

Socialist Worker

For workers control and international socialism

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IT'S GREAT
ON THE
MOON—BUT
NOT SO HOT
DOWN HERE

Government hushes up appalling figures

INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS

HIT NEW PEAK

Socialist Worker Industrial Reporter

THE TERRIBLE TOLL of industrial accidents and death jumped again last year. Accidents reached an all-time high of 312,430 in 1968, against 304,016 in 1967. That 3 per cent increase is the biggest ever increase from one year to the next.

Deaths shot up by more than 10 per cent — from 564 in 1967 to 625 last year.

But the most astonishing fact of all is the government's silence on these appalling figures. Usually industrial accidents and deaths are carefully tabulated and reported to the press in an official hand-out.

This year the figures have been tucked away on page 444 of the May issue of the Employment and Productivity Gazette.

The figures are compiled by the Factory Inspectors, who divide the country into 13 regions. Their reports show that in nine of the 13 regions there were substantial increases in the number of deaths and accidents compared to the previous year.

Once again, the highest number of deaths and accidents were recorded in the construction and building industry, notorious for its bad conditions, poor wages and weak union organisation. The total number of building and construction workers killed in 1968 was 238, against 197 the previous year. Total accidents in the industry were 46,569, against 46,470 in 1967.

Deaths in factories increased by 17 (total 359) and by three in docks and warehouses (total 28). Total number of accidents in factories was 254,454 and on the docks 11,407.

Strong attack

The government's refusal to publicise or comment on the figures has been strongly attacked by the British Safety Council. The BSC's director-general, Mr James Tye, has sent a telegram to the Prime Minister demanding that a Royal Commission be set up 'in the light of these horrific figures'.

More startling figures emerge from the July issue of the BSC's journal Safety. Out of 20,688 factories, each employing more than 50 workers covered by the Inspectorate, there are only 1261 with full-time safety officers.

In addition to the handful — about six per cent — with a full-time safety officer, 3598 either shared their safety man with another factory or had a part-time officer. In larger factories (more than 500 workers) only 35 per cent have a full-time officer.

All these figures paint a horrifying picture. While man can reach the moon, millions are condemned to a life of toil in dirty, noisy, inhuman conditions where death is always close at hand.

But such conditions are consistent with government policy. Incomes policy, wage freeze, In Place of Strife — all are geared to the need to boost the profits of the bosses at the expense of the workers. Speed-up, productivity deals, measured-day-work, the new 'scientific' methods of screwing more profit from the workers, mean greater risk of accidents as the work-load is intensified and the speed of the conveyor-belts increased.

Massive campaign

The trade unions, instead of bemoaning their fate and agreeing to police industry for the government, should launch a massive campaign against the intolerable and ever-increasing number of accidents and deaths. Official strikes should be called in every sector of industry until adequate safety measures are introduced with full-time safety officers.

Such steps could be taken, but almost certainly won't be by the timid bunch who control the unions. It is up to the rank and file to fight for such measures now and see that in the long-term real safety at work can only be achieved when the workers themselves control the factories and run them in the interests of society as a whole instead of a tiny handful of profit-hungry parasites who turn a blind eye to the death and misery they create.

LSE to discuss Left policies

A 'LIVING SCHOOL' to discuss the problems facing the working class and student movements will be held at the London School of Economics next week.

Organised by LSE socialist society and the Schools Action Union, the school is described as an 'anti-authoritarian project' around five themes: education, political

ideas, political action, communication and fun.

The organisers say 'The aim is to bring together all those who are dissatisfied with the present system.'

The school will be held at LSE, Houghton Street WC2 on July 28, 29 and 30, starting each day at 10 am. Further details from LSE socialist society.

MEN FROM EARTH have set foot on the moon. It is a tremendous achievement.

It has proved how rapid scientific progress has been during the past 50 years. After all, the first aeroplane only flew in 1903; the first jet plane was only developed during the second world war and television was invented during the 1930s.

But exciting as the journey to the moon is, it is still necessary to ask whether ten thousand million pounds should have been spent on getting there while so much misery and poverty exists on the planet Earth.

In Britain today, not only are half a million people unemployed and many millions living below the poverty line, but there is also a drastic shortage of houses, hospitals and schools.

RIOTS

In America the problem of poverty can be violently seen in massive riots that have occurred in most of the major cities. Not only has America fought against the Vietnamese people, it has also had to send troops into the streets of New York, Chicago and Washington to fight against American people protesting at their poor standards of living.

The journey to the moon will not resolve these kind of problems. Man cannot live on the moon because the atmosphere would not allow him to breathe.

The real reason why the governments of America and Russia compete in the 'space race' was admitted in the Daily Mirror last week — for military reasons. Each of them wishes to get an extra military advantage over the other.

The arms race, together with all their scientific experiments, such as germ warfare, menace the whole future of the people who live on Earth.

POWER

Today the governments in Washington and Moscow have the power of life and death over every man, woman and child. If they decide on war, this planet, destroyed by nuclear weapons, will cease to exist.

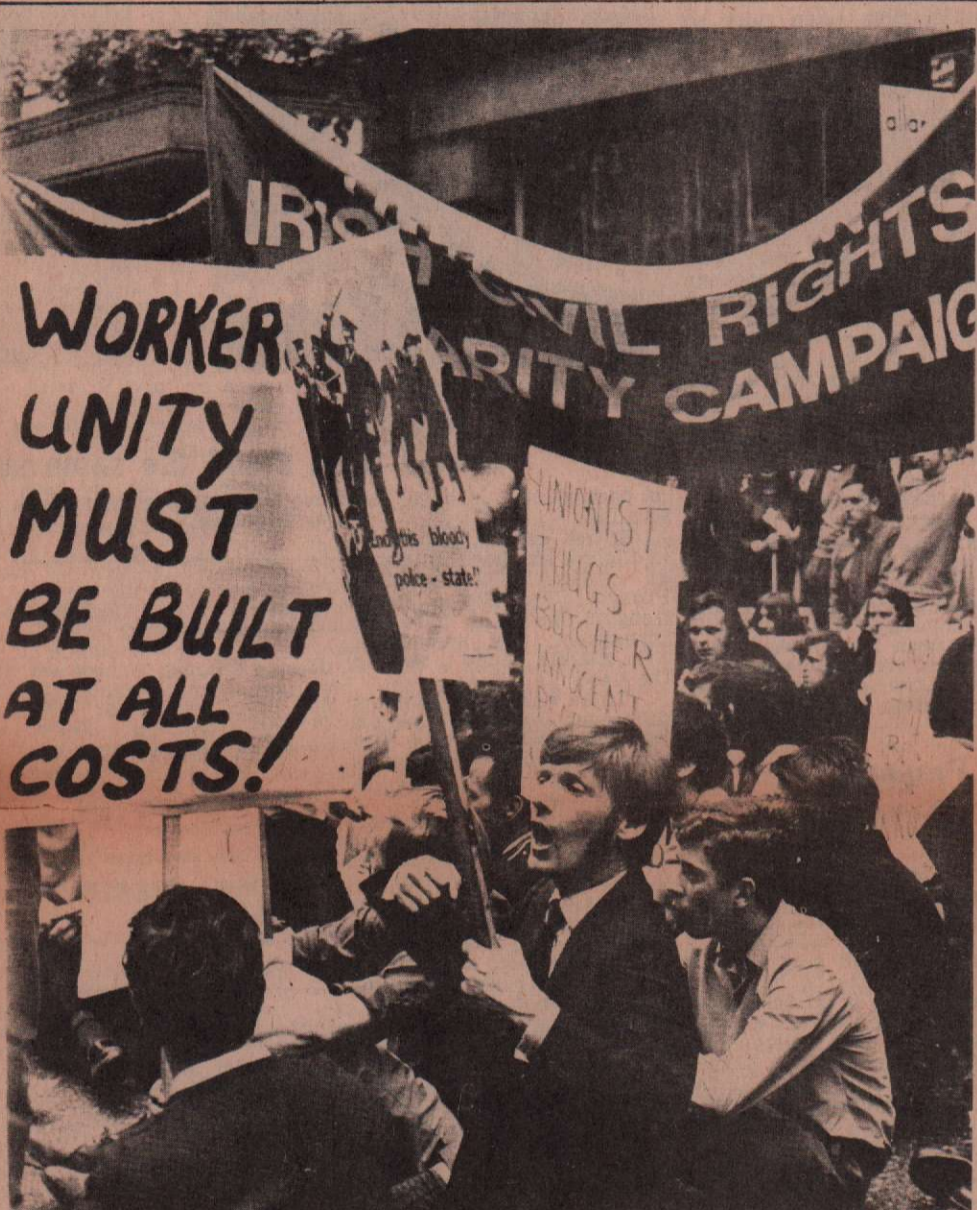
This power that they have, by its very nature, is completely anti-democratic. None of us will have any say in whether nuclear weapons are used. There certainly will not be a vote on the matter.

The expenditure on armaments not only prevents us from having a better standard of living and of resolving the massive problems which face two thirds of the world's population, it also daily threatens the future of us all and even adds more to the danger of total destruction.

Of course the three astronauts are brave men. Of course the journey to the moon is an adventure.

But the real problems exist here on earth and our resources ought to be used to sort them out.

This article first appeared as a factory leaflet produced by the Birmingham branch of the International Socialists.



Part of the crowd outside the Ulster Office on Sunday. Picture: Jeff Pick

'Disband Ulster's Gestapo' demand Irish civil rights marchers

CHANTING 'Tories out, North and South' and 'RUC - SS' more than 800 supporters of the Irish Civil Rights Solidarity Campaign marched on Sunday from Hyde Park to the Ulster Office.

They were accompanied by one of the biggest contingents of policemen ever seen on a small demonstration — three coachloads, plus a posse of mounted police waiting in a nearby side street.

After a meeting at Speakers' Corner, the marchers — mainly Irishmen, supported by IS and other Left groups — made their way down Park Lane, with the revolutionary Irish flag, the Starry Plough, at the head. Posters demanded 'Disband the Unionist Gestapo'. Unionist thugs butcher innocent people in Northern Ireland' and 'Civil Rights NOW'.

When the marchers reached the Ulster Office in Berkeley Street they sat and occupied the road while an impromptu

SW Reporter

meeting was held, preceded by a minute's silence for two civil rights supporters killed in clashes with the Royal Ulster Constabulary in recent weeks.

Gerry Lawless of the ICRSC told the marchers: 'We want civil rights not civil war, but if the government of Northern Ireland blocks the road to full civil rights now, if they face us with the threat of civil war, then I say to them that the fighting youth of Derry gave them their answer last week.'

He added: 'In the last few months our people have learned the lesson of Connolly, that the great appeared great because we were on our knees'. We are off our knees

now.' John Palmer of the International Socialists angrily denounced those who condemned 'the violence' of the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland. It was the economic violence of unemployment, slum housing and political thuggery that were to blame for the situation in the Six Counties police state, he said.

He called for the Irish workers to realise Connolly and Larkin's dream of a united Irish workers' republic.

Other speakers included Brian McCabe, Geoff Dudgeon and Tom McGurk from Belfast, Dennis Casey, who brought greetings from Ford shop stewards at Dagenham, Janet Wilcox and Frank Campbell of ICRSC and Bob Purdy, International Marxist Group.

For full details of the ICRSC, ring Pat Denny at 01-485 0476.

Summer break
SOCIALIST WORKER is taking a summer break for two weeks. We will be back with the issue dated August 14.

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The Hippie theatre

— is it 'turned on' to the wrong wavelength?

by KATHY SIMS

AFTER SEEING Hair at the Shaftesbury Theatre for the second time, it is possible to make a reasonably critical evaluation of it. The first time the whole effect was so overpowering and sensational that any form of criticism was absolutely impossible. I mean, when you've had a whole evening of long hair and leather jockstraps the mind is in no state to think logically. (Yes, girls, at last we are being catered for).

are giving sympathy and understanding and courage to their audiences, while you get the feeling watching Hair that you are a victim. The audience is made to feel as though they are to blame for all this unhappiness because they are not smoking pot and are middle class, fairly old and parents.

Sometimes the sarcasm can erect barriers that have just been broken down. For instance, the nude scene representing the honesty and openness of the young people, their desire to say 'here we are, unashamed' is one of the most touching scenes in the whole performance.

But in the next scene the actors themselves, 'picking' on the inhibitions of the audience say, 'Oh well, we've seen the nude scene, let's go home now.' This phrase, this bitchiness towards an audience they are trying to convert, tends to disappoint you, especially as you have no right of reply.

Rather than break down the barriers between audience and cast, incidents such as this tend to build them up, despite the fact that we are all invited up onto the stage at the end of the performance. Somehow it galls a bit when there is so much talk about love and togetherness when you've just paid 26s for a seat.

It is obvious that because Hair is a reflection of capitalist society and offers an alternative that is absolutely impossible under the present circumstances, it fits very well into the box-office requirements.

During the performance the cast shower us with leaflets. It is quite impossible to understand the meaning of the words on the leaflets unless you have a degree in mysticism or experience in dealing with coded messages.

Once again the audience is made to feel rather inadequate. Surely it would have been much more communicative to print a genuine leaflet giving information on forthcoming revolutionary activities. Instead there was no link-up between events actually happening in the world outside and the world that was being represented on the stage.

Another difference between the members of the street

groups and the actors in Hair is that the former are dedicated to the cause of changing society and, as mentioned before, will go out into the streets, on to the picket line, into the youth clubs and universities, whereas Hair is merely the authors' impressions of the society in which we live and in which actors are substitutes for real people.

Groups such as CAST and Agit-Prop have to take a back seat. They deserve all the encouragement in the world because they are using their talents to teach others, to offer guidance and culture to people who have neither.

Hair offers the middle class the opportunity to see what its like to live without any hope except the vague promise that one day we may all love together. But it does not tell the middle class how to reach this ultimate goal, nor does it sympathise with them.

MIRROR

Hair is good in that it holds up a mirror to the lives and feelings of the young. It is good in that it offers itself to a somewhat alienated theatre audience and succeeds in winning them over.

It shows them that behind the trumped-up vision of long-haired, drug-taking youths there is a genuine anxiety about the state of the world and the times in which we live. It opens its arms in the end to the very people it has been criticising — us.

Yet there is a distinct feeling that we are asked to join them in their hopelessness. We are asked to disappear with them into the realism of some mystic religion, rather than fight with them to rid society of the very things which necessitate such escapism.

Hair reflects the existing level of consciousness of certain sections of the working class, rather than raising the level of that consciousness — just as in the publishing world, reams of books on the revolutionary movement reach out to their newly radicalised market.

It is left to people like CAST and Agit-Prop and dedicated revolutionaries the world over to take middle-class culture out on to the streets and into colleges and help the working class to turn it into true, classless culture by forcefully making it their own.

THE NIGERIAN BL

The differences between Biafra and Nigeria not class differences, TONY CLIFF argues. The socialists is not to take sides but to campaign the role of British imperialism in Africa.

NIGERIA was an artificial creation of British imperialism. If the 'unity of India in the modern sense was brought about by the British conquest' as Marx put it, then even more so was Nigeria created by Lord Lugard in 1914.

Imperialism relied on the most reactionary feudal and religious chiefs of the North to keep this ramshackle structure intact.

There are many small tribes in Nigeria and three main ones. Each of the main tribes has its own language and culture — the Hausas mainly in the North, the Yorubas in the West and Mid-West and the Ibos in the East.

By the time Nigeria won its formal independence in 1960 three political parties had existed for a number of years, each representing very roughly one of the three main tribes and regions.

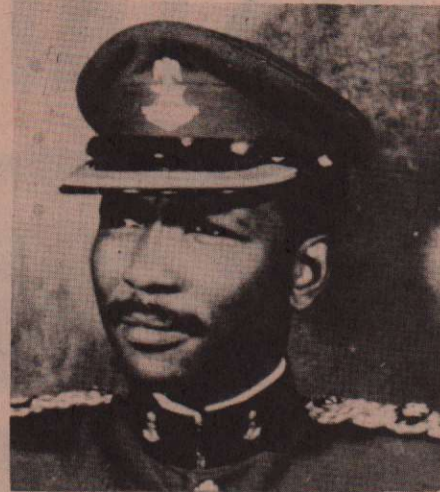
Grafted on to tribalism has been commercial capitalism. This has been largely a comprador capitalism — agents of imperialist capital. The money the merchants made was not on the whole invested in production but in speculative enterprises: land speculation, usury etc.

Property speculation

Take the case of General Ojukwu's father, Sir Louis Odumegwo Ojukwu, who died in September 1966 with a knighthood and several million pounds in the bank. He started life as a small businessman in the Eastern region but after successful property speculations, mainly in land, he amassed millions.

The independent development of commercial capital 'stands... in inverse ratio to the general development of society,' Marx wrote. In an age of local famine one has only to speculate in grain or land to realise fabulous profit which could then be multiplied by the same methods.

The last, but by far the most important element strengthening both tribalism and commercial capitalism and hence strengthening both feudal reaction and comprad



Gowon

Behind them stand the same social forces



Ojukwu

or corruption, has been imperialism.

British capital investment in Nigeria has been estimated at £600,000,000. (Frederick Forsyth, The Biafra Story, Penguin Special, p 168.) The investment was spread all over Nigeria, about a third in the East.

'There was one significant difference between the oil interests and all other financial and commercial interests held by Britain in Nigeria,' says Forsyth. 'The bulk of the oil investments were in the East, with a minority in the rest of Nigeria. But for all other business the bulk was in the rest of the Federation and the minor share in the East. Of the total investment, about £200 million has been estimated to have been in oil.'

The last spurt of mass action, breaking tribalism and regionalism, was the 1964 general strike. It started on June 1st and went on for 13 days.

It paralysed all the urban centres, not just in the relatively advanced regions of the South-West, Mid-West and the East such as Lagos, Ibadan and Port Harcourt, but Kano and Kaduna in the territories in the North which had been ruled by the religious feudal chiefs.

But even the strike showed that industrial capitalism was still in a primitive stage of development. The workers

involved in the strikes were the following:

Group	No.
Dockers & sailors	100,000
Teachers	97,000
Officials	70,000
Agricultural workers	35,000
Railwaymen	32,000
Trade employees	30,000
Post Office workers	15,000
Public works employees	12,000
Electricians	10,000
Printing workers	5,000
Hotel employees	2,000
Bus workers	1,000

(E.R. Braundi & A. Lettieri, The General Strike in Nigeria, International Socialist Journal, Sept/Dec. 1964, p. 598.)

Military coup

Who crushed the strike? The same social forces that stand behind General Gowon on the one side and General Ojukwu on the other.

In January 1966, after the suppression of the last nationwide mass action of

the workers, a military coup took place. It overthrew a regime headed by Ibo general, Irons

Under his merchant capitalism, Ibos and Yorubas tilt the old balance and the few little more towards themselves, without the alliance.

Nothing basic under Irons. Corruption, nepotism, in 'connections' were important, continued.

If an Ibo were chairman of the corporation it was assumed that even stoker and railway would be Ibo: Watz, Nigeria.

Suspicious were spread that Irons to replace a unitment for the federation; many non-Ibo that this was the exercise.

The result: the North and the murder of Ibos. In Northern generals a new coup and Irons and other and soldiers.

This was the Gowon regime. Ojukwu, chief from the Irons however, managed — Ojukwu.

About a thousand were murdered in the East and many,

CENTRAL

The Vietnam war is the central theme of the play and the effect the war has on the young community when it is discovered that one of their own members is to be drafted.

Here is where the play falters. It is purely a reflection of the society in which we live and offers no alternative except maybe 'freaking out on drugs and believing that love' is the answer to the whole problem.

In this respect it is impossible to compare it favourably with such groups as CAST and Agit-Prop who actually take their art out on to the streets to the people, rather than play to middle-class West End London audiences. Hair is purely self-indulgent — 'look at us, this is what we are like, this is our problem' — whereas CAST and Agit-Prop act out the lives of their audiences in an attempt to give a concrete answer to the problems faced in capitalist society.

They say to their audience, 'Look, here is middle-class culture which we want you to take and make your own. Your rents are rising, you are being made redundant — this is the solution to your problem.'

These street performers

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SOCIALIST WORKER is the paper of International Socialism, a movement of revolutionary socialists who believe that the present form of society, with its blatant inequalities, its periodic crises, wars and racialist hysteria must be replaced by one based on a planned economy under full workers' control; those who produce the wealth should own and control the means of production. International Socialism is opposed to any incomes policy that seeks to restrict the wages of the workers in order to boost the profits of the employers. We unconditionally support all shop stewards and rank and file trade union members in their struggles for better wages and conditions and oppose all reactionary laws that threaten the liberties of the labour movement. We support all strikes in defence of workers' interests with the de-

fluence by linking up on an industrial and ultimately a national basis.

We are opposed to racial discrimination, a weapon used by the ruling class to divide the labour movement. Immigration control must be ended, ensuring the free movement of peoples regardless of race and colour. Black and white workers must unite and form their own defence organisations to fight fascism and racialism. The labour movement must demand the immediate recall of British troops from abroad as the first step towards ending colonial exploitation.

The task of revolutionary socialists is to join workers in their struggles with socialist ideas that will link up the various sections of the labour movement and help create a force that will lead on to workers' power and international socialism.

Why Coventry workers are grateful to Jack Jones...

LAURIE FLYNN and Sabby Sagall (July 10) attack Jack Jones negatively and somewhat obscurely, in our opinion.

Jack Jones is well known in Coventry since he was one of the main organisers of the TGWU after the war among car workers, which has boosted our wages way above the national average.

He has a militant history and Coventry workers still remember him with gratitude and hope he does nationally what he has done locally.

Shop stewards in our factories came round and criticised the article. If Jack Jones is no good what is the alternative. Could we have specific details of incidents where he has sold the workers out?

Shouldn't socialists give critical support to some of the positive things in Jack Jones' policy — for example, more power to shop stewards, report backs in factory time, etc?

We realise that trade union leaders operate in a reformist framework, but surely Jones

LETTERS

JOHN FOSSICK, PHIL SETTLE, TGWU Shop stewards, Coventry IS.

Spanish Defence Committee

I AM WRITING to inform you of the formation of the Spanish Workers' Defence Committee. The committee's aims are to provide information about the struggle of the Spanish people against the Franco dictatorship and to assist the families of those imprisoned or on strike.

Twenty years after the fall of Franco's allies Hitler and Mussolini, the Franco dictatorship remains in power. Hundreds of people are imprisoned without trial, trade unions are illegal, civil liberties are non-existent. There is a rigid censorship of the



JACK JONES
'Harsh carping'

is better than Deakin or Kealey and constructive criticism rather than harsh carping is more helpful and more understandable to workers. — DAVE EDWARDS,

press, prohibition and a ruthless po

The Spanish people suffered terribly for socialist democracy, but they were crushed. Movement in this a duty to support struggle.

We appeal to all of Socialist Workers' efforts. They by asking their to affiliate to the to send a donation invite a speaker trade union branch affiliation fee is 10p individuals and £2 for organisations. — THE SECRETARY, King Street, London

NEXT ISSUE

Socialist Worker is down for two weeks the editorial staff to take a next issue will be August 14 and let issue must reach by August 11.

GOODBATH

are tribal,
the task of
n against

mainly Ibos were murdered in the North (according to Biafran sources, as many as 30,000).

This communal bloodbath brought forth Ibo separatism. On May 30, 1967 Ojukwu declared the independence of Biafra.

In Gowon's Nigeria there is an alliance of the tribal, feudal and religious leaders of the North with merchant capitalists, mainly of the Yorubas of the South-West and Mid-West.

In Biafra there is an alliance of the merchants with the military.

It is no accident that in beleaguered Biafra in the midst of mass starvation there is no food rationing. It is not that General Ojukwu has not thought of it after two years of war, he knows that more money can be made by speculators under famine conditions if there is no food rationing.

There is not a radical difference in class structures between federal Nigeria and Biafra although there are slight differences. The difference between the states is overwhelmingly tribal.

Although Ojukwu speaks as if Biafra is synonymous with the Ibos, it is not true. Inside the original boundaries of Biafra as of May 1967, there were an estimated 8,000,000 Ibos and 5,000,000 non-Ibos.

Code of conduct

While Gowon supporters are mainly anti-Ibo, it would be idiotic to speak about him carrying out genocide of the Ibos.

Gowon is not a Hitler. He has issued a printed code of conduct to his troops against mistreating the Ibos. He has had some Nigerian soldiers executed for killing Biafran civilians.

Many Ibos continue to survive in the federal administrations, sometimes in high positions and many serve in Gowon's army.

When it comes to the Vietnam war, the Left in Britain is completely united. All are on one side. Why is this not the case in the Nigeria/Biafra war?



Federal troops pose in front of a Biafran plane after the capture of the Port Harcourt airstrip

The first reason is that the international constellation is not clear-cut at all in the Nigeria/Biafra war. Britain and Russia are on Gowon's side, France (whose supplies of arms a few months ago were estimated at 30 tons a day) and Portugal side with Biafra. The US is neutral.

Whatever side wins, imperialism will not lose. In a chapter entitled 'Oil and big business', Forsyth argues quite correctly that British big business was divided and in no way were for Ojukwu's defeat. In the event of Ojukwu's victory, it is probable that other imperialist oil companies and not Shell-Mex will be the main beneficiaries.

For France, Portugal and South Africa (to name but three) oil is a major strategic factor. Apart from the fact that not all the oil concessions in Biafra are bespoke, the Biafrans have repeatedly warned that the price of the British government's policies towards them over the duration of the war could lead to a re-negotiation of the existing oil concessions to other takers. (Forsyth, p.170). Hence the letter of adulation that Ojukwu wrote to the Portuguese dictator, Dr. Salazar, in which he was described as 'the star of Africa, the friend of Biafra'.

If the criterion for the attitude towards 'self-determination' of Biafra is the

impact of imperialism, there is no reason why socialists should side with Ojukwu's Biafra and not Gowon's Nigeria.

But perhaps socialists should side with Biafra not because of the impact on the anti-imperialist struggle but for other reasons.

Before the period of imperialism, before the rise of monopoly capitalism and the export of capital, in the middle of the 19th century, Marx and Engels used another criterion for their attitude to self-determination.

They supported, for instance, the unity of Germany, for they expected that a unified Germany would help the development of capitalism in Europe generally, would accelerate the growth of the working class and thus help progress towards the socialist revolution.

But this Marxist criterion is not applicable to either Biafra or Nigeria. Both federal Nigeria and Biafra are backward. Tribalism existing there died away in Western Europe more than a thousand years ago.

They are under such overwhelming pressure from world capitalism that to speak about an 'authentic viable capitalist development in any area between the Sahara and white-dominated Africa' is absurd.

Only incorrigible liberals who do not understand the

role of imperialism (and hence the theory of the permanent revolution) would believe in such a possibility.

Without a viable capitalist development the concept of national development falls through. To speak, as some socialists do, about Biafra as a 'would-be nation' is absurd.

Empty speculation

Even where capitalism did develop strongly one could not know in advance where the boundaries of a potential nationality would be.

To assume that the Ibos will become a nation, let us say, separate from the Yorubas, is really an empty speculation. There is no possibility of a viable capitalist development and hence authentic national development in any part of

Africa under imperialist rule.

Finally, some socialists ask for support for Biafra on the assumption that one must support communal minorities who carry the brunt of attack by majorities. This attack would lead:

1. to support Moslem Pakistan against Hindu India.
2. the Luo against the Kikuyu in Kenya, if a tribal war were to break out, as possibly it will after the assassination of Tom Mboya.

Revolutionary socialists in Nigeria, of course, should oppose Gowon's offensive against the Ibos. A revolutionary socialist among the Ibos should oppose tribal separatism.

But we are not in Nigeria or Biafra. What should British socialists do?

The war in Nigeria should be very much our concern. Why has there not been a real movement in Britain in opposition to imperialist involvement in Nigeria while there has been a very strong

movement against US imperialism in Vietnam?

Any possibility of a real mass movement against the war in Nigeria was paralysed by the fact that the issues were posed in terms of support for either Nigeria or Biafra. These were the terms in which they were posed by Gowon and Ojukwu alike, by the British, Russian and French governments, by the Communist Party and the Labour Party, from Michael Stewart to Tribune.

We have to oppose imperialism as the instigator of the war, as the cause of the backwardness and Balkanisation of Africa, as the supplier of arms and the exploiter of the people.

Exposing the role of British imperialism and demonstrating against Britain's supply of arms to General Gowon should be the aim of the campaign here. They are the terms under which a campaign could get under way. Let us get on with it.

Join the International Socialists

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ACTON Tom Hillier
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BARNESLEY Joe Kenyon
120 Standhill Crescent
BECKENHAM Mervyn Smith
9 Alton Gardens Copers Cope
Rd 01 858 8552
BIRMINGHAM Godfrey Webster
128 Yardley Wood Rd B'ham 13
BRADFORD Bob Kornreich
Flat 1 7 Oak Avenue Bradford 8
BRIGHTON Andrew Moir
14 Upper Wellington Road
BRISTOL David Rose
25 Sydenham Rd Bristol 6
CAMBRIDGE Ian Rudledge
1 New Square Cambridge
CAMDEN EAST Lee Kane
26 St Paul's Crescent NW1
CAMDEN WEST Robert
MacGibbon 22 Estell Rd NW8
CARDIFF Derek Shields
8 Ruthin Gdns Cathays
CHERTSEY Chris Wickenden
Langmead Pirbright Woking Sy
Brookwood 3003
COLCHESTER Ian Noble
12 Coach Rd Arlesford
Wivenhoe 272
COVENTRY Dave Edwards
58 Palmerston Rd Earlsdon
CRAWLEY Deborah Ward
2 Weddell Rd Tilgate
CROYDON Jenny Woodhams
26 Braemar Avenue South Croydon
DURHAM Pam Law 16
Hartfield View
EAST LONDON Bob Light 2
Oster Tes Southcote Rd E17
EDINBURGH Brian Lavery 25
South Clerk St Edinburgh 8
ENFIELD Ian Birchall
109 Croyland Rd N9
FULHAM Jackie Taylor
41 Perham Road W14
GLASGOW Ian Mooney
4 Dalcross Passage W1

GRAYS & TILBURY Alf Waters
c/o 1 Russell Rd Tilbury Essex
HARROW Kevin Simms
56 Salisbury Road
HAMPSTEAD Chris Barker
36 Gilden Road NW5
HAVERING Terry Ward 91
Heath Park Rd Gidea Pk
HIGHBURY Joyce Rosser 23
Hampstead Lane N6
HORNSEY Valerie Clark
18 Dickinson Rd N8
HULL Paul Gerhardt
52 Freshold Street
ILFORD Lionel Sims, 16
Madras Road, Ilford 01 478 7311
IPSWICH Brian Mulvey 104
Westbourne Road Ipswich
ISLINGTON/ANGEL D Phillips
2 Chapel Mkt Grant St N1
01 BRU 1028
KILBURN Valerie Lloyd
37 King Henry's Rd NW8
KINGSTON John Owen
4 Sandown Court Esher
LAMBETH Andy Smith Flat 6
128 Streatham Hill SW2
LEICESTER Lynette Allham
Stanford Hall Stoughton Drive
South Oadby Leics.
LEEDS Vince Hall Flat 3 25
Bagby Rd Leeds 2
Woodhouse: Viv Hopkins 25
Midland Rd Leeds 6
LOWESTOFT Paul Welby
173 The Avenue
MANCHESTER J Sutton 11a
Rowan Ave Walley Range M16
MERSEYSIDE Mick Taibot
15 Serton Park Rd Liverpool 8
MERTON Fred Milsom 119
Wolsey Crescent Morden
NEWCASTLE Tony Corcoran
26 Lesbury Road
NORTHAMPTON Mick Bunting
25 Witton Rd Duston N'hampton
NORWICH Gerald Crompton
220 College Rd NOR 54F

NOTTINGHAM Tony Evans
289 Derby Rd Nottingham
OXFORD Dave Peers
21 First Turn
PORTSMOUTH Pamela Shurmer
43 Marmion Road Southsea
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TRAWLERS IN SIX-WEEK BATTLE FOR DECENT WAGE

John Cunningham and Dave Barron

ABERDEEN:- 1000 trawlermen are now in the sixth week of a strike which is predictably labelled by employers and press as the work of a few troublemakers threatening economic ruin to the whole community. But in the light of the conditions under which trawlermen work, it is amazing that the strike is only happening now.

The average earnings of a deckhand are £24 14s 10d a week including pay and food. To get this, he will be on call for 24 hours a day and actually working for perhaps 14 to 20 hours.

GLC threat to evict 20,000 rent rebels

SW Reporter

TORY BOSSES of the Greater London Council have decided on a 'get tough' policy with rebel tenants who have refused to pay rent increases for nearly a year.

On Tuesday Mr Horace Cutler, chairman of the GLC's housing committee, said the council would take steps to evict 6000 tenants withholding a 7s 6d increase imposed last autumn. If the threat is carried out, 20,000 men, women and children could be turned out of their homes.

Ken Lowe, a leader of the 'Rebel Tenants' Action Committee, hit back swiftly at the Tories' vicious plans. 'We will fight,' he said. 'They will not get away with it.'

Mr Lowe said the council plan may just be a tactic to scare the 6000 into paying up. 'In any case, we will fight,' he added.

Barricades

And UTAC's press officer, Len David, said that if the GLC attempt to evict tenants, the committee would organise barricades at flats.

Mr David said UTAC's legal advisors were convinced that the rent increases were illegal and that the first case taken to court would go in the tenant's favour.

When the increases were first imposed they met with a storm of protest throughout the estates in greater London. The militant tenants' movement spread quickly, linking up the estates and a number of big demonstrations were organised.

Many thousands refused to pay the increases and defied frequent threats of eviction from County Hall, the GLC headquarters.

UTAC has won support from a number of trade union organisations that have pledged industrial action as soon as any attempt is made to evict a family.

The tenants were planning a march on County Hall at 7.30 tonight (Thursday) to coincide with the annual beer-up of the council flunkies.

NOTICES

SOUTH LONDON IS: Sunday August 3, 7.30pm Tony Cliff on the theory of state capitalism. Wilton Arms, Thornton Heath High Street, Surrey.

LONDON REGION Meeting on Ireland, Speaker John Palmer, 6 Cottons Gardens E2, July 26 at 3pm.

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This schedule will go on day in, day out, for two weeks in a middle-distance boat, and for up to a month on an Iceland boat.

It has been pointed out that a local authority workman would make £52 a week, not including holiday pay, if he worked the same hours.

The trawlermen are demanding a £3 a day basic rate, compared with £2 2s 3d at present and a better poundage rate. The present rate is 11s 7d per £100 of fish landed.

An important demand is for regular payment to wives while the men are at sea. The present system of payment, involving advances on the next trip's wages, means that men are almost permanently in debt.

The money, which comes partly in a lump sum to the men on completion of a trip, is often immediately swallowed up in paying back subs.

FOBBED OFF

Part of the money comes to the wives in weekly or fortnightly advances from the company offices. Often the wives are fobbed off on the pretext that the boat is coming in the next day, and this delaying tactic will last until the boat does show up, perhaps two weeks later.

The men are also asking for free protective clothing. A member of the unofficial strike committee told us that he has to spend £5 a trip on gear.

When the strike was made official by the Transport Workers' Union on June 20, the employers refused to negotiate until the men went back to work and they offered a derisory 2s a day.

The second offer, after negotiations had taken place, was for 2s 6d a day and better bonus. This was again rejected by the men.

On July 3 the men met again to hear the employers' third offer, but they stormed out of the meeting before the negotiators had finished outlining the deal which was for:

1. 4s 6d on the basic day's wage.
2. 11d on the poundage rate.
3. 8d a day gear allowance.
4. 3d a day on the holiday pay.
5. Regular payments to wives.
6. Six month contracts instead of casual trip by trip employment.

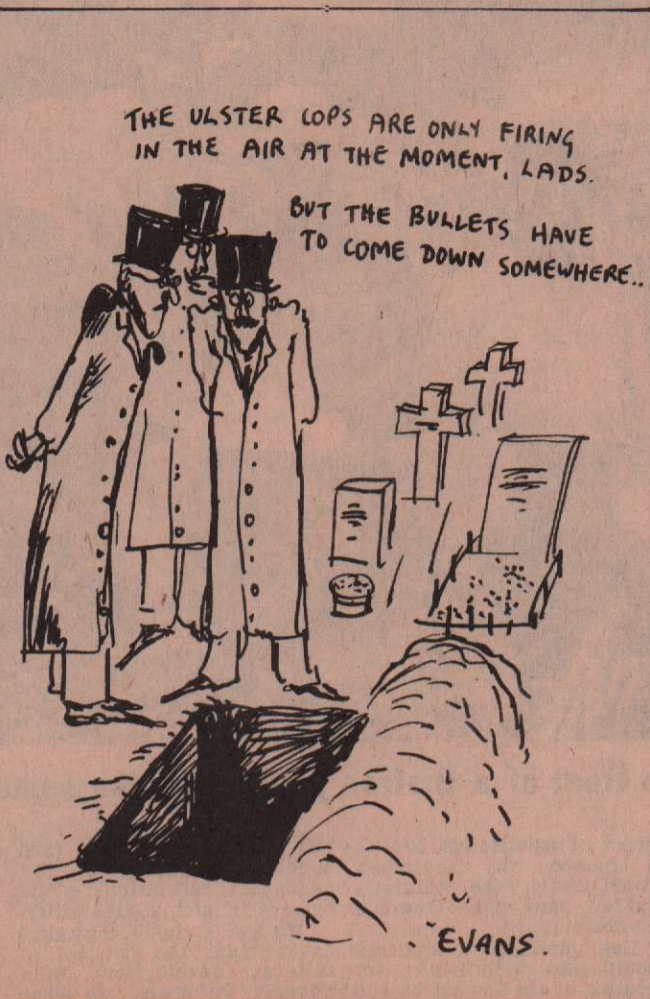
ANGERED

The local press was indignant over what they presented as an irresponsible walk-out from the meeting, omitting to mention that the men were angered on arrival by the discovery that the employers had been working on individual fishermen to get them to sea to break the strike.

The press had to eat its words when a ballot was taken in which the men voted two to one in a 75 per cent poll to continue the strike.

Even if the men get all their demands this time they will still not be earning a comparable hourly wage, never mind being compensated for the exceptional hardships and dangers of the job.

Until the time when the fishing industry can be run under workers' control, with collective ownership of the boats, the present owners will get fat profits for risking their capital and the men meagre wages for risking their lives.



TUC watchdog tries its teeth on steel men

Les Pick

PORT TALBOT:- The biggest steelworks in Britain is to be the testing ground for the TUC's new watchdog powers over its own men.

1300 blast furnacemen are on unofficial strike because the management has refused to pay them a nationally agreed pay award which would increase the minimum wage for lower paid workers from £12 1s 5d to £13 1s 6d for a 40 hour week.

The press blabs about 'wildcat furnacemen', the 'highest paid workers in the industry', but the Port Talbot men are striking for the sake of only about 200 of their lowest paid members.

Even the proposed rate of £13 a week is small payment for the dangers and discomforts of the job. Only a few weeks ago two men were killed when brickworks fell on them.

Unemployment

The strike must be seen against the background of Port Talbot itself, lying in the middle of an area hard hit by unemployment, a town with 16,000 steel workers' lives dependent on a steel plant where 5,200 men are to be sacked in the next three years.

Those that remain with jobs will be working in the 'streamlined' conditions familiar to connoisseurs of productivity deals - faster, harder, more dangerous work for a little more money which gradually buys less and less.

These conditions, laid out in a 'green book' meant to

'Darling, they're playing our tune'

AT LAST Saturday's Durham Miners' Gala, one of the lodge bands approached the assembled big-wigs, union bureaucrats, government hacks and prime minister Harold Wilson and launched into several rousing choruses of Puppet on a String.

guide the managers negotiating them, are being imposed plant by plant to decrease the chances of solid strikes against them.

Meanwhile, men with years of hard work at the Abbey plant are being told to take huge cuts (sometimes half their wage packet) as they are shifted to new jobs.

So far the strikers have rejected the repeated attempts of their union's general secretary to get them back to work, and their solidarity has also quashed the management's scheme to chop their holiday pay. They are in a potentially powerful position in a plant which supplies the British motor industry with 30 per cent of its steel.

But they must quickly link up with other workers if this strike is not to become another futile gesture against the deadly march of unemployment and 'prod' deals.

THE JOHNSON MATTHEY strike drags into its seventh week while the union chiefs at the TUC posture and manoeuvre.

Members of the Engineering Workers' Union are demanding recognition and negotiating rights at the Brimsdown (Enfield, North London) branch of the rich metal company.

Workers from the Harlow JM works collected several large boxes of food and delivered them to the Brimsdown pickets this week. Each man received a handsome food parcel worth several pounds as well as a share from the money collected at Harlow and local factories.

This is typical of the solidarity that has kept the strike going. The essential question of 'blacking' Brimsdown products (members of

WELL, ARE YOU BUZZING OFF TO THE BAHAMAS THIS YEAR?

Laurie Flynn

BEFORE WE START THE WHIMSY, let's pass on the good wishes for a good holiday. And don't ask for pepper if you're at Butlin's, for they forbid it as a sexual stimulant. And if you keep company with any Methodist ministers, you'll know they're dead keen to forbid Butlin's for the same reason.

Away with the killjoys for a hard-earned while, and into the arms of the professional bringjoys, as they feed you, wine you and sleep you. And king for more than a day, crowned in a paper hat - at the appropriate price mind, by the day or by the night, and book up well in advance. And too late for that bit of advice.

Out of the city and down to the seaside. Funny us, saving like the bars all year for the freedom of the crowded beach. Still, fine it is - your own boss, and no false clock to tick out your time. And lucky us, going away. Half Britain's people never get away; some have never seen the sea.

And the bosses gracious enough nowadays to set us aside a fortnight a year. But tight in Britain like, four weeks in France you know. And three for the well organised in Belgium, with six weeks' money.

A terrible strain

And they need a rest themselves, the bosses. A hell of a strain on the facial muscles is laughing all the way to the bank. A quick month in the Bahamas, and get rested up for winter sports. And safe in the knowledge that the workers can manage without them for the two weeks that make the difference between a month and a fortnight. Funny though, some of them seem to think they'd do fine without their masters all the time. Agitators them.

And socialists - killjoys too, in their own way. Eyes glaring politics when they're asleep even. Leering it at you, when you're trying to get away from it, and life as we're forced to live it. But right mind, in their own way.

Keep on about there being no need for the separation between life and pleasure. And saying there's more to it than a fortnight a year of non-stop bingo and kiss-me-quick. And right there, too, kiss me forever - against the family them, common property women, under socialism.

And the dafter ones talking about festivals of the oppressed, and production for use, and building garden cities where gasworks and slums intertwine, and moving rivers to suit your whim. And us doing the deciding as well as the labour. And wanting to abolish 'holidays', and help release man's creativity, to make life pleasure and pleasure life.

Aye, and telling us that we'd even enjoy work, you know, when we're reshaping the world to suit our own needs. But right mind, in their own way.

Building workers back striking insulators

Alan Wild

LIVERPOOL:- 350 thermal insulators on strike on Merseyside building sites for 14 weeks remain solid. They voted on Monday to continue their strike.

The General and Municipal Union offered to negotiate for the men in three months time provided that they returned to work. The men refused and the union has now ignored them completely. But the men are not alone. They have the full backing of all the major sites and are receiving strike pay levied on the sites.

Intimidated

The insulators marched through Liverpool on Wednesday. The site committees have raised £1000 for them and have ensured that no insulating is being done.

The management has intimidated apprentice laggards who

have refused to do the strikers' work and some have been sacked. The union has not lifted a finger to help these young lads, although national agreements are being broken.

The men are extremely bitter about this. The management has persistently broken manning agreements and the union's alleged concern about dust disease are merely hollow words, when the men are fighting for basic protection against the disease.

Out of the strike has come a national organisation. The men on Merseyside are in contact with their fellow workers on Humber and in Scotland. They have now held up some major contracts in the North West, including Partington Gas.

Donations and support to: Bro. Mclean, 43 NUGMW branch, 162 Stanley Rd, Liverpool 4.

Solidarity shakes metal combine bosses

Alan Woodward

the British Iron, Steel and Kindred Trades Association are still working) has been made effective almost entirely by the personal efforts of the strikers and the shop stewards' combine committee.

JM is not hurrying to settle the dispute and its content to observe the lengthy TUC negotiations involving BISAKTA, which it recognises, and the AEF.

Many JM employees have been disturbed to find out from leaflets that the company has extracted surplus value to the extent of more than £1,100 per worker in making a massive £9 million profit in 1968.

The realisation of the

strength of unity has been increased as a result of the combine committee. A shop steward at JM's Harlow plant told me, 'We are determined to win this strike and build up the combine committee.'

'Many men are giving pay and sending food as well. In strikes, the solidarity of other workers is the most important thing.'

The Brimsdown steward, Mr Gerry O'Farrell, praised the efforts of local engineers, drivers and railway workers who had overcome reactionary elements and were giving support to the strikers.

Railway workers in particular are concerned that the company is 'policing' a goods siding with scab labour to protect pirate tankers

Details of picketing support or donations: Mr G. O'Farrell, 24 Maryland Road, London N22.

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