

Socialist Worker

No 306 20 January 1973 5p

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

ACTION NOW TO FIGHT THE FREEZE!

Soaring prices slash wages

by Chris Harman

THE clearest evidence that the Tory wage-price restraint is a fraud aimed at workers' living standards is the staggering upsurge in prices in recent weeks.

The increases have dealt a stunning blow to working-class families. Growing numbers of housewives are wondering how they are to find the money needed to buy meat.

Food prices have shot up despite the government's 'freeze' by 6 per cent in two months. And more increases are on the way. An 8.7 per cent increase in raw material prices in December will be passed on as increases in the shops in the months ahead.

Even the Tory government has pretended to show concern over this state of affairs. But its inquiry into beef prices was a complete whitewash operation.

It accepted that price increases had been inevitable and that the price of beef would not fall in future. The committee's advice to buy pork or lamb instead of beef ignored the simple fact that lamb prices have risen by 50 per cent in the last two months and pork by 50 per cent in the last year.

But then the committee was not really concerned with the plight of working-class families at all. It expressed pleasure at the fact that 'the prices of cheaper cuts have risen relative to the price of the more expensive cuts' because this 'reduces the pressure on the more expensive cuts.'

The committee's main conclusion was that increased prices were a result of an increased demand for meat internationally. What it did not say is that powerful groups in Britain have been making considerable profits from this state of affairs.

Record profits

Over the last year almost all the major food firms have recorded record profits—Unilevers (owner of Batchelors, Birds Eye, MacFisheries and Walls, among others) by 14 per cent; Imperial Tobacco food division (owner of Golden Wonder, HP sauce, and the giant Ross group, which produces a quarter of all poultry) by 40 per cent; Tesco's 30 per cent; Associated Dairies 30 per cent; Pork farms by 60 per cent; Associated British Foods (owners of Fine Fare) by 'only' 10.6 per cent; Associated Biscuits by 80 per cent; and Associated Fisheries who have netted record first half-year profits.

One reason why prices have soared over the last two months is that firms are determined to maintain such massive profits. As the government inquiry admits 'retailers took the opportunity to increase their retail prices and restore their cash margins'.

Other major beneficiaries of the upsurge in meat prices are the farmers. One fact the government committee did not bother to mention is that farmers' profits on cattle have shot up from £36 an animal to £58 an animal in the last year.

Ministry of Agriculture figures reveal that in 1967 59 per cent of workers on livestock farms worked for a mere 12 per cent of the farmers. This 12 per cent produced most of the meat and had an income of more than £70 a week five years ago—a figure which today would probably be well over the £100 mark.

What the increase in meat prices means to the really big farmers was revealed by a report on Tuesday from the firm of J B Eastwood, which owns 10,500 acres of farm land. Its profits from farming shot up from £420,000 to £1.3 million in the first six months of last year.

The firm expects the rise in beef prices to push its profits up by a further £400,000. And as the country's second biggest producer of broilers (it sells 33 million a year) it will gain further if housewives switch from beef to chicken.

Yet the Minister of Agriculture, Joseph Godber, has claimed that no control over



Barber: goodbye collective bargaining?

ALL-OUT ACTION against the Tory wage freeze by the trade union movement—that is the demand that must be raised in every factory and workplace in Britain in response to the fraudulent 'phase two' of government policy.

Behind the smokescreen of 'fairness' and a desire to help the low paid, Heath and his ministers have set out to drive down the wages and living conditions of working people. And the only possible answer to that challenge must be massive industrial and political action against the government and its big business backers.

Look at the reality behind this week's soft-soap act by Heath and Barber.

Wages have been frozen completely for the first stage of government policy. But shop prices have risen by 6 per cent during the freeze, plus the increases imposed on council tenants by the 'Fair Rents' Act.

It adds up to a savage cut in the standard of living for millions while the profiteers have had a field day as the prices of foodstuffs have soared. And the wages lost under phase one will never be recouped.

Now under phase two the Tories are offering an across-the-board £1 plus a 4 per cent norm in future negotiations—presented as an average 8 per cent increase in the national wages bill. But even if all workers were to get an 8 per cent increase it would be whittled down to 6 per cent after tax and other stoppages. In other words, it would not even cover the price increases of recent weeks.

PIPELINE

The fact that the Tories are now offering a few pennies to workers instead of a big round nothing should not obscure what phase two will mean for trade unionists with claims in the pipeline if they meekly accept the government scheme. This is how phase two would affect just three groups who have submitted claims:

	Claim	Phase two award
47,000 gasworkers	£2.65 to £3.05	£1.70 to £1.90
270,000 miners	£3 to £3.50	£1.90 to £2.40
50,000 Ford workers	£10	£2.40 to £2.50

The Tories and employers are set on a course that means the end of free collective bargaining and the rigid strait-jacketing of wages by the state. Asked at a press conference if phase two meant the effective end of free negotiations between unions and bosses, Chancellor Barber

Freeze special

The deepening economic crisis: page 3

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snapped: 'One thing is clear: we're not going back to the inflation of last autumn.'

He didn't give a straight answer—but a nod is as good as a wink. And Michael Clapham of the Confederation of British Industry has declared that a return to free collective bargaining seems unlikely in the 'foreseeable future'.

The Tory wage freeze is an extension of the Industrial Relations Act's onslaught on the rights and liberties of the labour movement. That onslaught will be defeated only by mobilising the strength of the working class and not by the abject grovelling of the TUC leaders in recent months.

Vic Feather and company say they don't like phase two and will not help operate it. But that does not mean they will actively fight it.

The fight depends on the rank and file. In every industry workers must prepare now to use their industrial power to smash the freeze.

They must say to the leaders of the trade unions: Are you prepared to sit back and see workers' families driven further into poverty, to see the low paid fall further and further behind, to see the terrible plight of old people made worse by this vicious employers' government?

And the call must be raised and fought for that will spell not only defeat for phase two but for the entire anti-working-class plans of the Tories:

- Recall the TUC to demand all-out action to smash the freeze.
- No more talks with the Tories.
- Industrial action in solidarity with all groups that fight the freeze.
- Mobilise the entire labour movement to fight for:
 - £25 a week minimum wage
 - £16 a week pension
 - Equal pay for women.



SIGN OF THE TIMES: Nottingham butcher Paul Hogg offers beef on HP.

Bombing of South goes on -stop Nixon's slaughter

All out this Saturday—20 January
Important for all IS branches: IS contingent forms under Waterloo Bridge, Charing Cross embankment 1pm
March from Charing Cross via Trafalgar Square to US Embassy, Grosvenor Square
Bring branch banners and placards

BEST FOOT FORWARD

PAUL FOOT, Socialist Worker staff writer, was awarded the 'Journalist of the Year' plaque on Tuesday by Granada Television's What the Papers Say.



Racism: strategy for Europe

by Stephen Castles

THE USE of racism to counter the strike by Indian workers at the Mansfield Hosiery mill in Loughborough points to a strategy used by bosses throughout Europe.

There are about 11 million immigrants in Western Europe. As in Britain, they get the worst jobs and housing and the lowest pay.

Measures such as the Common Market free labour movement policy, which now applies to Britain, are officially described

as an increase in freedom. Indeed, they increase the workers' liberty to be exploited by foreign bosses, and the bosses' freedom to put pressure on wages and weaken the labour movement.

By increasing the labour supply, wages can be kept down and profits up. Capitalism used to do this through unemployment, but this led to working-class militancy. Foreign workers, on the other hand, can be

sacked and sent home without arousing protest.

In the West German recession of 1966-7, the foreign labour force was cut by 400,000 within six months, but only 29,000 stayed on in the country to draw the dole. Immigrant workers form the modern equivalent of what Marx called the industrial reserve army.

A large proportion of the heavy manual work is done by immigrants, so that jobs tend to get divided up into those done by local people and those done by newcomers. For example, nearly all the assembly line work at Ford in Cologne is done by Turks, while the Germans have supervisory and skilled jobs.

This means that the different nationalities have little chance to communicate, and the bosses can drive a wedge between them during a dispute.

Most immigrants on the Continent come from Southern Europe or North Africa, so the language barrier makes matters worse. They also come from backward agricultural areas and have little experience of industrial work practices and trade unionism.

Throughout Western Europe special discriminatory laws ensure that immigrants are kept under the bosses' thumb: they are forbidden to change jobs, have no civil rights and are prevented from carrying out political activities.

Control

British employers are learning from their Continental friends. Ten years ago they let racism stop immigration. Now the new Immigration Act of 1971 could provide the basis for recruiting labour on the West German pattern: workers could be brought in for a limited period, forbidden to change jobs and kept under strict control.

At the same time the racist outbursts of Powell and his cronies hinder solidarity between British and immigrant workers.

There is only one answer to the bosses' immigration strategy: get to know the immigrant workers, find out their problems, help them fight for their rights. Only by opposing all forms of discrimination can the use of immigrants as an industrial reserve army be stopped. That means fighting for equal pay, equal job opportunities, equal housing and equal social conditions for all workers.

Throughout Europe, where local workers have shown solidarity, the immigrants have responded by taking an active and militant part in industrial and political action.

ITALY: BOSSES STEP UP THE PRESSURE

by Mike Balfour

UNLIKE the hot autumn of 1969, there have been no street battles in Italy so far this year.

The struggle over national agreements covering millions of workers which are still being negotiated has not had the same insurrectionary character as in 1969. But it is no less bitter and determined.

The political situation is critical. While the economy continues to stagnate, the cost of living is soaring. Chaotic social conditions, unemployment, underdevelopment in the south are stirring up popular revolt.

The Italian ruling class, unable to solve the crisis, are relying increasingly on repression.

The employers need to recoup the losses they suffered in 1969 and 1970. They are determined to re-establish control in the factories, to plan and reshape industry to meet the international competition. Over the past two years they have been conducting a campaign of closures, redundancies, speed-up and victimisation of militants.

In negotiations over the engineering agreement, the employers have not only refused to accept any of the unions' demands but have insisted on making their own, including plans to curb absenteeism and a demand for guarantees of industrial peace for the length of the agreement.

The unions' platform reflects the experience of the 1969-70 struggles: the drive among workers for greater unity, for breaking down the divisions between skilled and unskilled, white-collar and manual workers. The most

important demand of the Engineering Workers' Federation is for a single grading system of five grades to cover all workers—production, maintenance, clerks and technicians.

They also demand a £4 across-the-board rise and four to five weeks' holiday. But many demands from the more militant factories—for greater parity, guaranteed wages and automatic upgrading, have been ignored or watered down by the union leaders.

Since the first national strike in June, the struggle has grown at an ever-increasing pace. Every week massive strikes take place in different parts of Italy backed by mass demonstrations.

DROPPED

Round one in the struggle went to the employers. An agreement between the chemical industry employers and the chemical workers was reached last October after the intervention of the Minister of Labour.

It was a sell-out. Some of the most important demands were dropped, others were conceded only partially while the unions made several crippling concessions—extending the period of the agreement and agreeing not to review bonus until 1974.

The agreement was rejected in mass meetings at several factories, notably in Milan and Porto Marghera.

The present stalemate in the negotiations over the engineering workers' agreement can only lead to an intensified campaign of strikes and demonstrations. But the willingness of the rank and file to fight and link with other sections of workers has not been matched by the unions' handling of the struggle.

FLIRTING

The unions, including the Communist-dominated CGIL, have made little attempt to unite the different sections. Engineering workers in the public sector have been called out separately from those in the private sector and those in small factories.

The unions continue flirting with the confederation of small capitalists

BRIEFING

WORKERS at Ford's Industrial Equipment factory in Denmark went on strike for a week last month until the management agreed to dismiss a nurse who sent workers back to work after accidents, or even to work until the ambulance came.

THE FRENCH revolutionary socialist group *Lutte Ouvriere*, last week announced their first 60 candidates for the general election in March. But in an article in the daily paper *Le Monde* a leading member of *Lutte Ouvriere*, Paris trade unionist Arlette Laguiller, emphasised that the group has no confidence in so-called parliamentary democracy. She pointed out how parliament in no way represents the interests of workers and underlined this by showing how few workers are candidates even for the 'Left' parties.

Of the group's first 60 candidates, 18 are manual workers, 24 clerical and other routine white-collar workers and the rest teachers and housewives. There are 18 women among them and Arlette Laguiller said that the group would be putting up more than 40 women in its 176 candidates,

(part of the Communist Party's strategy of alliance with 'anti-monopoly' sectors), with the result that they have toned down their demands to the small firms, where there have been no strikes or overtime bans. In some factories, workers have been working up to 60 hours producing components for the larger factories where their brothers are on strike.

The unions' attitude was summed up in a declaration some months ago by the secretary of the CGIL and other union leaders that they were ready to fight but not to 'strangle the productive development' of the Italian economy.

Criticism of the unions' handling of the dispute has come mainly from the big factories in Northern Italy. Attempts to create broad rank-and-file organisations to fight for greater unity and tougher action are beginning to bear fruit. The Comitati Unitari di Base, unofficial rank-and-file com-

mittees in the militant factories, are linking up in several cities.

In Milan and the surrounding region there is a successful liaison committee including all the engineering factories. The example is spreading to other big towns, such as Genoa, Breda and Porto Marghera. In some places councils of action have been formed by the committees with local tenants' associations and students, connecting social and economic struggles.

ALTERNATIVE

Unemployment, inadequate housing, transport and welfare, better wages and conditions—these cannot successfully be fought separately. Despite their rhetoric, the union leadership and the Italian Communist Party are not committed to forging links between the different struggles. More than ever there is a need for a revolutionary alternative to the Communist Party, whose reformist policies are weakening the great potential of the Italian working-class movement.



Part of the enormous demonstration against Nixon and the war in Vietnam which was held in Utrecht, Holland, last weekend. 80,000 people marched in protest against the bombings—the biggest demonstration in Utrecht since 1945. The protest was supported by socialist, communist, catholic and protestant political parties.

A REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST MANIFESTO by Kuron and Modzelewski. The famous open letter to the Polish Worker's Party, written in 1964. A vitriolic analysis of the Eastern European regimes and a call for social revolution. 29p postage included, from PLUTO PRESS Unit 10, Spencer Court, 7 Chalcot Road London NW1.

BOOM OR BUST?

The crisis in the aircraft industry

'The huge sums of money being spent on Concorde will only serve to save a few hours for businessmen or to carry on pleasure trips a tiny handful of privileged people. We have to ask what sort of society refuses to spend even a small amount of money providing a reliable and efficient bus service for ordinary people while at the same time wasting millions on Concorde.'

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as many as are being put up by all the major parties put together (out of their 800 or more).

She said that revolutionaries would use the election period to show to workers that their real strength is not the vote but the class struggle in the factories and on the streets.

AN AMERICAN B-52 pilot who has flown 175 missions over North Vietnam has refused to do any more bombing, saying that even from the point of view of American aims in Vietnam, the destruction and slaughter in the North is excessive. While he claimed that most American pilots hit civilian targets only by accident, he said he had heard one pilot openly declare that he intended to hit civilian targets 'because it hurts the North Vietnamese more.'

AN ISRAELI court has condemned an attempt by the ruling Labour Party's youth section to take over the Israeli

League for Human and Civil Rights by demanding to join the League in large numbers during a general meeting.

An internal Labour Party document shows that the party was prepared to finance this operation by paying all the new members' subscriptions to the league.

The Israeli Labour Party can afford to be lavish with its funds. Most of its money comes from outside Israel, from organised appeals which are registered as charities in countries such as Britain and the USA so that contributors receive tax deductions for money donated. In the end, the British or American taxpayer is paying for some of the repressive policies of Israel's ruling party.

FOUR HUNDRED women workers at a underwear factory in Brittany have been refusing for the past two months to operate a piece-work bonus system and have cut production by 10 per cent.

Work in the factory was speeded up after the summer holidays, when the management decided their workers were slower than those of competitors. The women's resistance began when a young

mother recently returned from maternity leave had a nervous breakdown in front of her machine.

The women earn less than £18 take-home pay for a 40-hour week, and to earn the piece-work bonus of up to £3 a week they have to fulfil norms set by the company.

PRIME MINISTER Trudeau of Canada, whose Liberal Party won an equal number of seats to the Conservatives in last autumn's elections, has obtained a majority in the new parliament thanks to the support of the New Democratic Party, Canada's labour party. A vote of confidence in Trudeau was also supported by the right-wing Social Credit Party.

The New Democratic Party based its electoral campaign on attacking Trudeau's economic policies, which have produced unemployment figures equal to 6.5 per cent of the working population. Now that the election is over, they prefer to give the Liberals another chance, and have been widely praised by government supporters for their 'responsible decision'.

BRANCHES AND FACTORY GROUPS BOOST OUR FUND

JIM NICHOL, the IS National Treasurer, had scarcely recovered consciousness from his serious motor-bike accident than he received a letter from the East London Group Hospital Management Committee demanding immediate payment of the sum of £1.25 as his 'emergency treatment fee'.

Jim, who is recovering fast after a very bad two weeks, sends this message to Socialist Worker readers: 'I will pay the

£1.25 . . . to the Printshop Fund, on condition, of course, that at least £100 is collected this month by IS for every penny wanted by these mean bastards.'

A total of £2055 in donations pushed the total received so far to £12,489.

Our own IS branches in particular have responded well and include: Bath £150, Warley £21.94, Camden £64, Oldham £33, Neath £20, Glasgow South £27.50, Teesside £60, Sheffield £105, Coventry £110, Edinburgh £31.50, York £325, Kilburn £10, Manchester District Committee £37.50, Hackney £98, Birmingham

North £150, Tottenham £29, Colindale £200, Exeter £6.04, Hornsey £21.70, Basildon £28, Cambridge £101.

Socialist Worker groups in places of work started to collect money systematically and regularly. For instance GKN (Birmingham) raised £2.00 and Park Royal Printers £3.00.

The support for the fund is growing, but we must not relax for a minute if we are to reach our £30,000 target.

Rush donations to: Tony Cliff, Acting IS National Treasurer, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

LABOUR-TUC IN

Socialist Worker
Industrial Reporter

AT A SECRET MEETING with representatives of the Labour Party national executive on Monday, the top brass of the Trades Union Congress will once again return to their task of preparing legislation which a future Labour government would bring in as a replacement for the Tory Industrial Relations Act.

The top TUC men are keenly aware that no Labour government is going to repeal the Act and leave it at that.

As a party wholly committed to managing the present system of society, any Labour government is going to insist on measures designed to strike at the heart of organised trade unionism.

And in the course of the discussions which have taken place so far (about which, in the best traditions of socialist and trade union democracy, no information has been made public) it is increasingly clear that the TUC is desperate to collaborate in this task.

At present the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the TUC is proposing that once the Industrial Relations Act is repealed, it should be replaced by 'The Employment Relations Act', a new title chosen to distinguish it from the present Tory legislation.

STATE MACHINE

The Finance and General Purposes Committee's own working document on the subject does reject the fines and sequestrations on unions and jailing of workers approach enshrined in the Industrial Relations Act, an approach rejected by the TUC because 'it makes for bad industrial relations'.

But that and the change of title is about the extent of the difference. Everything else in the document indicates that the TUC leaders are putting in a very strong bid for themselves to be appointed as policemen over the labour movement. The TUC general council would then become an integral part of the state machine.

The Industrial Relations Act—aside from its manifold provisions for unfair industrial actions and contempt of court—relies heavily on the law of contract, and makes the National Industrial Relations Court responsible for enforcing this. An employers' action in the civil courts cannot be heard if the NIRC can deal with the case.

Contract is a master-servant law and by its very nature subjugates workers. In practice the worker finds it impossible to enforce the rights he or she is supposed to have through this law and so the need for working-class organisation arises.

What the TUC now proposes is that once the Industrial Relations Act is repealed the common law of contracts will be a basis for the legal regulation of in-

DEAL ON UNIONS



Wilson and



Feather cook up new laws

The TUC working document is in fact shot through with such legal holes. With massive generosity this could be put down to a faulty attempt to patch up the present legal uncertainties. But the TUC bosses are shrewd operators and this is not their purpose.

Their quite mistaken assumption that all the legal niceties which existed before the Industrial Relations Act will return intact after a Labour government repeals it, are entirely consistent with their real strategy.

CLOSED SHOP

For example in the Finance and General Purposes Committee draft, there is not one single mention of the closed shop, a 'problem' the Labour government would like to challenge just as much as the Tories. Repeal of the Industrial Relations Act will not in any way guarantee that the closed shop is restored as a valid condition of employment. In fact it seems that the TUC are prepared to wheel and deal on the closed shop.

But in the material there is a mention of collective agreements being legally binding when the two parties voluntarily chose that they should be so. Perhaps this could be the cornerstone for a deal on the closed shop, which would then no longer be a closed shop in the real sense.

The document also shows the TUC's deep love of industrial tribunals. This is so strong that they are prepared to let these state bodies interfere with trade union rule books. In addition union rules could be challenged in the civil courts.

Ideally of course what the TUC leaders want is to be appointed to vet rule books. This is precisely what they proposed in reply to In Place of Strife, the last Labour government's draft for the present Act.

RULINGS

The working document gives very strong hints as to what precisely the TUC barons and their friends on the Labour Party executive are after. The Conciliation and Arbitration Service set up with the Confederation of British Industry would be drawn right into the state machine as the industrial law enforcement agency.

And its rulings would be deemed to be part of workers contracts of employment and bound by common law. Wholesale class collaboration would then have been achieved with Vic Feather's signature represented as the endorsement of 10 million organised trade unionists. As far as the TUC is concerned, the whole business is a dispute about making the poison sweeter and more effective and giving them the right to administer it.

From lame ducks to incomes policy—why the Tory switch? Don't miss an important analysis by Nigel Harris next week.

Behind the Tory freeze economic crisis grows

by John Palmer

IN SPITE of the sacrifices imposed on the unemployed, the low paid, the pensioners and all the other victims of Tory policy, the outlook for the British economy is actually worse today than it was 12 months ago.

Contrary to the hilly-ho about government economic 'successes' the signs are that the economy is now headed for another balance of payments crisis.

As the economy gets deeper into the red internationally the pressure will grow on the Tories to abandon their promises about economic growth and cutting the level of unemployment.

Already the Tories have started a traditional economic 'squeeze' by forcing up interest rates to record levels and reducing the resources of the banks for lending.

Because the British employers have persistently invested less of their profits in expanding manufacturing capacity over recent years than their principal rivals, the British economy is now even less able than before to sustain fast economic growth (such as the official government target of 5 per cent a year) without incurring a huge bill for imports. As this happens and as British industry continues to lose its share of world export markets a new, massive payments crisis looms around the corner.

Conflicting

The Tories have few options. Either they meet this crisis by allowing the £ to lose further value on the world currency markets (the £ is already 10 per cent lower than last year) or they fix a new rate and then try to defend it. If they devalue yet again the result is bound to be still faster price inflation because of still higher prices for imports.

The French government (and others in the Common Market) want the £ fixed before the fragile effort to arrange some economic unity between the conflicting interests on the nine EEC members is shattered.

But if the £ is fixed and the payments deficit leads to a flood of capital out of London—as has always happened in the past—the Tories could only hope to defend the £, with international banking help, by imposing a ferocious squeeze at home. This must reduce economic growth towards stagnation once again and increase the numbers out of work.

At every twist and turn of policy the Tories and the British ruling class find themselves confronted with the consequences of the decline of British capitalism. They see only one way forward—to break the power of organised labour and reduce living standards in the hope that this will produce such a dramatic recovery in the profitability of British industry that this decline can be reversed.

Dialogue

But there are two major obstacles in Heath's path. These do not include the trade union or political leadership of the labour movement.

By continuing their 'political dialogue' with the Heath government, the trade union leaders (including the 'lefts') have handed the Tories a powerful political weapon to justify as 'reasonable' and 'just' the latest phase of the attack on wages and conditions.

One serious obstacle to Heath's plan is the steady worsening of the international economic climate. Although some of the major capitalist economies managed a partial recovery this year the outlook for prices (and growth) in the most important international markets this year and 1974 is not bright.

The world ruling class are not in the mood for mutual assistance especially to the international lame ducks like British capitalism. That is why agreement on a new world money order and agreement to prevent the drift to trade war are as far off as ever.

But the most important obstacle to the Tories remains the British workers. In 1973 trade unionists cannot afford to let the vigilance and militant determination to defend living standards slip one inch.

The battle this year will be even more of a political one than last year precisely because the Tories are exhausting their room for manoeuvre.

PRICES

From page one

farmers' profits is possible 'in a free market situation'. He did not add that the government could, if it wished, end the free market situation by taking over from the 52 companies that buy 70 per cent of the meat from farmers. There would then be little difficulty in ensuring that meat was resold to the public at prices working people can afford.

But the government has no wish to attack the profits of either the big meat distributors or the big farmers.

There is a second, related reason why the government will not take such action. It has just entered the Common Market, and one condition of joining was acceptance of the Common Market agricultural system. Under that system food prices are deliberately forced up by imposing taxes on food coming from outside Europe and buying up massive amounts of food by the various governments to create artificial shortages. In this way a massive 350,000 tons of butter had been taken off the market by 1969—not to be used to feed people but merely to push up the price of butter to the people of Europe.

The Institute of Economic Affairs has estimated that this policy has cost every person in the Common Market an average of £24 a year in increased food costs.

Well-to-do

In Britain a different policy has traditionally been used—the handing over of massive subsidies to farmers (by the same governments who have rejected the idea of subsidies on food to consumers to keep the price down). A recent study has shown that those who pay most in taxes to support this policy are workers earning less than £35 a week. Those who gain most from it are the well-to-do farmers.

An average of more than £2000 a head goes to each farmer from this policy—but not much of it finds its way into the pockets of a small farmer with 50 acres, whose total income is a mere £18 a week.

Under either policy, the really big boys have raked in the money at the expense of the rest of us.

The present upsurge in prices has helped them to profit in another way as well—it has pushed up the cost of agricultural land, which has doubled in the past year.

The banks have also benefited—a doubling of land prices means a big increase in the demand for loans to farmers, for which they get back 10 per cent interest. At present £50 million a year of what is paid for food ends up in the bankers' pockets.

So it can be seen why the government has taken no action to prevent price rises. Those who have gained are those whom the government consciously defends: the big food companies, the banks, the rich farmers.

Those who suffer are the agricultural workers, the small farmers and the working-class families that can no longer afford an adequate diet.



An International Socialists pamphlet

STUDENTS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM

Susan Buddle Richard Noss Colin Sparks

The struggle for socialism can only be won by the working class, but other sections of society are always drawn into the action. The International Socialists believe that students can and must be won into political alliance with the workers, and this pamphlet analyses the role of students and of the 'student movement' in an attempt to show the way forward.

Price 15p, plus 3p postage, from IS BOOKS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN

Socialist Worker

WHAT WE THINK

AS the Tories unveil their plans for phase two of the wage freeze, we publish this week on the centre pages articles on the state of two major trade unions that will be of concern to every militant and socialist in the labour movement.

Stripped of all the guff about 'fairness' and 'helping the lower paid', phase two means that the attack on working people and their organisations continues and intensifies. And that attack continues courtesy of the TUC and most of the leaders of its affiliated unions.

If all the fine platform talk of the last two and a half years had been translated into action not only would there be no wage freeze or Industrial Relations Act, there would be no Tory government either. Remember how Vic Feather and his colleagues raged against the Industrial Relations Bill—'the most savage attack on the unions this century'? Despite the rage, it is now being used to undermine the strength of workers determined to protect and advance their members' interests.

Remember the decision of last year's Trades Union Congress against any discussion with the government about wage restraint and incomes policy? Within weeks of the congress, the TUC leaders were back at Downing Street and Chequers, debating how to restrain wages in 'the national interest'.

Although the talks broke down, the mere fact that the TUC were present strengthened the Tory-employer propaganda about wage increases being the major factor behind inflation and helped the government introduce the freeze.

The actions of the right wing in the trade union movement will come as no surprise to most of our readers. The role of Feather and company is to act as honest brokers between workers and government, to dampen down militant action and to wheedle small concessions on the basis of their reasonableness and responsibility.

What is more disturbing, as our centre pages show, is the retreat and vacillation of the official left in the unions.

Jettisoned

Last year's magnificent victory by the miners should be used as the springboard for a showdown this year. But instead of mobilising the members, the left as well as the right on the NUM executive have jettisoned their own conference commitments and are prepared to sign away thousands of jobs through further productivity concessions. In engineering, the left on the AUEW executive have refused to call for national, official action in defence of their funds and are now paying the price through the ominous resurgence of the right wing around Conway and Boyd.

The reason for this dangerous disarray is rooted in the politics of the 'broad left' in the unions—a left that includes the Communist Party. The struggle in the unions for them is a struggle for office and manoeuvre within the bureaucracies, to replace a right wing official by a left one and notch that up as a major step forward. The real force for change, the rank and file, are seen as a stage army whose potential is threatened against the employers but never effectively used. This sorry state of affairs is underlined by the fact that the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, largely dominated by the Communist Party, has issued no call to action or organised meetings and demonstrations throughout the period of the savage NIRC fines on the AUEW.

Of course, no serious socialist militant is opposed to left-wing candidates standing for office in the unions. But elections must be an integral part of the struggle to build powerful rank and file movements throughout industry that will force the leaders to act and bypass them when they refuse.

With the Tory attack reaching a new and even more dangerous stage the time has never been more urgent to intensify the struggle to build in every industry combine committees and rank and file groups to spearhead the fight against the freeze and the anti-union laws. The only defence is attack, to mobilise the trade union movement for industrial action to smash the freeze and to arouse such massive solidarity action that fines cannot be imposed on workers who challenge the pro-employer rulings of the NIRC.

To downgrade such a struggle and pin our hopes solely on officials who confine their opposition to the conference platform is to disarm the working class in the face of a ruthless enemy.

6 COTTONS GDNS, LONDON E2 8DN



Apollo moonshine

AROUND the Prime Minister there is a special group of journalists and public relations men known as 'the grovellers'. Whenever Heath wants a particularly dotting piece of gossip in the newspapers, his staff contact 'the grovellers', whose influence extends throughout Fleet Street. Somehow, they persuade their editors to publish the piece Heath suggested.

In return, the grovellers get special advance notice of the contents of Heath's most 'important' speeches. They got their Downing Street copy, for instance, of Heath's speech to be given on 2 January at the European Movement binge at Hampton Court to celebrate Britain's entry into Europe.

The speech issued to the grovellers started with a tribute to Dr Sicco Mansholt, retiring chairman of the European Commission, who was proposing the toast to the British government, to which Heath would be replying.

'Mr Chairman,' Heath was to say, 'I am delighted to be able to respond to a toast moved with such eloquence by a European who has brought to this cause such a personal conviction, determination and compassion . . . and so on and so on for nine lines. There followed the following unforgettable passage:

'For it is he who has been the permanent conductor of the Nine Muses, known to us in British song as the 'nine bright shiners'. Indeed, Matthew Arnold might have been thinking of Dr Mansholt when he wrote:

" 'Tis Apollo comes leading
His choir, the Nine.
The leader is fairest,
But all are divine."

'I am happy to recognise in Dr Mansholt the Apollo of modern Europe.'

But after issuing the advance copies of the speech Dr Mansholt was to make, proposing the toast. The speech, as we know, said that the Common Market had been a failure in advancing the wealth of the masses, in cutting down chauvinism, and so on.

Heath was furious. At a stroke, he changed his speech. The final edition,



HEATH: changed speech

issued by Russell, Greer and Associates on behalf of the European Movement, tucked a reference to Mansholt into the middle of the speech, which contained a 'tribute' to his work over agriculture and a silly joke about his ability as a sailor.

'I agreed of course,' said Heath, 'with so much of what he had to say tonight.'

The Apollo of modern Europe had completely disappeared. And the grovellers faithfully said nothing about the disappearance.

Knight star

IT IS difficult to imagine anything more revolting than Sir Frederic Bennett, the Tory MP for Torquay. Sir Fred it was who opened the House of Commons debate calling for government action to deal with wreckers in industry. Sir Fred spilt out a lot of bilge about Communist Party infiltration in industry, and then included the following quote from ex-Communist Frank Chapple, President of the electricians' union.

'Working for the Communist Party is like being part of a ruthless industrial and political Kray Brothers organisation. It is like a religion run by gangsters', Chapple had said.

The following night, Sir Frederic gave a dinner party in his handsome London residence (he also has a house in Devon and one in Wales). The guest of honour was the new Ambassador in London for Communist China, Mr Sung Chih-Kuang, who was dining in an English private house for the first time since his appointment.

Sir Frederic, it will be remembered, was the country's most enthusiastic supporter of General Yahya Khan's invasion of Bangladesh in 1971, which led to the slaughter of several million people. (He was awarded the Sithari [Star] of Pakistan for his services to

that country's rulers in 1964.)

Sir Frederic was greatly impressed by the support for Khan and Pakistan which came during the war from the People's Republic of China. There is nothing, in short, which the noble knight does not know about gangsters.

Feat of clay

ORGANISERS at Transport House are 'most upset' by the decision of Labour Party members in North East Derbyshire to refuse nominations for the new district council to councillors who have agreed to implement the Housing Finance Act. This decision is largely due to the work and propaganda of the Labour councillors in Clay Cross who are now defying the Act after almost all other councils in England have collapsed. Eleven councillors from neighbouring councils which have implemented have been unceremoniously axed from the panel of possible future councillors.

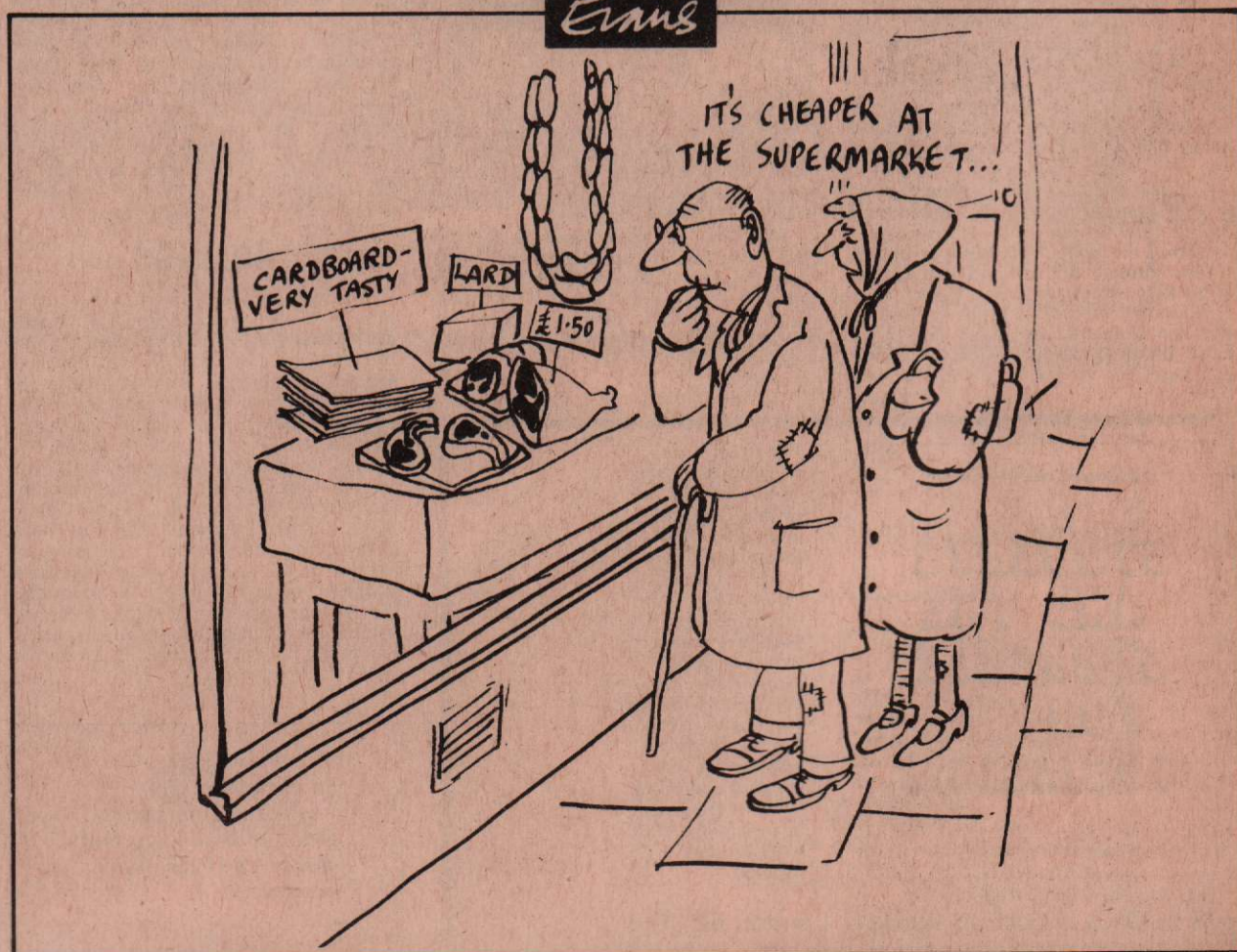
The Labour Party organisation sub-committee has promptly ordered a full-scale inquiry—which one Clay Cross resident summed up in advance as 'the hatchet for David Skinner'. (David is Labour leader of Clay Cross council.)

THE Coal Board will shortly announce their replacement for Mr Jim Stone, who resigned recently as head of the board's Doncaster division after a front-page expose in *The People* of his connections with a mining machinery firm.

Mr Stone was also the owner of 4000 shares during the boom in Bonser Engineering, a mining machinery firm whose best-known director was Alfred Robens, son of Lord Robens, then Coal Board chief. With several other Coal Board officials in the area, Mr Stone sold his Bonser shares at a handsome profit after the firm had profited from substantial Coal Board orders for pit props.

Mr Stone will be replaced by Mr L J Mills, who is area director of the board's North Yorkshire division. The new director of the North Yorkshire division will be Mr Thomas Wright.

Mr Wright was also a shareholder in Bonser Engineering. At one time he had even more shares than Mr Stone. He had 5000.



PRINTS

A SLIGHT LAPSE

MEMBERS of the International Socialists who read the Financial Times must have been delighted with the long, facing-leader-page article on 9 January, which was entirely devoted to an analysis from the point of view of 'enlightened' British capitalism of Tony Cliff's review of 1972 in Socialist Worker on 6 January.

After quoting liberally from Cliff, the article's author, Mr Joe Rogaly, who has recently been promoted to the post of assistant editor, argues that unless Heath can turn even more of a somersault and come to terms with unions 'the Socialist Worker may have cause for further self-delight 12 months from today.'

Mr Rogaly's interest in the trade union movement extends beyond mere journalistic interest.

He is a member of a 'reform group' recently set up in the Central London branch of the National Union of Journalists, which covers all the national newspapers. The 'reform group' sought to get the branch on 'the Right road again' and out of the hands of sundry 'disrupters and subversives'.

Before last autumn's emergency conference of the union, which was called at the demand of branches who disagreed with the annual conference's decision to de-register under the Industrial Relations Act, Mr Rogaly's name was one of a block presented by the 'reform group' for the branch delegation to conference.

Further down the agenda, however, was the list of members who were to be lapsed because they had not paid their union subscription. The list included Mr Joe Rogaly. In some embarrassment, his name was removed from the nominations.

Hot money

WAGE INCREASES, remember, which have been agreed before the freeze cannot be paid until after the freeze. It's different, however, for dividends. The government has agreed, without letting too many people know about it, to allow dividend increases announced before the freeze to be paid during the freeze.

The Hanson Trust, a vast manufacturing concern which makes, among many other things, Massey Ferguson tractors, announced last June that they would be paying a 25 per cent dividend (compared to only 16.85 per cent last year) in December. On 5 December, in the middle of the freeze, the increase was paid.

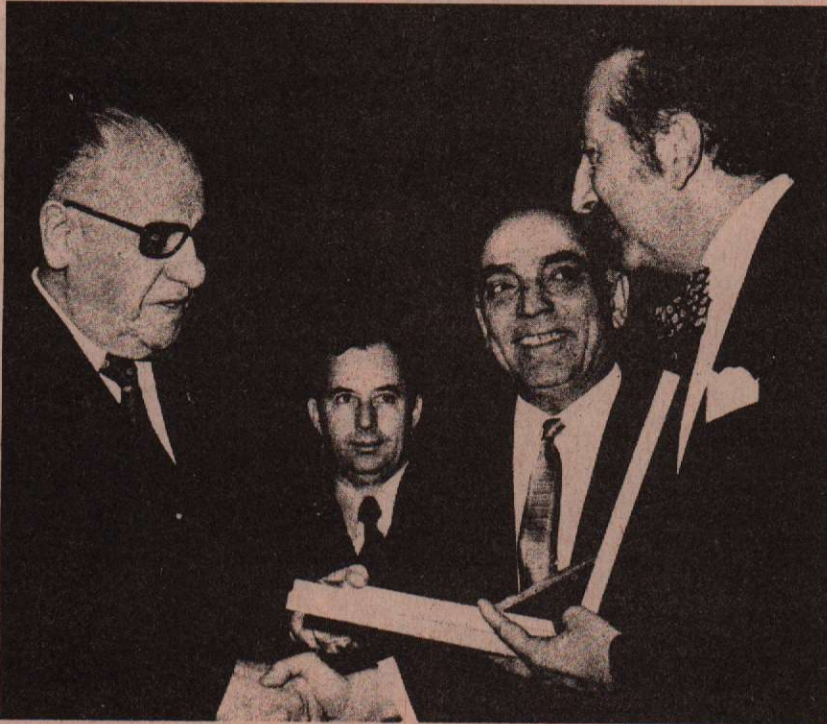
Similarly, the Triumph Investment Trust announced last June an increase in dividend. On 12 December in the middle of the freeze, they paid 1.8p a share, compared with 1.5p last year.

The cost of this unfrozen increase meant that Triumph paid out £932,000 in dividends this year compared with £546,800 last year.

Loaded...

AN International Socialist member who is a tenant in North London recently opened an envelope addressed to his absentee landlord. It was an invitation to join the Landlords Association, who have premises in the offices of estate agent A G Lawrence at 315 Westbourne Park Road, London W11. Mr Lawrence is the chairman of this new and flourishing body, and in the document he outlines its advantages.

'All members should place any flats or rooms which they may have from time to time direct with the association for letting... in this way



President Sunay of Turkey (left) at the union dinner. See 'Gold Turkey'

the association can provide for the landlords a decent tenant for the start of the letting and thus obviate many of the problems which could arise through the Rent Acts and Rent Tribunals being heavily loaded against the landlord.'

Among the association's 'main functions' are listed:

'Constantly to make representations to the government for a revision of the Rent Acts and the severe restriction of the powers of the tribunals.'

'To maintain a list of bad tenants, to which all members have access, either to report a tenant or to inquire whether a tenant is on the list.'

'To let all accommodation on behalf of members by means of pre-selecting decent, responsible tenants.'

The association is affiliated to the Midlands Landlords Association, and the annual subscription is five guineas.

Were anyone to ring Mr Lawrence and offer him unsuitable accommodation, he would be very angry. His telephone number is 01-727 3025.

Says Len

LEN MURRAY, deputy general secretary of the Trades Union Congress, recently spoke to the Forty Club in Leicester, which is the dining club of the 'executive group' of the hosiery and knitwear industry.

After a policy speech, Mr Murray congratulated the Hosiery and Knitwear Workers Union, whose general secretary was also at the binge, for the 'very cool and level-headed way' they had handled the dispute at the Mansfield Hosiery mill, where 500 Indian workers had been on strike for nine weeks.

Presumably Mr Murray knew that the union had allowed their white members to go on working in a factory in which black workers were on official strike, and that the Race Relations Board had found the union guilty of blatant racial discrimination inside the factory.

Perhaps these two attitudes are now official TUC policy.

THE NEW 'work together' campaign sponsored by the National Coal Board and the National Union of Mineworkers is in full swing. On 3 January, the Coal Board offered the union their £50,000 de Havilland executive plane to take union officials to meetings in Britain and in Europe. In the past, union men and Coal Board officials have travelled together on the plane, but this is the first time the unions have been offered separate use.

The plane is a Dove, the symbol of peace.

Gold Turkey

OUR PICTURE shows the glamorous President Sunay of Turkey presenting a gold plaque to Mr Sahap Kocatopcuoglu, director general of the Turkish bottle and glass industries. The plaque is a token of gratitude for the work done by Mr Kocatopcuoglu as a former chairman of the Turk-Is, the confederation of Turkish labour unions, whose main financier is the CIA.

The occasion was an anniversary Christmas cocktail party thrown by the Turk-Is to which were invited several businessmen and diplomats but no workers. The Confederation chairman, Mr Halil Kaya, is second from the right. He is happy.

In spite of this striking example of worker/government/industry co-operation, there have been more arrests and torture of dissenters in Turkey in the past few weeks.

The British government attitude to all this was restated in a letter to Mr Frank Judd MP from Mr Anthony Royle, a junior minister at the Foreign Office, published in the first edition of the Sunday Times on 7 January (this is the only edition which gets to Turkey).

'We do not believe,' said Mr Royle, 'that the Turkish government have turned their backs on democracy, notwithstanding the measures taken in Turkey since April 1971 when martial law was declared in 11 provinces.'

Left bank?

THE Boycott Barclays Movement, started by Anti-Apartheid in protest against Barclays' involvement in the building of the Cabora Bassa Dam in Mozambique and other projects designed to harden racial divisions in Southern Africa, seems to be losing support among its most enthusiastic supporters.

The ACTT, the cinema and television workers' union, gave a pledge to Anti-Apartheid several months ago that they would switch their account from Barclays. An Anti-Apartheid ACTT member protested recently when he was told to pay his subs into Barclays, and received the reply: 'Oh, yes. The finance officer said we must go on banking at Barclays because it's almost next door to the office—so convenient, you see.'

This courageous approach is rivalled only by the New Left Review, whose current issue asks for subs to be paid into Barclays.

The New Left Review has been one of the country's leading advocates of 'shareholder intervention' to counter racialism, but Barclays is very close to its office too.

FRAME-UP!

IF THERE is one thing that the Nottingham police force detest more than anything else, it is the idea of black people organising in pursuit of their rights.

The Nottingham police have gone out of their way to stamp on the Black Peoples Freedom Movement, a black socialist organisation whose members have had the insolence to take up the issues of low wages, job discrimination and harassment of black people, not least by the police.

Twenty-two-year-old Raymond Kirlaw is the BPFM complaints officer in Nottingham. It is his job to help black people who get caught up with the police, to help them get bail and fix them up with legal advice.

In doing this Raymond Kirlaw naturally has dealings with the police. When he started the job, he could scarcely have imagined how in turn the police would deal with him.

Kirlaw began to receive the attentions of the Nottingham police almost immediately after joining the BPFM. He was regularly followed and subjected to provocation. Early last March he was arrested for obstruction after a series of incidents in the town centre when he and a friend were harassed by the police. He was found guilty and fined £42.

He remained active and continued as BPFM complaints officer. Police harassment increased. His home was repeatedly raided and he was hauled in 'for questioning' about many an unsolved crime in the area.

'Blackmail'

Then in August last year the police really moved. Raymond Kirlaw was arrested on the morning of 7 August in connection with the activities of 'The Organisation', a body alleged by the police to be seeking to carve up and profit from all drug peddling in the city. Three other young blacks, Paul Brown, Philip Haynes and Paul Whittingham, were also arrested and charged with conspiracy, blackmail and assault.

The arrests followed a visit to the Nottingham drugs squad from Michael Knott. While he was at the police station, Knott confessed to breaking into Boots the chemists and stealing £38 in cash and £53 worth of assorted drugs. He also alleged that Kirlaw and the other three men were involved in menacing, blackmailing and assaulting him in an attempt to extract drugs and money obtained by selling drugs from him.

Knott was to be the star prosecution witness against the four. But before this, Knott himself had to face trial on serious charges.

Knott was on probation and working out a conditional discharge for his previous convictions and could therefore have expected a prison sentence.

Confess

But the man who had denounced Kirlaw and the others to the police met with quite extraordinary leniency and was sentenced to three years probation on condition that he report to a local drug addiction treatment centre, fined a small sum and ordered to pay some costs. His breaches of probation and conditional discharge cost him £5 and £2 respectively.

Raymond Kirlaw states that before he was put into a cell with the three other men who were to be his co-defendants, officers from the Nottingham drugs squad told him to convince the others that they should confess to the offence of assault causing actual bodily harm. If they did this there would be no extra charges and they would be bailed right away, dealt with in a magistrates court and only fined £50.

Police rigged the evidence against black militant

Kirlaw refused to make any statements incriminating himself or others. He knew he was being framed and also that he should fight the case. Paul Brown, Philip Haynes and Paul Whittingham did make such statements, incriminating both themselves and Raymond Kirlaw.

On the opening day of the trial, the prosecuting solicitor really went to town. The defendants were all members of 'The Organisation' which by blackmail and extortion was out to sew up drug trafficking in the city.

On 13 December, the fourth day of the trial, Raymond Kirlaw was cleared of all charges: conspiracy to blackmail, three counts of blackmail and two of assault. The acquittal followed a direction from the judge that there was insufficient evidence against him.

On the second day of the trial an important prosecution witness, Yusef Dar, had repudiated his statement supporting Knott's allegations against the four. He told the jury that he had been under the influence of drugs when he made it and that most of it was untrue. The prosecution was forced to ask that he be declared a hostile witness.

Assault

Then two of the defendants, Brown and Haynes, told the court that their statements, which implicated Kirlaw, were false and had been obtained by the police on promises of immediate bail, not too serious charges and light penalties. All this confirmed exactly what Raymond Kirlaw had said from the beginning.

Both men were found guilty after the jury, failing to reach a unanimous verdict, went out for a second time. The prosecuting solicitor had insisted that 'the best evidence of their guilt is their own confessions', confessions both men had disavowed under oath after Raymond Kirlaw had been cleared.

The third defendant, Paul Whittingham, who co-operated with the police from the start, got bail and eventually pleaded guilty to charges of blackmail and assault, was jailed for three months.

Raymond Kirlaw, complaints officer of the Black Peoples Freedom Movement, only just escaped the net. In fact he had spent more than four months in jail from the day of his arrest to his trial, probably enough 'punishment' to dissuade most people from organising for their rights. Kirlaw intends to continue the struggle and could well be picked up on other 'charges'.

TREVOR SHAW

VICTOR SERGE

Memoirs of a Revolutionary 1901-1941

TRANSLATED BY PETER SEDGWICK

The memoirs of Victor Serge, revolutionary, novelist and poet, are a testimony to the experience of three successive revolutionary generations—the anarchism of pre-1914 France, the syndicalism of Barcelona 1917, finally Russia as Stalin took over. Out of the annihilation Serge himself survived as virtually a lone witness.

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VIETNAM: the destruction and hypocrisy

Bombing goes on -thousand tons in two days

RICHARD NIXON'S decision, on 30 December, to call off the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong, was greeted with sighs of relief by liberal newspaper editors, clergymen and Labour politicians.

The brutal and indiscriminate bombing of densely populated cities had stung them into some kind of mumbling protest. Now they could go back to celebrating entry to the Common Market with a clear conscience.

The Guardian, for example, headlined its editorial on 9 January with the question 'Is the Bombing to Return?'. It is a question which would bring a wry smile to the face of many Vietnamese, for whom the bombing never went away. On the weekend of 6-7 January, B-52s dropped more than a thousand tons of bombs on the large areas of North Vietnam south of the 20th parallel.

And the B-52s are flying more bombing raids over South Vietnam than they do over the North, helping the corrupt and ineffective South Vietnamese army retain control over parts of the countryside.

Yet this continuous and murderous bombing is scarcely reported, except for incidents such as the accidental bombing of the Da Nang base last week.

Despite all the talk about running down the war, the US has been stepping up its bombing throughout the past year. In the first nine months of 1972 800,000 tons of bombs were dropped—over 30,000 tons more than were dropped in the whole of 1971.

Between February 1965 and August 1972 the total amount of explosives—bombs, rockets, machine gun bullets—dispatched from US aircraft over Indochina adds up to seven and a half million tons. Yet throughout the Second World War in all parts of the world the allied forces used only just over two million tons.

TARGETS

US sources estimated, last October, that in the previous two years about 400,000 people had been killed throughout Indochina. Since the North Vietnamese do not publish casualty figures this may well be an underestimate. The forms of war which killed most of these people are still going on, despite the so-called 'halt to the bombing'.

There are many different types of bombing used by the US. Some are aimed at precise military targets. But it is quite clear that much of the bombing is designed quite simply to kill, maim, terrorise and demoralise the Vietnamese people.

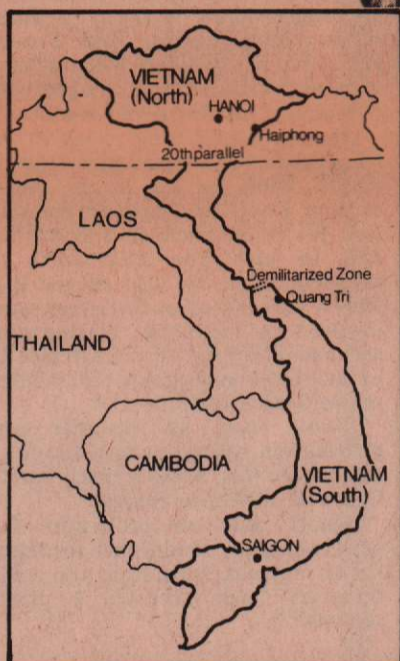
A Dutch doctor, Harald Aarts, who visited North Vietnam last August, told the Far Eastern Economic Review what he had seen and heard: 'Foreign journalists in Hanoi told me of a particular bombing technique which appears to be popular with American pilots. They cited the example of Hon Gai city on the Vietnamese coast.

CHILDREN

'US aircraft came to bomb this city at 3am. They first dropped incendiary bombs, then fragmentation and perforating bombs and finally blast bombs. The incendiary bombs forced people to rush out on to the streets and make for the shelters. In the open, they were caught by fragmentation bombs. The lucky ones who made it to the shelters became targets for blast bombs.

'This bombing pattern leaves no escape for civilians.

'We saw improved anti-personnel bombs—fragmentation bombs—which are also carried in 'mother' bombs. On explosion, they scatter tens of thousands of splinters which kill people over a limited radius. Improved varieties are called spherical fragmentation or 'plastic' bombs. I saw patients hit by both types. Victims die very slowly . . . Most of the victims I saw were children.'



Vietnam: the bombing has just shifted south of the 20th parallel

In the South, where the National Liberation forces are able to get a grip on large parts of the countryside, the struggle is even more bloody. The South Vietnamese forces which have taken over the land war from the US are both incompetent and brutal, and regarded with legitimate distrust by the population.

This is illustrated by a story from the US magazine Newsweek (21 August). 'In one particularly nasty incident, an ARVN [Army of the Republic of Vietnam] battalion of the Ninth Infantry Division walked into an ambush and was annihilated. The battalion's commander, fleeing for his life, dashed up to a farmer's house and asked to be hidden. The farmer, however, was evidently aware of the Ninth Division's reputation for looting and raping the civilians of the area. He took one look at the officer's shoulder patch and shot him dead.'

So if the South Vietnamese troops are to chalk up any victories at all, they have to rely on US air power.

On 15 September the South Vietnamese liberated the city of Quang Tri. It was the city rather than its inhabitants that was liberated, for observers were able to find no sign of living beings in the recaptured city. Those who were not dead had fled.

On 8 October Craig Whitney



An American B-52 airman captured after being shot down. Wire picture from North Vietnam

described the scene to New York Times readers: 'Inside the walls of the former Citadel, nothing—not one tree, no building, not even a bunker—is left standing.

'Outside, stretching east, west, and south as far as the town once did, there is nothing but rubble, bomb craters and shredded trees.

'The marines who reoccupied the town this September put up yellow South Vietnamese flags on the shattered telephone poles, because almost nothing else stands higher than a man in Quang Tri city now.'

Seven years bombing have had a disastrous effect on the physical environment of Vietnam. It is estimated that there are now 26 million bomb craters in Indochina, 21 million of them in South Vietnam. The total area comes to about seven hundred square miles. Although the resourceful Vietnamese are using the craters for fish-breeding, they have a ruinous effect on rice-growing.

And it is estimated that there may be 500,000 unexploded bombs in the soil waiting to be set off by a plough. Ten per cent of cultivated land in South Vietnam has been abandoned.

TERRIBLE

Although Nixon ordered a halt to chemical warfare in December 1970 the damage is not healed. The whole cycle of nature has been destroyed in many places. Where vegetation has been destroyed the animals and birds that lived there have gone—and without the animals the vegetation cannot be fertilised and grow again.

But despite the terrible human cost, the North Vietnamese and the National Liberation forces are far from beaten. Reports prepared for the US National Security Council by the CIA and the Defence Intelligence Agency estimated that despite the bombing the North Vietnamese would be able to maintain the struggle 'at the present rate' for the next two years.

A crucial element here is that the Liberation forces know what they are fighting for—the independence of their country and the overthrow of Thieu's corrupt regime. The morale of the remaining US forces is summed up by a placard carried by a black US serviceman as he embarked for the journey home:

'We are the unwilling,
Doing the unnecessary
For the ungrateful.'

While Nixon's planes sow destruction from the air, Thieu's policemen and hangmen are continuing to round up every possible source of opposition in the South, even those liberals who are known to be firm anti-communists.

ARRESTS

In a recent article in Le Monde, Ngo Cong Duc, who until 1969 was a deputy in the South Vietnamese National Assembly, alleges that already three months ago there were 200,000 people imprisoned in South Vietnam—and waves of arrests are continuing.

Almost all these prisoners are subject to mistreatment and deliberate torture. Electric shock treatment, forced drinking of soapy water and the hammering of nails through the finger tips are common.

On 2 January two young French teachers who had spent two and a half years in a Saigon prison told a meeting in Paris what they had experienced there.

'Prisoners who have spent months or even years in tiger-cases 20 inches high can no longer stand up straight or walk. And all this is being done under the supervision of American advisers, who, we are certain, know all about what is going on in the Vietnamese prisons.'

Such is the 'freedom' that Nixon and friends are talking about—from a safe distance. There can be no peace for the Vietnamese people until the last US soldier has gone and the Thieu regime has been overthrown.

Wilson's support for US terrorism

A MYTH is rapidly being established in and around the Labour Left that Harold Wilson attacked the American government when they bombed North Vietnam when he was Prime Minister, and that Wilson's personal attitude to Vietnam while at No 10 was much more hostile to the Americans than it appeared.

Many times in the past few weeks, Wilson has referred to the Labour government's (very mild) criticism of the American bombing of North Vietnam in 1966.

The facts are these. In February 1965, after an alleged 'incident' in the Gulf of Tonkin, apparently involving a North Vietnamese attack on an American ship, the American air force started to pulverise 'military installations' (including schools and hospitals) in Hanoi and Haiphong.

Harold Wilson, who was then going through what is known to his admirers as his 'eyeball to eyeball' period, promptly got on the 'hot line' to President Johnson and asked him to receive a British deputation, headed by Wilson, to talk about Vietnam. Johnson, as Wilson admits in his memoirs, lost his temper.

'I won't tell you how to run Malaysia and you don't tell us how to run Vietnam', he said. 'If you want to help us some in Vietnam send us some men and send us some folks to help us. And if you don't feel like doing that, go on with your Malaysian problem.'

The wretched Wilson dropped the phone, and adopted a policy of total, unconditional and grovelling support for the Americans.



On 1 April 1965, he summed up his government's policy in the House of Commons: 'So far as Her Majesty's government are concerned, I repeat, as I have said many times before, that we have made absolutely plain our support for the American stand against Communist infiltration in South Vietnam . . .

'The people of South Vietnam, like the people of North Vietnam and every other area, are entitled to be able to lead their own lives free of terror, free from the danger of sudden death or from the threat of a Communist take-over, and the government of South Vietnam are entitled to call in aid allies who could help in that purpose.'

Almost a year later, he repeated his faith in everything done by the Americans in Vietnam. Again in the House of Commons (on 8 February 1966), he said: 'I have made clear the desire of the American government to bring this fighting to an end, and I am absolutely convinced about the sincerity of the President in this matter. I could not be more convinced about anything.'

In these shabby policies, Mr Wilson was supported by his entire Cabinet, and in particular by his new Home Secretary, Mr Roy Jenkins, who now finds the bombing of North Vietnam so distasteful.

by Ian Birchall and Paul Foot

HOW THE HIGH PAID HELP THE LOW PAID

'GREEDY WORKER'—that's the familiar battle-cry of politicians and newspapers against higher-paid workers.

This howl of abuse from people earning £200 a week or more is backed by the demand that workers earning £30 or £40 a week should exercise 'restraint' so that those even further down the wages ladder can win bigger increases.

The government is now bandying the idea that under Phase Two of the wage freeze, after the 150 days' total freeze, lower-paid workers would receive a flat-rate increase of £2-£3 with a lower percentage increase for the higher paid.

Underlying this suggestion is the notion dear to ruling-class hearts that the demands of the higher paid can be met only at the expense of the lower-paid. The higher paid are cast in the role of the fat Mr Bumble refusing Oliver Twist's request for more.

But far from there being any conflict of interest between the higher and the lower paid, the struggles of the stronger sections always help the weaker ones to raise their living standards.

During the boom conditions of the post-war years, well-organised workers in the private sector devised a method of raising their wages well above the level established by official union negotiations. This method, referred to by government and employers as 'wage drift', was based on militant local plant bargaining over such matters as piecework rates or bonuses. It created a two-tier system of bargaining in which the lower tier, national bargaining, established only the minimum rates in a particular industry, while actual earnings depended on the higher tier of local bargaining.

For example, in 1964 the national standard rate for an engineering fitter was £10 11s 8d, but actual average earnings for fitters were £16. The share of a fitter's real earnings won through local bargaining was nearly a third.

Pressure

Local negotiation was clearly a crucial weapon in the hands of such militant sections as car workers. It enabled them to drive their wage levels above those reached by the rest of the working class. This 'wage drive' was the factor which, more than any other, enraged the employers and forced them to launch the productivity deal offensive against well-organised groups.

Because of 'wage drift', when the next round of national negotiations came along, the pressure would be on to raise minimum rates to the level achieved by the most advanced workers in the industry. And once the new level was established the best-organised sections would go on to

In 1960 the council tenants in St Pancras, London, fought against a rent scheme which contained many of the elements which have now been incorporated in the Housing Finance Act. The story of that fight is told in this pamphlet by Dave Burn, with an introduction by Hugh Kerr of the Harlow Tenants Federation.

Rent Strike: St Pancras 1960

Dave Burn

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Don't slip back on the wages mountain

raise the ceiling even higher, enabling the lower paid to reach higher rates at the next round.

In addition, the struggles of the higher paid in industries with a two-tier system of negotiations have had an important impact on settlements in industries with only one tier. They inevitably compare their wage levels with what car workers or higher-paid engineering workers earn and set their sights accordingly.

Reduced

It should be clear to all militants that the only method by which wages are raised is through the struggle of the better-organised sections. The rest of the working-class keep up by comparing their wage levels with those won by the strongest groups.

This is borne out by the experience of the labour movement: that the struggles of the better organised raise living standards throughout the working class and as a result differentials between high paid and low paid become considerably reduced. For example, the differential between skilled and unskilled groups remained



Dustmen picketing outside Buckingham Palace (left) during the 'dirty jobs' strike of 1970, the most successful struggle by low-paid workers since 1948. Right: rubbish, piled up in a London market during the strike.

BY SABBY SAGALL

at around 50 per cent for many years up to 1914, while by the 1950s the unskilled had managed to raise themselves to 80-85 per cent of the level of the skilled.

Different sections of the working class are tied to each other like members of a mountain climbing team. The faster those higher up the 'wage mountain' move, the quicker they haul up those below them. When they slow down, those beneath them also slow down.

Finally, there is the case of what are known as 'keynote' settlements. Certain settlements in any one year have a crucial impact on other settlements, for they set a trend which other workers tend to follow. High settlements reveal to other workers what militancy and organisation can achieve, whereas low settlements discourage other groups from setting their sights too high.

The tragic defeat of the postmen who settled for 9 per cent early in 1971 resulted in a lower level of settlements throughout the rest of the year. But 1972 saw the successes of

	Percentage settlements	
	1971	1972
Government industrial workers	8.5 (July)	13.8 (July)
Retail workers	12.0 men 20.2 women (July)	14.3 men 19.1 women (October)
Laundry workers	18.2 men 23.4 women (October)	9.2 men 10.9 women (October)
Local authority manual	7.7 men 9.7 women (November)	12.9 men (November)
Farm workers	8.0 (January 1972)	20.4 (December)

the miners in February (20 per cent) and the railwaymen in June (13.6 per cent). Up to the end of October 1971, weekly wage rates rose by 12.3 per cent over the previous year, while in the course of the following year, up to the end of October 1972, the general increase in wages was 17.3 per cent.

Poverty

With the exception of laundry workers, every group of low-paid workers achieved higher settlements in 1972 than in 1971. All in all, the harder the struggle of the higher paid or, as with the miners and railwaymen the struggle of those around the middle of the wages scale, the greater the benefits to the lower paid.

It is only following the example of militant workers that they can raise their deplorable living standards. Cosy chats between trade union leaders and Tory ministers will leave them in poverty.

It is only when the higher paid demand more, like Oliver Twist, that the others gain the courage to shake the really greedy one, the fat Mr Bumble.

What you can claim if you're single

A STRIKER is always entitled to Social Security benefits for his family and most people know of these—but there are other welfare benefits which many do not get simply because they do not know they are entitled to them.

One of these is the housing allowance, which is paid by the Social Security either for rates and rent or interest on a mortgage (but not for capital repayments)—plus a small allowance for repairs and insurance.

If you do not pay rent yourself but are living with your parents, an allowance of 70p will be paid instead of rent.

If you are the householder, and there are other people living in the same household, you will get only a part of the rent. For example, a man with a wife and two grown-up children still at home will get only half of the rent or mortgage and rates paid. Deductions are also made if you sublet or have boarders.

While claiming social security you are entitled to a free pint of milk a day for each child under five years old. This is given in the form of tokens, and you can also get tokens for free vitamins. These tokens used

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



Strikes and the Social Security-Part Two

to be given to everyone, whether claiming or not, but they were cut out by the Tories in 1971, along with school milk for the over-sevens.

It's worth getting your teeth and spectacles seen to while you're not working, for the treatment can be done free (ask your dentist or optician). You are also exempt from prescription charges.

If you are involved in a long dispute, gas and electricity bills are bound to mount up. Section 7 of the 1966 Social Security Act allows the Social Security to give lump sum payments to cover these to avoid hardship, for example if supplies were cut off for non-payment.

Grants can also be made for clothing and other items. If they try to give you a loan insist on a grant instead. If you don't get satisfaction, appeal. During the long Fine Tubes strike in Plymouth all these extra benefits have been obtained by the men.

Strikers are normally entitled to claim benefit only for their dependants. However, that is not the end of the story for single people, for Section 13 of the Act applies on grounds of hardship. The Social Security officials may not agree, but don't give up. Insist that you have to eat and pay rent. If you are living with relatives tell the Social Security

officials that it is not your family's duty to support you.

Make sure you don't disclose any savings or cash in hand, or they will try to make you use that before paying up.

They will probably try to limit any weekly payment to you to £4. In fact this is just a figure conjured up by some petty miser in London—there is nothing in law to fix the figure at £4 and it is worth fighting for more. Make sure that the people you are living with will back you up.

In the secret instructions issued by the headquarters of the Department of Health and Social Security to its officials, it is stated that single claimants are the most likely to commit fraud (not surprising, considering how hard you have to fight to get anything at all). The instructions tell clerks to warn single people that their statements will be checked, and to pick them out for visiting at home.

In fact the offices are usually too hard pressed to be able to do this, but watch out!

NEXT WEEK: What happens to your strike pay.

THE UNIONS

Miners' leaders—right and left—ready to sign a murderous 'prod deal'

MASSIVE RETREAT OVER

WAGES AND CONDITIONS

LAST WINTER was a good time for the miners. After years of humiliation they defied the experts, surprised their union leaders and badly bruised the government.

When the miners showed that they could deprive Heath of even the light to read by, they taught the rest of the working class a lesson. If it had not been for the spinelessness of the NUM leaders, the miners might have provided the trigger for a national movement that could have kicked the Tories out there and then.

The seven weeks' strike that started on 9 January last year brought to an end the gloomy post-war years of retreat, years in which the union leaders had brazenly collaborated in holding back wages and the closure of hundreds of pits that brought redundancy for thousands—all done in the name of 'higher productivity'.

The strike was in pursuit of a claim for £26 for surface workers (an increase of £8), £28 for underground workers (£9 more) and £35 for faceworkers (an extra £5).

The battle of Saltley coke depot: in Birmingham, backed by 10,000 striking engineers, finally proved to the Tories that they were beaten. They called in the faithful Lord Wilberforce to head an inquiry which was rushed through in a matter of days.

During the strike the rank and file had taken over, but NUM president Joe Gormley and the right wing were manoeuvring to regain control. Pickets were called off before the vote on the Wilberforce deal was held. As a result, miners won increases of £6, £5 and £4.50, backdated to November but the NUM agreed to discuss a new productivity deal.

In the 12 months since the strike the leaders have deliberately dissipated the enthusiasm and will to fight of the members. The NUM was the first union to appear before an industrial relations tribunal.

But the greatest indictment concerns wages and employment prospects. The first warning came with Wilberforce, the second came in April when the names of the committee were announced to investigate the possibility of a productivity deal: Joe Gormley, Sydney Schofield (Yorkshire), Sid Vincent (Lancashire), Tommy Burke (Yorkshire), Tom Bartle (Durham), Len Clarke (Notts) and Lawrence Daly—with the exception of general secretary Daly, a bunch of right-wing reactionaries.

These men have lived up to expectations. A number of documents have been circulated to members of the union executive. Among the most revealing is one



Miners—jealously guarded weekends now up for auction

headed Efficiency Incentive Scheme (JNNC/US/7/11/72). The arguments and suggestions made in this document could have been lifted straight from a manual of management consultancy. It begins:

'It is the basic job of the NUM to advance the real material standards of its members in pay, security and real wages. To achieve this does not necessarily require the union to give major priority to an annual wages settlement, or to preserve the principle that the single annual increase should be the largest contributor to raising living standards.'

'Such a policy can and does create frustration and unrest as members enjoy the short-term benefits of a pay increase and then as the months pass they experience a decline in their living standards and seek to redress the balance by annual conference instruction to the NEC, which starts the process in motion again.'

'The Wilberforce Report sought to get the union and the NCB away from the pattern of major annual confrontations by suggesting that some steady improvements may be forthcoming from a productivity scheme. At its October meeting the committee considered the paper outlining alternative schemes and decided that more research was required into the prospects of an efficiency scheme.'

Among the guidelines suggested for any deal the author of the document lists:

'B: Establish special committees at all levels for the purpose of achieving fair shares and controlling other factors. Such committee work would return some working initiative down the trade union structure.'

'C: Consider the effect on security of employment, and, where it is unrealistic to insist that there should be no redundancy, the local or national committees would control the way in which the workforce would be reduced or re-deployed.'

'DILIGENT'

'E: Consider the long-term effect of the scheme, short-term gains should not be snatched if they produce later disadvantages i.e. employment prospects, market competitiveness.'

Then follows an outline of the planning stage for an agreed deal. Phase one we are told:

'Would be to mount a programme to improve the use of existing capital equipment without drastic alteration in operating methods, i.e. equipment may be more speedily taken to where it is required, men more speedily deployed, equipment standardised where practical, more attention to cost factors, a more diligent approach to salvaging operations and clearer lines of responsibility and authority.'

At Phase two:

'At this stage in the scheme the industry may have to look at revolutionary changes as a means for further improvements on production levels and reduction of costs. One immediate prospect which comes to mind is an improvement which would extend machine running time.'

'That is in the deployment of men over a period of a week in a manner which will minimise production time-lags. There are a number of ways in which this might be achieved and the method adopted may perhaps be dictated by local circumstances which of course, would be known to the local production committee. Perhaps four-shift working would provide the necessary overlap giving a 24-hour cover, a system

which may involve a close examination of manriding methods in the shaft and underground. An alternative which may recommend itself at units where the workings are reached only after a long journey underground, would be to introduce four-day face working with an extended shift time.'

'In total, this may give a longer time of maximum production at the face than existing five-day arrangements and there are obviously associated benefits from a production point of view.'

This is just a flavour of a document which makes many militants speechless with disbelief. One would be hard pressed



Daly: fines on absentees

to find any section of workers in British industry who have suffered at the hands of productivity bargaining to the extent that miners have.

Employment prospects have been halved in about 12 years. Real wages have actually been cut, most dramatically for face workers. The accident rate has actually increased as have the number of chest disease cases.

The Coal Industry Bill of December, greeted so enthusiastically by press and union leadership, actually spells out, beneath the honeyed words that there is a future for the coal industry—but at only half its present manpower, producing the same amount of coal.

To talk productivity in these circumstances is sheer betrayal, for it spells ruin for many more mining communities, especially in Scotland, Durham, Lancashire and South Wales.

A further document of early December, bearing Lawrence Daly's signature, argues very robustly for a productivity incentive scheme. It remarks that:

'It [the union] has already declared publicly its interest in making better use of the industry's extensive capital and maximum co-operation has been offered to the NCB in a joint effort to cut the cost of production by using capital equipment

more efficiently.'

Ignoring completely that the labour movement has always been engaged in a struggle to obtain advantage over the employer or lose the advantage to the employer, Daly goes on to say that:

'Productivity committees . . . could remove any suspicion that either side sought advantage at the expense of the other.'

Later, after describing the way a new bonus system might be organised, Daly writes:

'Penalties would be imposed for bad attendance in the way of fines from the bonus which would be invested with the board for later distribution to pensioners or some similar objective.'

For generations the union fought to remove area differentials. Yet here in this document we read that:

'Obviously the prime coal areas should be encouraged to produce more of their high cost coal for maximum profit to industry . . . the task would be easier if a local incentive was provided.'

The matter of the shorter working week has been detached from the current wage claim. A spokesman for the NUM told Socialist Worker that in settling the wage claim the union would be satisfied with an assurance that there would be 'serious moves' towards a shortening of the working week.

REMOTE

This tactic has been deliberately adopted to make the prospect of any 'confrontation' even more remote.

Executive representatives have already had preliminary discussions with the board on the 'separate' question of shorter hours. At these they floated the idea of the 'nine-day fortnight' with continuous working over the weekends as one formula.

Weekends have been the most jealously guarded part of the miners' conditions. That the union can even discuss their passing would be fantastic if it was not seen against the background of the thinking revealed in the documents quoted above.

The NUM representatives have now asked Coal Board statisticians to go away and come up with estimates on the productivity and financial costs of the shorter working week and so have ensured that 'economic' criteria will decide the formula adopted.

As a result of this hours, holidays and shift pay are likely to end up as part of a swingeing productivity package which will mean many more redundancies. And on wages Joe Gormley and the rest are pledged to ditch the precise conference claim in favour of something much lower. £5.50 to £7 is suggested in the claim but these are target figures for the future, not demands. £3.60 has been mentioned as a likely settlement but doubtless the union will allow the Tory government's forthcoming 'guidelines' to influence its attitude to an offer.

FORCED

It comes as a startling reminder that the conference was unequivocal in its demand for:

**Increases of £4.50 to £7 a week.
A 30-hour working week.
Special payments for anti-social shifts.**

The way the union leadership is handling the claim hardens all the indications of the last few months. The leaders of the union—sadly the left as well as the right—are not prepared for the fight necessary to obtain the conference demand.

And with such unity among so many of the executive the rank and file will be forced to mount a fight itself.

But it has to be faced that the militants are ill-equipped organisationally for such a fight. One of the few encouraging elements to lighten the gloom is the modest success of The Collier, the rank and file paper and organisation. Now producing its sixth issue since the strike, the current number carries a list of sponsors on practically every coal field as well as many contributions from rank and file miners.

Support for the aims of the paper grows rapidly and local Collier groups are beginning to appear. Any miners interested in starting such groups at their pit or in their area should write to 29 Station Road, Dodworth, Barnsley, Yorkshire.

Preparing for Power

J. MURPHY

IN this book first published in 1934, Murphy considers the role and success of the revolutionary left 50 years ago and its later isolation. The author was a key figure in this first shop stewards' movement.

Special offer to Socialist Worker readers:
FREE hardback copy of Victor Serge's novel BIRTH OF OUR POWER with every copy of Murphy's book, £1 plus 21p postage.
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by John Charlton, Bill Message and The Collier editorial board

THE UNIONS

Engineers: wobbling by 'broad left' aids the right wing

No clear lead in fight against union laws

FOR MANY THOUSANDS of trade unionists who want to see a fight to smash the Industrial Relations Act, the behaviour of the leaders of the engineering section of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers over James Goad, industrial court attendances and the payment of fines stands out like running water in the middle of a desert.

The TUC and the leaders of the overwhelming majority of its member unions have totally abandoned any pretensions they had of seriously opposing the Act. Faced with this, the engineering section executive has stood up and refused to face the firing squad of the National Industrial Relations Court.

Quite alone it has taken the rhetoric of implacable opposition seriously and tried to turn it into action, boycotting the court, refusing to pay the mounting fines for contempt and making some serious call to the membership to act in defence of the union.

But the refusal of the broad left in the leadership of the engineering section to move for decisive official action with definite objectives is playing straight into the hands of the highly organised right wing in the union. And unless the strategy is altered the engineering section's lonely stand will lead to a retreat and perhaps even to a rout.

The present course of action, which leaves it to the membership to take any action they think necessary to defend the union, has given the right wing unique opportunities to sabotage any such action. They have had considerable success, as was seen in the way the magnificent lead of CAV Sudbury workers for an indefinite strike was turned into a return to work through lack of support.

Reverse

This was deliberately engineered. CAV stewards who travelled to the Lucas combine meeting in Birmingham were not admitted, thanks to the manoeuvres of local right-wing officials.

And while more regions of the union were coming out for one-day protest strikes against the fines again this week, other areas have seen no serious action at all. Those that have come out feel they have done their bit or that they are being given no lead as to what should be done next.

The right wing wants to force the left wing on the engineering section executive into a position where it has to recall the national committee. There the broad left does not have even the majority of one that it has on the executive.

And given that union policy is quite definite on 'implacable opposition' to the Act, the only reason to recall the national committee would be to reverse that position.

The lefts on the engineering section executive do of course have reasons for adopting their present, highly dangerous course for action. They have all along sought desperately for 'unanimous' decisions and the price they have had to pay for this policy is action being left to the membership.

For the right will have nothing whatsoever to do with official national action. But this is not the whole explanation. The lefts, too, are not keen on an all out fight.

The broad lefts' strategy is not one of actually smashing the Act. They are not prepared to take decisive action. They want independence from the Tories and the state but they do not want a huge confrontation.

They want to use guerrilla industrial action to force definite concessions from the government, these being modifications of the 'worst' aspects of the Industrial

by LAURIE FLYNN, Socialist Worker Industrial Reporter

Relations Act. And they feel isolated by the abject grovelling of the TUC which in turn reinforces their belief in 'limited objectives'.

The reason for this is that the lefts have no serious analysis of the reasons for the state assault on the trade unions. As far as they are concerned the various aspects of the employers' offensive are largely unrelated. So, bit by bit, reasonable men and women, backed by the occasional bit of industrial muscle, can win a few concessions.

Union president Hugh Scanlon himself is an eloquent if silent witness to the impasse of the broad left's view of the world. He is so nauseated by the decrepit, snivelling state of the TUC general council on which he sits that he understandably declines to raise the question of the engineers' current struggle on this fake general staff.

He believes that the talks with Heath during a wage freeze should be brought to an end. But while he stands head and shoulders above the rest of the pack, he cannot speak out and organise for an alternative course of action among the rank and file, the real strength of the trade union movement. That would be 'unconstitutional' and 'improper'.

The policy decision under which the engineering section of the executive is at present defying the state is not a decision of the engineering section alone. It is the conference decision of the whole amalgamated union, draughtsmen and technicians, foundrymen and construction workers as well as engineers.

Inability

The resolution gives the leadership of the different sections and the amalgamated union as a whole the authority if not quite the obligation to engage the whole industrial strength of the union in opposition to attacks on its organisations and members. It also makes the struggle against the Act the responsibility of the whole amalgamated union.

Fairly simple considerations suggest that to use the whole strength of the amalgamated union would make it liable for any financial penalties incurred for contempt of court. And since this body, as opposed to the separate sections, has little in the way of funds or assets, the financial cost of standing up for trade union principles would be minimised.

But because of an inability to see the need for decisive action against the Tories the engineering section declines to put the struggle in the hands of the full amalgamated union.

Yet if this were done the left would be in a much stronger position. On the national committee of the amalgamated union the left has a firm majority, a marked contrast to the situation in the engineering section. But the lefts will not adopt this approach, insisting on dealing



Goad (with press friends): fight left to rank and file



Scanlon: nauseated by TUC

with the matter on their own. This again strengthens the right wing.

But if the struggle against the Act became the property of the whole amalgamated union and a clear official call

for decisive action against the Act was issued then the ground would be completely cut away from the saboteurs of the right wing.

As it is the right wing is being left with the master key of action being 'up to the membership'.

Furthermore, the very notion that local guerrilla action fits the present situation is both romantic and absurd. The left in the AUEW engineering section is still paying the price of the last major bout of guerrilla action.

Last year's engineering pay claim was also left up to the membership. The Manchester district was one of the few areas to really take up the fight. The outcome of this local struggle was nothing short of disastrous.

Workers in the Manchester area believed

that they were taking the first steps in a serious national campaign. There was no national campaign and as a result many of them feel (with considerable justification) that they were used as a battering ram for an army that was never called on to follow up their move.

This feeling shows clearly in the recent election results for the area. John Tocher, a Communist Party official who made some attempt to lead the fight, just scraped back in as Manchester district secretary.

The truth of the present situation is that the broad left caucus which brought Hugh Scanlon to power is in a shambles. It is in a shambles as an organisation, not least because its ideas are a mish-mash, thanks to a concern with what individual leaders will do rather than with the kind of leadership necessary at all levels in the union.

As a direct result of this, the right wing, which has been waiting patiently for its opportunity, feels that it may be very close to hand.

The same Jim Conway, the general secretary who writes editorials in the union journal calling for support for the present line of action in defence of the union, also telephones industrial reporters on the Sunday Times and puts out rumours of Scanlon's impending retirement.

Appalled

And doubtless Scanlon himself, sickened by the behaviour of the TUC general council and unable to see any 'constitutional' way ahead in his own union, does entertain thoughts of packing it in. Two things hold him back: he is not a weak man, and such is the state of the left that he must be appalled at what will happen to the union if he were to go.

But all is far from lost. Given the approach of the union leadership, the response of the rank and file over recent weeks has in many cases been nothing short of magnificent.

Scanlon and the other lefts must be pressed to move from a sectional guerrilla struggle to an all-section national struggle. But this is by no means guaranteed.

The lefts want to be independent from the state but they do not want to take it on. They want to use limited industrial strength to toughen up some negotiating position they believe can be won.

But the Tories and employers keep returning to the attack and huge opportunities have been frittered away.

Any way forward in the AUEW must therefore include a struggle for ideas and policies, the concern to build a genuine minority grouping throughout the union which will both press the leadership into action and act itself when the leadership does not deliver.

The Tories are not on the offensive for fun, but because the crisis of the system they uphold is a serious one.

NEW!

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International Socialism 54

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The decision had been taken by a handful of top party leaders. The job of everyone else was to unanimously endorse it'

OUT OF YOUR MIND

Duncan Hallas on socialist ideas and capitalist myths

WHAT sort of society emerged in Russia from the years of Stalin's terror? According to its constitution 'the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is a socialist state of workers and peasants' (article 1) and 'All power in the USSR is vested in the working people of town and country as represented by the Soviets of Working People's Deputies' (article 3).

Actually the soviets are no longer workers' councils, as they were in the early years, but bodies elected on an area basis. As article 34 of the constitution states, the 'lower house' of the Supreme Soviet ('Soviet of the Union') 'is elected by the citizens of the USSR voting by election districts on the basis of one deputy for every 300,000 of the population.'

The 'upper house' (Soviet of Nationalities) consists of nominees from the constituent republics and autonomous regions. Judges are also elected.

The constitution guarantees 'freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, including the holding of mass meetings, freedom of street processions' (article 65) and various other rights. All are highly democratic—on paper. Indeed when the constitution was first published in 1936 it was boasted as 'the most democratic constitution in the world.'

The reality is rather different. Firstly, to start with an indisputable fact, there has not been a single contested election in any constituency since the constitution was adopted. Not one.

'Election'

Even more remarkably, hardly any electors abstain: votes of 99 per cent are regularly recorded. For example, in the June 1970 election for the Soviet of the Union 99.74 per cent of the electorate is officially claimed to have supported the official candidates.

The decision of the legislative bodies are invariably unanimous. This cannot be explained by party discipline. More than a quarter (27.7 per cent) of the members of the present Supreme Soviet are officially classed as 'non-party', and so are an actual majority (55 per cent) of members of local soviets.

The short answer is that the 'soviets' do not take decisions. They ratify unanimously decisions taken elsewhere.

But where? By the Communist Party—which has at present about 14 million members? This idea will

The 'freedom' Stalin built

not stand critical examination.

We have seen that the 1934 Congress of the Russian Communist Party elected unanimously (by the list system) a Central Committee of 139, and that 98 of them (70 per cent) were shot as traitors before the next congress in 1939. Evidently even at this top level the principle of majority decision, let alone respect for minority rights, did not prevail.

There was, and is, one higher party body—the politburo. Of the 11 members and candidates elected in 1934, four (Postyshev, Kossior, Rudzutak and Chubar) were shot. So was one of the replacements (Eikhe). All five have since been 'posthumously rehabilitated'.

In addition one (Kuibyshev) died in mysterious circumstances, and two (Kirov and Ordzhonikidze) were murdered, the first probably, the second certainly on Stalin's orders. (It was a 'suicide'. Khrushchev later revealed that Ordzhonikidze 'was forced to shoot himself'.) Again a majority disappeared.

As to the ordinary delegates, only 35 of the 1966 who attended the 1934 congress appeared as delegates in 1939 (excluding the surviving Central Committee members).

But of course all that was in Stalin's day and it is now officially admitted that Stalin was guilty of 'gross violations of soviet legality', which is now, we are assured, firmly re-established.

It is true that the wholesale shooting of party members is a thing of the past. But the 'decisions' are still unanimous. No dissenting voice is heard. So, until 1956, Stalin was the 'greatest leader and teacher' and not

a word of criticism of him appeared. In 1956 and again in 1961 when Khrushchev denounced the sins of his predecessor, not a solitary voice was openly raised in defence of Stalin.

There is indeed a story, probably untrue but illuminating, that at the 20th Congress in 1956 one bold delegate did interrupt Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin's crimes with a shout of 'And where were you at the time?' The general secretary is said to have paused, surveyed the hall and mildly requested the interruptor to identify himself. Nobody stirred.

When in 1964 Khrushchev himself was overthrown by Brezhnev and Kosygin, not one solitary voice was raised in support of the man who had, until yesterday, received unanimous support. Nor, today, is any word of disagreement with General Secretary Brezhnev openly voiced.

Professor

An incident, trivial in itself, throws some light on the extent of political discussion allowed during the Khrushchev era, which is considered to have been rather more 'liberal' than that of Brezhnev.

In the autumn of 1962 I was one of a party of 50 or so foreign visitors who were taken round the Kiev Institute of Refrigeration Technology. The proceedings included an address by the Professor of Marxism-Leninism. (All educational institutions have one, we were told.)

General questions were invited. One was asked about the disputes between Russia and China, already extensively reported in the western press but not yet mentioned in Russia.

The professor assured us that there was no conflict and could be none. Such stories were fabrications put about by foreign intelligence agencies and no one in Russia believed them.

Within weeks the Russian press was denouncing the Chinese leaders and 'no one in Russia' was to be found publicly defending Mao Tse-tung.

So much for the 'freedom of speech, freedom of the press' solemnly guaranteed in the constitution. The decision had been taken by a handful of top, party leaders. The job of everyone else was to 'unanimously endorse' it. So it is with every matter of importance.

BOOKS

REVIEW

The anti Concorde illusion

CONCORDE: TEN YEARS AND A BILLION POUNDS LATER by Chris and Liz Edwards, Pluto Press, 30p.

FIRST what's good about this pamphlet: presentation, many facts, figures and graphs, a long bibliography at the end.

What is wrong is its politics. The pamphlet has one aim: propaganda to get the Concorde cancelled. So it stresses not the crisis in the British aircraft industry nor the significance of European collaboration in aerospace, but the costs involved and the lack of 'public accountability'.

Its main grievance is that the public was not informed through parliament about how its money was spent. For the authors this seems 'incredible' and 'alarming'.

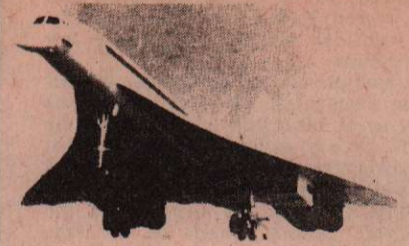
But what difference does it make when parliament is informed? How much say does the working man ever have in how his taxes are spent?

A chapter on pollution is notable only for its vagueness. To be convincing, it needs to show clear signs of an ecological problem—vague possibilities of 'pollution' are not enough.

Concorde's noise level and sonic boom are dealt with in more detail, though unfortunately in scientific jargon well above the heads of most of us. But significant points are raised, such as the makers' refusal to publish any measurement of present noise levels and that target levels are well above standards for subsonic planes. Since many workers suffer partial deafness from constantly high noise levels at work, we need no further attacks on our eardrums.

But even on this point the authors hold illusions. They explain that a ban on sonic boom is more likely in Western Europe and the USA than in countries 'where the individual has less power', since in the rich West people would claim for damages.

Certainly some individuals have power—but not 'the individual'. The



fight by the parents of thalidomide children for compensation shows that only too clearly.

The 'individual' as a worker, a housewife or one of the unemployed can wield power only when organised with many other such 'individuals'. Excessive noise from Concorde must be countered by the trade unionists who are designing and producing the plane.

Only one sentence of the pamphlet mentions the 20,000 workers involved on the project, and suggests that 'theoretically' the £200 million which would be saved by cancelling Concorde now could be used to compensate or redeploy them.

As if it would! The only way forward for these men and women would be for them to take over their factories and produce alternative and useful projects themselves. But the revolutionary nature of such a step prohibits the authors from mentioning it. Their faith in parliament 'looking after' the people forces them to speculate in dreams.

Their conclusion is that: 'In the absence of any immediate alternative to the existing system' we must learn our lesson from Concorde and demand 'greater accountability' on such projects.

This pamphlet is written for middle-class readers 'interested' in the problem and concerned about where their taxes go. In comparison, the relevant chapter in Boom or Bust—The Crisis in the Aircraft Industry, is written for those concerned with Concorde as a source of work.

The real issue is the right to work. To support the abolition of Concorde is equivalent to supporting the closure of coalmines. No sane society would send men to work down mines—nor would it produce a Concorde.

But we know our society is not sane: closing mines or stopping Concorde would mean thousands of men thrown out of work. So we support the government subsidies to the coal and aircraft industry, since they provide jobs at a time of massive unemployment.

Concorde is used as a weapon against

shopfloor struggle by the emphasis put on it as a 'national project', and by its instability. We see it as a great technological achievement and not just a 'flying elephant'. But as such a socially useless achievement is a complete waste of human endeavour and skills.

The waste involved in Concorde raises the question of who controls production and to what ends, and shows the necessity for a society based on the needs of working people. But the authors' insistence on 'public accountability' and the waste of taxes, shows their acceptance of the present system and its value. Their politics amount to no more than reformism.

SHEILA MELOT

Artist and industry

ART AND THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, by Francis Klingender, Paladin Books, 75p.

THIS BOOK is a study in art history in marked contrast to the academic antiquarian approach which merely chronicles changes in style.

Several themes run through its pages. How the industrial revolution changed both the position of the artist in society and transformed artistic techniques. The changing response of artists to industry and to nature. And it is also a valuable introduction to the social history of the 19th century.

In the early stages of the industrial revolution the manufacturers saw themselves as the pioneers of progress. They believed they were making a better and more enlightened society, not only for their own class but for the workers as well.

Joseph Wright of Derby, one of the painters Klingender discusses, painted this enthusiasm. His 'Experiment on a bird in the air pump' was exhibited in 1768. Wright was part of a circle of painters who combined art with science and mechanics.

Other artists, such as Blake, were more pessimistic in their response to industry. Their despair, Klingender argues was connected with the course of the French Revolution. Many of the artistic radicals became politically disillusioned when Napoleon took over.

But it was also a social disenchantment with the new world the manufacturers were making. Like Blake, Wordsworth looked with loathing on this 'unforeseen creation' with its 'potent engineering' and restless appetite 'industrious to destroy'.

Klingender comments: 'Arts, in themselves good, were turned into fearful scourges of mankind.'

But in the late 1830s and 1840s, confronting the first national organisation of the working class, Chartism, it seemed to middle-class observers as if industry was itself an inferno which produced wild, bitter and savage men.

Klingender quotes descriptions of Chartists from contemporary writing in which they appear inhuman and manipulators.

Alternatively, when middle-class artists portrayed the workers they tended to idealise and sentimentalise them. They did not see them as individuals but as representatives of brute force, as labour power personified.

Only rarely do the workers present their image of themselves. Even the occasional working-class artist tends to see workers through the distorting lens of middle-class style.

Klingender raises the problems of the working-class artist in a middle-class world in his account of James Sharples, from Wakefield, who worked in a foundry from childhood. Sharples chalked designs on the workshop floor and did exercises in perspective on the sheet-iron casing.

His picture, The Forge, was painted while he was working. It took him three long years. Not content, he cut the design for the engraving by hand with a needle, made himself a press and finished the plate 10 years later.

His endeavours feature in Samuel Smiles' book Self-help, a grovelling tale of workers who struggled up within capitalism despite the odds against them. But Smiles failed to mention that Sharples was cheated outrageously of the fruits of his industry by the print-sellers.

Sharples, who was a life-long member of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, was typical of many trade unionists after Chartism who gave up hope of a just society and tried to make the most of the relative prosperity of the 1850s and 1860s. The emblem he designed for the engineers expressed this. Its slogan was Unity and Industry.

Klingender's book, first published in 1942 and now reissued as a very welcome paperback—though much of the fascinating illustrations has reproduced badly—leaves us with questions, but provides a rich source for further inquiry.

SHEILA ROWBOTHAM

OUR NORMAN

OH AYE - SAUSAGES AGAIN!



SORRY NORMAN - BUT REAL MEAT'S SO DEAR...



EVEN THE CAT HASN'T HAD A BIT OF MEAT FOR WEEKS - I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO GET ANY MEAT, CHEAP.



IN THE FIFTH YEAR OF FEDERICO FELLINI

Nigel Fountain looks at the Italian director and his latest film

FEDERICO FELLINI is one of Italy's most famous directors. Which doesn't mean too much in terms of British box-office.

Certain Italian films have made it big in Britain and Fellini himself is responsible for adding a phrase to the English language, 'La Dolce Vita' (the sweet life), which was his 1958 film dealing with Roman society, corruption and social climbing. With the aid of Anita Ekberg it got a circuit release, and helped create in England the myth of Italy as a country where Ferraris and mink coats are handed out with the holy communion.

The film was not well received by those who had appreciated Fellini's earlier work. In the 1940s and early 1950s he had been one of the 'neo-realist' school of directors. Neo-realism had emerged from the collapse of Mussolini, the first films being made towards the end of the dictator's rule. They were a reaction against the overblown romantic soap operas which had typified the fascist period.

Instead of glorification of the Italian race the neo-realists concentrated on the life of the people of Italy, on the poverty, and on the struggles of the workers and the outcasts. Films like Vittorio De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves* achieved massive world-wide distribution, and still pop up regularly at local film clubs.

In the 1950s, as the south of Italy decayed, the northern industrial areas went through a massive boom, accompanied by continued labour struggles—but the neo-realists flaked out one by one.

De Sica began to make films that

concentrated on soggy romantic plots, or melodrama such as his vehicle for Sophia Loren, *Two Women*. Visconti, another neo-realist, has recently produced *The Damned*, with Dirk Bogarde, a much publicised but predictable film about Germany just before the Nazi takeover, and *Death in Venice*, a psychological study taken from the Thomas Mann novel.

Recently De Sica made a belated comeback to political comment with *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*, which concentrates on the downfall of a rich and beautiful Jewish family during the Jewish pogroms of the fascist period. But the beauty is the problem, for everyone is so bloody lovely, and there's so much vaseline on the lens, that one can't see the tragedy.

ABANDONED

Fellini himself changed direction from the time of *Dolce Vita*. His earlier films, such as *La Strada*, conformed to the neo-realist pattern. From 1958 onwards he concentrated far more on microscopic analyses, particularly of the state of his own head, reaching a climax with '8½' which was a film about a film director making a film about a film director making a film.

This change of direction set off criticism from left-wingers that he'd sold out and abandoned areas of social comment where he had been making a useful contribution. He comments in his latest film, which is reviewed below, 'How can I solve the world's problems when I can't even solve my own?'



The neon-lit pope of Fellini's Roma

His escape from modern Italy reached a climax with 'Satyricon', which was set in Ancient Rome. But in this film he does succeed in two things. Firstly, he draws illuminating parallels between the decay of that society and the decay of its modern equivalent, and simultaneously he conveys the idea of a world totally alien to the one we live in, where time itself moves differently.

There's none of the 'In the fifth year of Tiberius Caesar it came to pass that Kirk Douglas was crossing the Rubicon.' Events come in cycles. There are no beginnings, no ends, the myths of Rome, gods and devils move in and out of the film, which doesn't end, but just stops. A very interesting experiment.

A crazy race through Rome

FELLINI'S new film is titled *Fellini's Roma*. It isn't a documentary or a feature film, but a mixture of both, with a dose of *Look at Life*, *All our Yesterdays*, and detergent commercials. Predictably, it is difficult to digest.

The film centres on its director, cutting from his memories of youth in Rome to his film crew in action in the contemporary city. One moment one is transfixed with interest, the next squirming with embarrassment. Fellini's love for his city combines acute social observation with banal questions and answers, grotesque attempts by his film-crew to act, and brilliant documentary film of modern industrial Rome.

The film begins with Fellini the youth, crossing the tiny stream that is the Rubicon on his way to the city. A city under Fascist rule, but a city of endless eating, heaps of pasta, snails, carcasses being torn apart.

Then a superb sequence which captures the horror and excitement of modern industrialism better than anything I've seen on film. The film crew are filmed as they film the entry into Rome from the great Autostradas that ring the city. Cars, lorries, men with handcarts, a horse running down the freeway, driving rain, riot police, a socialist demonstration, dead horses decapitated blocking the traffic, spilling from a blazing horsebox, buildings being destroyed, built, Roman ruins isolated amid the cars and skyscrapers.

Two thousand years of history thrown together by the crazy logic of modern capitalism.

Then Fellini changes the pace, to parks, gigolos, American tourists. He changes gear throughout the film at such speed that I suspect he throws most of his audience off the chair.

From the tawdry but funny music-hall of the 1940s, with dead cats being hurled at the stage, to a nightmare fashion show where the 'fashions' are new lines in cassocks and habits, and centring finally on a neon-lit pope with cold, evil features behind rimless glasses.

Fellini is running like mad through-out the film providing the continuity, but as he jumps from situation to situation he trips and often falls, and the audience go with him. If the film had worked out it could have been superb.

But the director doesn't really know where he's going. He can mirror the city, he can re-create the past, but he can't explain what the hell anyone can do about it, or even how he and the city got there in the first place.

The film should be around in London for a few weeks and is then likely to get a limited release in big cities. It's worth seeing, if only to drive you up the wall.

Witty and gritty

THRILLER fans who get BBC2 should note, if they don't already know, that the amazing *View from Daniel Pike* is now back on Sunday nights, stories of the Glasgow private eye that so far have concerned a Rachmanite landlord and a corrupt copper. For something a bit closer to reality, plus tough, witty scripts and marvellous gritty Bogart-style acting from Eddy McMillan, it's not to be missed.

DEVOTION TO DUTY

'What you are doing is no good for the company or England. Buck your ideas up.'
The personnel manager to us labourers.

not being sure whether the nazi or british salute
or revolutionary clenched fist
was the most appropriate
i just hummed the words of the 'Red Flag'
to the tune of 'rule britannia'
to myself

of course he's right
the company and the country
in that order

i am conscious of my duty
we are all conscious of our duty
our duty is to work in the
dust and fumes dirt and filth
without complaint
11 hours a day
and praised be to god, the queen,
and
Birmid Qualcast Foundries Ltd
that i'm not in the dole queue

and when i die
i wish to be buried amongst the scrap
castings
or cremated in the furnace

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WOMEN FIGHT BACK

WHAT WE STAND FOR

The International Socialists is a democratic organisation whose membership is open to all who accept its main principles and who are willing to pay contributions and to work in one of its organisations.

We believe in independent working-class action for the abolition of capitalism and its replacement by a classless society with production for use and not for profit.

We work in the mass organisations of the working class and are firmly committed to a policy of internationalism.

Capitalism is international. The giant firms have investments throughout the world and owe no allegiances except to themselves and the economic system they maintain.

In Europe, the Common Market has been formed for the sole purpose of increasing the trade and profits of these multi-national firms.

The international power of capitalism can only be overcome by international action by the working class.

A single socialist state cannot indefinitely survive unless workers of other countries actively come to its aid by extending the socialist revolution.

In addition to building a revolutionary socialist organisation in this country we also believe in the necessity of forming a world revolutionary socialist international independent of either Washington or Moscow. To this end we have close relationships with a number of other socialist organisations throughout the world.

We believe in the necessity to unite socialist theory with the day-to-day struggles of working people and therefore support all genuine demands that tend to improve the position and self-confidence of the working class.

We fight:

For rank and file control of the trade unions and the regular election of all full-time officials.

Against secret negotiations. We believe that all settlements should be agreed or rejected by mass meetings.

For 100 per cent trade unionism and the defence of shop stewards.

Against anti-trade union laws and any curbs on the right to strike, whether the strikes are 'official' or 'unofficial'.

For equal pay and a better deal for young workers.

Against productivity deals and job evaluation and for militant trade union unity and joint shop stewards committees both in the plant and on a combine basis.

For a minimum wage of at least £25 a week.

Against unemployment, redundancy and lay offs. We support the demand: 'Five days' work or five days' pay.'

For all workers in struggle. We seek to build militant groups within industry.

Against racialism and police victimisation of black workers.

Against immigration restriction.

For the right of coloured people and all oppressed groups to organise in their own defence.

For real social, economic and political equality for women.

Against all nuclear weapons and military alliances such as NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

Against secret diplomacy.

Against all forms of imperialism. We unconditionally give support to and solidarity with all genuine national liberation movements.

For the nationalisation of the land, banks and major industries without compensation and under workers' control.

We are opposed to all ruling class policies and organisations. We work to build a revolutionary workers' party in Britain and to this end support the unity of all revolutionary groups.

The struggle for socialism is the central struggle of our time. Workers' power and a world based on human solidarity, on the increasing of man's power over nature, with the abolition of the power of man over man, is certainly worth fighting for.

It is no use just talking about it. More than a century ago Karl Marx wrote: 'The philosophers have merely interpreted the world. The point is to change it.' If you want to help us change the world and build socialism, join us.

THERE ARE IS BRANCHES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

SCOTLAND
Aberdeen
Cumbernauld
Dundee
Edinburgh
Dunfermline/
Cowdenbeath
Glanrothes/Kirkcaldy
Glasgow N
Glasgow S
Greenock
Stirling

NORTH EAST
Bishop Auckland
Durham
Hartlepool
Newcastle upon Tyne
South Shields
Spennymoor
Sunderland
Teesside E
Teesside W

NORTH
Barnsley
Bradford
Dewsbury
Doncaster
Grimsby
Halifax
Huddersfield
Hull
Leeds
Pontefract/
Knottingley
Scarborough
Selby
Sheffield
York

EAST
Basildon
Beccles
Cambridge
Chelmsford
Colchester
Harlow
Ipswich
Leiston
Lowestoft
Norwich
Peterborough

NORTH WEST

Barrow
Blackburn
Bolton
Burnley
Crewe
Kirkby
Lancaster
Manchester
Merseyside
Oldham
Preston
Rochdale
Salford
St Helens
Stoke
Stockport
Trafford
Wigan
Wrexham

WALES and SOUTH WEST

Bath
Bristol
Cardiff
Exeter
Gloucester
Llanelli
Mid-Devon
Neath
Plymouth
Swansea
Swansea Valley

GREATER LONDON and HOME COUNTIES

Bexley
Camden
Chertsey
Croydon

Ealing
East London
Enfield
Fulham and Hammersmith
Hackney and Islington
Harlesden
Harrow
Hemel Hempstead
High Wycombe
Hornsey
Houslow
Ilford
Kilburn
Kingston
Lambeth
Lewisham
Merton
North Herts
Paddington
Reading
St Albans
Slough
Tottenham
Walthamstow
Wandsworth
Watford
Woolwich

MIDLANDS

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Birmingham S
Coventry
Derby
Dudley
Leamington and Warwick
Leicester
Loughborough
Mid-Derbyshire
Milton Keynes
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Nottingham
Oxford
Rugby
Warley
Wolverhampton

SOUTH
Brighton
Canterbury
Crawley
Eastbourne
Guildford
Farnham
Southampton

FISHING BOSSES STUCK IN ICE AGE

by Laurie Flynn

SCIENTISTS who have successfully developed techniques for preventing trawler disasters caused by the icing up of masts and rigging are currently crossing their fingers and praying that no such disaster will take place this winter.

They have been reduced to this state of powerlessness by the steadfast refusal of the trawler owners to introduce their proven systems on their boats.

In January 1968 two British deep sea trawlers operating off the coast of Iceland froze over on mast and rigging. The weight of the ice caused the centre of gravity to shift and the ships foundered.

Thirty-eight fishermen were killed. Against this dreadful background the safety of fishermen and the stability of trawlers in the treacherous Icelandic seas became, briefly, a cause for concern.

As a result, research scientists and development engineers at Palmer Aero Products in Leyland, Lancashire, set to work to develop a simple and inexpensive de-icing system.

This involved laying sets of rubber overshoes and facings over the trawler superstructures. Compressed air is pumped into and out of these sleeves, causing the ice to fall away.

The trawler cannot therefore become top heavy with ice except in the most severe weather conditions. Even then the de-icing system gives skipper and crew more than enough extra time to get clear to safety.

RIGOROUS

In January 1969 Palmer Aero fitted out a Boston Deep Sea Fishing Co trawler, the Boston Phantom, with its system. At the height of the Icelandic winter the system was subjected to rigorous testing at sea.

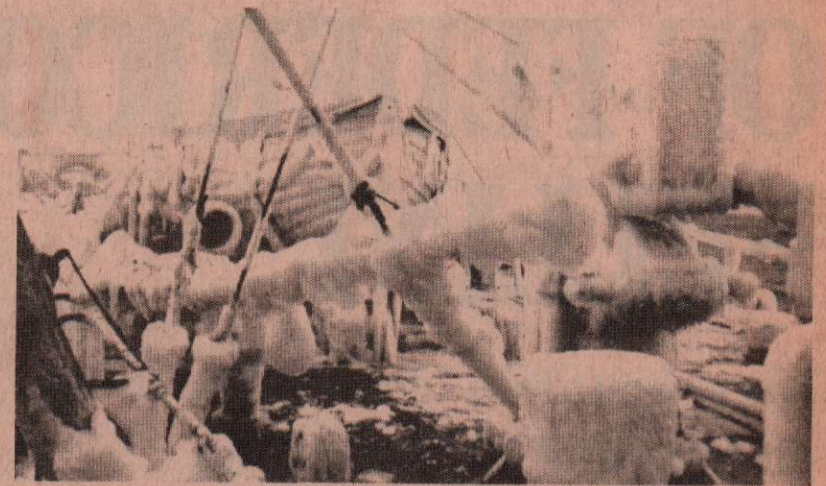
Campbell Thomas, Palmer Aero product manager, who co-ordinated research and development, describes the trials as highly successful. Independent experts from the British Aircraft Corporation and the White Fish Authority Industrial Development Unit who were on board during the trials all agree that they were highly successful.

Fishing News International reported the conclusion of the trials as follows: 'The de-icing system has been proved a success... the expenditure of a few thousand pounds would be more than repaid by the safety afforded to the vessel and her crew.'

After this Palmer Aero moved into action to spread the good news that any repetition of the 1968 Hull disaster could be prevented. In pursuit of firm orders, they distributed technical reports outlining the simplicity and effectiveness of the system.

They made a film showing how it worked. They contacted all the trawler companies and gave them rough details of the cost.

The response, at least as far as innocent scientists and development



All iced up—a danger to trawlermen's lives

engineers were concerned, was truly staggering. Palmer Aero Products did not get a single order to fit the system and have since axed all work in this field. To this day the Boston Phantom is the only vessel fitted with the de-icing system. And as winter succeeds winter, trawlermen fish in hazardous waters and conditions without the assistance of a cheap and efficient de-icing system.

This is how Theo Small, a senior research engineer with the British Aircraft Corporation, who was involved in the testing, explained the situation to me: 'After the Hull disaster the whole thing became high fashion for a few months. We had proved that the experimental system was excellent. And then all of a sudden none of the trawler companies was interested because of the cost.'

'To my own knowledge this is not the first time research has been shelved. I first became involved in this field after the 1955 disaster when two British and one Icelandic trawlers iced over and went down killing all on board. But that and our work was soon forgotten too. For 13 years in fact, until the Hull deaths.'

By July 1969, the trawler owners were provided with a ready-made excuse for their callous contempt for human life. The Holland/Martin report into the 1968 deaths and trawler safety centred its recommendations on re-designing trawlers for stability. This only affected new boats.

The trawler owners immediately leapt on this. They talked enthusiastically of the safe new stern-fishing boats they would build. And with lips pursed, they regretted that because of the big amounts of

capital involved in constructing them, they simply could not afford to modify side-fishing vessels.

Three years later the vast majority of fishermen who go into the treacherous Icelandic seas still do so in unstable and unsafe side-fishing boats. According to the latest official figures, 120 out of 165 vessels in the British deep water fleet fish from the side and have no de-icing system.

The cost of fitting the life saving de-icing system on one ship is £2000 or roughly the same as the retail price of one ton of fish fingers. With a crew of 20, this works out at about £100 a life.

DIFFICULT

As Campbell Thomas puts it: 'This was a first class system. I just don't understand why the trawler companies refuse to take it up. It's probably because of the cost, a commercial decision.'

'I have often asked representatives of the trawler companies what price they put on men's lives. I find it rather difficult to get an answer to this question.'

Mr Thomas is one of those people who, because of the winter and the extra dangers brought by the Cod War, are saying prayers and keeping fingers crossed. Should these inexpensive precautions fail and more men die unnecessarily because the trawler owners refuse to spend money on such unprofitable items as safety, then Mr Thomas and the rest of us can take some small consolation.

The trawler owners will be quick off the mark with telegrams of condolence to widows and sweethearts, parents and children.

Deal bans solidarity strikes

by David Becham

FRANK CHAPPLE, staunch right-wing boss of the Electricians and Plumbers Trade Union, has gone some further distance towards earning that well-deserved knighthood with an agreement he signed recently with the employers in the electrical contracting industry covering 40,000 staff.

Not only does the agreement say that the EPTU will not organise sympathy strikes in the industry but it is also legally binding. Chapple may not have succeeded in getting the EPTU registered under the Industrial Relations Act, but this agreement conforms in detail with the aims of the Tory law.

This is the first legally-binding agreement that any recognised union has signed and once again the TUC has not uttered a bleat—though it's this kind of deal that does the Tories' dirty work for them.

The agreement is with the EESA (The EPTU staff association)—not a group of workers famed for their militancy or a key section of the union. But what the Tories are

looking for desperately are precedents.

Once one or two major unions sign legally-binding agreements, the rot will set in and every right-winger in the GMWU or the AUEW will demand to get on the bandwagon.

The agreement plays into the hands of the Tories in other ways too. Clause A of the General Principles 'recognises the right of the companies to manage their establishments'—the type of clause that employers are trying to push more and more on weakly-organised or defeated groups of workers.

Clause C agrees that the staff association will not come out in sympathy with the other EPTU members in the event of a dispute. Remember this is all 'legally binding'—so here is a union agreeing to outlaw solidarity.

Further Clause B of the section on union membership says that 'membership of the staff association is

voluntary'.

The only possible result of such an agreement is that there will be no real union organisation among electrical contracting staff and that the efforts of the manual workers within the industry (often very isolated, and open to victimisation) to obtain a better deal will be made much more difficult.

What is especially important to all EPTU members (and other trade unionists) is that Chapple can sign away the rights of his members without any comeback from the rank and file and even boast about it in the union journal.

EPTU members should take note of this case, protest to the union executive about the agreement and be vigilant. If Chapple is allowed to get away with it this time, without any reaction from the membership, the opportunity will be much greater for him and other officials to sign away the rights of other trade unionists in the months to come, and let the Tories control the unions through the back door.

FREEZE: MISSING DEMAND

IN THE front page article last week Duncan Hallas says there is one answer only to the price freeze and that is to fight for compensating wage rises with automatic cost of living increases. However as part of a movement dedicated to overthrowing capitalism itself Hallas failed to make clear that there is another 'solution' to the wage freeze and that is to build a revolutionary socialist organisation which will be able to smash the very notion of freezes

and such like by smashing the class and the state apparatus which uses them in its own interest. Hallas should not assume that everyone knows this who reads the paper. Of course the paper has to put forward tactical ideas and suggestions in the everyday struggle but its essential role is in widening and generalising the struggle and in this case Hallas failed to do this.—J N GUTMAN, Salford, Lancs.

Unfair to Panthers?

I WAS surprised at the remarks by Peter Sedgwick on the American Black Panthers (23 December). He seems to have missed the aims of the Panthers as I have understood them from my readings and a few conversations with GIs who have been in contact with them in the US.

When Huey Newton and Bobby Seale founded the party six years ago in Oakland, California, it was formed as a revolutionary party. They expected repression and violence to be directed against them by the FBI, local police and National Guards so they decided there was no point in just sitting around talking revolution and waiting for outside aggression. They went to the community and involved themselves in the needs of the community.

They started the 'breakfasts for the kids' scheme, free medical and dental clinics, communal factories and schools which involved them in the running of the local black communities and allowed the people to see that they had the good of the people at heart. So when the Panthers were attacked and in some cases murdered by the police, it was not just the Panthers who were under attack but the whole community.

Their initial aims were a realistic start considering the conditions they were working under. Their mistakes have not been in policy but in personnel. The party expanded so quickly that they took in a number of people who, while they appeared satisfactory on the surface, turned out to be troublesome.

The obvious example is Eldridge Cleaver who is an exceptionally able writer but turned out to be an egocentric, quarrelsome individualist who caused internal disruption.

It is hard to tell what will happen to the Panthers. It is possible that police violence, legal frame-ups and the defection of Cleaver with its attendant troubles may all have culminated in their collapse or they may yet succeed against the odds in starting a true socialist revolution in the bastion of capitalism.

Whatever happens, I think they are entitled to a certain amount of admiration and respect for what they have done. I can only hope that we will have as much courage and determination in the times to come.—NICK HEGARTY, Fakenham, Norfolk.

Tough break

I AM WRITING to tell you how much I appreciate and enjoy your informative and well-written newspaper. In fact last week in my haste to collect my copy of Socialist Worker from a friend's house, I tripped and fell, breaking an ankle! Do continue to produce this excellent journal and I in my small way will support your movement as much as I am able.—(Miss) G. Molner, Great Clarendon Street, Oxford.

Don't ignore wave of shipbuilding sackings

AS a regular reader I have noticed a general lack of information about an aspect of the industrial struggle on Tyneside which is as equally important as the recent strikes you reported here at Swan Hunter and Barbour's.

Redundancies in the shipbuilding industry in the North East have reached a new peak and this state of affairs is likely to become worse in an area in which a large proportion of the working class depend on this industry for employment and in which the unemployment figure is significantly higher than the national average.

Consequently those workers made redundant find it virtually impossible to find work elsewhere in the area.

LETTERS

Tenants: the lie of the century

I AM at odds with you on your analysis of the figures you quote in the article on Camden council (6 January) and thus in the narrowing of the issues involved.

I don't see how you can say that 'the figures speak for themselves' and it is not shown that 'the accumulated gap between the moneylenders and the rents collected grows wider and wider'. You illustrate:

Rents collected	Interest paid
1970 £2,853,145	£4,088,270
1971 £3,141,935	£4,698,359
1972 £3,686,506	£4,539,930

Difference
£1,235,125
£1,556,428
£853,424

The gap is not being widened: it is being bridged by the tenants' increased rents. As such it is a satisfactory solution for the government. That is the intention.

Since the government intervenes in the private and the public sectors, the role it plays should be clearly seen. The greatest British myth of the century has been created by the indoctrination of the nation with the lie that the council tenant has been feather-bedded.

Some feathers. He's stuck with interest for something he never owns—his home—and he pays interest and capital repayment on the house and the land it sits on.

Doubly robbed and doubly maligned, he is then foisted with a very special maze of rent rebates, rate rebates, supplementary allowances, poverty declarations, all uniquely offered to the working class.

As these proliferate, so too does the extent of the humiliation and exploitation. All honour to those councillors, lawyers and professionals who stand up to the demands of their principles.

But your message must be as clear to the misinformed masses, the non-informed masses. They are our fighters. The town halls are full of means-testing forms to perpetuate the myth.

It is our duty to disclose the facts and protective measures of treatment

provided for the private sector at the expense and sacrifice of the working class. This protection grows more oppressive on the workers as the ratio (in England, not Scotland) of the property-owning sector exceeds that of the council-renting one.—ANN FORDYCE, London SW16.

Language

IT IS regrettable that in Footprints (6 January) Socialist Worker should have started off the New Year on the wrong footing. I refer to the article accusing Plaid Cymru [the Welsh nationalists] of racism when it attempted to get a Welsh-speaking doctor for a Welsh-speaking village in Wales.

I am an Irish republican socialist and feel strongly that I and all socialists must support the Welsh in their struggle to retain their language and achieve national self-determination. Thomas Davies, one of the greatest of Irish socialists who spoke not a word of Welsh, wrote as follows in the 1840s: 'To lose your native tongue and learn that of an alien is the worst badge of conquest—it is the chain on the soul. To have lost entirely the national language is death.'

And Pdraig Pearse recognised the importance of language in revolution when he wrote: 'The Gaelic League will be recognised in history as the most revolutionary influence that has ever come into Ireland. The revolution really began when the seven proto-Gaelic Leaguers met in O'Connell Street . . . the germ of all future Irish history was in that back room.'

As socialists we must support not slander those who fight for the national fight of their own language and literature without which the people of small nations like Wales, Ireland and Scotland will remain fragmented and exploited by imperialism.

In the specific case cited in the article, the appointment of a doctor for Brynamman, I would submit that the ability to speak Welsh is an essential qualification for the job, as French would certainly be required in France and English in England, etc.

The Indian doctor certainly is the victim of racism since he can presumably speak English and having an MRCP (a qualification taking five to 10 years after the MD) should be employed as a consultant or at least as a senior registrar. This case of racism, which is all too common within the medical profession, should be exposed.

Your article, with its 'jokes' about racism and nationalism, has failed to do this, finding it more fun to attack the Plaid than the racist racism of the National Health Service.

Welsh nationalism may give a socialist base and be willing to the labour struggle in Wales and Connally realised for Ireland. This should be the purpose of a paper with the influence of Socialist Worker. ANN FORDYCE, London SW16.

Big cover-up on Tory link with Irish bank raid

WITH THE CO-OPERATION of the entire British press, the Bow Street magistrate Mr E Macdermott has helped cover up what appears to be British government involvement in Irish bank robberies.

On 11 January the strange extradition case of the brothers Kenneth and Keith Littlejohn was held in secret after an application from the Attorney General's lawyer. Mr Macdermott asked for 'precedents' for holding the case in camera and the Attorney General's barrister cited a number of divorce cases in the last three centuries which were held in secret under an outdated law which was designed to 'protect the public' from 'obscene or lewd' disclosures in court.

In desperation, the barrister also cited the case of civilians after the Easter Rising in Dublin who were tried in secret by court martial.

This was enough for the magistrate, who decided that the case should be heard in camera. The press were ushered out, and none of the press had anything to say about the incident.

The Littlejohn brothers are 'wanted for questioning' by the Irish police in connection with the robbery of the Allied Irish Bank, Grafton Street, Dublin on 12 October last year—the biggest bank robbery in Irish history.

At 8am that morning, Mr Noel Curran, the bank manager, was taken from his house by three masked gunmen, driven to the bank and forced to open the vaults. The men got away with about £45,000.

Mr Curran said that the men had addressed each other as 'commandant' and that one had worn a military-style peaked cap. Immediately the impression gained ground that this was yet another 'outrage' by the IRA—though both wings of the IRA instantly denied responsibility.

Strangely, however, the men had English accents. By the following day, Chief Superintendent Joy of the Gardai [Irish police], who was in charge of the case, was telling the press of his doubts about the IRA's involvement. He thought it more likely that the raid was the work of a 'professional gang of criminals'.

Then there was silence. Suddenly, more than two months later, on 21 December, John Wyman, a British government agent and Patrick Crinnion, who worked as a clerk at the Gardai headquarters in Dublin, were arrested and charged under the Official Secrets Act.

Warrants

The charges alleged that Crinnion had passed secret police documents to Wyman. The press reports of the arrest also stated that several documents were seized in Wyman's flat, and that one man was detained there for questioning, and then allowed to depart for England.

The following day, 22 December, warrants were issued in Dublin for the arrest of the Littlejohn brothers. They were brought to Bow Street Court on 23 December. The British Attorney General's spokesman asked for their extradition to Ireland. The police opposed bail. Mr David Jonas, a prominent criminal law solicitor, appeared for the two men, and examined a Flying Squad sergeant as follows:

Q. Has the fact that there is a political aspect to this case been put to you?

A. No.

Q. Are you aware that these two defendants are stating that they were employed by the government to deal with certain matters in Eire?

A. It has been mentioned.

Q. And that job was to infiltrate



Carrington: not in court the IRA?

A. I have heard that from them.

Q. Have you been in contact with the Special Branch over this case?

A. No, but I understand Inspector Parker has.

Mr Jonas then told the magistrate: 'I have to choose my words carefully in this case. My clients state that at the relevant time they were working for the British government in Eire . . .

'One brother had a factory in Southern Ireland making clothes, and the other brother worked for him. The factory closed down in October. My clients are saying that they were working for the British government.'

Somewhat oddly in the case of so grave a charge, the magistrate promptly granted the two brothers bail on generous terms.

Evidence

On 10 January, Mr Jonas made an application before another Bow Street magistrate. The offence which is alleged to have taken place in Eire, he said, 'is a political matter. I am applying for witness summons for three people whose names I can mention in open court and two whose names I cannot mention.'

The three he could mention were Lord Carrington (Minister of Defence), Mr Geoffrey Johnson Smith, Parliamentary Under Secretary for Defence, and Lady Onslow, who appears to be connected with the Foreign Office.

Mr Jonas made it clear that evidence given by these three would prove that his clients were working for the British government. He also wrote down the names of the two people he couldn't mention, and handed it to the magistrate. The magistrate refused to grant the witness summons.

The Littlejohn brothers finally came up in front of Mr Macdermott on 12 January. Once again, Mr Robert Watson, counsel for the Littlejohns, asked for Carrington, Johnson Smith and Onslow to be subpoenaed to assist his clients. The three witnesses had been written to, he said, and had not turned up.

At this stage, counsel for the Attorney General leapt up to make his plea that the hearing should be heard in secret. It was granted and the case continues in camera.

Paul Foot

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NO LONGER 'YOUR OBEDIENT SERVANT'

by Mike McGrath (CPSA)
THE BATTLE against the freeze and for a just pay settlement is coming to a head in the civil service.

The day of action by civil 'servants' last Wednesday was a massive protest against the government's wage freeze. At mass meetings branch after branch voted overwhelmingly for strike action.

Typical was a meeting of 600 at the British Museum where there were only two votes against a motion calling for strike action for the full pay award backdated to 1 January. This explosion of militancy follows the pattern set by other white-collar unions such as the teachers and the national and local government officers.

The problem we now face is whether this militancy can express itself directly or will be channelled off by the union's leaders, whose history and present action points to a passive role.

For years they have tolerated low pay, especially among younger members, many of whom earn as little as £10 per week. With rocketing inflation the membership is finding this intolerable.

STRIKES

The leaders have hidden for too long behind pay research 'negotiations', a method of comparability that avoids the need to fight for wage rises. Increasingly members are seeing the futility of this type of agreement—an agreement which the government has broken unilaterally five times in 12 years.

The union leaders are organising a series of regional rallies—the first was held in London on Tuesday. These rallies are meant to test opinion—as if it was not already clear. The plan is to hold week-long selective strikes.

This is totally inadequate. At these



The massive vote in favour of strike action by the meeting of 600 civil servants at the British Museum in London. There were only two votes against.

rallies the rank and file must push for *extended selective strikes* in areas that will hurt most—Customs and Excise members can bring the introduction of VAT to a halt.

There must be a *compulsory levy of 50p per member per week* so that the strikes can be extended for as long as needed, and a *one-day national stoppage and demonstration* to be held jointly with other public sector unions.

A joint protest against the freeze

with Post Office workers, teachers, local government workers and health workers would be the first step in building a fighting unity and prevent isolation and consequent defeat.

REDDER TAPE, the rank-and-file journal of the Civil and Public Services Association, has the task of pushing this fight forward, as do the rank-and-file journals in other unions. Copies of Redder Tape can be obtained from 9 Manor Road, London E10.

9000 protest against the wages freeze

NEWCASTLE upon TYNE:—An impressive demonstration by the 9000 members of the Newcastle Central Office branch of the Civil and Public Services Association was held as part of the nationwide protest by civil servants at the freezing of their pay award.

The clerical workers at the Department of Health and Social Security—the largest offices in Europe—had never been involved in industrial action before, but there was no mistaking their militancy now. Section by section they left their offices and joined a march which ended in a mass rally filling the canteen and adjoining carpark.

Telegrams of protest were sent to Edward Heath and Earl Jellicoe, the Lord Privy Seal, and the meeting unanimously approved the union's national executive committee's call for a ban on overtime. The Newcastle Central Office branch was to start a local overtime ban on Monday.

Civil servants have enormous bargaining power if they choose to use it, and the demonstration shows that they are no longer prepared to be the government's obedient—and poor—servants. It is ironic, to say the least, that many of the workers who administer the Family Income Supplement scheme are themselves now receiving it. By the government's own standards the civil servants are now among the poorest of the 'working poor'.

Worker wins £5000 damages for illness

A FORMER moulder and sandmiller has successfully sued his former employers', Ruston and Hornsby of Lincoln, and been awarded £5000 damages for chronic bronchitis resulting from his employers' failure to protect him from the effects of noxious dust.

The victory of Charles Wallhead, who is 63, means that thousands of other workers may now sue over bronchitis, a disability employers and state authorities have previously insisted was unrelated to working conditions.

Two-day strike victory

CLAY CROSS, Derbyshire:—The strike by members of the General and Municipal and engineering unions at the Clay Cross Works ended in victory last week with the reinstatement of Mr Albert Blant.

In a town with heavy unemployment the management has been playing off departments against one another and so has got away with redundancies, demotions and wage reductions. The workers united for the first time, won after a short sharp two-day strike which is reckoned to have cost the company £30,000. Seventy staff joined the strike.

Teachers sacked without a hearing

by Liz Clay (NUT)

TEESSIDE:—54 teachers have been sacked and 74 suspended by the Labour controlled education authority in retaliation for their part in a 'work to contract' before Christmas called by the National Association of Schoolmasters (NAS) and the Union of Women Teachers (UWT) in pursuit of job security.

The attitude of this Labour authority matches the worst examples of reactionary anti-trade unionism in recent years. Teachers are being victimised for taking industrial action. Suspended teachers appearing before the committee have been told that they are required to wait until midnight, if necessary, for a hearing.

Forty-six teachers were sacked without a hearing because, having waited nine hours after the time they were summoned to appear, they went home.

Members of this 'star chamber' have refused to identify themselves by name to the teachers they are interviewing, have refused to answer questions from the teachers, and on one occasion the chairman had to wake up a member of the committee who had fallen asleep during the hearing.

Factories

Both Redcar and Middlesbrough Trades Councils have condemned the attitude of the education authority. One Labour Councillor, Kevin Nilan, has resigned from the Labour Party on the grounds that 'as a trade unionist I cannot stand by and see fellow trade unionists sacked for taking industrial action.'

A petition supporting the teachers and calling for the resignation of the chairman of the education committee, Peter Fulton, has been widely circulated in local factories and on estates and has been signed by hundreds of shop stewards, convenors, branch secretaries and parents of children in schools affected by the dispute.

The conduct of the main teaching union, the National Union of Teachers, has also left a lot to be desired. Co-operation and solidarity at rank-and-file level has continued between the NUT and the unions in dispute, but the union's national executive, having previously lifted the 'blacking' on one school at the centre of the dispute, has failed to condemn the sacking of teachers for trade union activity. Despite the strong feelings of the local association of the NUT on this issue, its Teesside officers have been slow and reluctant in their comments.

Formula

Last week the Department of Education and Science decided to intervene in the row. An inquiry is now being set up. This has led to a massive retreat by the NAS and few concessions from the employers. The NAS has said that it would now be prepared to return to normal working if all its members are reinstated without loss of pay. Such a formula would be a return to the situation before the dispute without any concrete achievements.

The NAS has also instructed its members to apply individually to the National Industrial Relations Court to take proceedings against the Education Authority for unfair dismissal.

Throughout the dispute the attitude of the NAS leadership has been characterised by a flair for verbiage and publicity, but also by a reluctance to take strike action however outrageous the actions of the authority. It is certain that the NUT branch on Teesside would support strike action against the dismissal of teachers.

Council falls to blackmail

NORTH LONDON:—Camden Council ended its defiance of the Housing Finance Act last week and voted to raise the rents.

The council were blackmailed by the government which has already withheld £3½ million of the housing subsidy due to Camden since September.

As the council has not sought the active support of tenants in its campaign against the Act, it doesn't have the confidence to retaliate against blackmail by refusing to repay the vast interest charges on loans which come to more than £4 million each year.

Councillor Paddy O'Connor, whose amendment urging the council to continue opposing the Act was lost by 22 to 39 votes, summed up the situation in Camden now: 'The last word doesn't lie here with the council. The last word rests with the tenants.'

WHAT'S ON

Copy for What's On must arrive by first post Monday morning. Charges are 5p per line, semi-display 10p per line. CASH WITH COPY. No insertions without payment. Invoices cannot be sent.

IS MEETINGS

WALTHAMSTOW IS public meeting
SMASH THE WAGE FREEZE!
 Speaker Tony Cliff
 (IS National Committee member)
 Thursday 25 January, 8pm
 Ross Wyld Hall, Church Hill Road,
 London E17

IS AUEW Northern School
 Leeds Trades Club
 26 January, 11.00 am
 Contact Industrial Sub-Committee
 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2.
 Phone: 01-739 1878

LONDON REGION IS public meeting: The Meaning of Marxism. Speaker Duncan Hallas. Friday 26 January, 7.30-9.30pm, The Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. (Three minutes from Holborn tube.)

CAMDEN IS public meeting on Ireland. Laurel Tree, Bayham Street, London NW1, Tuesday 23 January, 8pm. Speaker: Pat Prendergast.

NOTTINGHAM IS public meeting: Inflation and the Wages Freeze—How to fight back. Speaker Granville Williams. Thursday 25 January, 8pm prompt. Upstairs lounge, Lion Hotel, Clumber St, Nottingham. (50 yards Victoria Centre.)

LONDON SOCIALIST WORKER ORGANISERS meeting: Friday 26 January, 7-8.30pm, at 6 Cottons Gardens, E2. All organisers must attend or send a deputy.

BURNLEY IS: the meeting advertised for Monday 22 January has had to be cancelled due to circumstances beyond our control.

OTHER MEETINGS

PUBLIC MEETING: Class Struggle and the Common Market. Speaker Sam Mauer. Discussion. Thursday 25 January 7.45pm, St Pancras Library, 100 Euston Road, London NW1. Organised by the London group of the Communist Federation of Britain (Marxist-Leninist).

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES presents: Eileen Atkins in TRIALS AND ERRORS, a dramatic anthology on the theme of crime and punishment. The Mermaid Theatre, Blackfriars, London EC4, on Sunday 28 January at 8pm. Tickets £3, £1.50 and 75p, available at the box office, or phone 01-248 7656. All proceeds to NCCL.

HOLBORN STATION PEACE CIRCUS: Friday 19 January, 8am-6pm. All money to go directly to feeding programmes of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam.

NOTICES

BUY, BORROW, SWOP, hire IS journal numbers 7, 12, 20, 26 and 28, urgently required, central London. Phone 01-794 6877. Will collect.

POSTERS OF TROTSKY—25p each plus 10p post and packing. Send cheque or crossed postal order please, payable to Colchester IS, to Helen Lentell, 31 Cannon Street, Colchester, Essex. Orders for more than 10 post free. Proceeds to the printshop fund.

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 Defend and extend the NHS
 We welcome as FULL members all who work in health and welfare. Associate membership extended to organisations and people who support our work.
 New pamphlets: 'Socialist Health, Care of Tory Bureaucracy' 10p; 'A plan for an occupational health service' 10p.
 Details of membership and publications from SMA, 14/16 Bristol Street, Birmingham B5 7AA. Due to tight finances this advert will appear only once.
WRITE NOW—YOU REALLY ARE LOSING YOUR HEALTH SERVICE.

WANTED: SCABS, pamphlet on the Loughborough hosiery strike, 5p from Anticircus, c/o 30 Elm Ave, Nottingham.

OLD TROTSKYIST PAMPHLETS for sale: see Socialist Worker issue 305 (13 January) for details.

JUMBLE WANTED URGENTLY (for Wandsworth IS jumble sale in Feb (details later). All proceeds to Printshop Fund. Please bring to Typesetting Dept, 6 Cottons Gardens, E2, or ring 675 3709.

FLAT FOR TWO WANTED, East London area preferably. Write Box K, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

WOMENS VOICE: Could all branches send in the money for the last issue and place orders for the next now please. Issue no 4 will be out shortly. All correspondence in future to Womens Voice, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM JOURNAL: The following back copies are still available, but some only in limited numbers: 33, 34, 37, 41, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52. 20p per copy, including postage. Money with orders please to: IS Journal, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

WHEN writing to Socialist Worker please mark envelopes clearly either EDITORIAL or BUSINESS.



Tenants to defy eviction threats

TENANTS representing associations from all over Yorkshire and some from as far away as Manchester and Liverpool crowded into Sheffield's Dinnington Hall on Sunday to hear speakers from the tenants' and trade union movements, after a small but militant demonstration against the Labour council's decision to serve eviction notices on those on rent strike in the area.

There was thunderous applause after Wally Preston, a national committee member of the International Socialists and engineering union convenor at Trafford Park power station in Manchester, said that if there were any evictions then his combine committee would call for everyone out.

'The spineless, soft, flabby, Labour councillors have the nerve to come for your support and then threaten to evict you,' he said.

The government could survive petitions and lobbies to the

gas house of Westminster, he went on to say, but they could not survive real working-class action.

The miners and the dockers showed the way last year in defeating the vicious policies of this government. Tenants must follow that lead... Rent strikes and industrial action in support of any tenants who were evicted are the only ways to defeat the Tories and their Act.

George Skinner from Clay Cross, where the council is still refusing to implement, urged tenants to occupy their council chambers where councils were co-operating with the Act. He was greeted with laughter when he said that the council at Clay Cross were only obeying government policy to fight inflation. They were perhaps the only people to be cutting prices at a stroke by not implementing the rent increases.

Local tenants too spoke of their determination to carry on with their fight against the rent rises.

Angry wives put blockade round pollution factory gates

by Bryan Rees

SWANSEA:—Angry housewives in the Port Tenant area of the city have again blocked the main entrances to the United Carbon Black factory in their fight against pollution.

About 200 have volunteered to maintain the blockade, working half-hour shifts, until the company shuts off its smoke stacks. The factory burns oil to produce carbon black, which is used in car tyres, and this pollutes the air and makes drying washing in the open air impossible.

The company claims that the local residents have inflated the problem out of all proportion, and that the pollution they cause is within the limits of the Alkali Acts. But Les Griffiths, secretary of the Port Tenant Anti-Pollution Committee, said: 'When it's falling out all over your clothes there are no limits. Sometimes I have seen women break down and cry because they are at their wits' end.'

The company has also threatened to close the works and put 120 workers out of a job unless the housewives stop their protest. This is a clear case of intimidation, and its effect has been to strengthen the determination of the women to get the pollution stopped once and for all.

One mother said: 'We will start a round-the-clock blockade if necessary, so long as the smoke continues to pour out.'

Two suspended for heckling

LANCASTER:—Two socialist student militants have been suspended for 'heckling' at a right-wing meeting. Two others, charged with the same offence, have been acquitted.

These two cases show a new face of the Tory attack on students. Left-wing students are being singled out for victimisation in an attempt to break political organisation in the militant colleges.

It is vital that the National Union of Students lead national solidarity action with victimised students, but the Communist Party-led executive sees this as an attack on sabbatical union officers, and not as a political struggle at all. Apart from a few worthy press statements, they have failed completely to give any lead.

Dockers charged on press 'hue and cry'

LONDON:—Five dockers charged with conduct detrimental to the interests of the union were not allowed to present defence witnesses at a Transport and General Workers Union inquiry hearing last week.

Charges against the five men, Conny Clancy, Tony Merrick, Johnny Hatton, Ray Holmes and Ray Halsey, were brought after the massive press witch-hunt against dockers' 'violence' at Transport House on 16 August last year, the day the Docks Delegates Conference called off the national docks strike.

It seems that the only 'evidence' against any of the five men is press statements and photographs singling them out. This is, to say the least, an arbitrary way of bringing disciplinary proceedings arising out of a massive demonstration involving hundreds of dockers, who were understandably outraged at the success of the Jones-Aldington manoeuvres.

The five, who all pleaded not guilty, had to appear one by one in front of the union's regular no 1 committee of inquiry last Wednesday. Conny Clancy was told that photos existed proving his involvement in violence inside Transport House. But neither these nor any other evidence were produced.

Ray Halsey, who is accused on the



Remember Fine Tubes, Mr Jones?

JACK JONES, general secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, spoke at a luncheon given for American businessmen in Britain at London's Savoy Hotel last Thursday.

Among the guests who vigorously applauded his speech was Mr Tom Barclay, managing director of American-owned Fine Tubes, Plymouth, where Mr Jones' members have been on official strike for two and a half years.

After being introduced as 'the man who with Lord Aldington averted chaos in the docks and helped Britain's exports', Mr Jones opened his speech with a comic reference to his recent holiday in Israel and a serious boost for productivity in Britain, which, he said, was increasing.

'Trade union leaders in Britain,' he said to laughter and applause, 'get on better with American industrialists than with United Kingdom industrialists.'

'This is the second time I've been to the Savoy. The first was as a guest of an American businessman...'

'On the whole, American businessmen have found UK trade union leaders flexible. We have never argued with the profit motive in the firms with which we negotiate.'

The president thanked Mr Jones for his 'conciliatory speech'.

After the binge, Socialist Worker's reporter was approached by a large businessman, almost blind with booze. 'From reading the papers,' he said, 'you would think Jack Jones was a red and a wrecker. But he's quite a reasonable chap really. I gather he plays golf...'

absurd charge of swearing at and abusing women secretaries, was also informed of the existence of photos allegedly implicating him. Again these were not produced.

Tony Merrick was told that he had been accused of throwing a punch at a union official, which he denies.

John Hatton seems to have been selected purely and simply on the basis of press publicity about a docker tearing up his union ticket and naming him. Ray Holmes, a noted TGWU loyalist, is charged with the 'crime' of asking journalists to show their union cards or leave the building.

Docks shop stewards in London made it clear this week that they have no objections to the union disciplining members since this is a central part of all trade union organisation. What they object to is that these proceedings have been brought as a result of a trumped-up hue and cry in the press and one call from a dock gate meeting where a delegate to the Docks Delegate Conference in question demanded action. They point out that since it is an unofficial body, it has no right under the rules to call for any such action.

The region no 1 committee of inquiry will shortly be making its recommendations to the full TGWU executive which will in turn announce findings and any penalties on 31 January.

WORKERS CONTROL CRANES FACTORY

by Dave Peers

SUNDERLAND:—The Coles Cranes factory—part of the Swiss-based Acrow Engineering group—has now been under workers' control for two weeks.

Pickets control the gates and guard the stores 24 hours a day. Telephones and telex handle union business only, and all production is at a standstill.

Deputy convenor Mattie Wake, of the engineering union (AUEW), and its technical section (TASS) representative, Hector Gowland, spoke to Socialist Worker in the factory personnel offices.

Acrow took over Coles Cranes just over six months ago, and soon after the takeover a sharp change in the attitude of management was evident. A series of provocations came to a head in November when a meeting of stewards was informed that 300-350 workers were to be made redundant to reduce costs, even though the company was finding it difficult to keep up with orders that were flooding in from the construction industry and had agreed to take on an extra 15 fitters.

DIVIDEND

A deputation that went to see group chairman William de Vigier was told that he had instructed Coles management to reduce costs by 10 per cent. Work-sharing and voluntary redundancies could not be permitted as this was not Acrow policy.

De Vigier—chairman of more than 50 companies—is fond of talking of the Acrow group as 'one big family' and of urging his 'Acrovians' to greater efforts. He appears to revel in takeovers and rationalisation and had promised a bumper 20 per cent dividend for Acrow shareholders this year.

At Coles Cranes the workers talk of the head of their new 'family' as The Godfather.

After 300 had been sacked at the beginning of December, Acrow put the boot in again—and again. AUEW district secretary Harry Wilkinson was told that regardless of the level of orders no assurance could be given about expansion at Sunderland, and indeed there was every likelihood of further offloading of work-people in 1973.

BROKEN

Just before Christmas management scrapped mutuality in methods of timing jobs. Rate-fixers were instructed to time workers without any consultation with stewards. When the stewards protested 300 workers were suspended.

Union representation succeeded in getting the suspensions lifted while negotiations proceeded on the timing of jobs, but the provocations continued.

Notices were posted—many of them unsigned—which stirred up intense anger inside the factory. The holiday agreement was broken when the company changed the dates of holidays.

Shop stewards were forbidden to leave their department without the manager's permission. Permission to attend meetings would only be granted providing the purpose of the meeting was explained to the manager and that he found the reason

acceptable.

The crunch came immediately after the holidays. On 3 January a mass meeting of the 2500 workers demanded that the management return to the status quo before 27 November and honour all existing agreements.

The management refused to discuss the issues under dispute and the workers took control of the factory. Only apprentices and supervisors are now working.

The stewards intend to convene a meeting with other factories in the Acrow group which make cranes and construction machinery—in the Coles and Priestman Excavators division—to stop the transfer of work.

Acrow are trying to break trade union organisation in this well-paid and well-organised factory—and it appears they are using similar tactics at the Coles factory at Glazebury, near Warrington. A combine committee of all the factories in the Acrow group is urgently needed to put the 'Godfather' in his place.

At local level the Sunderland workers have already received the full backing of trade unionists.

They deserve the support of workers everywhere. Messages of support and donations to: Norman Jackson, Convenor, c/o AUEW House, 189 Roker Avenue, Sunderland, Co. Durham.

Israeli state attacks the left

THE LEFT in Israel is undergoing the biggest attack ever mounted by the authorities. Some 60 militants, both Arabs and Jews, have been arrested and charged with involvement in or knowledge of a so-called 'Syrian spy ring'.

An hysterical press campaign has been aimed even against the Zionist left and some papers are calling for the outlawing of non-Zionist and anti-Zionist groups.

A member of the Israeli parliament, Abraham Levenbraun, has disclosed horrifying stories of the torture and humiliation of the detainees. The Israeli left need solidarity and support. Contri-

Scottish jobless assembly irrelevant

by Steve Jefferys

EDINBURGH:—The Second Scottish Assembly on Unemployment, held in the Usher Hall on Monday, proved as irrelevant as expected.

Contributions from the floor began with a speech from Cardinal Gray, head of Scotland's Catholics, 'May God,' he intoned, 'further the deliberations of this assembly.'

There was the company director whose firm would benefit by £70,000-a-year if the government would pay Regional Employment Premium in Edinburgh, and the chairman of the Scottish Brewers, who wanted Scotland to prepare the 'infrastructure' for industrial growth by 'building better roads'.

The trade union right-wing was there in force. John Boyd, executive member of the engineering union (AUEW) got considerable applause by attacking trade unionists who held up the introduction of new jobs by defending the old lines of job demarcation.

John Matheson of the National Union of Railwaymen, a General Council member of the Scottish TUC, demanded increased investment in Scottish railways without saying a word about his negotiations with British Rail about productivity proposals which aim to cut rail jobs even further.

Pressure

If the situation were not serious, it would be comical. Unemployment in Scotland is still nearly double the national average. In the five years 1965-71 an average of 32,000 jobs a year disappeared.

The 1970s have seen the creation of a permanent pool of around 100,000 unemployed in Scotland which exists regardless of temporary booms.

The assembly was convened last February by the Scottish TUC on the initiative of the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders shop stewards. The stewards' original pressure for an assembly 'for the Scottish people' has now born its predictable fruit. The right-wing of the trade union movement can now hide behind the assembly and its standing commission (two full-time union officials to 15 employers, councillors and others) while accepting productivity deals, rationalisation and redundancies—and can still pretend to be fighting unemployment.

Active trade unionists must now condemn this sham Scottish Assembly and demand the withdrawal from it of the Scottish TUC. A campaign must be started for a real working-class anti-unemployment programme for work or full pay for the unemployed, a 35-hour week with no loss of pay, total opposition to productivity deals and the dismantling of existing ones, a real fight against any loss of jobs or redundancies, and nationalisation under workers' control of any workplace threatened with closure.

butions for legal aid for the detainees are urgently required.

The Ad-hoc Committee for the Defence of Civil Liberties in Israel, supported by the Israel-Palestine Socialist Action Group and the Israeli Revolutionary Action Committee Abroad, is calling for a demonstration this Saturday, 20 January, against the visit to Britain of the Israeli Minister of Police—assemble Dollis Hill tube station at 7.15pm.

Letters of support for the detainees should be sent to Israel care of Dr I Shahak, 2 Bartnura Street, Jerusalem, and cheques for legal aid should go to Sylvia Klingburg, 36 Somerfield Avenue, London NW6.



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Socialist Worker



A section of the International Socialist contingent on last Saturday's march through Merthyr Tydfil in support of the Labour council, which is refusing to implement the Tory rent Act.

Council's rents battle on a knife edge

CONISBOROUGH:—The Labour councillors in this South Yorkshire mining village are among the few still fighting the 'unfair rents' Act. Apart from Clay Cross they are the only council left in England still not implementing the Act.

But the battle is on a knife edge—the council is split almost 50-50 on whether to implement or not.

The major reason that they have carried the fight beyond the weak-kneed approach of virtually every other Labour council has been the resolute support of the Cadeby branch of the National Union of Mineworkers, the pit which dominates the village. This week meetings have been held in Conisborough and Denaby sponsored by the NUM branch to build support among tenants.

On Friday the auditors were to move in and a large 'welcoming' reception was

planned by tenants and trade unionists. If the Tories make the slightest attempt to attack the councillors there will be strong moves to close down the neighbouring pits and other industries in the area until the threats are removed.

Only the involvement of tenants and the use of industrial action will ensure the fight is kept up.

LABOUR WATERS DOWN POLICY

LONDON:—If Labour win the Greater London Council election in April, as seems likely, they will face the decision what to do about the 50p rent rise due in October.

Labour's policy for the GLC is meant to be made by the Greater London Regional Conference of the Labour Party. When this body met in March last year it voted unanimously against implementation of the Housing Finance Act. Labour councils were full of verbal militancy at that time.

But when the regional executive came to draw up the manifesto for the elections, the 'no rent rise' pledge had been dropped. It became clear that many of the leading Labour 'knights' of County Hall would refuse to stand on a manifesto which might commit them to any 'illegal' act.

Rather than lose the services of these valuable 'leaders' and select a few people with guts, the regional executive has substituted a passage saying: 'Labour will campaign against the Housing Finance Act.'

Next April the GLC tenants will see an election where on the crucial issue of rents, it will make no difference at all whether they vote Labour or Tory. No one will be surprised if the poll falls lower than the normal 40 per cent.

STATE AIDS BOSSES IN WAR ON SITES

by SW reporter

SINCE the end of the national building workers' strike late last summer, Britain's building bosses have been waging a relentless guerrilla war to prevent trade union organisation spreading through the industry.

In this they are receiving the direct assistance of their friends in the government machine. The Inland Revenue has issued nearly 400,000 tax exemption certificates to labour-

only workers in the construction industry.

This means that just over 40 per cent of the entire building and civil engineering workforce have been given official sanction to work in this illegal, union-busting fashion.

The latest issue of the trade magazine *New Civil Engineer* discloses that in areas such as Glasgow and Merseyside, where the strike

was particularly vigorously prosecuted, building employers are paying out sometimes more than £100 a week to lump workers to keep them off the sites.

Last Friday the employers brought the matter to a head in Birmingham. Bryants, the city's biggest contractor, sacked Peter Carter, the well-known building workers' leader, and three other bricklayers on the trumped-up

excuse that no more bricklayers were required. All workers on the site, Chamberlain Gardens, are now on strike for their reinstatement and against the employers' plans to bring in the lump.

Birmingham building workers are also mounting mass pickets on the big WC French city centre site, which is riddled with lump labour. They are being supported in this by cement delivery drivers who have blacked the job.

In London too the employers are maintaining their tough anti-union stance on both the Lovell's Guildford Street contract and Cubitt's World's End council housing job. At Guildford Street lump workers are still entrenched on the job where trade unionists were victimised and the strike continues. At World's End Cubitt seems determined to shut the site down to break the best site organisation in central London and force the council to make massive 'ex gratia' payments before the firm finishes the job.

The Union of Construction and Allied Trades and Technicians has no serious strategy whatsoever for dealing with the employers' co-ordinated attacks. The leaders consistently refuse to spread the struggle to other sites.

Speculator's axe threatens 700 jobs

WEST LONDON:—About 700 jobs are being sacrificed in Ealing so that a glass firm can make about £10 million profit on property speculation.

The Rockware Group announced last Thursday that it was closing its main glass factory in Greenford, Middlesex, which employs 900. About 200 jobs, according to the company, will be saved—the workers being moved to office jobs at company headquarters.

The Greenford factory has been helping improve Rockware's already healthy profit position. Profits before tax improved 17.5 per cent in the first half of 1972. In the same period, glass sales were up from £14.65 million to £15.84 million.

But the rich pickings from prime land in Middlesex promised a quick killing for Rockware, so 700 workers have to go. About half the sacked workers are black.

There has been no comment on the closure so far from Rockware's chairman, Mr Peter Parker, former chairman of Bookers and television star of the mid-1960s, who was always quick to stress the importance of good industrial relations and 'progressive management'.

Last October, Parker unleashed a tirade of abuse against Slater Walker, who were secretly buying up Rockware shares. This practice, said Parker, 'has no logic as far as the welfare of industry is concerned.'

But the practice of sacking hundreds of workers in the interests of property speculation, it seems, is very logical as far as the welfare of Mr Parker is concerned.

The workers in Greenford are preparing to give Mr Parker a bit of a shock.

Published by the International Socialists, 6 Cottons Gdns, London E2. Printed by SW (Litho) Printers Ltd (TU all depts). Registered with the Post Office.

PICKET LINES

EDINBURGH:—70 electricians employed by J B McKenzie, subcontractors at Scottish and Newcastle Breweries' new £11 million Fountain Brewery, stopped work last Thursday after rejecting a management offer falling far short of their claim for parity with other building workers on the site.

Joiners, bricklayers and scaffolders average £1 per hour bonus while electricians get a miserly 13p per hour, which is tied to penalty clauses. These include working a compulsory one-hour day and losing the 13p per hour if you clock in late.

SCOTLAND:—3,800 workers at the Hoover factory in Cambuslang, near Glasgow,

staged their second one-day strike last Wednesday. The workers, mainly members of the engineering union, are demanding parity with the Hoover factory in Perivale, Middlesex. The average pay of the six grades at Cambuslang is about £4-a-week less than their counterparts in Middlesex.

Negotiations about closing the gap were under way before Heath introduced the freeze last November. Then when the agreements at both factories expired at the end of December, both were made the same offer—£2.90.

This refusal to consider the parity claim sparked off the present action. Overtime is now banned and the workers intend to strike every Wednesday until Hoover come up with a serious offer on the full claim.

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Union calls off gas strike, but action goes on

THE executive of the General and Municipal Workers Union decided on Tuesday to call off official industrial action by gas workers which was due to begin the next day.

It used the excuse that the government ban on wage negotiations had been lifted. Yet there was no sign at all of the sort of wage increase its members need to keep up with the soaring cost of living. Indeed, all the signs are that the second phase of the government's wages policy will be as opposed to the interests of low-paid groups such as the gas workers as the first.

David Basnett, recently elected general secretary of the GMWU, and sometimes described by people who should know better as a 'progressive', has shown that he is not prepared to depart from the ways laid down by his predecessor, Lord Cooper.

Last minute attempts by union officials in Scotland to sabotage Wednesday's one-day strike appear to have failed. The unofficial shop stewards' committee has held two well-attended meetings in the past week and reported the continued anger of the workers. Workers at the key natural gas plant at Westfield, Edinburgh, even threatened to stay out from Thursday on an indefinite strike.

Victimisation bid

EDINBURGH:—The management of United Wire, Granton, have been attempting to victimise one of the workers, Les Loughney, for selling during the dinner hour copies of the bulletin produced by the local Engineers' Voice group. The company has announced that the other major engineering employers in the area, Parsons and Ferranti, support its policy.

The management's action also seems to be getting support from the right-wing officials of the local engineering union district committee. They have recently circulated stewards in the district warning them to keep away from Engineers' Voice, and have now warned the officers of the Pilton AUEW branch to have nothing to do with the United Wire dispute.

Les Loughney himself is not a member of that union, but of the Amalgamated Society of Wire Drawers and Kindred Workers. He has been given support by shop stewards in the factory and by his union, and will be represented at the

fourth stage of his appeal against the sacking by the union's general secretary.

Meanwhile Loughney has been reinstated while the appeal is heard. If it fails there will be an attempt to organise industrial action by the United Wire workers.

Bloody Sunday Commemoration

LONDON
SUNDAY 28 JANUARY
Assemble St Paul's, 2.30pm

March to rally in
Camden Town Hall

Speakers: James Wray (father of one of the victims), Mike Cooley, and Paul Foot and Gery Lawless