

# Direct Action

For workers' direct  
control of industry

no. 5

5p

PAPER OF THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION (IWA)

## MIDAS

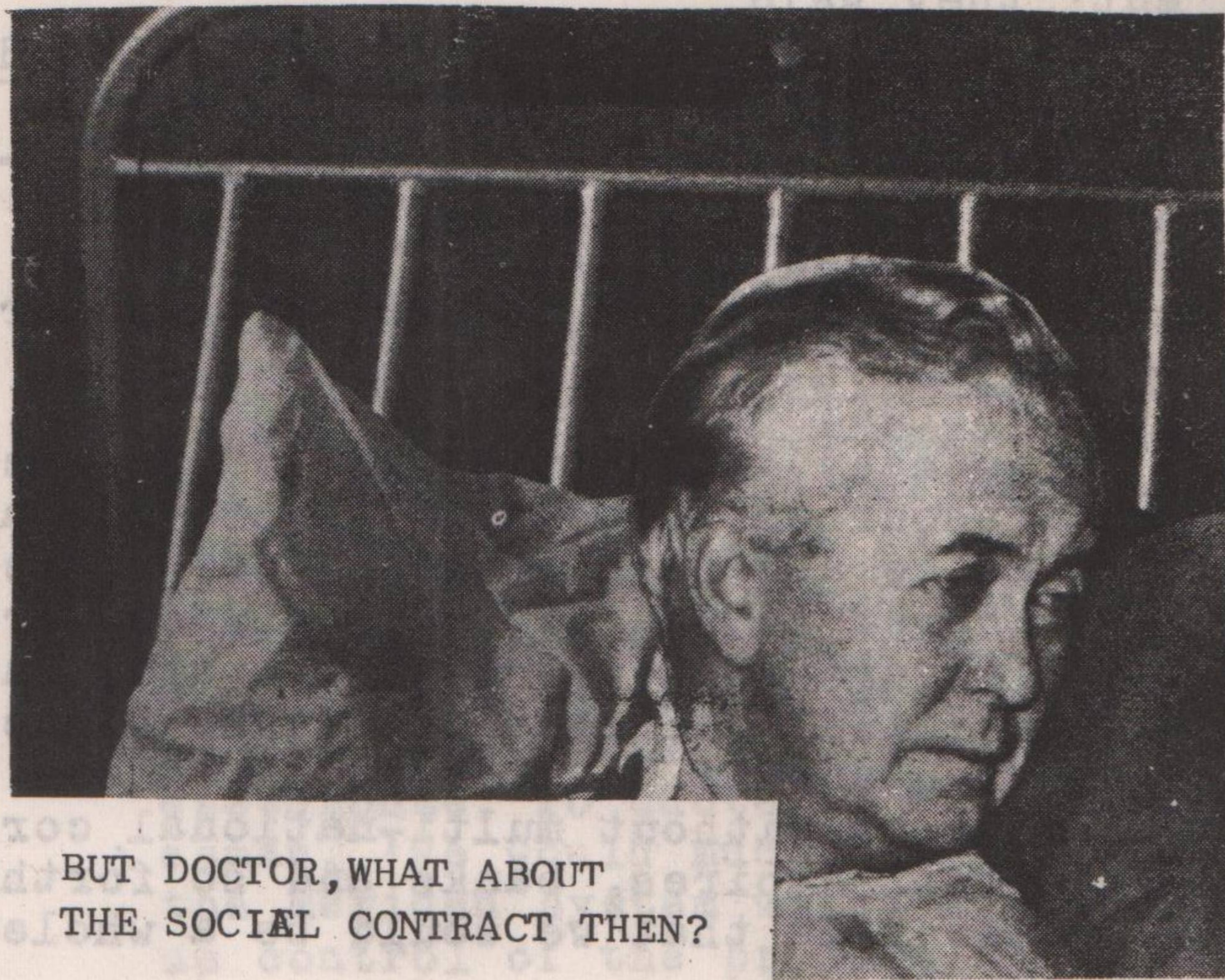
a consultant

A few  
political  
points

The reaction of the National Health Service Consultants to their new terms of contract highlights the archaic conditions that pertain in the medical profession.

One can't really argue against the consultants demands for more money for the job nor even against a reduction in their basic working week. After all every worker would like a basic £7,000 p.a. for a 30hr. week. Even the tactics which the consultants propose to use to get around their contract, e.g. counting travelling time as working time in order to qualify for overtime rates at £8 per hour would earn approval from trade union militants. However as their demands can only be met at the expense of both, hospital staff (most of whom earn less than £2,000 gross for a working week of up to 50 hours) and of the treatment given to N.H.S. patients, the Consultants should not be too surprised if Hospital Nursing and Ancillary Staff refuse to co-operate with their greedy demands.

Hospital work is arduous and demanding and as in all similar conditions the brunt of the work falls on young people both Nurses and Doctors who however have little or no say in hospital policy. Senior Consultants of course often sit on Hospital governing bodies and so have even more control over their



BUT DOCTOR, WHAT ABOUT  
THE SOCIAL CONTRACT THEN?

subordinates lives and futures as well as being able to obtain preferential treatment for their private patients.

The abolition of private patients is only one reform which the Hospital service is in need of. Better pay and conditions for junior staff. A huge increase in the number of young people being trained as Doctors and Nurses with opportunities for Nurses to qualify as Doctors are some of the things needed to break the stranglehold which Consultants and the B.M.A. has over the National Health Service.

## INTEX

The strike at 'Intex Yarns' (ICI) Ashton Under Lyne on victimisation grounds against shop steward Dave Hallsworth who was accused by management (without any proof) of sabotage has exploded into a bloody situation in which right wing strong arm men are going around intimidating Trade Union militants, in two cases shop stewards have been slashed with razors and beaten.

Several families have fled the area. Racialism has come to the surface in the area with Indian workers being warned to keep their mouths shut and stay in the background.

CONTD. ON BACK PAGE





# dirty old town

## THE REFORMATION.

On April 1st. of this year our fun-loving leaders, who always have the nations interests at heart, decided to play an April Fools joke on the people. 'Let's have a reform of Local Government' they said.

So they put on their 'serious-faced' masks and solemnly announced that the old local government system was inefficient and that this new system would rectify these faults. What was wrong with the old system as far as they were concerned.

### 1). SMALLNESS.

'Too many authorities lacked sufficient resources to be able to provide a wide range and high standard of services'. Therefore the new authorities were made larger and fewer than the old. In 'intellectual' circles of course bigness is the answer to everything. Where would we be without multi-national corporations, empires, banks and so forth? The answer is that we would be a whole lot better off.

### 2). COMPLEXITY

'There were no fewer than nine different types of elected local authority! The new local government structure is much less complex. This second piece of brilliant logic says that variety must be minimized because by doing so problems will automatically be minimized. On a much more drastic level, Adolf Hitler had the same idea, and the authoritarian left is also intolerant towards differences of opinion. However political manoeuvring necessitated that the supposedly simple system become complex again but in a different manner i.e. the complexity covered larger areas and was more authoritarian.

### 3). APATHY AND SUBORDINATION.

'Many observers deplored the low turn-out figures at local elections, and the apparent lack of either interest or knowledge among the bulk of the population'.

'Local authorities were too dependant on central government for funds, and subject to too many instructions'.

Under the new system local elections take place on the same day each year. This magic recipe gives the mass media a better chance of publicity for local elections and thus automatically increase the public's interest in them. Has it ever occurred to anybody that maybe local government does not relate to the people in any case? People can hardly be expected to take local authorities seriously when these authorities are

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constantly quoting Ministerial circulars, and applying for extra central government funds. If you don't believe this try making any enquiry at any local authority office!

One section of the population has benefited from local government Reform however. That is the professionals who work: in local authorities. The creation of Districts with wider powers than previously created an instant excessive demand for more professionals like planners. The result is that we now have lots of overpaid idiots (like myself) who only help to create double the amount of paper, pushing than there was previously.

The Town Planning press, however, is constantly claiming that we are tremendously short of planners. Why do I therefore spend several days in most weeks merely twiddling my thumbs, reading a good novel, doing some scetching or discussing how various football teams are likely to fare during the season?

Policies you would have thought would have changed drastically since the old local authorities were so inefficient. However, what a county-like Tyne and Weir has done is to merely adopt the policies of the old local authorities.

Well, whats wrong with local authorities as they are at present? Quite simply they are undemocratic. More often than not they are merely puppets of Whitehall. In some cases they are even corrupt little empires for the sole benefit of some local notable. This isn't surprising when considering what the idiot who designed the Reform think on the topic of democracy.

The biggest arse-licker on this issue is Lord Redcliffe-Maud who has been the chairman of several 'Independent' commissions on Local Government. The purpose of local government 'is to do for the people what a group of persons elected accordingly to law, by a majority of the citizens but on election becoming representatives of them, all conceive to be good within the limit of their legal powers'. If you care to analyse this quote you can see how sinister the local government system is. Firstly, a group of persons decide what they conceive to be good for all of us. Secondly, this self same group are limited by the powers that Parliaments give them.

Lord Redcliffe-Maud would be the first to admit that low turn-outs at local government elections and a lack of interest or knowledge of local government affairs by a vast majority of the population, make local government a very dubious example of a democratic institution. He would also point out that many local administrations such as gas, electricity and water boards are not directly accountable for their actions although they provide extremely important services, on the same breadth Redcliffe-Maud



contd. from  
page 2.



claims that since local councillors have to face their electorate every four years and this local election ensures a measure of local accountability.

The question we must ask is 'Do we need planners, engineers, social services and rulers over us in general? If you are reading this article the chances are that you are very doubtful about the need for such ineffectual and imposing institutions.

The most positive action to take, therefore is to destroy these institutions. As far as planning is concerned this is quite easy. Anybody can put in an application for planning permission on any piece of land regardless of whether you own it. If you do not own a piece of land you must notify the owner that you are applying for permission. In fact, you can even put in an application for changing the use of your local council offices into a childrens playgroup centre, or housing. The local authority if the procedure is carried through correctly are obliged to put these applications to the planning committee. If they lay them aside you can appeal to the Secretary of State for the Environment after 2 months have lapsed for non-determination. Even if the Planning Committee refuses permission for the application you can still to the Minister. The fun part is that (a) the Department of the Environment is about 6 months behind in handling appeals, (b) appeals keep local authority planning staff incredibly busy.

Following such procedures has a double usefulness (a) It can be used to literally bugger-up the works of local authority planning, (b) it can be used to publicize various issues such as lack of housing or lack of community

facilities etc. Furthermore, there can be no danger of central government taking over a straining local government system since central government would also crack under the work load.

Our leaders have had their laugh. Under the guise of reform they have made local government more remote and authoritarian. Now its our turn. Let's take the opportunity. I'll be happy when I am out of a job.

N.S.

Tyne and Wear C.C.

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"Overtime Pay For Weekend Work!"

Compared to some countries, the top-brass of the British Army have it easy. If they were presented with a situation, like the one which exists in the Dutch Army their florid faces would turn a darker shade of puce.

In 1966, a new union was organised in Holland, the BOND VOOR DIENST-PLICHTIGEN, or in English, the union of Conscripted Soldiers. In its short existence, the B.V.D. has won a number of victories from the military establishment on quite a few issues. Wages have been increased, the 40 hour week, improvements in Army food, an end to saluting to name but a few.

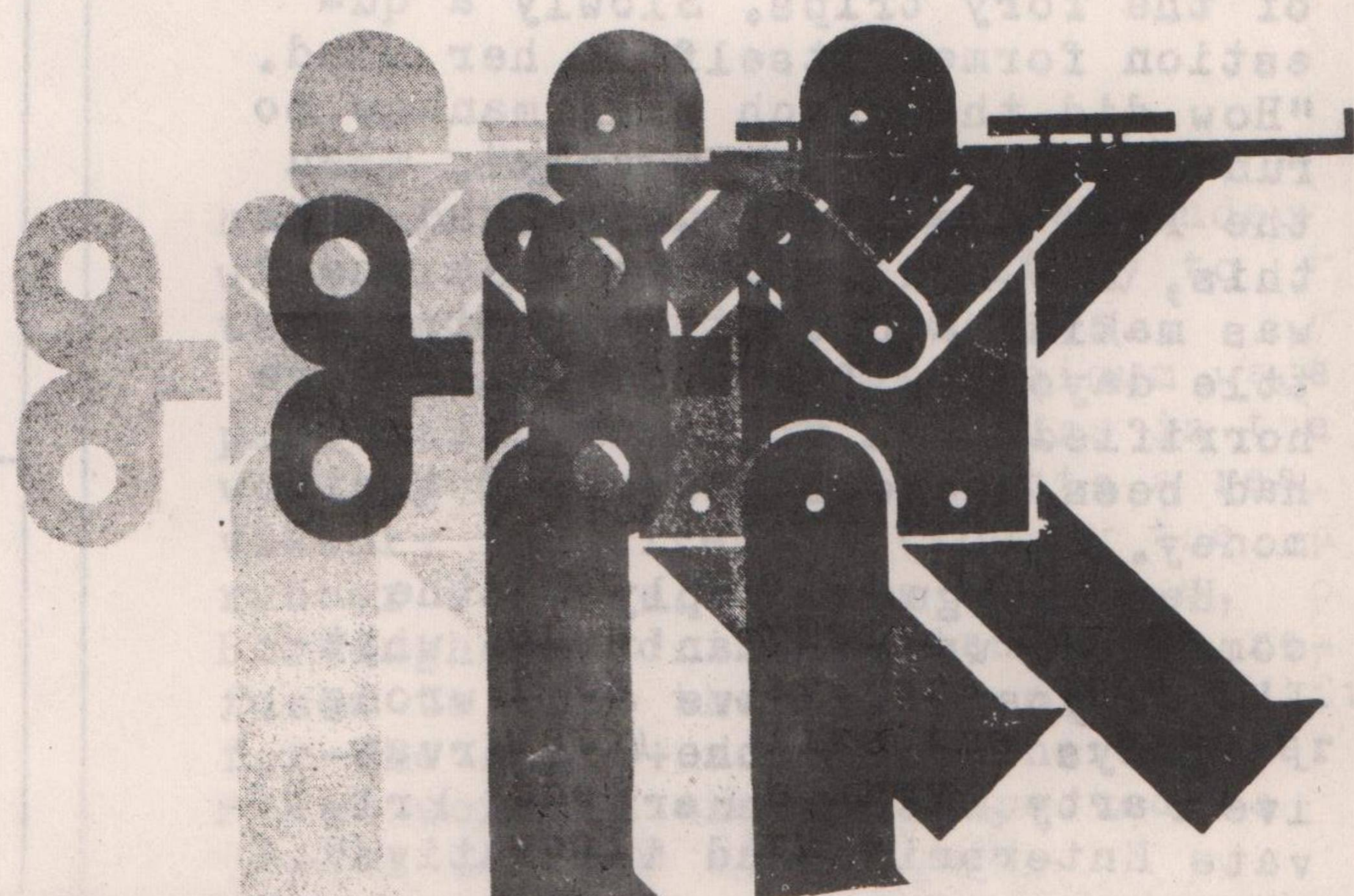
The B.V.D. membership is 31,000 about two thirds of conscripts which is a majority of the army. The unions latest demand is for overtime for weekend work and ceremonial parades.

The union maintains vocal weekly pickets around the Dutch equivalent of the Ministry of Defence to remind the generals of their demands.

Recently, a vote was taken on the overtime issue and now the threat of strike action hangs over Dutch military bases.

Anyway it won't catch on overhere, will it?

Axle.





# MINER MYSTERY

We all love to believe that in some greater or lesser measure we are an authority on a source of information denied to the ill informed and the plain stupid. We read our copy of the Private Eye and the Guardian and we choose to know that we and the writer are the only two privy to a certain knowledge. Guiltless the man chooses football or cricket for his claim to sole information on the corruption of the human heart and curse the man who believes that he is an authority on the living and the dying of his fellow men and women. The man who will give you the true facts National Frontwise about the concentration camps proving that the death rate, if it existed, was the result of internal faults due to external faults and a normal death rate for that time of the year. The informed lecturer at the place of Higher Education who will explain that the death rate and the misery of the working class during Britian's

## TORY STORY

In Preston there lives a woman who besides being the owner of a dress shop is very active in the women's section of the Tory Party.

Every month, or so, the Lady Tories had a day trip to Blackpool or some other fleshpot.

The Ladies were quite happy to pay their 20p a week to the Party Leader so that they could have their enjoyable night out away from the family.

Unfortunately, Mrs X a member of her coterie went with some relations on a coach trip. She found that the price of a ticket was considerably less than that of the Tory trips. Slowly a question formed itself in her mind. "How did the coach firm manage to run a day trip so cheaply". When the Tory organiser was taxed with this, she had to admit that she was making a profit on their little dayouts. The good dames were horrified that their organiser had been pocketing some of their money.

Her indignant reply to the committee was "I can't see what I'm supposed to have done wrong I always thought the Conservative Party was the Party of Private Enterprise and initiative".

Industrial Revolution was a myth and the result of wrong statistics. The Tory who will demonstrate that there is no homeless or slum housing and the simple honest worker who will tell you, in the confessional of the shit-house, that the pathetic old woman living next door to him in one ghastly room has thousands tucked away and that the colours and the paks are earning fantastic wages, driving huge cars and salting away millions while poor old whitey is deliberately denied these things as part of government policy. And we who know these things are wrong smile for we know the true facts, that the working class are taking home 'at least a £100 a week' is proved false by our own weekly pay packet. That in the great machine shops the conveyor belts are closed down all day for the workers to play cards, football and attend union meetings to vote for more money while at the same time not attending union meetings thereby allowing dem there militants to take over and at five o'clock all machines are then switched on for the workers to work overtime at three, four or five times? the hourly rate and it is believed my comrades, it is believed.

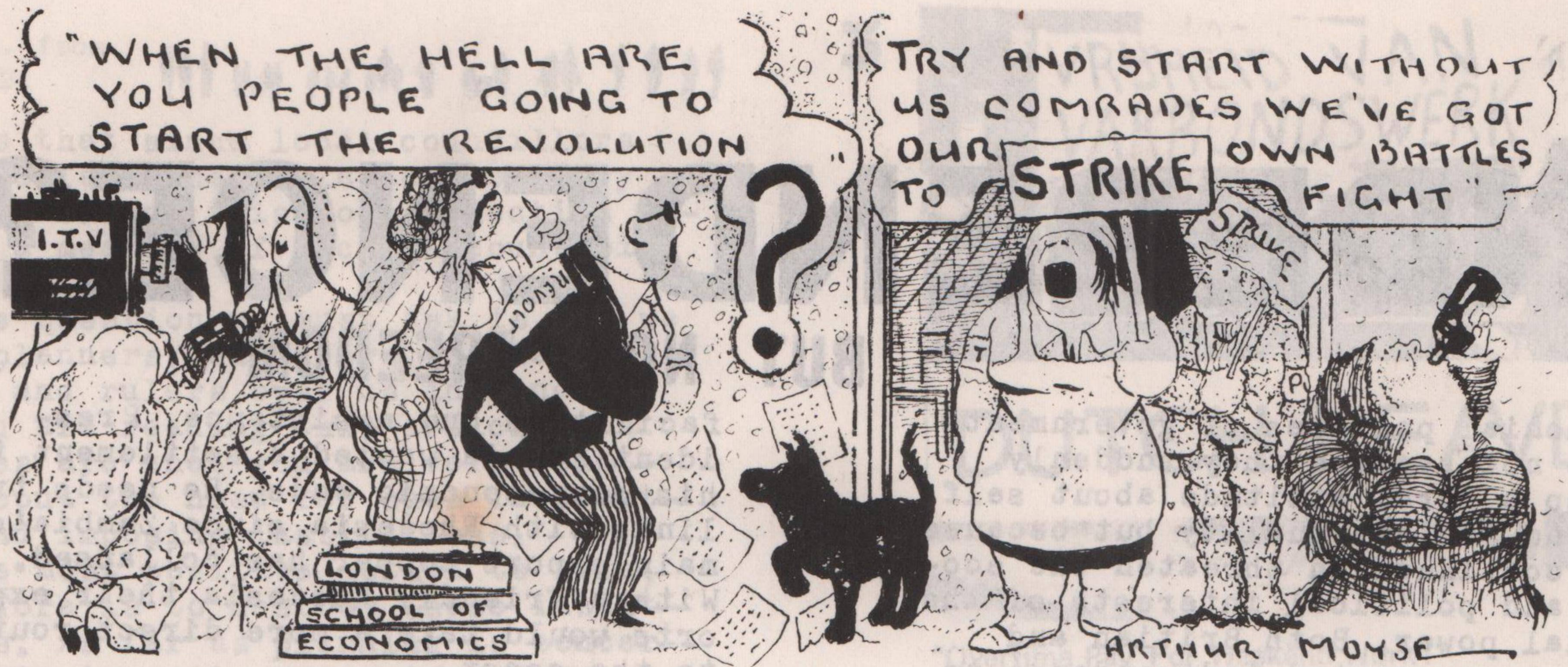
I, in my wisdom, and in the knowledge that for half a century I have worked in every type of factory and walked the streets to work at 4.30 in the dark cold winters morning believe, in my fashion, that i know the truth of the world of the working class for I am of the lumpenproletariat and I know because it is part of my life. But then an idle in the guvenor's time poses the question of where do coal miners working at the coal face go for a shit and the more one thinks on this the more one realises how little we do know of the working conditions of our fellow workers.

Twice a working day we preform that natural function and in home, ship, factory or office we walk to the loo but what does the coal face worker do when he needs to empty his bowels. It may seem a frivolous excuse for an essay but if you cannot answer it then we cannot claim to know the working conditions of our fellow men.

Cont on Page 5.

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For centuries we have mined coal and ore in these islands and generations of men have lived and died in this awful job and we have read the books, seen the films and studied our D.H. Lawrence and we know how the cage goes up and down, the weeping faces of the women and the eating of 'snap' (am I correct?) but in their performance of a simple daily function we know less about them than we do about the Roman soldiers guarding the northern ramparts of these islands two thousand years ago. I asked the question a dozen times in the course of a week and men smiled as at a mild dirty joke but there was no answer for there was no knowledge. I know that a man in the darkness of a deep underground mine could drop his trousers and shit where he eats at the coal face, but comrade does he take arse paper down with his snap?

In all the union negotiations on the coal miners new wage structure every one with a tv set is an expert. We know what the government wants, what the militants demand, why the moderates walk out. From the Financial Times via the London School of Economics to any student common room we claim to know, but in the performance of that most functional of human actions we know nothing.

What does the Mining acts say about it, in the 'new' coal mines how does the coal face worker shit, what is the official union attitude and is the procedure incorporated in the massive pages of worker/employer regulations. It is not a joke for let every one who reads this ask himself "how does a coal mining face worker empty his bowels without having to stand in his own and his fellow workers shit", and if you cannot answer that question then in spite of our pretensions our knowledge of our fellow workers in the mining industry is as superficial as that of any lecturer doodling on a shithouse wall within the London School of Economics.

Arthur Moyses.

## UNDERCURRENTS

Issue No. 8 of 'Undercurrents' has a very interesting article on underground Bunkholes for government in London. The article is an edited version of a pamphlet called 'London: the Other Underground' which gives details of tunnels under London. This pamphlet was produced by a group called Anarchist Anonymous. The expose is similar to that of the Spies for Peace about 10 years ago. This pamphlet explains the Counter Revolutionary role of these governmental hideouts.

S.W.F. PAMPHLET. Workers Control is now ready 10p. each from the Direct Action and National Secretary.

## DUNLOPILLIA



The long struggle against the hated Friday night shift has ended with Dunlop conceding victory to their rubber process workers.

With a £30 per week minimum wage plus a reduction of 2½ hours in the working week this represents a real victory for direct action by the rubber workers. Plants at Speke, Birmingham and in Scotland have refused to work the Friday night shift for the last 4 months. Other Rubber Plant workers are now expected to demand similar conditions.



# INDEPENDENCE?

## BUT NOT FREEDOM

Colonial policies of governments change not because they suddenly develop a moral attitude about self rule and racial equality but because their continuation threaten the economic and political interests of the imperial power. Both Britain and France have granted independence to their former African colonies for these reasons. They realised that their rule had become untenable.

It is this realisation of Rhodesia's position that prompted Mr. Vorster, the South Africa's prime minister, change of heart. Both the economic and political interests of South Africa are threatened by the continuation of white supremacy rule of their northern neighbour. Mr Vorster no longer thinks that blacks are not capable of ruling themselves. He no longer thinks of them as uncivilised, as long as by throwing Mr Smith the prime minister of Rhodesia and the white settlers to the 'wolves' he can buy time for his own and the continual rule of the whites in South Africa.

A number of things have made Mr Vorster change his mind. The realities of power have changed since the South African government supported Mr Smith's unilateral declaration of independence in 1965. But it has not been the economic sanctions imposed by the member countries of the United Nations, but the fact that the Black nationalist movement has gained the advantage over the Rhodesian security forces that has changed the situation in Rhodesia. For just over two years now nationalist guerrillas have been infiltrating into Rhodesia. With a newly independent Mozambique, Rhodesia would have great difficulty in opposing the black nationalists attacks from there and Zambia. In fact a General Yarborough - former head of the United States Special Forces has warned the Smith regime that the situation had all the markings of another Vietnam. This also would mean that the South African government would have to increase its own number of security forces already operating alongside the Rhodesians. The war against the nationalist guerrillas just could not be won.

Although Zambia has given the nationalists guerrillas training



facilities and assistance, President Kaunda wanted a settlement for his own economic ends. He needs trade links with Rhodesia since Zambia's main export copper has collapsed. With a friendly Rhodesia their exports would take a more direct route to the coast.

Mozambique also would like a settlement since the newly independent country would rely heavily on the gold received from South Africa in return for the thousands of their workers employed in the mines there. In fact both the black and the white governments in Southern Africa want an end to war. In this situation Mr Smith and his government will have to go. Governments no matter what colour or ideology deal in political and economic realities. The reality for Rhodesia is an end to white supremacy.

We will soon see that the very people who in the past have been 'unfit to govern' will be forming a government. The privileged white settlers will no longer be able to lord it over the blacks. If they cannot stomach their fall to equality then they can leave for the mother country.

But while all the abuses, indignities and outright slavery of white supremacy rule will pass, what will take its place will be a class society. The colour of the skins of the rulers might change but the black workers lot will remain essentially the same.

Workers will have little or no say in the decisions affecting their lives. One man, one vote will mean choosing masters instead of them being imposed. Independence will mean being ruled by their own countrymen, but the boss, the government and the institutions of the state will remain. Until these are abolished people will not really be free.

P.T.

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## small dividends for coops



Having got over their initial dismay at the Labour Governments first steps towards a State-Capitalist managed society, the capitalist managerial class are quickly learning to use government intervention in industry to their own advantage.

Now that control over both of the state capitalist institutions, the Housing Corporation and the National Enterprise Board is safely in the hands of top capitalist managers, money, mine and yours that is, is flowing in the direction which suits big business.

British Leyland is being granted an immediate £50m. Court Lines debts are being underwritten. Scottish oil interests have been offered an almost open cheque. One begins to wonder whether the cash liquidity shortage was caused by the dirty workers refusing to invest in Heath's 3 day society. Cash and Carry - The Can.

However the balance is being redressed by the treatment being meted out to the worker-cooperatives whose growing pains have induced so much belly-acheing amongst the bosses. The Scrooge of government interventions, the Industrial Development Advisory Board's latest outburst has attacked the viability of the co-ops not on their original concept which was and is, the preservation of employment within the workers home environment, instead it criticises them

as to their profitability, and yet the total amount which Benn has offered to the three workers co-operatives: I.P.D. of Kirkby, Meriden Workers Co-operative and the projected Scottish Daily News is only one fifth of the initial advance which is being given to Leylands.

### TRIUMPH TAKE OFF?

One bright spot is that Norton-Villiers-Triumph Director Dennis Poore's attempts to set the Small-Heath motor-cycle workers against the Meriden experiment has backfired on him. It has been agreed by the workers of the three factories involved, Meriden, Small-Heath and Wolverhampton that the only alternative to the proposed Meriden (co-operative) system must be 3 factory production under state control. It is to be hoped that this will be the end of Poore's asset stripping on behalf of his parent company Manganese-Bronze. To quote an N.V.T. spokesman, 'We would much rather have the Meriden system which would give us control of the product without any responsibility rather than the 3 factory system for which we would have to take full responsibility'. If the Meriden workers keep up the consultation with their fellow motor-cycle workers, they stand more chance of resisting pressure from both N.V.T. and the Government.

## BUILDING SOCIETY

Building Society

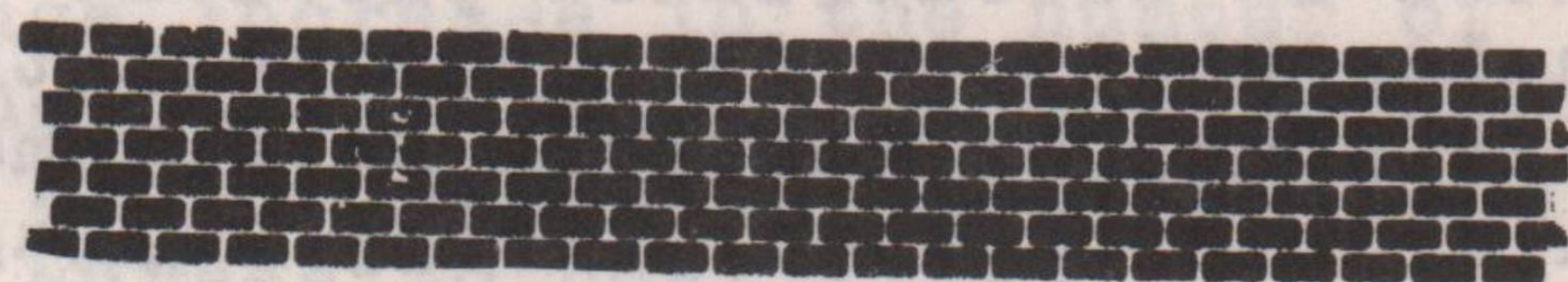
Mr. Roger Warren Evans has been named as government housing chief under Anthony Crosland. Trained as a Lawyer and Economist, he is at present managing director of 'Bovis Homes' which specialises, amongst other things in building village homes at £30,000 a time. Evans thus seems well equipped to face up to the problems involved in housing Britians homeless.

### PROBLEMS

Brickmakers are demanding a price rise of at least 15% despite there being a stockpile of nearly 1,000m Brick.

Land developers like Northern Investments want the Government to take some of their land back off their hands at inflated prices.

Building societies want permission to raise their lending rate before granting new mortgages.



Builders want an increase in their rate of profit before starting new work.

### SOLUTIONS

Fortunately there are some positive aspects of the situation which Mr. Evans will be able to utilise. For instance there are 40,000 new 3 bedroom houses which are lying empty and unsold. He will be able to municipalise these immediately thanks to the Governments generous offer of cash grants for this purpose.

He will be able to municipalise the Property Developers, Land Banks again using the Governments generous offer of cash help, and following Labour past statements on housing land he won't have to pay more than double its agricultural value, thus ensuring a fair profit for all.



# BOOKS & PAMPHLETS



Syndicalists in the Russian revolution  
by G.P.Maximoff

How the Labour Governed 1945-1951.

Lenin and Workers Control 2½p.

Hungarian workers revolution 5p.

Workers Control 10p.

Anarchism & Anarcho-Syndicalism 20p.

by Rudolph Rocker.

Franco's Prisoner

by M.Garcia. £2.25.

My Social Credo.

by G.P.Maximoff. 20p.

Revolutionary Government.

by P.Kropotkin. 5p.

The Social General Strike

by Tom Brown is being reprinted

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CONTD. FROM PAGE 7.

Following the settlement of the Building Unions pay claim for a much lower figure than anyone expected, messrs. Crosland and Evans will be able to give the green light for the 'Direct Works' building departments of the larger councils to embark on a crash building programmes, and because most large authorities employ a practical planning staff, most people can be rehoused in decent sized pleasant housing units at far less cost than Bovis Homes or Northern Developments could do with their trendy village developments.

Following the fantastic saving of public money which will follow from Mr. Evans dynamic course of action we can expect Mr. Crosland to use these funds to improve the amenities and appearance of council housing estates as a whole.

A comparatively small amount of extra money can double the number of maintenance workers on council estates. Many workers who by middle age have had their health ruined by years of factory working conditions would welcome the opportunity to take part in improving their living conditions. Flat corridors and stairs could be kept clean and free from vandalism. Supervised play schemes for young children would give young mothers more freedom and security, and enable them to develop their own lives, while there are not many council estates which would not be improved by more flower beds and trees.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

The process workers union in the factory the National Union of Dyers Bleachers and Textile Workers appear to have taken an authoritarian attitude toward the strike and have refused to recognise it. They have arbitrarily expelled two members without giving them a chance to defend themselves. The union justification for this course, is a catch 22 rule of 'acting contrary to union interests.

When 50 of the strikers occupied the Union H.Q. in Bradford in protest against the expulsions, fly boys in the union bureaucracy fabricated a bomb scare in order to force the demonstrators out of the building.

Claude Lavender a Bradford based member of the N.U.B.D.T.W. National Executive took up the case of the expelled members and was promptly expelled for his pains on the same catch 22 grounds as the other two.

The intex workers are now in an embattled situation with facing not only an intransigent management but a reactionary union and right wing thugs at their backsides as well. They need all the support that can be given. All offers of support and donations to:  
Secretary, Intex Shiftworkers Strike Committee, 186, Kings Road, Ashton Under Lyne. Tel. 061 330 7231.