SOLD OUT?

BACK IN BUSINESS.
'You will have to work like you've never worked before', that's how works conductor Jack Spriggs broke the news to his fellow Fisher-Bendix/IRB ex-workers that their 'Workers Co-operative' had been granted a $6.9 million loan by the government.

From now on the Kirkby workers will be responsible for their own future instead of being sitting ducks for shake-down merchants as they, and thousands of other workers have been and are still are.

Fisher-Bendix floated into Kirkby on a wave of grants and tax relief, as soon as they had skinned off the cream of these concessions Fisher-Bendix moved on to the second stage of industrial looting, asset-stripping. It was only the prompt action of Spriggs and the other stewards in putting a lock and guard on the stock and stores which put the kybosh on that trick.

When Fisher-Bendix folded, Harold King of IFB arrived on the scene, incidentally also with a Government grant, and received well again. After all a washing machine works just as well and a bottle of pop tastes the same whether you change the brand name or not. However all was not well, as soon as Harold King ate up his first grant and was released another, he went off in a huff with his employees holiday pay.

After this further seilout the Kirkby work force were determined not to be done in the eye again, up went the flag and they carried on working. For themselves, obviously it is not going to be all plain sailing. They are going to have to take responsibility for market outlets, raw materials, wages, structures etc, being Merrisiiders they'll have a good shot at it.

Under New Management

TRIUMPH FOR HOWS?
The Meriden Workers Co-operative are in for a trilly ride with Norton-Villiers-Triumph chief Dennis Moore.

Under the recently negotiated agreement N.V.T. will get the lions share of $5 million which the Government has allocated to the Co-operative. The Meriden workers are also to hand over to Moore the re-structured 'Monseville' models and spares which they had been holding. N.V.T. has also persuaded the Government into allocating them $5 million export credits.

The latest development is that the West Bromwich B.S.A. workers who are to produce N.V.T.'s future models under the 'Triumph' mark are protesting that the Meriden Co-operative is operating in unfair competition to them. You wouldn't have to search far to find out who put this idea to the West Brom workers. It seems certain that when the minimum terms of the settlement have been met that N.V.T. will rat on the rest. It will then be up to the Meriden workers to show what they can really do. Financials may make wizard fiddles but they have never made a motor bike.
JUSTICE?

Joe Warren and Eric Tomlinson are back in prison to serve out the rest of their three years and two years respectfully they received for conspiracy to intimidate workers to abstain from lawful assembly and making as affray. Their appeal against their sentences failed and so the deterrent effect of these harsh sentences remains.

This is the sort of class justice workers can expect from the courts. The real conspiracy has been committed by the ruling class. At the time of the building strike in 1972 pickets lines were big news. Building workers were organising flying pickets; visiting all the sites in their areas. This initiative and organisation came not from the executive of the Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians but from rank and file members.

This same executive has only made protest noises and called for legislation against the use of conspiracy charges but has not used the industrial strength of the membership to gain the release of Warren and Tomlinson.

In 1972 the Tory government needed to make an example. Picket lines had brought success to the coalminers in the previous February. The same methods had done the same for building workers. Stories in the mass media told of violence, mass pickets and offensive weapons. The middle classes were having nightmares about pickets. As the party of the middle class narrow thinking, pickets had to be put down by the Tories.

During the building workers strike 1972, the employers had a willing army of scab labour. The 'lump' gangs took no notice of the strike call. They were their own bosses etc, and so the only answer was the flying picket'.

Direct action by workers is always creating new situations where new methods of struggles are called for. Such methods proved a success during the miners strike and also during the building workers dispute. Syndicalists have always stressed direct action and have also put forward new tactics to win disputes. Such methods give those involved more control of the running of the strike.

At the moment this control is in the hands of the union officials. We should not expect these same bureaucrats to mobilise the full strength of the trade union movement to win disputes or to gain the release of the Hoxton Four.

P. Turner.

letter

Comrades,

A well attended meeting was organised in Manchester on the 3th November by the Manchester and Salford Trades Council to discuss how to release Eric Tomlinson and Dennis Warren from the savage re-imprisonment to which the appeal court sentenced them.

It was decided initially to support the National Lobby in London on November 24th. Most of the floor speakers were Catholic and speaking out for a general stoppage until these two victims of a capitalist conspiracy were released.

After Warren and Tomlinson are free the campaign should not cease but should become the spearhead to bring about the abolition of the 1972 Conspiracy Act which has become a blaster weapon against working class struggles.

W. Allin U.C.A.T.

PRESS FUND

Donations:
- AB £1.90, BS £1, TR £1.50
- AP £2.70, BN £2.50, BW £2.00

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BLACK FLAG, organ of the Anarchist Black Cross. 10p, from:
Prices

ITALY

Most workers will be very concerned about rocketing prices and soaring inflation. Britain isn't the only country suffering from shrinking purchasing power. The Italian working class also has been hard hit by rising prices. Perhaps the action of some Italian workers will strike a chord over here.

Workers in Milan have been taking over supermarkets and occupying the check-out points for about thirty minutes and charging shoppers half price for their purchases.

On leaving the supermarket, one of the price-strikers hands over the cash from 'fines' to the manager saying that they are honest workers. This part of a civil disobedience campaign which includes refusing to pay increases in bus fares.

This action in some cases has caused the bus companies to suspend the fare increases. In Rome there is also a campaign to urge people to pay only half their electricity bills.

If enough families take this action, the electricity board will be unable to cut off the electricity from thousands of homes.

This type of action, of course, has a long and respectable history. George Rude in his book "The Crowd in History" reports that similar tactics were used at markets in France just before the French Revolution, then as now the crowd sold the goods at a "fair price" and gave the proceeds to the traders.

SWF

National Secretary,
BQM BOX SWF,
LONDON WC 1Y 6AX

Manchester Syndicalist workers Federation,
c/o Greg Roots,
178, Oxford Road, Manchester 1.

Pete Bond,
c/o 35 Moorland cres,
Upton Poole,
Dorset.

Derek Pattison,
63, Thornecliffe Avenue,
Dukinfield,
Cheshire.

Good News "A Batalha" the paper of the old General Confederation of Labour, and now the organ of the Portuguese Libertarian Movement has reappeared. The first issue was published in September in Lisbon. The paper will appear fortnightly at first.

"A Batalha" reaffirms its faith in Anarcho-Syndicalism and we, comrades of the Syndicalist workers Federation, British section of the A.I.T./I.-A. salute their reappearance after so many decades of repression.

As we have said,

"A Batalha", which already has a circulation of 55,000 copies, believes that an autonomous and free industrial union movement is needed in Portugal in order to combat the reformist ideas of the intelligentsia which is under the influence of the communist party.

The C.P. is opposing all wildcat and political strikes, occupations etc., which could endanger the chances of the party doing well during the free elections in 1975.

"A Batalha" intends to fight for the rebuilding of the C.U.P. (General Confederation of Labour) which will pursue the class struggle at all levels to its conclusion. The smashing of Capitalism and the state, then the syndicalist network of workers organisations would produce goods to satisfy the needs of the people according to their needs and administer a stateless, free and egalitarian society, in short Libertarian Communism.

Anarcho-Syndicalism has for a long revolution tradition in the Iberian Peninsula before the takeovers of Walzar and Franco.

We believe that our Portuguese comrades who are emerging from the long silence imposed by Fascism will play an important role in reviving the Syndicalist movement in the world at large, and we must join them in their call for the oppressed of the world to a Social Revolution.

Those comrades in Britain who want to support this revolutionary paper can send money, books, pamphlets, news, articles, etc to

"A Batalha", Rue Angelina Vidal 17-28
Lisbon 1, Portugal.
One family in five in Britain needs re-housing. Some of them live in century-old terraced housing with leaking roofs, damp walls, outside toilets and no hot water or bathroom. Others lead a dreary existence in multi-occupied - a pool term for over-crowded Victorian Mansions in revolting and unsanitary conditions. Yet more people, especially young married couples, double up with their parents while they desperately scrimp and scrape to save the deposit necessary to take out a mortgage on a home of their own. Needless to say these are all working people.

Meanwhile fifty thousand new houses lie empty throughout the country. Building workers are being laid off, brickworks are closing down. All this because property speculators, they come in many guises, Estate agents, Housing Associations, Building Societies etc., allowed their greed to run away with them.

Over the last five years the price of living accommodation has almost doubled whilst the price of land for building has risen astronomically. Lord Goodman, Chairman of the "Housing Corporation" said in his Limolby Lecture "by what iniquity do they (government) allow land once valued at fifty pounds to raise to fifty thousand pounds just because someone has wrangled planning permission!" Lord Goodman also pointed out that this country has a plethora of planning regulations, and that if they had been properly applied over the years, the whole of the population could have been decently housed.

Instead we have had to suffer cramped, barrack-like working class housing in our cities and on rubbish dumps of industrial estates, while at the same time thousands of acres of good arable countryside are being despoiled by the myriads of individual rabbit hutches thrown up by the speculator, of which young married couples may obtain a front door key only if they mortgage the whole of their future. Very often mortgages are obtained under the understanding that views continue working for a number of years. No doubt Keith Joseph approves of this as a way of keeping certain social classes from breeding.

It is estimated that there are about a million houses in varying condition, being allowed to remain empty and rot, some on land zoned for road and motorway schemes, some are bought up by large property speculators who hang on to empty houses waiting to make a killing in areas where liberal Tenants Associations work like beavers to obtain preservation orders. Areas like this eventually become trendy 'villages' and if any working class survive in them it is because they are domestically useful to the new residents.

More and more of the homeless, both families and single people, are being driven through desperation into squatting as the only way to obtain some sort of roof over their heads. This type of squatting is often countered at by local housing departments and social workers as a way out of their responsibilities for homelessness, and it is often the form of squatting that degenerates into shuffling between one draughty, dirty, leaking, bug-ridden hole and another and does nothing toward solving the problem of homelessness, it just sweeps it into rat-infested cellars.

When Council or private property developers (including charity based Housing Associations) want possession of 'squats' they can obtain a court possession order in a day and can, and do, literally pull the property down around the ears of the homeless concerned and then have to trudge around until they find another slit-hole to shelter them for a while.

"IF WE CAN'T GET THE LAW TO SHIFT THEM WE COULD INCORPORATE THEM INTO THE BUILDING!"
Islington, London Council would appear to be more concerned in destroying homes than in rehousing people. Susan Williams, a crippled, unmarried mother rents a room from the Council which although it is in a development area is not due to be demolished until next March. However the demolition firm involved had other ideas and Susan recently underwent the terrifying experience of being awakened by a shattering of glass as demolition workers climbed into the house and began tearing up the floorboards in their search for loot, even after Susan had let the front door open. The workers pulled the door open, the only toilet in the house, dismissing her with a sneer as 'squatter'.

It is no wonder that, with the increase of incidents such as the above that London housing policy is acquiring a 'Kamikaze' title.

The Remedy - Theirs.

Anthony Crosland, Minister of the Environment deserves the gold-plated cough drop for his classic solution to the housing problem: Build smaller houses, so much for the wisdom of our rulers.

The attitude of the Housing Societies was predictable as their spokesman put it at a luncheon paid for by the mortgagees: 'All that is needed is money'.

The spokesman for the National Federation of Building Trade Employers stated that if only local authorities would stop using direct works building departments to build council housing and give the contracts to private enterprise instead then all would be well, more houses could be built for less money and not only would everyone have decent housing but there would be a saving on the rates as well. We are offering this wish to Heath as a future Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The Greater London Council have published an ambitious plan which sets out to provide decent housing for all Londoners by 1980. This paper has given a lot of publicity and praise. It does indeed set out the problem squarely, the important factor is the increasing number of older council housing that are deteriorating and in need of refurbishment. In London there are over 200,000 of these new slums and it is an increasing problem in every city or city in Britain. In Moss Side Manchester recently, members of the local Tenants' Association occupied a newly built council house in order to draw attention to living conditions in nearby flats which, although only 5 to 8 years old are infested with mice, bedbugs and lice. Local Tory papers tried to blame the situation on the way local people lived, even citing throwaway

workmen's sandalwood as a cause of infestation.

The truth is that the trouble stems from over 10 years ago when this part of Manchester was pulled down piecemeal by 'chump' demolition merchants who after grabbing and disposing of all salable items, part burnt and then levelled off all remaining items, leaving the result that a lot of infested bedding and furniture was tipped into the old cellar areas and have become breeding grounds from which the new buildings are infested. The same conditions pertain in new dwellings which are still being erected in the area.

It is becoming obvious that in the cities of Britain at least, housing programmes are not even keeping pace with maintenance needs, and that new council housing, even at the recently accelerated pace is nowhere near large enough to fill the need for houses.

The Remedy - Ours and Yours.

All houses built in this country produce several forms of profit. First there is the astronomical profit on building land, then comes the planners profit, Architects, Surveyors etc. There is profit on building materials and the profit of the building firms. The sum total of all these profits however is only a fraction of the profit which is made out of the interest charges on mortgages and Government loans. Over a 30 year repayment period these come to nearly 3 times the original cost of building.

Society must radically change its attitude towards housing before any solution to the problems can come about. As a first step housing the population must be accepted as a social necessity and not primarily as a source of income and profit as it is treated today.

Public housing must cease to be an exercise in cramming as many people as possible into the smallest area. It must be made to be seen for what it is the most formative factor on the lives of the generation growing up. How many housing estates today have enough hospitals (if any), schools, clinics etc? How many have decent entertainment facilities apart from the dreary and ubiquitous 'pub'? (again a huge source of profits?)

Not until these defects are remedied will be on our way to a decent society and they will not be handed to us on a plate by our present masters. Not until working people are organised strongly enough both where they work and where they live will they be able to demand their birthright. To this end we must organise, NOW!
"Nationalisation" according to most Labour politicians and trade union officials is still the panacea for all our economic and social ills. This is still being advocated in spite of the fact that for a quarter of a century now we have had nationalisation in several of our major industries. The workers here still had to strike or threaten strike action as their fellow workers in the private sector of industry in order to better or safeguard their living standards.

We are being told that the nationalisation program of the Labour government must be implemented. If we are to survive economic chaos caused by private enterprise, we were told that the working class must give full support in order to secure a Labour government in the general election with a large working majority. The apologists for Labour declare that the minority government had been obstructed from implementing its policies by the Tories, Liberals and Nationalists and despite this the government had done a great deal. Rents have been frozen, old age pensions increased, food subsidies introduced, in the next brash-to-spark they refer to the "unjust" wage restraint in the face of rising prices caused by the conservative government. The apologists conveniently forget the wage restraints of previous Labour governments. They also try to deceive with references to food subsidies, frozen rents, price controls etc. This recalls the time when the Attlee Labour government with an overwhelming majority introduced wage restraint (with the approval of the Trade Union Congress) food subsidies, housing subsidies, rent restrictions, and rent restrictions. After the government went out of office the late Richard Crossman M.P. made an admission that since 1945 the British trade unions should have enjoyed a far higher wage packet if the leaders had followed the American example and exported the highest possible price for labour on a free market. Instead of doing so, however, they exercised extreme wage restraint. This they justified by pointing out to the worker the benefits he enjoyed under a "welfare State", food prices kept artificially low by subsidies, rents kept low by housing subsidies, rent restrictions, and in addition the Health Service.

Interesting as Crossman's remarks may be it is recorded in 'The Economic Crisis' that in 1947 until the end of the Labour government in October 1951 the retail price index rose by 29% whilst the wage rate index lagged behind with an increase of only 22%.

The Conservative government which succeeded had also a period of wage restraint and the next Labour government with Harold Wilson at the helm followed the same pattern. Governments come and go but the familiar economic crises and stumbling blocks created by capitalism remain.

Neither majority government by any political party or nationalisation can solve the problems of the mass of the people. Nationalisation is not intrinsically socialist as some people may think. This in fact is a dangerous fallacy. Bismarck in the nineteenth century Germany advocated municipal gas, water works and railway nationalisation. The Tories in this country nationalised the post office and telegraphs. The port of London Authority quoted by Labourites as an example of Socialism was formed by a government under the guidance of Lloyd George. The industries which were nationalised under the Earl Attlee Labour government remained nationalised under the succeeding Tory government. Both Conservatives and Labourites support nationalisation depending on circumstances, time and place.

Many workers of different shades of political opinion are having some respect for the Labour government at present. Their own observation and experience of traditional political parties are leading them to think a little further on "what is to be done". They are beginning to realise that somehow there is something radically wrong in their organisational set ups. Some feel they have been let down by their leaderships which is only a half truth.

Social democrats and parties endeavour to change the face of society by gradual reforms within the framework of capitalism and its institutions. They are therefore doomed to failure. They inevitably become conditioned and corrupted by the very system they try to change. The political power which they try to conquer actually conquers them for political power is really based on economic power and this power essentially remains in the hands of the capitalist class. Those who control economic and industrial power control all
THE COST

SCOTLAND

striking it rich.

The recent upsurge in working class militancy in Scotland has resulted in the current outbreak of strikes, union for the most part are being settled in the workers' favour.

The success of the Scottish workers is of the utmost importance to the future of working class struggle in Britain, and it ranks with the sweeping victory of the refuse workers a few years ago.

Since the end of the first world war British capitalism has treated Scotland as a source for the following: cheap raw materials, cheap labour, as a site for cheaply run subsidiaries of large concerns, and as a reservoir for high skilled mobile labour. All of this was highly profitable for British capitalism but did not go for Scotland or Scottish folk. A reactionary aristocracy and a brutal police force have worked hard hand in hand to maintain the status quo.

Recent events have completely upset this system. For one thing the cost of living could not be held down enough for the tame union bosses to keep the workers down. Also the influx of non-scottish oil workers has strained the service industries and shows them to be inadequate, especially housing.

The shortage of houses led to an outcry for the importation of skilled labour in the same areas where for generations have had to watch the best of their young folk drift away to the towns of England and other countries.

The mounting discontent under these and other impressions produced rumbles among the more organised sections of workers notably the A.E.M. and Motor Engineers, however it was the Haulage workers strike which triggered off the country wide eruption. Scotland's transport drivers the life-line of the war effort and with years worked normally long hours in every possible condition at a ridiculously wage level.

It is to be hoped that in the aftermath of the struggle will be forged a stronger workers rank and file organization tied neither to the mythes and paranoia of nationalism nor to the tendencies of the Scottish T.U.C. workers interests lie far beyond the confines of boundaries and flags.

The annual report of the Government Chief Factory Inspector should make comforting reading to those citizens who have been anxiously watching the share index drop week by week. The industrial accident figures have kept well up to average, in one or two industries they have even increased.

The construction industry as usual is in great demand, with other heavy tasks industries; steel, shipbuilding, mines etc., well in the running. Disclosures were made that Dysentery is increasing. This disease has been choking cotton workers mostly women, to death in Lancashire since the industrial revolution.

The report had a word or two of comfort for chemical workers, Britain has just suffered its first known fatality from dioxin (chloroform) caused by working in the manufacture of vinyl chloride which is used mainly for producing P.V.C. This unfortunate worker had been working with vinyl chloride for 20 years before symptoms of the disease appeared, and the experts point out that no safe level of monitoring can be achieved.

Don Nally, North Derby organizer of the Municipal and General Workers Union is urging the government to speed up legislation to ease the plight of workers in the plastics industry who have contracted a crippling bone disease.

The reported 'small leak' at Dounreay Atomic Reactor highlights the report published in the U.S. journal Science. This states that casual workers (they can be skilled or unskilled) are commonly used on cleaning operations at atomic plants which subject them to high radiation bombardment. The point is made that there is a high turnover of such labour, and that often safety training is inadequate or else casual labour is often recklessly in carrying out safety measures.

The same conditions prevail in Britain. The official attitude is that it is both wasteful and unnecessary to 'burn out' (that is submit to a brief high exposure rate so that he has to be taken off inspection work for weeks or months) a registered radiation worker when outsiders can be brought in for on-off exposures. Nothing is said about the consequences for the casual workers.

The one set of figures in the report which are positive are that the factory inspectors are to be increased, probably to keep pace with the numbers of victims of industrial greed.
gig and politicians become puppets on a string. However, the idea of alternative methods of struggle and forms of organisation are beginning to permeate the industrial workers.

The various governments throughout the world have demonstrated how not to achieve emancipation from the yoke of wage slavery.

In their awakening we hope the working class will soon see clearly that their strength lies in organising at the point of production. That is where they are robbed of the fruits of their labour and that is the place to remedy their plight.

Over 100 years ago Karl Marx in an address to the General Council of the International Working Men's Association stated: trades-unions work well as centres of resistance against the encroachments of capital. They fail particularly from an inelastic use of their power. They fail generally from existing themselves as a gorgilla war against the effects of the existing system instead of simultaneously trying to change it, instead of using their organised forces as a lever for the final emancipation of the working class, that is to say, the complete abolition of the wage system. ("Wages, Price and Profit" R. Marx.)

Last time was Marx saying, but that the unions should develop from defensive organs to offensive ones, syndicalists hope the industrial workers will now take sound advice. R. Lyan.

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**BOOKS & PAMPHLETS**

**Syndicalists in the Russian Revolution**
by G.F. Maxeiff
New Labour Governed 1963-1971
Lenin and Workers' Control 25p.
The Hungarian Workers Revolution 25p.
The pamphlet "Workers Control" is being reprinted.
Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism
A.B.C. of Anarchism
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by T. C. Wilson & M. 35p.
Franco's Prisoner
R. G. E. £1.25.
My Social Credit
G. F. Maxeiff 20p.
Revolutionary Government.
Anarchism 30p.
The Social General Strike,
by T. A. Brown is being
reprinted orders from
Manchester S.W.F. Group.

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I thought M. Rowes and W. Alls criticism of David Lamb's lump pamphlet is recent issues very good. Though a lot of Lamb's critique of the union was quite valid, U.C.A.T.T. is largely a defensive set up so that when there is a boom on, the market leaves it a very low bid in.

Workers in this system have to sell their labour to the highest bidder so the lump must attract any workers who obviously want to make money while there.

But the bosses usually want his pound of flesh so like M. Rowe points out speed ups and an all round deterioration in conditions takes place.

For Lamb to suggest that the lump in itself might be an alternative to the union is nonsense.

There is no alternative to organisation even if Lamb suggested something like a lump cooperative for instance it might be worse. There is no power without organisation and alternative is to be left to the whim of the employer and with the building boom at an end, it would be a hard winter on building sites.

Unions don't always affect things directly an example of this is the notorious anti-union painters B.C. Thompson in Dundee his firm always pays above the union rate, but every time the union negociates a rate they pay out a corresponding rise but I couldn't see them paying out any increases otherwise.

Likewise the U.C.A.T.T. sets the minimum rate an the lump has to pay above this to attract labour away from the union. If after a building boom there is no union to go back too, building works would be in real trouble, perhaps a wage cut spiral.

The way out as I see it is to win back rank and file control and initiative.

This is where the strength is where its all won or lost, workers have to know fights without power are just privileges which can be withdrawn when no longer convenient, real fights require power to back them up, the union has potential the lump has nothing. The only good boss is a dead one.

Yours sincerely
A. B. Ipswich.

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