

Socialist Worker

FOR WORKERS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

153 8 JANUARY 1970 EVERY THURSDAY 4d

BONANZA FOR BOSSES

Labour turns screws on workers

by Laurie Flynn

BRITAIN'S FACTORY WORKERS increased production by 48 per cent in the last five years. This fantastic boost was achieved with hardly any increase in the size of the labour force.

Official figures released last week by the Board of Trade show clearly how the Labour government's policy of pay freeze, mergers, redundancies and productivity deals has led to a bonanza for the bosses.

This new confirmation of how Labour government really works follows news that profits shot up by an average of 19 per cent last year. Big business is confident that it will do even better this year.

The BoT official Census of Production shows that the total value of work undertaken and goods produced in 1968 was £36.892m. But the average number employed in manufacturing industry in that year was eight million, an increase of only 126,000 on the 1965 level. And most of the increases were among white-collar employees, not shop-floor operatives.

With more than six million workers in Britain now covered by productivity deals, the figures underline the fact that the 'miraculous' recovery of the British economy has been paid for solely by the working class, who are working longer hours for wages eaten away by the ever-rising cost of living.

Massive benefits for bosses

As a result of 'better productivity' — that means turning the screws on the workers — output per worker went up from £1364 in 1965 to £2485 in 1968.

The massive benefits for the bosses can be seen from the state of the chemical industry. Here the number of workers declined by 12,300 in the five-year period. But net output soared from £1174 per worker in 1965 to £3384 in 1968.

A slight drop in the number of workers engaged in petroleum and coal products was matched by an increase in output per head of almost 50 per cent.

These figures record a remarkable success for Labour's administration of the big business system. But this achievement does not mean that the bosses' offensive against organised labour is going to let up. Nor does it mean that Britain's economy is forever stable.

Britain's bosses face cut-throat competition in a dwindling world market. In order to compete, they need desperately to modernise their factories. And the burden of modernisation is always transferred to the working class.

Labour's policies are the calculated political choices of the agents of an ageing system that orders them to boost profits at any cost to those who produce them.

New attacks on way

Once again, 'You know Labour government works' was Harold Wilson's New Year message to his masters. And all over the Bahamas, they said 'Yes — but we want it to work even better.'

So the kind of successes indicated in the figures from the Board of Trade herald new attacks and new offensives on the labour movement. But the attacks produce new resistance from workers. It is up to socialists to help weld that resistance into a movement that will challenge the whole shoddy system.

We must demolish any illusions in the role of the Labour government.

workers worked faster, profits soared, wages declined; Labour government works.

There were massive increases in industrial accidents, because workers worked faster; Labour government works.

Free milk was abolished in the schools and rickets reappeared in Glasgow for the first time in a quarter of a century; Labour government works.

Between November and Christmas each year 2000 children die as a result of poverty; Labour government works . . . and how!

RAT-BAG OF THE WEEK

MR CAMPBELL ADAMSON, director general of the Confederation of British Industries, said on BBC television on Monday that the

1960s had seen too much emphasis on the distribution of wealth and not enough on the creation of wealth.



THIS IS BRITAIN ...

MRS ANNIE GLOSSOP smiles contentedly in her warm room in the Hillcrest old people's home in Sheffield. But a few hours previously on New Year's Day, Mrs Glossop (inset) was found lying under rags in her freezing and dirty council flat in run-down, turn-of-the-century Croft Buildings.

The change in Mrs Glossop's fortunes was the result of a campaign by journalists on the Sheffield Star to bring attention to poverty and bad housing in the city. The authorities had been told of Mrs Glossop's condition two years ago, but no action was taken on the grounds that she had seemed reluctant to accept help.

Now, for the first time in two years,

Mrs Glossop has had a warm bath and sleeps between clean sheets. In Croft Buildings she had no bath and had to share an outside lavatory.

The superintendent of the old people's home commented: 'Annie Glossop is just one among many old people living in Sheffield who are suffering under the most appalling conditions . . . What is needed in this city is a number of blocks of flats where old people can live by themselves but with a warden to keep an eye on them.'

Special flats for old people, superintendent? Come, come — that would cost money — and the Labour government has other priorities . . .

Support the Young Socialists' demonstration

March against murder!

Pinkville: 500 massacred
Black Panthers: 28 shot
SUNDAY 11 JANUARY

Assemble Speakers' Corner (Marble Arch) 2 pm
March to Downing Street

Vietnam: the wrong man is in the dock ...

IN 1919 General O'Dwyer ordered British troops to fire on an unarmed demonstration in the Indian town of Amritsar. They killed 450 people and wounded 1500 others.

In the Second World War, German soldiers destroyed the French village of Oradour and the Czech village of Lidice. Almost the entire population were murdered in both places.

In 1968 American troops massacred 500 Vietnamese men, women and children at My Lai.

These atrocities have a common feature — the ugly face of imperialism. They were all committed by foreign troops in an occupied country, where the people were hostile to the intruders.

They were all committed by foreign troops attempting to grapple with powerful resistance movements, whose aim was national independence. They all happened during a type of struggle that imposes particularly severe strains on the soldiers of the occupying power.

At any moment, night or day, the soldier is liable to be shot. He does not know who his enemy is, or when he is going to strike.

BRUTAL

Isolated and nervous, the soldier may translate his fear into savage brutality. As one American GI, who took part in the My Lai massacre, said:

'To us they were not civilians. They were VC sympathisers. You don't call them civilians. To us they were VC . . . You don't have any alternatives.'

This attitude was doubtless shared by the British Tommy at Amritsar and the German soldier at Lidice, men who murdered not because they were born sadists. They were brutalised by the situation in which they were placed by imperialism.

The real criminals are not to be found in Vietnam but at home. The real culprits are the men who created the situation — the politicians of the White House, who ordered the American troops to invade Vietnam, and the politicians of Whitehall, who back the aggression.

Johnson, Nixon and Harold Wilson should be in the dock — not Captain Medina.

RUINS

The myth of American imperialism — the myth which in this country has been peddled by the Labour and Tory parties — lies shattered in the ruins of My Lai.

The excuse for US intervention is that they came to help the people of South Vietnam who were being attacked from the North. If this were true, then one would expect the people of South Vietnam to welcome the American troops.

The soldiers would find themselves treated in a similar fashion to GIs who came to Britain during the Second World War.

But My Lai is not an English village that was left unscathed by American troops.

The Americans are in Vietnam not to protect the people of Vietnam, but a tiny section of the people who happen to be corrupt land-owners and moneylenders.

When American troops use their M-60 guns indiscriminately, it is giving a living, and dying proof of how much support they have among the masses of South Vietnam.

Raymond Challinor

LETTERS

Insensitive hatchet job on Lawrence...

I DON'T REALLY want to join the ranks of the nit-pickers but I must object to Kathy Sims' hatchet job on D H Lawrence (18 December) which in parts exemplified the sort of insensitivity that hostile critics most like to attribute to marxism.

I'm no great fan of Lawrence myself, nor of the cult around his name, but to dismiss him with a bit of patronising sympathy as a semi-fascist queer is to ignore and simplify so much of his work that it amounts to a real distortion.

To take a few points. She says Lawrence 'hates violently the new, emancipated middle-class women'. He hates some of them, yes, but not simply because they're emancipated or because they're women!

Ursula, for example, especially in *The Rainbow*, expresses many of Lawrence's own criticisms of society. She attacks the university as 'a little apprentice-shop where one was further equipped for making money' and agrees with the man who, speaking of the 'immorality' of colliers says 'The most moral duke in England makes £200,000 a year out of these pits. He keeps the morality end up.' (Not bad for a near-fascist).

To say that Lawrence understood something of the ruling class and use as proof the facetious verse 'How Beastly the Bourgeois Is' when there's a great mass of really perceptive attack in the major novels looks at best like wilful omission.

Kathy makes a similar distortion when she says of *Women in Love*, 'Gerald Crich refuses Birkin's love and so dies'. But the logic of Crich's death is at least as much bound up with his role as the modern capitalist viewing men as machines, as it is with his alleged refusal to go gay with Birkin (itself a pretty dubious interpretation of the end of the novel).

I'm not claiming Lawrence

DH Lawrence, the miner's son, afraid of love and the workers



as a secret marxist, nor am I saying one shouldn't try to show the main contours and directions of his work. A marxist can face so much that establishment critics don't even include in their work that it's self-defeating for us to simplify or distort what doesn't seem to slot neatly into place.

Yes, Lawrence did have some crap ideas, especially outside his novels. And he often did try to write novels according to these weird schemes.

But in the actual novels his honesty and perception often take him beyond the formula he set out with and it's pointless to summarise him as being back at the point of formula. Mellors in *Lady Chatterley* is clearly meant to be some sort of ideal 'physical man' but in fact turns out to be lonely, insecure and sharply aware of his isolation, just as Birkin is admitted to be a prig in *Women in Love* and just as it is the impotent Sir Clifford Chatterley who comes out with the sort of fascist views that Kathy stresses as being Lawrence's essence.

But of course once you've started to ignore what a writer actually says then you can blithely go on to hypothesise, as she does, that had Lawrence returned to his class he would probably have become a revolutionary!

Perhaps the most telling part of her undialectical approach comes when she writes 'Lawrence had nothing new or constructive

— Flashback to 18 December

to say, only a new way of saying it.' You simply cannot divide form and content in this manner. You can't say the same thing in a different way, though you may think you have.

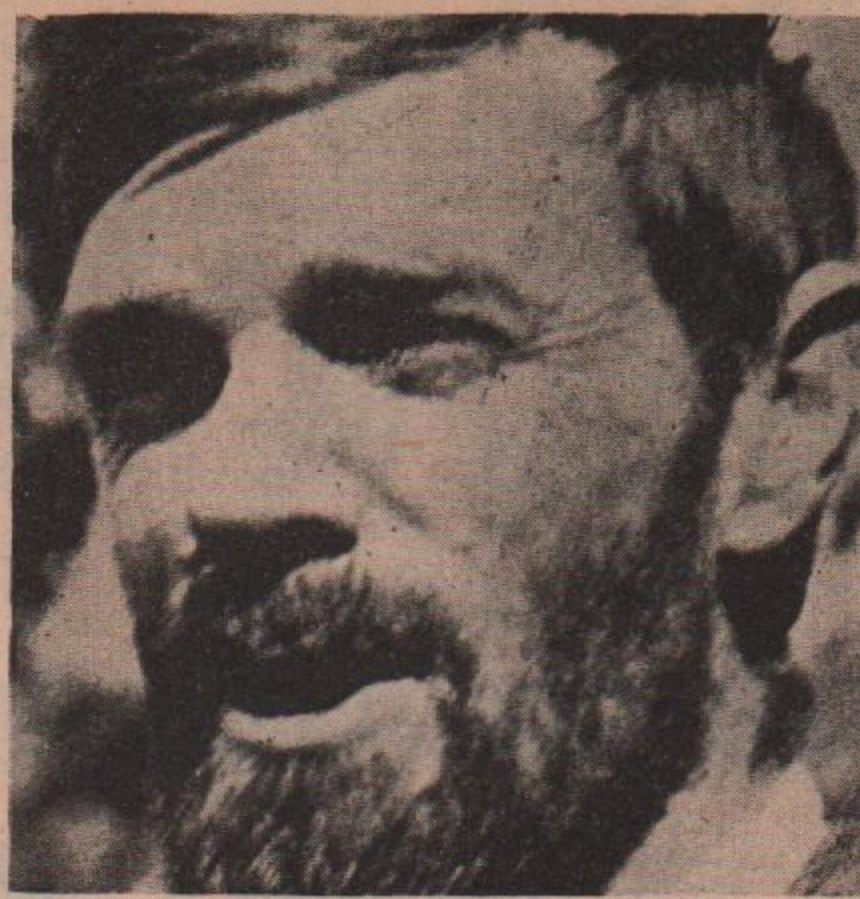
In fact you've said something slightly different. If we follow Kathy's logic then there's no point in reading *Crime and Punishment*: all you need to know is that crime doesn't pay, or alternatively you might as well read *Sherlock Holmes* since it 'says' the same thing!

A profitable part of capitalist criticism trades on just this approach, hinting that you don't really need to read books of any sort now, you just buy the crammer's or the cocktail party-goer's guide to what they 'say'. Let's not add the glib socialist's guide to that list. - JILL BRANSTON, Swansea.

Passion, tenderness and imagination

KATHY SIMS' article on D H Lawrence seemed a frenzied piece of personality assassination really undeserved by Lawrence. She claims that he despised the workers.

This is really a misstatement. The truth is he hated and despised industrialisation and the brutalised semi-literate it produced. At the same time no other English writer has been better able to appreciate the passion,



tenderness and imagination of the workers when it does manage to break through, as in his description of the miners' love of flowers and the beauty of their tiny gardens in the midst of the squalor of their housing in Mining Country.

In *Strike Pay*, a short, terse account of miners on strike, he gives a fine account of their sensitivity and comradeship with each other as well as the economic hardships and badgering they have to face at home. In the same way throughout Lawrence's work there are accounts of accidents in the mine and the hypocritical and callous reactions of the owners. At least one long poem is about this subject.

Lawrence certainly did not love the miners uncritically. This would have amounted to treachery but intense optimism on the part of the working class is certainly characteristic of him and the underlying violence which Kathy Sims claims he fears is exactly the quality that gives him hope.

In *Lady Chatterley* for instance he constantly counters the aspect of the effete, decadent group gathered round Clifford Chatterley with the uncouth belligerent colliers (especially the new *Stacks Gate* colliery miners who frighten everyone by their silent refusal to affect 19th century forms of servility).

In the end the place of the sterile Clifford is usurped by the working-class Mellors. Kathy Sims finds this relationship unreal, she finds the part where Mellors and Connie Chatterley weave violets in each others' pubic hair ludicrous.

All I can say is that she herself must have a very limited and humourless idea of how people behave sexually. And the other remark about Lawrence having no sense of humour simply means that she has no sense of Lawrence's humour.

The rest of her article seems a bit pettifogging. Lawrence certainly was priggish as a young man, a face which the old Lawrence often lampoons with great glee. Any young man faced with the social barriers Lawrence faced would feel obliged to erect some sort of barrier.

It is true that Lawrence had quite a few wild ideas—a hankering after some sort of rural utopia, stemming from his dislike of industry and a deep mistrust of politicians.

These things apart, Lawrence is quite apparently on the side of the workers, especially as he grew older. It is difficult to know just what Kathy Sims would have preferred him to do. She claims he was inconsistent but gives no details.

To call him unoriginal is absurd and that he was potentially a fascist dupe is treating a man of penetrating intellect as a fool.

For Lawrence also said 'Democracy will not be achieved until we learn that property is there to be used not to be owned.'

One thing he was consistent in — no novelist of his time unnerved the ruling class as much as he did and as a result he was viciously attacked by the press.

In 1919 he or his wife could not appear in the public streets without having stones thrown at them. He did not sell out.

His last two books, *Lady Chatterley* and *The Man who Died* were more bitter and scathing than any that he had written previously. Both were banned for over 30 years. - HARRY TAIT, Edinburgh.

Fascists — public debates or the cold-shoulder?

ROGER PROTZ'S defence (18 December) of the 'tactic' of breaking-up debates with the fascists is pathetic. He claims that 'it has long been a principle in the marxist movement that revolutionaries do not debate with fascists'. Yet the marxist Socialist Party of Great Britain has always challenged all its opponents to public debate.

In the past we have debated Mosley's New Party, his British Union of Fascists and his Union Movement. We have also debated the National Front. The fact is that it is only recently that IS has realised that we have been engaged in this kind of anti-fascist activity.

In order to justify denying 'free speech for fascists' Roger Protz has to make out that they are sub-human; 'animals' he calls them. This is a tacit recognition of the socialist principle that all human beings should be allowed to express their views freely, however obnoxious those views might be. I would also remind him that the tactic of putting this kind of label on some group and then hounding them for political reasons was one applied so successfully by the Nazis.

In any event, Roger Protz does not practise what he preaches. Not so long ago he did debate with members of the National Front in the columns of the *Tottenham Herald*. Why, if it is right to debate with fascists in the columns of a local newspaper, is it not all right to debate with them at a public meeting? I would have thought that the public debate was a much more effective way of refuting the vicious and dangerous nonsense peddled by such outfits as the National Front. - ADAM BUICK, London N6.

'Reactionary Bolshevism'

IT APPEARS from Roger Protz's reply to Bill Turner that IS is not opposed to all debates, but only those with organisations you choose to label fascist. You are quite willing, it seems, to debate with the so-called Communist Party that has over the years been associated with, Russian concentration camps, pacts with the Nazis, anti-immigration policies, attacks on independent working-class activity in industry etc, and even to allow others the 'privilege' of doing so. (You didn't I hear break up the Socialist Party of Great Britain's debate with the CP in South London), similarly with the Labour Party and other enemies of the working class.

Since nationalist and racist prejudices are so common amongst large sections of the working class (and if you think otherwise, then you're more out of touch than I thought) then it seems commonsense enough to directly combat them by debating with an organisation which expresses them in an extreme form.

Perhaps it is that you are so steeped in reactionary Bolshevism, regarding the workers merely as a mass to be manipulated by a self-appointed vanguard, you are afraid of the NF as an alternative leadership. You obviously haven't got very much confidence in the ability of workers to reject the fascist case when shown for the fraud it is by socialist argument, if you are forced to adopt the same tactics as the NF in breaking up meetings.

It's time the romantic revolutionaries in IS grew up. - M BALLARD, London NW2.

Free expression of ideas

I AM GLAD that Bill Turner (11 December) has drawn to your readers' attention what happened when we tried to oppose the National Front in public debate at Hornsey on 17 November. As the one who was to represent the Socialist Party of Great Britain may I explain our position?

Like Marx, we are opposed to all censorship and stand for the free expression of ideas. We have consistently argued that the widest possible discussion of conflicting political views is in the interest of the working class. Socialism can only be established when working-class men and women have come to understand what they must do to end class society.

Alone in politics, we have recognised the capacity of ordinary people to work out for themselves the cause of and solution to their problems. Only those who doubt this capacity would wish to censor the expression of views they consider undesirable.

We publicly debate with our opponents not only because we wish to oppose their mistaken ideas, but also because we have nothing to fear from criticism and may even have something to gain. - EDMUND S GRANT (Prospective Socialist candidate for Hornsey).

Social security plans divide the workers

WE HAVE TO THANK Jim Kincaid (20 November) for not being fooled by the claims of the government's new social security plans to be progressive or 'revolutionary'. But he fails to stress sufficiently what to us is the main feature of the system, and that is its complete social divisiveness, a situation which the new proposals will not alter in any way. The present set-up — at the centre of which is the National Assistance Board — creates a mythical class of 'lumpen proletariat' which is held to be something separate from the working class as a whole — drop outs, 'idlers' and unorganisable. In fact the 'lumpenproletariat' is simply those persons who are dependent on means-tested benefits for survival.

Such mythology is quite as malicious as racialism and indeed, as the intensifying anti-claimant campaign testifies, it rivals racialism as an anti-socialist ideology. The organised labour and socialist movement has not been silent about racialism, but has behaved quite impotently in the face of government capitulation to the reactionary clamour against claimants.

It has failed to comprehend the significance of the Ramsey MacDonald-like cuts in assistance to the unemployed — the new 'four week rule' which effectively stops benefit after four weeks or so unemployment, and the increasing use of the 'bloody-minded 15s' which is simply a blunt and arbitrary cut in benefit — both regulations used of course not universally but with absolute 'discretion'.

If the Left just goes on letting this pass we can safely expect new attacks, such as withdrawal of benefit for strikers' dependants, more and more health and welfare charges, and more and more means tests. Social Security must be brought into the orbit of militant working-class struggle. It is to be hoped that your readers are not going to hand over the whole matter to ineffectual 'anti-poverty' pressure-groups, but will take the militant movement seriously when it spreads to other areas in the New Year. - Julia Mainwaring, Geoff Mainwaring, Roger Clipsham, Birmingham Claimants Union, 2/9 Trafalgar Road, Moseley, Birmingham 13.

Socialist Worker

6 Cottons Gardens London E2

Tel: 01-739 1878 (editorial) 1870 (business)

CAPITALISM has nothing to offer mankind but exploitation, crises and war. The ruling classes of the world—a tiny minority—subordinate the needs of the vast majority to the blind accumulation of capital in the interests of competitive survival.

Imperialism condemns two-thirds of mankind to famine and calls forth movements of national liberation which shake the system and expose its essential barbarism. The constant and mounting preparations for war and the development of weapons of mass destruction place the survival of humanity itself in the balance.

The increasing intensity of international competition between ever-larger units drives the ruling classes to new attacks on workers' living standards and conditions of work, to anti-trade union and anti-strike laws. All of these show capitalism in deepening crises from which it can only hope to escape at the cost of the working class and by the destruction of all its independent organisations.

The only alternative is workers' power — the democratic collective control of the working class over industry and society through a

WHERE WE STAND

state of workers' councils and workers' control of production.

Only thus can the transition be ensured to a communist society in which the unprecedented productive forces thrown up by capitalism can be used to assure an economy of abundance. Only the working class, itself the product of capitalism, has the ability to transform society in this way, and has shown its ability to do so in a series of revolutionary struggles unprecedented in the history of all previous exploited classes.

The working class gains the experience necessary to revolutionise society by constant struggle against the

ruling class through the mass organisations thrown up in the course of that struggle.

To overcome the unevenness with which this experience is gained, to draw and preserve the lessons of past struggles and transmit them for the future, to fight against the pressure of bourgeois ideas in the working class, and to bond the fragmentary struggles against capitalism into a conscious and coherent offensive, a revolutionary Marxist party of socialist militants is required, embracing the vanguard of the working class.

The struggle to build such a party is only part of the wider struggle to create a World Revolutionary Socialist International, independent of all oppressors and exploiters of the working class, whether bureaucratic or bourgeois.

International Socialists therefore fight for:

Opposition to all ruling-class policies and organisations.

Workers' control over production and a workers' state.

Opposition to imperialism and support for all movements of national liberation.

Uncompromising opposition to all forms of racialism and to all migration controls.

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the paper.

Fifty years of twisting and turning: the 'golden anniversary' of French Communism

by Ian Birchall

MANY OF THOSE who are discontented with the British Communist Party, with its failures in the political and industrial fields, still tend to feel that if only it were a mass party like those in France and Italy, things would be better.

And others, who were disillusioned by the French party's behaviour in the general strike of May 1968, saw this as a 'betrayal' of its previous positions, as a break from its former line.

Supporters of Mao Tse-tung, in particular, consider the basic degeneration of the British and French parties came in the early 1950s, with the passing of J V Stalin. It may therefore be of interest to sketch out the history of the French Communist Party and show that there never was a 'golden age' of the mass revolutionary party.

The French Communist Party was born in December 1920. Unlike the British party, it was not formed from a few small sects, but by a split in the French Socialist Party, already a mass working-class party. Something like three-quarters of the Socialist Party opted for support for the Russian Revolution and affiliation to the Third International. The CP started life with a membership of around 130,000.

Clearly, to start as a mass party was a great advantage but there were disadvantages as well. The new party had not clarified its position beyond general support of the Russian Revolution. A horde of careerist hacks, journalists and local councillors, anxious only to be with the majority, came along with it.

Low calibre leaders

With a few exceptions, such as the former syndicalist Alfred Rosmer, the calibre of the leadership was very low. One of the leaders of the party was Marcel Cachin, a socialist politician who throughout the First World War had taken a crudely nationalistic line. In 1915 he had gone to Italy to try to persuade Mussolini to campaign for Italy to enter the war on France's side. After the February Revolution in Russia he had been to Petrograd to urge Kerensky to carry on the war against Germany. Now he went to Moscow to crawl before Lenin on behalf of the French CP.

Of other leaders Semard, for a time secretary of the party, said that Marx's Capital (of which he didn't even know the correct title) had bored him to death. Ker, of the political bureau, was a freemason until challenged by Trotsky.

A story that illustrates confusion lower down in the party concerns a communist called Devienne, head of the textile strike committee in Lannoy, who was leading a demonstration when he was approached by the brigadier of the local gendarmerie and told he had been appointed a member of his unit. Without hesitation, Devienne left the procession and became a dedicated gendarme.

All the same, the party had a real base. In 1924, all but five of the party's 44 election candidates in the Paris area were manual workers. Gains were made among the peasantry by the dynamic campaigning of Renaud Jean.

Severe factional struggle

But the party was slow to respond to movements by the class. L'Humanite, its newspaper, gave little space to trade union questions. In August 1922 a strike of port workers and metal workers at Le Havre led to clashes in which three workers were killed. The unions called a general strike. L'Humanite did not even report it, and the party took no initiative.

The lack of experience and understanding of tactics in the party led to a severe factional struggle. Many sections were unable to understand the need for a united front with the Socialists from whom they had recently split. But for police repression in January 1923, which created a sense of unity, the party might have disintegrated.

This is not to argue that the French CP was corrupt from the start or that it should never have been founded. The party had a strong base, some good leaders and a potential for growth. But the weaknesses which were there from the beginning paved the way for difficulties in the next few



The French CP's congress at Lyon in 1924. Maurice Thorez is in the centre, facing camera.

years. After 1924 the Third International came increasingly under the control of Stalin's faction in the Soviet Union. From an authentic, if frequently imperfect international organisation, it was transformed into a mere instrument of Russian foreign policy. Its job was to support the line of 'socialism in one country', to give moral and political support to the Russian regime, and if necessary, to act in defence of the Russian state against attack from the West. The spreading of revolution, even where possible, was no longer part of their job.

Best men expelled

The political and organisational weaknesses of the French party before 1924 made things easy for the pro-Stalin elements. Some of the best leaders (Rosmer, Monatte) were expelled in 1924. Meanwhile a new young leader, Maurice Thorez, rapidly established himself. Thorez, tough and clever, but ready to do as Moscow told him, had played little part in the founding of the party but by the end of the 1920s he had established himself as the dominant personality and law unto himself. In 1930, Thorez paid his own fine to get out of prison, thus breaking a basic rule that members should refuse to pay fines until the party agreed to it.

But the establishment of tight discipline in the party — the so-called 'Bolshevisation' — also led to a rigidly sectarian attitude.

In the 1928 elections the party refused to support (in the second ballot of the elections) the candidates of the other working-class party in France, the Socialists. Despite this, six out of 10 of their voters disobeyed and voted for the Socialists.

The 'Third Period' line, which saw no essential difference between social Democrats and Fascists, led to worse excesses. In 1934 the CP launched the slogan 'Down with the reactionary fascist national union prepared by the Radical Party and the Socialist Party'. Only two years later, the CP had an electoral alliance with both these parties.

It was the success of Hitler in Germany that shocked the Communist International into a hurried change of line to the call for a 'Popular Front'. The line was now unity, at almost any price, against the fascist threat. In fact, it is highly questionable whether there was a fascist threat in France at all in this period. Anti-semitic and extreme right-wing ex-servicemen's organisations did make some impact, but there was no force equivalent to Nazism.

The CP's line of unity with Socialists and the middle-class Radical Party simply disarmed workers at a time when they could have taken an initiative. The party played down the revolutionary content of its programme. It described itself as the 'Party of the French nation' and dropped its opposition to compulsory military service.

While the Socialists wanted to

keep nationalisation in the Popular Front programme, the CP insisted on dropping it so as not to offend the Radicals. Thorez even proposed that the demand for legalised abortion be dropped from the party programme, arguing that the German CP's support for abortion had helped the Nazis. The party's election slogan in 1936 was 'For order, vote Communist'.

The Popular Front election victory in May 1936 led to the formation of a government of Socialists and Radicals, with Communist support but no CP ministers. The enthusiasm produced by this 'swing to the left' sparked off a general strike, involving around two million workers and using the then novel tactic of factory occupation. In what could rapidly have developed into a revolutionary situation, the CP played at best a passive role, at worst a role of conscious betrayal.

Eyes on government

The first factory occupation in France took place in Aisne in the North-East. L'Humanite made no mention of it. At no stage did the party take a lead in encouraging and spreading the strike. Their attention was fixed on the government and they were anxious not to go beyond the programme of the Popular Front. A symbolic incident took place in one occupied factory. The workers played a record of the Internationale every day, until one day a CP member insisted on playing the Marseillaise as well, to stress national loyalty.

The CP argued that the workers could not go any further because they had no support from the peasantry. In fact there was much agitation among agricultural workers, and even occupation of farms. On 11 June Thorez spoke to a mass meeting of party members. His message was: 'If it is important to carry out a campaign of demands properly, it is also necessary to know when to stop.'

Yet since the CP was the only organised force on the Left, it gained massively in this period. Its membership rose from 81,000 in 1935 to 340,000 in 1937. Yet the disillusion produced among the mass of workers by failure to carry through the demands of June 1936 led to confusion and demoralisation and helps to explain the lack of resistance at the beginning of the Second World War.

For the CP the war posed special problems because of the Hitler-Stalin pact signed on 21 August, 1939. On 2 September, the CP deputies voted war credits. On the 26 of the same month the disgraced Council of Ministers dissolved the CP.

The CP took a neutralist attitude in the war and offered no serious resistance to the German occupation or the puppet government at Vichy. Their opportunism reached its high-point in the letter addressed

by the underground CP to the German authorities in July 1940:

'We request permission to publish L'Humanite in the form in which it was presented to its readers before being banned by Daladier, after the signing of the German-Soviet pact. L'Humanite published by us would take on the job of serving the people and denouncing those responsible for the present situation in France. L'Humanite published by us would take on the job of denouncing the activities of the agents of British imperialism who want to drag the French colonies into the war and of calling the colonial people to struggle for their independence against the imperialist oppressors. L'Humanite published by us would take on the job of pursuing a policy for peace in Europe, of advocating a Franco-Soviet friendship pact, which would be the complement of the German-Soviet pact, and would create the conditions for a lasting peace.' (This incident, long glossed over, is now confirmed by the official party history.)

When Russia entered the war against Germany in 1941, the CP threw itself into the Resistance movement. Ever eager to demonstrate its patriotism, it did not stress any distinctive programme from the purely nationalist movement.

Deep roots in people

No one should underestimate the devotion and heroism shown by CP members during the Resistance and Liberation. And it was this period that saw the Party establish itself with deep roots in the French people. Its membership rose to 800,000 by the end of the war and its electoral support to five million. It made, however, more rapid gains among the peasantry than among workers.

The history of the party since 1945 is much better known and need only be sketched out here. The party became even more undemocratic. The crucial decision to enter a coalition government under de Gaulle was taken without consultation of the membership. The best militants were taken away from their local bases, and given full-time jobs in Paris, servicing the CP ministers. The personal domination of Thorez was such that when he was absent ill in the Soviet Union, the party congress was postponed, in clear breach of party rules. 'Discipline' was taken to ludicrous lengths. After Tito had split with Stalin in 1948, party members were censured for attending the France v. Yugoslavia football match.

This period saw many switches in line. In 1945, when the CP was in the government, the party opposed all strikes. Thorez even made a speech attacking doctors who encouraged absenteeism by giving medical certificates too easily. A couple of years later, Thorez made another speech which included the sentence: 'I am for revolution tomorrow; that is why, until the day it will be possible, I intend to let capitalism operate according to its own laws.'

Concern for respectability

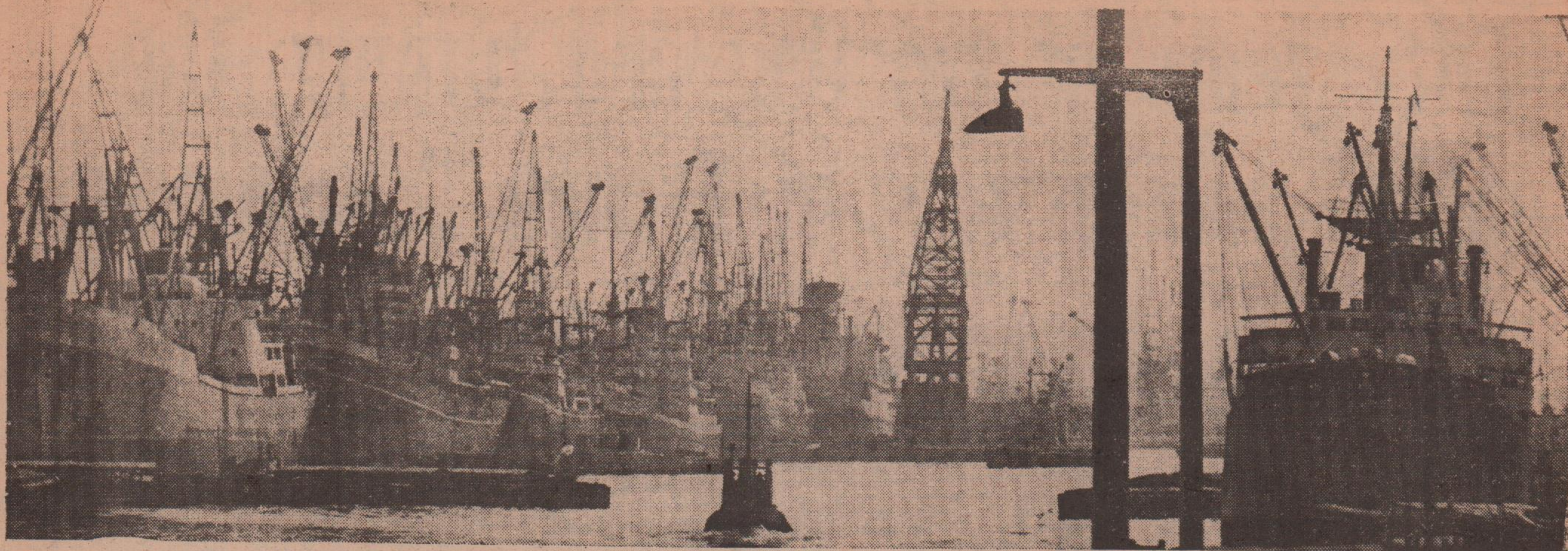
But the logic of all the switches was based on a parliamentary strategy. From 1944 to 1947 the CP was in the government. In 1947 it supported a massive strike wave — but its main concern was to put on the pressure for a return to the government, since then appeals for unity on the one hand, bold 'left' stances on the other, have all been part of a concern to establish itself as a 'respectable' body, part of national life. To this end, any kind of loyalty to the working class or internationalism has been surrendered. In 1947, CP ministers supported sending French troops to Vietnam. In the great strikes of August 1953 it delayed its call for solidarity until the twelfth day of the strike.

For more than 30 years the French CP has been the only mass organisation of the working class. It still contains many of France's best worker-militants. The decline in activity of its membership, the slow erosion of its support, can mean that, despite their recent achievements, French workers will withdraw into increasing apathy.

Only the building of an alternative organisation on the left can transform the CP's decline into a positive factor. The clear appreciation of the CP's history is a vital factor in the building of such an organisation.



French Bolsheviks—with knives in teeth!—rallying in Paris, 1920



Exports: there will be no major increase for Britain as the world market shrinks

British economy faces slow decline

by Sabby Sagall

BRITISH Big Business is not yet on its last legs but the confidence in the system created by the boom of the 1950s is beginning to decline. While we are unlikely to see in the immediate future a slump on the scale of the 1930s, the last few years have seen a growing unevenness in the rate of economic growth and only occasional expansion.

What justification, then, is there for the present mood of optimism about Britain's current balance of payments surplus and the strength of the pound? 1969 saw a continuation of the low rate of growth of the British economy (1½ per cent) of the low increase in the rate of consumer spending (about 0.8 per cent according to the Sunday Times), and the gradual rise in unemployment which the Sunday Times expects to reach 600,000 in the first quarter of 1970 and 650,000 by the end of the year.

'IMPROVEMENTS'

What kind of system is it in which economic 'improvement' can only occur if there is a rise in unemployment? If industry runs with considerable resources of unused capacity? And if workers' wages have to be held down in order to allow profits to rise and increased investments to take place?

For what section of society does such an 'improvement' occur? What can be the future prospects for a society in which such 'improvements' take place at the expense of the vast majority of its population?

The basis of the government's economic strategy has been the incomes policy. The main reasons for this policy are the following:

1. In modern capitalism, business investments are on a vast scale, both in sheer volume and in the time they take to produce returns.
2. In addition, the pace of technological change (new methods, new machines) is so much more rapid than before that the risks involved in investment are much greater. Profits can be very high if investment is correct, but the losses can be equally high if investment is in the wrong place. The danger of machinery becoming out-dated has greatly increased in the course of this rapid technological advance.
3. The pressure of international competition has become sharper and more ruthless than ever before. The long-term nature of investment and the speed of the present technological revolution drive large-scale firms to attempt to exercise much stricter control over all aspects of cost — in particular, labour costs. The employers need such control in order to be able to engage in long-term economic planning.

RAISE PRICES

One important result of greater international competition is the growing tendency for the rate of profit to decline. From 1945 to 1955, the economic recovery of Japan, Germany, France and Italy had only just been achieved. It was therefore easy for employers in Britain to raise prices when sections of workers won wage increases. Until the late 1950s, world prices were going up generally and employers could compensate for wage increases by price increases, even in the case of exports. But with the tightening up of international competition, profit

margins began to get narrower.

In the case of American capitalism, there has been a trend towards a slow decline in the rate of profit, apart from those years of the Korean and Vietnam wars (1950-52 and 1965-67) when increased arms expenditure created boom conditions.

In the case of British capitalism, a clear illustration of the declining rate of profit is the engineering industry, which is responsible for a third of manufacturing employment in Britain, and for over half of all British exports.

Gross and Net Profits as Percentage of Turnover in Engineering*

	Non-electrical eng.		Electrical eng.	
	Gross	Net	Gross	Net
1954-55	14.8	12.9	14.0	12.2
1955-56	14.3	12.2	12.5	10.7
1956-57	12.6	10.5	12.5	10.2
1957-58	12.9	10.7	12.8	10.0
1958-59	12.4	9.9	11.4	8.4
1959-60	12.5	9.9	12.9	9.7
1960-61	12.4	9.8	12.6	9.2

* W A H Godley 'Pricing Behaviours in the Engineering Industry', Economic Review, May 1964

It can be similarly found that in the British car industry, the pre-tax return on capital invested by the Big Six firms declined between the years 1954 and 1963 as follows:

	1954	1963
BMC	32	15
Ford	44	21
Vauxhall	43	16
Lotus	23	1
Standard-Triumph	23	
Leyland	16	15
Average	34	16

(A Silberston, 'The Motor Industry 1955-1964', Bulletin, Oxford University Inst. of Economics & Statistics, November 1965)

Underlying this intensification of international competition and the narrowing of profit margins is the fact that arms expenditure — the key element in the whole development of the post-war capitalist economy — is losing its stabilising power. As the arms race between the super-powers sharpens, it pushes them towards the production of more advanced weapons, such as missiles and nuclear warheads.

These weapons depend on far fewer sectors of the economy and require far smaller resources of raw material and manpower than did tanks, battleships or conventional aircraft. The result is that firms which previously depended directly or indirectly on arms production are less and less assured of a steady market for their products. If they are to maintain an increasing rate of profit, they must capture new markets or at least improve their competitive position on the world market, that is increase their share of the world market at the expense of their economic rivals.

This explains the growing intensity of world competition which

in turn is responsible for the present technological revolution. For vast new investments are constantly needed if a firm is to succeed in undercutting its rivals on the international market. Newer, more advanced machinery replaces older machinery at an increasingly rapid pace in the competitive struggle to cut costs.

In the US, the life of machinery has been shortened from 10 years to about four or five years. And it is this increasing rate of investment which produces the long-term tendency for the rate of profit to decline, since the rising investment no longer results in parallel rises in output. As time goes on, more investment is needed in order to produce the same amount of output.

The British economy has been particularly sensitive to increased international pressures because of its chronic balance of payments problem. To try and solve this, successive British chancellors have



Strikes: the 'English disease' has spread to Europe

regulated the economy through the 'stop-go' policy. This has meant that industry is forced to work below capacity for an extended period every four or five years. The cost of this policy, however, has been to raise the unit costs of British industry, and to create an economy that grew at a lower rate than any other advanced economy.

Annual Growth-Rates of Gross National Product

	1950-55	55-60	60-65	65-70
Japan	12.1*	9.7	9.6	7.5
Germany	9.3	6.3	4.8	3.5
Italy	6.0	5.5	5.1	5.0
France	4.3	4.6	5.1	4.8
USA	4.3	2.2	4.5	4.5
UK	2.7	2.8	3.3	4.1

*1952-55 (J Knapp, 'Pragmatism and the British Malaise', Lloyds Bank Review, October 1968)

Britain's share of exports in world trade declined from 21 per cent in 1953 to 19.3 per cent in 1955, to 15.9 per cent in 1960 to 14.9 per cent in 1963. In West Germany, France, Italy and Japan, growth rates were much higher because profits raced ahead of wages far more than they did in Britain. In all these countries,

during their crucial years, there were large reserve armies of unemployed — the bosses' traditional instrument for keeping the level of wages low.

Because nearly full employment existed in Britain since the Second World War, the threat of unemployment could not be used as a stick to discipline the workers. Inflation — the wage-price spiral — rises directly out of the very conditions in which the class struggle takes place in a modern capitalist economy where there is relatively full employment. Inflation since the war has carried out the same role for big business that the army of unemployed formerly did — keeping down the working-class' slice of the national cake.

British capitalism for a time was prepared to pay the cost of this in terms of stagnation. But with the growth of world competition towards the end of the 1950s, inflation began to eat into profits. The purpose of the incomes policy has been to keep down the share of wages in the national income without introducing stagnation.

STRICT LIMITS

British workers are constantly told that their wages are too high compared to those in other countries and that they must accept strict limits to wage increases in order to boost Britain's trading position. But are wages in Britain high compared to those in other industrial countries? In fact, wages rose much faster in other European countries than in Britain. Between 1958 and 1967, gross wages rose by 51 per cent in Britain, 70 per cent in Belgium, 83 per cent in France, 99 per cent in Germany, 103 per cent in the Netherlands and 106 per cent in Italy.

Other reasons for the balance of payments problem become clear if we look at the drain of resources from Britain due to the cost in foreign currency of military expenditure abroad and to capital exports. In 1964, the cost of military bases abroad was £334 million. And if capital flows out of Britain at an annual rate of roughly £300 million, these two items alone would have to be covered by exports worth £650 million a year.

British workers have to produce goods worth more than £2 million a day just to meet the balance of payments cost of those two items.

CURRENCY CRISES

A third factor which makes any sterling crisis worse once it has started is Britain's involvement in the international banking business. Even before the crisis of November 1964, the British reserves amounted to only one-seventh of the value of Britain's annual imports, and since the pound is an international reserve currency, it also had to cope with fluctuations in the trade of other members of the sterling area.

Britain's role as an international banker has greatly contributed to her currency crises. Britain's debts to the International Monetary Fund and other foreign institutions have increased in recent years: in 1964 Britain's liabilities were £5,409m, in 1965 £6,016m, in 1966 £6,401m, in 1967 £6,689m and in 1968 £7,671m. These debts carry a heavy interest bill. Sterling's vulnerability to crises of confidence showed itself in an extreme form on 6 December 1968: 'The losses on that

one day were greater than the loss of exports as a result of all the strikes we have had in the motor industry in the last six months' (Guardian 11 November 1969).

The Guardian's financial editor stressed the real purpose of the 1966 deflationary policy when he wrote: 'In the City yesterday, it was said that rising unemployment will do more for sterling than our unreliable trade figures and phoney gold reserve totals. Each well-publicised redundancy announcement will be seen as real evidence that the government's measures are really biting' (Guardian 23 August 1966).

At the present time, four factors have had the effect of restoring some sort of international balance: the devaluation of the French franc, the revaluation of the German mark, the sudden transformation of sterling into a strong currency, and the continuing credit squeeze in the US, maintained because of growing inflationary pressures in the American economy. But such a balance is bound to be a temporary affair, since the increasing competitive chaos of international capitalism creates tremendous ups-and-downs in the field of currencies.

British exports rose in 1969 by at least 5 per cent, but this was mainly due to the general rise in world trade last year by about 15 per cent. There is likely to be a decline in the rate of growth of world trade in 1970, to a large extent because of the probable recession of the American economy.

A further important factor in this temporary balance in international finance and in the current strength of sterling is the realisation by international business that the so-called 'English disease' — the cycle of 'stop-go' high inflation, a low rate of growth and a high rate of strikes, — is spreading to other capitalist countries.

DEEP INROADS

The fact is that a balance of payments deficit cannot hit all the competing countries at the same time. Because of the likely future contraction of the world market, British exports will not, as in the 1950s, rise on a swelling tide of world trade. This means that Britain's economic targets can only be achieved by making deeper inroads into the shares of the world market of her main competitors.

If Britain manages to maintain a surplus of, say, £500 million, other countries would as a consequence see a decline in their external balances. They would be forced to take defensive measures, which would in turn undermine Britain's surplus position. The increasing ruthlessness of international competition is gradually forcing all major capitalist countries to intensify the rate of exploitation of their working classes in order to offset the adverse effects of inflation on their international trading strength.

The prospects for British big business is a period of continuing instability, creeping stagnation and unemployment and slow, gradual decline. There is likely to be a prolonged period of restraint on wages and consumption in order to channel the increased profits from rising productivity into the investment necessary to boost British exports.

The working class has no reason to share the current optimism about the British economy. Whatever improvements have occurred are temporary and at the workers' expense. British capitalism is a slowly ageing body whose strength is gradually diminishing.

International competition forces major countries to step up attacks on workers

GEC workers need strong

SW Manchester Correspondent

THE INFLUENCE of the combine committee in General Electric-English Electric is very limited. It is not recognised by management — but that is not very surprising.

What is much more serious is that the combine committee seems not to be recognised by the unions as a valid and much-needed instrument for workers in the Weinstock Empire.

The minutes of the combine committee show that, despite repeated requests, it has received no information from the trade-union side of the National Joint Consultative Council. At present, the NJCC is under serious debate by trade unionists within GEC-EE.

And no wonder. It seems to be a pretty useless piece of apparatus. Its minutes are not circulated to local trade union officials, let alone to shop stewards. (The only union, it seems, to pass on information to its local officials about the NJCC is the Clerical Workers.)

The trade union officials who sit on the NJCC have no power to negotiate wages and conditions. The NJCC seems only to meet when the management side decides it would like to call a meeting.

When the combine committee decided in June 1969 to lobby the NJCC, the meeting was suddenly moved to another venue to avoid the lobby. Presumably this move was initiated by the management side — or has it? The lobby was to be of union officials, not of managers.

At the more recent lobby in London of the NJCC's October meeting, the delegates



WEINSTOCK: rationalising with an axe

from the factories affected by redundancy in Power Engineering again had great difficulty in getting access to their officials. One trade union official, who left the meeting early, refused even to speak to the delegates.

It is about time trade unionists in the combine reminded the officials who pays the piper — and started calling the tune a bit more. Some people are saying that the NJCC should be abandoned, and that the unions should demand a much better negotiating set-up. I agree.

At the same time, it is necessary to recognise that the October lobby revealed the weakness of the combine committee — only seven delegates (two from Stafford, four from Netherton and one from Trafford Park, Manchester) turned up. Clearly the combine committee's own strength has to grow if its influence is to expand.

It is best to be honest about the way things are at present. The combine committee is not functioning too well. Only a small proportion of the factories are represented at the meetings — and clearly everything possible must be done to remedy this state of affairs, with newsletters and personal visits. But that's not all. The majority of the time at the combine is taken up with reports from the various factories represented. This kind of exchange of information is of course vital. But is it enough?

In various factories in the combine, new schemes are now being introduced by management — productivity deals, job evaluation, measured day work, etc. The GEC-EE combine has been subject to some of the most ruthless 'rationalisation' programmes in the history of British industry. Up to now the main focus of interest has been on 'pruning' the labour force. But there can be no doubt that the GEC-EE board will do all it can to get more sweat out of the workers who remain.

All the various schemes that managements are currently trying on in British industry are aimed at squeezing more profits out of each worker by increasing

links to combat Weinstock plans

'efficiency'. No one can deny that the British bosses have had some real successes in the past five or six years in the field of 'prod deals', 'rationalisation', 'measured day work', 'job evaluation' and 'scientific method study'.

At the beginning of the 1960s, no one had heard of 'productivity deals' — yet today it has been estimated that something like six million workers are already covered by these deals. They have been introduced almost everywhere without much discussion or debate about the general principles involved. If there is one thing the labour movement is not properly prepared for, it is the introduction of these new types of 'deal'.

In the 19th century, the employers in the engineering industry started trying to introduce piece-work. They were resisted all the way. Even though they won in the end and piece-work was forced on to engineering workers, it took them 50 years and more to get it — 50 years of quite intense struggle, both locally and nationally.

What a contrast to the introduction of 'prod deals'. It can not be said that the unions have any kind of policy towards them. Only one union (DATA) is completely opposed to them. Some unions, like the TGWU are officially in favour of productivity bargaining, while others like the AEF seem to face both ways at once and have no real policy.

As a result of this confusion and lack of policy towards prod deals, British employers have been introducing them all over the place, with the active support of the state — and sometimes with the active assistance of trade unionists who are normally thought of as militant left-wingers. Yet these productivity deals are very dangerous. They threaten trade-union organisation at the workplace. Time and again management has used them to 'divide and rule' its workers. They threaten hard-won working conditions of all kinds.

More prod deals

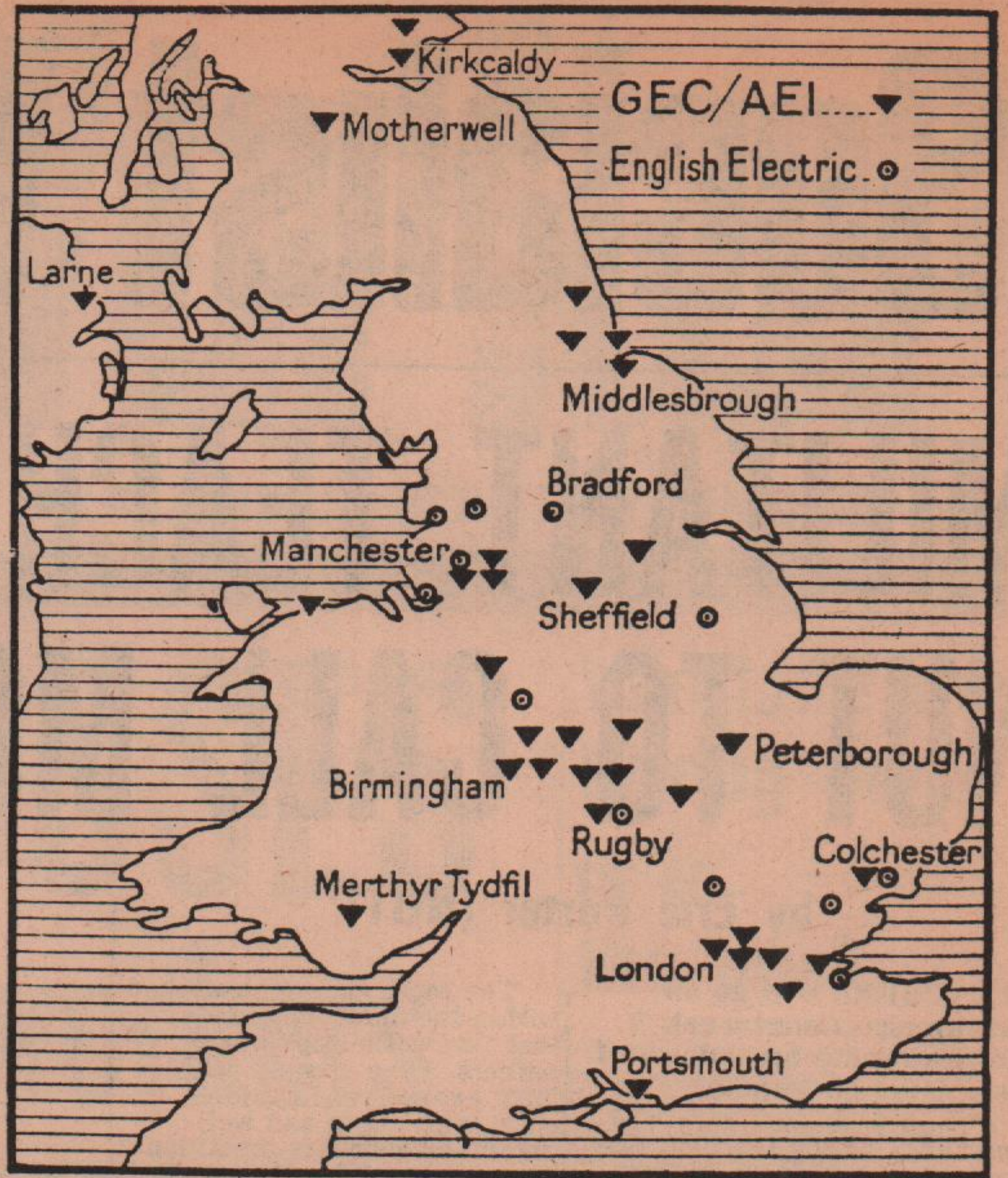
The new problems raised by these new deals, and by all the paraphernalia associated with them (time and motion study, job evaluation, management consultants) are not of course restricted to workers in the Weinstock Empire. These new deals are being brought in everywhere. But there's no doubt that for GEC-EE workers they are the sign of the future. Up to now the Weinstock board has been rationalising the empire with an axe. But all the signs are that they will want more and more prod deals from now on.

We believe these deals can not be handled factory by factory with any success. A combine policy towards them is needed. If the board of directors meet opposition to some new deal in one or two factories, they will go ahead and introduce it in other factories in the combine and then seek to spread it. Gradually the militant factories where there is opposition will be isolated and it will be that much easier for Lord Nelson, Arnold Weinstock, Jack Scamp and the rest of them to defeat the militants. This has already happened in the ICI combine.

If necessary, they will always close a difficult factory in the interests of 'rationalisation'. It may not have been simple accident that made them choose Napier and Netherton works in Liverpool for closure. At both plants there was a tradition of militant trade-union action and wage rates were higher than average.

The GEC-EE board sit like a spider at the middle of her web. They can control the strings and manipulate policy in all the different factories. To this kind of centralisation workers must oppose their own kind of centralisation — in a democratic and effective combine committee.

The GEC combine covers the UK. A strong and effective combine committee is needed to counter the bosses' plans for sackings and new work methods.



Some trade unionists will resist the idea that the combine ought to discuss and formulate policy, as they are worried that such a discussion will verge on 'politics'. The trouble is, these days it's no longer possible to separate 'politics' and 'trade unionism'.

In a way, the combine committee at present is still an organisation in search of a cause. But if the combine committee can help trade unionists in the GEC-EE empire to formulate answers to the problems they will be facing over the next couple of years, then it will really become powerful.

Immediate steps

GEC-EE are now preparing for 1971 and the end of national bargaining over wages. Are trade unionists preparing for this, so as not to be taken by surprise, and so as to get the best possible deal out of the new situation? That is the problem facing the whole combine — and therefore facing the combine committee. I believe that a strengthened combine committee is absolutely essential. Immediate steps that need to be taken in that direction include the following:

1. Urgent steps to contact every factory in the combine and get their representatives to the meetings. This work should be organised and shared out, not just left to one or two 'dogs bodies' who have to carry all the burden.
2. More circulation of documents, reports,

information, etc. Many factories are very isolated.

3. Recognition of the fact that it is not going to be enough just to swap information. Policy discussions are needed on the attitude trade unionists should take to the employers' new weapons. We can't fight tanks with bows and arrows.

4. In the trade unions themselves, a fight for proper recognition of the combine committees, without having to subordinate them to full-time officials or drastically weaken them.

5. Recognition of the idea that what happens in one factory deeply involves other factories in the combine: a unified management can only be fought on a unified basis.

6. In the factories, making sure that as many workers as possible are kept up to date with the business of the combine, its discussions and its problems, so that they can be mobilised when necessary. A combine committee that does not get through to the shop floor is like a general who marches without his army. Recent experience has only hammered this lesson home more surely...

This article is reprinted from the GEC-EE-AEI information bulletin produced by Manchester International Socialists. Copies are available (1s 6d post paid) from Colin Barker, 44 Sewerby St, Manchester 16.

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FILMS

A shot in the arm

IF YOUR revolutionary ardour is flagging, you could probably do with being reminded of the inherent brutality, thuggery and violence of the ruling class. Adalen '31 (Academy One, Oxford Street) is dedicated to five Swedish martyrs who were shot by troops as they marched with others in protest against the manning of docks by scab labour in the 1930s.

The impact of the massacre is made even more disturbing because the director has shot the whole sequence in pale, sensitive colours and the camera seems to roam from one scene of anguish to the next, almost like a spectator taking in the whole revolting episode. Drama isn't needed here — the despicable butchery of the ruling class speaks for itself.

The film does have its faults. It devotes too much time to the everyday routines of an upper working class family and none at all to the rank and file militants who organise the march. Obviously the director thought that the life of the labour aristocracy would give him more scope artistically. Consequently many scenes in the film seem

unnecessary — and in many places it's just another Swedish film on youthful sex exploration and 'awakening'.

These things were happening at the time, of course, life of a kind did continue during the strike, but there were other things happening which warranted more explanation than is given in the film.

But the climax of Adalen '31, the disastrous march and massacre, is worth seeing again and again, if only for the fact that it injects into us renewed anger and hatred for the capitalist system. Sometimes we need a boost like this.

I'd advise all socialists in the London area to go at once — the cinemas was half empty when I went and it was a Saturday night. I doubt if the management will tolerate that situation for very long. Outside London, you should bully your local cinema into showing it.

KATHY SIMS



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Socialist Worker

MILITANT TEACHERS FORCE NUT TO CALL MORE STRIKES

by Eric Porter (NUT)

TEACHERS will go on strike again next week following the breakdown of pay talks on Monday.

The tremendous growth of militancy among teachers last year shows no signs of flagging and has forced the NUT executive to call further stoppages in selected schools throughout the country.

The third round of talks between the teachers' unions and their employers on the Burnham Committee ended in deadlock when the demand for an all-round increase of £135 was rejected. The union leaders refused to take part in arbitration where they would have been outnumbered two to one by the employers.

Education Minister Edward Short failed to get the Cabinet to treat teachers, like nurses, as a special case and lift the 4½ per cent ceiling on pay claims.

The employers made no increase on their previous offer of £100 a year more for teachers earning up to £1000 a year. They merely increased by a few miserable pounds the offer made to teachers earning more than £1000, tapering down to £80 for those on £1275 a year.

The mood of rank and file teachers is clear: 'No compromise - not a penny less than £135'. The flat-rate increase they demand would merely restore their purchasing power to the 1967 level.

Timid

A timid NUT executive, dominated by head teachers, has been given no room to organise a sell-out, as they have done so many times in the past. The tactic of fighting for a flat-rate increase for all salaries has meant that the education authorities have not been able to use their normal splitting methods of increasing differentials - that is, offering more to the few at the top at the expense of the majority.

R-R stewards call for combine to stop sackings

ROLLS-ROYCE are to sack 3500 workers in England and a further 1100 in Scotland. The timing of the announcement at New Year has taken the unions by surprise and meetings are being held this week.

But staff union stewards at the Hillington, Glasgow, factory - where 1800 workers have just returned from a 10-day strike - have called for a combine committee to be set up that would unite the Scottish factories in order to fight redundancies.

Rolls-Royce have been re-tooling for the last 18 months and it was obvious that the sackings would take place. But no preparations

The tactic has also worked within the union. Increases that favour the top salary earners have brought off the NUT executive. But this time, with angry and well-organised members breathing down their necks, they had little temptation to dampen down the militancy.

The key to the success of the operation so far has been the strength of the rank and file. There is a widespread and growing number of teachers - many of them young - organised around the flourishing two-years old paper Rank and File.

Anxious

From Monday, thousands of teachers in primary and secondary schools will be called out for a fortnight on a selective basis. Many more schools are likely to be affected than in December. Union headquarters have a long list of schools that are anxious to take strike action.

NUT local associations will also have to arrange for ballots of their members to win approval for extended strikes in whole areas. Special meetings will have to be called and membership lists checked, for union rules demand that at least two-thirds of the members in an area must support strike action before it can take place.

A £1 a month levy has been imposed on the members at the same time as an increased subscription comes into operation. It is a heavy burden, but the enthusiasm and determination of the ¼ million NUT members should carry the struggle forward.

The government have attempted to split the teachers from the nurses by offering nurses a higher increase as a 'bonus' for not going on strike. But nurses and all other 'public servants' waiting for more pay should realise that it is the teachers' militancy that has broken the freeze, enabling them all to advance.

were made to fight them.

Militants know that the 'golden handshake' of the Redundancy Payments Act will be the bosses' main weapon.

In similar situations in other combines, workers have accepted redundancy pay rather than fight for their jobs. But redundancy money is soon spent and then the workers face the dole queue.

Militant action is the only hope for the Rolls-Royce workers. They can expect little fight from full-time officials who probably share the opinions of a Midlands R-R convenor who said the sackings were necessary to fight American competition.

IS London Region Meeting

Which way for the unions?

Bert Ramelson (CP industrial organiser) and Tony Cliff

Sunday 18 January 7.30pm

**AFRICA CENTRE
38 King Street WC2**



Coal increases will hit prices and old people

THE COAL BOARD'S decision to raise the price of coal by 10 per cent is a disgrace. It marks yet another savage increase in the cost of living, particularly for old people who depend on coal fires for heating.

The increase is certain to spark off further price rises in the steel, gas and electricity industries. The 'pledge' by some electricity boards to peg prices this year is not worth the paper it is written on.

The coal increase is indefensible. The claim that it is necessary to avoid the NCB making a loss this year is a straight lie.

The Coal Board makes a healthy surplus every year. The 1969 operating profit was £28.6 millions. But this figure became a deficit of £8.9m when £37.5m were paid in compensation to the former pre-war mine owners.

The outrageous sums paid to the old owners, who bled the industry dry for decades at a terrible cost to miners' lives and conditions, is

MILITANT tenants in Greater London are campaigning to organise estates in the area to meet rent rises of up to 10s in March. The United Tenants' Action Committee, which has its main strength in North and East London, is concentrating on South London and the suburban areas in an effort to increase support.

This Sunday, UTAC supporters will be in the Boreham Wood area. They will call for associations to be formed to refuse to pay any further increases.

RECKITT and Coleman, the soft drinks firm of Hull, gave 12 bottles of orange cordial to every employee for Christmas. Nice thought? Maybe - but unfortunately the cordial contained cyclamate which is now banned

responsible for the economic problems of the industry. Twenty years of operating profits since nationalisation in 1948 have been turned into an accumulated loss of £87.3m.

The labour movement should demand that the government ban the price increase and put an immediate stop to crippling compensation.

SW Reporter

A FORD shop steward was sacked last week for refusing to work a three-shift system. He is Alan Watts, who was given an hour's notice at the car combine's Autolite plant at Enfield, North London, where sparking plugs, horns and windscreen wipers are produced.

With crucial Ford pay talks due on 23 January, militant workers feel the management may try to introduce three-shift working throughout the combine in return for a few pounds extra on wages. The sacking of Watts could be part of a softening-up process in which militants are weeded out before the triple-shift system - which totally disrupts family life - is brought in.

Before any further damaging agreements are signed, union officials should be forced to look closely at the way in which existing ones are used by the management. At Autolites, agreements are being interpreted in an increasingly high-handed manner.

It is now common practice for workers who are four minutes late in a month to

Halewood unity leaves Ford bosses smarting

by Alan Wild (TGWU)

THE LAST THREE MONTHS at Ford's Halewood plant near Liverpool have seen persistent attempts by the management to attack the conditions and job organisation of men working in the Paint, Trim and Assembly plant. The men responded with united and unexpected methods of opposition that left the management smarting.

An attempt to reduce the number of workers in a section of the plant by the use of time and motion studies resulted in the men so bamboozling the bosses that eight more men were brought into the section. The same men had earlier fought the management's refusal to recognise their newly-elected shop steward.

Shortly after this victory, members of the senior management were replaced. From Dagenham came Mr Mchrone (a hatchet man from 1962) as manager of the PTA, together with a Belgian whose job was to 'sort out the paint shop'.

When Mchrone went into the paint booths and suggested that one man was not working properly, the worker dropped his gun into the astonished manager's hand and told him to see if he could do any better. Outside the booths, the worker dressed down the flabbergasted bureaucrat in front of the assembled section for among other things, breach of regulation for not wearing a protective hat.

'Trouble-shooter' chased

The men on the paint shop floor have chased the Belgian 'trouble-shooter' on several occasions and the shop stewards' committee has refused to acknowledge his existence. Many sections of the PTA have been involved in stoppages, overtime bans and concerted working-to-rule as a result of the provocative actions of the management.

Matters came to a head when Mchrone sacked two men for a minor disciplinary offence. The PTA voted to a man to stop work and the following day the two men were reinstated with full pay. The cost to the company has forced them to ease off provocative actions and allow the men to run the job as they see fit.

But the shop stewards are not complacent. They are grateful to the men, whose quick reactions have bolstered their morale, but they are aware of the possibility of a management attempt to repeat the 1962 offensive in which 17 shop stewards were sacked at Dagenham.

The complete silence of both local and national press is an indication of the men's strength. The company has created an illusion of harmony while militant action has given them a real hiding. News of the Halewood successes must be passed onto other car workers, particularly in the Ford empire, to show them what rank and file action can achieve.

MOVE TO BAN TRANSFER OF WORK

by Andy Enever (Press Shop TGWU)

THE 'A' shift in the press-shop at Halewood has voted unanimously to 'black' the movement of all dies from the plant. Management has been attempting for some time to move the Capri model dies (used for stamping out car parts) to Ford's Cologne, Germany, works.

This is seen as a management threat to undermine any strike which may take place this year over the claims for parity of wages with Midland car workers. If Ford workers were on strike, Ford could simply transfer production of even more Capris to Germany.

German Ford convenors have promised to black any work normally done in

Ford in England. In the long term, the attempt to move the dies can be seen as a threat to the jobs of Halewood men.

Management have said they wish to transfer the Capri work completely to Germany and replace the Capri dies with Cortina dies.

But the Cortina is going out of production in June and this will mean a likely run-down on work and labour.

Attempts to move work to Germany in the face of rising militancy at Ford in Britain must not intimidate militants. More links must be made with the rank and file workers in Germany and Belgium in order to oppose the playing-off of one Ford worker against another.

Steward sacked in three-shift row

receive intimidating letters from the management. A worker is suspended after three warning letters.

One man already on a three-shift system was threatened with three days' suspension for being late on the 6.30 am shift. He refused to be suspended and was given his cards.

The management then asked Alan Watts to take the dismissed man's place on the three-shift system. Watts said no and an hour later was outside the gates as a New Year present.

Blatant

Watts told Socialist Worker that shortly before he was sacked, the Paint Engineering Manager told him, together with his foreman and convenor, that Autolite intended to bring in three-shift working throughout his department.

This blatant move to override the workers and their union annoyed the more experienced Personnel Relations Manager. He decided that the only way to save the situation was to get rid of Watts, the main opponent to management

plans.

Ford workers should be on their guard against the widespread introduction of triple-shift working and double shifts for women. The rank and file must demand that no agreement should be signed on 23 January before the unions hold mass report-back meetings.

And those meetings should demand: Parity with the Midlands, no strings and no triple-shifts.

NOTICES

RANK AND FILE conference Saturday 10 January 10-5pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq WC1.

KINGSTON IS: anti-Powell demo. Assemble 7pm Coronation Hall, Penryn Rd, Kingston, Monday 12 January.

DEMONSTRATE against Springboks at Galashiels. Coach leaves Glasgow Sat 15 Jan. Phone 339 1075.

NORTH LONDON women's group Sun 25 January, 18 Dickinson Rd, N8. Subject: The Family, Children welcome. W7 bus from Finsbury Park.

WANTED: Lenin selected works, vols 1,2,3, new or second hand. Phone or write IS Book Service, 6 Cottons Gdns, E2. 01-739 1870