

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

Vietnam: what chance peace? Report page 2

Even truth
is hit
by the
freeze...

by Paul Foot

THE STENCH of corruption from the Poulson bankruptcy affair is now so strong that the government, the press, the television authorities and above all the law are resorting to outright censorship.

Last Friday the Independent Broadcasting Authority, which controls all commercial television and commercial radio, announced a ban on an hour-long programme on the Poulson affair which has been prepared for more than six months by Granada's World in Action programme.

So carefully was the programme prepared that it was effectively libel-proof. Solicitors for Granada could find no fault with it. Discussions were then started with the producers and barristers from Granada and the IBA.

The solicitors for the IBA were also present. They are Allen and Overy, a rich city firm, who also act for Mr Reginald Maudling, the former Home Secretary, who resigned from the government because of his connection with Poulson.

Yet Allen and Overy were quite happy to advise the IBA on whether a film criticising Maudling should be broadcast. And the IBA, who knew about the conflict of interest, did not bother to change their lawyers.

In spite of Allen and Overy, the programme was eventually 'cleared' by the barristers. But the IBA decided to ban the programme before the lawyers reached their decision. In other words, the ban had nothing to do with libel, contempt of court, trial by television or any other nonsense. It was crude political censorship.

An IBA spokesman confirmed to Socialist Worker that every member of the IBA was present at the meeting which banned the programme, except one.

Close friend

He refused to name the absent member, but confirmed that Sir Fred Hayday was present. Sir Fred, who has recently retired, was national industrial officer of the General and Municipal Workers Union from 1946. As such he was a close friend and colleague of Andy Cunningham, GMWU chief in the North East and an alderman on Durham County Council.

Cunningham's links with Poulson were very close indeed. He and his wife were both for a time on the Poulson payroll. Both took expensive holidays at Poulson's expense. Poulson designed three union offices in the area.

Sir Fred Hayday was not in favour of the Poulson programme being broadcast.

Neither was Baroness Sharp, another member of the authority, who was also at the meeting. Baroness Sharp was Permanent Secretary (chief civil servant) at the Ministry of Housing from 1955 to 1966. When T Dan Smith came up before his old political colleague from Newcastle, Judge Gillis, at the Old Bailey on corruption charges in 1971, he called only one defence witness—Baroness Sharp.

Baroness Sharp told judge and jury of her work with Dan Smith when she was at the Ministry of Housing and of his magnificent attributes as a public servant. Her passionate defence of Smith helped a lot towards his acquittal.

It did not take long for the assorted Labour hacks, Tory businessmen and academics who make up the IBA to agree that the programme was politically dangerous and should be censored.

Not one national newspaper protested editorially against this blatant censorship. Only a handful reported the protests of the National Union of Journalists and the Association of Cinematograph and Television Technicians.

Yet if the IBA changes its mind and revokes the ban it will only be because of the threat of industrial action by the ACTT. The unions throughout the 'media' are beginning to realise that radio and television are not unbiased seekers after truth. They are direct instruments of a corrupt class which does not want its dirty linen washed in public.

WAGE REVOLT IN HOSPITALS

HEALTH SERVICE WORKERS, one of the worst paid and super-exploited groups, have declared their militant determination to fight the Tory wage freeze. It is a challenge that must be backed by the full might of the rest of the trade union movement.

In a ballot held by the National Union of Public Employees, the main hospital ancillary union, a majority of the 80,000 workers involved voted for a total national strike to win the full claim of £4 a week



more. Other demands included selective strike action, withdrawal of patients' facilities and a go-slow.

The ballot decision underlines the seething anger felt by the silent army of hospital porters, canteen staff, ward assistants and cleaners over their pay and conditions and the insulting offer of £1.84 offered by hospital management in line with government phase two policy.

Some NUPE members are not prepared to wait for the union leaders to decide on a course of action. In Bristol chefs and catering staff at Purdown Hospital walked out on Monday and shop stewards in the West Riding of Yorkshire were meeting this week to discuss strike action and organising flying pickets to pull out staff from all hospitals in the region.

Their willingness to take the government on can be understood by a look at the average hospital workers' pay slip. Of an estimated 130,400 ancillary workers in England and Wales, 104,870 are on a basic wage of less than £20. One out of four are on a male basic scale of £17.48 and a quarter of women workers get £15.28 before deductions.

The hospital service and our health and welfare is maintained on the cheap, sweated labour of an impoverished workforce.

FORCED

NASH, the hospital workers' rank and file group, has calculated that the workers need a £10.90 increase to restore them to their position in the pay ladder of two years ago. Forced into reluctant action by the ferment in the ranks, the union put in for £4—but even that paltry amount has been confined to the government refrigerator.

The offer of £1.84 would hardly buy a weekend joint, let alone cover rises in VAT and the second stage of council rents that will hit hospital workers especially hard.

The workers have declared that they will put up with drudgery and poverty no longer. In voting to strike they face the full might of the new state labour laws and special anti-union powers.

Wages are now fixed by government decree and without appeal. If health workers do strike they face the threat of imprisonment and fines under the criminal law. In the new Tory democracy it is now a crime to organise and fight for a living wage.

SMASHED

Union leaders who oppose industrial action because it is against the law should be forcibly reminded that the trade union movement would not exist if it had not challenged and smashed reactionary ruling-class legislation. Today, both the Industrial Relations Act and the phase two proposals are designed by a minority determined to hold down wages and break rank and file resistance in order to boost profits.

If the current legislation does not work, even more repressive laws will be introduced. It is the right and duty of every trade unionist to organise to defy and break legislation aimed at crippling the working-class movement.

That is why the hospital workers' fight is so decisive and must have the full support of the entire trade union movement.

Hospital workers must keep up the pressure. They should tell the NUPE

Derry dead not forgotten



SEVERAL THOUSAND marchers, including 1200 International Socialists, demonstrated in London last Sunday in memory of the 13 killed by the British Army in Derry a year ago and against the continuing repression in Northern Ireland. Organised by the Anti-Internment League, the marchers made their way from

St Paul's cathedral to a rally. The start of the march was defused by police brutality, when two demonstrators were seized, kicked to the ground and then arrested. Mike Cohen's pictures show part of the IS contingent with (inset) IS member Paul Foot speaking at the rally. Derry march picture: page 16.

Best way
to melt
the ice

A TOTAL of £1506 in donations received last week for the International Socialists' Fighting Fund pushed the total received so far to £16,790.

IS branches in particular have responded well, and include: Hounslow £100, Nottingham £26, Leamington £13, Leeds £104, Colindale £16, Crawley, £13, Lambeth £25, Rochdale £9, Brighton £66.35, Colchester £40, South Birmingham £48, Edinburgh £40, Newcastle £215, Manchester £49, Bristol £70, Tottenham £11.

We have received many donations from groups of workers. Coil Forming Shop No.12 workers in C A Parsons, Newcastle, sent £8.20. Engineering work-

ers at Crompton's Glanmman factory, victorious after an 11 weeks' strike, sent £5. GKN, Birmingham, workers donated £1, Austin Longbridge £3.30 and Conisbrough tenants on rent strike £2.65.

To aid the regular and systematic collection of money at places of work, we have printed collection sheets. They can be obtained from local IS branches or from IS headquarters.

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.

IAN BIRCHALL REPORTS

VIETNAM'S UNEASY

THE Vietnam cease-fire opens a new phase in the country's tormented history, but it is already clear that this is far from the end of the road in the Vietnamese people's long struggle for national independence.

For a long time it had been clear that neither side could win a clear-cut military victory. All the massive might of US technology could not defeat the courage and resilience of

the Vietnamese, yet nor could the Americans, increasingly dependent on air-power, be driven into the sea.

The terms of the cease-fire have been claimed as a victory by both sides. This is partly because of the vague way they are phrased—indeed, they are even vaguer than the Geneva Agreements of 1954, an uneasy compromise that inevitably led to further conflict.

On the ground too the picture is confused. The situation in South Vietnam has been compared to a

'leopard skin', with blurred patches controlled by each side.

Nixon has spoken of 'peace with honour'. For many people it may be hard to associate the idea of 'honour' with this mediocre ex-McCarthyite career politician. So it is necessary to translate. For Nixon 'honour' means not being seen to ditch Thieu too blatantly, otherwise he might lose his credibility with similar gangster politicians throughout the world.

It is impossible to say exactly what differences there are between

the present agreement and the one which might have been signed last October. Hanoi has not made any major concessions in response to the US terror bombing, but in many ways the position accepted represents a compromise for the North Vietnamese.

SABOTAGE

Certainly the withdrawal of US troops is a major victory, though of course US air power will still remain in strength in South East Asia. While

Nixon is probably not planning to use it at present, the possibility remains open.

But as long as Thieu remains in power in Saigon the peace will be fragile. Indeed Thieu can sabotage almost any agreement, since any solution depends on the agreement of all parties.

The delay in signing a cease-fire since October has already been of enormous value to Thieu. He has been able to consolidate his power and suppress the opposition. This may have been the main purpose of



Gun-toting cowboy Thieu still firmly in the saddle

ON THURSDAY last week, the day after the text of the cease-fire agreement was published, President Thieu made it clear in what spirit he intended to pursue peace.

Speaking in Saigon, he declared: 'We must apply cowboy law . . . If the communists act like hooligans, we must act like bigger hooligans . . . If they lift their little finger, we will put our fist under their noses . . . If they put their feet into our zones, we will kill them.'

Such is the man who, for the moment at least, will continue to rule part of South Vietnam.

Thieu was elected head of state in 1965, after a series of military coups. He became president in 1967, but only in 1969 did he get a complete grip on the apparatus of power. In autumn 1971 he ran for the presidency as the only candidate. The election was so blatantly rigged that even Hitler's admiral Marshal Ky would not stand against him. Thieu managed to get 94.3 per cent of the votes.

The only man Thieu admires is said to be General Park Chung Hee, the South Korean dictator, whom he has described as a 'superman'.

Election

In a speech last August Thieu set out what he meant by democracy. 'I must complain that our government has allowed us to enjoy too much democracy too soon. This is like—if you will excuse me for my comparison—a small baby that is given an overdose of medicine, or like a weak person who takes up physical exercise so that his health cannot endure.'

'The communists are now spending money buying newsmen, publishing newspapers and taking advantage of the disorderly and broad democracy and freedom in the South. When an election is held, the communists try to benefit from it.'

Clearly for Thieu anyone who tries to win an election is 'misusing' democracy. It did not take him long to work out the logic of this, and 11 days later he issued a decree abolishing the election of officials in South Vietnam's 10,000 villages. Instead they were to be appointed by military provincial chiefs.

Likewise the 'misuse' of press freedom to disagree with Thieu was met by press laws which rapidly led to a string of prosecutions.

Though Thieu speaks of anti-communism, the main victims of censorship and the massive wave of arrests have not been communists at all, but middle-class politicians opposed to Thieu, supporters of the so-called 'third force' and rivals for the right to repress the South Vietnamese people.

The future Thieu envisages for South Vietnam was shown clearly by the budget for 1973, published last November.

Landlords

Of the total £400 million, nearly two-thirds is devoted to defence and to the Ministry of the Interior. The budget for the Ministry of Information is about four times that for social affairs, and about the same size as the health budget. And if more than £25 million are to be spent on agriculture, much of this is to compensate landlords for the effects of land reform.

But to do Thieu credit, he has struck a blow against unemployment. The 1973 budget provides for the training and support of 122,000 policemen, compared with only 95,000 in 1969.

THE WAR AS SEEN BY...

Three American presidents

'I have never talked or corresponded with a person knowledgeable in Indo-Chinese affairs who did not agree that had elections been held as of the time of the fighting [ie 1954], possibly 80 per cent of the population would have voted for Ho Chi Minh.'

(Eisenhower, in his memoirs *Mandate for Change*)

'In Indo-China we have allied ourselves to the desperate effort of a French regime to hang on to the remnants of empire. There is no broad, general support of the native Vietnam government among the people of that area.'

(John F Kennedy, 1951)

'[We are] against sending American GIs into the mud and much of Indochina as a bloodletting spree to perpetuate colonial-

ism and white man's exploitation in Asia.'

(Lyndon Johnson, *Congressional Record*, April 1954)

Two American War Veterans

'I don't see what good it has done. Vietnam is just a politician's war, man. They say it's to make the world a better place, but even over here they just talk about fixing up the slums. They don't do anything about it.'

(William Walsh, 25-year-old legless war veteran, quoted in *The Guardian*, 19 May 1970).

'I think any other war would have been worth my foot. But not this one. One day someone has got to explain to me why I was there.'

(19-year-old US Marine, quoted in

restore 'law and order' and make the way smooth for the French to get back in.

Britain's services to the US war effort were more indirect, but they were nonetheless wholehearted. Napalm and poison gas manufactured in Britain were sold to the US for use in Vietnam.

Support

Various British firms supplied the US with military equipment of the sort needed in Vietnam. AEI and Elliot Automation had large contracts for radar equipment, Rolls-Royce for aircraft engines and the Decca Navigational Company for helicopter guidance systems. Ford supplied military equipment to the reactionary Ky regime in South Vietnam.

But the most important support

given by Britain was the consistent political support offered by Labour and Tories alike. General de Gaulle, his own hands still stained with Algerian blood, could dissociate himself from American action, but Washington could count on support from Home, Wilson and Heath alike.

But Britain's so-called 'special relationship' with the US was not just a matter of kind words, it was a question of practical help. In his book *The Labour Government 1964-70*, Brian Lapping imagines a Foreign Office spokesman in the early years of the Vietnam War summing up Britain's relation to the US:

'We keep the communists out of power in Malaysia—and make a bloody good job of it—we keep an eye on most of Africa, we maintain naval surveillance off South Asia, and the Americans are glad in these areas to rely on our competence and good local contacts. We save them a lot of money and share some of the international unpopularity that goes with being the world's policeman.'

'In return they treat us as their number one ally: they share nuclear secrets with us, give us a special measure of financial help. That's what the special relationship means.'

The British withdrawal from 'East of Suez', was made possible only by the murder of hundreds of thousands of Indonesian communists in 1965, so removing the 'communist' threat to Malaysia.

In his delight at this, Wilson allowed himself a modest reprimand against US bombing of North Vietnamese cities in 1966. In general, though, Britain has remained the most loyal supporter of the US right to the end.



Dr Kissinger and Le Duc Tho shaking hands after the Paris peace talks ended with the cease-fire agreement last week.

Britain's hand in the slaughter

The Guardian, 19 May 1970)

. . . and One Two-Faced British Politician.

' . . . not a man, not a gun, must be sent from this country to defend French colonisation in Indochina . . . we must not join or in any way encourage an anti-communist crusade in Asia under the leadership of the Americans or anybody else.'

(Harold Wilson, May 1954)

'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 into South Vietnam.'

(Harold Wilson, 1 April 1965)

'PEACE'

the US hesitation.

On several key questions the agreement is incredibly vague. On the vital problem of civilian political prisoners in South Vietnam the agreement merely requires both sides to 'do their utmost' to solve it in 90 days 'in a spirit of national reconciliation and concord', a spirit for which Thieu's policemen and torturers are not noted.

Likewise the form of elections to be held is left vague, and Article 11, which calls for the observation of basic freedoms—of speech and the

press, for example—is highly unlikely to be put into practice, for it would mean the repeal of most of Thieu's recent decrees.

In short, the causes of future conflict are strewn liberally throughout this document. The future for war-weary Vietnam looks bleak.

Yet over the past eight years Vietnam has provided a powerful inspiration to revolutionary movements throughout the world. In the long term the destiny of Vietnam will depend on whether that inspiration can bear fruit.

The long fight for freedom

1859-83: French invade and annex Vietnam.

1930: Nationalist and peasant risings crushed by the French.

September 1940: Japanese occupy Vietnam with French co-operation.

June 1941: Founding of Vietminh (Revolutionary League for the Independence of Vietnam).

August 1945: Japan surrenders; rising by Saigon workers.

September 1945: Declaration of Independence of Democratic Republic of Vietnam, under presidency of Ho Chi Minh. British troops temporarily occupy Vietnam South of 16th parallel.

January 1946: Vietminh successful in elections throughout Vietnam.

November 1946: French bombard Haiphong, killing 6000 people.

December 1946: First Indochinese War begins.

May 1950: US begin military aid to French in Vietnam.

May 1954: French defeat at battle of Dien Bien Phu.

July 1954: Geneva Agreements divide Vietnam at 17th parallel.

October 1955: Diem proclaims Republic in South Vietnam.

November 1956: Peasant rising in North Vietnam against land reform tribunals, crushed by Ho Chi Minh government.

1957-58: Emergence of guerrilla struggle in South Vietnam following Diem's attempt to reverse Vietminh land reform; no support from North Vietnam.

December 1958: Murder of detainees in Phu Loi concentration camp leads to intensification of struggle in South.

December 1960: Formation of National Liberation Front.

November 1961: Kennedy steps up military aid to Diem.

November 1963: Diem assassinated; replaced by military regime.

August 1964: US attacks North Vietnamese mainland bases.

February 1965: US starts bombing North Vietnam.

January-February 1968: Successful offensive by National Liberation Front.

March 1968: US President Johnson cuts bombing and proposes negotiations.

May 1968: First meeting of US and North Vietnamese delegations in Paris.

June 1969: Formation of Provisional Revolutionary Government in South Vietnam.

April 1970: US invades Cambodia.

February 1971: South Vietnamese, with US aid, invade Laos.

March-April 1972: New North Vietnamese offensive; US responds by bombing and blockade.

October 1972: Hanoi proposes settlement terms to US.

November 1972: Nixon re-elected.

December 1972: Heaviest bombing of the war by US against North Vietnamese cities.

January 1973: Cease-fire agreement.

THE BALANCE SHEET

THE HORROR of the American war in Vietnam cannot be expressed in figures alone. But a few figures may help to express the dimensions of the past eight years of struggle.

IN MONEY

The war has cost the US about £43,000 million.

IN EXPLOSIVES

Since 1965 the US have exploded between 14 and 15 million tons of explosives in Indochina, the equivalent of 720 atomic bombs of the type dropped on Hiroshima.

IN NATURAL RESOURCES

Between 1962 and 1970 about a seventh of the total area of South Vietnam was affected by defoliants—about 10,000 square miles. The National Liberation Front estimates that about 1,300,000 people have been affected by chemicals. The long-term effects are still unclear—for example a sharp rise in the incidence of cancer of the liver has been noted.

IN HUMAN LIVES

US casualties: 45,931 killed in battle. If

non-combat deaths and deaths of wounded outside Vietnam are included, 56,227. (This is 23,000 more than in the Korean War). Wounded—303,605.

South Vietnamese army: 188,000 killed, 430,000.

NLF and North Vietnam: 920,000 killed (American estimate). There is no serious estimate of civilian deaths. One US estimate put it at more than 400,000. Between 1964 and 1971 the war made more than four million refugees. The estimate of 300,000 war orphans includes only children of military, not civilian, dead.



Race: Tories toe the Powell line

UNDER PRESSURE from Enoch Powell and its right wing, the government have moved one step further towards a completely racist immigration policy. Once again, it is marching in pace with the Labour Party.

Last week Home Secretary Robert Carr announced new rules for Commonwealth immigration. 'Commonwealth citizens,' he said, 'with a grandparent born here will not have to obtain a work permit or be subject once here to any form of supervision; but will be granted entry clearance which will enable them to come to work and to settle here for as long as they like.'

This and various consequential provisions have pacified Tory backbenchers and the Daily Express who wanted easier access for their white 'kith and kin' in Australia and Canada.

The 'grandparent' nonsense, which was defeated when the Immigration Bill went through the House of Commons last year, is the only means Home Office draftsmen can find to write racial discrimination into the law without actually saying so.

Mr Carr went further. On 25 January he announced a ban on the immigration of Asians in Kenya and elsewhere who have British passports. This means that the Kenya Asians, who are not citizens of Kenya, and who were

promised sanctuary in Britain if necessary, will now have nowhere to go if expelled.

It also exposes the humbug of Tory Ministers, not least Mr Carr, who boasted to the country about their 'integrity' and their 'determination to keep their promises' when they allowed the Ugandan Asians in last summer. Mr Carr told the Tory Party conference last October that he 'could not remain a member of a government' which had failed to meet its obligations to British passport-holders. After his decision on 25 January we can all look forward hopefully to his resignation.

Meanwhile, Mr Carr can expect nothing but help from the Labour Party. Opposition spokesman for Home Affairs, Mrs Shirley Williams, who built up her reputation in the Labour Party by her commitment to multi-racialism, refused to oppose any of the measures which Carr announced.

She asked for 'full consultations with other Commonwealth governments so that we can avoid being put in the almost impossible position of a crisis in which our compassion and decency in a country is placed on one side of the scales and the concern of the Home Secretary to avoid a flood of refugees is placed on the other side of the scales.'

Mr Sidney Bidwell, 'left' Labour MP for Southall, and Miss Joan Lester, Labour MP for Eton and Slough, also managed a short statement about the announcement without protesting about the Carr proposals.

BRUM POLICE ON RACIALIST RAMPAGE

by Mike Flood Page
IN THE SMALL HOURS of Boxing Day 1972, the Handsworth, Birmingham police raided a party in Whitehall Road. The police stated at the time that the pretext was a neighbour's complaint about the noise.

For such a threat to public order, the appropriate police strength arrived: five panda cars, two black marias, dogs and at least 40 men.

People who were leaving the party were arrested in the street and scuffles broke out. More serious violence followed as the police entered the house. According to eye-witnesses, truncheons were swinging and anyone in the way, men and women, was liable to be hit.

One man, Mikey Brown, subsequently arrested with 11 others, had his upper leg savaged by a police dog. And he spent two days in police custody before a doctor could be persuaded to check his injuries.

RESPONSE

The 12 arrested men were brought to court the next morning, charged with affray. Four were further charged with assaulting police officers and three with possessing 'offensive weapons'. These were bottles they had been drinking from at the party. Only two had legal representation and all were remanded in custody for one week as the police opposed bail.

The behaviour of the police, the charges and the remands brought a swift response from the black community. When the 12 came up in court again on 12 January members of their families, friends and sympathisers mounted a picket outside the court to protest against the police behaviour.

This time the 12 defendants were bailed to re-appear on Thursday this week. But the bail, £100 plus sureties of £100 each, was set at unusually high levels for such charges, particularly as some of the accused

have no previous convictions.

But even more serious is the additional bail condition. All the defendants were required to surrender their passports. This clause is rarely used, mainly in fraud cases where the defendants might skip the country—hardly the case here.

The move only makes sense in the light of the recent Immigration Act. This blatantly racist legislation makes anyone who is not formally a British citizen who is convicted of an offence for which the maximum penalty is a prison sentence—whether or not such a penalty is applied—liable for deportation.

The police involved in the Whitehall Road case come from Handsworth's Thornhill Road Police Station. This was described as 'one of the buildings most dreaded and most hated by Black Handsworth' in a recent report by black social worker Gus John called 'Race in the Inner City'.

The Thornhill Road police have earned this fear and hatred over a long period. Last March their activities were probed by a parliamentary Select Committee. Some black groups refused to give evidence to this body on the grounds of possible police reprisals against witnesses.

Nine blacks who had picketed the

Thornhill Road station in protest at police brutality on the day of the Select Committee's visit to Handsworth were arrested some two months later for possessing and trafficking in cannabis after the police staged a massive para-military raid on the Villa Cross pub. Following publication of the Select Committee's whitewash report the police brought extra conspiracy charges against the nine. Eight were found guilty and given heavy prison sentences.

TROUBLE

Numerous other instances of police brutality and harassment of black people have taken place since. The case of Pakistani night shift workers at Sleeman Shotblasting in Perry Bar is typical. The men (members of the Transport Workers Union) recently had to change their shifts following repeated trouble from the police when they came off shift and were on their way home at 5am.

The provisions of the racist Immigration Act coupled with the attentions of the police are designed to intimidate black people and keep them on their knees at work and in the community. It is the duty of every militant and socialist actively to support their struggle for freedom.

WAGE REVOLT IN HOSPITALS

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leaders to stop stalling and make a clear statement of strike action to honour the ballot decision. The union should declare its intention to boycott further farcical pay talks on 16 February.

Branches must prepare now, through hospital meetings, to argue the case for strike action to all hospital workers and patients. Planning must be made for effective picketing and blacking. 'Volunteers' should be told they are unwelcome.

A fighting alliance of all public sector unions is urgently needed. The teachers'

union is pressing for such action and local meetings of all public sector workers to organise joint action at rank and file level must be worked for now without delay.

The freeze and its sinister laws must be smashed. Success depends upon rank and file mobilisation and wide-ranging solidarity action in every workplace and town. A heavy responsibility falls on the tried and trusted battalions of the trade union movement to help the low-paid and poorly-organised to victory.

The message of hospital workers to the miners and the Ford workers is clear: Victory for YOU means victory for US.



Socialist Worker

WHAT WE THINK

'THE MOST INTRIGUING political question of 1973 is where will Harold Wilson lead the Labour Party?' So says the Daily Mirror. Its current Wilson-boosting campaign is not just a Fleet Street stunt. The shrewd and wealthy men who control the Mirror have a serious political purpose. They are worried that the growing resentment and opposition to the Tory government's anti-freeze policies are not being channeled into the Labour Party. And that is a very dangerous state of affairs for our ruling class.

'There must be a credible alternative,' says the Mirror. 'Tomorrow's Men eager and ready to replace Yesterday's Men.' Yesterday's men means the Tories. The Mirror's bosses can read the signs. Those signs indicate escalating opposition to Heath's policies, not so much in the opinion polls but where it matters—among key sections of workers who have the power to shatter the freeze. A big defeat for the government on the industrial front this year—or even a succession of small defeats—will completely discredit Heath in the eyes of his own supporters and lead to the government's downfall.

Big business needs an alternative government. Heath has exhausted his tactical options. Strike-smashing confrontations with the unions failed and Heath was forced into adopting Labour's 1964-70 policies.

But 'stand on your own two feet' Ted is not a very credible social democrat. To persuade working people to accept cuts in living standards 'in the national interest' is very difficult for an avowedly right-wing government with a record like the present one. If Heath goes down there is an urgent need, from the ruling-class point of view, for a revival of working-class illusions in the Labour Party.

Danger signal

The trouble is that the widespread scepticism generated between 1964 and 1970 is still strong. Labour's miserable failure at the Uxbridge by-election, not to mention Rochdale and others, is a real danger signal. 'A people drilled, dragooned and distracted into believing that there is no choice, that they are denied any real power to choose,' said Harold Wilson in Edinburgh, 'can find themselves drifting into a target for extremists... This is the danger, as democrats, we could face in Britain.'

In other words, unless workers can be convinced again that the Labour Party in power really will pursue policies different from those of Heath today and Wilson before him, a genuine socialist movement will grow at the Labour Party's expense. And so left-wing phrases are the order of the day and the Mirror talks of 'Mr Wilson's concept of socialism with a human face.'

Wilson now speaks of 'international mega-corporations' and the individual frustrated 'because increasingly the decisions which govern his life, and the life of his family, are taken from him by remote powers or persons he has never heard of.' It's true enough.

What about 'the directors of a few hundred great combines determine between them what Britain should produce... these men, together with the directors of leading insurance companies, are usurping the functions of a government that is theoretically responsible to the whole people.' That is what Signpost for the Sixties—the basis of Labour's 1964 election platform—said. Once in office, the Labour Party leaders did more to promote mergers, takeovers, the growth of monopoly and 'mega-corporations' than any previous government.

And so in every field. The 'planned growth of incomes' turned into Wilson's statutory wage freeze. Social services are cut. Tory foreign policy continued (support for NATO, for the US in Vietnam, the pledge to do away with British nuclear weapons forgotten).

There are still, of course, pathetic Labour 'lefts' who believe it will be different next time. Think of all those left-wing conference resolutions they tell us. As if Labour ministers in power have ever paid the slightest heed to conference resolutions.

There is no immediate alternative on the left capable of taking power and so a Labour government is the only possible successor to Tory rule. But the real job of socialists today is the building of a socialist alternative on the basis of leadership in the struggle against capitalist policies—whichever government puts them forward.



GONE TO SEED

IT IS always a joy to listen to a speech from Arthur Affleck, chairman of the joint shop stewards' committee at the Lackenby steel works and a member of Teesside IS. Arthur was in particularly good form at Ebbw Vale last week speaking immediately after a long drive alone all the way from the North East. He spoke mainly about the bankruptcy of the leadership of his own union (BISAKTA) and the need for rank and file organisation in the steel industry.

Answering a spate of questions about apathy in the working class, Arthur referred to the dreadful state of the Labour movement. He told the following story about his own area which might well have come out in the banned World in Action programme on the Poulson affair.

Arthur's predecessor as checkweighman at the Lackenby works was a Labour councillor, A S Seed JP, who was chairman of Eston Urban Council planning committee before the council was swallowed by the Teesside County Borough in 1968. Sitting with Mr Seed on the planning committee were Councillors J R Briggs, who ran a local Co-Op butchers' shop, and W Herlingshaw, a building labourer.

For some years before 1968, the Eston Planning Committee had been dealing with applications to build luxury bungalows on an open site in the area known as the Cricket Lane site. The application came from one of the North East's best-known millionaires and property speculators, Charlie Amer.

The application was turned down several times, but was eventually granted. Soon after the bungalows were built, the three councillors changed addresses. Councillor Herlingshaw moved into a bungalow at 23 Cricket Lane, Councillor Briggs moved into a bungalow at 31 Cricket Lane and Councillor Seed moved into a bungalow at 64 Willow Drive, off Cricket Lane.

'It was all a coincidence,' said Arthur. 'They all had insurance policies which matured at the same



ARTHUR AFFLECK
Poulson story

time.'

Councillor Briggs, incidentally, has since been in a little trouble. He has been fined for stealing cigarettes. A specially-convened magistrates meeting had to deal with 'Briggsy's' case, as Briggs was himself a magistrate.

Labour Party members in Eston also recall a powerful speech from Councillor Seed at a meeting of the general management committee of the local constituency Labour Party on the subject of the proposed new Eston Labour Club.

Plans for the club had been drawn up by a Sunderland architect, who had been paid £850. Councillor Seed intervened at the meeting to say that planning permission might not be granted for the club unless the party changed its architect.

He explained that so many new buildings in Eston—the swimming baths, the James Finnegan Hall, the Eston Town Hall, and a large council estate—had been built according to the designs of one architect that any plans by another architect might not 'fit in' with their surroundings. He urged the Labour Party to switch to the architect who designed the other buildings. The meeting agreed.

That architect was Mr John Poulson.

Sick transit

THE January 1973 minutes (very confidential) of the National Craftsmen's Co-ordinating Committee for the steel industry reveal an interesting new sidelight on the government's freeze.

The committee's rather measly sick pay scheme with the British Steel Corporation, which only provides for sick workers who have been employed for 10 years or more, and which was

to have come into operation on 1 January, has been frozen by government order.

The militant response of the Co-ordinating committee (chairman: John Boyd) to this action is summed up by this statement: 'It was agreed to associate with every other union in protesting to the government about this surprising decision.'

ON 22 January Mr William Whitelaw opened a conference in the City of London to encourage investment in Northern Ireland.

He started his speech with the following introduction, which needs no comment: 'I am very grateful to this distinguished gathering representing so many different businesses—commercial and political interests (you will notice my order of preference)—for coming here and showing their real concern for the people of Northern Ireland.'

Promises

WHAT is an election pledge? Psephologists everywhere are debating the question.

Everyone agrees that the best example of a perfect, undiluted, irrevocable promise is the one in the Tory Party's manifesto, A Better Tomorrow, which won them the last election. It read:

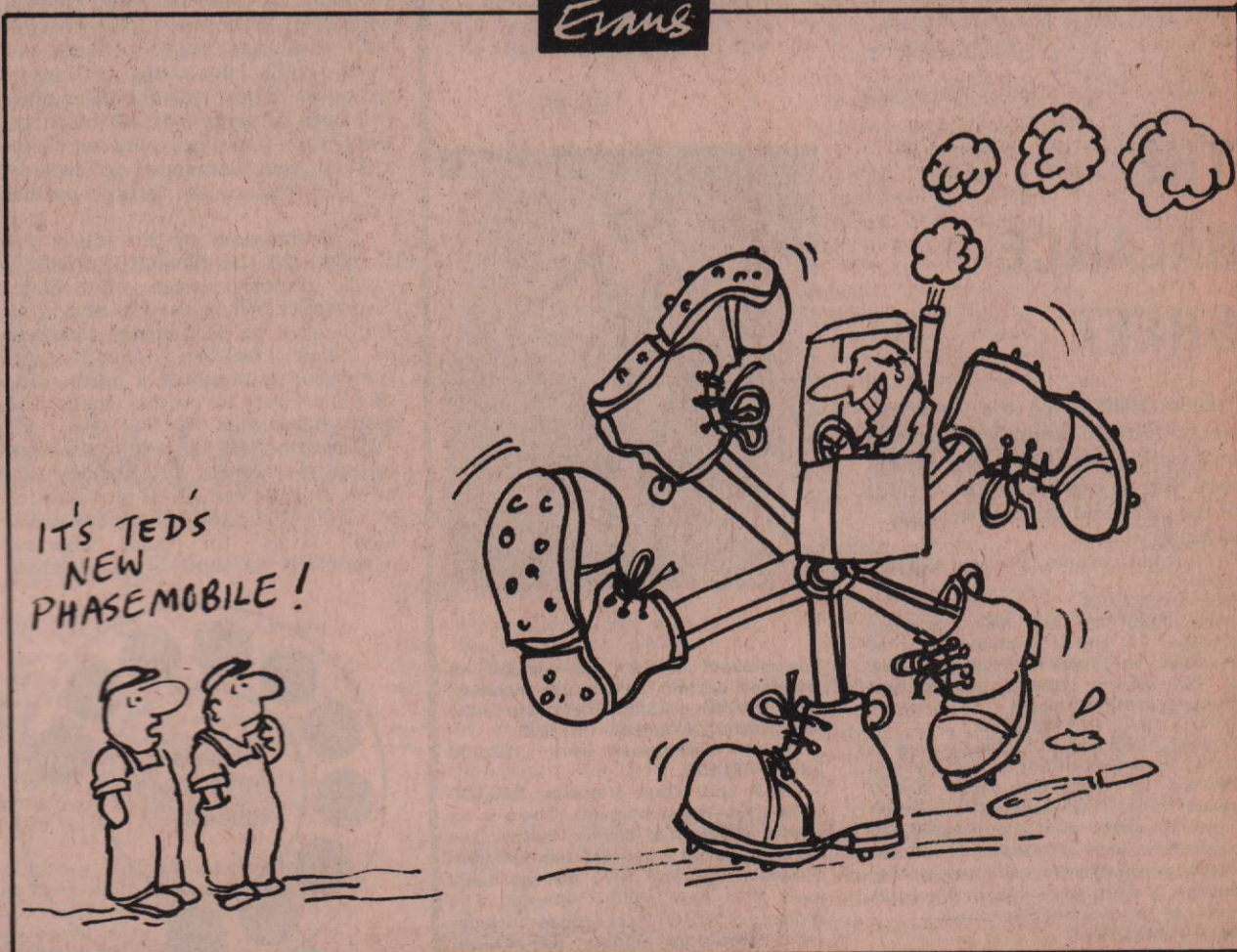
'LABOUR'S COMPULSORY WAGE CONTROL WAS A FAILURE AND WE WILL NOT REPEAT IT.'

The Tories meant it. As Mr Heath wrote in his introduction to the manifesto: 'I am determined that we shall re-establish our sound and honest British traditions in this field.'

I GATHER that Sardinia is a lovely place for workers' holidays, and commend the following advertisement in The Times to anyone who wants to try it out.

VILLA, SARDINIA

Costa Smeralda, exceptionally comfortable private house on The Sea, fantastic views 4 double beds, large swimming pool. English resident staff. 1973, high season £450 p.w.; low season, £250 p.w. Refs essential. Box 1312 R, or Tel 01-435 6809.



PRINTS

MEN OF STEEL

THE Steel Corporation, which is currently planning massive redundancies throughout the industry, has experienced a few redundancies in its own ranks.

On vesting day 1967, the corporation was completely controlled by the old steelmasters—men like Fred Cartwright of the Steel Company of Wales, Niall Macdiarmid of Stewarts and Lloyds, and Wilfrid Molyneux, the personal nominee of Sir Henry Benson of Cooper Brothers, who did such a marvellous job squeezing the government for compensation for the steelmasters.

For one reason or another most of these steelmasters have now left (Macdiarmid had to go, for instance, after some rather unfortunate scenes at an expensive dinner at Barrow-in-Furness).

Only Lord Layton of the Steel Company of Wales can be found still on the board representing the amply-compensated steelmasters. The old monsters have been replaced almost completely by gentlemen from industries whose main interest in the Steel Corporation is either to buy from it cheap or to sell to it dear.

FINANCE

Lord Melchett, who has been chairman since vesting day, came from Hill Samuel, merchant bankers, and is obviously keen to return to the merchant banking world. He got special permission from the government to join the board of the Orion Bank, a vast European consortium whose chief purpose is to finance the leasing of equipment to European industry.

The chairman of the Orion Bank told *The Times* (19 January): 'These large corporations need unlimited leasing facilities in all parts of the world.'

The leasing craze was started in this country by the National Coal Board, which has set up several subsidiary companies to lease equipment to industry at cheap rates (so penalising the taxpayer who finances the Coal Board). The Steel Board is anxious to get in on the Act. Lord Melchett is well-placed to supervise it.

ORDER

One of the strongest advocates of the Corporation's proposals for redundancy is H M 'Monty' Finniston, one of the corporation's vice-chairmen and a celebrated scientific 'whizz-kid'. Monty is also a director of a company called the International Research and Development Corporation, which sounds very impersonal but which is in fact a subsidiary of the North East's heavy industry combine, Reyrolle Parsons.

The Reyrolle Newsletter of August 1971 (the first ever) reported with pride a £500,000 order from the British Steel Corporation for switchgear equipment for the BSC Anchor site at Scunthorpe. A Parsons subsidiary, Parolle, provided Transformers, was described in a later



FINNISTON:
Redundancy whizz-kid



LITTMAN:
RTZ's man in Steel

newsletter as 'a major supplier of the National Coal Board and the British Steel Corporation. Another subsidiary, Parolle Ltd, provided the complete power plant for the Llanwern steel plant of Richard Thomas and Baldwin (part of the BSC).

The chairman of Reyrolle Parsons, incidentally, is Mr E T Judge, former chairman of Dorman Long and president of the British Iron and Steel Federation (steelmasters).

Mr Finniston's colleague as deputy chairman is Sir Mark Littman.

Sir Mark is a director of Rio Tinto-Zinc, the biggest suppliers of raw material to the Steel Corporation.

HOSTILITY

In June 1971, the government made three other inspired appointments to the British Steel Corporation. They included Sir David Barran, chairman of Shell, one of the most powerful industrialists in the country and, Sir Matthew Stevenson, who as Permanent Secretary at the Minister of Power in 1965 and 1966 drew up the Continental Shelf Act, whereby the Labour government, with the full consent of the Tories, handed over the benefits of North Sea oil and gas to the oil companies. Even the toughened bureaucrats on the Gas Council were heard to express surprise at Sir Matthew's rigid hostility to nationalised industry.

The third appointment was that of Mr R M Bateman, chairman of Turner and Newall, the asbestos and cement combine, whose main mining interests are in Southern Africa. Turner and Newall are probably the Corporation's second biggest suppliers. This week they were criticised by the Monopolies Commission on four counts of carving up the asbestos and cement industry by recent secret agreements.

Mr Newall has been one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the British Steel's investment in

apartheid.

The 1972 appointments have run true to form. They are Mr M Rosser, a chartered accountant whose business interests in Wales are so great that he sits on the Welsh council of the CBI, and the Hon W K J Weir, chief executive of the Weir Group, one of Scotland's biggest engineering combines.

Only four members of the corporation are now free of board-room influence—A Silberston, an economist from Nuffield College, Oxford, George Chetwynd, former Labour MP and Labour's all-purpose board man, and two trade unionists, Ron Smith, former general secretary of the Postal Workers' Union, and Ward Griffiths, former executive member of BISAKTA, the biggest steel union.

There has been a deafening silence from these members at the proposed redundancies. Griffiths, in particular, is quite prepared to preside over the pulverising at Ebbw Vale, his home town.

The only member of the corporation (apart from Griffiths) who ever knew anything about steel-making, Mr Stephen Gray, resigned three months ago in protest at the corporation's plans for North Wales.

Picked men

SPECIAL 'Picket Combat' training is being organised for the police, especially in Yorkshire where some trouble is again anticipated in the pits. Three busloads of police were taken recently from the Barnsley area to Catterick Camp where they were given some rigorous military-style training.

The basic movement trained is the one practised so effectively by police against dockers at the Neap House Wharf, Scunthorpe last summer. The main body of police formed a wedge in the dockers blocking the road, while 'snatch squads' moved round to the back to pick off the leaders.

At the same time, police photographers take pictures of the leaders for the better information of the 'snatch squads'.

NORINYL 1, a brand of the pill manufactured by Syntex Pharmaceuticals, of Maidenhead, has put its price up. A Portsmouth member of the International Socialists sends me documentary evidence of a pack of Norinyl which she bought in London on 21 December, in mid-freeze: price, 44p. On 18 January the same pack cost her 46p in Portsmouth, a 4.5 per cent increase.

If the contraceptive profiteers are going to break the freeze, what remedy has the consumer? Are they to abstain (like the Daily Express 'housewives' who brought down the price of beef by not eating any) or simply 'shop around'.

On the Maud

I SEE that the two names being canvassed for the chairmanships of the Pay Board and the Prices Board are Lord Robens and Mr Reginald Maudling. Mining machinery and architectural consultancy, we can assume, are not to be covered by either board.

Mr Maudling, incidentally, can be seen every week as 'adjudicator' in the Sunday Debate, a television programme on moral issues which has been fitted into the 'religious slot'.

Future questions for debate, confidently expected, are:

Is it moral to make money out of offshore property funds?

Is British architecture keeping pace with Europe?

How much should television companies pay for uninterrupted hypocrisy?

Equal pay struck by frostbite

ANY BELIEF that the Equal Pay Act will eventually give women equal pay took another knock last week with the details of the second phase of the freeze.

Trade unionists who had hoped that the government might use its powers to issue an enforcement order to employers, requiring them to give women 90 per cent of men's pay this year, were disappointed.

Instead the government chose to let the employers off the hook and kick the ball back into the trade unions' court. Without the order it is obvious that the original target of 90 per cent equal pay will not be achieved.

Maurice Macmillan, Secretary for Employment, has attempted to excuse the employers in recent speeches, but a report issued by the Office of Manpower Economics last autumn showed that employers are making little effort to achieve the 90 per cent target. Women's earnings are, on average, about 20 per cent less than men's, and their take-home pay is half.

The responsibility for enforcing equal pay is now firmly back with the trade unions. Under phase two of the freeze, the difference between minimum rates for men and women can be reduced by a third. This is allowed over and above the £1 and four per cent allowed for all other increases.

Technically this means that women who now earn more than 85 per cent of men's rates could get more than 90 per cent this year, but for the majority of women, who earn less than 85 per cent, the deal is a huge sell-out, even if their trade unions are prepared to fight on the issue.

Fierce

If past showing is anything to go by, women will be lucky if the trade unions decide to fight on this issue. Despite frequent impassioned commitments to equal pay by trade unionists at various TUC get-togethers, the fact remains that the threat of action by the TUC on this issue is so feeble that one employer's representative felt able to write recently: 'The Second World War did more toward getting equal pay for women than the trade union movement has done.'

Delegates at the TUC Conference on Equal Pay last week made fierce speeches against the government, condemning it for shirking its responsibilities towards women. Fine strong words, but they will only mean something if these same delegates now return determined to fight on the issue in their own trade unions.

Despite the fine speeches, all too often the equal pay demand has been the first to be signed away when trade union leaders and employers got around the negotiating table. Nor has there been any attempt by the unions to encourage women to campaign for equal pay. There has been no propaganda and no information.

Such inactivity was nothing short of irresponsible in a year when women workers took more militant action in defence of wages and conditions than ever before. Women, such as those at Fakenham, Norfolk who occupied their shoe factory when threatened with closure, showed they were ready to fight for their rights. All over the country women became involved in



militant activities—many for the first time ever.

A real fighting spirit exists among women, but delays and lack of information from trade union leaders have led to confusion and apathy over the equal pay issue itself.

The enthusiastic equal pay campaign which directly involved many women workers in 1968 fizzled out after the Act was passed. Many women thought it pointless to carry on campaigning if they were to get equal pay anyway. This effect was probably one of the aims of the legislation.

Despite many criticisms of the Act, women have never really mobilised to protect their interests. There were fears, for instance, that job evaluation, which is written into the Act, would be used to swindle women out of equal pay. Some employers announced they intended to stop employing women altogether if the Act were enforced. Others devised ways of using the Act to their own advantage, like putting women into 'women only' jobs, and regrading them.

Misled

Nevertheless, many expected the Equal Pay Act would ensure some progress toward equal pay for women. Now it is perfectly obvious that the Act itself guarantees nothing. Employers have wriggled out of their obligations with the help of their cronies in the government.

Women workers must launch a campaign that will mobilise the trade unions to fight in their interests and not to be misled by laws like the Equal Pay Act which are worth nothing. The only way that women will get equal pay is to get out and fight for it.

WOMEN IN TRADE UNIONS

At the last Women's Liberation Conference a meeting of women interested in work in the trade unions resolved to call a meeting for women trade unionists to work out a programme of demands and activities.

The meeting will be held on Saturday 3 February at Birmingham University Students' Union starting at 11am. There will be a crèche.

The conference is for women only.

New terrorist tactics bring problems for Rhodesia security men

From Ian Smith
Salisbury, Jan 12

Rhodesia faces a long and expensive counter-insurgency operation in its sparsely populated north-eastern areas. The main problems facing the com-

So now we know who The Times' man in Rhodesia is.

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.

70p including postage, from

IS BOOKS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN

Rank and file hail defeat of corrupt gangster union leaders

ARNOLD MILLER has been elected president of the United Mine Workers of America. That event will undoubtedly go down in history as a turning point in the life of the UMW, and quite possibly as a turning point in the life of the entire American working class.

Predictions were that the election would be close. Miller supporters, despite their predictions of certain victory, hardly believed themselves that they could actually beat Tony Boyle and the machine he had built up around himself in his 10 years as UMW president.

Miller took a narrow lead from the first. When early results showed him carrying 45 per cent of the vote in hard, pro-Boyle District 12, Boyle's bureaucracy at UMW headquarters in Washington, DC, began to look grim. The final vote count showed a clear victory for Miller.

The vision of grim, determined miners tramping into polling booths in hundreds of small mining towns seems remote from the lives of most American workers. But it's not.

The history of the United Mine Workers is, in many ways, a history of the entire American working class. Past struggles and aspirations of miners have changed the lives of millions of American workers who never have and never will set foot in a mine.

Now miners are struggling to reclaim their union as a fighting tool for the ranks, to free their union from the stranglehold of a corrupt bureaucracy. This struggle, like others before it, has the potential of having a profound effect on the American workers' movement.

The United Mine Workers was a union with a social vision in the 1930s and 1940s. Miners saw themselves as the leading force in a massive struggle to better the lives of workers everywhere.

They were proud of their union and the power that it held, and were unafraid to pit that power against anyone—giant corporations or even the government of the United States.

It was the UMW that took the lead when the American Federation of Labor, then the representative of all organised labour in the United States, proved incapable of organising the millions of new workers in auto, steel and rubber in the 1930s.

War crisis

Under the leadership of their legendary president, John L Lewis, the Mine Workers and several other unions left the AFL and formed the Congress of Industrial Organisations.

The UMW poured millions of dollars and hundreds of organisers into the CIO to win contracts in the new industries. In 1943 the UMW struck for higher wages and a better medical and pension plan. They were striking against the 'no-strike pledge'—a pledge that all American unions had signed saying that they would not strike during World War II.

The UMW strike posed a crisis so severe for the 'war effort' that the US government was forced to take over control of the mines. But the miners won that strike and came out of it with the best contract any American union had ever seen.

The story of the UMW in the 1950s is a story of decay, the story of a union cowed into subservience to the mine companies.

In 1962 Tony Boyle was elected president of the UMW. By that time the union was forgotten by most workers except miners themselves. It was if miners had retired into the hills, never to be heard again.

The official structure of the Mine Workers, under the iron-clad grip of Tony Boyle, refused to change. So the miners took matters into their own hands. The Black Lung Association, headed by Arnold Miller and centred mostly in West Virginia, went on strike for payments to miners disabled by black lung disease, the known killer of more than 700,000 miners.

And they won. West Virginian miners were the first to receive payments for the disease, but other states hurried to enact similar legislation to ward off trouble.

In 1970 miners struck for large wage increases—up to £20 per day for skilled workers. The mine companies eventually gave in to their demands, figuring that they were safe anyway since the government Pay Board would never let such large pay increases go into effect.

The companies underestimated one thing. Miners had never forgotten the lesson they learned about government interference in their union in the 1943 strike. They decided to stay out, despite Boyle's pleadings to return to work, until the Pay Board obeyed their new contract—which it hastened to do.



Top: Arnold Miller discussing with miners during the election campaign. Above: ousted president Boyle

American miners on the march again

by Lynn Jones

Reprinted from Workers' Power, paper of the International Socialists, USA

Joseph (Jock) Yablonski, himself a minor Boyle bureaucrat, understood that a 'movement' was developing among miners and attempted to place himself at its head. In 1969 he ran against Boyle for the UMW presidency on a mild reform platform, and lost.

Yablonski supporters claimed he would have won in a fair election, which it certainly wasn't. The US Department of Labor threw out the results of the 1969 election because of gross irregularities in the way the Boyle bureaucracy conducted it.

Found murdered

Yablonski was physically attacked at least twice during the campaign. He and his wife and daughter were found murdered in their home a few days following the election.

Miners for Democracy is the organised leadership of the mass miners' movement in the coal fields. It con-

sists of Yablonski's forces, the Black Lung Association, and other militant sections of the UMW, including many of the young Vietnam veterans who have gone into the pits.

In May 1972, MFD met in Wheeling, West Virginia. There hundreds of delegates, mostly local union officials, chose Arnold Miller, Mike Turbovich, and Harry Patrick as their candidates for president, vice-president and secretary-treasurer of the UMW. The delegates also chose the platform on which their candidates would run.

Health and safety. For every working day that Tony Boyle was in office, two miners died in the coal pits. A mining disaster in Farmington, West Virginia, finally provoked the government to consider passage of a stronger Mine Safety Bill in 1970.

Miller, as his leadership of the Black Lung Association shows, has long been a militant on health and safety. Even in the most conservative period of the union in the 1950s, miners struck locally over health and safety issues.

Miller promises to give official UMW sanction to any health and safety strike, including those called during the life of a contract. If Miller lives up to this promise, the ranks of the UMW could, for the first time in history, force the mine companies to live up to the letter of the law.

Pensions. The UMW Pension Fund, and especially the anthracite miners' fund, has been on a bad footing for years. Boyle did nothing to put that fund in good order.

At the current rate, unless some way is found to bring more money into the fund, pension payments will end once and for all in 1975. Miller promises to put the fund on a sound footing and to equalise pension payments to all miners.

Miller also promises to increase coal company payments and organise the many small, unorganised pits that abound in the Appalachian coal field. Still, all these measures put together won't solve the problem and he has come up with nothing else so far.

Union democracy. All union officials were appointed under Boyle, including the international executive board and all district officers.

Shortly after taking office, Miller fired the executive board and appointed several new members. He promises that the majority of the board, which he has not yet appointed, will be elected.

He also promises that district officers will be elected and MFD has already, prior to the election, started legal action against the Boyle bureaucracy for refusing such elections.

Boyle's counter-campaign consisted largely of name-calling. He red-baited Miners for Democracy and referred often to their 'hotline to Moscow' and 'outside support'. He warned that Miller's proposals, if put into action, would destroy the UMW.

MFD did initiate massive government intervention in the union. Miners fear and distrust all government intervention in union affairs, and they resent MFD for opening the UMW to government scrutiny.

While most miners were likely to laugh off Boyle's 'hotline to Moscow' routine, they knew that MFD did have outside support. Again, miners have traditionally kept their union out of the folds of either the Democratic or Republican Party.

MFD continually drew on supporters from the Democratic Party. Miners fear that, once elected, Miller will bring the union into the workings of the Democratic Party machine.

Fighting force

What is significant is that miners realising all the dangers involved in electing Miller, still chose to do so. Thousands of rank and file miners across the country, after listening to Miller and MFD, chose to try to rebuild their union into the fighting force that it once was.

Miller's election was greeted with wave of walkouts throughout the coal fields over health and safety.

The ranks did not elect Miller for what Miller will do. They elected Miller because they see in him a chance for the rank and file of the UMW to have its own way with the union.

The Miners for Democracy victory has opened the door for democracy in the UMW, but not necessarily the kind of democracy that its leaders and their government Labor Department allies envisaged. Instead it will be, if the ranks have their way, the democracy of an active rank and file continually pushing their leadership to greater militancy.

The last time the UMW moved with a far-sighted leadership at its head, the CIO was born. The rest of the American working class will have to decide what will be born this time.

Did you miss the January International Socialism?

Demand for the new-style monthly journal was high—and it was sold out one week after publication.

All the more reason for ordering the February issue now or better still taking out an annual subscription.

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Owen Traynor died alone, for weeks he had been too ill to clean his own filth from around him... Doctor, hospital, police knew of his condition. Later they duly made their excuses to the coroner.



OWEN TRAYNOR was 77 when he died in a Salford slum. He was so ill from broncho-pneumonia that he could not move from the chair in which he died.

He was visited regularly before his death but neither the Health Service, the Meals on Wheels service nor the police, all of whom knew of his condition, did anything to help him. He died from a combination of pain, illness, cold and starvation.

Mr Traynor lived in Broughton Street, Salford, heart of the 'Love on the Dole' country. He had worked all his life as a building labourer, and had lived alone since his retirement. In July last year he was treated for severe stomach pains for two weeks at Crumpsall Hospital, Salford.

According to evidence given at an inquest in Salford earlier this month, he had 'deteriorated ever since'. For most of the time he was incapable of much movement. Before long his two-room flat became a jungle of old clothes, mouldy food, excreta and vomit.

His only regular contact with human beings was the weekly visit paid him by his brother and sister-in-law. Mr and Mrs Traynor arrived as usual on Monday morning, 6 November, to find Owen slumped in his chair covered in filth.

'He appeared to be in very great pain and had been vomiting. He kept saying that he wanted to die and he was cold and shivering.'

They made him a hot drink and lit the

fire and then Mrs Traynor went out to find someone who could help her brother-in-law.

She went first to a surgery where three doctors had a practice. They assured her they would attend as soon as possible.

When she returned to her brother-in-law, he said a doctor had called and that he would be taken to hospital that day. By seven that evening, no one had appeared. Mrs Traynor again telephoned Crumpsall Hospital, and was again assured that the matter was in hand.

Refusal

On Tuesday morning, Mrs Traynor went back to her brother-in-law's house. He was very ill indeed, in agony. She again rushed to the doctor's surgery, and was again told that the hospital had the problem under control. A hospital doctor would call at 4pm.

No doctor arrived.

The following day, Wednesday 8 November, Owen Traynor was even worse.

Mr and Mrs Traynor then turned in desperation to the police. They went by taxi to Broughton police station, Salford, where they were greeted by the desk clerk, Constable David Barlow.

Oh, no, Constable Barlow explained, this was not a police matter. There was nothing, nothing at all which the police could do in this situation. Mrs Traynor implored the officer at least to ring a doctor or a hospital, but Constable Barlow refused.

Near-hysterical, Mrs Traynor returned to

her brother-in-law's flat.

'The place,' she later told the coroner, wasn't fit for a rat to be in, never mind a man. I was very distressed and haven't been right since. I was ill, and nobody would lift a finger to help. It was so disgusting.

'I was so upset that I wasn't able to go the following day. I was sick and my inside was turning over. I have never seen anything like it in my life, and I never want to see anything like that flat again.'

Mrs Traynor could not have done much if she had returned that Thursday morning. Owen Traynor was found dead by the health visitor, Mrs Margaret Kyte, who had visited him on each of the last three days of his life but, like Mrs Traynor, had been unable to find anyone who could help him.

Everyone duly made their excuses to the Coroner. Dr Kazi from the doctors' practice said that he had assumed the hospital would look after Mr Traynor. Dr Khan from Crumpsall Hospital said he had called at Mr Traynor's flat but had 'found no sign of life' and had gone away.

And Police Constable David Barlow agreed that he had turned Mr and Mrs Traynor away without doing anything to help them. He said proudly: 'I am satisfied with the way I handled the situation because it was not a police matter.'

Dr R M Winston, a consultant at Hope Hospital, said that if Mr Traynor had been admitted to hospital on the Monday, it was possible that he might not have died.

THE BOSSES

PREPARE

TO HIDE

CONCORDE'S

DEATH TOLL

IT COSTS more than a thousand million pounds. It pollutes the atmosphere. It's called 001 because only .001 of the population are likely ever to fly in it.

The outcry against Concorde would be even greater if the public realised that, besides taking its money and causing environmental damage, Concorde will also cause death. Dr John Adams, of London University, points out that there is 'a very high probability that within a given period a sonic boom from Concorde would trigger fatal heart attacks in certain medical cases living beneath its flight path.'

OBTACLES

If, on every occasion, Concorde took the same flight path, then the deaths would all tend to occur in the same area. In such circumstances, people living in the danger zone are likely to become alarmed. The public will probably start campaigning for the aircraft to be banned.

Equally serious, from the manufacturer's standpoint, it might find itself involved in expensive legal actions for compensation.

To surmount these obstacles, a 'flight path randomizer' has been developed. This means that the Concorde flight path is varied many times. As a result, the sonic booms still kill the same number of people but they are spread over a wider area.

IGNORANCE

This will bring the death level down in any particular town or village to a size which is less likely to arouse public concern. Also there would be a greater possibility that the victims of Concorde will have their deaths attributed to natural causes. Costly legal actions will be fewer, perhaps even none at all.

A new term—'the economies of ignorance'—is now becoming fashionable in business circles. Acutely aware of the predicaments of thalidomide manufacturers, Distillers, industrialists want to avoid unpopularity and the payment of large sums of compensation. So it is important for them not to be seen as responsible for death or injury even when in fact they are.

RAY CHALLINOR

How to claim your benefit

WHEN claiming social security benefits, knowing how to claim, how to find your way through the maze of procedure, puts you over the first fence.

When you are involved in a dispute you are not unemployed, so you don't sign on at the employment exchange. Go straight to your local Department of Health and Social Security Office (phone first to make sure it covers your area if you don't know).

Sometimes the Social Security opens special centres if a lot of people are involved. This happened last year during the miners' strike and the Manchester engineering sit-ins.

This has the advantage of keeping everybody together, but it doesn't give you the chance of seeing how the SS operate normally. It may mean you have to suffer even worse conditions (such as a draughty church hall) than at the proper office.

Normally you have to go along in person to claim, though there is provision for wives or husbands to go instead. During the 1972 miners' strike the Social Security refused to let miners' wives represent their husbands, which meant that men had to waste time in the offices when they could have been picketing.

**KNOW
YOUR
RIGHTS**



Strikers and the Social Security—part four

At the office you have to fill in a four-page form. Take along pay-slips, rent-book (or mortgage papers or rates demands), family allowance book, and something such as a driving licence as a means of identification. They will ask questions about your family, and when you were last paid, if you have any savings, and so on. If they ask irrelevant questions, demand to know what purpose the information will serve if given.

The golden rule is never go alone, if at all possible. When dealing with the Social Security, unity is indeed strength. Remember that the officials nearly always see their interests as the same as the employers' and the government's, so they will try to give you as little as possible. Moreover, the offices are often understaffed, and

the number of mistakes made is very high.

The only way to beat the Social Security is to know your rights, to organise collectively to make your claims, and to fight if necessary. Even the most militant individual can give up in desperation if he's on his own.

Union officials may be helpful—but their interests and yours may be poles apart, and they may never have had to make a claim themselves. And there is no knowing what can go on when two sets of bureaucrats get together to negotiate.

The best way is to organise yourselves.

NEXT WEEK: Starting a claimants' committee.



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'The language of the civilised nations has clearly marked off two epochs in the development of Russia. Where the aristocratic culture introduced into world parlance such barbarisms as czar, pogrom, knout, October has internationalised such words as Bolshevik, soviet... This alone justifies the proletarian revolution, if you imagine it needs justification'—Trotsky.



MIKE McGRATH

From mummies to militancy

ONE of the most heartening aspects of the current wave of revolt against the government's polar policies is the involvement of groups of workers not usually re-knowned for their militancy.

Any straw poll on 'the group least likely to go on strike' would almost certainly have been won by the Civil Service a few months ago. Yet suddenly suburban gents in bowler hats and impeccably furled umbrellas have downed pens for work-time protest meetings and mass rallies up and down the country are demanding tough action, including strikes.

It must cause considerable concern in ruling circles when people traditionally dismissed as compliant, unquestioning supporters of the system begin to throw off their self-imposed shackles.

Of course the bowler hat brigade are not the sole members of the Civil Service. It is an enormous, sprawling institution of government departments and ministries and it employs manual as well as clerical workers.

Mainspring

Many employees are locked away in research establishments apparently remote from the real world and there is a certain pleasing irony in discovering that Mike McGrath, one of the leading militants in the present upsurge, works in the Egyptian Antiquities department of the British Museum in London.

Mike, 32 years-old chairman of the museum's Civil and Public Services Association branch and a member of the International Socialists, is one of the founders of Redder Tape, name of a CPSA rank and file group and its paper (Red Tape is the title of the official union journal). The group

is one of the mainsprings beneath the present agitation and is busily organising meetings to rouse and organise the rank and file ferment.

Mike McGrath said that the stolid, middle-class, middle-aged image of the service has been turned upside down by the influx of many thousands of younger people who are not prepared to stomach low pay in return for the 'dignity' of their employment.

Pay in the Civil Service is a maze of 'incremental scales' negotiated by a body known as the Whitley Council. There are 16 points on the incremental scale and one of the demands of Redder Tape is a drastic reduction of the steps up the pay ladder and a higher minimum for those joining the service at 16.

Mike said that not only are salaries low for young clerical workers but that older workers who become locked into the incremental system can end up

earning £28 a week at 55. Even executive officers in the clerical section get little over £2000 a year.

Clerks at 25 years, a time when mortgages are being considered and families being reared, earn just £24 a week. And for those just starting, salaries are a sick joke. 'One London clerk in Redder Tape takes home £9 at 17 years of age. He just can't live on that.'

The CPSA with 200,000 members among clerks, typists and machine operators is far and away the biggest of the unions in the service and has been at the centre of the storm over pay. The unions don't talk hard cash in negotiations—that would be slightly indecent—but every two years take part in a pay research scheme that is supposed to bring Civil Servants up to the comparable rates for similar workers in private industry.

1 January was the time when the latest two year award was due—and Mike reckoned it should have been in the region of 20 per cent—but that has been lost in the arctic gale now blowing from Downing Street.

Redder Tape's demands for fighting the freeze are:

- Extended selected strikes in the most effective areas.
- A national one-day stoppage throughout the service, preferably with other public sector unions.
- The full pay research award backdated to 1 January.

'Washout'

The strength of these demands among the rank and file can be gauged from the fact that a resolution incorporating them was narrowly defeated by 15 votes to 11 on the CPSA executive. A successful counter-motion from general secretary Bill Kendall wanted the pay award backdated to 1 January, with the 'possibility' of joint industrial action and a call to the TUC for a special congress on the freeze—but no clear commitment to strike action.

'Kendall's demands are a wash-out,' Mike McGrath said. 'At the beginning of the freeze the leaders were very militant, with talk of week-long selected strikes.'

'But now they have seen the members in action they are back-tracking fast and are dropping any

idea about strike action because they say it would be "illegal" under the freeze. Their tactic at the mass rallies is to put a vague motion at the end without amendment or debate that gives them a blank cheque.

'They've got away with this in London, Reading and Glasgow, although the platform speakers were nearly lynched in Glasgow because of anger over their tactics.'

'That's why Redder Tape is pushing out 15,000 leaflets at all 22 rallies in an attempt to overturn the executive's policy.'

The union leadership is largely right-wing Labour Party in its political make-up. The present leadership ousted the Communist Party from control in the early 1950s, but, says Mike, for the members the change was largely one of faces, not politics.

'The Communist Party members kept their heads down when they were in power and now the party is virtually non-existent in the union.'

He explained that the absence of a traditional 'left-wing machine' in the union was one of the reasons behind the present rank and file upsurge.

Alliance

'There is no machine to absorb this militancy and channel in the direction of electioneering and pressure-group politics. But this also means that the present volatility of the members could easily be dispelled, especially if we are defeated. It is vital for Redder Tape to build an effective organisation now.'

One of the group's key demands is the setting up of a public sector alliance that would bring together teachers, workers in the Post Office, health service, local government, social security and the Civil Service to use their collective strength.

'This is not the same sort of alliance that Tom Jackson is talking of,' Mike said. 'Such an alliance Jackson-style means unity at the top that would not involve the rank and file.'

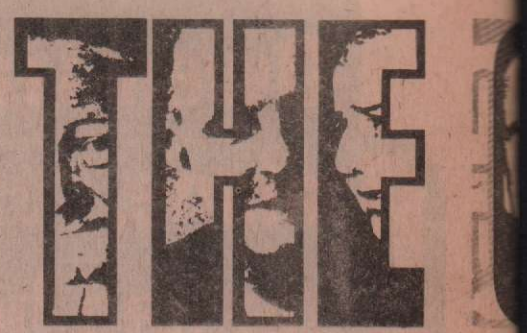
'What we're after is a fighting rank and file alliance. We want to see, for example, clerks and Post Office workers marching together on a one-day strike against the freeze. I think the possibilities are good. The Rank and File group in the teachers' union are also raising the demand for a one-day strike.'

But what about Bill Kendall's warning that strike action is illegal?

'The choice is clear,' Mike replied: 'Either we accept the law and get ground down by an unjust law or we fight with the only weapon at our disposal.'

'We've had the amazing spectacle of 4000 Civil Servants in London voting unanimously to endorse any action the union might take—which for the 4000 meant strike action. For the first time people have gone to work-time meetings, disrupted government departments and sensed the power to stop institutions that seemed impervious to outside influences.'

'We're learning now what other sections have learnt before us—that our strength is the strength of our own organisations.'



ONE of the proud boasts of British capitalism is that it has pioneered and sustained a 'democratic way of life'. Yet a look at the financial cornerstone of the system reveals a nightmare world of double-dealing, financial chicanery and a total disregard for the interests of ordinary people.

In an attempt to improve its image, the financiers and their press propagandists coined the quaint phrase 'people's capitalism' back in the 1950s, suggesting that small shareholders gained from the dividends and profits made in large companies in which they invested.

The Stock Exchange itself proclaimed in 1966 that 22 million people actually invested. This devastating figure brought sly grins to the faces of city slickers, for it included people holding insurance policies.

In fact only two million, including holders of unit trusts, actually invested personally in 1969. The Financial Times in the same year chronicled the sad 'decline of grass-roots capitalism'. The number of direct investors has since declined even more.

The financial world of capitalism exists 'not to make things, but to make money,' according to top financier Jim Slater. It is there to make money out of other people's money. It is a world of speculative ventures, of back-stabbing and of quick fortunes, graced with a veneer of ceremonies and banquets.

The millionaires of finance may never have seen a factory in their lives but they are quick to bestow their 'confidence' or 'death-blow' to large sections of industry by their power to withdraw shares or finance. Their links with actual production in society or its needs is remote. Large concentrations of shareholdings remain in companies like GEC or British Leyland only if the financiers think it is profitable for them.

The largest and most powerful of the financiers are the insurance companies. The Big Ten, including Lloyds, Pruden-

tial, Guardian Union, have a p of more than £3 year.

About 50 per cent of all 'Br capital' is owned by insting investment tr funds, and insur are giants among example is Prudde a colossal inve billion.

The decision companies to r

AND LIONEL SIMS REVIEWS THE

Top mugger in the money game

IN 1968 the backed to between A GEC and t Company. O the Woolwi been closed after GEC ha

Despite could say th contribution productivity, long-run intere Arnold We at the head of the Labour o three merge combined an £1000 million 235,000 work

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By 1961 father-in-law

RACIALISM IN BRITAIN

Derek Humphry

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GRAB MERCHANTS



THE DISASTER they cause: Arthur Wellard, founder member of the South East London Action Committee, a rank and file body fighting unemployment, in the now closed and derelict grounds of the AEI works in Woolwich. The City financiers were backers of the AEI 'rationalisation' programme that sacked thousands and ended in the merger with GEC.

Masker Vashee looks at the back-stabbing, wheeler-dealer world of high finance

Commercial premium income £100 millions per

SSAL

cent of 'voting' companies, including pension funds and insurance companies. The best initial, which has a payment of £2

Weinstock's GEC against AEI facilitated the merger and its consequences, high profits and massive redundancies. Institutions owned 40 per cent of the shares in AEI.

It was also Prudential's intervention that promoted Lord Robens of the National Coal Board to the part-time chairmanship of Vickers, the ailing 'merchant of death'.

The people who control this vast financial power are made up of a network of interlocking directorships, with close connections with the banks. Like the banks, the insurance com-

panies have 'outside directors', who meet once a month for a 'long lunch'.

The board consists of ancient peers, baronets, admirals and generals, fortified by merchant bankers. These backwoodsmen creep out every month to decide the destiny of this vast financial pool and disappear back into their country seats. General Accident has seven peers and baronets; Sun Alliance has a Rothschild, a Fleming (merchant bank), Lord Bearstead of Samuel Properties and Aldington of the National and Grindlays Bank and GEC.

In the money lending field, the Big Four banks are the traditional institutions. National Westminster, Lloyds, Barclays and Midlands had deposits totalling £12,600 millions in 1970.

This enormous wealth is controlled by 220 directors, a 'selective group' of whom a quarter are old Etonians.

Another feature is the habit of banks to co-opt their oldest customers on to their boards, who are then well-placed to help entrench themselves and each other—Economist, June 1966. This is not only the habit in

LIFE AND HARSH TIMES OF CITY DARLING ARNOLD WEINSTOCK

Wilson government the hit the merger Arnold Weinstock's the English Electric only a year before the AEI plant had and 5500 sacked taken over AEI.

his the government at the merger 'by its to higher exports and will be in the lists of the employees.' Weinstock would never be GEC-AEI-EE if not for government. He heads companies whose sales total nearly and used to employ

stone

out the Labour Weinstock would never £25 million personal

government came into the promise to make able for employers and e. Arnold Weinstock set in this fool's gold. n-sums up the futility message that the system

of fortunate accidents stock came to the the top men in the He married the he man who owned in 1949. By 1955, had changed its name Allied Industries, in charge. He paved cheap and highly sion-sets. Weinstock and his ere taken on to the



Weinstock: dog eat dog

same procedure was repeated at 35 regional headquarters.

Faced with running the massive GEC, instead of the tinpot Radio and Allied, he set about reorganising the form of management rule. Weinstock is not the person who reorganised the firm. He never visits the factories he runs.

His procedure is simple. He breaks the firm down into different divisions. To each division he appoints a management chief. On pain of the sack this manager must drive the workforce to meet a profit target set by Weinstock at headquarters.

Every month Weinstock studies the balance sheet of each division and whenever profits don't come up to the target a sacking is bound to follow. In this crazy dog-eat-dog world, Weinstock is the champ. He is the best mugger in the money business.

The man who unhesitatingly backed Weinstock for Mr Big in the heavy electrical industry was none other than . . . Tony Wedgwood Benn. Two top financial journalists, in their book on the merger, state the facts fairly:

Eloquent

'The GEC-AEI-English Electric merger was a victory for those members of the Labour government whose most eloquent spokesman was the Minister of Technology, Anthony Wedgwood Benn, and who believed that Britain's industrial strength would be enhanced by the creation of giant companies comparable in size to the leading businesses in America and on the continent.'

Wherever possible cheaper and shoddier production methods are being introduced. At the GEC subsidiary, Marconi, in New Street, Chelmsford, for example, instead of

using 16 gauge steel in metal fabrication, management have ordered a switch to 16 gauge aluminium.

An employee told me that in making up cabinets economies are being made in the welding of the frames. Sometimes pop-rivets are used instead of welding. This results in far weaker structures.

It is known that government inspectors have rejected a great number of them recently because they are too weak. It is rumoured that the Air Ministry is to inspect some of the processes because of the trouble which has been occurring.

And yet all the preparation and organisation which obviously went into the creation of GEC-AEI-EE was completely lost on the unions. While Weinstock picked off the workforce 'surplus to requirements' in plant after plant, the unions refused to launch a combine-wide counter-offensive.

Organise

Not because they hadn't thought of the idea. The joint shop stewards committee at GEC Rugby wrote to the GEC National Joint Consultative Council for the national officials to call for a public inquiry and organise a meeting of shop stewards from all GEC plants.

The minutes of the trade union side of the NJCC for 11 July 1972 state: 'It was agreed that no useful purpose would be served by seeking the sort of inquiry that had been suggested, and that the holding of the meeting as proposed would not be practicable.'

Arnold Weinstock has demonstrated to his class that he will stop at nothing to boost profits. It is up to the shop stewards and rank and file in the combine as a whole to stop at nothing in their fight against the bosses.

joint stock banks, but in almost all other financial institutions.

The 17 merchant banks, all family controlled, with assets of £3000 millions (excluding Rothschilds), have directors that sit on boards of insurance companies and industrial corporations. Lazards, the merchant bank of Lord Cowdray, the richest man in Britain, own Shell-Mex and S Pearsons and Sons, who in turn own the Financial Times, The Economist, Longman's and Penguin Books.

Lord Poole of Lazards is also a director of GEC. David Montague is a director of London Weekend Television and his bank has a large shareholding in the Midland Bank and Pearl Assurance.

POWERFUL

The biggest merchant bank, Hill Samuel, has directors who sit on the boards of nearly 50 major British industrial, financial and property companies.

With their financial power this small group of men can back mergers in industry, speculate on property, close down plants and industries and develop overseas empires. Barings have a large stake in Latin America and in Rothschilds, and they back Anglo-American, De Beers and Rio Tinto-Zinc in Southern Africa.

A new and powerful investor can also be found in the pension funds which every large company has set up for its workers. In 1971 these funds were worth £7000 millions. Some are controlled by insurance companies, though most are administered by the companies themselves. So it is possible for workers to contribute to these funds, as they do to insurance companies, and find

this very wealth being used against their interests.

The concentration of financial power has recently been accelerated by a new breed of financiers who pursue profit to its most ruthless logic. Jim Slater of Slater Walker Securities (in partnership with the Tory minister Peter Walker) has built up a vast fortune in buying and selling companies and properties.

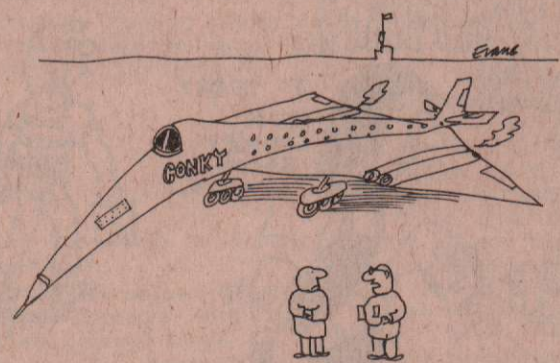
It is ironic that in times of slow growth in industry, the Jim Slaters of the world buy and sell companies to build their vast fortunes. They have no interest in production, in the lifetime of work on factory floors, but solely in using the wealth created by workers for profit.

This new breed are said to be the new Heath-type Tories and have been responsible for the millions poured into property speculation.

These financiers will not hesitate to undermine the economy through a transfer of 'hot money' abroad if they feel threatened by government policy or industrial unrest. Hundreds of millions of pounds were shipped overnight out of the City into European stock exchanges after Labour took office in 1964, during the devaluation crisis of 1967 and during the docks strike of 1970.

The speculators have bought up shares in industry, insurance companies, in banking and in unit trusts, bringing about the new super-financier. They control the factories people work in, the shops they buy in, large chunks of the cities they live in, and all for the benefit of nobody but themselves.

And that's the reality of capitalist 'democracy'—the rule of a small minority based on the exploitation of the rest.



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.'

15p per copy plus 3p postage, six copies or more post free, from BRISTOL INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS, 9a Oakland Road, Bristol 6.

REVIEW

BOOKS

The General Strike, by Christopher Farman, Hart-Davis £3.50

THE General Strike of 1926 was probably the most important single event in the history of the Labour movement in Britain in the past 100 years. Its defeat put the seal on 15 years of rising industrial militancy and opened the way for 40 years of right-wing domination of the trade unions.

Yet little published material is readily available for those who want to learn about the strike.

If for no other reason, the recent appearance of a detailed account by Christopher Farman (*The General Strike*, Hart-Davis, £3.50) is to be welcomed.

Farman would not claim to be a revolutionary. Yet his book contains all the information needed to undermine the orthodox view of the General Strike—that it failed because the trade unions tried to do the 'impossible' in using industrial strength for political purposes. Instead what emerges as the single, most important cause of defeat is the vacillation, cowardice and outright treachery of the official leaders of the strike, whether their politics were ostensibly right-wing Labour or left-wing Labour.

In the mid-1920s British big business found itself in a situation in some ways similar to that today. Its ability to compete with its main foreign rivals was slipping. It was not yet on its deathbed, but it certainly wasn't as sprightly as it had been. The only way it saw to reinvigorate itself was to make sharp and prolonged attacks on the living standards of workers and the organised strength of the trade unions.

Stanley Baldwin, prime minister at the time, put the issue bluntly to a miners' delegation: 'All the workers in this country have got to face a reduction in wages.'

'What do you mean?'
'I mean all the workers in this country have got to take a reduction in wages to help put industry on its feet.'

Victory

The first to feel the pressure for a wage cut were the miners, the largest single group of workers. It was clear to everyone that if the miners gave in, it would make resistance by other sections of workers difficult.

Where the mine-owners and the government tried to take on the miners' union, they received a sharp rebuff. The transport workers' and railwaymen's unions announced that their members would move no coal—at a time when stocks were low. This would mean the closure of most industry in a matter of days, so the government did a quick about turn and announced that it would subsidise the mines for nine months, so that the owners could pay the old wages.

It seemed that a great victory had been won by the workers. 'Red Friday' proclaimed the Daily Herald. The unions, it seemed, had proved their power as never before.

The government, however, had suffered a setback, not a permanent defeat. It was determined to wreak its revenge and said so in tones loud enough for anyone to hear who was not deliberately plugging his ears.

The great crash of the working class

The Home Secretary, Sir William Joynson-Hicks, announced: 'The danger is not over. Sooner or later this question has got to be fought out by the people of the land.'

A special committee was established to ensure that in the event of a further clash there would be an adequate distribution of supplies, under the control of regional commissioners with dictatorial powers. A body called the Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies appealed for 'volunteers' and began to train them for scab duties.

The government's preparations did not stop there. To give an air of 'impartiality' to its wage-cutting measures, it set up a committee of inquiry into the mining industry, made up of 'a few distinguished men of business' and headed by Lord Samuel, who had just retired from running Palestine for the government.

It was hardly surprising when seven months later, the committee recommended wage cuts combined with a 're-

organisation of the industry'.

From TUC platforms speeches were made more militant than any before or since. At the TUC Congress the president, Alonzo Swales, spoke of 'clear indications of a world movement rising in revolt and determined to shake off the shackles of wage slavery.'

The speeches were not translated into action. While the government prepared for confrontation, the TUC merely waited for the nine months to pass. They ran out with the TUC no more prepared for action than at the start.

Massive

The mine owners announced that they would lock out their workers unless wage cuts were agreed by 1 May. Still the TUC made no preparations. It called a meeting of trade union executives to vote on all-out general strike action, but even while they were meeting, the TUC General Council devoted its energies not to discuss-

ing how to make the strike effective, but to trying to fix up a last-minute agreement with the government.

But if the trade union leaders wanted to give ground, the government would not let them.

What followed was a massive display of working-class solidarity. Despite the lack of preparation, there was an almost unanimous response to the call for strike action. Trade union leaders remarked that their problem was not calling men out, but keeping some at work. Leading Tory J C Davidson said later: 'The workers' reaction to the strike call had been much more complete than we had expected...'

On its ninth day, the strike was if anything more solid than on the first. Yet at that point the trade union leaders went to Baldwin and told him that they were calling it off without the government having given any ground.

The unions did not even ensure that there were guarantees against victimisation for their own members. Tens of thousands of rank-and-file activists were blacklisted.

Justifying the abandonment of the strike, spokesmen for the TUC General Council such as Jimmy Thomas of the railwaymen and John Bromley of the locomen, claimed there had been a mass return to work. But as Christopher Farman points out: 'This theme... continually stressed by Thomas and Bromley... had no basis in fact. More than 99 per cent of all railway staff remained loyal to the strike.'

Secret

How was the trade union leadership's amazing behaviour to be explained? In part it was a result of pure treachery. Some of the union leaders had become conscious supporters of the employing class.

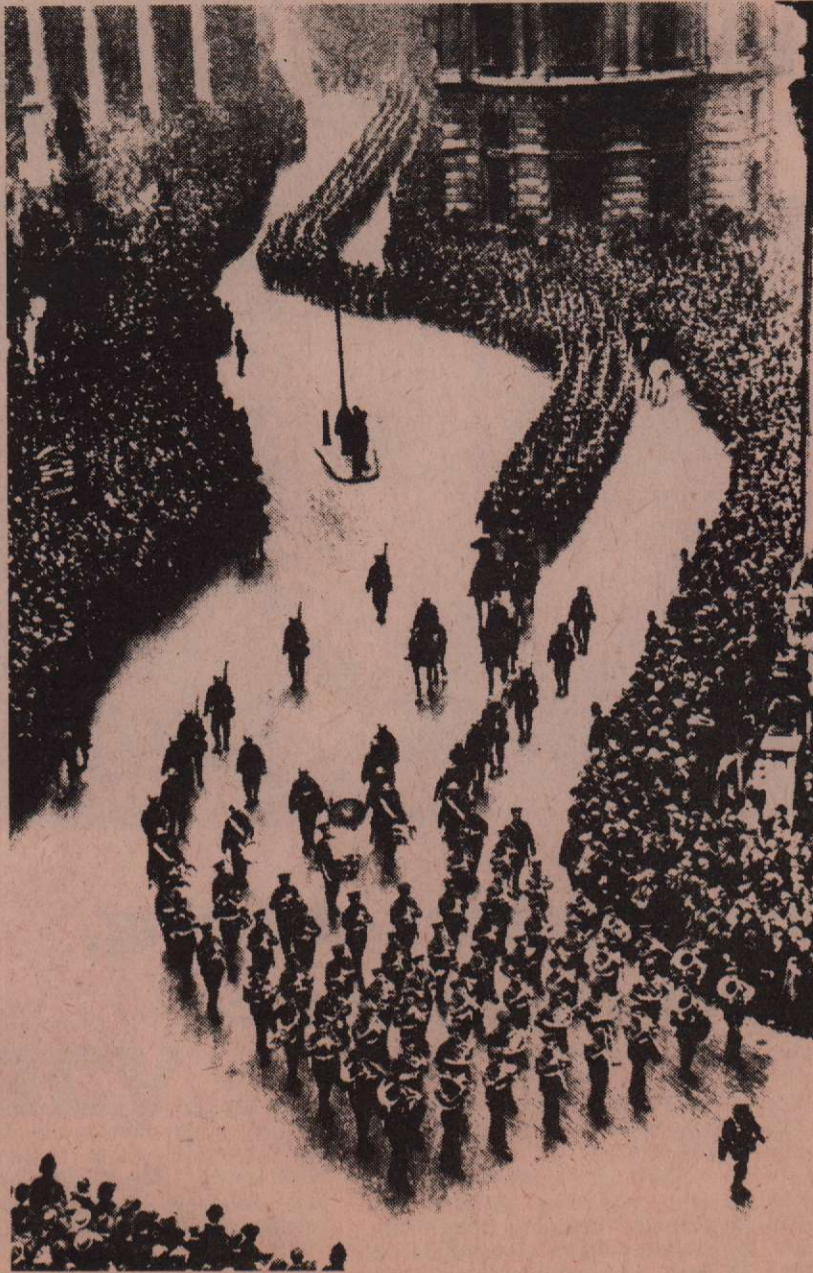
For instance, Ben Tillett, best remembered as one of the leaders of the great dock strikes of 1889 and 1911, was a member of the TUC's industrial committee. But he had already, in 1923, secretly offered his services to Tory Premier Baldwin. J C Davidson described Tillett as 'absolutely broke'; is going to fight Communism in the winter, and evidently wants financial help.'

Apparently it was suggested that the chairman of the Tory Party 'might be prepared to make a special grant of £1000...'

Other members of the industrial committee were similarly prepared to ingratiate themselves with the ruling class. Thomas was never happier than in the company of big businessmen, members of the House of Lords or, ideally, the royal family. He did not allow even the most important strike his members had ever been involved in to upset his social life.

For instance, he was a guest at a luncheon party during the strike at 'the gracious Arlington Street residence of

The First Brigade of Guards marching through London after the strike. Jimmy Thomas of the railwaymen's union had told the TUC General Council: 'The streets will soon be running with blood.' The TUC leaders gave in.



Lord and Lady Wimborne'. Wimborne was a landowner and industrialist. Others in attendance included coal mine owners Lords Londonderry and Gainford, and the former Viceroy of India, Lord Reading.

Another leading member of the industrial committee, Pugh, felt able to make a secret visit to Baldwin during the last crucial days while the lockout notices were running out.

But the corruption of a few individuals is not sufficient to explain the great sell-out, if only because other leaders, who seemed more honest, pursued the same policies.

Bromley, for instance, was very left-wing indeed in words. He had been a bitter opponent of the policies pursued by the first Labour government the year before, and was opposed to the ban preventing communists from being members of the Labour Party.

Neither Bromley, nor the other two 'left wingers' on the industrial committee, Swales and Hicks, ever complained of the failure to prepare for the strike. Nor did they protest at the sell-out.

Such leaders were as left wing, if not more so, than any of today's trade union leaders. But like today's leaders, they did not see any real connection between the activity of their unions within capitalist society and the smashing of that society to build socialism.

Loss

Instead they saw the essential task of trade unionism as to build its strength gradually, forcing more and more concessions from the system, and, in the meantime, to enable themselves to become more powerful and get more prestige. The main job was to negotiate with the employer. Talk of overthrowing him was for conference platforms only.

But such methods could only work while the employing class was prepared to make concessions. Once it decided it was going to use every weapon in its armoury to weaken the trade union movement, trade union leaders were at a loss to know what to do.

Millions of workers had joined the unions because of low wages and appalling conditions. Now they would get even lower wages and worse conditions unless the unions took on the government.

But once the fight with the government began, there was no knowing where it would lead. The union leaders lived in constant fear that it might mean the end of their own power.

Walter Citrine, then general secretary of the TUC, described how the whole General Council was left 'in a state of gloom' after Thomas told them 'the streets would soon be running with blood... There was no compromise. The government must fight until we are all smashed. Of course we all knew we must be smashed...'

Vicious

Rather than face such risks, the left-wing union leaders preferred to throw overboard the interests of their members and the independence of the trade union movement.

Christopher Farman's book gives an account of all the manoeuvres of the trade union leaders as they tried to appear militant and then ran away from militancy. He has picked out from the memoirs of union leaders and Tory ministers an inside story that has never before been so fully told.

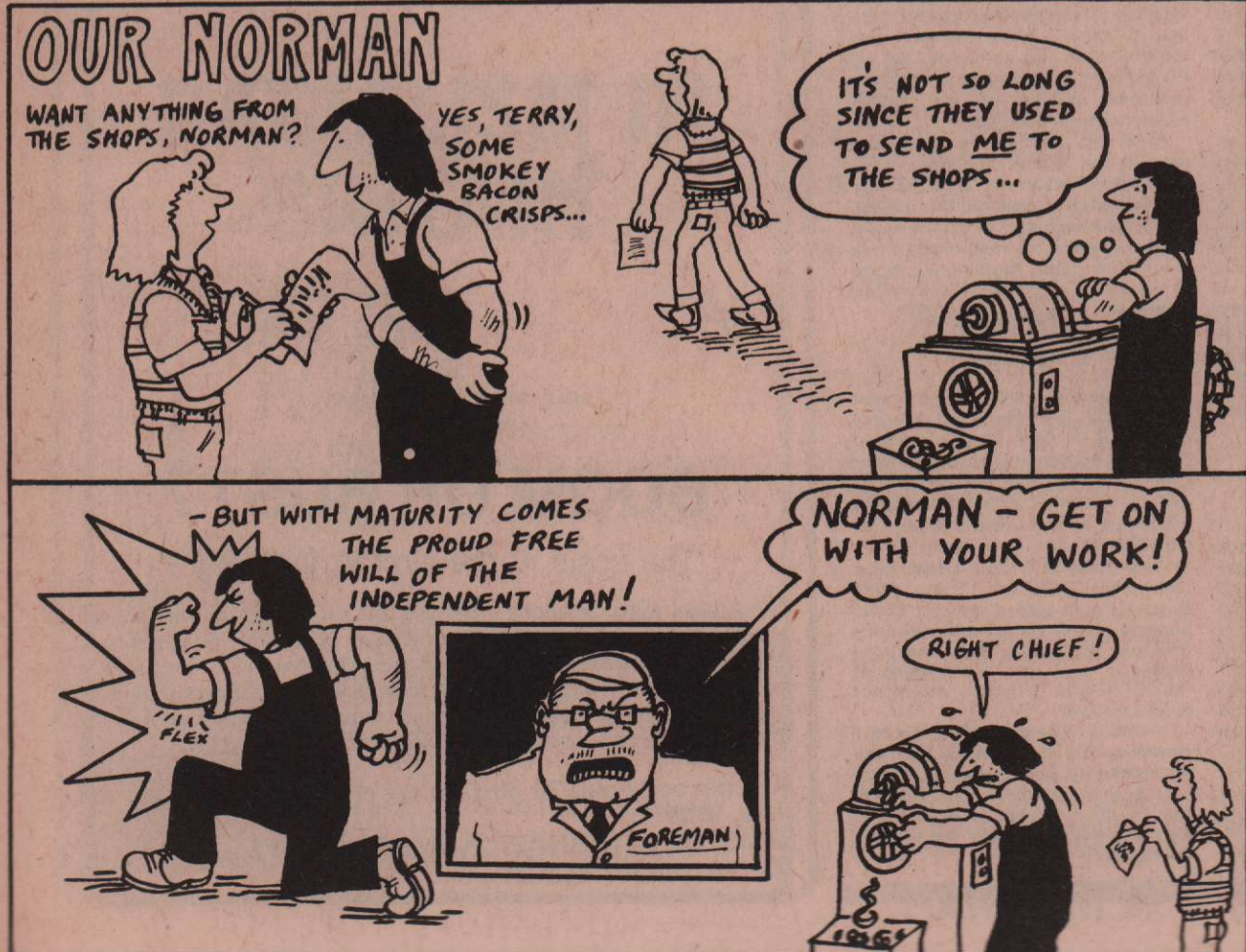
He also gives an excellent account of the strike in the localities, with graphic descriptions of the vicious way the police treated the strikers in many areas. He notes that far from defensive action by pickets aggravating violence, 'where defence corps existed there appears to have been less trouble than in areas where they did not.'

Yet this wealth of valuable detail, the book has a number of faults. The author often draws conclusions quite opposed to the facts he himself puts forward—as when he writes that the TUC made a mistake in calling out the newspaper workers.

He confuses marginal detail with the central story, particularly when dealing with the manoeuvres between different ruling-class politicians.

He falls for the line that some Tories were more sympathetic to the workers than others, not grasping that their disagreements were merely factually about how best to achieve a single goal, the cutting of workers' wages and a restoration of British capitalism to its pre-1914 grandeur.

Chris Harman



BBC JOINS STATE COVER-UP OF LEGALISED MURDER

ONE of the most successful of last year's television plays, *To Encourage the Others*, was repeated by the BBC on Tuesday.

It is taken from the book of the same name by David Yallop about the trial of Christopher Craig and Derek Bentley for murder and the hanging of Bentley that followed.

The play was successful, judging by the reaction of most television critics, the general public and the BBC itself. The critics praised it in their erudite pieces, the general public wrote voluminously to the director, the producer, the author and to the Bentley family, and the BBC considered it their 'Scoop of the Year'.

So it is somewhat surprising to find that it took a struggle to get the play repeated and that it appeared not on BBC1 but again on BBC2. Even more surprising, or more shocking, is that the BBC has cut the play.

David Yallop's contention is that police officer Miles was killed by another police bullet and not by Craig or Bentley. This is largely based on information given to him in an interview with police pathologist Dr David Haler.

Dr Haler stated that Miles was killed by a bullet (never found) of between .32 and a .38 calibre. Such a calibre bullet would have fitted the police guns but could not have been fired from Craig's sawn-off .455 Ely.

Dr Haler also said that Miles could only have been killed by someone shooting from about 6ft away. The police evidence stated that Craig was 39ft away—and everyone is agreed that it was a dark night. None of this was touched upon at the trial.

Denial

Presumably the BBC was sensitive to the possibility of being sued by Dr Haler. But the publication of David Yallop's book in November 1971 brought no reaction from him and it was only after the transmission of the play last March that he began issuing public statements denying that he had given Yallop the information about the calibre of the bullet.

In fact, before the book's publication he had confirmed his statements to two of the publisher's solicitors, and although none of his later demands for the deletion of passages and for damages were met he has gone no further.

Since Yallop's statements concerning Dr Haler's evidence are highly actionable, why has he not carried out his threat to sue? Almost a year has passed and neither the author nor the publisher (nor the BBC?) has heard another word from Dr Haler or his solicitors.

Nevertheless, the BBC saw fit to cut this section from the play.

As in the case of James Hanratty,



LEFT: Charles Bolton as Derek Bentley in David Yallop's play, *To Encourage the Others*. Bentley was hanged in 1952 for the murder of a police constable on a Croydon rooftop. At the trial the police accepted that Bentley's friend Christopher Craig had done the killing... but Craig was too young to hang. Yallop gives evidence to show that the constable was killed by a bullet fired by another policeman.

BELOW: Billy Hamon as Christopher Craig in a scene of the play filmed on the Croydon rooftop when the shooting actually happened.



who was hanged after the A6 murder trial, considerable public disquiet at the verdict has led to demands for an impartial review of the case of Craig and Bentley. Repeated questions in the House of Commons by Russell Kerr MP eventually received a written reply last May from the then Home Secretary Reginald Maudling.

Maudling said he was concerned 'only to consider whether any material fresh evidence has come to light which was not before the courts and which might have affected the verdict, and it is on this basis I have approached the matter.' He had instigated a police inquiry into the matter. Predictably, the Commissioner of Police found nothing to justify any action on the part of the Home Secretary or to warrant any more extensive inquiries.

The most likely reason for this is that the police had questioned only two people—their pathologist, Dr Haler, and former Detective Constable Fairfax, both of whom denied having said what Yallop contends they did say. Yallop himself was not questioned, nor did the police show any interest in the tapes and transcripts which he holds of his interviews.

In taking as his yardstick only the possibility that fresh evidence might have come to light, Mr Maudling saw fit to dismiss categorically all sorts of other considerations about the Craig-Bentley case.

What of the fact that Professor Sir Dennis Hill, a world authority on the human brain, had wished to make public his opinion that, apart from having an IQ of 66 and a mental age of nine, Bentley was also an epileptic? The Home Office had refused him permission to make this statement on the grounds that 'it would not be in the public interest.'

What of the fact that three police constables, Pain, Bugden and Alderson, who were also on the roof of the Croydon warehouse when the shooting happened, had never been called to give evidence?

Of the seemingly appalling fact that Bentley was hanged for murder although he had been under arrest for at least 20 minutes at the time of Constable Miles' death and although armed, with a knuckleduster, had made absolutely no attempt to either resist arrest or to escape.

Sweeping

That the fatal bullet has never been produced.

That the summing-up by the presiding judge, Lord Goddard, was emotive and prejudiced in the extreme. Lord Goodman, speaking in the House of Lords last year said: 'There can be little doubt that anyone who now... reads his summing-up in this case could hardly fail to

arrive at the conclusion that this was not one of the most creditable performances of a distinguished judge.'

That although Lord Goddard had managed to summarise Bentley's defence in two sentences of his summing-up, the three Appeal Court judges had come to the sweeping conclusion that there was nothing to criticise in this summing-up.

Lord Goodman, himself a distinguished jurist, said of the Appeal Court verdict: 'How any experienced judge, reading this summing-up, could have arrived at the conclusion that

there was nothing to criticise in it, passes my understanding, and—I venture to think—passes belief.'

Why did the police inquire into only one aspect of the case when so many other circumstances are so unsatisfactory?

And above all why was the inquiry secret. Was it because, as Lord Arran suggested in the House of Lords, the interested parties, namely the police, were themselves the inquirers?

On 14 June last year Lord Goodman initiated a debate in the Lords asking that the government might consider reviewing the cases of Bentley and Hanratty.

Viscount Colville, in answering dismissed the possibility of there being any new evidence. He said there were no grounds for a public inquiry because there was simply evidence which had been suppressed at the time of the trial, but as it was known it could not be said to be new.

The latitude thus given to police and state hardly bears thinking about.

Colville further argued that there were no grounds for an inquiry because there was no laid-down parliamentary procedure for conducting it and as the only result that could possibly arise would point to such legal inconsistencies that it would not be 'a satisfactory precedent for anyone if this were to occur.'

It is not surprising that the courts, the government, even the BBC close ranks. Though the establishment is always the first to mouth the words liberty and justice, it is so much bombast.

All the forces of the state combined to kill Derek Bentley. The same forces now combine to deny society the truth.

There's a sting in the Nasty Tale

THE FOUR defendants in the Nasty Tales obscenity trial were acquitted last week.

The affair had started just two days before the Oz Trial in June 1971, when the police raided the offices of the London underground paper IT. The fortnight-long trial ended last Thursday at the London Palladium of Pornography, the Old Bailey.

Nasty Tales is a comic book and sells at 20p, and is mainly composed of American material taken from the underground press. As one of the Nasty Tales Defence Group pointed out: 'There are hardly any good English underground cartoonists.' He made an exception for Edward Barker, who by now may be considering retiring—being one of the defendants in the trial.

The charge was the production of 'obscene articles for publication for gain'.

Even within the ruling class's legal swamp the laws on 'obscenity' are a peculiarly stagnant pool. But the

police, the courts and various 'concerned citizens' spend much time paddling in it. Arguments about it make as much sense as discussing whether wearing top-hats causes a receding hairline.

This didn't worry Judge King-Hamilton. 'You may be surprised,' he told the jury, 'that anyone has come forward to say that anything in the comic had either literary or artistic merit. But there you are, the world is full of surprises.'

Satire

One of the defendants, Joy Farren, had been referred to as the 'mother' of the group. King-Hamilton suggested that it was surprising that she hadn't advised the misguided hippies to return to their parents. This was too much for the defence, who pointed out that there was no evidence that the hippies had ever LEFT their parents.

The 'surprises' the judge was talking about were Germaine Greer, who

gave the court an interesting lecture on satire from Dryden to the present day, and George Perry of that well known filth sheet the Sunday Times Colour Magazine.

Most merchants of 'pornography' live to ripe old age and make lots of money. Occasionally they are branded as corruptors of youth and get fined. The section of the community who do get regularly hammered are those people who are prosecuted for pornography but are in fact making a political point. Into this category come the four Nasty Tales defendants.

The cartoons in Nasty Tales are often politically false (in my opinion), sexually degrading (in my opinion), fascist in their implications (in my opinion). They are sometimes very funny, savagely accurate, and artistically excellent (in my opinion).

The magazine's sales have made nobody rich, but did make one person angry. A social worker's eight-year-old child bought a copy under the impression she was buying Beano (or that's what she said). At 20p a go

the child was clearly in the upper income bracket.

Mum was not amused. The police were and appeared with search warrant and criminal charge.

It is true but unhelpful to say that the 'real' pornography in this society is homelessness, exploitation, and mass murder. When the press and television talk of pornography they mean dirty books.

What is a 'dirty' book? Something which takes the taboos and fetishes of this sick society and provides a mirror image. Beat your child when he's 10 and there's a fair chance he'll be paying someone to do it to him when he's 40. To rid this society of pornography is as ludicrous as to try to lose your shadow.

What Nasty Tales tries to do, with varying degrees of success, is to hold the mirror up to reality—and laugh at it. That is never popular with our rulers.

Nigel Fountain

Lynette Trotter

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

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

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

WALES and SOUTH WEST

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

THE UNIONS

Feather moves to stop aid for paper under legal attack

TUC general secretary Vic Feather has warned secretaries of all trades councils that it would be 'improper' for them to make any donations to the Voice of the Unions newspaper financial appeal to cover its costs and damages in a libel action brought in 1968 by right-wing Electrical Trades Union officials.

Feather's letter, dated 11 January, states that trades councils should not take any action which could in any way impinge on the internal affairs of affiliated unions. He adds that support for the libel appeal would constitute such interference in the affairs of a member union.

Fourteen officials of the EPTU, including Frank Chapple the present general president, and his predecessor the late Sir Leslie Cannon, sued two members of Voice of the Unions editorial

board and their printers following the publication in 1968 of an article describing the erosion of democracy in the union.

The EPTU officials asserted that the article—written by rank and file electricians—implied that officers of the union were guilty of ballot rigging.

Settled

The Voice editorial board vigorously denied the article contained any such suggestion, but offered to publish a complete retraction of any such implication in the paper. The EPTU officials concerned would not accept this offer unless 'substantial damages' were paid in addition.

Three years' later the two members of the editorial board settled the action without any admission of liability for £75 each plus the publication of an apology.

But Voice's printers, Ripley Printers, a small non-profit making co-operative working almost exclusively for the labour movement, settled the action (unwisely as it later transpired) much earlier because they were afraid of the high risks of contending the case.

The EPTU officials later put their figure for a settlement with the printers at £1000 plus costs and have since sent in the bailiffs to recover the balance of the debt.

The Voice libel appeal is trying to raise £2300 to cover Ripley's costs. The money is urgently needed and donations should be sent to Ken Graham, Voice Libel Appeal Treasurer, 73 Ridgway Place, London SW9.

Several trades councils have already decided to ignore Feather's letter and make donations. If Feather's interpretation of the standing of trades councils were adhered to, then they would be completely powerless.

HAWKER TO GET A 'THORN IN SIDE'

HAWKER SIDDELEY, a company whose profits are expected to leap by 50 per cent this year, is faced with what could grow into 'one big thorn in its side'.

These were the words of one Hawker Siddeley steward at a Coventry conference of shop stewards delegated from 10 factories in the combine, and representing 8500 workers, to discuss setting up a new combine committee.

The meeting had been called by stewards in South Wales at Crompton Parkinson, a subsidiary of the main parent company, following a successful strike by workers at Glanamman that had proved the necessity for combine-wide support.

SYMBOL

A first step had been the setting up of a committee covering the South Wales factories that provided a basis to start pushing for nationwide organisation.

Sam Williams, convenor at Crompton Parkinson, Glanamman, said, 'In the world today Hawker-Siddeley is a multi-national corporation. You can go anywhere in the world and you could be working under the same flag—that of Hawker Siddeley symbol. Organising on a national basis would be a start in fighting this company.'

Delegates from all unions in the aviation and heavy engineering industry urged that a committee should give full support to every factory in the combine in dispute. With the strong helping the weak, the combine would ensure that one factory was not defeated through lack of support.

by Jason Meyler

Although the initiative for the committee had come from the shop floor, most of the stewards involved saw themselves as an important part of the official trade union movement. Workers were involved from all the unions in the industry and many of them were also members of their local and district union committees.

The push had to come from the rank and file but they welcomed backing from union executives. But many delegates made it clear that even if the combine committee won official support, the wishes of the men in the factories would still have to prevail.

Most of the delegates and stewards at the conference were enthusiastic about the response there had been, but they stressed that other factories had to be involved to make the committee meaningful. Delegates underlined the need to go back to the factories, argue for the com-

mittee and pull support around it. Things could then start snowballing.

The committee will meet every two months with provisions for emergency meetings. The next meeting will take place in March.

URGED

The key threat of the moment was seen by the stewards as the Tories' attempt through the wage freeze to take the initiative out of the hands of shop stewards and the rank and file. As a delegate from Swindon said: 'If we are not opposed to these phase two proposals, why are we setting up this committee in the first place?'

A motion was sent to the TUC condemning the freeze and urging any action that 'was humanly possible to stop it.' Several delegates urged that the motion should be discussed in every factory and that pressure should come from the ranks on the union leaders to take decisive action against the freeze.

Bleak outlook for Post Office workers as wages come under the hammer

by a Post Office worker

THE TORY wage freeze means a bleak outlook for Post Office workers, where wages have been deliberately depressed since the Labour government turned the service into a profit-making public corporation in 1969.

One result of this was that Post Office pay rates ceased to be part of the Civil Service Pay Research Unit. Since 1970 most Post Office workers have had only two pay increases with the result that they have fallen way behind rising prices. Wage rates have also taken a sharp dive in comparison with other workers'.

The defeat of the Union of Post Office Workers' strike in 1971 dealt a body blow to the hopes of achieving decent wages. The demoralisation suffered by that defeat is still felt by workers in the corporation, although they believe that an intelligent strategy could be adopted by their unions to force management to pay up.

Part of such a strategy must be a move by all the unions concerned to present a joint claim with a united campaign of action to achieve it.

The present claim is a move in this

direction. Six Post Office unions, representing 320,000 workers, have submitted a 'substantial' flat rate increase to be backdated to 1 January. The union leaders have not said how much they are asking for but it is thought to be in the region of £5.

Laughed at

The main unions involved are the UPW and the Civil and Public Services Association. The second biggest union in the Post Office, the Post Office Engineers, is not involved because its pay cycle comes round in June instead of January. This was the result of the Wilson's government's freeze which meant that the engineers lost out on half-yearly increases.

Although the current union claim is based on restoring postmen to the situation in January 1970 in relation to other workers, a UPW circular admits that 'for the majority of grades it will not restore them to the 1970 position.'

But even this claim, which will not begin to bring Post Office workers up to a decent level of pay, will be laughed at by the Tories and their frontman Sir Bill Ryland.

Even without the freeze, the unions' leaders' lack of effort in organising the members would make it impossible to win the claim. Since it was submitted the leaders have been keeping quiet. No meetings have been called to explain the situation to the members.

Speaking to workers at several London sorting offices, I was amazed to find that some had no knowledge of the claim.

But with prices rising there is certain to be an explosion within the ranks of Post Office workers in the next few months. Many of them find that even with 20 hours or more overtime every week they still find it hard to make ends meet.

But lack of union leadership and fragmentation of workers in the corporation caused by undemocratic rules will present serious problems in organising a fight. It is vital to build links both within the Post Office and between all public service workers suffering at the hands of the Tories.

How cost-of-living increases can help to beat the freeze

I AM NOT convinced by the arguments of Bill Message and John Charlton (27 January) that it is a mistake to push for 'sliding scale' agreements with automatic increases to compensate for rising prices.

They point out that deductions, especially tax and loss of earnings-related benefits, cut the real value of automatic compensating increases. That's true. It is also true of any kind of increase. The remedy is a fight for a bigger claim that takes these losses into account in advance. It is not an argument against trying to win an automatic cost of living increase scheme built into the agreement.

The argument that the TUC and the government would 'get off the hook' by accepting such agreements is based, it seems to me, on a misunderstanding of the situation. We must not fall into the trap of taking Heath's 'incomes policy' at its face value. The main object of that policy is to reduce real wages and increase profits. 'Sliding scale' agreements are a hindrance to this, not a help.

Now of course you can get a bad 'automatic increase' agreement just as you can a bad flat-rate increase agreement or a bad percentage increase agreement. But who took the initiative, in the post-war period, in ending those few 'sliding-scale' agreements that did exist—in the building trades and for some printers for example? It was, of course, the employers.

It goes without saying that we should, as the writers say, give 'total support for the full claim of the miners, the hospital workers, the Ford workers etc'. I think that we ought to press for more than the present full claims—those claims plus automatic cost of living increases.

Somehow or other, I don't think that the NCB, the Ford Motor Company or the government will welcome that at all.—DUNCAN HALLAS, London E2.

Suicide

IN THEIR LETTER last week Bill Message and John Charlton display an amazing combination of ill-considered assertions, dogmatic thinking and complete lack of understanding of the working class and its problems.

Duncan Hallas does not argue that a cost of living regulator is the formula for smashing the freeze. It is quite simply 'the only answer to rising prices under the system of private profiteering'. Supposing this demand is conceded, will it destroy working-class initiative and confidence?

Of course not. It would mean that when workers went in for a pay rise, it would really be a pay rise and not just chasing after prices. If this demand is not taken up by workers then their confidence will be destroyed as it is being eroded now.

Why do Message and Charlton think that the working class has tolerated this fraudulent freeze? Simply because they are fed up with running fast to stand still. Because the incomes policy idea and its ideological justification that wages are responsible for inflation is the only one which seems to offer an alternative to the wage-price spiral. It does—at the workers' expense!

The demand for a monthly cost of living regulator on wages is the workers' solution to inflation because by maintaining real wages, inflation does not affect them. It would also give the lie to the Tory claim that wage rises cause inflation since during the year wages would be stationary. Thus there would be no argument for wage control.

Can the bosses afford to concede it when their present strategy is to shift income from wages to profit in order to put British capitalism on its feet by means of welfare cuts, rent rises, incomes policy and the like? Monthly adjustments based on a real cost of living index would have to take these measures into account. To concede the demand would be suicide for them.

As for the transitional nature of the demand, the crucial problem today is whether the state will succeed in either weakening trade unions or usurping their basic functions. This demand is the only one on which to base your call in the trade unions for no incomes policy.—KEITH JACKSON, Hull.

LETTERS

Robbed

SOCIALIST WORKER is to be congratulated on the very concise way in which it exposed the great freeze fraud on the front page last week. And I found the article on page 3 about firms holding huge stocks in warehouses until the prices go up sky high and then releasing them so that the long suffering British public may be fleeced in order to boost the profits of the millionaires, very interesting.

I suggest that the article should be brought out as a leaflet and distributed among housewives doing their weekly shopping in the high street. With articles like this I predict that Socialist Worker will go from strength to strength.

There are however two other types of freeze which are worthy of attention. The first is that the big food processing firms are doing precisely the same thing. With new refrigeration techniques, firms like Joe Lyons can keep food stocks in their huge refrigeration rooms for six or even 12 months at a time, during which time food prices rocket.

The stocks are then released and sold when the profit margins are at their highest levels which goes to prove that there is no freezing of profit margins.

In the meantime there is yet another kind of freeze. The poor old pensioners are slowly freezing to death from hypothermia. To give the situation a Churchillian touch it might be summed up as follows: 'Never before in the history of mankind have so many been robbed of so much by so few.'—ERNEST OFFEN, London W14.

The Law

IN THE LAST few weeks Socialist Worker has exposed the wage freeze as a massive swindle. It has provided militants with facts and arguments with which they can demonstrate that a 'fair prices and incomes policy under capitalism is a pipe-dream'. It has called for 'all out action to fight the freeze'. This is correct and obviously necessary.

But we have to ask is this enough? Many millions of workers already know that the freeze is a con trick.

Letters to Socialist Worker must arrive first post Monday. They should be typed or written on one side of the page only. The editor reserves the right to shorten letters for space reasons.

The big problem for militants now is to overcome the confusion of many workers over 'breaking the law'.

As with the docks dispute, the press, television and the Tories are stressing that the freeze is 'the law of the land'. The Labour leaders and trade union bureaucrats are saying that however unfair the freeze is, it must not be opposed by 'unlawful' means.

Socialist Worker must tackle these arguments head on. We must explain the class nature of the state and the law. We must explain that parliament, under Tory or Labour, far from being democratic is nothing but window dressing for the rule of capitalism.

For revolutionary socialists it is not enough to (correctly) describe the freeze as a 'fiddle'. We must give a clear political lead. Only in this way can we go forward both to smash the freeze and build a revolutionary party.—ARNIE PROUT, Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Poison

IF, as Dave Wild maintains in last week's Socialist Worker, Monty Python represents the best of British humour then I can only say it is a very poor best. I think that Monty Python, despite occasional flashes of brilliance, is repetitive (eg the 'Alan Whicker' gag) and thoroughly anti-working class. Each week they manage to use a crude stereotype to caricature working people in the most disgusting way.

There has been some good material on humour in Socialist Worker in the past—don't go and ruin it all by letting the tears of laughter cloud your better judgment.—J N GUTMANN, Salford, Lancs.

BLACKBURN ARRESTS

ONE FEATURE of the Blackburn 'moving picket' against the National Front on 20 January which was not mentioned in the letter printed last week was that many people were attacked by the police and nine were arrested.

Seven of the arrests took place at the very back of the picket in Darwen Street and two just after. There was much solidarity among the sisters and brothers involved, but we feel that the whole organisation of the picket was bad and that the arrests could have been avoided.

We suggest that in future local organisers arrange the distribution of street maps and pin-point possible police traps, and ensure that this information is distributed to ALL groups involved well in advance.

Witnesses, photographs and information on these arrests are desperately needed. Please contact us c/o Bradford IS, 199a Manningham Lane, Bradford, Yorks as soon as possible as the trial begins on 12 February.—THE BRADFORD DEFENCE GROUP.

PRESS BLACKOUT AS WHITELAW TERROR GOES ON

ONE of the greatest ideological successes of the Whitelaw regime in Northern Ireland has been its ability to convince world opinion that internment without trial is a thing of the past in the British Isles.

The release of more than 600 internees in the first few months of Whitelaw's dictatorship was greeted with a blaze of publicity in the press. At one point there were fewer than 200 men left in Long Kesh. Normality and democracy were being gradually restored by the benevolent despot—or so we were told.

The truth is rather different. In recent weeks the number of men in 'the Kesh' has soared to nearly 800, almost as many as when internment was at its peak. By ignoring the daily search-and-arrest operations that continue unabated in the Catholic ghettos, the British press has given credence to the Whitelaw lie that internment no longer exists.

Technically of course neither Long Kesh nor internment exist any longer. Long Kesh has been re-named the Maze Prison, and the new word for internment is 'detention'. The difference between this and what existed before is that everyone is now promised the chance of a 'trial' before a tribunal of three judges.

When this tribunal was established, Socialist Worker showed how it would open the door to the police informers and the torturers of Hollywood barracks whose 'evidence' had been thrown out of open courts. The tribunal sits in secret, and even the accused is liable to be

excluded while information against him is given by Special Branch officers hidden behind a heavy curtain.

Most of this information comes from police touts and spies, who never appear in court themselves and who are never mentioned by name. In fact there is no proof that these informers themselves actually exist. There is nothing to prevent the police from fabricating the 'evidence'.

In most cases the accused is not aware of the nature of the charges against him, except in the vaguest form. For instance, he may be accused of causing an explosion on an unspecified date and at an un-named place. He cannot defend himself against such ridiculous charges, as he cannot offer evidence to prove that he was somewhere else at the time.

RANDOM

The prediction that 'confessions', extracted from internees by a process of brutal torture, would be accepted as legitimate evidence in the tribunal, has also proved correct. Men who have been released by open courts because the evidence against them had been obtained illegally have been detained indefinitely by the three judges on the same evidence.

Some random examples show the arbitrary nature of the system. Sean

McGuigan was interned in August 1971. Last year he appeared in court charged with a number of serious offences. He was found not guilty, but was never released. Instead he was re-detained as he tried to leave the court room.

Last week he appeared in front of the judges accused of more than 20 serious crimes. Again the Special Branch failed to convince even this sham court of McGuigan's guilt. After 18 months of incarceration he has now been released.

If the case of another young man released three weeks ago by the tribunal is anything to go by, then Mr McGuigan may not have long to enjoy his freedom. This man was re-detained by soldiers in Andersonstown only two weeks after his release.

One other man Frank O'Reilly who was found not guilty by the judges, was re-detained for smiling in the court when he heard that he was to be freed after several months in Long Kesh. The recent detention of a teenage girl, Liz McKee, has added another frightening dimension to British repression here.

As well as the fascist-type court there has been an all-round increase in the daily harassment of the internees. The British Army has recently taken over direct control of Long Kesh. Previously they waited outside the perimeter, only

MIKE MILLER REPORTS FROM BELFAST

Hands off Arsenal the soccer vanguard

I HAVE BEEN a regular reader of your paper for some time now but your last issue compelled me to immediately cease being so.

Last week you featured an ignorant article on football. The writer calls himself Roger Protz but as a regular reader of Private Eye I know this just to be the name of a cartoon character who once played the Russian Army in War and Peace.

The article by this unknown person (why doesn't he have the courage to tell us his real name?) is anti-Leninist filth. I refer particularly to the statement 'Red Cloggers of Highbury'. Everybody and anybody who knows anything about marxism and football knows that Arsenal FC are a Leninist side who, by their determination to win, reveal a marked similarity to the leader of the first successful proletarian revolution in history.

I have always suspected your paper of liberalism and idealism. Now I am convinced. All you are interested in is pretty patterns and fairies. Neither I nor 60,000 other workers can tolerate you and your Ramseyian deviations.

Plotters

Just for the record, Alan Ball is not a 'ponce'. This is a slur against a great player and clearly shows that your paper is just a front for Alf Ramsey to try to justify his non-selection of Alan Ball (Ballie to those of us who know him) for certain international matches.

I am both sorry and glad to discover that IS is no more than a conspiracy against Leninism and a front for anti-materialist conceptions of football and a platform for Alf Ramsey. Sorry, because you might have been a useful aid to us workers. Glad, because I and my mates have discovered you for what you are and that you are no different from the kinds of Hitler-Mikado-Trotskyist plotters that combined to support Wolverhampton Wanderers when they beat Moscow Dynamo some years ago and contributed to the feeling that capitalist culture was superior to that of Soviet man.

I and 60,000 other Arsenal fans spit on your organisation. I quite like Paul Foot and sincerely regret that Roger Rosewell's article on the Class Way of Death has not yet been published.—A READER, Liverpool.

● We notice that our Arsenal supporter is skulking in Liverpool—from embarrassment? It is our considered marxist opinion that Arsenal have more in common with Hitler's 'night of the long knives', when he murdered the Rohm opposition, than with the Bolshevik party, which, as everyone knows, has been reincarnated in the form of West Ham United. Rest assured that an article on Death and Roger Rosewell will appear shortly.—EDITOR.

entering to rough-up the internees if they made any complaints.

Since the military take-over the wives and relatives of the internees have refused to visit their menfolk as a protest against savage treatment by the soldiers on duty who seemed to take great pleasure at conducting body-searches of the visiting women. The same soldiers often steal parcels of food and books that are sent to the prisoners.

Several weeks of heavy rain have turned the ground around the nissen huts of Long Kesh into swamps, forcing the men to give up outside recreation. They are confined to their huts at all times.

The huts are freezing and damp. The men have to sleep in their clothes, including overcoats to keep warm. Even the loyalist prisoners, who have been moved there from the Crumlin Road jail, have had to admit that the place is not fit for human habitation.

Before they had any experience of actual conditions there, they called Long Kesh a 'Fenian holiday camp'.

The rate of releases by the tribunal now averages about one out of every five cases they examine. That means that hundreds of men are still going to remain interned for an indefinite period. Scores more will undoubtedly find themselves in Long Kesh before the publication of the White Paper on the future of Northern Ireland.

Whitelaw continues to deprive his political opponents of their freedom. Don't let the total silence of the big press barons fool you that anything else is the case.

Air bosses break Fine Tubes blacking

BRISTOL:-Stories circulating at BAC and Rolls-Royce suggest that these companies are still helping the bosses of Fine Tubes and getting away with it. A national blacking of Fine Tubes products has not yet managed to force the company to admit defeat. They still find devious methods of selling their tubing.

BAC and Rolls-Royce workers operate the blacking consistently—or so they think. Only recently it has become apparent to workers in the factories that their bosses are secretly hand in glove with those at Fine Tubes.

Apparently supplies of tubing have been reaching BAC's Filton Factory directly, through Fine Tubes' subsidiary Tube Sales of Southampton.

This sort of loophole in the blacking is exactly what keeps Fine Tubes going. Stewards everywhere must ensure that all possible outlets for the tubing are closed.

In Rolls-Royce, the story is more sinister, especially as this is a nationalised company. The blacking there has been 100 per cent effective, and so far the management has shied away from a confrontation with the unions over the issue.

But they say they do not want Fine Tubes to suffer financially, so they are ordering goods which cannot be delivered and paying for them just the same. About £2500 was handed over last year for goods not delivered. The tubing is being held at Fine Tubes, Plymouth, 'pending your [Rolls-Royce's] instructions'.

Fine Tubes stewards met stewards on the BAC Concorde project at Filton on Tuesday. Afterwards Frank Clark, of the Fine Tubes delegation, said: 'It seems some of the tubing got in when the unions lifted the blacking some months ago. But we've had a categorical assurance from the BAC lads that they will have no dealings with Fine Tubes material.'

'They were determined to help us, in spite of a recent management warning that effective blacking of Fine Tubes would mean short time.'



PETE CARTER
'Building workers must counter this attempt to smash the union'

SITE STRIKES FORCE BOSSES TO STEP DOWN

BIRMINGHAM:-Action by determined workers on all major building sites has forced the employers to make big concessions to the city's militant building workers.

Last week meetings of the industry's national conciliation panel—convened at an unprecedented speed—instigated Bryants, Birmingham's biggest building employers, to re-employ Bill Witton, Jimmy Lindley, Steve Dechenko and Pete Carter, who were made redundant to get Carter out of the city's building industry.

With only 24 hours notice of a call for unofficial strike action in solidarity with the four, 42 sites (including all 11 Bryants sites in the city) shut on Tuesday last week, the day of the first meeting of the panel.

The employers, faced with such massive opposition, had no alternative but to instruct Bryants to re-employ the victimised men, the exact opposite of what they had all planned.

CRUCIAL

The Birmingham militants won another notable victory last week, when W C French was forced to end all sub-contracting on its city centre site. The firm has now agreed to employ all workers directly. This means that the union-busting 'lump' cannot be operated behind the mask of some supposed 'genuine' sub-contractor.

The crucial feature of the struggle of the past fortnight is that the Birmingham building workers' movement has recovered from the after-effects of the long strike last year, re-emerging stronger than ever.

Exactly two years ago there were only two sites in the city which had any union organisation. Now the city's building workers can by united city-wide action defeat the employers' attempts to victimise and sub-contract the union out of existence.

In an interview with Socialist Worker this week, Peter Carter stressed the significance of the two victories in Birmingham, but added that building workers face an organised attempt to

by Laurie Flynn

smash trade unionism in the industry.

'Since the strike, the struggle has taken on a completely new turn,' said Carter. 'The employers are trying to ensure that there will never again be such a battle in the industry. They intend to make the current national agreement run for the full two and a half years, so that we will end up with wage negotiations in the middle of winter when fewer men are in employment and morale is low.'

'And throughout this time they will have been busy undermining the militants and UCATT by spreading the new form of self-employment in the industry as operated by the Labour Force, SOS, Manpower and Evergreen gangsters,' he added.

'While they pretend to negotiate with the union leaders about the so-called anomalies of the industry, they will be busy victimising militants and using these labour-only agencies to smash the union. I am certain that the employers have taken a definite decision to turn the whole industry over to self-employment with the assistance of their friends in the Tory government.'

'Building workers must counter this with bold initiatives as in Birmingham. With good leadership, the workers in the industry can be roused to defeat the employers' plans.'

Birmingham building workers have relied heavily on the 1956 Labour Council decision to outlaw labour-only sub-contracting on council contracts. In recent weeks the building employers have been bringing heavy pressure to get this decision reversed.

Among other tactics, they are deliberately slowing down progress on housing jobs already under way and refusing to tender for new jobs unless lump labour is permitted.

Both John Laing and George Wimpey refused to tender for the multi-million National Exhibition Centre contract on these grounds.

The UCATT regional committee has already informed R M Douglas, the contractor which has got the job, that the union will not accept sub-contracting of any kind on the job, that there must be 100 per cent trade unionism and that the union is after a basic rate of £1 an hour plus a £1 an hour bonus.

Mike Shilcock, the UCATT militant who was brutally beaten up on the orders of the employers during the building strike, told Socialist Worker last week that this was the way forward for the whole industry. 'We are consolidating our movement and trying to sew these jobs up before they get off the ground.'

SPIKED

The Tory minority on the council, naturally in co-operation with the employers, intend to make labour-only sub-contracting a major election issue, claiming that it means cheaper house-building. But their guns may well be spiked if the building unions can force the newly-announced police probe into contract awards by the City Architect's Department to be turned into a full public inquiry.

This investigation is mainly centred on the massive and ever-increasing sums paid out by the department for sub-contract design work on ever-decreasing numbers of council houses.

But with the recent disclosures that contractors have been getting 20 to 30 per cent more than the official guideline prices for housebuilding in Birmingham, and widespread talk of corruption, the inquiry may well become an investigation of the whole method of awarding contracts.

Building workers' shop stewards have called on all building workers to come forward with any information they have on graft and corruption.

GIRLS OUT THREE DAYS

RUGBY:-Girls at Smith's ceramics factory stopped work for three days last week after management tried to increase work speed.

The company had cut the bonus rate paid on jobs previously done in another factory at lower rates. Full-time union officials then let the girls down by accepting the management terms.

The girls staged a sit-down strike the following afternoon and then walked out. At the weekend they met the Coventry district organiser of the engineering union (AUEW) and agreed to return to work while a second works conference is held—but they made it clear they would be out again if their demands were not met.

Steelmen's steward hits out at union

EBBW VALE:-75 steelworkers crammed into the Penuel vestry last Thursday to hear Arthur Affleck, chairman of the Lackenby steelworkers' joint shop stewards' committee, and Paul Foot, speak against the plan to close half the town's steelworks, which employs 9000 workers.

The meeting, sponsored by the rank and file paper Steelworker, was chaired by Geoff Harris, chairman of Number One branch of BISAKTA, the main steel union. He had offered to take the chair after hearing Dai Davies, BISAKTA's general secretary, denouncing Steelworker in Ebbw Vale recently.

Arthur Affleck described in detail the 'corruption' of BISAKTA and urged all steelworkers to join the movement to reform the union, to read the Steelworker, and to attend the Steelworker Conference. This is to be held in Manchester on 10 March and has been called by rank and file steelworkers to organise the struggle against the government's closure plans.

Paul Foot described how the nationalised steel industry had now been entirely taken over by industrialists who wanted either to get their steel cheap or sell raw materials to the British Steel Corporation at inflated prices.

Both speakers were greeted with great enthusiasm and several steelworkers spoke out against the government, the Labour Party and the union bureaucracy.

Roy Beynon, of the transport union, said everyone had underestimated the number of jobs at stake. He warned that by 1983 almost all the Ebbw Vale steelworks would be gone if the government had its way.

John Evans, of the transport union, said that 17 advanced factories in Wales were now empty. He warned that promises that alternative industry would be brought to Ebbw Vale were not to be trusted.

Walk-out at lead plant

HULL:-800 men walked out of the Capper Pass chemical works owned by Rio Tinto-Zinc on Tuesday after management refused to negotiate over compensation payments made to men who had to take lower-paid jobs because the lead in their blood had built up to a risk level.

Management is hoping to stop such payments. One manager is quoted as saying: 'It's your own fault, you don't keep yourselves clean.'

At first only members of the Transport Workers Union were involved in the walk-out, but engineering union members voted to support them, and only the electricians voted to return

AIRPORT MEN LOCKED OUT

GLASGOW:-The Labour group on the city council, which recently betrayed council tenants, is being exposed by its attitude towards maintenance engineers at Glasgow Airport.

The corporation is the employer of most airport workers. Just one week before Christmas the airport manager locked out all 26 maintenance engineers for refusing to accept compulsory continental shift working. The workers

have received official backing from the AUEW, but the management is using divisions among the airport workers to prolong the dispute.

Management has brought in hired vehicles to replace those that break down and transport union drivers and porters have continued to work with them. The maintenance workers are now turning for support to factories in the area asking them to black shipments

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

WANDSWORTH IS public meeting: Social Work in Capitalist Society. Speaker: Peter Leonard. 8pm. Thursday 8 February. The Spread Eagle, SW18 (opp Wands Town Hall)

LAMBETH IS public meeting: The EEC. Wed 7 February, 8.15pm, Brixton Training Centre (opposite Town Hall).

BRIGHTON IS public meeting: The Tory Freeze—Phase Two. Thur 8 February, 8pm, The Prince George, Trafalgar Street.

MERSEYSIDE IS: Fight the Wage Freeze. Speaker John Deason (AUEW). Wed 7 Feb, 7.30pm, Strand Hotel, Brunswick St, Liverpool (near Pier Head).

IS TENANTS' CONFERENCE: Saturday 3 February, 12 noon-5pm, Milton Hall, Deansgate, Manchester. To discuss tenants' movement. IS members only.

SWANSEA IS: Fight the Wages Freeze. Speaker Bob Light, London docks shop steward. Friday 9 February, 7.30pm, St Thomas Community Centre Annex.

COLINDALE IS printshop fund party: Saturday 3 February, 8pm, at 56 Salisbury Road, Harrow. Phone 01-863 6299.

LONDON REGION IS public meeting: Reform or Revolution and the nature of the British Labour Party. Speaker Paul Foot. Friday 2 February, 7.30-9.30pm, The Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. (Three minutes from Holborn tube).

LONDON REGION IS Public meeting: Bourgeois Democracy, State and Revolution (Why there is no Parliamentary Road to Socialism). Speaker Richard Kuper, Friday 9 February, 7.30-9.30pm, The Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 (three minutes from Holborn Tube).

FAKENHAM IS public meeting: Trade Unions and their place in the Socialist Movement. Tuesday 6 February, 8pm, The Rampant Horse, Fakenham.

HOUNSLOW IS public meeting: Vietnam. Speakers Ceciley Hastings and Ted Crawford. Friday 9 Feb, 8pm, The Fox, Church Street, Twickenham.

GOOLE SOCIALIST WORKER public meeting: Strikes and the National Interest. Speaker Wally Preston (AUEW), national committee member of IS. Thursday 1 Feb, 8pm, Cape of Good Hope pub.

MIDLAND REGION INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS DAY SCHOOL on RACIALISM Sunday 4 February, 11am-6pm

Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham Speakers: Nigel Harris on Racialism and Roger Kline on Fascism IS MEMBERS ONLY All branches outside the Midlands are encouraged to send representatives

OTHER MEETINGS

RANK AND FILE TECHNICAL TEACHER: Sunday 4 February, 7pm, The Roebuck, Tottenham Court Road, London W1. Constitution/the present wage claim/conference.

PROTEST at repression in Ceylon on 20th anniversary of 'independence'. Sat 3 February, 12-2pm. Ceylon Tea Centre, Lower Regent St, W1. Organised by Ceylon Solidarity Campaign.

NOTICES

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

LYNCH LAW AND BRITISH ORDER in The Worker, revolutionary Irish socialist newspaper published by the Socialist Workers Movement—order now from Kevin O'Doherty, Flat 6, 117 Wandsworth Bridge Road, London SW6.

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.

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.



We will not move, say workers in sit-in jobs battle

SUNDERLAND:—The Coles Cranes dispute enters its fourth week with no sign of a break. A mass meeting of the 2000 workers made it clear on Monday that the factory will remain occupied until the Acrow management agrees to honour its agreements with the unions.

In a letter to the workers, company chairman William De Vigier brought a dozen charges against the shop stewards. The letter is a mixture of distortion and straightforward lies, and every one of his points was answered by convenor Norman Jackson at the mass meeting.

The stewards also produced a letter written by the factory's production manager which revealed that the fall in production last year was caused by mismanagement. This letter, which was 'discovered on the office floor', proves that the dispute has been manufactured by the Acrow management to attack union organisation in the Sunderland plant.



Pickets outside the Coles factory: the poster is an attack on De Vigier, chairman of parent company Acrow

Broken

De Vigier's letter admitted that the Sunderland workers were the best-paid and best organised crane-makers in the country, and he is clearly determined to put the boot in. Sunderland is not included in Acrow's massive expansion programme, and Coles Cranes managing director Don Hassell revealed at a meeting at the Department of Trade and Industry that the Sunderland factory would be run down regardless of the state of the order book.

Not that De Vigier is prejudiced against the North East.

The Coles Cranes delegation which visited the Hull factory of Priestman Excavators, another Acrow subsidiary, discovered that the Hull workers had been receiving the same treatment: redundancies, broken agreements and management provocation. The same had happened at Thomas Storey, a Lancashire company taken over by Acrow two years ago.

The delegation which will be visiting the other Acrow factories in the rest of the country this week will probably bring back similar reports. This is the De Vigier style, and the Sunderland workers are determined to put an end to it.

As John Creaby, an official of APEX, the clerical workers' union, told the mass meeting: 'Sunderland is a depressed area, and De Vigier is trying to make it even more depressed. The workers here at Cole Cranes have shown him that he is not going to get away with it.'

Clay Cross puts brake on tenants

CLAY CROSS:—At a mass meeting of 200 tenants last week Councillor David Skinner, chairman of the town's planning committee, explained the council's decision to appeal against the auditor's fines.

He resisted demands that the council should call a total rent strike now, arguing that the call should await the result of the appeal. About two-thirds of Clay Cross tenants are still not paying their rents, and the council has promised there will be no evictions.

David Skinner also said he had spoken to meetings of workers at Firth Brown and Davy United in Sheffield and to the local mineworkers' lodge and all have promised support. Clear promises of industrial action to defend the council have been given by workers at the Clay Cross Works and other local factories.

Several tenants at the meeting spoke of the need not to let the solidarity movement in the estates die down. A total rent strike now, they argued, would help to build up morale.

The danger is that the Labour Party will rely entirely on its own strength and will resist the pressure (much of it from within the Labour Party itself) for action committees in the estates to organise solidarity action.

Demand for recall of TUC

SCOTLAND:—A call for a recall conference of the TUC to plan action against Phase Two of the freeze and the Industrial Relations Act was made by delegates from 70 factories last Sunday.

The delegates, meeting as the West of Scotland Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, also pledged local support for the engineering union and the miners, for a day of action against

BLACKS PROTEST AT JAILING

BRIXTON:—300 people, most of them black, packed into the Town Hall last Friday to protest against the jailing of the 'Oval Four'—four young West Indians from the Fasimbas organisation in South London.

The four, who were jailed last month for assault and attempted robbery, claimed in court that they had been savagely attacked by the police.

Speakers from the British Unity and Freedom Party and the Black Panthers emphasised the growing unemployment among black youth, often as high as 20 per cent. Police repression they said, had grown more and more brutal in recent months.

Bob Light, a militant from London's Royal Docks and a member of the International Socialists, told the meeting the attacks on black people were a serious problem which affected the whole working-class movement. He referred to the dockers' march for Powell in 1968 and assured the audience that a growing number of dockers' militants were fighting against racist ideas among workers.

Step backwards for white collar union

by Geoff Woolf

THE right-wing majority on the national executive of NALGO, the local government workers' union which has the biggest membership of any white collar union in the public sector, took a major step backwards last Saturday.

While declaring its opposition to Phase Two of the freeze, the executive reaffirmed 'its view of the need for continuing consultation between the government and the TUC on economic policy.'

It also called on the NALGO economic committee to study the government's proposals with a view to obtaining concessions from the government in the budget.

The executive rejected a resolution from Peter Morgan of Birmingham calling for total rejection of Phase Two and for the TUC to be recalled. The fact that any opposition to the freeze was expressed at all was due to a resolution proposed by the London Metropolitan District of the union.

UNION BLACKLEGS ON OWN MEMBERS

A SPOKESMAN for the National Union of Seamen said on Tuesday the union would be making every possible effort to supply workers as quickly as possible to replace the 191 crew members flown back from Sydney, Australia, last week after the dispute on the liner Ocean Monarch.

As well as openly and officially blacklegging on an industrial dispute involving its own members in this way, the union will be putting up precisely no resistance to the 191 men and women being blacklisted by the shipping employers.

The seamen's union is registered under the Industrial Relations Act and was granted a state-approved closed shop late last year after a joint application with the employers. The TUC has again postponed the union's expulsion from Congress.

Crew members on the luxury cruise liner, owned by the Shaw Savill shipping line, lodged a wage demand on arrival in Australia last week when the currency revaluation out there meant their wages were at once cut by 10 per cent.

A seamen's union official, Mr J

Spruhan, was immediately summoned from London to help bully the crew back into line. He told them that the company could not pay any more money even if it wanted to, because of the wage freeze. This was untrue since people working abroad are specifically excepted under the freeze.

During the mass meeting on the quayside, the ship's master lifted the gangplanks and prevented the crew getting back on board. Australian dockers provided them with food and shelter while the lock-out continued.

Spruhan also insisted on a ballot vote after a show of hands almost unanimously rejected the company's non-offer of an extra day's leave per month in place of money. Then 177 out of 210 voted against accepting the offer, preferring to fly home.

Reactionary

The union official also put up no resistance to the seizure of £50 from each crewman's wage packet by the company, although the way this was done was an infringement of the 1970 Merchant Shipping Act.

This reactionary legislation, brought in by the last Labour government, allows ship's masters to levy on-the-spot fines. The seamen's union conference last year voted to oppose signing ship's articles while these provisions remained. But even executive members of the union are unable to obtain a copy of the conference report recording this decision because the general secretary, Bill Hogarth, does not want to implement it.

Eighty-eight men working for the Greater London Council on sludge disposal barges are locked out after they refused to sign articles including the 'slaves charter' provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act. The press is witch-hunting them over the resulting pollution threat to the Thames.

RENEGADE MINER HEADING FOR NIRC

by Dave Peers

JIMMY SIM is the most hated man in South Shields since he was fined £3 last year by the Westoe Lodge of the National Union of Mineworkers for working excessive overtime, against a union agreement.

For he refused to pay the fine into the aged miners' box and since then no miner at Westoe Colliery has spoken to him or worked with him.

Sim has been built up into a press hero, receiving lavish publicity on television and in the newspapers for attacking his own union. Now he is using the Industrial Relations Act to the full.

Just before Christmas he brought an action against the lodge under the Act, and an industrial tribunal ordered the Westoe miners to lift their sanctions against him. The lodge, under pressure from national officials, obeyed the court. But the miners continued to boycott Sim.

Last week Sim contracted out of the union. The miners' reaction was immediate. They have said they will stop the pit—and probably the entire Durham coalfield too—if Sim sets foot in the colliery. As one miner told me: 'The only way Sim would get down the pit is without the cage.'

At the moment he is suspended on full pay while talks are held between the union, the Coal Board and Sim's lawyer. But the talks cannot last more than a few days.

The Westoe miners insist that Sim must be sacked. It is very important that they win this struggle. If they can successfully defy the Tory Industrial Relations law and maintain the closed shop, then they will be setting an important example for all miners in the struggle for the national pay claim and in defiance of the Tory wage freeze law.

JOINT ACTION

With the freezing of the reduced working week for local council workers, pay rises held up in the electricity supply industry and other claims delayed, important sections of the rank and file members of NALGO are incensed at the reactionary attitude of the majority on the executive.

The NALGO Action group is calling for a massive campaign within the union against Phase Two and for joint action with other trade unionists.

Only this kind of positive action against the right-wing leadership will prevent a cowardly retreat by NALGO and other unions against the government's attacks on public sector workers. While the NALGO executive supported the call for joint meetings between public sector unions which was proposed by the teachers and civil service unions, they are insisting that these be called by the TUC, something the TUC has already refused to do. It is now up to the rank and file to build real unity with other public sector workers and smash the freeze by mass trade union and political action.

Coventry union buster Joseph Langston is taking a local engineering union official before the Industrial Relations Court.

The management at Chrysler's Ryton plant, fearing the reaction of their other workers, have kept Langston at home on full pay since he got a ruling from an industrial tribunal that he need not belong to a union. When he turned up at the factory to collect his wage packet shortly after Christmas, there was a spontaneous eruption of anger against him from shop-floor workers.

Hoover action sweeps on

GLASGOW:—The 3800 hourly-paid workers at Hoover's Cambuslang works are keeping up their series of one-day strikes in pursuit of a parity claim. Wednesday's strike was the fourth and was accompanied by militant picketing—all staff are being turned away—and a complete overtime ban.



I would like more information about the International Socialists

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Massive rise in price of chicken

A STAGGERING blow was struck at millions of working-class housewives attempting to feed their families on frozen wage packets when the Fine Fare supermarket chain announced on Monday that it was increasing the price of chicken by a third. Other major stores indicated that they would be following its example.

Nothing could more neatly expose the fraudulent nature of the government's 'price freeze'. Almost all the chickens that are sold in this country are produced by a handful of very big companies.

The biggest is the giant Imperial Tobacco, which sold 66 million birds last year. The next three, with more than 30 million birds each, were W and J B Eastwood, D B Marshal and the Union International Corporation, part of the notorious Vestey empire which put the five dockers in jail last summer.

These companies have already been raking in the profits as a result of rising food prices. Imperial Tobacco's food profits shot up by 40 per cent last year and Eastwood's farm profits by 200 per cent.

If the price of chicken goes up by an average 1p a pound only (and Fine Fare has put the price up 5p a pound) the profits of Imperial Tobacco could expect to rise by around £2 million. Eastwood and Vestey would gain by about £1 million each—all out of the wage packets of working people.

Already government nutrition experts are warning that 'if food consumption is affected by price rises, there will be a danger to nutrition.'

The British Medical Association suggested in 1932 a diet of basic foodstuffs 'adequate to maintain health and working capacity over prolonged periods.' The diet would have cost an average of £2.58 a head per week last year, before the most recent upsurge in food prices. Yet the average expenditure by people on food was 16p less than that, at £2.42 a head. Many workers on low wages spend much less than that.

Such facts give the lie to Heath's claim that his policy is 'fair to all sections of the community'.

Socialist Worker

BIG GASMEN'S STRIKE GROWS

GAS WORKERS, reacting bitterly to the government freeze on their wage increase, have been taking action unofficially in many parts of the country demanding more than the £2 they are being allowed. Although the

Tories are intent on making strikes against its wages ceiling illegal, there are already all-out stoppages of gas workers in Lancashire and parts of Yorkshire. In Scotland a one-week strike is planned.

Flying pickets bring out most of Lancashire

WIGAN:—Most gas workers in Lancashire are now on strike. The initiative was taken in Wigan, where 200 came out on unofficial strikes and organised a Wigan Gas Action Committee.

Flying pickets have toured all over Lancashire to win support. More than half the Wigan workers have been involved in the picketing. At 6.30 each morning two coaches leave Wigan to travel the county. Enthusiasm is high and there are often more volunteers than the coaches can take.

The pickets have met with remarkable success, including support from workers sub-contracting for the Gas Board.

When there are any gas leaks, the action committee is cutting off gas supplies completely, except when it finds there is a hardship case, as with old age pensioners.

One committee member said: 'The action is really snowballing now. We even got men out in north Cheshire. We hope they will organise their own picketing.'

'There's no bother getting the men out. Most are waiting for someone to come along and let them know that they are not alone. Then they go. It's more like spreading the good news than picketing really.'

Another striker told Socialist Worker: 'This freeze is the last straw. The Gas Board has accepted three freezes now. Other industries just broke through. The gas workers got left behind.'

'The government only fights those workers it thinks it can lick. The gas industry makes a profit—all other nationalised industries lose money, but they get the wages. Even if we get £6.50 that will only bring us up to £29.50, which is what the dustbin men got two years ago.'

Pickets out

YORKSHIRE:—Gasworkers in Rotherham are out on indefinite strike, and in Barnsley they have gone a step further by striking and banning all emergency work. When Sheffield workers voted against strike action on Monday, workers from the other two towns sent flying pickets to Sheffield in an attempt to reverse the decision.

In Castleford and Wakefield workers are also out and have been picketing their fellow workers in Leeds.

SCOTLAND:—A Glasgow gas fitters' shop steward and member of the unofficial Scottish Gas Workers Committee writes: 200 delegates to the committee met on Sunday to plan further industrial action to ensure its demands are met. Contact with gasworkers in England was discussed and delegates are to travel south in an attempt to link the struggle.

Although the committee is unofficial, Alex Donnet, Scottish secretary of the General and Municipal Workers' Union, asked whether he could address the meeting for 15 minutes to explain the union's position. He then spoke for a full 25 minutes complaining of the stress the committee had caused between the union and 'loyal members'.

He said the British Gas Corporation would not offer more than the government has laid down, but that if workers toed the union line then it would do all it could to help them on their claim.

Welcome

Shop stewards answered him vigorously. 'The stresses you're complaining about,' said one, 'are due solely to the attitude of the GMWU and electricians' union leaders towards the members in the industry. For years you've been taking money from us under false pretences.'

Donnet started to answer these charges, but after another 15 minutes he was told that he'd overstayed his welcome and should leave the hall. This he did.

The committee will not accept the government's miserable £2. Either our demands are met, or, in the words of one of our lads... NO CASH, NO GAS!

We appeal to gas workers throughout the country to organise similar committees to shake up the official union leadership and the government and let them know that the British gas worker will no longer be sold down the river by any of the unions.

We demand a decent wage. A £5.50 a week rise to bring us parity with the electricity supply workers. We've put up with a princely £18 a week for too long.

The shop stewards therefore decided to call for a week's stoppage throughout Scotland in protest against the gas council's offer and against the freeze.



GLASGOW:—4000 members of the Civil and Public Services Association came out on a half-day strike on Tuesday in protest against the continued faltering of the union leadership on all-out action to win their pay claim.

CPSA members all over the country made it clear at mass meetings on 10 January that they supported all-out action against the freeze. But this week the executive sent out yet another circular asking for information on whether CPSA members were prepared to take strike action.

As Socialist Worker went to press it seemed virtually certain that a national overtime ban would be imposed from this weekend.

Representatives of the CPSA, the National Union of Teachers and the National Union of Public Employees were also to meet to discuss joint action against the freeze. A one-day national stoppage of all three unions could well be called.

THE OFFER of £52 million made to the teachers, against their claim for £170 million, would keep their standard well below the rise in the cost of living. The new starting salary at age 2, or 22 of £1290 would mean take-home pay of less than £20 a week.

An attempt has been made to drown last year's London allowance claim—due on 1 November but frozen three weeks before the national freeze—in the £52 million pool. London teachers, the most militant in the country, with a strike and demonstration of 15,000 NUT members last November already behind them, will certainly not swallow this one.

The NUT is checking the returns from London associations, but if Hackney is anything to go by, more than 80 per cent of the membership are ready for strike action. It will be difficult for the union executive to ignore this rank and file groundswell.

The NUT nationally and branches locally are approaching other public service unions to consider concerted action on pay, as there is clear discrimination against them by the government.

THE meeting of the Ford National Joint Negotiating Committee last Friday did not bring any offer from the company to meet the unions' claim for a £10 a week flat-rate increase to bring them into line with earnings of motor workers in the Midlands. Instead after the five-hour meeting the company told union representatives that Ford, as a good law-abiding firm, considered themselves bound by the second phase of the freeze.

The two sides are to meet again next week. Ford sales and profits were gigantic last year. According to the trade union document setting out the claim, Ford profits for 1972 will top £60 million. Sir William Batty, chairman of Ford Britain, revealed on 21 December that Ford export sales exceeded £300 million.

Before the freeze, it was strongly rumoured that the Detroit masters of Ford Britain were unwilling to jeopardise their growing share of the market by repeating the £2-type offer which sparked off the spontaneous strike two years ago. But now Ford can hide behind the protective shield of the 'Tories' incomes' policy.

There is talk of a one-day strike to coincide with the next round of talks on Friday. The coming battle could prove as decisive for the working class in 1973 as the miners' strike was in 1972.



DERRY, one year after Bloody Sunday: Thirteen posters commemorating those killed by the British Army stand outside the Rossville Flats during the demonstration organised by the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association

SW 30,000 sales drive

by Margaret Renn

ALBERT LUCK is a member of the executive of SOGAT and works at Radio Times on the Park Royal estate in North West London, where he is Father of the Chapel. He told me why he sells Socialist Worker in the printing works each week.

'People buy Socialist Worker because it gives them the information they cannot get in other papers, even papers of the left. It stimulates discussion among the people who read it, which is very important to everyone's working life. Particularly, it speaks the truth in the industrial and political field, which is generally hard to find in the press. The facts you read in Socialist Worker are essential to know, even for shop stewards.'

'I have often quoted Socialist Worker when I have been arguing against the employers. The paper would assist every shop steward, as it contains the facts and the arguments.'

'New readers don't always agree with what is in the paper, so I always tell them that if they have a serious disagreement then they should write to the paper. We have to get the idea across that it is 'their' paper. We need a workers' paper. It is this that makes Socialist Worker different from other papers—it is written for workers by workers. I believe that it is a paper that every shop steward and active trade

unionist should read even if they don't agree with what it says.

'When the paper is sold in the factory it is the discussion that it provokes between its readers which is so vital. Readers of the paper must and should organise themselves into Socialist Worker discussion groups—all of us, including myself, will be able to develop our socialist ideas in these groups. Our own group is still in its early stages, but it has been very fruitful. It has brought out the thoughts and feelings that were buried deep in one's mind, but which were never expressed.'

'The problems facing the working class and the trade union movement today mean that Socialist Worker has a vital role to play. I have been active for over 30 years, and during that time I have been on numerous committees and sub-committees of the trade union movement. Socialist Worker has been a tonic, particularly in the last few years.'

'I will always endeavour to get the widest readership I can possibly get. It is up to all of those who agree with the ideas of the paper to see that it gets the widest possible readership.'

● Please phone me on 01-739 2639 for any ideas or help in hitting our 30,000 target.

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Glass workers ready to fight

WEST LONDON:—The 700 workers at the Rockware Glass factory in Greenford, who are to lose their jobs because their company wants to sell the factory for property speculation, are preparing to fight.

A 50p levy has been imposed on all workers and a weekly newsletter started. Arthur Harris, joint chairman of the newly-elected Rockware Co-ordinating Committee, told Socialist Worker: 'The workers are ready for a battle.'

'We are looking for support from Rockware factories in St Helens and Knottingley. We went to St Helens last Friday and got a lot of support from the lads there.'

The fighting spirit of the Rockware workers has not been dented by an offer of extra redundancy pay to long-standing workers. Most of the workers, especially the black workers, are not affected.