

THE WORKER



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KILL THE BILL-SMASH CAPITALISM! INDUSTRIAL ACTION NOT CLASS COMPROMISE

AFTER CROYDON

In December it was thousands. In January tens of thousands. By March 1st the million mark was reached. And on March 18th class war was declared by 4 million workers.

A qualitative change is taking place in the balance of class forces in Britain. Workers are acquiring a class political consciousness at a speed unrivalled in our history. March 18th, 1871, was the biggest leap ever taken up to that time by Workers anywhere, when they founded the Paris Commune. March 18th, 1971, in its own way, will be as important a date in the historical development of the British Working Class.

Two things happened on March 18th from which every worker in Britain can draw the appropriate lessons. Over two million workers went on strike to demonstrate their determination to fight the Government's Industrial Relations Bill to the finish. The TUC General Council at Croydon refused to countenance industrial action against the Bill and plumped for a policy of peaceful opposition.

The first of these was an event of major importance in the battle against the Bill which trade unionists everywhere are going to have to wage themselves, backing their own shop floor leadership in the struggle and rejecting every attempt of would-be leaders to make peace on their behalf. The second was a non-event which surprised nobody.

At the beginning of the year the WORKER had already warned that "the TUC will not lead a fight to smother the Bill". As we said at the time: "So terrified are they of being in the lead of the mounting army of the working class on this issue that they vacillate on all actions and demonstrations, find themselves unable to initiate even a one day stoppage and, in connection with the spontaneous actions on December 8th and January 12th, seek to apologise for them."

The seven-point programme of inaction against the Bill on which the TUC scraped by with a narrow 5 to 4 million vote at Croydon, as empty as the Government's majority vote in the House of Commons will be, fools no one. Voluntary non-registration is useless. The Government has already said that Unions will be declared in unless they take steps to declare themselves out, and the front on this line has been broken by tame union leaderships before it even happens. What the seven points really boil down to is a plea to the Parliamentary Labour Party to repeal the Act (the TUC has already accepted that the Bill will become law) if Labour ever gets back in power.

The TUC wants to return to the position under Labour when it was going to be allowed to do the employers' dirty work for them and surrender the strike weapon on behalf of the



On March 1st and 18th massive strikes against the Industrial Relations Bill closed down the car industry, the docks and newspapers; and disrupted business all over the country. Thousands marched through London on the 1st (pictured above) and demonstrations were held in all major cities. More thousands on the 18th gathered outside Fairfield Hall, Croydon, to leave no doubt in the minds of the T.U.C. and the Union leaders that the workers of Britain will never end their struggle against the Bill till it and those who have fostered it have been smashed.

Labour movement. Indeed, Vic Feather got down on his knees at Croydon and made the same appeal to the present Government. Set aside these proposals and "the TUC will enter into discussion about ways of improving industrial relations", which can only mean that they would give up voluntarily most of what the Bill would take away by force.

The secretary of the ETU backed up this line by suggesting that the TUC offer the Government a strike-free year in return for withdrawing the Bill! Croydon demonstrated another point which we made back in February. "When massive industrial action against the Bill begins to hit the employers where it hurts, the real class position of every would-be trade union leader will become obvious."

GOVERNMENT RATTLED

However pleased the Government was with the line adopted by the TUC at Croydon they did not like the mass strikes on March 1st and 18th which completely closed down the motor industry, docks and newspapers and seriously affected many others. The Employment Minister, Robert Carr, called this "deliberately engineered (because the AUEW initiated it?) political strike" an example of "mindless militancy". He mentioned with

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NEW ATTACK ON WORKERS

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As the crisis of British capitalism deepens the hirelings of the ruling class in and out of Westminster are working overtime (they're well paid for it!) to think up additional forms of action to be taken against workers. An idea gaining increasing support in reactionary circles is that of depriving the families of workers on strike of supplementary benefits. Indeed legislation on this matter is being drafted and the Conservative MP for South Angus, Jock Bruce-Gardyne, is only worried that it won't go far enough. (Sunday Telegraph March 7).

He fears that there might be some hesitation in cutting off supplementary benefits altogether because of some compunction about "letting the women and children starve" and urges that no such consideration should stand in the way. After all, he points out, the worker on strike can "postpone the payment of hire purchase instalments, he may be drawing strike pay and his wife may be working". Or, Bruce-Gardyne suggests, the worker on strike may take a second job — and refuse to declare this income for tax. (Can he have read the latest unemployment figures at 800,000?).

"I do not deny", he ends blandly, "that the withdrawal of supplementary benefits could involve a measure of hardship. But then all strikes inflict hardship on the community" — he means on the capitalist class, of course, and the wives and children of militant workers must pay for it.

BREAKING UP THE BIG UNIONS

Another idea in government circles is a plan to break up the big unions. This has become an

attractive scheme since two of the biggest unions are leading the campaign against the Industrial Relations Bill.

This idea is to use the Monopolies Commission which has never managed to restrict the size of the big monopolies (nor was it ever intended to really) for the purpose of limiting the size of trade unions.

It is sad that a nice obedient trade union leadership like that of the Municipal and General would have to suffer along with the bad boys opposing the Bill with industrial action, but that's what happens when the whole class has to be kept in after school for misbehaving.

British workers whose struggle against the main attack of the Industrial Relations Bill is mounting day by day will know how to deal with these diversionary attacks the Government dreams up.

The Industrial Relations Bill and the Immigration Bill are but two prongs of the same attack by the bosses against the working class, the drive towards the corporate state. Another prong of this attack, which has received less publicity than the other repressive legislation, but which is no less directed against the workers of this country is the Malicious Damage Bill. This bill provides for much stiffer penalties for offences involving damage to property. Although it is ostensibly directed against vandals it does not take much imagination to visualise it being used against workers who paint slogans on walls or strike pickets who damage property when they are assaulted by the Police. All repressive legislation is designed to restrict the day-to-day struggle of the working class, and for that reason it should be resisted by the working class movement to the utmost.

BRITISH TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND!

Easter 1971 is the 55th anniversary of the 1916 Rising in Dublin, which British troops suppressed with bloody reprisals after four days of fierce and bitter street fighting. 1971 is also the 50th anniversary of the Anglo-Irish treaty of 1921, under which British imperialism switched to

neo-colonial rule in the South of Ireland, while retaining direct control over the six North Eastern counties. Now, fifty years later, the "solution" to the Irish problem which Britain sought in the 1921 treaty lies in ruins. As in 1916 the movement to throw

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ON THE INDUSTRIAL FRONT

The government is trying to break the working class movement by encouraging recession and unemployment but this is beginning to backfire on them. For example the chairman of the clearing bankers, John Thomson of Barclay's made a speech complaining that "Failures and bankruptcies, with consequent unemployment, are supposed to frighten employees away from making claims while liquidity crises, brought on by excessive restriction on lending, are alleged to prevent employers from giving way." Many of our hard-pressed customers, however, would contend that they are too short of money to risk an interruption of output, even though it would be in their long-term interests to stand firm." So although the employers may be acting tough, in fact they are more vulnerable than ever and workers are using this knowledge.

REDUNDANCIES

The number of redundancies and the level of unemployment are steadily increasing. On top of the 4,300 Rolls-Royce redundancies (with 18,000 more depending on the future of the RB-211) and the connected bankruptcies and redundancies among suppliers there have been such events as the closing of Wiggins Teape's Hylton Paper Mill in County Durham making more than 400 redundant, 2,600 at the British Steel Corporation's special steels and strip mills divisions, in Rotherham, Corby, Manchester and S. Wales, with at least another 5,000 expected to be announced soon in these areas and in Scotland. 600 men are to be made redundant at Harland and Wolff's Tilbury and North Woolwich ship repair works, and the British Aircraft Corporation is sacking 500 men at Weybridge and Hurn.

ANTI T.U. BILL

The press were licking their lips at the prospect of a "revolt" at the Birmingham battery factory of the Lucas Group at Formans Road. The standard right-wing tactics were used — secret petitions, "Some of us are tired of being pushed around by a bunch of flaming Commies," etc. But the smile was wiped off their faces when at a mass meeting only 20 of 1,300 workers voted against striking on March 18th. The Lucas management were taught a lesson as well when 90% of the workforce stopped for two hours at the Aston lamp factory in protest against two people who had tried to organise an anti-strike petition.

GRIMSBY TRAWLERS

Fancy a life on the ocean wave? A seven-day week in an unsafe trawler in all weathers? A basic rate of £19 a week plus a commission based on the catch? Grimsby's 1,200 trawlermen don't like that situation either and went on strike on March 5th for a basic rate of £22.70 for a senior deep-sea deckhand plus a guaranteed £1 a day commission. They rejected an offer of £28 a week with a restricted commission. The shipowners managed to get six trawlers out, despite pickets but the trawlermen have improved things and have warned that they are prepared for a prolonged struggle, saying, "It is round one to the trawler owners, but this is a 15-round contest."

SCOTT LITHGOW

At the 6 Scott Lithgow shipyards on the Lower Clyde, the strike of 2,300 boilermakers which began on February 13th brought the yard to a complete halt by the beginning of March. The men rejected an offer of a 7½p an hour increase or 12.9% by a two-to-one majority. Despite the fact that recent pay deals on the Upper Clyde had brought increases of 10p or more and that Scott Lithgow has more than £100 million worth of orders on hand, the managing director, Mr. Belch, claimed that the 7½p was as much as the group could afford.

MINERS

The 2,000 strong NUM branch at Woolley Colliery, near Barnsley, Yorkshire, has called for the union to make a new pay claim on behalf of Britain's 300,000 miners. They want a weekly rate of £35 for men at the coalface, £28 for other underground men and £26 for surface workers. At present the rates are £26.37 for coalface workers, £19 for underground workers and £18 for surface workers as the national minimum rates. It was the Woolley branch that pushed for the demand of £30, £22 and £20 which resulted in last year's strike.

IDIOTS OF THE MONTH

Once upon a time there were six Surbiton typists who were persuaded by their employer and a Tory M.P. to work an extra half-hour a day for nothing "in the national interest." This was the start of the press's hysterical "I'm Backing Britain" campaign. Despite all the flag-waving it was the biggest flop since the solid lead airship. The employers gave up hope of getting the workers to cut their own throats and tried more direct methods like the Industrial Relations Bill. But like Dracula, the idea of workers making sacrifices "for the good of the company" has risen from the grave and the first victims seem to be 400 sausage workers for Walls at Evesham, Worcs. The factory lease is running out and that seemed as good an excuse as any to threaten to move the factory, the town's largest employer. The workers unfortunately fell for this threat instead of fighting it, and offered a year's pay freeze, increased productivity, and a pound a week from their wages for two years to buy shares (tell that to Rolls-Royce workers who held Rolls shares). The decision will make precious little difference to the fortunes of Walls, part of the Unilever empire, but will mean that the next time the threat of moving the factory is used, the workers will have even more at stake and will be in a far weaker position.

Also in the "feeding the mouth that bites you" department comes the offer from the Clerical and Administrative Workers Union of a loan of £50,000 to the nationalised Rolls-Royce (1971) Limited, provided the government renegotiated the RB-211 contract. The offer was described an indication of the union's concern to avoid redundancies and unemployment. So they lend money to a government whose policy is to hammer the working class into submission by increasing unemployment! The government's Industrial Relations Bill includes fines for unions of £100,000 or £50,000 and a union hands over the money voluntarily! And why didn't the money go to the postal workers when they needed it?

ROYAL MINT

After moving from London to Llantrisant, Glamorgan partly to try to escape from the pressure of highly organised skilled workers, the Royal Mint has found that it has simply moved from the frying pan into the fire, with strikes over demarcation issues taking place last month. And the Royal Mint workers never have to face the employer's usual complaint about being short of money!

FORD WORKERS FIGHT ON

After six weeks of united strike action and with the anti-strike propaganda going full blast Ford workers at Dagenham met on Sunday, March 14th, 17,000 strong, and, with no more than 50 against, confirmed by show of hands their determination to fight on. At this stage the strike had lasted longer than any before in Ford's history, and the hysterical propaganda from Ford and government showed weakness rather than strength.

Talk of shoddy work and its consequences can only demonstrate how far removed the high Ford management is from the realities of production. Every Ford worker knows about the shoddy goods and the reasons for it. This only shows that there is shoddy management.

But what of the prospects in this struggle. As we have said before, there are limits to the progress to be made when sections of workers take on the state-backed employer in isolation. This is no reason for not fighting. We would never subscribe to the idea that workers must wait for others to catch up before turning on the pace. But recent experience has shown that every section of workers is faced with the same problems. Large sections have faced up to them in the same way BUT SEPARATELY. Whatever illusions any workers have been under concerning the role of the TUC must surely now go in the harsh light of recent experience. The Postal workers were allowed, after a memorable struggle of which they can always feel proud, to go down in defeat with the TUC playing the part of a benevolent neutral. If the TUC has no effect in any of the great class battles of today including that of the very survival of Trade Unionism, has no apparent role at all, its continued existence can only serve to perpetuate an illusion. One thing the working class cannot afford is such illusions.

Ford workers are not only fighting their own just fight but continuing the fight which involves all workers. All workers are indebted to them and all must give utmost support in every way. While Ford workers are financially better supported than the Postal workers this is only marginally so. They have shown in eight weeks of united struggle their willingness to sacrifice in a fight which is not only their own. Those who let the postal workers go down through lack of means to continue have the chance afforded them by the Ford workers to retrieve the position, to score a victory for the working class. Therefore all support to the Ford workers. We cannot take over their battle but we can certainly sustain it, and after eight weeks the time is NOW.

THE ONLY ANSWER TO HENRY FORD. SHOW HIM THE QUICK WAY HOME!



"What's good for General Motors is good for the United States". So said Eisenhower's Defence Secretary who had formerly been a General Motors executive. Henry Ford II who has just been visiting his British Ford colony says: What's right for Fords had better be right for Britain — or else.

Complaining that Fords operations in Britain are "becoming increasingly difficult due to labour problems", he went on to say: "The problem is a British one — no matter what industry it is".

He said things in Britain needed to be cleaned up and trade union relations had to be improved. Meanwhile he was not going to sink any more Ford money in Britain and a £35m. engine plant would be set up somewhere else.

THE WORKERS' ANSWER

Ford workers who had gathered for a mass meeting at Leys Hall Baths, Dagenham, to reaffirm their determination to continue the strike which has closed down all 29 Ford plants in the U.K. were asked what they thought of this threat.

Some said he was bluffing since he already had too much tied up in Britain to think of pulling out. Others said whether he was bluffing or not there was no reason for them to work under the rate. All agreed that it is not for workers in Britain to go short so that profits here reach the fullest expectations of American capitalists. If capitalism either here or in the United States is in trouble that's not the workers' concern. They don't run it: they're exploited by it.

HEATH'S ANSWER

But Britain's Prime Minister Heath was a different matter. He could not get down on his knees fast enough to explain to the mighty Mr. Ford that everything was going to be all right for American big business in Britain. At a lunch arranged for Henry Ford and his entourage at Downing Street Heath explained his Government's Industrial Relations Bill which was intended to emasculate the trade unions. He thought inflation would soon be under control and he promised a conference on the problems of the motor industry at which Government would sit down with both sides and they could all talk their heads off.

It is hard to say if any of this fawning assurance that Heath was ready to take on the whole British labour movement in the interests of Henry Ford had much effect. After all, Henry Ford knows about fighting organised labour. Fords has one of the worst records of all time for hiring gangsters to beat up militant labour leaders, putting private detectives on to workers' representatives, and using scab labour to stave off trade union organisation.

In fact, from his family experience of fighting organised labour Henry Ford II paid British workers a great tribute. He said "In the United States we know when strikes are going to happen and how to foresee things. Here we don't know one day to the next how things will go".

Coming from the class enemy that is a compliment to the tactical skill of British workers. The point of a strike is to win. Otherwise its like the Welsh mine, who said strikes ought only take place in the summer time when the coal wouldn't be missed.

And Prime Minister Heath after his session with Henry Ford made one of his fighting speeches in which he said that the campaign against the Industrial Relations Bill would do no good and at the same time screamed hysterical threats at the workers waging it.

POSTAL STRIKE THE LESSONS

Although after seven weeks out on strike the Post Office workers returned with no more money than they were offered in the first place, they went back with something else — the experience of the strike, a higher class consciousness, and fighting solidarity and unity. Thus from the class point of view, the strike was a success. It was a success from the first day, by the fact that 230,000 workers came out to fight not just the Post Office, but also the whole employing class as later became clear.

Why did they go back? Cries of 'sellout' by the UPW executive are superficial. The real

sellout was by the whole working class in not throwing their weight behind the postal workers. The question is not so much why did the UPW call for a return to work, but why did the whole trade union movement not give more real support to the postal workers? One hour's pay from every trade unionist would have provided enough to pay strike benefits three times over. Even what support did come from the Unions was in the form of single loans, and were in no way the regular stream of money that was required. But more important than the failure to provide sufficient money, was the lack of sup-

port in blacking all kinds of work associated with the mails — of particular importance would have been action by the railway men.

An orderly return to work, united and disciplined, is far more in the workers' interest than the alternative of a slow drift back to work, followed by a total collapse. But when the strike was called off there was no sign of such a drift, in fact the solidarity of the postal workers was magnificent. The decision of the UPW leaders in calling off the strike demonstrated a lack of confidence in the working class, resulting from a lack of experience and understanding of the kind of solidarity that develops among workers involved in such a strike action.

The leadership should not be over-criticised. They did not, of course, see that the fight was against the government, and thus did not seek out support from the rest of the trade union movement as they should have done. But they were right in calling the strike when they did, despite those who said since there were no funds there should be no strike. With the level of wages in the Post Office, where could the money for a strike fund come from? It is also a fact that no union in the country could afford to pay to all its members for more than a fortnight. They were also right to call the strike without waiting for the other Post Office Unions — they would still be waiting.

As it turned out the Post Office Engineers were instrumental in weakening the strike. Their continual working throughout the strike enabled the continued use

of telecommunications which was unforeseen at the start of the strike when it was thought that commerce would be crippled in two weeks. By working while the P.O. workers were on strike they not only helped to force them to accept the 8% but have put themselves in a position where they cannot demand more than this. If the UPW members had got 15% the Post Office would have had to give this to the POEU as well. This is a classic example of the dictum "In elevating others you elevate yourself." If the whole of the trade union movement had really supported the strike, its success would have laid the way for similar increases throughout the public sectors. The non-action of the TUC, the supposed coordinator of the struggles of the trade unions (which it has never done) serves as another exposure of its real nature.

So the Post Office workers are back at work with a pay increase they could have got two months ago. But they have taken a giant stride forward politically, they have developed more through the strike than ever before their class consciousness and solidarity. Another smaller lesson will be presented to them with the result of the "Court of Inquiry" (i.e. arbitration) — the lesson that nothing can be gained from the Bosses' Court.

This struggle of the Post Office workers begins to compare in significance to the heroic battle of the miners in 1926. The workers have gone back with the greatest hatred of the employing class, and hatred is the beginning of class wisdom.



Post Office workers demonstrating their militancy, at a mass meeting in Hyde Park.

ROLLS ROYCE

Following on from the collapse of Rolls Royce it is a sorry sight to see the workers of Rolls Royce, Derby, with their misplaced loyalty, trying to save their defunct former employers, the owners of Rolls Royce. One would have thought the last few years would have taught them better.

In 1969 the workers of the Rolls Royce monopoly last faced a major attack by their arrogant management (who have always been an aristocratic, paternalistic management in their dealings not only with workers but with customers as well) — the closure of Stag Lane, Edgware, London, the base of much of Britain's pioneering aviation history under De Havillands and the declaring of massive redundancies at Bristol. The Derby A.E.U. convenor refused to support a call for industrial action throughout Rolls Royce at an officially convened delegate conference of shop stewards and trade union officials called by the A.E.U. Executive Council in London.

The excuse given for this refusal was that Derby (which meant all the Midland factories of the original Rolls Royce empire, prior to the mergers which gave Rolls Royce the aero-engine monopoly of Britain) had no redundancy agreement with the management. A vast amount of subcontract work went out of Derby to small engineering firms and, by letting up and down movements of production be accommodated by the subcontractors, the Derby workforce could be kept stable.

That was the agreement. That was the theory. So in 1969 Derby said, in effect, to the rest of Rolls Royce workers: "Pull up the ladder, we're fire-proof. Your problem is not ours". But how has it worked out? Already 2,000 at Derby have been declared redundant with tens of thousands of workers threatened with the sack if the RB211 engine is finally scrapped. So much for the isolationist "I'm all right, Jack" class collaborationist line Derby so briefly enjoyed. The workers of Rolls Royce Hillington (Scotland), Bristol, Coventry, Leavesden, Northern Ireland etc. would take again today their 1969 decision that the only way to beat the employing class is by mass action of all workers — not just those being attacked. Workers need their "bastion of iron".

This no redundancy agreement was known to the small and

medium subcontractors of Rolls Royce who are being wiped out by the collapse. They had it good while it lasted. They knew the score. As we said in the last WORKER we have no sympathy for them. It's their own capitalist system which is collapsing around them.

The misplaced loyalty of the Derby workers is of long standing. There is a favourite tale among the Rolls Royce workers of the ex-De Havilland, Bristol Siddeley companies which were merged into Rolls Royce. When some aero-engine fitters from the Coventry factory were working away at an airfield and met some Derby fitters also out working at this airfield they began discussing wages and conditions giving examples from their own circumstances. It turned out that the Derby fitters were getting £5 to £6 less per 40 hour week than their Coventry-based counterparts. The Derby fitters said it was worth £5 per week to be allowed to wear overalls with ROLLS ROYCE printed across their backs! They should have charged Rolls Royce a fiver for advertising rights. As workers well know — you can't pay the butcher or baker with pride, false or otherwise; he wants money.

Back in 1968 the Derby workers were allowed to buy equity shares in the company at around 45/- a share. They are now worthless bits of paper. Will these workers now realise that you can not buy out of the working class struggle, that only by revolution can workers reap the full benefit of their labours? And do the workers in Derby who are working overtime for nothing, let alone a flat rate, really believe their sacrifice will have one iota of influence on the decision of Heath or Nixon to save or scrap the RB211 engine? This decision like all others that affect their lives is a political one taken in the interests not of them but their class enemy.

The workers of Derby out of all their past mistakes and present or near future suffering must surely realise that the attitude of their workmates in 1969, unity of the workers to fight the common enemy the employing class, is the only way forward for us. "That we may end the system which creates unemployment and poverty in the midst of plenty, and replace it with a just and equitable one".

United we will win. Divided we are slaves.



Phnom Penh's Pochenteng Airport in ruins following a surprise attack by Cambodian National Liberation Armed Forces.

LAOS INVASION SMASHED

The Tet offensive of 1968 proved that even half a million U.S. troops in Vietnam were incapable of defeating the forces of the National Liberation Front, backed by almost the entire population. Ever since, the U.S. has been like a gambler getting deeper into trouble and trying one desperate throw after another. The imperialists cannot admit that the true strength of the National Liberation Front lies in its support from the mass of the people (so much so that the Saigon puppet army has the highest desertion rate in the world while that its administration and even its security forces are riddled with supporters of the NLF). So the American generals keep claiming that the key to the war is supply trails or arms caches (while in fact the major supply comes from the U.S.A. itself through captured weapons or the corrupt Saigon administration and the black market). The claim about cutting supply routes, which could only be finally satisfied with American troops occupying every country in the world, has been used as an excuse for the invasion of Cambodia last year, and now the invasion of Laos. The Cambodian invasion (Operation "Total Victory") has left liberation forces in complete control of at least 70% of the country, while the Saigon forces occupy little except graves.

The American regime are practically non-existent and the entire air-force was blown up in January. Faced with increasing opposition to the war inside the U.S.A. and growing revolt among U.S. troops (the Army has even set up a ballistic unit to check, when officers are killed, whether it was by the enemy or their own troops) the American imperialists have tried "Vietnamisation" — "changing the colour of the corpses". This does not mean U.S. withdrawal as Nixon has dropped his election-time talk about withdrawal by 1972, has said, "I will not put any limitation of the use of air power" and has said that troops will remain as long as there are American prisoners-of-war which there must inevitably be as long as troops remain. But all this talk, including threats of invading the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, is only that of a frenzied gambler losing all control.

The test of "Vietnamisation" was admitted to be the Laos invasion, with crack regiments of the Saigon army — and these have been chopped into bloody mincemeat by the liberation

forces. After the first few days of the invasion, with the reports of such victories as the seizure of 20 pigs and 2,000 cooking pots, it became clear that despite all-out U.S. air and artillery support the Saigon forces were being hacked to pieces, battalions at a time.

The advance into Laos along Route 9 reached only as far as Tchepone, 30 miles from the frontier — described as "a key nerve centre" until it was abandoned after a few hours. Bases set up along the highway were wiped out one by one and where evacuations were possible those fit troops left fought one another to get out, leaving behind the wounded. With over 200 aircraft shot down in the first two weeks, U.S. pilots became reluctant to fly near these positions, especially since liberation forces had captured smoke markers and used them to lure aircraft into traps. A 500-man Ranger battalion was wiped out when Hill 31 was overrun, while in the fighting that destroyed fire bases "Lolo" and "Brown" a whole regiment was cut to pieces by the Pathet Lao and the Saigon forces were pushed back 12 miles. Mean-

while in the rest of Laos, the puppet forces (sometimes referred to as "neutralists" in the same way that rabid reactionary trade unionists in Britain are sometimes referred to as "moderates") were suffering heavy defeats, with the fall of the towns of Saravane and Muong Phalane in the south. In the north of Laos the towns of Muong Soui and Sam Thong were captured while the much vaunted "secret army" of Meo tribesmen under General Vang Pao, paid and controlled directly by the C.I.A., began to melt away after suffering heavy losses in a battle just north of their base at Long Cheng. The fiasco of the "secret army" (set up because the regular Laotian army often refused to be used by the Americans to fight their fellow countrymen in the Pathet Lao) was completed when F4 fighter-bombers bombed the C.I.A. barracks at Long Cheng.

So the imperialists, after their invasion of Laos are more than ever in the position of having to choose between a forced withdrawal now, or even more escalation of the war, another desperate gamble, and yet heavier defeats to follow it.

CHINA WARNS U.S.

When Chairman Mao pointed out, some years ago, that the 700 million Chinese people provided a powerful backing for the Vietnamese people and the vast expanse of China's territory their reliable rear area, US imperialism scoffed. Today its reaction is somewhat different. Caught in a web of mistakes and defeats US policy in Indochina has suffered grievously. The latest act of aggression in Laos has been a complete fiasco. US and puppet troops cannot retreat too quickly in the face of the liberation forces whose accuracy is such the hundreds of U.S. helicopters have been lost in the space of a month.

At such a time Prime Minister Chou En-lai's speech delivered in Hanoi a few days ago, on the occasion of a high-powered Chinese Communist Party and government delegation to North Vietnam, should provide much concern to Nixon and his advisers and to the Henry Fords and Rockefeller who are behind the US government. "If U.S. imperialism should obstinately go down the road of expanding its war of aggression in Indochina, the Chinese people will take all necessary measures, not flinching even from the greatest national sacrifices, to give all-out support and assistance to the three peo-

ples of Indochina... The Chinese people and the peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia are brothers and comrades-in-arms... We will always unite together, fight together and win victory together."

These fighting words were scarcely mentioned in the British press or television. But they are a very serious warning to U.S. imperialism and to its subsidiaries such as the British capitalists who continue to help US aggression in Indochina. But Heath and Co. had better remember what happened to U.S.A. during the Korean War. The Chinese volunteers inflicted the biggest defeat the Americans had ever suffered till then. The China of today is far stronger. Politically the dictatorship of the working class has never been more powerful while economically and technologically China's achievements are spectacular. Just a few days before Chou's visit the Chinese put into orbit their second satellite. Rockets that can launch 221 Kg. satellites can also deliver ICBMs. The Pentagon had better learn the bitter facts of life. Also Henry Ford. Taiwan where Ford hopes to step up his investments now that British workers have proved to be so difficult is part of China. Its liberation is not far off.

EDUCATION MINISTER BOOED OFF CAMPUS

March 17th saw the visit to Enfield College of Margaret Thatcher, Minister of Education. She came to open a new tutorial building. As it turned out she never actually got round to opening the building and had to have a police escort to get off the campus.

The building she had come to open cost £3,000 and while another £3,000 had been spent on preparations for the opening ceremony. The irony is that although this building is never more than a third used, there is no student accommodation supplied by the college. It is the educational equivalent of Centre Point. As she entered the building students left their union meeting and booed her. One student shouted, "If you are so concerned about our education why don't you do something about it. The library is cramped. We don't have enough books. We have no accommodation. You want us to study and look what you subject us to. This is a factory." In reply, Thatcher shouted from the platform, "It's people like you who justify the actions of people like me!"

Police were called and escorted her off the campus. One student was arrested and a meeting of students held immediately afterwards demanded that any fine he might incur should be paid by the union.

While every word was pleaded that Thatcher was stopped there are still lessons to be learned. All the action was spontaneous, which is to the credit of the mass

of students, but also a criticism of those who should have emphasised the importance of good organisation. If things had been organised nobody need have been arrested. The students who took the most active part in the events cannot be said to be the established "politics" at the college yet they were conscious of their own conditions and what this meant represented. Yet before this the students had been quiet for some time. From this, we should learn that fellow students or workmates can appear "non-political" yet when the opportunity comes they show themselves to be as good as anybody else.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

APRIL 2nd — MEETING ON IMMIGRATION BILL 7.30 p.m. 155 Fortress Road, N.W.5.
APRIL 16th — MEETING ON IRELAND 7.30 p.m. 155 Fortress Road, N.W.5.
APRIL 23rd — MEETING ON THE PARIS COMMUNE 7.30 p.m. 155 Fortress Road, N.W.5.
MAY 1st — MAY DAY MEETING 7.30 p.m. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1.

Films
APRIL 24th — "ALEXANDER NEVSKY" directed by Eisenstein 7.30 p.m. Admission 25p. 155 Fortress Road, N.W.5.
MAY 8th — "END OF ST. PETERSBURG" directed by Pudovkin 7.30 p.m. Admission 25p. 155 Fortress Road, N.W.5.

ONE MAN'S BONUS ANOTHER MAN'S SACK

The present position of the Electricity employers following the Wilberforce inquiry, and its recommendation that the introduction of bonus schemes should be speeded up, should be enough to silence now and for ever those whizz kids in the labour and Trade Union movement who have in recent years been chiding the opponents of productivity schemes as "backwoodsman".

Those who have taken a line against wage increases through productivity deals were not backward looking but realistic. They saw quite clearly the threat to jobs. They were not only hampered by legislation in the form of redundancy payments but the proponents of deals claimed that in all deals the proviso that there would be no redundancy was necessary. This so called safeguard has usually been expressed in terms of no redundancy "except through natural wastage". Those who thought this to be a safeguard need only look about them to see its effect. Those who concluded productivity deals ten years ago need only count the labour force now compared with ten years ago and look at the present unemployment figures. A cut in the labour employed of

around 40 to 50 per cent is the usual pattern. If there is any doubt left of the real effect of productivity deals on employment the electricity employers have ended it, and in so doing have placed the Trade Union officials who have gone along with them, in fact have pushed the employers along, in a dilemma. In the Work Study based bonus scheme of the Electricity industry to which the Unions are a party, there is no question of a no redundancy clause. THE SCHEME CANNOT OPERATE WITHOUT REDUNDANCY.

The electricity workers are reaping the reward of weakness at all levels. In chinking out of a fight they could have won hands down they now face the contempt of the employers expressed in the advice to go forth and persuade your members to take the sack as without substantial redundancies the bonus scheme to which they have committed themselves cannot operate. The scheme amounts to nothing but reducing the labour force to a level that will enable it to earn bonuses by doing the work of those made redundant.

Of course the redundant worker would be given redundancy

pay, but then the job was gone for ever. None of the 800,000 unemployed can get it ever. So, the crackpot economists dedicated to making capitalism work instead of destroying it are now faced with the alternative of preaching redundancy with unemployment reaching its highest ever total since the war, or facing up to the fact that they have been wrong to hell, throwing the bonus scheme back in the face of the employers. One thing is certain. Whatever the disposition of the Chapples of this world there are many local Trade Union officials concerned in this industry with the support of the shop stewards who will refuse to be parties to this iniquitous scheme and will actively oppose it. The Wilberforce inquiry solved nothing from the workers point of view. Only a fool thought it might. The ball is back in the court of the workers in the industry. The choice is clear. Cannon, Chapple, Wilberforce, low wages and unemployment. Or struggle like all other workers. If other workers could not better their wages and safeguard their jobs except through struggle, why would any electricity worker imagine that he can.

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KILL THE IMMIGRATION BILL!

The first thing to note is that the Bill is not about restricting the number of immigrant workers coming into Britain. The flow of Irish labour will continue unchecked as in previous immigration acts as with the entry of European labour which has never been subject to quotas. Commonwealth workers will no longer be controlled by quotas imposed by the Labour Government in 1965. Instead they will be divided on ethnic grounds with one lot — from the white dominions of Canada, Australia, as well as Rhodesia, South Africa etc. being allowed to enter and work freely without vouchers if they are patriots. This old legal term, resurrected for the purposes of dividing the working class still further, means the children and grand-children of persons born in Britain. Patriots will have "rights of abode" i.e. the right to work and live freely in Britain while non-patrials — the bulk of the black Commonwealth i.e. workers from India, Pakistan, the West Indies — will be subject to a new kind of work permit. Incidentally, this division based on patriality has nothing to do with being British citizens since East African Asians, British passport holders, are going to be excluded along with Commonwealth citizens if they are non-patrials.

The employers will continue to get cheap labour as and when they want it and on their own terms. The new Immigration Bill ensures that the work permit will be given to people only on conditions imposed by the employer. For the first time in Britain a worker will be tied to his job, not able to change it for the 12 months of his stay irrespective of the level of wages or conditions of employment. Any change of address must be notified to the police. Thus at one stroke the freedom of movement, the most basic right won at the dawn of capitalism against feudal restrictions, is being taken away from one section of the British working class. Many workers already living in Britain will be classified as non-patrials if they have been here since July 1966. Others also will be involved since the onus of proving patriality is on the worker — not the government. Thus the very mobility of labour is being attacked and a

system of job reservation and restriction created reminiscent of South African apartheid. The employer not only hopes to get cheap labour on his terms but should the worker become disobedient or act in a manner considered illegal (and the Industrial Relations Bill makes the category of illegal acts on the shop floor quite considerable) the punishment provided by the Act is a further manifestation of the naked fascism that the British government is now using against the working class. For all kinds of alleged offences the penalty is deportation.

After the new Immigration law comes into effect (and the government is bent on rushing it through Parliament like the Industrial Relations Bill) any worker who goes on strike, demonstrates, pickets, gets involved with the police etc. is liable to be deported.

While workers will be able to appeal against most orders for

deportation the Immigration Bill introduces a new provision which has shocked even American commentators. In the manner of any typical fascist state like Nazi Germany the Home Secretary can deport anyone whose presence, in his opinion, "is not conducive to the public interest".

At one stroke all those who fought at places like Injection Moulders, Purnfield, Larico or during the recent Post Office strike and the strike now going on at Fords would be at grave risk of not simply losing their jobs, but their very right to stay in Britain. Britain has also the unique distinction of being the first state to demand deportation not only of the alleged offender but of his entire family — including children.

The Bill is inextricably related to the Industrial Relations Bill as part of the advance towards fascism by British capitalism now in grave crisis.

AFTER CROYDON CONTINUED FROM P.1

approval the TUC's opposition to the strike and to any industrial action for political ends. He said at the same time that such strikes were ineffective and that they were causing enormous damage. Of course, an EMPLOYMENT Minister who has just achieved the all-time high UNEMPLOYMENT figure of nearly 800,000 including Northern Ireland might be excused for sounding schizophrenic!

Prime Minister Heath accused trade unionists involved in the strike of preferring "anarchy without responsibility". Well, he is an authority on anarchy as the wave of bankruptcies from Rolls-Royce down shows. When his Government's policies have brought about the highest unemployment since the depression in the 'thirties he had the nerve to say "One man's strike call is another's redundancy notice — and all for the luxury of a political strike". This is a paraphrase of Feather's pronouncement: "One man's strike is another man's layoff".

Heath and Carr are right about one thing. The industrial action against the Bill IS political. It is directed not simply against the wages and conditions imposed by the employing class but against the capitalist state seeking to fetter fascist restrictions on the trade unions and, ultimately, against the capitalist system itself. It is not some new form of accommodation being sought. It is class war.

This is what has frightened the phoney 'leftists' in the labour movement. They want to get back to a position where they could live at peace with the capitalists, whatever sacrifices it meant for the working class. They call for a general election if they are reformists, hoping for a return of Labour and the illusion of class peace—an illusion workers proved at the last General Election that they no longer share. If they are

ultra-leftists, they call for a general strike — not as a device, however ill-conceived and ill-prepared, for smashing capitalism but for FORCING a general election which will put Labour back. So it comes to the same thing. We say: Any action designed to replace one capitalist government, the Tories, with another capitalist government, Labour, is a retreat from the level of working class struggle against the Bill already achieved and a betrayal of the class war.

Our party, the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) welcomes, supports and will be closely involved in all forms of industrial action to defeat this Bill and any others like it which may be devised by either capitalist party. Action to this end must come to include the entire working class in a growing tide of resistance which can maintain a protracted struggle. This Bill and what it implies will not be defeated by some short, once for all demonstration of temporary unity. In defying the Bill workers are telling the state agents of the capitalist class that their rule is no longer acceptable. Workers in saying this are really claiming the right to rule themselves, to overthrow the capitalist class and the capitalist system. That is what this struggle is about. That is the only way it can end. There can be no going back. The way ahead will be long and bloody, but the goal — a working class state freed from exploitation — is glorious.

We have complete confidence that the workers, the great rank and file, will slice through all the vacillation and petty haggling of which Croydon was an example, will take the leadership into their own hands and this Bill, too, and tear it to shreds. In so doing they are setting their feet firmly on the revolutionary road to the emancipation of the working class in Britain.

PARIS 1871



Commune fighters in the Place Vendôme, which they renamed "International Square". The column, a symbol of Napoleonic Militarism and Chauvinism, was destroyed by the Communards.

March 18th marks the 100th anniversary of the epic day in 1871 when the armed Parisian workers defeated the armed forces of the French bourgeoisie and took over state power for the proletariat for the very first time in history, holding onto it for the 72 glorious days of the Paris Commune and thus performing a "miracle" without precedent in the history of the world working-class movement and creating the first great landmark of proletarian revolution in history.

The significance of the Paris Commune is the history of the world working-class movement is inestimable, being the first of three major steps or landmarks in the struggle of the working-class for emancipation which, though defeated, through its extremely rich revolutionary experience, both positive and negative, paved the way for the second great landmark—the Great October Revolution in Russia in 1917— which in turn paved the way for the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China—the third great landmark of proletarian revolution.

The essential teachings of the Paris Commune were concretely applied by Lenin in leading the Russian working class to victory in 1917—that the working class, to achieve emancipation, cannot wield the existing state machine for its own ends, but must, through revolutionary armed struggle carried out by the armed workers smash the existing bourgeois state machine and create a new one, based on genuine proletarian democracy in its place — as well as the lessons of its shortcomings and defeat. An equally important lesson is the need for a centralised, unified disciplined proletarian party, and for a broad worker-peasant alliance (particularly when the working-class is still numerically small).

Though thousands of Communards were cruelly massacred by reaction, their revolutionary ideas live on, as does their revolutionary anthem, the Internationale,

to inspire revolutionaries in five continents—from China, Vietnam, India to Palestine, Poland and many other countries where the Commune's centenary will be duly commemorated, not only in words, but with revolutionary actions.

In Britain, too, this great historic event will be commemorated by our Party with meetings. It will also be a time for British revolutionaries to reflect on why (despite the work of the many Communards who fled to Britain to escape the white terror like Charles Longuet and Paul Lafargue who married two of Marx's daughters and played an active part in the organising of the dockers and other unskilled workers in London) the revolutionary ideas of the Paris Commune appear to have had so much less impact in Britain, a mere two or three hundred miles away, than in other far more distant lands. Certainly, the British capitalist class understood very well, in cold terror, the significance of the Commune and consciously undertook a more subtle policy of attempting to create divisions among the workers and at all costs to promote pacifism and reformism in the working class movement.

But history does not stand still. Revolution is the main trend in the world today — and the mass movement of the workers in Britain is growing steadily as is evidenced by the mighty strike of millions of workers against the reactionary Industrial Relations Bill on March 18th, the very centenary of the Commune itself. Despite all its cunning and deception the British capitalist class cannot keep revolutionary ideas from the British working class for ever. In fact, revolutionary ideas, Marxism-Leninism, are growing steadily, amongst workers in Britain. Without a doubt the cause for which the Communards heroically gave their lives will be vindicated here too and their revolutionary ideas triumph here in Britain.

IRELAND

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

British troops out of Britain's oldest colony is reaching the stage of armed struggle. The British ruling class is reacting to this situation by sending in more troops, by rushing repressive legislation through Westminster and Stormont, and by incarcerating Irish patriots in British jails. Chichester-Clarke before resigning announced the stationing of a permanent garrison in anti-Unionist areas of Belfast, areas which he described as "enclaves of subversion and terrorism". These measures are certain to provoke counter action from the nationally minded people in Ireland, who are now constantly being attacked by the British army, Protestant extremists, and the Police.

A legacy of 800 years of oppression, which has at times assumed genocidal proportions, ensures that British imperialism can never win the "hearts and minds" of the Irish people. The British authorities know this and are therefore attempting to reduce the people of Ireland to total submission by force of arms. There are at present some 8,500 British soldiers in the North of Ireland, supported by a 3,000 strong R.U.C. and another 3,000 members of the part-time Ulster Defence Regiment. In addition there are about 10,000 ex-B Specials, who are being permitted to form "rifle clubs" — para military organisations ready to back up the Army whenever they are needed. There is also the Ulster Volunteer Force (U.V.F.), of unknown strength but of increasing use to British imperialism. The Irish people, however, are indomitable, and the days of the British occupation of Ireland are numbered.

The British working class has a strong obligation to support the struggle against British rule in Ireland. The people of Ireland are our allies against a common class enemy. Their fight is our fight. Not a moment should be wasted nor any opportunity lost by British workers to press home the demand for the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Irish territory, an end to the partition of Ireland, and the release of Irish political prisoners from British jails.

Calling all workers! **MAY DAY RALLY**
PUBLIC MEETING on SATURDAY, MAY 1st
CONWAY HALL, RED LION SQUARE, W.C.1
7.30 p.m.

Help build your revolutionary party
Organised by the Communist Party of Britain
(Marxist-Leninist)

KILL THE IMMIGRATION BILL! STOP FASCISM NOW!
The Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) denounces the Immigration Bill as a further attack on the working class. Unless it is opposed and destroyed it will be the preliminary step in regulating the whole working class in the same manner as Nazi Germany.

The control of black immigration is just a pretext for the continuing efforts of the capitalist class to impose uniformity of control on the opposing class, the working class whose united power now threatens to destroy capitalism. To pretend that it is a question of black people only is to use them as whipping boys and stalking horses — just as the fascists used the Jews in Germany.

Divide and rule is the only philosophy capitalism knows. We say: workers unite — black and white against our capitalist enemy. White capitalists will not deport black capitalists. It is workers who are under attack.

Anyone who leaves the black worker exposed to the tyranny because of the colour of his skin betrays our class. If this Bill were aimed at black people alone, we would tear it up. In fact, it is one more step toward the corporate state which will enslave us all.

The Labour Government with its emergency measures (1965 White Paper, 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act) to keep out black people and the Tory Government with its new Immigration Bill hope that white workers will be deflected from their hatred of capitalism. But both Labour and Tory represent the capitalist state and the capitalist state is against all workers.

The Industrial Relations Bill would make it possible to fine and imprison workers who strike. The Immigration Bill would make it possible to deport them. By this fascist measure any Home Secretary can decree, without any trial or tribunal, which members of an entire section of the working class should be thrown out of the country because their presence is "not conducive to the public good". And no worker has to be told what representatives of the capitalist state mean by "the public good". It is whatever suits the employing class.

Divide and rule is the weapon British imperialism has always used. It is being used against the people of Ireland today with British troops gunning down Irish workers in the streets. British imperialism in crisis is trying to use the same weapon against the working class in Britain. The workers of Britain will smash this weapon.

The Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) calls on all workers to kill the Immigration Bill as they will surely kill the Industrial Relations Bill. But the fight cannot end until they have gone on to destroy the whole rotten capitalist system which has to rely more and more on fascist methods to survive at all.

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