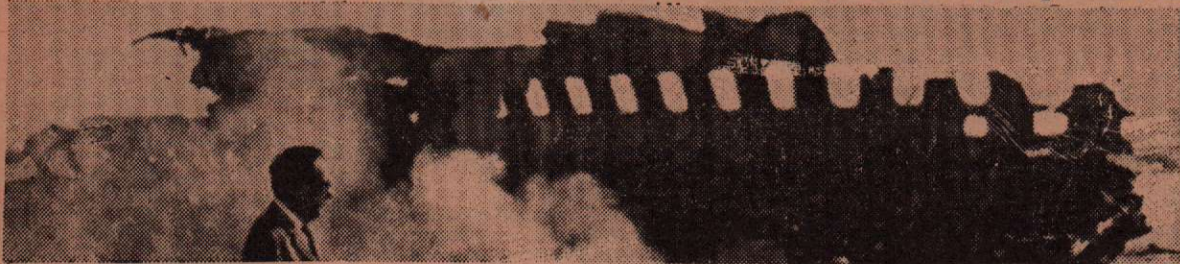


# Socialist Worker

FOR WORKERS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM



## Zionist air raid on the Lebanon may herald new expansionist drive



Burnt-out plane at Beirut airport

# ISRAEL STIRS MID-EAST TROUBLE

By ROGER PROTZ

ISRAEL, WESTERN IMPERIALISM'S PUPPET state in the Middle East, is once again waging war on the Arab people. The ferocious attack on Beirut airport last weekend may herald new moves by the Zionists to extend still further their illegal boundaries and render thousands more homeless and destitute.

The raid on the Lebanon was in retaliation for the attack on an Israeli airliner at Athens and for 'countless other terrorist attacks' according to the Zionists.

But it is the Zionist ruling class of Israel who are responsible for terror in the Middle East.

The state of Israel was created in 1948 by the sustained terror of Zionist gangs led by men like Moshe Dyan, who ruthlessly wiped out Arab villages and herded the people into concentration camps.

Supported by the Western imperialists, who saw Israel as a useful buffer state to the Arab countries fighting for national independence and control of the oil fields, Israel has made no bones about her desire to expand her borders.

### UPROOTED

In 1956 and 1967 the Zionists went to war and ruthlessly uprooted more Arab peasants and workers in their quest for land. As a result of this terrorism, countless thousands barely survive as 'stateless persons' in refugee camps.

In response to this, liberation movements like Al Fatah have been formed to fight to overthrow the Zionists and to restore Palestine to the Arab people.

British socialists should give their full support to the guerrilla organisations, which are not fighting the Jews but Zionism and its imperialist backer.

The tragedy of the Jews in the twentieth century should not be allowed to obscure the issues in the Middle East.

Zionism is a reactionary creed that sees the solution to anti-semitism in a religious state where the indigenous Arab people are treated like third-class citizens. Jews who support Zionism

## Left must back Arab guerrillas

and 'separate development' turn their back on the need for a united struggle against capitalism which breeds not just anti-semitism but all forms of racialism, nationalism and religious intolerance.

The Middle East in particular is an area crying out for social change, for the overthrow of the feudal and nationalist demagogues and the smashing of imperialism's grip over the oil fields.

In contrast to wild anti-semitic statements from feudal relics like Hussein, the leaders of the guerrilla movements have made it clear that their struggle for a free Palestine is directed only against the Zionists, not the ordinary Jewish people.

The Arab liberation movement calls for a free, secular Palestine in which all semitic people, Arab and Jew, can live in peace together.

Socialists in Britain have a duty to cut through the myths and distortions of the millionaire press and the flabby Labour Left who chatter about 'poor little Israel.'

Israel is bent on the destruction of the Arab liberation movement, aided and abetted by the imperialists and the giant oil companies.

A free Palestine will be a blow not just to Zionism but to imperialism as well and can open the way to the construction of a united socialist republic in the Middle East with full rights for all minorities.

## 1968: the year the workers showed their potential

1968 WAS A MOMENTOUS year, but we must be careful in analysing the prospects it has opened up.

The May uprising in France has shown the revolutionary potential of the working class in the advanced capitalist societies.

Events in Poland then Czechoslovakia revealed the rumblings of working-class opposition in the state capitalist countries of Eastern Europe.

The heroic National Liberation Front of South Vietnam have undermined the will of the mightiest power the world has ever known.

And recently strikes in Italy have again underlined the potential for revolutionary activity in Western Europe.

### Strength

But these tremendous developments must not beguile us into thinking that the end of capitalism is at hand.

The strength of the system is revealed most of all on the national economic level in Britain. The confrontations between the government and the labour movement which many expected have not really materialised.

The government uses the language of 'the national interest', 'not rocking the boat' and 'pulling ones weight' not to crush the organised working class but to get the orthodox trade union leaders to discipline their own members.

The overall hesitation of the ruling class was reflected in the half-hearted proposals of the Donovan Report on the unions. What is required, if it can possibly be achieved, is for the trade unions to castrate themselves. An open attack on the unions would force a break which Wilson would prefer to avoid.

### Peddling

The attack has occurred on two fronts. On the one hand there is Barbara Castle peddling the government's 3½ per cent norm for wage rises. On the other, there are the employers who say 'We'll give you the rises you want—in return for productivity deals.'

So far the strategy has worked well. Profits have risen—their growth rate is now back at the level reached at the last peak in the third and fourth quarters of 1964.

Dividends are up—so for that matter are prices and taxes on consumers. The fact is that British capitalism has improved itself, at the expense of the British working class.

This shows itself not only in frozen wage increases or once-and-for-all increases obtained in sacrifices of

years of hard-won industrial rights and protections.

It is also seen in the massive rise in prices, the savage attacks on welfare expenditure and the perpetual sacrifice of groups who are least able to organise, such as the old age pensioners. (After all what do old age pensioners export!)

The school building programme has been pegged at £119m. Taking price rises into account this is a slashing cut in an area where need, especially in working class areas, has become acute.

Council rents soar. Taxation is increasingly regressive—it takes from the poor to give to the rich.

Different sectors of the working class have been hit differentially, and some, by giving up more of their protective positions, have been able to maintain their wage increases just above that of prices.

But the quality of life, both present and future, has been drastically attacked. This will reveal itself as the deterioration of the education, health and welfare services absorb the effects of conscious government policy.

### Conditions

It will also be seen as groups of workers least able to help themselves are increasingly made to pay for the rationalisation of British capitalism. It is already seen in the deterioration of working conditions of vast numbers of workers covered by 'productivity' deals.

Only a social democratic government such as the Labour government trading on deep loyalties in the working class could have got away with such attacks without provoking class warfare.

A so-called socialist government has taken steps to revamp British capitalism. It has redefined socialism to mean increased production, economic growth and technological revolution as ends in themselves.

With this approach (clearly that of capitalism and nothing to do with the historic struggle for socialism as the emancipation of the working class) the only threat which worries the Labour government is that of the working class itself.

As Wilson put it at the Labour Party conference last year: 'Production, productivity, exports—everything we have achieved at so great a cost—can be imperilled by ill-considered industrial action whose effect can only be to put the employment of so many of our people at risk.'

What increased productivity really means is reduced labour costs so that the share of profits in the national cake can be increased. In reality it means harder work in the



BARBARA CASTLE Architect of 'prod' deals and anti-union laws

shape of speed-up or flexibility, or reduction in fringe benefits and deterioration of conditions.

The labour movement has paid for the modernisation of capital. Britain's competitive position has improved—we can now undercut foreign workers in some spheres, leading to their employers trying to increase their exploitation.

The underlying economic situation for British capitalism is slowly improving though it still faces huge obstacles. In particular the poverty of technological education is likely to lead to acute shortages of certain types of skilled labour.

Yet all that the capitalist Labour government has achieved is repeatedly threatened by the world financial situation. Increased rationality of individual capitalist countries leads to cut-throat competition between them.

### Panic

The position of sterling as a reserve currency makes it vulnerable to every irrationality in the world capitalist system.

In this situation sections of the ruling class are prone to panic. A panic over the May events in France (now referred to on the BBC as 'the May riots'), a panic over the Vietnam demonstration in October, and only a couple of weeks ago, The Times's own special brand of hysteria, with the call for a national government.

The most alarming form this panic has taken so far has been the cold-blooded attempt by Enoch Powell to exploit racialism as a means of building a right-wing base for himself inside and to the right of the Tory Party.

As yet the ruling class has seen fit to repudiate such racist phrase-mongering (after a period of hesitation of course) but for the first time since the Nazis we have a clear indication of what the ruling class will resort to if sufficiently rattled.

Wilson has done the dirty work of undermining the traditional defences of the working class, and now the Tories are screaming for the right to follow it up with direct attacks on the trade unions.

The Labour government,

sensitive to the slightest criticism from the right, is itself threatening attacks on the right to strike to appease the employers and the international moneylenders.

The very nature of the attack on the working class has perpetuated the fragmentation of the class. It has not been experienced as an attack on the class as a whole.

This has had political consequences of vital significance for revolutionaries. There has been a massive erosion of organisational support for the Labour Party but the need has not been felt for a total alternative—and where there has been such a need there has been no alternative available.

### Vacuum

For the class as a whole there are stirrings of disaffection but the connections are not being made—between one group of workers and another, between the industrial struggle and the tenants' struggle, between the war in Vietnam and the war in Britain.

There is, in short, a vacuum on the Left.

What this calls for is patient political propaganda. The real lesson of the May events in France is how such momentous movement of the class can occur in a situation of low levels of political awareness—both before and after.

What is needed as a step in the direction of building a revolutionary party is unity on the Left in Britain. The call which the International Socialists put out last April for unity must be pursued wherever possible.

The Left in Britain is small, it is isolated, it too is fragmented. If the class should move in Britain as it did in France well and good. But our ability to be able to help and influence such a development will depend on what we build before and during such a movement.

Capitalism will not crumble because one day the system stops working, nor because a self-proclaimed leadership shouts boo to it and exposes everyone (themselves excluded) as traitors and finks.

Socialism will be the self-conscious liberation of the working class, when the organised working class overthrows the capitalist system.

We must view our work in this light and an important step in this direction can be a regrouping of the marxist Left in this country.

In this respect the past year gives us room for cautious optimism.

While British capitalism is in the process of reorganisation many opportunities are opened up. We must be sure we do not spurn them.

Richard Kuper

# LETTERS

## The need to find that missing link

SOCIALIST WORKER is an excellent agitational paper. Its industrial reportage is thorough and its background to the unfolding class struggle on all fronts is fascinating. The paper's lay-out is good.

However, in its role as an educator there is a lot missing. There is a general lack of theoretical articles, and of relevant historical analysis.

In every issue at least one of the inside pages should be devoted to marxist material which is not necessarily immediately related to the day-to-day struggle (if it is, so much the better).

### Demanding

Of course there is a danger that there will be 'language' difficulties—and it is true that these cannot always be overcome. Some marxist terminology cannot be simplified and explained in the course of a short article.

But Socialist Worker must be fairly demanding of its readership, which, after all, is composed not only of workers with an underdeveloped trade-union consciousness, but also of communist workers and members of other left-wing tendencies, whom International Socialism must attract on the level of theory as well as activity.

The fact that the theoreticians of the International Socialists are already over-

worked should not interfere with the task of producing regular articles.

The editorial board should plan in advance series of articles—historical, or explanations of marxist theory—and commission individual IS branches to produce work for which they should be given adequate time to prepare.

Revised and shortened articles from our theoretical journal International Socialism could be reprinted. Contributions from other left-wing tendencies on basic theory should be solicited—and answered.

Space considerations must not be allowed to interfere with this important aspect of Socialist Worker's content. We do not hesitate to produce 'specials' for use in agitational work.

We should treat the present ideological confusion of workers—and of some of our comrades—with the same urgency.—PHIL EVANS, Leeds IS.

### THE EDITOR REPLIES:-

Phil Evans is right. The major weakness of the paper so far has been its inadequate and sketchy efforts to introduce marxist ideas and working-class history to our readers. I think an attempt was made recently to put things right with Mike Heym's article on Russian state capitalism. There is more to come. Meanwhile, if Leeds IS wish to prepare a series on marxism...

## Making friends and influencing people

YOUR PAPER is not too bad at times and I like to see it (and other Labour MPs to see it) because I think it is important to see what young socialists are saying and doing.

But also (at times) there is much rubbish. For example Mrs. Short. During my short time in Parliament, she has not functioned as a 'Left-wing Labour MP' nor has she been associated with group activity.

I think the reasons you make these errors is that you do not thoroughly understand the Parliamentary Labour Party, the Labour Party or the trade union movement on which the former rests.

If you expect to play any lasting and constructive role

in the development of British socialism (let alone international socialism) you will need to get to know leading trade union leaders and a number of Labour MPs so that you may get some first-hand knowledge instead of relying on hearsay and capitalist newspapers.—SID BIDWELL (Labour MP for Southall) House of Commons, SW1.

Letters for publication must arrive first post Monday. Please type or write on one side of the paper only. The editor reserves the right to shorten letters.

# Pegswood: death of a mining



MAYBE YOU'VE PASSED the little town of Pegswood. It's just a blink on the main London to Edinburgh line.

To some no doubt it's an unseemly blot among the ploughed fields and wooded denes of mid-Northumberland.

Its pit head and pit heap rise suddenly beside the railway line and just as suddenly are gone again as you speed north towards the Border—salmon, castles and Sir Alec Douglas-Home.

You aren't to know what you've passed by. Pegswood, a humble pit village, is well worth knowing.

### Take notice

It has more to boast about than Sir Alec's estates or Auld Reekie. Yes, those London sociologists might well stop off here and take notice.

For Pegswood's pride is its people. Five generations have lived together and worked together here since the colliery opened in 1867.

After 102 years, Pegswood will close next February.

Half the 500 men will lose their jobs. The 240 men transferred to nearby collieries can have no future.

One man here has been in on the death of four pits in two years.

Pegswood, a little town of 2,500 happy people, is being murdered. There is no other work here.

Unemployment is already 16 per cent among men. After February it will be 30 per cent. Next April, the neighbour-

ing Longhirst pit, only opened in 1956, will almost certainly close too—another 550 jobs.

Jack Davison is lodge secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers and a Labour councillor. He is proud of the men who built that great slag mountain out of the earth to dwarf the pit rows.

He set out to show the murderers of Pegswood just what they planned to destroy by publishing a social survey of the village.

It showed how the closure would lead to depopulation and that what the people feared most was the tearing apart of their families.

Many older people feel deprived, lonely, purposeless when sons and daughters and grandchildren are driven south. Why should they leave?

People who talk about the

## by TONY CORCORAN

village having no reason but the pit are surely mouthing planners' tripe. This community exists for its people not the Coal Board, Harold Wilson, Roy 'Miner' Mason or any Planners! As Jack says: 'What sort of system has nothing planned to replace a colliery after 102 years?'

### Private enterprise

The nationalised mines are being closed not because they are uneconomic but because the NCB want to open-cast the pits' reserves with contracts given to private enterprise.

'Butterwell Opencast site

near here will be mining over one million tons a year by 1970. The biggest deep mine quarry in Europe.'

Jack speaks with pride of the achievements of the lodge. How the miners look after their old folk, the youth (what's left of them) and the kids.

How they organise a Family Week run by the 'Welfare'. How Pensioners are taken by special train each summer to Largs, Morecambe, Scarborough or Southport.

To sophisticated city mous the homely atmosphere of the club here with beer still 1s6d a pint may be cheap and laughable.

The new £38,000 Miners

Welfare may be the Playboy Club.

But the socialists here are the miners by them and run. They owe no socialism. They have and caring in spite of it.

You will never from a train with there. And perhaps Wilson wants to

### Today's

Local Labour (Morpeth) occupy itency that in first 'working ment, Lib-Lab Th demned by Kei traitor to his cl

Few miners for time left for to Jack Davison mood of miners

# The nightmare of Stalin's

## —two searing acc

So I ask our government

To double

To treble

The guard

Over this tomb

— Yevgeni Yevtushenko

WHEN DID the Russian revolution begin to degenerate?

There are plenty of theorists who can give an exact date to it: Kronstadt or the death of Lenin or the defeat of the Left Opposition.

But what is more important is to remember what it meant to the millions imprisoned by order of the secret police.

In two recently published books we can taste the oppressive atmosphere of Stalin's Russia and decide ourselves what madness saw 12 million Russians murdered in the process of industrialisation.

One is a novel by Victor Serge, a member of the Left Opposition deported to Siberia in 1933: *The Case of Comrade Tulayev* (Penguin 7s 6d).

### PURGES

The other is an autobiographical account by an orthodox communist caught up in the purges in 1937, Evgenia S. Ginzburg's *Into the Whirlwind* (Penguin 6s).

Serge's novel is a great work of fiction. We move among the elite in 1939, the uncertain prelude to war with the trials and purges in the Red Army officer corps after the execution of Marshal Tukachevsky and a second Kirov affair with the murder of a high-ranking bureaucrat named Tulayev.

We see the net closing on a number of victims: a provincial official, an old Trotskyist still alive in internment,

a Comintern functionary who glimpses the final treachery in Spain and even by the inexorable pull of terrorist methods, the prosecutors themselves.

None are safe from the Chief, a paranoid figure who alone of the men of 1917 remains to decimate the old Bolsheviks in order to insert his new men.

### BASELESS

Serge gives a searing and heart-searching picture of the nightmare world the Stalinists held out as the triumph of 'scientific socialism'.

Into the Whirlwind is three years in the life of an orthodox communist who at 30 was torn from her family on the utterly baseless charge of Trotskyism.

We see not only the way in which she was tortured and starved in the prisons of the NKVD but the slow realisation that the man responsible for this state of affairs was her beloved leader, Stalin.

She met old oppositionists, Trotskyists, Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries condemned first by the Tsarists and then by the Stalinists to the selfsame prisons to which the monarchy had sent generations of revolutionaries.

Her suffering and that experienced by her companions is beyond belief. She was arrested and sentenced before physical torture became legal in the prisons of Russia, but she heard the screams of those who were and saw slow death from scurvy and starvation overtake her companions.

She found humanity and strength in many strange

## REVIEWS

quarters—the persecuted Old Believers and Baptists and the apolitical peasantry.

She saw many crack others change out of recognition in prison, with her old interrogators suffering the same fate.

She tried to remain true to herself and miraculously survived, to be released in 1955. She remains a communist who ascribed all to the 'cult of personality' and thanks God that the 'great Leninist truth' has prevailed—but only so much of the truth as Stalin's heirs would allow.

This is an important document, as important as Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, also reprinted by Penguin. After wading through

these pages of suffering we ca questions rais nature of Rus born out of t brutality. Ther rational defen murderous pol best of the Bo destroyed by dictator.

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# Socialist Worker

EDITORIAL 657a High Road Tottenham London N17 telephone 01-808 2879  
BUSINESS Paxton Works Paxton Road London N17 telephone 01-808 4847.

Editor Roger Protz  
Editorial Committee Paul Foot Richard Kuper Constance Lever Laurie Flynn  
Business Manager Jim Nichol

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 racist 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-

# WHERE WE STAND

mand of no victimisation of trade unionists. Redundancy should be opposed with the demand: five days work or five days pay. Shop stewards organisations should strengthen and extend their in-

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.

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by Tony Cliff a

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'We're back to the days of Ramsay MacDonald. In 1964 the lads were bewildered by this Labour government, then came frustration, now it's bitter anger.

**Grass roots**

'What concerns me is the destruction of the grass roots of the labour movement.  
'The question is not whether the Labour Party will win the next election but whether there will be a Labour Party to fight it.'

Watch out Will Owen. If you want to keep your seat you had better get more than promises from Harold.  
2,900 jobs in this area in four years' time is no good at all. Pegswood miners demand jobs in Pegswood now or no mine closure.

**Russia counts**

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innocents and still injustice and persecution flourish under the new class of expropriators created by Stalin, hyenas whose only claim to stand by the red banner of internationalism lies in the colour of the blood shed by them and their predecessors.  
These books give a clear exposition of the crimes it is all too easy to forget. We cannot despair in the face of such injustice and suffering.  
'Our only course is to fight to expose it and oppose internationalism and marxism to the crude dogmas of Russia and her satellites, just as we do to the crimes of the imperialist powers.

**Terry Bull**

**u read...**

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**The right of self-determination: restating a basic marxist demand**

AS SYMPATHETIC human beings we might give to charity, although we know such actions cannot even scratch the surface of the problem.

As socialists we are concerned with the battle to eliminate the root causes of poverty, war and oppression.

It is appropriate that the millionaire press was plastered with heartbreaking pictures of starving Biafran children when a Nigerian victory was thought to be imminent, but that they lost interest when the Biafrans struggled to their feet to keep on fighting.

As socialists, however, we are mainly concerned with supporting men when they fight, if we think their cause is right. We can leave the useless pity for the defeated to our private hearts.

But should we support Biafra's right to break away from Nigeria?

The phrase 'right of national self-determination' will not give us an answer until we have decided exactly what it means, and why we should support it.

**MAN MADE**

Socialists do not believe in mystical things which men cannot voluntarily change. We don't believe that 'nations' exist irrespective of what men think, but only because men make them and believe in them.

And we certainly do not believe in the sacredness of territorial integrity and national boundaries.

On the contrary, nations and nation states only took clear shape and asserted themselves with the development of capitalism and we are trying to encourage working-class internationalism and to fight to make a free international society.

Yet just as class rule does exist and can only be opposed by strengthening (not denying) class feeling and class war, so national oppression does exist and can only be overcome by struggles for national independence.

If workers did not feel class conscious you would not have a classless society, only one in which the class rule of the capitalists was even harsher. If the Vietnamese were not fighting the Americans you would not have a less nationalistic world, merely one in which the aggressive nationalism of American imperialism was less challenged.

**MAXIMUM**

'The recognition of the RIGHT of ALL nations to self-determination implies the recognition of the maximum of DEMOCRACY and the minimum of nationalism... Unless we in our agitation advance and carry out the slogan of the right to secession we shall play into the hands not only of the bourgeoisie but also of the feudal landlords and of the absolutism of the oppressing nation' (Lenin, 1914).

The quotation from Lenin is very much in its place here. Today we think of national liberation as a struggle against imperialism.

Clearly we must support the Vietnamese NLF against the world power which is the greatest enemy both of the third world and of the world working class.

The Biafran situation does not fit in neatly here. True, Britain created the Nigerian Federation, and deliberately weighted it so the feudal north would counterbalance the more modern classes of the West and particularly the East (Biafra), a situation with parallels in the Adeni Federation.

True, Britain has sustained the Nigerian attack with arms and supplies. But the rival imperialisms of Portugal and France have been backing Biafra.  
Most socialists have found

**Why Biafra should 'go it alone'**

by Constance Lever

the situation confusing and have abstained from taking sides or even from discussing it.  
But Lenin argued support for the right of self-determination in a situation which can easily be compared to Biafra. He was asserting particularly the right of secession of Poland from Russia—of a more advanced and westernised ruling class from the political domination of a more backward autocracy—which, said Lenin, was itself 'economically entirely dependent on the power of the imperialist finance capital of the 'rich' bourgeois countries.'

A bourgeois Poland, independent of Russian political rule, had a chance of developing its industry and its working class.

A Biafra independent of Nigerian rule would have much less chance of achieving this.

More than 50 years have passed and the capitalists of backward countries are almost entirely paralysed by the power of imperialism and the world market and by the distance that must be travelled to achieve a modern technology.

**MIGHT SUCCEED**

Yet while it is clear that the Nigerian Federation could not have achieved the breakthrough (and even clearer that a Nigeria reunited by force could not do so), it is arguable that an independent Biafra, inhabited by some of the most westernised people in Africa (with near 100 per cent literacy for example) and with valuable natural resources, might just possibly succeed.  
Lenin's argument about Poland did not however depend on the greater presumed efficiency and 'progressiveness' of an independent bourgeois Poland. Our argument about Biafra is also not dependent on this remote possibility.

We, like Lenin, are concerned first with the development of a strong working-class movement with an international consciousness. The working class of a nation which rules and oppresses another is corrupted by this, unless it campaigns for the right of the oppressed nation to self-determination.

'Can a nation be free if it oppresses other nations? It cannot' said Lenin.

And Marx thought that 'it is in the direct and absolute interest of the English working class to get rid of their present connection with Ireland... English reaction had its roots... in the subjugation of Ireland'.

On the other hand, the working class of the subject nation finds itself doubly repressed. It also finds its vision of the class enemy at home and the class brothers abroad blurred by the need to fight for independence.

There can, of course, be unity without oppression and to support the right to divorce does not mean one may not argue against it in a particular case.

Before the massacres of Iboes by other tribes, they were the section of the country most committed first to independence from Britain and then to a united Nigeria. Now, however, it is clear that a reunited Nigeria will



**OJUKWU**  
Aid does not make a puppet

It is uncertain whether this statement can be extended to the five million members of minority tribes living within the Biafran area. We must recognise also the justice of the aspirations of these minorities.

For the moment Biafra's struggle against Nigeria must be characterised as a defensive action. There is no working class in either Nigeria or Biafra capable of preparing the way to a solution to the problem by siding in solidarity with one or the other.

**PAPER OVER**

No one can demand of the Iboes that they let themselves be exterminated by Adekunle's troops. A peace not recognising the independence of Biafra could only paper over the national conflicts which would break out again in the long run.

The Ojukwu regime bears evident features of neo-colonialism—and French imperialism is no better than English imperialism.

But it is only in an independent Biafra that the Ibo ruling class can eliminate all the contradictions of the tribal quarrels.

**LIBERATION**

It is only along this path that the Nigerian and Biafran workers can recover from their destructive defeat and take up the struggle for real national and social liberation—for the overthrow of the national bourgeoisie and the feudal aristocracy, for the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasants and certain sectors of the middle class and for the unification of all the Sudanese states on a socialist basis.

Such success will only be achieved in conjunction with revolution in the advanced countries.

endence on arms from France and Portugal.

On August 19, a photocopy of a document supposedly signed by Ojukwu (the Biafran leader) was shown to the press in Lagos. It ceded to a French bank all rights to exploit Biafran underground resources (coal and minerals, not oil or gas) in return for 80 million francs in cash.

Yet aid alone does not make a puppet. It is clear that the Ibo population solidly supports secession, and that the move was not foreign inspired. The dependence of Biafra on support it receives does not nearly balance the dependence of Nigeria on its foreign backers.

Without outside support to either side, Biafra would have won long ago.

Is Biafra a nation? A nation may often be created in struggle. There can be no doubt that the Nigerian Federation before the civil war was not a nation and that if the Federation were reimposed by force, the chances of it becoming one would be nil.

The seven million Iboes have found a unity in struggle which is making a nation of them.

only be glued together by naked force and oppression, which would block the development of a working-class movement on either side.

Perhaps we are still begging the whole question. It is sometimes argued that we have here not a national but a reactionary tribal movement of a kind which could splinter Africa.

**WESTERNISED**

But the seven million Iboes are among the most westernised and detribalised people in Africa, comprising many traders, entrepreneurs and industrial workers.

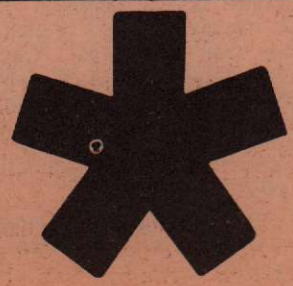
Their old tribal structure was not centralised and they are not now fighting under the banners of chiefs and elders but of a modern army and administration.

Are they then a puppet of a rival imperialism, as was Tshombe in Katanga? There can be no doubt of their dep-

**Join the International Socialists**

ABERDEEN Janet Kennedy 32 East Main Ave Mastrick	GLASGOW Ian Mooney 4 Dalcross Passage W1	NORTHAMPTON Alan Druker 21 Ardington Road
ACTON John Deason 148 Rusthall Avenue W4	HAVERING Dave Rugg 8a Elm Parade Hornchurch Essex	NORWICH Gerald Crompton 220 College Rd Norwich NOR 5AF
BECKENHAM Mervyn Smith 9 Alton Gardens Copers Cope Rd 01 658 6552	HORNSEY Valerie Clark 18 Dickinson Rd N8	NOTTINGHAM Robert Abrahamson 15 Wellington Square Derby Rd
BIRMINGHAM Godfrey Webster 128 Yardley Wood Rd B'ham 13	HULL Paul Gerhardt 52 Freehold Street	OXFORD Steve Bolchover 181 Iffley Road
BRADFORD Bob Kornreich Flat 1 7 Oak Avenue Bradford 8	ILFORD Lionel Sims 99 Belgrave Road 01 SEV 6991	POTTERIES John Whitfield 5 Grosvenor Rd Newcastle U Lyme
BRIGHTON Micky Adams Flat 4 85 St. Aubyns Hove	IPSWICH Malcolm Bezzant 45 Melbourne Road	RICHMOND Peter Glatter 3 Burlington Ave Kew
BOLTON F Canavan 11 Sutton Rd Sutton Estate Deane Bolton	ISLINGTON/ANGEL D Phillips 2 Chapel Mkt Grant St N1 01 BRU 1026	RIPLEY & ILKESTON C Burnett 75 Heage Road Ripley Derbys
CAMBRIDGE Peter Smith 65 Glisson Road	DALSTON/SHOREDITCH B Hugill 154 Downham Rd N1	SELBY John Charlton 12 Thatch Close Selby Yorks
CAMDEN Chris Barker 36 Gilden Road NW5	HIGHBURY Keith Ellis 8 Archibald Road N7	SHEFFIELD J Wilkin 15 Raven Road Sheffield S7 1SB
CHERTSEY Nick Humphrey 83 New Haw Rd Addlestone Surrey	KENTON Kevin Simms 56 Salisbury Road Harrow	SOUTHAMPTON John Fisher 144 Thornhill Park Road
COLCHESTER Ian Noble 12 Coach Rd Arlesford Wivenhoe 272	KILBURN Sean Dunne 18 Lithos Road NW3	STEVENAGE Michael Downing 57 Trumper Road Trots Hill
COVENTRY Dave Edwards 53 Palmerston Rd Earlsdon	KINGSTON Roger Crossley Flat 2 6 The Avenue Crossbiton	STOCKPORT Barry Biddulph 10 Foliage Crescent Brinnington
CRAWLEY Deborah Ward 2 Weddell Rd Tilgate	LAMBETH Andy Smith Flat 6 126 Streatham Hill SW2	STOKE NEWINGTON Mike McGrath 28 Manor Road N16
CROYDON Jenny Woodhams 26 Braemar Avenue South Croydon	LEICESTER Shirley Abrams Flat 3 26 St Albans Road	SWANSEA Pete Branston 33a Uplands Crescent
DURHAM A Beard 35 Hallgarth Durham	LEEDS Vince Hall Flat 3 25 Bagby Road Leeds 2	TOTTENHAM Laurie Flynn 374 High Road N17
EAST LONDON John Metcalfe 61 Wolsey Avenue E17	LOWESTOFT Ron Mallet 30 Cotmore Road	TOWER HAMLETS M Renn 58 Merchant St Bow E3
EDINBURGH Jim Smith 25 Pitt St (Leith) Edinburgh 6	MANCHESTER Jack Sutton 11a Rowan Avenue Walley Range M16	WATFORD Paul Russell 61 Carpenders Avenue Carpenders Park
ENFIELD Gill Pressman 34 The Chine London N21	MERSEYSIDE Ross Hill 5 Lothair Rd Anfield Liverpool 4	WIGAN Ray Challinor 34 Whiteside Avenue Hindley
FULHAM Jackie Taylor 41 Perham Road W14	MERTON Malcolm Roe 22 Elmhurst Avenue Mitcham Surrey	WOOD GREEN Helen Wigley 332 High Road N22
FOLKESTONE Dave Cowell c/o 18 Station Rd	MIDDLESBROUGH F Chris Chard 32 Bedford Terr Billingham	WOLVERHAMPTON Dave Spillsbury 274 Penn Road
	NEWCASTLE Tony Corcoran 26 Lesbury Road	YORK Bob Looker 22 Hobgate

Please send further details of the meetings and activities of the international socialists to



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

# ULSTER: WHAT THE LEFT MUST DO

RECENT EVENTS in Northern Ireland have made clear to most British socialists the existence of a police state in Britain's backyard.

To explain what this means in practice it is necessary to describe in detail the act which, side by side with the British Government of Ireland Act 1920, functions as the real constitution of the Six Counties of Northern Ireland.

This act, the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (Northern Ireland) 1922, is one of the most all-embracing pieces of repressive legislation anywhere in Europe. Section One of the Act contains a blanket clause giving the government power 'take all such steps and issue all such orders as may be necessary for preserving peace and maintaining order.'

Section Two, subsection three makes it a criminal offence to fail to inform the police of suspicious, not to say illegal, activity.

Section Five provides for the punishment of political offenders by judicial whipping.

Section Six prescribes the death penalty for infringement of certain sections of the Act.

Section 10 gives the government or police the power to interfere with coroners and juries.

Taken together these and other sections of the Act represent a charter drawn up by the Northern

## From SEAN REED

Ireland Tory government with the aid and assistance of Britain, and presented to the police as a composite plan for the efficient castration of any opposition.

The reason for the severity of the Act is to be found in the artificial nature of the Six County statelet. The cause is clear—a division in the Irish ruling class, originating in economic differences which was then manipulated by British imperialism.

### ASSISTED

The Northern ruling class kept its close links with British imperialism. In maintaining these links, the northern capitalists were aided by British troops who assisted in holding sufficient people and territory to make the Northern state viable.

Had the Orange enclave been confined to the immediate environment of Belfast, its popular base might have allowed the development of normal bourgeois democracy. But this was never on the cards: economically, the base is not big enough; politically, without British aid for the northern rulers, the southern regime would undoubtedly have swallowed it.

The necessary inclusion of a nationalist population amounting to one third of the total means that opposition to the regime, from whatever political quarter, tends to become opposition to the existence of the Six County State as such. Hence the need for the Special Powers Act.

From this follows the importance of the struggle for democracy in Northern Ireland. This struggle must be based on a programme which rejects Toryism, Green as well as Orange.

The Northern worker will never be won to a programme which calls for the absorption of the Six Counties into the present southern regime with its Rome-rule-in-the-schools which tends to confirm his ever-present fear that a break with Orange Toryism will open the floodgates and relegate him to the position of a second-class citizen.

He will only be won for the establishment of a republic, when it is clear in his mind that what is envisaged is a Workers' Republic, in which he as a worker will control his own destiny without fear of Thames or Tiber.

The complexity of the situation has in the past been used by many in the labour movement in Britain

as an excuse for doing nothing, or else indulging in the old British habit of telling the Irish how to run their own affairs.

This British paternalist—not to say nationalist—attitude to Ireland will come as no surprise to Irish revolutionary socialists, who have long recognised, if not accepted, the inability of the labour movement in Britain to show an understanding of the Irish problem.

The result of this attitude in practice is that even the best-informed British left-wing organisations fail to take any part in the struggle against British imperialism in Ireland.

What is to be done? First and foremost British socialists must refrain from penning long high-flown theoretical articles (which all end by telling Irish socialists what to do) and instead launch a campaign of solidarity with the Irish movement. In this campaign the best thing British socialists can do is demand:

1. the withdrawal of all British troops from Ireland
2. an end to the supply of British military equipment to the Northern Ireland Tory Party and its para-military Black Hundreds, the B-Specials
3. stop British subsidies to the Tory police state of Northern Ireland.

## worker's diary

### Let Fortune smile on you

A NEW YEAR resolution: all readers who can catch a bus, a train or book a coach should hurry to see Close the Coalhouse Door at the Fortune Theatre in London.

This unsolicited testimonial is prompted by Diary's visit during the Christmas holiday. It is an experience no socialist can afford to miss.

Set in a North-east mining village, the play traces the bloody heritage of the pitmen, from the founding of the miners' union, through strikes and lock-out to the current problems of closure and redundancy.

That bald description would not entice many to book their seats, but the history is told in such a manner that only a diehard reactionary would be left unmoved.

For history is about love and laughter as well as building unions and battling with coal owners and troops.

Written by Alan Plater, with songs by Alex Glasgow, CTCD is uncompromisingly on the side of the workers and hurls volleys of class abuse at the coal owners and nationalised bosses who have wrung profit from the pitmen, with a high cost to life and limb.

But for me it remains primarily an evening of high humour. And so it should.

For it is the workers' ability to laugh even when their mouths are bloody that has inspired generations of socialists. Even those who need no inspiration will walk a little taller when they leave the Fortune Theatre.

### My comrade and I...

DESPERATELY SEARCHING the radio for news other than Lunacy on Christmas Day, I stumbled into the Queen's festive speech.

This happens to me every year and I have a sneaking feeling that even if the telly and the radio are off those girlish cadences would still come seeping, Big Brother style, out of the wainscoting.

As usual, I found myself quickly captivated by what must be the comedy performance of every Christmas. I marvelled at the bored insincerity of it all and the obvious relief when she reached the end—a relief shared by a substantial number of her audience.

I also have a suspicion that her speeches are written by some anonymous lapsed marxist. I think it was last year, or the year before (or perhaps both) that she spoke of 'a world of constant change'.

Perhaps that was a shade too intellectual. This time she was more down to earth and spoke of the great brotherhood of man, epitomised by the Commonwealth of nations over which she, one of the world's richest women, reigns.

Waxing plebeian, she told her fuddled listeners: 'Rich or poor, we all depend upon the work and skill of individual men and women, particularly those in industry and production who are the creators of wealth and prosperity.'

Next Christmas: The theory of the falling rate of profit and how workers' control is applied at Windsor Castle.

L.D.T.

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STOP PRESS

### TALKS ON UNION LAW

Government introduce anti-union laws have been with TUC chief employers this Department of and Productivity thought that M proposals, des appease the T CBI, include a period for strike ballots before strikes. It is a rumoured that . repeal certain the Trades Dis 1965 and 1906 officials to be third party dam from strikes ar to sue unions . We will report week.

### DERRY LONG

Long march to Derry Jan 1-socialists ask participate. Th arranged from Friday and Sat Belfast 21193.

### 'PROD' DE

Unions repre workers at Brit Motors factory Scotland, sign productivity bo week.

# Scots sparks call for strike

## Socialist Worker Reporter

ANGRY SCOTS ELECTRICIANS are demanding strike action over a government decision to freeze a 9d an hour wage increase. Mrs Castle, Secretary for Employment and Productivity, stopped the increase last week because it exceeds the 3½ per cent norm laid down for wage rises and because the workers have already had one increase in the last year.

The increase involved 10,000 men in the electrical contracting industry in Scotland. The agreement was signed on December 12 by the Electrical Trades Union and the Electrical Contractors' Association of Scotland.

The 9d an hour increase would have brought journeymen into line with the 10s an hour earned in England and Wales.

This is the second time in two years that contracting electricians in Scotland have had a wage increase stopped.

Last Friday, the Edinburgh committee of the ETU, an unofficial body which organised a strike two years ago, called on the union executive to call a Scottish strike in defiance of the government.

Joe Black, Clyde district organiser of the ETU said: 'The government seem determined to discriminate against the Scottish worker.'

### Granted

He added: 'In January last year electricians in England and Wales were granted an increase but the rise was frozen for Scotland and we only got it here in the following July after strike action.'

Les 'High Court' Cannon and his clique who run the ETU are leading right-wing supporters of the government's incomes policy.

Scottish electricians should place no faith in them but should set up rank and file committees to organise swift strike action that will force the government to capitulate.

### MEETINGS

CAMDEN IS: Panic in High Places—the British economic crisis. Spkr Andrew Sayers. Dublin Castle, Parkway (tube Camden, Town) January 7 8 pm RHODESIA: Demonstrate solidarity with Zimbabwe Freedom Fighters Sunday Jan 12. Assemblée 2 pm Speakers' Corner, march to Rhodesia House. POSTER WORKSHOP Benefit Night: CAST in Muggins Awakening and other plays: Angry Arts Film Society—The Columbia Revolt (European premier); Agit-prop Street Players. Jan 10 7.30. All Saints Hall, Powis Gdns W11. Admiss 5s.

## Tenants court victory

From DAVID FERGUSON

TEESSIDE:— At the fourth court hearing last Friday Sean Grace and Barry Slater were cleared of obstruction charges.

They and Brian Ebbatson, all members of Teesside Tenants Associations, were found guilty of a breach of the peace and were bound over for a year. Brian Ebbatson was also found guilty of 'affixing a placard, namely a small bill sticker' and fined £1.

All three were arrested on December 3, when for the second successive month police tried to prevent members of the Tenants Associations from attending a council meeting at which rent increases were to be discussed.

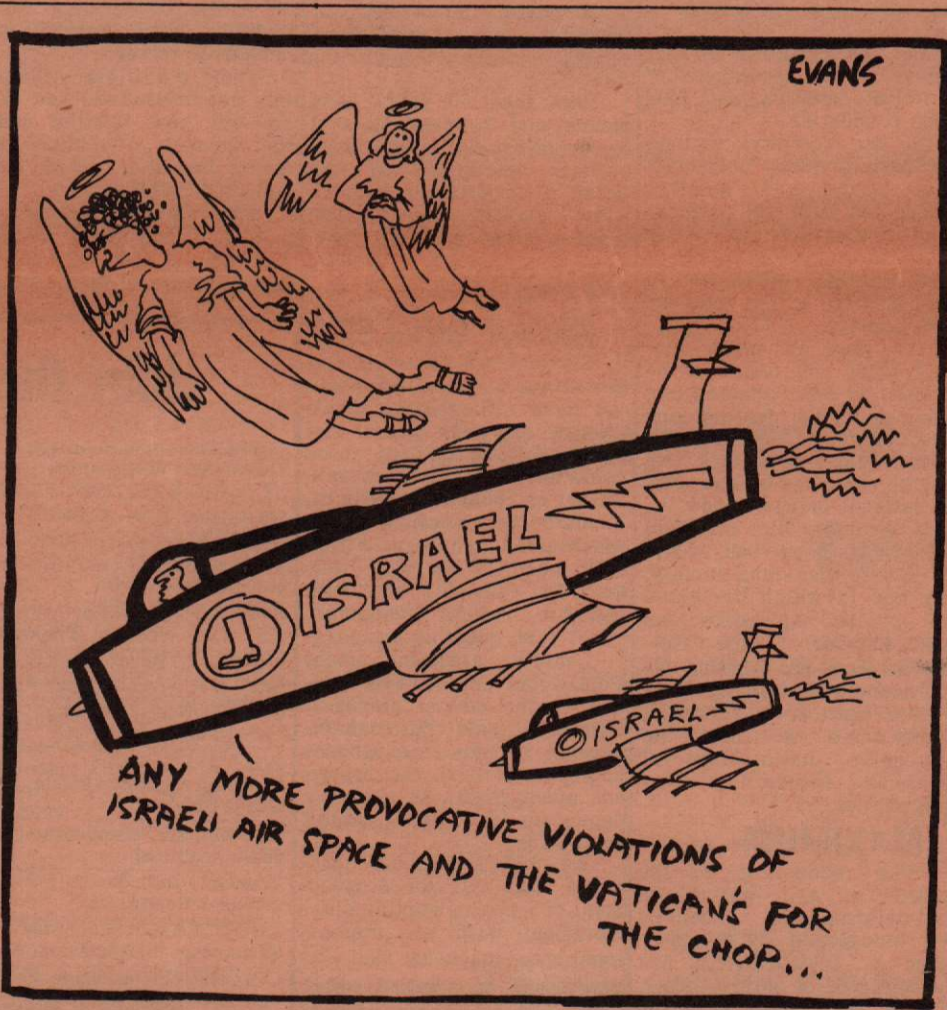
In court the defending solicitor argued that the cause of the disturbance was police action in trying to prevent members of the public attending the meeting.

He added that the arrests had been motivated by an attempt to pin the cause of the opposition to rent increases on 'student' agitators.

Sean Grace is an engineering apprentice, Barry Slater and Brian Ebbatson are teachers.

The magistrate's ruling was a victory for the tenants. Four police witnesses gave completely contradictory evidence.

One plain clothes man had a particularly vivid imagination. The police case failed to stick but the magistrate saved their face by convicting on the minor charges.



## Unions recognition fight

A BITTER DISPUTE over trade union rights could lead to a rash of strikes in the nationalised steel industry this month.

The rich bankers and former Tory bosses who now run the industry for the Labour government are terrified that the strikes will upset their plans to unload vast quantities of steel on the market before they put up the prices in the spring.

The dispute is between the manual and white collar unions in the industry. The six manual unions, including the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, are violently opposed to any white collar workers joining either the clerks' union (CAWU) or the supervisors' association (ASTMS).

BSC plans envisage wholesale rationalisation of existing plant, with the

weeding out of 'inefficient' sectors and the sack for those employed there. Both sides realise that CAWU and ASTMS could act as the spearhead of opposition to such plans.

The two white collar unions waged a tough campaign for recognition by the BSC. They won wide support from the rank and file of BISAKTA, whose leaders, instructed them to carry out the duties of clerks and technicians during any stoppages in order to maintain production.

When members of CAWU and ASTMS in the car industry started to black BSC products, the bosses caved in and a court of inquiry was set up.

This recognised that while the ISTC (including BISAKTA) is the biggest union in the industry with, understandably, the most white collar members,

CAWU and ASTMS should be included in national negotiations. The inquiry also said that the two unions should get local recognition where they could show 'substantial' membership.

The six manual unions retaliated by warning of strike action if their opposition to CAWU and ASTMS was ignored. Official instructions have gone out to their members telling them not to accept orders from members of any other union.

All workers in the steel industry should support the right of white collar employees to join the union of their choice. That is fundamental and the issue should be quickly settled, for other, more important, issues are at stake.

The maximum unity of all steel workers is vital if plans for closure and redundancy are to be fought.