

THE WORKER



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DAYLIGHT ROBBERY!

BOSSES COURT GRABS £5,000

On November 29th the four commissioners appointed by the National Industrial Relations Court completed their smash and grab raid on funds of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, deposited with the merchant bank, Hill Samuel.

Unable to collect the £5,000 fine from the Union's Midland Bank account, which was in debit as a result of industrial militancy during the engineers' guerrilla struggle against the bosses, the commissioners forced Hill Samuel to disclose the amount of the Union's account and to pay over the £5,000 to 'they also demanded another £1,000 to cover the costs of carrying out this daylight robbery!

Every penny of this money has come out of the pay packets of engineering workers. If Sir John Donaldson, President of the National Industrial Relations Court, thinks engineering workers will stand idly by and allow their hard-earned money to be snatched in this way, he has learned nothing in his time as the legal stooge of the employing class.

Why this fine?

The fine arose from the refusal of the AUEW to instruct the Sudbury branch the Union to readmit a man who scabbed during a strike at CAV and lapsed membership when disciplined, and has been in and out of the AUEW and on the T&CW several times.

The costs were imposed because the Union persisted in its democratically-led policy of not recognising this Court set up by the Industrial Relations Act, boycotted its hearings and refused to pay the fine.

On 30th November, after the fine was handed over by the bank in spite of the Union's instructions, James Goad, who had brought the case to the Court, sent himself for re-admission to the branch and was again excluded. The Union, quite properly, will not be dictated to by any outside body on the question of who shall be a member. To give way on this point would place a man's membership under the control of the employers and strike at the whole tradition of trade unionism. The AUEW has its own appeals procedure which it has refused to make use of.

Correct working class line

The Union branch is taking a correct working class line in excluding this man from its meetings. It would be correct for the workers at CAV to refuse to work with this man at all. If they decided to come out on strike or occupy the factory, they would, in effect, be making the bosses pay of their profits the fine levied by their own court. (And incidentally, with the talk about inflation, it should be noted that profits for all industrial companies are up by more than 19% over last year!)

The Union stands its ground on the principle of deciding its own membership. There is the threat of a much heavier fine and even total sequestration which could mean an attempt by the commissioners 'to take over the Union' run it themselves till the NIRC's order is obeyed.

What is at stake?

What is at stake is trade unionism itself—the organisation of the working class built up over a hundred years of struggle with employers and the state serves their interests. There can be no question of yielding. The engineers are fighting for the entire working class of Britain.

Ready meetings of engineers on the factory floor at many places of work are considering their tactics for defeating this assault on their Union. The only way to counter this attack is to use industrial action to make the decisions of this Court more costly to the bosses than to the unions. Engineering firms can be put out of business by workers' action. The Engineering Union has already shown that it cannot be put out of business by a fine. A union is as strong as the militancy and determination of its members. As long as its members go on fighting, it is alive and well.

Executive resolution

The following resolution on the subject of the N.I.R.C. on the 1st December was passed overwhelmingly at the Executive Council, North London Engineering, on 1st December: congratulate the Executive Council on their stand against the Industrial Relations Act in line with the policy of the Party and their continuing re-appearance before the Court or fines imposed on our Union, also call on the Executive

Council to give full support to any industrial action taken by our members against payment of the fine and the Industrial Relations Act.

Finally we would bring to the Executive Council's notice the strong feelings of our members against this law and the seizure of our funds and look forward to the Executive Council calling for appropriate action to defeat the Act.

The same factory based actions that caused the retreat of the Federation of Engineering Employers will force the retreat of the employers' Court and Government. And as the engineers move into struggle on this vital issue they will be able to count on the massive support of their fellow workers up and down the country.

Non-political?

At a dinner on November 23rd given by the High Court Journalists' Association, Sir John Donaldson said that he was not a political judge nor was the Industrial Court a political court.

'My attitude toward political life is much the same as that of a monk towards sex, nostalgic memories of youthful indiscretion, a frank acknowledgement of its attractions, and an unshakeable conviction that I could do better than those currently engaged in it...'

A monk who had only given up sex to the extent that Sir John Donaldson has foregone political action on behalf of the bosses would have about as much chance of salvation as a snow ball in hell.

SOARING PRICES

Since the Tory Government took over in 1970 prices have risen by 22 per cent, the highest increases being in food, housing, and fuel and light costs. In the month of October 1972 alone, prices went up by 1 1/2p in the pound.

With the freeze imposed as prices soar to this extent there cannot even be a pretence that the freeze is anything other than a blatant and vicious attack on the living standards of the working class.

IRELAND: carnival of reaction



The Lynch Government, using as an excuse the terrorism of the Provisionals, and the terrorism of the British Army which has been attributed to the Provisionals, has launched a savage onslaught on the whole Republican and progressive movement in Ireland. This onslaught is being waged on the instructions of the British Government. It shows the lengths to which Lynch is prepared to go in assisting the British Government to foist its federal 'solution' and its phoney peace on the Irish people.

The question of Ireland is not a British problem with an 'Irish dimension' as is asserted by Whitelaw. It is on the contrary an Irish problem with a British dimension. That 'dimension' is British Imperialism and that is the source and the root cause of the entire problem. British Imperialism has no right to impose any solution to this problem on the Irish people. By its aggression it has forfeited any such right. A man who sets

fire to your house has no right to tell you how to fight the fire. Nor has Lynch any authority to give it that right. It is not his to give.

Like the Palestinian people the people of Ireland now find themselves beset by enemies on all sides, enemies who will stop at nothing to destroy their organised strength. (Was it coincidence that two Dubliners were killed by a car bomb minutes before the vote on the offences against the state (amendment) bill was to be taken?)

While British Imperialism is waging aggression against the Irish people it is imperialism which must be opposed and attacked. It is criminal to attack those who are fighting that imperialism. Lynch, by his collaboration with the enemies of Ireland, and by his oppression of the Irish people has earned himself a place in history - beside Thieu, Hussein, Chiang Kai-Shek.

The Offences against the State (amendment) Act means

:If a senior officer of the Irish Police states that a prisoner is a member of an 'illegal organisation', according to clause 3 'the statement shall be evidence that he was then such a member.' It is up to the prisoner to prove otherwise.

:If an accused person has failed to deny a published report that he is a member of an 'illegal organisation' he could find himself convicted.

:Picketing of courts is prohibited.
:Taking part in public meetings and issuing statements about civil or criminal proceedings could carry a penalty of up to five years imprisonment.

:There is to be stricter control on marches and demonstrations likely to 'constitute interference with the course of justice.'

HIS ISSUE

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Powers Law?

We have now learnt about another great benefit the working class can expect from the return of a Labour Government. A new Emergency Powers Act! Most workers would have thought the existing act, now used regularly against major strikes, the dockers, the miners, the council workers, was bad enough. But a group of Fabian lawyers from Queen's University, Belfast, have published 'Emergency Powers: a Fresh Start', in which they call for a new law giving all the powers the state might 'reasonably require to deal with an outbreak of violent subversion.' Perhaps because of their experience of the failure of internment in N. Ireland they do not make provision for this, but they leave it open as a possibility.

Powers under the new law would make any person liable to be stopped and searched and questioned. Special courts would be set up. It would be a criminal offence to be an active member 'in any organisation whose objects or purposes include any form of violent subversion.'

But while hammering another nail into the coffin of bourgeois democracy, the Fabians do not forget they are social-democrats, and insist on an improved velvet glove to go with the improved iron fist. There will be increased 'legal safeguards' (and more jobs for the lawyers?). After people have been locked up, demonstrations and organisations banned, there can be appeals through the courts. In other words 'Shoot first and ask questions later'.

GEC Short changers

The manual workers of Witton-James, part of the G. E. C. Factory estate of the Arnold Weststock Empire are entering into their sixteenth week of strike. Their claims are not of wages but they are demanding parity with the staff workers with respect to holiday arrangements and conditions in general. Up to 28th November they had reached a stalemate with the Management who have been threatening wholesale redundancies - even to some of their own directors! They are flailing right, left and centre to get the workers back on the hook of status quo and peaceful short changing.

The workers on the Factory Complex realise the value of acting together, and have constructed closer liaison with each separate plant. It must be realised by now that anything that affects one plant is the concern of all! Therefore G. E. C. at Wembley, at least, has to be regarded as a complete entity and not as individual targets to be sniped at and saddled with confusion.

'Nobody could deny that G. E. C. is at last reaching commercial respectability' so said Arnold Weststock, who has come to the end of his first 10 years as G. E. C. Managing director. At Wembley, besides the various struggles for a decent shareout of 'respectability' in the form of wages and conditions over the whole of the 'Empire', the workers have had to withdraw their labour in disgust at the bad pay and conditions for a total of sixteen weeks, in one case, and thirteen weeks in three other factories. No wonder that the year 1972-3 should produce rather over £100 million of profit for the G. E. C. short-changers!

Editorial:

Terrorism or Revolution

What place has violence in the struggle of the British working class? We know that the ruling class, in anticipation of exhaustion and a rampant proletariat, is preparing for civil war even now. We must be prepared to meet their violence with ours; we must be prepared to overthrow them and their violent system. But we can only embark upon armed struggle when the working class is good and ready.

There are those detached from the working class and thereby contemptuous of it, who seek to stimulate that 'apathetic mass' by means of terrorist acts. As if the working class is not in constant contact with violence every day. Prepared even to bypass completely the working class, these 'revolutionaries' with their bombings, hijacks, assassinations, letter bombs hope to scare the ruling class into submission. Their efforts are as futile as trying to punch a hole in water.

The enemy can only be defeated by the whole class. Revolution is a war of the masses. If the workers are not yet ready for armed uprising they nonetheless fight on other fronts. They fight for the right to work, the right to organise, the right to extract a few pennies from the employer. It is this struggle that prepares the class for the question of the seizing of state power. It is in these struggles that the Party of the working class must be involved. Revolution does not consist only of the gun.

Those 'revolutionaries' who fire too soon only alert the enemy; if they are not 'agents provocateurs' then they might as well be. The acts of terror by a handful of 'supermen' will always be used by the ruling class as a pretext for massive repression of the people's struggle. Witness the recent Munich events which were quickly followed by Israeli air raids on Lebanese villages and 300 people killed.

But, of course, the ruling class never needs a pretext for its violence. They are doing it all the time; it is endemic to their system. Witness its full exposure in Ireland against those who fight to free their country; witness it more veiled here in Britain against fit men and women who are thrown on the scrapheap of unemployment.

Yes, we face a ruthless enemy. More important than that our strategy is correct, our tactics are correct. Our strategy involves primarily faith in the working class. We will all take up the gun, not with the relish of shedding blood but with the conviction that there is no other way to achieve our emancipation.

'International Terrorism'

The opposing stands on 'international terrorism' were expressed at the United Nations General Assembly when the sixth (legal) committee held a debate on the question from November 9th to 22nd.

In fact many delegations were strongly opposed to holding the discussion at all. For, as they predicted, the imperialist forces with Israel, South Africa and Portugal extremely vocal used the debate to vilify genuine movements of national liberation. They slandered the Palestine liberation movement and the liberation movements in Southern Africa as 'terrorist organisations' and also slandered those countries who gave support to these movements. Naturally, the delegations of many countries were fired with indignation, especially those of Arab and African Countries.

During the debate Albanian representative, Petraq Pojani pointed out that the timing, means and circumstances of the debate indicated an apparent attempt by some delegations to strike at the movements of national liberation and to deflect attention from the crimes of the real aggressors. For them, terrorists are only those who commit hijacks while they completely ignore those who bomb villages in Indonesia, those who fire shots at Czechs with tanks and guns. He said that the peace-loving countries would not allow the debate to be used against those struggling for national liberation and state sovereignty. He emphasized that the brutal violence perpetrated by the imperialists is the worst kind of terrorism.

The representatives of Egypt, Iraq, Somalia, Yemen, Tanzania, Algeria, Libya, Malagasy and other countries also stressed the legitimacy of the just struggle of the people for national liberation and against colonialism and foreign domination.

Chinese representative, Pi Chi-lung said, 'the Chinese Government is opposed to assassination and hijacking of individuals as a means for waging political struggles and is also opposed to adventurist acts of terrorism by individuals or a handful of people divorced from the masses, because they are detrimental to the interests of the cause of national liberation and people's revolution. That has been the consistent stand of the Chinese Government.'

'But, he said, 'we should never allow imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, racism and Zionism to use such incidents to vilify and suppress the national liberation movement and people's revolutionary struggles. For that reason, the Chinese delegation has from the outset opposed the inclusion of the question of so-called international terrorism in the agenda of the general assembly.'

Pi Chi-lung denounced the Israeli Zionists for openly vilifying, at the current session of the general assembly, the Palestine Liberation Organisation as a 'terrorist organisation' and heaping abuses on the Arab countries which support the Palestinian people's struggle. He condemned the Portuguese colonialists for making under the pretext of opposing 'terrorism', an outcry for the 'general and unconditional' repression of the national liberation struggle of the peoples of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea, and for brazenly demanding that provisions be made to this effect in legal form. He also denounced the South African white racist regime for vilifying as 'terrorism' the South African and Namibian people's struggle against apartheid and for national independence, and for indicating their intention to resort to 'all means at their disposal'.

Pi Chi-lung said, 'If one is to talk about international terrorism, the imperialist aggression against and oppression of the people of various countries, the U.S. imperialists' wanton bombing in Vietnam, the Israeli Zionist slaughter and persecution of the Palestinian people, the brutal colonial domination of the African people by the Portuguese South African and Rhodesian colonialist authorities and their crimes of racism and apartheid constitute large-scale terrorism in its true sense. The struggle of the Palestinian and other Arab peoples and of the African peoples for the achievement and defence of national independence are just struggles with the active participation of the broad masses of the people, and are not terrorism at all!'

STUDENT OFFENSIVE ON GRANTS

The NUS Conference held at Margate at the end of last month was held in an atmosphere of determination to fight against the deteriorating standard of living of students. Before this Conference, NUS had a policy of 'campaigning' only for the removal of discretionary awards, i.e. that minority of students who have no guarantee of receiving a grant for their studies.

But the pressure of students in their own colleges has forced a change in policy. Those on discretionary awards have realised that they had been isolated from the majority of students.

Already action has been taken, in the form of rent strikes and catering boycotts, over the inadequacy of grants. Students as apprentices for skilled occupations in industry are entitled to a living wage during their period of training.

The proposal was put to the Conference by Party students that NUS should adopt the principle that all students should, as of right, receive full grants. This would encompass all present demands for an end to discretionary awards, parental contributions etc.

As an integral part of the struggle it is also necessary to organise for a substantial increase in grants, £100 being proposed as inflation has cut grants by at least that amount since 1962.

The Conference, in fact, agreed to fight for higher grants, although no figure was named, but to keep the priority over discretionary awards. The Party had felt it essential that the offensive on grants should be waged on all fronts, uniting all students on the basis of their common interest. Previous local struggles had shown to be effective. It was felt that if these local tactics were used in a national campaign positive results could be achieved. Always our strength is at local level and this is where the battle will be won.

We are confident that the coming national action on grants will prove to students that our line was correct and our confidence in our strength was justified. The days when the level of grants was decided by cordial meetings of the NUS Executive and the DES have gone. Government spokesmen are already suggesting that the whole question of any students' entitlement to grants is 'under review' (NUS recent statement by Norman St. John Stevas, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Education).

This is no co-incidence, the State is preparing for another attack on Student organisations. All students must be prepared to protect the independence of their Unions and advance to build them into more effective fighting bodies.

The local-based struggle over grants is growing, and has now spread to London. Westfield College is planning to start a rent strike in January, and the Central London Poly has set up an action group to co-ordinate and direct all effective tactics to be employed e.g. rent strikes and canteen boycotts.

Out of their own mouths

Cohen's law

According to Sir Jack Cohen, boss of TESCO, on 'The World at One': 'The working man has never earned more than it costs him to live, and never will. And this is right!'

Pitcher's yarn

According to Mr. Pitcher,

works manager of Birds Eye Foods, while addressing student members of the Institute of Works Managers 'As prospective works managers they had to learn how to handle people just as one had to learn how to handle a fabric on a machine or a new piece of machinery'.

VIETNAM ATTACKS U.S. DELAYING TACTICS

In *Nhan Dan*, national paper of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, it is pointed out that Thieu's resistance to the prospects of peace and national concord was only to be expected but 'one wonders how a puppet can resist the puppet master.'

The significant question is what the U.S. is urging Thieu to oppose in the agreement which the U.S. publicly confirmed at the highest level of authority (when it suited Nixon to persuade the American people before an election that peace was just around the corner.)

At that time the U.S. agreed 'to respect the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Vietnam as recognised by the 1954 Geneva Agreements' and to leave 'the question of Vietnamese armed forces in south Vietnam to be settled by the two south Vietnamese parties in the spirit of national reconciliation and concord, without forcing interference.' Now the U.S. is obviously using its puppet to declare that no cease-fire will be acceptable without a north Vietnamese troop withdrawal and the restoration of the demilitarised zone.

Meanwhile the U.S. has stepped

up the bombardment of both zones, has ordered some 7,000 police operations across south Vietnam within a single week and is massively introducing weapons and military supplies into the south for the use of puppet troops. So many aircraft have been shipped in that the miserable Thieu regime which does not in any sense represent the people of Vietnam has the third largest airforce in the world! But then the largest airforce in the world proved no match for the fighting people of Vietnam.

The article in *Nhan Dan* concludes: 'If the U.S. does not honour its word by concrete acts, if it wants to restart the game all over again, retrace from the beginning the same path of aggression it has been vainly following for so many years, the Vietnamese people have no other choice but also to continue along the road we have pursued for several decades now by fighting on till the full attainment of our sacred national rights.'

The U.S. Government can lie, cheat and murder but they can in no way stave off their crushing defeat by the heroic people of Vietnam.

STIRLING CRISIS

attempt to devalue students

On Tuesday, 21st November students came to Stirling from all over Britain for a massive demonstration of solidarity against the victimisation of twenty-four university students (one has since died in a car accident). This was timed to coincide with the start of their trial by the university authorities, allegedly for their part in the so-called 'rowdy' incidents of the Queen's visit. In spite of bad weather and a total student population of only 2,200 at Stirling there were over 4,000 people in the demonstration. As has happened at other universities, the authorities, in the face of determined mass action could only resort to delaying tactics, waiting until a holiday when they could threaten people individually.

The 'Stirling Crisis' is a totally artificial invention of the capitalist press, an opportunity for 'student bashing'. They try to create or blow up minor contradictions as a diversion from the major contradiction between labour and capital.

The real issue was not that one student drank from a bottle in front of the Queen, but that

many students were demonstrating against the squandering of money equivalent to four students' annual grants. And the Administration did this without so much as consulting the Council of the Students Association (CSA).

The university authorities are responding to economic and Press pressures. Players Tobacco have already withdrawn their contribution for a Sports Centre. Universities are doubly vulnerable to economic pressures because of the deliberate government policy of providing public money, but not enough for universities, to get by without begging from private capitalism. Tom Cottrell (Vice-Chancellor) now leading the witch-hunt, on the morning after the incidents, described how the visit had passed off peacefully. As the Press campaign gathered force, Cottrell and his stooges shifted their position.

What have the pseudo-left been doing? Take Digby Jacks, the revisionist President of the National Union of Students. He has vacillated like a typical liberal. On the first evening of the NUS Conference at Margate he condemned the demonstration

during the Queen's visit, saying it was offering ammunition against students. Quite rightly, a large majority of the thousand delegates passed a motion of censure against him declaring that he was giving the Stirling students a 'stab in the back'. The President of the Stirling CSA commented that by his statement Jacks had joined the ranks of the press and big business.

The reaction of the press, business interests and the university authorities in this situation should be seen in the context of a general attack on the working class, including students, and against the autonomy and democratic working of their organisations.

The capitalist class is reacting violently because it sees many workers and students do not respect its institutions like the monarchy, and its ideology. We must organise for this conflict and take it from a defensive stand to an offensive struggle for union autonomy, a battle part of the struggle culminating in the overthrow of the capitalist state.

Sheffield women fight victimisation

On November 31st the management of Easterbrook Allcard, tool makers of Sheffield, sacked shop steward and union chairwoman Mrs. Sylvia Greenwood, allegedly on the grounds of 'bad timekeeping'.

Was it a coincidence that this came the day after the decision to work to rule, called to bring the management to recognise their unions (AUEW & T&G) as the negotiating body of the workers?

The workers' response was immediate and solid - to strike until their steward was reinstated.

The same day those well known letters were sent out to the company's 'loyal workforce' informing them that they were being prey to 'outside forces fomenting unrest and trouble!'

In some quarters was feared a lack of support from the women workers, many of whom are part timers, who constitute 50% of the work force, and of whom nearly a quarter were unionised. But their fears were groundless, for whilst the shop stewards were refused recognition by management, the same day the non-unionised were signing up for

membership.

With allegations and lies still flying regarding Mrs. Greenwood's time keeping, no-one believes that the strike is about anything personal but simply about the right to have a Union in the factory.

The shop stewards committee is confident of a sure victory. Now in the fourth week of strike not only are 95% of the work force firmly in support of the action, but the class solidarity of workers at the G.P.O., the Railways and on Transport has ensured that anything leaving the factory will not be touched.

'We should have done this twenty years ago' said one shop steward as he described the pay and conditions at the factory. The 'poor relations' of Easterbrook Allcard's 'big happy family' have learnt the hard way that helping out their £37,000 a year directors hasn't helped them out at all. They complain of atrocious canteen facilities that are unable to serve the numbers they are supposed to cater for, with a standard of hygiene that ensures the numbers are kept down!

The basic pay rates are £15.50 for women and £17.22 for men.

The bonus scheme is far below comparable rates for similar Sheffield firms - one example given to The Worker was of a woman part-timer working 20 hours who just a few weeks before was awarded the grand sum of 14p productivity bonus and one worker in the milling shop said that the most he ever got was £2 over the basic. This compares with the £10 - £12 of a worker in a similar shop of another Sheffield steel firm.

Easterbrook Allcard is perhaps typical of the way in which employers are no longer able to stifle class struggle under the banner of 'working together for the common good'. Like many other workers who are new to struggle, those at Easterbrook Allcard have shown no hesitation in fighting for the right to organise and defend fellow workers against the onslaught of panic-stricken bosses.

Significant too is their welcome reception of Sheffield university students who have shown their support by joining them on their picket lines during the past weeks.

ON THE INDUSTRIAL FRONT

The desperation behind the TUC-Government talks and the freeze shows up in the wage rise figures up to the end of October. These show the basic weekly wage rates 17.3% up on 12 months before, while hourly rates were 17.7% up. In July, the increases on a year before were only 11% but there was then a rapid acceleration because of the engineers and the builders. The freeze was intended to put a stop to all this, but workers have not been frightened off strike action on the wages front. The rush of pre-freeze settlements took some pressure off, but it is building up again as the following reports show.

GKN Sankey

80 internal drivers at Bilston, Staffs, struck for increased bonus payments. They are opposed to the present 10% ceiling on bonuses.

Teesside

1,000 steelworkers at three Teesside steel mills walked out, demanding parity with South Wales. The walkout started after men had been suspended for blacking work done by management despite a work-to-rule and overtime ban.

Firth Brown

600 white-collar staff at Firth Brown, Sheffield, decided to stage a 24-hour strike as the first step in a campaign to improve hours and holidays. The men, members of three unions, have been negotiating since February on their demands for a two-hour reduction in the present 37-hour working week and for a minimum four weeks holiday. Now they have decided that actions speak louder than words.

Arthur Lee & Sons

Despite the freeze, 300 maintenance engineers at Arthur Lee and Sons, Sheffield rejected an offer of an extra 40p a week from next February, and continued with their six-week strike for 'a concrete offer of a substantial increase'.

Tube Industries

White-collar workers at the Oldbury factory of Tube Products, part of the T1 group, held a one-day strike against the freeze, followed by a work-to-rule. The action followed the freezing, on Department of Employment advice, of a £94.50 a year increase for a trainee works study officer. We hope he will now take the opportunity of learning how to work to rule most productively.

FROM THE WORKERS

An interview with women pickets at J. Barbour & Sons Ltd, Rainwear Manufacturers of South Shields CoDurham, where 70 women and girls are on strike over Union recognition and wages.

In September of this year 70 women and girl rainwear workers went on an unofficial strike over a wage rise. Their gross wage was £10.60p, for a 40 hour week.

The floor manager offered to have talks in the canteen which the women accepted, but these talks broke down as the management refused to accept the women as negotiators on their own behalf. It was at this point that membership of a union was brought up by the women. In their contract of employment it states that an employee can join a union of their own choice. The management although recognising this, more or less said that if you don't join the Tailors and Garment Workers Union then you're not joining any other union.

So all 70 of the women decided to join the Transport & General Workers Union.

The women then went back to work and in the meantime got in touch with the T & G as to what action to take, and it was recommended that they should go on strike which they did on October 22nd with full union backing, and have been out since.

A meeting was organised in London with the management and Garment Workers Union, on 2nd November where the Wages Council offered a 5p, an hour rise on the basic wage, which if accepted would bring their gross wage to £12.60p for 40 hours. This the women accepted but only on condition that their union, the T & G was recognised by the management. But the management refused.

Locally the women have been well supported in this fight, at a mass meeting on November 6th the women were concerned as to who was going to do the picketing as everyone was expected to attend the meeting. Anyway, some local miners from Westoe colliery got to hear of this and offered to picket for them, which they did, and all of the women were able to attend the meeting.

Also goods which have been sneaked out by private car have been blacked at the post office and goods station. Drivers are also refusing to have any dealings with the firm.

The managing director, who is also a Conservative councillor and also has some dealings with the local newspaper, the South Shields Gazette, has been putting out rumours through this paper that the women have accepted the rise and have returned to work. He has also released a press statement which gives all the ins and outs of the rise but with no reference to what the strike is about, trade union recognition.

Tactically this strike has come at a very critical period for the firm, because obviously this time of year is its busiest period.

THIS IS NOT MERELY AN ECONOMIC STRUGGLE BUT ONE FOR DIGNITY OF WORKERS AND DIGNITY OF UNIONS.



London teachers vote for a 1/2 day strike. The march, on November 23rd, was attended by 15,000.



Midland Cold Storage

London meat drivers told their employers that they were not prepared to cross the dockers' picket line outside the Vestey Midland Cold Storage depot and outside other depots. They said that despite differences with the dockers they would not be used by the Vestey group for their 'anti-docker machinations'. They added that they would 'react in the most positive way open to us' if the NRC is used to penalise the TGWU. So in one move, the drivers have stymied two plots of the Vestey cousins. We are not sure who is the craftiest; the Vestey organisation in dreaming up new attacks on the dockers,

the Official Solicitor in finding devious ways to get the Government out of the resulting mess, or the ordinary docker who spent his shift unloading a Vestey ship and then went along to picket Vestey's depot.

Horizon Holidays

ASTMS has called a strike of 150 computer centre staff working for Horizon Holidays at Acton. This follows the sacking of four workers after a half-day stoppage over union recognition. The union is threatening to have its aircraft engineer members refuse to issue safety certificates to 'black' Horizon aircraft, thus grounding them.

Science postgraduates, Sussex University

On 27th November Science Postgraduates at Sussex University withdrew their labour in support of their demand for an increase in demonstration fees from £1 to £2 an hour (the rate in Technical colleges), and also that there should be no reduction in teaching time available to postgraduates. This has the unanimous support of the Student Union at the University.

Redundancy : we know the cost

The PEP (Political and Economic Planning) have recently produced the results of a study they have conducted in South-East London into the effects of redundancy. The Woolwich area has felt the effects of factory closures in recent years as large company after large company has decided that the locality is not 'economically viable'. The major closure was the Woolwich works of the GEC/AEI Telecommunications Ltd. after the Government-inspired merger. In addition four other engineering firms ceased production in the area between 1968 and 1970:- Deptford Works, Stone Platt (Crawley) Ltd, Woolwich Works, Norton Villiers Ltd; Erith Works, C. A. Parsons and Co. Ltd; Southwark Works, Dewrance & Co. Ltd.

Well what did the PEP in its wisdom discover was the effect of these redundancies? They found that there was unemployment, lower wages for those who found jobs, less skilled work for many, great difficulty for older workers and that redundancy payments didn't compensate for the loss of a job. Well we don't need the

The Cambodian people march on

In acclaiming the successes of the Vietnamese struggle against U.S. imperialism we must not overlook the major successes of the Cambodian and Laotian people and their part in the onslaught on that now defeated army, which has been so decisively beaten in Indo-China.

The puppet regime in Cambodia is on the brink of total disintegration following the major victories of the Cambodian People's National Liberation Armed Forces (C.P.N.L.A.F.). During the 1971-72 dry season the CPNLAF wiped out 56,000 enemy troops and won a big victory on Highway 6. In this year's rainy season campaigns the CPNLAF put 54,000 enemy troops out of action, captured nearly 10,000 weapons and over 270 tons of war materials, shot down or destroyed on the ground 46 aircraft, destroyed 258 important enemy positions and liberated 480,000 people. Phnom Penh, the last stronghold of the puppet Lon Nol regime, lies isolated with Highways 1, 2 and 5 and the railway between Phnom Penh and Battambang Province firmly under CPNLAF control.

Close to 90% of the land and more than 5 million out of the 7 million people of Cambodia have been liberated. Production in the liberated areas is developing quickly and the peoples' livelihood has improved. The liberated areas have provided a strong base for the continuation of the war against US aggression, the sacrifices and heroism of the Cambodian people will soon bring their just rewards.

PEP to tell us (or the bosses because that's why they close works) that these are the results of factory closures. Workers know what it means to be thrown on the scrapheap - to have their skills devalued and their respect shattered. This violence towards workers is endemic to our capitalist system. Redundancies are just one more weapon of the

ruling class in their attack on the living standards of workers: to deprive a man of his living. Only when workers have taken control of the system and smashed the power of the ruling class can redundancy be finally overcome; only in Socialist Albania and China are unemployment unknown and redundancy no longer a threat to our class.



CPBM-L delegate to Albanian Youth Conference addresses a meeting of the New Albania Society celebrating Albania's national day

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The lame duck of Europe

Next year Britain joins the Common Market. This is another attempt to solve the increasingly acute economic problems of British capitalism at the expense of the working class.

Attempts to weaken working class

The generally low level of Trade Unions and the comparatively poor organisation on the continent makes Europe a very attractive proposition to the ruling class. The Commission of Europe exists for the purpose of regulating employment, labour legislation, working conditions and the Trade Union and collective bargaining laws. A feature of the E.E.C. is that member states may not have laws or practices contrary to the regulations of the 'Community'. They may have more severe legislation but they cannot adopt a less restrictive approach. To take a relatively minor example, the device known as the 'spy in the cab', the tachograph, will become a compulsory feature of the road transport system of Britain in January. In addition, the Commission is empowered to develop new legislation which would also be obligatory for member states, should the existing powers prove inadequate. In practice, of course, what matters is whether or not the working class will allow legislation of such a nature to be imposed. The whole concept of an 'enlarged community' is designed to weaken resistance. A dominant feature of entry into Europe is the attempt to reduce working class organisation in Britain to the lower level existing on the continent.

Money matters

A second important feature is the new pattern of investment which will arise. For a long period, capital investment in this country has not produced such good profits as that invested abroad. This encourages the export of capital and accelerating the run down of industry, the growth of unemployment and the consequent inflation with which we are all familiar. The effect of joining the Common Market will be to exaggerate this trend. British capital and American capital invested in Britain, will move into Europe. The Institute of British Management have gone so far as to suggest that Britain will become an underdeveloped off-shore appendage of Europe, whilst the rest will become the centre of gravity of investment and production on the continent. This, together with the relative loss of industrial goods from Europe to Britain rather than vice versa (due to the opening up of the more efficient retail distribution system in this country) is bound to give Britain into an industrial backwater.

What we are seeing, therefore, is a deliberate strategy of the 'lame duck' tactic of promoting redundancy whereby the working class is well organised. Davies' speech in Strasbourg, in June of this year, pointing out that the opening of British markets to European competition will provide a 'salutary' lesson to British capitalists to resist 'inflationary wage demands', is an indication of the ruling class's determination to do its utmost to destroy the strength of working class organisation in Britain.

Nomads on a one-way ticket

The free mobility of labour is another feature of the E.E.C. There is a lesson to be learnt here from the experience of the Southern Italian workers who, being separated from their families, go home only on fleeting visits and only when they can scrape together the fare. They will never again return on a permanent basis within the E.E.C. The fund set up to aid mobilisation of labour moves in one direction only. A parallel might be drawn here with the 'shake-out' instituted by the Wilson Government as a result of redundancy. Now, an unemployed jig borer in Sheffield will be expected to move to Dusseldorf rather than, say, Southampton. And those losing work there why not Frankfurt?

Extra Eating Costs

Lastly prices. Did you think that the 25% rise of the last two years was steep? Well, you ain't seen nothing yet! A rise in food prices of 8% has already been recommended by the European Parliament and approved in principle by the vice-president in charge of agriculture. In fact in this country the cost of transition, especially the introduction of V.A.T., has been authoritatively estimated as likely to produce an increase of 40% in the price of food. The cost of V.A.T. to the worker in Britain will be enormous.

The Italian ruling class, also in very hot water, again refused to implement V.A.T. last month. This decision can only stem from a real fear of the effect of introducing this tax, an extended form of charging the workers for the upkeep of capitalism, as a time of dire crisis. British workers should not be under any illusions about the effect of Value Added Tax.

When capitalism catches cold it is the working class who take the nasty medicine. Entry into Europe is the last of a succession of devices to ameliorate an insoluble condition and nothing more. In fact the monopoly capitalists are a truly international class. They do not regard a worker as being any more or less a source of profit because of his country of origin. The be-all and end-all for them is the accumulation of surplus value. Bourgeois internationalism has nothing in common with Proletarian internationalism. The bosses and the workers can have no mutual interest.

E.E.C: friend of fascism

Spain

Sir Alec Douglas Home let the cat out of the bag, this week, while visiting Spain supposedly for talks about Gibraltar. He let it be known that 'Britain had no political objections to Spain becoming a full member of the E.E.C.'

South Africa

The E.E.C. is reported in South Africa to have agreed to reduce Europe's tariff on South African citrus fruit from 15% to 5% for the next two years. This will more than compensate South Africa for the loss of their duty-free market in Britain.