

What we think

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Thousands of older workers, thrown on the employers' scrap heap as useless, died of cold because they could not afford adequate clothing, food and fuel.

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Now, as the trade union and Labour leaders run for cover before the Tories' anti-union offensive, their so-called campaign for higher pensions this winter will strike every class-conscious worker as the height of opportunist hypocrisy.

Saturday's Labour Party pensions rally dragged this vital issue facing the working class through a two-hour morass of tear-jerking sentimentality and chauvinism, so as effectively to separate it from the struggle of the trade unions to defeat the Industrial Relations Bill and force the Tories to resign.

Facing a huge banner proclaiming 'We fight on their side', a capacity audience at London's Royal Albert Hall was treated to an organ recital, a pop song rendered by an O.A.S. choir and accompanied by a group, and a platform of assorted stars of stage, screen and Westminster.

Transport and General Workers' secretary Jack Jones said that the campaign 'must shake the confidence of the hard-faced men in Downing St'.

Trade unionists should link up with pensioners' associations to 'help them to know their rights'.

How will the Tories be persuaded?

'Write to the Prime Minister demanding a substantial increase', advised Jones. 'He takes notice of letters.'

Or as the Post Office used to advertise: 'Somebody somewhere is waiting for a letter from you!'

Nothing could instil more confidence among the Tories than this nauseating admission of bankruptcy from the secretary of Britain's most powerful union.

Except perhaps the statements of Trades Union Congress secretary Vic Feather.

Hot from his efforts to end the powermen's action, the TUC chief diverged from his set text to state: 'If pensioners would come out on strike for better pensions, I would bloody well lead you!'

This is indeed the height of humbuggery! Feather offers to lead a strike of pensioners who are now too old after a lifetime of work and struggle, and yet, during their working lives, he would have been the first to oppose such action on their part.

For the vast majority of pensioners, even Feather cannot arrange a return-to-work!

Nothing could be more unprincipled in the face of Feather's total opposition to any working-class action to bring down this reactionary government.

The fight for adequate pensions is part and parcel of this struggle to smash the capitalist system of exploitation once and for all.

The Tories mean to trample the old age pensioners underfoot in their efforts to defeat the entire working class.

It is in this context that the All Trades Unions Alliance takes up the struggle for older workers—as part of the struggle for basic rights and alternative revolutionary leadership in the trade unions.

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Leaders capitulate on work to rule

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Union law behind power witch-hunt

BY A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

ELECTRICITY - SUPPLY workers have over the last few days been made victims of a ruthless campaign by government, press and television.

While the main aim of this campaign has been to defeat the power men's legitimate demand for a £5 16s wage increase, it has another function in the Tory strategy.

This is to divide the working-class movement, on the eve of anti-union legislation being enacted, and to whip up an ultra-right movement against the working class with which to bludgeon trade unionists in the coming struggles.

While arming itself with emergency powers, the capitalist class openly encouraged provocations and even violence against electrical-supply workers by right-wing, middle-class forces.

Tory answer

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This is the Tory answer to the December 8 strike against the Industrial Relations Bill.

Encouraged both by the criminal inaction of the trade union and Labour leaders on this proposed law and by their shameful failure even verbally to support the power workers, the Tories scented victory over an important section of the working class.

The power men's fight is the same as that facing every section of workers.

Rocketing prices, rents and fares force all workers to fight for substantial increases even to keep pace with the cost of living.

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Actual policy
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And they want to defeat the power workers in order to be free to do more of these things.

Saturday's letters in 'The Times' indicate the mood that is being cultivated for even more stringent laws.

No doubt inspired by 'Labour leader' Lord George-Brown's earlier letter attacking the strikers, one correspondent says:

'Need "industrial action" nowadays all be one-sided and have employers forgotten their one-creed threat of the lock-out?'

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But efforts to create new jobs by lowering interest rates and making money more freely available appear to be having no effect on the rising jobless curve.

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Lost confidence

The employers have lost confidence in the economy, a loss revealed very clearly when the recent easing of credit served only to provoke a massive outflow of funds to West Germany.

The President and his advisers appear to have no solution to the crisis, and are turning more and more to brutal attacks on workers' rights through 'law-and-order' policies.

His use of the courts against the striking railway workers is an indication of the class tension as a strong and confident working class continues to press for higher pay.

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No one can claim their demands not to be entirely justified.

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Robert Jauregui, from near-by Elbar, shot during a demonstration in support of the Burgos 16 last week.

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From Mougins, on the south coast, 89-year old Spanish-born artist Pablo Picasso sent a message to the organizers of a solidarity demonstration at near-by Valauris backing all action in support of the prisoners at Burgos.

Only the strength of the working-class movement now stands between the prisoners at Burgos and Franco's firing squads.

Freedom of press is a class fraud

THERE is nothing like a good dose of class struggle to expose the lies, myths and hypocrisy which make up the so-called freedom of the press in this country.

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The main purpose of the capitalist news media—in which the press plays a predominant part—has always been to sustain the so-called sanctity, inviolability, immutability and permanence of the capitalist system and the 'right' of the capitalist class to exploit and oppress the working class at home and the colonial peoples abroad.

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proprietors were a virtual law unto themselves and treated their workers as they pleased; there was no cause for alarm; then there was 'freedom of the press' indeed.

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galloping upwards and workers winning big wage increases in a fight against the rising cost of living.

Current price rises average 6 per cent per annum, and wage settlements like the General Motors agreement are running at 30 per cent over three years.

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by Franco and his cabinet in Madrid. They have already been forced to hesitate by the scale of resistance in Spain and abroad.

Many workers in the Basque country plan to continue last week's strikes this morning.

In San Sebastian police stepped in on Saturday to arrest all 40 employees of a branch of the Biscay Bank who launched a strike.

They were protesting against the police murder of the 21-year old worker

Robert Jauregui, from near-by Eibar, shot during a demonstration in support of the Burgos 16 last week.

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NOT YET having had a chance to read either of the books reviewed in Workers Press of December 4 under the heading 'How British trade unions developed', I cannot say whether your reviewers fairly present the contents of the books under review.

But both reviews contain some factual inaccuracies and rather dubious interpretations, which ought to be corrected if your readers are to develop, as seems to be intended, an understanding of the history of the British labour movement as part of the preparation for the current struggle to defend trade union rights.

It is necessary, as Karen Blick points out, to destroy the Fabian myth that trade unions obtained their legal status by parliamentary tactics and in a gradual evolutionary fashion.

But the alternative account which she puts forward is an historical, inconsistent and in addition actually bolsters the Fabian myth, particularly in respect of the class-collaborationist tendencies of the 'labour aristocracy' and the 'encouragement' of trade unionism by the industrial capitalist class through the Liberal Party.

The term 'New Model Unions', first made into a general description of the national societies of skilled workers by the Webbs, refers to the modelling of their rules and organization on the constitution of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers founded in 1851 by an amalgamation of various semi-localized craft unions.

Resisted

It was not a term used by employers, and never signified that such unions were of a desirable model 'from the standpoint of the employer'.

The fight which the ASE had to wage on its formation against the onslaught of the employers will be well known to engineering and other workers.

For decades the vast majority of employers resisted any concession to collective bargaining or recognition of workers' representatives in negotiation, and throughout the 19th century the unions of skilled workers met with sharp opposition to most of their demands.

These unions were often conservative in their tactics; attempting to limit strike action to disputes they could reasonably expect to win, employing the selective rather than the general strike, preferring negotiation, and in some cases adopting arbitration, to obtain their objectives wherever possible; their argument being that indiscriminate strike action would have entirely destroyed their organizations.

But they never abandoned the strike weapon or forsore militant defence of their 'restrictive trade practices'.

They compromised time and again, but they did not surrender to the terms which the bourgeoisie wished to impose on them. To suggest otherwise is not only to do an injustice to our forefathers, but also to misunderstand the contradictions in the behaviour of the British working class and its potentialities for struggle in the current situation.

Image

The engineers, carpenters, bricklayers, stonemasons, etc., all unions of the 'labour aristocracy', were very far from functioning 'purely as friendly societies', as the employers well knew.

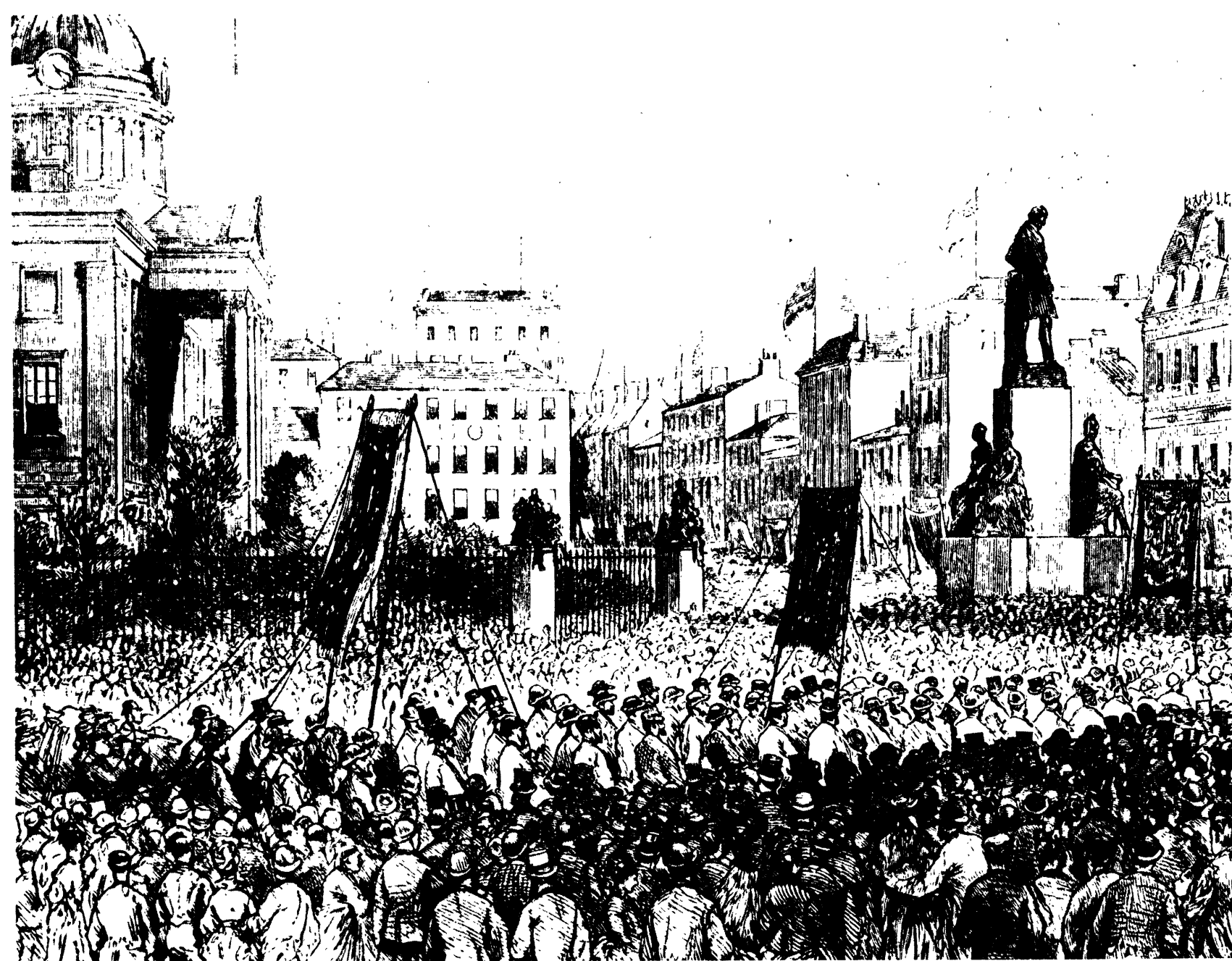
It is a mistake to take at face value the evidence of the union leaders, before the Royal Commission on Trade Unions of 1867-1869, where, in order to counter the attacks of the ruling class, they attempted to create for themselves a 'respectable image'.

This typically bureaucratic tactic was mistaken, but it did not signify a renunciation of the class struggle, nor did it fool their opponents.

It was the employers and opponents of unions who wanted to restrict them to purely friendly society functions, and this attempt was strongly resisted by the unionists.

When it was suggested to William Allan (not 'Allen'), the engineers' secretary, that his union had become 'an insurance society and much less of a trade union in the ordinary sense of the term', he rejected the proposition with the reply:

'It is as much of a trade union as any other, and I would like to see it accepted as such, let alone en-



Craft trade unionists marching through Manchester in 1874

The history of British trade unions

society now as it ever was. We have only added what I might call the benefit portion.'

Even while striving to show how useful their 'friendly benefits' were in relieving the burden on the poor-rates, the union leaders did not accept the social and economic principles of the ruling class.

Under pressure to admit the 'common interest' of employer and employee, Allan defiantly declared:

'There I differ. Every day of the week I hear that the interests are identical. I scarcely see how that can be, while we are in a state of society which recognizes the principle of buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market.'

'It is their interest to get the labour done at as low a rate as they possibly can, and it is ours to get as high a rate of wages as possible, and you never can reconcile those two things.'

Outspoken

Other unionist witnesses before the Commission were even more outspoken. To say that Allan's evidence 'stressed the near impossibility of his members resorting to strike action within the framework of the union rules' is a distortion: resistance to encroachments on established rights or wages had automatic backing, but major claims for wage increases which might lead to prolonged strike action had to be sanctioned by a democratic vote of the membership whose contributions would be used to finance the struggle.

Perhaps Lloyd Evans' book, like many others, only selects those passages which show the union leaders in their most conciliatory pose. This is all part of the furtherance of the Fabian myth, and it should be balanced by the other evidence, including that of the employers as to the actual practical operation of union policies.

There was nothing like uniform acceptance, let alone en-

couragement, of unionism, even in its most conciliatory form, within the ranks of the Liberal Party.

Karen Blick ignores these divisions and presents a completely inaccurate picture of the achievement of legal rights by the unions. The Bill proposed by the Liberal government in 1871 was split into two under pressure from the unions and some of their middle-class parliamentary friends (who were not numerous). The Trade Union Act was almost entirely satisfactory in conceding legal rights and in some respects a privileged status to the unions: the penal provisions were not part of this Act, but were contained in the Criminal Law Amendment Act, which was made more stringent in the Conservative-dominated House of Lords and carried in the Commons, against the government, by a combination of Tories and Liberal manufacturers and doctrinaire adherents of political economy.

Peaceful picketing had specifically been legalized as early as 1859, and, though the 1871 legislation repealed this provision, it was the declared intention of the government to maintain this right. (Whether the declaration was 'sincere' is another matter.)

'Coercion'

But the judges, contrary to the sense of the Act, interpreted the provisions against 'coercion', and, in addition, applied the law of conspiracy, in such a way that any strike might be declared illegal: the penalties used against peaceful picketing and the application to trade unions of the common law of conspiracy, were removed, and not (as Blick asserts) 'reinforced', by the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act of 1875 and the Employers and Workmen Act of the same year.

These Acts, which amounted to 'full legality' for trade unions and strikers' were at the time, and have ever since been, regarded as a great victory for labour, and it is curious that Blick sees in them exactly the reverse.

How were these gains achieved? Not by purely parliamentary means, nor through the Liberal Party. The 1875 Acts were passed by the Conservatives (who had hitherto opposed concessions to the unionists), partly as an opportunistic political manoeuvre (Disraeli thought by doing so he could win the working class to the Tory Party), but largely in response to the increased effectiveness of trade union organization and the steps (admittedly hesitant) in the direction of independent political action.

Up to 1871 the union bureaucracy had relied on polite requests, which the Liberal leaders had been able to ignore; but thereafter the organization of the recently formed Trades Union Congress was strengthened, and,

though its role in leadership left much to be desired, the demands became more insistent.

But more important than bureaucratic deputations to the Home Secretary, the rank and file locally, through their trades councils, began not only to bully their MPs, but to go on to the streets in mass demonstrations.

Awakening

In August 1873, after a large demonstration in Edinburgh, the Home Secretary Lowe (who had bitterly attacked unionism and used its power as an argument against extending the franchise in 1867) wrote to the Prime Minister:

'I think the meeting of the Scotch working classes at Edinburgh a very serious event. They are just awakening to the consciousness of power. [My emphasis.] I don't see very well how their demand[s] that criminal liabilities shall not be engrafted on civil contracts are to be resisted. . . . I think it will be wise to consider the question carefully and see if we cannot make some concession.'



Disraeli

It was under this sort of pressure, plus the threat of independent political action, that the gains of 1875 were obtained.

That the trade union movement did not go forward from there to create a Labour Party immediately is not entirely due to bureaucratic leadership and the intrusion of 'bourgeois ideology'.

The reasons are too complex to go into here, but there were enormous obstacles to the creation of such a party, particularly at a time of economic recession.

The 'New Unions' of the 1890s were an important step forward industrially and (due to socialist influence) politically, though they were not altogether 'free from the old illusions in the Liberal Party', but this movement did not win for trade union rights they had not previously possessed.

In the course of the 1890s legal decisions (largely in re-

sponse to the industrial policy of the new unions of the unskilled) seriously undermined the gains previously won.

The culmination of this attack in the law courts, the judgement in the Taff Vale case, was the application to trade unions of the law of torts, which had not hitherto been used against them.

The 1906 Trade Disputes Act restored and strengthened the legal rights and immunity of trade unions, and attempted to guard against further judicial twisting of the law. However, both historical precedent and current experience show that periodically the ruling class uses the law courts in an attempt to annihilate the legal rights wrong from the legislature by the working class.

The 1906 Act was indeed won by the formation of the Labour Party, but Karen Blick, by making this 'the final step' in a 'process', in effect subscribes to a Fabian concept of gradual acquisition of rights, rather than to an antithetical concept of working-class advance and ruling-class counter-attack.

Less serious shortcomings in the review are that the quotation from Godfrey (not 'Geoffrey') Lushington, the Comtist lawyer, describing the injustice of the Master and Servant Law, relates to the period before the passing of the 1867 Act, which, while not entirely satisfactory, did attempt to improve the position of workmen.

Connection

Lushington's essay is well worth reading, not only for this description, but for the discussion of the connection between trade unionism and the movement for the extension of the franchise to working men.

It is worth noting that Lushington, who was one of the legal advisers to the unions in 1867-1869, became Counsel to the Home Office in 1869 and helped to draft the labour legislation of the period.

In the light of this dual role a significant feature in his essay is that he was one of the first writers to state clearly that there was some hope for industrial peace and class harmony in the trade union movement itself, rather than in the supersession of trade unions by co-operative ventures or joint organizations of employers and employees.

This was not generally recognized by employers at the time (1867) or indeed for many years afterwards, and it has never become the unanimous view of the capitalist class, for it is only partially true that unions restrain the militancy of their members, and there is always a danger for the ruling class that workers will break through the bureaucratic and reformist apparatus.

Lushington and his fellow Positivists, Frederic Harrison and Henry Crompton, are prime ex-

amples of how 'alien' ideology entered the labour movement, but there were positive as well as negative sides to their contribution.

Bill Bowring's review naturally has less to say about trade unions but in what he does say he misapplies the term 'New Unions' to the ASE—it relates properly to the unskilled unions of the 1890s (see above)—and he also makes some mistakes in relation to the Irish movement.

An attempt

Probably due to a printers' error, the date of foundation of the Fenian movement in the United States is given as 1867, whereas it occurred a decade earlier, though it had not become prominent until after the American Civil War.

In 1866 the Fenians attempted an invasion of Canada, and later a rising in Ireland which obtained little support from the down-trodden and priest-ridden peasantry.

It was in the aftermath of these events that the Manchester van incident occurred, and later in the year (1867) the attempt

to release Fenian prisoners from Clerkenwell jail by blowing up the walls.

Such guerrilla tactics, for all their heroism, were doomed to futility without an organized revolutionary party based on the urban working class, and despite drawing its main support from Irish immigrant workers in England (and the USA) the Fenian movement was never much more than a para-military expatriates' club.

The connections between the Fenians and trade unions in Britain, and the joint impact these had on the consciousness of the ruling class have never been fully explored.

Bowring is right to stress the necessity of considering these movements together, along with the crisis over Reform and the trade depression of 1866-1867.

The latter, incidentally, was not caused by a successful wage offensive, though the opponents of unions blamed them for it and pretended that 'restrictive practices' had priced British goods out of international markets.

The ranks of the unemployed were further swelled by the effects of the severe winter of 1866-1867, and this contributed to the uneasy state of mind of the ruling class, faced by the triple problem of Fenianism, Unionism, and Reform.

Unfortunately these movements did not sufficiently coalesce in a conscious manner to take advantage of the revolutionary possibilities inherent in 1867, but there were limited moves in that direction.

In this connection, there is, I believe, an error in the statement that 'a meeting of the International . . . reported in 'The Times' of November 21 [1867] . . . The President, Beccles, condemned the Fenians' tactics . . .'

I think what is really referred to here is a meeting of the Reform League on October 23, at which a letter was read from its President, Edmond Beales, a radical barrister, condemning the Fenians, and suggesting that the Reform League should resort to force when there were constitutional means open to the Irish.

'Our men'

Most of the speakers at the meeting, far from making support for the Irish conditional on their contribution to the Reform struggle, denounced the views and supported the right of the Irish to resort to arms.

Many of these speakers were members of the International, and it is to this meeting and its repercussions that Marx refers in the letter of November 2 (quoted by Bowring): 'what a row "our men" have made in the Reform League'.

On November 19, 1867, 3,000 English workers met on Clerkenwell Green in support of the Fenians, and a delegate bringing greetings from a meeting of Irishmen held simultaneously at Notting Hill, expressed the hope that 'from this time forward English and Irish working men would go hand in hand together until the entire freedom of the people in both countries was accomplished'.

Reporting this next day, 'The Times' warned:

'There are not wanting symptoms of a sympathy with Fenians, not as patriots, but as the enemies of constituted authority [my emphasis], a lawless temper, fostered, if not engendered, by Fenianism, and carefully developed by professional incendiaries, is already making itself felt in our great towns.'

In its list of 'lawless acts'—street rowdiness, desperate

Reader GRAHAME HIGGINSON writes about two book reviews which appeared in Workers Press on Friday, December 4.

assaults on the police, bread riots, seditious meetings—the mouthpiece of the ruling class did not specifically mention trade union 'lawlessness', not that it was negligible, but because to have made the connection openly between Fenianism and unionism might have turned the dreadful prospect into dangerous reality.

A further Clerkenwell Green meeting on November 21 (referred to in the review) seems to have been at least partly a joint Anglo-Irish affair.

An attendance of 20-25,000 was claimed by the organizers, but 'The Times' (perhaps deliberately understating the numbers) only conceded 'over 4,000'.

The mealy-mouthed terms of the petition to the Queen indeed show the political weakness of the movement at this time (though a few years later there was a strong current of republicanism in the English working class), and after the 'outrage' at Clerkenwell jail on December 13, which killed several people in nearby houses, without in the least affecting the escape of the prisoners, the sympathy of English workers for Fenianism greatly declined.

Further arrests of Fenians and repression in Ireland followed, and though after several years of protest and petitions some of the Fenian prisoners were released, the Irish liberation movement largely became a constitutional attempt under predominantly middle-class leadership, to capture the Liberal Party for 'Home Rule', which English trade unionists supported.

Situation

The reckless adventurism of the Fenian leaders, almost as much as the political backwardness of the English working class, kept the movement apart, though then as now, Irish workers played an important part in English trade unions, and given correct leadership a combination of these national sections of the British labour movement could have altered profoundly the history of both countries.

The potentialities which existed in the years around 1867 have still to be realized, but we are now in a much more favourable situation than existed a century ago.

Both English and Irish workers can draw on their history of struggle, while recognizing the inadequacy of many of their past methods.

Neither trade union rights nor any of the other gains of the working class were won purely by gradual parliamentary means, and they were not defended by such means.

To leave the defence of these rights solely to parliamentary representatives—even if they are Labour Party 'workers' own' representatives—or in the hands of the trade union bureaucrats—however much they protest their willingness to fight—is to lay the movement wide open to disaster.

Only mass action by the working class, industrial and political, can defeat the current attack launched by the employers on all fronts; and only a revolutionary conception of this struggle, and revolutionary organization uniting all sections of workers for all of their objectives, can, in the situation of the present crisis of capitalism, transform a ruling-class offensive into a complete and permanent victory for the working class—the overthrow of capitalism, and its replacement by a socialist society in both Britain and Ireland, as a stage towards the achievement of world socialism.

Grahame Higginson.

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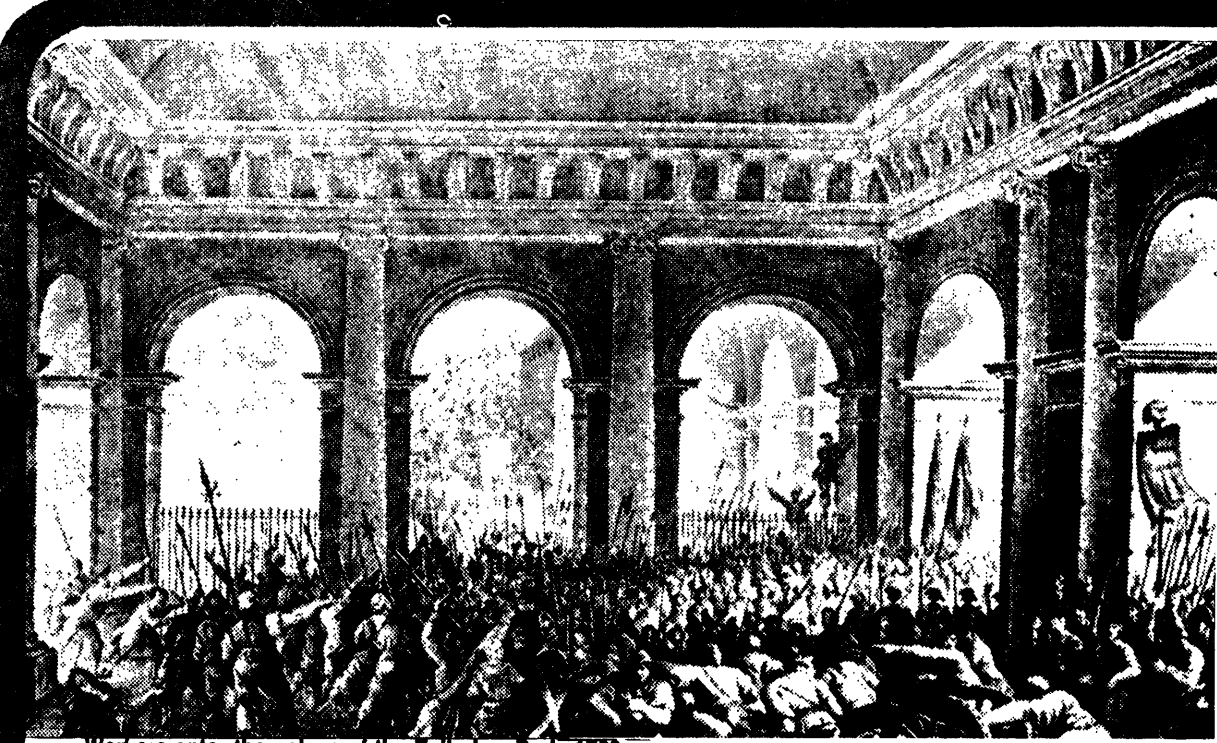
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Workers enter the palace of the Tuilleries, Paris 1789

THE AGE OF THE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

by R. R. Palmer
Volume I The Challenge
Volume II The Struggle

Princeton Paperbacks
Princeton University Press
1969, 1970

BOOKS

REVIEWED BY TOM KEMP

French Revolution through liberal eyes

THE MARXIST claim that the French Revolution brought to power a new exploiting class of capitalist property-owners is strongly contested by bourgeois historians.

In the present revolutionary epoch it is inevitable that historians should take sides in the interpretation of this great social upheaval.

Its study raises all the questions about the nature of the bourgeoisie and the laws and institutions by which it exists as are posed by the proletarian revolution.

Certain historians have been concerned to find what looked suspiciously like a Marxist interpretation of the French Revolution seeping into many specialized works, as well as general texts.

As a result studies appeared in academic journals which could have been, and perhaps were, financed by the CIA, so blatant is the attempt to discredit what is taken to be a Marxist view.

But there is no Marxist synthesis of French revolutionary history which takes into account the enormous volumes of detailed historical research which has piled up in recent decades.

During the period of the Popular Front, French Communist Party secretary Thorez adopted an interpretation which conformed with the lines of the French CP.

By comparing Robespierre with Stalin, he abused Robespierre and further contributed to the worship of Stalin.

Today the well-known official chair of French revolutionary history at the Sorbonne is held by card-carrying CP member, Professor Soboul.

To his credit, he would not agree to the extravagant interpretation which once held sway.

He has even engaged in polite controversy with Daniel Guerin, whose book on the Terror was attacked as a tendentious 'Trotskyist' distortion when it appeared in 1946.

Despite Soboul's merits as a historian, his view remains bounded by his association with the CP.

Now a paperback edition of US political historian Professor Palmer's two-volume 'The Age of the Democratic Revolution', published some years ago, has been re-issued.

Palmer attempts a re-evaluation

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tion of the French Revolution by placing it in international context.

He writes readably, sets out to make a 'historical synthesis' and tries, it seems, to sit on the fence in the debate about the revolution's nature.

Palmer's principal merit is to see the Revolution as part of a movement covering the whole of Europe in the second half of the 18th century.

He says there was, 'One big revolutionary agitation, not simply a French Revolution due to purely French causes, and foolishly favoured by irresponsible people in other countries'.

A large part of the first volume is spent examining movements in other countries, and particularly the American Revolution. Much of the second volume is devoted to the consequences which 1789 had outside France.

When he defines the nature of this revolutionary wave his weaknesses stand revealed.

He does not speak about the bourgeoisie revolution but the 'democratic revolution'. In other words he takes as its distinguishing mark what the revolutionaries said it was; he confuses form with content; he remains prisoner of their false consciousness and his own interpretation remains subjective.

He writes it as a middle-class man who fears proletarian revolution and hopes that it can be averted.

Identity

The bourgeoisie revolution did not spring from a previously conceived plan led by an organized party.

The bourgeoisie was becoming conscious of its interests and identity as a class in the 18th century. What is wanted is clear enough.

In the early stages of the Revolution its aims were codified in the Declaration of the Rights of Man, a document like the American Declaration of Independence.

Although couched in universal terms these declarations expressed the specific class interests of the bourgeoisie. Every phrase in the French Declaration struck home at some feature of the old regime which the bourgeoisie considered limited its ability to do what it liked.

A few years later the same bourgeoisie outlawed trade unions and made the 'agrarian law' — the demand for the equal distribution of landed property — a capital offence.

The revolutionaries of the 18th century proclaimed the sovereignty of 'the people' as the only legitimate basis for state power. To achieve this required the overthrow of the dynastic states of the old regime and the abolition of noble privileges and of the nobility as a class.

The question is who put forward this revolutionary programme of democracy and what alternative form of government did they propose?

In all the 18th century struggles with which Palmer deals it was the bourgeoisie which came into collision with kings and constituted bodies and sought to abolish hereditary rank and privilege.

So why not investigate more exactly the social composition of the revolutionary bourgeoisie in each case and relate its ideological concepts — democracy, liberty, etc. — to its needs as a class? This is the question from which Palmer shies away whenever it presents itself through over 1,000 pages of text.

The first point to make seems to be this. The Bourgeoisie was of necessity a minority of the population. Its leaders knew that it could not win power without allies or govern without 'the consent of the people'.

Case-histories

As Palmer's case histories show, where the bourgeoisie was unable to call on wide popular support (as in Holland, Switzerland and Belgium) there was no revolution.

A situation ripe for a bourgeois revolution required a deep social crisis involving 'the masses and bringing them onto the historical scene, often for the first time.

This requires a study of the developing social and economic crisis of the old regime in Europe and of the sources of popular opposition to British

Trotsky notes the absence of such vigorous municipal life as one of the distinguishing marks of Russian backwardness in social development.

ficance of the events of 1793-1794, studied in detail by Guerin and others.

Once the popular masses came into action the Revolution was pushed beyond the limits set for it by even the most radical of the bourgeois leaders, the Jacobins, who remained bourgeois men of property throughout.

Programmes

Democratic programmes and slogans were needed to cut through the privileges and hereditary rights by which the nobility and the monarchy retained their powers. But they were just as necessary to win the mass support without which the bourgeoisie could not stake a claim to rule.

So, although the revolution was democratic in form, acknowledging the 'sovereignty of the people', it was bourgeois in content, establishing the rights of bourgeois property-owners to rule.

The nature of the bourgeoisie and the divisions within its ranks in the 18th-century revolution have to be clearly brought out.

Firstly it was not a historically new class. It had risen during the middle ages in the towns which were centres of trade and industry. It fought to establish its right to govern by wresting municipal charters and similar concessions from lay and ecclesiastical lords, making the towns 'oases of freedom' in medieval society.

Palmer sees that the revolution, did not end with Thermidor. The Directory still had to safeguard the basic gains made by the revolutionary bourgeoisie since 1798.

But it had to do so against both a monarchical restoration and against those, like the followers of Babeuf, who sought to carry the revolution further, thus challenging bourgeois property rights.

The Directors turned their repression alternatively against the monarchists and the left Jacobins and Babeuists.

They did so with the help of generals, notably Napoleon Bonaparte, and no longer with the methods of revolutionary terror which could operate only so long as the masses were on the scene. The bourgeoisie slept more comfortably in their beds after Thermidor.

If the revolution went on, it did so in particular through military expansion and by the threat which French occupation, and to some extent French empire, meant to the old order in Europe.

This forms a major part of Palmer's thesis.

He shows in the first volume how the French Revolution was partly a single revolutionary movement, which manifested itself in different ways in different countries.

Impact

In the second he deals mainly with the impact of the American and French revolutions, the reasons for the absence of revolution in England and the success of counter-revolution in other countries.

He sees the revolutionary movement in political terms, as a struggle for 'democracy'.

Yet democracy did not emerge triumphant. Instead there came men on horseback. How can this be explained?

At this point Professor Palmer's treatment becomes somewhat perfunctory. It can be shown how the military men came to the fore and how the politicians in France discredited themselves.

What was at stake was simple enough: the men of property who had done well out of the purchase of Church and emigré property, who had made fortunes in speculation and arms contracting and no longer thought that 'democracy' — in the perverted form even which existed under the Directory — could safeguard the rights and privileges which the revolution had endowed them with.

They called in a Bonaparte

Secondly, in the course of time, as the bourgeoisie grew in wealth and numbers, sections of it were drawn into association with the monarchy and with feudal society.

Kings granted merchants special privileges; some were ennobled, often for a consideration. Sometimes kings played off the bourgeoisie against the feudal lords in order to strengthen the powers of the monarchy.

Part of the bourgeoisie class became parasitic on feudal society and were closely identified with it.

In France, for instance, there were the tax farmers and other big financiers whose wealth arose from their association with the regime. Most of the tax-farmers later perished on the guillotine.

Émigrés

Some of the nobility engaged in trade and controlled industrial enterprises. Many of the first émigrés in 1789 were bourgeois and a whole section of the bourgeoisie, ruined by the revolution, became its enemies.

Thirdly only a small part of 18th-century bourgeoisie consisted of factory-owners exploiting an industrial proletariat.

The bourgeoisie consisted predominantly of merchants, land and real estate owners, office-holders and professional men — especially the lawyers, from which its main spokesmen were drawn.

property for a long time. One of the changes which the Revolution accomplished was to turn feudal landed property into capitalist private property.

The wealth of the post-revolutionary bourgeoisie was drawn to a large extent from speculation in the lands confiscated from the Church and the emigré nobility.

Fortunes accumulated in this way, or by speculating in scarce commodities or supplying war contracts, later found their way into 19th-century industry and finance.

In the summer of 1789 there was a popular and peasant revolution. Chateaux went up in smoke, together with the documents governing the peasants. Municipal governments were taken over by new men and the old municipal officers and royal officials pushed out.

Demands

These popular masses without whose support the bourgeoisie could not have attained power were now on the move. The question was how to control the forces which had been unleashed and ensure that the revolution remained within bourgeois limits. It is this which gives the years 1793-1794 their special interest.

The 18th-century revolution therefore had a contradiction at its very centre.

When the masses came on the scene they made social demands, not political or juridical.

To oppose the demands of the masses the bourgeoisie had to move back from its more advanced positions. In France this took the classic form of the Thermidorian reaction and the establishment of the Directory.

Palmer sees that the revolution, did not end with Thermidor. The Directory still had to safeguard the basic gains made by the revolutionary bourgeoisie since 1798.

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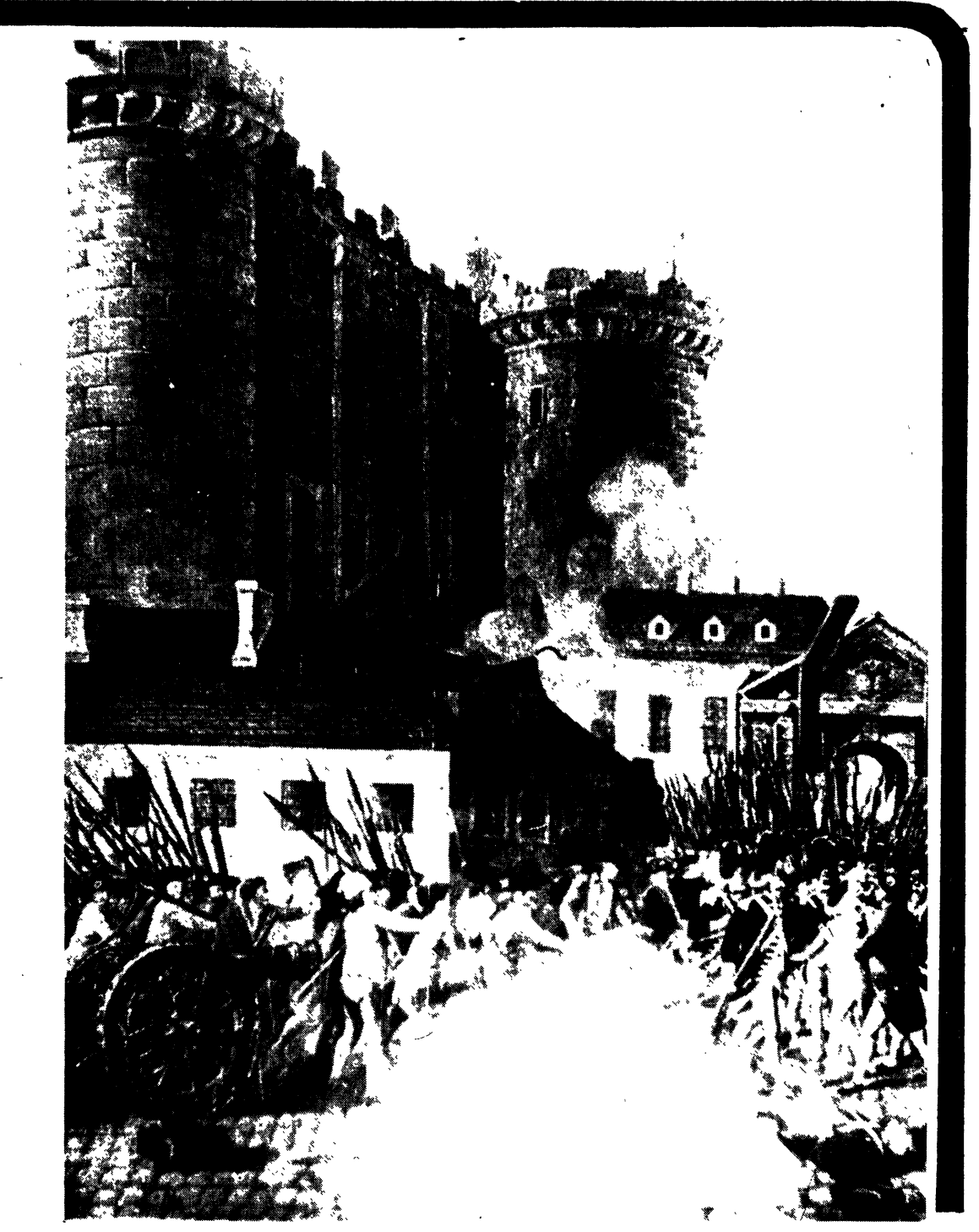
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They called in a Bonaparte



Storming the Bastille

when 'democracy' no longer served its purpose.

The final chapter, the appearance of Napoleon as the heir to the Revolution, ruling in an authoritarian way through the strong state based on the army, conflicts with the thesis of the book.

'Democracy'

The history of the bourgeoisie shows that however much it appreciates the advantages bestowed by 'democracy', it is quite ready to resort to other methods when this is the only way to preserve its position as a ruling class.

Palmer does not grasp the paradox that the period which he calls 'the age of the democratic revolution' culminated in the triumph not of democracy, but of Bonapartism in France, conservative republicanism in the United States and reaction everywhere else.

The bourgeoisie had gained positions even where it was not actually in power. It gained them socially and economically because every step forward of the

economy opened up new possibilities for merchants, bankers, industrial entrepreneurs and their professional and intellectual hangers on.

His final chapter marks a step backwards compared with much that he had written previously in the two volumes.

He says: 'In the 18th century there might have been no revolution, if only the upper and ruling classes had made more sagacious concessions, if indeed, the contrary tendencies towards a positive assertion of aristocratic values had not been so strong.'

The lesson of the 18th-century wave of revolutions is that ruling classes do not voluntarily withdraw from the scene of history, abandoning their privileges and power to a newly ascending class.

Decline

On the contrary, in the twilight period of its decline the beneficiaries of the old order become more reactionary, more tenacious in their hold over what they have and more reluctant to yield any of it.

But hardly had the first blows

in the revolution been struck when the counter-revolution began to organize. Likewise, the other countries of the old regime could not tolerate the threat of a revolutionary state on their frontiers, which was an example to their own opponents at home.

Palmer is conscious all through his work that there are parallels between the situation in Europe and North America in the period he covers, 1760-1800, and the contemporary epoch since the Russian Revolution.

Liberal's hope

As a liberal he cannot draw out all these parallels; because the conclusion would be that the conditions are now ripe for its overthrow.

What he is saying, in effect, by analogy with his view that the French Revolution could have been avoided, is that the bourgeoisie, by making 'sagacious concessions' can avoid going the way of former ruling classes.

This is the last-ditch hope of a liberal who, in the face of all of history's lessons, believes that with reason and commonsense bourgeois rule can go on for ever.

tv

BBC 1
10.25-11.55 a.m. Schools. 12.55 p.m. Malcolm Muggeridge asks the Question Why. 1.30 Watch with mother. 1.45-1.53 News and weather. 2.55-3.15 Schools. 4.40 Jackanory. 4.55 Blue Peter. 5.20 Barrier reef. 5.44 The magic roundabout. 5.50 News and weather. 6.00 LONDON THIS WEEK. Weather. 6.20 ENTERTAINING WITH KERR. 6.45 ASK THE FAMILY. 7.05 Z CARS. 'Playing for Keeps', part one. 7.30 NOT IN FRONT OF THE CHILDREN. 'A Yap in the Night'. 8.00 PANORAMA. 9.00 THE NINE O'CLOCK NEWS and weather. 9.20 STEPTOE AND SON. 'The Three Feathers'. 9.50 DOOMWATCH. 'You Killed Toby Wren'. 10.40 24 HOURS. 11.15 THE PARKERS AT SALTRAM. 11.45 Weather.

REGIONAL BBC
All regions as above except:
Midlands, E Anglia: 6.00-6.20 Midlands today. Look East, weather. 11.47 News, weather. North, NW, NE, Cumberland and Westmorland: 6.00-6.20 Look North, weather. 11.47 News, weather. Wales: 1.30-1.45 Ar lin mam. 6.00-6.20 Wales today, weather. 6.45-7.05 Heddiw. 7.30-8.00 Fo a fe. 11.47 Weather. Scotland: 1.00-1.30 Jesus today. 6.00-6.20 Reporting Scotland. 6.20-6.45 Se ur beatha. 11.15-11.45 Caring for people. 11.47 News, weather. N Ireland: 6.00-6.20 Scene around six, weather. 7.30-8.00 Day at night. 11.47 News, weather. SW, South, West: 6.00-6.20 Points West. South today, Spotlight SW, weather. 11.47 News, weather.

BBC 2
11.00-11.20 a.m. PLAY SCHOOL. 7.05 p.m. FRANCE. 'Les Frangals'. 7.30 NEWSROOM and weather. 8.00 THE HIGH CHAPARRAL. 'Too Late the Epitaph'. 8.50 CALL MY BLUFF. 9.20 HORIZON. 'Earthquakes, San Francisco'. 10.15 ALAN PRICE in concert. 10.45 NEWS ON 2 and weather. 10.50 'AMSTERDAM—CITY OF PROTEST'. Moral contradictions and outdated laws. 11.25 LATE NIGHT LINE-UP.

ITV
2.25 p.m. Journey of a lifetime. 2.40 Men and war. 2.50 Backfire. 3.45 Granny gets the point. 4.15 Anita in jumbleland. 4.20 Crossroads. 4.50 Lost in space. 5.50 News. 6.02 TODAY. 6.45 DAVID NIXON'S MAGIC BOX. 7.30 CORONATION STREET. 8.00 WORLD IN ACTION. 8.30 MAN AT THE TOP. 'Charly Begins at Home'. 9.30 GIRLS ABOUT TOWN. 10.00 NEWS AT TEN. 10.30 LATE NIGHT THRILLER. 'Night Train to Paris'. With Leslie Nielsen and Aliza Gur. An OSS agent is pursued by foreign agents. 11.40 THREE SCORE AND MORE.

REGIONAL ITV
CHANNEL: 4.00 Puffin's birthday greetings. 4.10 Anita in jumbleland. 4.25 Short story. 4.55 Forest rangers. 5.20 Timeslip. 5.50 London. 6.00 News, weather. 6.10 What's on where. 6.15 Knockout quiz. 6.45 London. 10.30 Quest for Arthur. 11.15 University challenge. 11.40 News, weather. WESTWARD. As Channel except: 3.58 News. 4.00 Gus Honeybun. 6.00 Diary. 6.20 Sports desk. 11.45 Faith for life. 11.50 Weather. SOUTHERN: 3.00 Journey of a lifetime. 4.00 Houseparty. 4.15 Felix the cat. 4.25 Best of Lucy. 4.55 Land of

the giants. 5.50 London. 6.00 Day by day. 6.25 Brona look at pop. 4.18 Women only. 4.40 Enchanted house. 4.55 Captain Scarlet. 5.20 Timeslip. 5.50 London. 6.01 Report West. 6.23 Report Wales. 6.45 London. 10.30 Cinema: 'The Country Girl'. With Bing Crosby, Grace Kelly and William Holden. A has-been star has a chance to make a comeback. 12.15 Weather. HTV (West) colour channel 61 as above except: 4.16-4.18 Report West. 6.23-6.45 This is the West this week. HTV (Wales) colour channel 41 as above except: 6.01-6.23 Y dydd. 8.00-8.30 Yr wythnos. ANGLIA: 4.05 Granny gets the point. 4.25 News. 4.35 Romper room. 4.55 Buss Bunny. 5.15 Timeslip. 5.50 London. 6.00 About Anglia. 6.40 London. 10.30 Probe. 11.00 Love, American style. 11.55 Fanning diary. 12.20 Other faiths. ATV MIDLANDS: 3.49 Horoscope. 3.52 Women today. 4.10 Peyton Place. 4.40 Anita in jumbleland. 4.55 Skippy. 5.15 Timeslip. 5.50 London. 6.00 ATV today. 6.40 London. 10.30 University challenge. 11.02 Object in view, weather. ULSTER: 4.30 Romper room. 4.50 News. 4.55 Phoenix five. 5.20 Timeslip. 5.50 London. 6.00 UTV reports. 6.15 Mona McCluskey. 6.45 London. 10.30 Monday night. 10.35 Movie macabre. YORKSHIRE: 3.00 Judo. 3.25 Fencing. 3.50 Shooting. 4.15 London. 4.30 Martine. 4.55 Rovers. 5.20 Timeslip. 5.50 London. 6.00 Calendar, weather. 6.15 University challenge. 6.45 London. 10.30 Name of the game. 11.55 Weather. GRANADA: 4.10 News. Peyton Place. 4.40 Anita in jumbleland. 4.55 Skippy. 5.15 Timeslip. 5.50 London. 6.01 Side-on-line. 6.10 All our yesterdays. 6.40 London. 10.30 University challenge. 11.00 Homicide. TYNE TEES: 4.10 News. 4.15 Mad movies. 4.40 Anita in jumbleland. 4.55 Skippy. 5.20 Timeslip. 5.50 London. 6.00 Today at six. 6.25 Sports-time. 6.45 London. 10.30 Face the press. 11.00 Aquarius. 11.45 News. 12 midnight How many times. BORDER: 4.10 News. 4.12 High livin'. 4.40 Anita in jumbleland. 4.55 Joe 90. 5.20 Timeslip. 5.50 London. 6.00 News. Lookaround. 6.15 University challenge. 6.40 London. 10.30 DUBLINERS. 11.00 Aquarius. 11.45 News, weather. SCOTTISS: 3.40 Dateline. 3.50 Horoscope. 3.52 Women today. 4.15 London. 4.40 Anita in jumbleland. 4.55 Captain Scarlet. 5.15 Timeslip. 5.50 London. 6.00 Dateline. 6.40 London. 10.30 Debate. 11.15 Late call. GRAMPAIN: 3.49 News. 3.52 Women today. 4.15 London. 4.25 High living. 4.55 Skippy. 5.15 Timeslip. 5.50 London. 6.00 News, weather. 6.10 Cartoon. 6.20 Country focus. 6.40 London. 10.30 University challenge. 11.00 Talk about sex.

Wide charter discussion prepares for ATUA conference

IN FIVE DAYS' time, delegates and visitors from all over the country will assemble in Birmingham for the All Trades Unions Alliance's second annual conference.

Special coaches have been booked to bring contingents from most industrial centres to participate in the discussion which began just over a month ago with the publication in Workers Press of the ATUA national committee's draft Charter of Basic Rights. Thousands of signatures have already been collected endorsing this Charter, which will be fully discussed and amended—in line with the wide factory-floor discussion conducted

around it—by next Saturday's Digbeth Civic Hall conference. Contributing today to the pre-conference discussion conducted in these columns since then is Swindon council worker STAN JONES. During the recent national strike, Stan and his fellow unionists withstood the government threat of army intervention and fought on to win their 50s.

But many of them—like him, a groundsman—now see even bigger battles ahead; battles which will require a programme for uniting the whole working class. Among those who have already made a particularly valuable contribution to making the Charter such a programme are Liverpool Trades Council president Eddie Loyden; public-works painters' convenor Sam Holmes, from

Sheffield; Glasgow postman Jimmy Johnston; Plessey's, Swindon, engineering union convenor Rene Haze; Chelsea dustmen's leader Tony Sweeney; airport electricians' steward Mick Davis, from Heathrow, and Battersea power workers' branch chairman Bert Price.

December 19 must show these public statements are only the iceberg-tip of the biggest political campaign ever mounted in the British working class—a campaign to take the Tory government by the scruff of its strike-breaking neck and force it to resign from office.



Stan Jones

Yugoslavia to publish Khrushchev memoirs

BY A FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

THE YUGOSLAV publishing house Otokar Kersovani announced from Rijeka last week that they are to publish Khrushchev's memoirs.

They have previously published a number of works banned in the Soviet Union and the other countries of E Europe, including Pasternak's 'Doctor Zhivago' and several novels by Solzhenitsyn.

Extracts from Khrushchev's memoirs have already appeared in the Yugoslav press, accompanied by doubts about their authenticity.

B-Leyland postpones MDW clash

BRITISH-LEYLAND'S plan to force Measured Day Work on its Cowley car-assembly workers before the end of the year has suffered a setback.

Shop stewards from Cowley's Morris assembly plant yesterday endorsed a report-back from union officials which blocks the company for at least a month from taking unilateral action to implement its speed-up scheme.

National-level talks on Leyland's proposals were adjourned until January at York on Friday.

In the interim, the combine's detailed proposals are to be submitted to senior stewards at Cowley within the next few days and discussed with them over the next four weeks.

Union officers are believed to have taken exception at York to the combine's failure to table detailed proposals in advance and insisted that they could not negotiate under these conditions. It is understood that Leyland was forced reluctantly to accept this position after pressure from the Engineering Employers' Federation.

The EEF may well have feared that precipitate action by the company at Cowley would poison the atmosphere at its January 13 talks with union leaders about their national procedure agreement.

Airport go-slow today

THE Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs decided to support today's threatened work-to-rule at airports.

The Association, along with other unions involved, has rejected a 41 per cent pay increase for airport and airline staff.

Mr Clive Jenkins, ASTMS general secretary, said after a meeting of his executive in London that the union claim was for a 7 per cent cost-of-living rise. He said there would also be a ban on overtime and that some 15 unions would be involved.

Nixon

FROM PAGE ONE

return of less than 1 per cent on its sales this year—bringing profits to an all-time low. Thousands of aircraft workers have been sacked, and it is estimated that Boeing alone has lost 130,000 workers since 1968.

Impact
The impact of a full-scale US recession on the rest of the capitalist world would be even more marked than in the US itself. Fear of this development, more than any other factor, is responsible for the very rapid turn to the right in W Europe, Canada and in Britain. With their anti-union laws and emergency powers, the Tories are systematically preparing for a world slump. They hope to hogtie the working class with the aid of the trade union and labour bureaucracy before the full force of the storm from across the Atlantic hits home in Britain.

Witch-hunt

FROM PAGE ONE

rightly appealed to the public to exert pressure on the electricity supply men to return to normal working. I suggest that this exhortation needs reinforcement. 'Why not invoke emergency powers, and issue an order withdrawing all legal protection from the persons and property of the workers concerned and of the officials of the unions who have organized the present "go-slow"?' This is the shape of things to come state-protected, middle-class action against organized and militant workers and their families—if the trade union movement is not mobilized to support the power men and defeat the anti-union laws. It is the same fight. The army cannot run the power-stations. The threat of troops was part of a ruthless strategy to frighten union leaders and isolate and crush the power workers.

Support

But no worker can allow the Tories to carry through the rest of their plan. Expressions of support and solidarity from factories, trades councils, union branches and district committees are vital on the road to defeating the anti-union laws.

Law and (clerical) order call Preston demonstration

PLANS for a march through Preston on January 2 organized by the Church and the police are clear proof that fear of the working class is driving the capitalists to step up their offensive.

YS LEEDS BAZAAR GREAT SUCCESS

THE Young Socialists Leeds Bazaar was a huge success. It was held in the enormous city centre Corn Exchange.

Shoppers who came in their thousands to do their Xmas shopping declared it was the best bazaar they had been to.

Approximately 5,000 programmes were sold. There were 17 attractive stalls ranging from gifts, a boutique, to bargain groceries and jumble. Children were not disappointed with a visit to Aiddin's cave to see Father Xmas.

The grand total profit was £500. This has certainly been the most successful year for the Young Socialists.

Young Socialists national secretary, John Stimmance, would like to thank everyone who did so much to make the bazars in London and Leeds such a magnificent success.

WEATHER

FOG is expected at first over most of England, Wales, S Scotland and N Ireland. Over many inland areas it will be clear and some hazy sunshine is expected later in the day.

Elsewhere the fog should clear early to give sunny intervals. Over N and central Scotland there will be a few scattered showers.

It will be rather cold in the N districts, but temperatures will be near normal in the W.

Outlook for Tuesday and Wednesday. Scattered wintry showers in the E and S. Otherwise dry in most places. Generally cold with night frost and local fog patches.

ALL TRADES UNIONS ALLIANCE MEETINGS

Discuss the proposed draft of the Charter of Basic Rights

DAGENHAM: Monday, December 14, 8 p.m. Marsh Green School, New Rd.

ACTON: Monday, December 14, 8 p.m. Co-op Hall, Acton High St.

WEST LONDON: Monday, December 14, 8 p.m. Prince Albert pub, Balfe St, NW1.

SOUTHALL: Tuesday, December 15, 8 p.m. Community Centre, Bridge Rd.

SW LONDON: Tuesday, December 15, 8 p.m. Prince's Head, Falcon Rd, Clapham Junction.

ABERDEEN: Tuesday, December 15, 9 p.m. Music Hall.

CROYDON: Tuesday, December 15, 8 p.m. Plough and Harrow, Thornton Heath Road.

LEEDS: Tuesday, December 15, 8 p.m. Trades Council Club, Upper Fountains St.

LONDON: Wednesday, December 16, 8 p.m. Festival Inn, Chisip St Market, E14.

FINSBURY PARK: Wednesday, December 16, 8 p.m. Sir George Robey pub, opposite Astoria.

SE LONDON: Thursday, December 17, 8 p.m. Artichoke pub, Church St, Camberwell Green.

LATE NEWS

US-USSR PEACEKEEPERS WELCOME—HUSSEIN

King Hussein of Jordan yesterday backed the idea of an international peace-keeping force as the best way to bring a permanent end to fighting in the Middle East.

He said the odds are now in favour of such a force, in which United States and Soviet troops would serve side by side.

lan Yeats investigates reactionary stirrings in a Lancashire town

officers in Lancashire trying to maintain order among 3½ million people. And unless these people wait order, then we will be unable to maintain order in this country.

By order, of course, is meant the capitalist system which the ruling class and their hangers-on in the petty bourgeoisie can see daily threatened by mounting opposition from the working class.

Fear is driving these people to attempt to organize their own class and conservative sections of the working class against the strong tide of workers' militancy. Chief Constable Palfrey has suggested that it is not the job of the police to establish a code of conduct. If that is the case, what is he doing organizing a march for that very reason?

To avoid citing the breakdown of capitalism as the cause of civil unrest Palfrey and Claxton talk of moral decay.

It all seems irrelevant until we discover that this greed shows its head in strikes, in managers who will not share their wealth and profits, in political parties manoeuvring for their own purposes and even in the church itself.

The Chief Constable said bluntly last week: 'I'm fed up with demonstrations where the coppers get thumped. There are 7,000 police

CREDIT

Palfrey said: 'We have in this country a living on a credit of Christianity for a long time and this time is running out.'

What has run out is the power of Christianity to drug the working class into accepting the injustices of capitalism. The present upsurge among workers does not represent a moral decay, but an awakening.

Time is running out for the capitalists. Gripped by fear an incoherent and right-wing elements will begin to appear to fight to preserve their decaying world.

The first steps towards a police state have been taken when the police feel that the authority of priests, teachers and the church has been so weakened that they alone can maintain proper standards and order.

Palfrey said: 'Here in Lancashire we are going to try to re-establish a code of conduct based on the Christian faith.'

Behind all this religious mumbo jumbo stands the Preston middle class determined to fight for its preservation.

They will be represented at the head of the march by the Bishop and the Chief Constable 'together with other church leaders, local mayors and MPs.'

The march reflects attitudes inculcated by the local mass media over past weeks, culminating in a bitter denunciation of the December 8 strike by the 'Lancashire Post' as 'the most stupid strike ever.'

They were at pains to emphasize that Preston workers did not join in. In fact men at Preston Dock and at British-Leyland plants at Leyland and Chorley brought their works to a standstill.

The paper has stressed that it is the ordinary people who suffer because of strikes.

WARNED

They called the 'dirty jobs strike' a 'tragic-farce'. They have warned that men could lose themselves out of a job. And they have warned union leaders that they are in danger of losing their authority.

If the only information available locally was contained in 'Post' editorials, it would appear that industrial unrest was exclusively the handiwork of a minority of trouble-makers.

However this cannot explain away the stoppage at Preston Dock and British-Leyland. Nor can it explain the violent opposition to Carr's Bill from the local trades council.

Preston and District Amalgamated Trades Council has attacked the Bill as 'an onslaught on the working class. They have called it a 'bosses charter' and a 'vicious and prejudicial move by the Tories'. They have joined with

HEADLINE

The banner headline, of course, drew attention from the union leaders' statement. So did the smaller headlines on either side of it noting doctors' warnings to mothers and the 'unkindest cuts of all'.

The union leaders say that they are being blamed for things that are not their responsibility.

The Preston branch secretary of the General and Municipal Workers' Union Mr Bert Leathers said last week: 'The public do not seem to realize that it is not the electricity workers who are rationing the electricity. It is sold to the area boards who then decide on the cuts that are to be made.'

A worker said: 'It is just mad. The workers at Preston have been doing what they should do this week. It has been thrown at the public that we are going down to work and doing nothing. This is all wrong.'

'The public are being riled and this is being allowed to go on deliberately.'

He added: 'The whole industry is being run on overtime. The slightest absence of a very few workers, sick or otherwise, makes the situation impossible.'

'At Preston power station we work seven days or nights at a stretch—not four as most people do—have only one weekend in three off and may not have a holiday at Christmas or the New Year for years on end.'

I'M NOT frightened of times like these. On the contrary I have been waiting for them for 20 years.

I agree with the Charter by the ATUA. To me it's what I have been fighting for all my life—pure socialism. The rights that the Charter seeks to defend and increase represent socialist thinking on all issues.

Two things strike me as important. One is the attacks the Tories are making on comprehensive education. We must fight for the right of every working-class child to get the very best, free education and we must go further and throw open the universities and increase grants.

The second thing is the attacks that workers must grasp, is its opposition to productivity deals.

In relation to this they should also read the ATUA book on productivity by Bernard Franks. This has helped me a lot to understand the sly tricks the bosses get up to.

They are trying one on now in the council. Suddenly there is talk of a deal and they are offering us £2 to £3. Well I smell a fish to say the least. It took a hard strike of six weeks to get 30s out of them, if they are offering above £2, there must be a lot in it for them!

December 8 must not be the end of the struggle. This is only a tiny beginning. To me the next step of course must be to mobilize the leaders—make them fight.

The struggles they have put up to are disgusting. I am a delegate to the Swindon Trades Council and I asked them what the official trades union movement in the town were going to do. They said they are going to send a delegate to see their MP. This is absolutely useless.

The aim of the movement should now be to bring the government down.

The fight now cannot be viewed as just a trade union fight. It is a political fight and undoubtedly the most serious the trade union movement has ever undertaken.

I have been listening to lots of workers and I can sense that an extreme right-wing element is being given, the whole of the working class would respond, even the most apathetic worker would respond.

We may go through many experiences before we see our way through to socialism. I think we may go through the whole of the 1920s again with Wilson or somebody like him turning out to be the new Macdonald.

But I'm not frightened of times like these. On the contrary it's something I have been waiting and hoping for for the last 20 years.

'Black' glass dispute in Hull

PORT STEWARDS in Hull meet this morning to discuss discipline threats against dockers backing Pilkington glass.

The port's Albert dock stopped on Friday afternoon after employers told stewards that they might act against a gang who refused to load a glassware consignment.

Stewards may decide at this morning's meeting to recommend continuing the Albert dock stoppage until the men are paid for Friday's stoppage.

Cowardly British CP silence on Solzhenitsyn

A MESSAGE to last week's Nobel Prize-giving ceremony from Soviet writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn once more called for the release of victims of Stalinist repression:

'May we, at this groaning board, not forget the political prisoners who are today on hunger strike for the restoration of their limited rights, which have been completely trampled underfoot.'

What a splendid contrast to the miserable silence of Communist Party leaders in Britain like Gollan, Ramelson and Matthews. Although faced with the daily threat of arrest, Solz-

Rank and file hostile to TUC method

GROWING hostility in the unions to the leadership's worthless campaign of publicity and inaction against the anti-union Bill found expression at Saturday's TUC London Regional Conference.

Congress secretary Victor Feather, who warned the conference against 'supporting in any way the activities of unofficial bodies arranging conferences or demonstrations or stoppages of work', came in for a good deal of sharp criticism.

A capacity Congress House audience heard Feather justify the TUC campaign as 'directed at all fair-minded people, at the less active of our supporters as well as the uncommitted.'

Trade unionists should act in accordance with overall TUC strategy.

There was a loud applause when Dagenham teacher Bernard Ebley called for a resolution supporting the power workers.

Not swayed

Former CEU secretary Ernest Patterson also spoke in favour of industrial action, and said the Tories would not be swayed by public opinion.

'The General Council must immediately prepare appropriate arrangements for industrial action against the Tories', he said.

Edna White, one of the SOGAT division A executive members named in the High Court injunction outlawing the executive's December 8 strike call, challenged the TUC to call industrial action.

Neither soft soap nor offers of bargains would persuade the government to retreat, she said.

'Victor Feather once compared the TUC to a carthorse. All I can say is that if it carries on at the same rate and in the same direction as it's going at the moment, it's heading straight for the glue factory,' shopworkers' organizer Hugh McCartney told the meeting.

'Felt sick'

'Before December 8 my members were eager to come out. I felt sick having to tell them the union was against the strike.'

I certainly don't fancy going back to them and saying "you can use your half-hour lunch-break against the Bill". I'm in favour of industrial action, not useless protest.'

Despite considerable opposition to TUC policy only ASTMS divisional council member Maureen Turnbull raised the question of General Strike action to force the resignation of the Tory government.

Her attack on the TUC 'left' trade union leaders and Communist Party members who cover up for it was described by Feather's assistant Len Murray as 'moving the reference back of the general election.'

This was impossible, he said. Such action would only provoke Heath to make the Bill even worse.

Murray was repeatedly interrupted during his denunciation of the opposition to the TUC policy.



ABOVE: TUC general secretary Victor Feather speaking at Saturday's London regional conference. Listening is General and Municipal Workers' president Lord Cooper, ELOW: Some of the old age pensioners who listened to Feather and to stars of stage, screen and Westminster at a Labour Party rally. (See What we think)



Freedom

FROM PAGE ONE

against the trade unions they are viciously slandered and told to shut up!

'The Observer'—whose 'liberalism' is a cloak for the most putridly offensive smears against the working class—now finds the print workers' action 'ominous' and editorializes: 'the freedom of the press must mean the freedom to publish anything within the law... the freedom of the press consists in the freedom to publish despite anybody's objections'. (Our emphasis, 'Observer', December 13.)

The 'Observer' statement is not only a warning to the trade unions of the unprecedented press attacks in the offing but—and this is the point—it reveals in all its clarity and explicitness the whole fraud of capitalist press 'freedom'.

This would be a paradise for the press baron and the trade union bureaucrat.

A forewarning of what is to come is clearly revealed by the continued exclusion of our industrial correspondent David Maude from the Labour and Industrial Correspondents' Group which maintains an exclusive relationship with key government departments.

By excluding him and shutting off the Workers Press from important government news sources, the journalists and officials involved are only helping to strengthen the dictatorial hand of the capitalist press monopolies.

Thus capitalist 'freedom' of the press is tyrannical censorship for the working class.

The defence of the trade unions today imperiously demands the complete nationalization without compensation and control by the workers of all the news media in Britain.

Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. Published by Workers Press, 186a Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4. Printed by Plough Press Ltd. (TU), 180b Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4.