

No10

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5p

libertarian struggle



FOR WORKERS POWER

LEN'



MURRAY

THE GOVERNMENT'S MAN

INSIDE: BAKERS UNION • ISRAEL •

BLACKBURN THREE • RED TAPE •

M•E•C DISPUTE • LETTERS

paper of the Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists

HALF-BAKED UNION.

At the last TUC conference a motion was passed to expel twenty-five unions because they failed to deregister under the Industrial Relations Act. One of these was the Bakers Union. Not a great deal is heard about this union - it is not renowned for militancy or action. At one branch at least, the Wonder bakery in Hull, this lack of militancy is fundamentally because most of its members do not realise that they are in a union.

The majority of workers in this bakery are women. The men do the actual baking and although this means they are working next to extremely hot ovens, the work is generally more interesting and skilful - and of course better paid. The women do the packing and work the pastry machines, or (if they are lucky) actually ice and decorate the cakes. There was one woman who did what was normally considered a 'man's' job - she weighed out all the cake and scone mixtures. This was a semi-skilled job as exact measurements are needed. The man who had the job before her was sacked because he used to take all day to do the day's weighing. She was given the job because she was known to be quick. She therefore felt compelled to do the work as soon as possible which resulted in her finishing at 11.30 a.m. She was then asked to help out in the room where the cakes were decorated. This meant that she was doing the work of two people and getting paid for one - not only that but she got paid less than the man who had held her job previously. Therefore the employer didn't have to employ another person for this room, which was understaffed.

When she asked for a job bonus because she was doing skilled work, she was given it - at the same rate as the other women (a few pence an hour) (once more less than the man). The fact that she didn't get paid the proper rate was doubly unfortunate for her as she was an unsupported mother with two children to keep. She was one of the few women who realised that she was in a union. She noticed that 17p was being deducted from her wages each week and when she enquired about it was told that it was the union fee. She said nothing more about it not knowing who to go to, as no-one knew who the shop steward was.

After hearing this, I enquired further about this 17p deduction and was told that it was compulsory because the bakery was a closed shop. I was told that if I had any complaints about paying my union dues to see the 'union man' - no name was given to this mythical 'union man' nor was he ever given one when further enquiries were made.

Although I had no objection to paying the union dues or to being in a closed shop. I was annoyed that no-one had thought it important enough to tell me (or any of the others) that they were in a union, but had just taken the money. Further enquiries about the union were met with a blank stare. No-one knew who the shop steward was and the union man (who was not the shop steward but one of the management) was never available. When enquiries about union cards were made the answer was 'Nobody has those here, dear'. Incidentally

there was nothing on the wage slip to indicate what the 17p deduction was for, therefore there was no proof that anyone was in the union or paid any union dues.

The Bakers Union and the management have used this closed shop for their own ends. The Union have been spared the trouble of recruiting. The management are happy with the situation because it means that workers' grievances cannot be backed up by shop-floor activity.

In this factory, as in many others, the majority of workers are women. They are either young girls who have been conditioned to think of their jobs as a fill in until they get married and are therefore not interested in the job itself not even to the extent of articulating their complaints. Or they are older married women who generally work part-time and feel that militancy could endanger their jobs, which they desperately need to supplement the family income. This means that they are all working in isolation and this stunts any hope of an active union. Therefore there is an even greater need for a union prepared to back up their complaints against the management and to raise the confidence in their ability to fight for better conditions. What the women in this bakery do not need is a union that sees its role only as a collector of subscriptions from an uninformed and naive membership.

MARION JACOBS

The Bakers Union suffers from the history of the trade. Twenty years ago, the majority of bakeries were attached to local shops and so employed only small numbers of workers. The Union was practically unknown in these 'local' bakeries. The only large-scale employer and centraliser of the workforce was the Co-op. And so, the only workers that saw the need to unionise were employed by an enterprise that 'represented' socialist ideas. The Union was tied to the Co-op and often the Union representative would be a Co-op foreman or supervisor.

Over the succeeding years, the bakeries have been centralised into vast plants, employing upwards of 200 workers. 'Wonderloaf' and 'Sunblest' are produced at the rate of 50,000 loaves per shift. The poor wages and conditions of the work ensure high turnover of staff. By 1970 the Union reported that over a 12 week period 60% of the labour force had left and been replaced in 5 of the biggest plants in the South East because of the 60-hour week and work conditions generally. The 'casual' labour force left the Union administration in the hands of the old no-strike Co-op men and meant that any new force in the Union was impossible to organise. The Union was notorious for its pro-boss attitude and its membership grew very little.

Now that the Bakers Union has been rightly expelled from the TUC, the Bridlington Agreement (over the poaching of members by other unions) no longer applies. Workers in the baking industry can now join a union in which their chance to effectively organise and fight is much better.

KEVIN CABLE

ABOUT 'LIBERTARIAN STRUGGLE'

This paper is written and produced by militants all over the country, who are active in their trade unions, tenants' associations, claimants' unions, women's liberation groups, schools, colleges and universities.

We are united by our membership of the ORA a democratically organised group, which fights for a libertarian communist revolution. This means a revolution brought about, and firmly controlled by, the working class. This is the only foundation for a society in which production is for need, not profit, free from exploitation and oppression.

The only way working class power can express itself, is through workers' councils in the factories and through neighbourhood councils in the communities. Demands for improvement in workers' living standards, whether wages, better housing, etc., are not purely economic demands. The working class must make each demand a move towards the control of production and the control of their own lives. Therefore every organisation and struggle of the working class must be directly and democratically controlled by the workers involved. Consequently we oppose all groups and parties who take the initiative and control from the working class.

As part of our attempt to put this kind of politics into practice, we have rotating editorship of each issue of this paper. We produce the paper (none of us are professional journalists) to provide one means of spreading some hidden facts, of publicising what workers are thinking and doing, to workers in other industries, and other parts of the country, to talk about what claimants, women, immigrants, pensioners and school-kids are doing, and to show how these battles can be united.

We won't give you the familiar shit about, 'this is your paper'. What we do say is: -USE this paper, -pass on what you've learnt, -contact others in a similar situation.

We know that lots of people have no practice at writing articles - but who needs literary genius? An essential factor in the development of the working class movement is the communication of details and the lessons of its various struggles.

The editorial group producing this paper wish to state that signed articles do not necessarily represent national ORA policy.

WORKERS' POWER - NO SUBSTITUTE!

As far as British justice is concerned, the case of the Blackburn 3 was closed on Monday October 22nd when the three accused - Sean Colley, Michael Kneafsey and Patrick McCabe - pleaded guilty to all charges.

The charges were:

Colley: Possession of explosive devices
Conspiracy to cause explosions
Sentence - 4 years in prison

Kneafsey: Intelligence officer of Lancashire unit of the IRA
Conspiracy to cause explosions
Sentence - 4 years in prison

McCabe: Conspiracy to cause explosions
Sentence - 3 years in prison

The guilty plea came as a surprise to everyone, including the defence solicitor. It was literally a last-minute decision by the three, unknown to anyone. They felt it was the best way to avoid implicating other militants in a long-drawn out trial, and to secure as short as possible a sentence for themselves. In doing this, they went directly against the wishes of their own organisation, Sinn Fein.

The outcome of the trial represents a major victory for the State. To begin with, the case for the prosecution was extremely weak, and a good defence within the court, together with a solidarity campaign outside, could well have secured an acquittal. This is why the court was only too happy to accept a guilty plea and to impose what were relatively light sentences. Indeed, the judge was almost friendly in his tone, describing the defendants as 'misguided young men' in his summing-up, a far cry from the usual hysterical outbursts by the judiciary in trials like this). There are also more serious implications. We have seen in recent years the increasing use of 'conspiracy' charges against left-wingers and Republicans in this country. Those charged have invariably defended themselves, and by so doing have drawn public attention to the nature of conspiracy law and the use to which it is being put. A guilty plea to conspiracy charges inevitably exonerates the State. It makes it easier to use the conspiracy laws against other people, and it makes it more difficult for those people to defend themselves.

The trial can also damage Sinn Fein. Both wings of the Republican movement have con-

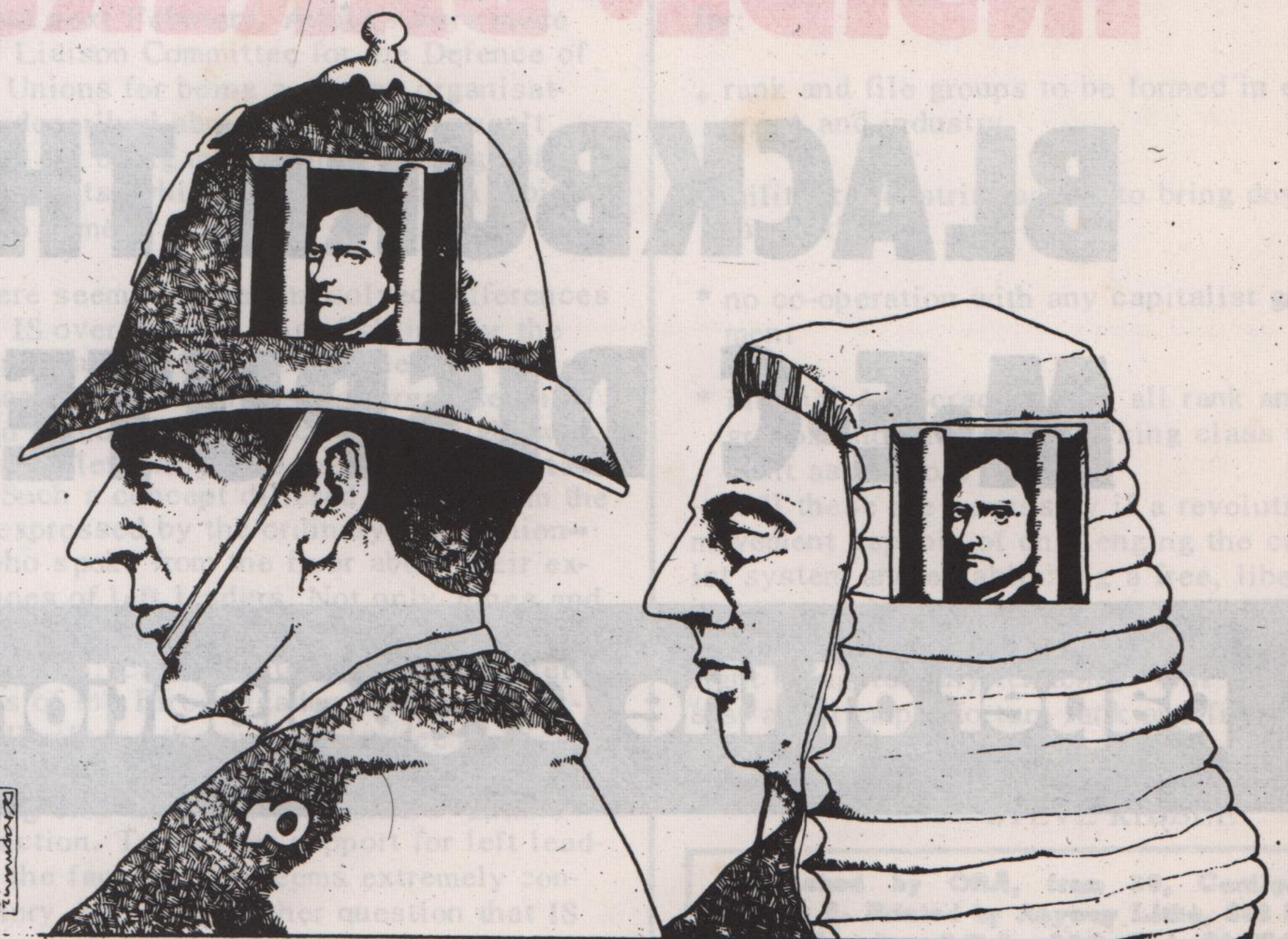
sistently denied responsibility for the bombs which have been going off all over the country. The guilty plea to conspiracy to cause explosions by three of its own members could do serious harm to the credibility of Sinn Fein. It gives more ammunition to the reactionary Tory MP's and the right-wing press, who have been calling for the banning of Sinn Fein.

The defence campaign which was organised to build up support for the Blackburn 3 was left high and dry. The whole tone of the campaign tended to stress the lack of police evidence and the nature of the conspiracy law, with the implication always present that the three were innocent. The fact that the three were political prisoners was not made the major point of the campaign. In trials of this kind, it is not up to revolutionaries to presume the innocence or guilt of defendants, but to stress that they are victimised by the State in order to further the aims of the ruling class. Any solid-

arity campaign must be firmly based on the principled position of demanding the release of all political prisoners, whether they are 'legally' guilty or not. At the moment, there are 32 Irish political prisoners in this country either serving sentences or on remand. That number will grow, and it is more vital than ever that a national solidarity campaign demanding their release be organised. Such a campaign can only be effective if it is linked to a wider Irish solidarity movement in this country which can mobilise opposition to British policies in Ireland. With the imminent demise of the Anti-Interment League, there is no organisational structure which can facilitate the growth of an Irish solidarity campaign.

National activity by the left on a united front basis is essential if the Irish struggle is not to be completely forgotten.

Brendan Railly



PALESTINE

At the time of writing, an uneasy peace has settled on the Middle East. A vicious and bloody war costing thousands of lives and millions of pounds worth of equipment has been fought between the reactionary Arab states and the racist State of Israel.

The world's 'Superpowers', who have supplied nearly all the arms used in the recent conflict, have with typical hypocrisy stepped in to impose a ceasefire. They are annoyed, it seems, when the arms they have supplied in such abundance have actually been used. The ostensible reason for the war is to get the return of Arab territories seized by the Israelis in 1967. In return, Sadat and his allies have promised to recognise the state of Israel. In the conflict, one thing has been almost totally ignored - the fate of the Palestinian people who have been subjected to a racist tyranny by Israeli Zionism while the ruling classes of the West have applauded, and poured in the arms necessary for the maintenance of Israel. The British press and other media have reserved their ample supply of righteous anger for criticism of Black September and other Palestinian liberation groups which, in their just struggle for the right to live, have been driven to extreme and incorrect tactics.

Meanwhile, Israel's Arab neighbours have been able to divert the social struggle at home - a struggle waged with ever increasing ferocity - by fostering rabid chauvinism and pan-Arab nationalism. While Egyptian leaders have made racist speeches threatening to push the Jews into the sea, the Palestine liberation movement has restricted itself to the call for a secularisation of Palestine. In Egypt itself, the working class is starting to wake up - strikes and demonstrations by students and workers (e.g. textile workers in Cairo in 1972) have placed considerable strain on the Sadat regime. While the Egyptian rulers have been conducting a verbal war against the Israelis, they have been conducting a physical war against their own working class and other dissidents. Sadat has denationalised certain sections of the economy, and has followed a wage restraint policy that pegs the wages of some Egyptian workers to less than £2 a week. Meanwhile, the Egyptian ruling class wallows in the kind of ostentatious luxury not seen since the days of Farouk. In fact, Sadat himself has taken one of Farouk's old palaces as a private residence. Undoubtedly, one of the reasons for the latest war is the necessity to unite the creaking edifice of Egyptian society. A call for national unity in the struggle against Israel gives Sadat any excuse he might need to intensify domestic repression against the workers' and student movements. In any case, it is likely to work - only the prospect of further Israeli expansion could unite the Egyptian people.

Inside Israel, conditions for the Arab population have got worse and worse since 1967.



GIVE THE CAPTURED TANKS TO THE WORKERS, NOT TO SADAT

Those who were not forced out into rotting refugee camps are subjected to extreme exploitation. Arab contract labour, which has none of the rights of the Jewish labourforce in terms of social insurance, holidays, etc., is being used in an attempt to build up a native Israeli capitalism. Arab workers on Jewish-owned farms often get only a quarter of the wages paid to Jewish workers - and that is when the Zionists allow them to be employed at all. Needless to say, there is systematic repression of the Arab press and an ever watchful police eye is kept on prospective Arab dissidents - as the regular round-ups of suspected 'terrorists' indicates. Israel has made it obvious that it intends to keep most if not all of the land it has captured in the Six Day War, and the hawks in the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) are constantly hinting at further expansion. We should make no mistake - Israel, like South Africa and Rhodesia, is a racist state. It is also the Middle Eastern bulwark of American imperialism. The disgusting actions of the Nazis and Stalinists against the Jewish people in no way justifies the institutionalised racism of Israel.

In this situation, revolutionaries must be quite clear in establishing a way forward.

Sections of the Arab fedayeen (freedom fighters) movement and the Israeli working class are discovering that it will be necessary to destroy the imperialist state of Israel and the corrupt Arab states before the Palestinians can return to Palestine and live with the existing Israeli population. We give no support to Sadat. In fact, only his overthrow (and that of the other reactionary Arab regimes) can lead to a successful struggle against Zionism. The Israeli working class must fight for a struggle of revolutionary defeatism - a struggle that calls for an end to participation in imperialist wars against the Arabs. It is absolutely necessary to forge direct political links between the fedayeen and Israeli revolutionaries - a process that is already taking place. We express all solidarity with these tendencies.

- * DOWN WITH SADAT
- * DOWN WITH MEIR
- * VICTORY TO A UNITED ARAB-ISRAELI WORKING CLASS STRUGGLE

GARY LONG

RED TAPE

Depending on where you work, at some stage you are likely to be approached by representatives of both the appropriate trade union and the rank-and-file group in that union who both hope to sign you up. Where does the rank-and-file fit in?

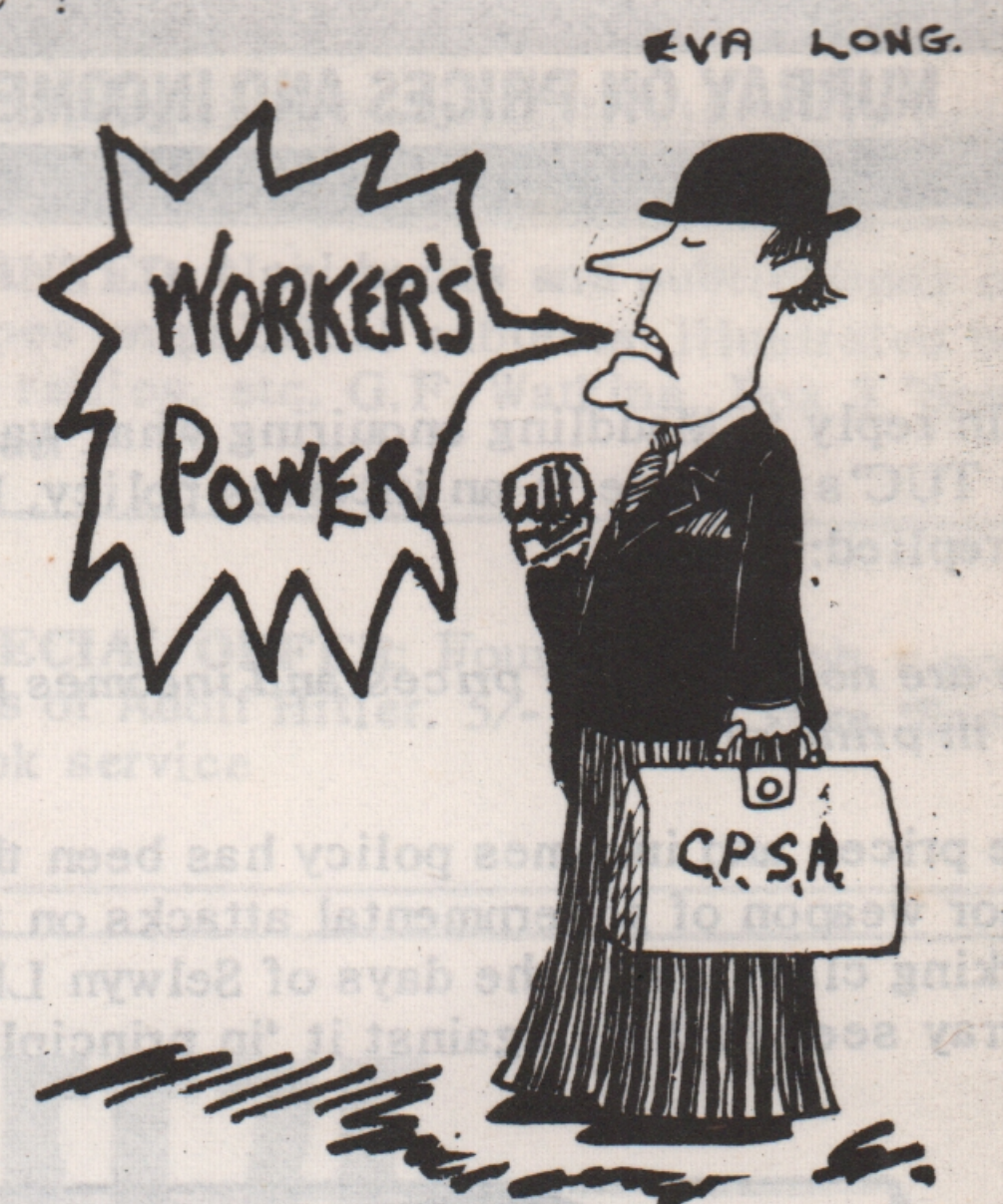
It can be seen as having two aims: firstly to provide a more militant stand over such issues as pay, holiday and working conditions and secondly to 'democratise the Union bureaucracy'. In other words trade union members have to be prepared to take on not only the employers but also the trade union officials. Are we also going to have to take on the rank-and-file officials?

As a new member of the Civil and Public Service Association (CPSA) I have been alarmed by my first encounters with the CPSA rank and file group 'Redder Tape'. Their magazine, while admittedly carrying some excellent articles, is littered with unexplained abbreviations and presents a very cliquish image. For example, in a report on the annual CPSA conference you find the sentence 'We all know what what happened then' with no explanations. There are incomprehensible articles and references to characters obviously well-known to the writers of the magazine, but to who else? The rank and file perhaps? I doubt it.

Similarly at a recent Union rally in Leeds over the civil servants pay claim, a group, which identified themselves as a Redder Tape group, while on the one hand opposing the platform, still displayed a very obvious chumminess towards them.

What does all this mean? While the constitutional changes in trade union structure proposed by rank and file groups are extremely important, this syndrome I've been describing actively militates against the ordinary member going to a meeting and getting up and saying his piece. This syndrome makes the leadership of rank and file groups into a new clique thereby reinforcing the very structures they are trying to destroy.

Are we going to have to try an 'Even-Redder Tape'?



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ORA

groups & contact addresses

If you think that the direct control by working people over all aspects of their lives is worth fighting for..

If you think that what's needed now is independent rank and file organisation linking all aspects of working class struggle - in housing, schools, womens' rights, in work, and all others.

If you think that the independence of these organisations must be defended from takeover by the Labour traitors, union bureaucracies, and the "NEW leaderships"

If you think that an organisation is needed which fights for revolutionary politics in everyday struggles but has no intention of seizing power for itself.

THEN, JOIN THE ORA!

LOCAL GROUPS.

Glasgow: Gordon Sykes, 32 Queen Elisabeth Square, Glasgow C3.

Leeds: Trevor Bavage, Flat 3, 35 Richmond Road, Leeds 6.

Hull: Marion McCartney, 13 Colman Street, Hull.

Manchester: Les Smith, 277 Kingsway Park, Davyhulme, Umston, Manchester.

Lancaster: Joe Thornberry, 56 Norfolk Street, Lancaster.

North London: Doug Durrant, 68a Chingford Road, London E. 17.

York: Neil Hunt, 24 Moss Street, York.

There are also contacts in: Andover, Birmingham, Colchester, Dundee, Edinburgh, Harlech, Liverpool, West, East and South London, Newcastle, Norwich, Oxford, Poole, Reading and Swansea. If you want to be put in touch, write to Terry Green, at the York Group address.

LEN MURRAY REVEALS

Late on Friday evening, 26th October, BBC television featured a talk with Len Murray, new General Secretary of the TUC, confronting three questioners - Reginald Maudling (Tory ex-Home Secretary), Eric Jacobs (rightist Labour correspondent of the Sunday Times) and Alex Jarrett (Director of the massive publishing cartel International Publishing Corporation - IPC).

In the discussion Murray totally confessed his role as policeman of the unions' membership and outlined in detail his willingness to stifle militancy and assist in implementation of the government's legislation concerning pay and trade unions. Selected quotes from the interview given below reveal Murray's treacherous and collaborationist policies as leader of the TUC.

MURRAY ON PHASE THREE

Murray and Feather have been consistent advocates of 'talks' at Downing Street. Murray's reasons are that by talking he can change Ted Heath's intentions and indicated this when he said:

'The government has taken up some of our ideas in Phase Three - some very good ideas - the results of negotiation.'

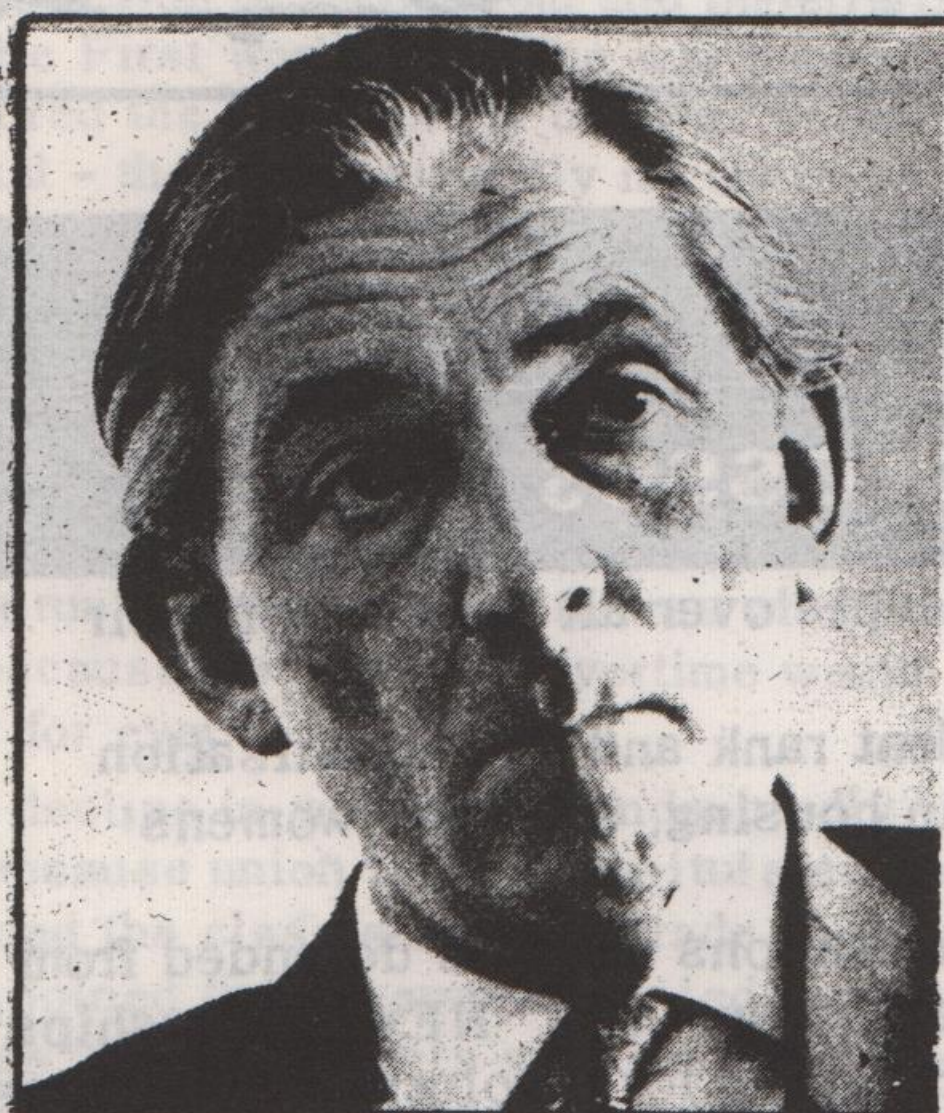
Phase Three is nothing more than a direct attack on the living standards of the working class while profit restrictions are lifted for the bosses. The package was dressed up with small, almost meaningless 'generous concessions'. These concessions were the result of Murray's 'good ideas' which, because they were negotiated, legitimised Phase Three in the eyes of many workers.

MURRAY ON PRICES AND INCOMES

In reply to Maudling enquiring what was the TUC's attitude to an incomes policy, Murray replied:

'We are not against a prices and incomes policy in principle.'

The prices and incomes policy has been the major weapon of governmental attacks on the working class since the days of Selwyn Lloyd. Murray sees nothing against it 'in principle.'



MURRAY ON PHASE ONE

Murray outlined the behaviour of the negotiators of the TUC in Phase One:

'The TUC negotiating before and during Phase One was ready to ask affiliated unions to recommend to impose a voluntary incomes restraint providing something was done on prices.'

Murray and the TUC were ready and willing to police workers who were demanding higher wages until price inflation caused a wave of militancy which the TUC could not control.

MURRAY ON JOINT UNION/EMPLOYER GOVERNMENT BODIES

In reply to a bout of discussion concerning the National Economic Development Council (NEDC) - a joint union-employer government body which was responsible for the infamous spread of 'productivity deals' and National Productivity Year - Murray stated:

'I must give full credit to Reginald Maudling for his setting-up of the NEDC in 1963 which made great headway in productivity.'

The productivity movement in the late 60's was responsible for mass redundancies as bosses sacrificed increased productivity for increased profits. Murray gives this 'full credit':

MURRAY ON COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

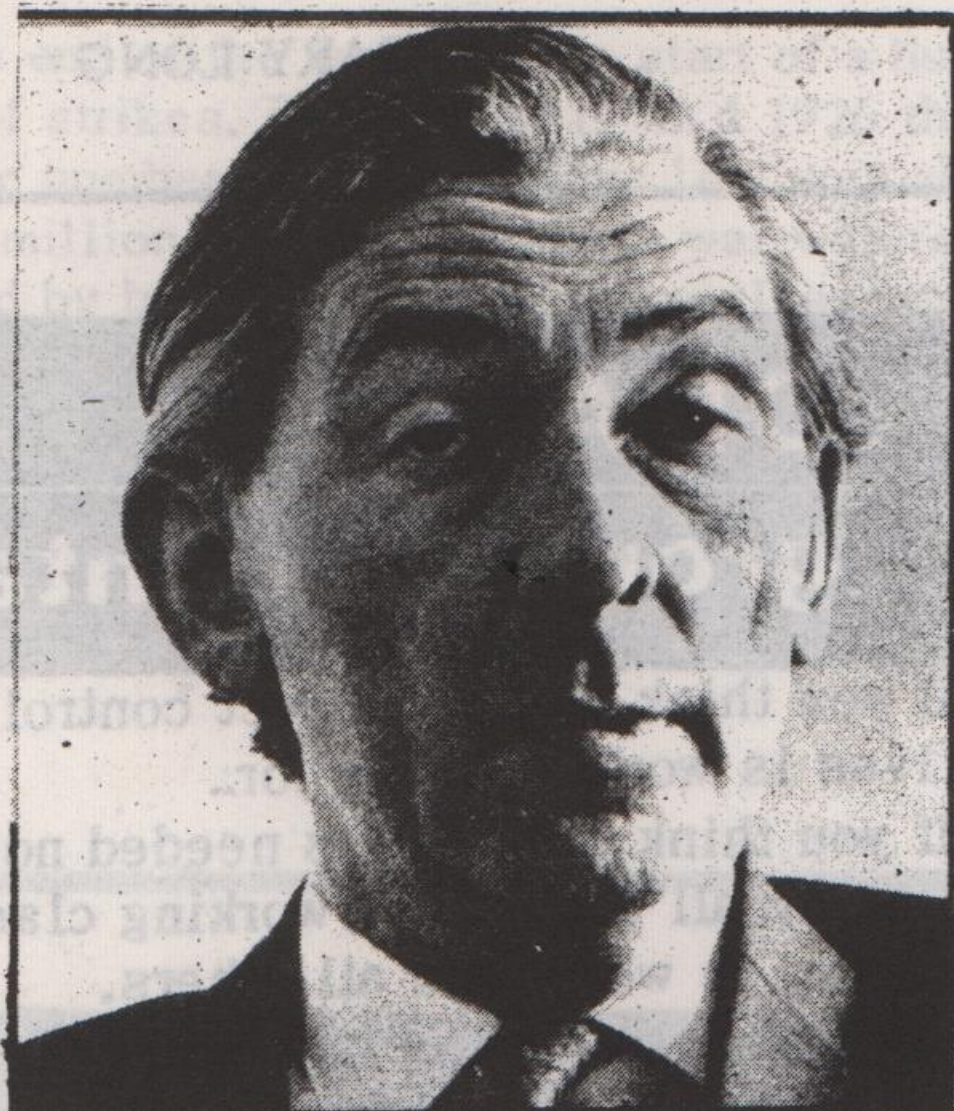
Murray was asked why the unions were backing the slogan 'Hands off collective bargaining.' He replied:

'Hands off collective bargaining' is just a journalistic slogan.'

When the working class is fighting for its basic rights defending one of those rights becomes to Murray a 'journalistic slogan.' In answer to the criticism that free collective bargaining is 'unfair' in that dockers get paid a lot and nurses a little Murray's attitude differed little from that of a high Tory:

'No ... voluntary collective bargaining doesn't (historically) give a fair distribution of income. The government must come in.'

Murray makes no mention that the employers ensure an uneven development of progress of wage struggles by holding back the weaker sections of the working class. According to him, it is the fault of collective bargaining, into which the government must intervene.



MURRAY ON GUARANTEES TO THE GOVERNMENT

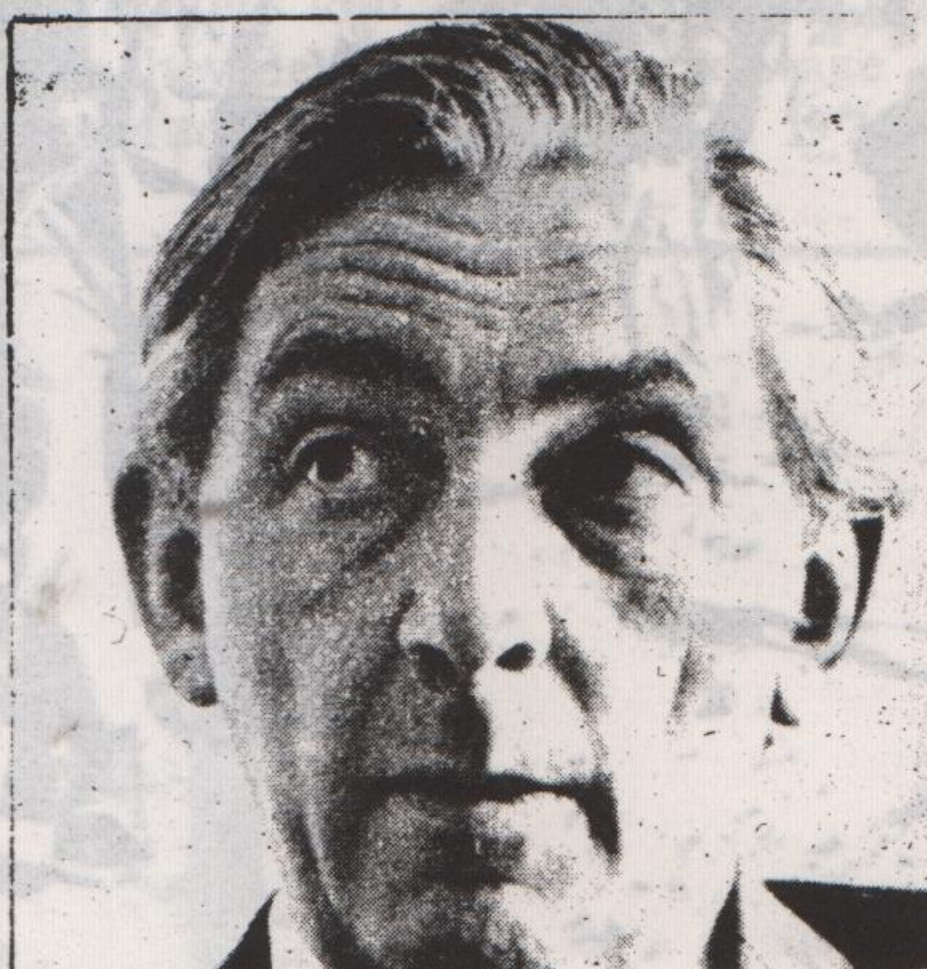
Maudling stated the NEDC failed because the unions could not carry out their part of the bargain and were unwilling. Murray again made his position clear:

'I wouldn't offer the government a copper bottomed cast iron guarantee because I couldn't carry it out.'

Talking again to Tory Maudling:

'We (the TUC) can only promise to do what we can and that can be our best - sometimes our very best.' ...

'...Unions don't just consist of its leaders - we have to try and convince the members. We can say to them we want you to accept this - it's the best we'll get. I can't promise they'll accept but we'll try always to persuade the members.'



He said little else on this issue, when it is the central factor in the erosion of the living standards of the working class - not a single mention of the interest war, speculation and vastly increased profits. This man never puts the case of the workers.

MURRAY ON THE LAW, UNIONS AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT

Should the unions comply with the law? Murray, when finally pinned down, answered with a firm 'yes' and clearly stated:

'I'm not going to defend widespread breaking of the law.'

Concerning the £100,000 sequestration of funds from the political fund of the AUEW by the National Industrial Relations Court, Murray said:

'They (the AUEW) have been punished for breaking the law - they've been punished. Some unions I would call extreme in their actions against the law.'

LEN MURRAY IN ACTION!

The following letter was sent to Trade Union branches all over the country during the November firemen's strike against wage limits in Phase Three:-

CIRCULAR No. 37 1973 / 74

I have issued the following statement in full consultation with the Fire Brigades Union on the strike in Glasgow fire service.

I hope you will ensure that none of your members in any way give support or assistance to the men who, by acting in defiance of the instructions of their Union, are threatening public safety, and that if the opportunity presents itself, your own members will encourage the firemen to process their grievances through their Union.

L. MURRAY
GENERAL COUNCIL
T.U.C.

The only reason Murray won't give the Tories guarantees is because he can't control his membership to accept a deal. Murray's role is to make sure that workers are 'good boys' and when that occurs he'll give all the guarantees the Tories wish for.

In reply to more pumping by Maudling, Jarrett and Jacobs as to why the unions were unhelpful, Murray actually pleaded:

'What do you want me to do?'

Jarrett replied that it was necessary to make labour more mobile, more able to be retrained, to take new machinery, etc. Murray, not highlighting that labour mobility is the cover for destruction of well-organised union shops and also produces closures and mass redundancies, replied:

'We've done our best - we've become a highly mobile society. The TUC has worked hard to make labour more mobile.'

Murray followed this up with:

'We want to help the government.'

MURRAY ON INFLATION

On being questioned that in 'normal' circumstances 'do wages cause inflation?', Murray came up with the answer:

'Right.'

He also stated:

'Rising prices is nothing.'

'The TUC General Council said in very careful words that they would give support for the recognition of the AUEW at Con-Mech, but we did not say we would support the techniques used (i.e. a strike) to gain that recognition.'

Murray believes the AUEW was justly punished before the law and he made sure the TUC gave no support to AUEW action at Con-Mech. On being criticised for having lost some control of the membership of the TUC and that a gap was widening between leaders and led, Murray lamented with:

'The working people are more educated and more critical today. They just don't accept advice - they resent authority.'

Remarks concerning 'extremist' leaders (Scanlon and Jones) were answered by a revealing perspective as to their role:

'These people have great energy and enthusiasm and it is our job to harness it and channel it.'



ALL

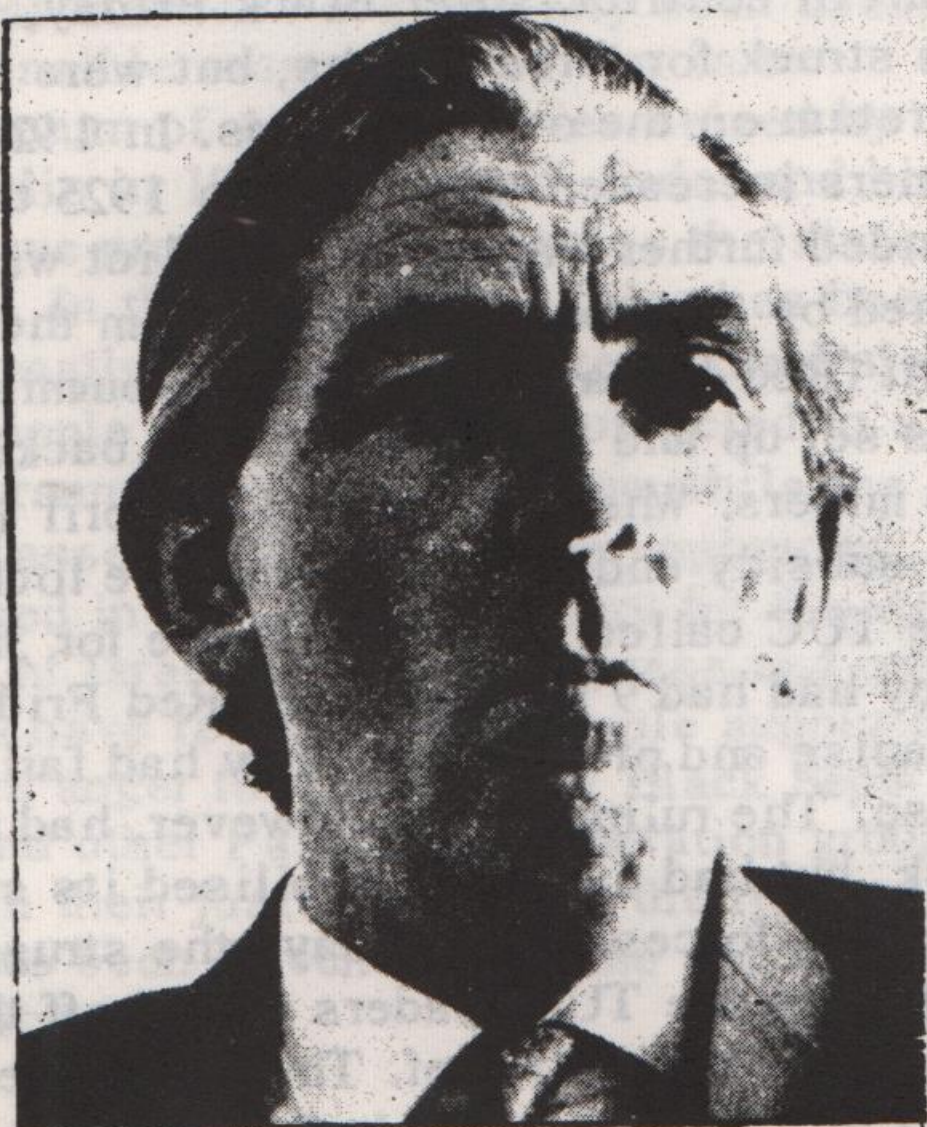
HUNGARY 1919

part two

The most threatening remark came from debater Jacobs when he told Murray:

'The Shah of Persia has empowered his security forces to control prices and incomes. This will happen if you don't help Len.'

This hint of the content of Phase Ten passed Murray by in the debate. He made no comment on the role of the Army in Persia shooting down strikers to 'enforce' an incomes policy.



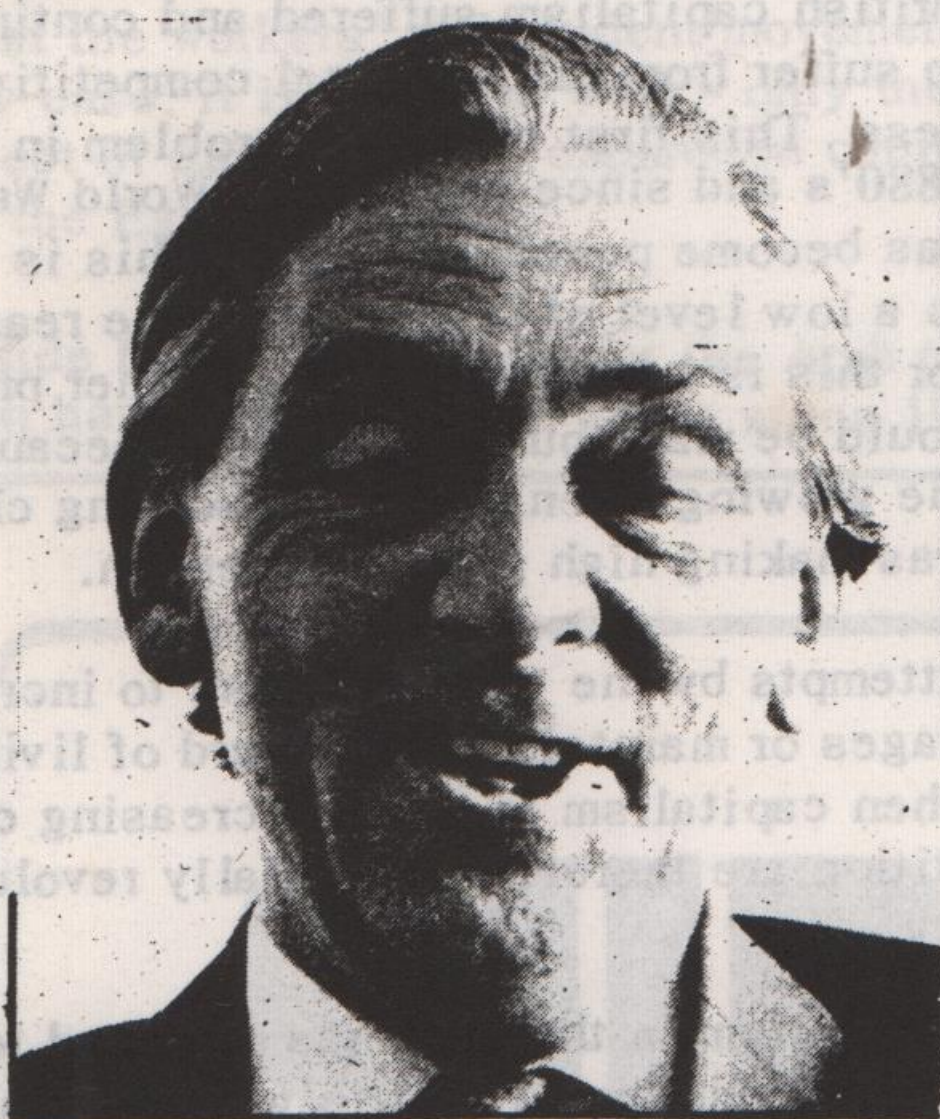
Throughout the whole discussion Murray played out the role of Ted Heath's boy, pleading that he was 'doing his best and trying hard' constantly asking the three Conservatives 'what do you want me to do?' and saying that 'we want to help.' His whole attitude was to swallow the Tory ideological kit-bag that the working class in the unions is to blame for the present economic situation. He hardly touched on the fact that the Tory government, backed by a bourgeoisie that is profit-mad, is bent on attacking the living standards of the working class. Conciliatory and friendly and chatty with Maudling and co - Murray is a bosses' man. Maudling in the same spirit congratulated Murray for his good work for the Tories with:

'I wish you all the best in your new job.'

Murray replied with a humble:

'Thank you.'

His job will be well done. Murray has revealed that if the membership lifts the pressure from him for just a small moment, he will be at 10 Downing Street negotiating with the 'reasonable men' of the Tory government trying to carry out their wishes.



"Like father - like son." Murray follows in the footsteps of Feather trying to stifle the independent activity of the rank and file while working with the government. When the British workers decide to take on the government in a 'once and for all' confrontation, in the form of a general strike, they will have to discredit Murray and his friends on the General Council of the TUC. No-one must believe that his type represents the workers in any negotiations. In a general strike, the TUC must either be directly under the control of the rank and file or the rank and file must rapidly create their own councils of policy, discussion and action. It is these units of working class power that we argue for in any struggle. We do this by constantly exposing the TUC and its leaders in their role and posing the alternative - Workers' Councils.

BOB CAMPBELL

During its brief existence, the Hungarian Workers Republic of 1919 did more than merely resist the encircling Rumanian and Czechoslovak armies, who were created, paid, and supplied by Britain and France. They also resisted the deliberate creation of famine by the official Allied blockade.

The legal profession was replaced by a system of revolutionary tribunals elected by the workers of the district.

All factories with more than 20 workers were 'socialised' i.e. run by workers' committees.

In education 'children's soviets' educated the children in a new self-managed way of life by giving the Children's Committees shared control of school discipline with the teachers. Sex education was taught with the aid of films and lectures. Birth control was advocated and the stigma of illegitimacy removed.

The Commissariat of Housing restricted upper and middle class tenants to 3 rooms maximum in their own houses and used the rest to house the homeless and those forced to live in slums. Newly-wed couples were provided by the Commissariat with basic furniture and kitchen utensils. Day nurseries were organised for working class mothers. Children's villages were set up for orphans.

At the end of April, renewed Rumanian offensive threatened Budapest. The working class districts rose en masse and factories

sent columns to the front. The government held dozens of mass meetings to explain its policies and to amend them through discussion. These were no false public relations exercises but tired men and women (both the speakers and the audience) struggling to lay the foundations of working class power and control in the midst of a world of enemies. The Rumanians were routed but a new French-organised Czechoslovak army immediately posed another threat.

At the same time, the feudal landowners, officers, priests and other riff-raff came together in the French-controlled town of Szeged to found a 'National Government' with the benevolent help of the French General d'Esperey. The figurehead they chose was the by-now tatty and battered 'respectable liberal' Count Karolyi.

The Red Army routed the Czech invasion but the Allied blockade was literally beginning to starve the Revolution. In June, naval cadets staged a counter-revolutionary rising - their main publicity was against the 'Jews' and the threat to civilisation posed by the seating of 20 women as elected deputies of the Budapest workers council. After street fighting they were crushed but the constant threat of physical intervention by British and French armies held back the necessary crushing of the counter-revolutionaries - only five

plotters were shot and this after the cadets had fired naval cannon indiscriminately at working class districts!

Meanwhile the 'National Government' set up a 'National Army' led by the reactionary landowner Admiral Horthy, and composed of units called 'death battalions'. These began their training in the countryside around beleaguered Budapest - murdering peasants, torturing Jews, killing the teachers and administrators of the children's villages.

On August 1st, with the Rumanians once more attacking and fifty miles from Budapest, the Hungarian Workers Republic ended. Bela Kun and his government resigned in return for Allied promises of an ending of the blockade. A Social Democrat government was set up and the Hungarian workers waited by the Allies to keep their word.

First the Rumanians swept in - wholesale massacres took place, Jews were hunted, anything left of value was looted. Then the Rumanians left and on November 16th Horthy's men marched into Budapest. The British and French had at last a government of gentlemen to deal with.

K.N.

NATIONAL FRONT FASCISTS CLAIM TO HAVE 'RESPECT'

The National Front, Britain's leading fascist organisation, is trying 'to go respectable'.

In October the annual general meeting of the National Front (NF) met in Red Lion Square, London. A line of 'bodyguards' protected the doorway as leaders John Tyndall and Martin Webster prepared a new constitution which would 'finally lay to rest the untrue and unfair assertion that the National Front is a 'fascist' or some form of totalitarian organisation.'

These 'untrue' and 'unfair' assertions are illustrated below. They are facsimiles of the advertisements taken from Page 4 of 'Spearhead', the journal of the NF when it was the

National Socialist Movement, in the August/September issue 1964.

The editor was John Tyndall, President of the NF and the stop press box announces: 'Martin Webster involved in incident with Jomo Kenyatta. International repercussions. Full story next issue.' Martin Webster is now National Organiser of the National Front..

WANTED. Pre-war publications of British Fascist/Nazi groups (not periodicals). John, BM/SKLAR, London, WC1

SWASTIKA BADGES. In Red, White and Blue! Buy yours now! Only 5/- each. Send s.a.e. to Box 6 'Spearhead'



The Third Reich in sound. Details from 'Spearhead' sound service. Box 6

OIL PORTRAITS of Adolf Hitler. To order: Send s.a.e. for details to Box 1 'Spearhead'

WANTED: Nazi books and publications of all types on political subjects: illustrated books on rallies, etc. G.F. Watkins, Box 3 'Spearhead'

SPECIAL OFFER: Four Photograph portraits of Adolf Hitler. 5/- per set from 'Spearhead' book service

DRAUGHTSMEN FEEL THE FREEZE

'Never have so many been out for so long for so little.' So the unfortunate pun went on the picket line outside Fenner's Marfleet, Hull. It had real meaning for 15 draughtsmen who had been on strike for 15 weeks. The men worked for MEC (Manufacturers Equipment Company), a subsidiary of the national firm, Fenner's, also based in Hull.

They claimed that the firm had not fulfilled an earlier agreement to carry out 'a reasonable and normal reassessment of wages' - the company had refused, using the government's wage freeze as an excuse. So the dispute began, the firm thinking that as there were only 15 of them they could intimidate and make an example of them. After a work-to-rule by the men, they were locked out by the firm and picketing began on 6th July at the MEC factory. There was no support from the AUEW in the firm at that time, or from the T & GWU. Drivers who did turn back in unofficial support of the strike, risking victimisation, especially those in non-union firms, which MEC began using as the strike went on in the hope of getting equipment through.

After a month the picketing was having an effect, so the company began using alternative dropoff points in Hull from where they hoped to smuggle the loads into the factory in

their own vans. The places were easy to detect, mainly because of the amazing lack of subtlety for instance, one place drivers were directed to was CEM warehouse, a smashed-up house in a derelict area. But then followed a period of escalation by MEC, in which they jumped round Hull opening new warehouses, which were quickly detected by drivers who informed the pickets.

The tactic of opening a large number of alternative warehouses was designed to stretch the reserves of the pickets - there were only 15 of them, so though each man picketed all day, every day, on many of the picket lines only a placard could be left saying 'MEC dispute, TASS please do not cross'. Firms outside Hull such as a sprout-picking/packing factory at North Newbald were obviously being paid for the use of their premises.

By now the men were told that they had been blacked by all employers in Hull, so they had to win to save their jobs. To fight this new threat they approached the workers in the main Fenner's factory in Hull and got the AUEW workers to allow them to picket there. Previously they had been picketing at the subsidiary MEC. The turning point of the dispute was the blacking of work for MEC by the workers at the main Fenner's factory. The dispute was now directly with Fenner's - they were now dealing

directly with their oppressors and not with one of its puppet subsidiaries. However, it was not until mid-August that AUEW began giving more than tacit help. It was the men and the drivers who had sustained the strike until then. The Hull dockers gave further support to the strike by blacking firms whose lorries and equipment were breaking the picket lines. The strike was affecting the external companies now - from where pressure could be brought on Fenner's to resolve the dispute.

The strike ended in September with talks between the AUEW and Fenner's, a victory achieved against the 'odds' by workers who though members of a large union belonged to a small section not renowned for their militancy. Victory was achieved by workers solidarity, support from the drivers, the workers at Fenner's, the dockers and eventually the union bureaucracy. Was the AUEW frightened of confrontation at that stage of the freeze, preferring to wait for Phase Three, or did they consider the issue to be too small? Although numerically the strike was small, it showed that the impetus came from the workers solidarity and it is only through this that struggles can be won.

JULIE SHARP

Lessons from the past:

U.K. CAPITALISM 1870-1926

The present difficulties facing British capitalism are in many ways comparable to previous crises. Both the economic conditions and the response of capitalists and workers show similarities. The trouble for the capitalists started at the end of the nineteenth century with the failure of British capitalism to maintain profitability.

Britain in 1870 was producing a third of the world's industrial goods, yet by 1913 it produced only 14%. It had been overtaken in productivity by the US, Germany and Sweden. At the same time as the increasing industrialization of other countries British workers were organizing into Trade Unions and fighting for higher wages. In the 1870's unionism grew amongst skilled workers and towards the end of the 1880's the unskilled began to unionize. By 1914 there were four million trade unionists, over a quarter of all industrial workers.

The growth of industrial capital, which initially enabled Britain to capture such a large share of world industrial output, had defended our high profits and low wages. In order to fight off increasing competition this high ratio of profits to wages had to be maintained. Therefore, in the years before the First World War the working class was under attack directly from the courts and growing unemployment. 1908 saw the start of growing militancy and in 1912 alone 40 million days were lost in strikes (compared to 10 million in 1970). The strikes were a response to the capitalist attack by the rank and file, and a protest against the trade union leaders.

CONFLICTS

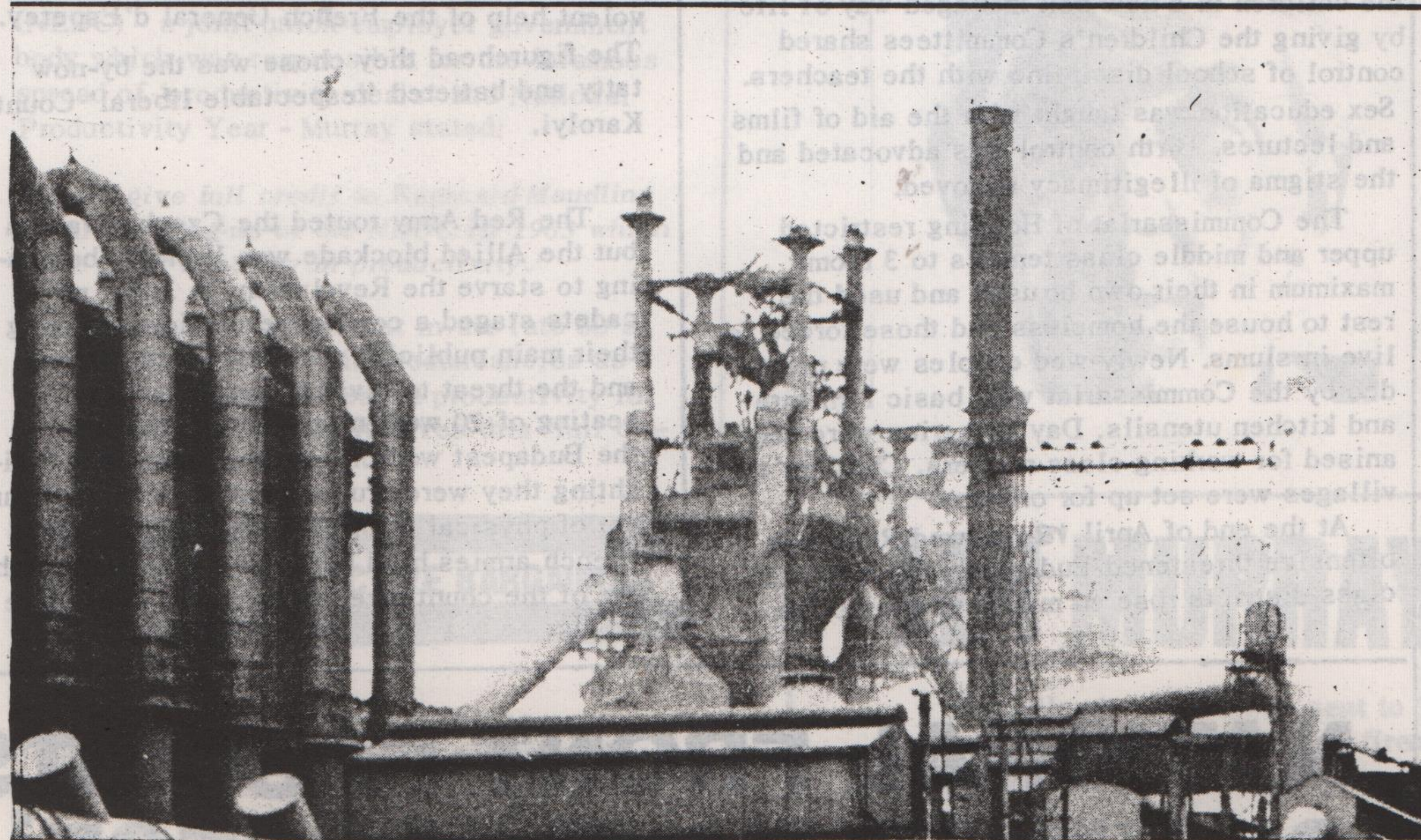
From 1880 till 1895 real wages (i.e. the purchasing power of wages) rose but between 1895 and 1905 real wages fell. This fall in wages was one of the causes of increasing labour militancy. Another factor was organised labour's dislike of management's attempts to introduce new labour-saving methods of production. Productivity had failed to rise, mainly because British industrialists had failed to invest sufficiently, whilst other countries, especially Germany and the US, greatly increased the amount of capital per worker. British capitalists were also investing overseas more and more. In 1870 overseas investment amounted to £35 million, by 1913 it had reached £200 million - about 9% of the national income, and one third of total profits.

The conflicts resulting from this international expansion of capitalism and imperialism led to the First World War. The war temporarily restored the profitability of large sections of capital - there was virtually no control of profits and there was a huge increase in demand for many goods. On the other hand, real wage rates are estimated to have dropped by about one fifth in the first 3 years of the war, although real earnings did not fall because there was so much overtime worked. But in the long run the real wage rate was what mattered, because bonuses and overtime would not last for ever.

The decline in wages was undoubtedly partly because union leaders capitulated and abandoned the class struggle. Trade union leaders joined the government or led the working class into agreements such as the Treasury Agreement of 1915, in which they voluntarily renounced the strike weapon for the rest of the war. But there were strikes, notably in South Wales and on the Clyde. Sections of the working class overcame their feelings of patriotism when they realised the exorbitant profits being made. The luxury of the rich contrasted strongly with food shortages and queues. This is reflected in the growth of trade union membership - from around four million in 1913 to over eight million in 1919.

In the last year of the war, industrial unrest increased with the help of the shop stewards movement. A Ministry of Labour was consequently established and the workers won some concessions in the form of improved unemployment insurance. At the same time, the voluntary restrictions of wages broke down. There was a major campaign for an eight-hour day, with no loss of pay, and the rank and file became militant. The number of working days lost in 1917 and 1918 was double the figure for 1915 and 1916.

Worst hit by decreased profitability was the mining industry, which was given a subsidy. Nationalisation, however, was rejected by the government and in the long term it was left up to the owners of the mines to find a solution. In 1921 government control of the mines ended and the mine owners lost their guaranteed profit. Therefore they demanded massive wage cuts, which led to the miners strike of 1921.



At the end of the war there followed a post war boom. However, even during the 1919-20 boom industrial output did not reach the 1913 figure because of lack of investment during the war. The boom was engineered to some extent by the government to avoid class conflict resulting from demobilisation and unemployment. But this strategy was soon abandoned by the ruling class in favour of restoring profits by cutting wages and by putting Britain back on the gold standard at the exchange rate with the dollar which had existed before the war (i.e. revaluing the pound and making British exports costly). The result was the sudden huge slump of 1920-21. Industrial production fell by more than a quarter, unemployment increased from 2% to 18%, and company profits were halved. If the industrial capitalists were to compete in world markets and to continue to make a profit, then costs had to be cut. Unemployment was to be just one of the weapons used to weaken the bargaining strength of the workers.

The end of the war was the start of a huge wave of strikes. Between 1919 and 1926 the average number of working days lost was about 40 million a year. The class war was recognised by both sides. The ruling class was terrified of the Triple Alliance (miners, railwaymen and transport workers) paralysing the country and revolution was feared if the working class was allowed to win the strikes.

The Triple Alliance issued a call for a sympathy strike on the 15th of April, but the National Union of Railwaymen's leader found an excuse to withdraw the Triple Alliance support. This was Black Friday.

By 1921 wage-cutting and attempts to lengthen the working week were becoming central to the capitalists' strategy. Baldwin argued that 'all workers in this country have got to take a reduction in wages.' Many wages fell by nearly 40% between 1921 and 1924, and many of the cuts were only made after fierce class struggle.

International competition was continuing to grow. World manufacturing output was growing whilst British output was falling. By 1925 the exchange rate with the dollar had risen to its pre-war level and the gold standard was restored. This made the prices of British goods too high to allow them to compete with the products of other countries. The restoration of the gold standard to try and win back for Britain her position as premier financial capital of the world was achieved at the expense of industry and labour. Financiers also benefited from the expansion of the national debt, on which they received interest payments. This was just one of the ways the bourgeoisie survived at a time of economic crisis. On the other hand, the working class was suffering

defeats. Real wages fell and trade union membership was down to five and a half million. Strikes became defensive and lock-outs became frequent.

The mining industry continued to be at the heart of conflict. After Black Friday, the miners struck for three months, but were forced to return on the owners' terms. In 1924, the owners increased wages but in 1925 they demanded further wage cuts. Conflict was postponed by a temporary subsidy from the government (Red Friday), the Samuel Commission was set up and the TUC pledged backing for the miners. When, at the end of April 1926, the subsidy ended the miners were locked out. The TUC called a general strike for 3rd May. They had had 9 months since Red Friday to organise and prepare, but they had failed to do so. The ruling class, however, had not sat back, but had carefully mobilised its strike-breaking forces. After 9 days the struggle was lost when the TUC leaders called off the strike, with obvious relief. The miners held out for a further six months before giving in. The complete catastrophe of the general strike weakened the working class for many years to come.

The most militant sections of the labour movement in the late 1920's were from the rank and file, and not the official movement. Militants in a number of unions, forced under communist leadership, the National Minority Movement. This rejected the class collaboration of union leaders, but the movement was compromised by its links with Stalinist policies.

CLASS STRUGGLE

What, then, should we learn from the class struggle 1870-1926?

- (1) Britain suffers from a separation of finance and capital which weakens international competitiveness. For example, finance presses for high interest rates to attract foreign funds and maintain the reserves while industry wants low interest rates for cheap investment.
- (2) British capitalism suffered and continues to suffer from international competitiveness. This first became a problem in the 1880's and since the Second World War it has become prominent again. This is due to a low level of investment. One reason for this is low profitability. Higher profits could be made outside England because the growing strength of the working class was making high profits uncertain.
- (3) Attempts by the working class to increase wages or maintain its standard of living when capitalism is under increasing competition are therefore potentially revolutionary.
- (4) Capitalism in the past has managed to survive by adapting itself to working class demands it could not meet. But it cannot go on adapting forever if the working class recognises the nature of capitalism and mobilises its strength. Up to now it has been sold out by union leaders and the party bosses.

The present crisis is reaching enormous dimensions even more than in the past. At each point of the struggle, politicians and union leaders will have to reveal their desire to shackle the working class to the demands of the bourgeoisie more and more often. We must constantly expose these incidents to show to workers, who trust the present institutions of the labour movement, the treacherous and anti working class role of these leaders and present a clear programme that poses workers' self management as the only alternative.

A.N.

THE PRESS FUND.

So far income and expenditure have just kept pace with rising donations and sales. LIBERTARIAN STRUGGLE needs a new composer, better quality newsprint to cope with a regular increase in the number of pages. Libertarian ideas have to become widespread in the class struggle which is reaching greater intensity. LIBERTARIAN STRUGGLE must be able to increase its effectiveness in this fight.

DONATIONS TO 29, CARDIGAN ROAD, LEEDS 6. MAKE OUT P.O.S & CHEQUES TO THE O.R.A. GENERAL FUND.



letters

Dear Comrades,

I found the article on the economic situation in the Soviet Union in last month's issue of *Libertarian Struggle* very good. However, I think that certain political factors need to be pointed out before we can fully understand why Russia is encountering the same problems as those faced by Western capitalism. These problems are not part of some universal law of economics, but are dependent on the political and economic organisation of society.

Firstly, in the field of agriculture. Before the 1917 revolution, Russia had a structure of rural life based on the mir, or village commune. This had close parallels with a genuine socialist community in that the members decided collectively on the allocation of land on the basis of need (usually the number of mouths in each family group). This structure was so strong that it survived the ruthless drive of Tsarist Prime Minister Stolypin to dismantle it and replace it with the orthodox capitalist system of homestead farming. It was Lenin, not Stalin, who destroyed this primitive communist mode of production when he brought in the capitalist New Economic Policy in 1921. The slogan for the peasants at that time was 'Enrich yourselves'. Those who (a) had possession of the best land, (b) were prepared to exploit their fellow peasants, or (c) were well in with the party or the Red Army proceeded to do so, thus creating the class of kulaks or rich peasants. These Stalin savagely exterminated in a mistaken attempt to reintroduce the collective under the authoritarian control of the State. The best estimates put the number of peasants liquidated at 1½ million. Thus it is not the collective structure itself which is a weakness, but the imposition of centrally devised targets which take no account of the notorious volatility of agriculture, particularly in a climate like Russia's. When the peasants found themselves unable to fulfil unrealistic targets, they were faced with further coercion. They naturally reasoned that if they ensured that targets stayed low (by repeated under-fulfilment), they would have a little in hand for the bad years.

Secondly, the Russian government has not overcome alienation in industry. It is surprising how many people overlook this obvious fact when considering the Soviet Union. Yet the situation in Britain gives close parallels. When nationalisation is carried out under State control, rather than workers' control, it is clear that the individual worker will feel no more identification with the monolithic State bureaucracy than with the overtly exploitative board of directors. Thus the worker feels his first priority is to protect himself and his workmates from either redundancy or further exploitation in the form of higher output targets. The leap in production figures which always follows State nationalisation is due to the rationalisation of some of the intrinsic inefficiencies in capitalism such as the middleman and the paraphernalia of marketing techniques.

I hope the article on Russia does not start a long argument on whether Russia is state capitalist, a degenerate workers' state, bureaucratic collectivist or whatever. The label which is attached is not as important as understanding the reasons why Russia has reached its present situation

Fratemally,

Bill Broome

P.S. The fact that a new grain output record of 215 million tons has been reached in Russia only shows the inefficiency of centralised target-setting - as did the figure of 170 million tons last year. What sort of 'planned economy' results in nearly a 30% difference in successive annual figures?

Dear Comrades,

In the October 'Libertarian Struggle' you suggest that, since libertarian solutions in Ireland today are utopian and irrelevant, libertarians should support the Republican movement. I am puzzled as to why you should take this position. Certainly libertarian solutions stand little chance of being adopted in Ireland while the majority of the population hold reactionary views. However, since this is equally true of England, should we all be supporting the Labour Party?

Your writer suggests that those who do not follow his line are unprincipled. This adjective might be better reserved for those who, while calling themselves libertarians give any support, however critical, to those whose nationalist propaganda and authoritarian militarist organisation clearly shows them to be the enemies of libertarian beliefs.

To be specific, as advocates of class struggle, what do you think of the statements of the Provisionals attacking 'atheistic Marxism'? As opponents of racism, what do you think of propaganda like the Republican 'Irish Soldiers Letter' that tells British troops that while they are fighting in Ulster blacks are sleeping with their wives? As opponents of repression, what do you think of those whose tarring and feathering of sexual deviants and purveyors of cannabis shows very clearly their own attitudes to law and order? As advocates of women's liberation, what do you think of those who while claiming to be 'non-sectarian' are incapable of giving straight answers to such simple questions like whether they are in favour of laws against contraception and abortion in a united Ireland?

Finally, your article at no point mentions the existence of the Protestant working class and the UDA. UDA members have shown themselves willing to engage in armed struggle with the occupying forces and speak a pseudo-socialist rhetoric no more or less convincing than similar IRA declarations. Do we support their struggle? Are their detainees and prisoners

included in the Irish political prisoners for whose release you call?

Yours fraternally,
Roger Sandell

In the editorial of the October issue of *Libertarian Struggle*, the editorial made three demands:

* release Irish political prisoners

* end internment now

* British troops out of Northern Ireland

These demands are now accepted by ORA nationally and work based on these demands are ORA policy. ORA does not support the IRA. The October issue of *Libertarian Struggle* also contained a review (It Happened Here) in which contentious points were raised that are not accepted by ORA as a whole. It is these points that Roger Sandell criticises. The review hints that one should support the IRA in their struggles against the British military with criticisms of the IRA policies and tactics as the quote given below shows:

"This is not to suggest that we give uncritical support to the IRA, but that the least we can do is take an active part in a campaign based on the demands of ending internment and withdrawing British troops."

Roger Sandell mentions none of these political demands, although he points out justifiable criticisms of the Provisional IRA. His comment that the UDA was not mentioned is because it is certainly not clear that a UDA calling itself 'loyalist', demanding a reinstatement of Stormont, and training in the British Army itself (the Ulster Defence Regiment) is ever likely to 'show themselves willing to engage in armed struggle with the occupying forces'. The UDA is armed by the British state and participates in militant strikes, rent strikes and political action only when it considers the British ruling class is not working hard enough to retain links between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK. If the UDA are imprisoned for their 'excesses' (i.e. two were jailed for 6 months in Leeds in 1972 for possessing £200,000 worth of arms as opposed to 10/20 years for the IRA or the Stoke Newington 5), we suspect that their detention by the British state is trivial. If UDA members are jailed for attacking the British Army, in that their demands are against the British ruling class, we support their release. If they are imprisoned for 'going too far' with the loyalist wishes, they will be released by the state after a short, token detention. Hitler was jailed in the 1923 putsch for 9 months in Bavaria. Would we call him a political prisoner to be released? The Irish political prisoners who fight the British ruling class on a long term basis are those for whom we campaign and not those whose imprisonment is 'temporary' in that they support British rule.

TEACHERS PENSIONED OFF

On Monday, November 5th, the 16 teachers' unions of England, Scotland and Wales broke off their negotiations with local education authority representatives over teachers' compulsory contributions to their superannuation scheme.

The unions now consider themselves 'in dispute' over the question - which involves the paltry sum of around £11 a year or just 15p a week. It is the principle which is being fought for, not the pittance.

After negotiations broke down, the unions decided to co-operate on planning co-ordinated action in support of their case, but just 2 days later the NAS (National Association of Schoolmasters - a sexist and backward un-



ion fighting only on questions of status and salary) and their satellite the UWT (Union of Women Teachers) took unilateral action and called a union meeting in school time on Monday 12th November.

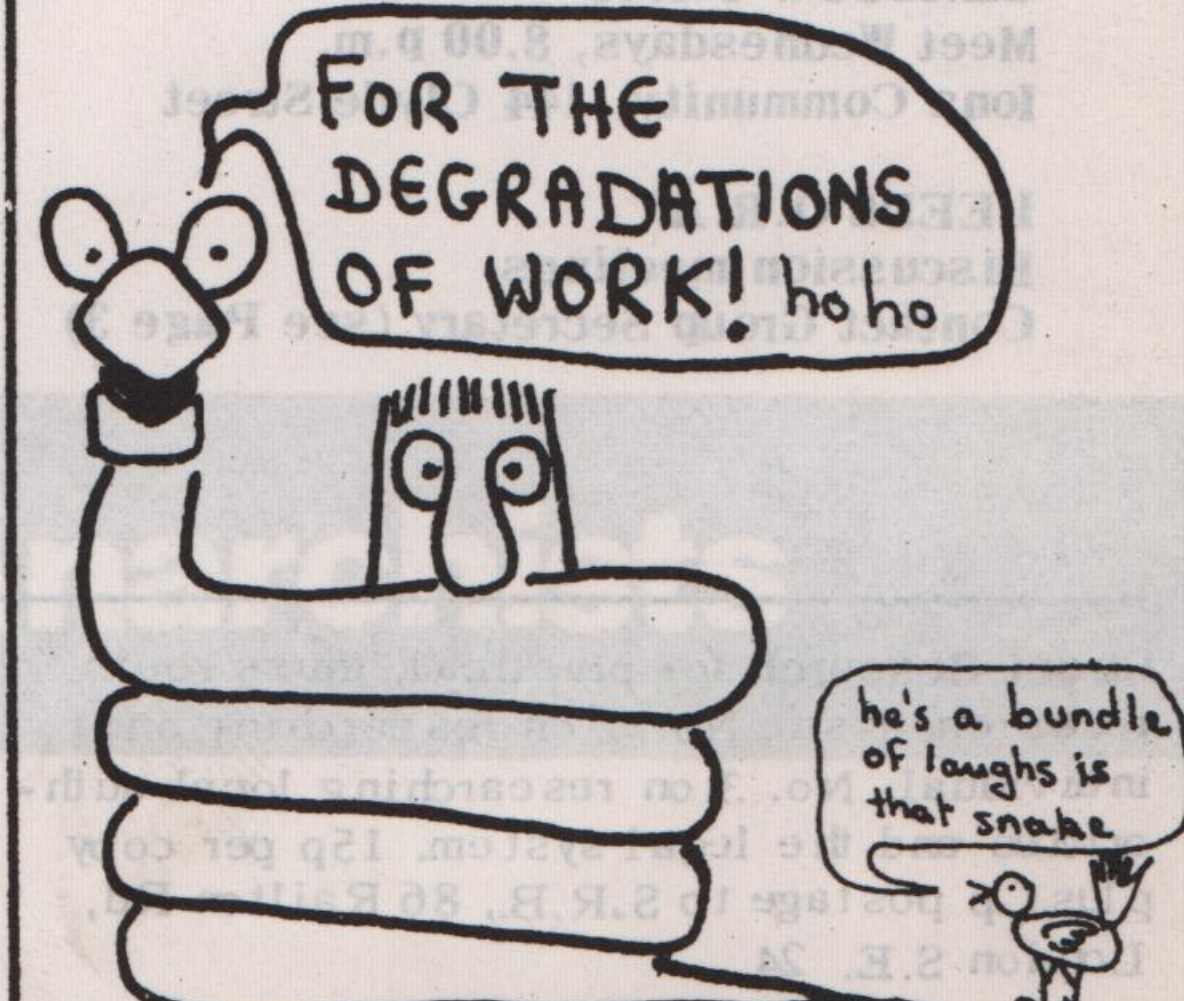
The meeting caused little disruption nationally - few schools had to close for half the afternoon - and no further campaign of action was decided on. The protest was thus singularly ineffective.

The 16 unions have now announced their 'co-ordinated action' - they intend to lobby MP's, then rally at Central Hall in Westminster, on Thursday December 6th. Useless enough, but what is even more derisory is that the protest rally will be held at 6 p.m. so that teachers may attend without schools having to close. The protest is nationwide, but teachers will attend on a representative basis so as to cause no disruption. Yet another bureaucratic appeasement of the growing militancy of the rank and file in the teaching 'profession'.

Add to this the abysmal efforts of the Executive Committees of the teachers' unions to campaign effectively for any improvement in salaries - the 25% claim submitted by the NUT is all words and no action - or conditions in schools where children are forced into part-time education, or the facile London Allowance offer of £19 a year on which no action has been taken. It is obvious that rank and file teachers can no longer rely on their union leaders to fight on their behalf - they must organise and fight themselves.

Eva Long

Snake



FOLLOW MY LEADER

Last month saw two conferences that could prove important to the working class movement. On November 4th, the Socialist Labour League 'transformed' themselves into the Workers Revolutionary Party, despite reputed objections within the League that the time was not yet right and that compared with, say, the Russian Bolshevik party, they were nowhere near being a mass revolutionary party. The following Sunday at Belle Vue, Manchester, the International Socialists held an 'Industrial conference to smash Phase Three' that appears to be part of the same strategy to turn IS into a mass revolutionary party.

The Socialist Worker conference was an impressive affair. There were about 3,000 people, many of them seeming to be ordinary working class militants. The conference featured speeches from Tony Cliff, Roger Rosewell (EC member of IS and Liverpool organiser) and contributions from trade unionists. Cliff's speech started with an analysis of why 1973 had been such a disastrous year for the working class. The strength of the British working class has always been its shopfloor organisation, with about a quarter of a million shop stewards. In the fifties and sixties, this kind of organisation, based on fairly small groups of workers, was able to win victory after victory in short sharp battles. The union leaders were powerless in this situation. Any national agreements that they negotiated were largely ignored as workers locally could get far above the amounts negotiated. It was a time of high wage drift and expansion.

In the seventies, this began to change as British capitalism began to decline rapidly. The employers and the government began to get much tougher and short sharp and fragmented battles involving small groups of workers no longer became enough. The time of large-scale confrontations took their place. With little wage drift, due to little excess



TONY CLIFF'S MESSAGE TO THE WORKING CLASS. — 'FOLLOW ME'

profit, the trade union leaders became more important, and their specific role became more and more apparent. The militant action that took place in 1972, especially the miners' strike and the freeing of the Pentonville Five, scared the union leaderships. They had to regain control of the organised working class, which was beginning to act for itself more and more. They backed off from any form of confrontation. Their role of being a buffer class between worker and employer became more and more obvious.

From this essentially correct analysis, with which no libertarian communist would

disagree, and from a denunciation of union leaders, left and right, Cliff called for a 'new leadership, based on the rank and file, controlled by the rank and file'. He described rank and file papers as very important, but even if they improved enormously in sales and content, they were still not enough. What was needed was a national rank and file movement. It was becoming more and more apparent to the uncommitted and the hostile that this conference was an IS recruiting drive and that all questions of independent rank and file activity were going to be ignored, as was any question of the exact relationship between this rank and file movement and its inspiration, IS. Cliff went on to attack 'economism' - the belief that gut militancy alone, with no political content, whether organised or not, is enough to win struggles. Considering that IS has largely been recruiting on just such a basis, this seemed significant. However, in the next few sentences, this call for the necessity of fighting for socialism turned cleverly into 'socialism in the working class movement equals IS' and its role as the initiator of rank and file papers and its future as the working class party. Clearly we were not going to hear from the Cliff who used to write at length about 'substitutionism' - the vanguard party substituting itself for the working class and inevitably coming into contact with it.

GENUINE RANK AND FILE

Much was made by both Cliff and Rosewell of the need for a genuine rank and file. They stated that this conference was not (true enough) delegated, and that such a conference, based on delegates actually representing the people they claim to represent should be fought for and should be happening by about next February. Attacks were made on the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions for being a phoney organisation as described above (although it wasn't attacked for being merely an appendage of the Stalinists, which might have been a bit close to home).

There seemed to be unresolved differences within IS over exactly what fighting for the democratisation of the unions means. To some, like Nagliatti, their industrial organiser, it seemed to mean the replacement of right-wing leaders by left-wing leaders, at least to start with. Such a concept differed greatly from the view expressed by the ordinary trade unionists who spoke from the floor about their experiences of left leaders. Not only Jones and Scanlon were denounced as being worse than the Coopers, Carrons, etc., but also the left leaders of the Fire Brigades Union who recently dismissed the area committee of Glasgow for their strike, which showed more than anything else the power of workers' autonomous action. To call for support for left leaders in the face of this seems extremely contradictory, and was another question that IS didn't care to resolve.

Two black speakers attacked the conference for saying nothing about racialism and a hasty paragraph was tacked into the conference resolution about it. But, in general, despite Cliff's opening speech on the need for politics, little was said about racialism and even less about the position of women. The conference called to smash Phase Three made no specific recommendations about this (beyond calling for a national rank and file movement) and did not mention the Equal Pay Act as a useful agitation point for opposition to Phase Three.

WORKERS' POWER

All in all, the conference was very hopeful from the IS point of view. It showed that they can mobilise quite large numbers of workers and that, for the time being, they can present themselves in a 'serve the people' role, ignoring some of the questions of control and tactics that are bound to emerge. The anarchist viewpoint to all this was well expressed in the last paragraph of a leaflet issued for the conference by Manchester ORA:

WHAT KIND OF WORKERS' POWER?

Revolutionary Anarchists call for the overthrow of capitalism and the State. We stand for the democratic control of the whole of society by the working class operating through workers' councils and a network of other bodies (factory committees, neighbourhood councils). No party, however 'revolutionary', can take power 'on behalf of' the working class, or as its vanguard without stifling the self-activity that is the essence of workers' power. The organisations that workers in struggle build up now will, to a large extent, determine the nature of any future socialist society. Revolutionary Anarchists therefore call for:

- * rank and file groups to be formed in every union and industry
- * militant industrial action to bring down the Tories
- * no co-operation with any capitalist government

- * internal democracy within all rank and file groups and within the working class movement as a whole
- All these are necessary if a revolutionary movement capable of challenging the capitalist system and establishing a free, libertarian communist society is to be built up. Within the workers' movement, the anarchists will fight alongside any tendency - but we will resist all attempts to turn rank and file groups into recruiting agencies for IS or anyone else.

STEVE KIBBLE

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Publications

Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists. (ORA pamphlet) advance orders to D. Young, 91, Burghhead Drive, Linthouse, Glasgow.

Mole Express Manchester voice of revolutionary struggle. News/reviews/exposes/graphics/features. 10p monthly from 7, Summer Terrace, Manchester 14 SWD.

The Tyranny of Structurelessness by Jo Freeman. Obtainable from Leeds Womens ORA, 29, Cardigan Rd., Leeds 6. 5p plus 3p post. 'Libertarians in all movements should study this pamphlet because it contains the core of the argument that ORGANISED libertarians have stated.' Review in April Libertarian Struggle.

Front Libertaire fortnightly paper of O.R.A. France. Sample copy from North London group, subscription details from 33, rue des Vignoles, 75020 Paris, France.

Michael Tobin, who was jailed for two years being in possession of leaflets calling on British Army soldiers to desert, has been released. He wishes to be contacted by fellow ex-prisoners, or prisoners, to organise a campaign against the British penal system. Contact Michael Tobin, P.O. Box 10638, Amsterdam, Holland.

De Vrije Socialist paper of the Dutch Libertarian Socialist Federation. For copies write to, Jan Bervoets, Willem de Zwijgerlaan 104, Den Haag, Netherlands.

Inside Story the radical magazine which specialises in the stories Fleet St. won't print. For sample copy send 25p to Dept. AP 20, 3, Belmont Road, London S.W. 4

Solidarity, a paper for militants in industry and elsewhere. 6p. plus post from 123, Latham Road, London, E.6

FOR INFORMATION, ON ORA

WRITE TO

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PUBLIC MEETINGS AND EVENTS

MANCHESTER AREA REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHISTS

Fortnightly public meetings
Thursdays, 8.00 p.m.
Lass O'Gowrie, Charles Street.

GLASGOW O.R.A.

Meet Wednesdays, 8.00 p.m.
Iona Community, 144 Clyde Street

LEEDS O.R.A.

Discussion meetings
Contact Group Secretary (see Page 3)

Street Research for practical, grass roots research. Issue No. 2 on researching an individual, No. 3 on researching local authorities and the legal system. 15p per copy plus p postage to S.R.B., 86 Railton Rd, London S.E. 24