WORKERS’ FIGHT

no. 9 24 June - 7 July 4d

TURN TORY RETREAT
INTO A ROUT!

FRONTS OF BRASS AND FEET OF CLAY! That sums up how the Heath Government looks to millions of workers right now.

It had squeezed the Social Services, deprived young working class children of school milk and thrown hundreds of thousands on the dole — all the time the smug, well-fed bourgeois faces of its members expressing how good it felt to be efficient, prosperous, ruthless, self-reliant, unsentimental Tory ‘hard-men’ out to exterminate all known species of lame duck.

Finally they goaded the workers into hitting back. And last week they were in headlong retreat from the wrath of the working class! All the class had to do was begin to move into action and the ground already shifted alarmingly under the feet of the Government!

On Thursday and Friday the 15th/16th June, Britain hovered on the brink of an ‘unofficial’ spontaneous General Strike. A 100% solid national Docks strike was certain for the following Monday, if the 3 dockers’ leaders were arrested on Friday. (continued p.3)

Police frame up

EMBARRASSED BY A RECENT newspaper report, the Metropolitan Police have been forced into appointing a team to inquire into their latest frame-up attempt. After an article appeared in the Sunday Times, the head of the Metropolitan Police has inaugurated the usual pantomime. Two high ranking police officers will inquire into the circumstances of the case of the “HACKNEY FIVE” and report back, ... to the police, of course!

On November 17th police of the Special Branch raided a shop in Wick Road, Hackney, and arrested five people. The five, who had set up a shop to sell clothes in aid of Ulster Catholics, were said by the Police to be members of Sinn Fein or Saor Eire (a radical Republican organisation). In court they were charged with possession of stolen weapons.

As the Sunday Times found out, however, the 11 rifles, 8 bayonets and 3 automatic pistols with 56 rounds of ammunition were planted on the premises by two men, one a policeman and the other a policeman “infiltrator”.

The “infiltrator”, John Parker, who claims he has done jobs like before for the Special Branch, delivered the arms to the house which he rented for the five.

In court, the two Special Branch detectives who gave evidence refused to answer questions about these two “colleagues”. They claimed “it would prejudice the security of the State.”

The Hackney Five were lorry. The police attempt to rig up and “IRA show-trial” to add to the unthinking hysteria directed against those fighting British troops in Ireland was too crude even for the judge. The farcical “trial” was simply stopped.

continued on back page

Defend
Stoke
Newington
Eight!
The campaign for 'peace' in the Six Counties appears to have triumphed. The Provisional wing of Sinn Fein announced on Thursday 22 June that "the IRA will suspend offensive operations as from midnight on Monday June 28, 1972, provided that a public reciprocal response is forthcoming from the armed forces of the British Crown". They stated that "the leadership of the Republican movement believe that the bilateral suspension of operations would lead to meaningful talks between the main parties in the conflict" and further "The movement has formulated a peace plan designed to secure a just and lasting solution, and holds itself in readiness to present it at the appropriate time."

INTERNMENT

The announcement was welcomed by Mr Whitelaw, who said that there would "obviously" be a favourable response from the British army (ie if you don't shoot at us we won't shoot at you?). by Cardinal Conway, Harold Wilson, Jack Lynch, Liam Cosgrave (leader of the main opposition party in the 26 Counties) - in short by all the shrewder political spokesmen of imperialism in Ireland.

The Official IRA and the Irish Communist Party have also stated approval, though the Officials hoped there would be no talks until all internes have been released. There seems to be some danger of this happening, however. Gerry Fitt's Social Democratic and Labour Party is already doing it, breaking a solemn pledge to.

WHITELAW'S ALLIES

Whtelaw's bargaining position at any future talks must be a strong one. He still has men in custody, he can use the UDA as a bargaining counter (compare Lloyd George's threat of "immediate and terrible war" in 1921 to win over the Irish delegation to the acceptance of the Treaty). He has the Catholic Church on his side, as well as Jack Lynch, who is intent on massaging on the talks, and, as British imperialism's best friend in Ireland, surely stands a good chance of being invited.

Immediately, Whitelaw has to tackle the problem - for him - of the rent and rates campaign, the no-go areas, the resistance of the Catholic minority.

This resistance has been broken down before - in the dismantling of the barricades in 1969 - and may be again.

The wings of the IRA appear to have paid the penalty of not consolidating their hold on the 'liberated areas' against the SDLP and the Church, and stand a good chance of being excluded from the talks.

BEHIND THE NEWS

CONTAINER ROW - T&G TO BLAME

In 1968 the TGWU signed an agreement with the container consortium enabling them to use registered dockers' pack and unpack the containers -- providing those men were in the TGWU.

This was to prove one of the biggest blows to dockers' job security. This is because of the boom in container ships, which meant more profit to the employer and less jobs for the dockers, as the container bases took over the job of the receiving shed.

It is quite obvious that this loading and unloading in the new places where general cargo is received, i.e. the container bases, is dockers' work. A container is part and parcel of a ship's hold and this is stowed by dockers.

We can well understand the employers' reasons for not wanting to use registered dockers. It is because over the years they have fought for and won good wages and conditions, using the type of militant solidarity the employers abhor. These reasons on the employers' part, of wanting to use cheaper and less militant labour, are understandable. But one is hard put to find any sensible reason why the leaders of the T&G signed these agreements.

They are now claiming that it was all a mistake. But how can this be? When in 1962 the American International Longshoremen's Association negotiated its famous 50-mile radius agreement, this laid down that any loading or unloading usually done on the waterfront and now cut out by containers, was to be done by I.L.A. labour within 50 miles of the port. If not, the container would be unpacked and re-packed by dockers on the dockside.

An operator trying to ship a container through could be fined $1,000.

The TGWU had from 1962 to 1968 - 6 years - to consider all these aspects. Instead they chose to sign away traditional dock work. Now 4 years later we have what appears to the general public to be a battle between two sections of workers, dockers v. container base workers, both belonging to the TGWU.

This should never have been allowed to happen. While the TGWU are giving 3 months notice of strike action, the ILA in America is now pressing for a 100 mile radius. As their leader Teddy Gleason says, "In this game you've got to think ahead and that's what I'm paid to do."

Brother Jones, please note!

Harold Youd
Manchester PortworkersCittee.

Our main job in Britain, however, is to stress, still, the principles in danger of being submerged: that the Irish people, north and south, as one unit, have the right to decide their own future collectively, on the basis of the democratic majority wish; and that British imperialism, and the British army, do not have any right to decide the future of the Irish people.

SELF-DETERMINATION

Any settlement at this stage is bound to fail short of freedom for Ireland. If full civil rights are granted and there is increased state aid for the 6 county economy this will not be enough to heal the scars of the past. Ireland as a whole will remain exploited, multilated, subservient.

The idea of a six-county referendum - put forward by Heath three months ago - denies the right of the whole Irish people to self-determination. A valid referendum would have to cover the whole 32 counties - not that imperialism could be 'voted out'.

In the coming phase, socialists will have to be clear that what we stand for is the right of the Irish people to kick out British imperialism, not just to be conciliated, to be granted a few scraps in an imperialist peace founded on domination.

Chris Gray

Bereford Eilis, author of the 'History of the Irish Working Class', discusses his book and his views at an

IRISH SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

forum: General Picton pub, Caledonian Road (near Kings X), London N1.

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CIVIL SERVANTS
FOR STRIKE-BREAKING?

With sit-in strikes and mobile pickets, the labour movement is rediscovers weapons from the past. But the bosses are doing the same.

In 1925-26, the period running up to the General Strike, the bosses set about building up a strike-breaking force, the Organisaton for the Maintenance of Supplies. (See article inside, page 4). Blocklegs were trained to drive locomotives in the private railways of large factories at week-ends and instructed in the operation of the telecommunication system.

And today? At the crucial period of the miners' strike, around the struggle at Saltley, a circular was sent round to civil servants.

It stated that in the event of a national disruption of essential services and transport, volunteers would be called on from the civil service. They would have to perform jobs outside normal civil service duties, and supplementary payment would be made above normal wages.

The Tories have already — so it is reported — made detailed plans for the use of the army to strike-break in the event of coal or docks stoppages.

According to official myth, the army, and particularly the civil service, are neutral bodies, above partisan class interests, dedicated only to the so-called 'national interest'. But what goes on behind the scenes, under the cover of official secrecy, is very different from the myth. And before long it may not be just behind the scenes. If the bosses and their State are preparing, the labour movement must prepare too. And all the strike-breaking lackeys of the Tories put together will not be enough to defeat a labour movement which stands firm in solidarity. A few thousand scabs cannot beat millions of workers.

VIETNAM
N.L.F. MAKE HEADWAY
DESPITE U.S. BOMBINGS

AS THE U.S. STEPS UP ITS bombing of North Vietnam, the Vietnamese liberation forces not only continue to hold positions but are making headway in the south near Trang An and in the Saigon-Nha Trang area.

So far the South Vietnamese army has shown its incapacity to fight without the massive support of US bombers, helicopters, tanks, and advisors. So enormous is their reliance on US air power that the US has, in order to protect these puppet forces dropped even more bombs on the South than on the North.

But that's not all that is being dropped from American planes over Vietnam. The other handy weapon is a propaganda weapon, or, to be more precise, two weapons. One is, according to the Washington Post of June 8, 'a cozy photographs of President Nixon and Russia's Communist Party leader Leonid Brezhnev...'. The other weapon is the same but with Mao posing instead of Brezhnev.

The latter photo was taken during Nixon's recent visit to China — where his chief advisor, Henry Kissinger is at this moment. Obviously such a strong show of revolutionary solidarity with the CIA's man of the moment only worked when it was forcefully asserted by "unofficial" and unsanctioned action by the rank and file. Now the leaders, instead of following the recent victory of the people in China, are trying to help away hobnobbing with the CBI. Whatever tight spot the Tories may be in, their greatest asset now is their ability — but in actuality they are the main brokers in politics of the conciliation line.

There is now, more than ever, a stark contrast between the combativity of the rank and file and the mealy-mouthed squirming of the TUC leaders with their pernicious attempts to conciliate the CBI (who, let us be clear, will only be really conciliated by a drastic 'voluntary wage freeze').

If the official TUC leaders have so much the conciliation only worked when it was forcefully asserted by "unofficial" and unsanctioned action by the rank and file. Now the leaders, instead of following the recent victory of the people in China, are trying to help away hobnobbing with the CBI. Whatever tight spot the Tories may be in, their greatest asset now is their ability — but in actuality they are the main brokers in politics of the conciliation line.

The issue now isn't non-recognition of the Act, but its complete destruction. Socialists and militants must fight to continue the offensive against the Government under the Act. In the long term, to ensure the total independence of the trade unions from the bosses' state, the central rallying cry must still be: FOR A GENERAL STRIKE TO SMASH THE ACT NOW.
the result of the working class’s victories over the bosses. What a contrast with the arrogant jailing judges who terrorised workers in the courts after the defeat of the General Strike in 1926.

MUSHROOM CLOUDS MUSHROOM
We’ve learned to live with the H-Bomb – the agitation and the mass demonstrations have all but disappeared completely. This is remarkable, since the threat from nuclear weapons, far from diminishing, is probably increasing. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute has just pointed out that in the ordinary course of the spread of nuclear power for peaceful purposes, more and more countries are acquiring the capacity to make nuclear weapons.

Anyone who feels sure this won’t lead to a spread of nuclear weapons can turn now to go back to sleep. Pacts and agreements between capitalists against any other capitalist governments will never guarantee the safety of humanity.

The prospects here were shown by the US Secretary of Defence when he said that the USA needed more Trident long range missile submarines, and 311 bombs to strengthen its hand in the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks...

Meanwhile workers in Australia haven’t given up on top of the world-analysing militant nuclear structures like people in Britain have. They are boycotting French trade in protest against the French nuclear tests in the Pacific.

The years 1919–1926 marked a decisive period in the history of the British labour movement. An understanding of this period is of immense importance to workers today.

Like today, it was a time of growing class conflict where every struggle became sharper than the one preceding it. This sharpening of class struggle derived from a profound dual crisis of British capitalism.

Firstly, Britain, the first capital- istic state on the world arena had entered a phase of irreversible decline, her economic pre- dominance being challenged and displaced by the other imperialist states. The First World War itself had, in part, been a product of this decline. Germany had begun to encroach upon and capture large chunks of the British share of the world market to the extent that this loss could only be redressed and a redivision of the world market re-effected by military means.

But far from the war providing a remedy for the chronic overall problems of British imperialism, it actually deepened them, opening the way for an even mightier challenge from the USA.

ORGANISED
Secondly, the period was characterised by a cyclical crisis of capitalism. The post- war boom, which had been based upon a demand for industrial goods, ended abruptly in mid- 1920 when the inflationary bubble well and truly burst. And these were not only difficulties which faced the bosses. The post war boom had registered tremendous changes in the outlook of the working class, which had taken advantage of the inflationary situation to assert its strength. To wrench wage concessions out of the employers, the workers had to resort to their only weapon: organisation.

Trade union membership grew in leaps and bounds from 9 million in 1917 to 15 million in 1920. The changes in consciousness in the working class produced by the sharp ness of the struggle helped in turn to intensify the problems of the ruling class, giving it very little room to manoeuvre.

EUROPE AN AVALANCHE
Reluctantly vital in its impact was the example of the Russian October Revolution in 1917. As Marxists have always emphasised, revolutionary developments are never purely national in scope and constitution and inter national phenomenon.

The early twenties exemplified the dangers of an avalanche. There had been revolutionary waves in Germany, Austria, Italy, Hungary and Ireland.

In Britain, too, there were revolutionary developments taking shape in every sphere of society. There were strikes in every industry, disorder in the Army and even a strike by those custodians of capitalist property and legality, the police.

Thus, the position of the ruling class hardly provided a foundation for optimism. Yet, there was only one way out – a relentless attack on the living standards of the working class, a driving of the working class, which prepared to meet this challenge in the only way known to mankind – by developing and strengthening its own organisation.

This explains the drive towards the amalgamation of trade unions which took place in the immediate post-war period. In 1921, the AEU (now AUEW) came into existence as a result of the amalgamation of the Amal- g amated Society of Engineers and nine smaller unions.

Two years later came the TGdGW. Parallel with this, the pre-war agreement for a Triple Alliance of Transport, Railway and Mining Unions to stand and act together, was revived.

RAILMEN WIN
Both sides were getting into battle formation. The employers’ major shots were fired in the late summer of 1919, following credits, wages, and a break in the boom. The Tory-Liberal Coalition provoked a rail strike by the AUEW to impose a statutory wage cut.

Despite the strenuous efforts of the railwaymen’s leader, J.H. Thomas, to betray the strike, the government folded up at the threat of the Triple Alliance being invoked.

Workers’ militancy was on the rise. The struggle was reaching unprecedented levels at the point where industrial action turned into a political weapon.

This was demonstrated particularly by the “Jolly George” incident, in which the dockers in London refused to load ships destined to arm the Red Army by the country’s Provisional Polish Army in 1920.

To stress the point, Council revolution was won under the leadership of union leaders like Bevin, to spearhead the struggle against British imperial intervention in Russia if that became necessary.

The next round of struggle involved the seamen who demanded a wage increase and called upon their partners in the...
1919-1926 how the Tories prepared their VICTORY OVER THE WORKERS

by David Black

Triple Alliance to throw their weight behind them. The coal-owners refused the increase and on 16th October there began a strike.

The threat of solidarity action by the Transport Workers and Railwaymen created a panic in the ruling class which, while buying time, also pushed through an Emergency Powers Bill which virtually restored its wartime anti-strike powers and forestalled the Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies. In reality the decision to struggle was only postponed for six months. The ruling class had bought time to prepare a counterattack.

By 1921, 2½ million were unemployed. The "shake-out" had begun. Next in the firing line were the workers in the vital export industries - shipbuilding, mines, engineering - where chronic problems of lack of investment and surplus capacity existed along with what the employers considered high wages.

BLACK FRIDAY

The mines were destined to be the first battlefield for the bosses' attack. By April 1921 the coal-owners demanded a wage cut and, this being rejected, locked out the miners. It was now class against class.

Amidst tremendous support for the miners in the working class, the Triple Alliance was invoked, a syndicalist strike being called for 16th April 1921. The Tory-Liberal Government was now on a civil war footing with the Emergency Powers Act implemented, reservists mobilised and troops posted to industrial areas. The union leadership surrendered at once.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Thomas of the NUR and Williams of the Transport Workers backed out and left the miners to fight alone. Betrayed and deserted, the miners fought on for two months and were forced to concede defeat.

This monumental betrayal went down in history as Black Friday and was a colossal demonstration of the cowardice of reformism. Moreover, it served to demoralise whole sections of the working class.

STEWARDS

Section by section, the employers dealt with the unions and, in the wake of Black Friday, defeat followed defeat.

The employers had drawn strength from their victory over the miners. They took on the engineers and virtually smashed the remnants of the massive wartime Shop stewards movement.

Pursuing this, they inflicted defeats on the dockers, building workers and textile workers, to the extent that they could boast of having slashed wartime pay increases by 75%.

These defeats had the effect of dampening down the class struggle. Large numbers of workers drifted out of the unions. The tide of class struggle had begun to ebb. The only force which stood up against these developments was the infant Communist Party, which fought resolutely inside the unions to draw out clearly and understand the lessons of Black Friday.

MINORITY MOVEMENT

By early 1924, the workers began to regain their fighting spirit. This was reflected in the defensive, and aimed at consolidating their positions amidst tremendous rank and file criticism by being seen to be doing something.

This line, of course, only created the conditions for further treachery. At a time when capitalism could not afford half measures, this leader of J.H. Thomas and Co. were prepared to act only on the basis of such half-measures. Criminality, they disapproved the will of the class to fight and covered the coming struggle in a smokescreen.

RED FRIDAY

The capitalists saw things quite differently. They knew what was in store and prepared for the battle. By demanding new wage cuts in the pits and threatening a lock-out.

Owing to the low stocks of coal available, this was a premature move. Recognising their advantage, the miners rejected the coal-owners demands, and in July 1925 forced the Tory Government to back down by granting a subsidy to maintain wage levels for nine months. This was a partial victory.

The Tories had retreated - strategically. It became known as "Red Friday".

The Tories were quite clear on what they had done. As Churchill put it: '"If the Government was impressed with the fact that the country as a whole was not sufficiently informed of the character and consequences of such a struggle... We therefore decided to postpone the crisis in the hope of averting it or, if not averting it, of coping efficiently with it when it comes." Or, as Baldwin put it more succinctly: "We were not ready."

Their intentions were quite clear to everyone except the trade union and labour leaders. The whole crisis of the coal industry determined the bosses' and Tories' outlook. The return to the Gold standard forced British export prices up and put coal out the running in a market flooded with cheaper German and Polish coal.

The employers and their government now looked as never before on cutting miners' wages. To do this involved the capital. The slightest of demands of a most detailed character.

THE O.M.S.

In September 1925, they began in earnest to prepare for a revolutionary situation. They set up a body "unofficially" with the object of maintaining communications and supplies in the event of a general strike. This was the Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies.

It was made up of middle class Tories who wished to do their "patriotic duty". It was joined by students and such gutterwash as the (pre-Mosley) Fascist.

The government encouraged the OMS and set about preparing its own lines. It divided the country into ten regions, each under a Civil Commissioner. 83 voluntary service committees were set up to keep local services in operation.

Continued on p.10
ONE IN THE DOCK
ALL OUT THE DOCK!

They say, though I don't believe it personally, that in Italy there's a statue of the Virgin Mary that miraculously sheds tears. After the victory of Chobham Farm, if there's anywhere that's got a statue of Heath, I bet they'll have found it sweating.

Feather had capitulated to the courts with his ludicrous line of: "I didn't know the NIRC would have the status of a High Court". The rest of the TUC leaders followed him. Jones agreed to pay the £55,000 and had to be saved — not by defiance but by Denning! The railway leaders followed the ruling of the NIRC, and had a belief of their members. Only the rank and file stood firm.

The victory of Chobham Farm is their victory. It was their fight that was a rallying cry for the hatred of the working class for the Tory government.

Messages of support by immediate strike action came from all the ports. NUR members at Southamton dock pledged their support. Stewards at the Vauxhall Motor Company pledged theirs. Many smaller groups of workers stood at the ready — prepared to walk out in the event of any docker being jailed. And the mighty weight of the Scotti-

ish miners was behind them too. What was in the offing was a spontaneous General Strike — official leadership or not. But then the Tories chickened out and approved the appeal on behalf of dockers — an appeal the dockers didn't approve of themselves.

In fact, if they were angry before, the dockers were furious now. While being delighted at their victory, they were being deprived of their pay. They didn't want to stop the Tories, they wanted to smash them.

As Alan Williams, one of the three the Tories threatened, said: "I didn't want a solicitor representing me in a court I don't recognise". Vic Turner had a simpler message: "It's bloody liberty!"

Now the rank and file has stopped the retreat of the labour movement and started the retreat of the Tories.

TURN THE RETREAT INTO A ROUT!

Danny James.

ROYAL GROUP OF DOCKS
SHOP STEWARDS COMMITTEE
ARISE YE WORKERS
"Make no mistake about it, the same action will take place if they try it against any industrial worker in this country."

Vic Turner
From April to May 1902 Rosa Luxemburg wrote a series of articles about the General Strike, revealing her at her most characteristic — rejecting even the least schematization and above all that which was new and rich in the class struggle. In this piece, part two of "VET AGAIN ON THE BELGIAN EXPERIMENT" written fully four years before the experience of the wave of strikes in Russia allowed her to write her classic "Mass Strike". Luxemburg herself was the real experience of the then just defeated General Strike.

Two points stand out. First, she sees that the Bel-
gian "experiment" was something new, that the General
Strike, though traditionally referring to the anarchist
model which made it even more equivalent to the revolution,
could cover other new tactical methods, and also that
General Strikers for limited aims could be undertaken.

Second, she still somewhat in advance of parliamentarians who prevailed before the Russian
Revolutions, she saw how the substitution of the spontaneity
of the strike to parliamentary-type alliances brought dis-
agreement.

The most important development in the history of the General Strike, however, has taken place since this article was written. The working class has added the spontaneous General Strike — as in France 1968 and other anti-
tactical arms: We publish this article not as a set of recipes, but so that
we can learn, most of all, from the richness of her method, its clarity and free-
captions. This we must learn to apply to the General Strike and to all our continuing previous struggle for A GENERAL STRIKE TO SMASH THE

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT.

THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT that the General Strike is one of the most effective tools of the modern workers' movement; certainty It is one of those over which there has been the hottest and most frequent debate with
in the ranks of socialism.

If however one avoids having nothing but this "victory", one realizes that the joys are rare and that to get
the essence of the matter, then it will be clear that the General Strike is applied in various cases to cover quite different things and consequently receives different appraisals.

There is no "necromenius" (2) famous idea of a General Strike in the event of war is quite a different thing from the international general strike of miners that was being planned in Eng-
land in 1977 for a protest against the coal and oil crisis, for which Eleanor Marx sought to
join them, and which the French Socialist Congress in Lille in 1980.

It is clear that there is just as great a difference between a General Strike in France when the attempted General Strike was in favour of the railway workers by other sections met with bitter failure and the brilliantly successful General Strike of the Northern European Railway workers in Switzerland. Likewise that the so-called General Strike in Cre-
maul in 1883 as a protest against the special tax on the mayor, the ex-convict Calvignac, has nothing in common in the "Holy Month" decision up to the present as long as 1835, etc. etc.

The precondition for an examination of the question of the General Strike is that one makes a dis-
tinction between the General Strike, etc. and the so-
called General Strikers, political and trade unionist. The others are "necromenius", those that are motivated by a particular event and those which derive from a wide-scale political or economic crisis, etc. One only has to cast one's eye over the variety of experiences of this form of struggle and one will see how mind-
less is any stereotyping, any dismissal or glorification of this weapon.

Let us be clear. There is no General Strike, no political workers' Strike, and exclude the straightforward trade unionist action. For it is the case that countries has become a daily event making any "theoretical" superfluities.

ANARCHIST

We see what is at work in our opinion are two different assumptions of the meaning of this means of struggle: the agricu-
lural mass strike (4) as we shall for the moment call it. In the first position we find above all the national General Strike under-
taken by the unions, and that of the socialist order, which has been the traditional hobby-horse of the French trade unions (5) and the Allemannians (6). This was clearly express-
ed for instance in the periodical "L'Internationalisme" of May 27th 1969 where we read: "When the prolet-
arian strikes spread and link up one with another they are very close to becoming a General Strike and a General Strike limited with the ideas of emancipa-
tion which currently prevail must end with a general bankruptcy which would con-
sume the social upheaval."

The Congress of French Trade Unions which met in Bordeaux in 1888 res-
ed likewise: "Only the General Strike which can bring about the liberation of the working class."

As a characteristic rider to this another resolution was accepted by the Cong-
gress in favor of the workers were encour-
gaged to "make a clean break with the politicians who betrayed them."

The same basis underlies the French resolution which was supported by Fried (7) and opposed by Laglen (8) at the last International Socialist Congress, held in Paris in the summer of 1960 (9).

This argues "the workers of the world unite and organize a General Strike, should it be possible to use
this organisation as a simple means, a new and a great pressure could be
exerted on capitalist society which is the basis of the introduction of the necessary political and economic changes."

We are inclined to view this situation presents itself as favourable, for putting the General Strike at the service of the social
specifies of time and place, from the concrete political situation of the

cases struggle in each country as well as from the organic connection between the General Strike and the daily struggles of the proletariat, with the work of action and organi-
isation all this was the typically anarchistic feature of this conception.

On the other side of the coin the anarchist was the utopian aspect of this theory, and with its emergence — emerged the necessity to fight this conception of General Strike with the utmost vigour.

UTOPIAN

Thus we have for decades seen Social-Democrats (12) fighting the utop-
anism of the General Strike. The tire-
less struggles of the French Labour Party against the French trade unions were based on exactly the same prin-
ciples as the invariable disputes of the German delegation at the International Congresses with Nieverhusen.

In this the German Social-Democrats emerged for themselves the special merit of having not only given the scientific arguments against the utopian theory but particularly of having countered the practice of day to day political struggle at the international level to the speculations of a one and for a time that is only "ideas without an end", against the bourgeois state.

That is the extent — no further — of what is called often the Social-democ-
ocracy's struggle against the idea of the General Strike. In fact it is only against the absolute, anarchist theory of the General Strike that the criticism voiced by the advocates of scientific social-
ism was addressed. And it was only against this that Nieverhusen has been addressed.

The political issue General Strike which the French workers have from time to time engaged in for specific political ends, as in the already men-
tioned case in Carnaux; and which the Belgian workers in particular often en-
gaged in as part of the struggle for uni-

ANARCHISM

In one as in the other the character-
istic thing in the conception is the belief in the General Strike as a pan-
acea against capitalist society as a whole, or, in the same thing, against certain of its essential func-
tions, the belief in an abstract, absolute category of the General Strike as the method of the class struggle equally and equally successful in all countries and at all times.

When the Bolsheviks, delivering their waves, the streets remain lighted up, the rail and tramways do not run — the Bolsheviks were right. Worked out on paper like this the plan was as valid for all times and in all countries as any inggroup in a fog.

This everlasting attention from the concrete political situation of the

the political issue General Strike on the contradictory relates to asp-
bects of the day to day political life which are definite and absolute and definite.

At the same time it serves as a specific medium of socialist agita-
tion. In the same way the contradiction constricted between day to day political work, in particular parliamentary activi-
ENGLAND

Finally there is the example of England where to a large degree the economic and political preconditions for the successful General Strike existed but where this mighty weapon never gets used in its political life. This example highlights yet another important precondition for its utilisation — the internal coalescence of the trade union and the political workers’ movement. In Belgium the economic struggle and the political function as an organic whole, the trade unions and the party finding themselves side by side in every important action, working hand in glove with one another.

In England however, the narrow craft and therefore also divisive party pump politics of the trade unions together with the lack of a strong socialist party excludes side combining in a political General Strike. A class party also shows that all absolute judgments of the General Strike and contradictions made without taking the concrete circumstances in every country into account, nominally leading by the political — i.e. in Germany, amounts to nothing but national conceit and thoughtless schematism. And this same question shows one other thing: that when the advantages of a “free hand” in socialist tactics is so eloquently advocated to us, the arguments of “keeping-your-options-open” or of adapting to the variety of the concrete, it is in the last resort always no more than the freedom to engage in horse-trading with the bourgeois parties.

When on the other hand it is a question of mass action, some means of struggle distinctly resembling a revolutionary tactic, then these devotees of the “open options” immediately turn into the poorest dogmatists. They then try to force the class struggle and the whole world into the mould of the so-called German tactic. If this recent General Strike in Belgium has been unsuccessful, this fact cannot constitute grounds for a “revision” of the Belgian tactic, because it is well known that the General Strike was neither prepared for nor was it used politically. In fact it was paralyzed by the big business and before it could accomplish anything dispersed. Because mass action was not contemplated by the ruling class, or, to be more precise — parliamentary leadership of the movement, the workers were forced to wait for their cues with no connection with what was going on and on at stage until they were finally shouted off at the dressing room. The failure of the strike on a go slow was a first hostile in proving the pointlessness of the General Strike as little as the surrender of the defences of Minsk by Bazaine (77) proved the pointlessness of naval defence, as such or as little as the parliamentary collapse of the German liberal’s proves the pointlessness of parliament.

Quite the contrary. The failure of the latest action of the Belgian Labour Party must convince everyone who knows how it was prepared, that only a General Strike — one that really takes the field — could have achieved anything. And if there is any need to ‘revise’ the tactic of our Belgian comrades then it seems to us that it should be in the direction we indicated in our previous article in this periodical (78). The April campaign after all showed one thing clearly: that a strike indirectly against the church but directly against the bourgeoisie is a complete waste of time the moment it departs from this point of principle into the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie turns from being a means of pressure on the government into a wall and a bane that leaves the steps of the proletariat (79) The most important lesson of the Belgian experiment speaks out not against the General Strike as such but on the contrary against a parliamentary alliance with liberalism which condones every General Strike to fruitlessness.

We must oppose with the utmost sharpness, however, just reacting to the various attempts to replace the word “General Strike” with the old ideas clutches once and for all, more useful to combat the various ideas of Neuenhaus and the anarchists. The same applies to any attempt to “transform” the Belgian tactic simply on the basis of the most superficial comparison to what happened in Belgium because not only the Belgian workers, now as then, but also the Swedish (20) stand poised to wield the weapon of the General Strike in the battle for universal suffrage. It would be a pity if even half of the millions in these countries let them themselves be led astray in their search for a strategy by merely forms of speech and tured by the pretentiousness of the so-called “German” methods of struggle.

(1) All emphasis are Rosa Luxemburg’s including those within quoted passages.
(2) Neuenhaus: Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis (1846—1919), Leader of the Dutch Socialist Union; went over to anarchism later; advocate of anarchist General Strike and ‘ethical socialism’.
(3) By this is meant the General Strike which is really synonymous with the revolution, advocated by syndicalists and later syndicalism. Bazaine was its great advocate in this period.
(4) Rosa Luxembourg is evidently not too happy with this terminology. The point is that the strike is planned and relates to specific goals short of revolutionary overthrow. As such, it is a workers’ fight, page 4, what is called type (a) under the section PLANNED STRIKE is about the type we have here although as Rosa Luxembourg makes clear the latter might still be better as in (b) and (c).
(6) Bioassyists — followers of Paul Broussard (1854—1912). After the destruction of the Paris Commune Broussard moved to Bahia. In 1877 he appeared as the leader of the French Socialists in France advocating reformist gradually and decentralisation, particularly of local councils.
(6) Followers of Jean Allain (1843—1915), also a Frenchman.
(8) International Socialist Congress took place in Brussels from 16—22 August 1890. It was from 6—12 August 1892 and in London from 27 July 1895 and 26 August 1896.
(9) Social-Democrat was the term used before 1914 for what we would now term Marxist.
(10) Wilhelm Liebknecht was the father of Karl Liebknecht, the great revolutionary who was murdered with Rosa Luxembourg in 1919.
(11) By Chur, the deputy was referring to the French Parliament.
(12) In France it was difficult to get socialists in Parliament not easy to get them on local departmental councils and executive committees. For this reason that the Broussards stressed the electoral campaign that the General Strike was a real issue is Carmaux.
(13) Actually over 90,000 took part in the strike.
(14) Achille Bazaine (1811—1880) was a French general and statesman.
(15) The reference here is to a whole series of articles in the Leipzig und Wiener Zeitung 14 April, 15 April 25 April, 22 April and, particularly, the Neue Zelt Yr 20/1902 vol 2 pp 105—110. It was a detailed study of how the alliance with the liberals defeated the General Strike.
(16) On the character of the reform of the franchise in Belgium at this time the principal tool was the Catholic Church. The position of the Social Democratic-Socialists-expressed in their paper "Peuples de France" on "the sacred right (to) hold the strikers, “so that at least the legal charges are not proved” (i.e. Parliamentarian elections — trans.) can be overcome by the mass movement and the pressure being exerted by the liberal bourgeoisie and all the official bodies "organising the country". This in the "pressure" of the bourgeois and the working class, the socialists and liberals which shackled and then smashed the whole strike (20) The Swedish strike timed to coincide with the Bahia debate was called off on the promise of universal equal suffrage. The government, however, reneged and it was years before Sweden achieved it.
Where we stand

The police force was enlarged then a movement of Special Constables was mobilized through the banks, railways and telephone exchanges.

Warships were anchored in the Mersey, Tyne and Clyde, while groups armed with gas were moved into the central and industrial main centres.

The bosses meant business.

True form, the trade union leaders did nothing to meet the challenge.

The Royal Commission on the Coal Industry reported, demanding that the miners accept a wage cut and a longer working day. The employers declined a lockout for May 1st, 1926 unless the miners accepted their terms.

In response the miners raised the slogan: "Not a penny off the pay, not a minute on the day. No district agreements."

On April 20th a state of emergency was declared and the Special Constabulary was mobilized. On April 29th the Executives of the Unions met at a special TUC Conference, and frantic efforts were still being made by leaders' like J.H. Thomas and J.R. Clynes to avoid a confrontation.

On May 1st the miners were locked out. Simultaneously the TUC Conference took a poll of the miners on their attitude to a General Strike to defend the miners. 3,655,827 voted for a General Strike; 495,294 against.

But still the union leaders procrastinated themselves before the Government, begging the cabinet of "hard-faced men" not to push them into a fight. "I never begged and pleaded as I begged and pleaded all today," confessed Thomas.

Finally the dictators' had their hands forced for them - in the middle of a conference with the cabinet, by unofficially backed by the newly-elected, the National Baptist of the National Baptist of the General Assembly, the General Council effectively made them indistinguishable from the union leaders.

In the absence of revolutionary leadership the class was defeated and discredited, not so much by the preparations of the "class" as by the incompetence and ineptness of its "leaders" to throw off the sponge.

On the left was the central lesson of 1910-1926, the defeat of the "class" in Workers' Council Strike and which, following the lead of the trade leaders of the Communist leftists of the left of the so-called lefts on the General Council, "thrown on the class" the most power to the General Council, effectively made them indistinguishable from the union leaders.

The only force which could have provided the unified alternative was the Communist Party, whose leadership ran across the lines of the strike and which, following the lead of the Stalin leadership of the Communist leftists of the left of the so-called lefts on the General Council, "thrown on the class" the most power to the General Council, effectively made them indistinguishable from the union leaders.

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**BRIEFING**

Hilary Cave reports on the EQUAL PAY fiddle

"I'm an Englishman, and I think that most people, like me, would never work for a woman or a black..."

"It is an age-old, man-made suffering..."

**INDUSTRIAL LIGHT**

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<th>Non-manual</th>
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<td>91.6</td>
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<th>Pensions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>45.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>11.9</td>
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The outstandingly low figure here is the number of working-class women covered by pension schemes. Thus those who earn least at work will receive the least in retirement — although their need will be greatest.

The advantage of the Equal Pay Act is, there can be no doubt that equality of women's earnings will not be created in 1975, when the terms of the Equal Pay Act come into force. Like so much 'progressive' legislation it is largely a sham, full of loopholes and room for the bosses to manoeuvre and fiddle as they please.

Trade Union militancy could make sure that these fiddles did not succeed, but many women are simply not trade union members.

Those who are members are often inactive.

This is not surprising when we consider the pressures on women to accept or most of the responsibility for running a home or looking after children.

It remains to be seen whether the officials in the trade unions will push the fight for real women's rights in industry. Just as the official leaders of the trade union movement have avoided a real fight over the Industrial Relations Act, they have for years failed to take effective action over the question of equal pay for women.

**Reliance on the EPTU.**

**THE G.E.C. SUBSIDIARY, RELIANCE TELEPHONES, Wellingborough, has closed down one part of its factory, the department where mainly women workers wired up jack-in-equipement. Nobody explained why it was done, but some thought 'well, they're only women workers.'**

This sort of attitude highlights one of the basic problems of the area — that of weak basic trade union organisation. Northampton is a weak area and Wellingborough particularly weak. Reliance was at one time fairly strongly organised by the EPTU. But this organisation crumbled when up the branch secretary was arrested for an anti-capitalist rally so that he could sell the men down the river in a pay dispute. The EPTU organised it so that members and non-members alike were balloted — the total workforce.

Understandably this rankled with the members of the Union and many dropped out altogether.

However, with only a few members left in the EPTU, it will still negotiate rights, although the majority of the workers in the shop had changed to ASTMS in disgust.

The status quo is being kept with the active connivance of the Managing officer, Stringer, who for obvious reasons allows the devil in his pocket to outdo the devil in his head. Someone should do something about this.

To show how 'democratic' he was, Stringer said he would arrange a meeting with 10 workers from the shop floor to help "iron out differences". The time chosen (by Stringer of course, and with no prior notice) was 9am, Friday, 4.35pm. And when, come 5 o'clock, the men decided to go home, Stringer could righteously exclaim "They're not interested in our own affairs — we might well adjourn the whole thing!"

During the meeting Stringer was asked why he wouldn't agree to the EPTU negotiating rights. He said he had written to the ASTMS branch secretary and hadn't replied. Then he himself had taken all 4 months to reply to the branch secretary's previous letter; he bristled angrily that "such discount cannot be tolerated!"

"(Reminds one of school) — write out 100 times "I must not be disrespectful to Mr Stringer" — and then perhaps he'll grant trade union rights!!"

The unacceptable EPTU situation could hamper any coming pay talks. The men demand a rise of £4 (The basic grade at present is £19.00) — who is going to negotiate?

**FIERY KEARNS**

Lastly the fiery Brother Keans of the EPTU came to speak to the men.

"Askers's no good" he says "selling me up any time, any place. I'll work wonders if you will promise me your full backing."

Some people were taken in. But ask Bro. Kearns what happened at New Valley Hospital in 1970 and you will have a clear picture of what can happen back in the same place (there now). There he was at the front "— we'll black the boss up, you know, like we did to John O'Grady. The company's taken on more than it bargained for."

The next day he ordered the EPTU men back to work. They were the first back. Then they were the last.

Now rumour has it that Operations Manager Stringer is arranging a meeting with the EPTU in Manchester, behind the men's back. In this way he may have a chance to ease out ASTMS. (In 1966 he eased out the AEF, who were forced to hold their meetings outside the workshop before they withdrew finally.)

The method could be something simple like bringing the negotiation procedure forward so that the EPTU are still sole bargainers, and then after that just play for time.

Stringer reckons he can win by dilly-dallying. But he could be very wrong.

Jack Wolf

I would like to know more about workers' flight.

NAME

ADDRESS

SEND TO: John Sterling, 200-300 High Street, London, N1.
The existence of a radical student movement is the subject of a new report issued by the police force for the "security of the State." One of the most important is the trial of the people now known as the "Stoke Newington Eight." On the 4th August a shooting up of police -- in particular Special Branch officers -- had been reported to the police force. This report was accompanied by the collation of files from Special Branch officers. From the files it was discovered that two houses in Essex were searched. Two other houses of friends of John Prescott and Ian Purdie, whose trial date had just been set, were raided. On August 15th there were three separate raids in London, and more the following days. On August 20th the first five out of the eight were arrested. Later another one trying to evict the others, like the others, on various counts including "INVASION OF CONSPIRACY TO CAUSE A SCARCITY OF GOODS OF UES.

Whatever our political differen- ses with those arrested -- and they are many and deep-going -- the Stoke Newington Eight are serious revolutionaries fighting on the side of the working class. Their defence, as belittls their beliefs, will be the defence of all revolutionaries.

The trial, which is due to last until about October, will be the most important revelations about the activity of the police and the Special Branch, and their methods. It will be a living example of one of the Defendants' main points: that police repression against the political opponents of capitalism is on the increase; that all sorts of cover-up all-ranges like Conspiracy, requiring only the most insubstantial of "evidence" are now being used by the State to attack and frame up its enemies.

It was on such a charge that John Prescott was given 15 years in jail last year.

The Sunday Times has done some service here, the opposite of what can be said of The Times itself. After an article appeared in that paper about armed training for the IRA in London, Michael Catlin alleged that one of the men was a police spy. They were charged in connection with a speech they are alleged to have made in Hyde Park about the war in Ireland.

The charge of Treason-Tolany, a method hitherto never used and carrying huge penalties, has been brought against all of them. They have repeatedly been denied bail.

At a recent meeting called by the Downham Estate Tenants Association (Lewisham, London), Labour councillor Mr. Bottomley told the 100 tenants that capacity had been increased at the Community Centre on the Estate.

On the platform was a spokesman for the Labour Council, which has decided to implement the Tory rents bill.

His speech was met with a howl of abuse from the meeting and he was unable to finish it. The tenants stressed that they didn't want ex- cesses - but a strategy with which to fight.

On the platform was a left Labour councillor and a local Communist Party member. They gave the tenants many fine words, but both expressed confidence in what the Labour Party, rather than the tenants themselves, could do.

They failed to come to the demand for rent strikes.

It was at this point that a member of WORKERS' FRONT spoke. He explained his group's strategy -- an attack on the "cultural strategy" of the left.

The tenants appeared to welcome this lead and the meeting finished by passing a resolution which called upon the Housing Commission to reverse its decision on implementation -- or else stand down.