine tool manufacturer in Europe, have sacked between 3,000 and 1,000 workers, over half of their whole labour force.

Whole plants have been closed down, with the losses ... and rationalise. Many small firms have gone to the wall, while others have been taken over by the bigger companies. Brown's closed the famous Coventry firm of Samuel Gibbs, Tube Investments, and Gauge and Tool, then closed one of the Coventry factories in spite of promises to the contrary; and Alfred Herberts, after taking over, closed Hoofbrooks and Lockwood.

In some instances, craft apprenticeships offered through their training centres and, certainly there were far fewer Machine Tool apprenticeships offered than the normal school leavers for many years.

Obviously machine tool workers are in a hard fight, and need to combine on a national as well as a local level to fight for every redundancy package as it arises. Every small firm, and there are many of them, must be organised. Redundancy notices should be signed, and no overtime worked, while sacked workers are still on the stocks! Cut the basic rates of pay, and no overtime deals should be signed."

And work to get rid of this Tory Government which puts the profits of the few before the livelihoods of the many.

Dave Spencer

BANGLADESH (from p.10)

honestly in Delhi or elsewhere pretends that it is the real reason for what are here. Bangla Desh will be like Calcutta, which we keep firmly under our thumb sith, with no nonsense of local autonomy." (My emphasis JW)

But was this venture India may well be aided by the Pakistan Government! The generals and the politicians will unite against revolutionary threats. Mujib is released by Bhutto in the hope that he can help keep control. The Pakistan ruling class must try to do this."

In India, the euphoria over the victory will quickly disappear, the situation is increasingly unstable, especially in West Bengal, where use strong Maoists. Over 30,000 people will set an example.

Given the importance of the West Bengal in the Indian economy and in Indian politics, and given the militancy of the workers, peasant movements and landless agricultural labourers, Bengali holds the key to the whole situation. But the problem in Bengali, as in India as a whole, is still the absence of a revolutionary Marxist leadership to lead the struggle to a victorious conclusion.

BOLTON ROADWAYS DRIVERS FIGHT ANTI-UNION VILIFICATION

ALL THE DRIVERS WORKING FOR Bolton Roadways Ltd are paid on a percentage basis — that is, they get a percentage of what their "ownies" earn in a week. Apart from forcing the men to forget about their safety, under this system it is virtually impossible to work out what the real time was spent on. Last month all the men joined the Transport & General Workers Union and elected three stewards. Over Christmas live men, including two of the stewards, were suspended. The reason given was "safety" but in the same week as the suspension two extra drivers were taken on.

An official strike was declared with only four drivers out of 21 still working. The pickets at the Bolton depot have run away several times, but the men's main success is with blocking. The firm has been blocked by workers in the shop and the busi- ness (a), at Dunlops and at Esso amongst others.

RR - Retreat on prod deals

BRISTOL. 6800 manual workers at Rolls-Royce aircraft factories returned to work on January 3rd. They have gained little from their 9 week strike for a £5 a week cost of living increase.

Management took a hard line from the start, offering only £5.50 with 50p offset against any national engineering increase, and demanding immediate progress on a proposed productivity deal. 6 weeks of limited action (a complete ban on over- time and a reduction of the working week to 37 hours) did not produce any new offer from management.

Having provoked the strike they stood firm and waited for the workers' determination to crumble. This did not happen despite a hysterical campaign in the local press and a month's delay before the unions, both the AUEW and the TGWU, decided to make the strike official.

Management's determination to win was in line with government policy to keep down wages, especially as Rolls-Royce pays among the highest wages in the area and a big increase there could have caused a spillover effect into wages at other firms. Also, Bristol is the only part of the Combustion to have accepted productivity deals.

SETTLEMENT

The final settlement was negotiated by national officials, and narrowly accepted at a stormy shop stewards' meeting. It gave £1.50, backdated to December, with "further negotiations" on the offset clause.

This agreement will allow management to push ahead with the introduction of activity sampling and job grading. The firm has reduced its manual workforce in Bristol from 17,000 to under 7,000 in 10 years, and further cuts — possibly up to 2,000 jobs are bound to result from the introduction of a productivity deal.

This is not an isolated attack by the Government-appointed management, brought in after the Company's stage-managed "bankruptcy" last year. In Coventry 1,200 men were locked out during the recent toolroom strike, making a big contribution to its defeat while vicious redundancies have been put through at the East Kilbride factory.

In the face of this onslaught the union's executive committee must be made into an effective fighting body to lead national action to defend workers' living standards and jobs.

Simon Temple TGWU
**Bosses get their Cards from Fisher Bendix workers**

The Kirkby Fisher-Bendix workers are the latest to refuse the offers that were forcefully tabled in 1972, and have continued to act on their own terms. This time round the fight against the dole queues begins inside the factories, not after the workers are out in the cold.

The workers at Fisher-Bendix have refused to allow the factory to close. On 2nd January they took over, marched to the Directors' offices, and TOLD THE MANAGEMENT TO GET OUT.

The management offered to postpone dismantling the machinery — for 26 days! A massive meeting of the workers rejected this generous concession, and told the management they must leave.

The workers have since controlled the factory. No machinery or goods will be allowed to leave until the workers agree to re-open the factory - workers' redundancies. (Last year a 9-week strike defeated a plan for large scale redundancies.)

Workers patrol the factory and grounds to make sure they keep control. Mass meetings are being held weekly — and the families of the strikers are now being involved in the meetings. This is a real occupation, not a half-way house like UCS.

The Thorn Combine Committee (Thornown, Fisher-Bendix) have exposed the real reason behind the bosses' plans to shut up shop in Kirkby - Wales wages are not being paid. For the Thoms' combine are on £14 a week, as against £24 in Kirkby.

The Committee has decided to fight for parity of wages throughout the company, and methods of fighting redundancy by keeping control of the machinery.

The strikers are being backed up by the local labour movement: the Huyton, Prescott and Kirkby Trades Councils have called for a local stoppage and mass picket of the workers at Fisher-Bendix on Friday January 14th.

Money is urgently needed. Send donations to Tom Staples at Northwood, Kirkby, Lanes.

Paul Barker

**Tenants take action**

A VOTE OF THANKS TO WORKERS' FIGHT MEMBERS FOR THE ASSERTANCE they have given, was the conclusion of a successful first meeting of the tenants on the Brightwell estate in Bolton, Lancashire.

Tenants gathered at the local Church Hall in answer to a leaflet by a member who lives on the Estate. Their anger and despair was released by the local council's contemptible scheme for re-painting the houses on one part of this large estate.

The houses on the bus routes have been painted, whilst all the others have not! Thus if you pass through you would get the impression that the Council kept the whole Estate in good order. But would you be wrong? These are just some of the things you get for a week in Bolton: Large gaps in your windows and doors; Damp in your bedrooms; Leaking overflows; Doors and gates missing. Cracked steps and paths front and back. Crack in water closets.

These are just six out of a list of over 40 complaints that the Council have failed to attend to, in some cases 3 YEARS of complaints and reminders.

The Council has even ignored a doctor's note warning of the danger to a child's health.

A petition was passed round, and the meeting went on to discuss the coming 'fair rents' Act and its implications. Committee was elected to guide and organise the fight for the rights of tenants.

The point was repeatedly made that to rely on Councillors to put things right would be a mistake as nothing had been done in the past. The Action Committee, Councils Partly had contradicted the strength of the tenants themselves could have any lasting success. Or.

One tenant put it: "If they won't put things right we'll have to make them."

Those present at the meeting agreed to contribute 5p per week to a fighting fund, and to ask all other tenants on the Estate to do the same.

Enquiries and messages of support should be sent to Howard Sweeney at 30 Moberly Road, Brightwell, Bolton Lancs. Letters from other Tenants Committees locally and nationally would particularly be welcome.