

Socialist Worker

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SACKINGS STEP UP JOBLESS TOTAL

A GRIM FUTURE faces thousands of workers this week. They are to lose their jobs in the latest wave of redundancies. They will be joining the 700,000 already on the dole queues. And for many of them there will be no hope of getting new work unless they are prepared to move hundreds of miles from their present homes.

What the latest sackings will mean can be seen by looking at an area like Teesside. Already 10,000 workers are unemployed there. Now the British Steel Corporation has announced redundancies that will add more than 4000 workers to the numbers — one in seven of its Teesside employees. ICI is to sack a further 1300 in the region.

A similar picture exists in much of the rest of the North East, in Scotland, in Northern Ireland, in the South West, and elsewhere. Even workers in areas like the Midlands, that have not known serious unemployment since before the war, are getting worried as employers have axed 50,000 jobs in three months.

The situation is not going to improve. A recent survey showed that one firm in 10 is to cut its labour force over the next three months.

Hold down wages

Unemployment is not an accident. The Tories are deliberately encouraging it as part of the attempt to hold down wages and force up profits. Their policy has been to make those with jobs work harder, through productivity dealing, job evaluation and so on, while holding down the total number of goods produced.

Every success for the Tories in holding down wage increases and making employed workers accept productivity deals leads to a further increase in the numbers without work.

For example, under the agreement recently signed for power workers, those who man the power stations will suffer. They will have to work still harder to get the sort of pay needed to keep up with rising prices. At the same time the agreement will reduce the total number of those employed in the industry by 10,000 in a year. In other words, it will add 10,000 to the dole queues.

Heath said recently that 'Jobs depend on making it possible for firms to earn profits'. This sums up the attitude of the present Tory government. The interests of the 2 per cent of the population who own 80 per cent of the industrial wealth are more important than the bleak future confronting hundreds of thousands of working men.

Condemns thousands

But many of those who claim to oppose the government on unemployment offer no alternative either. Harold Wilson attacks the Tories, but when he was in government the numbers on the dole grew by 50 per cent. Trade union leaders also speak out against Heath's policy. Yet even the 'left' leaders like Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon sign productivity deals like the one in the power industry and condemn thousands more to join on the end of the dole queue.

Unemployment will only be fought effectively when a massive movement develops opposed to the whole basis of a society in which a small minority of big businessmen control the destinies of millions. We can help build such a movement by fighting now for the unity of employed and unemployed workers against the Tory offensive.

The key demands must be:

1. No productivity deals that reduce the size of the work force.
2. Work sharing instead of redundancies and an overtime ban in any company announcing redundancies.
3. Work or full pay at union rates for the unemployed.
4. Nationalisation under workers' control without compensation for companies that close any of their factories.



SPOT THE SCROUNGER...

Hard-up Liz finds it tough on £475,000 a year

THE ROYAL FAMILY has joined the eight million families in Britain living in poverty. The impoverished Windsors are to appeal to parliament for an increase in the Queen's annual state handout — the Civil List.

Of course, there are degrees of poverty. Elizabeth and co are in a rather different league to families struggling on £16 a week or married pensioners on £8 a week. At present the Queen's Civil List stands at £475,000 a year or more than £9000 a week.

This is not a joint income. Prince Philip receives a further £40,000 a year from the state, the Queen Mum £70,000, Duke of Gloucester £35,000, Princess Margaret £15,000 and Prince Charles £100,000. The Queen pays her staff from the Civil List and the remaining members of her family like the Duchess of Kent who do not get

the aristocracy's version of supplementary benefit.

Inflation has hit hard at the palace. Prince Philip has been forced to give up his equivalent of the workers' fags and beer by selling his yacht Bloodhound. Palace staff have been cut by 15 per cent. If things get worse, Philip says he may have to give up polo.

It is thought that the Queen is after an increase that will bring up her Civil List payment to £790,000 — a rise of 65 per cent and just a little outside the government's 'ceiling' of 10 per cent for wage increases.

What is missing from the argument in the press about the Queen's 'poverty' is her own 'private wealth'. She is one of the richest women in the world with an undisclosed fortune thought to be well in excess of £60 millions.

BRITAIN AIDS TERROR IN CEYLON

ACCORDING to the press at least 1000 people have been killed in Ceylon in the last week. The government has proclaimed an 'emergency' and sent troops and planes to shoot down what it calls 'rebels'.

Guns and aircraft to help increase the death toll are being sent by our own Tory government.

Eleven months ago a general election was won by a coalition of parties that argued that they could introduce 'socialism' peacefully, without a revolution. Among these were the Ceylonese Communist Party and the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, which once claimed to be Trotskyist. But in the last year, the government, refusing to wage a revolutionary struggle against big business, has been forced instead to follow a policy of attacking workers and peasants.

Now the government is using any excuse in order to physically liquidate those who demand a real move forward.

Socialists and trade unionists in Britain must oppose the sending of guns to Ceylon for use against those combatting big business policies. But we must also learn the lesson. The approach, preached by the Communist Party in this country as well as in Ceylon, of hoping to get socialism by merely filling out ballot forms for left wing politicians, just does not work.



THE POSTAL WORKERS
AND THE
TORY OFFENSIVE

Paul Foot

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TUC tries again to sell 'incomes policy'

ONCE AGAIN the leaders of the TUC are raising the idea of an incomes policy. Six months ago Vic Feather offered a bargain to the government: if it would drop the Industrial Relations Bill the TUC would hold down wages.

The government ignored Feather's offer. It did not believe that the TUC could persuade rank and file workers to give up wage increases while prices were shooting up. It went ahead with the Bill and tried through direct conflict to hold down the wages of groups like electricity workers and the postal workers.

It knew that the TUC would not fight seriously against the Bill. It also guessed that other union leaders would not give real aid to unions, like the UPW, that were in the firing line.

The Tories' calculations on this score were correct. The TUC fought not to kill the Bill but to prevent militant action against it. Even the 'left' union leaders who made militant noises about the Bill failed to provide any real financial aid to the postal workers. And in writing a 'no-strike pledge' into the Ford settlement, Scanlon and Jones have shown that they accept much of the desire to weaken rank and file pressure that lies behind the Bill.

In this situation, Feather has once again suggested an incomes policy to the government. According to the Financial Times, at a meeting of the National Economic Development Council, he warned Heath that 'as a result of the higher charges . . . the demand for increases in wage earnings would go on at a higher rate than the economy could stand.' Of course, he made it quite clear that he would not support such demands. 'He was not defending that,' he continued, 'but it was something that had to be faced.'

In effect Feather has admitted that the trade unions will fight the Bill no further. He has emphasised that he does not support claims for higher wages. And he has begged the Tories to join him in enforcing an incomes policy.

They may be more co-operative this time. They feel that the anti-union law and the postal workers' defeat will make rank and file opposition more difficult. But an incomes policy will be of no benefit whatsoever to the mass of workers the TUC claims to represent.

Under capitalism, if a 'well-paid' worker goes without a wage increase, it does not go the less well paid workers. Nor does it mean lower prices. There is no mechanism by which either of these results can come about. If a Ford worker goes without a wage increase, all that happens is that Henry Ford's profits rise.

The experience of the last Labour government should be a good enough lesson of what incomes policy means. Lower paid workers were made worse off because of the policy. Better off workers found that they could only improve their pay by working harder than ever before. Unemployment grew and prices went up at an even faster rate.

Feather and his friends are not pressing for a policy to benefit rank and file workers. Something else motivates them. The growth of rank and file militancy over the last few months has alarmed them. It has threatened the careful balancing trick by which they manage to run the unions, while advancing to the positions of honour and privilege within capitalist society. And so they hunt desperately for some device to freeze the growing militancy from below.

Their manoeuvres must be rejected by the trade union movement. We must resist the attempts to foist incomes policy on us yet again. We can only do so by intensifying the struggle for rank and file control over the unions.

PLIGHT OF THE OLD

FEW FEATURES of our society are more disgusting than the treatment meted out to those too old to work. The moment a working man (or woman) retires he faces an enormous cut in his living standards. Somehow he is expected to survive on a mere £5 a week. A married couple get less than twice this - £8 10. Not for them the privilege of 'separate assessment' given to those on more than £6000 a year.

The government's Budget did little to change this situation. The £1 a week pension rise does not come into effect until September. And even when it does, the average pensioner will still be worse off in real terms than in 1969.

The Tories themselves have admitted, indirectly, that such a miserable pittance is not sufficient for anyone to survive on. It has raised tax exemption for the old to the figure of £10 a week for a single man. The trouble is that few working-class people who retire can even dream of such an income. A lifetime of working for poor wages does not allow you to save much.

The government's treatment of the old is at one with its treatment of those still young enough to work. The minority who own all the wealth in our society will not let any person earn a living unless there is a profit to be made out of it.

There are few profits to be made from the old. So they are cast on the scrapheap. They are given just enough money to stop them dropping dead in the street and not a penny more.

The working-class movement must begin to take the tasks of guaranteeing a decent living wage for the old as seriously as it treats the problems of those still in work. After all, we are all going to be pensioners one day. At present some unions are carrying on campaigns around the question of old age pensions. This is a step forward. But it is not enough.

For the miserly behaviour of both the present Tory and the previous Labour governments show that public sympathy alone is never going to ease the plight of the old. No real improvement will occur until direct pressure by the organised working class forces governments to make real concessions.

Until we get such real action from the unions - and real action in the long term must mean industrial action - the condition of the old will continue to deteriorate.

Workers stage protest over 19th century conditions

GHANA STRIKERS KILLED BY COPS OF UK COMBINE

by Wenda Clenaghan

BRITISH IMPERIALISM still murders to protect its property from attacks by third world workers. Two weeks ago, three Ghanaian strikers were killed by the bullets of the company police of the United Africa Company, the biggest British firm in West Africa.

The victims were members of a 2300 strong work-force of a subsidiary of the UAC, the African Timber and Plywood Company, based in Samreboi, 300 miles north-west of the capital Accra.

Hardwoods are a highly profitable raw material that the UAC has been pillaging from the tropical forest of West Africa for the last four generations. In British schools children are shown 'geographical' films, made by the UAC educational service showing how the timber arm of the company is bringing civilisation and work to the ignorant natives of the forests.

Needless to say, there are no clips showing the armed company police who patrol the compounds in which the workers are housed in miserable huts.

VALUABLE

The workers of Samreboi have similar conditions to those in the timber settlements of the UAC in Nigeria. They are paid a few shillings on a day-to-day basis to chop down the enormously valuable trees with hand axes, to drive the lorries that pull the logs to the saw mills, to work mechanical saws that cut the logs into planks, and in plants that process the remnants of the trees into plywood.

The company tries to justify the pathetically low cash wages by pointing to the huts that are provided free of charge and to the rudimentary health service provided by the company to keep the workers' body and soul together.

'Such facilities,' the argument goes, 'provide the native with a civilised standard of living which he would not get in the bush.' They also provide the UAC with enormous profits.

Similar to the set up of the larger



Ghana wood workers: outraged by management policies

companies in Britain in the early 19th century, the workers are provided with a company shop. From this shop the workers have to buy provisions, the small luxuries of tobacco and beer and perhaps an occasional piece of clothing.

Foremen may be able to accumulate enough money to buy a bicycle or a transistor radio. Because the store has a monopoly it can charge inflated prices. The store in Samreboi was one of the main centres of attack by the striking workers.

The strike started after the failure of management to implement improved service conditions (day-by-day workers transferred to permanent work, shortening of hours etc). These had been negotiated by the union last October.

Management, taken by surprise, denied that any such settlement had been made.

The rage and frustration of the workers was released. Thousands stormed the management compounds overturning cars, smashing windows and cutting telephone wires. They marched to the company store, taking all the goods that had been forbidden to them. The workers then dispersed,

uncertain of what to do next.

The police took this lull as an opportunity to search the huts of the men they suspected of being ring-leaders. As a result, 15 people were arrested and taken to the local jail.

These actions rallied the workers, who began a march on the police station to free their comrades. The police opened fire, killing three and injuring 87. The workers, unarmed, retreated in panic.

150 armed government police were shunted in from the coast to help the UAC out with its policing work.

MUTED

Comments from the pro-American and pro 'South African dialogue' Ghanaian government are muted. The leader of the Opposition, Mr Madjitey, himself an ex-police commissioner, announced in parliament that 'shooting and the loss of life were definitely not the normal solution to industrial disputes'.

The pro-government TUC team that is currently investigating the 'incident' will no doubt come to the conclusion that the police 'acted correctly in the face of due provocation'.

Hong Kong campaign to lift ban on Chinese language

A CAMPAIGN is under way in Britain's 'crown colony' of Hong Kong to make Chinese a recognised official language. One method used by the British authorities to divide and demoralise the Chinese majority is to outlaw their language at government and legal levels.

But a number of organisations in Hong Kong are fighting to make Chinese a recognised language, even though the Bar Association's annual statement this year says it is 'in the public interest' that English should remain the language of the law.

The influential Teachers' Association opposed the Bar Association's view, arguing in favour of the concurrent use of Chinese in courts. This stand was supported by the Students' Federation.

The authorities have attempted to throw a smokescreen around the issue by allowing Chinese to be used in the Legislative Council - the governing body of the colony - and the urban council. But there are no elected members of the Legislative Council, which frames all the laws, and its 13 Chinese members are representatives of big business and the law, all speak English and have a stake in the maintenance of British rule.

There are 10 elected members of

the Urban Council, but they are outnumbered by 16 appointed members and their power is confined to keeping the streets clean and looking after the libraries, parks and beaches.

But the agreement to use Chinese on these two bodies shows the wide-

spread support for the movement to recognise the language and end one of the more blatantly racist examples of British colonial rule.

(Information from 'Free Hong Kong').

Black revolutionary faces extradition from Sweden to face trial in USA

GLANTON DOWDELL, a founder member of the American League of Revolutionary Black Workers, who was forced to seek asylum in Sweden to escape racist threats to his life, now faces extradition by the US government on charges of 'falsification of government bonds'.

The original attempt at extradition was for 'crimes against the state' but this was not recognised in Swedish law. Since then the star witness for Glanton's defence has been murdered.

This is a clear attempt by the US government to persecute leaders of the black workers' struggle in America and indicates a significant development in the co-operation of the Swedish government in American political repression.

Glanton was arrested on 15 March by the Swedish authorities and is not allowed to speak to anybody apart from his lawyer. Before his arrest, he was not granted political asylum but the less secure status of 'humanitarian asylum', usually reserved for deserters from the US forces.

The American Deserters Committee in Sweden has been fighting for political asylum and has backed a campaign for Glanton Dowdell based on two demands:

1. His immediate release.
 2. Granting of political asylum to him.
- Messages of support and solidarity are required urgently and should be sent to: Solidarity Committee for Glanton Dowdell c/o David Bararesgaten 26a Stockholm, Sweden.

When unions broke the law — in order to exist...

Most trade unions that have existed for 150 years or more can recount episodes from this early period of illegality — the time when to be a member could mean heavy fines and imprisonment. There are many stories of secret meetings, held at midnight on the moors, or deserted barns, with out-runners to warn of the approach of suspicious strangers, of bloodcurdling oaths and initiation ceremonies taken to stamp on new recruits the importance of secrecy and of the widespread use, by government and employers, of spies to trap the unwary.

The authorities possessed an impressive armoury for repression. They prosecuted workers for conspiracies at common law, breach of contract, leaving work unfinished, and even under the 16th century Statute of Artificers. The Combination Acts of 1799 and 1800 merely strengthened existing legislation and simplified the procedure for gaining convictions.

Faced with this formidable challenge, trade unionists then took a very different line to that of Vic Feather today. He told the recent Croydon congress of the TUC that, should Robert Carr's Bill become law, we must all be good boys, conducting ourselves in a thoroughly constitutional and law abiding manner.

But Feather forgets there would be no trade union movement now if the pioneers had behaved in this way. Members of the early unions were prepared to break the law.

They knew that to combine with one another to improve pay and conditions was illegal. Nevertheless, they did not shrink from doing so.

Taunted

How they behaved depended on the relationship of forces. Where organisation was strong, then the defiance could be open and forthright. Workers even taunted the authorities to use their powers.

A Nottingham union declared: 'If you will find the jails, we will find the bodies.' On the other hand, where the organisation was weak 'taisez vous' — keep quiet — tended to be the tactic.

No leader or deputation would approach the employer. A hint would be dropped or an unsigned note left around, outlining the men's demands. If these were not met, then quietly the men would slink away. Production stopped without the boss being aware who organised it.

Of course, this tactic did not always work. The authorities might discover the ringleaders because some man spoke too loudly and to the wrong people. Such miscreants could expect to be sent to Coventry.

Occasionally, more severe punishments were inflicted. In the North-east coalfield, colliers were in the habit of working naked at the coal face because of the physical exertion and heat. At the end of a shift, the offending miner would find his clothes gone — an event that led to an acutely embarrassing journey home.

Fined

In North Staffordshire, one blabbermouth was ducked in a cesspool, it was said, 'to show him the impropriety of his conduct'.

While these kinds of action lessened the impact, they did not completely nullify the effects of repressive legislation. Newspapers between 1800 and 1824 contain abundant evidence of judicial barbarities.

Thousands of workers were fined and imprisoned. Even so, the authorities were far from prosecuting every infringement of the Combination Acts that came to their notice.

by **RAYMOND CHALLINOR**



The Combination Acts were repealed — but state oppression continued: in 1887 troops and police viciously attacked an unemployment rally in Trafalgar Square on 'Bloody Sunday'.

Instead of attempting to be universal, they were selective in their repression. They concentrated on the crucial struggles.

The full rigour of the law would be inflicted when it could smash a union or inflict a savage defeat on one group of workers that would act as a warning to the rest.

Their objectives were twofold: first, to destroy working-class organisations and, second, to administer blows that would strike terror into the working class as a whole. As the labour historian Edward Thompson rightly remarks, 'The effectiveness of the legislation is not to be judged by the number of prosecutions but its general deterrent influence'.

Doubtless, the Tory government today has the same objectives. It will judge the success of any anti-union law not by how many trade unionists are fined and imprisoned but by the extent to which it deters militant activity.

On this point, Conservatives should not find the evidence of history particularly reassuring. The parliament which repealed the Combination Acts in 1824 was completely controlled by landed aristocrats and industrialists.

They did not take the decision because their hearts had suddenly been filled with rapturous love for workers in general and trade unionists in particular.

Rather their decision was taken after soberly assessing the facts. The Combination Acts had to be repealed because they had become counter-productive. Their injustice was seen to be so stark, so naked, so monstrous, that it acted as an incitement instead of a deterrent.

Prosecutions inflamed workers' tempers, disrupted industrial peace, and made employers' tasks more difficult.

Parliamentarians in 1824 were impressed by the testimony of men like Francis Place who told them that the Combination Acts 'induced working people to break and disregard the laws. They made them hate their employers with a rancour which nothing else could have produced.'

Heartened

Place also gave ample evidence to show that, while a union here and there might have been destroyed by the Combination Acts, they had done nothing to arrest the development of the trade union movement as a whole, which was growing stronger daily.

Militants at the present time should be heartened by this knowledge of the past. They should not be demoralised if the Industrial Relations Bill becomes law.

For Robert Carr will discover that it is far more easy to get the Act through parliament than to get it



Illegal union meetings were often held at night: print shows a gathering of agricultural labourers

tionist line of the TUC leadership. From the very beginning, the trade union movement was not built on Feathers, too timid to break the law. Nor were the Combination Acts destroyed by men who were constantly talking about the need to keep within the confines of the constitution.

It is interesting to compare the attitude of the TUC general council with that of the early union leaders. The Lord Coopers and Jack Jones of today confine their opposition to sending meaningless petitions to parliament and accepting, even before the Bill becomes law, that they will register and meekly work under it.

Prudent

Contrast this attitude to that of the union leaders in 1825, when parliament threatened to re-introduce the Combination Acts. The Webbs, in their book, *The History of Trade Unionism* stated: 'Doherty, the leader of the Lancashire cotton-spinners, in the heat of the agitation, declared that any attempt at a re-enactment of the Combination Laws would result in a widespread revolutionary movement'.

Prudently, parliament thought again. The Act was never re-introduced.

Leaders like Doherty not only showed how to fight anti-union legislation but also how to prevent it reaching the statute book. Our present union leaders have not got that spirit but the mass of ordinary workers have the power to make the Tories think again.

International Socialism 47

Greece: four years after the coup
Revolutionary trade unionism
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Review of two books by Lukacs

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What makes prices rise



Strikers: a scapegoat for government policies that are the real cause of inflation

Press and Tories blame workers for inflation: the truth is rather different

by CHRIS HARMAN

EVERYONE knows what inflation means. Rising prices are hitting all of us all the time.

Official figures show that the cost of living is rising at 8½ per cent a year. And these underestimate the real extent of the increase.

The head of the John Lewis chain of stores recently warned that shop prices would go up by 10 per cent this year.

Press commentators, television spokesmen and government ministers all put the blame on one cause: rising wages are responsible for rising prices, they claim. 'Greedy workers' are said to be behind all the trouble.

But this is just not true. Even the representatives of big business will admit what the real forces are that have pushed up prices, but only when they are writing for one another and not for a mass readership. One publication where they discuss such issues is the Review of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research.

that massive quantities of goods that could be produced are not produced.

The Times (22 March) published a report that calculated how much this lost production was. The conclusions are stunning. 'The economy last year was producing about £3,400m less than it would at its full employment capacity ... that shortfall is estimated to rise over £5,000m this year.'

In other words, every man, woman and child in this country could be a clear two pounds a week (free of tax) better off without prices being forced up. But only if different policies guided the economy.

Successive governments (Labour and Tory) have forced up prices and have stopped the extra goods being produced that could improve living standards. They have then blamed the resulting inflation on workers who fight to keep up with rising prices.

Imports

It located the start of the present upward surge of prices in the period 1968-69. But it argues that 'in those years, however, the rise in wage rates and in wage costs per unit of output was relatively modest.

The main factors behind the rise in consumer prices in the 1967-68 period were import prices and indirect taxes; these counted for some two thirds of the increase.'

In other words, workers were not responsible for inflation. The government raised 'indirect' taxes (purchase tax and so on) and was responsible for devaluation which raised the prices of foreign goods. And the Labour government was supported in these policies by the Tories.

Workers put up with rising prices for two years before fighting back. The Review points out that it was not until 1970 'that wage costs made the running ... the rise in the pace of price inflation in the two earlier years are the proximate cause of the later rise in wage rates.'

Substantial

The claim that workers pushing for wage increases are responsible for inflation is wrong for a second reason. The fact is that substantial improvements in the living standards of the mass of people could take place without prices being pushed up. But only if the economy was run in a different way.

More than 700,000 people are at present unemployed. Many factories are not producing nearly as much as they could. The result is

Living standards to boost the

MANY PEOPLE recognise that government policies have caused inflation. Even TUC leaders will make the point.

But what they fail to do is to understand why such policies have been followed, not only by the Tories but by Labour before them. Instead they merely write letters to Heath begging him to change his approach.

But measures carried through by Wilson and then Heath are not an accident. They are the only ones open to any government that accepts the situation where two per cent of Britain's population own 80 per cent of the industrial wealth.

There are sound capitalist reasons why prices were initially pushed up by tax increases and by increasing cost of foreign goods. There are equally sound capitalist reasons why the economy has been stopped from expanding, so leaving men unemployed and machines idle.

The government is frightened that if it lets the economy grow, by using all the resources available to produce wealth, it will soon run into a balance of payments crisis.

Apologists for the government say there is a danger of British people consuming more than they produce. This, it is said, means that imports exceed exports and the country can no 'longer pay its way'.

But at the moment it is quite clear that the workers of Britain are paying their way. Exports exceed imports. What the government really fears is something else.

Every year the minority who own the wealth in this country spend hundreds of millions of pounds abroad. They do so by investing

abroad in their search for possible profits.

Last year this totalled £735m. The chemical industry half as much as they do in this.

At the same time itself spends large amounts abroad. Last year more than £450m was spent abroad to defer investments.

When the government 'country must pay that workers must cover these payments. Without such payments would not just recently the last decade.

INCREASE

The last Labour government opted this situation forced down the workers deliberate these sums could.

Wage freeze and expansion used to foreign goods gain.

Purchase tax and est rates were level. The economy expanding and allowed to increase.

The present government is being run by workers. It fears balance of payments seriously hit.

Not in the mass standards improving going up. More...

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

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Sean Thompson/Jeff Pick

Socialist answer: take the wealth from the minority

ALTHOUGH workers are not to blame for rising prices, the only policy the government has for stopping inflation is to cut real wages. Its other policies — like increasing health charges, rents, bus and train fares — only add to the cost of living.

It seems there should be another policy which could be followed. This would be to cut the cost of living directly by cutting purchase tax on a large scale and by reducing interest rates and profits. At the same time, providing work for the unemployed would produce massive new quantities of goods that could raise real living standards.

This is in essence the policy suggested to the government by the TUC. The only real trouble is that it can never be carried through while industry and wealth are controlled by a small minority of the population. That is why the last Labour government implemented quite the opposite policy.

The reasons are simple. The owners of wealth would move their money abroad on a massive scale if there was the slightest danger that profits and interest rate levels were going to be reduced.

They would do the same if they thought that policies were being followed that might result in a rise of imports. In either case, they could cause a balance of payments crisis within days.

Massive amounts

Government controls cannot stop such movements. Those who own industry also control the massive amounts of imports and exports crossing this country's borders every day. They can also evade any sorts of controls by a few accounting tricks.

The way to stop those with wealth moving it out of the country to sabotage policies they do not like is not to try to control their use of it. What is needed is to take it physically out of their hands. But this could only be done by massive intervention by those who actually create the wealth — the organised working class.

The TUC, of course, has no plans to organise such a massive inroad into the power of big business. That is why it provides no real alternative to the continual subordination of workers' interests to the requirements of the ruling class's hunt for profits.

Only when a mass revolutionary organisation of workers has been built will we be able to fight rising prices and the other aspects of government policy like unemployment. The present struggle against the government's attacks on living standards can begin to bring together those forces that can build such a movement.

Standards cut for profiteers

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...fear that those who own wealth in Britain will move it abroad on a far greater scale than ever before.

An example of how this can happen occurred last September. In the first week of that month there was a rumour that certain changes in government policy were possible. £200 millions of funds were moved out of the country by their owners in one week alone.

The only way the present government (like its Labour predecessor) knows of counteracting such movements is to do its utmost to keep up interest and profit rates in this country. So it stops the economy expanding and hopes that rising unemployment will cause real wages to fall.

It tries to hold down wages in the public sector directly. And it makes welfare cuts.

As the ruling class see it, in the words of the Financial Times, 'the main priority must be to increase industry's profit margins so that industrialists are once again willing to invest.'

The consequences for ordinary workers are plain to see. When prices will rise by 10 per cent over the next year, when workers like the postmen are offered an eight per cent rise, it is clear that their real living standards will fall.

But even groups of workers who squeeze more than 10 per cent out of their employers will suffer. The reason is simple.

A third of any pay rise is automatically wiped out by tax for any worker earning more than £18 a week who has a wife and two children. A 10 per cent pay increase is worth really only 7 per cent.



Shop prices soar — and the government offers wage increases that amount to a cut in workers' living standards

A POLLSTER SAYS 'PUBLIC OPINION' IGNORES THE WORKERS' VIEWS...

WE HEAR a lot in the press about 'public opinion'. We read that public opinion does not agree with strikes, that public opinion believes Britain will join the Common Market. In fact, public opinion seems to agree with everything that is placed in the editorial columns of the newspapers.

Newspapers base their argument on opinion polls. Reporting the results of the polls is often done in such a way as to give banner headlines to some particular favourable point but to relegate the rest of the results to the back page of the newspapers.

The results of the polls are accepted as the absolute measure of the thoughts of the population when in fact the companies carrying out the polls always give a limit to the confidence that should be placed in the results.

This style of reporting may sell the newspapers but it is certainly misleading the bulk of the population. It may produce a large section of people who become conditioned by the results of the opinion polls to the extent that they will cease to hold any opinions of their own but will follow the so-called wishes of the majority.

The companies that conduct the polls are most scrupulous, but there are many problems facing them, for instance:

The proportion of the population that takes part in the polls should be typical of the population the poll claims to represent. Since it is obviously impractical to conduct a 100 per cent poll for reasons of cost and time, the companies are forced to use samples of the population that will always produce a small error in the results.

Small print

This small error is usually referred to as the 'sampling error' and is often printed with the results of the polls in the press, generally in the small print at the end of the results.

The questions asked in the polls have to be phrased in such a manner as to be readily understandable by all the sections of the population interviewed. The questions must also be independent of the others except where they are part of a series of questions on some connected points.

The interviewers must be carefully chosen for honesty and character. This must be done to avoid any misreporting of the answers and to prevent the interviewer badgering his subject into giving a view which is not his own. This point can be overcome by the way in which the questions are put.

The results of the opinion polls are generally presented along with the number of people who took part in the poll and the sampling error. To make the polls as quick and easy to operate as possible the answers are often supplied under three headings, usually 'Yes', 'No' and 'Don't Know', with the numbers in each category presented as a percentage of the total number of people.

The trouble with this approach is that quite often the answers of the people interviewed cannot be classified in this way. People's views are usually more complex than this sort of answer allows, yet there still seems to be a preponderance of the one word answers.

Not their own

There are several ways of selecting a sample of people to take part in the poll. Two of these are:

Quota sampling, in which each interviewer is told to go out and interview, for instance, 10 housewives, five labourers, five office workers, three shop workers etc — and

Random sampling in which random people walking along a street are chosen to be interviewed.

Both of these methods can lead to inaccuracies unless they are extremely rigorously controlled.

A problem with political opinion polls is that assumptions are made about the awareness of the people interviewed on the questions or issues under survey.

A large number of people may have their own opinions but when confronted by a semi-official-looking person, complete with clipboard and biro, ready to take down what is said, they may state a view that may be a more articulate one, but which is not their

Are you a 'Don't know'?

own. The only place they can get these views in a majority of cases is from the pages of the newspapers, in leading articles and editorials. Who can say how much the Daily Express or the Daily Mail help to formulate the opinions of their readers?

Public opinion is a difficult thing to measure. There are people who have a different opinion about some basic matter for every day of the week. Who can measure what these people think?

The current trend in this country seems to be to use this so-called public opinion to demoralise workers by 'proving' that they are in a minority if they oppose the wishes of the establishment.

Pub cronies

The public voice is invoked against the workers in a large number of cases without even a poll being conducted. If the government or the newspapers make these statements about the temper of the public, do they get their basic information from the shop floor or from their cronies in the bars along Fleet Street and in the clubs in Pall Mall and St James's?

It is certain that if the views of the shop floors were taken, the opinion of the 'public' might undergo a considerable transformation.

We now have a government that states that it serves, not itself but the country, public opinion, public interest, and the public good. Is it a coincidence that the very things that it claims to represent are very difficult to measure, and that the actions that the government undertakes for these principles always coincide with the bosses' interests?

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WORKMATES SEE THIS

The police and the death of Stephen McCarthy

by John Telfair

ON 16 NOVEMBER 1970, Stephen McCarthy, six months on the run from Borstal, was standing at an Islington, North London, bus stop with two friends. Then Constables Kilshaw N385 and Leonard, N456 arrived. As a result of what happened that night, Stephen died.

The police version is simple. Either before or after PC Leonard grabbed Stephen, he slipped and hit his head against the bus stop. Not one of the thousand people the police claim to have interviewed could confirm this story. It has been supported — by other policemen.

Stephen's companions and two girls at the bus stop saw it differently. Stephen's arm was twisted behind his back, and Leonard cracked his head against the stop. Bleeding, he was taken to the Royal Free Hospital and received head stitches. The following day he was remanded to Wormwood Scrubs.

The family heard of Stephen's arrest through rumour, and at the weekend his sister went to Upper Street police station. He was at Ashford Remand Home she was told. He wasn't, he was still at the Scrubs. The following Tuesday, he appeared at Old Street Magistrates' Court.

Stephen was pale, didn't smile, had his head inclined and was deaf in his left ear. He was suffering from a perforated ear drum, an exacerbation of an ear condition that he had had for years — as prison medical records would have shown, had anyone bothered to read them.

Later at his inquest a pathologist stated that a blow on the head such as Stephen had received could have activated and worsened his ear condition.

The family were worried. On 25 November they wrote to the Governor of the Scrubs and asked for a

medical examination. They received a reply 12 days later, from a Mr Walker.

Stephen, said the letter, was 'fit and cheerful and would get medical attention if he needed it.' In fact he was already being treated for his ear trouble. But then Mr Walker was hardly to blame. He hadn't seen Stephen, he hadn't even written the letter, just signed it. When it came to the Coroner's court the file of the letter had been lost.

Medical travesty

Stephen's treatment in detention was a medical travesty. Six doctors had seen him by the time he was sent to Dover Detention Centre. The last certified his fitness for the centre — but he went straight into the medical wing on arrival. None of these doctors read his prison medical records.

Unconscious, he was transferred to the Brook Hospital, and had several operations on his ear and his brain. He died on 25 January.

Eight policemen testified at the inquest. Each said Stephen had been 'all right' after his arrest, that he had said he 'tripped' or 'ran' into the stop. Stephen had been unwilling to sign any statement. The girl who testified was accused of being in league with the McCarthys. She didn't know them.

'Natural Causes' was the Coroner's only recommendation to the jury. He dissociated himself from their rider, 'negligence by the prison authorities'.

A protest meeting was held in Islington attended by 500 people. Eighteen people were arrested afterwards, including a local journalist who was released when his credentials were shown. The family intend to prosecute Kilshaw and Leonard, and want a public enquiry.

'It won't bring him back,' said Mrs McCarthy, 'but it might make it better for the other kids of Islington.'



Mr and Mrs McCarthy: they will prosecute the two arresting officers

'Healthy competition' and 'free enterprise' are fast poisoning land, sea and air...

Pollution: a threat to our survival

by Dale Fox

Now the poisons are everywhere and even the aristocracy are taking note with the threat to the expensive claret wines of the Bordeaux district from an expanding Shell refinery's filth and the near extinction of Atlantic salmon.

Recently a group of public analysts bought a random selection of produce over the counter, and found prohibited concentrations of pesticides in our apples, lard, milk and potatoes.

Pollution comes from many sources:

Lead pollution of the air from car exhausts.

The destruction of oxygen and dumping of fuel in the air by jet aircraft.

The discharge of untreated sewage and radioactive waste in the oceans.

Toxic agricultural pesticides which get carried into our rivers and oil from wrecked tankers — all these play a part.

Heaven help us all if a ship carrying defoliants to Vietnam is wrecked at sea. But the main offender is manufacturing industry or, to be more accurate, the industrialist who permits the wholesale pollution of the atmosphere by poison gases such as carbon monoxide and dumps untreated toxic waste into river and sea.

In Tokyo, pollution is so severe that queues form by vending machines which dispense a puff of clean air at a bob a go. The poisoning of river and sea by the dumping of industrial mercury has led to pregnant women in many American states being advised not to eat fish.

Cheap way

British firms are holding their own in the race to the grave, and the nationalised industries have hardly set a good example.

The National Coal Board has ruined miles of the Durham coast by dumping dust and slag straight into the sea. And what of the local authorities?

'Pushing the waste over the edge of the cliff is a damn cheap way of getting rid of it,' says a Durham County Council spokesman. Meanwhile, Edinburgh's Tory council is busy dumping 50 million to 300 million gallons of untreated sewage daily into the Firth of Forth.

In 1967, the Lothian River Purification Board demanded the installation of a sewage treatment plant by 1973, in the interests of public health. Edinburgh's Tories have so far replied by giving priority to building a police headquarters and an opera house.

'Free enterprise' and 'healthy competition' mean that any capitalist firm which spends a bit on pollution

(above) fishing becomes a deadly pastime



WARNING
MUSSELS UNFIT
FOR HUMAN
CONSUMPTION

(Right) Ironic notice on the shore at Musselburgh on the Firth of Forth

FREE ENTERPRISE, we are told, leads to competition. At present industries seem to be competing to see which can poison most in the shortest time.

Workers are well aware of the suffering caused by pollution, generations having been weaned on a diet of sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide and fluoride, though the bosses and politicians in their residential suburbs and out-of-town mansions were able to forget the poisoned atmospheres of the industrial zones.

The vast majority of the 4,000 people who died as a direct result of the London smog of 1952 were pensioners, workers and housewives from the slums.

Acid rain

Not that pollution is still confined to a few industrial regions. Last year it was reported that traces of toxic pesticide had been discovered in the snows of Antarctica, while the Scandinavians complained that poison gas clouds from British industry were turning their rain acid and damaging the forests.

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control will suffer. Banning pollution, like banning war, is bad for business.

Why doesn't Britain take a lead? 'Against the national interest — would make our export unprofitable,' wail the Tories.

'Most pollution comes from getting rid of wastes at the least possible cost. We are not prepared to pay ... the cost of cleaning up after ourselves'.

These are the words, not of a left-wing radical but those of Dr F Fraser Darling, Vice-President of the Conservation Foundation. Yet according to Robert Boote, Chairman of the Council of Europe's Conservation Comm-

ittee, 'If men really tackled the problem, 95 per cent of air and water pollution could be eliminated in 10 or 15 years'.

But neither the bosses nor their Tory stooges will seriously tackle the pollution problem since the cost of waste treatment and disposal schemes would bring a little drop in profits.

Capitalism favours the most ruthless polluter, but like the dinosaur, capitalism is proving incapable of meeting new challenges. Instead of responding to the environment, capitalism is destroying it, and this destruction must be stopped before it is too late.

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!



Man above the law

ONE of the most important functions of all art is to accurately reflect the state of society, its ideas, morals, tensions, loves and hates. But to be successful as art, such reflections must remain honest representations and not mere pegs for the artist's particular obsessions and bees in the bonnet.

What marks out Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion (Cameo-Poly) from so many similar but inferior films is its mature awareness of the real complexities and difficulties of reflecting a society in turmoil.

The central character is the chief of the Murder Squad of a large Italian city. He is thorough, brutal and successful. He enjoys his work and yet he is vulnerable.

His mistress, who is fascinated by crime and murder, taunts him with his inadequacy as a lover and as a man and compares him unfavourably with her other lover, a wild, youthful revolutionary. The police chief is driven mad with jealousy and cuts the woman's throat at the height of their impassioned love making.

It all seems simple, a familiar and well-worked theme. But it is only a sub-theme of the film, just one ingredient in a mixture of political intrigue, blackmail, sexual perversion and power games.

Big opportunity

The police chief is a man obsessed by a very simple idea — the sanctity of authority. He is promoted to become head of Political Intelligence in the city on the very day he commits his murder. This is his big opportunity to put his ideas into practice.

In the usual fashion, he denounces moral degeneracy, homosexuality and the growth of communism. But he is so obsessed with his one driving idea that he devises a near-fatal game of Russian roulette for himself.

Having committed his murder for what appears to be essentially private motives, he proceeds to use the crime as a weird test of his own obsession with power. He gives his subordinates clue after clue to his own guilt but they blunder along blindly like the well-trained machines they are. He becomes so infuriated with their inefficiency that he finally confesses to them.

But his assembled, distinguished colleagues refuse to accept his confession and destroy all the possible evidence. They plead with him — the fabric of society, the good name of the police force — and all demand that he retract his confession.

And so he retracts. Society needs him as a guiltless upholder of the law. In a perverted way, his idea has won through. The abstract principle of authority has triumphed against the individual.

Inevitably, any written description of this magnificent film can do only the palest justice to its imaginative power and tantalising complexity. Equal to and reminiscent of Kafka's The Trial and Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment, it is one of the best films of the last decade.

Martin Tomkinson



COTTONS COLUMN

THE UNFREE PRESS was at its best last week, frontpaging the latest outburst from Mr Tim Fortescue, Tory MP for Garston. Readers may recall that during the Ford strike, Fearless Fortescue alleged that Ford's Halewood plant was a cesspool of anarchy, where the workers played football all day, pinched parts, boozed on the night-shift and refused to allow foremen on the line.

The allegations came, said the MP, from workers at Halewood. Of course, they couldn't be named for fear of reprisals. The lack of any evidence to back up the charges did not deter the Fleet Street tyros from giving great prominence to Fortescue's drivelling remarks.

Seeing your name in headlines acts like strong wine to weak heads. The Garston Gorer returned to his subject again last week, coincidentally as the Halewood men were carrying on their strike for parity in defiance of the practitioners of sell-out from the AUEW and TGWU.

The tabloids screeched in enormous headlines last week: 'Frightened Men of Fords' (Mirror), 'Sack the Wreckers' (Sun) and 'Violence Probe by Ford Bosses' (Sketch, RIP). The first two threw overboard the time-honoured tradition of Fleet Street of distinguishing between news and comment by giving the impression on their front pages that Fortescue's bluster was hard fact.

The further allegations of bribery and corruption at Halewood were too much for the liberalish labour staff of the Sunday Times. On Sunday, Eric Jacobs and Phillip Knightley demolished Fortescue by stressing his second refusal to name his



FORTESCUE: headline hysteria

informants but saying they believed that only one of the nameless trio actually worked at Halewood out of a workforce of 12,000.

They added that it would be difficult to go to work drunk at the plant because of strict checks on the gates, that a security staff of 80 made theft equally difficult, that the strange shift hours might enable the morning shift to kick a ball around during their break when the fortunate Fortescue might be contemplating his first sherry of the day and that the strict domination and control of the measured-day-work system made 'idleness' virtually impossible.

And the final indignity was to politely tell Tired Tim that if he wanted to declare 'subversive' papers to be at the root of the trouble, he might at least get their names right. The militant Merseyside paper named by the MP is called Big Flame, not 'Blue Flame'.

He must have confused it with a film he'd been to see . . .

FINAL FORD WORD: one of the warm-hearted gestures in the 'no-strikes' pay deal was that the workers could have New Year's Day as an extra holiday. Nice, except that for the next two year's NYD falls on a Saturday and a Sunday.

Noncensus

THE LIBERAL PARTY's indignation at the National Census now being conducted is concerned with the state's growing intrusion into the privacy of the individual. Fair point, but the aim of the census goes beyond a mere government desire to hedge us around with a battery of baffling forms.

One aim of the latest costly (£10m) exercise is to find out exactly how many 'coloured' immigrants there are in Britain and how fertile different races are, a sickening piece of racist jiggery-pokery that will be used to great advantage by the Smethwick gauleiter and his Klan.

The volumes of statistics produced after the census are gobbled hungrily by business, small and big. Firms are happy to pay a fat fee for information that tells them where to find pockets of 'inactive female labour' and areas where salesmen might profitably call to sell washing machines and other costly items.

Although the findings are 'secret', it is possible for busybodies to match up each district of the census — about 200 households to one 'enumerator' — with the electoral roll and actually work out each individual household, its income, expectancies, background and likely purchases.

So the census is more than a mere infringement of our liberties. It is a device to intensify racial divisions, to open up pools of cheap labour for unscrupulous employers and to place unwary housewives at the mercy of smarmy salesmen. But if you feel like refusing to fill in your form, be warned — you can be fined up to £50.



THE COMMERCIAL channel seems obsessed with the 'anti-hero', the man who claws his way to power, his path to wealth and influence littered with destroyed opponents, discarded friends and cast-off bedmates.

Perhaps the obsession is a reflection of the life-style of the average television tycoon or the humdrum and inadequate existence of the average television writer, but the end result as far as the viewer is concerned is the feeling that the characters on the screen, in spite of their many failings, are worthy of some adulation and respect. We live in a dog-eat-dog society, is the implication, so just sharpen your teeth, Fido, and get stuck in.

The relatively civilised backstabbing of The Power Game has given way to Man at the Top, a television version of the bedventures of Joe Lampton, the unspeakable creation of the equally unspeakable and interchangeable John Braine. While Lampton has a well-deserved rest, we are served with two more characters from the same mould, Hine (ATV, Wednesdays) and Budgie (London Weekend, Fridays).

I have not yet managed to see Hine but it is enough to say that he is a successful arms salesman for you to get the drift of the series. Budgie is a disgrace — or at least the first instalment was and I have little hope for its improvement.

It comes from the stable of Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall, who last year gave us a stomach-turning series called Queenie's Castle that told of the happenings of a nasty and thoroughly unbelievable bunch of small-time crooks, drunkards and determined inhabitants of the dole queue who lived, of course, in a council flat.

Since then, Keith Waterhouse has turned to writing a twice-weekly column for the Daily Mirror that has quickly become required reading for its radical approach, its tough and uncompromising support for such groups as the power men and postal workers and its hilarious attacks upon the reactionary prejudices of the middle class towards workers in general and strikers in particular.

It seems strange, then, that Mr. Waterhouse panders to those same reactionary middle class prejudices when he writes for television.

Budgie is another small-time crook, just out of prison and yearning to return to a life of crime. He has an abandoned wife, a mistress who has borne his child and a 'stage-Irish' sidekick. Budgie shows his gratitude to a van driver who gave him a lift home from prison by planning to hijack the van a few days later but due to the incompetence of his assistant, pinches the wrong vehicle and lands up with a load of illegal pornographic literature.

The series cannot decide whether to be serious or amusing, with the result that the seriousness is interlaced by lumpy humour of the Brian Rix variety that includes, along with the thick Paddy, an 'oh, ducky' queer barman and an effeminate film producer. The acting, direction and writing are all equally wooden and undistinguished and Adam Faith, as Budgie, appears to mime his part, as though he were still mouthing to his latest recording.

It would be absurd to claim, let alone demand that television show, that all working people are paragons of virtue. They have their warts. It would be pleasant and more truthful to see their finer points and their scars from time to time in television drama.

David East

Socialist Worker

GMWU breaks glass pledge

by Gerry Caughey
Chairman Pilkington rank and file committee.

LESS THAN three months ago, Walter Aldritt, North West regional secretary of the General and Municipal Workers' Union, gave an assurance that victimised Pilkington strikers would be given priority when the St Helen's Triplex

factory was taking on new labour.

Triplex is currently taking on new labour but not one of the sacked men has been taken back.

In January the Pilkington rank and file committee and representatives of Liverpool dockers who were then blacking exports of Triplex glass, met the regional secretary and branch secretaries from most of the St Helen's Pilk-

ington factories.

Walter Aldritt gave two assurances at this meeting, in order to prevent the dockworkers re-imposing their black on Triplex:

1. Older men from among the sacked workers would be given priority in being taken back and
2. No new men would be taken on until the sacked workers had been re-employed.

The assurance has been broken.

Get tough policy at Ford

by John Pinder,
Metal Stamping and Body Plant shop steward, Halewood.

WHEN Ford's Halewood workers went back to work last week they were greeted with a talk on the management's new ideas of discipline.

Starting with the petty things, each department foreman spelt out the new rules to his audience, just returned from a 10 weeks' strike. For example, sandwiches are to be eaten only in a special 'tea area'. The canteen - widely used for breakfasts during the strike - now opens only at lunchtime.

But in addition to restrictions of this kind, management informed shop stewards that they can no longer move freely from department to department. Now they must have a pass signed by their foreman.

The general opinion in the plant is that management is beginning an attempt to take away some of the stewards' power and bring the men increasingly under the control of the foremen.

COLLABORATION

This is the end-result of a ballot rushed through undemocratically and with absolutely no time for any discussion. The two-year agreement is a blatant attempt at American-style strike breaking.

It is significant that it was concocted by top-level union, management and government collaboration as a blueprint for future agreements to be introduced under the Industrial Relations Bill.

At Halewood, the vote went 2,514 for 2,100 against the deal. This was only a 35 per cent poll. By boycotting the poll, the majority voted not with paper but with contempt.

UNDEMOCRATIC

Ignoring the working-class democracy of mass meetings and resorting to the use of duplicate ballot forms to ensure the outcome; the agreement was imposed on a militant and hostile workforce. Already the lads on the shop floor are reaping the harvest, management's new code of discipline.

The Ford agreement marks a new step in the employers' offensive against rank and file trade unionism. In order to fight back, the men and the stewards like myself will have to take no notice of phoney, agreements of this kind. The stewards will have to intensify their attempts to defend the interests of the working class, in Ford and elsewhere.

But it is absolutely vital to understand that a defeat for any section of the working class like the dockers or carworkers is a very serious matter. Starting now, a much more intense struggle against the Industrial Relations Bill must be launched.

UNIONS AND BOSSES IN SECRET DEAL AT CHRYSLER

by JOHN SETTERS

CHRYSLER CAR WORKERS are now in the same firing line as Ford. A letter signed by AUEW executive member Bob Wright, dated 30 March, confirms that the unions and top Chrysler management have agreed a secret new clause that will be 'imposed' at the end of each local factory procedure agreement.

The deal is the twin of the agreement negotiated secretly by Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon during the Ford strike. No shop stewards or convenors knew any details until they were confronted with a sell-out.

The Ford settlement failed to win parity and strictly forbids pay claims or strikes. It was imposed on the 50,000 Ford workers despite their magnificent nine-week strike. They were betrayed by their full-time union leaders.

Bob Wright's Chrysler letter states that the unions have agreed at national level to a new final clause providing for details of any breakdown of talks at local level to be sent immediately to both the national officials of the unions concerned and top Chrysler management.

The agreement was reached on 3 February at a meeting held without reference to or approval from any shop stewards' committees.

RESPONSIBILITY

Particularly important in view of the Tories' Industrial Relations Bill is the fact that the new procedure agreement does not contain a clause stating that it will never, under any circumstances, be made legally binding.

Chrysler's new agreement also states that 'the unions and the company recognise that the final stage of procedure ... would be in the locality, and the attendance of national officers would not be precluded at this stage whether either the unions at national level or local level deemed it advisable.

'The responsibility for such a decision must ultimately rest with the executives of the unions concerned,' it adds.

The agreement also states that 'where a situation developed with implications affecting the company as a whole or a breakdown at local plant level, ad hoc arrangements could be undertaken by mutual consent to enable the national unions, together with local representatives, to meet the company and further discuss the particular issues involved.'

The motor owners' present policy is to try and remove the shop stewards from negotiations over pay and conditions. This is why piecework was scrapped at Chrysler and why British Leyland is also out to get rid of it in its factories.

SPECIAL MEETING

The employers would like to have a payments system which is only adjusted yearly by national negotiations between themselves and the unions.

They would also like all these negotiations to take place at the same time and, according to a recent issue of The Times, the employers have had a special meeting with Robert Carr to discuss how this can be done.

In simple terms, the employers' aims are: pay talks once a year, with the talks taking place in all the companies at the same time. In addition they want clauses in all those agreements that - as in Ford or Vauxhall - disallow any pay claims or strikes for the next 12 months.

Chrysler workers should reject this new agreement and condemn the secret and unauthorised talks that have produced it.



The IS conference in session: delegates heard of a two-thirds growth in membership

Recruits help strengthen IS

TWO HUNDRED and fifty delegates plus 350 visitors packed London's Beaver Hall over Easter weekend for the annual conference of the International Socialists. They heard that the membership of the organisation had grown by two-thirds in the last year, mainly in the last six months.

Many more industrial and white-collar workers have joined and now form a majority of the membership. The main debates were on IS work in industry and steps to build the revolutionary organisation.

Reports were given by members in industry and the trade unions. The fight against anti-union legislation, speed-up and productivity deals, plus the role of union officials received considerable attention.

Work among youth, students and women were also discussed and the conference heard reports from comrades in America, Ireland, West Germany and Italy. The delegates also decided to issue a call for left-wing unity

CP HELP NUT LEADERS OF THE PAY HOOK

SW Reporter

SCARBOROUGH:- A united left can carry the National Union of Teachers for militant policies. That is the first lesson of the union's Scarborough conference this week.

Press reports suggesting a resurgence of the right are misleading. What has happened is that the right has won on a number of key issues because leading Communist Party members of the union have helped them.

Not that many of the CP delegates oppose militant policies. They do not. But they have been led to accept 'lesser evil' arguments that help the right wing.

There were really two conferences, a special salaries conference to decide the line on the current salaries claim, plus the regular conference.

Every year, left wing delegates - very broadly defined - hold an eve-of-conference meeting to discuss strategy and tactics. This year it was largely devoted to efforts by the CP to get delegates to withdraw amendments to an innocuous executive motion that would have firmly committed the union to reject arbitration in any circumstances and prepare for strike action.

STOOD FIRM

The argument was that if the amendments were put and lost the position of the 'progressives' on the union executive would be weakened.

A number of delegates were influenced by this line of argument and withdrew amendments. But the group associated with the journal Rank and File stood firm. In the event the leading CPers opposed all the amendments in conference and, with this invaluable assistance, the executive carried their resolution that gives them a completely free hand.

The result will be a sell-out. The right wing majority on the executive will brush aside the objections of the very 'progressives' who helped them at conference.

What might have happened was shown by the vote in the resolution on future salaries policy. Here the CP did fight and the united opposition of the whole left defeated an executive-backed procedural motion that would have shelved the issue.

The salaries motion that was carried is not a good one. But at least it does emphasise the need to fight for the basic salary scale against the attempts of the employers and the union right wing to find a divide-and-rule salary scale that gives most to the best paid minority.

The CP lined up with the right on two other issues. To defeat a Hackney-Wandsworth motion to reject the whole idea of a 'Teachers General Council', Max Morris, the CP's leading figure, personally took the floor to support the executive.

The whole TGC idea is an attempt to divert teachers from union action, as the whole left has long recognised.

NOTICES

IS Women's Newsletter. April issue now available from IS Bookshop or 31 Canton Street, Southampton. 5p plus post.

MANCHESTER Council of Action public meeting. Bernadette Devlin MP. Thursday 22 April, Houldsworth Hall, Deansgate, 7.30pm.

VIETNAM SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE demonstration against US imperialism in SE Asia and British complicity. Saturday 24 April, Trafalgar Square, 3.30pm, march to US Embassy and Hyde Park.

PART-TIME BOOK KEEPER required, approx 10 hours per week, hours to suit. Ring 01-739 1870.

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IMPORTANT:- Meeting of IS members going as delegates to Liaison Committee Conference 7.30pm Friday 23 April at Cottons Gardens. Admission by card only.

LONDON IS BRANCHES:- every branch to send minimum of two members to sell and distribute leaflets at Liaison Committee conference, 24 April 8.30am Central Hall, Westminster. Contact Chris Harman on 739 1878. Conference credentials from J Hiles, 137 Wanstead Park Rd, Ilford, Essex.