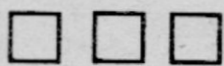


News from everywhere

A SCHOOL buried by a giant heap of slag and 144 deaths might have been the worst disaster imaginable for the little Welsh village of Aberfan, but it was not the last.

Now the village cemetery, where the victims of the tragedy are buried, looks like being dug up to make way for a dual-carriageway road linking Cardiff with Merthyr Tydfil.

About 50 houses will also have to go to let the £37 million road through, according to Welsh Secretary John Morris. To bully locals into accepting the situation, he is offering them an 'alternative' route threatening 70 houses. —ANS.



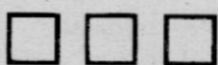
A GROUP of 150 landlords, calling themselves the Flat Owners Association, have decided to keep a blacklist of 'difficult' tenants.

People who damage property, don't

pay their rent or who take landlords to the rent tribunal, will all be put on the list.

Anyone trying to rent a flat has to give the name of their previous landlord, who is contacted to ensure that the tenant does not come into the difficult category. A landlord can be thrown out of the Association if information about tenants is not forthcoming.

— Manchester Free Press



THE LABOUR-controlled London borough of Lambeth have introduced tough new rules for dealing with homeless families.

The rules, introduced amid angry scenes in the Town Hall's public gallery, include the following:

Increases in contributions paid by families in bed and breakfast hotels. Eviction of families in reception centres seven days after refusing

a "reasonable offer". Homeless families to be allocated dwellings instead of choosing from offers made to them. Families squatting in council property to be moved into "less desirable" homes. As a general rule there will be no nominations to the Greater London Council for single parent families. —ANS.



THE Islington Metal and Plating Works has been discharging dangerous chrome compounds into the back gardens and basements of local houses. The seepage was first noticed last year when back gardens, basements and walls began turning a curious shade of yellow.

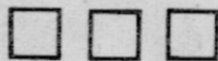
Islington Council (London) advised those affected to seal off their basements or, alternatively, to wear gloves whenever they go down to the basement and to keep washing the walls.

Many of the basements in Duncan Terrace, the street affected, are occupied by old people. Exposure to chrome compounds causes 'chrome ulceration', a condition which nullifies the healing powers of the body. Cuts and scratches turn to ulcers and sores. Residents have complained of a choking feeling in the morning and of itching after sitting in the garden.

The local factory inspector says he has told the firm to take action to minimise further pollution, and this work is nearly complete. But Isling-

ton Council say "we have no adequate powers to completely remove the hazard."

— Islington Gutter Press.



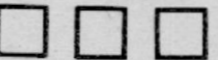
ELTSA ('End Loans To Southern Africa') have successfully tabled a shareholders' resolution calling on the Midland Bank to lend no more money to the South African government or its agencies. The resolution is backed by 120 shareholders, holding over a million shares.

ELTSA are also calling on people to write to branches of the Midland (whether they bank there or not) and to local press, MPs etc. A list of Midland shareholders is available from ELTSA, 134 Wrotesley Road, London NW10. —PNS.



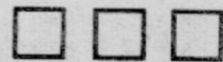
A WOMAN in Rockville, USA, has won \$365,000 damages from two men who raped her. This is the first award of its kind granted to a rape victim.

— Women's Liberation News.



THE SCOTTISH Daily News is still coming out as an emergency paper. The editor, Dorothy Grace-Elder, says: "We work — unpaid — in a

former paper palace which has become an eight-storey fridge... We have only one telephone left." —ANS.



A BILL to legalise the arming of security guards for the Department of Energy and Atomic Energy Authority has been given its first Parliamentary reading.

If it goes through, virtually all arms restrictions on these security guards will be lifted, provided there is proof that they are guarding nuclear matter or pursuing persons believed to have removed or attempted to remove nuclear matter unlawfully.

Such wide-ranging powers go beyond even those of the police, who at present can only be issued arms on the orders of the Chief Constable.

— Freedom.



THE CHIEF Constable of Manchester, Mr W. James Richards, has told the Greater Manchester Police Authority that it was entirely his decision not to prosecute National Front supporters who smashed up the National Council for Civil Liberties meeting in Manchester last November.

In the attack six people were injured and £800 worth of damage was done. Mr Richards said his decision came after legal advice from the Director of Public Prosecutions that there was "insufficient evidence".

— Morning Star.

RIGHT TO WORK?

WE INTEND to direct our criticisms towards two conflicting attitudes — the 'right to work' and the 'right not to work'. Each of these refers to working class 'rights' under capitalism. In this article we are attempting to point out the nature of these 'rights'.

'Rights' such as these are only 'rights' which are granted by capitalism within a system of exploitation, i.e. capitalist 'rights'. No matter which 'rights' are realised by capitalism, the working class remains exploited.

Both demands are unrealistic. Firstly, considering that it is in capitalism's interests to have unemployment — especially in a time of economic crisis (as exists now) the supplications made to Parliament by the right to work campaign appear to be rather pathetic as it has always been quite clear that parliament works in the interests of the ruling class and not the exploited classes of society. You might as well ask the Vatican for dures gossamers.

Also, considering that capitalism needs to exploit human beings as labour in order for the system to function, it's unrealistic to demand a life of 'leisure' — and that only in the form of a lousy state benefit — within the framework of capitalist society. Or you may ask, 'Why bother?' since people are being thrown onto the scrapheap anyway.

Neither of these attitudes poses any alternative to the present system. In order to clarify things a wee bit more, let us look at each attitude separately.

Firstly, for the slogan 'the right to work' read 'the right to be exploited'. In most cases, in fact, the campaign never questions the nature of the jobs it seeks to defend.

The car industry is by far one of the best examples of this. While there is an obvious need for a decent system of public transport, capitalism continues to sell cars by convincing people of the 'need' for private transportation. At the same time motorways and multi-storey car parks are being erected, while there is an obvious need for more houses in a situation of rapidly increasing homelessness. Besides this, the lead content among exhaust fumes continues to pollute us every day. What the 'need' for more cars boils down to is simply the need of all capitalists to make more profits.

Neither capitalism nor the 'right to work' campaign ever question these glaring contradictions. This trend neglects itself in many other areas.

Armaments are produced which are no use to society and we continue to produce useless plastics and 'consumer' articles while real human needs are ignored. What the campaign is demanding in this sense is the 'right' of people to be exploited in order to satisfy the 'needs' of capitalism. There are in fact an estimated ten million people involved in these forms of 'mal-employment' [*The Fight to Live*, National Federation of Claimants Unions, p.8].

Besides failing to question the nature of useless and harmful production, the campaign also doesn't point out such things as the practice of 'planned obsolescence' (the system by which goods are produced in a way that ensures they break down or wear out sooner than they should, thereby compelling the consumer to replace them so that profits will rise even

higher) that goes into the production of various trash.

The paradox of the matter is that if this was successfully challenged by anyone, sales and production of these articles would decrease tremendously and cause unemployment to rise anyway!

The right to work campaign fails to question the nature of exploitation under a system of production for profit and the demoralising physical and psychological effects this has on people. For instance, there are many diseases and disabilities caused through work, such as asbestosis, cancer of the bladder, lead poisoning, silicosis, arthritis, deafness caused by the noise of machines, etc. And that is not to mention the loss of life and limb caused by innumerable industrial injuries.

It shouldn't be necessary, either, for us to mention the adverse mental effects which work has on people, but the right to work campaign appear to ignore this also. Several mental disorders are caused by people having to spend their lives in repetitive, boring, frustrating and totally stultifying occupations.

PERPETUATING PROBLEMS

This frustration is for ever increased by the general social and economic problems which people have to face even outside the workplace, and which are caused and perpetuated by this system of exploitation.

According to the people behind the 'MIND' campaign, more work days during the early 1970s were lost through mental illness than through strikes. Makes you think twice about the so-called 'English disease' the press and TV are always screaming about, doesn't it?

Among others who have jumped on the bandwagon of the right to work are the union leaders and some 'left-wing' politicians. These people are advocating such reactionary demands as import controls in order to 'defend their workers' rights' thus setting up British workers against workers in other countries. The left seemingly capitulate to this view by failing to oppose it.

Another crowd of dildos who seem anxious to remedy the jobs situation are Tory MPs who have been putting forward proposals for work schemes 'to set the nation's jobless at work'.

These schemes will obviously result in tighter control of the unemployed by the state. Claimants would be used as cheap labour in shit jobs, having the choice of that or the threat of having benefits stopped altogether. This again will give the media the opportunity of boasting that

unemployment figures are going down while claiming that the system is still intact.

The nature of this 'right' becomes more clear when we see who is advocating it besides the left.

One of the main problems the right to work doesn't tackle is the existence of the 'work ethic', i.e. the belief among working people — instilled into them by capitalism — that it is good to work (to be exploited) for work's sake. Consequently people who are out of work are generally referred to as layabouts, scroungers and yobboes. This helps capitalism to exist by dividing the working class and convincing people that their main role in society is that of a worker (wage slave).

A classic example of this is seen in the well-known poster depicting an unemployed man from the thirties leaning on a street corner looking miserable because he can't find work. This seems to imply that what he needs to solve his problems is a nice, kind employer who will give him work to make profit from his labour. As if demoralising exploitation would make people happy!

The whole tactics of the right to work campaign is a direct return to the depressing thirties. Obviously a campaign of this nature during the thirties was far more valid, as being out of work meant being next door to literally starving, but even then the tactics used were defeatist in that they didn't challenge the system of exploitation and wage labour which causes such poverty.

Nowadays, however, there is less stigma in going on the dole than there was in the thirties. This is due in many ways to the improvements, since then, in social security payments, but there are some people — particularly young people — who are beginning to see work for what it is. It is, in any case, impossible to imagine people nowadays advocating 'work at any price' as in the thirties. The working class today just wouldn't stand for the crap their parents and grandparents had to put up with, but the myopia on the left somehow doesn't seem to notice this. It may be that only a small number of people are rejecting this work ethic, but this shows that while the left are still living in the thirties, some of the working class are already leaving them decades behind.

One of the main arguments in favour of the right to work concerns the economic hardship faced by people on the dole. But the paradox of this is that there are many married workers in low paid jobs with dependents who find themselves receiving just as much or in some cases

even more on dole than they got while working!

In concentrating its attention on the point of production, the right to work campaign does not admit any possibility of the unemployed taking autonomous action while out of work. It also mentions nothing of struggles taking place in the communities or schools. Struggles have always taken place within far wider areas of society than just the place of work.

The latter of these two attitudes — the 'right not to work' — only seeks to oppose one form of exploitation which is that of wage labour. What it advocates is that we should all go on social security and seek a living income from the state rather than challenge the existence of the capitalist state.

The result of this would be to increase the power and control of the state over people's lives because this would require an extension of the existing bureaucracy in order to administer the system of payments. This administration would obviously operate in the interests of capitalism since the state has not been challenged.

We only have to take a look at the hassles people have to go through in order to obtain their 'entitlements' from the state to see what life on social security would be like. People have to face such things as the Industrial Misconduct Rule, the Cohabitation Rule, the Four Week Review, Rent Stops, means tests, snoopers and general contempt from the S.S. And

BY TOMMY DEVANEY AND MARK CAULFIELD

as well as all this there is the comforting thought that the S.S. is keeping a watchful eye on you with their secret 'A' codes. Delightful prospect, isn't it?

In many respects the right not to work campaign seems to ignore a lot of the economic aspects of unemployment such as the difficulty in providing adequate clothing, furniture and bedding. As we have mentioned before, there are married people with dependents who in fact receive just as much or more money from the dole than they would working. This doesn't however mean that they are 'well off'. This merely shows the number of people living on a pittance.

The remedies to overcome hardship advocated by some of the people in the 'right not to work' lobby are almost utopian. For example: "We believe that if the unemployed can work out ways to survive materially (through greater sharing, odd-jobs and food co-ops for example) they could discover many creative possibilities in not being used every day by a boss".

This seems to be advocating an attitude of passivity rather than stressing the need to continue to struggle whilst unemployed.

Firstly, the suggestion of greater sharing appears to be saying that people who are employed should share their wages with those who are out of work, thus assuming that people in full-time employment can even afford to do so! In other words the exploited in work are to subsidise the exploited on the dole.

Looking for odd-jobs ('foreigners') is very difficult and most find them seldom, or not at all.

As for food co-ops, these appear to be advocated as an alternative to the present system. However if we look at the history of the co-operative movement this proposal will appear to be futile.

Among others who appear to support

the 'right not to work' attitude are the claimants unions. Past experience has shown that in spite of their original intentions, the CUs have become for people a sort of alternative NAB, becoming permanent 'representatives' of claimants and therefore preventing any possibility of people taking action on their own initiative. The CUs also seem to treat struggles on the dole as an end in itself. There is nothing pleasant in constantly struggling to obtain entitlements from the state all your life.

In short, what the 'right not to work' is demanding is the 'right' to a means-tested state pittance.

To conclude, both attitudes appear to be advocating that the working class should remain commodities to be bought and sold within the world capitalist market. That is, within a society which produces for profits and not needs.

Instead of demanding an end to exploitation, they enforce the maintenance of the speculation and competition which keeps the working class in poverty and subjugation.

In demanding 'rights' from the capitalist state, both attitudes fail to question what the role of the state actually is (i.e. the means by which the domination of one class by another is maintained).

The activities of socialists ought to be directed towards the achievement of a society in which production will be for need and not profit.

The advancement of technology even within capitalist society has proved that work, even 'socially necessary' work, can be done automatically, whereas capitalism applies its technology to things like nuclear armaments, Concorde jets, space-ships and various other pernicious projects. Technology within capitalism is continually being used to increase the rate of exploitation.

A revolutionary change of this nature within society would release millions of people employed in useless occupations — such as the armed forces, white collar sections and those referred to earlier who are in 'mal-employment'. These people could then engage themselves in work that would be necessary, therefore reducing the amount to time which would have to be spent in production and consequently increasing the leisure of all. It would also stimulate new energies and creativity by which people would discover how to control their own lives and make them much more worthwhile.

The left have been advocating reforms for decades and have not yet attempted to transcend this reformism. In a way they accept — perhaps unconsciously — the inevitable continuance of capitalism in that they always appear to be saying in their propaganda that the time for revolution has not yet arrived and we should therefore demand reforms. This is adopting the attitude that the working class are not capable of doing anything until the 'final crisis' of capitalism has arrived. As if the working class are a crowd of morons who won't take revolutionary action until their faces are being pushed into the dirt. We disagree with this view.

We are not under any utopian delusions such as believing that after a revolution all of the problems created by capitalism will be eradicated. Far from it. We have merely attempted to outline some of the possibilities for a revolutionary transformation of society. So having said all that, why not forget about the reformism the left has been putting forward for far too long and try revolution for a change?

• Tommy Devaney is unemployed. Mark Caulfield is a student.