

Socialist Worker

FOR WORKERS' CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM 205 30 JANUARY 1971 6d (2½p)

Raise collections, organise meetings to back strikers— their fight is every worker's fight...

POSTMEN MUST WIN!

THE POST OFFICE WORKERS must win their strike. It is a dispute that vitally affects every trade unionist in the country.

The strikers' determination to fight for £3 a week more is magnificent. More than 220,000 postmen, telephonists and counter clerks have been out for nearly two weeks.

But solidarity action from other sections of the trade union movement is essential as the Post Office management steps up its lies and distortions about 'a drift back to work' and the millionaire press attempts to whip up public feeling with stories of hardship to old age pensioners.

If there is any hardship caused by the strike, the blame rests squarely on the shoulders of the government and Post Office bosses.

Every trade union branch, works committee, shop stewards' committee and political organisation should rally to the postmen's side. Collections should be raised and taken to local strike headquarters — remember, the postal workers have no strike pay.

PUBLICISE

And meetings and leaflets should be organised in every town to help publicise the strikers' case.

The strike is a fight for a decent standard of living. Many post office workers have great difficulty in making ends meet on present wages.

Last year the cost of living rose by more than 10 per cent. If the strikers were to accept the Post Office's 'last and final' offer of 8 per cent it would mean accepting a wage cut.

The Tory government is determined to prevent postal workers from winning their strike. It was they who incited the Post Office bosses to suggest a pay cut and then accused the workers of 'unreasonable behaviour' when they rejected it.

The Tories want to defeat the strikers to make an example of them in the hope that other workers will be scared to fight for higher wages in case they are beaten too. This policy is being carried out in the whole of the public sector.

It began last autumn when the

RAT-A-TAT-TAT ON THE WAGES DOOR: REPORTS AND INTERVIEWS Page 3

by SW Industrial Reporter

Tories turned down a pay claim from the lower paid council workers. After a long strike they were compelled to grant a 15 per cent rise.

Since then they have given 12 per cent to the miners and offered only 10 per cent to the electricity supply workers.

If the Tories are successful in defeating strikes and holding down wages in the public sector groups such as the railwaymen and the teachers will suffer. And strong pressure will be put on private employers to do the same.

The outcome of the postmen's strike is vital to millions of workers.

The Tories and their hirelings in the Post Office keep calling on the union to go to arbitration. The union has quite rightly refused to agree. Courts of Inquiry are always loaded against the workers.

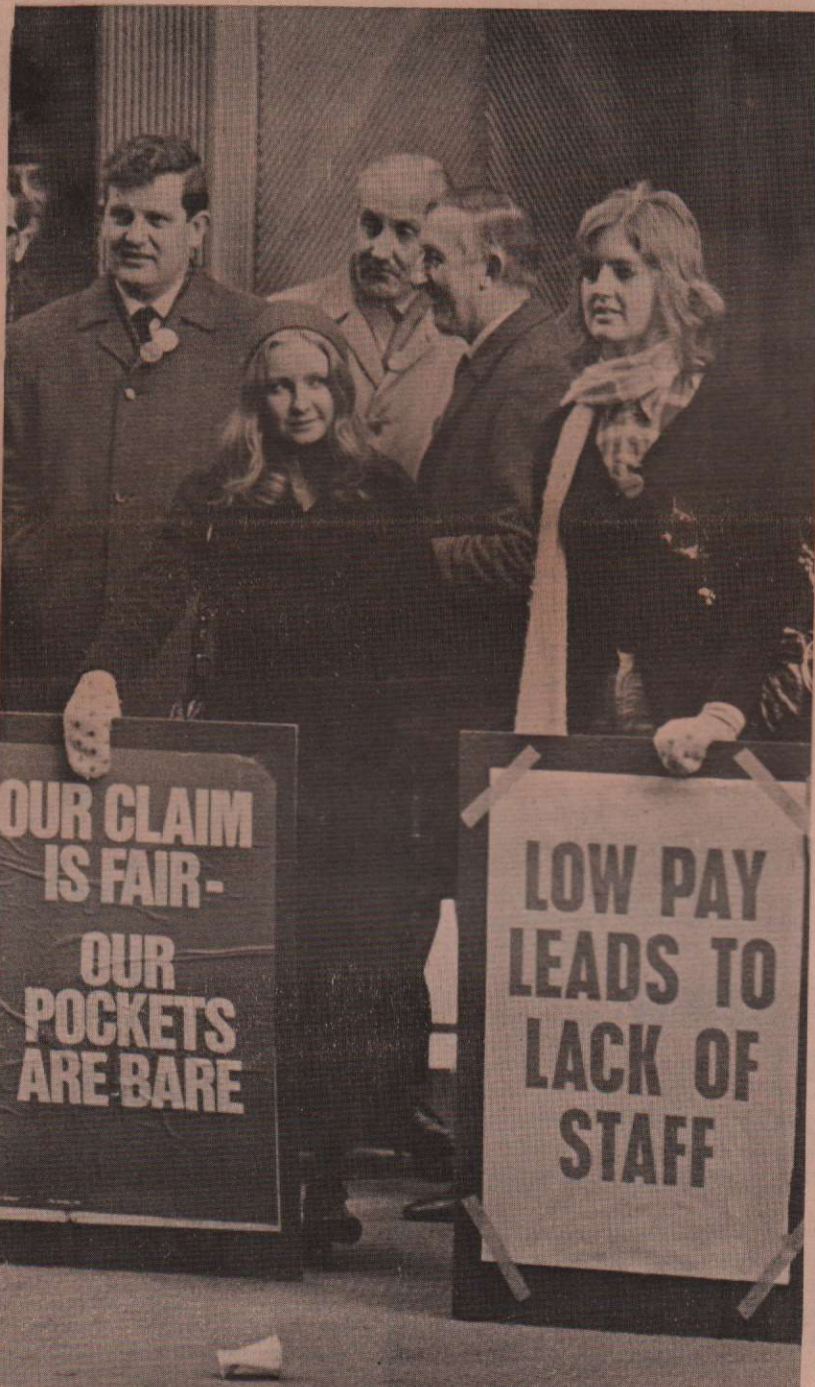
Trade unions should follow the TUC lead to raise cash for the postmen. They should give them huge donations and pledge their full support in blacking pirate mail services and railway parcels services.

ALLIANCE

Within the nationalised industries an Industrial Alliance must be formed. The united strength of the Tories and the employers should be matched with an alliance of all the trade unions under attack.

Unless the Tories are defeated, millions of working people will suffer pay-cuts at the same time as prices continue to rise. Savage anti-union laws will attempt to smash shop-floor organisation.

The postal strikers are in the front line of the anti-Tory battle. They must not stand alone.



STRIKE PICKETS outside Electra House, the Post Office Cable and Wireless HQ.

Support the Postmen

Speakers:

BERNADETTE DEVLIN MP
JIM HIGGINS POEU Executive
(in his personal capacity)

Thursday 4 February 8pm
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1

IMPORTANT: all IS branch secretaries must phone the National Secretary, 01-739 1878 by Friday evening.

NEW THREAT BY ULSTER RIGHT WING

by Sean Treacy

THE DECISION of the right wing of the Ulster Unionist Party to have another try at forcing the resignation of the Chichester-Clark government marks a further stage in the political crisis in Northern Ireland.

The new move comes at a time of open and violent conflict between the British army of occupation and Stormont forces on the one hand, and some of the regime's formerly ardent supporters in the Shankill Road area of Belfast.

The writing is on the wall for Stormont. It is a matter of speculation how long the Unionist regime can maintain itself before Westminster is forced to intervene and impose direct rule.

The right wing's demands are not all acceptable to Westminster. If Craig and West, leaders of the Unionist Party right wing were to have their way, Stormont would abandon completely even the paper progress towards civil rights, would re-arm the B-Specials and would launch a vicious repression against the Republican and Socialist opposition.

Westminster is quite content to see Republicans and left wingers locked up under the Special Powers Act but it wants the promises of civil rights to remain on the statute book as part of its 'understanding' with the Dublin Green Tory government of Jack Lynch.

The clashes on the Shankill Road are an indication of the developing collapse of the northern regime. On the one hand, the young Shankill fighters continue to express their frustration in sectarian, anti-Catholic terms.

On the other hand, the Shankill workers are being forced into violent conflict with the very state which in the past they have looked to for protection and patronage. More and more Protestant workers, especially those faced with Northern Ireland's rising unemployment, feel betrayed and this is leading them to question the whole basis of their misplaced faith in Orangism and Unionism.

The task of socialists in Northern Ireland in building a united movement of Catholic and Protestant workers is not easy. But the events of the past week bring the possibility of such a vital unity of all Irish workers one stage nearer.

CS Troops and CS Trial
Public Meeting with Bowes Egan and Eamonn McCann
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1.
Friday 5 February 7.30pm
Organised by ISC

Rally in Support of Frank Roche
assemble Lambeth Town Hall
Sunday 7 February 2pm

Pickets on Old Bailey each day of trial from Monday 8 February 11am

Build Action Councils to kill the Bill

Socialist Worker

6 Cottons Gardens London E2 8DN
Tel: 01-739 1878 (editorial) 2639 (business)

Why the wages battle must go on

ACCORDING to the Department of Employment and Productivity Gazette, the rise in the cost of living between December 1969 and December 1970 was 10.6 points or about 8 per cent. These figures are misleading. The index of retail prices does not, for instance, take into account any rises in taxation and consequently the figure of 8 per cent is inaccurate.

The real rise in the cost of living has certainly been more than 10 per cent. Against a factual background such as this it is clear that for workers to merely keep pace with these rises, wage settlements of more than 10 per cent must be achieved. Any figure less than this will represent an actual wage cut.

At the present time the Tories and the employers are launching an all-out offensive against wage settlements. Questioned at the Power Workers' Court of Inquiry, Sir Donald MacDougall, (£10,400 last year and £15,000 this year), the Chief Economic Adviser to the Treasury, declared that the government's aim was to force wage settlements down to a rate of 7 per cent and below by the end of the year.

The government's policy of trying to actually cut wages is receiving vigorous support from the employers. Speaking in Bristol, Mr Campbell Adamson, the Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry, said that all employers should 'stand firm' to wage demands and that the fight to do so was comparable to the Battle of Britain. Remembering the purpose of that battle it might be proper to paraphrase Churchill's famous words: 'Never before has so much been taken by so few from so many'.

Force down wages

The present postmen's dispute is crucial to the outcome of the wages struggle. The government is seeking to force down wages in the public sector in order to encourage private employers to do the same. They began by reluctantly giving 15 per cent to the lower paid council workers and followed this with 12 per cent to the miners, an offer of 10 per cent to the electricity supply workers and now only 8 per cent to the postmen.

As additional weapons in their fight to hold wages down, the Tories have seriously increased the numbers of unemployed and are currently trying to pass savage anti-trade union legislation.

The wages fight is essentially political. The government is leading the employers' offensive and, unless there is a political response, the working class will be forced to fight with one arm tied behind its back. The Tory offensive must be defeated and only a militant counter-offensive by the working class can achieve this. Central to such a fighting policy should be:

1. The demand for a minimum wage of £25 a week and no retreat on wage claims.
2. Full support to all workers in struggle. This means that an industrial alliance of all the relevant public sector trade unions should be formed in order to face the government with a united front.
3. A campaign against the misery of unemployment with the demand of work or full pay for those suffering from the inability of the system to provide them with a job.
4. Mass action to defeat the Industrial Relations Bill and a declaration by the TUC that they will not register or abide by any of the Tory laws if they are passed.

POVERTY: THE GRIM TRUTH AT LAST

SOCIALISTS are often accused of exaggerating the degree of poverty and hardship that exist in Britain today. Our accusers should pay careful attention to a report published this week by the Child Poverty Action Group.

The group estimates that poverty has doubled in the past four years while personal wealth has increased two or three times. It says that more than two million children were living on or below the poverty line at the end of 1970. As the 'poverty line' is drawn up by the government — never generous in its estimate of what working people can live on — it is clear that several million more children must be living in situations of dire shortage.

Behind the statistics lie the appalling human problems bred by the callous indifference of the system to the children of the working poor.

The facts produced by the CPAG explode the comfortable myths of a society moving towards greater equality of wealth, where poverty and class differences are things of the past. On the contrary: since the end of the Second World War more wealth has been concentrated into fewer hands and growing numbers of people are unable to keep pace with the soaring cost of living.

The report shows with brutal clarity that government policies in recent years have done nothing to help the poor and have in fact made their plight worse. The two Budgets in 1970 returned £550 millions to taxpayers but not a penny went specifically to families with children. And it was the rich who did best out of Barber's 6d off income tax last autumn.

As it is government — the present Tory one and its Labour predecessor — that is mainly to blame for the plight of the poor, it seems a pious wish on the part of the CPAG to ask the government to solve the problem by setting up a Royal Commission on inequality and to agree to make a greater provision for the poor in future budgets.

The only effective way to fight to relieve the hardship of the poor is by the trade union movement taking action to force the government's arm. The £25 a week minimum wage referred to above must be fought for. The TUC's pitiful call for £16 10s shows how out of touch the knights of the General Council are with the working class — many workers earning that amount now are among the officially designated poor.

POLISH STRIKES HIT SHIPYARDS AND TRANSPORT

by Chris Harman

A NEW WAVE of strikes has hit Poland. Workers in the Baltic ports who fought pitched battles against the police and army last month are once again taking action to press their demands.

In Gdansk, Sopot and Gdynia there have been token strikes by bus and tram workers, as well as a continual go-slow in the shipyards. And in Szczecin a complete shutdown of the shipyards has spread to the transport workers.

After the December fighting, in which scores of people were killed, the authorities tried to give the appearance of accepting some of the workers' demands.

Opponents of the old party leader Gomulka used the riots as an excuse to get rid of him and his close associates. Although price increases were not ended, wage improvements for lower-paid workers and pensioners were promised.

It was admitted that some of the demands made had been justified. Publicity of grievances appeared in the press.

MEAGRE

One Gdansk paper could even write that: 'The sham appearances erected by many people went up in smoke, the bitterness of workers was revealed' (Glos Wybrzeza, 28 December).

But the money allocated to improve workers' living conditions was meagre — only 4 per cent of total government spending. The new leaders hoped this would be sufficient to placate the workers, while the authorities took measures to re-establish their own total control.

Now the government is beginning once again to drop its mask of benevolence and toleration. The Warsaw paper Trybuna Ludu has warned



Polish workers looting shops during December's upheavals.

against 'attempts to create an atmosphere of anarchy and demagoguery' and the prime minister has called on industrial managers to 'strengthen discipline and oppose unrealistic demands by workers'.

Poland's workers are determined to continue to press for improved living standards. They have been neither lulled into complacency by government promises nor intimidated by its displays of force.

They are not striking just for economic demands. They are also calling for the removal of certain key members of the government: Kociolok

the economic overlord, and General Moczar, the former police chief who initiated a campaign of vicious anti-semitism three years ago.

OVERTHROW

The lesson is being learnt that there is only one way out of the present crisis — an overthrow of the bureaucratic class that rules in Poland as elsewhere in the so-called Communist states.

This is the lesson Hungarian workers began to learn in 1956 and Czech workers in 1968-9.

Violent repression by Israel in Gaza Strip

THE MYTH of 'liberal occupation', cultivated for more than three years by the Israeli leaders and by Zionist propagandists, has now been smashed to smithereens.

The violent repression by the Israeli occupation forces in the Gaza Strip has totally exposed that propaganda myth.

For the first time since the June War of 1967, this is being admitted even by the conquest-hungry and annexationist Israeli leaders. None other than the Minister of Defence, Moshe Dayan, has explicitly admitted that 'in some cases the Israeli soldiers are ordered to shoot' at crowds.

Special unit

He said that some Israeli soldiers feel unable to do this and there have been some cases of refusal to carry out such orders, as at Maariv on 7 January.

The Gaza Strip is now under the charge of the Border Guards. This is a special unit which the Israeli press calls the Green Berets.

It was the Green Berets who carried out the massacre in the Israeli Arab village of Kafr Qasim on 27 October, 1956, the day of the attack on Egypt at the start of the Suez War planned and waged by Israel, France and Britain.

The atrocities of the Israeli occupation forces in the Gaza Strip have now reached new heights. There are mass arrests without trial, continuous curfew for weeks, blowing up of

homes, cutting off of water supplies to entire districts, mass beatings by police truncheons and whips and firing on inhabitants.

Almost every day there are official statements about inhabitants of the Strip being killed or wounded while 'trying to escape'.

An official announcement says that a new detention camp is being opened in the Sinai Desert to cope with the large number of detainees from the Strip which the ordinary prison can no longer accommodate.

The hundreds of wounded and dozens of killed — including old people, women and small children who even a madman could not associate with armed resistance — make it your duty to mobilise in struggle against the occupation and oppression to which the masses of Palestinian Arab people are subject.

We direct this appeal especially to revolutionary socialists — organisations and individuals — all round the world.

Israeli Socialist Organisation (Mazpen)

FRENCH SOCIALISTS TAKE STEP TOWARDS LEFT-WING UNITY

SINCE March 1970, representatives of the French paper Lutte Ouvriere (Workers' Struggle) and the Ligue Communiste, the French section of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, have been discussing the possibilities of unity.

They published a joint agreement on united work earlier this month. After a period of discussion, the groups are now ready to embark on joint campaigns around various working-class issues.

These will include the struggle for all-round, flat-rate wage increases rather than the percentage increases favoured by the unions that tend to widen differentials, working conditions and public transport

in Paris.

In the course of this joint work they hope to move towards the merging of their papers.

If this joint work proves successful, the two groups will have open talks for the creation of a united organisation. Some broad principles have been agreed, including the political independence of the eventual united group within the USFI and the priority that will be given to industrial work.

We hope to keep readers informed of progress in this united work which we hope will strengthen the revolutionary left in France.

Rat-a-tat-tat on the wages door



Post Office workers on their massive London march last week

'Most strikers realise this is a political fight'

Post Office spokesmen and the press have deliberately distorted the truth about the post office workers' strike. Socialist Worker spoke to BRIAN TOAL, a counter clerk at Mount Pleasant and a committee member of the City of London UPW branch. He speaks in his personal capacity.

WHAT are the reasons for the strike?

Firstly the long incremental pay scales. A person who joins the Post Office at 16 must wait until 30 before reaching the basic scale. The second reason is the wage levels.

What is the rate for a Counter Clerk?

In London aged 25 it is £1035, outside London £910. That is after nine years' service.

LAUDABLE

What is the response to the strike call?

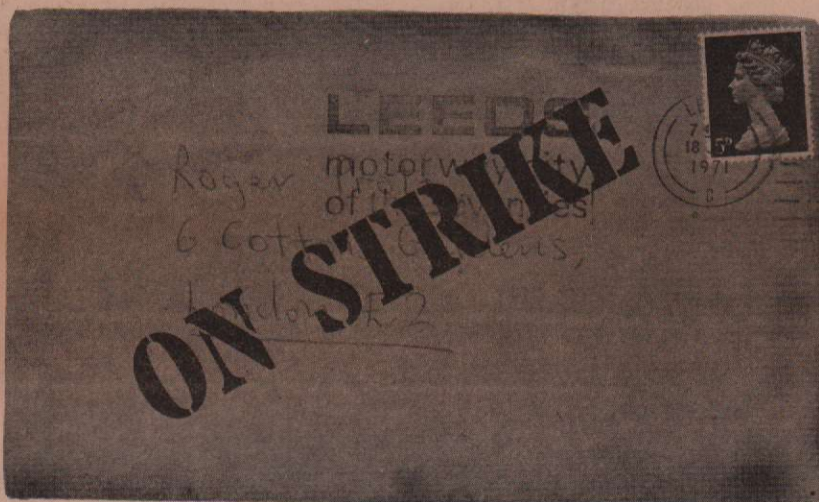
In my grade it has got 95 per cent support. The response is 97 per cent for the Post Office as a whole.

How do you feel the UPW executive has conducted the strike so far?

Their handling of the strike so far has been laudable. It reflects fairly accurately the feeling of the members.

But the rank and file are rather afraid that the executive will take too much notice of the deliberately misleading and misconstrued reports in the press.

For the first time, the UPW is now involved in the wages struggle, some-



thing that the Post Office has sheltered them from up until now. It is encouraging to see such strong response from workers uninitiated in the fight that many other workers have every day over wages.

Why do you think the Post Office has decided to take a stand now?

Because of the government's dictated policy, reflected in the summary dismissal of Post Office chairman Lord Hall. He was dismissed because he would have argued that public service workers should be paid wages comparable to those in the private sector.

Most of the strikers realise that this is a political fight and are quite prepared to fight it as such. This is particularly true of the white-collar grades who have had it forcibly thrust on them that they are workers like

the postmen in uniform.

What do you think of the Post Office's strike-breaking tactics such as their decision to open the London Chief Office, staffing it with blackleg labour?

The rank and file counter clerks have responded to this by deciding not to open any office on the voluntary basis that existed last week. The management has made a crude attempt to invent a crack in their solidarity.

VOLUNTEERS

Every counter clerk knows that the Post Office is making no effort to pay pensions, family allowances or supplementary benefits by providing cash, even though a large number of volunteers have been available. They

hope to turn public opinion against the strikers.

Will the Post Office ever be the same again?

Whatever settlement is reached, postal workers will have had the experience of a totally committed strike for the first time since 1920. They are now firmly in the mainstream of the working class struggle, a task they have proved ready to shoulder.

ROUND UP

Strikers help out pensioners

YORKSHIRE postal workers are enthusiastically backing the strike. In the Doncaster, Retford and Scunthorpe area, there is 100 per cent support from postmen and 90-95 per cent from all other UPW members.

The workers have made a special effort to make sure there is no hardship to pensioners. Strikers, at their own expense, have been delivering pensions to outlying districts up to 30 miles away from Doncaster.

Strikers had to use their own transport. The Post Office refused to supply vehicles for use in hardship cases.

Post Office spokesmen mislead the public with their claim that postmen are getting an average £25 a week.

A management spokesman claimed that postmen could earn £25 with an average of 7½ hours overtime a week. But provincial postmen who worked 7½ hours overtime would only get £21.

And overtime opportunities in many post offices are rare. In small towns like Retford or rural areas like Thorne, overtime is non-existent except in cases of sickness.

Many postmen in this area are on the basic of £18 40p for a 43 hour week, with little or no opportunity for overtime.

Head's distortions

CREWE, Cheshire:- 570 of 690 postal workers attended a mass meeting on Sunday. They unanimously passed a resolution to go without pay and to continue striking for 15 per cent. They said 8 per cent was totally unacceptable.

The strike here is 100 per cent. It is opposed only by the Head Post Master who has given grossly distorted figures to the press and radio about postmen's pay and the amount of mail affected.

He also refused a request from the UPW executive to allow workers to get their outstanding wages. The Telephone Manager has allowed telephonists to have their outstanding money.

March through city

LIVERPOOL:- A mass meeting of 2000 strikers at the Pier Head on Monday unanimously passed a resolution in support of the union claim of 15 per cent. The strike committee said the strike had been 99.4 per cent on Merseyside.

The only serious opposition comes from the Head Post Master.

The strikers have received support from dockers and Ford workers at Halewood. After the mass meeting, the postal workers demonstrated through the town and gave leaflets to shoppers and office workers.

Determined to win

COLCHESTER saw its first march by trade unionists for many years when 400 post office workers marched through the town on Monday. This followed an address at their union meeting by Maurice Styles, chairman of the UPW executive.

The response to the strike here is almost 100 per cent. The men and women are determined to win. Only 30 of the 120 telephonists have braved the strong picket.

The young telephonists have given great support in their first-ever strike. Public response has been good.

Contributions to a hardship fund have started coming in, and the Colchester International Socialists have so far collected £30 for the post office workers and have issued leaflets to factories in the town calling on them to support the strike.

Hang on to your Herts Trings...

by Steve Mann

BECOMING a postman seems easy enough. Every day you see costly advertisements crying out for recruits.

Fill in the form, you think, and within a couple of days you will be whistling your way round the streets with the early morning birds, delivering letters.

But when I signed up, I quickly found out the lengths the Post Office goes to discourage prospective postmen.

After nine weeks of tests, forms, interviews, medicals and waiting around, I started my first day of training at the London Postal School.

I joined 100 new-entrant postmen at a lecture by the head of the

school who introduced us to the Post Office.

'Put your cigarettes out,' we were told before being given the run-down on what the Post Office expected of us: Duty, discipline, punctuality were some of the words thrown around.

Then question time.

'Can I apply for promotion to such-and-such a job?' a woman asked.

'No, only permanent staff or non-Post Office workers can apply for that job,' she was told.

'I thought I was permanent?'

'No. Only men are permanent. If we had enough men we would get rid of the women ... Right, ladies and gentlemen, off to dinner and then your instructors will introduce you

to the 48 box frame in the main hall.'

In the next two weeks we 'sorted' a series of cards representing letters. We were tested every couple of days.

Anyone who 'failed' was interviewed by the head to see what was wrong. We were told we must pass our final test.

We dreamed of the cards for two weeks. We made up jingles to remember where towns were: 'Tring went the strings of my Herts' for example.

At the start of the course there were nine in my class. By the first Wednesday Bill stopped turning up and on Friday old Ernie shook hands in the tea break. He had been told he wasn't quick enough.

Another one went the same way

on Monday. And soon after a second old chap was called into the office and was never seen again.

By the final day when we had our goodbye lecture, I estimated that our numbers had dwindled to half.

The head said we had done well and wished us luck. We wondered what he told the people who had the 'interview'.

'And don't think you've seen the last of the cards, gents. You'll have another three days on them back at your offices.'

As I groaned my way home that Friday evening, I began to see why the Post Office puts all those ads in the papers ...



what we stand for



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

We believe in independent working-class action, that we must overthrow capitalism and not tinker with reforms to patch it up.

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

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

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

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

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

In addition to building a revolutionary socialist organisation in this country we also believe in the necessity of forming a world revolutionary socialist international independent of either Washington or Moscow.

To this end we have close relationships with a number of other socialist organisations throughout the world.

We believe in rank and file control of the trade unions and the

regular election of all full-time officials.

We are firmly opposed to secret negotiations and believe that all settlements should be agreed or rejected by mass meetings.

We are for 100 per cent trade unionism and the defence of shop stewards.

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

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

We support all demands for equal pay and for a better deal for young workers.

We believe that there should be a minimum wage of at least £25 per week.

We are opposed to unemployment, redundancy and lay offs and support the demand of five days' work or five days' pay.

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

We are opposed to racialism and police victimisation of black workers.

We are opposed to any immigration restrictions and fully support the right of black people to self-defence.

We are opposed to all nuclear weapons and military alliances such as NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

We are opposed to secret diplomacy. Neither Washington nor Moscow but international socialism.

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

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

We are for the introduction of a democratic planned economy in which resources can be devoted to social need.

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

The struggle for socialism is the central struggle of our time.

Workers' power and a world based on human solidarity, on the increasing of men's power over nature, with the abolition of the power of man over man, is certainly worth fighting for.

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

THERE ARE IS BRANCHES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

SCOTLAND
Aberdeen/Clydebank/Dundee/Edinburgh/Glasgow N/Glasgow S/Stirling/Fife

NORTH EAST
Durham/Newcastle upon Tyne/Teesside (Middlesbrough and Redcar)

NORTH
Barnsley/Bradford/Derby/Doncaster/Huddersfield/Hull/Leeds/York/Selby/Sheffield

NORTH WEST
Lancaster/Manchester/Oldham/

Bolton/Merseyside/St Helens/Wigan/Potteries

MIDLANDS
Birmingham/Coventry/Northampton/Leicester/Oxford/Nottingham

WALES and SOUTH WEST
Bath/Bristol/Cardiff/Exeter/Swansea/Plymouth

SOUTH
Ashford/Brighton/Crawley/Folkestone/Portsmouth/Southampton

EAST
Cambridge/Harlow/Ipswich/Lowestoft/Norwich/Colchester

GREATER LONDON and HOME COUNTIES
Acton/Angel/Bletchley/Camden/Chertsey/Croydon/Dagenham/Enfield/Erith/Fulham/Greenford/Harrow/Hemel Hempstead/Hornsey/Ilford/Kilburn/Kingston/Lambeth/Lewisham/Merton/Newham/Reading/Richmond/Stoke Newington/Slough/South Ealing/Tottenham/Walthamstow/Wandsworth/Watford/Victoria

JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

Name

Address

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

BLIND JUSTICE Frame-up and repression hit US Left

THE IMAGE of the United States' socialist movement in the American yellow foreign counterparts is a bomb-happy, violent and degenerate one. It would be its fate at the hands of Edgar Hoover and his FBI guardians of law and liberty.

The image is a crude distortion. Like socialists everywhere, American revolutionaries are the great majority of working people to their cause in order to bring about the complete society. Acts of individual terror play no part in such a struggle and the handful of braggart youngsters who take part in bomb escapades unconsciously do a grave disservice to the socialist

The real and massive violence is performed by the American state, both at home and abroad. The unspeakable horror of Vietnam is only the most obvious example of American capitalism's brutality. Millions of Americans, blacks in particular, face lives of grinding poverty and persecution.

And now the American Left faces one of its periodic witch-hunts by the state. As the socialist movement grows and begins to win a hearing from greater numbers of people, the FBI, the police and the courts set out to physically destroy it.

Bound and gagged

Main target for attack is the militant Black Panther Party. When Panther's leader Bobby Seale was on trial for his alleged part in the Chicago 'conspiracy' he was gagged and bound to his chair — a living symbol of American 'justice'.

Since then many Panthers have been shot down — often in their beds — as the police have attempted to liquidate them. Leading party members have been forced into exile to avoid legal murder or arrest.

Now another black militant is on trial for her life. She is Angela Davis, a member of the Communist Party and one of Hoover's 10 'most wanted' criminals.

Angela Davis is awaiting the start of her trial next month in



FBI boss Hoover: socialists are 'criminals'

San Rafael, California. She is charged with murder, kidnapping and conspiracy.

The trial is an attempted frame-up. The prosecution's flimsy case rests upon the claim that Miss Davis was the owner of guns used in the same court last summer when Jonathan Jackson brought weapons into court in an attempt to free prisoners on trial.

Jackson and two of the prisoners were killed in an ensuing gun battle that also accounted for the judge and wounded the prosecutor and a juror.

Miss Davis was nowhere near the court at the time. When she appeared at San Rafael last month she declared her innocence and said: 'I am a black communist. The corrupt government of this country could not accept such a com-

bination. That's what happened at San Rafael. I was willing to be convicted on the evidence admitted. I was disturbed in my mind, but I was merely handed the Vietnam

Her co-defendant, Juan Farina, has been accused of causing a disturbance and refusing to get up to testify. He was willing to be convicted on the evidence admitted. I was disturbed in my mind, but I was merely handed the Vietnam

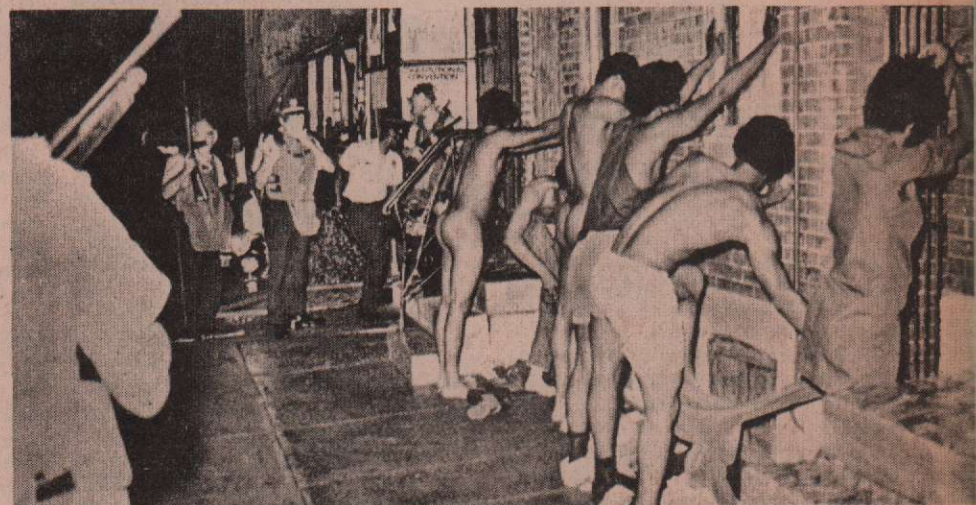
These are the cases. But even other acts of socialists.

Juan Farina of the Trotskyist has been accused of causing a disturbance and refusing to get up to testify. He was willing to be convicted on the evidence admitted. I was disturbed in my mind, but I was merely handed the Vietnam

The truth is that I was willing to be convicted on the evidence admitted. I was disturbed in my mind, but I was merely handed the Vietnam

The sergeant in charge of the centre tried to refuse inductive sergeant has no for attempted d

There was a sign anti-strike during the trial interrupted the sign anti-strike Brecht could be better.



Special report by EDWARD CRAW

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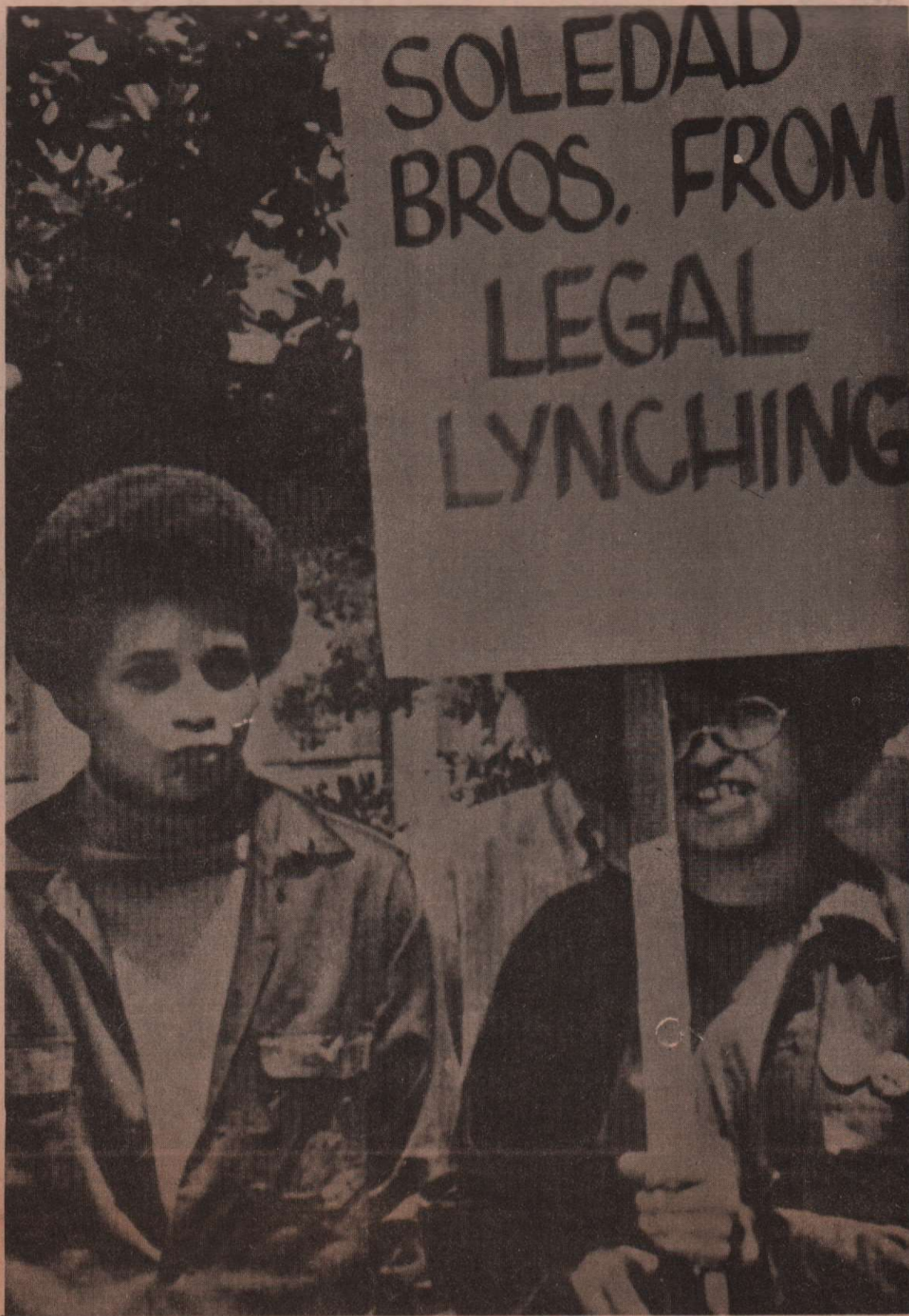
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Angela Davis seen with Jonathan Jackson during a demonstration to demand the release of black prisoners in Soledad jail. Jackson was shot last summer and Angela Davis is now on trial for her life

Farinas is appealing to the US Court of Appeals and a defence committee has been formed to publicise his case.

Last September the National Guard Armory — the US Territorial Army — was raided in Boston and a policeman was murdered. The Chief of Boston police boasted that he could link the incident with left wingers at Brandeis University.

Shortly afterwards, two members of the Students for a Democratic Society, Kathy Power and Susan Saxe, were arrested and charged. Two rifles found in the girls' apartments were said to have been the murder weapons—a claim that has subsequently been discounted.

At this stage, a man named Stanley Bond, leader of the unknown 'Revolutionary Action Force East', said his group was responsible for the killing. He was arrested but was given free access to the press and television where he made blood-curdling 'revolutionary' remarks about the need to bomb and kill.

Expelled from SDS

Chief prosecution witness at the trial is — Stanley Bond. After his release on parole from a sentence for armed robbery, Bond became an enthusiastic supporter of radical politics and began attending SDS meetings at Brandeis University.

His habit of always carrying a tape recorder attracted attention and he was finally expelled from SDS meetings when he incited people to terrorism and let slip racist remarks.



Panther leader Bobby Seale: bound and gagged in court

Some people are convinced that Bond was a police agent and that if Kathy Power and Susan Saxe were involved in the armory raid it was at his incitement.

In Philadelphia, Steve Fraser and Richard Borgman have been charged with possession of explosives and conspiracy to use explosives. They are both members of the National Caucus of Labor Committees and were active in the Philadelphia student strike in 1969.

They have been framed by a Lieutenant Fencel of the Civil Disobedience Squad (the political police). Under cross-examination, Fencel has admitted that he received a tip-off from an unnamed informer and that even the FBI had said that the Labor Committees were not part of the alleged bomb plot.

The star informer has yet to make his appearance in court. So blatant is the frame-up that respectable trade union leaders have put their names to a national commission of inquiry into the whole affair along with Benjamin Spock and Paul O'Dwyer, senatorial candidate in New York state.

The lessons for socialists in Britain are, first, that we must declare our complete solidarity with all those in America under attack and to publicise their cases.

Secondly, we must prepare for a similar assault on liberties here. The crude political victimisation of Rudi Dutschke and the uncanny timing of the bomb incident at Robert Carr's home on the day of the TUC's campaign against the anti-union Bill shows the ruling class turning the screw.

It will use scapegoats in a bid to turn the attention of workers from their real enemies and develop an hysterical atmosphere in which serious revolutionaries are tried and found guilty by the press of acts of terrorism before the real culprits are found.

The only answer

The repression in America must be used to demolish the myth of 'liberalism' and 'democracy' under capitalism. When the ruling class feels threatened it will stoop to the most blatant terror and victimisation to defend its control over society.

The only answer to the growing repression of capitalism is the struggle to win millions of working people to the socialist movement by the logic and reason of our politics and through such a movement to build a society where real freedom and democracy will flourish.

If you have difficulty in obtaining Socialist Worker regularly ask your local bookshop to stock it.

Mopping up on the night cleaning front...

NIGHT CLEANERS are a group of workers who clean offices and factories at night. They work an eight-hour shift from 10pm until 6am five nights a week. Most of them are women with families who need the money to supplement their husbands' earnings.

The rate for the job is 27½p to 32½p an hour (£11-£13 a week). Sometimes there is a little extra for 'covering' for a girl off sick or if the job is short staffed. I spoke to May Hobbs, one of the cleaners, who is out of work at present for her activities in trying to organise the cleaners into the Transport and General Workers' Union.

The struggle of the cleaning women has been widely reported in the press and on radio and TV. What is the story to date?

After an article in Socialist Worker last August, putting the case for the women joining the union, we started by spreading the idea among the cleaners themselves. We did this by leafletting the girls as they went to work.

We got a marvellous response. They were all for it.

Of course, when the cleaning contractors got to hear of it, they didn't take kindly to the idea at all. Last November, two shop stewards at Sanctuary House, the Board of Trade building in Great Smith Street, London, were given the sack by the Strand Cleaning Company.

The union rang the company and managed to arrange a meeting with them. To emphasise their determination to get the girls reinstated, the cleaners at another BoT building, Companies House, came out for a night.

EXCUSE

The stewards were reinstated next day.

About a month later all the girls at Companies House were sacked. This was nicely timed by the contractor. There are always a lot of women prepared to do a bit of cleaning to help out with presents for the kids just before Christmas, so labour is easy to come by.

The excuse the contractors gave was that the building was being changed to evening cleaning. The high wages paid to the evening cleaners who took over didn't last long!

What has happened to the girls who were sacked?

A meeting was called to consider strike action. But the girls thought it was better to wait until after Christmas because of the relatively weak position they were in.

Since Christmas, all the girls who wanted their jobs back have been reinstated. One girl was given her job and then sacked again an hour later.

The basis of the sacking was that she had caused trouble before and was a bad time keeper, but it was almost certainly her union activities.

After getting the girls to support her and merely threatening strike action, she and another girl were reinstated with full payment for time lost.

What other tactics have the contractors used to fight off unionisation?

Spreading tales about the militants and lies about our motives and our strength. I have had a number of threatening phone calls from the contractors — from the managers even.

WELCOME

I've had threatening letters, too, but I almost welcome their threats as a sign that we're getting somewhere.

What has the union done about these attacks on the cleaners?

Generally too little, too late. For instance they promised to make our actions official when the Companies House girls were sacked but before they could get round to it the girls were reinstated.

What do the girls think of the union now?

Now that a number have joined they are beginning to think of the unions as their own combined strength against the contractors rather than the officials. Those who come up against the union



May Hobbs speaking in Hyde Park on 12 January

officials find they work much too slowly.

You originally made a number of demands. Have any of them been fulfilled yet?

Well the Strand company has made a number of concessions, though they don't admit that we forced them into it. For instance, we now get one week's holiday for every six months worked whereas we used to have to work a full year to get a fortnight's money.

Everyone now gets one week's notice or pay in lieu and it looks as though cover money may go up to £2 a night instead of the present £1 30p.

The new cover money rate is 'out of the goodness of our hearts'—nothing to do with the union' the contractors say. The girls know better.

SPREADING

All the cleaners got £2 gift vouchers for Christmas—including the sacked girls. The girls' reaction was: it'll take more than £2 to buy us off!

What is the present situation?

In London things are going ahead well — two complete buildings have applied for signing-on forms in the last week.

The movement is spreading to other places. In Oxford, 95 cleaners at the Pressed Steel motor works have been out on strike for more than two weeks for better pay.

How can anyone help?

People living in London can help in all sorts of ways — principally by leafletting cleaners as they go to work. The most effective way is to concentrate on one particular building or group of buildings for several weeks, say one night a week.

After a while the girls there will get to know you and overcome their suspicions. People living out of London can get working on their area, particularly the North and Scotland.

A lot of the contractors make big profits up there and the girls are even worse off than we are in London.

Anyone prepared to help in any way should give me a ring on 01-348 2817. Money is urgently needed, particularly for the girls on strike in Oxford.

Send money to me at 13, Middle Lane, London N8, and I'll see it gets on to them.

FERGUS NICOL

Harassment and humiliation: black suspects in Philadelphia are forced to strip in the street

FORD

The Law: built-in bias for bosses

by RAYMOND CHALLINOR

'THE LAW is the fox, poor men are geese; he pulls off their feathers and feeds upon them.' So spoke Gerard Winstanley, the Diggers' leader, more than 300 years ago.

He was protesting about the enclosure movement, the vast transfer of land from the common people to the mighty landlords. Many of the poor, deprived of their land, either starved to death or were reduced to begging.

Meanwhile the rich used their newly acquired land for sheep raising, not food producing, because fortunes could quickly be made from exporting wool. The wealth for a few came from the legal robbery of the many.

In a similar fashion today, industrialists look to the law. They want its assistance to tip the balance further in their favour, increasing the proportion of total income going to profits and decreasing the proportion going to wages.

That is what the Industrial Relations Bill is all about.

The law has a built-in bias against the working class. It isn't merely that capitalists can afford to employ the best legal brains, while militants, with much less money, usually get less talented lawyers.

It is that the entire legal system — its attitudes, rules and personnel — is hostile to ordinary people.

Judges, living on £14,000 a year, are an integral part of the Establishment. Their social connections and outlook naturally come from this top stratum.

They were also born into wealthy families. When the Sunday Times in 1963, analysed the social background of a hundred English High Court judges, it discovered that none had working-class parents.

Instead, 18 were the sons of, or closely related to, peers and baronets while a further 17 were 'unequivocally upper class', having been educated at top public schools.

Many of the others had fathers who were knights, military officers above the rank of major general or were listed in Burke's landed gentry.

Even the Sunday Times drew the correct conclusion. It openly admitted that 'the idea of an absolutely impartial judge is in fact, a legal fiction ... judges, however well meaning, do not act irrespective of social background'.

This means that 'trade unionists hauled before the courts will find themselves in a similar situation to the football team who discover that the referee is also playing for the other side.

PRESERVED

But the Industrial Relations Bill proposes to make things even worse than this by disregarding an important and hitherto accepted legal safeguard.

Up until now, English justice may be the best that money can buy — emphasis on the word 'buy'. Nevertheless, however unjust it has been in practice, it has always preserved the theory that all people are equal before the law.

With majestic impartiality, it has forbidden both millionaires and tramps



GERRY CAUGHEY (with mikel): Tory laws will aid the Pilkingtons, hit at militants like Caughey.

alike to sleep under railway bridges.

The Industrial Relations Bill scraps this veneer of impartiality. The principle of equality before the law is gone.

Actions that could land workers in prison are quite legal when committed by employers. There remain two sides to industry, but the legal obligations are placed only on one.

For instance, if workers black goods it will be illegal whereas if employers blacklist workers it will not. Hull dockers will not be permitted to refuse to handle Pilkington glass.

Employers on the other hand will be entitled to show sympathy with Lord Harry Pilkington by refusing to employ Gerry Caughey, John Potter and co.

Before unions take industrial action they will be supposed to ballot their members. Why should not companies before they indulge in action such as speed-ups and sackings, be expected to ballot their shareholders?

Workers who shut a factory in an effort to obtain a 20 per cent wage increase are liable to be told that it is

against the national interest and consequently illegal.

But if the employers shut the same factory, not temporarily by strike action but permanently by rationalisation, moving the work elsewhere because they can obtain 20 per cent higher profits, then nothing illegal is being done.

WARNING

The factory closure may spell economic disaster for thousands of people, the death of a community, but this would not be against the national interest, as defined by the terms of the Bill.

Furthermore trade unionists are expected, in certain circumstances, to give 60 days notice of intended industrial action. No similar requirement is placed on employers before they take industrial action.

While workers in any struggle lose the element of surprise, capitalists not merely retain it but also will be given advance warning of any stoppage.

As a result, they will be able to make other arrangements, transferring

work to other factories or even out of Britain. Consequently the effect of the strike may be partly or wholly nullified.

Indeed, inspired by Robert Carr's proposal, I have decided to challenge Muhammed Ali to a fight. I feel confident of victory, so long as a special rule is applied: he must give me 60 days notice of any punch he intends to deliver!

Like all legislation, to become law the Industrial Relations Bill will have to be passed by both Houses of Parliament. This raises an interesting point.

When the Sunday Telegraph conducted an investigation into the nobility, it discovered that a third of their lordships had never had a job and less than 40 per cent are at present in employment.

So here we have the House of Lords: a body of men, many of whom have never done a stroke in their lives, eager to pass a Bill that will fine and imprison men who spend the major portion of their lives working.

Surely this is the final injustice!

THE MEANING OF MARXISM

A weekly column by Duncan Hallas



Public interest: throwing dust in workers' eyes

'THE COUNTRY can't afford it.' 'It' can be anything from free milk for school children to decent pay for postmen. Now 'the country' is, strictly speaking, a geographical expression. Of course people who talk like this do not really mean 'a collection of islands in the North Sea can't afford it'.

If pressed, they will probably admit that what they mean is that 'the people living in these islands can't afford it'. Put that way the statement is much less effective because it is obvious that we are talking about how to share out available income among these people. The trick is to give the impression that there is something called 'the country' which is somehow different from the actual people who live in it.

Words like 'the economy', 'sterling' and 'the public interest' are used in the same way. The intention is to throw dust in people's eyes to prevent them thinking about the real issues. It is often very effective. Words can be weapons and if people can be made to think in terms of these big abstractions it is very much easier to mislead them.

Marx called this type of thinking 'Fetishism'. A fetish, according to the Oxford dictionary, is 'an inanimate object worshipped by savages as having magical powers or as being animated by a spirit.' The natives of West Africa used to make wooden models of fantastic animals which they believed had real minds and powers of their own. Illusions of this sort are by no means con-

finned to primitive people. They are an important part of capitalist ideology. To pay homage to something called 'the strength of sterling' is no more and no less rational than to pay homage to a monkey-headed crocodile.

Fetishism means assuming that things have interests of their own and that society can be seen mainly as a relationship between people and things rather than between people and people. 'In the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world ... the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entering into relations both with one another and with the human race,' wrote Marx. 'So it is in the world of commodities with the products of man's hands. This I call Fetishism ...'

Frivolous

The 'strength of sterling' is a good example of a modern fetish. What actually does it mean? Ask an economist and you will be told that if sterling is strong people will prefer to hold it rather than, say, dollars. But what people and why? Clearly not the mass of working people in this country.

In fact most shops and pubs will not accept dollars anyway, so that whether sterling is weak or strong most of us have to 'hold' and use it regardless. The economist will probably brush aside this objection as frivolous. The 'people' he has in mind, he will explain, are bankers, brokers and 'international currency speculators'. Now they are not a very big group. Why do

their preferences matter so much? If our economist is very patient he will tell us that if these bankers and speculators think that sterling is not a 'sound currency' they will convert their holdings into dollars or Swiss francs and this will 'upset our balance of payments'.

In short these people have great power. But it is not power over pieces of paper or entries into bank ledgers. It is power over other people specifically over working people. The paper and the entries are only tokens of that power.

Having got so far we are well on the way to asking why on earth the working people of this or any other country should tolerate a state of affairs in which a handful of speculators can exercise such power. It is not a convenient question for the rich, which is why the mass media conjure up fetishes like 'the strength of sterling'. Recently a daily newspaper had on the same front page a headline, 'Sterling Has Never Been Stronger' and another saying 'Wage Claims Threaten Economy'!

An American political scientist described politics as being about 'Who gets what, when and how'. It is a good shorthand way of describing economics too. Every economic problem is really about relations between people, people who work and people who get a lot of the proceeds without working.

The job of the mass media, and of much of 'education' from infant school onwards, is to prevent people from seeing this obvious fact. In the words of the English revolutionary poet Shelley: 'Around your face a web of lies is woven'.

There are limits to the power of the mass

media. It is quite easy for them to persuade most of their audience that the rulers of Bongoland are a vicious, anti-British lot, even if it isn't true. Bongoland is far away. It is very hard for them to persuade people to disregard facts within their own experience.

Successful propaganda — 'public relations' is the term favoured nowadays — is based on some facts well known to the audience. These are then fitted in to the story that the company or the government wishes to have believed. Very large sums of money are spent on 'attitude research' for this reason.

Militants' role

Attitudes are not fixed and unalterable. People are heavily influenced by the opinions of the group they work in. The role of the militants is very important in developing resistance to media manipulation.

Incidentally this is why women, taken as a whole are more conservative than men. A much larger proportion of them are isolated from working groups and so more vulnerable to the head-fixers. It has nothing to do with sex as such.

Activity is the most important single factor in changing consciousness. In changing the world men change themselves. People are not passive instruments like radio receivers. Their actions and their thinking are aspects of a single process. Thought influences action but action also influences thought. Fetishism and ideology can be overcome by the combination of class activity and socialist ideas.

NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN!



THE SEPARATE PARTS that go to make up Braden's Week on BBC-1 on Saturday nights are not very promising: a few excruciating 'comedy' spots, rather twee interviews with children and odd songs from rather odd singers.

But the end result is usually a pleasant half-hour in which Bernard Braden and his team have a go at some of the stupid, crooked or bureaucratic nonsenses that affect the lives of ordinary people.

Braden exposes rackets about which the great 'free' press maintains a deathly silence. While strenuous efforts are being made to shackle trade unionists, a blind eye is turned to the shady goings-on in the business world.

Any little shark with a few ill-gotten pounds in his pocket can form a company, advertise goods in the press, receive money from potential customers, send them nothing in return and then conveniently go bankrupt when complaints are made.

Even in the respectable areas of gas and electricity, malpractice abounds. Public corporations recommend private contractors to instal costly central heating. Jobs are often botched, unfinished or the systems left unworkable — but the gas and light companies wash their hands and claim no responsibility, even when firms they have recommended go out of business.

Bite the hand

These disgraceful affairs are ignored by the press for the simple reason that they make large sums of money from the advertising received from 'direct mail' firms and the gas and electricity boards. To investigate the fiddles and fixes would be a clear case of biting the hand that feeds you.

So more power to Braden's elbow.

TWO Tory MPs, Julian Critchley, the former telly critic of The Times and Harold Soref, the Monday Club member for Ormskirk and Pietermaritzburg, have both been sounding off about the BBC being controlled by 'lefties'.

To attempt to grapple with this kind of argument is to enter a strange half-world of bomb-throwing conspirators and reds under every bed where anyone left of Edward Heath is considered a dangerous pinko.

In general, of course, they are talking nonsense: the growing bias and hysteria of news broadcasts against strikes, the distortions and twisting of the facts show the main outlets of the media dominated by Establishment time-servers who reflect the concern of the ruling class at the developing militancy of large numbers of workers.

But it is true to say that some programmes like BBC-2's Man Alive and World in Action on ITV do show a distinct bias towards the 'left' for the simple reason that if you are concerned about the world and believe that changes are necessary you are hardly likely to be an enthusiastic follower of Mr Harold Soref.

So when pundits like Critchley and Soref sound off against 'reds', they are really condemning themselves. If it is progressive to be concerned about Vietnam, South Africa, unemployment, poverty and drug-taking, what word can be used to describe those who oppose such programmes on the grounds that they are 'communist propaganda'? Would 'reactionary' fit the bill?

On this tack, a few weeks ago William Rushton, in his Friday night monologue on Late Night Line Up, showed film of rhinos copulating. A lady wrote to the BBC complaining that such film showed a left-wing bias. She must have been looking very closely...

David East

Pay rise for the men of property

IN SPITE OF the volumes of space devoted in the Tory newspapers to the government's 'battle' to hold down the wages of workers, little attention was given to the announcement that solicitors' 'remuneration' for transferring property is to go up by some 20 per cent.

The decision, which comes into effect on 15 February, is in breach of two Prices and Incomes Board reports that the fees should be cut.

The first report, in February 1968 found that 55.6 per cent of solicitors' income comes from conveyancing fees. People buying houses worth £5,000 were faced with fees of more than £100.

Far in excess

The fees, the Board reported, were far in excess of the costs. Conveyancing accounted for only 40.8 per cent of solicitors' expenses.

The Board also discovered that the average annual income of solicitors in 1966 was £4870 (nearly £100 a week). The income had increased by 82 per cent in 10 years, a healthy annual average of 8 per cent, come boom, come recession.

The income compared interestingly with an average of £4102 for architects and £3300 for dentists.

The Board proposed a package deal whereby fees for conveyancing houses valued at less than £2000 should be raised but that where the houses were valued at between £4000 and £20,000 they should be cut by 6 per cent.

On 24 July, 1968, the Labour Lord Chancellor, Lord Gardiner, announced that the government accepted the report. A great howl of fury went up from the solicitors' 'closed shop' trade union, the Law Society.

Government collapsed

A policy of non-co-operation over the review of fees was rigorously pursued and eventually, in typically brave style, the government collapsed.

In 1969, the matter was referred once again to the PIB which, in November, came up with exactly the same conclusions. Once again, the Law Society managed to forestall any action and the government dithered around until it was defeated at the polls.

The new Tory orders increase the charges on £2000 houses from £37.10 to £45 (20 per cent), and leaves all the remaining scales unchanged.

The Law Society, incidentally, is strongly in favour of the government's Industrial Relations Bill and its fight against inflation.

Paul Foot



COTTONS COLUMN

REMEMBER the storm last year when the Tory government handed over some of the nationalised airlines' most profitable routes to private enterprise?

One of the happy-firms on the gift receiving end was British United Airways, a company largely owned, by Caledonia Investments, whose chairman, Sir Nicholas Kayser, must be one of the busiest men in Britain, with 71 directorships.

Caledonia in turn owns British and Commonwealth, a shipping firm which — believe it or not — is now getting geared up for the dismemberment of the health service.

So confident are they of the profits in the health game that they are building a 96-bedroom private clinic overlooking Lord's cricket ground in London. Cost: £3½ million.

'We are used to looking after people. This venture is an extension of our present services — with the added incentive that hospitals are never empty,' a spokesman for the firm gloated.

Charges are expected to be about £150 a week. Book now.

ONE of British engineering's more remarkable feats came to light in Dundee last week. Under a £1.6 million contract, Mitchell Construction is building two 21-storey blocks for the corporation.

Mitchell is nearly two years late in handing them over, according to one councillor. This has cost the city nearly £100,000 in lost rents.

Main reason for the delay, it seems, is that the window frames do not fit the window spaces. Another complication is that 70 toilets had to be moved because there was inadequate leg room and it was impossible to sit down.

Know thy enemy

WHAT THE SYSTEM DOES TO PEOPLE: Former US army private Paul Meadlo, giving evidence in the My Lai trial of Lieutenant Calley in Georgia, testified that he shot babies in the arms of their mothers in South Vietnam because he considered them all his 'enemies'.

He said he was afraid the babies would be booby-traps which the mothers would throw at him. He was therefore prepared to shoot and kill all Vietnamese, no matter what their ages.

Shattered

ACCORDING to Pilkingtons, they have just discovered a way of treating glass fibres so they are not destroyed by the alkali in cement. This means that glass instead of steel can be used to reinforce cement in construction work, an important advance.

The press reports suggested that Pilkingtons alone were responsible for the development of glass reinforcement. But the discovery was, made in 1967, more than three years ago, by a public body, the Building Research Station.

Pilkingtons weren't interested in the invention when it was first canvassed among the big corporations. But when they did get interested, the glass monopoly really started to do some research.

They looked at 300-400 other forms of glass to see if a competitor could get the same end result with a different formulation. They wasted the time and ingenuity of dozens of their scientists to make sure their patent was exclusive and no one could get in on the act.

So an idea became private property and its secret history was never known to the hardworking journalists of the free press who helped Pilkingtons grab all the credit as well as all the profits.

Hold on tight...

NEXT WEEK: Victor Borgia and Edward Crankshaft on the great Isaac Deutscher Mystery — was his autobiography of Trotsky really written by Enid Blyton and the Special Branch? Did Agatha Christie write What Is To Be Done? Order your copies now ...

NOTICES

SOUTH LONDON IS branches: Lionel Sims on Welfare Cuts — the Decline of the Welfare State. Sunday 31 January. 8pm, William Morris Hall, Wimbledon Broadway, SW19.

LONDON REGION IS Students mtg. spkr Mike Kidron Western Capitalism — Inflation. Monday 1 February 7pm. LSE Houghton Street WC2. RmEO18.

LONDON Students IS sub-committee mtg Monday 1 February 6.30pm. Room S101A LSE.

Socialist Worker

AUEW anti-Bill strike call

THE IMPORTANCE of rank and file pressure on union leaders can be seen in the decision this week by the executive of the engineering union to call for strike action to defeat the Tory anti-union Bill.

The leaders of the engineering section of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers voted on Tuesday to table three demands at a special conference of

the whole union next Thursday, 4 February.

The demands are: a series of one-day national strikes by engineering workers, national strikes called by the TUC and a declaration that the AUEW will pursue a policy of non-co-operation with the Bill if it should become law.

There is a strong possibility of the

demands being accepted by the conference in London next week. The other sections of the union - construction, foundry and technicians - are all on record in favour of militant action against the government.

Official strikes called by the amalgamated union would bring out up to three million workers in engineering, building, construction, motors and other industries.

STRIKE-BOUND BOSSES THREATEN TO CLOSE PLANT

by Vince Hall

LEEDS:- Bosses at the strike-bound Wellworthy engineering factory have threatened to close the plant unless the workers end their fortnight-old dispute.

The workers walked out when talks broke down over their demand for a straight £12 a week increase without productivity strings.

Wellworthy is part of the powerful Associated Engineering group and pays its Midlands workers up to £40 a week. But the Leeds workers have survived for £16 to £18 a week, well below even the Leeds AUEW district rate.

The stewards recently threw out a proposed productivity agreement that offered a £4 a week increase for the acceptance of sweeping 'strings'.

When the management turned down the £12 demand, it went through 'procedure' - the engineering industry's slow negotiating system - where a 'failure to agree' was recorded.

Last week, Wellworthy bosses told the local press that the factory would be closed if the strike was not called off. The staunch Tory Yorkshire Post said the workers' pay claim was 'threatening the factory'.

The management spoke to the stewards only after the press story appeared. They said closure would be 'in a matter of months'.

But Mr Thorpe, personnel director of the AE group, bluntly declared that the decision to close was taken in 1968 and had nothing to do with the strike. He said that even if the workers had accepted the productivity deal, the combine would still have gone ahead because the factory was 'out of date'.

The stewards are ignoring the closure threat until they are given a definite date. The same tactic was tried at AE's Coventry Radiator plant last year during a strike - but the factory is still open.

One Wellworthy steward put it: 'If they can't pay us enough money they might as well close it now.'

3500 walk out at oil site

BAGLAN BAY:- 3500 workers at BP's giant construction site have been on strike since last Friday over a management attempt to force through night-shift working.

The bosses announced the decision to electricians as they came to work on Friday. They refused to work nights and were sacked.

The rest of the site walked out when reinstatement was refused.

None of the unions involved has given any support. The AUEW has told its members to go back.

Just out! Special issue of **ADVANCE** the power workers' rank and file paper. It deals with the recent work-to-rule and the Court of Inquiry. Copies price 6d can be obtained from 68 Fountains Road, Stretford, Manchester.

TORIES TELL FORDS TO STAND FIRM ON PAY PARITY

by SW Reporter

THE TORIES and employers' leaders have made secret interventions in the talks at Ford about wage 'parity' with the Midlands. Both the government and the Confederation of British Industry have spoken to top management and demanded that the company refuse to pay the increase demanded by the unions.

The Ford negotiations are crucial. For years the Ford workers have earned less than Midland car workers. At the moment, the Ford hourly rate is 11s6½d, compared to 19s1½d an hour paid at Chrysler's Coventry factories and the £1 an hour imposed with Measured Day Work at Leyland's Morris Motors plant at Cowley.

RESPONSIBLE

To catch up with Cowley rates, Ford workers need a pay increase of £17 a week. The management were expected to reply to the claim yesterday (Friday).

The basic reason for Ford's low wages has been Measured Day Work. The system has been responsible for both Ford and Vauxhall workers falling behind Chrysler and BLMC.

MDW is a pay system where no negotiations are allowed on times, speeds and prices. It gives an hourly rate of pay in return for total managerial control over production.

Piecework exists in the Midlands. The regular negotiations over prices together with strong organisation and militancy in these factories are the main reason why pay levels are higher.

ABOLISHED

This fact is clearly understood by the motor owners. In 1968, the Coventry Engineering Employers published a confidential report on car workers' wages.

The report recommended that piecework should be abolished and replaced by Measured Day Work. The report drew attention to the low Ford rates of pay and openly admitted its admiration for the success of MDW in the company.

British Leyland are also trying to introduce MDW into their factories. The cost of 'buying out' piecework is high and that is why they had to offer £1 an hour at Cowley.

But in the long run, they hope to hold down wages by the system.

Ford workers should tolerate no interference with their claim for parity and insist that no retreat is made.

Police arrest pickets at plastics firm

POLICE arrested 13 workers on picket duty at the Laricol Plastics factory in North London on Monday. They were charged with obstructing the highway and the police.

Another Laricol striker who went to the local police station to make inquiries was also arrested on the same charges even though he had not been on the picket line at the time.

32 workers, all members of the AUEW, have been on strike for a month following the management's sacking of six workers, including the shop steward.

The factory has been organised for just over a year and the work of the steward had shown results. The hourly rate had been increased from 6s6d to 8s3d, with the promise of a further 3d an hour on 4 January.

But when workers arrived at the factory on 4 January they were told of the sackings. The management claimed the dismissals were 'redundancies' but then immediately advertised for fresh labour.

When the rest of the workforce struck, the management offered to take back all the sacked workers - but at the old rate of 6s6d. It is a clear case of victimisation of the shop steward in an attempt to force down the rate.

The morale of the workers - mainly Pakistanis - is high. They are determined to win.

They have been encouraged by Pakistani workers in other local plastic factories, particularly at Punfield and Barstow where, after a bitter 12 weeks' struggle last summer, the workers forced up the rate from 6s6d to 12s 6d.

The strike has been backed by the North London district of the AUEW but has yet to be ratified by the union executive. Money is urgently required and should be taken to M Amin, 58 Ivy Road, NW2 or to Socialist Worker.



KILL THE BILL MARCH

'KILL THE BILL' was the message from 500 transport workers on Monday when they demonstrated in North London against the Tory anti-union Bill. The workers marched to Edmonton baths for a mass meeting where union speakers outlined the dangers in Carr's Bill. There were demands from the floor for a concerted and continuous campaign against the Tory proposals. Several speakers stressed the need for industrial action. The march was called by an Action Committee of TGWU members and was the first of several activities planned for the area. The meeting pledged support for further action being taken in the area by the AUEW.

300 pack CoA rally

MORE THAN 300 trade unionists packed a meeting called by Waltham Forest Council of Action in East London last week.

Bernadette Devlin MP and Vincent Flynn, general secretary of the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades (Division A) both spoke of the need for rank and file action to defeat the proposed Industrial Relations Bill.

Bernadette Devlin stressed the dangers of relying on MPs and the TUC to fight the Bill. She ended: 'This is an attack not on union leaders but on the whole working class. That is why the Tory Bill will not be defeated by MPs or the TUC but by the working class itself.'

Members of the fascist National Front attempted to disrupt the meeting but were quickly dealt with by the big audience. The local NF organiser was thrown out of the meeting by angry trade unionists when he shouted obscenities at Miss Devlin.

MIDLAND REGION IS day school: two speakers on Decline of Social Democracy and Industrial Perspectives for the Midlands, Leicester University, Percy Gee Building, 10am Saturday 6 February.

STOKE NEWINGTON IS public mtg: The Struggle in Ireland spkr Eamonn McCann. Monday 1 February 8pm. The Rose & Crown pub (Upstairs room) cnr Albion Rd/Stoke Newington Church St. N16. Bus: 73.

Hull IS: Public meeting Sunday 31 January 8pm. Haworth Arms, Beverley Rd. 'Defeat the Tory Bill - the way forward for 1971'. Speakers: John Palmer (NUJ) Mick Neve (TGWU).

ALISON and TOM LANGAN announce the birth of a daughter. All doing well.

Car conference

Major battles are taking place throughout the car industry.

The Tory government is threatening savage anti-trade union legislation and motor workers are in the forefront of the Tories' offensive to weaken militant shop floor organisation.

A national car workers' conference will be held on 7 February at the Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham. It will start at 11am and there will be sessions on parity, Measured Day Work and the general situation.

Delegates' credentials can be obtained from the organiser, 01-237 6869

£5 at Linwood

LINWOOD:- The last of the unions at Chrysler's Scottish factory last week accepted the management's offer of a £5 a week pay increase and improved fringe benefits.

In return, the unions agreed to an extension of three-shift working and an additional appendix to the Pay and Productivity Agreement. This addition spells out in general terms areas in which the company expects more co-operation than in the past.

Parity

The Linwood workers original claim was for parity of pay with Chrysler workers at the company's two Coventry plants. Even with an extra £5, Linwood will still be £6 12s a week below the Coventry rates of 19s1½d an hour.

And these rates will probably be improved in new pay talks this summer. The announcement of the Linwood

settlement immediately provoked an uproar. Tory newspapers criticised it, Tory MPs condemned it and the Confederation of British Industry expressed its concern.

The Financial Times explained it all. The bosses' paper quite rightly said that if there were any more pay offers of £5 a week or about 18 per cent the whole of the government's policy of holding down wage increases could be threatened.

The Chrysler pay settlement is both a victory and a defeat. A victory has been won in terms of defeating the Tories anti-wage increases policy and giving an example to other workers to press for higher pay.

But against this, there is no doubt that a militant struggle at Linwood could have forced Chrysler to concede parity and drop their productivity strings.

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