

Socialist Worker

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

Industrial backing now more urgent than ever

HEALTH FIGHT:

ON 31 MARCH 200,000 hospital workers were striking or working to rule for better wages and conditions. On 1 April and every day since, the same 200,000 hospital workers are challenging the law of the land.

The Counter Inflationary Act is now law. It gives powers to the Pay Board under Sir Frank (£307 a week) Figgures to examine any wage claim anywhere in the country.

The board can at any time give 14 days notice to any employer or any group of workers engaged in a pay claim.

From the moment that notice is given, any strike or work to rule for a wage rise above the £1 plus 4 per cent limit is illegal. Trade unions 'or any other organisations or any person' who is found guilty of 'organising, procuring or financing a strike . . . or any industrial action short of a strike' are then liable to fines of up to £400 from a magistrate or unlimited fines in the high court.

Everyone knows that the hospital workers are the biggest group of workers challenging the government's wage policy by industrial action.

Everyone knows that as long as the hospital workers' action continues, the government's new law is a mockery.

PARALYSE

Yet Sir Frank Figgures, according to the press, is 'determined to do his best to stay out of controversial skirmishes, such as ordering the hospital workers back while he examines their grievances.'

Sir Frank and his masters in the Cabinet do not want a confrontation. So strong is the hospital workers' case for substantial increases that an order from the Pay Board restricting their pay would lead to a wave of industrial disruption which they could not contain.

They hope that the mere existence of the law will paralyse the trade unions. They hope that Alan Fisher and the rest of the hospital workers' union leaders will give up the fight for better wages.

They hope that Fisher and company will lead the hospital workers into the blind alley into which the General and Municipal Workers' leaders led the gasworkers and the Civil and Public Services Association led the civil servants.

Every day of the hospital workers' action calls the government's bluff. It shows that the government and its laws are impotent to deal directly with mass industrial action.

But the hospital workers on their own cannot defeat the government and the Pay Board. They create no profits for the industrialists and bankers who control the government.

SUPPORT

The rich lose nothing from the hospital workers' strike. They are happy to sit back and wait while their friends in the press and television sap the workers' morale.

The hospital workers need the support of every section of the working class. Fine words are not enough.

Mr Hugh Scanlon, president of the engineering union, writes in his union journal: 'If the government persists in its indifference to the suffering of hospital workers and patients, then the entire movement will be forced to take action.'

The government has been persisting in this indifference for more than two months now. No call has come from Mr Scanlon and his colleagues on the TUC General Council for industrial support for the hospital workers.

The fight for the hospital workers and for trade union rights will have to be taken up in earnest by real militants in the rank and file, who have both the power and the will to call the government's pay law bluff once and for all.

200,000 DEFY LAW

Arrested hospital pickets battle on

ALL over the country hospital ancillary workers are battling on for a £4 a week increase in defiance of the Tory wage freeze and its Phase Two anti-strike laws.

St Mary's Hospital in Paddington, West London, is typical of the determination of the low-paid 'Cinderellas' of the health service to take on the Tories.

Even before Phase Two became law, Don Steadman and Peter Barker, two strike leaders at St Mary's, were arrested while on picket duty and were remanded on bail.

As soon as they left court they went straight back to the picket line to continue the fight. Picture shows shop steward Peter Barker (in patterned jumper) on the picket line watched by the police.

All London hospital workers stopped work for the day on Thursday and marched with other trade unionists organised by the London Trades Council from Tower Hill to a lobby of parliament.



Factories and tenants boost drive to hit fund target

THIS WEEK'S donations and contributions of £1147 have swelled the International Socialists' printshop fund to £27,280. The most encouraging sign in recent weeks has been the large number of factory workers and council tenants who have contributed.

This week is no exception. 68 carworkers from British Leyland Body plant in Oxford collected £28, £5 from Heavy Axle, Rubery Owen, donated prior to their current strike, Redferns

National Glass (Barnsley) £2.15, UPW (International Telephone Exchange) £7.70, NUM faceworker 50p, London dockers £5, shop steward at Poulsons Trafford Park £3, David Brown Tractors £1, Harold Hill council estate £1.50, Cuckoo council estate £2.30.

Among our own branches, Kirkby sent £5, Hackney £50, Guildford £8, Halifax £10, Birmingham £60, Leicester £72.14, Swansea £6.50, Basildon £14, Blackburn £4.16, Cumbernauld £3,

Chelmsford £1.50, Exeter £4.50, Woolwich 50p, Llanelli £21.50, Oxford £19.68, Barnsley £2.10.

Soaring prices coupled with the introduction of VAT does not make it any easier to raise money. The target is well within sight and we are confident that with your help it will be reached.

Rush donations to: Jim Nichol, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

Savage rise in prices

by Chris Harman

HOUSEWIVES throughout Britain have been stunned once again this week by price rises. The government's new Value Added Tax has forced up the price of necessities right across the board, from canteen meals to toilet paper, from laundry charges to cat meat.

The fact that a few luxuries like colour televisions and jewellery have fallen in price is of little help.

And food prices can be expected to continue their upward spiral. The head of Heinz, the giant food empire, said earlier this week that the price of five basic foods—butter, sugar, dried eggs, meat and fish—would rise by 24 per cent before the end of the year.

Yet wages have been completely frozen for five months. There could hardly be clearer refutation of the Tory argument that wage increases are to blame for price increases.

Instead the government has been singing a different tune. It says that a world shortage of certain basic foods has forced prices up everywhere.

The most amazing thing about this argument is that ministers have the cheek to put it forward. After all, it is the Tories themselves who decided to introduce VAT, knowing full well that it would add substantially to the cost of living, knowing that it was a tax on the poorer section of the population.

Massive

Many of the food price increases are also due to government policy. For instance, 80 per cent of the beef eaten in this country is produced here. So the massive price increases of the last year have gone straight into the pockets of the big farmers and food companies, even if the initial cause of the increased prices was a 'world shortage'.

But it is not even true that shortages are behind all the price increases. In Europe there is not a shortage of butter, but a massive glut.

The Common Market agricultural policy, which the Tories have introduced into Britain, means that there is a mountain of 267,000 tons of butter that cannot be sold because the price is too high for working people to afford. The government is deliberately forcing up the price of butter to fit in with this policy—hence estimated price rises for butter of 24 per cent.

Bacon and sugar prices are similarly being forced up, without there being any 'shortage'.

One of the most prominent advocates of a dearer food policy is Lord Watkinson former Tory Minister of Defence. 'The era of cheap food is over,' he declared in December. Lord Watkinson is also chairman of the Cadbury-Schweppes food and drink combine which announced a 33 per cent increase in profits last week. Such profits were quite permissible under the freeze.

Higher prices are not an unavoidable accident. They are the result of the conscious effort of a big businessman's government to solve the problems of a capitalist economy at the expense of working people.

SUPPORT CLAY CROSS COUNCIL! March and Rally Saturday 14 April

Assemble 1am Holmgate Estate, Clay Cross

Speakers at rally:

Mick McGahey, President,

Scottish Miners

George Caborn, Sheffield area

organiser AUEW

Tom Swain, MP, Derbyshire North East

Ethel Singleton, Liverpool Trades

Council Tenants Co-ordinating

Committee and Merseyside IS

Alex Maxwell, Cowdenbeath Council

Charlie Bunting and David Skinner,

Clay Cross Council.

All IS members in the London area who

want to go by coach to Clay Cross,

contact John Phillips: 237-6869.

Tory welfare snoopers: the real scroungers go free

LAST WEEK an official report on 'welfare scroungers' was warmly welcomed by the government and given massive publicity in the national press.

The report was prepared by the Committee on Social Security Abuse set up by the Tories in 1971 and chaired by a super-annuated High Court Judge, Sir Henry Fisher.

The aim was to prove that scroungers are making off with huge amounts of money

Dutifully the Fisher report reached the conclusion the government wanted—'abuse by wrongful claims is a serious problem'. Yet the Fisher committee could produce little evidence to support this allegation.

In 1971-72 some £4400 million was paid out in social security benefits. The Fisher Committee estimate that in the same year the loss to the system by fraudulent claims amounted to only £1.5 million.

A month ago in the Budget, the government handed out about £350 million a year in tax cuts affecting the very rich. Most of this money went to the scroungers who live off investment income.

Ignored

This friendly gesture by Chancellor Anthony Barber was virtually ignored by the mass circulation newspapers.

The government announced last week that the size of the welfare fraud squad is to be increased by 30 per cent. Already some 329 special investigators are employed at an annual cost of £1 million.

In one special inquiry carried out in 1970, 26,500 people getting unemployment or supplementary benefit were investigated in depth.

In only 100 cases was there evidence of fraud, mostly involving no more than a few shillings. In 1971 another investigation into sickness benefit fiddles cost eight times more than the amount of overpayments discovered.

In 1971, more than 9000 people were forced to hand over a total of £12 million to the Inland Revenue after being caught out in tax evasion. Yet only 120 (1.4 per cent) of these particular scroungers were prosecuted.

Welfare benefit frauds rarely involved more than a few pounds, yet nearly one quarter of those accused of fraud are prosecuted by the Ministry.

The real abuses of welfare state benefits are not mentioned in the 300 page report of the Fisher committee: the rudeness and hostility with which claimants are treated, the hours of waiting in social security offices, the one million old age pensioners whose incomes are below the official poverty line because they do not get supplementary benefits to which they are entitled.

Jim Kincaid

DEBATE IS GAGGED AT

SW Reporter
THE LIAISON COMMITTEE for the Defence of Trade Unions was reduced to impotence on Saturday. Deliberately stifling free debate and discussion, the leaders of the committee turned their backs on the opportunity to turn the body into an effective, grass-roots fighting force against the Tories and their growing arsenal of anti-union laws.

The Liaison Committee has lived a fitful existence for eight years. It can claim responsibility for organising some of the protest strikes against both Labour and Tory attempts to shackle the trade unions.

But its potential has been deliberately restricted by its Communist Party leaders. Their politics are confined to pressuring left union officials—who are never publically criticised for their retreats and vacillations—and gaining positions within the union machine.

The Liaison Committee has been used by the Communist Party as a pressure group to be brought on stage from time to time to indicate the party's industrial strength to the trade union leaders. But they have resolutely refused to transform the committee into a genuine, democratic organisation uniting militants at rank and file level for fear of alienating themselves from the officials they seek to impress and influence.

EFFORT

Last Saturday's conference at Friend's House, Euston, was seen by many delegates, including members of the International Socialists, as a last-ditch effort to turn the committee away from 'stage army' politics at a time when it has never been more vital to build a rank and file movement capable of uniting all those sections willing and able to take on the Tories.

The effort was not successful. In some of the most disgraceful scenes of bureaucratic gagging and strong-arm methods seen for a long time in the working-class movement, the Liaison Committee leaders ruthlessly trampled on any attempts at a real discussion on the future of the organisation and the need to set up local committees in every part of the country.

The reason why the platform refused to accept resolutions from the floor was summed up by the Morning Star's report of the conference: 'Most delegations realised that a decision to have resolutions would strain relations with official trade union bodies, whose rules and constitutions do not allow them to commit them-



Delegates demanding the right to table resolutions at the conference

selves in resolution form at unofficial trade union gatherings.'

There in one sentence is the entire Communist Party strategy for the unions: do nothing to upset the 'left' officials and stifle the independence of the rank and file.

In place of resolutions and debate, delegates were presented with a 'declaration' that correctly stressed the need to turn the TUC's May Day protest into an effective 24-hour general strike. But its call for further 24-hour strikes until the government drops its working-class offensive was just empty rhetoric, shorn of any organisational proposals for mobilising workers for such action.

The conference, attended by some 800 delegates, began with chairman Kevin Halpin skating over the failure of the Liaison Committee in the last year to make any intervention in the major battles between unions and the government. He made a veiled criticism of Hugh Scanlon's call for the Tories to amend the Industrial Relations Act in order to have meaningful talks with the TUC but Halpin went on to suggest that Scanlon had been misrepresented by the press.

Praising the struggle of the hospital workers, Halpin called for a strategy to help those with little strength to win—and then spent the rest of the day using his position to strangle any debate on such a strategy.

Mal Collins (Coventry TASS) said he was mandated to ask for resolutions to be accepted and debated.

The chairman ruled against him and refused any discussion of the issue. With several other delegates on their feet challenging this ruling, he took a snap vote and declared his ruling carried with 40 per cent of the delegates against him. This decision so outraged delegates from the London docks that they walked out but returned later after discussions with other delegates.

The first two speakers were both critical of the Liaison Committee and sent the platform desperately sorting out the requests for speaking rights to make sure that no further critics slipped through the net.

DEMAND

Jim Kemp, TGWU building site convenor, said it was irresponsible just to call for a general strike to demand concessions from the Tories. May Day was a step forward, he said, but the conference needed resolutions to plan a strategy. 'The responsibility for that strategy rests with the delegates—that's democracy.'

Roger Cox, Chiswick AUEW No 5, said: 'Left rhetoric is worse than right wing rhetoric. Scanlon has run away from the fight.' He said only the rank and file could successfully defeat the Tories.

'We must hammer out a strategy and win rank and file support. Militants are often isolated and the conference should overcome that isolation. This organisation should give leadership and confidence and

collect militants together. Will the Liaison Committee take this responsibility?'

He received an effective answer by later being evicted from the conference as a 'troublemaker and disrupter' and was only allowed back in on the insistence of other delegates.

The rest of the morning session was largely taken up by platform speakers who uniformly praised the Liaison Committee for its alleged activities in recent months and supported the pious 'declaration'.

Bill Freeman of the Briant Colour Printers 'work-in' summed up the platform attitude to its critics: 'There's been a lot of talk about "democracy" this morning. It's a very popular idea. But what we want is unity.'

Other speakers were to refer repeatedly to the need for unity, but it is a notion of unity that runs counter to working-class experience and socialist practice. Real fighting unity can be achieved only by critical debate, not by flabby rhetoric and backslapping.

At the start of the afternoon session, Alan Watts, an AUEW member from MK Electricians toolroom Edmonton, North London, suggested from the floor that as many delegates had only had an opportunity to study the platform's declaration at lunchtime, would it not be in order to accept amendments to it?

He was abused by the chairman and told to shut up, but all over the hall delegates rose to support Watts.

Paras get a free hand to terrorise Ardoyne

by Mike Miller

BELFAST: The murderous activities of the paratroop regiment in Belfast in recent weeks have gone completely unnoticed by press and television. While huge coverage was given to the killings of three British soldiers two weeks ago, nothing has been said of the murder of three unarmed civilians by the Paras in the Ardoyne in the last three weeks.

The British government is trying to terrorise those parts of Belfast where the IRA still enjoy considerable support. The Ardoyne is one of the best organised areas for the Provisionals and so the government has sent the notorious murderers of Bloody Sunday into action.

The first day that the Paras went into the Ardoyne they put on what was described by one local paper as 'a show of force intended to prove to the people of the Ardoyne that they meant business.' What this meant was the shooting dead of a man as he stood in his front door with his hands in his pockets.

He was shot from close range with a high velocity bullet. His head was blown to pieces. His eyes were found in the garden of the house next door

and his brains were splattered all over the hall of the house. The press remained silent, accepting the usual army line that it had shot another 'terrorist gunman'.

Since then two more unarmed civilians have been shot dead by the Paras, and another dozen shot and injured. As well as shooting people they have been arresting great numbers and beating them up.

This has included women and children. Every household in the area has now suffered at the hands of the terrorists of the British Army.

Last Saturday the people of the Ardoyne turned out in force for a mass demonstration against the presence of the Paras in their area. The demonstration was a direct response to the latest of the Para murders—that of Patrick McCabe, a 19 years-old youth gunned down in cold blood last week.

The Tory government is still carry-

ing on its terror campaign against those who dare to resist the domination of the Six Counties by British thugs in uniform. Behind all the fine sounding phrases in the White Paper about 'freedom', 'peace' and 'reconciliation', the massive harassment of the anti-unionist population continues by day and night.

Paras invade school

AS PART OF an army public relations campaign, the Parachute Regiment, which was responsible for the massacre of 13 demonstrators in Derry in January last year, has spent two days 'fraternising' with the students of one of London's most fashionable secondary schools, Holland Park Comprehensive.

The chairman of the board of governors at Holland Park is Mrs Caroline Wedgwood Benn, wife of the

former Labour Minister, whose two children attend the school.

The Paras were called in by Mr F D Rushworth, the headmaster, who until recently described himself as 'a Marxist Leninist'. Mr Rushworth was encouraged to call in the Paras by a housemaster at the school, Mr Charlie Ryan, the careers officer.

Mr Rushworth brushed aside objections to the visits by a deputation of sixth formers in the school, and a petition signed by members of the National Union of Teachers employed at Holland Park.

The Paras swarmed over every part of the school, chatting pleasantly to the pupils. Special leaflets were distributed to fourth and fifth year pupils outlining 'the grand life' in the Parachute Regiment.

Students who protested about Bloody Sunday were selected for abuse and ridicule by the most offensive of the troopers.



LIAISON RALLY

A squad of stewards then moved in, threatening delegates on their feet. One delegate who challenged the chair from the microphone was seized and pummelled and angry scenes continued for several minutes.

The conference had come to a complete standstill. Showing considerable restraint at the verbal and physical attacks on them, the critical delegates resumed their seats to allow the conference to proceed.

One last critical speaker was allowed to address the gathering. **Hugh Kerr**, ATTI, stressed the need to generalise the struggle of public sector workers to industrial workers with strength. The key question, he said, was could the Liaison Committee be turned into an effective rank and file organisation to link militants in each locality?

STRESSED

'The frustration shown by delegates is due to the lack of democracy,' he insisted. 'At the recall TUC there was no chance to put amendments. It is absurd that the same situation exists here.' He ended by stressing the need to build local committees affiliated to the Liaison Committee and was warmly applauded by a substantial number of delegates.

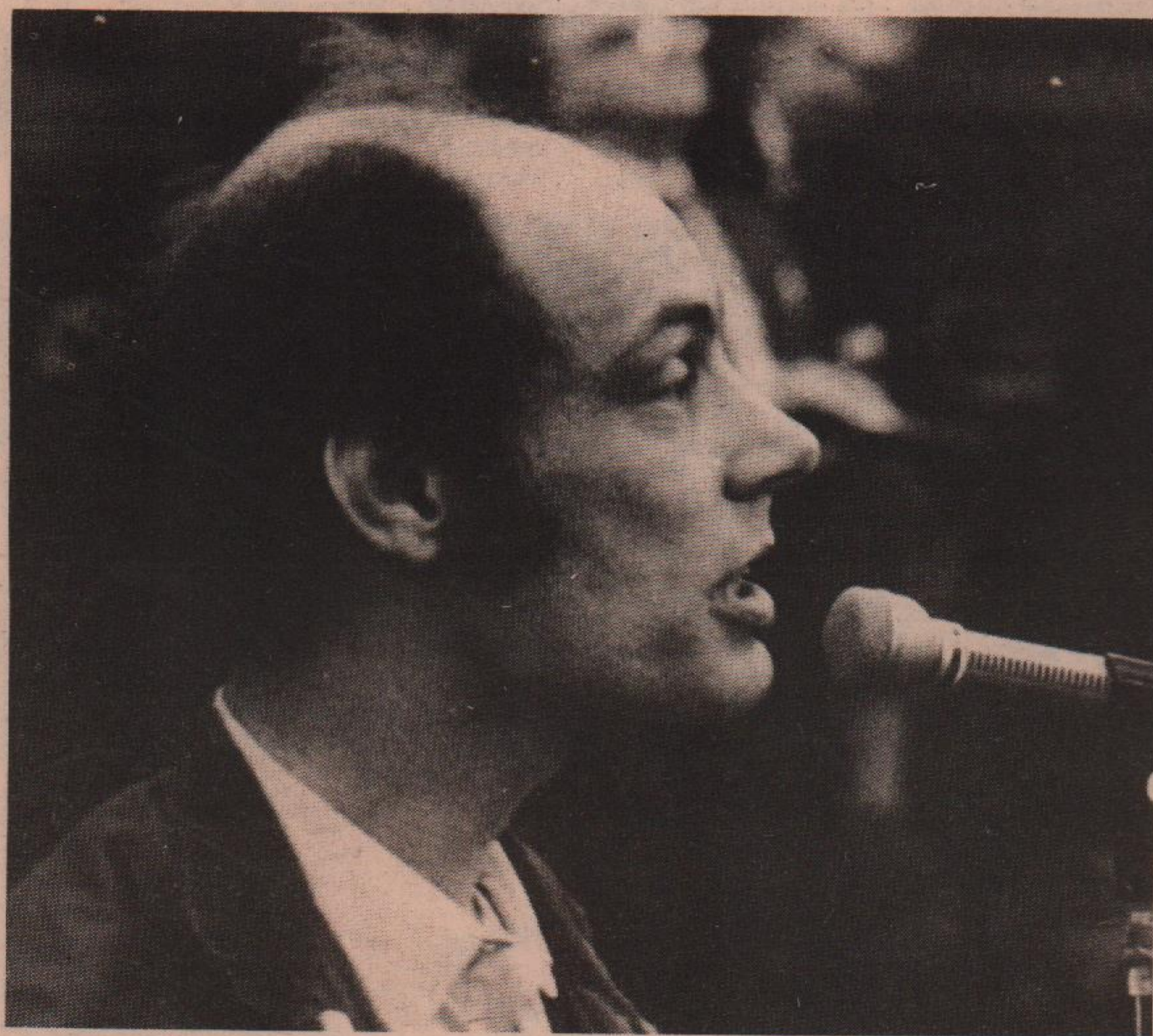
From then on the conference was increasingly dominated by a series of platform speakers from the official ranks of the trade union movement and leading Communist Party delegates, who treated the meeting to empty platitudes about the wickedness of the Tories and the even greater danger of disrupters, sectarians and 'instant revolutionaries'.

The 'instant revolutionary' tag was a cheap insult hurled at those denied the right to speak. Far from making wild, ultra-left demands, the critics had attended the conference in an attempt to root it firmly in the working-class movement. It was a particularly fatuous jibe from a platform calling for a series of one-day general strikes without the organisational framework to achieve such actions.

Bob Wright, an executive councillor of the AUEW, who sits on a conciliation panel with the Confederation of British Industry, summoned up the ghost of the Stalinist 1930s with the suggestion that critics of the Liaison Committee received funds from dubious sources.

His speech was punctuated by cries of 'What about Fine Tubes—what have you done for them?' and it was fitting that Bob Wright was followed to the mike by **Jock Greenlees** of the Fine Tubes strike committee, one of the Plymouth strikers abandoned by the official leaders of the AUEW and TGWU.

The conference ended with chair-



Roger Cox: We need strategy

man **Kevin Halpin** ironically pointing out that none of the critics of the declaration had put up any suggestions for its improvement—hardly surprising when he had refused amendments and his stewards had assaulted delegates who attempted to challenge his ruling.

As one delegate said as he left after the adoption of the declaration, 'I've been called everything today—"disrupter", "wrecker", "saboteur"—except called to speak.'

DISCONTENT

In private discussion many Communist Party delegates expressed their discontent with the handling of the conference and its refusal to accept criticism. Yet they loyally supported the platform and its spurious appeals for 'unity'.

It was a unity achieved at the expense of democracy and a clear directive to the future fight against the Tories. The Communist Party leaders had shown that they prefer to strip an organisation of any power and effectiveness if their total domination is threatened.

The task of building a genuine, democratic rank and file organisation of militants based on a clear strategy of linking workers in struggle against the Tories is now more urgent than ever.

It is a movement that must welcome the active participation of Communist Party militants currently held in the straitjacket of their leaders' bankrupt politics.



'Shut up or get out': a steward moves in on a delegate raising a point of order

WHAT THE DECLARATION SAID

THE declaration adopted by the conference said that the Tories' Counter-Inflation Act and the Phase Two code are the latest in the ceaseless attack unleashed against the working class. Strikes and other forms of industrial action are now criminal offences, backed by conspiracy charges against building workers and the threat to arrest hospital workers' stewards.

It stressed the need for mass action to defeat the government along the lines of the movement that had freed

the dockers jailed last summer. 'It was this growing understanding that industrial action is the only language the ruling class understands that led the delegates to the special TUC on 5 March to reject the general council's attitude of passive verbal protest and to insist on industrial action. We welcome the decision of the special TUC to call for action. The spirit of the congress was clear—a 24-hour general strike as a matter of urgency and co-ordination of solidarity action with those unions in struggle defying Phase Two.'

The declaration called on the entire movement to make 1 May a complete and total 24-hour general strike with massive demonstrations in all towns and cities. Trades councils should begin to organise now for such action.

It put forward the demand for a mounting campaign to get the TUC general council to call a series of 24-hour general strikes and, if necessary, an unlimited general strike to force the government to abandon its incomes policy and anti-union legislation.

'Community work' sentence on black militant Soares

TONY SOARES, a leading member of the Black Liberation Front, was sentenced last Monday to '200 days community work' during the coming year, and was bound over to keep the peace for two years after being convicted last week of incitement to arson and the use of weapons.

The judge, Mr Justice King-Hamilton, warned Tony that if he was convicted of a political offence in the next seven years, his prison sentence would be 'in double figures'.

'If you don't like the laws of this country,' said the judge, 'you have a simple problem with a simple solution. You can go to some other country.'

On 10 March 1971, Nigel Strange, then President of York University Students Union, was found guilty of incitement to commit malicious damage for publishing an article in a student newspaper about how to make a Molotov cocktail.

The article was almost exactly the same as the one for which Tony Soares was convicted. The circulation of the paper was greater than the issue of Grass Roots which was cited in the Soares trial. Unlike Soares, who denied editing the 'offending' article, Neil Strange admitted responsibility for it.

Strange was given an absolute discharge. He is white.

Socialist Worker

WHAT WE THINK

HUGH SCANLON admitted last week that he would settle for a modest amendment of the Industrial Relations Act rather than the total repeal that is still official AUEW policy and indeed official TUC policy. And one of the two specific amendments he has in view—a 'vetting' to prevent the Goad-Langston element putting both the NIRC and the unions on the spot—is certainly very acceptable both to big business and the government.

There is no doubt at all that Scanlon's statement is part of the preparation for new talks between the TUC and the government on an 'incomes policy' deal for 'Phase Three' in the autumn. These talks will probably start in May after the TUC's Day of Action on May Day—which Hugh Scanlon still says must be 'a really massive turnout'.

It is as well to be absolutely clear what is being proposed here. Incomes policies under capitalism have been aptly described as 'people getting £1000 a week or more telling people getting £1000 a year not to be greedy.' The government badly needs trade union support for such a swindle in the autumn when, as even the Guardian has pointed out, 'the expected rise in the cost of living will leave the lower paid worse off than they are now, even if they get £1 plus 4 per cent.'

The TUC right wing has always been willing to co-operate in a scheme to preserve and increase inequality and so boost the profits of big business. Now the 'lefts' are willing to abandon their opposition both to incomes policy and to the Industrial Relations Act. Scanlon differs from the other 'lefts' mainly in being more straightforward about his intentions.

In this situation the conduct of the Communist Party leadership of the Liaison Committee in refusing to allow discussion on specific policy proposals at last week's conference (other than their own innocuous 'declaration') gives direct aid and comfort to the enemy.

Of course 'relations' between genuine militants, including many Communist Party members and the trade union leadership, are going to be 'strained'. A complete sell-out on incomes policy and the Industrial Relations Act is being prepared—and it is being supported by those very 'lefts' in whom the Communist Party has been doing its best to create illusions.

This sell-out has to be fought every inch of the way. That means a fight against both open rightwingers and all those 'lefts' who go along with them—including some of the Communist Party's favourite trade union chiefs.

VOTE LABOUR

SHOULD socialists vote Labour in the council elections? The Our Norman cartoon in this issue sums up the disgust felt by tens of thousands with the Labour Party's wretched record of sell-outs and broken promises.

In Merseyside, to take one example of many, how can tenants on rent strike be asked to vote for councillors who ran in 1972 on a promise to refuse to implement the Tory 'Fair Rents' swindle and once elected promptly ratted?

The socialist case for voting Labour does not depend on any assumption that the Labour Party will carry out its pledges. We know very well that, in general, it will not carry them out, indeed cannot carry them out because it is committed to making capitalism work.

We know it, but millions of workers disagree. It is quite true that there are far fewer illusions in the Labour Party than there were ten years ago—thanks to the experience of the Wilson government. But Labour still appears as the alternative to the Tories.

That state of affairs has to be altered. It can most easily be altered with Labour in office, both locally and nationally. Labour in opposition talks left.

The party can regain credibility with militants to the degree that it is free from office and so is able to hide its real face. It is just because we believe that the attempt to 'work in the Labour Party to change it' is a tragic blind alley for socialists that we are strongly in favour of putting it in power.

Power is the test. And so we urge all our readers to swallow their distaste and vote Labour—vote Labour without illusions but vote Labour.

6 COTTONS GDNS, LONDON E2 8DN



BRIEFING

THE Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers' Union in the United States is carrying out a nation-wide boycott of Shell Oil on the crucial issues of health and job safety. Support is strongest in the San Francisco Bay area, where striking refinery workers, anti-pollution groups, doctors and health workers, students and consumers—many of whom had never talked to one another before—are forming an alliance.

The highly-automated Shell refineries, with overhauls now carried out at two-year intervals instead of every three months as before, and a huge number of new,

inadequately researched and highly toxic chemicals, are a death and disease trap

Last year 60 Shell workers in San Francisco were suspended for refusing to do dangerous jobs. On one occasion when three men did agree to tackle a hydrogen leak with the detectors off there was an explosion and one was killed.

Shell workers are demanding joint safety committees of unions and management, proper industrial health surveys by union-approved consultants, regular medical checks, and the disclosure of sickness and death statistics.

THERE is no doubt that the new Australian Labour government intends to make a better job of managing big business interests than its Liberal predecessors. Just announced is a planned trip to China by the Minister for Secondary Industry and Foreign Trade, Dr Cairns.

'The government must act as a bridge between private interests and countries like China,' Dr Cairns is reported to have said.

His trade mission team consists of Australia's leading businessmen, who are determined to snap up new markets and cheap imports for themselves. Prime Minister Whitlam is wasting no time in becoming good friends with the men who hold the strings of the Australian economy. He is soon to open a new £180 million iron and steel plant for the country's biggest monopoly, Broken Hill Proprietary, whose chairman, Sir Ian McLennan, is to head the trade mission's business interests.



Riot police armed with rifles charge demonstrating students in Paris

WORKERS AID FRENCH SCHOOLS REVOLT

SCHOOLS all over France were closed or empty last week as lycee (high school) students continued their struggle against conscription.

In many places working-class students in CETs (a combination of technical school and junior technical college) joined the struggle and in some places those in CESs (secondary-modern type schools for older pupils) too.

It is in the CETs that there has been most discussion of widening the struggle beyond the immediate demand for postponement of military service for students. Other demands include political freedom in the school, changes in discipline, a 40-hour week including classes and travelling (most CET students are apprentices), and an end to the domination of employers over the CETs.

The most radical attack on military service has come from the collective co-ordinating the Paris CETs: they are demanding the replacement of conscription by military training for all in the factories or communities under the control of workers' organisations.

Last Wednesday was a day of demonstrations of 'explanation to the people'. In Paris 10,000 people marched in four demonstrations called by co-ordinating committees led by revolutionary socialists, and 1500 in a demonstration by organisations led by the Communist Party. In the provinces 50,000 demonstrated. At Caen 4000 students clashed with police, and at Poitiers a peaceful march of 2000 was attacked by extreme right-wing elements.

DISPUTE

While the school students' revolt continues, a major industrial dispute has broken out. Two key shops in Department 12—the body plant for the R4 and R6 models—at the Renault car factory at Billancourt, Paris, have been out since 21 March. Most of the workers involved are immigrants. This section nearly came out before the elections, but was held back by the Communist-led CGT union, which didn't want a strike during the election campaign.

Groups of immigrant workers are also on hunger-strike all over France, and there have been demonstrations in support of them including a big one in Paris on 31 March.

They also protest over the 'Fontanet circular', which lays down new conditions for immigrant workers. These rules were not even passed by parliament, but decreed by the Ministry, and they affect all immigrant workers except those from Algeria and the African countries which have a 'special relationship' with France.

From now on all immigrant workers must have a certificate—provided by the employer—that they are 'decently housed.' Since employers are responsible for most of the slum hostels where immigrants often live, they will be able to use the certificate to get rid of workers they don't want.

Many bosses are already using strong-arm tactics to keep immigrant workers from joining a union, let alone being militants. The workers on hunger strike are threatened with deportation.

STARVATION STRIKERS HIT AT VORSTER

by W Enda

AFRICAN workers are not standing patiently by while The Guardian and other 'liberal' papers belatedly attempt to prick the consciences of the hundreds of British companies paying starvation wages to their workers in South Africa.

New and more militant strikes start daily.

Two weeks ago 1000 Africans struck at the giant SAPPI paper mill in Durban, demanding 50p an hour—many earn only 10p an hour. Groups of strikers armed with sticks, confined by police to the mill's African township, attacked the police road block with sticks, while others set fire to the long grass between the township and the mill.

Last week 1700 African workers walked out of the Veko clothing factory in Natal and were joined in solidarity by workers from the neighbouring Trump plant. Five hundred women formed a sit-down picket. Their demand of £4 a week would be for many a 100 per cent rise. They refused to elect a negotiator for fear he would be seized and jailed, but by Friday it is said 1000 had returned to work without any gains.

Banned

Striking is strictly illegal for African workers, who are forbidden trade unions with negotiating rights. But the strikes are spreading. In and around Johannesburg groups of engineering and steel workers have struck, and in Cape Town Coloured (mixed race) Pepsi-Cola drivers stopped work but were driven back by the police.

The government is beginning to lose its cool, after at first claiming sympathy with the Natal strikers and attempting to blame the employers. It started blaming outside agitators, and banned both the black and white student leaderships. Now the government is talking about 'unbridled wage demands' and 'unfounded claims for higher wages.' The hard line has begun.

A hundred white national servicemen were sent in last week to break the strike of 700 African workers at the Alusaf aluminium works. The plant, the only one in South Africa, is at Richards Bay, designated by the government as a key development area.

It draws labour from the surrounding Zulu Bantustan where the people are literally starving, and the workers get even less pay than the pathetic minimum laid down by the Industrial Wage Board because of the special exemption for developers. Some earn only £4.70 a week, from which £1.47 is deducted for board. They are demanding another 20p an hour, and have rejected an offer of an extra £1 a week.

Repatriated

The officer in command of the troops says they will stay there 'as long as they are needed', to run the plant. Last Friday, after a meeting with a Zulu official from the Bantustan, 500 workers agreed to sign off and be repatriated. This official has succeeded in persuading the workers to do what the government would like them to do by force—remove the militants to the Bantustans, where they will rot.

The Zulu Chief Minister, Buthelezi, appears left-wing when he says he would appeal to all other Zulus not to replace the repatriated men, 'if we had our own mass media.' He is in fact preventing the workers from running pickets. His aim is to capitalise on the workers' struggles to get further concessions, in money and land, for his Bantustan. With the black anti-apartheid student leadership banned, there is no one to publicly counter his influence with a policy of outright opposition to the Bantustans.

In Britain, ASTMS workers at GKN factories in the West Midlands have demanded information from

the company chairman concerning 'the average weekly income' (excluding overtime), the percentage of Africans paid below the Poverty Datum Line, and the names of the representative bodies of African workers with whom wages are negotiated' in GKN's five South African factories. (The Poverty Datum Line is £11 a week, the income considered necessary for bare subsistence for a family of five.) The workers aim to be more successful than The Guardian, which failed to get this information from the GKN chairman.

US steel union sells the right to strike

by John Hellebrand

THE American government is facing a long, hot summer as most of the big unions start talks for better pay and conditions.

Mr I W Abel, leader of the 1.4 million steelworkers' union, is doing his best to avoid a row. The last time the steelworkers came out on strike was in 1959 when they stayed out for 116 days and presented capitalism with a major setback over lost production in steel and dependent industries such as the General Motors and Ford.

Two months ago, Mr Abel disclosed that he and Mr R Heath Larry, top industrial negotiator for the United States Steel Corporation, were planning to eliminate strikes as a weapon that workers could use to gain wage increases and find a 'better way to settle differences.' The likely solution was thought to be some form of binding arbitration.

The company was so keen on this plan that it began an 'educational' campaign at all the mills and finishing plants equating strikes with permanent loss of a job. It printed comics for the workers to take home, took spots on educational television programmes, produced films, and even invented a game that the family could play.

Mr Abel was certainly in the 'right' frame of mind to be educated, for last week he put a proposal to the union executive that was passed unanimously.

Details are being withheld at the

THE CHAIRMAN of the Russian film directors' union has said that Last Tango in Paris would never be shown in Russia. 'Not that we are puritans, of course. The truth is, sexual problems do not exist in the Soviet Union.'

Meanwhile, Komsomolskaya Pravda, the official youth publication, has called for 'courses of matrimonial instruction in the schools to prepare young people for the severe adjustments necessary in married life. There should also be an encyclopedia of married life which could be very useful to older couples. The stability of millions of households and the happiness of children depend on the moral and psychological preparation of young people for marriage.'

One marriage in four in the USSR ends in divorce: a rate shared with Czechoslovakia and second only to the USA.

THE much-applauded British Exhibition in Peking is not merely a diplomatic manoeuvre. It is clear that the Chinese are keen to import western products and technology despite their emphasis on do-it-yourself science and economic independence.

But the ambiguity of Chinese economic policy is most clearly seen in relation to Japan, which has in the past been alternately denounced as imperialist and greeted as a fellow victim of American imperialism.

On the one hand, a delegation to China from the Japanese monopoly Mitsubishi last September concluded that the Chinese aim of self-development would not permit imports of consumer goods, foreign capital investment, or extensive foreign credit, and that China intended to develop her own mineral resources.

On the other hand, recent public statements by prime minister Chou En-lai which are quoted by optimistic Japanese businessmen include:

'The Chinese see no contradiction between self-help and collaboration with foreign countries.'

'China intends to develop a broad trade with Japan. In particular we need steel, fertilisers, industrial equipment, whole factories.'

'China can alter her five-year plan to take account of Japan's needs... to sell to Japan an increasing amount of industrial raw materials.'

'China wishes to look especially at Japanese technology. She wishes to imitate the way in which Japan borrowed foreign techniques to bring about her own development.'

moment but the plan definitely calls for binding arbitration on those points where management and the union do not agree. In short, the union executive has sold the steelworkers' basic trade union right to strike for the empty promise that they will get a fair deal from an 'impartial' arbitration board handpicked by the Nixon government.

The last time union executives avoided a strike was in 1971 and the United Steel Corporation and other large steel producers showed their good faith by making 85,000 steelworkers redundant and closing many plants immediately after the deal was signed.

The reason they gave was that orders from major steel consumers had fallen off and the companies had to cut back.

The fact that the current contract does not run out until August 1974 only gives that much more time to Abel and the United States Steel Corporation to 'educate' the workers until they are able to understand that the management really knows best for them.

This is a glaring example of what can happen and what will happen when there is no active political alternative being put forward at the factory level.

America may seem far away and its problems immense, but they are no different than the struggle in Britain.

The case of United States Steel should make us all realise the necessity of building a political organisation involved in all fronts of the class struggle.


FOOT

PRINTS

Greater London Carve-up

ONE OF THE most annoying things about being a councillor is the legal obligation to 'declare an interest'.

According to the Local Government Act (1933) any councillor who has a pecuniary interest (money) in any contract under discussion by his council must declare his interest.

All he has to do is to write a letter to the town clerk setting out what his interest is. The town (or county) clerk will then write an abbreviated and unspecific account of the 'interest' in a book which is not available to the public or the press, but only to other councillors.

It is considered 'very bad taste' to reveal the contents of the book.

By means which can only be described as in 'very bad taste indeed', the contents of the 'declaration of interests' book in the Greater London Council (which is the biggest local authority in Europe) have come into the hands of Socialist Worker.

The 'interests' declared in this secret book will not be made public during the forthcoming GLC election campaign (polling next Thursday). Which is a pity, because they tell us a thing or two about devotion to public service in the controlling Conservative group on the Greater London Council.

Consider, for instance, the case of Mr Harold Sebag-Montefiore, QC, chairman of the Arts and Recreation Committee of the GLC and a councillor for the City of London and Westminster. Mr Sebag-Montefiore is a barrister.

Like so many barristers, these days, he manages to squeeze in a bit of 'property consultancy' in his spare time. On 19 May 1971, for instance, he 'declared an interest' to the GLC, confessing that he was a 'consultant on town planning for the Hammerson Group'. The Hammerson Group is one of the fastest-expanding property groups in Britain.

Mould

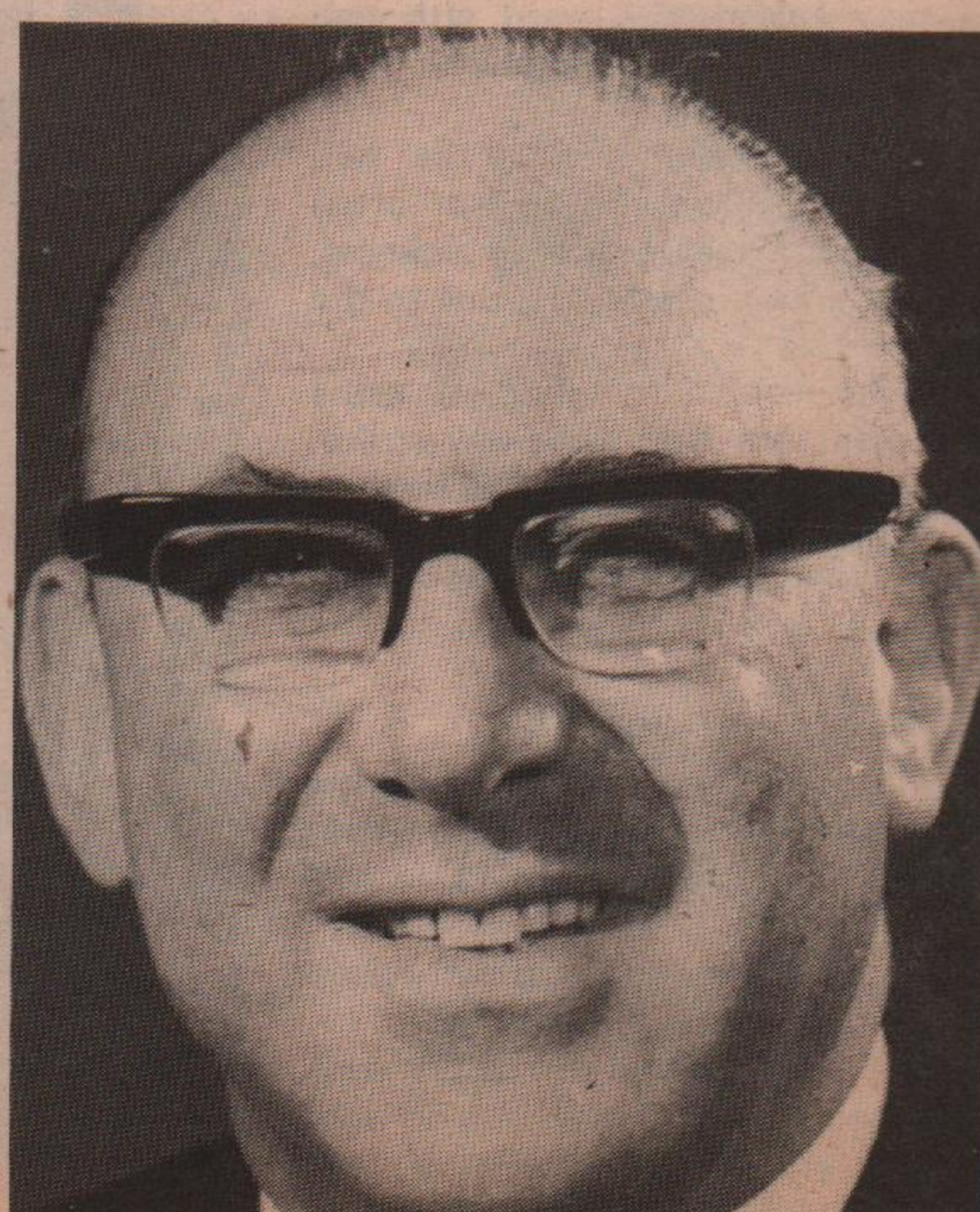
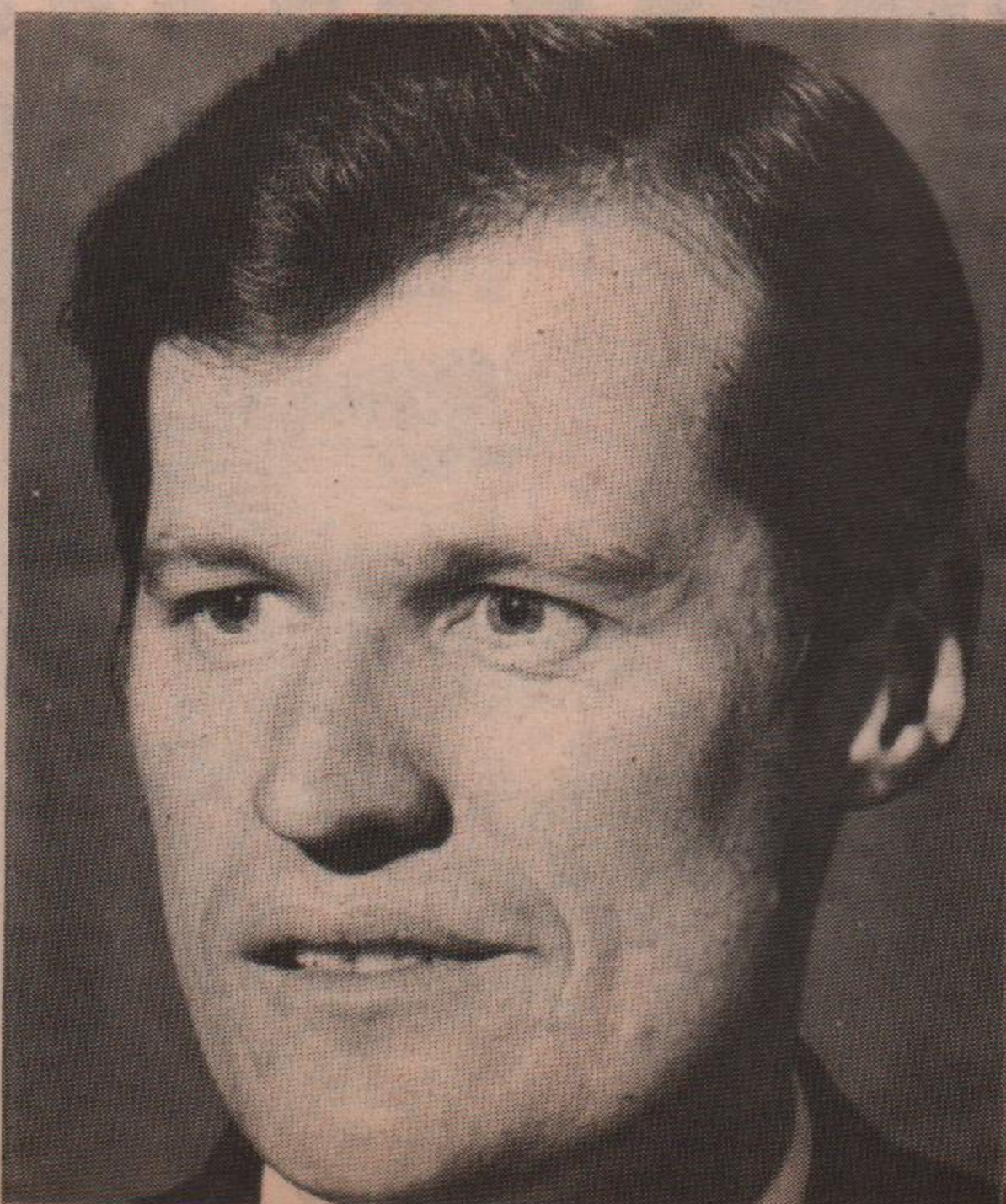
While Mr Sebag-Montefiore was at County Hall, Hammersons developed Woolgate House, EC2, St Vincent House, an office and hotel development between Leicester Square and Trafalgar Square, Princes House, Gresham Street, several properties in the Bedford Estate, Holborn, and the town centre at Romford—all in the GLC area and most in Mr Sebag-Montefiore's constituency.

In January 1970, Mr Sebag-Montefiore declared an interest in Joe Lyons and Co, the restaurant group, which has been building with GLC permission all over London, and in October 1967 he declared still more interests in proposed hotels in Knightsbridge and in Southwark.

Property lawyers in the mould of Mr Sebag-Montefiore form the largest single block of Tory GLC councillors.

Another trained barrister is Mr G W Aplin, who is looking for votes in Croydon South. In 1967, Mr Aplin, who is the principal in a firm of chartered surveyors, James Fisher and Son, declared an interest in the redevelopment proposals for Piccadilly Circus. Mr Aplin has also declared an interest in land in Merton.

Another prominent lawyer is Mr Robert Vigers, a former chairman of the powerful GLC Strategic



VERY INTERESTED: Richard Brew, motor agent, David Harris, PR man, Leslie Freeman, property lawyer.

SPOKESMEN FOR M-WAY MADNESS

TWO EAST LONDON TORY candidates will be arguing ferociously in favour of the destruction of London by motorways. Mr Richard Brew (Chingford) is a former chairman of the GLC's Environmental Planning Committee, which was responsible for the decision to build the ringways. Mr Brew is also chairman of Brew Brothers, the world-famous Knightsbridge motor agents for Rolls-Royce, Bentleys and Daimlers. Brew Brothers are one of the most prestigious

members of the Motor Agents Association, which in turn is affiliated to the British Road Federation, the all-powerful pro-motorway lobby.

Mr Neil Thorne (Ilford North), chairman of the Covent Garden Joint Development Committee, is also a strong motorway supporter. In April 1970 he declared an 'interest' in the Ringway. His Ilford company, Hull and Co, he revealed, would benefit from the Ringway's construction.

Planning Committee, who is campaigning in Kensington. Mr Vigers is a partner in the prominent London solicitors, Simmons and Simmons, and among his many declarations of interest in property was a 'professional interest' in the development of Blackfriars station.

Another solicitor is Mr Leslie Freeman, who will not need your vote as he will be a GLC Alderman until 1976. On 21 July last year Mr Freeman declared an interest in Boots, the Golden Egg Group, ICI, the Proprietors of Hays Wharf, Shell, Capital and Counties, Metropolitan Estates, Land Securities, Town and Country Properties, the Midland Bank, Associated Newspapers, Associated Portland Cement, GKN, Dunlop, BP and London Merchant Securities, to name but a few.

Obliged

There are two other solicitor councillors standing again for the Tories: J C Dobson (Acton), and Mr Reginald Marks (Barnet, Chipping).

Apart from the property lawyers, there are a very large number of Tory candidates who have something to do with the property business. Mr Bernard Brooke-Partridge for

instance, who describes himself as 'a director of companies connected with construction and property development' has been obliged constantly to declare his interests.

At different times since his election in 1967 he has declared an 'interest' in negotiations for the purchase of Willey Street, as a 'director of a printing group which receives contracts' and, in December 1967, in a petroleum licence connected with the redevelopment of the Rosehill Community Centre Site.

In the same month Mr Brooke Partridge mentioned that he was 'interested' in the redevelopment of St Katharine's Dock.

Several other GLC candidates are 'interested' in property companies. Mr Tom Mitcheson, Tory candidate for Southgate, a former manager of the National Provincial Bank, is on the board of 14 property companies which operate in the London area. Mr George Everitt, the candidate for Carshalton, is the chairman of a property company called New and Expanding Towns, and Mr Michael Farrow, a member of the Monday Club Action Fund and the candidate for Ealing, North, modestly describes himself as 'a director of property companies'.

Mr Horace Cutler, former chairman of the GLC Housing Committee, is a building company director and

landowner.

There are also a large number of professional gentlemen who are connected directly with the building industry, including two estate agents—Alfred Berney (Brent East) and H T Mote (Harrow, East). (Mr Mote has declared an 'interest' in J Harvey Ltd, in connection with a GLC decision about new towns overspill)—three consulting engineers Peter Black (Hendon South) Sydney Clack (Hendon Central) and Lt Col Andrew Jardine (Brentford).

Retains

There are two chartered accountants/surveyors, Geoffrey Seaton (Surbiton) and the GLC leader, Sir Desmond Plummer, who has now sold his shares in the three companies developing Piccadilly Circus, but retains his shareholding in London and Merchant Securities which forced him to declare an interest on 10 November 1969. Sir Desmond is the London and Merchant Securities and Conservative candidate for St Marylebone.

The great majority of Tory GLC councillors who are standing again are surveyors, accountants, civil and consulting engineers, property lawyers, auctioneers, planning consultants or ordinary up-and-down-the-

wicket property speculators. To keep a balance, however, there are also seven managing directors, a parfumer Mr Peter Malynn (Lambeth North) and even a journalist—Mr David Harris an unbiased, objective political correspondent for the Daily Telegraph.

Mr Harris' work as Greater London Councillor and Daily Telegraph correspondent does not prevent him from doing a little public relations on the side.

A spokesman for the large public relations firm Parker PR Associates confirmed that Mr Harris had worked for them on a number of accounts over the last six years. Parker also confirmed that they had done work for the Greater London Council between 1966 and 1970. On 5 June 1971, Mr Harris declared an interest in Parker PR Associates, and in the British Aircraft Corporation.

Prison

Most of the above councillors were elected in the Tory landslide in 1967, which brought to local power the most unlikely Conservative candidates. Mr David Thornton, for instance, who was elected for Havering, had a very unhappy time with his 'public relations' and 'shipping consultancy' firms, and is now in prison for embezzling one of his companies' money.

Another councillor elected in the same year, Mr Richard Butterfield, after declaring a number of interests in property in Hampstead, ended up in the bankruptcy court.

These were the unlucky ones.

Most of the businessmen and professional men who have protected the Tory interest at County Hall for the past six years have prospered mightily. Some of them are retiring.

In their place is a gang of younger, fresher property speculators, chartered surveyors, accountants, company lawyers, consulting engineers, small builders and bankers, who are without exception a credit to their predecessors and to their party.

Property men with the capital in their hands

BOBBIE WANTS

BOBBIE BLUNSON works at New Cross hospital, Wolverhampton, as a domestic. Her job, along with 200 other domestics, is to keep the hospital clean.

This means that a ward that might contain as many as 36 beds has to be swept, mopped and dusted every day, teacups have to be washed and basins and baths have to be scrubbed.

In return for this hard work, Bobbie gets £10.50 take-home pay for a flat 40 hours a week. But because she is a widow and the sole wage earner, she has to work every Saturday and Sunday, too.

This brings her week up to 49 hours and her pay to £14.73.

She starts work at 7am and finishes at 3pm. There is no dinner break and the hospital canteen does not provide a cooked meal. She is not allowed to eat or drink in the ward although doctors and sisters regularly have coffee and biscuits.

There are supposed to be two domestics for every ward but often there is only one because of sickness, holidays and understaffing due to the abysmal pay.

Bobbie told me: 'When we came back after our first three-day strike, each one of the jobs which I have to do on my own in the course of a day's work had been allotted to one nurse.'

■ ■ ■
 'In other words, the hospital management are as good as admitting that we are overworked. You see, domestics are treated like skivvies. We are not regarded as human beings but as delinquents and illiterates.

'Doctors push you out of the way, close doors on you and look straight through you as though you did not exist. Everybody else in the hospital wears an identification badge, but not the domestics.

'For the last five years I have had to work weekends. I don't like doing it but it is the only way I can save up for my holidays. A person has to have a bit of pleasure.

'I went to bingo last week and that was the first time I had been out for a night since last September. The last time my sister, who lives with me and who is also a domestic at New Cross, went out was to the rally of hospital workers in Birmingham on 13 December.

'Over the last three years we have seen a definite drop in our standard of living. We can no longer afford a joint at the weekend and we have to make do with bacon and eggs or chops. After we have paid the rent, rates, electricity and food, there is very little left over.'

Bobbie has been a NUPE shop

A DUST UP WITH HEATH...



'We can't win on our own'... Sheffield building workers on a hospitals march

steward for 12 months. 'Management hate my guts. The female staff always had a male shop steward before and they never seemed to get anywhere.

'The members had never seen a shop steward coming into the canteen to talk to the members about their problems.

■ ■ ■
 'Contact with the members is very important. After all, as far as I am concerned, they are the union. Mind you, I would not say that being a shop steward is a bed of roses, but I basically took the job on because I could see that there were a lot of things wrong and I decided to take up the challenge to get things changed.

'At first the members thought my shop steward's badge was just a flash in the pan. But now they know that

if there is a bone to bite, I'll bite it. I'm lucky, I have got a grand bunch of girls at New Cross.

'There is a lot of colour prejudice in Wolverhampton, but we don't get it in the hospital. Anybody who is a member of the union is worth fighting for. If we start to divide black from white, the employers will be the only ones who benefit.

'As I see it, hospital workers cannot win on their own. The Tories are the moneybags of this country and they do not want the working class to get their just reward.

'I bet Heath and Keith Joseph do not have bread and marge for breakfast. The Tories are trying to hold down wages and the working class. We should be seen and not heard, according to them.

'By our own action we have given Heath a headache but we need the help of the big unions in terms of demonstrations and meetings of solidarity, collections and picketing.

'It is a fight that no working-class person can afford to lose.'

Paul Holborow

HOTTING UP

SIX THOUSAND copies of the International Socialists' new pamphlet Anti-Freeze were sold in the first week of publication. 50 copies were sold at a London Trades Council meeting the night the pamphlet was printed.

So far most of the copies have been sold in trade union branches and in factories. 59 were sold by one member of IS in his NUT branch, 15 were sold on a North London building site and 25 in an engineering factory in Keighley, Yorkshire.

Picket lines are another place where sales have been successful. Copies were sold to hospital workers, gasmen and to CPSA members on strike at the Freight Terminal in Stratford, East London.

It is no accident that copies are being brought by the very people who are at the forefront of the fight against the freeze. The pamphlet contains facts and arguments against the freeze and the other anti-working class measures of the Tory government which people can use in their work place and on their estates.

All readers of Socialist Worker should take copies of the pamphlet—not only for themselves but to sell to the other people they work with or pass on their copy of the paper to. One shop stewards' committee have taken 200 copies and others should be given every encouragement to do likewise.

Copies can be ordered from Margaret Falshaw, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN, 5p per single copy (incl p&p), orders of 10 or more, post free.

Zulus' revolt spotlights

The tide

IT WAS ON the personal intervention of Sir Nicholas Cayzer, chairman of the British and Commonwealth and Union Castle shipping companies, that the wage rates of 24 Zulu seamen on the firm's Clan Robertson ship were more than doubled. His swift and speedy action in raising their rates from less than £10 a week to more than £20 was not unconnected with the fact that when the Zulus walked off their ship in protest in Gothenberg, they were supported by Swedish dockers and seamen who blacked the ship.

Sir Nicholas did first try to find a less inflationary solution to his company's little problem. He attempted to run the strike-bound ship shorthanded into an English and then a Dutch port. In both places the ship was blacked by dockers at the request of their international trade union federation.

And with the imminent prospect of the Clan Robertson's cargo of grapes and fresh fruit rotting in the holds at sea, Sir Nicholas had a vital interest in doing something to get the ship unloaded.

The price was raising the Zulus' wages by one hundred per cent to the miserable levels his company and his industry pay British seamen.

In more normal circumstances (which is almost all the time) Sir Nicholas and his fellow shipowners direct their vitality in precisely the opposite direction. Maintenance of their industry's present profit levels depends heavily on wresting super profits from the sweat of Asian and African labour.

One third of all seamen employed on British ships are Asian or African seamen. They are employed to do all the most menial jobs on the ships and their rates of pay vary from about £4 to £8 a week.

These rates are 'negotiated' with company-dominated unions in their home countries.

The giant P and O company acts as the recruiting agent for most of the British companies and a few others besides, taking on some 20,000 workers annually. After the Clan Robertson settlement two weeks ago (which it should be noted covers 24 men for as long as they work on one particular ship), P and O chief Asian crew manager Donald Young explained just how vital sweated labour was to his industry.

Shored up

'I just hope that nobody else starts claiming that kind of money. If we had to pay the rate for British able seamen then a lot of cruise ships could go out of business.'

In the nineteenth century coal owners said much the same when it was suggested that only adults should work in the pits and at adequate rates of pay.

Shipping's contemporary slaving system is shored up by the general misery that world capitalism has inflicted on the so-called third world. Sweated wages initially seem very attractive to the starving and the unemployed of Bombay, Calcutta or Durban.

And it comes in very handy as a way of keeping down British seamen's wage rates. Their union leaders can be persuaded that British seamen are very favourably treated by comparison, even if the extent of the favour is a rate of only £22 a week.

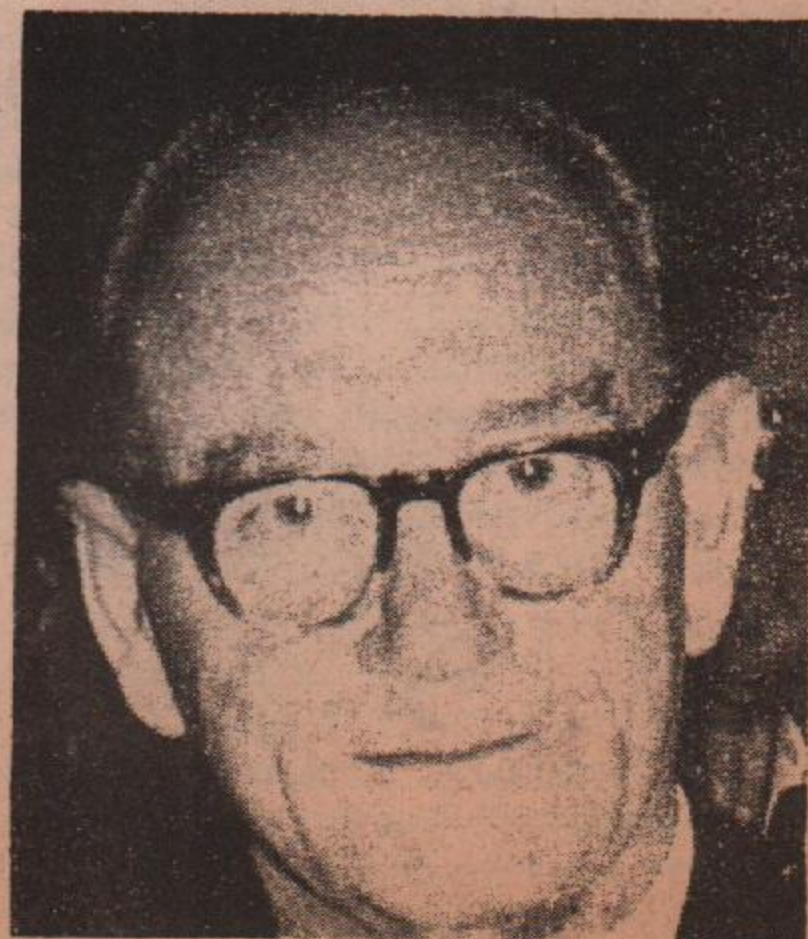
The British shipping companies go to immense lengths to prop up this world-wide system of exploitation. They are organised into one of the most powerful cartels in this country.

The British Shipping Federation has one of the most highly organised and successful lobbies of parliament. And they have penetrated their power quite openly into the supposedly neutral organs of government which are charged with controlling their industry.

The safety and stability of their ships is nominally under the control of the Department of Trade and Industry's shipping section. This body is in fact the creature of the employers.

For instance, it never conducts

by
Laurie Flynn



Hogarth: immense pride

proper inquiries into shipping's many accidents and disasters. And through their cartel they have been able to get the massive government subsidies for their shipbuilding activities.

Their power extends to the National Union of Seamen. Contrary to formal appearances, this is a company union with a state-approved closed shop granted by the National Industrial Relations Court after a joint application with the employers.

The NUS leadership has been very helpful to the shipowners in maintaining their slave system, not least when a Labour government was in power.

Thanks to the activities of the NUS and the employers, seamen are not covered by even the most mild and basic reforming legislation. At the Trades Union Congress in Brighton last year NUS general secretary William Hogarth, in his speech prior to the suspension of the union for collaborating with the Industrial Relations Act, boasted of this situation.

British ships, he recounted with immense pride, were not covered by the Race Relations Act, the Redundancy Payments Act, the Contracts of Employment Act or Homosexual Offences Act. It is still a crime for consenting adults aboard a ship to have homosexual relationships.

Discipline

The employers insisted that this gerrymandering of the law was necessary to maintain discipline. It has been fully formalised in the Labour government's Merchant Shipping Act which guarantees the employers untrammelled power.

Contrary to its own conference decisions, this Act has never been resisted by the National Union of Seamen. Instead it has helped the employers win the above exemptions.

The shipping companies have other

Union

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wage piracy on the high seas...

starts to turn for ship bosses



Some of the Zulu seamen in London: sweated wages no longer attractive

resources which enable them to deal with anyone who steps out of line. In the one or two instances where smaller shipping firms have made the odd concession towards equal pay for blacks or higher rates for all, they have magically found that their shipping insurance premiums have doubled or trebled the following year.

This delightful little business arrangement for perpetuating tyranny comes as a result of the links between the shipping and insurance sector of the British economy. If you examine the boards of P and O, British and Commonwealth, Cunard and the like, you will find that their directors interlock with the giant banking and insurance firms.

Interlock

And more than that, they interlock with almost every section of the 1 per cent of British society who own 80 per cent of the wealth. The shipping boardrooms are in short a Who's Who of British big business. And not only British big business.

Sir Nicholas Cayzer's ventures into the exploitation of black workers do not start or stop on South African quaysides where his ships take on Zulu labour. Sir Nicholas is one of the main movers in ensuring that the business of apartheid continues smoothly despite the odd ban on a cricket tour or the brutal murder of Africans at Sharpeville.

Just before Sharpeville an outfit called the South Africa Foundation was set up to fund discreet political

propaganda among the business and government communities throughout the Western world. Its operations have gone from strength to strength. One of the trustees of the South African Foundation is Sir Nicholas Cayzer.

He is also president of the United Kingdom South Africa Trade Association, which operates from the same London address as the Confederation of British Industry. This particular organisation is the key link in British big business' continued rape of African labour throughout South African industry.

Sir Nicholas is not the only member of the Cayzer family. He has a brother called Stanley who farms in Warwickshire. His reward for having a few shares in the robbery of the fruits of other people's labour is that he hunts four days a week, shoots on the fifth and rests over the weekend.

Another brother is Anthony. A little more directly involved in business than Stanley, he was one of the first big businessmen in Britain to call for legally binding labour contracts in Britain.

During the unofficial 1967 dock strike, Anthony made slashing denunciations of the 'wreckers' and 'agitators' in the docks who were holding the nation to ransom.

His approach was later to be enshrined in the Industrial Relations Act.

Anthony, too, is a farmer and he tried very hard to bring a little of the apartheid system to his 3500 acres in Hertfordshire. He quite ruthlessly exploits the tied cottage system to ensure that his farmworkers stay

'loyal' and continue to rely on huge amounts of overtime to gain the beginnings of a living wage.

And with the housing shortage in Britain worsening every day, this is an increasingly powerful weapon.

Among his other pieces of bargaining power is lending his employees money to buy household goods or cars at the normal (extortionate) hire purchase interest rates. He retains ownership of the goods until the debt is fully paid off. He is also, on application, willing to meet employees' gas and electricity bills and deduct so much a week from their wages until the amount is paid off.

Advised

Mr Cayzer has met with some considerable resistance to his regime from one of his employees, Bob James, who was until recently county and branch secretary of the National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers. Mr James started organising against his fellow workers' subservience and fear and had the cheek to give some press interviews on the situation on the Cayzer farmlands.

Anthony has subsequently informed him that if he gives any more press interviews he will be sacked on the spot. His union has advised Mr James that Cayzer is fully within his rights to do this.

Mr James has since resigned as county and branch secretary of his union. The Cayzer empire may pay different rates to its victims but it most certainly assaults them on a world-wide scale.

The budget's gift to the millionaires

READERS may be interested to see how some other members of the working class have been faring since the Tories' 'neut Budget.

As forecast in this column on 10 February, the fall in share prices been short-lived and it was the Budget that brought the revival on 6 Mar

The table below shows the personal (and, in some cases family) shareholdings of a selection of the stars of British capitalism in the companies they run. All these people also possess other shares and wealth, of course, but this is a start.

There are several property companies here because the government was particularly considerate to them: the City was worried that some attempt might be made to curb the worst excesses of property development. But the most convincing evidence of how ineffectual the proposed measures will be is the rise in property share prices since the Budget.

As the table shows, by doing nothing all these men have become much richer since Budget Day. Although this does not mean they have received cash amounting to the figure in the last column, it does mean that at the beginning of this week they could have sold their shares for that much more than on Budget Day.

Developers

All these people, who are of course making a substantial contribution to society, have appeared in Socialist Worker in the recent past.

Joe Levy is one of the key developers interested in replacing Piccadilly Circus with much-needed offices and a conference centre. Town and City Properties are involved in turning Gamage's former store into offices and redeveloping part of Covent Garden with Tom Jones and Engelbert Humperdinck.

London and County Securities (director Jeremy Thorpe MP) was in the news recently because it was lending money at the attractive rate of 280 per cent.

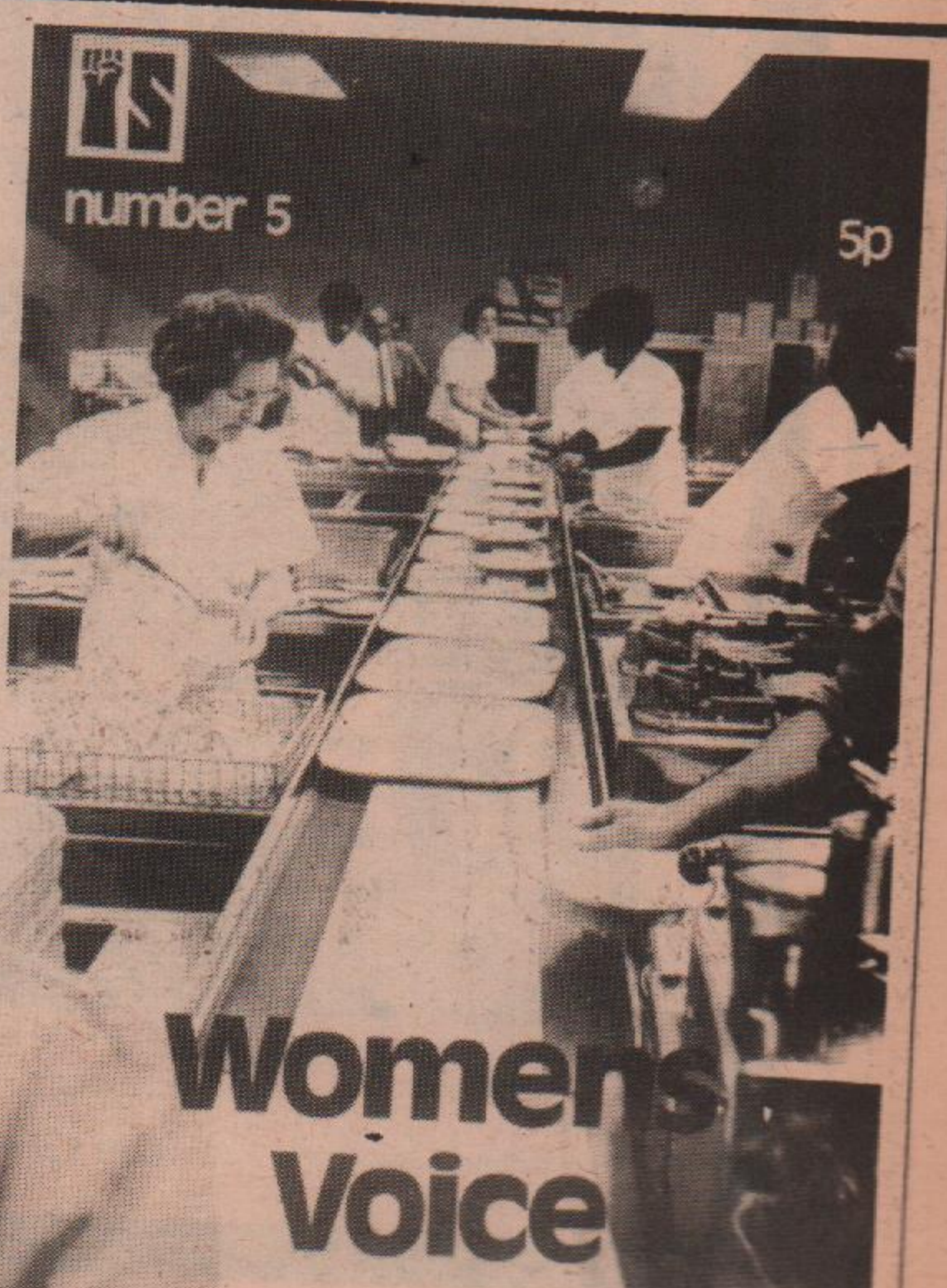


Jules Thorn is the man who tried to close the Fisher Bendix factory in Liverpool just over a year ago but quickly sold it when faced with an occupation by the workers. Sir Charles Forte is the benevolent hotelier and restaurateur who pays his non-unionised foreign workers deplorable wages in his luxury London hotels.

These are just a few of the people who are getting richer every day at the moment. It is understood that few of the workers employed by these gentlemen have received wage increases since Budget Day.

T H ROGMORTON

COMPANY	INDIVIDUAL	SHARES HELD	SHARE PRICE Budget Day	SHARE PRICE 26 March	INCREASE IN VALUE OF HOLDING
Trust Houses Forte	Sir Charles Forte (including Family Trusts)	13,366,056	195p	225p	£4,000,000
Town and City Properties	Barry East	3,367,130	128½p	142p	£471,000
Stock Conversion	Joe Levy	2,513,560	136p	145p	£226,000
Land Securities	Lord Samuel	3,300,000	166p	184p	£594,000
London and County Securities	Gerald Caplaw	1,415,483	237p	276p	£552,000
Thorn Electrical	Jules Thorn (inc. Family Trusts)	7,104,738	389p	400p	£781,000



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NORTH SEA ROLLS OUT FOR OILMEN



Workers on the drilling platform Sea Quest prepare the diving bell for an examination of the sea bed

'OIL, and plenty of it', 'A Second Texas'—this is how the newspapers congratulated the moguls over North Sea oil.

They portray oil as the saviour arriving in the nick of time to solve unemployment, rising prices, the balance of payments, and any other problem for which the newspaper proprietors need a convenient excuse.

This headline in a Texas oil magazine came much nearer to the truth: 'North Sea—Wonderful place for oil industry.' For this is exactly what it is. Since the discovery in 1969 of the on-shore Groningen gas field in the Netherlands, the oil companies have been frantically battling for control of the known reserves of gas and oil.

Sixteen oil reserves and four gas reserves have been discovered since 1964. The profits are enormous for those who can get there first—estimated recently by *The Economist* to be 49p a barrel after tax, a return of 21 per cent on investment. By the mid-1980s estimated profits should be £2000 million a year.

But these huge profits are part and parcel of the destructive exploitation typical of capitalist production. Recoverable reserves of four billion barrels have been discovered in the North Sea. The Middle East reserves are 370 billion barrels, yet the oil companies are to extract North Sea oil at double the rate the sheikdoms allow. This not only ensures immediate profits, but also causes long-term damage to the oil fields.

Dr Frank Symon, a gas consultant with Phillips Petroleum, said recently: 'To put all the North Sea gas reserves into perspective, they would last the US less than 2½ years. We see the price increasing until it reaches its true value in the market place. Only then . . . will the prospects of North Sea natural gas come to fruition. They could be excellent.'

FRANTIC

Excellent, that is, for the international oil companies. In the meantime the world energy crisis is deepened by the spoilation of gas and oil fields in the relentless search for profit.

But why has the exploitation of North Sea gas taken on such a frantic character at this particular time?

Part of the answer is to be found in the Middle East. In 1970 the oil-producing states formed the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to force the oil companies to pay them a bigger share of the revenue from oil.

The world-wide price increases for oil in 1970-71 accelerated the search for other sources of energy. As early as 1964 the Labour government was offering cheap franchises to the oil companies to tap the reserves of the North Sea.

OUTCRY

Now, with the next general election in mind, Labour politicians are trying to get a bit of credibility with the working class by demanding nationalisation of the oil fields. Anthony Wedgwood-Benn bemoans the loss of 'a great deal of revenue' in the past 2½ years, concealing the fact that Labour Party policy paved the way for the present North Sea policies of the Tories.

The public outcry over the recently revealed tax fiddles of the North Sea oil companies was only an expression of the deep contradictions of British capitalism. The oil companies, by making paper transfers of funds between different groups in their empires, were able to write off against North Sea profits tax paid in the Middle East, which amounted to



£1.5 billion at the time of the budget.

To assist its balance of payments problem and currency problems the British ruling class needs these revenues.

British capitalism also needs North Sea oil as quickly as possible. It is estimated that oil imports could be cut by half when the North Sea fields are in full production and this would aid the balance of payments by £500 million per year.

But there is tension between the aims of British capitalists and those of the international monopolies. The president of the American Petroleum Engineers Society warned this month that unless tax incentives and cheap off-shore franchises were granted then the cost of oil would rise and be passed directly to the customer. This would push prices up right across the board and add to capitalism's already insoluble problem of inflation.

At a conservative estimate the British balance of payments deficit will be £875 million in 1973.

The attitude of sections of the British ruling class towards the oil

companies the Barber had to governing North budget, Lord T 'urgent need fo plan'. Lord Or 'The American so vastly rich I-making discret licences to UK c be quite brutal to look after our And the Labo nationalisation-British Capitalis

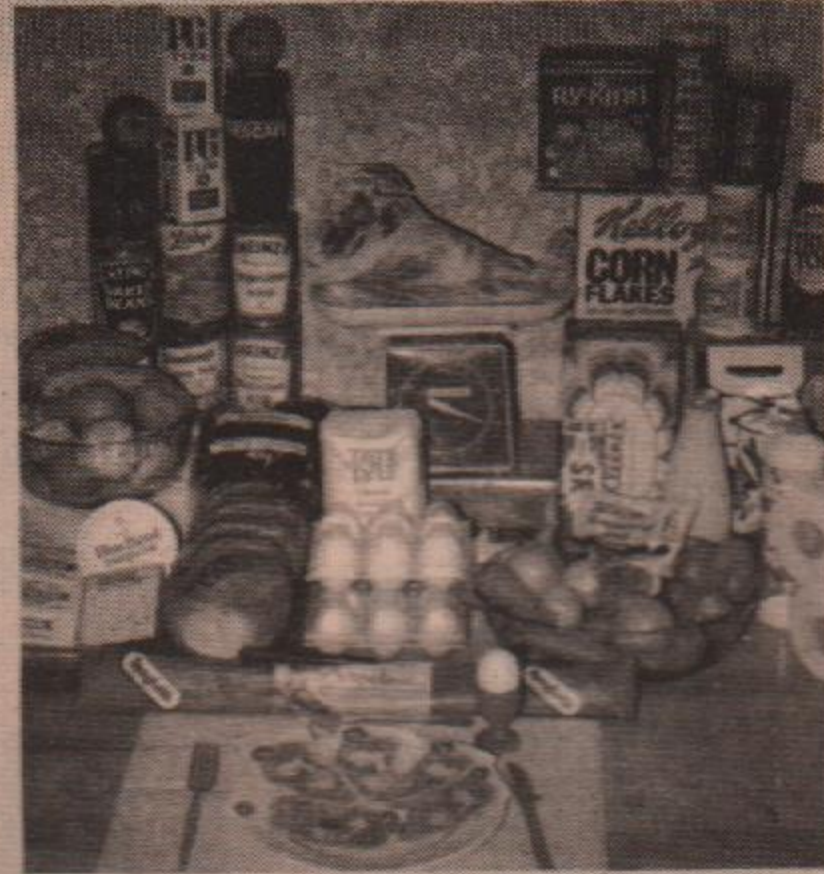
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The oil com that they mus North Sea oil v their markets. transport the

International Socialism 57

Prices since the freeze/Crisis on the left/Italy April 1973 15p



The April issue of *International Socialism* journal analyses the present shape of the working-class struggle against the Tories, the retreat by the TUC and its refusal to organise effective action to back groups such as the health workers and gas men.

Articles include:

Roger Rosewell: **The Engineers**

John Charlton: **The Miners**

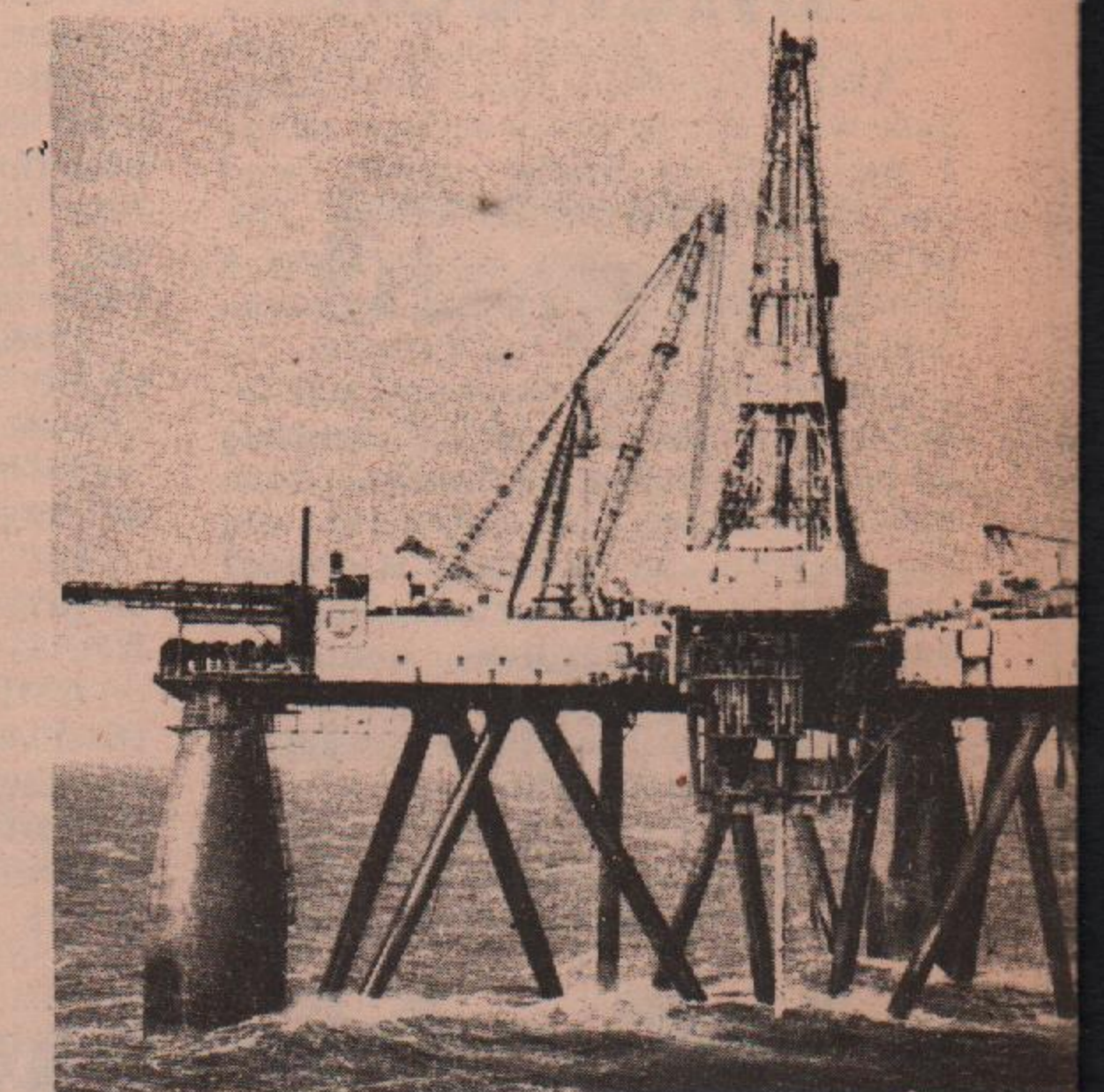
Mike Balfour: **Italy, unions and rank & file**

Reg Groves: **Memoirs of a revolutionary**

Joan Smith: **Marxism versus reformism**

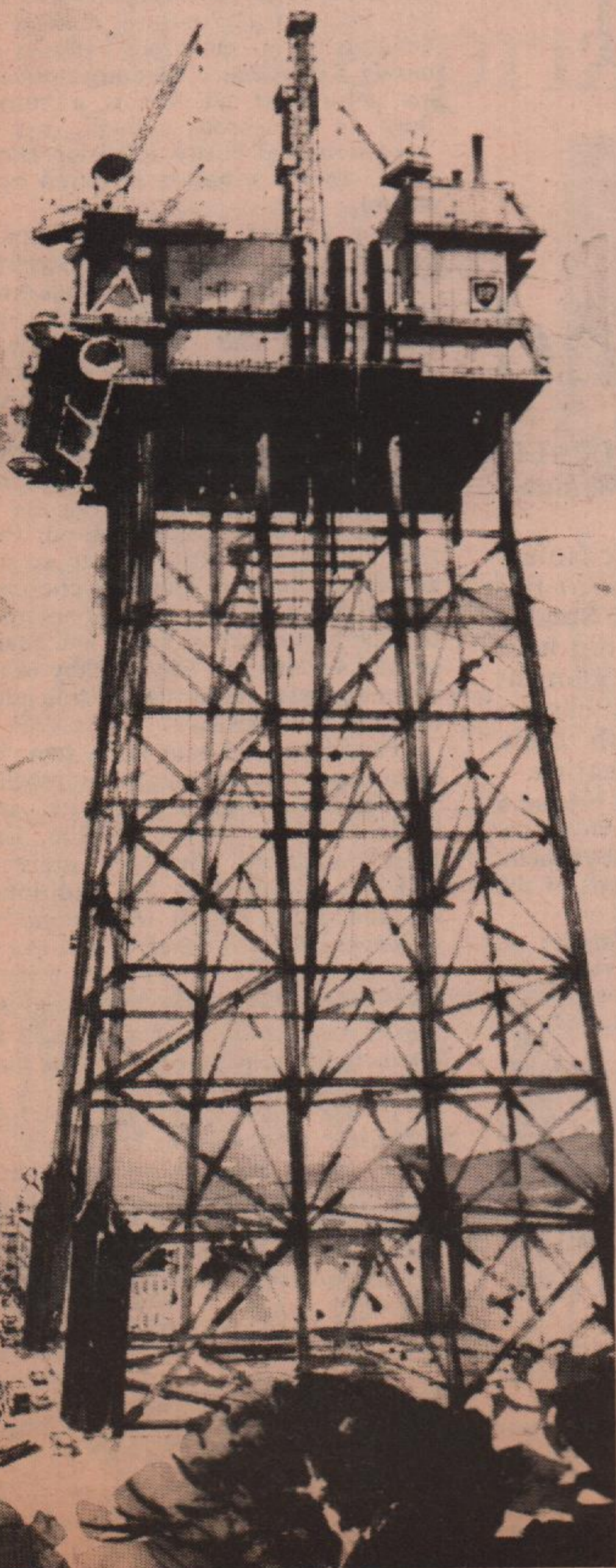
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The BP drilling platform Sea Quest, east of Aberdeen. Fort from the drilling operation, but none will benefit the people whatever the politicians might say

T BARREL



British Petroleum has produced this impression of an oil rig constructed at the east end of Edinburgh's main street. The purpose is to show the herculean nature of North Sea oil exploitation. But the drawing is unintentionally much more revealing. The rig has been placed right above St Andrew's House, seat of HM Government in Scotland. BP has certainly chosen a sound foundation. They've had that particular field and its equivalent in Westminster sewn up for years.

in consultation with the unions! The British Steel Corporation has a rig-building yard at Methil in Fife, and the £6.5 million contract for BP's on-shore pipeline at Grangemouth (the off-shore contract was awarded to Japanese concerns). This has not altered BSC's plans for 7000 redundancies by 1975.

Most of the world's oil servicing industry is American-owned. Less than 20 American contractors supply the oil companies with drilling rigs. Almost all the oil companies have share holdings in the contracting firms and have been known to specify drilling equipment even down to naming the supplier of casting pipe. Of a total of 61 rigs on order at the moment two-thirds are to be built in American yards, none in Britain.

George Williams, managing director of Shell UK, said in December last year that British industry is 'beginning to understand the requirements of competitiveness in pricing, quality, and punctual delivery.' This can mean only one thing—in other words productivity deals and no-strike agreements.

Petroleum Times reported: 'All the contractors to whom we spoke indicated that within the past year all had approached British shipyards to undertake further rig construction but had received a uniform refusal on the grounds that rig construction was not for them an economic enterprise. A notable exception to this is Marathon Manufacturers... their intention is to... introduce as much labour-saving operation as possible to ensure that productivity will make rig construction economically viable in the UK.'

INCREASE

Marathon Manufacturing—the 'saviours' of UCS—signed an agreement with the unions and the Communist Party-led shop stewards' committee which did just this. At the expense of 2000 jobs Clydebank was made 'economically viable' for rig building.

The four-year agreement signed with Marathon in August 1972 provides for arbitration and agrees to a 10 per cent bonus every six months if production schedules are met and the individual worker has worked at least 900 hours.

'The unions and Marathon agree not to resort to strikes, work stoppages, lock-out or other industrial action either before or after arbitration. Both parties agree that their members and employees, managers, officers and officials shall be required by them to abide by such decision as well.'

This is the real meaning of North Sea oil for the working class and only a determined fight by the rank and file can stop it.

The spoilation of fuel reserves, increasing the severity of the world energy crisis, is in no one's interest—except that of profit. The unplanned development of capitalism ruins small communities and devastates what remains of beautiful countryside. Only when production is controlled by the workers in the interest of the working class will these criminal acts be stopped.

refining centres in Britain and abroad. BP's plant at Grangemouth is being extended, Esso's Milford Haven plant will be increased by 6.3 million tons to 14 million tons capacity, and Shell's Stanlow Refinery from 10.5 million to 18 million tons.

It is important to remember that in oil refining the number of workers needed after initial construction is relatively few. BP estimates that it will employ a permanent staff of 'several hundred' between the oilfield, the shore terminal, the Grangemouth refinery, the Forth terminal, and the offices in Dundee and Aberdeen.

Such low and vague estimates merely underline the fact that the final number of extra jobs created will be very few. To date the 'oil boom' has caused a little industrial development on the Cromarty Firth, the opening of managerial offices in Aberdeen, and the growth of investment companies—Pict Oil, Caber Oil, Viking Oil, and many more—backed by the big banks and finance companies. It has also caused massive inflation of land prices all along the north-east coast.

DANGER

Communities like Shetland, with a low level of real unemployment, are in danger of destruction as traditional work is abandoned in favour of quick money in the employment of the oil companies.

The new graving dock at Nigg Bay employs 900 men. This workforce was recruited almost exclusively locally and trained by the construction companies. For example, welders are given 400 hours of company 'training' at £28 for a 48-hour week.

What, we might ask, are the unions doing about this? The Guardian reported that: 'The transition from sand dunes to intensive industrial activity at Nigg has been accomplished amicably

before hardens. After the tax laws Sea profits in his inlaw talks of the a national energy -Ewing can say: oil companies are would have Britain onary awards of ompanies. I would about it. We have own interests... Party demands in the interests of m Ltd.

JOBS

'boom' is presented only as a solution of the employers, the answer to the the unemployed—the Scottish un-00 new jobs have between Aberdeen Firth. What are the

panies are insisting be free to shift where it most suits They intend to oil to existing



ines are being made of Scotland,

Report by Murray Armstrong

Benn's spadework for defeat by John Lea

ANTHONY WEDGWOOD BENN, the bright spark of Labour's left, wrote an article called 'Heath's Spadework for Socialism' in the Sunday Times on 25 March. His theme was how the Tory government, by intervening more and more in the economy, is in fact laying the foundations for socialism.

He wrote: 'Thus Heath has performed a very important historical role in preparing for the fundamental and irreversible transfer in the balance of power and wealth which has to take place, even if only to allow inflation to be tackled successfully.'

It may come as a surprise to many workers to learn that the 'Freeze', the outlawing of strikes, the attack on wages, the imprisoning of trade unionists, contrasted with the ludicrous facade of 'profit control', has contributed in any way whatsoever towards the struggle for a just society. But Benn reassures us.

What he argues is this: The Tories have established the machinery for state intervention in the economy. They are using it in the 'wrong way' against the interests of the working class.

But Labour could use this same machinery in the 'right way' in the interests of the working class. And so we would have socialism.

All that is necessary to bring socialism is to vote in a Labour government pledged, as every Labour government is, to use the state machinery in the 'right way'.

Straitjacket

This is the basis of the Labour Party's politics. Besides wondering why it never seems to quite come off, we must understand why it cannot be achieved.

The reason is simple. The fundamental purpose for which industrial production is undertaken in a capitalist society such as Britain is the making of profits.

As long as this persists, state intervention, whatever its goals, must remain within the straitjacket of not interfering with bosses' profits. And today this means an attack on the working class.

Look at some of the examples of state interference which Benn argues could be used to bring socialism.

He mentions 'power over profits': 'For the first time, "the commanding heights of the economy" have been clearly defined by a British government and measures introduced to control them.' But control in whose interests?

While wages are effectively frozen and attempts to strike against frozen wages are to be illegal from 1 April, profits are treated very modestly. They can rise up to the average level of the best two of the last five years ending on 1 April.

Lame ducks

These levels are very high indeed, but more fundamentally, unlike wage rises which once lost cannot be regained, profit rises can simply be reserved or ploughed back in to make more profits, and distributed when the freeze is over.

If profits really were seriously curtailed by the freeze, then capitalists would have no reason to invest in production and there would be massive unemployment and crisis.

Benn assumes that any industry in which capitalists were not investing due to the lack of profits to be had could be nationalised and state run to prevent massive unemployment. The same effect is aimed at simply by the state doling out massive subsidies to 'lame duck' industries such as Rolls-Royce, UCS and now BSA. Bosses are given a government subsidy in lieu of profits.

But the cash to dole out to lame ducks or to subsidise a non-profitable nationalised industry has to come from somewhere. Mr Benn's benevolent state machine, dedicated to the interests of the working class, is caught in an unresolvable dilemma.

As profit rates begin to fall and capitalists are reluctant to

Hanging on to Heath's coat-tails



BENN: Pat on back for Heath

invest further, with the consequent threat of unemployment, in steps the state to take over the industry or give it a shot in the arm in the form of a subsidy. But the cash for this from taxes reinforces the very tendency it set out to cure.

In the confusion, the government is then likely to lurch to the other extreme and cut back state expenditure because it is taking too much in the form of taxes on profits and we are back where we started.

The last Labour government produced no major reforms. In fact the reverse. It began the process, which has been continued by the Tories, of cutting back the welfare state—education, prescription charges, school milk and so on—and was thinking seriously about an attack on the trade union movement.

Why was this? It wasn't because Labour Party leaders had suddenly become nasty men. It was because the exceptional boom of the post-war years had ended and industry needed to be modernised and re-equipped.

Any increase in taxation on profits to produce further reforms threatened to reduce profit opportunities to such a level as to threaten the economy. But worse than this, even state expenditure at exist-

ing levels was a threat, a 'burden' on the bosses.

So Labour had to find ways of cutting it back. This meant only one thing—a frontal attack on the hard-won reforms gained by the Labour movement over years of struggle.

And so the Tory attack on the working class continues. The government tries to continue the policy of state intervention to save profits, without reducing profits by taxation.

It does this by reducing those areas of state expenditure which benefit the working class. The most notorious single example of this of late is the Housing Finance Act whereby working-class tenants are going to be forced to maintain directly the profits of money-lenders.

Lessons

Benn, assuming that by now we've forgotten about the last Labour government and its 'reforms', tries to convince us that under the next one things will be different.

If he wants things to be different, he has some lessons to learn:

1 The only intervention in the economy that makes any difference is intervention to destroy profit making as the aim of industrial production. But that sort of intervention is nothing short of abolishing the whole capitalist system itself.

2 That cannot be done by parliament, but only by the working class taking the means of production under its own control and declaring the bosses and their state machinery redundant.

If Benn and his friends were serious about socialism this is what they should be advocating. And they wouldn't be writing about it in the Sunday Times.

They would be fighting to build a militant working-class movement, led by a revolutionary socialist party. To do anything else is to try to lead the workers' movement into the blind alley of delusion and defeat.

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JUDGES ON CASH

AND CARRY

IN THE CASH AND CARRY store of ideas, the line that the law of the land must in no circumstances be defied has not been selling so well of late despite a massive advertising campaign.

The reason that the bottom has fallen out of an important part of the market is that hundreds of thousands of workers, faced with an economic, political and legal onslaught from big business, have insisted that the law must be defied. Or at least a certain part of it must be defied.

As Hugh Scanlon, president of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, put it last week: 'Defiance of particular laws which are an affront to a significant section of the community does not imply an attempt to take over the role of government.'

Crammed into this statement is a whole host of assumptions which indicate that in many ways the cash and carry store is still doing sound business.

All, it seems, would be well if only the nasty Tories would set aside (or make a few modifications to) the hated Industrial Relations Act. We would, then, it appears, be back in the most wonderful of worlds where British justice, the best in the world, would again reign unblemished and supreme.

After all Sir David Barran, chairman and managing director of Shell, and a millionaire, would be dealt with just like anyone else if ever he was caught removing lead from a school roof. And his wife would be treated as any other woman, child or man who was caught shoplifting from one of Lord Sainsbury's stores.

UNEARNED

While it is a considerable advance on the previous institutionalised servility of the trade union movement, the 'special case' approach to the law ignores the rather important fact that there are massive inequalities in this society. These only too readily ensure that if Sir David ever did fall short of ready cash to meet his electricity bill then it is highly unlikely that he would have to do a job to conjure up the money. In any case it is more than likely that his electricity is on the firm.

In addition to refusing to admit that the law in general was made by a definite social group with definite purposes, Hugh Scanlon's approach assumes that the institutions set up to police the law are some sort of referee in the great and democratic football match that is British society.

The courts are above it all, dispensing wisdom and justice with the same precision and feeling as retired country gentlemen (on fat unearned incomes) devote to their rose beds.

And the police force? Well it exists to help old ladies across busy streets. Whatever else policemen do, they do with the same spirit and a similar purpose. They never tell lies in court. They never do the employer's job when they protect property and make unprovoked attacks on pickets. They never take bribes or harass

Taking the scales off justice



justice

A SERIES BY LAURIE FLYNN

black people. Or leastways if some do, they are a tiny minority—a few rotten apples in the barrel.

The stupendous inaccuracy of this picture of the law is extremely vital to keeping people in their place. It functions to prevent them organising not just against this or that manifestation of injustice but to identify and dig out the roots. And in addition, it helps to contribute to that most desirable of situations where people become their own jailors.

SELECT

Perhaps the most hallowed and effective of all the instruments used to market this hypocrisy are the men who enshrine in their very persons the full majesty of the law—the judges. And at the top of their particular tree sit those fortunate men who have successfully passed through the long preparatory course for dealing with the most serious offenders against the crown, state and property. They are the judges of the Queen's Bench Division, all 44 of them.

To get on the approach road to such a prominent career, money and a certain kind of education are essential. The judges come from a very definite social group.

Every one of those 44 men was educated in a major or major minor public school. Soused in certain values and ideas at school and in the family they have them reinforced in certain select universities or in the offices where they serve their time.

In training as barristers they become acquainted with the

hypocrisy and corruption of the whole system. Pledges to keep their clients' confidences are not the only thing that keeps them in line. To proceed to great prominence, such men must come to terms with any lingering serious reservations they might have about the world. The late communist barrister D N Pritt gives some indication of how the system works in his recently published book *Law, Class and Society*.

Pritt was handling a case involving compensation for a dead seaman's widow and orphan. The employer who was being sued was represented by a hustler from the employers' organisation, the British Shipping Federation. Pritt was told by this gentleman that if he settled this claim 'cheaply', it would be very advantageous for Pritt.

ROTTEN

Pritt tried to tease out the man's meaning and was told by the hustler, a highly respectable fellow member of the great profession, that what he meant was that if Pritt did the right thing, then the British Shipping Federation would steer a lot of lucrative cases in his direction. Pritt declined.

The highly respectable gentlemen's response was that if Pritt was one of those awkward people who couldn't agree to behave sensibly, the Federation and its solicitors were in a position to see to it that Pritt did not succeed in his chosen trade.

Such treatment is reserved for the odd half-decent apple in a very rotten barrel. Those men who get on to the Queen's Bench division are soldered to the present system of society so immaculately that they are completely unaware of what has happened.

Just how thoroughly this is done can be illustrated by the recent adventures of Sir John Robertson Crichton, Queen's Bench division judge. Two weeks ago at Birmingham Crown Court, he handed down one year to eighteen months prison sentences on eight black youths found guilty on his direction of assaulting policemen, possessing offensive weapons and taking part in an affray.

They are to appeal on the accurate grounds that they were victims of a brutal police assault on a West Indian party—a thing that Sir John finds quite impossible to believe of the police.

Sir John was recently involved in another appeal—on that occasion on grounds that he was asleep during a crucial part of the case. The appeal was rejected. One of his fellow Queen's Bench division judges subsequently commented: 'They were rather silly to appeal on the grounds that he was asleep. They would have stood a better chance if they argued that he was awake.'

NEXT WEEK: The Worker and the Law.

BOOKS

REVIEW

Liberal spy in gangland

A GLASGOW GANG OBSERVED, by James Patrick, Eyre Methuen, £1.75.

YOU MAY have noticed the fanfare with which the publication of this book was greeted in the posh Sunday newspapers but you may not have noticed a disclamatory statement made by the book's central character, 'Tim', to the Scottish Daily Record on the day of publication.

While the author claims 'to present a brief glimpse of the reality which engages Glasgow gang-boys', the boys themselves commented: 'It's right out of the author's imagination.'

We don't have to look far for an explanation of these different views, for the author's commitment to middle-class society takes precedence throughout the book.

As a liberal academic turned establishment spy, James Patrick is at great pains to present a 'balanced picture' of what it really means to be a gang-boy. He tells us: 'Life with the gang was not all violence, sex and petty delinquency. Far from it. One of the foremost sensations that remains with me is the feeling of unending boredom, of crushing tedium ...'

And again: 'Specifically delinquent activities occupied only a small fraction of their waking hours.'

But his real views come, un-camouflaged, when he suggests in later pages that: 'The core members of the gang need to be arrested and imprisoned ... The removal of the seriously disturbed leaders would permit orthodox group work to begin with the marginals.'

It would be more accurate to say that Mr Patrick himself is seriously disturbed at his own inability to comprehend the sporadic violent excesses of a group of working-class boys. His failure to do so reflects his own class interests, namely 'the immediate protection of society', and so his overriding concern for controlling and 'treating' the individual wrong-doer while leaving society to sort itself out.

Rather than attempting to relate the 'aggro' to the everyday conditions of working-class youth, the aim is to bring their behaviour under control.

Writers like Patrick and the safe, well-off readers of serialised extracts of this book in *The Observer*, all accept

the motives of the ruling class as somehow being in the 'national interest'. The delinquent, on the other hand, is commonly supposed to have no motives for his actions at all. He is a 'mindless thug', a 'dangerous animal', and thus 'a pathological entity requiring elimination', to use a phrase favoured by the author.

For a brief moment we think the author may have stumbled on something when he writes: 'The city's high rates of slum housing and unemployment, of delinquency and violent crime, of alcoholism and disease, are not discrete areas of deprivation, but interconnecting and cumulative forms of inequality. And it is from this "interlocking network of inequalities" that the subculture of gangs in Glasgow has grown.'

But the insight is shortlived, for he goes on to ask: 'But why do so many adolescent boys in Glasgow choose the violent gangs as their form of adaptation to such a plethora of social and environmental adversities? Why do they become street-fighters rather than drug-addicts or political activists.'

Patrick provides us with two fairly stupid answers: an indigenous 'rebellious independence against authority' and a tradition of economic hardship. Under these conditions, 'the only alternative, and one hallowed in the traditions of Glasgow slum life, is to respond with violence', which is patently not the case even on the 'researcher's' own evidence. Even the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders' work-in is seen here in terms of the local character of rebelliousness rather than in any political tradition.

If the 'interlocking network of inequalities' is seen as the breeding ground for violence, there is no hint that the structural arrangements under capitalism are at fault and require change. For Patrick, those at fault are the 'psychopaths' who upset the smooth functioning of that system.

GAIL ARMSTRONG



Slums, background for the gangs

Out of the gay ghetto

HOMOSEXUAL, by Dennis Altman, Angus and Robertson, £2.50.

THIS BOOK is the first comprehensive study of the Gay Liberation movement. It is written by a gay man and is a welcome change from liberal stuff on homosexuality where, as Altman says, the heterosexual writer 'ostentatiously kisses his wife and children good-bye in the first chapter before embarking on his voyeuristic tour of the homosexual world.'

Altman has based his book on an understanding that homosexuality isn't just about what gay people do in bed. Our homosexuality, he argues, is a crucial part of our identity, not because of anything intrinsic about it but because social oppression has made it so.

Altman talks, both personally and generally, about the nature of the gay scene. He shows the way in which this ghetto simply mirrors heterosexual society, trapping gay people within a system of values that confirm our self-hatred and inferiority rather than challenging homosexual oppression.

The emergence of the gay liberation movement is a response to the oppression of homosexuals and to the phoney 'community' represented by commercial gay bars and clinics. The book briefly traces the history of the gay movement in America from 1948 to the three days of rioting in New York that led to the creation of a movement for homosexual liberation.

The book's criticism of the marxist left is sound. Until very recently, socialists tended to ignore the gay question completely. Altman correctly notes that generally gay people had to withdraw from socialist organisations and form their own before they felt able to demand acceptance from fellow revolutionaries.

The bitter quote from Martha Shelley makes the point well: 'Men dance with

men, women with women ... You ever see that at a Movement party? Not men with men, this is particularly verboten. No, and you're not likely to while the gays in the Movement are passing for straight in order to keep up the good names of their organisations or to keep up the pretence that they are acceptable—and not have to get out of the organisation they worked so hard for because they are queer.'

The main weakness of the book is its political perspective which could best be described as 'revolutionary gradualism'. Altman argues against the violent overthrow of the American ruling class because of the risk of 'merely aping their oppression with another variety'.

Against revolutionary class action he poses a nebulous 'change in consciousness'. Altman sees this change of consciousness arising from a combination of technological change and the activities of the gay and women's movements.

Ironically, Altman misses the most important lesson of the gay liberation movement—that we learn in struggle. The change in the consciousness of many homosexuals brought about by the gay liberation movement did not just occur—it is the result of self-activity and fighting back against oppression. The enormous changes in consciousness and culture needed to liberate homosexuals are a necessary pre-condition for the building of a socialist society.

But this awareness will not be determined by technology or propaganda—it will emerge as the result of struggle against capitalism by the working class and oppressed groups like women, blacks and gays.

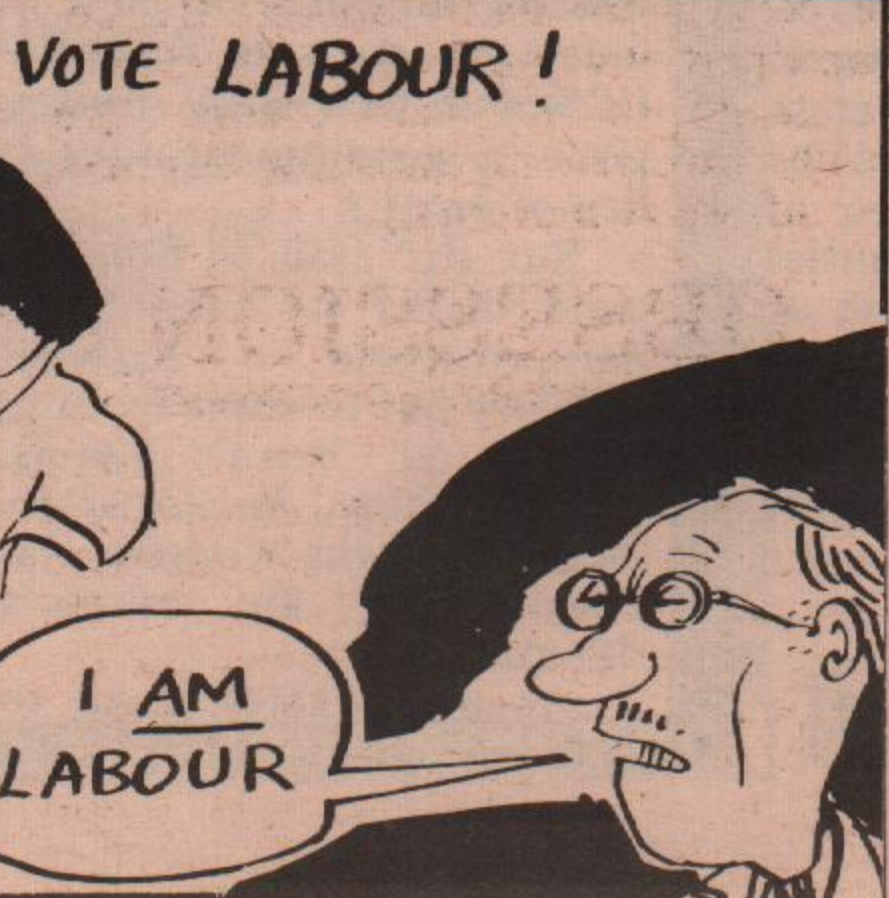
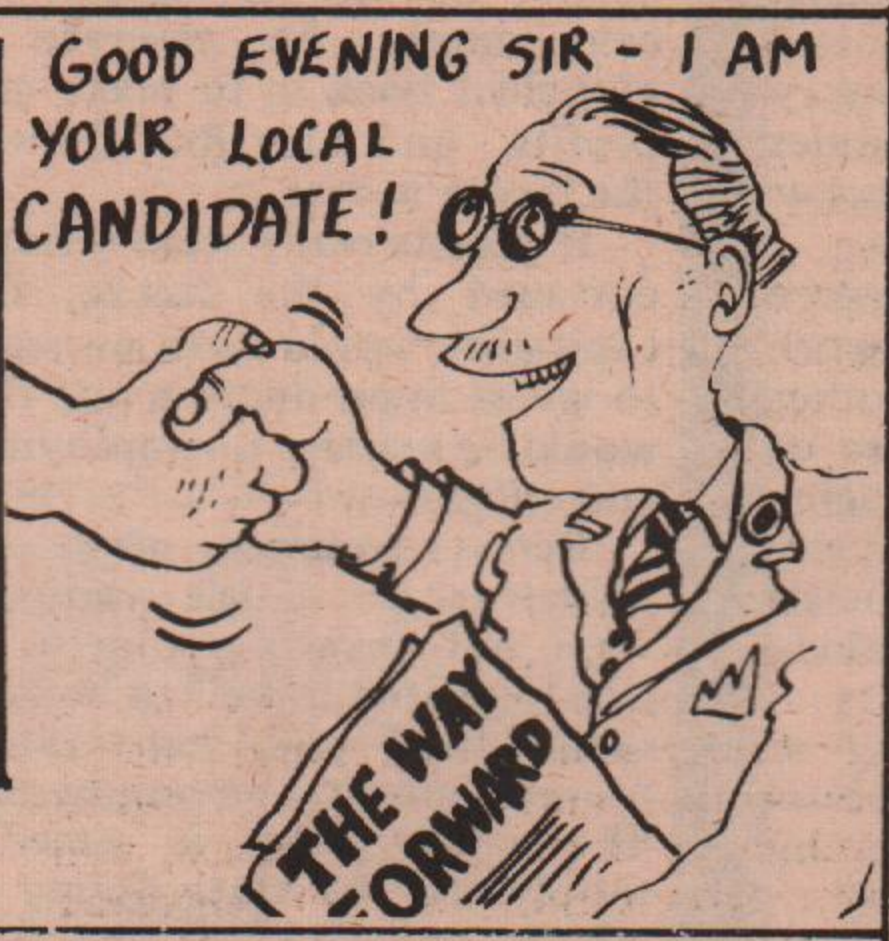
Despite weaknesses, Altman has written a good book that should be read by all socialists because it helps make clear the relationship between capitalism and sexual repression. At £2.50 it's pricey but efforts should be made to get it into libraries. (And on to the shelves!)

DON MILLIGAN

OUR NORMAN



OUR PARTY STANDS FOR IMMIGRATION CONTROL, WAGE FREEZE, LAWS AGAINST HARMFUL STRIKES—THE MONARCHY AND LAW AND ORDER!



All the prizes go to Speech Day

BY TOM CLARKE

'WHERE'S the telly?'

'In the visitors' lounge.'

'Downstairs, you mean?'

'Well, more around the corner, like. This bein' the annexe. Turn down left at the corner and cross over at the lights and—let's see now ...'

That's how it was I never got to see Andy Warhol. I haven't seen anything on the box for a couple of weeks. I've been in London working.

I did see one programme at a friend's house. Speech Day, Play for Today, writer: Barry Hines, director: John Golschmitt. That, for me, was the Play for 1973.

Not being a member of Her Majesty's Judiciary I don't feel competent to discuss the Warhol without having seen it. What did hit me right between the eyes was the amount of attention the Warhol programme got in the press compared with Speech Day.

It's true that there's a Play for



Today every week and we don't get a chance to see big fat wobbling titties every week. But neither do we get to see the work of Barry Hines every week, and after all he did write Kes, which the newspapers all claimed was a masterpiece.

Nor do we see a play like Speech Day every week, one which points out unhesitatingly, unequivocally and to everyone except Sylvia Clayton of the Daily Telegraph, with the use of tremendous dramatic skill and boldness, that in order to

persuade our kids to accept that they've got to spend their adult lives stuck behind a Boots counter or sweating over some filthy, dangerous job in a smelting shop you need a system of compulsory schooling—for which read 'brutalisation' instead of 'education'.

And that's more than Andy Warhol's got to say, I'm willing to bet my weekly rentals.

Hardship

But there it is, Warhol makes the front page of the Evening Standard (City Prices edition) and Barry Hines gets a slap on the fingers with a ruler from Miss Clayton, who calls his play 'Doctrinaire Realism' and wonders whether it might not have been better to have some interviews with some 'actual school-leavers'.

It might, Miss, please, if you don't mind, and then you wouldn't have been able to get a glimpse of those dreary urban wastes, or the

shattering sketch of the lapsed trade union militant risen to be Mayor. You wouldn't have got to see the physical hardships of a lifetime spent in a smelting shop, or the cynicism of the teachers. And that would have made it all so much easier to dismiss.

Not that the ladies and gentlemen of the press find it difficult to dismiss anything which they find disturbing. Which is one reason that you so seldom do find anything disturbing on the telly.

It's a peculiarity of our type of cultural thinking that anything which appears in the papers causes far more fuss than what gets on to the screen. Mary Whitehouse doesn't ring up ITN, she writes to the papers. It tells us a lot about our sense of values that Whitehouse screams the roof off about Warhol's bare bums but doesn't raise a whimper—though she is herself an ex-teacher—over what Barry Hines shoves under her haughty hooter.

You might think it doesn't matter, but it does, dear readers, it matters. What we need is a press which will turn Barry Hines into a household word and make sure that when Speech Day is repeated it gets the audience it deserves, and that's all of us.

Criticism

Don't tell me, I know, we won't get it.

And that being said, I'd just like to say that in my view Warhol, or rather his director, Morissey, and his Workshop, have shown us a lot of cinematic talent and, make no mistake about it, have given us some strong social criticism as well as some surprising cinema.

You didn't know that?

Ah, well, they don't put that kind of boring stuff in the papers, do they?

Anyone written any good letters to The Times lately?

MONTY PYTHON'S SLIDING POLITICS

MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS was, during its run, one of the most successful of all BBC television series.

It was attacked on the right as subversive and immoral, while a correspondent to Socialist Worker claimed that it was 'anti-working class'. Others on the left regarded the series as a brilliant attack on the values of the society we live in.

A lot of people found it very funny.

But what was the motivation behind Monty Python? How did the team see the series? John Cleese wrote and appeared in the series and was involved in its predecessors, such as The 1948 Show.

John Cleese was lying in bed with a heavy cold when I interviewed him.

Our discussion about the show was more handicapped by my assumptions about its political nature than by his cold. He said he'd got bored talking about the series—especially when people stopped him in the street and ask 'How's the ministry then?'

He's also irritated when people miss the message of any particular sketch, such as Python's version of Sam Peckinpah's version of Salad Days, where a 1920s garden party dissolved into a battlefield with arms and legs dropping off and blood spurting out all over the place.

'There are several ways people could have seen that sketch,' said Cleese, 'either as a bunch of staid Edwardian "jolly-bung-ho" chaps enjoying a round of tennis, when suddenly the scene develops into a bloody riot, or it could be seen as a send up of Peckinpah, who, given a film, will make it violent—although that's probably not true.'

AUTOMATIC

'You might just find it funny to see people's limbs falling off, but to have understood that sketch fully as we meant it, you would have had to have known something about Peckinpah, and conclude from that that we were really attacking the automatic use of violence.'

I asked him what he felt about the Socialist Worker reader's view that

by Rosie Hurst

Python was anti-working class.

'It's not anti-working class. We stringently attack middle-class ways of thinking. Some working-class people have middle-class ideas. We attack those ideas and that way of behaviour.'

Cleese referred to Python's notorious cackling women bedecked in aprons and headscarves as essentially caricatures of pretentious middle-class people. 'Those women have a Readers Digest knowledge of culture, as was shown in one of the sketches about Jean-Paul Sartre. They are not caricatures of working-class people as such.'

ESCAPED

'We did a sketch about a corrupt policeman. What we showed was an exaggerated view. We don't necessarily think that all policemen are corrupt. I've met some very nice policemen. If you are doing a sketch, it's got to be about somebody. We can't make humour out of standard lamps talking to waste-paper baskets.'

'Python is satire which has escaped the rigidity of people's ideas. I began doing this kind of humour in the Footlights Club at Cambridge 12 years ago. Since then I have done 27 Frost Reports, 13 of the 1948 Shows, 25 Frost Programmes, and 40 Monty

Pythons,' said Cleese. 'When satire first started it shocked Londoners who had never seen this new kind of humour. Cambridge people just accepted it,' he said.

'Python is favourable among "bright" people. As far as we know from feedback, it is not liked by some working-class people, but others do seem to enjoy it. I've never met a cab-driver who doesn't like it.'

Were any of the Python team consciously political? 'We are certainly more left wing than right wing. Satire has, to a certain extent, always to be anti-establishment, but we are not marxist or particularly socialist.'

The team emerged in fact as a strange phenomenon. A man like David Frost used his background in Cambridge University's 'Hello Ducky, you were wonderful' review world to bounce into the 'Hello ducky, you were wonderful' world of television in New York and London. He became part of wonderful showbiz land.

'None of us,' said Cleese, 'are really involved in the show business world, we're mavericks.'

OBSESSION

Cleese echoed a misconception about the left held by Johnny Speight, author of Till Death Us Do Part. Both regarded the demands for higher living standards as an obsession with 'money'.

'I'm not so sure that an awful lot of what is wrong with people's

lives isn't that there's too much accent on money as an indicator of success. If people changed their attitudes towards money and material conditions it would be better. People with money are playing a game of monopoly so that at the end they can go up to God and say: "Look God, I came 16th." They've lost all contact with real life.'

CRITERIA

Which is true enough. But the logic of this position evaded Cleese when it came to other parts of the discussion. 'I admire people like Lew Grade who, because he wants to be at the top, starts work at five or six in the morning. If that's what he wants to do, I don't see why he shouldn't. But I agree that he shouldn't if it means someone else's loss.'

This is indeed a classic liberal position, and it does indeed mean someone else's loss—all the time. Lew Grade finishing 16th in God's ratings may, as Cleese points out not make him happy. It also means he directly exploits thousands of people and lays television waste by making the sole criteria for quality the width of the profit margin.

But then John Cleese claims to be a liberal, socially and economically. 'I don't think that it is the system which is at fault. I think that grievances stem from people's expectations and their own personal make-up,' he said.



Monty Python's Fliegender Zirkus—a photo taken when the show visited Germany. John Cleese is on the left.

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

Rent Strike: St Pancras 1960

Dave Burn

Pluto for Architectural Radicals Students Educators
15p plus 3p postage.
ISBN 0902818 30 9
Unit 10 Spencer Court
7 Chalcot Road
London NW1 8LH
also from
IS Books
6 Cottons Gardens
London E2 8DN



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 racism 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**

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Camden
Chertsey
Croydon
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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

SOUTH
Brighton
Canterbury
Crawley
Eastbourne
Guildford
Portsmouth
Southampton

**WALES and
SOUTH WEST**
Bath
Bristol
Cardiff
Exeter
Gloucester
Llanelli
Mid-Devon
Neath
Plymouth
Swansea
Swansea Valley

THE UNIONS

GMWU CUDDLES

UP TO THE TORY LAW

ON TUESDAY last week the General and Municipal Workers Union concluded a second agreement with a major British company which is in flagrant breach of the agreed policy of the Trades Union Congress and of the union itself.

The two agreements covering recognition of the union as well as disputes procedure are with Trust Houses Forte and Grand Metropolitan Hotels. Both are legally binding on the GMWU's members in the two giant hotel combines under the terms of the Industrial Relations Act.

For many months after the 1971 TUC decisions that member unions should in no way co-operate with the Industrial Relations Act, the GMWU shilly-shallied and continued to consider registering.

It was only after the massive wave of rank and file militancy to free the Pentonville Five that the GMWU, in company with other right-wing unions, decided to come off the provisional register.

Since then David Basnett has taken over from the worshipful Lord Cooper as general secretary and many people on the socialist left have been confused into believing that this change has ushered in a new 'progressive' era.

TACTICS

Just before the election for Cooper's successor took place last autumn, the Communist Party's Morning Star described Basnett as the candidate progressives would wish to support. Since then Basnett has been paraded as yet another example of the leftward turns in the trade union movement which result from making or assisting in the odd change of personnel at the top of the machine.

This led to a complete lack of analysis of the GMWU leadership's tactics in the gas dispute. True Basnett and the rest called an official dispute, but they consistently refused to develop the successive rank and file initiatives into an all-out struggle.

And with 1 April fast approaching, when strikes would formally become illegal, the GMWU leaders calculated that their gas industry members would be sufficiently disillusioned to vote

SW Industrial Reporter

acceptance of a phoney new offer from the employers. They called a ballot and, as expected, got the majority for a settlement they wanted.

The scandalous conclusion of legally-binding deals over recent weeks indicates that the GMWU, while in some sections it operates rather more shrewdly than before, in others it is still the company union it has long been.

Throughout last year both Trust Houses Forte and Grand Metropolitan, who pay mainly immigrant workers appalling rates of pay in their luxury premises for the rich, were suffering the attentions of the International Workers Branch of the Transport and General Workers Union.

In order to stave off this branch's genuine attempts to recruit workers into unions, the employers' association for the hotel and catering industry decided that it would deal only with the GMWU and instructed all member companies that they should proceed to recognise this organisation alone.

Since this decision was taken last autumn, Grand Met has systematically harassed TGWU rank and file militants within the confines of its empire and virtually broken the groundwork of organisation that had been created.

At the same time Grand Met was negotiating with the GMWU to give it sole recruiting rights. And, given that the GMWU was being brought in at the companies' invitation, it was not too difficult for the employers to insist on the small matter of legally-binding agreements.

These have now been signed

despite union and TUC policy, and despite the fact that Mr Basnett is a member of the TUC General Council and its so-called inner cabinet, the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Interestingly enough the situation has partly arisen due to the failure of other lefts elsewhere to deliver the goods. If the TGWU had engaged its real strength in industry, it could have won recognition for its International Workers' Branch.

POULSON

Further evidence of the continuity of regime at the GMWU lies in the fact that the executive has given the General Council of the union no opportunity to discuss the spate of resolutions which have come into head office questioning the conduct and suitability for office of Alderman Andrew Cunningham.

Cunningham, the union's North East regional secretary and a member of the Labour Party executive, has received considerable publicity for his links with John Poulson, the bankrupt architect, and T Dan Smith, former city boss of Newcastle, who was found not guilty of giving bribes to another man who was found guilty of taking them.

The General Council is supposedly the highest authority in the union between conferences. Composed mainly of lay members, it meets only quarterly.

Real power lies in the executive which meets monthly. This is made of Basnett, his national industrial officers and the regional secretaries—including Alderman Cunningham.

Iris with right-wing roots

ONE TORY MP who is reputed to take more than a little active interest in trade union affairs is Norman St John Stevas, the member for Chelmsford.

Being a Roman Catholic in an area where Catholic Action is effectively organised within the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers engineering section, he quite often has 'consultations' with its leading members on the shop floor in the area.

Catholic Action is one of the most highly-organised conspiracies within the trade union movement and disposes of lavish funds whose source is naturally not disclosed. Their purpose is ostensibly to combat communism in the trade unions and they are therefore fond of making allegations of the 'Moscow Gold' variety.

In the aftermath of last year's fiasco over the engineering pay claim and the divisions in the union over how the National Industrial Relations Court should best be resisted they underwent something of a resurgence. Operating through their front organisation of witchhunters in the Industrial Relations Information Service, the advocates of 'moderation' have begun a real fight to defeat the Scanlon left.

Being true democrats, their material is careful not to say who exactly to vote for. But the tactics

of smearing and innuendo are good substitutes and they exploit this to the full.

Ably supported by the popular press, they label election candidates as communists or supporters of the broad left and leave the rest up to the backward members to get the votes in.

At the end of February, workers in Halstead Essex plant of Courtaulds were among many who received copies of the IRIS leaflets in preparation for the 19 AUEW engineering section elections which took place in the first two weeks in March.

Turncoats

The leaflet headed Engineering News and Views, contains the following remarks prior to the precise instructions on how to cast your vote.

'The opportunity for producing fundamental changes in leadership has never been greater than now. By using your vote wisely you will make your personal contribution towards re-establishing once again... leadership which has been so lacking in recent years.' The kind of leadership envisaged is disclosed later on with fulsome references to right wingers and turncoats like Carron, Tanner, Brownlie and Little, 'who gave leadership and were not told what to do by the Communist

Party.'

The IRIS leaflet identifies the elections in Division 5 as absolutely crucial, not least because if their man Roger Horner were to defeat the sitting member, the right would be on their way to a clear majority on the executive. They then go through a host of other elections and tip their men.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about the leaflet is the way IRIS slides over the situation behind the ballot for the full-time organiser in division 21, Essex.

This election, which was won by E T Brown of Chelmsford last October, has to take place again in March. His opponent is the same well-known Communist he defeated then,' says the leaflet.

What IRIS does not explain is the reason for re-running the election. This was due to 'irregularities' in the return of postal ballot forms and to the defeated left-wing candidate's concern at the vast amount of electioneering done on behalf of his opponent.

Not surprisingly, Engineering News and Views calls for a complete turn around on the union's policy of opposition to the Industrial Relations Act and the Common Market. It also opposes all strikes and calls for outright collaboration with the Tory government.

Get to grips with real

muggers...

Ireland: fight those illusions

AT WORK last week we had a very heated argument which went on for two days about the 20 years' sentence for mugging on the boy from Handsworth (not far from Witton where we work). We didn't quite see eye to eye.

My other mates thought the sentence would deter others from cold-blooded assaults and murders on total strangers for the sake of a few pence or pounds and would do something useful about a situation where people hardly dare go out alone for fear of being mugged by gangs.

They applauded the judge for being 'tough' on a gang who were out to terrorise the majority of decent-living people who didn't turn out like that however bad their living conditions.

I couldn't give any short-term answer to the fears of people who live in areas like Handsworth. Even if the local authority built 20 new youth clubs and nursery schools overnight (which they won't) or even if we could transform society in five or 10 years time, is that a good enough answer now?

Do other workers, as my mates do, think that muggings are a far greater crime than the remorseless killing and crippling, year in, year out, of hundreds and thousands of workers in mines, building sites and factories? Is it an 'accident' when safety precautions are deliberately flouted?

Isn't it equivalent to getting away with it when employers are fined less than what it would take to instal safety equipment? Where are the prison sentences and fines that would do more than dent the paper of a profit and loss account? Finally, who would you find to imprison when seven miners die because no one bothered to seal the old mine shafts?

Let's face it, whoever you lock away, he's just a scapegoat for a system with upside down values and there's no use expecting fair rules or punishments this side of a revolution. But we must still have some answer for the relatives of mugging victims and mining 'accidents'.—HESTER BLEWITT, Birmingham 16.

The voice of doom

THE 'population doom' lobby has always appeared at times when the existing social conditions are disintegrating and breaking down.

And it is not true, as R Merritt claims (31 March) that the capitalist press ignores the 'ecological crisis' and 'pollution'. A glance at any of the Sunday supplements or the 'better quality' papers will dispel that idea.

What is true, however, is that they rarely turn and bite the hand that controls them—the ruling class—when it comes to the question of pollution.

Few and far between are the voices raised against RTZ who literally poisoned their workers at Avonmouth, or against the London Brick Company which belches out flourine fumes in the brickfields of Bedfordshire.

Again it should be made clear that workers have been fighting pollution in the sense of improving their working conditions for generations. What happens too often, however, is that the present problem of pollution is seen as an abstract issue, completely divorced from class, unrelated to the capitalist system or any other system of production.

I don't think this is a realistic view—certainly the pollution of the atmosphere, rivers and lakes is part and parcel of the capitalist system where the driving force is accumulation of capital and where production is not planned for people's need.

As to socialism, it remains to be seen. But I imagine that in a system where production is planned for people's needs, the working class will hardly organise production in the haphazard and wasteful way that it is today. And given that, I expect that pollution, like the capitalist state, will 'wither away'.—BRYAN REES, Newcastle upon Tyne 15.

LETTERS

Fine Tubes: the union can do no more

I SEE that that observer of the class struggle, Paul Foot, suggests a four-point programme in regard to Fine Tubes (31 March).

PICKETS: He suggests a mass picket organised every day for a month. Now, Paul, where would the mass picket come from, the unsympathetic Plymouth district of the AUEW?

BLACKING: All districts have been asked by the AUEW executive council long ago to black Fine Tubes, and the largest factory—Hawker Siddeley Aviation—in the Oldham district has been carrying this out right from the beginning of the dispute.

Now, Paul, what would you do to the mass of the members up and down the country who are refusing to black the work?

STRIKE PAY: AEU rule 29, clause 9, dealing with dispute benefit, states: 'and that in no case shall the benefit be paid for more than 52 weeks'—so that Hugh Scanlon's claim was based on fact, Paul. And does he really suggest that our rules revision committee should be recalled to alter this rule? By the way, the last donation from the Oldham AUEW District Committee was for £69 and was sent on 21 December 1972.

SOLIDARITY: Paul wishes to 'start to halt industry, at least throughout the South-West'. Fine, but why don't the members in the South-West do this, because they

certainly do not need the permission of the AUEW executive council or Scanlon.

Could it be that there are only 16,000 members in the whole of the division which covers Devon and Cornwall, and that there is no support from the 5000 members in Plymouth, which should be compared with the position at Roberts-Arundel with 47,000 members with district offices concentrated within 15 miles of the Roberts-Arundel factory, all having voted not only for solidarity of action but for district levies, which have been refused in Plymouth.

The simple truth that the International Socialists consistently wish to ignore is that the Roberts-Arundel dispute was in a large industrial area with large industrial support. Fine Tubes is in a non-industrial area with negligible support and it is this and not the attitude of Scanlon which is the decisive problem.—R WILLIAMS, AUEW District Secretary, Oldham, Lancs.

I WOULD like to ask Anthony Collings (31 March) if he thinks that by not fighting for better pay and conditions by letting levels of pay remain static while prices and rents soar that trade unions are any less 'part of the system'?

The trade union movement, however inadequate and bureaucratic, must continue their fight for a fair deal for workers, otherwise we will be living under slavery conditions.—S C DRAKE, Colchester, Essex.

Don't ignore sport

FOR MANY on the left sport is seen as the modern 'opiate of the masses' and that, from a socialist's point of view, his only concern should be to expose the exploitation that characterises the organisation of, for example, professional football.

There is some truth in this view. Socialist Worker would do well to observe among other unscrupulous practices the manner in which many teenagers' hopes are raised when they are offered terms by the Football League clubs, and later when they 'fail to make the grade', they are left to squeeze a living from non-league clubs or from occupations outside football.

The clubs, of course, appreciate the fact that only a small proportion of the apprentice professionals succeed. However this is only a partial view.

Don't believe all you read in the capitalist press. But Socialist Worker should broaden its coverage of sport.—EDWARD COMYN-PLATT, Manchester 21.

THE MALE EXPLOITERS

UNTIL Tom Clarke begins to understand 'the one isolated fact' that women, 50 per cent of the population, have always been and still are being exploited first as women and only secondly as workers, the significance of women's lib will continue to elude him.

He talks (17 March) of the 'economic and class victimisation of the female'. The point is women have always been exploited economically, socially, sexually by one class—men.

Does it always take an attack of 'flu before he thinks of 'taking over'

IN ANSWER to Bill Campbell's letter (Ireland: Mind what you say, 31 March) it must be pointed out that the prime need for a group 'serious about building a revolutionary alternative' is to combat with the greatest insistence those illusions prevalent in the working class which hinders its success.

If sections of the English workers believe that the IRA are murderous thugs, that the British Army is a peace-keeping force, or that the struggle in Ireland is about religion, these misconceptions have a direct bearing on their ideas about their own struggle.

To refuse to arm the English workers with the vital lessons of the Irish struggle when they themselves are beginning to face the apparatus of the state in their fight for decent living standards would be nothing short of criminal.

The use of repression in Ireland is now—as it has been before—a testing-ground for its use in England. Imperialism is perfecting in Ireland methods of terrorism, legal suppression, and riot control that they are already beginning to use against workers on strike at home.

It is certainly true—as many workers in Ireland realise—that the ordinary soldier is not a conscious agent of the Tories. The urgent need in England is to campaign for the withdrawal of the army from Ireland, on clear political grounds.

Unless the issues of Ireland are understood and the unity of the working class is fought for, we are risking defeat.

There can be no question of back-sliding on Ireland for the sake of easy support. To hesitate on the very questions which define us as revolutionaries would be to underestimate the workers, and to mislead them.

If we 'review' our 'opinions' on the Irish struggle we must do so on the basis of objective class needs, not as a response to prejudices or illusions.—CELIA HOLT, Islington, London N1.

Express needs transfusion

THE SUREST SIGN that a newspaper is in trouble and losing its nerve is a restyling of its lay-out. It seldom, if ever, succeeds in halting the downward slide, and when it is done badly it usually accelerates the decline.

Servants of the Daily Express with long-term contracts would be advised to study the small print. Its latest typographical writhings suggest that its self-inflicted wounds could be fatal.

What the restyling amounts to is a short-back-and-sides for the ancient crusader emblem, a bolder title piece, and the introduction of bold column rules throughout the news and sports pages. The overall effect has been to render the Daily Express more like the Sunday Express.

Instead of giving the anaemic daily a shot of red blood the changes have simply diluted what little spirit was still left in the moribund daily. Rigor mortis must

soon set in. At the end of the first week of the new-look Express the paper was running a 24-pager on Saturday. But there was not a flicker of news past page 5. The centre pages, which were normally devoted to features on the one side and news on the other, were devoted, as they were throughout the week, to a mélange of weak, turgid feature material. Of the entire 24 pages on the Saturday only a little more than three pages were devoted to news, while racing itself commanded

almost as much. Features took up five pages.

It would appear that the Express has given up the battle to get news and get it first and is now content to give its own highly coloured interpretation of the news—several days after it has occurred.

PERHAPS the nastiest item to appear anywhere last week was the Mail's Vincent Mulchrone 'personal plea' to the hospital workers to CALL OFF THIS STRIKE.

Mulchrone, whose income must be at least five or six times that of a hospital worker, told them to go back and take their case to the pay board. It was the sweetest invitation to suicide since the witch persuaded Snow White to sample the poisoned apple.

The Mail's man oozed sympathy for the 'grossly underpaid' workers who 'want a living wage and should have it.' But the bulk of his piece

coroners who have tried to blame the strikers for deaths, and ended was spent in quoting doctors and with a quote from one dead woman's son: 'My mother could have been alive today but for the strike.'

Although the article was entirely concerned with the hospital workers strike Mulchrone had not quite gone so far as to actually interview one of the workers involved. On the other hand a 'Sheffield physician' was approvingly cited as forecasting that 'hundreds will die as a result of this strike.'

Mulchrone's conscientious researches into the views of Sheffield physicians did not, unfortunately, yield anything about the thousands and millions who are pushed to the back of the queue while greedy, heartless, hypocritical doctors give preference to private patients.

He didn't even ask the question.

Ron Knowles

Industrial empire threatens 500 jobs

BRISTOL:-500 jobs are at stake with the threatened closure of Brecknall Dolman and Rogers, which has been taken over by the massive Tilling group: the consortium that once owned all London's buses.

Tillings have sold the factory site for £400,000—and claim they do not know who has bought it.

The workers were prepared to fight for their jobs, and completely stopped all movement of work. Neither plant nor products could go in or out of the factory. Then a sit-in started. This lasted 24 hours and management re-opened negotiations—but in terms of an ultimatum.

It offered 50 per cent more severance pay, in return for complete co-operation and the waiving of right of notice. This was quite unacceptable to the union officials, who fell into the trap of arguing against giving up rights of notice. They found themselves negotiating inside the principle of closure—instead of tearing up the company's ultimatum and calling the men out again.

Militancy

A mass meeting then voted to take severance pay—on better terms than what was offered—and the stoppage of movement of work is to back up this demand.

But the fight is by no means over. That one vote at a mass meeting where no clear lead was given does not mean an end to the men's militancy and determination. The engineering union (AUEW), through its executive council, is calling on all other factories in the Tilling group to fight the closure and support the 500 men.

● If you know of a factory in your area that is part of the Tilling group, and especially if you work in one, please contact the BDR convenor (at the address below). The empire is huge. You may be part of it without knowing! Messages of support to: Wally Coombes, c/o AUEW, 8 St Paul's Road, Bristol 8.

TOWARDS MAY DAY

TEESSIDE:-A Trade Union Co-ordinating Committee has been established to ensure maximum effectiveness of protest action on 1 May. It was originally called for by Middlesbrough Trades Council, but members of the International Socialists have had to exert pressure to ensure that it becomes an active, fighting organiser.

2000 WORKERS OUT AGAINST THE FREEZE

WOLVERHAMPTON:— More than 2000 workers at Rubery Owen's Darlaston and Kingshill works went on strike on Monday against the freeze and in defence of their union organisation.

The two plants, which are the motor industry's main suppliers of motor frames, wheels and light and heavy axles, are now at a complete standstill.

by Paul Holborow

The company is trying to divide the workers by insisting that pieceworkers accept cuts in their wages of as high as £11, using the excuse that it will then be able to give dayworkers a substantial wage increase. The negotiating committee has replied with a demand for £2.50 across the board in addition to what has already been offered to day-

workers.

On the surface the dispute is about money. But the strikers have said that what is really at stake is the continuing existence of strong union organisation at Rubery Owen.

The Owen Organisation, which owns 90 other companies and is the biggest private company in the country, has been built on the backs

of the Darlaston workers, sucking everything out of Darlaston without putting anything back. The crunch has now come with increasing competition, and the Owen family is determined that the workers will carry the can.

Negotiations for the new deal dragged on from last July until the freeze, which gave the company its chance. Day workers were told they would only get their rise if pieceworkers took a drop in earnings. It then ignored the negotiating committee's opposition and tried to appeal over the heads of the committee by sending out a letter direct to workers about the terms of the offer.

In face of this provocation, more than 2000 workers stopped work last week and demonstrated outside the main offices. Although there was a small demonstration in support of the company's 'offer' last Friday—blown up out of all proportion by television reporting—support for the strike and the strength of the picket lines show that the overwhelming majority of workers realise what the Owen family is up to.

The pieceworkers support the dayworkers' demand for more than £4, but emphatically reject the idea that pieceworkers should pay for it.

Direct wage cuts have been virtually unknown in this country since the 1930s. That a major firm like Rubery Owen is trying to bring them in should be a warning to all workers. The fight for union organisation and against the wage freeze deserves the widest possible support.



Women on the picket line outside the Tillotson's works

Sit-in after chapel officers are sacked

LIVERPOOL:—400 members of the print union, SOGAT, have occupied Tillotson's, the packaging and printing firm, after the sacking of the father of the chapel (senior shop steward) and three other chapel officials.

Behind the sackings lies a six-year fight against redundancies—since 1967 Tillotson's workforce has been reduced from 700 to 400.

The company, which is owned by the American St Regis group which controls 72 plants in 19 countries, is trying to force another 103 redundancies by October. It began in February with 26 dismissals, and the SOGAT chapel replied with an overtime ban and sanctions on manpower movement, forcing management to back down. Last week the company issued the notices again and the chapel reimposed the sanctions.

The chapel officials were all dismissed for 'unfair industrial practices' and 'mis-leading' the union members.

When the management tried to prevent the four re-entering the plant the workers forced a way in for the victimised stewards. The sit-in decision was taken immediately at a mass meeting.

The management has reacted by trying to pressure individual SOGAT members into accepting voluntary redundancy.

The demands of the sit-in are the reinstatement of the four and no redundancies.

Paul Haywood, a member of the chapel committee, warned that the right to elect representatives and the right to work were at stake.

All work has stopped. The few NGA and Electricians' Union members are still being paid by a management that can't use them. The telephone is cut off, the canteen and the surgery have been shut down although they're being re-opened.

Help is already coming in from other printers and trade unionists in Liverpool. But it could be a long fight, and help is needed from trade unionists all over Britain.

● Donations and motions of support to SOGAT District Offices, 254/256 County Road, Liverpool 4.

Police attack demonstrators

LANCASTER:-Police attacked a demonstration against Tory proposals to replace family allowance by tax credits last week. Six demonstrators—including two members of the International Socialists—were arrested and charged with threatening behaviour and obstruction.

The attack took place after 50 demonstrators had held a protest sit-in at the Lancaster head post office and then marched to a Mothercare shop. At the shop the police threw demonstrators across the pavement and grabbed others by their hair. Many of the demonstrators were mothers with babies.

The protest was organised by the Lancaster Women's Centre as part of a nationwide campaign against tax credits.

In Wolverhampton, women from two council housing estates picketed post offices to protest at the government plans. The demonstration was organised by the Low Hill pre-school play groups, which have about 50 members.

Spokeswomen Mrs Noreen Turner and Mrs Audrey Warley said they felt it was necessary for mothers to show that they and their children should not suffer.

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

FULHAM & HAMMERSMITH IS public meeting
Unite to Fight the Wage Freeze
Chris Davison, TGWU
Mark Palmer, NUPE
Hammersmith Town Hall (small hall)
Tuesday 10 April, 8pm

LEICESTER IS public meeting
THE ELECTIONS AND WHY THE SYSTEM STINKS
Wednesday 11 April, 8pm
Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate

HARLESDEN IS public meeting
Wally Preston and local speakers
HOW WE'LL BREAK THE FREEZE
Thursday 12 April, 8pm
Willesden Junction Hotel, Station Rd
London NW10

COLINDALE AND HARLESDEN IS public meeting
Ireland and the White Paper
Speakers: Bernadette Devlin and Eamonn McCann
Tuesday 10 April, 8pm
Willesden High School, Doyle Garden,
London NW10 (near Willesden Jct)

LAMBETH IS public meeting on Ireland.
Speaker Pat Prenderville. Wednesday 11 April, 8.15pm, Brixton Training Centre, opposite Brixton Town Hall.

LONDON IS BRANCH SECRETARIES MEETING: Sunday 8 April, 2.30pm, at 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2. Discussion on May Day strike, councils of action, SW factory discussion groups. All London branches must be represented.

ENFIELD IS public meeting: Violence and Capitalism. Speaker Laurie Flynn, Wed 11 April, Kings Arms, corner of Hertford Rd and Green Street. Buses 279, 135, 135a. All welcome.

CHELMSFORD IS public meeting: Racism and Fascism—what they are and how to fight them. Speaker Nigel Harris. Tuesday 10 April, 8pm, Civic Centre, Chelmsford.

ISLINGTON IS public meeting: How International Socialists are fighting the Freeze. Speaker Ross Pritchard. This is the inaugural meeting of a new branch—all sympathisers in the area are welcome to attend. The work and strategy of IS will be explained. The George, Liverpool Road, London N1. Tuesday 10 April, 8pm.

NALGO IS FRACTION Day School: Saturday 7 April, 10am-4.30pm, at 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2. Sessions on the history of NALGO and its role in the trade union movement, its structure and negotiating machinery, etc. For accommodation, contact Geoff Wolfe, flat 2, 34 Dermody Road, London SE13. Phone 01-318 3566.

OTHER MEETINGS

SOUTHAMPTON PUBLIC SECTOR ALLIANCE
A meeting is being held to form a public sector alliance for all public sector workers
Monday 9 April, 8pm
UCATT Hall, Hemstead Road (off Bedford Place), Southampton
Chairman Pat Tee (NUR shop steward)
Speakers: Les Hughes (EEPTU shop steward at Fawley power station) and a speaker from Camden and Islington Public Sector Workers' Action Committee

BELFAST TEN public meeting
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square
London WC1
Tuesday 10 April, 7.30pm

PICKET Brixton Prison: Meeting Jebb's Corner, protest against Belfast Ten jail conditions. Saturday 7 April, 2pm.

KILBURN Anti-Internment League Forum: Role of British Army in Ireland. The Lord Palmerston, Kilburn High Road, London NW6. Monday 9 April, 8pm.

WORKERS ASSOCIATION public meeting: The White Paper—what does it mean for Irish workers? The Metropolitan pub, Farringdon Road, London EC1. Friday 13 April, 8pm.

NOTICES

ONE VERY LARGE ROOM and two small rooms for rent—suit two comrades sharing or 2/3 singles. Contact 46 Heber Road, London NW2 after 6pm.

COMRADE SEEKS ROOM in Inner London area—Phone Durham 5953 (reverse charges).

UNIQUE GIFTS TO FRIENDS (or just you!) Chinese silk-woven portraits of Marx, Engels, Lenin and others, 16inx10 1/2in—70p, 28inx19 1/2in—£1.10, 7inx4in—24p. LP gramophone record, Chinese choir and orchestra. The Internationale—34p. Immediate delivery, D Volpe, 16 Belmont Court, London N16 5QD.



Car strike defeat - leadership to blame

OXFORD:-Workers at the British Leyland Austin-Morris assembly plant voted to return to work last week, against the shop stewards' advice, and allow industrial engineers on the shop floor.

Two years ago the company abolished piecework and introduced measured day work. But the agreement was signed because the stewards refused to accept the new system, which had been forced through over their heads.

However, when the first wage review came round last year, management insisted that unless the stewards signed the agreement it would not negotiate on wages. The stewards then signed an agreement that has no adequate status quo or mutuality clauses.

Cowley management has been trying to get industrial engineers on the shop floor for some time to increase the work load. Two weeks ago they decided to act. A shortage of parts due to the gas strike means some of the workers were likely to be laid off. So management stuck in its heels and sent in the industrial engineers.

There was an immediate walk-out, which lasted for more than a week. But at a mass meeting nine days later, the men rejected, by two to one, their stewards' recommendations for continued strike action.

Production did not immediately return to normal, because the firm then provoked a dispute over lay-off pay at the neighbouring body plant.

The lessons of the dispute have to be learnt. Management at the assembly plant has been able to exploit a situation in which the rank and file have become disillusioned with the factory 'leadership'.

Unless there is an immediate attempt to build up shop floor organisation, the rate of speed-up could be as high as Fords.

Correction

IN last week's report on the victory at Coles Cranes, Sunderland, words referring to the extent of the retreat by Coles boss de Vigier were mistakenly attributed to AUEW convenor Mattie Wake. We apologise for this error.

Betrayed Teesside newsmen go back

MIDDLESBROUGH:—Teesside journalists returned to work after their 10 days official dispute on Tuesday, angry at the betrayal by the National Union of Journalists.

For 10 days Evening Gazette journalists had stood together against a determined assault on their working conditions by the Thomson group, one of Britain's biggest press empires.

The dispute broke out after the management put a stop to union/management agreements over deadlines for advertising supplements. In retaliation, journalists 'blackened' the offending edition which led to sub-editors being locked out while executives made up the 'blackened' paper.

by Mike Buckingham

The dispute was quickly made official and the journalists were supported by fellow trade unionists and colleagues in other newspapers.

By Friday the journalists were confident of success. News coming into the Gazette office had been reduced to a trickle.

The 67 were staggered on Saturday, however, when the union executive ordered them back to work. Just as victory was in sight, the executive had made a deal with the management, behind the workers' backs.

The deal had been conducted with almost indecent haste. So anxious was the NUJ executive to placate Thomson that they offered to pay for the hire of a car to round up members and get them back to work. It was even suggested that a chapel meeting be held on Sunday to secure an early return.

The agreement called for an immediate return to work, no victimisation of blacklegs and no union activity for 27 days while a dispute procedure was gone through.

The chapel voted to demand that NUJ general secretary Ken Morgan should attend a meeting to explain the executive's behaviour. His reception is expected to be cool.

PLENTY OF FIZZ IN GIN STRIKE

EIGHTY members of the technicians' union, ASTMS, at the Gordon's gin factory in Islington, North London, are on strike for the second week. Gordon's are owned by Distillers, the company responsible for the Thalidomide scandal.

Last year an agreement was signed giving ASTMS full negotiating rights for supervising staff. But there was a catch in it—the management now claims the deal doesn't apply to wages. They are also insisting on co-operation with non-unionists and refusing to give equal pay to four women supervisors.

The 250 production workers, members of the TGWU, are clocking in and going home. So the firm is still paying a hefty wage bill while production is at a standstill. No drink is being shifted, as the tanker drivers and gin workers at Booths, another Distillers company, are also refusing to increase output.

Distillers—whose pre-tax profits last year were £62 million—has always boasted of its 200 years of good labour relations.

But the Gordon's workers can have no illusions about its 'happy family' image. A strike victory will be a lift to other workers in the group still without union recognition.

The irony of the dispute is that if the strikers win, the management will argue that no wage increase can be negotiated outside the freeze. So if they want a meaningful rise the Gordon's workers will have to take further action. And that means linking up with other trade unionists to defeat the freeze.



Smashed windows and debris after the racist attack

New fire-bomb attack

by Mike Flood Page

BIRMINGHAM:—Racialists, responsible for the Brixton fire-bombings, found another target last week—a West Indian house in Handsworth.

While three people slept in a house in Leonard Road, racialists broke the downstairs windows, poured petrol over the front door and through the letter box, and set fire to it.

The results could have been tragic, but the people in the house—used as a headquarters by a black community group, the Afro-Caribbean Self-Help Organisation—woke to find glass everywhere and charred woodwork.

The local paper, the Evening Mail, called the fire a 'mystery'. It should know better. Like the Brixton outrages, it is the result of a situation in which unscrupulous politicians like Enoch Powell exploit the misery of working people by making a scapegoat of the black community.

The inability of either political party to solve the real problems of rising prices, redundancies and unemployment,

has opened the door to extreme groups like the National Front and the Enoch Powell Support Group. In the face of a severe crisis they propose one answer: kick out the blacks.

History has shown this is no answer at all. In Germany the Nazi rise to power was marked by appeals to the workers and savage attacks on the Jews. Once the Nazis were in the saddle, the workers were subjected to the same brutal repression as the Jews.

The National Front, engaged in an intensive campaign in West Bromwich, Wolverhampton and North Birmingham, offer similar phoney solutions to the real problems. They hope to divide working people and smash the class when the time comes.

Afro-Caribbean and similar groups represent a positive response by black people to squalor and discrimination. They deserve every support, for when they are attacked, the victimisation of militants and trade unionists will not be far behind.

Only united militant action can put a stop to the racialists and overthrow the rotten system under which they flourish.

HOSPITAL WORKERS FIGHT CAVE-IN

STRIKING hospital workers took to the streets in several cities last week in a crushing reminder to the Heath government that opposition to the vicious freeze phase two proposals is far from finished.

In Nottingham hundreds of marching hospital workers were joined by miners, shop workers, technicians, transport and local authority workers, greeting a visit to the city by Heath with cries of 'Out, out, out.'

Marches also took place in Coventry, Teesside, and Oxford. This week 214 London hospitals, and hospitals in Doncaster, Gloucester and Manchester were due to strike and demonstrate.

At the start of the strike, the total lack of co-ordination and leadership by the official leaders of the health unions left health workers confused and uncertain. Local branch decisions were reversed by union officials, who insisted on forms of action thought inappropriate by militants on the spot, and strike pay was refused.

In many areas, such as Leeds and Bristol, militant health workers have come up against their own branch officers, members of the old guard elected on the basis of years of service rather than on any willingness to fight for better wages and conditions.

SURRENDER

Now the union leaders are looking desperately for ways to end the struggle. On Monday the general secretary of the public employees' union, Alan Fisher, indicated that he would be prepared to appear before the government's Pay Board, providing it were allowed slightly more flexibility in dealing with the claim.

He said he wanted 'to get our members off the picket line and into the hospitals', but could not do so on what had already been offered. He implied, however, that if the Pay Board offered slightly more, even if not now but in a few months time, he would try to end the strike.

But the new militants are far from slipping into a state of apathy. They are starting to organise themselves into strong fighting groups, ready to carry on the struggle against the government—if necessary in the face of their own union leaders' surrender.

Groups in Manchester and London organised regular local strike bulletins, co-ordinated flying pickets and reinforcements for picket lines at non-striking hospitals, ran hardship funds and organised support from local trade unionists.

In London, members of the newly formed action committee, representing more than a dozen hospitals, were planning to hold a mass meeting on Thursday after a London Trades Council march from Tower Hill to St Thomas's Hospital. Leaflets were distributed to factories, building sites and workplaces, calling for support for the demonstration from other groups of workers.

Solidarity action is increasing. Car-workers joined marching hospital workers in Oxford last Friday and in Middlesbrough

engineers, steelworkers, pensioners, journalists and shipyard workers struck for two hours to join a 500-strong hospital workers' rally.

About 1000 people marched through the centre of Coventry last Friday in solidarity with striking hospital workers. Among factories represented by delegations were Coventry Climax, Rolls-Royce Anstey and Parkside works and Chrysler's Stoke and Ryton plants. The march was also supported by representatives of Coventry Trades Council and staff and students from the Lanchester Polytechnic.

The biggest single solidarity contingent was from the Alvis works, which had struck for the afternoon to back the hospital workers.

In Manchester the struggle escalated this week when striking drivers stopped all supplies entering Hope Hospital when they heard laundry was being taken in. Management protested innocence but guaranteed that staff would be instructed not to take in laundry.

PROGRAMME

Since this, police have been harassing pickets, but the only effect has been to make pickets more militant.

Workers in the United Manchester Hospitals have returned to work after four weeks strike—but on the basis of a militant programme of non-co-operation, work to rule and daily strike meetings. A mass meeting voted no confidence in the NUPE national executive for not organising all-out action and voted to strike for 24 hours on 1-May.

In spite of press and government propaganda about dying patients, inter-union squabbles, resigning branch secretaries and hospitals scurrying back to work, the strike is far from over. Many hospitals are joining the action for the first time.

Now is the time for health workers to make the message clear: No retreat on the claim over the money, the hours, the holidays or the equal pay. National links must be built between the well-organised groups of militants, to organise for an all-out national strike the minute the union leaders move towards the Pay Board and compromise.

PHASE TWO STRIKERS READY FOR FIGHT

WEST MIDDLESEX:—Workers at the local Hoover plant staged a mass walk-out on Monday—first day of phase two—in protest at the firm's refusal to concede between £5 and £6 a week and improve holidays and other benefits.

When Hoover offered an average rise of £2.40 the workers began a policy of non-co-operation which seriously disrupted production. Last week Hoover took reprisal by attempting to send home several workers and refusing to pay for an hour-long meeting during worktime.

The climax came on Monday when a mass meeting decided overwhelmingly to strike every Monday and to maintain restricted production. Hoover will probably try to retaliate and the action may escalate.

While unity and confidence among the workers is high, so is the sense of isolation. Local union officials have shown little enthusiasm for the action.

The Hoover plant in Wales has already accepted a rise within the freeze. Support must come from the other Hoover plant in Scotland and indeed all over the country. One of the first factories to challenge phase two cannot be left to do so alone.

Civil servants angry at union stalling

THOUSANDS of civil servants staged walk-outs last Friday in what their union executive saw as the last protest before surrendering to the government freeze.

In Manchester mass meetings passed motions of no confidence in the executive and demanded that strike action be continued until the demands are met. Union members are determined that no future struggle will allow the executive to repeat this betrayal.

A meeting of public sector workers in Manchester, called by the rank and file CPSA group, Redder Tape, was attended by delegates from the hospitals, gas industry, teachers, and the mines. Speakers stressed the need to build local rank and file action committees to co-ordinate action against the freeze.

STUDENT LEADERS FREEZE IN GRANTS STRUGGLE

EXETER:—The conference of the National Union of Students this week is the most important in its history. Students have faced many attacks by the Tory and the previous Labour governments. The value of grants has fallen so far behind rising prices that many students live in real poverty.

The NUS has been conducting a grants campaign, but while many colleges have shown considerable militancy and determination, the Communist Party-dominated executive has consistently failed to give any lead. Instead of attempting to fight alongside workers in the struggle against the freeze, the executive tried to turn the campaign into a protest aimed at winning friends in Fleet Street and so 'influencing' the Tories.

The Tories have replied that the wage freeze applies to students too—£1 plus 4 per cent is the maximum they will offer if they are forced.

The executive, faced with this blank wall and increasing victimisation of students on rent strikes, has been trying to back down.

The conference elects a new executive and the grants campaign is the dominant issue. The Communist Party is effectively the union's right wing. In the presidential campaign, the Party backed Mike Terry, but a split within its own election machine brought a challenge from John Randall, a former supporter. Their policies are virtually indistinguishable.

Against them the socialists in the NUS

ran Mike Hill, a member of the International Socialists. He campaigned on an openly socialist platform, stressing the common struggle of students and workers against the Tory government.

Randall won with 306 votes to Terry's 270 and Hill's 136. Hill's vote is a major advance for the left.

Move to 'lump' labour starts engineers' strike

EAST KILBRIDE:—63 test engineers at the Standard Telephone and Cables factory in Lanarkshire, Scotland, struck when management tried to move some testing equipment to 'lump' labour in another factory.

The men, all members of the EEPFU, first heard of the company's decision to contract work out when an STC manager told a union official that he could get a job on the 'lump'. The test engineers are on a top rate of £30 a week. The 12 non-union 'lump' men are guaranteed a minimum of £78 a week.

STC is a subsidiary of IIT, the giant American company under investigation for meddling in the Chilean elections. The company has a long record of anti-union activity.

A few years ago the militant AUEW convenor was successfully sacked despite a long strike. The 63 strikers are determined to win this time.



I would like more information about the International Socialists

Name _____

Address _____

Send to: IS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN

Socialist Worker

Miners: what happened to all the militancy?

THE SHOCK result of the strike ballot by the National Union of Mineworkers will no doubt have a profound effect on all the other struggles taking place against the Tory wage freeze. The inevitable question is: where is the militancy and fighting spirit of last year's strike?

The miners themselves were confused. They had been given no clear lead by an NUM bureaucracy which did nothing to campaign for the claim.

Immediately after the strike last year president Joe Gormley led the union back to its old disastrous policy of co-operation with the Coal Board. Productivity has been increased so much—by 6.2 cwt per man shift—since the strike that the Coal Board saw no urgency in pushing through the productivity deal which is long overdue as a result of last year's Wilberforce settlement.

This suited Gormley down to the ground. A productivity deal last autumn would have provoked considerable opposition from rank and file miners.

Last July's NUM conference passed a resolution for a wages structure of £30 for surface workers, £32 for the men underground, and £40 for face workers. The executive never took the claim seriously. They delayed it while the TUC tried to do a deal with the Tories.

Claim

When the chance of any deal fell through they had to submit a claim, though because of their wish to see the TUC-Tory deal, they had done nothing to win support for it among the members.

The left-wing members of the executive have been complaining in the past few weeks that the Coal Board refused to negotiate seriously over the claim. This should have been obvious from the moment Heath announced his wage freeze.

They should have immediately begun a campaign for the claim among rank and file miners, emphasising how price and rent increases had eroded last year's award, how any retreat by the miners would give the Tories the chance to put the boot in in revenge for last year's victory.

But the left-wing executive members concentrated on beating Gormley on his home ground—by trying to get the executive to organise a special delegate conference. Such a conference would probably have given backing for a strike.

But the built-in right-wing majority on the executive was able to ensure that such a conference was not held.

Gormley had been confident he could do a deal with the Coal Board for £2.29 and minor concessions, including an extra week's holiday. When the holiday offer was withdrawn he was forced to adapt his tactics.

Scared

Turning a remarkable somersault, he suddenly appealed for an all-out industrial campaign against the Tories led by the TUC. But he knew that the right-wing TUC leadership, which he had been tailing throughout its talks with the Tories, would never lead such a campaign. At the same time he abdicated his responsibility to lead his own members, by claiming that action by any one section alone was 'suicidal'.

This not only took the wind out of the sails of the Communist Party and Labour left but also scared the moderates in the union.

The 'traditional' left was in a vacuum.

They had done next to nothing to ensure that the membership was behind them, and were left with only a couple of weeks to mount their campaign.

In Yorkshire a coalfield meeting was rapidly called and 2000 miners attended, though it had been poorly advertised. Arthur Scargill, acting general secretary of the Yorkshire NUM, put the case for a fight.

But there was much confusion among those present about the kind of tactics needed. This confusion reflected the lack of discussion at rank and file level. Scargill was unable to satisfy questioners, and the miners left after being told that all they had to do was vote 'yes' in the ballot and leave the rest to the executive.

There is no doubt that the influential Communist Party and left Labour Party militants in the mines could have awakened a real fighting spirit among the rank and file. This they did not do.

The Collier, the rank and file miners' paper started after last year's strike, mounted a massive leafletting campaign in all the coal fields. Unfortunately, The Collier's influence is still not sufficient, although many militants, disillusioned with the lack of fight by their established spokesmen, will no doubt now realise the need for strong rank-and-file organisation such as The Collier offers.

Shotton steelmen give lead

FLINTSHIRE:—Shotton steelworkers have taken a major step forward in the fight against the threatened closures by British Steel and the loss of thousands of jobs. The Shotton Action Committee has called a national rank and file conference of steelworkers at nearby Connaught Quay on 13 April to discuss ways of fighting the closures nationally. Delegates are expected from nearly every steelworks in Britain, including some not immediately threatened.

The action committee is filling the gap left by the steel unions, and hopes to see the setting up of a national rank and file action committee with the power to call future conferences and the strength to lead an all-out national fight against the closures involving every steelworks in Britain.

If this conference is fully supported it will be the turning point in the fight against the closures.

Details from the secretary of the Shotton Action Committee, K W Monti, 25 Chester Close, Shotton, Deeside, Flint.

DOCKERS JOIN THE FREEZE BATTLE

LONDON'S West India, Royal and Tilbury docks, riverside wharves and the Chobham Farm, Tilbury and Barking container depots were at a standstill this week after the employers issued a challenge over the pay freeze.

The port's 7000 dockers voted early last month to accept a wage offer from the employers which was firmly within the limits of the £1 plus 4 per

Tory freeze formula—but only by withdrawing from productivity deal clauses most valuable to the employers, those in phase two of the Devlin agreement.

This was on the recommendation of the 18-man trade union negotiating committee.

On Monday, when dockers in the Port of London Authority shed 17 insisted that the employers abide by trade union policy, they were locked out. They had demanded that the three-man gangs agreed under Devlin Phase Two be boosted to eight, the figure before Devlin.

The rest of London's docks came out in solidarity, striking in anticipation of a lock-out. Their action is officially backed by the union.

Before last weekend the employers were considering making concessions on the committee's manning demands. But under the direct influence of the Tory government, they decided to go for a confrontation

DUBIOUS

London is the only port where there has been any resistance to the employers' freeze offers. Southampton was first to accept an offer within the freeze. Bristol, Hull, Manchester and Liverpool followed, though in Liverpool the vote was narrow and many dockers were under the false impression that London had voted to accept unconditionally.

The tactics of the negotiating committee in fighting the freeze under the guise of demanding higher manning levels are dubious and have contributed little to a real mobilisation of the men against the freeze.

Like all workers, London dockers have a watertight case for a large pay rise. Devlin Phase Two agreed that wage rises would be based on increases in the cost of living and on improved productivity.

Productivity in the London docks—as in other registered ports—has risen enormously as fewer dockers handle increasing tonnages. The cost of living has risen by 24 per cent since dockers signed away their rights to eight and ten-man gangs for a £36 basic wage.

Their present £9.50-a-week claim would only restore them to their 1970 level of purchasing power.

EXPLOIT

Before the freeze there were clear signs that the employers' starting offer would be £5 a week. It was rumoured they were willing to pay out £7 to avoid a dispute, so fast were their profits rising.

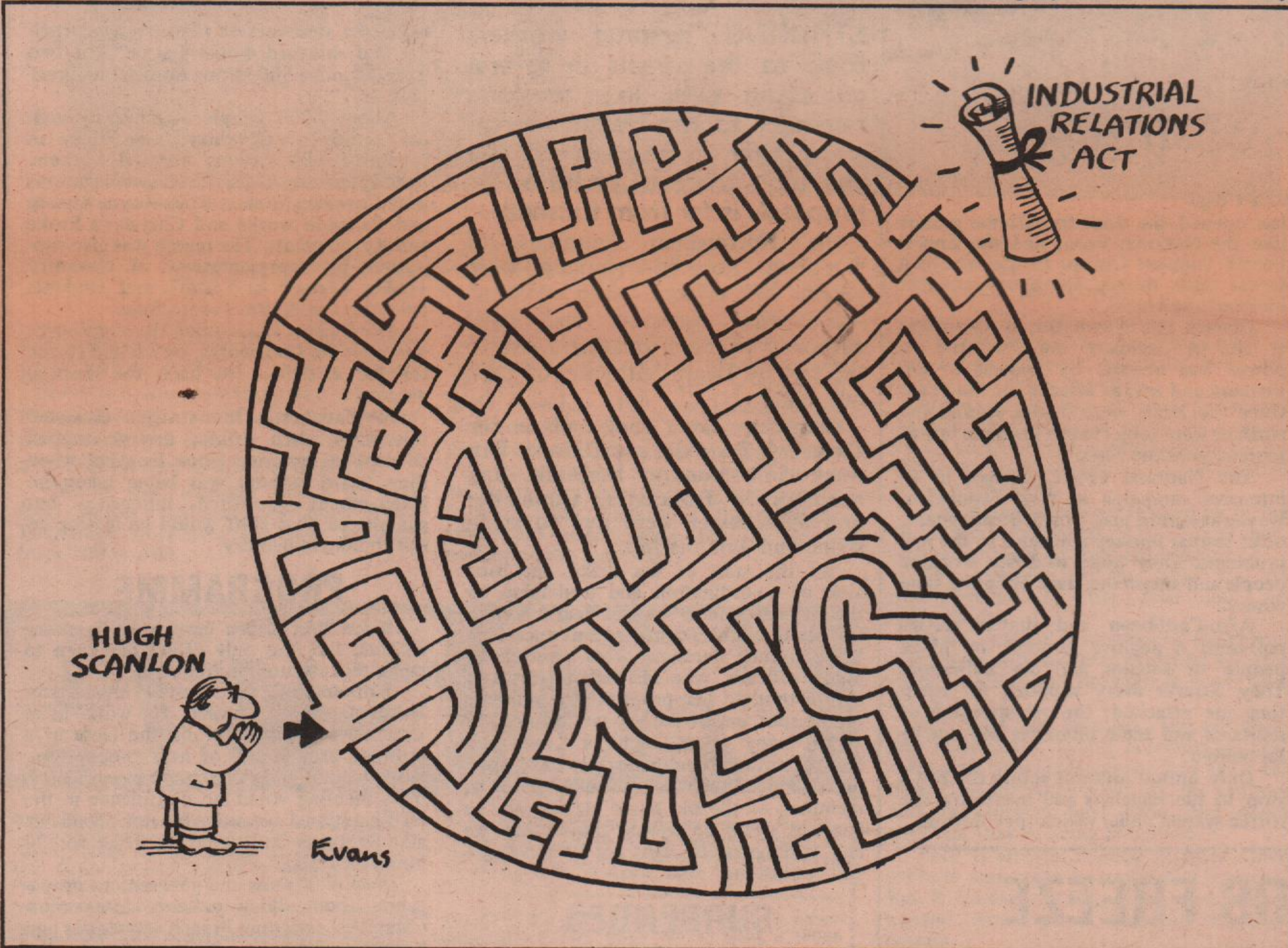
But with the Tory freeze they are now determined to exploit the situation and save on wage awards already budgeted for.

The national leadership of the Transport and General Workers Union has been doing its best to sabotage the possibility of a united fight not only over jobs but also over wages. It has allowed separate negotiations and agreements port by port.

London's main hope of putting enough pressure on the government and the employers lies in Liverpool and Hull joining the struggle.

Liverpool dockers were due to meet before the mass meeting in London on Friday to decide their attitude.

Hull dockers are demanding a recall docks delegates conference for national action against the fifth column of non-registration and are to strike for one day this week over this issue.



Vital move at sit-in factory

NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS:—The occupation of Ruston Paxman diesel factory in Lancashire by 1000 engineering workers to secure the reinstatement of sacked engineering union shop steward John Deason is now entering its sixth week. Senior GEC management have snubbed

the compromise offer made by Bob Wright, a member of the union's executive, and John Tocher, the divisional organiser. They had asked for John Deason's reinstatement in return for the suspension of his steward's credentials for one month while talks continued in London.

GEC seem determined to make an example of John Deason to break the shop stewards' organisation and re-establish 19th century-style discipline.

Bob Wright is a leading member of the AUEW broad left. Militants feel his efforts would be better directed towards striving for better unity throughout the giant GEC combine than offering olive branches to the company.

Stewards have called on the AUEW executive to organise an official delegate conference of all GEC shop stewards. The joint shop stewards committee at Ruston Paxman has been a key organisation behind the recent initiatives to build an effective combine committee by launching a GEC rank-and-file paper.

The first issue is due out this week and stewards hope this will generate support from other GEC factories.

Meanwhile the strikers continue their occupation and are daily sending out delegations to raise support.

Financial support is picking up but money is still desperately needed. Donations and messages of support to George Harrison, AUEW House, 431 Downall Green Road, North Ashton, near Wigan, Lancashire.

MANCHESTER:—Workers at Gardner's engineering factory turned their two-week strike into a sit-in last week when management tried to remove diesel engines by the back door as workers were collecting tax rebates at the front. The move is an important step in the struggle to re-establish the Manchester Piecework Agreement, which allows a worker to choose to go off piecework on to the day rate.

EDINBURGH:—Workers at Portobello Power Station demonstrated against a new security system of closed-circuit TV and automatic gates last week, wearing overalls covered with 'convict' arrows. Three gate-men have lost their jobs since the system was brought in and the men are demanding their reinstatement.

MANCHESTER:—Building workers on the £25 million Taylor Woodrow Market Street North development struck again on Monday—only two days after UCATT union official John Brougham negotiated a 'complete surrender' with the firm. The original dispute was over workers getting only £5 bonus per week. After the men went on a work-to-rule, management warned that there would be no negotiations until they resumed a 'normal' week of 48½ hours. Only 30 lump workers ignored the strike call.

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