

Socialist Worker

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

TORY CHIEFS NAMED IN DEATH PLOT



CARRINGTON:
Refused to appear

5000
salute
Clay
Cross

ALLEGATIONS that the British government inspired plans in Ireland to rob banks, provoke riots and assassinate Republicans are likely to emerge in a criminal case which is already before the Irish courts.

Three Englishmen, the brothers Keith and Kenneth Littlejohn, and their business colleague, Robert Stockman, face charges in connection with the robbery of the Allied Irish Bank, Grafton Street, Dublin, on 12 October last year. All three men have been extradited from Britain after court proceedings in which they claimed that they robbed the bank as part of their work in Ireland as agents of the British government.

In the extradition hearings, first heard at Bow Street court last December, the Littlejohn brothers sought to call as witnesses Lord Carrington, Minister of Defence, Geoffrey Johnson Smith, Parliamentary Under Secretary at the Defence Ministry, and Lady Onslow, a senior Foreign Office official. The Littlejohns claim they met Johnson Smith at Lady Onslow's home soon after the declaration of direct rule in Northern Ireland in March 1972.

The ministers and Lady Onslow refused to appear in court. The magistrate refused to issue a subpoena for their appearance.

GRANTED

Instead, he allowed an application from a lawyer representing Sir Peter Rawlinson, the Attorney General, a government colleague of Lord Carrington and Mr Johnson Smith, that the case should be heard in secret. The extradition order was granted without hearing either of the ministers or Lady Onslow. At no time during the case or since have either of the ministers or their ministry issued a denial of the Littlejohn allegations.

The men appealed to the Court of Appeal, and Kenneth Littlejohn, who was held in Brixton prison, applied for habeas corpus to the High Court and from there to the House of Lords. Each time, the men's appeals and applications were dismissed, each time in conditions of total secrecy.

Turning down Kenneth Littlejohn's habeas corpus application in the House of Lords on 3 April, the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Widgery, said: 'There is no reason to suppose that the raid was committed for any reason other than to raise funds for the IRA... Both Mr Littlejohn and his brother Keith are members of the IRA.'

But in spite of this assertion, neither brother, nor Mr Stockman, is being charged in Dublin with being a member of the IRA, which is an 'illegal organisation'. They are being charged only for offences in connection with the bank robbery.

The current issue of the Worker, the paper of the Socialist Workers Movement in Ireland, reveals that the Littlejohn

EXCLUSIVE by SW Reporters in Dublin and London

brothers have made a number of startling allegations in their defence.

THEY CLAIMED they came to Ireland in late 1970 after the formation of a supposed clothing firm, Whizz Kids Ltd, whose documents in London and Dublin indicate that the company never traded.

THEY CLAIMED that after making contact with criminals and with IRA elements they contacted the British government.

THEY CLAIMED that immediately after the declaration of direct rule they met Geoffrey Johnson Smith in London and soon afterwards were put in touch with two British agents in Ireland—named 'Oliver' and 'Douglas', a 'journalist'.

The agents, whom the brothers met on several occasions, gave instructions to start a 'terror campaign' to provoke the Lynch government to sharper action against the IRA, and at the same time to assassinate leaders of the IRA—one of whom was to be blown up with all traces destroyed. Rumours were then to be spread that he had fled to Canada with IRA funds.

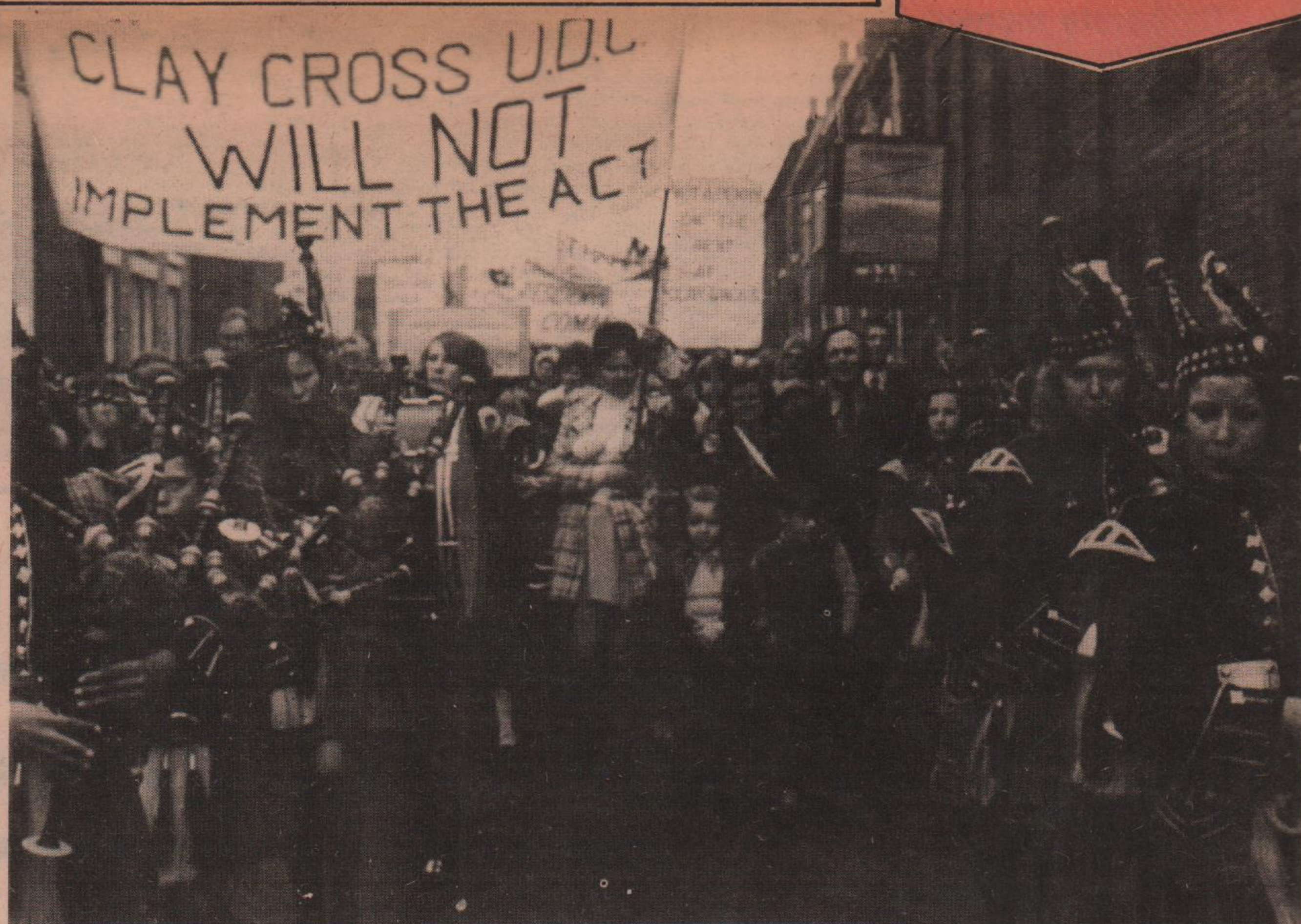
THEY ADMITTED responsibility for two petrol bomb attacks on police stations at Louth and Castlebellingham last September.

VIOLENT

These attacks took place at 10.30 and 11.30 in the evening on 22 September. They were carried out from the same car which was seen 'speeding off in the direction of Dundalk' with 'three men inside' (Irish Times 23 September).

The day before, Dundalk had been the scene of the most violent riots then known in the south of Ireland. Both the riots and the bombings were universally blamed on

to back page



Lead by a pipe band, the great Clay Cross demo moves off. More pictures back page

'CLAY CROSS FIGHTS ON.' This was the defiant message given to a 5000-strong demonstration in the Derbyshire mining village last Saturday by David Skinner, one of the 11 Clay Cross councillors still refusing to implement the Tory Rent Act. If defiance was one theme of the march and rally in support of Clay Cross, the urgent need for solidarity and support from the tenants and labour movement in support of this last island of resistance to the Act was the other.

Ethel Singleton, Merseyside Trades Council, a Liverpool tenant and IS member, put it bluntly: 'There is only one effective way to help these brave men and women in Clay Cross. Prepare an all out national rents strike with industrial support for any victimised tenants from the trade union movement.'

Her message was enthusiastically received by the large demonstration which included Merseyside dockers,

Nottingham and Kent miners, AUEW branches, several trades councils as well as tenants from Tower Hill (Kirkby, still on all out rent strike), Dudley (12,000 still on rent strike), Manchester, London, Stafford and many other centres. There were some 50 International Socialist branches represented—almost half the total march. This turnout brought the comment from Cllr David Skinner: 'Without organisations like IS there would have been no demonstration like this.'

£ 30,000 FUND

Socialist Worker went to press early this week because of the Easter holiday and before an up-to-date figure on the IS printshop fund was available. A full report will appear next week. Meanwhile, please keep the money rolling in so that we can quickly hit that £30,000 target.

May Day: all out against the Tories

Terror on the streets as Paras hit Armagh

by Mike Miller

BRITISH ARMY TERROR tactics have been in full swing in Armagh since two members of the Second Parachute regiment were killed in an explosion there last week. Both the Paras and the Fusiliers have been involved in what amounts to a campaign of savage reprisals against innocent people.

Almost immediately after the explosion, the Paras 'arrested' a young man, Martin Walsh, who was returning home after feeding the cows on his father's farm. The soldiers beat him and held his head under water for long periods, demanding to know who had been responsible for the bomb.

They then ordered him to climb over a fence and, as he did so, he was shot in the head at almost point blank range. The bullet missed his brain and he lived.

As he lay wounded, he heard the soldier who had shot him ask an officer for permission to 'finish him off'. The officer refused because 'there are too many watching.'

Since the incident the army and the press have pretended that Mr Walsh was responsible himself for the explosion and was shot while 'trying to escape'.

After the shooting, soldiers raided the Walsh home. They kicked in the door, seized Martin's younger brother, Donal, and arrested his brother in law and two neighbours who came to see what was going on.

In all 10 men were arrested and some were so severely beaten that they required hospital treatment. None of them has been charged.

The terror campaign has led many anti-Unionist groups in the area to call for a boycott of the coming local elections which, they say, will take place under virtual martial law if the Paras are not removed.

Deliberate murder

While the Paras have been conducting their campaign of reprisals in the Armagh countryside, the Fusiliers have been engaged in what looks very much like a policy of deliberate murder of Official Republicans in Armagh city itself.

On Saturday last week this regiment was involved in house searches in Catholic areas of the city. They were carrying photographs of two members of the Officials: Peter McGerrigan and John Nixon.

Later that night they shot McGerrigan dead and seriously wounded Nixon in what local residents and Official Republicans regard as premeditated murder.

The following Monday, the same soldiers shot Tony Hughes, also a member of the Officials. This time the soldiers appear to have been lying in wait for their victim.

Local eye witnesses are adamant that the soldiers were hiding in an unoccupied house. The angle of the bullets which hit a wall behind Hughes suggest that they were fired from an upstairs window, and soldiers were seen carrying sleeping bags from the house.

The Officials themselves believe that the deliberate murder of two of their members is aimed at forcing them to react violently and so be prevented from standing in the forthcoming local elections.

In Belfast copies of their paper have been seized, although their organisation is now 'legal'. Candidates for the elections have been harassed and 'arrested'.

The activities of the British Army on the ground are living proof of the hollowness of the Tory's self-professed desire for peace. They want victory and anyone who stands in their way will suffer.



Two of the Belfast Ten waving to supporters from a Black Maria on their last trip to court

THE 'Belfast 10' are the people arrested at Heathrow Airport on 8 March and charged on 12 March with conspiracy to cause explosions in London. The 10 are:

Roisin McInerney (18) a typist of Fort Street, Belfast, William Patrick McLarnon (19) unemployed of Finley Park, Newton Abbey, Co Antrim, Robin Martin Walsh (24) a tiler of Theodore Street, Belfast, Gerald Kelly (19) unemployed of Brittain Parade, Belfast, Martin Francis Brady (22) a driver of Granville Street, Belfast, William Joseph Armstrong (29) window cleaner of Moyard Crescent, Belfast, Hugh Feeney (21) a student of Blocks Road, Belfast, Dolores Price (22) a student of Slievegallion Drive, Belfast, Marion Price (19) a student of Slievegallion Drive, Belfast and Joseph Holmes (19).

The 10 have already been found guilty by the media. Between 8 and 12 March nine of the 10 were kept completely unclothed in Ealing police station.

During that time two solicitors, one contacted by relatives of the 10 and one by the National Council for Civil Liberties, and the mother of Dolores and Marion Price, were prevented from seeing them. The police had no legal power to do this. At present the three girls are held in a male prison, Brixton. This is entirely without precedent.

The Defence Committee was set up on the initiative of members of the Anti-Internment League in London. It is open to all those who are willing to help or involve themselves in its

activities.

The committee has organised a rota list of persons willing to visit the 10. A rota is necessary, firstly because the prison authorities are still being obstructive in the matter of visits and the committee wish to keep track of those applying to visit and to document the extent to which the authorities breach regulations. A rota is also necessary to try to ensure that each prisoner is visited, if possible, each day.

The committee needs funds urgently to pay for printing and hire of halls, the fares of relations wishing to come and visit and for sending food, books and cigarettes into the prison.

The committee has established four sub-committees—welfare, finance, activities (pickets, meetings, etc) and publicity. Anyone willing to serve on one of these committees is very welcome. The committee meets at the General Picton, Caledonian Road (five minutes from Kings Cross) each Sunday at 8pm. The convenors of each of the sub-committees will be present every Sunday. The committee can be contacted at 88, Roslyn Road, London N15, or by telephone at 800 9392.

All those willing to help in any way—to put their names on the visiting rota, contribute funds or to join any of the sub-committees—are asked to come to the General Picton or to contact the committee at the address or telephone number above.

Big swoop by police

IN a massive dawn raid last Friday 500 police, some of them armed, swooped on homes in London, Birmingham, Coventry, Manchester and Liverpool.

The press obediently reported the police statement that the raids were in connection with 'IRA bomb threats'. But it is clear that the carefully organised, nationally-planned action was a political threat to the socialist left in Britain, in particular those supporting the struggle against British imperialism in Ireland.

Spearheading the raids were Special Branch and the newly-formed Special Patrol Group, the armed police who shot dead two Pakistanis with toy pistols at India House.

In **Liverpool**, Eddie Collins, north-west organiser of Clann na hEireann, the Official Republican movement in Britain, and Jerry Harte, secretary of the local Clann branch, were arrested under the Official Secrets Act and the Theft Act respectively.

The secret police are well aware that both men are opposed to indiscriminate bomb attacks. Following the London bombings, they issued a statement disassociating the Liverpool branch of Clann na hEireann. They said the bombings could only reinforce the divisions between British and Irish workers and stressed the need for a united workers' struggle to smash British imperialism in Ireland.

In **Coventry**, police raided homes of members of the International Marxist Group, armed with warrants under the Criminal Damages Act. IMG address lists and conference documents were seized.

A Roman Catholic priest in Coventry was detained.

It is vital that all sections of the left rally to the defence of those under attack, demand their immediate release and bring to the attention of the working-class movement the sinister attempts by the armed, secret police to intimidate those fighting for a united Ireland.

Europe butters up Russians as our prices shoot up

by Jim Kincaid

STOCKS of unsold butter in the Common Market countries have risen to a gargantuan 400,000 tons—almost enough to supply the requirements of a country as big as Britain for a whole year.

The big European butter producing companies have been getting worried. Their profits depend on an exorbitant retail price for butter.

Yet prices could not be kept at the present artificially high level if the Common Market Food Commission began to release reserve stocks into the retail market. The fast growing margarine business would be equally threatened by a fall in butter prices.

Last week, under heavy pressure from the food producing interests, the Common Market authorities sold 200,000 tons from the butter stockpile to Russia.

The Russians were in a strong bargaining position and screwed highly favourable terms from the Europeans: Delivery within the next seven months, but 30 months to complete payment, and a price of 8p per lb—about a third of the current retail price in Britain.

The deal will cost taxpayers in the Common Market about £150 million, which is the cost of subsidising the knockdown price secured by Moscow.

The Russian government has offered no promises that this subsidy will be passed on to Russian consumers. In any case, the motives of the European food authorities were far from charitable.

The cost of storing and preserving 200,000 tons of butter for a year would cost more than the £150 million subsidy. After 18 months in store the butter becomes uneatable anyway.

In addition, it is forecast that butter production in the Common Market this year will be about 250,000 tons more than the amount bought by consumers. So even after these massive sales to Russia, the European mountain of uneaten butter will rise even higher.

Given this vast surplus, European butter prices should in theory be

falling and consumption rising. Already in the EEC butter is retailed at 2½ times the price on the world market.

Instead, unless there is a last minute change of policy, the price of butter sold to British housewives is to be raised on 1 May by 1½p to 2p per lb.

As part of the price of Common Market entry, the government has undertaken within five years to raise British butter prices to Continental levels, currently twice the going rate in this country. The 1 May increase is the first stage in this process.

Crazy situation

In a speech on 2 April, Anthony Beresford of Heinz and President of the Food Manufacturers Federation, warned that 'retail butter prices in Britain are likely to be 24 per cent higher by the end of 1973.'

The great Russian butter deal was designed precisely to keep up prices in the Common Market and enable further price increases to be introduced.

The situation is crazy—but not

hard to explain. In the Common Market farmers and food manufacturers are allowed enormous influence over food policy.

These special interests have used their power to secure marketing and subsidy arrangements which guarantee maximum profits. What suits butter producers best is that the retail price should be pushed sky high, and that taxpayers should pay for the enormous surplus, which is then kept off the market.

The usual propaganda defence of this system is that the small peasants of France and Germany should not be driven out of business. The truth is that most of the massive subsidies paid by European consumers to the food producing interest go to the large farmers and the big companies in the food processing industry.

Profits, not peasants, is the name of the game. Already, between 1967 and 1970, the amount of butter consumed in Britain dropped from 20.5lb to 19.3lb per head.

As prices soar, the decline will continue. For increasing numbers of poorer families, butter will become a rare treat, for special occasions only.



WHITEWASH ON BRIDGE COLLAPSE

by Laurie Flynn

IT WAS A FARCE at Bracknell Court last week when Marples Ridgway came to court to answer two charges of breaches of the Construction Safety Regulations and the Factories Act arising out of the collapse during construction of the Loddon Bridge near Reading.

This collapsed on 24 October last year, killing three men and seriously injuring seven others.

Even before last week's proceedings started all those on the press table knew what the outcome would be. Marples Ridgway's specially hired public relations man indicated that the Factory Inspectorate and Marples Ridgway had agreed between them that a plea of guilty would be returned on the less serious charge (that the temporary supports for the bridge deck were of inadequate strength and stability).

In return the second, more serious charge (that the company's construction was not good and sound) would be permanently adjourned. The only imponderable was how much the firm would be fined for its supports of inadequate strength and stability which killed three men. The maximum fine was known: £300.

DECEIT

So stirring and patriotic was the company's defence and plea for mitigation that the price of a life was reduced by the Bracknell magistrates. The firm had only to meet fines totalling £150 for causing the death of three workers, Derek Thomas, Derek Cooper and Bernard Ford.

The hearing was an amazing exercise in whitewash and deceit. And it was highly successful. Newspapers up and down the country carried headlines about the 'human error' that caused the collapse.

Marples Ridgway's silver tongued Queen's Counsel, John Griffiths, of the firm Slaughter and May (one of whose partners, T P Walmsley, is deputy chairman of Marples' ultimate holding company Bath and Portland) made full use of the occasion to put over the true glories of the firm and its sorrow at this most unusual lapse.

He told of Marples' great honesty in hiring an independent consultant to find out what went wrong and then, as soon as he had located the innocuous, little human error, how Marples had brought it to the attention of the Factory Inspectorate.

Then he moved towards his plea for mitigation. 'In my submission this is not one of the bad cases,' he told the court. 'This is a good, prominent and respected firm. Its standard of workmanship reflects not only on Marples Ridgway, but on our country.'

In Socialist Worker the week after the collapse (4 November 1972) we wrote that Marples Ridgway had been using a quick erect system of temporary supports for the wooden moulds into which the concrete for the bridge decks was poured. Such systems, we said, were designed not for safety but for speedy erection and transfer at low cost and that after the support system was re-positioned for the second bridge deck it was checked by men working on the lump.

Marples Ridgway found it necessary to make a forceful denial in court last week that the lump could in any way be linked to the collapse. 'It has been rumoured in some places that the use of the lump was connected with the accident. I refute that here and now. Only Marples Ridgway's directly employed workers were involved on the fabrication, fixing, erecting, moving or re-erection of the falsework,' the firm's QC told the court.

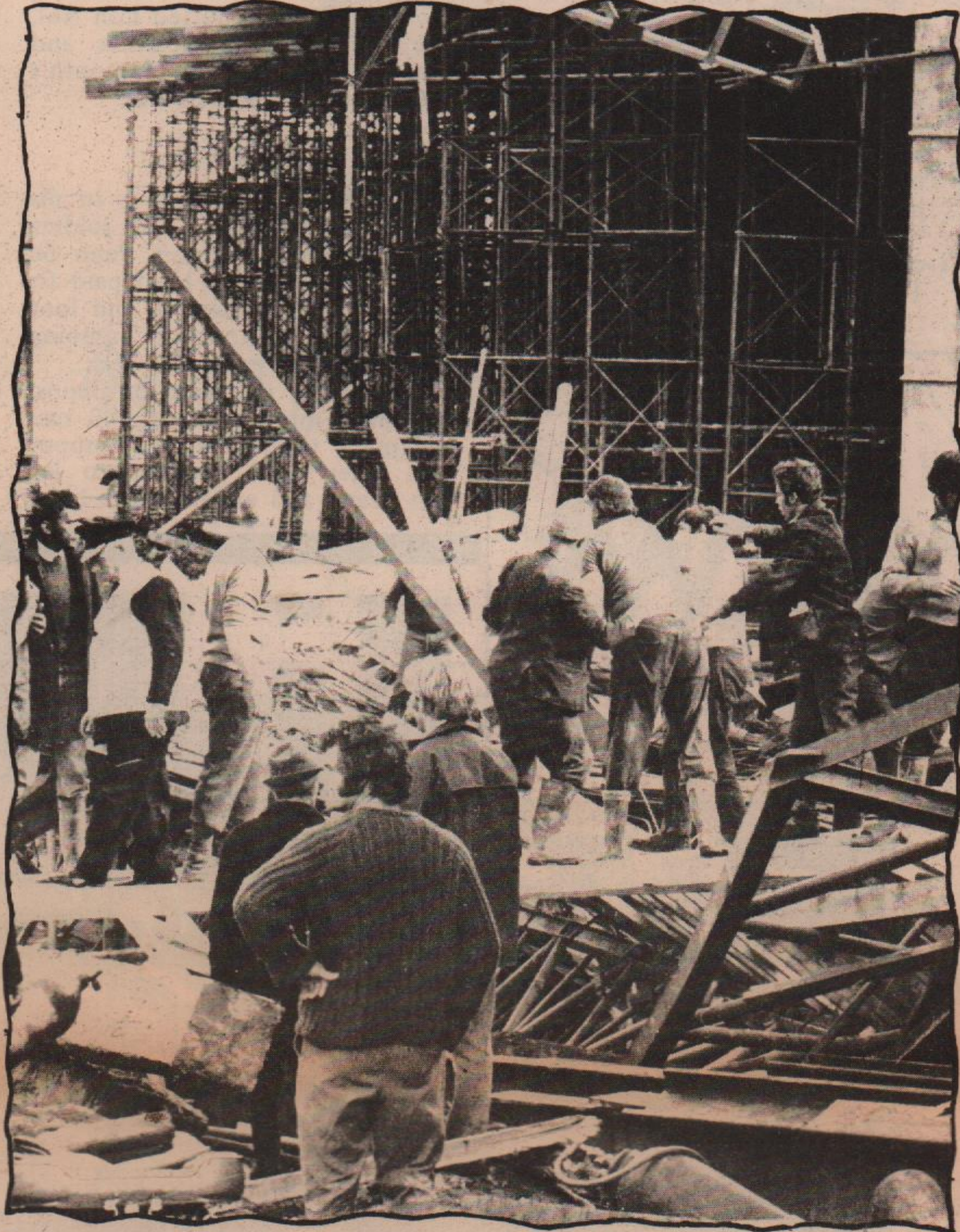
FALSE

Interestingly enough the company did not explicitly deny that lump labour had been used to check the temporary support structure once it had been erected. But it did insist that directly employed Marples Ridgway workers alone had put it up.

This is patently false insist the unions. Immediately after the collapse of the Loddon Bridge the Transport and General Workers Union construction section demanded a public inquiry. TGWU officials have given evidence to the Department of Employment that the whole contract was badly organised and handled, not least because it was riddled with lump labour.

In point of fact lump workers employed in a subcontract with Keeny's did the checking work on the structure in addition to helping with the concrete pumping. And contrary to Marples Ridgway's statements in court, lump workers were involved in the erection of the temporary supports, says the TGWU. The name of the firm in this instance was McCabe and Gulligan.

Neither Keeny's nor McCabe and Gulligan are firms registered at Company's House and the bosses of both outfits have miraculously 'disappeared' since the collapse according to union sources. In addition the scaffolding on the job was done by another lump firm from Reading.



Flashback to last October's Loddon Bridge collapse

This background might help to explain Marples Ridgway's ardour to be one of the first firms to accept liability 'in the first instance' for paying compensation for the death of or injury to nominally self-employed workers. It is the case that one of the advantages of the lump to the contractor (in addition to its union-busting powers) is that the employer owes no legal obligation to self-employed workers.

Marples Ridgway's tactics of admitting liability 'in the first instance' function to prevent any further court discussions of the lump, the precise responsibilities of subcontractors on the job and any further discussion of the causes of the collapse.

The Department of Employment and its Factory Inspectorate department is involved in this Loddon Bridge manoeuvre to the hilt. The only reason for the prosecution under the Construction Safety Regulations, according to union officials, is to head off union demands for a proper public inquiry.

What has happened, they argue, is that Marples Ridgway has been allowed to find their own fault, 'a simple, human error', and have the matter sewn up in a magistrates' court where the company could talk of 'the impressive self-discipline' of those lump workers it did employ and where the lump could be publicly exonerated.

An indication of the full extent of the cover up job that was done last week can even be found in the proceedings themselves. The prosecuting counsel studiously avoided any mention of the lump and concentrated exclusively on Marples' own discoveries about the causes of the collapse—that the bridge supports buckled because of an inadequate margin of strength in the grillage beams to support the deck girders for the formwork above the system built towers.

Any serious prosecution of the firm would have questioned many of the defence statements. In the event not one single question was asked, either by the prosecuting counsel or by any of the three magistrates on the bench. That Marples Ridgway made a mistake in designing these beams was stated and accepted.

Such beams should have had web stiffeners to bring them up to adequate strength, insisted the prosecution. Indeed so, said Marples Ridgway, and they would have had if only the simple, human error had not been made. This does not explain why one of those understrengthened key support beams was web stiffened and did not collapse.

The prosecuting counsel did not even bother to follow up his own disclosures. Nor did he inquire into exactly what designing Marples Ridgway did—whether in fact, like other contractors, they merely picked the beams from a glossy contract hire catalogue on the basis of what was 'adequate' and cheap.

The prosecuting counsel also stated that Marples Ridgway's checking and re-checking should have eliminated the error. But sadly, 'it persisted throughout and the firm must be held to account.' The firm replied that it was missed because it was in the simplest part of the operation and that 'it could not and would not happen again' because a checking system had now been introduced.

CHEAPER

You would automatically assume that any serious inquirer after truth would at least have asked why there was no checking system before. The answer might have been disconcerting. Just as it is cheaper to use untried and untested systems of falsework supports, so it is 'cheaper' and 'more expedient' not to bother about thorough checking systems.

Perhaps the most moving part of Marples Ridgway's defence concerned how difficult the contract was and how well it was handled.

To back this statement the firm's QC quoted from the reports of an 'independent expert' Marples Ridgway hired to scrutinise various contracts. 'There are no significant defects in method and procedure and the standard of workmanship continues to be very good', said one report from the independent expert, written just after the falsework system had been repositioned and not long before the collapse.

But Marples Ridgway's QC did not name the independent expert nor did anyone ask him for the name. That is understandable. The independent expert who wrote the glowing reports was Frank S Jackson. Until 18 months ago Mr Jackson was an engineering director of none other than that 'good, prominent and respected firm' Marples Ridgway. And since leaving he has worked exclusively for them.

All in all the Loddon collapse and the prosecution of Marples Ridgway resulting in the massive fine of £50 a life plus £150 costs (a very great deal less than was spent preparing the prosecution) is a terrifying morality tale on the society in which we live.

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

THE GOVERNMENT has scored such solid successes that its battle to enforce the Phase Two '£1 plus 4 per cent' norm is effectively won. The ending of the fight by the hospital workers' leadership marks a new stage, a stage of temporary retreat.

The TUC leadership is set firmly on the course of new talks with the government leading, it hopes, to a TUC-CBI-policed 'voluntary' incomes policy for Phase Three in the autumn. The differences between left and right on the TUC General Council are about terms, about how much to concede, not about the objective.

Not that these differences are unimportant. Differences about the terms of agreement brought about the collapse of the last talks and could well do so again. But it needs to be recognised that Heath's successes in the last two months have strengthened the right wing in the movement, for the time being at any rate.

The other side of the coin is that the government's victories are laying the foundations for fresh conflicts. In 1972, as a result of successful strikes, earnings rose significantly faster than prices. Now prices are rising faster than earnings—real earnings are tending to decline. One thing that is certain is that price increases at around the present rate will continue throughout the summer and into the autumn. Increases that have already taken place in raw materials and fuel costs, but not yet effective in the shops, will ensure this, as will continuing inflation on a world scale.

Urgent need

The industrial boom that is now well on the way will aggravate the situation. The more successful the government's Phase Two, the more workers will feel the pressure of declining living standards over the next six months.

What can be done now? The urgent need is to rally the working class by a widespread and effective demonstration against the government and all its works. That is the importance of May Day. The right wing of the trade union movement, echoed by the capitalist press and also, unfortunately, by some misguided voices on the left, argue that a one-day strike and demonstration will not bring down the government, that it is useless and should not be supported.

The right wingers are doing their best to sabotage the TUC day of action, which many of them voted for as a lesser evil at the special congress. They are actively assisting the government.

For there should be no misunderstanding. Under the present conditions of a partial retreat, a massive strike and demonstration on May Day will be a setback for the Tories. A poor response would be a substantial victory for the Tories, for incomes policy and for the trade union right wing.

Only basis

The case for the May Day stoppage and for mass demonstrations must be argued and won in every workplace. Of course it is only a beginning, but it is an important beginning. Basically the Tories survived their 1972 defeats on the wages front and on the Industrial Relations Act because of the passive (and sometimes active) support of the present trade union leaderships.

Those leaderships are now, more than ever, willing and eager to come to an agreement with the Tories to police the working-class movement in the interests of capitalism, provided that they can get some modest concessions.

The fight inside the trade union movement against the right wing, and their vacillating half-allies, the TUC left, depends above all on working-class activity. That is the only basis on which a serious left wing challenge can be built.

The outcome of the struggles in the autumn and next spring—struggles that will be forced on working people by the inexorable inflation—depends in large part on sober, steady, realistic work by militants now and over the next months.

For the TUC, the May Day action is an embarrassment to be got out of as quickly as possible, a last shot in a dying conflict. For us May Day is a new start in the ceaseless struggle to develop a militant socialist leadership in the working-class movement.

CAMBODIA: US BOMBING

HEAVIEST EVER

IN THE United States the 'end' of the Vietnam War is being celebrated in ecstasies of patriotic fervour.

Returned prisoners of war—mainly bomber pilots who had never so much as seen a Vietnamese until they were captured—are being paraded round the country.

But for the people of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos there is still little sign of peace.

The past few weeks have seen the heaviest bombing of Cambodia in the entire war. The more heavily populated areas of central Cambodia are being bombed and whole villages are being destroyed.

Even some members of the US Senate have got round to muttering criticisms of the bombing. Nonetheless, Nixon is reported to have been discussing resuming the bombing of North Vietnam to try to halt the liberation forces in Cambodia.

Clearly Nixon does not want to start all over again in Indochina. There is clear evidence that the US are doing their best to restrain Thieu in South Vietnam. They dis-

suaed him from bombing a US air base taken over by Communist forces and, most effective of all, they have been cutting down on his ammunition supplies.

But equally Nixon is not prepared just to ditch the whole of South East Asia. Large US forces are remaining in Thailand.

It appears that the US has put pressure on Lon Nol, the puppet ruler of Cambodia, to broaden his government, or even to resign. But they cannot afford to be seen to drop him too blatantly. The best solution from the US point of view

is for South Vietnamese forces to go to Lon Nol's aid, rather than any escalation of direct US involvement.

Lon Nol, brought to power by the CIA in 1970, is in a weak position. He has broken with many of his leading associates, and his younger brother recently resigned from the government. Lon Nol controls only one fifth of Cambodian territory and less than half its people.

Even within Phnom Penh, the capital, Lon Nol's support is weak. The recent siege has led to disas-

trous shortages of water, rice, petrol and electricity. Inflation is rampant—an average worker's daily wage is now not high enough to pay for a glass of beer. The intellectuals, who originally supported Lon Nol, have gone into opposition and teachers have been on a month's strike against price increases.

PEKING

Lon Nol's army too is in disarray. In February 200 soldiers demonstrated in Phnom Penh because they had not been paid for three months. Desertion and looting are rife. Without US bombing, Lon Nol would not last a week.

Meanwhile the guerrilla opposition have more than 70,000 men and many thousands more supporters. They have supplies to last two years, and are no more likely

to be bombed into submission than the Vietnamese liberation forces.

But their leaders cannot be relied on to go all the way. Ex-Prince Sihanouk, former ruler of Cambodia, is no revolutionary. His 'left' reputation derives entirely from attending banquets in Peking—his social policy before he was deposed was entirely conservative. He has already made it clear that he will come to terms with the US, providing Lon Nol can be removed.

The stage seems set for compromise. Russia and China will both make radical declarations, because they are competing for the allegiance of North Vietnam. But neither has any interest in a real confrontation.

Russia has diplomatic relations with the Lon Nol government. China is giving aid to the guerrillas—more than £4 million last year and £6 million this year. But this makes it all the easier for the Chinese to control them politically. Without a revolutionary alternative the misery of the Indochinese peoples will continue.

IAN BIRCHALL

BRIEFING

WORKERS demonstrated again in Barcelona last Wednesday in protest at the shooting of a building worker by police a week earlier. Petrol bombs were thrown and traffic halted.

The general secretary of the official Spanish trade union organisation, whose congress opened on Wednesday, revealed that 1972 had seen a high level of strike activity in Spain, with about seven and a half million working hours lost. Two clandestine trade union organisations, the General Labour Union and the Workers' Trade Union, denounced the official union congress as 'anti-democratic and anti-working class.'

THE rising tide of neo-fascist violence in Italy led to the death of a policeman in Milan last week. The policeman was killed by a hand grenade when the city authorities tried to stop a neo-fascist march. A left-wing student had been shot in Milan the day before, and the authorities were trying to avoid further trouble.

In Milan clashes between the left and the neo-fascists are a regular event, and police violence against the left led to the death of one student and serious wounding of another earlier this year.

The neo-fascists who defied the ban were egged on by a telegram from the parliamentary leader of the neo-fascist party, Almirante. When news of the policeman's death reached Rome, Communist Party deputies in the Italian parliament physically attacked their neo-fascist colleagues.

THE three-week strike of press-shop workers at the Renault car factory near Paris has ended after management promised to reopen negotiations about the factory's grading system. This is far from meeting the demands of the unskilled workers at Billancourt and two other plants which joined the strike demanding the regrading of all assembly line workers into a higher category.

The union leaders at Renault—chiefly the Communist Party-dominated CGT—has been anxious all along to get the striking workers back. Their main worry was the 7000 Renault workers laid off because of the press-shop strike. Instead of pressing for solidarity between the striking and locked-out workers, the CGT told those laid off it would do its best to get Renault to pay them for the time they were out of work. In 1971 Renault paid workers laid off during a similar strike of unskilled workers, but the workers were then in a position of strength—the union leaders have now led them back without any guarantee of lay-off pay at all.

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



Police injure 50 in homes protest

by Roger Murray

DEMONSTRATIONS in Frankfurt, West Germany, against property speculation and lack of action by the local authority led to two street battles within three days.

Police, with rubber truncheons, riot shields, tear gas and water cannon attacked protesters defending squatters from eviction. Nearly 50 demonstrators were injured, and several are still in hospital, two unconscious.

In fact attempts by the authorities to spread general hysteria and label squatters as criminals, with the press contributing stories of petrol bomb arsenals, have not succeeded.

Much of Frankfurt is being systematically destroyed and converted to luxury offices and flats. The first confrontation began with the occupation of empty houses in the Westend quarter in September 1971.

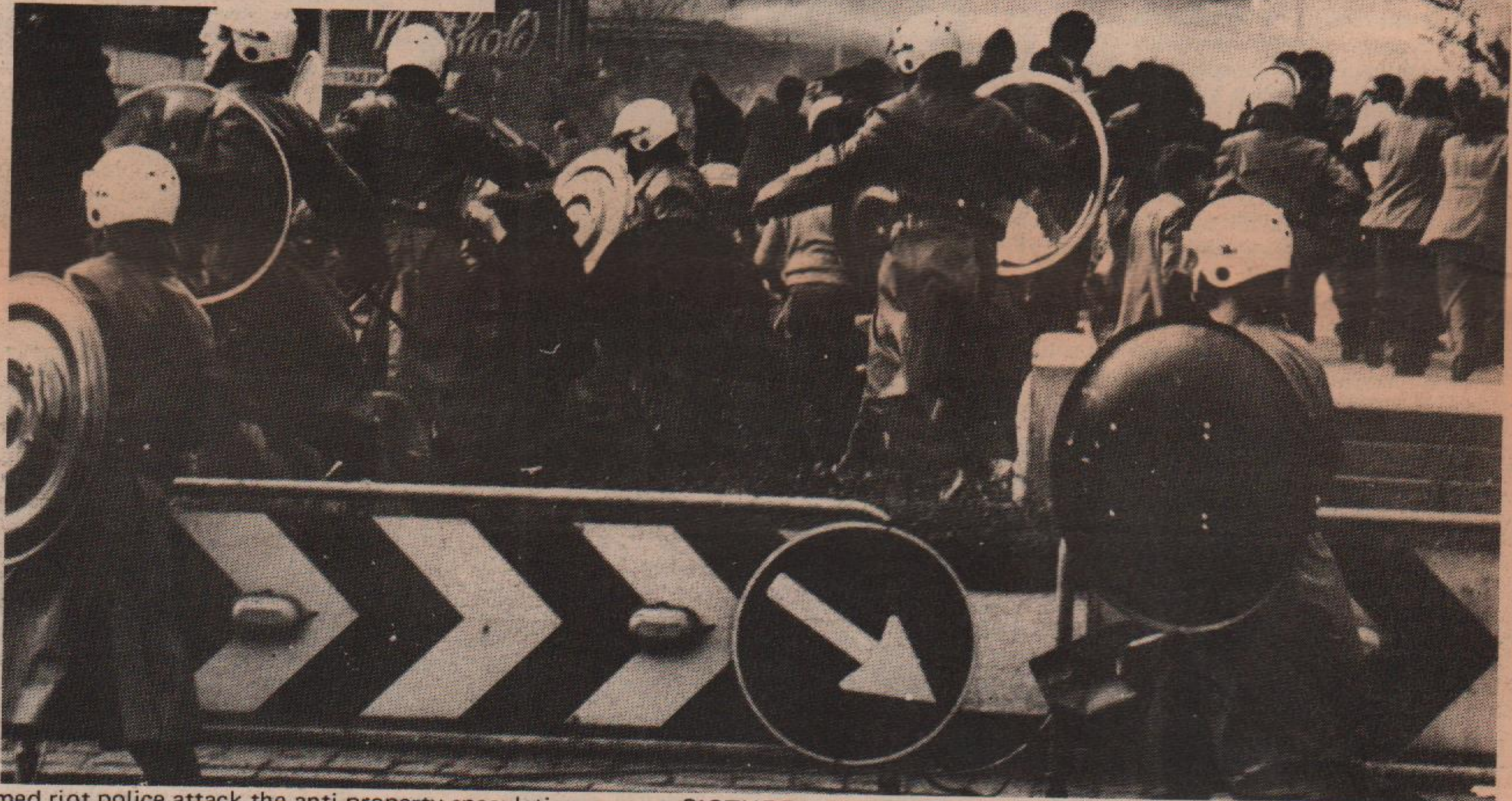
The squatters were given permission to stay for one year, mainly because the owners had not yet got planning permission or demolition orders. They formed a housing council to work with other tenants, especially over rent strikes. There are now 300 families, mostly Italian and Spanish immigrant workers, on rent strike.

The local authority has consistently supported the property owners on the speculation and housing issue. In the past year at least a dozen cases of intimidation by landlords have been reported—without any action being taken. Meanwhile rents stay at extortionate levels, and more than 100 big houses stand empty.

Barricades

The attempt to evict squatters from the house at 51 Kettenhofweg was originally met with teach-ins, a press conference and gatherings at the expected time of eviction. After four days delay, 400 demonstrators went to the city centre to make the struggle more public.

The police responded by savagely attacking demonstrators, who were beaten up, chased into shops and cafes, and beaten against shop-windows. Police tactics were clearly not simply to disperse protesters, but to terrorise people into giving up completely. The brutality of the action can also be explained by the panic of the SPD officials that their



Armed riot police attack the anti-property speculation protest. PICTURES: Abisag Tullmann

local power was being challenged.

That afternoon street battles raged through the centre of Frankfurt until the police reached the occupied houses in Kettenhofweg where demonstrators had erected barricades to defend themselves and the houses. Although these were smashed by water-cannon, the police encountered the first real resistance to their power to dominate the streets and intimidate protest.

On the Saturday another demonstration mobilised more than 5000 people. Again police attacked without warning. Demonstrators were discussing the housing issues with people in the main shopping centre, after a peaceful march through the town. Demonstrators and passers-by alike were beaten up.

Destroyed

The use of force had not succeeded in breaking the movement, but the squatters were evicted at 4am the following Wednesday. 700 police sealed off nearly a square mile of Frankfurt in the middle of the night, and stormed the house as if it were occupied by armed criminals. Police with machine-guns and tear gas stood by and TV cameras were there to record the spectacle. It was impossible to get within 400 yards of the scene, and the 10 squatters were forced to give in without resistance.

The house was immediately made unfit to live in, floors and electricity connections were torn up, and squatters' property destroyed.

Local people responded by showing solidarity with the squatters by a mass demonstration the same day.

The political credibility of the authorities has been destroyed, particularly that of the mayor, Rudi Arndt, who has been forced to retract his decisions to ban meetings. There are eight more occupied houses, spreading rent-strikes and growing public solidarity with the struggle—the contradictions will inevitably develop in the next few weeks.



Police using crowbars break in to evict the squatters

FOOT PRINTS

MAURICE MACMILLION

PHILLIP WHITEHEAD, Labour MP for Derby North has exposed a dirty little piece of profiteering on behalf of Macmillan, the publishers. An afternoon in a university bookshop revealed that Macmillan are 'surcharging' on text books which they published up to two years ago. An example is the Macmillan Case Book Series, a series of small-size paperbacks of famous literary works

which were published in 1971-72 and advertised for the 'needy students'. The price on publication was 50p. Few of the issue were sold out, so Macmillan are selling the same series this year, at no extra cost to themselves, at 75p—a 50 per cent increase. The new price tag is stuck over the old price on sticky paper. A low-selling novel, of course, would not provide Macmillan with the same opportunity, since no one would buy a bad novel a year late at



a higher price. The student market, however, especially when the price of decently-produced books is soaring, is always open to exploitation. The president of Macmillan is Harold Macmillan, Conservative Prime Minister from 1957 to 1963. His son, Maurice, still holds 100 shares in the company. Maurice is in his spare time Secretary of State for Employment, and is a strong supporter of the government's wage and prices freeze, not to mention the continuing low rate of student grants.

Emergency in the labour ward

THROUGH floods of tears, I must write of the flood of activists leaving the Labour Party in Edinburgh. The reason, it seems, is a certain cynicism about the ability of the party's rank and file to keep control of its Labour councillors.

Some weeks ago a meeting of Pilton Ward Labour Party decided not to renominate Councillor Magnus Williamson, on the grounds that his political attitudes were not suitable. During the recent journalists' strike on the Edinburgh Evening News, for instance, Williamson supplied news material to the executives who kept the paper coming out.

At the next ward meeting, called for other purposes, a group organised by the party leadership managed to get Williamson re-adopted after all. Party stalwarts remember that in a similar incident two years ago, when another Pilton councillor was refused re-adoption, Magnus Williamson paid the subscriptions for 26 new members.

These new members, many of them pensioners, were warned of a 'Communist take-over' of the Labour Party, and duly voted for the councillor's re-adoption. The following year many of them, when approached for their dues, denied that they had ever joined the party.

There is also some dissatisfaction, I understand, in Central Leith Ward, where a councillor is Tam Macgregor, the contract representative for McGowan Construction, a firm which profits by using sub-contracted 'lump' labour.

Macgregor recently chaired a sub-committee meeting of the corporation's highways committee, which met to discuss which firms should be awarded contracts. He somehow forgot to mention his connection with McGowan Construction.

Although Labour councillors are continually assuring their local parties that the council does not give contracts to 'lump' firms, McGowan Construction features in the list of firms recommended for contracts.

VICIOUS VISCHER

A STAR-SPANGLED cast took part in the International Reinsurance Seminar at the University of Sussex on 27-29 March, but no speaker was more handsomely received than H B Vischer, general manager of the Swiss Re-Insurance Company. The Policy Holder Insurance Journal (23 March) had an advance copy of Mr Vischer's speech, and reported as follows:

'The unchallenged master of his subject, Mr H B Vischer makes an



impressive contribution on the subject of moral hazard. Mr Vischer has none of the hypocrisy which afflicts the English and as a result makes no attempt to pretend that deteriorating moral standards are in some curious way part of a glorious march to freedom of the human race.

'The problem he sums up is whether democratic societies can overcome the trend towards a slackening of their ethical concepts, and whether there will be a counter-move to restore the age-old values on which Western civilisation is founded.

'If this does not happen, then moral hazard will remain an increasing risk. It is worth noting that, in addition to familiar remedies, Mr Vischer advocates a private police force organised and paid by the insurance companies. This is an overdue recommendation.'

I understand that one subject not on the seminar's agenda was 'Vehicle and General Insurance and the age-old values on which Western civilisation is founded.'

A NASTY little case of disguised redundancy has arisen in the offices of British Titan, the titanium production group which is part-owned by ICI, Lead Industries Group and Greeff Chemicals. Dr A Bowman, who has been with the company for 30 years and rose to be its technical director, and Dr P G McCarthy, who has been with Titan 25 years and was works manager, have retired at the respective ages of 58 and 57. The 'retirements' followed a reorganisation in the company in which both jobs suddenly became redundant.

For some reason, neither man has complained about ill-treatment. This may have something to do with the 'ex-gratia' payments which have been made to them, which, taken together, come to £93,000.

THE REIGN IN SPAIN —MPs GRAVY TRAIN

THE storm that blew up last month over Labour MPs going to Portugal to celebrate 600 years of imperialist association between Britain and Portugal ended with the MPs cancelling the visit—but this hasn't prevented a rush to join the 'delegation' to Spain being organised next month by the British section of the Inter Parliamentary Union.

The Spanish parliament is chosen in free elections. Everyone is free, that is, to vote for candidates on a list approved by the government. All opposition to the government list is illegal.

This unorthodox way of electing a parliament in no way disqualifies Spain from membership of the Inter Parliamentary Union, which is described in its brochure as 'an international organisation' whose members are 'parliaments constituted in conformity with the laws of a sovereign state of which they represent the population'. In other words, parliaments which call themselves parliaments.

The IPU has 72 members, including Albania, Brazil, Hungary, Kuwait, Malawi, South Vietnam, Ruanda Burundi, Czechoslovakia and Russia. Greece, a spokesman assured me, is not a member. Nor is South Africa.

Nor is Portugal, which has been applying regularly for membership recently on the grounds that it is 'unfair' to exclude fascist Portugal from a parliamentary organisation

which includes fascist Spain. This argument is now considered so strong that Portugal is expected soon to win membership.

Portuguese membership would be welcomed by the Labour MPs who have already applied to join the IPU gravy train to Spain in May. The IPU spokeswoman would not give me names, but she was definite that Labour MPs would be going. 'You see,' she told 'we always like to make these visits all-party.'

That second week in May will be busy for the IPU's British officials, since from 15-22 May they will be entertaining a delegation from another IPU parliament—Poland.

Of the 460 members of the Polish parliament only 255 are members of the Polish United Workers Party (Communist Party). There are 117 from the United Peasants Party, 39 from the Democratic Party (mainly small businessmen) and others from local and sectional groups, including 11 Roman Catholics.

These MPs are chosen in elections which are entirely free, except that the list of candidates is selected by the 'National Front'—which is controlled by the Communist Party machine. Voters are encouraged not to cross any names off the voting list, but to drop the paper straight into the ballot box, in which case the top six are declared 'elected'.

In the most recent elections, in March last year, the Party machine

got a shock. Only 91 per cent of the top Party officials were elected, which meant that at least 9 per cent of the electorate had gone into the polling booths (whose use is officially discouraged) and crossed off the names of the top Party nominees. This insubordination is unlikely to be tolerated in the future.

These rather unparliamentary methods will not be discussed during the banquets, cocktail parties and other important functions organised by the IPU in Britain for their Polish guests.

By one of those happy coincidences which are almost inevitable in the glittering calendar of Inter Parliamentary Union 'functions', the Polish IPU section which visits Britain in mid-May were hosts to the Spanish delegation only last January.

The Spanish MPs were led by Jose Finat, Count Mayalde, who distinguished himself in the 1930s as Spanish envoy to Hitler's Germany. On leaving Poland after his visit, the Count told the United Polish Workers Party paper, Tribuna Ludu: 'Spain respects Poland's social and economic policy.'

The visit caused some concern in the exiled Spanish Communist Party (the PCE) which put out a statement saying the Polish invitation meant 'a kind of support for the farce of Franco's parliament.' The delegation from Spain was 'more a delegation of specialists in police suppression than of members of parliament' (presumably a reference to the presence on the delegation of Carlos Iniesta, head of Franco's Guardia Civil, one of the most brutal police forces in Europe).

The greeting of the delegation was, according to the PCE, 'a desertion of the Polish peoples' tradition of solidarity with the Spanish people, which harms the prestige of Poland and the prestige of socialism.'

This is not the first time the PCE has been forced into reluctant criticism of what it still considers to be a communist country. In 1970, it issued an even stronger protest at news that the heroic strike of Spanish miners in the Asturias had been broken in part by the supply of coal from Poland.

What Reggie meant

CONGRATULATIONS to Federal Judge Palmieri of New York, who is dealing with the complicated action launched by a Mrs Jacqueline Wiener in 1971. Mrs Wiener had invested her life's savings in the Real Estate Fund of America, which later went bust in curious circumstances, and she was suing the fund's directors for her money back. Defendants to the action included Robert Wagner, a former mayor of New York and former chairman of the fund, and the fund's first president, Reginald Maudling, former Chancellor and Home Secretary.

Ex-mayor Wagner is standing in the New York mayoral elections this year as 'a liberal candidate' and is not anxious to get involved in a nasty financial suit, so he and others are paying Mrs Wiener off. On 8 April it was announced before Judge Palmieri that 'a settlement' had been arranged 'out of court'.

The judge could not resist a few remarks. The Real Estate Fund of America, he said, had been 'an attempt to squeeze more juice out of the foreign money market. They over-extended and over-invested and their policies

were not strictly according to the rules.'

The judge was then asked about remuneration for the defendants and replied with the immortal sentence: 'I can assure you that nobody worked for nothing. They all had their feet in the gravy pot.'

Mr Maudling protested at this. He had, he told the Daily Telegraph, on 9 April, 'never received any remuneration in any form whatsoever from the fund.'

When the fund started in May 1969, Maudling was given 50,000 shares in it. A year later, he accepted another 10,000.

These shares were never worth anything, because the fund went bust. But if the fund had reaped it in for its directors on anything like as big a scale as had its illustrious predecessors, IOS and GRAMCO, the shares would have been worth a few gravy-pots full. Jerome Hoffman, the founder of the fund who persuaded Maudling to be first president and is now in prison in America for fraud, valued Maudling's shares at £350,000.



Maudling: 'Didn't refer to me'

SOCIALIST WORKER QUIZ CORNER

Which are the two 'Communist' countries to have recognised Franco's Spain?

...AND IT'S THE POOR WOT GET THE BLAME

POORER children at the age of seven are often a year behind middle-class children in reading, are shorter in height, are more likely to squint and be bed-wetters. They are probably also clumsier and less likely to be immunised and vaccinated.

They also live in appalling overcrowding, so have less chance to dream dreams 'in the best years of your life'.

Despite the Tory claptrap about 'equality of opportunity', society positively discriminates against the poor. By the time a child is seven his environment and social class have moulded him for the rest of his days. Society's crazy priorities rate building Concorde and allowing dockland developers to cream off £200 million higher than eliminating the class measures of poverty and child deprivation.

One man who has made a study of child poverty is Peter Wedge, of the National Children's Bureau and the Socialist Medical Association, who says that deprivation starts as soon as you leave the womb, gets worse at school and at work and goes on and on until you're six feet under.

'Deprivation takes many forms—not just material or emotional, but medical and educational as well. These disadvantages afflict quite a large number of our children and are largely part of the structure of society itself. It is counter-productive to blame the victim though this is the danger with schemes that focus on the parent. An alternative strategy is put forward by those who argue that our educational system is itself oriented in the wrong way.'

And the socialist approach? 'A third possibility is to work for a massive redistribution of resources and power in society by involving those usually on the receiving end. We must begin to tackle diseases and not symptoms.'

PALMED OFF

Middle-class people get the best deal from the system, including the health services, because they talk the same language as the bureaucrats. Look how a middle-class woman demands the most convenient time to suit her when fixing an appointment at hospital for her child, and compare it with how a working

woman is palmed off with the most suitable time to the hospital.

Poor working women face almost insurmountable problems. 'Take immunisation for children,' says Peter Wedge. 'She's probably got a large family and there's a limit to how much time you can spend on one child. Also there are difficulties about not being able to get a bus to the clinic or not being able to afford the taxi fare.'

ELIMINATE

'Blaming the victim is not the approach—if there's a splendid new clinic in the area, working-class women can't be blamed for not using it if it's inaccessible. It should be sited to meet their needs, not the planners'. Also there's the problem poor people face of alienation at school, when facing bureaucrats and those with the power.

'There'll be no significant change unless those in power have the will to change the distribution of chances. The trouble with those in control is that they always want to hang on to what they've got.'

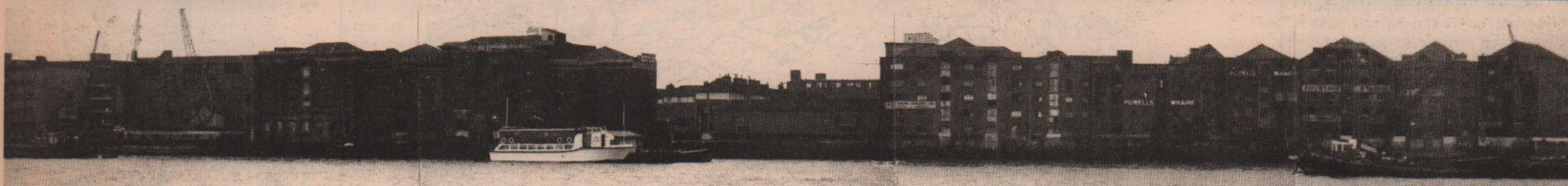
'Society has a built-in bias in favour of the middle classes. Working people are alienated from school. Middle class children responding to society's norms are said to be "progressing satisfactorily".'

'The thing to do is to make people aware of how children develop and tell others what they need and want. It may sound patronising, but although no significant change is likely to take for a long time, change is possible.'

The National Children's Bureau believes that infant school teachers, social workers, local authorities and government can all do their bit to eliminate material and social deprivation by improving housing and introducing health, maternity and children's services that take account of what people need rather than what those in control want to give them.

The only people they don't bring in are the poor themselves. It's fatal to leave everything to the bow-tied academics and administrators. Until the poor unite and demand action, they will always be with us.

Neil Hamilton



THERE'S been much publicity about how the Tories are to launch the most comprehensive planning scheme to redevelop London docks after the employers and the government, aided and abetted by Jack Jones, have got rid of most of the dockers.

Now the dockland study team has just published its official preliminary plans.

The authors of the report are a group of outsiders who have, with their usual arrogance, presumed to decide the future of a whole working-class community. They got most of their information from such well-known benefactors of the human race as the Brighton Marina Company, Imperial Chemical Industries and Town and City Properties.

They know quite a lot about finance, engineering and statistics. They know nothing and care even less about the working people who live there.

The closure of London's upriver docks and wharves, the likely closure of the rest, and the departure of industry linked to the docks has meant a dramatic drop in local employment. For the workers, this is the 'benefit' of technological change.

Trendy

For the upper class the prospect is somewhat different. Suddenly there are roughly 26 miles of river front and disused docks for development as middle-class residential area without all that nasty, dirty industry. In other words, fortunes for the developers and fun for the rich.

They've already started in St Katharine's Dock, where Taylor Woodrow (who gave us Ronan Point) have built a new hotel and conference centre looking out on Tower Bridge. Some of the beautiful old dock buildings, in which generations of London dockers sweated for their living, have been turned into trendy studio flats.

There is a scheme to turn the Surrey Commercial Dock into a yachting marina—just what all those working-class Bermondsey yacht owners have been crying out for for years! Bob Mellish, local Labour MP and Labour Chief Whip, thinks it is a very good idea.

Livelihoods

The report gives five alternative plans for dockland. Some make more concessions to local needs than others. But wherever workers' housing gets more space, recreational facilities get less. Wherever more private housing is to be built, the schemes get more and more exotic, including such things as fast passenger transport systems and horseriding centres.

Plan P gives you a riverside camping site, presumably to relieve pressure on the Salvation Army hostel.

The planners' estimates for new £14,000 (at 1971 prices) the dividing line between cheap and expensive houses, so ensuring that only the rich will be able to buy. Most of the proposed new jobs are white-collar—in an area where educational

Dockland profiteers push the boat out

opportunity is more restricted than almost anywhere else.

The planners estimates for new jobs in 1991 vary between 17,000 and 63,000. What right have these people to play around with our livelihoods like this? And on what basis will decisions be made? The answer is, of course, that decisions will depend on how much profit can be made from the redevelopment and from the jobs—unless working people do something about it.

The people of dockland are overwhelmingly working class. The planners are convinced this is a very bad thing. At first they considered the idea of 'social mix', bringing in a new 'civilising' middle class, though of course you don't hear anything about the need for social mix in Hampstead Garden Suburb.

But the planners have now rejected the idea. Working people are now to be excluded as much as possible—and what new jobs are provided will be those needed to service the rich who are moving in.

Profitable

So the chance to develop dockland for the benefit of the working people of East London is to be thrown away in the pursuit of profit.

For the planners, the interests of big business come first. Nothing, it seems, can be done without the services of Taylor Woodrow and the other big property companies. And they will provide nothing that isn't profitable. So offices, hotels, yachting marinas and houses for sale at the maximum market price are the things that must be built.

The planners, instead of being the servants of the community, become the technicians of big business on the look-out for a killing.

None of the alternative plans get anywhere near the needs of the people of dockland. How could they? Now the property speculators and construction firms will negotiate a few so-called concessions and the government will give them the go-ahead.

There is an alternative to all this. Planning is not really the complicated matter that the so-called specialists and technicians like to pretend it is. It is simply about whether you need housing before jobs or vice versa,

what kind of leisure facilities people need, and so on.

The East London Dockland Action Group has been recently set up to defend the area from the impending rape of the property and construction boys. The group recently held a public meeting in Shadwell which was attended by 300 people. The local labour movement is beginning to get involved and is preparing to put up a fight. Street committees are being formed.

Misdirection

The vested interests of speculators and planning bureaucrats ensure that it will be a difficult struggle. The danger is that the group will become just another 'interest' to be consulted. The only people so far consulted have been almost exclusively public authorities, capitalist concerns and

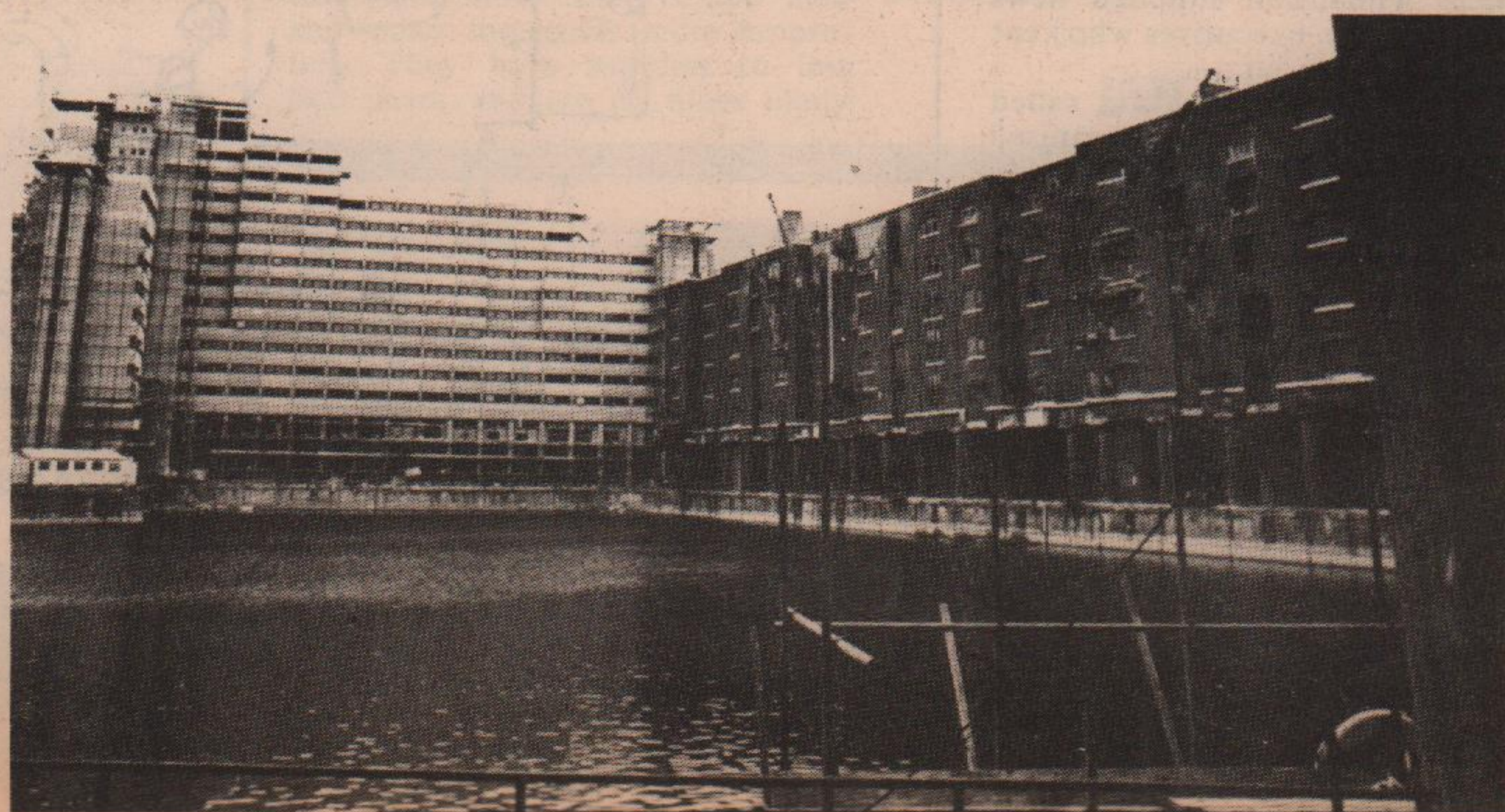
middle-class 'representatives' of the local community.

Even this last group got only a token hearing. But doubtless there will be many more token consultation sessions.

The truth is that the only way to avoid this invasion and destruction of a community is by mass organisation of the 55,000 people who live there.

Socialists have often been suspicious of 'environmental' campaigns in the past—because they have often been a misdirection of effort, or a simple cover for the defence of property values and middle-class privilege. It is a fight for the livelihood and community of a hard core working class area of London. It is part of the broader struggle of working people to control their own lives.

JOE SICHEK

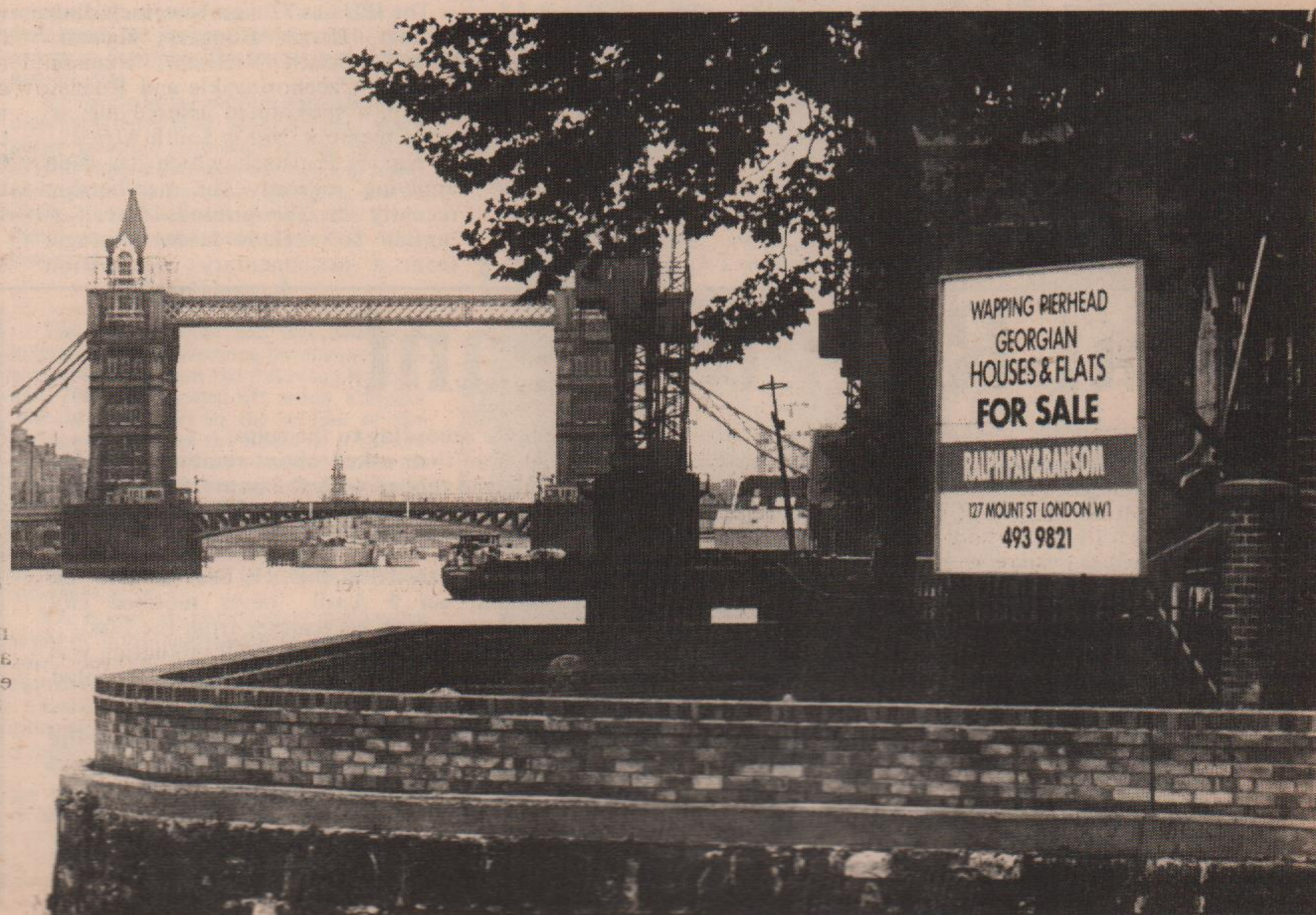


THIS bit of property is going to net £200 million profit over the next 20 years for property giants Taylor Woodrow—at the expense of working people. It is St Katharine's Dock, near the Tower of London, which is being turned into offices, hotels, a theatre, restaurants, a yachting basin and luxury homes for the wealthy.

The hundred-year-old warehouses on the right will probably become trendy flats at high rents.

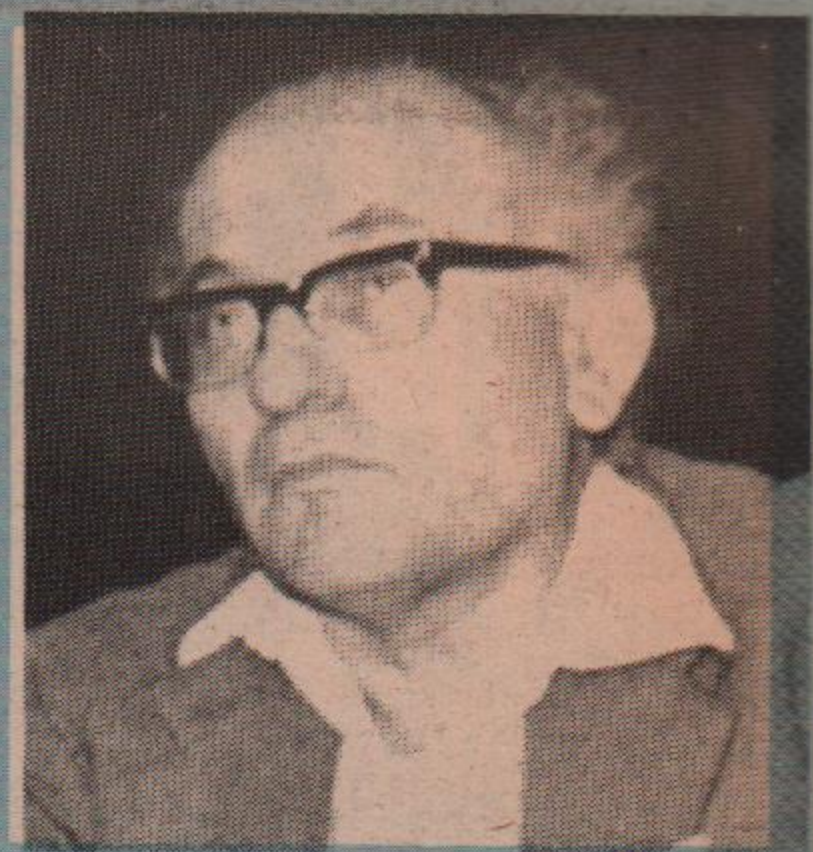
Very high rents. Taylor Woodrow are expected to get £10 million a year in rent. They are leasing the land from the Greater London Council at less than £250,000 a year—a cost which they'll cover with one week's rent.

Tower Hamlets Council, which is desperately short of housing for working people, gave the scheme its blessing because its dockland plan originally included a large chunk of council housing. But Environment Minister Peter Walker gave the go-ahead to Taylor Woodrow's profiteering—and vetoed the big council housing development.



The property speculators come to Wapping. Note the name of the estate agents—Ralph Pay and Ranson

Now rank & file must pick up the gauntlet



by Tony Cliff

Executive committee member IS

WORKERS HAVE RETREATED on a number of industrial fronts in recent weeks—the gas men, after a work-to-rule banning of overtime and selective strikes, accepted the government norm of £1 plus 4 per cent. Civil servants, teachers, nurses, dockers and, finally, miners followed suit.

The miners' acceptance of the government norm is the most important in its impact on the whole working class. Last year it was the miners who smashed through the Tory dam and other workers followed in their footsteps. The railwaymen's victory and finally the great victory of the workers in freeing the five Pentonville dockers followed the miners' advance.

Have the rank and file failed? Do workers lack militancy? Are they submissive? What is the explanation of the retreat? Let us take a closer look at the miners' retreat.

The miners decided by a ballot to reject industrial action against the National Coal Board's offer, an offer that was exactly within the Tory norm. Only 37 per cent of the miners who voted came out for action. How do you explain that?

We have to start with the aftermath of the victorious strike last year. After seven weeks of strike, the government, the National Coal Board and the top leadership of the National Union of Mineworkers were so stunned by the fantastic power of the miners that they decided to introduce into the new agreement a change that, on the face of it, looked very small but had great implications: they made the agreement run not until the end of November, as previous agreements did, but until the end of February this year. It was not an annual agreement but an agreement for a period of 15 months.

Retreat

At the time, the International Socialists and Socialist Worker pointed out that this change would create considerable difficulties for workers in the future. Shifting the end of the agreement from the beginning of winter to its end meant that a new strike action—after preparation through ballot, banning of overtime and mass meetings—would have to take place at the spring or the beginning of summer. 'If it took us seven weeks to win in winter, how much longer will it take in the summer?' many a miner must have asked himself.

The NUM leadership also prepared the ground for the retreat. While the conference of the union in July last year put forward the demand for a wage rise of up to £7 a week, the leadership did nothing about the claim for several months. After six months or so, through tortuous negotiations with the NCB, the union leadership agreed to the offer of £2.29. What was the issue on which the negotiations broke down? The question of one extra week's holiday. And this was ostensibly what the ballot was all about.

Many a militant miner who voted for industrial action did not do so for the sake of the extra week's holiday, but as a challenge to the whole Tory policy. But many a miner must have said to himself: 'To go on a long strike for the sake of one week's holiday—is it worth it?'

No special delegate conference took place. Scarcely any meetings were held and there was no mass leafletting by the union to explain the issue. A comrade from the Nottinghamshire mining area writes: 'In 1970 there were large mass meetings. In 1971 there were pit head meetings by Joe Whelan and others. This year not a single mass meeting, not a pit head meeting, not even a leaflet. The area council met on the Saturday before the ballot and recommended rejection of the NCB offer—hardly the sort of thing to sway the rank and file.'

Lastly, the miners were simply asked to vote on whether or not they would like industrial action, without the union national



Hospital workers: a magnificent struggle

executive putting forward any recommendation on how to vote. Under such conditions a 37 per cent for industrial action was a significant achievement for the militants in the pits. The retreat of the workers was the result of the flight of the trade union leadership, leaving the troops to straggle along.

THE MAIN LESSON of 1972 was the tremendous power of the new weapon the miners used so effectively—the flying mass picket. The summit of this success was the struggle at Saltley Coke Depot in Birmingham. A few hundred miners were defeated by a few hundred policemen. Then, the next day, 50,000 engineers came out on strike in support of the miners and 10,000 engineers came to the picket line at Saltley. The government surrendered.

The lesson for employers, government and union leaders was a simple one—'Never again'. It was not the weakness of the workers that led the union bureaucracy to collaborate with the state—on the contrary, it was their fantastic strength. Hence all the talk you hear now among some left wingers about the Tories having created 'fascism' or the 'corporate state' is rubbish.

On the contrary, the government knows and the employing class knows that they cannot rule by relying on brute force. They have to rely much more on collaboration with the trade union bureaucracy. Ted Heath needs the TUC and the TUC needs collaboration with the government.

This explains why Hugh Scanlon, the leader of the 'left', could suggest that he might be ready to negotiate with the government if just a couple of amendments are introduced to the Industrial Relations Act. One change will save money for the unions by lifting taxation of their funds. The other is that no action would be taken against a union without the agreement of the Employment Secretary—as if that is not exactly what Ted Heath would like to have.

The TUC leaders are not afraid of one thing—being raped by the Tory government.

In the 1940s, 50s and 60s, the small unofficial strike was predominant. In recent years, massive official strikes involving hundreds of thousands from Post Office workers to ancillary hospital workers came to the centre of the arena. Recently a third type of strike has been coming more and more into prominence—the *unofficial* strike involving thousands. Over the last fortnight, to mention only a few strikes of this type, there have been:

Rubery Owen, Wolverhampton: 3000 workers.

Standard Triumph, Speke, Liverpool: 3000 workers.

British Leyland Assembly Plant, Cowley, Oxford: 18,000 workers.

The enclosed London docks: 7000 workers. This type of strike will probably become

more prominent as the small strike proved its ineffectiveness and official trade union leaders more and more openly capitulate to the employers and the government.

THE HOSPITAL ANCILLARY WORKERS have fought magnificently. But it was no surprise that they were isolated by the government once the strong battalions of workers—miners and dockers in particular—were out of the field of battle.

But will the impact of a defeat for the hospital workers be similar to the defeat of the postmen after the 1971 long strike? The answer is definitely No.

First, unlike the postal workers' strike, which was total and so affected all the 270,000 workers over a period of seven weeks, the hospital workers' struggle was much more of a selective strike for a short period. As a result, the impact on the material conditions and on the nerves of the workers will be inevitably less than a seven weeks' struggle by the postmen.

Second, and far more important, is the psychological factor. In the case of the Post Office workers' strike, Tom Jackson was for a whole period in advance of the great majority of members and, as the strike was a total one, the initiative remained largely in his hands throughout. In the case of the hospital workers, Alan Fisher appeared to many of the strikers to be dragging his feet. As there is much less illusion in the trade union leadership in this case than there was in 1971 a defeat of the strike will have a far less shattering impact. Throughout the struggle the mood of the active hospital workers has been very critical and sober towards the struggle and towards the leaders.

Shatter

We have entered a plateau in the class struggle in Britain. How long will it continue?

Many workers accepted the £1 plus 4 per cent formula on the assumption that it will be shortlived and that in the autumn things will be much easier. This assumption is central in evaluating the probable duration of the plateau.

Life itself will shatter the illusions of millions of workers that Phase Three, starting in the autumn, will ease things. First of all, prices will continue to soar. Secondly, the area of manoeuvre open to the employers and the government is very narrow and will continue to be so because British capitalism is resting on a time bomb in the form of the increasing balance of payments deficit and the abysmally low level of capital investment in industry.

Above all, we must remember that the volatility of the situation in the class struggle is not a result of the weakness of workers but as a result of the disparity between readiness to struggle and the form of organisation. As I wrote a month ago in Socialist Worker: 'When

the level of struggle and the form of organisation are not compatible one of them will give way. Either the form of organisation will rise to the level of the needs of the movement or the struggle will slow down to the level of the existing organisational framework. This is the basic cause of the extreme volatility of the new sections of workers now engaged in action.'

The volatility has not ceased, notwithstanding the immediate retreat. One central weakness revealed over the last few months was the fact that quite often the militants, including the shop steward militants, did not know how to involve the majority of the rank and file in the struggle. And it became clear that there is a lack of communication between militants in different factories belonging to the same empire.

ONE CENTRAL ELEMENT in the thinking of millions of workers is: 'Can we take on the government?' The question is not that workers have many illusions about the state being a neutral factor, an instrument of fairness to all. It is not so much a question of class consciousness as of class CONFIDENCE in their ability to beat the state. Hence only the development of the struggle itself, the daring to fight the government, will be followed and accompanied by the daring to think politically.

There is a Russian saying: 'One that has been licked is better for than the one that has never been.' Recent defeats imposed by the government with the help of the trade union bureaucracy can help to prepare workers for further battles, if militants and socialists will draw the right conclusions, and will take the correct steps.

Cement

Three permanent features are going to dominate working-class struggles in the coming months and years:

- Prices will continue to soar and the need to fight back will be more and more pressing.
- The trade union bureaucracy, including the so-called 'left', will continue to fail to give a lead.
- The traditional form of organisation, shaped over the decades of individual shop stewards' committees, will be found lacking.

The need to cement the militants throughout a whole industry, through a rank and file organisation assisted by its own paper, will become more and more vital. This is a central plank in the policy of the International Socialists. The main issue that rank and file organisations in the unions will raise will be 'Who is the union?' Of course, for us the unions are the members but in the real world the union bureaucracy acts as if the union is nothing but the extension of its will and power.

To create a rank and file organisation, let us say, between miners in hundreds of pits, isolated geographically from one another, is not an easy task. Capitalism does not prepare workers to write and edit their own papers, workers do not own printing machines or even duplicators or typewriters.

Above all, to build a rank and file organisation, especially at a time when things are in the doldrums—and, alas, that is the case the majority of the time—is very demanding on the brains and the nerves of workers who are, in any case, exhausted by the hardship and monotony of work and life.

Without the inspiration of a socialist world outlook, without the clear conviction that the struggle is greater than the immediate issues of wages and conditions, however important they are, one could not build a viable rank and file movement.

The coming months and years will put on the order of the day the building of rank and file organisations in all trade unions and in all industries, and the building of a really consistent fighting revolutionary socialist workers' party. The foundations for such a party have already been established by the International Socialists. Our task now is to build on them.

Vital need for militants' to link-up

'UNION JACK' WODDIS: CLASS STRUGGLE ENDS AT DOVER

THE COMMUNIST PARTY of Great Britain has published a new pamphlet. It is called *Time to Change Course* (30p) and it sums up in its 150 pages all the baffling bureaucratic paradoxes which mark the largest political group to the left of the Labour Party.

The party's 34,000 members include many of the most active and militant trade unionists in the British labour movement. But this new programme nowhere even mentions the fight for rank and file democracy in the trade unions, and weaves its way through every phrase in the dictionary to avoid coming out for workers' control.

The party started life as the British section of an international movement for world-wide workers' power. But Jack Woddis, the author of the document, seems to believe that socialism can stop at the English channel.

The Communist Party's founding conference in 1920 repudiated 'the reformist view that a social revolution can be achieved by the ordinary methods of parliamentary democracy'. It came out 'for the soviet (or workers' council) system as a means whereby the working class shall achieve power.'

DESTROY

Jack Woddis nowhere mentions workers' councils. Instead he believes that 'one of the citadels of power is parliament . . . To think of a change of power without ending ruling-class control of this seat of authority and decision is totally unrealistic . . . This involves winning a parliamentary majority of Labour and Communist MPs pledged to socialist change and actively supported by the overwhelming majority of the working people.'

The programme of the Communist International called for 'the destruction of the capitalist state apparatus (bourgeois armies, police, bureaucratic hierarchy, the judiciary, parliaments etc) and the substitution in its place of new organs of proletarian power.'

But Jack Woddis merely insists that 'key posts in the state apparatus, in the armed forces, police, ministries and departments, diplomatic service, economic institutions and nationalised industries would have to be held by men and women who really believed in socialism . . . Also 'A socialist government would introduce more democratic procedures into the armed forces and the police.'

Now this is not just a theoretical quibble. There is a great deal of experience of those occasions when the working class has



attempted to take political power into its hands.

In Russia in 1917, in Hungary and Bavaria in 1919, in Germany in 1918-9, in Spain in 1936 and in Hungary in 1956, working people have created their own institutions of power. Workers' councils in all these places have been based on the direct democracy of the work place, subject to control from below, and forming a pyramid at local, regional and up to national level.

Parliament is based on the opposite principle. One MP represents—for five years—everybody in his constituency: workers, shopkeepers, employers.

In a state of workers' councils, working people take power for themselves and administer and carry out their own decisions. Parliaments are based on electing someone else to take decisions for you—a bureaucratic state apparatus

then carries them out.

Of course Jack Woddis is not against mass struggles from below. But for him, the mass movement has essentially a walk-on part.

'A socialist majority in parliament would require the active support of the mass movement outside parliament in order to press home the decisions taken in parliament, and to overcome any resistance to such measures offered by the capitalists.'

Now Jack Woddis is nothing if not consistent. Having started from the top instead of the bottom, he proceeds to turn the whole struggle on its head. 'Moving the unions to the left is a first step in moving the Labour Party to the left. And a victory of the left in the Labour Party is a vital part of the process of securing the election of a new type of Labour government which will start to weaken the power of the monopolies.'

At this point the argument acquires more than a passing resemblance to 'The House that Jack Built'. The left trade union leaders deliver the block votes that swing the Labour Party conference that makes the policy for the next (socialist) Labour government. So we mustn't be too nasty about them meanwhile, must we?

ENSNARE

Thus we read that after the strikes that freed the five jailed dockers last year, the Tories' response 'was to strive to stamp out the spirit of class struggle which had swept over the workers, and to ensnare them once again in the toils of class collaboration. So Vic Feather and his colleagues were invited to restart discussions on incomes and prices with the government and the CBI; and to this offer the right wing leaders were only too ready to agree.'

But didn't Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon go along to Number 10? Of course it is important to fight within the unions for militant policies and elected officers. And revolutionary socialists cannot rule out the need to stand for parliament.

But this must all be seen as secondary and only important insofar as it helps the rank and file themselves to gain in confidence and experience. Woddis sees the relationship the other way round. He is like a man who thinks the barometer changes the weather.

The same idea of 'socialism from above' shows up clearly when the booklet looks at how industry will be run after the (parliamentary) socialist revolution. There is to be sure a good deal of encouraging rhetoric about 'industrial democracy', but when we try to discover who will actually take the



JONES: not mentioned

decisions, we find that 'workers would be encouraged to take part in the democratic management of their enterprise.'

They will also 'have a real voice in managing the enterprise and in helping to draw up the plan.' And the management boards would be composed of 'workers, technicians, scientists and managers with direct experience of the industry.'

But apart from the vague phrases already quoted, he can't tell us whether or not there will be workers' control. As for the plan itself, this will be drawn up by a Planning Board nominated by parliament.

This 'will then be subject to nationwide discussion, which will assist the subsequent debate and amendment in parliament before its final endorsement. Once these plans have been approved in parliament, the industries concerned would proceed to carry them out.'

There is also a bizarre stream of nationalism which runs like a sewer throughout the document. We are told, in tones worthy of the Daily Express, that 'the Tories are

sacrificing the interests of the British people by dragging us into the European Common Market.'

We also learn that the working class are the only true patriots, and the bosses are betraying the 'national interest'. 'More than ever it falls to the working class to mobilise all that is best and most progressive in our national life in order to defeat the danger threatening the British people.'

The danger referred to is the Common Market. The book nowhere mentions a United Socialist Europe as the alternative to the EEC and indeed makes no mention of any sort of international link between workers, or the need for a socialist Britain to spread the revolution to break its isolation.

VEHICLE

There are a number of reasons for this omission, including the author's grotesque belief that a third of the world is already socialist. But the most basic is that nationalism follows logically once you accept that the existing nation state, however purged or prettified, is a vehicle that can bring socialism.

One of the most significant passages in the book, however, states that 'The high point of unity on the left has been the big industrial battles of the past 12 months, although a weakness here has been the insufficient link between the industrial struggle and the parliamentary Labour left.'

But these Labour lefts, together with a sprinkling of Communist MPs, are supposed to be the instrument that will legislate socialism.

The 'insufficient link' is not an accident. It flows from the nature of parliament and a party oriented in the first place to winning elections.

You can ride the wave of industrial struggles and still coexist with left MPs and trade union leaders. But you can't build a fighting organisation rooted in the rank and file and still keep up the myth that these official worthies hold the key to socialist change.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Social Security for Strikers



a Socialist Worker pamphlet 2p

Special review by Stephen Marks

BUILDING not poor. profit-makers are among richest and organisatio

They are accountable even more multi-nation

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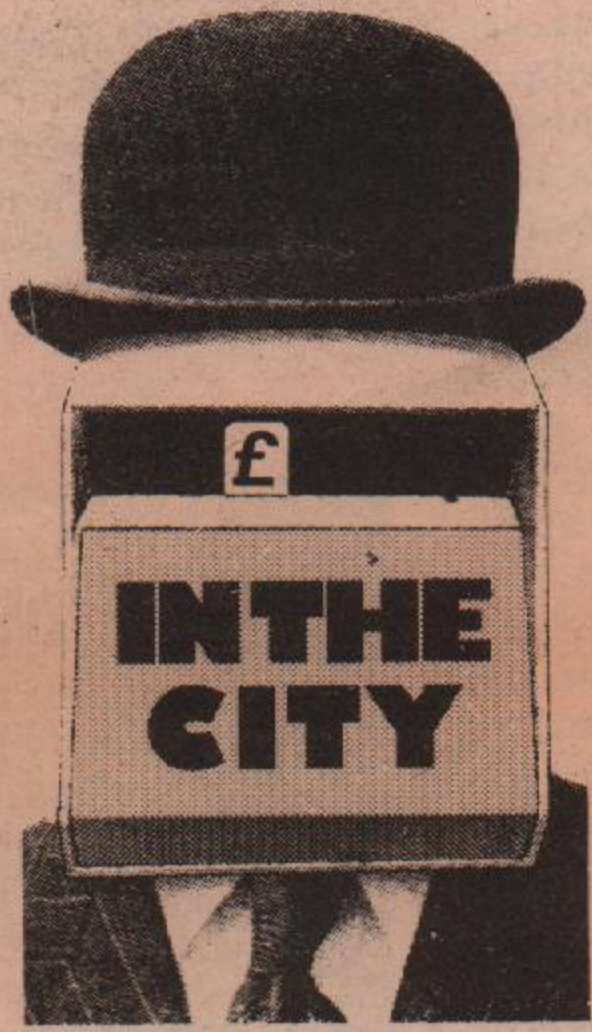
Assuming societies are cent, their follows: On receive £1 depositor, v lent, receive free, unlike or dividend

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Not that call it profit calls it 'Ex Expenditur The Halifax society in even bother but it can

the mortgage market: a roof over our heads...

BUILDING SOCIETIES are not are they non-profit bodies. They are some of the most powerful forces in the country. They are completely unaccountable for their actions, more than some of the largest corporations. They have a substantial effect on the lives of houses we live in, they support the economy of marriage and they support the poverty of the unemployed. Building societies are money-lenders that only lend to the purchase of a flat because of generous subsidies by the government to make it easier to attract deposits. They can generally lend more than most other banks. The cost of borrowing is 30 per cent cheaper than most other banks. The rate at which building societies lend money has recently fallen to 10 per cent. The government has said that it will give a gift of between £15 million and £18 million over the next months so that the rate of interest will be brought down to a level of 10 per cent. The building societies will build one extra house and the gift comes from council tenants increased rents. The building societies are lending at 10 per cent and every £100 lent they receive £10 of interest. The money is being lent at £6.75. This is tax on most other interest. The building society then pays half of the depositor's interest at a special low rate. The building society is to pay its running costs from the surplus which is taxed as such. The building societies are the biggest building societies in the country, doesn't show it separately, but it is worked out: £13



T H Rogmorton

million and £5.5 million of profits on the sale of investments.

Building societies have no shareholders who are entitled to this surplus, so the money is kept and contributes to the already hefty reserves.

The Halifax has reserves of £73 million and the Abbey has reserves of £70 million. These reserves are money that belongs to the building societies, the result of years of accumulation. This money could be lent to people trying to buy their own home. It is these reserves that put the lie to the societies' claim that they can't afford to lend any more money at the moment.

The total funds of the building societies are greater than this. The Halifax has £2398 million under its control. That is more than the total funds employed by ICI, the biggest company in Britain.

No control

But the government does not control these giants, the depositors have no control, and, of course, the borrowers have no control. The building societies control themselves and are one of the most successful cartels.

The individual societies increase their rates on the recommendation of the Building Societies Association, which is itself composed of the individual societies. It is virtually unknown for individual societies to step out of line.

The building societies are then a massive, rich, profitable cartel. It is also clear that they manage their affairs with such conservatism that they contribute

materially to the difficulty in obtaining a mortgage. It can be shown that even at the moment they have plenty of money to lend.

In theory the societies are lending on anything up to a 30 year basis, although they are borrowing on periods of less than a year. Although in fact the average period of a building society loan is less than 10 years, it is prudent not to lend all the money they have deposited with them.

And they are prudent: in 1972 the Halifax had £2315 million of depositors' money, £1959 million of this was lent out. More than £350 million was kept as a safety margin. That roughly equals the extra new money that was deposited with the society during the year.

The building societies are claiming that the money deposited in 1972 is now being withdrawn, but these figures show that bankruptcy is far away - £70 million away.

This conservatism is highlighted further: the law requires that the societies' cash and investments are equal to 7½ per cent of their total assets. In fact the societies keep them as high as 16½ per cent.

Bad debts

Such provision for possible problems is unjustified by the building societies' own experience. In 1972 the Abbey had £43,914 of mortgages in arrears (that is, people who hadn't paid money they owed).

They had made provision for bad debts of £175,000. These amounts are negligible in relation to the total amount of money lent of £1831 million. These substantial reserves will only be released when the building societies are brought under public ownership and control.

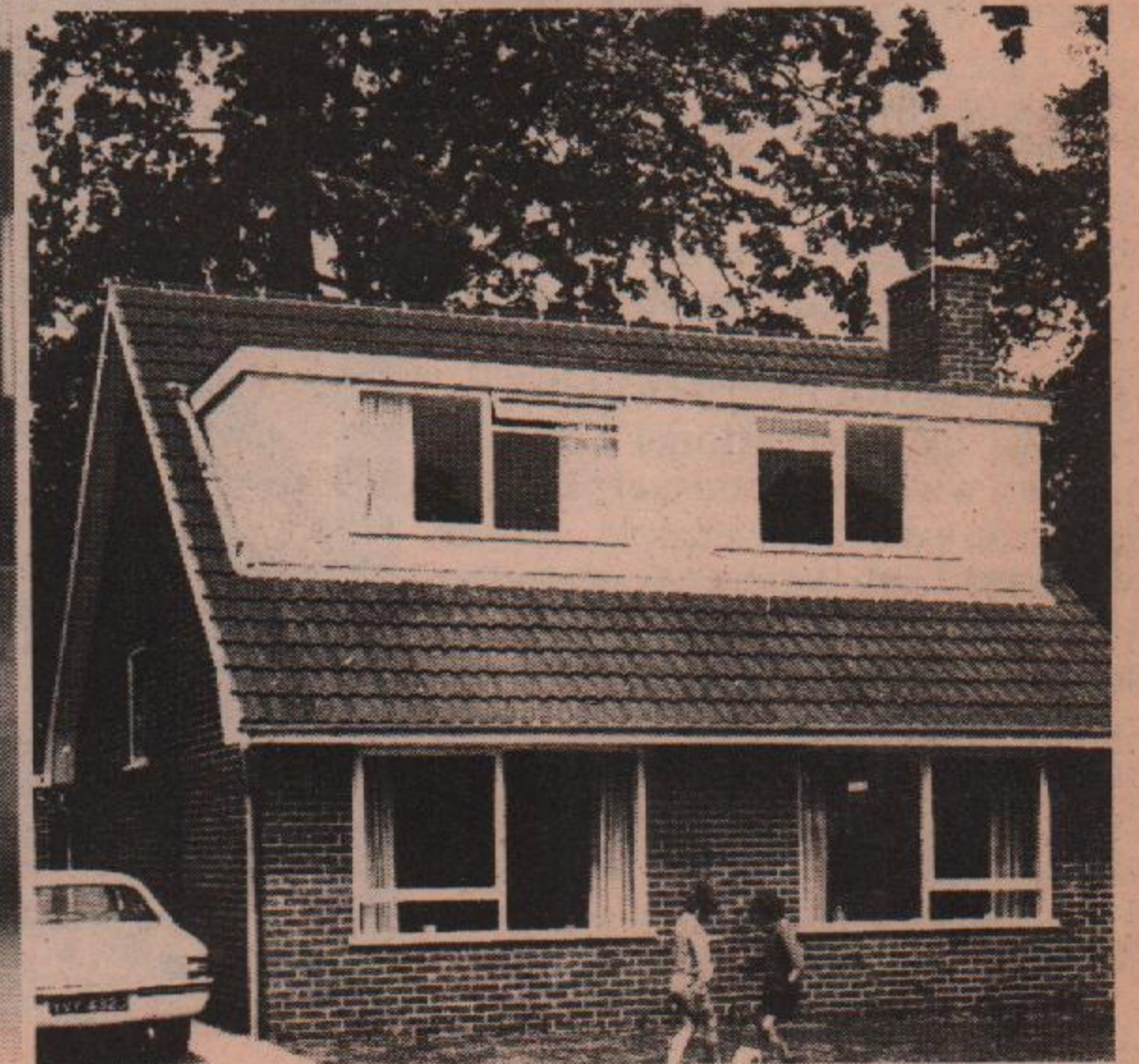
The building societies do not just help create the shortage of mortgage money. They also help to shape the face of the country.

They are very unwilling to lend money on old houses and when they do they will generally lend only 75 per cent of the total cost. They are much happier to lend money to buy a new box on an estate. They are also prejudiced against flats, which is a disaster for people who want to live in London.

As a result the countryside is being covered in unimaginative



Flats and older houses are now out of reach of workers as building firms and building societies push the joys of the 'ideal' jerry-built box.



housing estates that frequently don't represent the type of house people want to live in, but which the building societies consider desirable. In London, as there are few new houses, the building societies guarantee that ordinary working people haven't a chance of buying anywhere, quite regardless of the price, because they are unwilling to lend even 90 per cent of the cost.

Prejudices

It is not surprising that the building societies favour new mass-built houses, as the builders are well represented on the boards of the societies. One of the deputy chairmen of the Abbey is Lord Netherthorpe, deputy chairman of Richard Costain, who describe themselves as 'one of the country's leading private housebuilders.'

One of the people serving on their North West Advisory Board is F W Phillips, a director of Unit Construction, a subsidiary of Alfred Booth, house-builders and property developers.

Building societies have other prejudices: they generally will lend less to a woman than to a

man earning the same wage. They are very reluctant to lend to two people who are not married. They are less generous in their lending to wage earners than to salaried people.

All these prejudices have a big impact on our lives but the building societies are accountable to no one.

Not that this prevents many people making a killing out of the way the building societies work. The Observer quoted the case of one senior manager who lived in a luxury flat in the West End of London and was driven around in a Rolls-Royce. The insurance societies and insurance agents also do well.

Many people have their mortgages linked to an endowment insurance policy. This means that the borrower pays only the interest on his mortgage and at the end of the mortgage's life he repays the capital borrowed with the proceeds of the insurance policy into which he has been paying during the mortgage period.

It is easy to see why the building societies like this idea. The insurance companies are well represented on the boards of the societies. The Abbey has directors

who are also directors of Century Insurance, Phoenix Insurance, Avon Insurance and Scottish Mutual Assurance.

The insurance agents do well out of this arrangement. They are paid a 2 per cent for life policies they arrange. So on a £5000 policy they would receive £200. As many agents are also mortgage brokers, this is a very cosy arrangement.

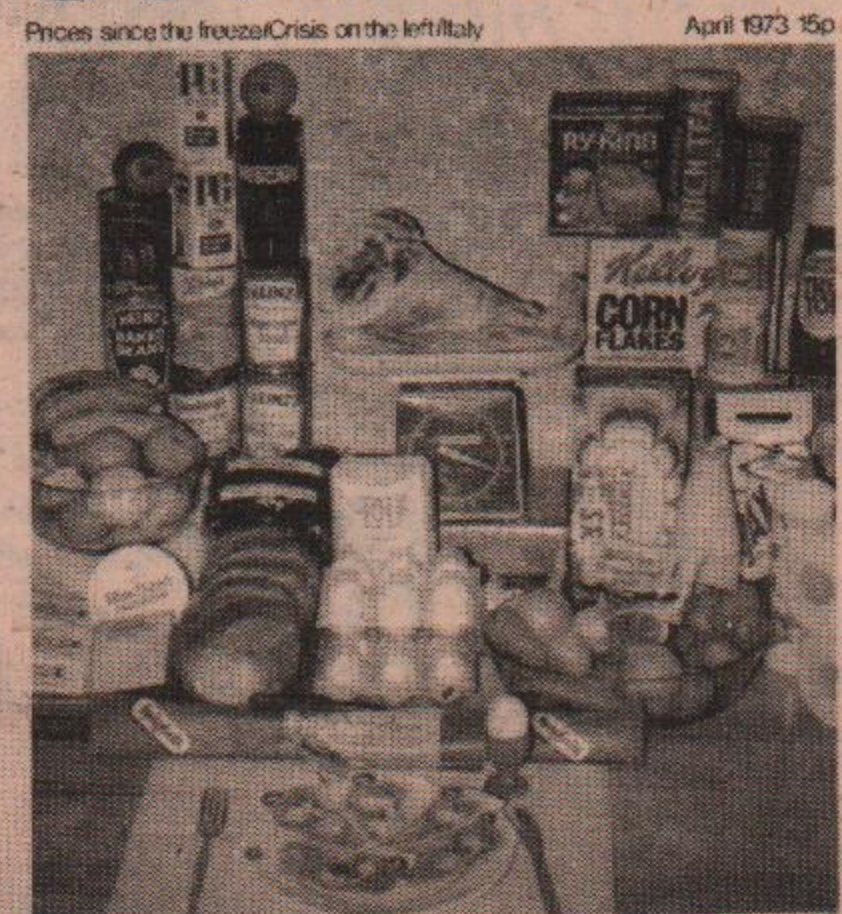
In fact it is a cosy world for everyone. The building societies are, despite their pleas, rich and irresponsible. They are major props to capitalist values and society.

Dramatic change

The directors of the societies are the same men who are so culpable in their roles as directors of insurance companies, banks, investment and industrial companies.

Socialists must demand not just the nationalisation of these financial giants, but a dramatic change in their policies, in order that they really meet the needs and wishes of the mass of the people.

International Socialism 57



Prices since the freeze/Crisis on the left/Italy April 1973 150

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**
 Plus Briefing on prices, Notes of the Month and book reviews

International Socialism Journal,
 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN
 Annual Subscription £2.10 (12 issues)

Helping old ladies cross picket lines

AS EVERYBODY knows, one of the main reasons for having a police force is to help old ladies across the road.

With 12 million cars around and more coming off the production line every day, you could reasonably expect that the police traffic section would be in a state of constant expansion. Strangely enough this is not the case.

And according to Roy Bullock, who until recently was a detective chief inspector with the Fraud Squad, another key area that merits growing police attention is large scale company fraud.

These massive criminal swindles are committed by international businessmen, often with good contacts in high society. A perfect example is the involvement of American swindler Jerome Hoffman with Reginald Maudling, until recently Home Secretary and Tory law and order supremo.

But the Fraud Squad is not being expanded either, though Bullock estimates that £400 million a year is involved in company frauds in the City of London alone. The Department of Trade and Industry's company fraud division is also being held at its present massive strength of 12 qualified inspectors for the whole country.

The one area where the police force is really expanding is the control of picket lines. A new special patrol group has been set up specifically to deal with mass pickets in London and the activities of so-called terrorists who are unwise enough to carry toy guns.

Myth

Since the miners' strike last year various police authorities have been systematically training officers in the techniques of breaking up picket lines and 'crowd control'. They have been unleashed on several occasions, most notably on Hull dockers picketing unregistered wharves in defence of their jobs.

During the past year thousands of trade unionists have been forced to modify their understanding of the policeman's role in society.

But the myth remains that the police are there mainly to restrain the wilder and more unruly elements and are doing a very worthwhile job.

As far as the law and the police are concerned, a person's body is a piece of property which others should not violate. For the police were not set up to look after people's bodies but to look after certain people's property.

They don't do a particularly good

Taking the scales off



justice

A SERIES BY LAURIE FLYNN

job in protecting life and limb since far more people are killed at work than done to death in country lanes. Industrial deaths, of course, are neatly classified as accidents and ignored.

Just as it was no accident that it was policemen who came to arrest the Pentonville Five last year, it was no accident that the first modern police force grew up in dockland. It was founded in Wapping in 1798 by the West India Merchants Association with the help of Patrick Colquhoun, an important and intelligent businessman who is regarded in all histories of the British police force as the inspiration of almost everything that has followed since.

The aim was simple. Colquhoun saw that at that time crime was an important part of the class struggle within the Port of London. Crimes in the port were committed not by professional criminals but overwhelmingly by the very people the employers had to allow to be there, the port workers.

Not surprisingly, the merchants wanted to put an end to this primitive but effective method of redistributing wealth. Their own security systems were in no way as adequate as an 'independent' body with the backing of the government could be.

Patrick Colquhoun understood and spoke openly about a police force which not only looked after property but kept public order of a broader kind. The workers had to be kept in

their allotted place and taught and forced to be industrious. The police would help to restrain working people from practising bad habits such as drinking and roistering.

So from the start the police were made guardians of the most petty details of so-called public order. It helped greatly to make the mask of independence believable.

The great popular agitations of the first half of the 19th century were to prove Colquhoun's point. At the height of the Chartist agitation in 1839 Lord Napier, the officer commanding troops in the North of England, wrote to the then Home Secretary: 'My belief is that concessions must be made to the people's feelings or the establishment of a rural police force hurried on. I would do both.' Four days later the Rural Police Bill was introduced into parliament.

Reacted

To further the police's image of impartiality, the ruling class went to considerable lengths to ensure that no officer caste emerged such as in the army. Promotion from within the ranks helped to quell internal strains and make it possible for some working class people to see the police as a career.

But trouble did come. In the great revolutionary crisis in Britain after the First World War even the police were in turmoil, demanding recognition of their own independent union and the right to strike.

A government concerned to cut every worker's wages reacted swiftly to the 1918 police strikes in London and Liverpool. The huge wage rise of £2 was awarded and a Federation promised, but without the right to strike.

The situation today is not much changed. The government make sure of the loyalty of the police. Just before Heath brought in the pay freeze last year, the police were allowed to get substantial rises. It was the same story with Labour. Twice the police were allowed through Wilson's net so that they would continue to maintain 'law and order'.

And so they did, being brought ever increasingly to the centre of industrial life. In 1967 something of their real face could be seen in Stockport, where Roberts Arundel, an anti-union management, was trying to break the union.

The police were let loose to break the pickets. Three of the injured trade unionists got compensation varying from £375 to £1300 for assault by policemen.

The police always conduct their own inquiries into such matters. Impartially, of course. They decided there was no case to answer.

BOOKS

REVIEW

Russians absent without leave

ON THE ART AND CRAFT OF WRITING, translated from the Russian by Alex Miller, Progress Publishers, £1.

OCCASIONALLY the field marshalls of official Russian literature, when not busy court martialing their own best writers, let something interesting out of the literary cooler.

These Moscow-published extracts from the polemical writing of Maxim Gorky, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Alexei Tolstoy and Konstantin Fedin make up a book absent without leave, an exception to the mounds of dreary obedient droolings usually minted by Progress Publishers.

The modern Russian writers Fedin and the younger Tolstoy don't have a great deal to say, although they say it with an intriguing blend of high seriousness and low humour. They show how even among the loyal ranks of Russian fiction there is real seriousness about politics and commitment to literature. They also make some interesting side-swipes and short histories of other personalities in Russian literature and even a joke or two.

Gorky's contributions are of a different order, some humdrum, reeking of literary officialdom, others pulsing with disreputable life. Listen to his reply to a 19-year-old Russian boy who wrote to him in 1928 complaining: 'With every fibre in my being I hate the deadening tedium that centres around the kitchen, gossiping and yelping.'

Gorky wrote: 'It was tedium of that very description that drove me into all kinds of mischief; I would climb on the roof and stuff pieces of rag into chimney pots, throw handfuls of salt into boiling cabbage soup, blow clouds of dust into clocks and generally go in for what is called hooliganism.'

'The reason for this was that while I had an urge to feel I was a living person, I was unable to find other ways of convincing myself of the fact. My feeling was that I had lost my way in a thick forest full of fallen tree-trunks, dense undergrowth and rotting leaves into which I sank to the knees.'

What an excellent start in life for a poet or revolutionary.

The star of the show is the glamorous Mayakovsky, whose LEF manifesto on how to write poetry, 'How Verses Are Made', springs and vaults through an appallingly heavy-handed translation. These are his conditions for poetry writing:

'First. The existence in society of a task which cannot possibly be tackled other than by poetic work. A social demand.

'Second. An accurate knowledge or, to be more precise, awareness of the desires of your class (or group you represent) concerning this problem. In other words, a target.

'Third. Material. Words. Continual restocking of the reservoirs and barns of your skull with the

needful, expressive, rare, invented, renewed, manufactured and all other conceivable kind of words.

'Fourth. Equipment for the enterprise, and tools of production. Pen, pencil, typewriter, telephone, a suit for visiting the doss-house, a bicycle for visiting the editorial office, a suitably mounted desk umbrella for writing in the rain, living accommodation of the requisite dimensions for pacing up and down while at work, a contact with a press cuttings agency for tracing material on the issues agitating the provinces, etc, etc, and even a pipe and some cigarettes.

'Fifth. Word processing techniques and methods, infinitely individual and only to be acquired after years of daily toil: rhymes, metres, alliterations, images, bathos, pathos, tailpieces, headings, drafts, etc, etc.

'EXAMPLE: social demand—song lyrics for Red Army soldiers off to the Petrograd front. Target—to smash Yudenick. Material—army slang. Tool of production—chewed pencil-stub. Method—rhyming chastushki.

'RESULT: Had some mittens from my pretty 'Gainst a winter spell of weather. Now Ydenich leaves the city Absolutely hell for leather' It makes Noel Coward look like nursery rhymes.

RICHARD HUSELBECK



MAYAKOVSKY: 'A rhyme is a barrel. A barrel of dynamite. The line is the fuse.'

Worth its weight in disputes

ANTIFREEZE a handbook for trade unionists by Roger Kline, IS Books, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2, 2p, plus 3p postage (six copies or more post free).

THE FREEZE Phase Two is almost history but this little gem of a pamphlet is still extremely valuable. If you have ever winced at a fact in Socialist Worker, vowed to remember it for ever and yet lost it from recall at a vital moment in a pub closing-time argument, get this behind you.

Roger Kline has compressed a stack of information on how the freeze works, combining a barrage of decisive facts, argument-clinching explanations and speech-making points. The unfairness and cynicism of the Tory strategy is readably explained and then punctuated with some juicy figures on just how well the supermarket owners, farmers and food manufacturers are doing out of it all.

Kline gives an especially useful run-

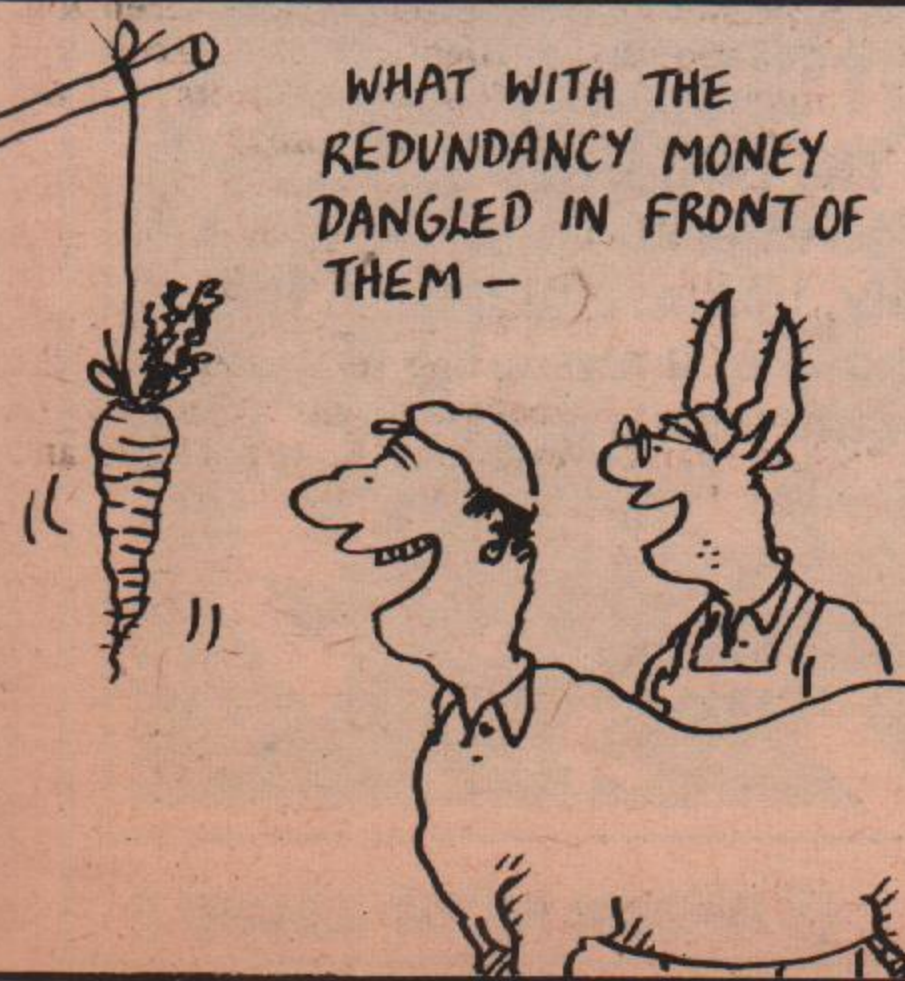
down on how Harold Wilson's 'incomes policy' or 'wages freeze' or wages cut depending on how you look at it, actually worked out.

The arguments are basic but none the worse for it. Phil Evans' front page cartoon hammers the point home: wily businessmen melt their way out of the freeze while the stoic worker stays red-nosed and frozen.

And the call for action is there too, although already the calls for solidarity, joint action and 'a massive barrage of propaganda to counter the smokescreen of the Tories and the press' seem too general and vague after three months of actual experience fighting the freeze. The politics of the situation tend to take second place to getting the argument across.

It's not really a 'handbook' but at a price of 2p it cries out for mass distribution and stewards' committees and rank and file trade union bodies could still find a mass purchase of this pamphlet worth its weight in disputes.

OUR NORMAN



MOST OF THE MEN ARE TOO APATHETIC TO PUT UP A FIGHT...



Superfly is just a load of supertrash

SUPERFLY is the latest of the dollar-digging black films from America. Like Shaft, it is third rate and most black people watching it will conclude that the film moguls' wish to corner the black audience in the US hasn't interrupted the tradition of maximum exploitation of the latest fad.

A cheap thriller script, black actors, a Harlem setting and a music score by Curtis Mayfield were a gamble by Warner Brothers which had nothing to do with raising black awareness. It was a selling job, intended to reconcile shrinking white cinema audiences with growing black audiences, and using as a basis the all-American interest in the violent psychopath.

Priest is an ambitious young black cocaine dealer who is at the top of his 'profession' and has a white girl in Park Avenue, but who now determines to escape both trade and ghetto by scoring a million-dollar profit on one cocaine deal. The obstacle in his path is that the drug industry is already owned and controlled by white criminals, and that the company rules do not take kindly to knowledgeable pushers like Priest. Priest's effort to beat The Man, make a million dollars and achieve freedom, is the film.

As the sequences of backstabbing, double-cross, and sex in the bath unfold, one realises this dime-novel trash has succeeded financially only because the leading characters are black. Neither Sig Shore's production nor Gordon Parks Junior's cinematic work, despite arty stills, can give the slightest merit to a film whose every event has been regurgitated from previous films of the same type. The film becomes believable and real only in those shots done on location in the ghetto.

How can a film as bad as Superfly be justified? Some say that because a film has a black cast, and because its theme is crime and violence in the ghetto, it's an improvement from the times when blacks were either ignored or stereotyped. This is about as logical as to say that the Black and White Minstrel Show would portray the racial issue more favourably if it included negroes instead of blacked-up whites.

Superfly Priest is reduced to an imaginary black Al Capone whose resort to terrorism can be explained by the honourable American tradition



Fantasy hero Priest, a drug pusher, fights off a rival

Barry Almeida reviews the film SUPERFLY

pioneered by the Irish, Jewish and Italian mobsters on their road to respectability.

Another defence made for such films is that black stars are healthier heroes for black youth than the equation 'white equals good'. But this doesn't work either.

Hatred

In the opening shots of the film we see Priest temporarily the victim of his own prey. Two junkies, Joyboy and Willie, drugged, fail in their attempt to rob the cocaine dealer who is snakehipping his way through their misery resplendent in a 4000-dollar coat.

The scene in which a black family

huddled together in what passes for an apartment watch Priest exact his vengeance on a sick and defenceless Joyboy provides one of the few indications in the film of the contempt and hatred which wide sections of black people have for the parasites who profit on their degradation.

Because Priest symbolises success in a savage environment he is ruthless, calculating and callous. Towards Fat Freddie, a minor street hustler in the gang and certainly both more human and more black than Priest, he is merciless—forcing him to make up for his cocaine losses by armed robbery.

Superfly, instead of building on the positive image of black people created by the sacrifices of Malcolm X and George Jackson, seethes with

the deprecation, self-hate and loathing of those blacks who sold their souls to the white man for a mess of pottage and who attach to any manifestation of their natural blackness the worst word in their vocabulary—'nigger'.

The reason why Priest and the other drug dealers succeed is because the racism of American society closed the doors to legitimate business, made educational opportunity a joke, doomed most black people to unemployment and a life of squalor in vermin-infested slums. That the system stinks with corruption and the dealers themselves are middlemen in a game controlled by the Deputy Commissioner of the New York police only gives weight to the view that if you are black and live in the ghetto and have energy and intelligence you will break the law because it is the quickest way to earn a living.

Diamonds

Yet there is no law of destiny that says that the best and ablest of black youth should seek the false salvation of custom-built Eldorado cars, apartments costing per month the yearly income of a Harlem family of eight, and the kind of conspicuous consumption that puts diamonds in the teeth of a pimp while a block away black babies are gnawed to death by rats.

Other alternatives were made explicit in the film. Priest and his side-kick Eddy are confronted by young black nationalists who demand they pay their dues towards the creation of a new nation. Priest pulls a gun and dismisses them saying that until all the blacks are out killing whitey he intends to remain uninvolved.

It is at this level that Superfly really functions: as a fantasy for black people that upholds the status quo rather than explores it, and consciously avoids the unpleasant questions that successive generations of black militants have striven to answer.

Theatre against the 7 per cent

MAN FRIDAY, a play written by Adrian Mitchell, performed, presented and acted by the 7.84 Theatre Company, opened at the Bush Theatre, Shepherds Bush, London, on Monday. It will run until Saturday 28 April.

Next Tuesday in Aberdeen, The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil, a play written by John McGrath, and again presented and acted by the 7.84 Theatre Company, will be performed at the Aberdeen Arts Centre. On tour it will cross the Highlands to Skye.

John McGrath has worked on Z Cars in its early days and written plays and wrote plays and filmscripts such as The Bofors Gun and Billion Dollar Brain. Now he's a member of 7.84.

Why 7.84? 'The title arose when I was working on the socialist paper Seven Days. We were arguing over what we should call the paper and one idea was 7.84. It was rejected but was a good name for a theatre group. Everything we do is based on the economic structure of the country,' said McGrath.

Seven per cent of the population own 84 per cent of the wealth. McGrath had little red lapel badges made saying just this.

'Some people said, "Oh, a load of bloody rubbish," when I did them. In fact they've been the most politicising thing we've done outside the plays.

'It becomes a basis for discussion about the structure of the country.

'We played a school and lots of kids asked us for badges. The county council got very hairy about us handing out "International Socialist propaganda". I said we weren't in IS—and it wasn't propaganda but a simple fact.'

7.84 began in 1970. 'We began thinking about it in 1967-8,' said McGrath. By then it was possible to think of a theatre circuit which was completely outside West End-dominated theatre. Various things were happening, like Alan Plater's *Close the Coalhouse Door*, which hit audiences in Newcastle, Leeds and Nottingham with fantastic power, which got working-class audiences into the theatre, really enjoying it, because it was about *them*.

Factory

McGrath worked a lot with the Liverpool Everyman theatre, which helped him with 7.84. 'A theatre can't ever lead anything, it can only be part of a movement, and on Merseyside industrial militancy is growing. It is right and inevitable that theatre is a part of it.

'A lot of people who come to see 7.84 know very well what's going on and come to compare notes. They get something out of it—and we get a hell of a lot back from them. They don't come out of curiosity—things are moving and they are involved in it. It's the only kind of theatre which makes sense.

'We've played pretty well all over, Cheshire, Yorkshire, Lancashire, the central industrial belt of Scotland. Sometimes we play for free, like in an occupied factory or something and they always turn out to be the best gigs.'

There have been about six main productions by the team, with different directors, and the work shared. 'As far as possible everyone works together, everyone has an equal say.

'We want to get to a situation where the company as a whole is able to control the concept of the whole production.'

The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil has been in the planning stage for some time. The first performance in Scotland received a tumultuous reception. It's about the Highland clearances, the driving of the Scottish crofters off the land by a succession of oppressors.

'What is happening now is amazing,' said McGrath. 'Land prices have gone right up, and it is all being bought up by the big American and British oil companies. We are going to try to trace the connections between the Duchess of Sutherland's evictions in the 1820s and the role of modern American capital.'

Nigel Fountain

MAN FRIDAY is on at Lancaster University on Wednesday 2 May, Rochdale Youth Theatre Workshop on 3-4 May, Leigh Library on Saturday 5 May, and the Gulbenkian Studio Theatre, Newcastle, on 7-9 May. It then goes on to Manchester, Plymouth, Bristol and York.

Picasso has the last laugh

THE world's press has done an even bigger job on the passing of painter Pablo Picasso than they managed with the loathsome Noel Coward. From the Sun and The Times to fascist Spain's *Avanguardia Espanol's* six-page feature on the artist, a torrent of praise has buried the 91-year-old Spaniard.

As much as possible his communism has been kept in the background. The critics find it far easier to deal purely with Picasso's innovations as an artist than to locate his work in the struggles of his times. But the two cannot be separated. Guernica, considered by many the greatest painting of the century, was



Picasso outside his home at Vauvenargues

inspired by the destruction of a Spanish town by fascist bombers in 1937.

Tragically, Picasso was a socialist in isolation. The Communist Party treated him as a god, while Russia denounced painters who followed his path.

Picasso's scorn for the art profiteers shows in the way he has left 25,000 unseen works of art, including paintings, sculptures, engravings and

etchings. No longer will owning 'a Picasso' be such an exclusive status symbol—prices are going to slump.

And that, certainly, will have Picasso laughing in his grave—for he had nothing but disgust for those who measured art in cash terms.

Picasso's death was a financial loss to the profiteers of the artistic stock exchange, but rather more important, he was a loss to the revolutionary movement.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We fight:

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

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

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

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

For equal pay and a better deal for young workers.

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

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

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

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

Against racialism and police victimisation of black workers.

Against immigration restriction.

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

For real social, economic and political equality for women.

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

Against secret diplomacy.

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

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

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

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

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

THERE ARE IS BRANCHES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

SCOTLAND Aberdeen Cumbernauld Dundee Edinburgh Dunfermline/ Cowdenbeath Glanrothes/Kirkcaldy Glasgow N Glasgow S Greenock Stirling	NORTH WEST Barrow Blackburn Bolton Burnley Crewe Kirkby Lancaster Manchester Merseyside Oldham Preston Rochdale Salford St Helens Stoke Stockport Trafford Wigan Wrexham	WALES and SOUTH WEST Bath Bristol Cardiff Exeter Gloucester Llanelli Mid-Devon Neath Plymouth Swansea Swansea Valley
NORTH EAST Bishop Auckland Durham Hartlepool Newcastle upon Tyne South Shields Spennymoor Sunderland Teesside E Teesside W	MIDLANDS Birmingham NE Birmingham S Coventry Derby Dudley Leamington and Warwick Leicester Loughborough Mid-Derbyshire Milton Keynes Northampton Nottingham Oxford Rugby Warley Wolverhampton	GREATER LONDON and HOME COUNTIES Bexley Camden Chertsey Croydon Ealing East London Enfield Fulham and Hammersmith Hackney and Islington Harlesden Harrow Hemel Hempstead High Wycombe Hornsey Houslow Ilford Kilburn Kingston Lambeth Lewisham Merton North Herts Paddington Reading St Albans Slough Tottenham Walthamstow Wandsworth Watford Woolwich
NORTH Barnsley Bradford Dewsbury Doncaster Grimsby Halifax Huddersfield Hull Leeds Pontefract/ Knottingley Scarborough Selby Sheffield York	SOUTH Brighton Canterbury Crawley Eastbourne Guildford Portsmouth Southampton	EAST Basildon Beccles Cambridge Chelmsford Colchester Harlow Ipswich Leiston Lowestoft Norwich Peterborough

THE UNIONS

Lumper Davies puts Transport Workers on spot

by Dave Peers

THE Industrial Relations Act has thrown up another challenge to the trade union movement and has put the executive of the Transport and General Workers Union on the spot.

An Industrial Tribunal on Tyneside last week awarded £728 compensation to Mr Bill Davies for unfair dismissal. Mr Davies had been employed as a crane driver at the Anglo-Great Lakes Corporation factory on the outskirts of Newcastle. He was a member of the TGWU and a shop steward.

When the Industrial Relations Act came into operation last year Mr Davies resigned from the union and refused to rejoin. Following a strike by 400 workers, Anglo-Great Lakes suspended him, and later gave him his cards. By their prompt action the workers had successfully

defended the closed shop at the company. But Mr Davies brought an action under the Industrial Relations Act against the company for unfair dismissal. His action was successful—and profitable—and Mr Davies is now working on the lump with an extra £728 in his bank account.

In addition the tribunal ordered the TGWU to reimburse this money to the company because its members had pressurised Anglo-Great Lakes to dismiss Mr Davies.

This judgment is the biggest danger to the closed shop since the Goad case. If the TGWU pay the compensation to the company they will be opening the door

to every scab in the country to attack the funds of the trade union movement.

If they refuse to pay they stand to be fined for contempt of court. When the union was fined £55,000 last year for refusing to appear before the NIRC the TUC performed a swift about-turn.

Trade unions are now permitted to be represented in the industrial courts to defend themselves from attack. But representation offers no protection.

The TGWU were represented before the tribunal in the Davies case and much good it did them. Now the executive are deciding whether to appeal against the judgment to the NIRC.

If they do decide to 'fight' the Act from within in this manner, the road to registration and complete co-operation with the institutions of the Act is wide

HOW JACKSON REPAID HIS DEBT

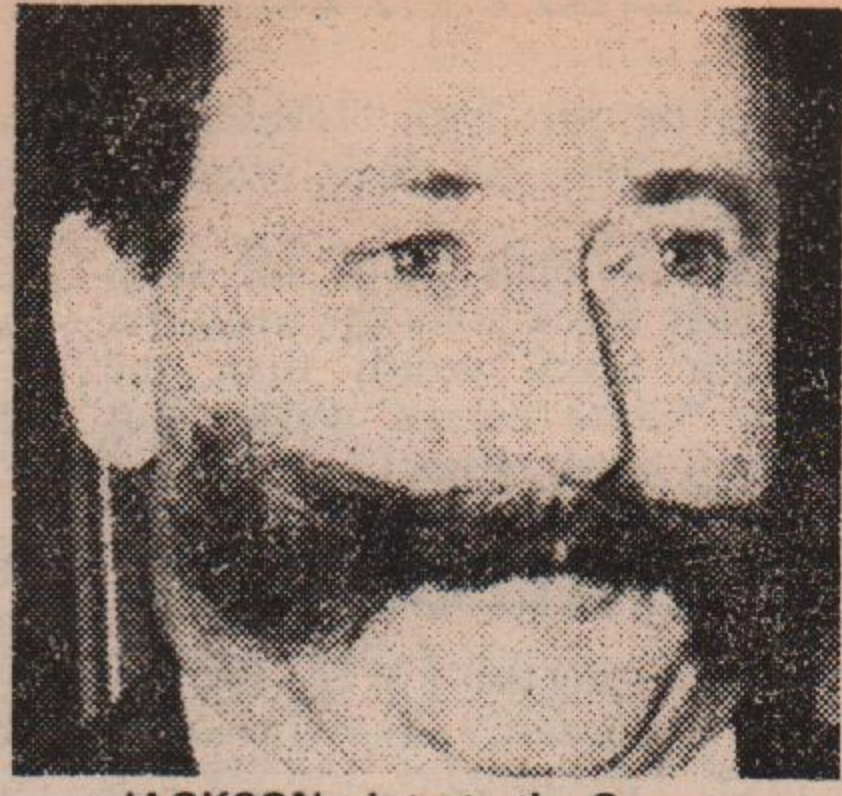
SW Reporter
TWO YEARS AGO the Union of Post Office Workers was in a similar situation to the hospital workers today. They were isolated and defeated.

In spite of the fact that thousands of workers saw the need to give them active support, the TUC leaders' policy of leaving them isolated never received any effective challenge.

What is true, however, is that some union executives and thousands upon thousands of rank and file trade unionists dig deep into their pockets to help fund the UPW strike.

Since the defeat, the right wing on the UPW executive have strengthened their hold. And the union leaders who pronounced themselves so grateful for the assistance of the broad trade union movement two years ago have found some novel ways to cancel that debt.

Everyone is familiar with the long-standing struggle at Fine Tubes in Plymouth. UPW general secretary Tom Jackson not only refused to issue an instruction to the local postmen not to cross the picket line but quoted the Post Office Act at them and blathered on about 'their statutory duty to deliver the Queen's Mail'.



JACKSON: duty to the Queen

RIGIDLY

The union could have been of immense assistance to the struggle for recognition at Fine Tubes. It could have organised an official refusal to deliver mail and persuaded its members to refuse the company operator-controlled telephone services through their switchboards.

But the UPW leadership has at no time considered doing this. It prefers to stick rigidly to the law of the land whether it be Post Office Act, Code of Discipline or even the Industrial Relations Act.

Over the past two months women workers at Empire Pools in Blackpool, members of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers, have been on official strike against appalling wage rates and conditions. Football pools firms are uniquely dependent on the good offices of postal workers for their survival. As a result, if the UPW was to take firm action, then the Empire management would be forced to concede right away.

While the Blackpool postmen are respecting USDAW picket lines, USDAW can count on absolutely nothing in the way of effective solidarity from the national union. Instead of instructing postal workers up and down the country to refuse to handle Empire's mail, the UPW leadership through Tom Jackson has asked all the members 'not to fill in

the coupons as private individuals.'

Perhaps the most serious instance of the UPW right wing's recent scabbing activities was the reaction to the strike by the Civil and Public Services Association in pursuit of their pay claim.

The CPSA has a considerable number of members within the Post Office. One of the main reasons the CPSA did not call out its members in this section was on account of a circular the UPW sent round to its members.

This stated that the CPSA dispute was in no way the business of the UPW and instructed UPW members to take no action which in any way supported the CPSA's claim. UPW members were openly encouraged to cross CPSA picket lines.

The union's stance over the 1 May TUC day of protest and stoppage is identical. The UPW was the first union unreservedly to accept the £1 plus 4 per cent freeze formula and to agree to co-operate with the Tory Pay Board.

On 2 April Jackson sent a circular to all branches setting out the UPW's attitude to the 1 May day of action.

'The Executive Council decided that there should be no stoppage of work on that day as far as our members are concerned.

It was however resolved that there should be protest meetings in meal breaks and that telegrams should be sent to the Prime Minister protesting about rising food prices.

It was further resolved that should the hospital workers still be on strike

on 1 May that our members should give generously from their pay on 1 May to help the legitimate struggle of these workers.'

And then after a reminder that no postal workers should attempt to collect mail from or deliver it to premises that are being picketed on May Day, follows the killer punch. Branch and district officials are reminded that, under rule, only the executive can call strikes. There must therefore be no unofficial action.

Since the 1971 strike two poles have emerged among the membership—disillusion or left-wing militancy. The right wing leadership of the union does everything to encourage disillusion and uses the undemocratic structure and rule book of the union to hamstring the left wingers.

ADHERE

The massive increase in scabbing activities over the last year is not unconnected with the present holder of the key post of UPW national chairman, Mrs Beryl Treble. During the strike, only 13 out of 400 workers in Mrs Treble's section came out and ever since she has used this as a cover for successive pleas for 'moderation' and 'good sense'.

This good sense includes support for registration and the Industrial Relations Act, acceptance of the Pay Board and the National Industrial Relations Court and rigid adherence to the Post Office's Victorian code of discipline.

Postal workers are only beginning to reap the bitter harvest that results from the policies of the right wing. Wages are still terrible and members still rely on heavy overtime working.

But the union leadership has other plans in store. It is collaborating to the full in helping management make the Post Office 'profitable' and large scale redundancies will result.

These were formerly confined to so-called natural wastage, but the UPW leadership has just concluded a new Big Brother redundancy agreement which allows the Post Office to get rid of those with 'bad' sickness absence or timekeeping records. And there is more to come.

Women: shout don't

HOW TO SMASH APARTHEID

PEG SILK (7 April) needs to get a few facts straight if she wants to effectively fight male chauvinism both in and outside of the revolutionary left. Women are not exploited as women—they are oppressed, an important difference.

Women's exploitation, like men's, is determined by the fact that they are forced to sell their labour (at a much cheaper rate than men) in order to live. Their oppression is reflected in their subordinate position in the family, which existed long before the birth of capitalism.

As revolutionaries it is essential that we understand how the exploitation and oppression women suffer under capitalism reinforce each other.

And let's be clear that men, who are guilty of oppressing women sexually, socially, and in the home, are not guilty of being 'a class'. They're either part of the ruling class or they're part of the working class.

One point Peg Silk didn't take up of Tom Clark (17 March) was his statement 'We can't be told often enough that women are badly treated.'

On the contrary, we're still only murmuring what needs to be shouted by all working class women, and the test is not in accepting this state of affairs, but in fighting to change it.—JACQUY HAYMAN, London N8.

Resources

ALTHOUGH not a member of IS I feel moved to comment on your total misunderstanding of the women's question by your report (24 March) of Sara Carver's motion on equal pay at the IS annual conference.

I fail to see how a question, which affects one-third of the workforce of this country, can be considered 'outside the present resources' of an organisation such as your own which purports to believe in improving 'the position and self-confidence of the working class'.

That this motion, with its limited demands, should be carried only by a small majority reflects the extent to which socialist organisations are prepared to tolerate the continued existence of women as a sub-proletariat. The question of the improvement of women's position in society is again and again pushed to the back of the queue.—JANE SCOTT PAUL, Aberdeen.

● The main conference report on women's work showed that IS had improved this vital part of its activities out of all recognition to previous years. But resources do have an important part to play when a revolutionary organisation considers its future activities. It would be dishonest to commit ourselves to grandiose schemes that we could not possibly carry out. Every effort will be made to implement the terms of the successful motion in the light of all our commitments.—EDITOR.

March farce

I WAS on the building workers' march and lobby of parliament in London on 28 March to support Eric Heffer's Bill aimed to ending lump (self-employed) labour on building sites.

It was a complete farce. Sites like the World's End, Chelsea, which has been out on strike, were out, but other sites were still working as we marched past. In particular, the site on the House of Commons car park was working—with lump labour on it.

Eric Heffer claimed he hadn't realised about it before, and when asked to lead a deputation to it said he would rather handle the situation through parliament.

I didn't lose a day's pay just to see other blokes working. We need to publicise the facts about lump labour, but demonstrations must be properly organised, and aimed to achieve a little more than a few votes for 'left' MPs.—KEITH DUFFIL (UCATT).

LAST WEEK's report on the NUS conference contained a number of factual inaccuracies and omissions. Unfortunately the proposal that students join the strike on 1 May was not carried.

Members of the Communist Party voting against it were enough to get it defeated. Because of this any successful action on this day will have to be organised on a local level and much work will have to be done by militants in their colleges.

Two members of the International Socialists, Mike Hill and Simon Turner, were elected to lower positions on the NUS executive.—STEVE CUSHION, Birmingham.

whisper...

LETTERS

Rigged conference that avoids a real fight with the Tories

I ATTENDED the conference of the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions on Saturday 31 March, and I have never seen such a rigged affair. I came all the way from Coventry in the vain hope that we were going to have a meaningful and fraternal conference on the ways and means of building a powerful and militant rank and file organisation in industry to fight the freeze and bring down the Tory government.

When I arrived, however, I was presented with a document. It was not a very good document, as it did not go much further than calling for a one-day strike on 1 May and making references about the Tory government.

However, instead of being able to propose alternative resolutions and amendments, we were told that this would not be possible. What we got was in the main a round of fairly tedious speeches, many of which were not actually on the subject. We also witnessed a physical and verbal assault on the several hundred delegates there who obviously wanted the conference to be something more than a rubber-stamp.

As a carworker in the Transport and General Workers Union, I object to being

told by a fist-flailing thug with a steward's badge on that I ought to go and get a job. It's the sort of rubbish I might expect from the Daily Express—but I expect better from those who are supposed to be in the vanguard of the working-class movement, defendants of the unemployed and students, etc.

Not only that, but the continued cry from the witchhunters on the platform was that all the people who wanted to amend the document were 'instant revolutionaries', which was a complete lie.

All that we were asking for was a democratic conference, where a militant

SOCIALIST WORKER has quite rightly criticised the scandalous activities of the Communist Party at the Liaison Committee conference. We must also make every effort not to allow any mud thrown by the Morning Star about us being 'sectarians' to stick.

We think the time is right for a careful article in Socialist Worker explaining the IS position on 'unity of the left', which is the bogey always raised not only by Communist Party members but by some of our own

policy for industry could be thrashed out, and whereby the LCDTU would be strengthened in all districts of the country, by building deeper roots in the factories. Instead we were treated to some electioneering by Bob Wright and long-winded affairs from others who had come for a bit of speaking practice.

As a conference, it was useless. As a rally, it was a disaster. The militants in the labour movement should certainly not depend on a strategy which has been knocked out in Jim Hiles' front room!—A ENEVER, Chrysler TGWU 5/156 branch, Coventry.

sympathisers.

Such an article should carefully explain that we are in favour of unity—but unity in action, not abstract unity at the cost of being paralysed.

We need to make sure that a number of good militants are not put off by what to them appears as simply a slanging match between the International Socialists and the Communist Party.—ROGER KLINE, PARMEN LEONTOVITSCH, Nottingham.

Kids' stuff

I READ the Review page in Socialist Worker every week and I think it is excellent. It examines practically the whole range of so-called culture.

One area the section neglects is that of children's books. Hundreds are

published every week and thousands must be read by children of all ages.

The 'quality' papers have special sections devoted to reviews of children's books. I don't know whether you consider it important to cover such areas in a newspaper such as Socialist Worker.

I think you should but not in the way the bourgeois press does. Why don't you get some kids—the people who actually read the books—to review some once in a while. Take a cue from Stepney Words and give them a chance.—J N GUTMANN, Salford.

Nazi vote grows—with a little Labour help

RESULTS of the voting for the new Leicestershire county authority last week revealed substantial support in the city for the fascist National Front and their friends in the Enoch Powell Support Group. A total of more than 10,000 votes were cast for the 16 NF candidates and more than 3,000 for the three from the Powellites.

Leicester has been chosen as the main target for the extreme right. The NF stood 41 candidates all over Britain—16 of them in Leicester.

It has been clear for some months that they have been pouring vast resources into the local branch. The attempts of the fascists to gain respectability and bury their Nazi origins has been aided by the local press. It has not supported them outright but has treated them as one of the major parties operating in Leicester.

But the greatest assistance to the right has come from the local Labour Party. Why is race such a problem in Leicester? Other towns have large immigrant populations and even worse unemployment and housing

SW Reporters

shortages.

But Leicester is different in that it has a Labour Party which has laid the way for the racists. The Labour-controlled city council published two sets of health figures, one for immigrants and one for whites. The immigrant figures announce a 60 per cent increase in TB cases—but the fact that this increase is from three people to five is not announced.

Along among city councils, Leicester put an advertisement in the Kampala Times calling on Ugandan Asians NOT to come to their city. Instead of fighting the idea that immigrants cause the problems, the Labour Party promoted it, while doing very little itself to tackle the city's housing and other problems.

Not surprisingly, the Labour Party refused to fight the National Front. Instead they ignored it, hoping it would go away. Some hoped it would split the Tory vote.

These results should provoke a re-think. It is mainly working-class Labour votes that have gone to the NF, and the cost to the Labour Party is dear.

Win control

In Belgrave, one city ward, 23 per cent of the vote went to the extreme right. Labour should have won the two seats in this ward—instead, they went to the Tories by a small margin. It is seats like this that have enabled the Tories to win control of the new authority.

Leicester International Socialists attempted to counter the right with its limited resources. They took a

leading role in organising two large demonstrations in the city, carried out extensive poster and distributed large numbers of leaflets.

Before the election 10,000 copies of a leaflet were given out which attempted not only to show the origins of the NF but also to show that their 'solutions' were no solutions at all for working-class people and that the only way forward lies in building a revolutionary socialist movement.

The leaflet did have some effect in the areas where it was distributed, but much more effort will be needed in the future to make a real impact.

The extreme right will be making a major push in the district council elections on 10 June. Their lies must be exposed to the ordinary people of Leicester before they can establish a base.

CONGRATULATIONS for your excellent articles (24, 31 March) on George Peake's remarkable story. However, his concluding remark would seem to deprive his heroic struggle against apartheid-capitalism of much meaning.

'The revolution has to be made in the west to smash neo-colonialism before there can be the chance of socialist revolution in Africa.'

This is nonsense, of course. The theory of permanent revolution tells us that although any particular national working class can come to power and initiate the transition to socialism, no workers' state can complete the construction of socialism or even survive indefinitely without the victory of the workers' revolution on a world scale.

And our analysis of the development of imperialism since Lenin's time shows us that no "backward" country can hope to solve its problems on a national basis independently of the world economy (as Nyrere is attempting to do). But this does not mean that the working class of South Africa cannot on its own initiative smash the apartheid state apparatus and replace it with a workers' dictatorship.

Indeed a concrete analysis of class relations in South Africa and Rhodesia would suggest that this is the only way in which the national liberation struggle can succeed in those countries. But the survival of a workers' state in South Africa would depend on the action of workers in the west in solidarity with the new state and against their own capitalist ruling classes whose interests are so closely involved in apartheid.—ALEX CALLINICOS, Oxford.

I FIND George Peake's closing remarks impossible to accept. It is true that the various types of 'African socialism' do not resemble revolutionary socialism since in those countries the working class is exploited by both neo-colonialism and their own ruling classes.

It is also true that if Rhodesia and the Portuguese colonies are liberated by African nationalist freedom fighters, it does not follow that the white capitalists in South Africa will graciously throw in the towel. But, to my mind, to deny the revolutionary potential of the African working classes, particularly in West Africa, Zambia and South Africa, is to deny the possibility of the working class making a socialist revolution anywhere.

South Africa, the key to the continent, has an enormous and increasingly class-conscious black working class. True it suffers from the lack of a Bolshevik-type leadership. In addition the day-to-day repression of an efficient police state saps its vitality.

But the South African workers' fight back now is terrific. Without a revolutionary leadership it will remain spontaneous and doomed to failure. But to tell African revolutionaries to give up and wait until we in the west overthrow our own ruling classes and thereby destroy neo-colonialism is to say we have no confidence in the ability of our African working-class comrades to smash capitalism and neo-colonialism in their own continent.—WENDA CLENAGHEN, London N16.

ENGINEERS TO CLAIM £35 FOR 35 HOURS

by Roger Rosewell

THE National Committee of the engineering section of the AUEW, which has been meeting for the past two weeks, agreed to submit a wage claim of £35 for a 35-hour week.

But the union leaders still do not seem to have learnt the lessons from last year's unsuccessful struggle.

The president of the Engineering Employers' Federation summed up the results of the struggle on 21 February. 'The campaign was not a fruitful one for the unions... The vast majority of settlements were within the guide lines drawn up by the management board... Employers who experienced industrial action displayed notable solidarity and determination to resist.'

But the union's national committee, despite its left-wing majority, failed to analyse the results of the struggle with the same clarity.

Hugh Scanlon, president of the union, intervened in the discussion to urge for a fight for a 'substantial increase', instead of the specific demands of £35 for 35 hours. 'There is always an advantage in not committing ourselves,' he said. The committee nevertheless rejected this advice and voted unanimously for the new claim.

But it failed to take any decision about how the claim is to be won during the wage freeze, and with the demoralisation of last year's defeat.

The same contradiction in the position taken by most of the delegates also showed itself in discussion of the Industrial Relations Act.

The committee correctly defeated by an overwhelming vote of 51 to 11 a right-

wing call for co-operation with the Tory law. But it failed to instruct the executive to call national strikes in defence of its funds and policies.

On the wage claim and on the Act, the delegates seemed to want 'to do something', but to avoid a major showdown. The result was a failure to give a real lead.

The danger of such an attitude was shown a fortnight ago, when Hugh Scanlon said that if the government made a couple of minor amendments to the Industrial Relations Act, then 'we could talk of some of the other practicalities.'

'I believe if we could do these things for a temporary period and allow a breathing space to work out a voluntary policy, that would be a way forward,' he said.

The failure of the 'left' in the union to impose militant politics on the leaders opens up the ground for retreats and surrenders in face of the Tories.



Shop steward Tom Kelly speaking to workers outside the Watney Mann brewery

Pickets spread Watney brewery strike

LONDON:—600 strikers at the Watney Mann brewery in Whitechapel are on strike for the second week, and the dispute is spreading to other Watney breweries.

Last Friday fitters at the Isleworth plant came out, followed on Monday by other craftsmen. A 24-hour picket is on the gates and all production has stopped. Flying pickets have also brought out craftsmen at the Mortlake plant.

They have not been helped by the attitude of the Transport workers senior steward there, Collins, who claims that only a few workers are involved and refuses to talk about the dispute. Further lorries turned away by the pickets have been called back by Collins.

The agreement under dispute covers all the breweries. Unions agreed last November to several productivity concessions in return for a new shift payment. All guaranteed overtime and

shift overlaps were to be phased out. Discussions were to start on possible new shift systems and Measured Day Work was to be introduced in the transport sections.

Tom Kelly, Whitechapel strike committee member, told Socialist Worker: 'For management this has been an exercise in cynicism from the start. They now tell us they cannot pay the shift payment or give us the extra holidays because of the Tories' pay freeze.'

Morale is high and the strikers are determined to win. Already beer supplies are getting low. Further pressure is being brought on the same company—Maxwell Joseph's Grand Metropolitan Hotels, from Truman transport drivers who are out on strike in Whitechapel on a dispute over deliveries. Stewards at Trumans are supporting the Watneys' strikers.

Donations and messages of support to the treasurer, J Fitzgerald, 1 Littleton House, Churchill Gardens, London SW1.

Strikers determined to defend wages

WOLVERHAMPTON:—Workers on strike at Rubery Owen, Darlaston, expressed their determination last Friday to protect their union organisation and wages.

Rubery Owen management is hiding behind phase two of the freeze so that it can cut piecework pay by up to £11 a week to pay for increases to day workers. The reply of the negotiating committee—a mandate which was unanimously endorsed by Friday's meeting—was to demand £2.50 across-the-board increase, on top of the offer already made to day workers.

The strike is now in its third week and workers are being laid off throughout the motor industry because of shortage of parts made at Rubery Owen.

BUSMEN VOTE YES TO THE PAY 'NORM'

LONDON:—Delegates representing 20,000 busmen and women voted last week to accept a pay settlement exactly equal to the £1 plus 4 per cent norm of phase two of the freeze. The demands for four weeks' holiday and a 35-hour week were yet again passed over.

The wages' offer itself was so carefully costed within the pay norm that it included an amount to cover increased overtime earnings resulting from the £2 increase in basic rates. The employers clearly expect

the present high level of staff shortage to continue and busmen to go on working overtime to make up for the inadequate basic pay.

Larry Smith, national bus officer of the Transport Workers Union urged the delegates to accept the offer, pointing out how 'lucky' the busmen had been to get their new shift payments through only hours before the wage freeze was imposed last November. Yet again the message from the officials was clear: 'Now is not the time to fight.'

So it will seem strange to busmen that the same national officer of the union was calling with even more vigour at the same conference for the busmen to support the May Day strike against the freeze.

This was agreed by 45 votes to 23, but the success of the strike on London buses will depend entirely on the ability of local TGWU branch officers and militants to persuade their members that May Day is not just part of the union's token verbal opposition to the freeze but can be the beginning of a real movement to break through the freeze stranglehold.

The settlement clearly shows how much this is needed. The £2 increase will give a family man about £1.40 extra after after deductions. Those in council houses will pay £1 of this in rent increases and those with mortgages will pay even more in extra interest. This leaves barely 50p to cover escalating prices. The result will be, in practice, a wage cut.

Yet again the union leaders give us fine talk and many words against the wage freeze yet in practice urge union members to accept it.

Car components men challenge the freeze

BIRMINGHAM:—Workers at the Wilmott Breeden factory, in Tydesley, are challenging the Tories' wage freeze after management turned down the demands by indirect workers for parity with skilled pieceworkers. The present differential is up to £14 a week.

The claim went to the company a month ago. The management replied by offering £1 plus 4 per cent. In retaliation all skilled indirect workers have imposed a work to rule, withdrawn co-operation and banned overtime. The action started on Saturday morning and the effects have quickly escalated so that the factory was expected to be shut by the middle of this week.

Since the company carries little stock, the effects will be felt at the Austin, Chryslers and Ford car plants.

Feeling is running high on the shop floor. A shop steward for the mechanical maintenance workers said labourers were living below subsistence level and many better paid skilled workers were determined to help their less well paid brothers.

One older worker denounced the Tories' wage freeze. 'It is diabolical', he said, 'the way the cost of food and rents are going up.'

Miners vote to strike

THE South Wales Area of the National Union of Mineworkers voted overwhelmingly on Monday to call its members out on strike on May Day, in defiance of the union's national executive which last week refused support for the TUC day of action. Delegates to the conference expressed great bitterness over the conduct of the recent miners' pay claim and ballot.

WHAT'S ON

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

IS MEETINGS

WALTHAMSTOW IS public meeting: After May Day—Which Way Forward? Speakers: Bob Light (TGWU—Royal Docks), Laurie Flynn (NUJ—Socialist Worker), Friday 27 April at 8.00pm. Ross Wyld Hall, Church Hill Road, E.17.

IS IRISH FORUM: The Protestant Working Class Speaker Jeff Bell Friday 27 April, 7.30pm The Roebuck, Tottenham Court Rd (nearest tube Warren St)

SALFORD IS public meeting: The Politics of Homosexuality. Speaker Don Milligan. Thursday 19 April, Maypole Pub, by Pendleton Church.

EALING IS Social: bar extension to midnight, entertainment: CAST's new play, plus music. Friday 27 April, 7.45pm. George and Dragon, Uxbridge Road, Southall (bus 20 from Ealing Broadway). In aid of Printshop Fund.

HORNSEY/BARNET IS public meeting: Fight the Tories—the need for a revolutionary party. Speaker: Paul Foot. Wednesday 9 May, 8pm, Bull and Butcher, Whetstone High Road, (near Tottenham and Whetstone tube/buses 263, 134, 84, 125).

IS BUILDING WORKERS Fraction Conference: Saturday 28 April, 10.30am-5.30pm (with break for lunch). Lecture Room S, Digbeth Hall, Birmingham. All IS building workers and others involved in the industry should attend.

WANDSWORTH IS public meeting: Fight the Tory Rent Rises. Speakers: David Skinner (Clay Cross councillor) and John Palmer (IS executive). Thursday 3 May. St John's Church Hall, East Hill, SW18.

LANCASHIRE REGION IS DAY SCHOOL Sunday 29 April Regency Hall, Blakey Moor (off Northgate) 10.30am: The Freeze—speaker Chris Davison 2pm: The role of revolutionaries in the trade unions—speaker Roger Rosewell IS members only Also Rebel regional meeting

MANCHESTER DISTRICT IS MAY DAY PUBLIC MEETING The Struggle for Socialism Speaker Bob Light (TGWU steward, London Royal Docks Tuesday 1 May, 7.30pm Basement Theatre, Town Hall extension, Mount Street

IS HISTORY GROUP SCHOOL Saturday 28 April Rootes Hall, Warwick University, Coventry 11.30am-1pm: Organising session for group 2-4pm: Harry Wicks on The TUC left and the Russian trade union movement in the 1920s 4.30-6.30pm: Reg Groves on The revolutionary left in the 1920s and 1930s School fee 20p. Details from: 69 Arden Street, Coventry

OTHER MEETINGS

THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT: Third conference of Radical Scholars of Soviet and East European Studies, 4-6 May, Union Building, University of Birmingham. Friday 4 May, 7.30pm: Marx and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Saturday 5 May, 10am: Dictatorship of the proletariat in 1917-21; 2pm: Bureaucracy and the Party in the 1920s; 7pm: Free discussion and social. Sunday 6 May, 10am: How to fight empiricism in Societ studies; 2pm: workshops. Registration: students and unemployed £1, others £1.50. Floor space for sleeping bags is available.

ALL-SCOTTISH Student Conference on Indochina: Saturday 5 May, Strathclyde Student Union, Information from the secretary, 90 John Street, Glasgow C1.

INDOCHINA—SUPPORT MUST CONTINUE: Demonstrate Trafalgar Square, Saturday 5 May, 2pm. Meeting and march to US and Saigon Embassies. Organised by Indochina Solidarity Conference.

UNITED IRISHMAN FORUM: The Irish in Britain, The Worker and The Gombreen Man. Wednesday 25 April, 8.30pm, The Arsenal Tavern, 175 Blackstock Road, London N4. Organised by Clann na hEireann.

NOTICES

LARGE YORKSHIRE ATTIC (bedsit) to spare from October. Cheap in return for minimal reliable companionship of two small girls after school 4-6. Might suit part-time student, writer, etc. Send for details: Carey, 6 Granville Terrace, Bingley.

JUST OUT for May Day: Lessons of the General Strike, 1926, by Bob Dent. A look at the role of the government, the TUC and the rank and file with lessons for today. Copies 10p each (plus 3p postage). Bulk rates available. From Millennium, 9 Sefton Drive, Liverpool 8 (051-733 2635).

IS BOOKS can now undertake to obtain any paperback under the following imprints within two weeks: Aldine, Armada, Arrow, Bantam, Carousal, Corgi, Coronet, Everyman, Faber, Fontana, How and Why, Knight, Lions, Mayflower, New English Library, Paladin, Pan, Pan Piper, Panther, Papermac (fiction only), Peacock, Pelican, Penguin, Piccolo, Puffin, Signet/Mentor, Sphere, Tandem (not soft cover library), World Distributors.



Sacked convenor: smear tactic fails

BIRMINGHAM:—As the strike to get Larry Blewitt, the victimised convenor at Baxters, reinstated enters its third week, strikers are angry at management smear tactics.

When the strikers collected their outstanding pay last Friday, in each pay packet was a statement from the board explaining Blewitt's dismissal. The reaction of many of the strikers was to rip the letter up or to throw it back.

The letter alleged that the convenor was either absent, part-absent or late 30 times in the first 10 weeks of 1973. Of course, it never mentioned that this included 10 shop stewards meetings, three local conferences, six visits to the AUEW district office and three days on strike.

The letter also alleged that in talks with management Blewitt had commented that 'all management stink'. No steward can remember him saying this, although the letter claims all the stewards were present when the remark was made.

The board alleged that Larry Blewitt, referring to a strike on 22 January, said that 'as a trade unionist it is a wonderful experience to have had a factory shut down for a day.' The context of this remark has been distorted.

When somebody from management complained how terrible it was to be sitting in a quiet factory with no machine running, Blewitt replied that some people might take the opposite point of view. The letter ended with an appeal for workers to 'let common sense prevail and return to work with renewed vigour.'

Young, Birmingham West district secretary of the engineering union, at a mass meeting last Friday, congratulated the strikers and stressed that it was union policy to defend victimised shop stewards and convenors. He said that the district committee was recommending the strike be made official.

Collection sheets and donations to: Ken Wilkes, Baxters shop stewards committee, 46 Victoria Road, Harborne, Birmingham B17 0AE.

4000 furnace men in lock-out

SCUNTHORPE:—The lock-out of iron and steel workers is the fourth in Britain within eight weeks—which shows the ruthlessness with which the British Steel Corporation is following its ten-year strategy of closures.

The blastfurnacemen's original dispute over rates for manning the £230 million Anchor plant had been whittled down after seven months' negotiations to a mere £1.18 extra for each of the 35 men manning seven furnaces.

The local branches of the National Union of Blastfurnacemen have based their claim on parity with South Wales and have considerably raised earnings, but the corporation wants to take some of these additional earnings from the rate

demanded for the production men at the front of the furnaces.

Then the week before the blastfurnacemen were sent home, Sir Dai Davies, boss of the main steel union, BISAKTA, reopened the dispute over recruitment of middle management in the Anchor plant melting shop. The BISAKTA leaders led the men into a strike defeat on this issue in January. So the corporation has locked out both steelmen and iron men in the old plant.

The joint lock-out means that none of the laid-off men in the two unions can expect unemployment benefit. The so-called test-case on this question is being deliberately held up by the Department of Employment, and social security benefits for the families of the 4000 men locked out can only be processed at the

Scunthorpe office at the rate of 200 a week.

So the welfare state is helping the state steel corporation wear down the resistance of the blastfurnacemen by causing extremes of hardship. The only answer to such tactics should be sympathetic action at other steelworks.

The BSC is using the lock-out as an excuse to bring forward the planned redundancies in Scunthorpe. So far the only response of the BISAKTA leaders has been a single resolution at this week's extraordinary BISAKTA conference. It calls for tri-partite committees of the union, the management and the Tory government to supervise the closures of steel plant with 'fairness to all concerned'.

The corporation's idea of fairness ought to be clear now to all steelworkers in Scunthorpe.

Teachers' leader surveys the ruins

THE annual conference of the National Union of Teachers meets in Scarborough this weekend. When the new president, Max Morris, a Communist Party member, steps up on the platform he will be able to survey the ruins of the pay policy he railroaded through last year's conference.

The teachers' leaders then accepted meekly a divisive wage structure based on distinct wage scales. The employers' success in imposing it had previously been denounced by the union leaders—including Morris.

Now Morris has called the union's own version a 'winner'.

The rank and file preferred to call it the 'yellow peril'—and not only because of the colour of the document. It aimed to put head teachers on £6000 a year—Morris and most of the executive are head teachers—four times as much as working teachers.

The Union leaders were forced, briefly, to abandon this policy because of the government's freeze. Because they were not prepared to fight the freeze, they submitted a claim for £135 for everyone.

But when it looked, in February, as if the employers might accept that figure, the executive hastily withdrew, giving the excuse through general secretary Edward Britton that 'it was not certain that phase two would get parliamentary approval'.

Meanwhile, the executive had been forced to give way to insistent demands from 60,000 London teachers for action over the claim for an increased London allowance. This increase has been promised last year, but was then caught in the freeze.

Reluctantly, the executive organised a short burst of one-day and three-day strikes, but then refused to allow further industrial action during phase two

Waiting

The government cheerfully rode out the strikes and the employers were able, on 6 April, to make an offer worse than the previous one. Class teachers were offered a mere £127 a year—£8 less than before. Heads and their deputies are offered up to £170 a year.

Worse still, nothing at all is offered on the London allowance, the main cause of the London strikes.

Instead £250,000—about £4 a year for each London teacher—is being set aside until there is a decision by the government Pay Board. And that could mean waiting until November.

This is the offer which the union executive unanimously (Communist Party members and all) will be trying to push through the conference.

In London there is the beginning of a revolt against the executive. Already five branches (Hackney, Lambeth, North London, Southwark and Wandsworth) representing 6000 members, have called on teachers to strike on 1 May, although the executive has refused the TUC call.

At present the union's constitution gives local associations the power to do this, but the executive is retaliating with a priority resolution for conference aimed at doing away with this power. 'No constituent association or division of the union, or members or member thereof, shall organise or engage in strike or industrial action without the approval of the executive,' reads the motion.

Communist Party members on the executive are again backing a ban on rank and file action. The executive is hoping that the confusion created by this apparently 'left-wing' support and the majority among delegates of head teachers from outside London will enable the resolution to scramble through.

STEEL FIGHT—A NEW WEAPON IS FORGED

STEELWORKERS from all over Britain met in Connah's Quay, near Shotton, Flintshire, last Friday for a rank and file steelworkers conference called by the Shotton Action Committee to hammer out a national rank and file policy to fight the massive redundancies threatened by the British Steel Corporation.

Eighty-five delegates from 22 action committees representing 111,000 steelworkers attended what could be the beginning of a real fight back against the closures.

The central problem for the steelworkers is linking up across the country. Until Friday there was no organised fight back.

The chairman of Shotton Action Committee, Luke McLoughlin, said steelworkers had been 'sold down the river', and the conference was 'an absolute necessity'. Gordon Roberts, also of Shotton, said: 'Jones, Scanlon and Dai Davies have stood by while other workers have been defeated... The trade union leaders and the TUC are pussyfooting. We have to take the fight into our own hands, into the hands of the rank and file.'

Warning

Tony Hope, from River Don Works, Sheffield, argued that a steelworkers' national action committee 'will be a nail in the coffin of the BSC and the government.' Other delegates argued the need to bring the paid officials to heel. As one delegate put it: 'The TUC must see it from our point of view and not the BSC's.'

Arthur Affleck, chairman of Lackenby Joint Shop Stewards Committee, Teesside, and a member of the International Socialists, asked: 'What are the priorities of these industries? Whose benefit are they being run for?' He replied to local Labour MP Barry Jones, who had warned delegates not to be misled by 'wreckers, infiltrators and lunatics', that 'we are already prisoners

SW Reporter

of the lunatic fringe. The real lunatics are the Conservatives, and the Conservatives include some of our union leaders.'

The setting up of a national action committee was crucial, he said, because the union leadership could not be trusted. He called on steelworkers to use 1 May to start the fight back in earnest. The setting up of the national action committee was agreed overwhelmingly.

In the debate on what action to take

there was general agreement, but warnings were sounded. One delegate argued that it was not enough to discuss the problems of modernisation and improved performance and profitability. That was to argue in the bosses' terms. Militant policies were needed to unite the rank and file around slogans such as No Redundancies. There was danger in not providing activity for the rank and file, danger in concentrating on improved performance and not on the

power of the shop floor.

Delegates from East Moors steelworks near Cardiff raised the problems of their own works in an emergency resolution. They face redundancy and closure in just three months. 'We have nothing left in Newport. All we have is your support.'

Immediate action is needed at East Moors in what is the first test of the new National Action Committee. Its strength rests on the shop floor—it will now have to use that strength, and build on the success and enthusiasm of the conference which has set it up, to defeat the closures.



The mass meeting outside the British Oxygen factory



Peter Van Der Larr: victimised

Victimisation starts strike

NORTH LONDON:—Workers at the British Oxygen factory in Tottenham stopped work in protest at the suspension of a shop steward last week.

The steward, Peter Van Der Larr, told Socialist Worker that his three-day suspension was a clear case of victimisation. British Oxygen factories in both Tottenham and nearby Edmonton are threatened with redundancies and Peter Van Der Larr has been consistent in his opposition, although the stewards committee has not yet taken a clear stand. He says that BOC Tottenham can give a lead to other workers in the area facing redundancies.

At a mass meeting last Friday the workers decided to return to work on Monday, when the suspension would be lifted, and to carry on the fight inside the factory. But they have shown that management cannot pick on workers and get away with it, and that there is a base for a fight against the redundancies.

DIESEL BOSSES SIT OUT ANTI-SACKING BATTLE

NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS:—The six-week occupation of Ruston-Paxman Diesels (GEC) by 1000 Lancashire engineering workers to secure the reinstatement of sacked AUEW shop steward John Deason has ended in complete surrender. At last Wednesday's mass meeting the shop stewards' recommendation to continue the occupation was voted down by 2-1.

The return to work was campaigned for by a breakaway group of 150, but the real reason for the collapse was battle-weariness and the absolute determination of GEC management to smash the union organisation.

This was the second time within 12 months that the factory was occupied—last year it was occupied for 13 weeks over the national engineering pay claim.

There has also been a series of shorter disputes provoked by management, while

work has been subcontracted out through the back door. Clearly, GEC had carefully prepared for this showdown.

The stewards were conscious of GEC's ability to take on and smash one plant in isolation, and have been leading recent moves to build a GEC combine committee. Unfortunately these and the launching of a GEC rank-and-file paper were and are very much in their infancy. It is no coincidence that the sacked steward has been particularly active and is on the paper's editorial board.

WEAKNESS

The stewards, aware of the urgency of support from the rest of the combine, repeatedly called on the AUEW executive to organise an official GEC delegate conference. But as in other giant combines there is a marked resistance by top officials to help organise effective group liaison.

Bob Wright, who sits on the AUEW executive council and the mystery National Joint Consultative Committee for GEC, has in no way helped rank-and-file efforts to strengthen combine unity. In fact Wright's single contribution to the fight at Newton was to begin informal talks with top GEC management and offer

the suspension of the steward's credentials.

This olive branch was brusquely turned down by GEC, and could only have been interpreted as a sign of weakness.

A simple call from Bob Wright for financial and backing support from the rest of GEC would have done more than all the 'clever' negotiating in informal talks. The lack of such initiatives by leading officials casts further doubt on their role on the secretive National Joint Consultative Committee.

Ruston Paxman is not the first GEC plant to suffer such a defeat. The urgent need for a widely-circulated GEC rank-and-file paper and an effective combine committee is the main lesson from such defeats. But if efforts to build an effective combine committee are redoubled, the strikers' sacrifices and John Deason's victimisation will not have been in vain.

The six-week occupation, against daunting odds, was no mean feat. No doubt GEC boss Arnold Weinstock will now be expecting to put the boot in.

The strikers, and in particular the 200-300 militants who voted to continue the occupation, must get over their disappointment and resist further management attacks on their union organisation.

Indeed they must strengthen and extend it throughout GEC.

EDINBURGH IS
Socialist Worker Readers Meeting
Leith Town Hall
Thursday 26 April, 7.30pm
Speakers: Wally Preston (AUEW) and Roger Protz (NUJ)



I would like more
information about
the International Socialists

Name _____

Address _____

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

* Socialist Worker

HOSPITAL WORKERS GO DOWN FIGHTING

Judges order: 'Convict picket'

THE TORIES' legal onslaught against picketing continued last week when the Queen's Bench Divisional Court ruled that strikers who seriously try to stop people or vehicles crossing their lines are breaking the law.

The police were appealing against a Stockport magistrates' decision that a construction union official was not breaking the law by standing in front of a lorry and arguing with the driver for nine minutes during a building workers' strike picket last summer. The police had arrested the man and charged him with obstruction.

In step with the government's plans to impose massive restrictions on picketing without formally changing the law, Lord Chief Justice Lord Widgery and two fellow High Court judges dug up provisions in the 1959 Highways Act as grounds for forbidding serious picketing.

They ruled that UCATT official John Broome should be convicted and have sent an instruction to Stockport Magistrates Court to reverse its decision and find him guilty. John Broome is to appeal to the House of Lords.

The three judges were at pains to point out that the only rights pickets have is to turn up for picketing and use placards and conversation peacefully to persuade lorry drivers or others to observe their picket lines. It is illegal to make picket lines effective.

Last week's appeal was by Stockport Police, the same force which viciously tried to break up the Roberts Arundel picket lines in 1967.



Part of the big International Socialists' contingent on Saturday's march in Clay Cross. Inset: Liverpool tenants' spokeswoman Ethel Singleton Pictures: Mike Cohen

THE LEADERS of the four health unions have rushed to a compromise with the Tories, but the mood of hospital workers up and down the country is far from docile.

Workers at seven hospitals in Coventry, Wolverhampton and Warwick were staying on strike on Monday after the decision of a mass meeting last week.

Transport union members at two hospitals in Coventry virtually ignored a personal appeal by their local union official to return to work.

In Bristol eight boilermakers remained out on strike and their action, although it involved only a few people, has been causing difficulties for the management. Catering workers in Liverpool were still solidly for the strike after walking out last week.

Drivers belonging to NUPE and COHSE at Hope Hospital, Manchester, were still on strike, and workers from Salford and the United Manchester Hospitals were planning a demonstration when Health Minister Sir Keith Joseph visited Salford this week.

Sweetener

The crocodile tears shed by the leaders of the main union, NUPE, cannot disguise the fact that the offer they have accepted is a complete sell-out of the members. After official strike action lasting 6½ weeks and unofficial action which had been going on for months since the first strike in Bristol last October, the offer of £1.80 for women and £2 for men is no advance in cash terms on the original freeze offer rejected so vehemently by the unions two months ago. The only sweetener is the bringing forward of a scheduled 80p equal pay increase for women by six months.

Alan Fisher, NUPE leader, has spoken of the settlement as 'no mean achievement.' But it means new basic wage rates of only £19.48 for men and £17.88 for women. All the fine arguments about inflation and poverty wages have been conveniently forgotten in the face to avoid confrontation with the government, leaving hospital workers still with deplorably low wage levels.

Fisher claims this is an interim award, and that the union intends to 'build up its resources' to bring 'pressure' at a later stage. Hospital workers must not be fooled by this talk.

In this struggle the union refused to

allow the membership to exert real 'pressure'. Despite the union ballot for all-out strike action, the leaders allowed only selective strikes.

The union leaders have imposed tactics that undermine solidarity. The situation in Leeds last week was typical. When oil tanker lorries refused to cross the picket lines to refuel the boilers in one hospital, the local union official pledged his support - only to go on television later condemning the hospital pickets' action and recommending the tankers be allowed in.

At St James' Hospital, Leeds, steward and member of the International Socialists George Roberts was given full support by his fellow workers until the local official used 'red scare' tactics to isolate him. He was told by the area officer to stop producing the local rank and file bulletin or risk losing his credentials and his job.

But the fight is far from over. Morale is high and there is anger among the hospital workers. As a Teesside militant put it: 'A victory has been achieved at local level in that hospital workers have seen they can take action against local management. Strikes have achieved the maximum effect.'

In many areas where hospitals have voted to go back, the voting has been close and the mood is far from defeatist. Hospital militants have conceded round one to the government, but now see the urgent need to organise for the next battle. They are not content to leave things to the union leaders.

The first issue of a rank and file newspaper, The Hospital Worker, will appear next week and will attempt to draw the lessons from the strike and point the way forward for hospital trade unionists.

Doctor attacks picket with red-hot iron bar

OXFORD:-Last week a picket of 40 hospital workers outside an incinerator was attacked by a local doctor wielding a red-hot iron bar. One worker was seriously burned on the hands and had to go to hospital.

Hospital management had presented an ultimatum to striking incinerator operators, saying that rubbish must be burned by 5pm that evening. This was met by a solid picket line and police were called to usher doctors, management and staff members through.

Several hundred workers in five Oxford hospitals walked out in protest the following day, but were later told to return to work by union officials when management agreed to use union labour to burn rubbish.

TORY DEATH PLOT

from page one

the IRA, although both wings of the republican movement denied responsibility.

Two days later, the Minister of Justice, Mr Desmond O'Malley, gave a special interview to Irish television in which he screamed abuse at the IRA and swore revenge for the week's incidents. Two months later, he introduced his repressive Offences Against the State Act.

The Littlejohns also claimed that they had done the Grafton Street robbery as part of their general 'intelligence' work for the British government and that they had deliberately made it look 'an IRA job'. The robbery was in fact carried out by men who called each other 'commandant', one of whom wore a peaked, military cap.

The Worker suggests that the Littlejohns have been 'sacrificed' by the British government in exchange for John Wyman, who was found guilty recently of receiving crucial, secret Irish government documents on behalf of the British government.

On his conviction, Wyman was instantly released. A sentence normally 'appropriate' to Wyman's very serious offence would have been extremely embarrassing for the British government since Wyman was among their top six intelligence officers in Ireland.

A warrant for the arrest of the Littlejohns for the bank robbery was issued in Dublin the day after Wyman was

arrested on 21 December.

Part of the pact, suggests the Worker, was that the Littlejohns should not be charged for any political offences.

Whether or not these allegations are repeated in full in the Irish court case, there is expected to be 'no comment' from the British government, nor any change in the government's view that 'those who seek to use violence for political ends in Ireland' should be punished with the maximum possible severity.

Printing boss begins to weaken over sacking

LIVERPOOL:-Management at Tillotsons, the carton printers occupied for a month by 400 SOGAT members, showed the first signs of weakening last week. The printers are protesting against the sacking of their four senior chapel officials and threats of redundancy to a quarter of the workforce.

Management have asked for 'talks about talks', and have been forced to accept as chapel negotiators the four sacked officials.

Paul Haywood, a member of the chapel committee, made it clear that donations from other trade unionists were crucial to the continuing fighting ability of the workforce.

Boilermakers are sacked

BELFAST:-700 of the 2300 boilermakers at the Harland and Wolff shipyards were paid off last Friday as their overtime ban continued. The ban is because a bonus scheme in a major productivity deal signed last year has not been brought in. The remaining 1600 men are to be sacked over the next few weeks.

In spite of a Boilermakers Union executive order to return to normal working, the boilermakers voted unanimously to continue with their action.

The executive's reasons for ordering a return to normal working are similar to those used by Tory ministers—that if Belfast workers dare to struggle for better wages and conditions they could upset the British ruling class's plans for stabilising its control over Northern Ireland.

The boilermakers, who are 98 per cent Protestant, receive from £8 to £12 less than boilermakers in Britain. If ever they are to close the gap, they must totally reject the dangerous argument that they must accept low wages and bad conditions to ensure political stability for British domination.

Engineers and electricians, who have an £8-a-week claim before the Tory Pay Board, could also be involved in industrial action if their demand is rejected.

Scandal over massive drug profits

TO PAY the 220,000 hospital workers the £2 extra a week to meet their full claim would cost slightly more than £22 million a year.

The money could have been found by the Health Service at a stroke if Roche Products repaid 'excess profits' made since 1966 on the marketing in Britain of two tranquilliser drugs.

The conservative Monopolies Commission, in a report out last week, estimated that Roche made £25 million in profits from 1966 to 1972. Almost all of this, even by the cosy reckoning of the Monopolies Commission, was 'excess'.

Roche, in its 'statements of accounts' to the commission, claimed that the ingredients for Librium cost £407 per kilo and for Vallium £1014 per kilo. 'We are informed,' says the report drily, 'that the active ingredients . . . could be purchased from various Italian manufacturers for about £9 and £20 respectively per kilo.'

Although the commission criticises Roche, it says nothing about the exploitation of the Health Service and of hospital workers which is carried out by all drug companies. It doesn't like 60 per cent profits made by Roche, and it would like Roche to bring its profits down to the 'norm' in the industry—about 25 per cent, the highest average for any group of industries in the country.

It makes no complaint about the

continued looting of a monopoly market created by the Patent Laws and a National Health Service which is not responsible for choosing the products it buys (the NHS has no power to order a doctor what to prescribe).

Librium and Vallium have come down in price. But the prices of all drugs and the profiteering of the drug companies remains almost as big a scandal as the pay of hospital workers.

2000 ON ONE-DAY STRIKE

MIDDLESEX:-More than 2000 workers at the Hoover plant successfully staged the third of their weekly one-day strikes on Monday. The started the action when Hoover, who made almost £18 million profit last year, refused to offer more than £1 plus 4 per cent.

Hoover have set out to harass and

provoke their employees. On Friday they tried to block the wages of the night shift. After a sit-down and an angry procession through the factory, the workers forced management to pay up.

The police tried again on Monday to force a way through the picket line, manhandling one of the pickets

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