

WORKERS' fight

3p

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IT'S THEIR LOCKOUT MAKE THEM PAY! INSIST ON WORK OR FULL PAY!

The two days a week GENERAL LOCKOUT ordered by the Tory Government is the weapon of a government which is tottering but dedicated above all to defeating the working class.

According to economist Nicholas Kaldor, the overall cost of the lockout will be about EIGHT HUNDRED times as much as the cost of the miners' full claim.

Kaldor did not say who would pay the cost of the miners' claim or who would pay the cost of the lockout.

The cost of the miners' claim would come from the top 5% who own 75% of all private wealth in this country... the men who rake in over £1000 per year in profit for every single worker employed in this country.

Where is the cost of the lockout to fall? That depends on us. Part of the cost will come from big capital. They are prepared to pay that price in order to bludgeon the miners, the railwaymen, and the engineers into submission.

According to Government plans, the BULK of the cost will fall on the bulk of the population... 25million working people and their families.

Average

Already many working people get enough to live on only by long hours of overtime. We must demand FIVE DAYS' AVERAGE PAY however the work week is cut. We cannot afford to PAY FOR the Government's lockout by reducing our living standards well below the bare minimum we have fought for and worked for over long years.

Many workers have guaranteed week agreements. Scandalously, some unions are consenting to tear up these agreements JUST NOW when they are most needed. We must keep AND EXTEND these agreements. Five days' MINIMUM or BASIC pay is not enough to live on. We must demand five days' average pay.

Other tricks are being tried by employers. Many are laying off large numbers of workers. This could split the workforce (between those laid off, those on short time, and those still on a full week) and condemn hundreds of thousands to poverty on the dole. Lay offs are also being used as an excuse for employers to weed out militants.

Bosses will try to use the crisis atmosphere to push up work rates during short time working. Briefly, they aim to get four days' work in three days for three days' pay. At Stanton steelworks management want to have Saturdays worked at

JAILED PICKETS

AN ATTEMPT TO OUTLAW MILITANCY

by Jackie Cleary

WHEN THE Judge handed down sentences of THREE YEARS, TWO YEARS AND NINE MONTHS on Des Warren, Ricky Tomlinson and John McKinsie Jones in the Shrewsbury trial on December 19th, even the foreman of the jury muttered "disgraceful" and left the court, followed by another juror.

The sentences are certainly a vicious and disgraceful proof that this government is determined either to break and tame the labour movement, or to break itself in trying.

That Government knows what the whole capitalist class knows — that nothing will ever go right for them in Britain until they have broken the militancy of the working class and loaded the complete weight of the problems of the capitalist system onto its bent back.

The jailing of the three is a blow in their war to tame the working class, to beat it down.

It is symbolic that the three are builders. These are men who have

normal rates of pay, with no overtime rate. We must not let them use their crisis and their lockout to bring in speed up and undermine protective practices which we need now more than ever.

Management plans for cutbacks must be checked over by workers' directly elected representatives. Full information on energy and financial resources, in each factory, industry, and nationally, must be available. NO LAY OFFS.. cut hours for everyone with no loss of wages. Trade union control over work practices and mobility of labour.

Against plans to lay off or sack hundreds of workers, we must reply by OCCUPYING THE FACTORIES.

fought against super exploitation in the building industry, against the lump — a cattle market for labour — and against the profiteering vermin who coin tens of millions out of the labour of building workers.

The insecurity, widespread non-unionism, and divided labour force in the building industry — these are conditions the bosses want to spread and impose on every worker in British industry.

The jailing of the three is a blow in the offensive to achieve that aim. If the sentences stick, from now on to picket aggressively will be to risk fines or jail. To get together with other militants to plan the moves of the workers' side in the class war — that will be to risk charges of conspiracy, followed by years in jail.

Direct action

Their side in the class war is armed with the "might and majesty" of the law — backed by the police and the army. Ours only with direct action. The charges were brought as a test case to tighten the law on picketing. It is now so tight as to outlaw forceful direct action. And since their defeat by miners and dockers in 1972 the Government has prepared and continues to prepare "snatch squads" of police thugs to haul militants into the spider's web of ruling class justice in the course of future struggles.

That's why the sentences are a challenge to the whole labour movement and why the issues must be posed clearly.

Either we now compel the state to release its grip on our three brothers or we face the certainty that this time next year the number of jailed working class victims of the class struggle — of the coming big battles — will number dozens if not hundreds instead of the



Above: part of Merseyside demonstration to FREE THE THREE, Saturday December 22. Below: CYNTHIA BALDRY of Workers' Fight speaks at the Pierhead after the demonstration



present three.

If the reaction had been as instantaneous and powerful as that which greeted the jailing of the five dockers in 1972, the three would be out of jail already.

The reaction SHOULD have been like that. It must be like that. ACTION is still the first requirement if we are to force the gates of Shrewsbury Jail open. IT IS STILL POSSIBLE.

In the name of the three jailed men, socialists and militants have the right to pose the following questions, and to insist on answers:

BUILDING WORKERS! Your brothers are in jail! What are you doing about it?

MINERS! You know this is an attempt to frighten you. You know Des Warren has been sentenced to three years to intimidate you and stop you giving the Tories the thrashing you gave them last time and the thrashing they deserve now! What are you doing about it?

Whose hands on the Coal stocks?

HAROLD WILSON has said: "What is needed is a Britain in which sacrifices are shared".

Look at the facts. For a big employer who sees millions in profits coming in every week and has a personal income of several thousands a week, even a 50% cutback of income is a featherweight burden to be carried for the sake of lower wage costs in the future. Come what may, he will still be very comfortable.

Ordinary working people living on £20, £30, £40, or £50 a week have no such margin of luxury. To lose £5 a week, let alone more than 40% of pay, means to have to scratch around for even the bare necessities. Any "sharing of sacrifices" here is a sham.

And WHY is there a lockout anyway? Is there really not enough energy?

The 13 million tons of coal stocks standing at the power stations would last for seven weeks without any cut back in electricity supply. There is another 13 million tons of coal in stock at the pit heads and two thirds of normal supply is still coming up from the pits.

Heath claims this coal cannot be used because the ASLEF work to rule is preventing it from being distributed to the power stations. British Rail has specifically denied this.

Last week Labour Party leader Anthony Wedgwood Benn posed six questions to the Prime Minister. He asked for figures for

1. coal and oil stocks at power stations;
2. the rate at which stocks are being used up;
3. how long stocks would last without the three day week;
4. the effect of the power engineers'

Contd. back page

DOCKERS! 300,000 men struck so that your five brothers could be freed from Pentonville Jail. You swore then that you wouldn't let it happen to anyone again! Honour your promise! Decide on action NOW.

PRINTERS! You are always the first to respond by shutting down the bosses' lie machine. You were the first out in solidarity with the dockers. What are you going to do now?

EVERY TRADE UNIONIST must stand by these three brothers now. WAR HAS BEEN DECLARED BY THE TORIES and this sentence was the way they chose to make the declaration. The war is against you.

Target date

January 15th is now the target date for a concerted day of national protest action.

Organise for it! Prepare it by creating defence committees INSIDE every factory and port to explain to workers why it is in their direct interest to take action to respond to the declaration of war on the labour movement.

A powerful campaign must be created NOW, pledged to all out direct action if the sentences are not quashed on appeal and the charges on the remaining 18 dropped.

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL! RELEASE THE THREE IMMEDIATELY! DROP THE REMAINING CHARGES.

BEHIND THE TWO-WAY MIRROR

THE DAILY MIRROR at its best can be very good indeed. I remember, for instance, an editorial on Vietnam which began on the front page and went on, unusually, for page after page, eloquently (if very belatedly, because it was only last year) demolishing all the claims of the USA and their Saigon puppets and expressing admiration and almost support for the forces of the NLF who had repulsed the USA's terror machine for so many years.

It can agitate brilliantly and very forcefully on questions such as food prices — even if it doesn't provide any programme of action. And of course twice a week there's Keith Waterhouse laying waste to Tory propaganda.

The Mirror likes to claim that it is a "workers' paper". But if we take the Mirror at its worst, it shows what suckers we'd all be to take that claim with any seriousness.

A good example of the two together was the Mirror of December 20th. Keith



Waterhouse was at it again, exposing Anthony Barber's call for national unity. "The question that Mr Barber really wants the British people to answer is not the scrap of Churchillian rhetoric he quoted. It is this: 'Will the miners and the railwaymen unite with the Government against themselves?' And he knows the answer as well as they do. The cry for national unity... is a fraud, a booby trap, a delaying tactic"

Very good stuff, even with the qualifications, ifs and buts which I have represented with three dots.

But Waterhouse was writing not only the day after the budget, but the day that three trade unionists were sent to jail for fighting for their living standards. The trial was an attempt to intimidate and cripple the entire trade union movement — or at

least that movement's active, aggressive, creative section, its militant rank and file.

And on the very next page to Waterhouse, the Mirror showed its true face in its report of the ending of the Shrewsbury trial, sinking to the worst sort of twisted, lying, filthy gutter 'journalism' imaginable.

The savage sentences, which drew the angry exclamation "disgraceful" from the foreman of the jury and an angrier response from thousands of workers up and down the country, were reported with relish under the headline "PICKET TERROR SQUAD PUT BEHIND BARS".

Not a word of the speeches made by the Defendants, exposing the political nature of the trial, was reported nor even hinted at. The Judge's response to these speeches, a personal attack on Des Warren as "arrogant and vicious" was quoted under the headline in big, bold type.

And the charges were even exaggerated: whereas the three that were jailed were convicted of "conspiracy to intimidate building workers to stop working", which is a very vague charge that, to be proved, doesn't even have to show that anyone WAS intimidated or DID stop working, the Mirror's reporter states that they actually had "terrorised workers" — a charge which the police hadn't even brought.

Finally, and with a real vengeance, came the "human interest" bit that the tabloids excel at. "Downfall of the Godfather of them all" was the headline. In a mere hund-

red words, Ted Macauley conjured up a personally-organised gang "called 'The Flying Pickets' — a hundred-strong force of radical students and Communists hell-bent on wrecking industry at shop-floor level" with men directed on a "course of violence" from a "roadside café".

It seems that Warren could "fix trouble at picket lines anywhere in the country" and the "hooliganism" was directed "with the efficiency of a military commando group".

All the elements of a really nasty collection of "Hells Angels", painted over with Red Scare and finally topped up with some almost libellous insinuations about Warren's personal life.

When you've finished reading that sort of crap, you stop thinking of the Mirror at 'its best' or 'worst', as a bit of this or a bit of that.

Instead, it begins to come out more like this:

Millionaire Hugh Cudlipp ran his squad of liars and hacks with the slipperiness of a snake-pit manager. They were called "The Lying Pen-pushers" — a very large force of twisters and reactionary cheats hellbent on getting a "story".

Cudlipp, also the Big Boss of a world wide publishing outfit, planned this daily outpouring from a penthouse suite in London's busy Holborn, and just to get ordinary decent workers to swallow down the poison, he employed one or two men to tell the truth.

Spilki

VIC FEATHER's TUC "fact-finding" del South Africa returned last month and put to the General Council. In its report the recommends the setting up of an office of onal Confederation of Free Trade Unions Africa to aid the unionisation of African world wide appeal fund of £100,000 to aid African trade unionists, continued opposition investment in South Africa, and continued the emigration of white workers.

On the face of it this would appear to be a strong stand against apartheid and for the rights of the African majority — in fact the visit has certainly benefited apartheid more than it has harmed it.

First the visit was sponsored and organised by the Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA), a body which stands firmly for white supremacy and which denies membership to Africans.

Secondly the TUC's tour was OPPOSED by the South African Confederation of Trade Unions (SACTU), which is the only organisation genuinely representing the trade union interests of African workers and which is illegal for just that reason.

TUCSA's interest in sponsoring the TUC's visit was to gain credibility for its claim to be non-racialist for although TUCSA denies membership to Africans it is anxious that any organisation of African workers should be strictly under its control.

White trade unionism in South Africa has as much interest in keeping black labour down as in fighting the employers, for the wage differential between white and black labour is something like 20 to 1 and employers have recently

Paul

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POLICE RAIDS PROBED

BRISTOL TRADES COUNCIL has given a lead in reaction from the labour movement to the growing police harassment of socialist militants.

Over recent months hundreds of homes have been searched in Bristol, London, Birmingham and Coventry, generally on the pretext of looking for bombs. Under this cover, files, letters, and address lists have been removed. Obviously the Special Branch is building up a considerable file of information on the left and on the Irish solidarity movement.

Bristol Trades Council has recently held a public inquiry into police raids in the city.

Twelve people gave evidence to the inquiry alleging abuse by police of their powers. The Chairman of the Trades Council, Mr Don Bateman, concluded that the raids were "purely an operation for collecting names and addresses and political harassment" and had nothing to do with police inquiries into suspected "bomb factories".

Using warrants served under the Explosives Act, files, addresses, and reference material were removed.

A day after one of the raids, in which 16 people were detained, an Advice Centre staffed voluntarily by young lawyers was broken into and files and letters were opened. The warden of the Advice Centre thought it "a remarkable coincidence" that this should have happened just after the raids, in which apparently the police had questioned people about the advice centre.

As a result of the Trades Council's inquiry, pressure is building up against the Police and the Home Office has been asked to account for the police behaviour.

Resolutions should now be put to other Trades Councils whenever there is a need to respond to police intimidation for similar action as a prelude to a general campaign of defence against the bosses' state.

WHAT with the two-day national lockout and the continuing coal and oil crisis, the budget introduced by Chancellor Anthony Barber on December 17th has tended to be forgotten.

Because Barber did not introduce any new taxes on consumption, many people gave a sigh of relief.

Let's recall the main points in Barber's announcement:

1. £1 200 million to be cut from projected government spending in the year 1974-75.
2. Coal and electricity prices are to be raised so that government subsidies to these industries can be cut. (And now gas prices are to be raised by 7%)
3. Control of hire purchase re-introduced with minimum deposits of up to 30% and a maximum period of repayment of two years.
4. Further control of bank lending by increases in special deposits by all major banks with the Bank of England.
5. New taxes on land and property development.

Gloss

We can dismiss the property taxes. They will not bring the price of houses, or any other property, down. They have no other purpose than to try to put a gloss of 'fairness' on the other measures in Barber's budget.

Already, before the budget, the value of property shares had fallen as the rip-roaring boom in property speculation slowed down. If anything, these taxes may push house prices up again so that speculators can gather in the same profits after taxation.

The increases in gas, coal, electricity will, of course, hit the poorest sections of the population worse than the rich. It is estimated that prices

generally will increase by about 15% over the next twelve months. Food prices will probably increase more.

The government has, as usual, hit the consumer, rather than seeking to curb the enormous profits of the suppliers. The recent price increases allowed to the oil companies here in Britain will add about £180 million to the already vast profits of these monopolies.

Control of hire purchase will mean that, again, the poorest sections of the population will be forced to cut their consumption. It is the workers who mainly use this method of buying goods. The rich don't need it so they won't be affected.

Coming to the cuts in government spending, it is here that the working class will have to carry the biggest burden. There is to be a cut of £111 million in the Health Services expenditure.

Projects

There will be a cut of £ 69 million in hospital building. An already overloaded hospital service will be allowed to deteriorate even further. Urgently needed hospitals will not be built.

Projects for old people's homes, children's homes, welfare centres, etc. will be cut. Education is to be hit to the tune of £ 182 million.

Plans for building more primary schools will be shelved. Already 25% of all primary schools were built before 1890 and are

BUDGET FAREWELL TO WELFARE

by
KEN TARBUCK

classified as slums. So working class children will have to carry on 'education' in slum schools with ever greater problems of teacher turnover and shortage in the areas where they are most needed.

Apart from these specific cuts, there will be a 20% cut across the board on all government spending on building and machinery. The nationalised industries will have to carry part of these cuts. This means that steel, coal, transport, electricity, etc. will all suffer, leading to further problems of supply — and no doubt more price rises — in the future.

The first and most direct result of these cuts will be a further reduction in building activity at a time when house building has slumped to a post-war low. For building workers it means more and longer spells of unemployment. The consequences of this will feed-back into the suppliers of the building industry.

This 20% cut in government spending is the largest single reduction since 1931, and this is an indication of the gravity of the situation.

The whole of the capitalist world has just been through a period of boom coupled with unprecedented inflation, and is now poised on the edge of recession. The effects of this recess-

ion would have begun to 'hit Britain early in 1974. Barber's budget has all the ingredients of a full-scale slump for Britain.

The British economy was running an enormous balance of payments deficit of about £ 2000 million in 1973. The Tory government gambled on the boom expanding exports faster than imports. They failed and the deficit has got progressively worse.

What is peculiar about the budget is that it does nothing in the short term to deal with this very problem. Arguments about cutting home demand to release goods for export are so much eye-wash. With the capitalist world entering a period of recession, it will be more difficult to sell abroad.

FREE SPAIN'S

SPANISH trade unionists and socialists have issued an appeal for world wide solidarity with the ten trade unionists of Carabanachel.

Prison sentences totalling 162 years have been passed on charges of 'illegal association'. The ten accused were charged with being members of the "Workers' commissions".

Genuine trade union organisations such as the "workers' commissions" are banned in Spain. Only the official government/ employer-controlled

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How Feather's trip boosted South Africa's Apartheid unions

one in industry in South Africa. What is vitally necessary, however, is government approval to enable an organisation such as TUCSA to organise the African worker... Let me repeat the alternative - the inevitable emergence of an all African trade union movement wedded to nationalism, in this instance Black Nationalism".

By organising stooge unions for Africans, TUCSA hopes not only to take the "inevitable" nationalist content out of African labour struggles but also to prevent African workers from competing with whites. The recent wave of African strikes has made the task for them much more immediate, if they are to cut away the ground from the re-emergence of independent African unions.

But the one thing that TUCSA lacks in its attempts to get Africans into its stooge unions is credibility that it is anything else but another arm of the apartheid state. At an ILO conference on apartheid, held in Geneva last year, TUCSA delegates were refused credentials because of their apartheid policies. What could be better designed to restore their credentials for the unionisation of African workers than the TUC accepting the invitation for a "fact-finding" tour?

As far as the facts are concerned, the important ones about the murder of African workers and the banning of bona fide African trade unions can be got

from any one of a dozen publications. If it is more detailed facts that are required, then, as SACTU pointed out, these couldn't be obtained on a tour organised by TUCSA.

No genuine trade union leader would risk exposure in order to meet the TUC delegation, and all that they saw was controlled by TUCSA, itself a bulwark of apartheid.

As far as the proposals are concerned, two are a mere continuation of policies already established, except that the opposition to British investment now does not apply to firms which encourage African unions. This proviso can only be taken to refer to TUCSA-organised trade unions, since it would be illegal for British firms to aid SACTU unions.

The £100,000 fund could easily have been set up without any visit taking place, and finally the major proposal - an ICFTU office to aid the unionisation of African workers - is either a bad joke or yet another concession to TUCSA.

STOOGES

Does the TUC really imagine that the South African government is going to allow it to set up an office in Johannesburg in order to aid genuine independent African trade unions? Or is this office merely to be a cover for TUCSA sponsored stooge unions?

The impression that the TUC is ready to cooperate with TUCSA is given cred-

ence by the impudent remarks of one Cyril Plant of TUC's international department. Plant, a member of the delegation, met a group of African workers and described them as "naive and immature" when they reject his advice to cooperate with the white trade unions.

Not so naively, the African workers know full well that their trade union struggle cannot be divorced from a struggle to overthrow the apartheid South African state. The white working class is and always has been a mainstay of apartheid, and there can be no fight to end it within white dominated unions.

RETREAT

In fact, the "fact-finding mission" has been used by the TUC to RETREAT FROM the stand it accepted (in words, at least) at the June 1973 Geneva international trade union conference. We must demand that the TUC returns to and ACTS ON that stand:

1. Call on all governments to sever ties with South Africa;
2. Trade unions to pressure governments to deny South Africa arms and port and airport facilities.
3. Campaign for the recognition of African trade union rights; for the release of all trade union and political prisoners; for an end to the migratory labour system.
4. Boycott on unloading and loading ships and planes en route to or from South Africa and Namibia.

Race for Oil

ONE of the better effects of the oil embargo has been the panic of the South African government, almost totally dependent on Middle East oil. This government has been the latest in the race to rat (at least verbally) on its fellow racist state, Israel.

South Africa has, quite naturally, always taken a strong pro-Israel stand and has close links with that other outpost of European 'civilisation'. But a recent broadcast by the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs claimed that South Africa is neutral in the Israel-Arab conflict.

The irony is that, if South Africa succeeds in keeping its oil flowing by denouncing Israel, it would be as if Adolf Hitler had been tried as an accomplice and friend of, say, Mussolini, found not guilty and released to go about his business as before.

ROME TERROR & MR. SIEFF

PALESTINIAN militants have had much cause to be bitter when they compare the publicity given to the deaths of, say, the Israeli athletes taken hostage at the Munich Olympics with the silence regarding the casual slaughter by the Israeli army of hundreds of Palestinian men, women and children in their 'reprisal' raids on Palestinian refugee camps.

Yet this capitalist hypocrisy and double standard does not justify the casual slaughter of three dozen or so quite innocent and uninvolved people, passengers and airport workers, at Rome Airport just before

Christmas. As a newspaper that has consistently and uncompromisingly supported the Palestinian cause, WORKERS FIGHT feels obliged to condemn the massacre in Rome as an act of terrorist despair taken to the point of murderous lunacy.

The shooting of the Zionist magnate Mr J Sieff is entirely different. He raised millions for Israel's war effort. No innocent civilian but a world pillar of support, encouragement, subsidy, and propaganda justification for the racist state - Sieff only reaped a little of the seed which Zionism has sown.

Revolutionary socialists have the duty, especially in a country like Britain, to fight against the dismissal and condemnation of any and every armed action as mere 'terrorism'.

Just because of that, and because of our duty to support just and necessary armed actions such as the war being conducted against the British government by the I.R.A., we must make clear the difference between rational guerrilla warfare tactics and pointless lashing out like the Rome Airport killings.

Such acts do nothing but harm to the Palestinian cause.

EDITORIAL

Free the Three! Drop All Charges!

THE RESPONSE so far to the jailing of the three building workers has been such as to encourage the government to step up their intimidation of militant workers, rather than to force them to release their current victims.

If a wave of angry protest swept Britain as soon as the gates of Pentonville clanged shut behind the Five dockers last year, forcing those gates open in a matter of days, this time the strikes and the protests have been few and feeble. It seems it is being left to the appeal court to open the gate for these three class war prisoners.

The government calculated rightly that of those who hit them hard with strike action last year the builders were most vulnerable, the least well organised for a country-shaking immediate response. They calculated on creating confusion by bringing ordinary criminal charges against the pickets. They relied on the tacit support of builders' union (UCATT) general secretary George Smith to dampen down support for the victims of class justice.

They kept a fog of press silence around the trial and only lifted it for papers like the SUN and the MIRROR to scandalously misrepresent what the case was about and heap abuse on men whose railroading to jail even outraged the chairman of the jury which had convicted them. In addition the time of year made an immediate response difficult.

Ten times better

All of this meant that the reaction to the jail sentences was not a fraction of what it should have been.

The left, the Communist Party and the International Socialists especially, seem to have calculated that things would move at a slow pace towards an appeal and the release of the three on bail pending the appeal. Their attitude towards protest action has been largely "wait and see", hoping that someone ELSE would take the initiative and the risks.

Ten times better than such calculations would have been a drive for even limited strike action - and the CP, at least, has the power to organise such action. It would have been a shot across the bows of the government.

The Pentonville 5 were released because, according to the formula used, after only a few days they were deemed to have "suffered enough". Everyone knew the real reason was because the government had panicked at the explosion which greeted the jailings. This time too strike action would have helped decide the outcome of the appeal (at least) and sent the voice of labour roaring through the windows of Heath's jailhouse with the demand for the release of the three jailed pickets.

It is still not too late to act. An attempt is being made for action on the 15th January. Every self-respecting trade unionist must answer that call.

The next trial

There are 18 more of the Shrewsbury 24. The next trial starts on the 18th January. A real national defence must now be built to stop them being railroaded - as well as to fight for the release of our three brothers.

USE THE FACT of the sentences to bring home to workers the threat hanging over the remaining 18 - and over every worker who hereafter organises a flying picket.

ORGANISE defence committees in factories and workplaces to campaign for a protest action NOW and a pledge to take strike action if the sentences aren't quashed. Here, militants on Salford docks are giving a lead by creating a committee to explain the case among dockers.

We must point out the implications clearly and widely. The campaign to free the three and rescue the remaining 18 will take place against a background of bitter class struggles. With Shrewsbury under their belts, the police will be much more aggressive on picket lines. There will be more legal intimidation. There will be more arrested. As well as organising defence in and round the courtrooms, the labour movement will have to organise defence on the picket lines.

'TOLPUDDLE TEN'

the growing opposition to Franco's dictatorship.

The Spanish ruling class have tried to use the Carabanachel 10 to reassert control. Not only were defence witnesses not called, but right-wing thugs have been encouraged to harass defence lawyers and the prosecution could not find a single witness to back up its charges.

JOHN CUNNINGHAM.

Liverpool: 20 BUILDING WORKERS VICTIMISED

FOR THE FIRST TIME a job run by Nuttalls contractors on Merseyside has been unionised. And Nuttalls have reacted by sacking 20 men, including two stewards, without warning, in a blatant attempt to smash the union organisation. Nuttalls have thrown down the gauntlet and it is essential that the men get support.

As concrete labourer John Fawcett put it: "If they get away with this no-one down there stands a snowball's chance in hell of getting a fair deal".

"Down there" is the William Browns-Lime St-site on the loop line railway being built underneath Liverpool - 95 feet

underground. Nuttalls are doing this job, due to finish on this section by 1975, for the Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive. "A fair deal" is very necessary - at present the men are working in wet and dangerous conditions building the tunnel, without a cabin or any facilities underground, so that even a cup of tea involves climbing up to surface and back.

Until recently Nuttalls have had things mostly their own way. Despite the fact that the site was unionised, they have kept the organisation weak. They have not only brought in men from outside Liverpool but are using men from the local Walton

jail who have no union rights. They have succeeded in dividing the men among themselves, with some concrete gangs getting substantially more than others, and concreters doing 'miners' work of trimming rocks at below the 'miners' rate.

The concreters are given impossibly high targets and watched over by an oppressive general foreman, Merridge.

The concreters hit back by throwing out the targets - and standing by the site agreement, which involved working 8 to 6 whether or not the concrete was finished. The agreement was originally made by T&G official

Walker and Nuttalls project manager Naylor.

The concreters gave 36 hours notice of their intention to stick by the agreement, and that time was used by Nuttalls to prepare to smash the union organisation. On the morning of 5th December the men were given a letter from Naylor trying to split the work force and threatening redundancy.

Naylor himself stated that "Satisfactory levels of output can only be achieved by adherence to the working rule agreement and the site agreement..." That night, 20 were sacked for sticking by the rules and not finishing the concrete.

This attack has drawn attention

to the need to strengthen union organisation on the site. The case is due to come before the conciliation board in early January. Meanwhile the men's jobs are being blacked.

Militants on the sites must stress the importance of not letting Nuttalls get away with this.

If they don't win through the Conciliation Board, further action must be taken on this and other sites. And the men must demand active support from Walker, who was prepared to make a site agreement with the bosses but so far hasn't made the dispute official.

CYNTHIA BALDRY

Irish Political Hostages PRISONERS HUNGER STRIKE NOW IN SEVENTH WEEK

A WOODEN CLAMP forces open the jaw and a thick orange greased tube is pushed down the throat. A liquid mixture is poured down and is almost always followed by nausea and vomiting.

That is the force feeding treatment being given to four young Irish Republican prisoners in British jails: MARION PRICE (19 years old), DOLORES PRICE (23 years old), HUGH FEENEY (21) and GERARD KELLY (19).

These four were jailed after the Winchester "bombs trial". They are demanding to be moved to prisons in the North of Ireland and granted political prisoner status, and are on hunger strike for those demands.

The Price sisters have lost 2½ stone in weight as a result of their treatment. Gerard Kelly lost one stone in 8 days. Hugh Feeney has lost 2 stone and has had a heart attack and his handwriting is so weak as to be almost unreadable. All four vomit continuously following the feeding, and have bruised and swollen jaws and throats. Dolores Price vomits as soon as the clamp is put near her mouth.

Yet Home Secretary Robert Carr refuses to grant them their demand to be moved to Ireland. Eighteen prisoners have been moved from Ireland to England at their own request since 1969, and four from England to Ireland. Three have been moved from England to Scotland to be near their families.

But these four young people simply get more ill-treatment. No civilian doctor has been allowed to visit them.

Hugh Feeney and Gerard Kelly have had NO visits since they were convicted on 14 November. The Kelly family paid their fares from Belfast only to be turned back at the prison gates. Hugh Feeney's widowed mother waited two days after coming before and was then told she could not visit him.

On their conviction the four

declared themselves PRISONERS OF WAR - prisoners in the war that the Irish people are fighting for freedom against the British army.

Socialists in Britain who understand that the interests of the British army and the British government in that war are not our interests, must support these prisoners' demands.

From page 1

Coal Stocks

settlement on electricity availability;

5. the effect of the ASLEF work to rule on coal deliveries to power stations;

6. the cost in lost production, lost exports, and extra public expenditure (he could also, and more importantly, have mentioned the cost to WAGES) of the three day week.

Heath replied with evasion. Benn commented that he had "not answered a single one of the questions I put... The British people are entitled to know the full facts about the fuel situation. You have no right to conceal them".

Very well. Heath conceals the figures. No surprise. Even if he gave figures, they would probably be fiddled.

What is Benn going to do about it? The facts must be got, and there is one simple way of doing it.

All these facts are collected and tabulated by ordinary trade unionists working in the fuel industries. The Labour Party and the TUC should send out a

request for these figures to the shop stewards' committees or trade union branch officers in every power station, oil refinery, colliery, and rail depot in the country. Accurate figures, without dodges or fiddles, can and must be collected by the labour movement.

And if it turns out that normal five day working is possible (which looks likely from the figures that are available)? Again, the remedy is simple. All fuel supplies are transported or switched on by ordinary trade unionists. The Labour Party and the TUC must just organise trade union Distribution Committees in each area to ensure that fuel does get through and work does go on.

Together with this must of course go a vigorous campaign by the labour movement to evict this criminal Tory government.

There is nothing pie in the sky or ridiculous about trade unionists organising to find the facts about the fuel situation and taking practical steps to stop the lock-out. 90% of the necessary information and 90% of the necessary organisation exists already. 90% of the necessary work is done already.

What IS ridiculous is that 15 million people should be pushed about and the country paralysed because of the political plans of a handful of rich people. Unless we believe that Heath and the Heathmen have a sacred right to rule (in which case we might as well stop complaining about them concealing facts) we must do something to protect our livelihoods.

Even local trades councils could make a start, since the Labour Party and the TUC seem more keen on talking about "shared sacrifice" than on any socialist policy. Facts and figures can be collected locally and circulated to other trades councils with a request for them to do the same. Then if the figures show it is possible, electricity, coal, and oil supplies to workplaces can be organised, and the lock out broken that way.

All that is needed is less pretty TALK from the leading bodies of the labour movement about a "Labour government with a socialist programme" and more organised attention to practical socialist policies in ACTION now.

Tower Hill Rent Strike Support still needed

A 14-MONTH RENT STRIKE in Tower Hill, Kirkby, which had come to a head with the jailing of tenants for refusing to appear in court, was called off just before Christmas.

The reason given for calling it off was lack of support, particularly industrial support. At a meeting called a week after tenant Brian Owen was jailed, only stewards from Anglia Paper Products and the Liverpool dockers turned up. Of those two, only Anglia Paper Products had been on strike. Fisher Bendix along with other factories didn't come out.

Reasons given for lack of support include the nearness of Christmas; the fact that it was a

total and not a partial rent strike and the fact that neither the Labour Party nor the Communist Party did anything to mobilise support.

Brian Owens was released from Walton Jail when he 'purged his contempt'. Five other arrested tenants were released a few days later. Calling the rent strike off, the rent action group agreed to try to get terms from Kirkby council.

To date the council has agreed on a system of 25p minimum and £1 maximum per week for repayment of arrears. Support for the rent strike will still be needed if the Kirkby (Labour) council tries to victimise anybody.

John Bloxam

WORKERS' FIGHT & THE 4th INTERNATIONAL
Report of the Special Conference on the Fourth International held in January 1975. Now available, price 10p plus 5p p&p from WF Business Manager, 98 Gifford Street, London N.1

SOCIALIST WOMAN FORUM: 'Women in the Miners' Struggle'
Wednesday January 9th, 8pm in Room 3a, University of London Union, Malet Street, London W.C.1 (tubes Warren Street, Euston Sq)

3-Day Week makes the miners' fight everybody's fight

THE THREE-DAY WEEK means that the Tory government has made the outcome of the miners' struggle a class wide issue, on which depends the living standard of the whole working class for a year at least.

The case is clear. While parasitic employers are sitting back in the boardrooms and just watching the profits come in to the tune of millions a week, there is no doubt that miners

who risk their life and health on a hard, unpleasant job and may take home little more than £20 at present deserve a big increase.

The fiddling about with "waiting time" just confuses the case. Worse, it can drive a wedge between surface and face workers and disrupt unity, since waiting time allowances would not benefit surface workers. The gap between offer and claim would still be around £4 to £5 even if the extras were agreed on.

The miners should get their full increase. Phase 3 should be ripped up, opening the way for needed wage increases all round.

In all areas, miners are ready and waiting for a national strike to settle the question quickly and sharply. And the more support they get from the rest of the labour movement, the quicker and sharper it will be.

Other sections with claims coming up - engineers, railmen, transport workers, teachers - must arrange coordinated action with the miners. All trade unionists and students - through trades councils and Councils of Action - must prepare to give the miners the sort of support they got on the flying pickets in 1972.

WORKERS' FIGHT IS NOW WEEKLY

A SOCIALIST newspaper connects itself as closely as possible with the life, problems and struggles of the working class. If it fails to do this, it risks becoming a self-absorbed, navel-contemplating irrelevance.

WORKERS FIGHT has always attempted to live up to the demands of the objective situation. Within a few weeks of being expelled from the International Socialism group we began producing a workers newspaper to talk to the advanced members of our class about the pressing issues facing the whole class.

Now, because of the present situation of struggle on a nationwide scale against the Tories' massive attack on the working class, we have decided that it is necessary to produce the paper as a weekly during the crisis. Such a weekly 4-pager answers the needs of the present situation much better than a 12-pager which was, frankly, for much of the time only a nominal fortnightly.

This will, however, put a big strain on our resources.

Therefore we need more support than ever from our readers: **Take extra copies to sell to friends and at work or at your union branch. Help boost the circulation.**

Contribute as much as you can to the £400 Special Crisis Fund which we plan to raise in the next 4 weeks.

Rush cash urgently NOW to The Treasurer, 98 Gifford Street, London N.1. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to Workers Fight.

LONDON WORKERS' FIGHT
PUBLIC MEETING
**THE LEFT OPPOSITION
AND TROTSKYISM**

Speaker: SEAN MATGAMNA
Sunday 6th January 8pm at the Golden Lion, Kings Cross Road, London N.1

Triumph Meriden 50% WAGE CUT?

LEADERS of the planned Triumph Meriden workers' cooperative are negotiating with Norton Villiers Triumph management to fix a price for the work.

The workers' cooperative is to be a 'labour only' company, and NVT is to continue to own land, materials, plant, and products. At issue is the price NVT will pay for labour.

NVT's present offer would give Triumph workers about half their previous wages! Even T&GWU organiser Bill Lapworth's proposal is only around 60% of previous wages. If Triumph workers let themselves in for this, they are simply imposing on themselves wage cuts which NVT could never get away with on its own account.

The Triumph workers have received strong financial backing from local trade unionists, but backing is really needed for a militant campaign for a **government guarantee of finance and workers' access to all NVT's accounts.**

Meanwhile, a large number of the completed Triumph bicycles have left the factory. But the picket around the factory which excludes management (above factory level) and stops plant leaving for the Birmingham BSA factory has been manned continuously.

S.C.