

WORKERS' FIGHT

no.8

14-24 June 1972

4p

430 killed in

RHODESIA MINING DISASTER

OF THE 430 MEN WHO DIED IN Rhodesia's worst ever mine disaster last Tuesday, 394 were black slave labourers. They worked on a Contract which left them few rights. They were housed in barracks and fed on slops. They earned less than £3 a week. And they were murdered, just as surely as those recently shot down by Smith's police, or those African militants who have been strung up by Smith's hangmen.

Mining is dangerous, always, at all times, under all conditions. But when it is organised on the basis of very cheap labour and when that labour is terrorised and repressed, forbidden to organise independent unions on the job and denied a political voice, as in Rhodesia's racial dictatorship, then the dangers are multiplied murderously.

The drive for profits is unrestrained. It smashes the disorganised

resistance of the miners, whose lives come cheap to the mine owners. Men who never enter a mine determine work pressure, pace, safety; those whose lives are at risk have no say.

The main profiteers (like the Anglo-American Mining Corporation which owns Wankie and many of the S. African mines) are the international mining giants responsible to no-one but themselves, and least of all to the African miner. Risks which the NUM in Britain would never tolerate become the rule: for example an UNDERGROUND dynamite store made the Wankie disaster much worse than it might otherwise have been.

Explosions and disasters are expensive. But the high profit from unrestrained working of the black miners makes up for it: anyway, safety observances and controls are also expensive.

A few whites risk their lives — but they are middlemen, slave herders and the odd technician.

The result has been a terrible coupling in Southern Africa of racial exploitation with mining disasters scarcely distinguishable from cold-blooded murder. The worst mine disaster in the last dozen years was in South Africa where 437 died in 1960. And there have been very many others.

President Dupont of Rhodesia has opened a fund for the dependents, and pro-Smith Tory MPs are virtuously clamouring to subscribe. What the miners need, however, is not a few coins of conscience money, but that the white racists in Rhodesia and South Africa, and their international backers and partners — this tribe of murdering hypocrites — should simply get off their backs.

**National
Docks
Strike :**

STEWARDS LEAD

THE NATIONAL PORTS SHOP Stewards Committee has called for a one day national stoppage on June 14th or 15th to coincide with the meeting of the National Lay Delegates of the Docks Section, TGWU.

This strike will serve notice on the Lay Delegates and the Union leaders that the NPSSC won't tolerate much more shilly-shallying from them and that they had better start organising the fight back on the docks — or else get out of the way and let the NPSSC do the job.

On the same day there will be a lobby of the delegates by dockers wary of inaction and of letting the issue slide.

The Stewards are aware that a major reason why Jack Jones called for a National Strike on June 2nd was to get the initiative away from the Shop Stewards, who have so far given the lead in the container-blacking dispute. But last week, the Lay Delegates, on the leadership's recommendation, postponed the strike until June 16th while a Union-employers Committee looks at the problems of containerisation and port unemployment.

Since the so-called Aldington-Jones Committee will hardly have met before the 16th, Jones will undoubtedly ask the Lay Delegates for another "postponement".

Will the Aldington-Jones Committee make a difference? To think so is to think that the issues in dispute can be solved by "reasonable" men talking.

But they can't: both sides have too much at stake. The best that can come out of it is better compensation for loss of jobs.

Meanwhile such "investigations" can only hinder dockers from fighting back.

The facts are already well known. Erosion of dockers' jobs continues at a rapid pace — one quarter lost in 6 years. In London alone 1700 men are now in the "pool" at £20 a week.

The Union demand for £42 fall-back pay, 4 weeks holiday and the exclusive right of dockers to pack and unpack containers at the container depots (which would still leave 3/4 of all containers packed by non-dockers) won't be the full answer to our problems. But at least it is a start.

But these demands must be fought for.

Every docker should support the call of the NPSSC for a one day National strike. Any chance of effective action in the ports lies in following the lead of the Stewards — the Union officials will do their best now, as always in the past, to lead us up the garden path

HAROLD YOUNG



**U.S. TROOPS OUT
OF VIETNAM !**

Ireland:

PEACE? or...Surrender?

"Let there be no settlement short of the mark. If we do we are sentencing the next generation to death and destruction. Let us be responsible. Let there be no let-up. If there's to be a struggle, let it come in our lifetime."

Thus Rory Brady, President of Sinn Fein (Provisional) last Easter. He was recalling 1921, when the forces of "peace" and "moderation" succeeded in snuffing out the war for Irish Independence before full Independence had been won. They thus ensured the partition of Ireland, and laid the basis for the present war.

The same forces — the Catholic Church and the Irish middle classes, and their politicians like the Social Democratic and Labour Party, allied with the British Government — have recently won another round, with the unilateral and unconditional ceasefire by the Official IRA. They are now turning the heat on the Provisionals and have started a modified form of 'internment' in the South to beat them down.

When they talk of peace they mean peace on British Government terms. By 'an end to terrorism' they mean, primarily, an end to the campaign to smash the licenced terrorists employed by the British state. When they denounce 'thugs' and murderers' they have in mind not the forces of the Crown but the heroic militia thrown up by the Catholics of Northern Ireland's ghettos to fight off the real thugs and the real murderers.

By 'an end to violence' they mean that the Catholics should disarm, leaving the British Army and the Orange thugs of Vanguard (who legally possess or have access to over 100,000 firearms) armed to the teeth.

The SDLP politicians now no longer demand even an end to internment without trial as a matter of right, but as a "reward" for ending the struggle that made internment 'necessary' in the first place — that is, surrender.

It most certainly is not for us, living in England as we do, to tell the Irish republicans to continue to fight on, or to tell the Northern Ireland Catholics to continue in the terrible war conditions now existing.

But when the major Republican organisation (the Provisionals) shows a determination to learn the lessons of modern Irish history and, this time, not to let the fight end before it is won, then they should have our support. And when, despite all the pressures of the Church, of the politicians, of the propagandists and, above all, the pressures of

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workers fight

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Ireland

the hellish life in Catholic Belfast and Free Derry, very substantial sections of the population demonstrate publicly in support of the Provisional IRA (as over 5,000 of them recently did in Derry) — then socialists and militants in Britain must back them fully.

We must back them, defend them and fight in the British labour movement to undo the work of Government propaganda by explaining why the IRA fights on and why the majority of Catholics still resist the lures of the much-publicised "peace campaign".

The IRA is a victim, in a certain sense, of its own success, and also of its own limitations.

It fought the British Army to a standstill until the politicians had to use 'concessions' to undermine it from within. The "concession" was Direct Rule — an end to direct Orange control of the Northern Ireland state. The dividends are already rolling in for British Imperialism, garnered by the Church and the whore politicians like the SDLP MPs Hume, Fitt, Paddy Devlin et al.

Pushed aside by the Republican upsurge in 1971 and forced to adopt an 'extreme' posture to maintain any influence at all, these people have regrouped around the "neutral" gauleiter, William Whitelaw. They are trying the repeat the performance of 1969, when they persuaded the Catholics to let the British Army into the free areas and remove their protective barricades.

Then they plugged the line — "the British Army is neutral and will protect you from the RUC and the B-Specials". Now their line is — "William Whitelaw is neutral and he will protect you from the terrorism of the British Army"

No wonder the majority are harder to convince this time round.

Whitelaw has, of course, stopped the wholesale reign of terror in the Catholic areas. The troops no longer systematically beat Catholics or wreck their homes in the course of "searches". That's all part of the plan.

Whitelaw is playing "soft cop" to the Army's "tough cop", The contrast with the recent Army terror, together with the threat to unleash it again, is meant to disorientate the republican people, to make them forget that the "soft" approach is unlikely to last longer than the time it takes to isolate them from the IRA — without whom there would be no "soft" approach and no concessions.

And in the South, brave Jack Lynch has moved into action — in support of the British Army in Northern Ireland. Inhibited so far by Southern indignation against the British terror in the North, he now feels strong enough, given Direct Rule and the Peace Campaign, together with his victory in the recent Common Market referendum, to move against the IRA.

Special courts of 3 judges and without juries have been set up to guarantee convictions of IRA men and bring about what is bitterly described as Internment with "trial".

Thus the success of the IRA in forcing the British Government to make "concessions" and to take the "soft" line where the hard one had failed, has now created the opportunity for all the IRA's foul-weather 'friends' to turn on it and attempt to smash it.

The political limitations of the IRA helped give them their opening. As articles in this issue (see p.3) by Irish socialists explain in detail, they have failed to couple their military action with effective political action. And the blatant sectarianism of recent actions, seemingly the work of the Provisionals (though it shouldn't be ruled out that these acts, or some of them, are the work of provocateurs), and ugly acts of very doubtful military value (like the killing by the Officials of the Bogside British Army man on leave, William Best) couldn't possibly advance the struggle. They could only horrify and demoralise the catholic population and needlessly, senselessly widen the already chasm-wide division between Protestants and Catholics, making the work of the organisers of the semi-fascist Vanguard movement that much easier. They have helped it grow, and thus created a genuine fear of civil war for the reactionaries to use.

But none of this changes the basic rightness of what the IRA is fighting for: an end to Internment; a speedy end to British occupation of Ireland; an end to the artificial and disruptive partition of Ireland.

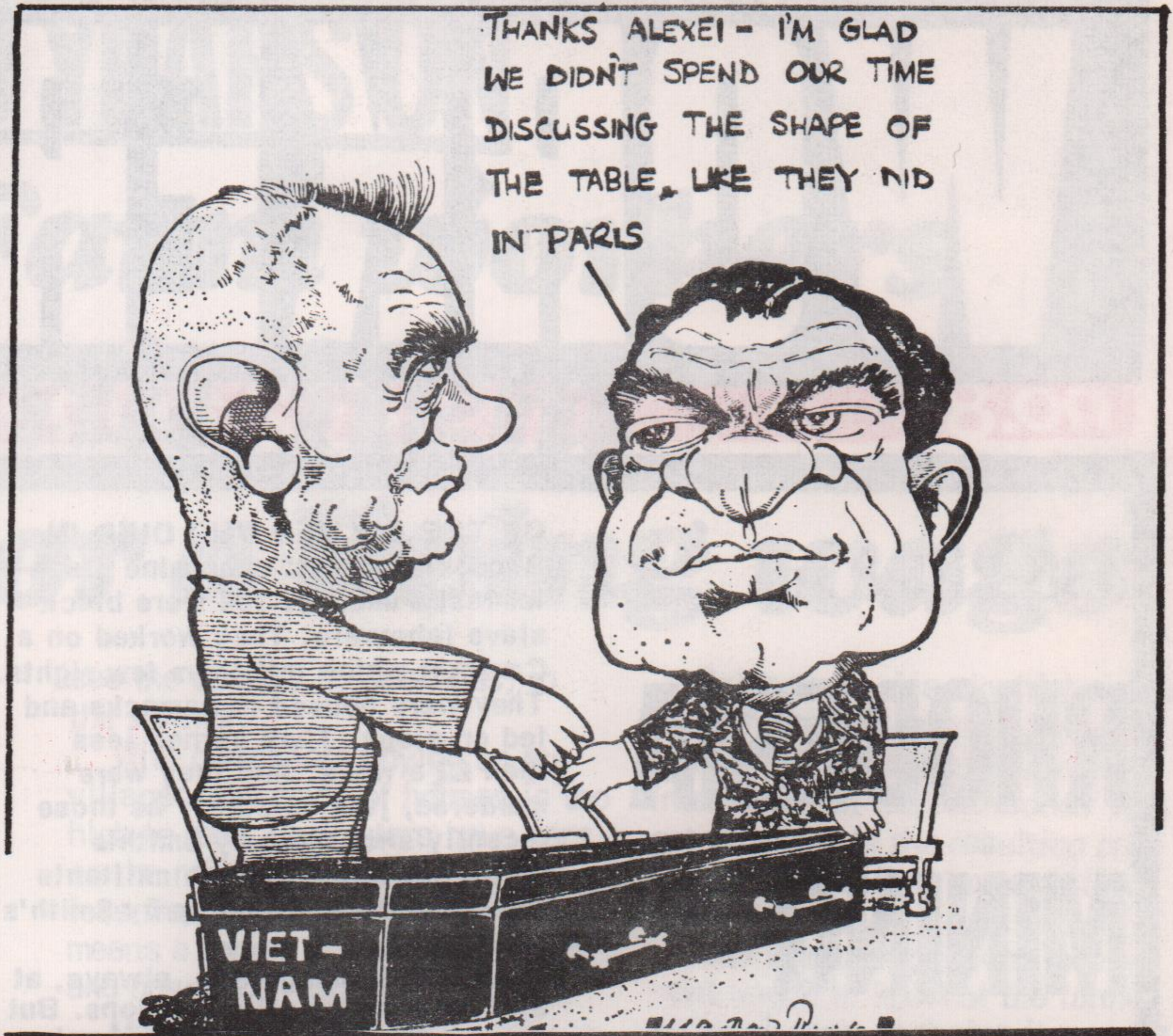
Nor does it affect the duty of socialists and militants in Britain, and all who believe in the basic democratic right of a nation to self-determination, to continue to support the IRA.

So long as it continues as the militia of the Catholic masses, without whose support it couldn't survive, to fight for national independence, it is entitled to the support of every socialist in Britain.

British socialists must counter the propaganda of the bosses' press by explaining these issues. And we must counter the mass movement against the IRA mounted by Government, press, Church and the hypocritical "peace"-mongers by building a mass campaign in solidarity with the Irish Republican Army.

ALL COPY FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF WORKERS FIGHT MUST

REACH US BY SATURDAY JUNE 17th AT THE LATEST



The great conciliation swindle

SO FAR THE TORIES HAVEN'T done so well in their attempts to beat down the unions. They haven't controlled the rank and file and have only succeeded in making life extremely difficult for union leaders who would be quite content to collaborate fully with them if circumstances and the rank and file permitted. The Tories' failure so far has generated a current of opinion which wants an additional weapon as well as the NIRC big stick. They advocate a tactic of conciliation between the employer and the Trade Union leaders.

This conciliation is favoured as an ALTERNATIVE to the Act by the TUC and by the Labour Party with which the TUC has had discussions on the 'alternative' to the NIRC.

The Tories still believe a confrontation and a decisive defeat for the labour movement is the only solution to their problems. The danger is that workers will follow the 'lefts' and fall for the waffle about conciliation as an alternative — and thus fail to prepare a determined resistance to the Tory attack.

DAN JAMES traces the growth of the 'conciliationist' mood.

The initiative for this "conciliation" talk came

from the Confederation of British Industries, in fact from Campbell Adamson its Director General. On the 14th of April, the day after Barber pelted the Trade Union Movement with the usual Tory garbage of "blackmail", "ransom", "crude force", etc., etc., the C.B.I. proposed setting up an "independent commission" to avoid the massive confrontation they saw just around the corner.

After only two days the employers talk was in the mouth of the TUC leader Feather announced: "Mr. Macmillan will find that he will not have enemies inside the movement provided he endeavours honestly and with integrity, as I know he will, to try to bring about conciliatory processes, despite the policies of the Government, into the field of industrial relations". The CBI proposal for talks to "solve the problem of inflation" was the next step.

The following week saw both left and right falling over each other in the rush to retreat. First the TUC

and railway unions decided, 'under protest' to cooperate with the NIRC. Then Feather pretended he had only just realised the NIRC was a real court of law. Even Hugh Scanlon, after a posture of militancy, announced that the courts must be respected. Then again on the 26th the CBI had another go with its conciliation proposal - this time with Heath's backing.

Heath agreed to draw up plans for a new system (already ?) of industrial conciliation INDEPENDENT OF THE GOVERNMENT. The noose was beginning to tighten and Feather couldn't wait to put your head in it. He commented: "the aim is to bring about conciliation in industry generally which would in effect make the NIRC redundant"

The day the TGWU paid the NIRC its £55,000 blood money Lord Watkinson, Chairman of Cadbury-Schweppes, called on the Government to establish a conciliation agency to act as a buffer "between the process of free industrial bargaining which must continue and the absolute authority of the NIRC."

Hugh Scanlon and Tom Jackson backed the idea. Scanlon said "I believe that conciliation will work far better than legal sanctions and the Government's policy of abrasiveness and confrontation". Jackson proposed a new Council for Industrial Research, Conciliation and Arbitration.

By the 22nd the union leader had reached "broad agreement" with the National Executive of the Labour Party and the Parliamentary Labour Party on a voluntary conciliation and arbitration body which would involve hiving off most of the Dept. of Employment as current conciliation services. Two days later though, talks about the setting up of such a body were being announced between the TUC and the CBI.!

CLEARLY MANY OF THE BOSSES HAVE BEEN TAUGHT THE NEED FOR SUBTLETY BY WHAT THE 'FINANCIAL TIMES' CALLS 'NUTTY EMPLOYERS' LIKE HEATONS. THE LABOUR MOVEMENT MUSTN'T FALL FOR THE SOFT SELL. THE ACT MUST BE SMASHED BY A GENERAL STRIKE, NOT DRESSED UP WITH 'CONCILIATIONIST' POLITENESS ■

IRELAND: "THE GREAT PEACE FRAUD"

IN ORDER TO STAND UP TO THE latest barrage of press propaganda against the IRA and in favour of "peace" in Northern Ireland, it is very important for socialists and militants in Britain to know how their counterparts in Ireland see the situation.

In fact, Irish socialists have commented bitterly on the 'Peace-at-any-price' bandwagon which has been rolling in Northern Ireland recently.

Under a headline THE GREAT PEACE FRAUD the June 2nd issue of "Unfree Citizen", the weekly paper published in Belfast by PEOPLES DEMOCRACY, said:

"The last ten days have seen the newspapers filled with the Great Peace Campaign. Every vested interest in the country from the Free State Government to the Catholic Church and back again has jumped on the peace bandwagon.

Some weeks ago the Unfree Citizen made clear that, having been forced to scrap Stormont, the British would attempt to turn defeat into victory by undermining the resistance struggle and isolating the IRA from the people. Whitelaw has persisted with this carefully planned strategy — ignoring the demands from the wilder Unionists to invade the Bogside, and hoping instead that the NO-GO areas would collapse from within.

From the beginning the Alliance Party, Dr. Connor Cruise O'Brien and the other open agents of British Imperialism called for an end to the rent and rates strike and the boycott of Councils, and appealed to the anti-Unionist population to collaborate with Whitelaw. The SDLP were more cautious. They appealed for an end to violence (by the IRA, of course) but said nothing about the Civil Resistance Campaign.

But the Catholic Church was coming out in the open. For a long time the denunciations of violence by Cardinal Conway and Bishop Philbin had seemed just a ritual response to British demands. But on May 18th Father Hugh O'Neill of Derry said the IRA had better stop hostilities "before they are made to stop". Fr. O'Neill claimed that the IRA were deliberately prolonging internment and that if this went on much longer the "Elected Representatives" would have to talk — Internment or no Internment.

Meanwhile in Andersonstown a group of women began collecting signatures for a petition to "utterly reject and condemn all use of force and violence at the present time." Since the British Army are unlikely to lay down their arms it was obvious the petition was aimed at the IRA. It became more obvious later when it was discovered that the organisers had met Whitelaw some time before.

At first the Catholic Church pretended not to be involved but by now Parish priests are competing for who can get the most signatures and the Irish News carries a copy of the petition to be filled in and left at Church Presbyteries.

The shooting of William Best, the Bogsider in the British Army,

gave added impetus to the peace campaign. The genuine indignation of the Bogside women was quickly organised by Fr. O'Neill, who suddenly discovered North Korean and Algerian Reds under his bed, and a committee of 5 women, including Mrs. Eileen Semple, secretary of the local SDLP, was set up.

Derry men were quickly organised as well, this time by Father O'Neill with Tom Doherty and Eugene O'Hare, former nationalist Councillors, who saw an opportunity of crawling back to positions of power.

The press and television gave massive coverage to the calls for peace, almost totally ignoring the hunger strike in Crumlin Road jail which was in its second week.

The SDLP took courage from these moves and Austin Currie attacked the IRA as fascists and equivalent to the British Army and the Vanguard movement. He also rushed to blame them for killing a man in a shooting incident in East Tyrone. The logical conclusion came when the SDLP broke every pledge wrung out of them by the Resistance Movement and urged Catholics and Public Officials to go back to their posts. The only thing that prevented the MPs from taking their seats again was the fact that Stormont was scrapped!

... And this spurious peace movement has had some success. The anti-Unionist people are tired and war-weary after several years of struggle. They know a victory has been won in smashing Stormont; they are confused about where the struggle is going now. And they are frightened of the Fascist backlash as threatened by the UDA and the murder gangs who have been shooting Catholics late at night.

The tactics of the IRA haven't helped: bombs that kill civilians, blowing up factories and putting men out of work, shooting a Protestant youth on the Shankill — if the IRA was responsible for that — and killing William Best rather than forcing him out of the area.

And no political alternative to the existing state has been put forward. In Derry in particular it is scandalous that neither wing of the IRA made any attempt until recently to establish street committees and a Resistance Council in an area which they physically control. If a strong political leadership had been established in the Bogside and Creggan then Fr. O'Neill, the SDLP and the Nationalists would have cut no ice with the people of Derry.

But the struggle must go on. British rule and Northern and Southern capitalists have not been so weak for 50 years. They are desperately trying to "normalise" the situation because they see their end in sight.

The danger is that the struggle may lose the support of the people and so collapse.

What is needed now, more than ever, is vigorous political action to remind the people of the oppression that is still going on and to create within the anti-Unionist areas self governing Peoples Coun-

cils — and to give the people something to fight for. And the Peoples Councils must be Socialist and take socialist measures, for today it is clearer than ever that, as Connolly said, "the working class are the only incorruptible inheritors of the struggle for Irish freedom." The middle classes are getting out fast and only the working class is left.

The military resistance must be planned to keep the support of the people and aimed at the Capitalist, not the worker. That way the Imperialists and their lackeys will never recover.

renege totally on their promise not to co-operate with the Unionists or British until all internees are released, are trying to mobilise "peace demonstrations" in order to help Whitelaw isolate and smash the defences of the Catholic communities, then re-invade the Bogside, Creggan and West Belfast in order to re-establish the full force of British Army terror.

Whitelaw said he would move into these areas "only at the right time". Fitt, Hume, Paddy Devlin and Co, Jack Lynch and Conor O'Brien are deceiving the Catholic masses and helping to prepare "the right time" for Whitelaw's army.

The IRA — either wing — have totally failed to prepare for the combined political offensive of the pro-imperialists. The Officials have conducted no campaign to mobilise the Catholic and Protestant masses in a political struggle against imperialism on a socialist basis. Such a struggle would include, not only military defence, but an organised struggle against all forms of collaboration with the state, for the full control of the areas opposed to imperialism, and for a campaign against unemployment and the other social features of imperialist rule.

In fact some of the Officials are so ill-educated politically that in Derry they support the SDLP's "peace plan", the very plan designed to isolate them.

The Provisionals have paved the way for Whitelaw and his supporters by sectarian bombings and by allowing "free-lancers", as they called them, to murder several ordinary Protestant workers in Belfast.

If they want to stop the reactionaries from pulling the rug from under them they must AT ONCE cease the campaign against Protestant civilians and must AT ONCE hunt down and deal with the madmen or provocateurs who opened fire on civilians and workers coming out of factories, and must AT ONCE begin a campaign to mobilise all workers on a socialist basis for an end to capitalist and imperialist rule.

The sectarian conflict that has kept the working class in Northern Ireland divided against itself for so long is fundamentally a product of British imperialist domination of Ireland. Any "peace" while that domination continues is merely an interlude in a war which has already lasted for centuries. Fifty years ago, in 1921, another fight was called off too soon. The Irish working class, Catholic and Protestant, Green and Orange, is still paying the price of that "peace".

It is in the interest of every worker in Ireland that this fight shouldn't end until the last British soldier is either driven out, or carried out, of Ireland. And until the last vestige of imperialist control is removed. It is also our responsibility to see that it doesn't.

Unfree Citizen: order from Paul Dillon, 50 Newry Road, Armagh.

Workers Republic: order from 13 Lower Camden Street, Dublin 2.

Sell-out

prepared

for North

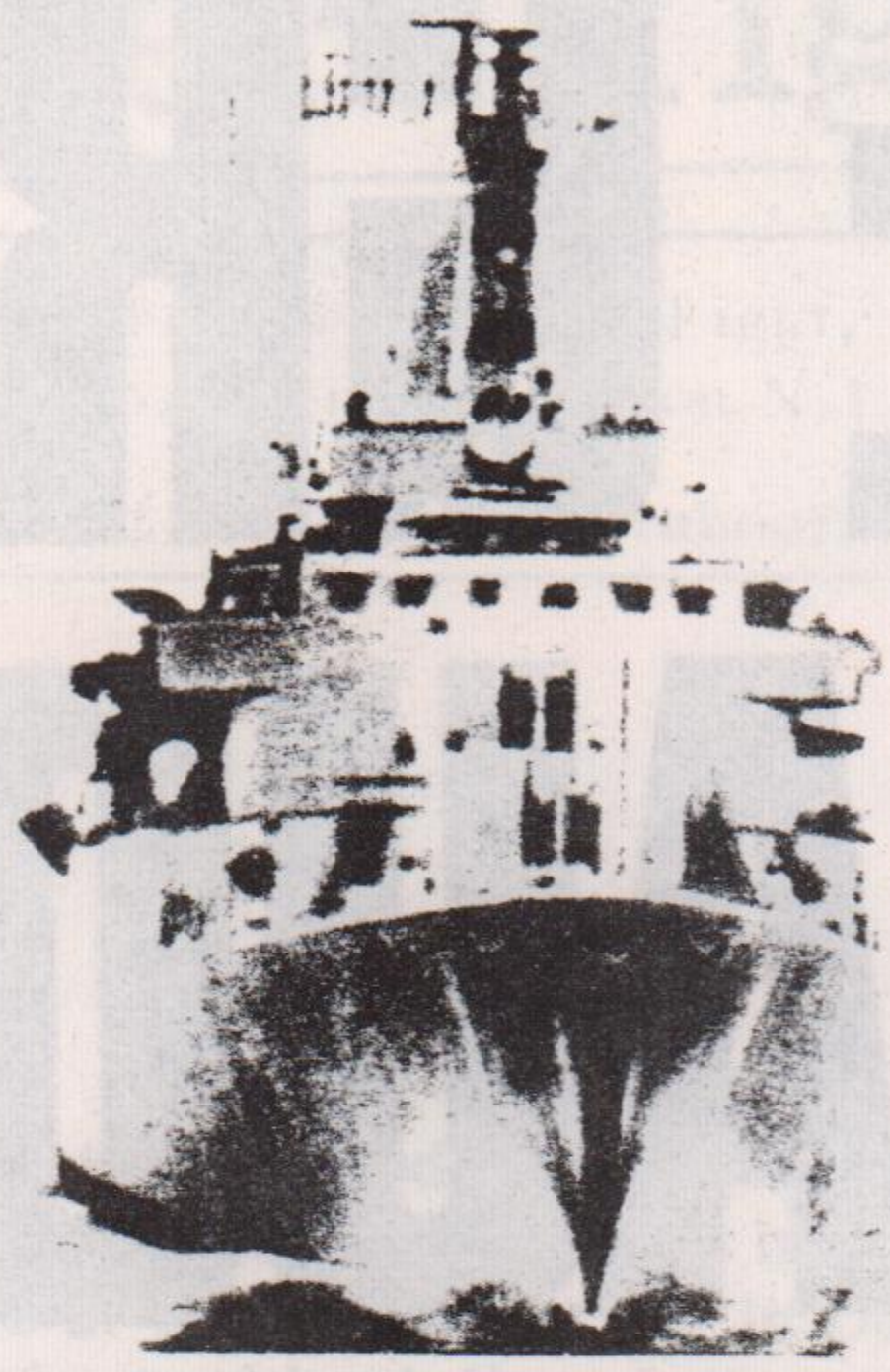
In the June Issue of WORKERS REPUBLIC, the Dublin monthly published by the LEAGUE FOR A WORKERS REPUBLIC, an editorial on the 'peace' movement and a front page article on the Official IRA ceasefire see things in pretty much the same light:

"Every single reactionary force in this country has now come out and laid on the line its support for the British Government's policies in the North. Totally forgetting the 700 internees, totally forgetting the murders, including the Derry 13, by the British Army; totally forgetting the brutal murder of Joe McCann — they are all banding together to aid British imperialism and smash the resistance of the Northern working people.

Jack Lynch under cover of the threat of so-called civil war played up for all its worth by the bosses' press, is preparing to smash down on the IRA and Socialist organisations fighting British imperialism. He received his cue from the treacherous Labour Party through its spokesman Conor Cruise O'Brien, who called on Lynch to wipe out "illegal armies". A further prop to his decision was the vicious Fine Gael Ard-Fheis. The successors of the Fascist Blueshirts criticised Lynch for not taking more vigorous action against the IRA.

This comes at a time when in the North Whitelaw has established a bridgehead of traitors in the form of the middle class SDLP, who are co-operating fully with him under the guise of a "peace offensive". These unprincipled manoeuvres,

THE NAVY LARK



Dave Brodie spent a considerable period in the R.N.D.B. before being 'discharged with ignominy'. These are some of his recollections.

* * *

YOU ALWAYS GET that sinking feeling as you approach the gates of the Royal Naval Detention Barracks, Portsmouth. Even though it's your first time, you will have been given all the propaganda necessary to give you a sense of foreboding about the establishment.

Commissioned Officers as well as NCOs will make direct threats or subtle hints as to what one's fate will be if one doesn't obey the letter of the law, according to Queen's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions.

Tales get back to ships and Naval Establishments as to the treatment of prisoners in this home for wayward sailors.

Some are true, some exaggerated. However, I can say without exaggeration that it is far from pleasant.

There are more brutal American establishments, and possibly more brutal and vicious South African detention barracks. But for starters we can study the R.N.D.B. Portsmouth.

I hope I can state without conceit that at the age of eighteen when I first entered the Royal Naval Prison, I was in extremely good physical condition. At the time I boxed for the navy, played Rugby, was part of the Home Air Command Athletic Team — and yet, after a few weeks internment, I felt, to say the least, a little drawn. Those whose physical condition was not first class, suffered agonies before their sentence was finished.

HANDCUFFED

On arrival at the Detention Barracks, handcuffed in line, you are instructed to face the prison gate. The gates are opened. One by one the prisoners are released from their handcuffs. Each prisoner must pick up his belongings, kit bag, hammock, case and, if he's a tradesman, his tool box.

With this cumbersome load he makes his way through the gate. As he enters the gate, a marine Colour Sergeant will blast his eardrums with the order: "Double March!"

He will probably try to comply with this almost impossible command. In doing so he will most

likely drop most of his belongings. For this he will, in all events, be cuffed soundly around the head.

If he retaliates, he will be submerged beneath a mass of Royal Marine uniforms and assailed by a hail of Marine issue boots.

Eventually all prisoners will be accounted for and the gates closed. The prisoners will then be doubled onto the parade ground, halted and informed that they will complete an undisclosed number of laps round the assault course.

The next half hour will be chaos. The newly recruited prisoners will make efforts to complete circuits of the assault course, complete with Hammock, kit bag and tool box.

The air rings with the curses of the Marine Sergeants, the crashing of studded naval issue boots. Each man struggles to regain his possessions as they fall with monotonous regularity. "Pick 'em up!"

Some of the older or less fit prisoners will quickly run out of breath and pause to suck in desperate gulps of air.

"Move you bastards!"



Failure to comply is met by a hail of fists. Human nature being what it is, some of the Marine Sergeants are more eager to hit certain prisoners than others.

Eventually the new inmates will be lined up alongside the main gate of the prison Block. The gate is opened.

"Double March!"

The line moves into the Prison Block. Three tiers of cells, three iron staircases leading up to each.

"Halt!"

One man puts down his kitbag.

"Pick it up you bastard!"

"IN HERE I AM GOD"

The Marine Colour Sergeant arrives on the scene, for his customary reception speech.

"You are in here because you don't like the rules. You are in here to learn to like the rules. While you are in here you will always move at the double. You will speak to no one unless you are spoken to. Any prisoner found talking to another prisoner will lose all privileges for three days and remission."

(Privileges equal food, the single blanket on your bed, and the two cigarettes allowed daily. Prisoners are not allowed to sleep in their

clothes, and in winter there is ice an inch thick on the walls of the cells.)

"In here I am God. You will treat me as God, except on Sunday mornings when you may attend Church service.

"You have no rights. Ask for none. There is a system whereby you may make requests through the normal channels. I do not like people to make requests, is that understood?"

He looks for response. Each man makes a mute gesture of understanding.

"You are allowed two cigarettes a day, if I think you should have them. You will be issued with a basin, a bucket and a spoon. They will gleam, if they don't then you will deal with me.

"You will not smoke, you will not eat, until I am satisfied. Take them away, Sergeant!"

Another shaven-headed robot takes over the new intake. "Attention!" The line shuffles off, each man is allocated to a cell. Belts and shoelaces are removed.

The cell is equipped with a table and stool. The stool must not be sat upon except at meals. The bed board in the corner must not be laid upon until "lights out" at 9.30 pm.

ROUTINE

The routine is rigorous.

5.30 am. Reveille — Fold bedding, scrub floor, table and stool. This sometimes leaves no water for washing.

5.45 — Cell door is opened, bedding placed outside. Lavatory pan is emptied and cleaned. Bucket emptied, basin emptied. This entails line after line of half asleep prisoners queueing to use an old fashioned sluice. The stench is sometimes overpowering.

6.30 — Double down to the galley (kitchen) for breakfast. This consists of porridge (no sugar) and half a cup of tea (no sugar) to be eaten in the confines of your cell.

7.00 — Assault course. Number of laps according to the whim of the sergeant in charge. The younger, fitter men will find the exercise within their capabilities. The more portly, less athletic types will soon have to stop.

They will be pushed and punched into motion. Some will collapse and refuse to move, perhaps unable to go on anyway.

Eventually the exercise stops. The prisoners are ordered to form a column of three. If the new intake think their efforts are over, there's a disappointment in store. Each man is issued with a rifle.

The order is to hold the rifle above the head with both hands.

"Double March!"

After a time the arms start to ache. A few begin to lower their rifles. "Keep 'em up!" Soon only

the inmates with the most stamina will have their rifles still held aloft.

More cuffing and pushing, more curses and insults. Then the order to carry the rifle behind the neck, still at the double. This obstructs breathing. Soon the column slows to a shuffle. Even the screamed insults and threats of the Marines cannot drag more energy from the gasping prisoners.

This continues throughout the morning, until half an hour before lunch when the prisoners are lined up. The inmates double through the Prison Block, each man collecting his tin plate as he passes his cell.

The line trots past the Colour Sergeant, who is stood on a dais, throwing a cigarette to each man as he passes. The plate each prisoner carries must gleam, or the cigarette is with-held. The Colour Sergeant Marine must like a man's attitude, or no cigarette.

"Did I detect a smile there, lad? You can do without today."

The line continues through to the Boiler House, where a red hot coal from the furnace, held in tongs, provides a light for each cigarette. Every now and then a threatening gesture from the marine holding the tongs will make the man draw his head away. "Give me the cigarette, only one chance to have a light, lad."

The prisoners march onto the parade ground. The inmates line up three yards apart, drawing on the precious cigarette. If a man turns his head it will be classed as talking. He will lose three days remission.



Smoke time is also mail call. All letters are censored, both outgoing and incoming. "C22, I have a letter for you." Each man is addressed by the number of his cell, sown onto his belt.

"Come and get your mail, C22!" Then he starts to have his fun.

"Right, C22, two paces forward march. About turn. Left turn. Pick up your kit, 22. Hold it above your head." By this time the Colour Sergeant will be grinning all over his face. "Now let's see how many times you can double round the block."

This entails twelve long corridors, plus three flights of stairs, up and down.

And so it goes on...



Students and workers shake Vorster



White Students in the Witwatersrand march in protest against banning of Winnie Mandela and 21 others early this year

By Jack Price

The developing dissent in the Black and English speaking universities took a major step forward at the beginning of last month when Abraham Timor, a final year Arts student at the all-black Turfloop University of the north was elected by his fellow students to give a speech on their behalf at the graduation ceremony.

While the university authorities had given permission for the speech to be made they did not bargain for one that was critical of the apartheid system.

Actually the speech was quite mild: "... The challenge to every black graduate in this country lies in the fact that the guilt of all wrongful actions in South Africa — restrictions without trial, repugnant legislation, expulsions from schools — rests on all those who do not actively dissociate themselves from and work for the eradication of the system breeding such evils, the apartheid system of the National Government.

... There is one thing the Minister cannot do: he cannot ban ideas from men's minds. The day shall come when all shall be free to breathe the air of freedom. And when that day comes no man, no matter how many tanks he has, will reverse the course of events."

Abraham Timor was promptly expelled.

SIT-IN

The students presented a petition to the University registrar demanding Timor's reinstatement. In reply they received a circular rejecting their petition and suspending the constitution of the Student Representative Council. The students replied with a sit-in in the Great Hall, where they sang the African national anthem Nkosi Sikelele Afrika.

The authorities replied by expelling all 1,146 students!

Later the authorities tried to quell the outburst their viciousness had called forth by saying that the students would be allowed to enrol in the new year without — a singular concession this! — paying a second registration fee.

But such 'generosity' had strings attached: the students could enrol providing they signed two forms. One says that they agree to abide by the university authorities' policies, while the other states that the signatories agree to the suspension of all student committees and the expulsion of Abraham Timor.

But if a twisted "reprieve" was offered his fellow students, there

was none for Timor himself. In a letter to the student's mother the University Rector Professor J.L. Boshoff said: "Should he mend his ways and should he after, say, 2 or 3 years wish to return to university to complete his studies and he can convince us that he has in fact mended his ways, I shall be pleased to accept him back."

When this letter was read out to the Turfloop students they just broke out laughing and continued in their determination to fight for his immediate reinstatement. None signed the new enrolment forms!

The demand for the reinstatement is being pushed also by the South African Students Organisation (SASO), whose President commented "There is a very angry mood about what has happened at Turfloop among students on all campuses."

On May 12th West Cape students unanimously passed a resolution demanding a boycott of lectures.

DIARIES BURNED

SASO is coming under increasing surveillance from the Security Police. And at Turfloop the authorities called in the student Diaries and returned them with SASO's policy/manifesto, and a SASO-inspired declaration of student rights, ripped out. On receiving the diaries back — now minus Manifesto — the students made a great bonfire of them.

Support for the Turfloop students has come also from the African township of Soweto, where a meeting held jointly with SASO and with students' parents elected a committee to look after the interests of black students.

The next day (to quote the South African newspaper the Rand Daily Mail) "while Security Branch detectives listened at the windows of the Vedic Hall in Durban over 1,000 voted to stay away until black demands are met."

Those voting in the Vedic Hall were the Indian students of Westville University. "We are not voting as Indians" declared one speaker, "but as blacks. We need solidarity to eradicate the repugnant system that is oppressing us... For too long the Indian community have been compromising with the whites. Now we are showing that we can think and will act."

On 29th May, the Westville students boycotted lectures, staged marches, sang freedom songs and re-enacted the death of Ahmed

Timol, who recently "fell" from the 10th floor of the John Vorster Square Police HQ during "questioning."

WHITES JOIN IN

The following day saw an important development with the action spreading to the English-speaking all white university of Witwatersrand.

This was not the first time that Witwatersrand had been involved in anti-government demonstrations. Earlier this year the students had demonstrated against the banning of Winnie Mandela, wife of the imprisoned ANC leader.

But this time the action spread further — to Cape Town and to Rhodes University in Grahamstown, and also to Durban.

On June 1st the Springfield Teacher Training College in Durban struck, and was later joined by the Ngoyi University in Zululand; the Durban Technical College; and the black University of Natal.

But as the action spread, the sheer animal ferocity of the Security Forces showed itself.

The day after the Springfield boycott 50 police wielding rubber truncheons beat up 150 white students demonstrating peacefully against apartheid on the steps of St. George's Cathedral in Cape Town.

A member of the Cape Town Student Representative Council, Robbie Ferran, was dragged by two plain clothesmen from the high altar of the Cathedral where he had hoped to find refuge. 51 students were arrested.

THUGGERY

When on the afternoon of 5th June 150,000 people, many of them not students, arrived to demonstrate against the fascist thuggery of the police on the previous Friday, the Justice Department banned the demonstration and it was dispersed with tear gas.

In the evening a small group including three clergymen — one of them the Dean of Cape Town — stood on the steps of the Cathedral believing that if the police did not arrest them they could not arrest those who were still taking refuge inside the cathedral.

Undeterred by this logic the police arrested the lot — Dean, clergymen students and all!

Replying to critics of the police action at the Cathedral, Prime Minister Vorster said: "I am slowly getting tired of talking nicely and

I want to issue a warning that the time will come for drastic action against such universities. Where these educational institutions are being used as a tool of Communists, terrorists and the enemies of the state, the Government just cannot afford to overlook these things."

Just as the pressure has continued steadily to develop from early May to the present, it will not subside, notwithstanding the latest ban. Those white workers who joined the Cape Town students and were tear-gassed off the streets, are a small pledge for the future.

Perhaps in time the militant and revolutionary traditions of the white South African working class will be regained. But they will not be in the leadership of the struggle. That leadership must be forged now by the black African workers — those looking beyond equal rights and beyond national liberation.

OVAMBO STRIKE

While the students' struggle was unfolding, busmen in the same Reef area were on strike. And in Namibia the massive struggle of the Ovambo contract labourers still continues.

The student actions have of course met with less harsh resistance from the state than either the Ovambo or the busmen. Police arrested 300 of the 830 striking non-white Reef bus drivers (the drivers, who ferry about 10 million non-whites around the Reef each month, are demanding 100% pay rises).

The police explained their arrests by stating that the strike had contravened two laws: the Bantu Labour Settlement of Disputes Act, and a law forbidding the disruption of essential services. *

The harshness is of course a mark of the seriousness with which the Vorster regime views these actions — actions which by normal bourgeois standards are not at all revolutionary.

But Vorster is right to be worried, because he knows that, in the words of Abraham Timor — "no man no matter how many tanks he has, will reverse the course of events."

* But the police weren't too sure whether these laws actually fitted the case. Mind you, that hardly worries the kind of cop whose police dog could outsmart him in an IQ test. Minds were set at rest by the cool legal logic of acting Divisional Commissioner of Police Brigadier P.J. Lemm: "We have not yet decided what they are going to be charged with. If they are charged they will appear in court today and they will be allowed bail. If they are not charged they will be allowed to pay admission-of-guilt fines"...

JACKBOOT JUSTICE

Miss Susara Kirk is a blond with blue eyes who lives in Brakpan. She and her parents and grandmother have always lived as whites and have white identity cards. Miss Kirk mislaid her card, however, and applied for another. Meanwhile she married a white man. But the new identity card stated that she was coloured, and officials confirmed that she had been reclassified. He husband then applied successfully for their marriage to be annulled in accordance with the Mixed Marriages Act. Miss Kirk also lost her job.

Pass laws

An African is not allowed to live or work in any area without permission. An African is liable to have his pass inspected by the police at any time, anywhere, and if not carrying the pass, or if in an unpermitted area, or if the pass is not in order (even if only technically) he will be arrested. The parents of children so arrested are usually not notified although it may be months til the child is released.

During the year ending June 1966 there were 501,914 prosecutions under the Pass Laws - a daily average of 1,375. The average daily prison population in 1966/7 (to the nearest thousand) was: Whites 3,000; Coloureds 11,000; Indians 400; Africans 59,000.

Death penalty

Between 1963 and 1965, 281 death sentences were passed in South Africa. Of these 194 were carried out. That is: 47% of all executions in the world over that period occurred in South Africa. Over 50 political executions took place between 1960 and 1970.

Terrorism Act and Proclamation 400

Under the Terrorism Act people are held incommunicado without trial. Proclamation 400 applies to the Transkei area. In addition there is the 180 day Law which operates similarly, with the purely hypothetical time limit of 180 days. People are banished to remote regions, to transit camps or held under house arrest. Altogether there are about 10,000 political prisoners.

Strikes

African workers are covered by the Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act, under which strikes are illegal. Africans who strike are liable to immediate arrest and face penalties of a fine of up to £500 or 3 years imprisonment, or both.

Banning

People can be banned from attending particular meetings, from being members of organisations (that is, legal organisations), or banned from certain areas.

Parliament

There are 166 seats: 160 for South African and 6 for 'South West African' representatives. The representatives like the voters are all white.

Population (1968)

Whites	3,639,000
Coloured (mixed race)	1,912,000
Asians	574,000
Africans	13,042,000

Immorality Act

Marriage and indeed intercourse between different race groups is illegal.

How do education opportunities compare?

The following table gives an idea of how discriminatory education is for the different race groups in South Africa.

	Whites	Coloureds	Indians	Africans
Per cent of total expenditure	77	10	4	9
Expenditure per school child per year (1965/6)	£75	£30 for both groups combined		£7
Per cent of total school population in secondary schools	32.0	9.0	18.0	3.3
Enrolment at universities and tribal colleges in 1967	60,747	1,438	3,791	3,320

Pupil-teacher ratios for Africans are 55 : 1 in primary schools and 35 : 1 in secondary; for whites the ratio is 22 : 1 in both primary and secondary.

DISEASE RATES (NOTIFIABLE CASES PER 100,000 OF POPULATION) 1965

	Whites	Coloureds	Indians	Africans
Tuberculosis	37.1	248.2	517.9	459.3
Kwashiorkor*	0.3	5.0	42.3	99.6
Typhoid fever	3.2	7.1	10.5	37.6
* This is a deficiency disease.				
Life expectancy (males) years	64.6	44.8	55.8	40-45
Infant mortality per 1,000 in Port Elizabeth in 1967	13.69	105.89	29.54	269.18
Medical doctors graduating in S. Africa in 1967	330	17	31	11

APARTHEID

ON APRIL 6th, 1652, THE FIRST Dutch settlers landed at the Cape to establish a half-way house to supply fresh provisions for their ships going to the East. Not long after, however, they began to enslave the local African inhabitants, to confiscate their cattle and drive them off their land.

Towards the end of the 1700s British troops arrived and were later followed by some British settlers, who in no way differed from the Boers in their exploitation of the Africans, whose resistance to the white colonisers was finally crushed when the tribes were militarily defeated in 1906.

Within a few years the need for unity of the African tribes - the basis for which was ironically laid by their very defeat - was being emphasised by black leaders like Dr. Pixley ka Izaka Seme. In 1911 he declared: "The demon of racialism, the aberrations of Xhosa-Fingo feuds, the animosity that exists between Zulus and Tongas, between Basuto and every other native, must be buried and forgotten. We are one people."

The African National Congress Party, which he founded in 1912, united black tribes, black peasants and workers, chiefs and intellectuals.

But the racists of the white minority were also active. In 1913 their regime passed the Land Act. Under this law the whites took for themselves 87% of the land, leaving the remaining 13% to the African people - who constituted more than 80% of the population.

In the 1920s the struggle shifted mainly onto the industrial plane. With rapid industrialisation taking place, Africans were drawn more and more into secondary industry as well as mining. Trade Union activity developed vigorously and the basis was laid for a tum away from the "middle class" delegation politics of the past decade to the mass civil disobedience and trade union struggles of the thirties and after.

As the industrialisation process involved shifts of population the racist minority evolved the pass laws to prohibit free movement of blacks and form the vast concentration camps which their townships have become.

Never content in their monstrosity and savagery, the white "bringers of civilisation" proceeded in 1935 to remove African voters from the common roll - where previously they had "only" been forbidden to stand for election.

The Africans were not the only oppressed people in the then colony. The Indians were also ferociously kept down. In 1946 the South African Indian Congress started a civil disobedience campaign against the various laws designed to ruin the Indian people economically as a prelude to their repatriation to India.

During the same year the African Mine Workers Union came out on strike.

Over 100,000 African miners struck work and the army was called out by the racists. In an unprecedented wave of brutality the strike was crushed.

NATIONALIST PARTY

In the general Elections of 1948 Dr. Malan and his pro-Nazi Nationalist Party came to power on a programme of intensifying racial oppression by the enforcement of what has now become a common synonym for inhumanity - Apartheid.

Of course the attack on the black, coloured and Indian populations did not come without an attack on the trade unions and on the working class - particularly the revolutionary wing. The South African Communist Party was ruthlessly harassed and outlawed, as were both liberal and revolutionary organisations.

Over the course of Nationalist rule the apartheid system has strengthened. Nevertheless certain effects of the racist laws exercised a restraining effect on the ability of the South African capitalist class to make money. Already there are white industrialists who wish to bestow on the black African the doubtful privilege of almost an equal opportunity to have coin cast from his sweat in every department of life. Thus the call for black professionals and supervisory grades.

This is having an important effect on the nature of the struggle of the oppressed population. The imperatives of a class ideology - which while incorporating the aspiration for national liberation, supercedes it - become greater as the class differentiation within the black population develops. The struggle which is now taking place in the universities illustrates this. For what we see are blacks with a mainly nationalist consciousness, many deriving from a relatively privileged layer within the black population, taking the lead.

We see the way that on the one hand capitalist development - even the crabbed and twisted development of this brutal racist capitalism - creates the preconditions for an able, literate, more or less united black leadership to emerge, steeped not only in an indigenous tradition but now taking in the experience of radical - in particular student - revolt the world over.

While on the other hand we see the limitation of their struggle if it is kept separate from the working class struggle.

The continued resistance of all oppressed sections in South Africa must be counted an important contribution to the gradual development of a self-confident working class steered in the thousands of daily hazards of life under the truncheon and jackboot of South African racialism.

John Balhornung

RHODESIA AFTER PEARCE:

SMITH'S RACIST RULE HARDENS

THE CURIOUS EPISODE OF THE Home-Smith deal and the Pearce Commission it set up has ended, for the moment, without the much feared open sell-out. But it is certain, nevertheless, that the white slave-state in Zimbabwe ("Rhodesia") is stronger now than before last November's Agreement.

Smith and Home made two mistakes. They miscalculated the ability of the stooge, state-paid chiefs to deliver a 'Yes' verdict. And they misjudged the heroic determination of the African masses of Zimbabwe to brave the terror of Smith's police state and to seize the platform provided by Pearce to tell the world what they felt about "Rhodesia's" creeping Apartheid.

The banning of meetings and the arrest or shooting down of unarmed demonstrators couldn't stop them.

Still, despite the 'No' verdict, Smith has gained enormously. The November agreement was a major diplomatic coup for the "illegal" regime, promising open recognition of its right to terrorise the blacks for the indefinite future if only it could make them acquiesce while the Pearce Commission was around.

That, it couldn't do. But since November the sanctions, riddled already with loopholes, have been eroded further.

Home now says the door is still open, and the recent fiasco is sure to be the prelude to the British Government washing its hands of the whole affair, perhaps when the sanctions come up for renewal in the Autumn.

The Sanctions have in fact never been very effective, being applied half heartedly or completely ignored.

"SOCIALIST" TRADE

Japan, Germany and many other countries trade more or less openly with Rhodesia. "Socialist" Bulgaria and East Germany buy Rhodesian chrome for re-export; Czechoslovakia supplies it with fabrics. For all its public virtue Britain allows companies like Lever Brothers, GKN, Imperial Tobacco, GEC, Shell and BP to run subsidiary companies in Rhodesia. The only penalisation is difficulty in drawing off profits from these companies.

The dog-eat-dog competition of the capitalist world market, together with the lack of scruple of Stalinist bureaucrats, has cushioned the Rhodesian economy.

South Africa, frightened by black revolts, and Portugal, fighting a colonial war on Rhodesia's borders, have openly aided Rhodesia. Sanctions have not stopped the Rhodesian economy growing at an average of 6% every year since UDI in 1965.

LAND ACT, 1970

Within Rhodesia one quarter of a million whites lord it over five and a quarter million blacks, disenfranchising them, robbing them of their land and then shooting them down or jailing them when they protest.

The 1970 Land Act, for example, is generous enough to divide the land equally between the races — 45% each. That is, 4.5% of the pop-

ulation get the same proportion as do 95%!

The 1969 "Republican" Constitution has a Legislative Assembly with 66 seats: 50 to whites, 8 to be elected by a very small black vote (about 2,000 people), and 8 to be appointed by the Government-controlled Chiefs.

The November agreement of Home and Smith would have in theory allowed the possibility of parity around about the year 2035 and, if the whites were then agreeable, the possibility of a small black majority after that. Progress!

In Rhodesia, caste race-laws are helping to rivet the chains of wage slavery firmly on the African people. Blacks are cheap labour. Wages for industry are about £250 a year; for mining, about £180; for farm labourers, about £65 per year.

The white caste, including wage earners, lives off the fat of the land, and off the exploitation of the blacks. Broken-down mis-fit British aristocrats have found a haven in Rhodesia where servants are cheap and the 'lower orders', unlike the British workers, at home, can be kept well and truly down.

Rigidly stratified racialism is not yet fully established, but it is already making giant strides.

Africans are being cleared off the land, according to the 1970

Act. In the near future the "Urban Councils Bill" will legislate strict racial segregation on the South African model in swimming pools, cinemas, public parks and buses.

LEADERS JAILED

To protect the whites the police state grips the blacks ferociously. The leaders, and very many militants, of the two African political parties, ZAPU and ZANU, are in jail. Many militants have been hanged. The leaders of the African National Congress, a united group set up to organise the 'No' response to Pearce, will soon follow them.

And this despite them being very tame middle class people, frightened of revolution, vainly hoping for release from their bondage by a negotiated compromise with those who benefit from their degradation, and led by a Bishop (Muzorewa).

The white Rhodesians will not be talked into liberating the blacks: they will liberate themselves, or stay as they are. Undoubtedly the future of the resistance movement lies with the guerrilla organisations which openly challenge white supremacy.

The great bravery with which the people took to the streets recently shows the potential for armed struggle, once the masses get it fixed irrevocably in their minds that they can rely only on them-

selves, not on Britain or the United Nations. Already a Front for the Liberation of Zimbabwe exists.

Meanwhile, let liberals and others waste words denouncing the attempted "sell-out" by the British Government. The Tories betrayed nothing but the illusions of their dupes. They are loyal to themselves. Having in Africa used the whites as their garrison and then switched to neo-colonialism, they wanted to hand over to reliable African stooges, as they have elsewhere.

But the whites had their own interests — and they revolted. Britain tried, weakly to be sure, to coerce them and, failing for 7 years, then tried to do a deal.

Every turn was guided by the same principle — the interests, the the profit and the well-being of British capitalism. As for "selling" out the Africans, the British Empire was built on buying, selling and enslaving Africans. Here too, nothing is new. The Tories are true to themselves and to the traditions of their class.

Only when the Africans take things into their own hands will no one be able to sell them out. As of now, their only possible allies are the international working class. Already, U.S. and Australian dockers have struck against trade with the racials of Rhodesia and South Africa, refusing to handle their cargo.

That is an example for British workers to follow!

Jack Cleary





STEVE WOODLING



BAS HARDY

Why we left I.S. a statement by two ex-members

DURING THE LAST nine months we have developed a number of disagreements with aspects of IS theory and policy which have led us to adopt a generalised critique of IS politics. Our present position is incompatible with membership of IS, and we wish to state to other IS comrades our reasons for leaving the organisation.

When we joined IS in early 1970 its main attraction was its seemingly sincere attempts at revolutionary left unity, combined with its apparent concern to promote a healthy internal democracy. New to the organisation and to politics in general, we started to promote IS politics in our locality. At one point, mainly due to our efforts, we had built a thriving branch of over 30 members.

We first began to develop criticisms of the Group over the ditching, almost overnight, of a policy relating to the Common Market which IS had maintained for over ten years. If this had been the sole error committed by IS, our doubts would have rested there. However, the National Committee's attitude towards Ireland demonstrated all the more

clearly IS's ability to turn the litmus paper from red to blue.

The incorrect positions IS has adopted when dealing with issues of direct political significance cannot be viewed as temporary deviations from the 'straight path'. They derive from a clear break from the traditions embodied in Marxism.

All along, even when it was a relatively small sect, IS has succumbed to the prevailing political winds, failing to take a principled stand on questions such as Korea and Ireland. The method behind these mistakes, as with IS's own private shibboleth — the theory of state capitalism — is one of bending to anti-communist pressures.

What IS politics led to has been clearly revealed by events of the last few months. The way in which IS handled the police raids following the Aldershot explosion — the sheer fact that certain leading members of IS were prepared to let Eric Heffer maintain that IS was a "non-violent" organisation, totally opposed to the nasty "terrorism" of the IRA — is a clear indication of how principles are easily jettisoned

At the time of the December 4th Conference (called especially to expel Workers' Fight. Ed.), whilst holding political differences with IS, we were unsure as to whether

the degeneration of IS was irreversible. We opposed the expulsion of the Trotskyist Tendency (Workers' Fight. Ed.), but were not prepared to leave IS as we were not sure that a credible alternative could be built outside.

The events of the last six months have convinced us that our hesitation at that time was wrong. With an imperialist war in Ireland, IS capitulates to Social chauvinism; then with the greatest upsurge of the class struggle for many years, the government attempting to tie the unions to the capitalist state, IS finds itself completely lost.

Instead of counterposing to the betrayal of the trade union leaders an offensive strategy, the demand for a General Strike, to generalise and advance the struggle of the WHOLE class, IS finds itself tail-ending "militancy", at the same time making empty, abstract propa-

ganda about "kicking out the Tories."

The so-called opposition in IS is composed of diverse elements who make no attempt to involve the mass of the membership in their ideas, and advance no programme for action. Because of the failure of the 'opposition' to look for the roots of IS's mistakes in its abandonment of Trotskyism, they are unable to 'oppose' in any effective way. Their opposition provides a democratic facade for IS.

Two seemingly contradictory phenomena are present in IS: the hardening of the bureaucracy and the unevenness of the organisation. Various comrades in the Group, including ourselves, have raised fundamental political questions. These have been met with varying degrees of demagoguery, witch-hunting and bureaucratic manipulation.

On the other side of the coin we have dubious political alliances with the Liberal Party in Durham, the impending expulsion of IS's leading industrial militant in Manchester, etc. Members of IS dismiss these events as isolated incidents, but in an organisation where they happen regularly one must look for the root of constant errors in practice, in fundamentally incorrect method.

These experiences have convinced us that the designation of IS as a non-revolutionary, ie a centrist organisation, is correct. By that we mean IS is revolutionary in words but not in deeds. Trotsky's writings on centrism give substance to such a characterisation.

IS's failure to live up to the expectations of this period are shown even in its own empirical frame of reference. In a time of large scale working class struggle Socialist Worker's circulation has dropped from 27,000 to 21,000.

We have watched the development of WORKERS FIGHT with some interest. Our involvement in IS has been intense and we have found some difficulty in breaking with the organisation. However, we are convinced that IS has degenerated into yet another tightly controlled sect in the British left, which can only serve a harmful purpose in the working class movement.

We are also of the opinion that WORKERS FIGHT, though much smaller than IS, is seriously grappling with the task of building a revolutionary party in Britain.

We are not 'splitters' or 'wreckers'. We have a serious concern for the working class movement and its struggles. We call upon the sincere revolutionaries within IS to follow our actions and join WORKERS FIGHT.

BAS HARDY
former branch secretary
STEVE WOODLING
former SW organiser Lewisham IS.

Chequebook in the sky

QUITE A BIT of coverage was given recently in the so-called popular press to the activities of an American evangelist, the Rev. T.L. Osborn, who sends you a magazine for a few months, and then sends you a kind of 'chequebook'.

You use this checkbook to send £2 a month to him, together with your request for a daily prayer, saying what you would like him to pray for you for.

He lists everything from a better sex life to curing your ulcers (though you're more likely to get ulcers finding £2 to send to the Rev. Osborn every month!).

He says that the hardest part is finding the faith to send the first month's money. He's not kidding!

It is claimed that only people who have requested them receive the magazine and the cheque book — and that's a lie, as I received them and I certainly did not request them.

The Rev. Osborn claims that the money is used for financing missions to the underdeveloped countries, and that the Lord rewards you for financing this work.

Why the Almighty Lord couldn't give the aid directly to the underdeveloped countries, without all the rigmarole of us sending our £2 a month, hoping to have a great sex life and our ulcers cured etc., is not explained.

But the answer's obvious. If God did exist he'd be an even bigger con man than the Rev. Osborn.

Another Evangelist who fell by the wayside recently is Garner Ted

Armstrong, formerly of the programme "The World Tomorrow", which is carried on 400 radio and 99 TV Stations in the USA. Years ago, when Garner Ted said over Radio Luxemburg that Jesus Christ is coming back to overthrow this system of things, my father, eagerly looking forward to working through the night at Wilton I.C.I., said "I hope he comes back when I'm on night shift."

Garner Ted's radio programmes have now been replaced by ten-year old tapes made by his father the founder of the self styled Radio Church of God.

The Radio Church's members are expected to give tithes of 3 tenths of their gross income to the Church — and the Church's annual income is estimated to be \$55 million, and its founder flies round the world in his private jet to visit Japanese PM Eisaku Sato and Indira Gandhi.

Of course any religion is one big racket and the established churches are the biggest racketeers of the lot.

The Church of England, of which

Marx said that it would rather give up 38 of its 39 articles of belief than one thirty-ninth of its income, owns vast amounts of property that could be used for the benefit of humanity.

The Roman Catholic Church causes untold misery by banning any effective form of birth control — and at the same time bleeding the people dry to provide luxury churches.

The American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr once said that the main danger from Communists was that they think they can change the course of history and bend it to their will. He recognised, evidently, that when man can control nature, conquer disease, prolong human life and begin to know the Universe, then Man will have no need for the myth of God.

The bottom will drop out of the religion market, and its countless spivs will have to turn their hands to doing an honest job of work...

STAN LEE



THE HOOK
rank and file dockers' paper
available from:

H. Youd
Editor,
26, Langton Street,
Salford 6.

read
REAL STEEL NEWS

available from:
48 Kensington Road
Middlesbrough

First WF Conference

SINCE OCTOBER 1971 WHEN THE campaign to expel WORKERS FIGHT from I.S. was first launched, the Group had more than doubled in size, had consolidated itself after expulsion from I.S. on December 4th, had set up a printing press manned entirely by members, and had produced 'Workers' Fight' regularly, together with a number of industrial fraction papers.

At the same time certain problems of balance in 'Workers' Fight' and of making its publication regular and of training people to write for it, had still to be tackled and overcome.

This was the balance sheet facing the first Annual Conference of WORKERS FIGHT, which took place at Rugeley in Staffordshire on the weekend of 27th/28th May.

Delegations were present from London, Bristol, Northampton, Coventry, Stoke, Birmingham, Derby, Nottingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Bolton, Stoke and Teesside.

The Conference consisted of four sessions spread over the two days.

The first session discussed perspectives, the report from the National Committee and reports from national fractions.

Written reports were discussed from fractions active in docks, car components, machine tools, the Health Service, steel, print, tenants and students.

Plans were laid for the establishment of a machine tools fraction paper in the immediate future and it was reported that the steel bulletin 'Real Steel News' will also become a printed paper.

The comrades in the steel fraction reported that the Allied Crafts Committee on Teesside had agreed

to give official support to the bulletin. Further, it was pointed out that the bulletin has in the past dealt with the war in Ireland and has come out clearly for the military victory of the IRA. The fact that it now receives official support from a section of the labour movement is a vindication of the stand taken on this issue, and a decisive proof of the error of the position of groups like IS, who feared that such a stand would "alienate British workers."

It was clear from the discussion that one of the central tasks in the coming year will be to develop and extend the work of the fractions, and the fraction papers and bulletins.

WEEKLY PAPER

Discussing 'Workers Fight', the Conference decided that in the present sharp political situation the paper, as the main weapon of the Group, must be developed. It was resolved to build up and expand the circulation, to regularise its appearance as a fortnightly, to expand the technical resources of the Group and proceed to a weekly paper within a target date of three months.

There was a thorough discussion on strengthening the local branches and on training comrades.

The problem of education was discussed, and weekend schools are to be held in the near future in the various regions and also a week-long cadre school in London.

The Conference was told that the Group will be bringing out a journal within a few weeks.

Sunday's discussion dealt with the struggle in Ireland. Conference passed a resolution re-affirming the call for an Irish Solidarity movement based on the slogan for the defeat of the Army of British Imperialism.

On Sunday morning the question of the Fourth International was also discussed, and it was agreed that the Group should undertake a process of education and discussion on the problem of the Fourth International, to culminate in a special conference in six months' time. The present position of critical support for the United Secretariat was affirmed.

The afternoon session formally adopted a Constitution for the new organisation, and elected a new National Committee of 12 members.

WORKERS' FIGHT

Where we stand

■ Capitalism is inseparable from the exploitation by the bourgeoisie of the working class 'at home' and (since 'advanced' capitalism became imperialist) of the workers and peasants in the colonies and neo-colonies abroad.

It is a vicious system geared to buttressing the strong against the weak, to serving the handful of capitalists against the millions of workers, and to keeping many millions in poverty so that a few may prosper. Capitalism exalts property and degrades life. It is at the root of the racialism which poisons and divides worker against worker. It is a system of massive waste and social disorganisation, at the same time as it forces the working class to fight every inch of the way to better or even maintain its wages and conditions.

Having once been progressive, in that it at least developed, in the only way then possible, the productive resources of mankind, it is now a totally reactionary force in history. Its expansion after World War 2 gave it merely the appearance of health: in reality the boom was like the flush on a sick man's face. And already economic expansion has given way to creeping stagnation.

■ Today the ruling class can keep their system going only at the price of large scale unemployment and attempts to cut the living standards of workers in the 'rich' parts of the world, of massive starvation and bloodshed in the 'poor' two thirds of the world, and of the ever-present threat of the destruction of humanity through nuclear war.

■ The only way out is for the working class to take power and to bring the resources of the modern economy under a rational working class plan, in place of the present unplanned and blind private-profit system. Having overthrown capitalism and established social ownership of the means of production, the working class will build towards a truly communist society, in which at last the principle will be "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."

■ The working class has created political parties for this purpose - Labour Parties, Communist Parties, Social Democratic Parties. But in country after country these parties have joined capitalist governments and managed capitalism. They have betrayed the socialist aspirations of their working class supporters, tied the labour movement to the bosses' state, interest and ideology, and destroyed the political independence of the working class.

■ The task is therefore to build a socialist party which will stand firmly for the interests of the working class.. WORKERS' FIGHT is a group of revolutionary socialists, aiming to build that party: a party which is democratically controlled by an active working class membership, which preserves its political independence and fights the ideological domination of the ruling class.

■ The basis of our activity is therefore the scientific theory of Marxism, the only theory which gives a clear understanding of present-day society and of the necessity of revolutionary change.

■ We fight for the independence of the trade unions from all state control, and within the unions for democracy and militant policies. Although they are not enough for the struggle for workers' power, the trade unions are necessary for the defence of workers' interests. Only a mass national rank and file movement, linking up the different industries in united class action, can, in this period, turn the trade unions into reliable and independent instruments of working class interests.

■ We fight against the Industrial Relations Act, against any incomes policy under capitalism, and against any legal restrictions on trade unionism.

■ We fight against unemployment; for a national minimum wage; for work or full pay; against productivity bargaining.

■ We fight to extend the power of workers' to control the details of their own lives in industry here and now. We stand for the fight for workers' control, with the understanding that it can be made a serious reality only in a workers' state. We are against any workers' 'participation' in managing their own exploitation under capitalism.

■ We believe that the "Parliamentary road to socialism" is a crippling illusion. The capitalist class will not leave the stage peacefully: no ruling class ever has. Socialism can be built only by smashing the capitalist state machine, which is the ultimate defence of the bosses' power in society, and replacing it with a state based on democratic Workers' Councils.

■ We give unconditional support to the struggles of oppressed peoples fighting against imperialism, and to their organisations leading the fight.

■ We fight racialism and against immigration controls. We support the right of black minorities in Britain to form defence leagues or independent political organisations.

■ We fight for full and equal rights for women, for female emancipation from the male domination which has co-existed throughout history with class society and has its roots in such society. We fight, in particular, for the emancipation of women of our own class, suffering a double and triple exploitation, who have been most accurately described as the "slaves of the slaves."

■ British workers have - fundamentally - more in common with every single worker throughout the globe, irrespective of race, religion, nationality or colour, than with the whole of the British ruling class. We see the fight for socialism as a world wide struggle, necessitating the creation of a world revolutionary party. We give critical support to the Fourth International.

■ We stand for a political revolution of the working class against the bureaucracies of the USSR and the other countries called 'communist', which we consider to be degenerated and deformed workers' states. The social regime of the different Bureaucracies has nothing in common with socialism, let alone with real communism. At the same time we defend the nationalised economy in these countries against capitalism and imperialism. unconditionally: that is, irrespective of the selfish, usually anti-working class and anti-revolutionary policies of the ruling bureaucrats, and against those policies.

■ There are other political groups (including the official British section of the Fourth International) which have generally similar aims, but methods differing from ours, or differing conceptions about what needs to be done here and now. We consider all these groups to be seriously - sometimes grossly - inadequate in theory and practice. We favour unity in action with these groups where possible, and a serious dialogue about our differences.

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— OUT OF JOINT

THE MUSICAL "GODSPELL" (God/Gospell/spell ... get it?), running in London's West End, is drawing enthusiastic, young, audiences. It was also shown not long ago on BBC at peak viewing time, significantly placed after one of those religious programmes where people sit about saying things like — 'Now what exactly did God mean when he said 'Esau is a hairy man and I am a smooth man'?' — and before Englebert Humperdinck and the Young Generation.

Very significantly: because "Godspell" is a subtle mixture of the kind of musical idiom popular today, and the kind of mindless religious cant that's been with us for centuries.

It is as lively and as funny as "Hair", but "Hair" was a musical which told it like it was for huge numbers of young people, who reject the values of capitalist society but don't yet know how to change it.

GOOD GIFTS?

All our children learn at school a song which includes the lines:
All good gifts around us
Are sent from heaven above.
How ridiculous this sounds, when

any seven year old must have noticed that *man* is changing the face of the world.

It is man who has harnessed the world of nature to make his own purpose. It is living acting men who make history and no longer have any need for gods. That people still feel such a need is an expression of the confusion and conflicts which exist in human society, as it is presently organised.

Art today can also be a means for people to investigate the real society they live in and to test out their ideas on how it works. They now have the capacity to understand it, so art need no longer be the expression of people's subjection to incomprehensible and apparently supernatural forces, as it had been from the days when art and magic, and then art and 'religion', were inextricably connected.

This does not mean that art of the past should be buried and forgotten. There are words which are majestic and wonderful in their due historical context, but almost laughable when adapted to the use of decaying capitalism.

Certain lines from the St. Matthew Gospel are beautiful when sung in



MUGGERIDGE and WHITE HOUSE — bright and beautiful ?

concert halls to settings by Bach, but are quite ludicrous chanted by gay young things in Mickey Mouse T-shirts to the accompaniment of acoustic guitars.

DISILLUSIONED

Today, far from motivating the artist as in earlier states of society, religion often trails behind socially determined trends, stealing the popular style of things like "Hair" to revive its own dead doctrines.

"Hair" appeared with something to say about the disillusionment of youth. But "Godspell" is an abortion — its message died over 100 years ago, along with the ban on non-C.of E. civil servants!

Just look at these lines (I'm quoting from memory, so they may not be precisely correct word for word) —

"Don't be depressed
Your wrongs will be redressed
Someone has to be oppressed."
Thank God (whoops...) that today, at least, most young people would ask "WHY?"

This sort of message may have been a comfort to downtrodden

peasants of the 13th. Century, but we must beware of allowing it to crush the spirit of young workers in the 20th. Century.

If you've seen the film "The Ballad of Joe Hill" or heard the songs Joe Hill wrote for the American labour movement at the beginning of this century, you may be familiar with the sarcastic words

"There'll be pie
In the sky
When you die."

Socialists have long realised the dangers of the submissive and resigned attitudes recommended by religious preaching in helping to maintain capitalism's grip on the working class.

Ernst Fischer, in his book "The Necessity of Art", says "It is utterly decadent, in a world gone out of joint, to behave as though everything were in perfect order."

And this is exactly what "Godspell" does. It has been described as "a two-hour experience." It is an experience we'd be better off without.

NAOMI WIMBOURNE

Dave Brodie

"...nor iron bars a cage"

There is growing concern amongst the people in Hampstead, Eastbourne and Bournemouth regarding the mollicoddling of prisoners in British jails.

If you will allow me to quote one or two instances, I will endeavour to prove that there is a measure of truth in their beliefs.

First, let's take Freddie Pilling.

Freddie spent the first fifteen years of his life in a decaying two up-two down in Oldham. He slept with his brothers in one bed, covered with an old army greatcoat. I remember Freddie always wore clothes two sizes too small, or three sizes too big.

His shoes either pinched or slipped from his feet.

Weekends and holiday periods were spent playing in disused mills or on the banks of the canal.

Eventually, after a few scrapes with the law, Freddie was sent to a Borstal Institution in Portland, Dorset.

Freddie had never seen the sea before.

He was quite impressed.

He was issued with a pair of boots that were actually his size. He wore clean clothes and slept in a bed of his own.

True, he was beaten up now and again at the order of the Governor, but Freddie was brought up on good hidings.

And anyway, he'd never eaten three times in a day before, so what were a few kicks or punches between friends.

Freddie was completely spoiled. He even began to learn to read and write, something the priests and nuns hadn't succeeded in doing in the ten years they had Freddie in their charge. He could recite the Catechism and reel off one prayer after another, but literacy seemed to have escaped him.

In between his spells on bread and water, he began to take it for granted that he would be given meat with his potatoes.

And so it came about that even during internment, Freddie's horizons were widened.

Dare I suggest that they could hardly have been narrowed.

* * *

My second instance is one Terry Yarwood of Middleton, near Manchester.

Terry is part of what is considered to be a normal hard working family. Mother is a pillar of the church and father is a paid informer at a local plastics factory. When he was a child, Terry's father insisted that he join the Scout movement, to teach him, as he put it, "Respect for his betters, discipline, and loyalty to his Queen and to his country."

"Pro Bono Publico" of Winchester Hants, who writes letters to the Daily Telegraph, would have been proud of Terry's father.

Terry never knew deprivation to the extent Freddie had known it. He led a fairly well ordered life. In fact, for seventeen years he worked for a Manchester electrical company

He had come to believe that he was an appendage of the armature winding machine he had operated for the past 5,863 days.

And then something happened.

He began to live the live of the proverbial Riley. He gambled more in a night than he had previously earned in a month.

As Terry's father was quick to point out, "It aint decent to go round spending money like that, when you're not working." To which Terry replied, "It wouldn't be possible to go round spending money like that if I was working."

"And gambling", retorted his father, "I don't hold wi' gamblin'."

"That boss of yours gambles."

"He's a gaffer. And what are you doing in gaffers' places? I'd like to know where you're getting all this money from."

Soon afterwards Terry returned home to find his belongings out in the street.

Naturally his money ran out. He had to return to the well. But he had discovered something that would have been a contradiction to him, a few years before.

Terry had always believed that if one wasn't prepared to work, one would naturally have to accept

poverty in return.

In his new environment he had found that the only individuals with wealth were the ones who had never worked in their lives.

Inevitably, he was caught one day.

Terry didn't like jail. It was dirty and it was oppressive.

In fact it was just like the factory he had worked in for all those years. There was a Governor with all the traits of his father. There was a sanctimonious, psalm singing vicar who somehow reminded him of his mother.

If 'Disgusted' of Eastbourne, Sussex would really like to punish him, he should suggest that Terry be sent straight home.

After clocking his card for the 11,865th time he became discontented. And at the age of 33, Terry turned to a life of crime.

At first he was extremely fortunate. One of his first capers netted for him nearly £4,000.

Now this may not seem such a large amount to 'Pro Bono Publico' of Winchester Hants, who writes letters to the Daily Telegraph.

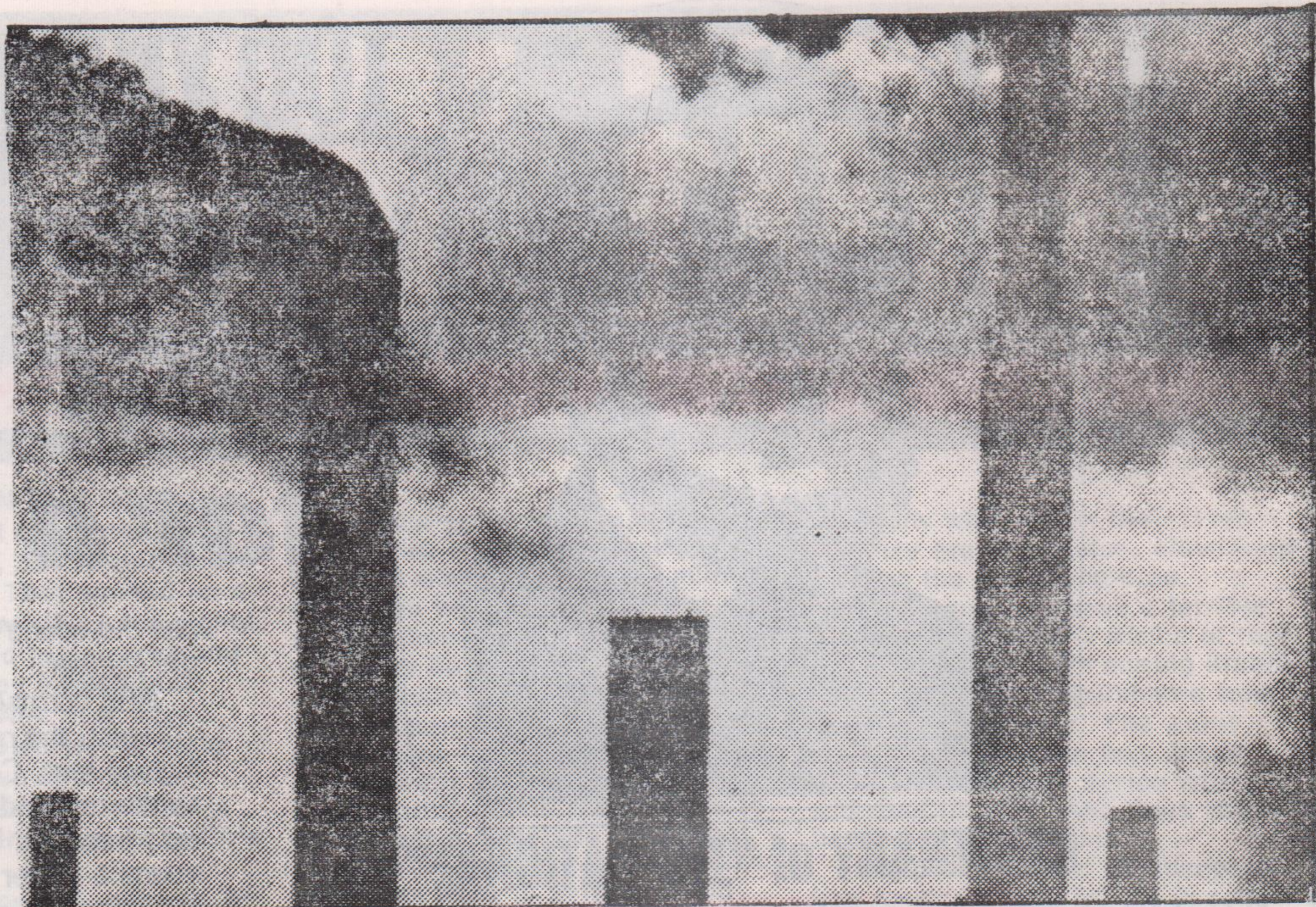
To Terry it was the equivalent of four years work (with overtime).

Or, to put it another way, clocking on 2,740 times.

The wind blows

poison....

but not for all



IT'S HARD NOWADAYS TO IGNORE pollution. From all sides we are assailed with hysterical demands for universal birth control, drowned in floods of crocodile tears over vanishing trees, and all the other outpourings symptomatic of another middle class bandwagon.

What's more, it affects all of us ... We are told that pollution is "the most important issue of the age" and, furthermore, that it is an issue we can "all get together on", one that is completely outside politics.

But look closely at just one aspect of pollution, and it becomes clear that these are dangerous lies, which the ruling class uses to obscure the real nature of pollution — its class nature.

Pollution is not impartial. It is on the workers that the hardest blows fall, in the form of clouds of fumes, dust, dirt and acidic rain.

The environment of the workers in industrial countries has been brutalised by the factories around which workers' houses are huddled — while the middle class live away from the factories in suburban "semis" complete with trees and plastic gnomes; those, that is, who are unfortunately too poor for a country retreat.

Where I live, in Gorton, dust from nearby factories settles thickly across the windows. Open your window for some 'fresh' air and you're up to your neck in dust.

Leave out a white shirt to dry and later it'll be blacker than ever before.

All very unpleasant and inconvenient. But think of your lungs as that white shirt...

BRONCHITIS

In this country, diseases of the lungs are very common. Most prevalent is bronchitis, a disease clearly related to class.

The death rate from bronchitis among workers is roughly four times that of the 'upper' and middle classes. Hospital admissions for bronchitis show parallel trends and, in the words of one researcher, "there is no escaping the conclusion that bronchitis remains a disease closely associated with poverty, poor housing conditions and unhealthy environment, particularly in the cities."

In other words, most bronchitis is a result of the poor living conditions of today's 'affluent' workers.

It has been objected that perhaps smoking also plays a part. Undoubtedly this is true: but, as smoking — unlike environment — is a class-wide factor, it would not explain the vastly greater number of workers who suffer and die from bronchitis.

Moreover, studies on children — not affected by cigarette smoking — indicate where the blame lies.

One study in Sheffield examined the health of children in three areas — Greenhill (an area of low smoke pollution); Longley, a council estate, and Attercliffe, an area with three times the smoke pollution of Greenhill. While chronic cough was found in all areas, it was twice as high in Attercliffe as in the other two areas.

A national study (by Colley and Read) also showed the same effects, with a high rate of chronic cough among working class children. It concluded that "This large survey of chronic respiratory disease in children has confirmed earlier rep-

orts of a social class gradient in this disease among children. Of special import is the fact that this gradient, which is so pronounced a feature of bronchitis mortality in adults, appears in children even before they have begun to smoke.. Nor is this social difference disappearing, for it is as clear now as it was ... 15 years before. This study underlines the special urgency of the problem ... among working class families."

SMOKESCREEN

So it isn't smoking that produces the differences in bronchitis rates. What does cause it is the nearness of most working class areas to factories, which makes them suffer the brunt of air-borne pollution.

A terrible example of this is the Kaverton Hill estate, near Middlesbrough.

This was built in 1926 opposite an ICI works, which shortly afterwards rapidly expanded. Its proximity, combined with a prevailing wind, soon made the area extremely polluted, so that, for instance, garden fences would fall apart every few months because of the speed with which the nails in them disintegrated.

In 1951 things had become so bad that the area was scheduled to be run down.

ICI attempted to shrug off the blame and, at a public inquiry, produced the ludicrous claim that "the houses were of good quality; that the area appeared unsatisfactory only because it contrasted unfavourably with the open countryside around it; that it was no worse than other industrial areas; that ICI were not the only producers of pol-

lution; and that it had been encouraged to make as much smoke as possible during the war for reasons of national defence." (!)

In 1959 a survey of the area showed that well over 50% of the people wanted to leave.

STEELWORKS

If you are unfortunate enough to live near a steel works, you are subjected to pollution by dust on a grand scale. For example, in and near a steel plant the monthly dust-fall varies from 200 to 500 TONS per square mile, and this falls off with distance to 50 tons about one mile away.

In Germany, a monthly rate of 133 tons per square mile was found at a distance of 1/2 mile from a steel plant.

"All this sounds alarming, it's even worse when you realise that the safety limit for health is somewhere around 30 tons.

So it seems we can draw a direct link between bronchitis, poor environment, and the houses of workers.

In their relentless drive for profit, the bosses are not bothered how much filth and poison they dump onto the workers' houses — after all, bronchitis only becomes disablingly severe late in life. By then the sufferer will have worked out his usefulness to capitalism.

Don't be fooled, then, when the next bunch of toadies appears on the box and starts bemoaning the fate of the English countryside. Think instead of some old feller coughing his guts up, wheezing air into his lungs poisoned by the bosses.

Do you still think pollution is impartial?

Neal SMITH

Fine Tubes, the two year lock-out

by Simon Temple

On Thursday June 16th. the 43 workers still on strike at FINE TUBES LIMITED in Plymouth will be 'celebrating' the 2nd anniversary of the start of their struggle.

In January 1970 they submitted a claim for a substantial pay rise and took it right through the engineering industry's procedure agreement. The firm refused to negotiate or even to make an offer, and the workers walked out on strike. After a fortnight the strikers were sacked and scabs were recruited at higher wage rates and with staff conditions.

Last year the Government set up a committee to investigate the dispute. It recommended a joint meeting between the unions — AUEW and TGWU — to discuss reinstatement.

Under pressure from union officials the blacking and picketing was called off and the meeting took place. The company offered to re-employ the strikers ... as vacancies occurred — providing they underwent a 3 month training course!

The strikers are now trying to impose the blacking again, and have appealed for support to all trade unionists. During the time when the blacking was lifted the firm got some new contracts, including one from BAC for parts of the hydraulics for Concorde. These could soon be stopped by effective blacking.

BAD ORGANISATION, LOW WAGES

In the last 15 years many firms have moved to the South West attracted by the low wages and lack of trade union organisation. This has been challenged by a series of strikes in the last 3 years, including the big struggles at Centrax and Ottermill Switchgear. Fine Tubes is part of this movement. If they win, it will encourage workers at other factories in the area to fight for higher wages, and to resist increasing redundancies. If they lose, it will set back the trade unions in the West Country for years.

NO STRIKE PAY

The trade union leaders have done little to help the strike. The AUEW cut off strike pay after a year — as per rule — and has given minimal support since. Neither Union has organised blacking effectively, nor have they demanded action against unions such as BISAFTA which have refused to black supplies to Fine Tubes.

The strike committee has called a national picket for Friday June 16th, and it is vital that as many people as possible come to Plymouth to show that the strike has massive support. For further details of the picket, or to send urgently needed donations, contact Fine Tubes Strike Committee c/o 48 Stuart Road, Pennycomequick, Plymouth, Devon.



CENTENARY of "THE NATIONAL"

**FOUNDER
JOSEPH ARCH
1826 - 1919**

100 YEARS ON

Farm workers still fight for a living wage

BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY saw a march of 1,000 agricultural workers, brilliant banners waving, through the village of Barford, Warwickshire, to celebrate the formation 100 years ago of the National Agricultural Labourers Union by Joseph Arch of Barford.

JOSEPH ARCH

Joseph Arch was a great character who, because of his job as a wandering hedge-cutter, saw for himself the desperate countryside poverty of the agricultural worker.

Nowhere did any man get half the wages of any industrial worker. In some places, half a worker's wages went on bread, and they could never afford the meat they were rearing for the farmer.

The children rarely got to school since they had no shoes and were needed to boost the family income.

They lived in tied cottages owned by the farmer, so that with any trouble they lost both job and home. The constant drift from the land to the city meant the breakdown and demoralisation of country life.

JOIN THE UNION!

In these circumstances, organising an agricultural workers' union was and is a difficult business. In a large factory, militancy can soon spread. On a farm with only 3 or 4 workers, living in tied cottages, the farmer has the upper hand and a man has to be very brave indeed to stick up for his rights.

These days, with larger units, estate farms and factory farms employing 20 men or more, militancy is growing. But it is still the exception rather than the rule. And heaven knows, they have enough to be militant about.

This year the Conference of the National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers decided to go in for a 50% wage rise. Despite two awards in the past two years of £1.65 and £1.40 their present basic rate is still only £16.20 for a 42 hour week.

This claim is a militant response to the refusal by the Agric-

ultural Board in London last February of even the pathetic £18 for a 40 hour 5-day week. It may be that the Agricultural Board couldn't give a damn about the long hours of the farmworkers, but it certainly doesn't like the idea of long hours itself. After all, it polished off the case for refusing the claim in 150 short minutes and called it a day!

The original pay resolution was for £20 and there was speculation as to whether the executive would composite various resolutions on pay into a single resolution mentioning the figure of £22.

But the rank and file at the Conference would have none of it. £25 was their answer. And if £20 of it isn't forthcoming by February next, then it's strike action!

The demand is modest enough, you might think — but the farmers think it's outrageous.

INTENSIVE

Yet British agriculture is supposed to be the most intensive in the world — and is heavily subsidised by the taxpayer into the bargain.

Why then, in an industry where each worker produces more per man than in any other country, are his wages so low compared with Germany and France? The money must be going somewhere!

Perhaps the answer lies in what one worker told us — "After the latest government handout, our boss bought a new Mercedes-Benz. I asked him — why not stick to your old Jaguar and put more money in my pay packet?"

Many workers would be better off for money on the dole.

Another told us that he has a good job on £25 a week — the only trouble is, his working week is 7 days long, working from 4.45 in the morning to 6.30 at night, with 2 hours breakfast break.

FRESH AIR AND HOT AIR

Many people think that working in the country is compensation in itself — fresh air, fresh eggs, cheap rent and a side of bacon when you like. But these people work and live in the town and only

see the country at weekends, in the summer.

With commuters buying up the villages, the price of houses is too high to rent. Commuters have cars, so the rail and bus services get less frequent. The cheap rent means a worker is tied to his boss and has to be respectful or else.

Most farm work these days is in fact highly skilled; and many too are the dirty jobs, for which any factory worker would expect a hefty bonus.

PART TIME & CONTRACT

Part time labourers, where the farmer pays no tax, dilute the market. The casual spud-picker or the local Bobby who does a shift on his day off, all help the farmer make more profit — and they also help to keep down the farmworker's wages. Part time labour, except on a regular, agreed basis, must be eliminated.

Another danger is the emergence of contract labour. This is a mixture of what on a building site would be piece work and lump-work. The worker is considered to be self-employed, and is paid by results.

THE FIGHT AHEAD

It is clear that the farmworkers have a hard fight ahead to gain their £25 for a 40 hour week. With the UK going into the Common Market with its free competition rat race, the government and the farmers are relying on the quietness and low pay of the farmworkers to compete.

Prices will rise sky high — witness the recent price of beef. Farms will get bigger and more intensive, yet the farmworker will get no share in the resulting profits and yet still be expected to produce more!

The whole trade union movement needs to know of the farmworkers' case, and give it support. Like the miners, farmworkers will need to be mobile, to make contact with their fellow workers in industry and enlist their help in the event of strike action. They will need to organise to close the dairies, the slaughterhouses and food packing stations.

Within a week the country would know their case and demand justice.

Dave Spencer

There are 201,000 regular farm workers, and 188,000 farmers.	
50% of farms do not employ outside the family. 40% employ one man. 10% employ more than four men.	
TOTAL AVERAGE EARNINGS	
Farming	£23
Manufacturing	£31

Many farmworkers would be better off on the dole.

