

WORKERS' FIGHT

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4p

£30 FOR 35 HRS!

In its 10th week, the builders' strike is still spreading and probably 300,000 workers are now out. In many towns every site is stopped. Previously non-uni on sites have been stopped and thousands recruited to the Union.

The main strength of the strike has been a lesson learnt from the miners - flying pickets. These have been vital to spread the strike in an industry where workers are widely dispersed on thousands of sites, and where probably the majority of workers are as yet non-union.

And, like the miners, the building workers have spread the scope of their picketing, to include, in some places, building suppliers as well as the sites.

The men know that one of them dies every day on the sites due to inadequate safety precautions; that they have to work 60-hour weeks and more for a living wage; that they suffer from complete insecurity and long periods of unemployment; that the work is heavy, dirty, and, in winter or in bad weather, especially, unpleasant.

And for the last six years the national union officials have won just £6 on the national rate.

That knowledge is what fuels the militancy of this fight, which all working people should support.

The National Federation of Building Trades Employers is on the run: it has closed ranks, agreeing to give interest-free loans to members, and is expelling member companies who settle with the unions.

The policy of individual, company by company, settlements may therefore seem to be a way of applying the salami tactic to the bosses - cutting them off one by one. But in a actual fact it is just as much a policy for dividing up the workers.

Look at the experience of the engineering workers! As soon as any individual settlement was made below the full claim, even though the settlement may have seemed a good one for that particular factory, the fight for the full claim was weakened. And as soon as a few larger factories had settled, the remaining factories were just left stranded.

The result was settlements far below the full claim on money - rises of around £2 - £3 which with rising prices means a cut in real wages - and, often, including nothing on the non-money parts of the claim such as hours.

The building workers too are in danger of this whittling down process. From £30 basic the claim goes down to £30 guaranteed (ie basic plus bonuses); and the claim for a 35-hour week - vital against unemployment - gets relegated to the sidelines.

But the achievements of the building workers up to now show that - even though the top union officials may make concessions and retreats - they can win the full claim and give a powerful boost to the general fight against unemployment.

No individual settlements! All out until the full £30 basic - 35 hour claim is met!

PRISONS

REVOLT AGAINST SLAVERY

Manchester dockers learned not so long ago that a local container depot was being worked by convict labour. The convicts earned a pittance of 25p per day. Who benefits from these rates? The container companies and the prison authorities.

This highlights what prisoners on the rooftops of many of Britain's jails have in mind when they describe themselves as "slaves". They mean it literally, precisely.

The growing wave of work-strikes

and other demonstrations in British prisons, organised by PROP and demanding elementary civil rights, deserve the support of the labour movement.

The demands include: the right to vote, the right to parole, the right to conjugal visits, the right to educational facilities, the right to trade union membership, the right to fair pay and working conditions, and the right to join PROP (Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners).

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RACIST MARCH FALLS FLAT

Fascists who tried to restage the 1968 pro-Powell marches of dockers and meat porters have been sorely disappointed. Only a fraction of meat-porters marched - less than one in ten. No dockers marched this year. They are too busy fighting the real cause of their troubles, the bosses and the Government, to listen to the baying of the racist con-men, hot in pursuit of a scapegoat.

Nevertheless it is a great shame on the labour movement that even the porters marched, together with the fascist National Front and with Mosleyite Danny Harmston as the main speaker at the meeting.

The beasts of Fleet Street - the Express and the others - ensured that the poisonous message of the meeting was spread, splashed on all the front pages, as widely as possible. When has a strike meeting ever received such publicity, had its ideas conveyed so clearly.

Despite the flop of the march, complacency is out. Racism is now respectable, very many workers sympathised with the porters, though unwilling to march. Such ideas can be exploited, and will be exploited, by the bosses to divide and rule the labour movement. Racism must be rooted out of the labour movement.



WHY THE SITES ARE SHUT

by John Cunningham

THE PROFITS

The building workers' strike, now in its 10th week, is probably the most important dispute this section of the working class has ever been involved in. And there are lessons to be learnt from it for many other sections.

For years the bosses in the construction industry have amassed huge profits — companies like Wimpeys, McAlpine, and Taylor Woodrow are the golden boys of the Stock Exchange. On the property development side of the industry, such parasites as Harry Hyams purposely keep buildings such as Centre Point empty and make millions through the fantastic increase in rent per square yard of office space and the consequent rise in the value of their property.

On the design and engineering side, such firms as Freeman, Fox, and Partners bolster their profits by cut-price bridges which have already led to two disasters — the collapse of the Milford Haven bridge and the Yarra bridge in Melbourne. The collapse of the Ronan Point block of flats is yet another testimony to the present state of the British building industry.

Time and time again, design has been skimped, safety standards ignored, prices fixed, wages kept down, and lump labour employed: all to one end, to fill the pockets of the bosses. The British building industry is an appalling gutter of corruption, exploitation, and downright swindling.

It is the working people who suffer. The McAlpines and Hyams don't die at the rate of one a day due to inadequate safety precautions on building sites, these rats don't have to work weekends and holidays to take home a decent wage, nor do they have to wait five years for a council house because they can't afford a mortgage.

They talk about difficulty in housing 40,000 Uganda Asians. Difficulty? Deport a few hundred Hyamses and you'd have plenty of room!

THE LUMP

We all know that the bosses make their profit by exploiting workers, but let's look at the particular characteristics of the building trade to see why exploitation is so particularly marked in this sector of industry.

The work is casual — sometimes jobs will be for very short periods indeed. Many sites employ few workers. Any long term work of building up trade union organisation and understanding is therefore very difficult.

The small business survives in this trade, even though it is very much a dog eat dog type of affair. These subcontractors, like many small-time capitalists, are often extremely reactionary in their attitudes to such things as organised labour, working conditions, and so on.

On the smaller sites and in the smaller firms it is more difficult to unionise, and improve wages and conditions.

Because of these factors, many building workers are non-union. It is difficult to know exactly, but the figure is around one million — many of these work on the 'lump', a system of labour-only subcontracting — no cards, no questions asked.

For a better wage than he can usually get, the builder must work unlimited hours, often under great pressure to get a job finished on schedule. There is no job demarcation, and most important of all the lump deters trade unionism as the men are nominally self-employed.

The whole lump system is based on fear and intimidation, even to the point where seriously injured men have refused hospital treatment because they have been scared of the National Health finding out that they have no cards (and therefore have paid no tax) and passing this on to the Social Security.

THE LUMP MUST BE SMASHED! For too long it has been a cancer in the heart of the building workers' movement!

The Charter needs a strategy for an alternative leadership. But the Communist Party, who play a dominant role in the Charter, have not been prepared to take this step. Not only have they avoided sharp criticism of UCATT secretary George Smith, they even recently opened the pages of their paper, the 'Morning Star' to him — despite his record of witch-hunting C.P. militants!

The Charter, despite much really good work, has failed to take any real initiative since the dispute started. No 'Special' strike Charters have been published, and there has not, as yet, been an extraordinary conference.

If the Charter fails, it could end up doing a "Grand Old Duke of York" on the rank and file — with disastrous effects on the morale of workers in the building industry who for the first time in years are feeling strength and confidence



"BUT THE COUNTRY CAN'T AFFORD IT"

THE CHARTER

The Charter started in 1969 around militants involved in the Barbican dispute in London and militants in Liverpool. The movement grew rapidly and is now probably the strongest rank and file organisation in any industry. Nearly 1,000 attended the Charter's third annual conference in April.

Through mounting pressure the Charter has pushed the Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians (UCATT) further to the left. The present militant stand of the UCATT official leadership is due almost entirely to the Charter and the rank and file builders grouped around the Charter's 12 demands.

But it's not enough to get the officials to make a temporary 'left turn'. They may well be prepared to look militant now and keep their credibility — all the better to sell out later. It is necessary to point the finger and name names — to say that building workers should never put their trust in the George Smiths who settled for 9d an hour a few years ago, who got them just £6 increase on the national rate in six years.



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"The construction industry is riven with money grabbing individuals and instead of being a social service it is rapidly becoming a bankers' paradise" — Building Workers' Charter vol. 2 no. 4.

"Planning is dictated by greed" — Ed Berman, Save Piccadilly Campaign.

"Larger building and construction companies offer the best investment prospects ... brokers reckon that construction will be one of the strongest sections of the economy this year" — Manchester Evening News, Business Section (18 August 1972)

"Hyams upvalues empire £49m" — Sunday Times, Business News (2 July 72).

"There are 1,500,000 slum houses yet to be cleared. 4,000,000 other houses cry out for improvement" — Guardian Editorial (29 January 1971).

"Most of the big hotel groups are now putting up new units in London and other cities under the Labour Government's scheme, which gives a grant of £1,000 per bedroom to all hotels completed by the end of March 1973" — Sunday Times (20 August 1972).

At 'Villa Devoto', one of Argentina's main prisons, there are more political prisoners than 'common prisoners'.

On 22nd August, 16 of these political prisoners were killed by police — "shot while trying to escape" the official story was, though few believed it.

Within two days a 14-hour general strike had been called in the town of Cordoba, the Army had been put on a state of alert, armoured cars had been used to break up demonstrations, and 500 demonstrators had been arrested.

Street fighting, general strikes, guerilla operations, and armed repression have been commonplace since Argentina's "May events" in 1969, when there were general strikes and barricades in the streets in Cordoba and Rosario.

The country is in massive crisis. Inflation will reach 75% this year. Real wages are falling sharply. Unemployment is high. Meanwhile a \$560 million deficit in the balance of payments adds to a \$4,800 million foreign debt, and output of the main export product, beef, is actually falling.

The ruling class of Argentina is turning to its last card — Juan Peron, dictator from 1946 to 1955.

Since he was overthrown by the Army, Peron has lived in Madrid — now he promises to return in October, and he has been nominated as a candidate for the Presidential elections next March.

INDUSTRY

In many countries of the "Third World" industrialisation has simply been stalled. The siphoning off of profits for investment in the USA or Europe, the total dependence of many of these countries on one or two basic agricultural or mining industries, the domination of their markets for manufactured goods by American or European monopolies — all combine to keep these countries in a state of backwardness.

But Argentina is probably the most industrialised major country in the "Third World". Over 70% of the population live in towns — a higher proportion than in Scotland, France or Germany. The proportion of the labour force involved in agriculture is no higher than in, for example, Italy. Union organisation is strong.

The combination of industrial development and violent and primitive conditions is a product of Argentina's history.

The exceptional fertility of Argentina's pampas plains made its development exceptional. The landowners were able to collect high rents and amass a large volume of wealth during the 19th century. The country operated a free trade policy, and developed a relatively prosperous middle class, which could accumulate a sufficient national wealth to make some industrial development possible.

It was on this accumulation that the policy of Peronism was to be based.

The depression of the '30s led to a sharpening of social tensions and military coups took place in 1930 and in 1943.

PERON

In the 1943 regime the Department of Labour — a post with little prestige — was taken over by Colonel Juan Peron. Peron used this position to establish a mass base of support for himself. He built up strong unions in the meat-packing houses, and in the sugar plantations, where only months before union supporters had been ruthlessly murdered.

Employers were forced to yield higher wages and shorter hours. Social Security funds were set up.

Jealous of Peron's power, and linked with the landowners who feared him, a group of officers

ARGENTINA

A DICTATOR RETURNS ?

Eva Peron, idol of a 'personality cult'.



attempted an anti-Peron coup in 1945. But 100,000 workers took over the streets of Buenos Aires — and Peron was back. Within 5 months he was President.

Peron, we are usually told, was a fascist dictator. Dictator he certainly was, and his own political statement was "we shall create a fascism that is careful to avoid all the errors of Mussolini".

But the experience of Argentina illustrates an important point; political figures and political movements must be judged primarily by the social forces and the interests they represent, not by what they say.

Despite the similarity of talk, Peron was not the same phenomenon as Hitler or Mussolini. They came to power by mobilising the middle class, the unemployed and demoralised sections of the working class — against the labour movement. They smashed the unions and beat down the wages and conditions of workers.

ALLIANCE

Peron relied on leading the working class into an alliance with the national capitalist class of Argentina, on a programme of national industrial development. He milked the agricultural sector and the landowners. A state monopoly of foreign trade was set up, agricultural goods were bought up at low prices and sold on the world market at higher prices, and the difference was used to finance nationalisations and Peron's reforms.

by John Sterling

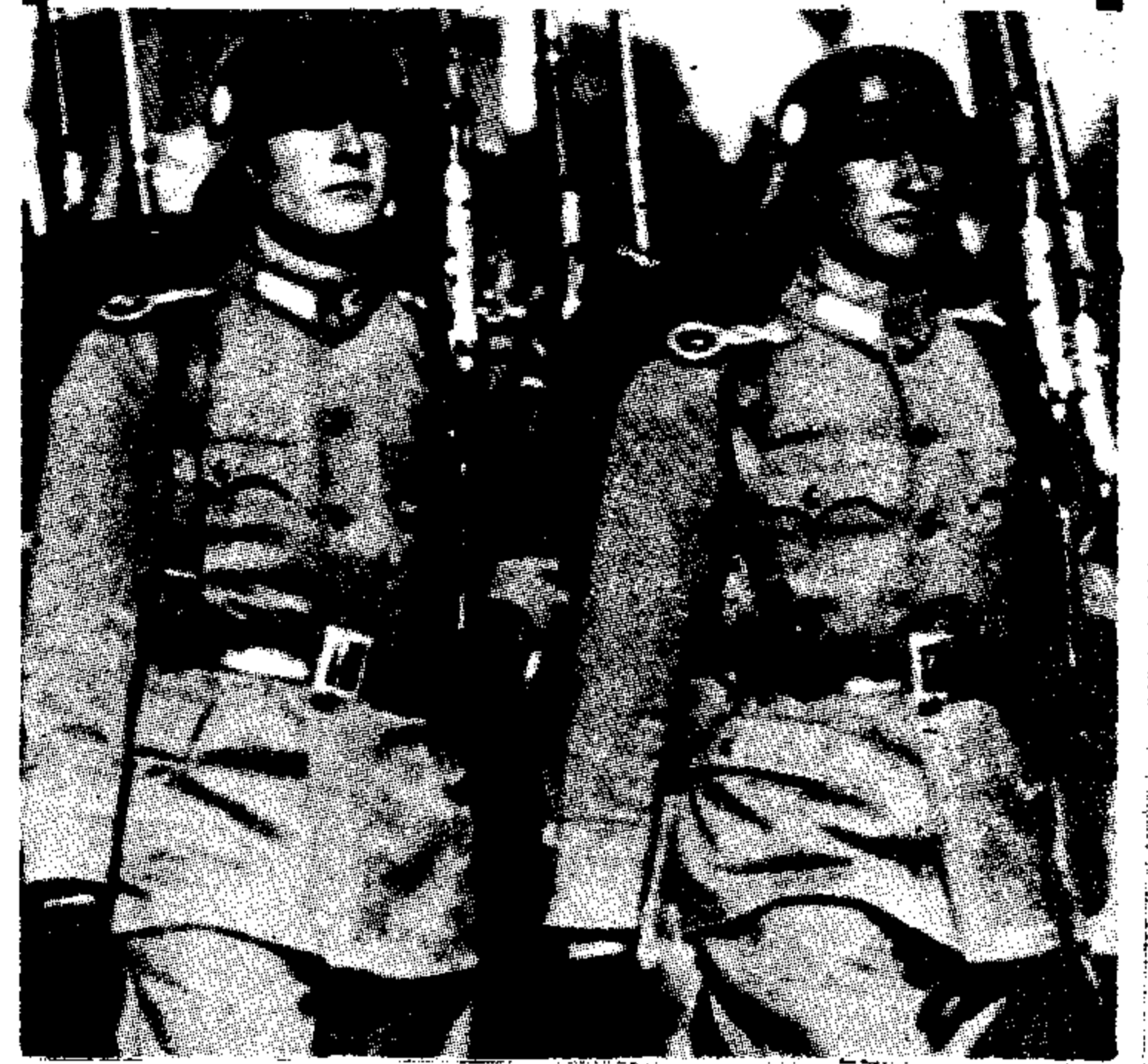
The railways (British and French owned), the gas and telephone systems (American) and the Central Bank were nationalised — albeit with more than generous compensation. Workers' wage packets rose by 30% in 1943-48. Social security provisions were improved until such payments rose to almost 50% of the wage bills of all firms.

That is the material basis for the popularity that Peron still maintains among the working class of Argentina.

It is the material basis for the 'personality cult' that surrounds Peron's wife Eva. She took millions of pounds out of public funds and distributed them as a Lady Bountiful in charity and welfare payments.

Peron's Operation was in some ways (only some) similar to Disraeli's building up of the Tory-voting bloc that still includes a

The Argentinian army has played a crucial part in the regime since 1930.



unions. No wonder that Peron's support has remained and expanded!

INVESTMENTS

These developments have gone together with a massive expansion of US investment in Argentina. And these investments have been concentrated in manufacturing industry. US capital investments in Argentinian industry increased four-fold between 1955 and 1965.

Traditionally, foreign investment in the "Third World" has been in oil, mining, plantations ... raw materials industries. But the rate of profit in those industries is now lower than in manufacturing industry. American capitalists are quite happy to have their interests in raw materials industries nationalised, as in Peru and Chile — so long, of course, as compensation is paid and re-investment in the manufacturing sector is allowed.

This industrialisation has, in fact, paradoxically, increased the dependence of Argentina (and of Latin America in general) on the US and Europe.

The dependence of Argentina on beef exports — 70%, still, of its exports are agricultural — is increased, since beef exports are needed to pay off the foreign debt. Hence the roots of the present economic crisis.

The industrialisation-investment process raises grave problems for the ruling class of Argentina. The new industry uses advanced machinery and fewer workers, leading to unemployment. None of the regimes in Argentina since the fall of Peron have had a sufficient popular base to be able to hold proper democratic elections — and economic developments threaten to increase this popular dissatisfaction dangerously for the ruling class.

LAST RESORT

The persistence of Peron's support is in a sense a safety valve for the Argentinian ruling class. It is to their advantage for the workers to look to a right wing demagogue living in Madrid on the proceeds of his corrupt administration, and not to a socialist programme.

But as long as Peron stays out of Argentinian politics, as long as he remains a vague myth fig-

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Edward Kennedy with Frondizi, President 1958-62. The regime has been closely tied up with US interests.

third of the British working class — financing payoffs to the working class from the surplus of a prosperous economy and accompanying it with radical but right-wing verbiage.

Peron was not a socialist. He was not at all prepared to challenge the real basis of the power of the British and American imperialists and of the landowners. He paid lavish compensation when he did nationalise.

Communists and trade union leaders opposed to him were promptly shot — employers who stalled were not. The army threatened to overthrow him — he didn't arm the workers.

Soon (in 1953) he ended up imposing a wage freeze and signing an agreement for Esso to exploit Argentinian oil.

In 1955 the army overthrew him, hand in hand with the Church whom he had antagonised by legalising divorce. But he was already losing his mass support.

Since then Argentina has been effectively a police state, under a variety of regimes. In the two years after Peron's fall, there were more executions without trial than in the whole Peronist period.

Bombs were dropped on demonstrations. Torture has been widespread. Jews have been persecuted (walls daubed with the slogan "Kill a Jew a day"). Imprisonment and seizure of funds have regularly been used against trade

WHAT IS RACISM



AT THE TOP OF THE HEAP

of course, Powell, the legit-
 imiser of race-haters, the darling of the fascists. Below

left: (top) neo-Nazi John Tyndall and the Dior heiress — once imprisoned for burning 30 synagogues — waiting for Colin Jordan's release from prison; (centre) Colin Jordan and bodyguard; (bottom) Martin Webster, National Front activities organiser, organiser of the Smithfield porters' march; (lower centre) Danny Harmston, Smithfield porter, the Mosleyite behind the market-men; (upper right) some of Harmston's fellow thugs; (bottom right) P. Newman, member of Colin Jordan's British Movement... which claims to be non-Nazi!

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RACIALISM?

which have set out to present such arguments have done so in terms like — “it isn’t the nightmare it seems” etc. Despite the arguments and the facts, they continue to use the terms which the very facts they present contradict. They continue to talk as if immigration is a “nightmare”, as if “Britain is being invaded”, even when they are “being favourable” and condescending to say that “it isn’t so bad.”

All the popular cartoonists, even when their message is not expressly hostile, depict the Indians with the caricature features that would not have been out of place in Hitler’s propaganda machine. Take away the turbans and the dark shading, and a shocked reaction would be voiced to anti-semitism.

But the fact it that racist prejudices and sentiments which, if they were directed against Jews (or, say, Scots) would be shocking and universally condemned, have come to be accepted when they are directed against black people.

Thus racialism has become the norm. That is how the National Front and the open fascists can present themselves as normal

people, how they can emerge into the light of day — and get massive publicity at that.

How did it become so?

In the last ten years a series of immigration Acts have institutionalised the idea that black immigrants are undesirable. All the quotas, work permits, vouchers etc have not, as some even well-meaning people might have thought, made things easier for those here to settle in. They have, on the contrary, created the impression that they are all ‘a bad thing’, that there is something wrong with them. If there isn’t anything wrong then why limit the numbers, why keep any out at all?

In their operation, too, these Acts create a climate of racialism: the treatment as criminals of the people whose only crime is to try to enter this country without fulfilling all the red tape requirements of Whitehall, tends to degrade all of them.

The labour movement has either been indifferent to the growth of racialism, or has actually helped it along; the Labour Government brought in its own Immigration Act, and its own behaviour with the

Kenya Asians in 1968 was the biggest break the Powell ever got. We must demand to know — why hasn’t the TUC stood out against it? Why hasn’t it called out thousands of trade unionists onto the streets to protest the slanders on black trade unionists?

We cannot in fact wait for the TUC to act. As in defence of our other interests, rank and file trade unionists must take up the issue themselves, form anti-racist committees and see what aid they can give local immigrants and black organisations to defend themselves against the hooligan attacks whipped up by Powell, by the Press and by the fascists.



foundation of racialism is prejudice. It lingers and like a disease, because we want to know the facts. The simple facts contradict the assumptions behind all the phrases now in common use — speaking of the Uganda — yet the phrases continue to be used.

“overcrowded island” — but a net loss of people from the island amounting to 40,000 every

“taking our jobs” — but it is the jobs of industry and Government that are taking our jobs. Jobs in steel are to go at 20,000 have gone on the 6,000 nearly went at UCS; thousands of jobs in minibus have been slashed. Has the Press not daily abuse at the people who have taken those jobs and closed down?

“taking our houses” — did you ask why the Government spent up the money to meet the housing needs of the thousands of unemployed (with a crash housing programme? No. It’s easier to blame it on the ‘outsiders’.

“outsiders” — figures show that more people from the social classes on average, and take out more than those born here. “problems” — what problems? Perhaps — but the Ugandan English-speaking: yet doesn’t stop all the talk of ‘outsiders’.

in those articles in the press

FRONT FOR NAZIS

THE BARBARITY OF RACIALISM, the vision of filth and sickness that it conjures up for most, is best proven by the fact that almost every racist denies that he is one.

Enoch Powell certainly denies he is a racist. And yet this rat from the City of London sewers puts the seal of his dubious “culture”, of his “respectability” on the whole dung-heap of neo-Nazis, Mosleyites, professional bullies, Jew-baiters, Paki-bashers, ‘nigger’-haters and scabs.

He is the legaliser. Their passport to Tory-type respectability. Their “certificate of patriotism”. Even the neo-Nazis like Danny Harmston, the synagogue burners like John Tyndall, the Fuhrer-fans under ex-school master Colin Jordan, all claim now — “We are not racists.”

On Thursday August 24th a small minority of market porters (fewer than one tenth of them in all) marched on the Home Office. This march was organised by Martin Webster, the National Organizer of the National Front — Britain’s biggest fascist organisation — along with market porters Danny Harmston (Mosleyite) and Ron

Taylor (National Front).

So much for the credentials of what the Daily Express called “the first rumblings of opposition from the people.”

These are not “the People”. This social scum of racists oppose the real “people”, the working class, at every turn.

And though Danny Harmston declared that blackshirt leader Sir Oswald Mosley was “one of England’s great patriots”, Taylor lied “We’re not racists”. And Harmston chimed in with an obviously well-rehearsed “I’m not anti-immigrants, I’m anti-immigration”.

But there is only one reason why these people can get away with the trick of claiming that they are not racists. And this is that there are thousands and thousands of people who say the same and really mean it.

But it’s no use saying “I’m not a racist, but immigrants should be kept out”. If you think black immigrants are a threat, you are a racist, because you are singling out race as the decisive criterion — race and not character, race and not personal record, above all race and not class.

Such attitudes are racist because they rest on the notion of “the British People” as against “them”. The “them” is always the foreigner or the immigrant. Some call them “invaders”, so making their hostility even clearer. With a deep sense of faith in “British superiority”, the “send-them-home” league paint a picture of backwardness, barbarity and undesirability whenever they talk about “the foreigner”. And the darker his skin the more brazen and abusive the talk becomes.

Let’s face it, though: the fact that there are the likes of Powell, Webster, Harmston and Taylor able to gain a hearing here is the best argument against “British superiority”. To what are these scum supposed to be superior?

And the truth has to be faced, that with all the denials, with all the hypocrisy, these ideas create an atmosphere in which straightforward, naked racism does not seek the dark corners and back alleys of politics but can strut unashamedly in the open.

Let’s look at the growth of Hitler’s Nazis and learn the lesson — before it’s too late!

WHOSE COUNTRY IS IT?

WHY DOES THE PRESS MAKE SNIDE RACIALIST remarks about the high proportion of black children in, say, Bourne? No-one sees anything wrong with a black child being in a minority in a white class.

Why? Because they think this is “our country” — a naturally “white” country, in which whiteness is the only right of citizenship: in which an Australian is an ‘insider’, whereas a native of this country is an ‘outsider’.

It isn’t “our” country. It is in the possession of the ruling class — a minority alien to the majority of the people than all the

Indians, Africans and Chinese put together. An ex-Etonian would most likely need an interpreter if he wanted to find his way about the London docks or the Durham coalfield.

The fact is, it isn’t our country. We have no stake in it — not as it is. All we have is solidarity, mass action against the owners of this country, and the class sense of honour which views the scab as a traitor, not as a clever guy ‘getting ahead’. It is these values that are “out country” — they’re our home ground. And they have no physical boundaries. They are international.

So how can we be ‘invaded’. It

isn’t a matter of the Ugandan “invasion” being bad or not-so-bad: for the working class struggle THERE IS NO SUCH THING. IT SIMPLY DOESN’T EXIST.

The only way our ground can be invaded is by alien ideas: ideas of class collaboration, ideas of “national interest”, ideas that the capitalist system is here to stay, ideas that profit-making is a natural human activity — and ideas that black workers are our enemies.

The only ‘aliens’ on our ground are scabs — and these are precisely the National Front gang and their ilk. These are the very types that the bosses round up and use as an organised scab force. And

these are people who are trying to spread racialism — the scab ideology of the ruling class.

For the ruling class racialism has two closely linked purposes: one is to split worker from worker, to break up working class unity. The other is to try to create a false unity, to cement ‘conciliation’ of (white) workers with (white) bosses, against the supposed ‘invasion’. To bring the bosses, landlords, Tories and profiteers together with their victims, the better to go on exploiting us.

Isn’t it high time the labour movement stood up clearly to deal with the real aliens — the scabs in our midst.



workers
fight

WHERE WE STAND

□ CAPITALISM is inseparable from the exploitation by the bourgeoisie of the working class 'at home' and (since 'advanced' capitalism became imperialist) of the workers and peasants in the colonies and neo-colonies abroad.

It is a vicious system geared to buttressing the strong against the weak, to serving the handful of capitalists against the millions of workers, and to keeping many millions in poverty so that a few may prosper. Capitalism exalts property and degrades life. It is at the root of the racialism which poisons and divides worker against worker. It is a system of massive waste and social disorganisation, at the same time as it forces the working class to fight every inch of the way to better or even maintain its wages and conditions.

Having once been progressive, in that it at least developed, in the only way then possible, the productive resources of mankind, it is now a totally reactionary force in history. Its expansion after World War 2 gave it merely the appearance of health: in reality the boom was like the flush on a sick man's face. And already economic expansion has given way to creeping stagnation.

□ TODAY the ruling class can keep their system going only at the cost of large scale unemployment and attempts to cut the living standards of workers in the 'rich' parts of the world, of massive starvation and bloodshed in the 'poor' two thirds of the world, and of the ever-present threat of the destruction of humanity through nuclear war.

□ THE ONLY WAY OUT is for the working class to take power and to bring the resources of the modern economy under a rational working class plan, in place of the present unplanned and blind private-profit system. Having overthrown capitalism and established social ownership of the means of production, the working class will build towards a truly communist society, in which at last the principle will be "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."

□ The working class has created political parties for this purpose — LABOUR PARTIES, COMMUNIST PARTIES, SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES. — But in country after country these parties have joined capitalist governments and managed capitalism. They have betrayed the socialist aspirations of their working class supporters, tied the labour movement to the bosses' state, interest and ideology, and destroyed the political independence of the working class.

□ The task is therefore to build a socialist party which will stand firmly for the interests of the working class. WORKERS' FIGHT is a group of revolutionary socialists, aiming to build that party: a party which is democratically controlled by an active working class membership, which preserves its political independence and fights the ideological domination of the ruling class.

□ The basis of our activity is the scientific theory of MARXISM, the only theory which gives a clear understanding of present day society and of the necessity of revolutionary change.

□ Although they cannot organise the struggle for workers' power, the TRADE UNIONS are indispensable for the defence of workers' interests. We fight for the independence of the unions from all state control, and within the unions for militant policies and for democracy. We see the trade union bureaucracy as a distinct stratum which acts as a broker between workers and bosses. Its life and work-situation is quite different from that of the working class. Lacking a direct, necessary allegiance to working class interests, or any fundamental historical interests of its own, its general tendency is to work with the bosses and their state against the working class.

Only a mass national rank and file movement, linking up the different industries and guided by the ideas of revolutionary Marxism can, in this period, turn the trade unions into reliable instruments of working class interests, independent of the bosses' state.

□ We fight against the INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT, against any incomes policy under capitalism, and against any legal restrictions on trade unionism.

□ We fight against UNEMPLOYMENT; for a national minimum wage; for work or full pay; against productivity bargaining.

□ We fight to extend the power of workers to control the details of their own lives in industry here and now. We stand for the fight for WORKERS' CONTROL with the understanding that it can be made a serious reality only in a workers' state. We are against any workers' 'participation' in managing their own exploitation under capitalism.

□ We believe that the "PARLIAMENTARY ROAD TO SOCIALISM" is a crippling illusion. The capitalist class will not leave the stage peacefully; no ruling class ever has. Socialism can be built only by smashing the capitalist state machine (army, police, civil service) which is the ultimate defence of the bosses' power in society, and replacing it with a state based on democratic Workers' Councils.

□ The LABOUR PARTY is a capitalist party in its ideas, its policies, and in its record in government. At the same time, the bedrock organisations of the working class, the trade unions, support and finance the Labour Party. There is an open valve connection between the Labour Party and the unions, allowing the possibility of large-scale active working class participation in the party.

We relate to the Labour Party, therefore, not by simply denouncing it, but by attempting to advance the working class towards outgrowing and breaking through the stage in its own development — ideological, political and organisational — represented by Labourism.

□ We fight for full and equal rights for WOMEN, for female emancipation from the male domination which has co-existed throughout history with class society and which has its roots in such society. We fight, in particular, for the emancipation of women of our own class, suffering a double and triple exploitation, who have been most accurately described as the "slaves of the slaves."

□ We fight against RACIALISM and against immigration controls. We fight for the integration of immigrant workers into the labour movement and for a united fight against capitalism, whilst supporting the right of black minorities in Britain to form defence leagues or independent political organisations.

□ We give unconditional support to the struggles of oppressed peoples everywhere fighting against IMPERIALISM, and to their organisations leading the fight.

□ British workers have — fundamentally — more in common with every single worker throughout the globe, irrespective of race, religion, nationality or colour, than with the whole of the British ruling class. We see the fight for socialism as a world wide struggle, necessitating the creation of a world revolutionary party. We give critical support to the FOURTH INTERNATIONAL.

□ We stand for a political revolution of the working class against the bureaucracies of THE U.S.S.R. and the other countries called 'communist', which we consider to be degenerated and deformed workers' states. The social regime of the different Bureaucracies has nothing in common with socialism, let alone with real communism. At the same time we defend the nationalised economy in these countries against capitalism and imperialism, unconditionally: that is, irrespective of the selfish, usually anti-working class and anti-revolutionary policies of the ruling bureaucrats, and against those policies.

□ There are OTHER POLITICAL GROUPS (including the official British section of the Fourth International) which have generally similar aims but methods differing from ours, or differing conceptions about what needs to be done here and now. We consider all these groups to be seriously — sometimes grossly — inadequate in theory and practice. We favour unity in action with these groups where possible, and a serious dialogue about our differences.

BOUND TO BE READ

LENIN'S MOSCOW - by Alfred Rosmer.
Pluto Press.

Who knows the legacy we have lost? Only the men who were there, and those who re-discover and re-enact it.

The years of struggle from 1917 to 1924, in particular the activities of the Communist International 'under Lenin', have a legacy of thousands of lessons to teach us.

Lessons drawn from successes and lessons drawn from failure. But there are few who can transmit those lessons directly. Alfred Rosmer is one who can.

Born to French parents in New York in 1877, he lived his life in France, where he was one of the leaders of revolutionary syndicalism — revolutionaries who rejected political action, believing that revolution would be achieved through the industrial organisations of the working class. When the war broke out in 1914 he was immediately active in organising a French anti-war group.

It was at this time that Rosmer met Trotsky, who had just fled from Vienna. He saw in this period the defection to the side of war-mongering and flag-waving capitalism of the majority of both the 'political' socialists and the 'non-political' syndicalists; and on the other hand the unity of both socialists and syndicalists who really were revolutionary and had the courage to oppose the war.

On this experience as much as anything was based his conviction that common ground in practice could be found between the socialists and the syndicalists despite different ways of formulating theoretical questions.

Rosmer found a leading role in the Red International of Labour Unions. RILU, whose founding conference was held in 1921, was an attempt to unite in a single body those trade union organisations which had affiliated to the Communist International and those minorities which existed within bodies which were not affiliated, like the TUC.

INDEPENDENCE

The situation of the founding conference was gloomy. Soon after the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920, Pestana, the delegate from the CNT (Spanish Confederation of Labour) and Armando Borghi, secretary of the Italian Unione Sindicale, broke from the C.I. Their criticisms of the Soviet regime became increasingly harsh.

The attitude of these two important mass organisations had serious repercussions in syndicalist circles everywhere, notably in France. The question of relations between the Communist International and the RILU and that of the relations between party and unions came to the fore.

The syndicalists were sympathetic to the Communist International, representing the workers' revolution in Russia. But, with their traditional distrust of political parties, they shied away from any close connection between the union organisations in the RILU and the political parties in the Communist International.

The discussion centred round the meaning of the slogan "Independence of the Unions". Trotsky described the attitude of these syndicalists as one of transforming the idea of the independence of the trade unions from the capitalists and the reformists into independence in general. He points out that this independence in general means actually independence from revolutionary politics.

But what is independence from revolutionary politics? It is the battle cry of the

reformists and of the union bureaucracy. Haven't you often been to a meeting where a revolutionary militant is accused of "having a political axe to grind" or "bringing politics into it"?

Sometimes of course this is an expression of the fact that the working class is sick and fed up with the chicanery of the capitalist politicians of the Tory and Labour parties.

But genuine as it might be, it serves a right-wing purpose, because it is also the cry of the bureaucrat who is really saying to himself "you are bringing revolutionary working class politics into it, and I, I am bringing politics into it too — reformist, sell-out politics.

And — independence from politics in general? It is a deception. It is not possible. It does not correspond to what exists. The politics of the British TUC are the politics of the Labour Party, of a capitalist reformist party. The politics of the American AFL-CIO are those of the capitalist Democratic Party. The trade union struggle is never separated from politics.

FEATHER & JONES

The trade union struggle as fought by Feather and his like is political — it is not our politics, it is not politics in the interests of the working class, but it is politics. It is the politics of class-collaboration, of bowing down before the strength of the capitalists and weakening that of the workers from within, but it is politics.

And anyone who says "don't bring politics into it" is really saying "don't fight the politics which already exist in the trade union movement." And that means, don't fight Feather, don't fight the collaborators with Toryism, and ends up with the reality of don't fight the Tories, don't fight the bosses.

This is particularly true in a situation of crisis. What we have seen in Jack Jones's case lately is that a leader who is 'realistic' in trade union terms and shrinks from a full-scale confrontation with the Government ends up hand-in-glove with the Tories.

Rosmer had to fight both the 'genuine' prejudices of workers against politicians and the veiled reformists in his work for the RILU. But to make matters worse he also had to fight the sectarian arrogance of some communists. "One of them, the Bulgarian Dimitrov — who was in Moscow for the first time and participating in his first Congress — quite simply demanded that (the French syndicalists) be excluded from the Congress."

How then to galvanise the revolutionary energies of the Spanish CNT, the Wobblies in America, the French and Italian syndicalists, the Shop Stewards Movement and later the Minority Movement in England? Rosmer is the accountant closest to the books in this period of history, and Rosmer, on account of his syndicalist background, is the analyst most sensitive to these problems.

Nevertheless it is just in this that "Lenin's Moscow" is disappointingly sparse. Everything that is said is illuminating, but surely so much more could have been said.

But if sometimes information has been sacrificed to brevity, in most cases it is probably the racy brevity, the sharp character sketches, and the pointed anecdotes that make this book a real blood vessel of revolutionary memory.

It courses with vigour and — in spite of all that came after Lenin's death, after the close of this book — with optimism and the unshakeable revolutionary conviction which Rosmer held right up to his death in 1964.

Jack Price.

Workers' Control

The Charter's 12 demands have served to rally the building workers for the present struggle. But the programme must be developed.

Any militant would agree with almost all the demands, but some raise questions. In relation to no 4 - obviously decasualisation is a necessary step against the 'lump'. But - the docks were decasualised under the Devlin scheme, and though decasualisation did bring benefits, it also brought redundancies - 20 000 over 5 years.

Therefore the demand for decasualisation and registration must be coupled with a call for no redundancies and 5 days' work or 5 days' pay.

In no 6 the question of recall must be added. Re-electing officials regularly is something we obviously support. But Parliament is re-elected regularly - and look what we end up with!

Union elections can turn out the same - candidates make promises nobody believes them, they are elected in the midst of apathy, and they don't carry out their promises. A first step against this is to institute machinery for the rank and file to recall officials at any time.

And the last demand - for nationalisation - needs to have a lot added to it. The fact is that industries have been nationalised before - steel, coal mines, railways.

The state took over these vital industries because they were making a loss - British capitalism was suffering, so the state took them over and ran them for the benefit of capitalism as a whole.

Nationalisation did not benefit the workers - witness the numbers of pit closures under Robens, the redundancies in the steel industry (Stanton, Irlam), and the abysmally low wages of the railwaymen.

The question of workers' control must be raised. It must be raised both in the immediate struggle against redundancies and as a long-term perspective to guide the struggle.

1) Site committees should be elected. They should fight for 100% union shops (regardless of the Industrial Relations Act), for control over hiring and firing and over safety & working conditions, and for power to veto any management decisions.

2) Registration of all building workers and no redundancies.

3) Organised regional 'pools' of registered building workers, principle of first out first back in. 5 days' work or 5 days' pay.

4) House-building should be run as a public service. Everyone, even the Tories, pays lip-service, at least, to the idea that medical care should be a public service free to all. Why not the same for housing?

And workers should control non-housing building; costs should be assessed on the basis of building workers' right to a decent standard of living, not private industry's "right" to a profit. Useless "prestige" office blocks should simply not be built.

These ideas are, of course, far in advance of immediate possibilities until registration and something like 100% unionisation can be won. But you can't expect someone to take the first steps unless you show him where the road leads.

Unions

UCATT was formed in 1971 as an amalgamation of the Amalgamated Society of Painters and Decorators (ASPD) and the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers (AUBTW) with the larger Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers (ASW). Despite the fact that they are the biggest union involved in the dispute, they are the one with the biggest problem - for the officials.

By bending to the pressure of the Charter, secretary George Smith and his cronies have put their comfy £3 000 p.a. jobs out on a limb. While they have had to give in to pressure on the wages and hours question, they will be loath to concede the points on democracy, for fear of losing their jobs.

They have been partly motivated by the need to restore the union membership, which has been falling over the last few years. And in fact thousands of new recruits have been made to the union during the dispute. But unless recruitment is accompanied with education on why trade unions are necessary, the membership could fall off again rapidly after the strike is over.

UCATT are also under pressure from the T&GWU, the other large union involved in the dispute. Jack Jones appears to have his sights set on absorbing the UCATT membership to swell the ranks of his already enormous union - less in the interests of working class unity than of empire-building.

The T&GWU have one great advantage over UCATT, money. UCATT is almost broke and the T&GWU is one of the wealthiest unions in the country.

This inter-union rivalry is paradoxically both a strength and a weakness. It is a strength in so far as Smith feels Jones breathing down his neck and hence stays militant in order to keep his membership.

The weakness lies in the fact that obviously to have two unions fighting each other when they should be showing solidarity is weakening.

Hours & Money

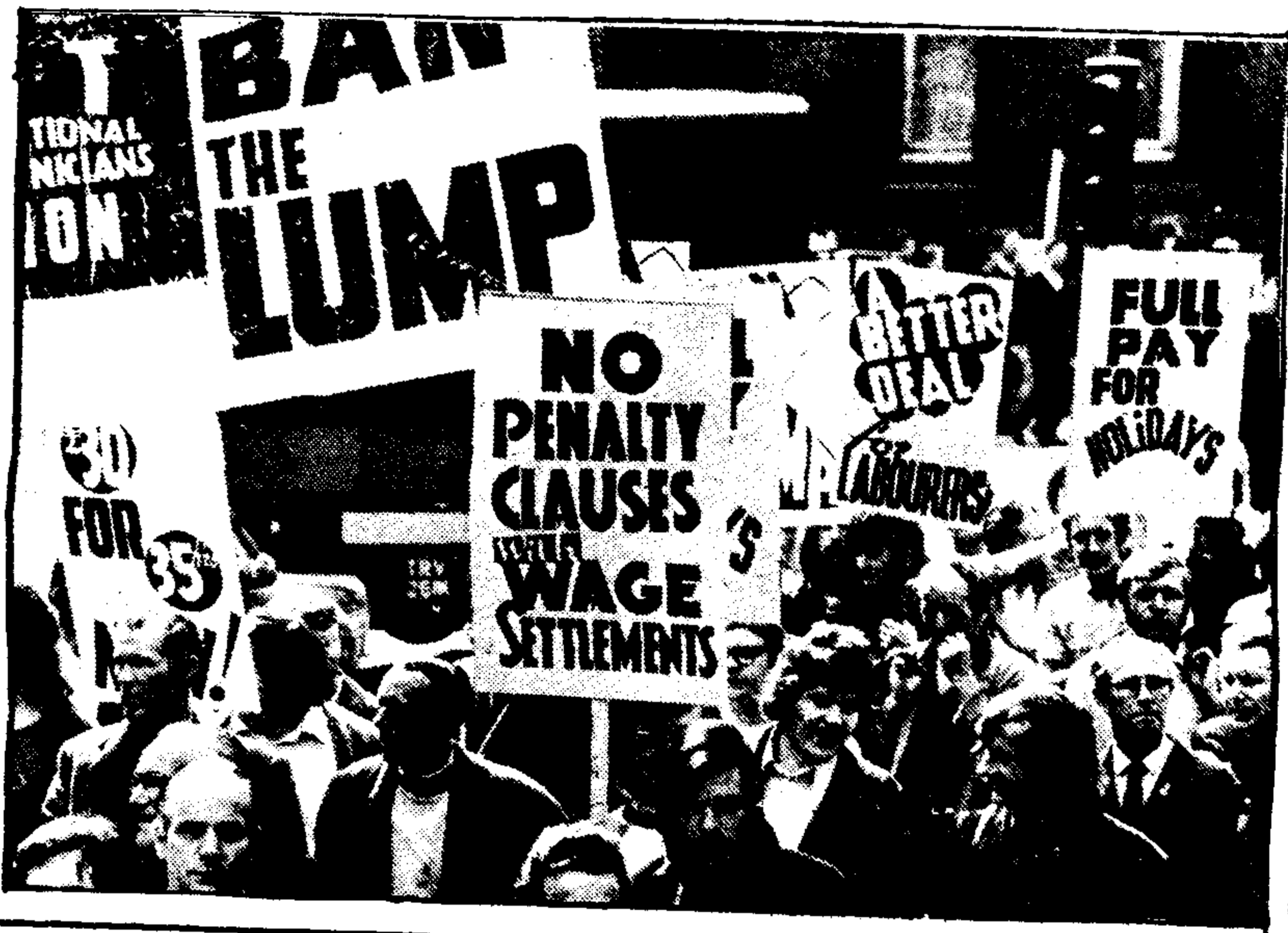
There must be no backdown on the question of hours. It is an answer to redundancies. And 5 hours gained this year is still 5 hours next year - £5 gained today has been cut away by rising prices next year.

The shorter working week can and should be a slogan to unify the whole working class.

Wages demands are almost always sectional, and liable to be confused with issues of differentials and so on. The eight-hour day was once the great rallying cry of the labour movement. The slogan now should be the six-hour day.

The Charter's Demands

1. £1 per hour basic rate of pay for a 5-day, 35-hour week, with maximum differential of 5p.
2. 4 weeks' holiday with full pay plus the retention of Christmas day and Boxing day as statutory holidays and the introduction of New Year's day and May day as additional paid holidays.



3. A fully comprehensive pension scheme to be introduced for workers in the industry.

4. De-casualisation of the building industry, including the registration of all building trade operatives.

5. Adequate safety and welfare regulations to be introduced and rigidly enforced in the building industry.

6. Democratise the Trade Unions by making -

- a) delegate conferences policy-making bodies;
- b) all T.U. officials submit themselves for election every three years and branch officials every year;

c) the disbanding of selection boards.

7. Full protection and recognition for stewards with provision for regular meetings.

8. Establishing compulsory 100% T.U. membership.

9. Total opposition to the lump.

10. The abolition of working rule 2B, six day and transfer clauses (which are used to victimise T.U. members).

11. The establishment of one fully democratic union for the building industry.

12. Full nationalisation and public ownership of the building industry.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

DICTATOR PERON RETURNS

ure who can be a focus for all sorts of aspirations. the ruling class is faced with militancy it cannot channel into the existing political system - the Peronist guerillas and trade union militants ("the central labour unions ... have completely lost their influence with the mass of workers in Cordoba, who are now solidly organised on a plant-by-plant basis and are responsive to extremist leaders", as one worried capitalist source put it).

So, the present military ruler, General Lanusse, is aiming to co-opt the Peronist myth. He has called elections for March next year, and his ideal would be to get Peron's endorsement for a candidate of Lanusse's own choosing. (At present, opinion polls show Peron leading the field and Lanusse getting just 6% of votes!)

Lanusse has made concessions to Peron - restoring his Argentinian citizenship, ending legal charges against him. But Peron has stood aloof. His Peronist movement persists in nominating him for president. Lanusse demanded that presidential candidates return to Argentina by 25 August. If elections are held at all, though, Peron's failure to obey the ultimatum won't be a very effective protection for Lanusse.

Will Peron rule again? Apart from the fact that Peron antagonised powerful vested interests in the Argentinian ruling class, this prospect would be a desperate last resort for them. It is simply not possible for Peron to repeat his 1946-55 policies.

With adverse terms of trade, there is no agricultural surplus to milk off. (The largest beef-producing company recently went bankrupt). With the industrial structure more closely tied up

with US interests, there is no possibility of the previous large-scale concessions to the working class.

The old set-up was one of limited conflict between the (protectionist, nationalist) Argentinian industrialist class and the (free-trading) alliance of the landowning oligarchy with imperialism, in which Peron could take the side of the industrialists; in the new set-up, the conflicts in the ruling establishment are between the landowners and an alliance of imperialist and national capital (cemented particularly by 'joint ventures' where US and Argentinian interests both take shares in a company).

A return of Peron might give the ruling class a brief breathing space: but soon the working class would begin to see through Peron and turn to more radical solutions. This process has already begun; many left Peronists have dropped the slogan 'Peron will be back'.

In the situation of a police state where, to quote a press source, "hardline generals in ... Rosario and Cordoba have been given a free hand in the fight against subversion", the Argentinian Trotskyists of the PRT (Revolutionary Workers' Party) have combined their mass agitation with guerilla operations such as the kidnapping of the Fiat executive Sallustro and the police chief Sanchez earlier this year.

The violence in Argentina is not a product of Argentina itself, but of the history of British and American imperialism. We in Britain, fighting the bosses and the Tories, are fighting the same violent enemy as are the workers and guerillas of Latin America

PRISONS:

FROM P1

The prisoner has no rights, and even the provision of recreation is a 'privilege' which can be removed at will by prison authorities. Locked away in 19th century dungeons, amidst fearful overcrowding, grotesque recreational facilities, and little or no chance to use their enforced seclusion to even so much as educate themselves — the inmates of Britain's prisons are subjected to a vindictive, brutalising retribution from 'society' for his crimes.

His family is of course also punished — for nothing. Children are deprived of the presence and support of their fathers or mothers, conjugal relations cease. The imprisoned person is deprived of liberty, dignity, comfort, privacy, sex. And in addition, can be used as slave labour.

PROP is an attempt to organise a prisoners' union to fight back.

Newspapers like the Daily Express, expressing shock at the very idea of the prisoners' Trade Union (it doesn't like the other kind very much either) present it as if all prisoners are Al Capone type gangsters like the Kray brothers or sick and dangerous men like Ian Brady, the moors murderer.

But there are 39 000 in jail. The majority are there for crimes against property. The vast majority are people from working class backgrounds, who tried to cheat the system, to wage a private war against it, and got caught.

True, not only the property of the employers is interfered with — ordinary people suffer too. And as socialists we think the only effective answer to what working people face under capitalism is collective action.

Nonetheless the vast majority of prisoners are more the victims of capitalist society than its criminals. In a socialist system such people — if they existed — would be treated as needing re-

education, and if necessary locked up for a while. Now, today, they are locked away in one of the smaller outer circles of hell capitalism is so effective in creating and left to rot.

The causes of the prison struggle lie in the conditions, which are getting worse. But it is surely the contagion of working class struggle, the ferment in the British working class, the growing refusal to lie down and simply take what the system dishes out, reverberating into the prisons, that supplied the spark to set it off.

Why shouldn't prisoners gain the demands of PROP? Why should there not be a prisoners' trade union. "But they must be punished" says the Daily Express.

They are being punished, by being locked up. Why shouldn't they have the rate for the job when they work? Why should they not have conjugal rights in jail? Why in both fields should others also suffer, have their lives totally disrupted? Most of the prisoners are the scapegoats of capitalist society, in one sense the political prisoners of the working class.

Slum landlords are all right, a needy shop-lifter is a criminal.

The fact of running their own Trade Union in jail would perhaps convey to many prisoners the power of collective action, that it is not possible to escape the conditions of capitalist society except by fighting collectively to change that society.

Predictably the warders are militant against the prisoners, though they were never militant in the cause of the working class. Selling themselves to the state as watchdogs, they settle in as its most inhuman representatives. The prisoners' union, not the warders' union is in line with the working class cause — the struggle of oppressed against their oppressors.

The TUC should recognise PROP. The Trade Unions must also demand that the Army should not be used against prisoners.

MEN REVOLT AGAINST SLAVERY



VICTORY AT SMALL & PARKES

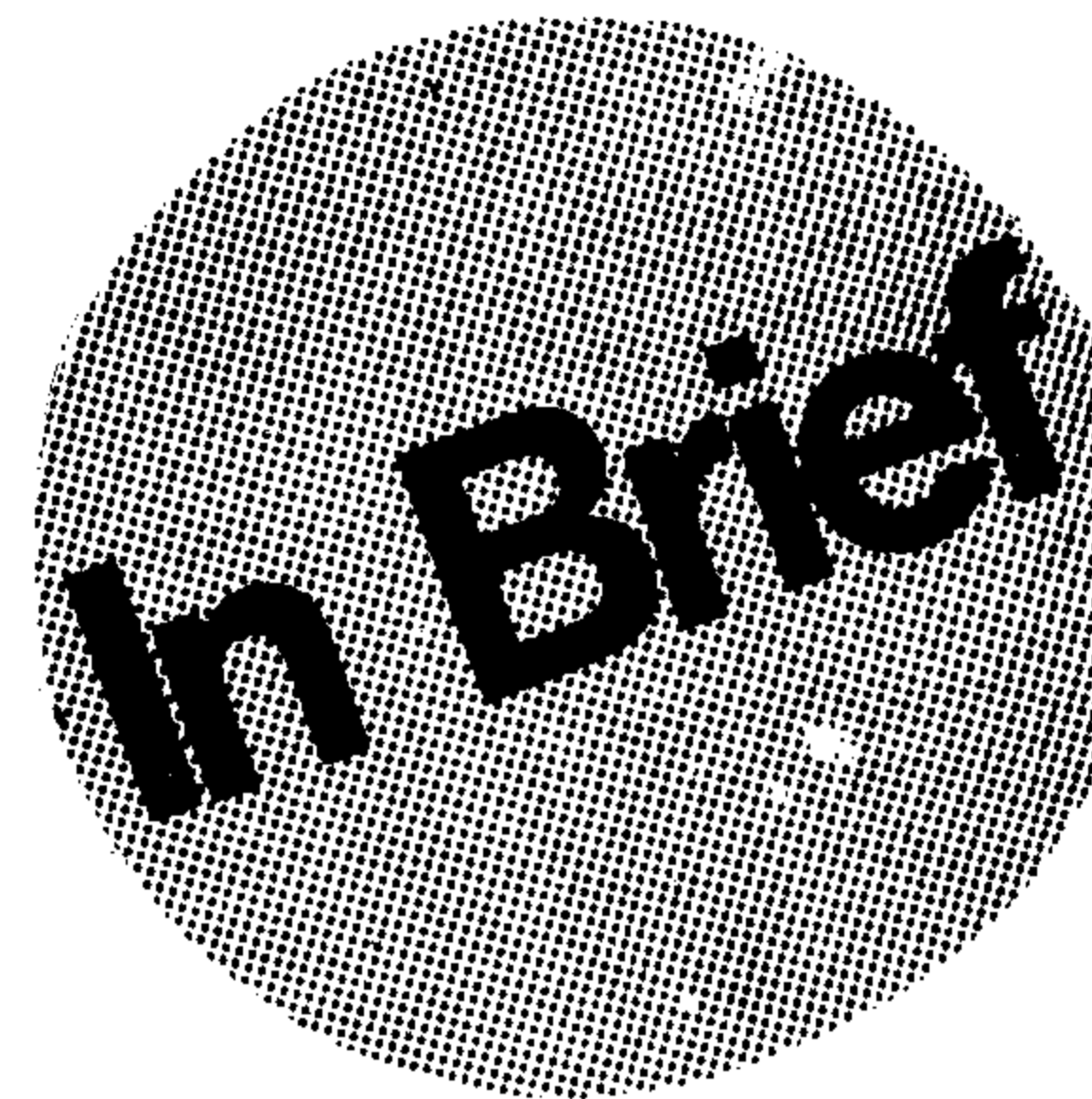
"The principles we set out for were achieved" said Bert Monaghan on behalf of the Combined Crafts shop stewards Committee.

The strike, at Small & Parkes, Manchester, of 100 maintenance men, finished after 5 weeks. The management gave way and agreed to a settlement of £2.10 on the basic rate, the retention of the bonus scheme, two days holiday and average earnings for holidays. The next step forward for Small & Parkes workers is the question of a shorter working week without loss of pay. The figures for the

Cape Asbestos Group, of which Small & Parkes are the automotive section, show a 12% fall in the workforce from 1970-71. The demand of a shorter week is an essential one against this loss of jobs.

Steve Corbishly

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I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS A CRIME TO KILL INDIANS

You'll often hear it said that "I've got nothing against black people but you have to face it, they're not as advanced as we are".

This attitude is like that of a man who knocks someone down and then condemns him for idleness because he's lying flat on the ground. The 'backwardness' of the poverty-racked two-thirds of the world is due to the exploitation and oppression of imperialism and colonialism, not to any natural deficiency of the 'backward' peoples.

A dramatic proof of this was given in the French paper 'Le Monde' of 26 August, in a report of the

experience of the Indians of South America. These Indians were the original inhabitants of the continent, and as such built advanced and complex civilisations. But — they were defeated by the Spanish colonists.

There were more than 50 million American Indians before the white people arrived; there are only a few million today. In Brazil, there were more than a million before the Conquest — 60,000 today.

The record is one of systematic genocide. When colonists have wanted the Indians' land, they have killed them without a qualm, regarding them as sub-human.

In 1968, for example, in Colombia, four farmers (of Spanish extraction) were charged with torturing and murdering 16 Indians. They replied, with surprise, "I didn't know it was a crime to kill Indians".

In Brazil an official Indian protection service was set up. But the Indians' lands were wanted for US military and economic purposes. The director of the service was found guilty of 42 crimes against Indians, of 500 employees, 134 were incriminated and 200 others dismissed. 'Safaris' had been organised against rebellious tribes, bombing them from aeroplanes.

There is a theory that the white man brought 'civilisation' to America, Africa, and Asia

BRISTOL DOCKS

MAINTENANCE MEN STRIKE

The same day as Bristol dockers returned after the national strike, 180 non-registered maintenance workers employed by the Port of Bristol Authority walked out.

They had been working to rule for a month over a £7 a week wage claim to restore differentials. This had been complicated by management's insistence on a productivity deal, especially aimed at increasing shift work.

Already five ships are stuck in the City docks, as the operator of the swing bridge at the dock entr-

ance is involved in the strike. Only two of the port's nine bulk grain dischargers are working. Cranes, fork lift trucks, and railway tractors are out of action, and the port will soon be at a complete standstill.

Negotiations have broken down between shop stewards and management have broken down and the strike seems likely to continue for some time. But none of the unions involved, including the electricians, engineers, and the T&GWU have made the strike officials.