

# Socialist Worker

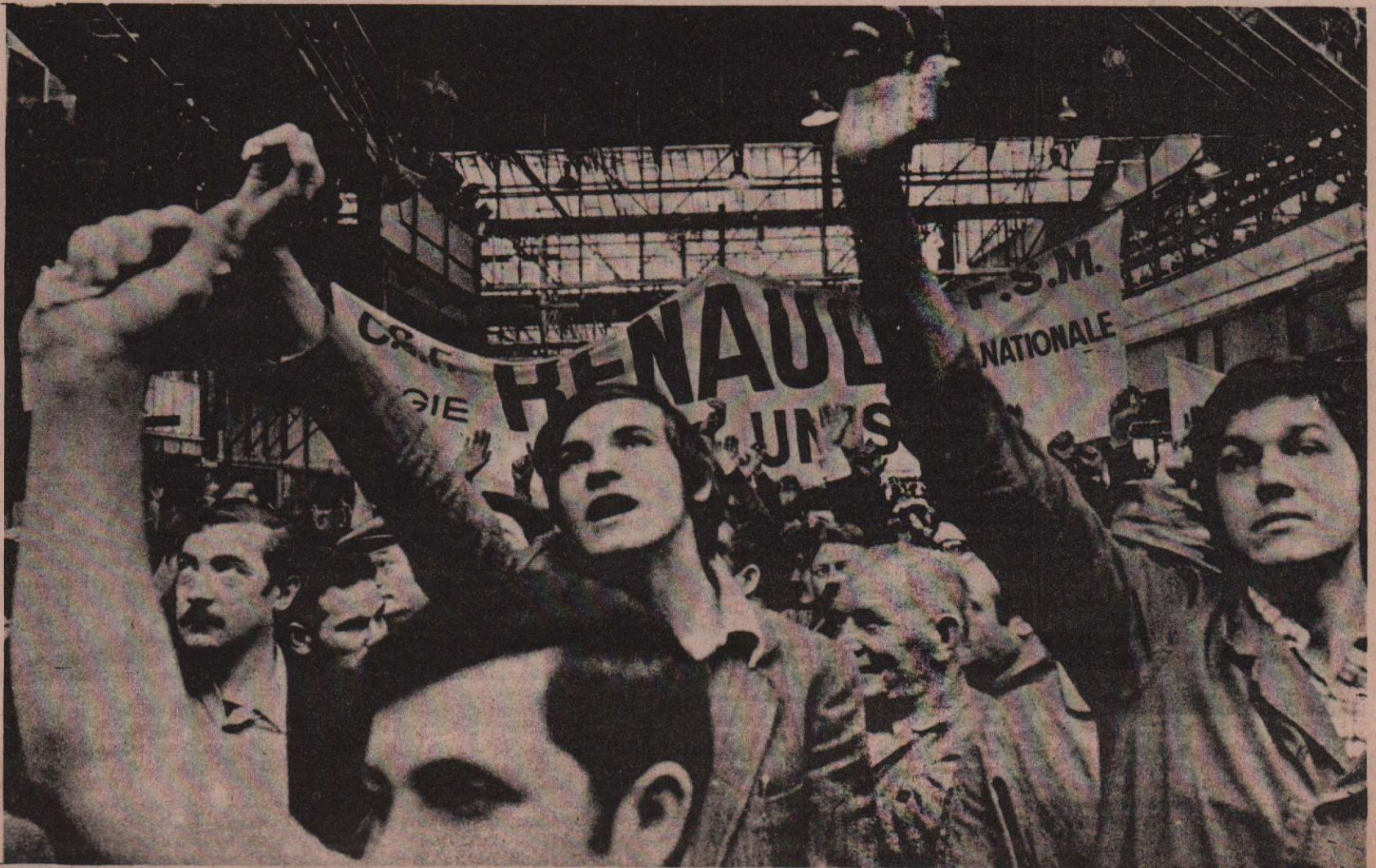
FOR WORKERS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM 221 22 MAY 1971 2½p

## Renault sit-in strike goes on

THE giant state-owned French Renault car combine remains closed as 97,000 workers continue their strike. Workers at the main plant at Billancourt, near Paris, are still occupying the factory.

The dispute began at the Le Mans factory when management refused to pay a summer bonus on the grounds that it is only payable if there are no strikes. The shut-down at Le Mans led to lay-offs throughout the combine and sympathy strikes and occupations.

Picture shows Billancourt workers voting to continue their sit-in strike. Full report: page 2.



# UNEMPLOYMENT GROWS AS

# TORIES STEP UP THE ATTACK

THE TORY onslaught on working people is gathering pace. This week has seen yet another sharp increase in unemployment, now at its highest level for 30 years.

But unemployment means more than figures. It is about human beings, about the callous and deliberate policy of Tory and Labour governments to 'shake out' industry and throw more than 800,000 on the dole to boost the profits of the tiny few who own and control industry.

Whole areas of Britain are being turned into wastelands as industry shuts down and moves elsewhere in the name of the 'national interest'.

According to the bosses' press, the government has had some success in convincing people that strikes and wage demands are responsible for the intolerable level of unemployment. If the papers are right—and the local council results suggest they are not—then the government has got away with the biggest confidence trick since the Nazis perfected their pre-war lie machine.

### Forced to pay

Whatever ministers say in public, their real policy is deliberately to create unemployment as part of their overall drive against the wages and living conditions of ordinary working people. As always, it is the workers who are forced to pay for the unplanned chaos of the capitalist system and its unquenchable appetite for bigger and bigger profits.

The Tories are the party of big business. Their aim is to help the bosses modernise industry and increase profits in order to compete on better terms with their world rivals and, in particular, the giant monopolies and cartels of the Common Market.

Such a policy demands a ruthless drive against workers' wages and organisations. Unemployment is a weapon used against

those with jobs to make them think twice before putting in a wage claim in case they join the dole queue.

The Industrial Relations Bill, soon to become law, is designed to cripple the unions at their strongest point—militant shop floor organisation.

The Immigration Bill is also part of this offensive—a clearly racist measure aimed at dividing black workers from white workers and hounding immigrants who take part in union activity with the threat of repatriation.

Even in the home, the attack on working families goes on. Increased charges for social services cut further into workers' incomes, intensified by rising rents, fares and galloping prices.

Even children do not escape the Tory attack. The abolition of free school milk and increased meals charges means that many thousands will be open to diseases of malnutrition such as rickets—already on the increase in East London and Glasgow.

The Tory Scrooges are even imposing charges for entry to museums—something considered unnecessary when the country was much poorer a century ago.



Heath: children don't escape

The attack by Tories and employers must be fought. It is no good waiting another four years for a Labour government. The Wilson government followed policies almost identical to the Tories'.

No, the fight must begin NOW. Unemployment must be fought within the trade union movement by raising the demands of work or full pay, work-sharing and a 35-hour week to increase the number of jobs available. And there must be a

complete ban on dangerous productivity deals that sell workers' jobs in return for a wage increase.

Workers must defend their trade union rights by fighting the Industrial Relations Bill now and when it becomes law. Rank and file trade unionists must campaign for policies of total non-co-operation with the laws and a refusal to register under the Act.

### Drive home message

And the racist Immigration Bill must be smashed by black and white workers united in action on the job, in the unions and in the community at large.

Such campaigns are vital—but socialists must drive home the message that as long as the capitalist system dominates us there can be no long-term solution to unemployment, poverty, sickness and the virus of race hate.

Only by building a mass socialist party dedicated to the struggle for a society planned and run in the interests of all working people can we guarantee a future free from insecurity and want.

## Force new councils to act

THE TORIES had a hammering in last week's local elections. Good. But we shouldn't sit back and expect a bed of roses from the new Labour councils.

In the past, many Labour councils have increased rents and cut back on social services. Even if they wanted to push through some reforms, they surrendered to the Whitehall auditors who insist on 'balancing the books' through higher rents and rates.

The only way to make Labour councils act in the interests of working people is to put collective pressure on them. Trades councils, local trade union branches and Councils of Action should move into action and demand:

Freeze all council rents. No mean-

tests.

No sales of council property. House the homeless.

Freeze the price of school meals and provide them free where possible.

Restore free school milk. Follow the lead of Merthyr Tydfil and Manchester and defy the Tory government.

Aid the old: build more flats for pensioners and provide them with regular food and welfare services.

If the Whitehall government moves against councils that carry out such policies they, would be defended through militant action by the organised working class.

International Socialists  
London Region Day School  
Saturday 5 June

2-4.30pm: Work of revolutionaries in the unions  
Speaker Roger Rosewell  
5-7pm: Imperialism and the Third World  
Speaker Tony Cliff

Followed by social, including films and plays. New Merlins Cave, Margery Street, WC1. Admission 15p.

## Big crackdown at Ford: see page 3



## The need for a real socialist alternative

THE TROUNCING of the Tories in last week's council elections is one of the most remarkable rejections of a political party in modern times. For, make no mistake about it, the voters may have been sending new councillors to the town hall but they were expressing their dislike and even hatred of the Whitehall government and its policies of unemployment, rising prices, anti-union laws and cuts in the social services.

However hard the Tories and the press pundits may try to write off the significance of the results, the swing against the Tories is almost unprecedented. Usually the council elections a year after a general election have a low vote and show support for the new government. This time the vote was substantially up and in city after city, town after town, the local representatives of business, profit and the landlords were swept from office.

The crisis affecting British capitalism has caused a more volatile political atmosphere. Voters are no longer prepared to give a new government 'the benefit of the doubt' or time to 'play itself in'. Working-class voters in particular are quick to react when government policies deliberately worsen their conditions.

Working-class abstentions last June were instrumental in defeating the Labour government and anger at the Tory government's blatantly big business policies combined with increasing rents and the slashing of local amenities led to the massive vote against Heath last week. The paradox is obvious: the same working-class voters who helped bring down the Labour government are now voting Labour to express their resentment against the Tories.

The superficial response from the 'experts' is that voters have short memories. Workers who voted for Labour last week have presumably forgotten the six years of freeze, squeeze, rising unemployment and prices and attempted anti-union laws that were the hallmarks of the Wilson regime. They have forgotten, too, that most Labour councils, whatever their promises and initial bursts of radical activity, have also jacked up rents and cut social services as savagely as their Tory opponents.

## Harsh reality

The real reason for the way in which workers vote has nothing to do with short memories but with harsh reality: the lack of an alternative. Many workers correctly see a difference between the two parties, The Tories are the hard-faced party of the rich, powerful and privileged, ruthlessly pursuing policies against the interests of working people. The Labour Party, because of its links with the working class through the trade unions, has to soften its support for capitalism by offering some reforms. But because it is committed to maintaining the present system, which essentially means the right of 7 per cent of the population to own 80 per cent of the country's wealth, Labour has and always will end up dancing to the tune played by that 7 per cent.

Labour offers no alternative for working people repressed and exploited at work and at home by employers and landlords, but until there is a genuine socialist movement fighting for policies of real change, real power and real democracy, working-class discontent will continue to be channelled into support for Labour in Whitehall and town hall.

There are lessons here for members of the Communist Party who were distressed to see their two councillors in London's East End thrown out last week in the general rush to vote against the Tories. The rising tempo of working-class activity and militancy should, according to the Communist Party scheme, have resulted in increased votes and representation for the party. On the contrary, the party's vote was derisory and it lost seats in other parts of the country as well as in East London.

## Better chance

The programme offered by the Communist Party both in general and local elections shows the party to be a slightly more left-wing version of Labour. For every council house Labour would build, the Communist Party offers two. Communists say they would build more schools, more hospitals, more roads, would cut the arms bill and help pensioners. But so does Labour. Voters looking for a change understandably feel that Labour has a better chance of winning national or local office and implementing their programme and therefore ignore the Communist Party candidates.

Of course, Labour does not carry out its promises. The arms bill grows, houses and schools decay, the pensioners are left to scrape along or die. There is a desperate need for change, but it will never be done by a party offering itself as a 'reformist' alternative to Labour.

Fighting elections can never be the main strategy of a genuine socialist party. Of course, in the struggle for a new society, a revolutionary movement will use parliament and local authorities to put forward its point of view and to prove that real power in capitalism is not held by MPs or councillors. But the main struggle must be to build a movement rooted in the working class and its struggles in industry, a movement that will provide unity in the battle with the employers and their state and that will argue for revolutionary politics and the need for total change through workers' power. It is the collective strength of the working class, not their individual votes in the ballot box, that will transform society and deal with the massive problems facing the majority of the population.

The Tories have been routed in the town halls. We outline suggestions on page one for action to force new Labour councils to carry out their pledges and to refuse to give in to the government, local big business or the landlords. That is important, but it is not a substitute for the main struggle: to build a mass socialist party that will pose as a meaningful alternative, not by offering slightly better reforms than Labour but the possibility of working people, by their own collective action, taking, transforming and moulding a truly democratic, planned society that meets the needs of us all instead of those of the profiteers.

## State firms: just as bad as industry in private hands

I MUST criticise the back page article Steel Sackings Boost Teesside Crisis (8 May). I support the programme for fighting redundancies but I would point out that it is an illusion to expect either a Tory government or even a Labour government to build factories nationalised under workers' control unless it is profitable.

You could have added a paragraph at the end, stating the International Socialists' policy—that only by establishing a socialist system of society through workers' councils can we get rid of the problems produced by capitalism.

This is illustrated by the fact that at the Basin Works of South West Gas in Exeter, a number of men will be made redundant this week because of the switch-over to natural gas.

This is in a nationalised industry and bears out my statement that none of the workers' problems can be solved under the capitalist system.—ARTHUR JOHNSON, Exeter, Devon.

## Police power

THE BOMBING of the home of employment minister Robert Carr in January sparked off what must be one of the most unusual investigations in the history of the special branch police.

Since he was appointed to head the investigation, Det. Superintendent Habershon has questioned several hundred people. In complete disregard of the law, he has taken many of them, by force, to Barnet police station and held them there against their will for several hours refusing them access to a lawyer.

This kind of activity is by no means unusual for our 'wonderful boys in blue', but to openly invade the precincts of Bow St Magistrates' Court and to drag off witnesses, much to the astonishment of judge, lawyers and public, is carrying police repression to a new stage.

I was one of the unfortunate four who were hauled off to Barnet that day. I was held for a total of seven hours, some of which were actually spent in a cell. Several requests for the use of a phone to contact a lawyer were refused.

I was separated from the other three girls and we were prevented from communicating with each other in any way. The police officers openly referred to me as 'the prisoner' and talked of 'the interrogation' that was to follow after our arrival at Barnet.

At no time was I asked if I would go to Barnet. We had committed no offence. I asked repeatedly to be allowed to leave or be charged. At one point I informed the police officer who was guarding me that I was leaving as the police have no authority to hold me against my will without charging me.

They had no qualms about physically restraining me. And yet, according to official police records, I was 'voluntarily helping them with their enquiries'!

Luckily we have found an ally in the National Council for Civil Liberties, which

## LETTERS

are welcomed by Socialist Worker. Please keep them short and post to arrive on Monday.

has agreed to take up the case. Proceedings are to be started against Habershon for unlawful imprisonment and assault.

I, for one, am not too hopeful about the outcome and entertain no illusions about the 'impartiality of the legal system'. Our number already looks like being reduced to three as one of us is an American citizen, whom the police are making desperate attempts to deport.

If you have been unlawfully detained by the police and questioned about the Carr bombing, please contact the NCCL at 01-485 9497. If this case is lost a new precedent will have been created which will put new powers into the hands of the police force and pave the way for even greater attacks on our rights.—SUSAN BRULEY, Tadworth, Surrey.

## Ban the Tories?

I HAVE no wish to debate the Communist Party forever in the letter column. I must, however, insist on a few points in reply to A Mills' defence of Digby Jacks.

1. When we first tried to ban the Tories from the use of Southampton Student Union facilities we were told we'd lose our independence. This means we can be independent—as long as we don't use our independence!

2. The same argument applies to the CP

## REACTIONARY STEREOTYPE OF WOMEN WORKERS

WE HAVE BEEN pleased to see the increasing coverage Socialist Worker has been giving to women workers and the women's liberation movement. However, your Strike Pay article in the 3 April issue represents a serious step backward. The writer of the article seems to think that all workers are men, and that women are all conservative housewives who will oppose their husbands striking if benefits are reduced.

You show no understanding of the fact that women make up a sizeable, militant sector of the British workforce who will fight as militantly as their husbands and brothers regardless of their responsibilities at home. And although many housewives may have the sort of conservative consciousness you anticipate (as do many men in the working class), you ignore the many instances of heroic sacrifices and militant struggles of women housewives throughout the world in support of their striking husbands.

One of the main tasks of revolutionaries is to fight for the liberation of women. Our job is not to reinforce the reactionary stereotypes of women which capitalist society would have us believe, as your writer does. We hope that this article does not represent a retreat from your developing support for women's liberation.—The New York City Women's Caucus, US International Socialists.

## Renault strikers shake France

by Richard Kirkwood

THE COMMENTATORS who congratulated themselves on the return of industrial calm in France are having to think again. The strikes and occupations by workers in the massive Renault car complex, traditionally seen by workers as the leader in militancy, are only the most significant of many other conflicts, such as at Moulinex, SEP of Bordeaux or Polymechanique, a large engineering works in the Paris suburbs.

In the last case the strike and occupation took place on the initiative of Force Ouvriere, normally the right-wing union but in this factory run by militant supporters of the revolutionary paper Lutte Ouvriere (Workers' Struggle) against the reluctance of the communist-run union, the CGT.

French unions are politically divided into three large national unions. The CGT is the biggest and traditionally the most militant but it consistently expels any known political opponents, particularly those of the revolutionary left who are forced to work in the next largest, the CFDT, or in FO. Many French workers are not union members although they support one union or the other.

At Renault the strikes and occupations took place against a general reluctance by

the CGT to move into any serious action. Despite the fact that the strike at the Le Mans components factory made it obvious from 30 April that lay-offs would follow in other factories, the unions ignored the appeals of workers to prepare for action until official notices were posted at the giant Billancourt factory on 4 May.

On that day, despite CGT silence, workers from revolutionary groups managed to call shop meetings to discuss the possible lock-out and in one case (Department 38) to vote for strike and occupation. On 5 May the CFDT and FO came out openly for a strike and there were a number of spontaneous walk-outs, especially on Seguin island, heart of the Billancourt complex.

## Mass meeting

Except for Department 77 which stayed out, the CGT succeeded in rushing its representatives round getting the workers back. But the mood of the workers, particularly in the traditionally militant assembly sections of Seguin island, and the firm line of the other unions forced the CGT to join in issuing a joint call for a mass meeting on the island for the next day.

On 6 May thousands of workers attended a meeting where the CGT unsuccessfully tried to use the loudspeakers to drown those shouting for an occupation. Eventually, they managed to get the workers to accept a ballot but agreed to one of the votes being for an unlimited strike and occupation.

This was confirmed by a mass meeting of 10,000 on 7 May and the occupation began that evening. The CGT immediately

acted to control the situation. There were no elected strike committees and banners and red flags were pulled down.

On Seguin island, where revolutionaries were active in setting up elected shop committees, a gang from the CGT, headed by Renault's senior union official, tried to create an 'incident' by preventing the making of posters, the sale of revolutionary papers and the formation of political discussion groups. The calm refusal of the majority of workers forced them to retreat.

In other factories the unions did rather better in limiting the workers' actions. At Cleon their tactics failed to prevent a strike, but did avoid an 'occupation' until the following Monday (10 May) and even then the technicians carried on working.

At Flins the factory was finally occupied—by managers and foremen, with the 'laid off' workers locked out! Here the CGT claimed that 'outside elements' had attacked workers who wished to go on working, the technicians that the CGT refused to mobilise. In fact it was the foremen who turned fire hoses on militant workers holding a meeting houtside.

At St Ouen the unions limited action to half-day token strikes, claiming that they had to wait for a mass movement to develop, after the massive Billancourt works had been occupied for two days.

Once again the militancy of French workers has forced the union leaders into action and the management's refusal to budge has kept them out. But we are not witnessing a repeat of May 1968 if only because the unions are determined to prevent it.

To break the grip of the union leaders will require the continued work of revolutionary socialists. But the current movement shows once again the readiness of French workers to enter into militant struggle.

and the National Union of Students. Jacks got elected, not as a militant fighter, but because he proved in the last few years that his winning wouldn't involve any real changes. Remember his promise of no 'revolutionary reforms' and his claim that his commitment to NUS came first and the Party second. So a CP member can be NUS president, provided he doesn't plan to upset the status quo. One cheer for Digby.

3. I criticised Jacks on his Southampton speech where he said that free speech shouldn't be denied to anyone, even Nazis. Any marxist knows that real free speech in capitalist society is impossible because in class society only some people have power. Lord Stokes and I are free to talk but he gets heard.

4. The argument about banning the Tories is a tactical question and must be argued as such. Maybe we were wrong. We think we were right because we raised questions among students and in society generally about free speech and what the Tories are doing to it with attacks on black people and industrial militants through the Immigration and Industrial Relations Bills.

5. If the Tories are going to attack union funds they will do it anyhow. We can prevent this, not by being good boys but by preparing students for the coming fight. Part of this we hoped would be our banning the Tories and spreading the issues and the ban around other colleges.

The best form of defence can be attack. However, the Tories have now succeeded in reversing the ban.

Finally if CP members or others think our action was tactically wrong they should argue their case. The paternalistic 'Look here, you silly boy' approach belongs to the reformist hacks and not to marxists. Which are you, Digby, or you Mr Mills?—J RAFTERY, Southampton.



# THE BIG CRACKDOWN AT FORD

## New get-tough policy is preparation for Tory anti-union laws

The Daily Mail recently planted a reporter in Vauxhall's at Luton to 'discover' what went on in the car industry. The Mail and the other Fleet Street papers are fond of clichés like 'industrial anarchy', 'wildcat strikers', 'wreckers' which are regularly paraded for the titillation of the City gent on his way to work. The truth is very different. The car industry is indeed prone to industrial conflict. To understand why it is necessary to look beyond the nonsense put out by Fleet Street. Socialist Worker asked Colin Beadle, a worker in the Assembly Plant at Ford, Dagenham for his views.

I work in the Dagenham Paint Trim and Assembly plant (PTA) of the Ford Motor Company. Two weeks ago I was working in the Body Plant. This fact illustrates one very important aspect of the car industry—the domination of the needs of production (as seen by management) over the wishes of the workforce.

The job I was doing simply dried up. Someone, somewhere decided that it was no longer required. There are a lot of jobs being 'rationalised' out of existence in Dagenham right now.

So, along with several other 'redundant' men, I was told to report to the Assembly Plant where vacancies existed. For one night's shift we refused to work and took the issue up with our stewards. But the following night I was given the one way option of either working in the Body group on a machine called the roundabout (which is a lousy job) or working in the PTA. So I work in the PTA.

I work on a two-shift system. Two weeks alternating. On days we start at 8am and finish at 4pm and on nights we start at 9.45pm and finish at 6.30pm. We are allowed an hour for lunch and 18 minutes relief time in the day. The rest of the time you are working.

The job itself is very mechanical. You do the work like a machine and after a while you tend to act like a machine. If, for instance, the job is changed slightly you find yourself unable to adjust to the change for quite a while.

### DOWNTURN

The conditions vary from plant to plant. In the Body Plant it is generally very noisy with quite a bit of metal floating around. In the assembly plant it is a bit quieter. My rate, at the moment, is 68p an hour.

Management has used the inevitable downturn in militancy after the strike to try and tilt the scales in their favour. Petty, irritating things are involved.

For instance, no one can approach the clock cards until two minutes before the hooter. Supervisors have been told to watch the clocks to ensure that this order is carried out.

More sinister things are also going on however. Many jobs are being discontinued. A labour surplus is being created.

Production is being stepped up at the same time. The dangers of working ourselves out of a job are too apparent.

### DEMORALISE

In Halewood these moves have been part of a more systematic campaign to demoralise the workers and isolate the stewards. So far they have failed but the outlines of a long-term campaign by the company to utilise the Industrial Relations Act (as it will soon be) to intimidate trade union activists can now be seen.

We have a 100 per cent union membership in Dagenham. Many workers tend to see the union as an insurance scheme and not as a workers' union where each member has a part to play.

Only a few members regularly attend branch meetings. But at the same time shop floor meetings have a very high attendance.

Issues raised on the shop floor are seen to be relevant. The steward is thought of as 'the union' by many people. It is not the case that people are apathetic but that the union structure is not in keeping with the times.



Ford's Dagenham plant: management are taking advantage of downturn in militancy

## HALEWOOD: MASS SACKINGS THREAT

by a Halewood Shop Steward

FORD's management at the Halewood, Liverpool, plant have tightened control since the end of the strike. The tougher attitude led to meetings last week between shop stewards and Industrial Relations Officers where the IROs spelt out the procedure for dealing with grievances.

Unless a worker immediately follows the supervisor's instructions, he will not be allowed to use the facilities of his shop steward. And if he refuses to obey an instruction he has 15 minutes to change his mind before he is suspended and 'escorted from the premises'.

The IROs said that suggestions had come from higher management that unless Halewood became 'efficient' (and by efficient, they mean absolute control by the supervisors) then the

More rank and file involvement is called for and it is the job of the stewards to lead the way forward on this issue. Democratic control of the union seems to me to be one of the policies which should be raised.

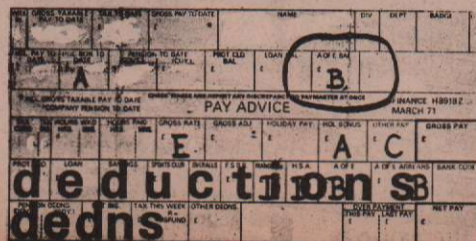
In fact, shop floor meetings in the Body Plant have passed resolutions calling for more rank and file representation on the National Joint Negotiating Committee.

This is a step in the right direction.

Some people are also calling for a national stewards meeting to hammer out a strategy for the next two years and I think this call should be really pushed for.

Politics are really being forced onto the shop floor now. It is necessary that we support the fight against the Bill. We should support any moves to nullify the effects of the Bill. No union should register.

In the final analysis it is up to



Wage slip: B is for 'attachment of earnings' plant would become a one-shift, one-car plant which would mean mass redundancies.

This has not yet been spelt out to the workers but by 'leaking' the news to the stewards, management have made sure that the message gets home to the shop floor. It was also pointed out to the stewards that this crack-down only applies to Halewood—and this is no coincidence

as Halewood was the first plant out on strike and the last plant back.

The only way to combat the employers' offensive is by solidarity and unity and more participation by the workers in decisions affecting their livelihood. Shop stewards must be backed by every section in any action they take.

Ford have lost no time in preparing the labour force for the Industrial Relations Bill becoming law. Workers received a new-style pay slip last week with a new section called 'attachment of earnings'. A covering note explained that this section referred to money stopped because of a court order.

It could refer to maintenance orders, but it could also be a preparation for deducting fines imposed by an industrial court or tribunal once the Bill becomes law.

the activist on the shop floor to lead the fight back. After the no-strike deal done by Bros. Scanlon and Jones with the company we should have no illusions about these people.

Of course they are better than Carron and Cooper, but that doesn't make them substitutes for the rank and file's own activity.

The anti-immigrant Bill is also very important. There are many

black workers in Ford and the threat to them by the Bill must be taken up by all of us. The tactics of divide and rule have got to be fought.

At the end of the road it is clear that what we want is a real working class party to lead the fight back on all these issues and start the campaign for a socialist society.

## CLEAN ROUND THE BEND...

MERSEYSIDE CONSUMERS, always given a raw deal by their local morning and evening newspapers, have been sold short again by the Liverpool Echo.

The Consumer Council was about to be axed when Echo feature writers John Perkins and Moya Jones noticed some anomalies in supermarket special offers.

They found, for example, that five similar tins of Ajax cleanser were fetching ludicrously different prices at shops within a few hundred yards of each other. Further investigations revealed that many more 'bargains'—on goods ranging from tea to toothpaste—were phoney.

With the demise of the Consumer Council just around the corner, they thought this would be an apt time to probe the price fiddles on behalf of the many thousands of shoppers who dutifully buy the Echo every day.

An admirable plan, indeed. But the would-be watchdogs failed to appreciate that the Echo loves shops... and hates shoppers. Given the choice between the stores and the consumer, the Echo will always plump for the stores.

The reason? Simply that the stores buy plenty of advertising space in the Echo—the five biggest spend upwards of £70,000 a year each. The fact that the

shoppers are also the readers who fork out over £10,000 a day for their copies of the Echo just doesn't count.

John Perkins and Moya Jones spent some considerable time searching for examples of special offers that weren't. They found plenty.

Tins of Ajax which weighed exactly the same—1lb 2oz—cost different prices in different shops. Identical tins marked at 2d off cost 1s 1d and 1s 5d. Tins each costing 1s 1d were marked at 2d off and 3d off. And a tin marked '1/4lb free' in fact contained no more powder than the other tins and cost 1s 5d.

The writers unearthed more misleading offers on Vim, Fairy Snow, Persil, Omo, various unnamed brands of soap and toothpaste and Typhoo and PG Tips tea.

When they wrote up their copy, they took the line any conscientious journalist would have taken. They said the shopper was faced with a deliberate prices jungle, which she could never hope to hack her own way through.

They attacked manufacturers and stores for not displaying the recommended retail prices on which the so-called bargains were allegedly based. And they made a strong case for a simplification of the special offer system.



Ajaxed: phony 'special offer' picture was dropped by the Echo

When they'd finished, their copy was a fair and accurate indictment of the way stores fleece the innocent housewife. They needn't have bothered. They should have known how Echo editorial executives and management would take it.

The story had to be rewritten to pander to the advertisers. After a long struggle with a reluctant Moya Jones and John Perkins, the introduction was re-angled in such a way as to take the heat off the stores.

The re-styled intro, as it appeared in the Echo, read: 'Everywhere the housewife turns today she is faced with bargains and special offers. For the woman who has the time to shop around, the bargain offers can ease the strain on the family budget.'

'But one of the big difficulties for the shopper these days is deciding which, precisely, are the better bargains when

faced with a situation where manufacturers are pushing hard for her business...'

And so the intro dragged on—equivocal, spineless, boring. The original graphic pictures of the five fiddled Ajax tins was dropped.

Of all the ridiculous headings to choose, the final version picked on was an enormous GOOD BUYS, followed by a second heading reading: 'But how can you tell the best?'

The features editor, acting on orders of the Echo editor, with management pulling the strings, had succeeded in taking all the guts out of the story.

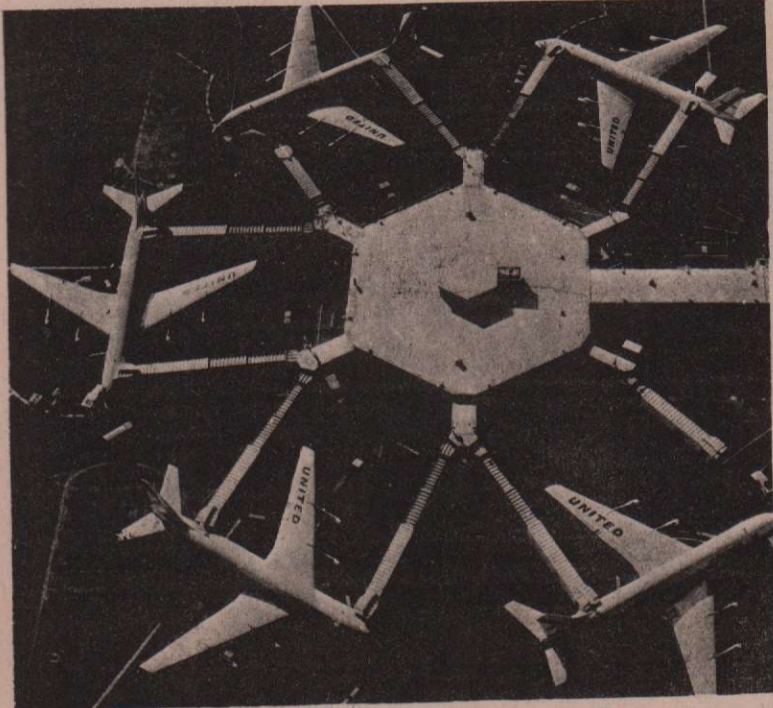
Once more, the Echo had cheated the shopper and the advertiser had triumphed.

Reprinted from Pak-o-Lies, a paper produced by the Liverpool Free Communications Group. Copies 2½p from FCG 32 Aigburth Drive, Liverpool 17



a special report by Laurie Flynn

# WASTE



IN 1961 a £300,000 contract was placed with John Mowlem for renovating Number 10 Downing Street. The job was finished in 1965 and by the time it came to settling up the bill for the work, John Mowlem extracted nearly £3 million for the pleasure of doing it.

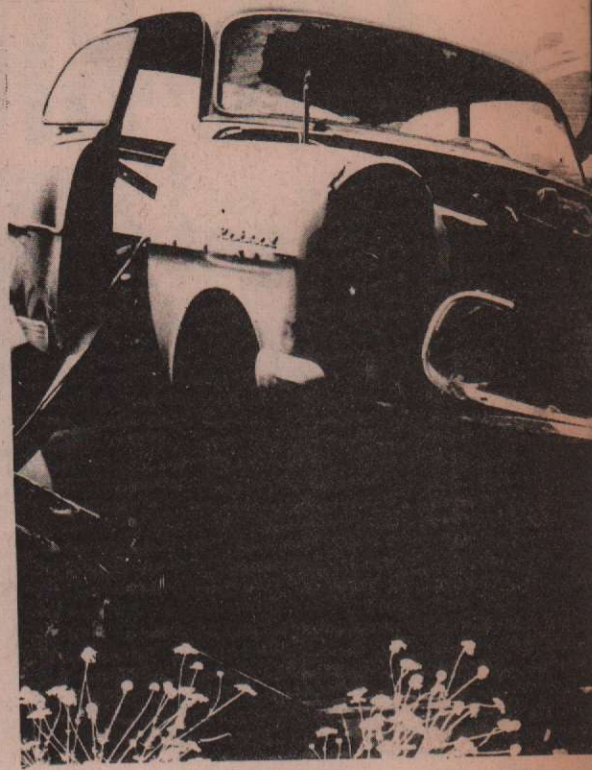
Strangely enough, this 600 per cent leap in costs was not due to the massive wages of the 50 or so building workers on the job. (They didn't get massive wages.) Nor was it due to inflation.

It was due to deliberate and flagrant waste. Gangs of men were regularly employed to build a wall, then knock it down to build another wall, and demolish it in turn. It was the same with the ceilings. No newspaper has ever printed this story.

A special government commission into the construction costs of the new La Villette slaughterhouse outside Paris reported in August last year that it should not have cost more than £13 million. At that time £75 million had been spent, with at least another £5 million to be paid out. The commission stated that the new slaughterhouse was quite useless and recommended that it be pulled down.

These are but two examples of a fundamental feature of our society, which quite systematically wastes our efforts, our resources and our lives, condemning the vast majority of the world's population to squalor at the same time as it pours resources into arms, useless aeroplanes and expensive slaughterhouses that should be demolished.

A vicious meanness goes hand in hand with this opulent contempt for those who produce the means of life. Only last week a report was published which showed that few women claimed supplementary welfare benefits under the 'co-habitation rule'. This means our society employs people to snoop on single women with children to support, to see if men live with them and love their children and who have earnings that should be taken into account when the Social Security calculates allowances.



## The motor car: dead and in the countryside, alive and it snarls on road and pollutes the atmosphere

stated last week. The pattern is repeated all over the country.

But the most flagrant instances of waste exist in the key car industry. On Tuesday last week, Ralph Nader, a young American lawyer and consumer watchdog, publicly accused the US motor industry of 'criminal fraud' in deliberately designing cars so that they suffered extensive damage in minor accidents.

At home the worst example of car-plant chaos was the preparation for the new Ford Cortina through the summer and autumn of last year.

Initially Ford of America had decided that the Cologne and Dagenham plants should produce similar models for the new launch. This was done to make certain parts interchangeable and to speed up metrication on Dagenham plant and equipment.

But Ford marketing men became concerned that if there was only one model and it did not sell, losses would be more than usually damaging. Accordingly, it was decided to replan the whole process and produce two different cars.

due to the enormity of the car makers' costs.

The vast quantities squandered on road building to feed car makers have been pointed by US and British car entering the rush hour, an £10,000 is necessary parking space, accommodation of City Pl charges (interest-free work out to a £1 car every day.

Perhaps the best false priorities of public building: 'Efficiency' and 'che Labour government limits' for housing schools.

In the drive for costs, architects forced to make Mr E Hollamby, of London Borough what these really radio programme.

The central heating school and its isolation valves and the janitor wanted during the school place had to be he - which cost around have allowed the on its own, producing savings in electricity.

## Che

Mr Hollamby: dozens of similar flats were balconied, he argued, things would be balconies paid for years in maintenance painting, windowing easier and che It was, argued Lambeth, a quite The 'cheap' houses within 10 years. But the most British industry: the power generation recent vicious battles on the pay-off flow from a massive investment and problems in comm

## WHAT WE STAND FOR



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

out the world.

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

We fight:

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

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

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

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

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

For equal pay and a better deal for young workers.

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

Against unemployment, redundancy and lay offs. We support the

demand: Five days' work or five days' pay.

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

Against racism and police victimisation of black workers.

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

For real social, economic and political equality for women.

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

Against secret diplomacy.

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

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

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

The struggle for socialism is the central struggle of our time. Workers' power and a world based on human solidarity, on the increasing of 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.

More than a century ago Karl Marx wrote: 'The philosophers have merely interpreted the world. The point is to change it.' If you want to help us change the world and build socialism, join us.

Between September 1968 and February 1969, £1900 was spent in clerks' wages alone in Manchester to check for fraudulent claims for free health service prescriptions. 6600 forms were checked, 43 cases were found to be 'fraudulent' and £8 was recovered for the taxpayer.

This spirit haunts every nook and cranny of your lives. The current 'redundancies' in the steel industry flow directly from the splendid incompetence of the British steelmasters since the war.

At Ravenscraig in Scotland, Colvilles laid down spanning new furnaces in 1957. They were the last open hearth furnaces to be installed anywhere in the world and were quite useless.

## Shambles

Colvilles were also planning to introduce a new universal beam mill for sizing down steel. This too would have been the last of its kind.

This was the kind of shambles which caused steel to be nationalised. Public money was thrown down the drain by the million to buy out decades of misplaced investment, planned from the sunny beaches of the Bahamas.

The state bought the industry at 22 times earnings, 'a price Lord Melchett (BSC chief) as banker would never have advised a client to pay', said the Sunday Times.

And the new nationalised outfit strolls along much the same except in its ruthless attitude to productivity deals and redundancies. It spends £13 million a year in advertising, utterly mad since it is the sole producer of the kind of steel it advertises.

£260,000 was set aside for Lord Melchett's personal Handley Page aircraft. Since that outfit went broke, a more costly replacement has been ordered from the USA.

## Madness

The first new offices for the BSC were to be in Baker Street in London. All sorts of alterations were made and a lease was taken out.

Before they ever moved in, Lord Melchett took a whim for a better class of offices and the BSC went elsewhere. The Guardian estimated that at least £750,000 had been wasted in rent and repairs on those Baker Street offices that were abandoned.

An even more colossal waste of resources affects the National Coal Board. Only last week, NCB engineers started preparing for coal on the site of a pit they had closed last year.

The New Wandsworth Colliery, at Rayston, near Barnesley, provided work for half the adult male population in the village until it was closed in December 1966. Around £10 million had been spent on modernising the pit immediately prior to closing it.

At Cwm Colliery, Newtown Llan-twit, there are enough supervisors to run another pit, its lodge secretary



Melchett: £230,000 wasted on rent

As a result the whole Dagenham production process for the new Cortina had to be replanned. This was done in such a rush that the metrication programme got into an utter shambles and parts simply would not marry up, since they had been incorrectly reconverted.

In some cases the car bodies would not fit on to the assembled chassis. This story was given to The Times by a prominent engineering journalist before Christmas, but the newspaper hushed it up as it was quite clear that Ford management intended to provoke strikes to cover up their biggest and most expensive balls-up in 50 years of car making.

Last week a design engineer from Reliant told Socialist Worker of the real problems that lie at the base of British Leyland's offensive to reduce labour costs. The Mini assembly line, was, he said, so badly planned that it was impossible to produce cars within the budgets laid down when Mini production was implemented.

Disorganising the internal chaos of the car factory, there is the whole question of transportation. The engineering journalist Patrick Kinnersley has established beyond all doubt that the car is the most inefficient, wasteful and dangerous form of mass transportation.

He has shown that free public transport is both cheaper and more efficient than the madness of the motorways. Mr Kinnersley has also uncovered new solutions to transportation which are left-quite deliberately-undeveloped,

### THERE ARE 15 BRANCHES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

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

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

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

**NORTH WEST**  
Lancaster/Manchester/Oldham  
Bolton/Merseyside/St Helens/Wigan

Potteries

**MIDLANDS**  
Birmingham/Coventry/Lesamington/  
Leicester/Oxford/Northingham/  
Northampton/Reading/Telford

**WALES and SOUTH WEST**  
Bath/Bristol/Cardiff/Exeter/  
Gloucester/Mid-Devon/Plymouth/  
Swansea

**SOUTH**  
Ashford/Brighton/Canterbury/  
Crawley/Folkestone/Guildford/  
Portsmouth/Southampton

**EAST**  
Barnstaple/Canterbury/Herford/Leamington/  
Lowestoft/Norwich/Colchester

**GREATER LONDON and HOME COUNTIES**  
Acton/Batchley/Camden/Chertsey/  
Croydon/Dagenham/Enfield/Erith/  
Fulham/Greenford/Harrow/Harrow/  
Hemel Hempstead/Horsham/Ilford/  
Kilburn/Kingston/Lambeth/  
Lewisham/Weston/Newham/Notting Hill/Reading/Richmond/Slade Newington/Slough/South Ealing/Tottenham/Walthamstow/Wandsworth/Watford/Victoria

I would like more information about the International Socialists

Name . . . . .

Address . . . . .

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

## Millions spent on weap



# PROFITS OR DEATH: THE NEW TORY 'CHOICE'



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Nicholson has shown that not one of them could be justified from the point of view of economic sanity.

The chaos is complicated by competing systems of power. Unquestionably a sane society would select one and one method only for the generation of power, in all probability electricity. This would reduce the fantastic resources spent on ferrying all sorts of competing alternatives up and down the country and across the globe.

The technology exists to heat every home adequately, and to do it with fantastic savings. Cables already laid down could be supercooled and the loads increased ten fold to supply the community with power

There would be no need for electricity meters, far less the vast bureaucracy needed to keep accounts and cut off those who cannot afford to pay.

The vast bureaucracies like the income tax authorities and the gigantic insurance companies too are an utter waste of human resources. All a socialist society would do if someone's house caught fire is provide another one. The Prudential Insurance company could be closed down and thousands upon thousands of human beings liberated from their irrelevant jobs.

The potential is so vast that it is almost unbelievable. The alternative that our current society offers combines

starvation for the vast majority of the world's population with grants to American farmers not to grow wheat, to Kent orchard owners to bury their apples, to the UK milk marketing board to pump millions of gallons of milk down disused Cornish tin mines, to maim and kill those who work and to leave millions on the dole.

## Starve

In Britain today one million workers are employed to produce the weapons of destruction, at a cost of over £2000 million a year while free school milk and kids dinners are axed and pensioners left to starve.

Waste is a main mechanism of this so-called society. It is not just an accident though some of its more lethal side effects may seem to be, like the wholesale destruction of the human race as one possible product of the arms race.

Consider the fate of the children of Belfast and the valleys of South Wales where waste in the water supply causes spinal paralysis and prevents them from walking the road to freedom.

Consider your own fate, the crippled and stunted lives we are all forced to live. Unnecessarily. And consider that there are solutions.

FRANK POVEY was about 75 years old. He was ill when he arrived at the Salvation Army Hostel in Bristol. He had an ulcer in his right side that was open and running.

He was ill for seven weeks. During that time, he lay on his bed, fouling himself and tearing at his side until the ribs showed through the wound. Captain Pocock of the Salvation Army called a doctor.

The first one refused to come point blank. So did another. Others just didn't turn up. After seven weeks, Frank Povey died.

To certify his death, the police surgeon was called. His comment was: 'There's no point in moving the body. It's like a morgue here anyway.'

One of the other people living in the hostel told us that when the undertaker came, Frank was so wasted away (he now weighed less than six stone) that the undertaker picked him up, by his wrists and ankles, in one hand. Frank went out like a sack of potatoes.

When Socialist Worker reporters went down to the hostel, Captain Pocock showed them another case. James Newton, 70, had an open ulcer on his leg. It was three inches across. Some time before a doctor had been treating him but the doctor died. Since then, he has been repeatedly refused attention.

## CRAWL

Cases like this were all too common. Another instance was of an old man who sold newspapers until his sight went. His sight was so bad in the end that the only way he could cross roads was to crawl on hands and knees.

Finally, with the onset of terminal dementia, he was found by the police crawling in the middle of the road. They picked him up, carried him to the pavement, and drove off. He was admitted to hospital only when he was finally involved in a traffic accident.

What is tragic in these cases, is that men such as Captain Pocock can give up their whole lives to trying to make life just fractionally bearable for men such as Frank Newton. But because the Salvation Army is run as a charity, because the men involved are the ones society has thrown off as useless, their efforts are bound to fail.

If you can't make a profit for the employers, you might as well die. Being human is defined in terms of being able to work.

A kind of institutional callousness runs through the Health Service and the Social Services. Doctors refuse to see patients from hostels. Ambulancemen won't pick them up from there, except under dire pressure.

If they are released from hospital, they are dumped back on the steps of the place. It is not the fault of the individual doctors or ambulance men.



'It's like a morgue in here'—Bristol's Salvation Army hostel



The ulcer on James Newton's leg: attention had been refused

It is the whole sordid system that discards these men that is to blame.

Nor is it only old men on the tramp who end up in the hostel. Young men, particularly unskilled labourers who are out of work, are often compelled to look for a bed in these places. With unemployment going up, their numbers are swelling. This particular hostel has 142 beds, and is nearly full all the time.

But the Tories' system of slashing back the social services is forcing more and more of these men to go on the tramp. The vicious four week rule for unemployed men makes them move from town to town.

This rule was explained in a letter to the Bristol and Bath Claimants' and Unemployed Workers' Union: 'In the case of a fit man who is single, unskilled and under age 45, in areas where it has been agreed with the Department of Employment that work is available of an unskilled nature, his claim is given special consideration.'

## AVAILABLE

'Instead of being given an allowance of unlimited duration he is at the outset given one for four weeks only and is told that he should be able to find work within four weeks and will be expected to do so, and that further benefit after that period may be refused. If at the end of four weeks the man is still out of work and suitable work is no longer available and he can show that he remains unemployed through no fault of his own, the allowance may be continued.'

'If suitable work is available, the allowance ceases and the man is told he can, if he wishes, appeal against the cessation of the allowance to the independent Appeal Tribunal.'

There are several points that should be made about this.

1. It is the Department of Health and Social Security who define what 'suitable work' is. It can include a job paying only £10 a week—that does not matter. It can include a job with terrible conditions—that does not matter.

2. Some employers will refuse to give an applicant a letter proving that he has been looking for work. If you are not really aggressive and pushing with the officials, this can result in your allowance being stopped.

3. Besides this, in 1968, Mrs Judith Hart, then Minister for the Social Services, specifically stated that this rule would not apply in areas or periods of high unemployment. What is 814,000 nationally but high unemployment? What is 8097 locally but high unemployment?

One of its worst effects is the way the four-week rule drives men onto the roads. Because many of them are inadequate, and need special help and care, they will not go and argue with employment officials.

And so more and more unskilled men are being forced to move from town to town every four weeks. The Tories are creating a small army of unemployed men on the tramp, men they have written off because they are no longer profitable.

There is a lot that trade unionists can do to help. Already in Bristol, it looks as if protests from the Trades Council have got the four-week rule lifted. And a scandal in the local press has brought sympathetic cooings from the Health Service, which means that probably for a short time there will be some help for the men in the hostels.

## NAGGING

But more can be done. The Appeals Tribunals are not independent. A survey published on 6 May showed that only 30 per cent of people who went to the tribunals thought them fair.

Women were reduced to tears by nagging officials. No help or information was provided beforehand. It is vital that Trades Councils put fighting representatives onto these bodies, to look after the interests of ordinary people, against the official callousness.

And locally and nationally, a fight must be put up against unemployment and its demoralising effects. A complete ban on all productivity bargaining would be a sign that trade union leaders are serious in opposing unemployment.

Frank Povey was a very insignificant little man, but he was human. But he wasn't profitable. So long as capitalism survives, and his type aren't profitable, he'll be left to die.

Story and pictures by

MARTIN BARKER

ons while world starves



‘We want a structure so that whether Les Cannon, Frank Foulkes or Lord Citrine is at the top, rank and file policies will prevail’

# ELECTRICIANS: THE FIGHT FOR UNION CONTROL BY THE MEMBERS

WHAT are the problems facing militants in the electricians' union since Les Cannon and Frank Chapple took office as General President and General Secretary 10 years ago?

We've seen two major developments in the union. One is the setting up of a centralised bureaucracy determined to destroy any democratic rights the rank and file may have had. The executive will try to crush any independent rank and file activity—what they call 'unofficial' and 'unconstitutional' action.

We've seen the gradual removal of all rank and file control such as the appeals committee elected by the members, the area committees and the election of local and national officers. On the other hand, we've seen the growth of a rank and file movement determined to overcome the control of the present executive. The members around the paper Flashlight are determined to bring about clear democratic changes in the EETU.

Does the death of Cannon change the situation?

Les Cannon was one of the cornerstones on which the present executive built its policies. In fact, they weren't executive policies so much as Cannon's policies. Cannon, an ex-militant and former Communist Party member, was determined to smash any rank and file participation in the affairs of the union.

But the Left believe we are fighting against policies, not a man. We've seen both with Cannon and Byrne and, to a certain extent, with Foulkes and Haxel—the Communist Party leaders ousted by the High Court in 1961 for ballot rigging—the mistake of placing the rank and file's faith in the hands of the leaders.

## APATHY

We want to build a structure in which the members will be involved in the decision making so that no matter whether we have Les Cannon, Frank Foulkes or Lord Citrine at the top, rank and file policies will prevail.

How successful was the Left in the recent executive elections?

The Flashlight candidates were not able to prove that the members are yet fully prepared to remove the present leadership. But this was the first time a national movement against the leadership was set up. There were six Flashlight candidates who polled 45 per cent of the votes cast.

They did well, but talking to the members in the branches and shops, there is still a lot of work to be done. The voting returns, in which 10 per cent of the members took part, reflect the amount of apathy which the present leaders have created and encouraged. They feel that if you have a dormant union, they can do as they like.

But the Left understand that an apathetic union means a bad union and our task is to build a union in which the lads on the shop floor and the sites get the support they deserve.

The present executive do not support many members in struggle. In fact, we've seen them expel many leading EETU members in the last few years.

## ILLEGAL

In the Braithwaite court case, a High Court judge ruled that 30 to 40 members had been expelled illegally against union rules and Cannon, although disgusted with the decision, had to take them back. Taking their own union leaders to court is always something trade unionists want to avoid, but the leaders frequently act against the rules.

A High Court judge ruled recently that because Chapple introduced an attack on the Left in the election addresses of all the candidates for the executive, the elections ought to be re-run. He left it up to the union to decide when these elections were to be held again. The active members are eagerly waiting for them to be re-run.

We were waiting also for our bi-annual rules revision conference this May or June, but we've heard recently that the executive have moved this back to October and the presidential election back for a further 12 months—after first agreeing that nominations would take place during the last week of June.

This decision has resulted in the High Court action in which Mark Young is challenging Chapple's and the executive's decision.

Many members believe firmly that Chapple is trying to do away with the executive re-elections no matter what the court ruling. We also think that he wants to abolish the General President's office and make himself sole administrator of the union, with two appointed officials as assistant general secretaries, one from the

## An EETU member talks to Sabby Sagall

plumbers' section and one from the electricians' section.

What problems does Flashlight face in trying to mobilise the members against the right wing leadership?

We face difficulties in organising in all the industries covered by the EETU—the power industry, contracting, engineering and so on. But slowly and surely we're overcoming the problems created by the size and scope of the union. Flashlight's support is growing daily. Having read our paper, and seen what we stand for, more and more members are flocking to support us.

What problems do you face in attempt-

ing to transform the union into an organisation that links the political struggle to the trade union struggle?

We've got a tremendous history of militant action in the EETU and it's been disheartening, to say the least, to see the complete abdication by the present executive of any struggle against the Industrial Relations Bill.

## BACKGROUND

This is the most crucial issue facing trade unionists today and the EETU has deliberately remained in the background in this fight. The attitude of the executive, as Cannon put it in the Sunday Times shortly

before he died, is that 'this Bill would not in any way hinder the trade union movement.'

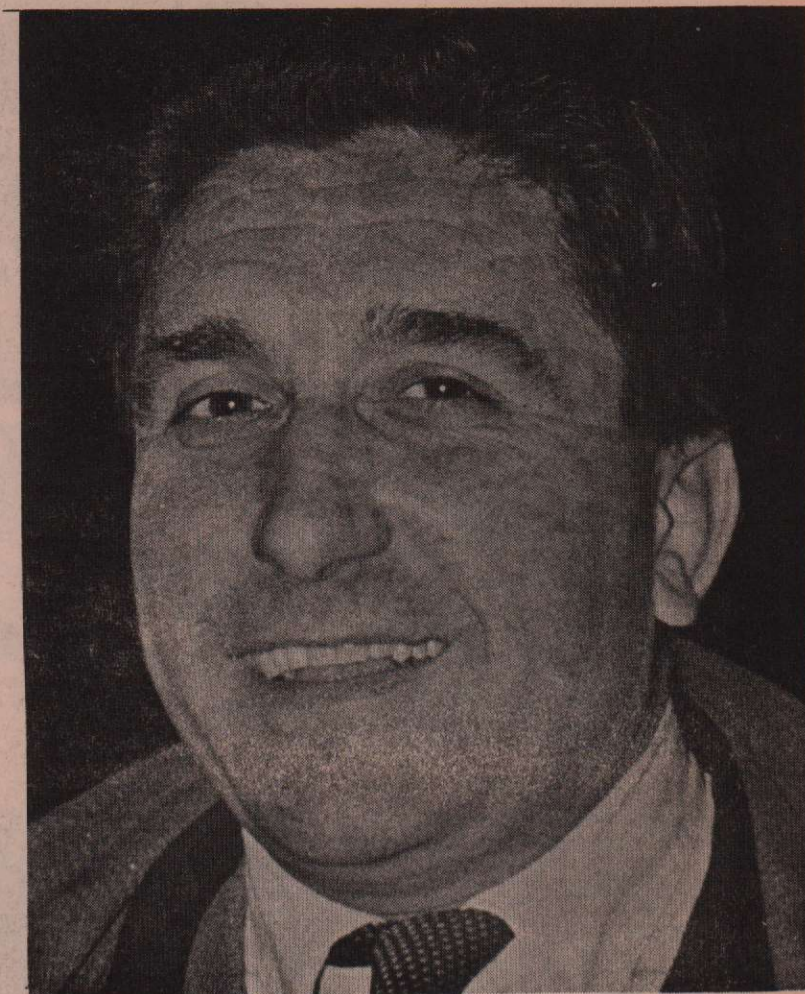
We can see why they take this view by looking back to the kind of agreement that was signed in the contracting industry two years ago without any consultation with the members. This was the notorious Joint Industry Board agreement where an employer has the right to fine an electrician up to £100 and to remove his union card, which stops him working.

The executive has not joined the fight against the Bill because it will strengthen right-wing trade union leaders. It will discipline their members for them.

The fight for change must go on. In the election in early June for the post of General Secretary, the members should support the Left-wing candidate, Fred Gore, against Frank Chapple. This would help to bring about democratic change and to make the EETU the kind of progressive union the rank and file needs.

Fred Gore is a well-known militant who would fight for democratic rank and file control of the union.

The EETU member in this interview has to remain anonymous because of the threat of fines and expulsion against members critical of the present leadership.



FRANK CHAPPLE: get rid of the president?



## Ideas in society

by Duncan Hill

'YOU CAN'T CHANGE human nature.' It is a very common idea and a very old one. 'Can the leopard change his spots or the Ethiopian his skin?' asked the bible writer and his answer was, 'There is no new thing under the sun.' No real change in society is possible because 'human nature' is such that there have to be bosses who decide and workers who obey.

Older Conservative-voting working men and women will sometimes tell you that 'they'—the Tories—are 'bred to rule'. They don't presumably have a mental picture of upper class men and women being examined by experts on breeding for physical and mental qualities and then carefully mated like mares and stallions to produce the best bloodstock. Still, somehow, or other, superior types are produced. 'Breeding tells', as they say.

As to the rest of us, because we are stupid, greedy, selfish and short-sighted, we are not really capable of running society in a democratic, collective fashion.

But surely nowadays most people don't believe in such rubbish? As a matter of fact, the accredited experts in these matters, the sociologists, preach a very similar doctrine to that of the priests they have replaced as learned spokesmen for the ruling classes.

There are 'elites'—them—and masses—us. The elites will inevitably always rule. Political change can indeed take place because there is competition between rival groups of elites and one lot, the 'outs', can sometimes turn the tables on the 'ins'. This is why there are sometimes revolutions and why a parliamentary system of government can work. Two or more groups of elites compete for votes and power in what is called a 'pluralist society'.

But come change of government or come revolution, ordinary working people never have and never can abolish classes and class rule. The best you can expect is a new lot of rulers. Look at Russia. Doesn't that prove it? It's human nature.

Of course, socialists reject all these arguments. If they didn't they wouldn't be socialists. Socialism means a society run by working people for working people on the basis of common ownership and democratic control. Why do we think this is possible and therefore that the 'human nature' argument is rubbish?

An English lord born in the 13th century was a radically different kind of man to a 20th century English capitalist just as the earth was very different from modern times. It is not

## Does human nature stop us changing the world?

just a question of beliefs—obviously they were different—but of their whole outlook and behaviour, of their 'nature' in short.

The baron was 'irrational' by modern capitalist standards. He despised trade and work, loved violence for its own sake and had all sorts of odd notions about 'honour' and was grossly superstitious to boot. He was quite capable of leaving his lands and family to fight 'infidels' in the Holy Land when any rational assessment of the chances showed that he would do better to stay at home and improve his estate.

Some will say that these differences are only on the surface. The underlying elements of greed, jealousy and fear are always there. What changes is the form they take. There is something in this argument. Nearly 2000 years ago St Paul wrote: 'The love of money is the root of all evil' and the saying still strikes a chord today. Nonetheless this argument too is misleading. To see why we have to look at a wider range of different societies.

## Important truth

'Man's nature,' wrote Robert Owen, is made for him, not by him'. It is a one-sided statement but it points to a very important truth. We are, in large part, what the society we grow up in makes us. Robinson Crusoe was not just any man cast away on a desert island. He was an 18th century lower middle-class Englishman with all the prejudices, knowledge and limitations proper to his time, class and country. Man Friday was a quite different kind of man, had a different sort of 'human nature' because he was brought up in a quite different kind of society.

There have been human beings and hence human societies for around a million years. There have been class societies, with rulers who do not labour and ruled who do, for five to six thousand years at most. Some primitive classless societies survived until modern times. By looking at what travellers and anthropologists found out about

these 'primitive survivals' we get some idea of the extraordinary range of possible 'human nature'.

Take sex for example. That men are more or less dominant over women and that jealousy is fundamental to sex relations for both sexes is, in varying degrees, common to all class societies. So too is the repression of 'incest'—sexual relations between members of the same family. They appear to be a part of 'human nature' if anything is and they rest, moreover, on actual inherited physical differences. Yet actually none of these things apply to all societies and therefore, whatever causes them, it cannot be an 'unchangeable human nature'.

There is not in fact a universal horror of incest,' writes a modern anthropologist R Fox (Kinship and Marriage) 'and many societies do not have penalties for it.' Nor is jealousy universal. Among the Nayar people of Malabar in South West India, a 'polyandrous' system obtained until well into the present century. Women were the heads of households and lived with their mothers and grandmothers. A woman normally had several husbands. 'These men,' writes Fox, 'had visiting rights with their wives and if one of the men on visiting found another's spear or shield outside the house, then he would go away and try again the next night.'

This system had worked without friction for many centuries. Children took their names from the mother as in other 'matrilineal' societies, and personal property was inherited in the female line. Landownership was in the hands of the matrilineal clan. There was no individual property in land, the basic means of production in this peasant society and, hence, no social classes.

This is merely one example of a stable society which seems highly 'unnatural' by modern capitalist standards. In fact, 'human nature' is very plastic and not at all unchanging. It changes as societies change. How and why this happens is another question, but that it does happen and that in changing society, men change themselves are indisputable facts.



NOW THERE! NOW THERE! NOW THERE! NOW THERE! NOW THERE! NOW THERE! NOW THERE! NOW THERE! NOW THERE! NOW THERE! NOW THERE! NOW THERE! NOW THERE!



# Icy waste of time...

SOMETIME in the near future, Mexico is in the throes of revolution. American imperialism has predictably intervened and the US itself has, in the course of combatting growing opposition to the war and civil strife within its own borders, become fascist.

This is the premise of ICE, which has the unenviable task of following The Battle of Algiers at the Other Cinema, Kings Cross.

The film centres around urban revolutionaries preparing for a spring offensive. The revolutionary leadership consists of hippies, women's lib, students and a vicar. Blacks, Spanish-speaking peoples and in fact the whole working class are referred to occasionally in passing but are never seen to take part in any of the proceedings.

## Curious

This is hardly surprising given the behaviour of the people who do take part. Workers, black or white, are very unlikely to join with people who behave as strangely as the ICE revolutionaries. They talk to stone walls, converse with one another in a peculiar language, round up residents in blocks of flats at gunpoint to listen to their boring lectures and watch their curious propaganda films.

They hide their guns in buckets of pottery clay and generally act as if they had wandered into the revolutionary headquarters looking for a deal and had to take part in the revolutionary scene before they got their pot.

The fact that this is the only film about urban revolutionaries in modern America doesn't stop it being the worst. Running for two hours 20 minutes, it cannot be blamed on a shoestring budget. Nor can the use of non-actors be blamed for the unconvincing vague, at times, incomprehensible conversations and activities that go on.

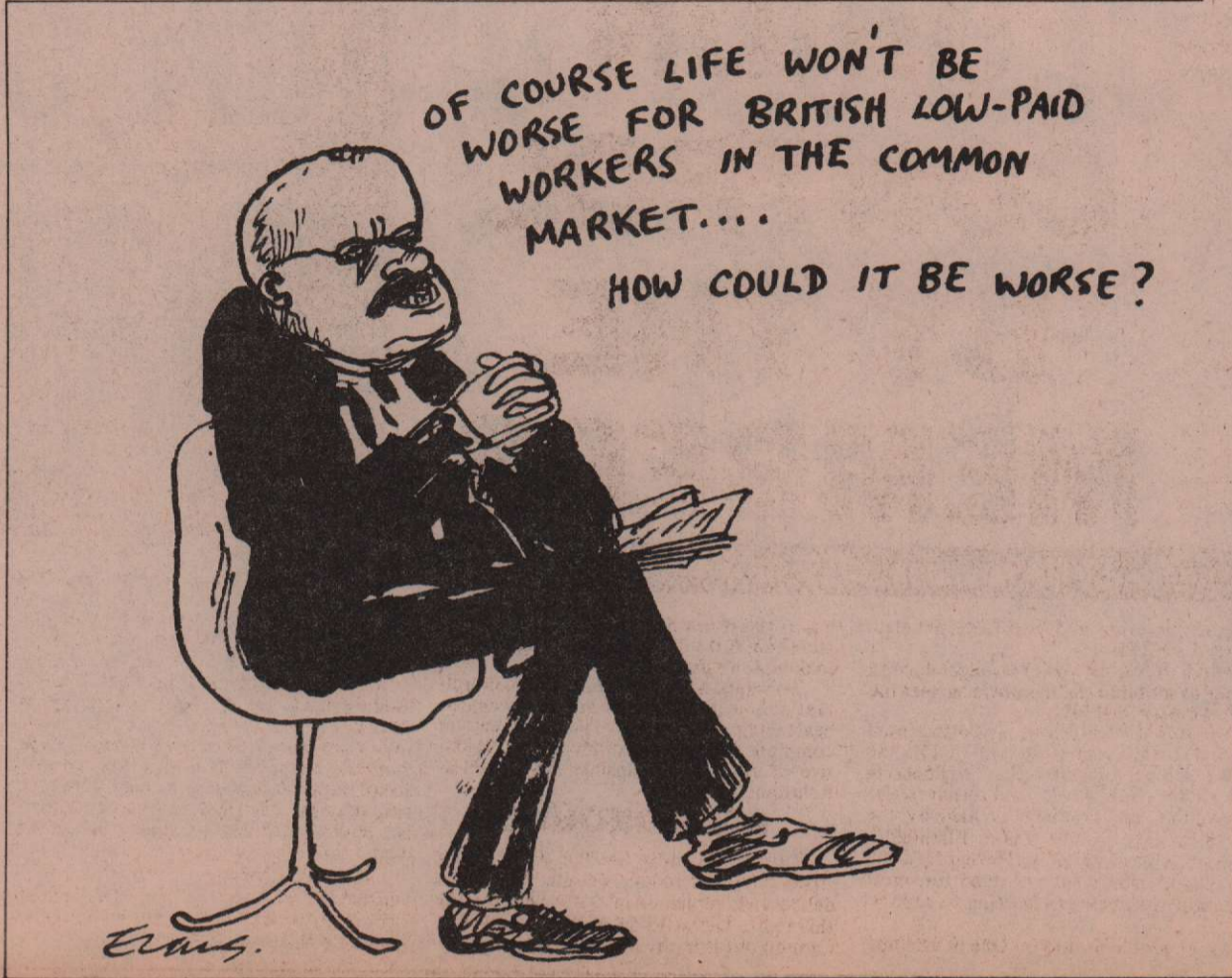
## Survived

One gets the feeling the people who do take part only see films that use non-actors and couldn't muster a passable Humphrey Bogart impersonation between them.

One leading revolutionary who has just survived a gun battle with the security police where his girl companion is shot through the lungs, is asked why he is 'so uptight'. Both comrades in this scene behave as if the hero had lost his afro-wig at the dry cleaners.

The only thing that kept most people to the boring end was the hope that the title was a reference to the marvellous scene in Eisenstein's Alexander Nevsky and that the Ice would open up to engulf the entire cast in the cold waters of Lake Superior to the resounding applause of the predominantly socialist audience. **Ross Pritchard**

The French revolutionary paper Lutte Ouvriere has full reports and pictures of the Renault strike. Issues 141 and 142 are available at 10p each from IS Books, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN. A year's subscription is £2.50.



# COTTONS COLUMN

WHILE Watney's shout about the Red Revolution in beer, there has been a quiet blue counter-revolution at one working-class drinking establishment, namely Ruxley Towers, grand headquarters of the General and Municipal Workers' Union at Esher in the heart of the Surrey stockbroker belt.

Ruxley Towers has a social club in its grounds and Lord Jack Cooper, genial gensec, has allowed the local golfing fraternity to use the club in the evenings. Trouble is, once you give the middle class an inch, they want several bloody miles.

A group of shop stewards on a training course at Ruxley Towers, have, naturally enough, slaked their militant thirst in the club. But this strong working-class presence has outraged the local pinstripe brigade. They have lodged a complaint about the stewards' behaviour with the management.

Have the middle-class yoiks been told to smartly disappear, mind their own business or quietly get stuffed? Well, it is the GMWU, after all, and they have their own traditional way of solving disputes between workers and employers.

Ruxley Towers' social club is now closed to visiting members of the union.

*JOKE going round America about Ralph Nader, the consumer watchdog mentioned in Laurie Flynn's feature on waste this week, says that Nader complained bitterly to General Motors that the car he was driving of theirs rolled over.*

*Back comes the bland reply from GM: 'Of course it rolled over—it wanted you to scratch its tummy'.*

## True blue

WE live in hard times, so the bosses



NADER: tickled pink

and their press prattle at us every day. Money is tight, profit margins are narrow and wage increases hit the national interest below the belt.

That is the public image. In private, there is a lot of lolly floating around, used by big business to look after its own interests. Latest company returns show no slackening in the loot being hived off to the Tory Party and sundry other piratical outfits that exist to smooth the path of the profiteers.

General Accident insurance company gave £5000 last year to British United Industrialists, a front organisation that distributes funds to 'anti-nationalisation' bodies, including the Tory Party. And Legal and General Assurance gave £5000 to BUI and £1000 to the Economic League. It is a small price to pay for the insurance firms, who know that the Tories will take no action to defend policyholders against collapsing firms.

But that sort of money is small beer. Reckitt and Coleman, a true blue firm in every respect, gave BUI a colossal £20,000 last year, plus £500 apiece for the Economic League and Aims of Industry and £50 direct to the Tories.

Tate and Lyle were not so shy of giving a substantial donation openly to the Tories. Heath and co got £15,776 from the sugar barons last year. £10,000 went to Aims of Industry, £6,250 to BUI and £1575 to the Economic League.

## Gravy train

OF COURSE, the Tories pay back their financial backers. Writing in the New Statesman, Labour MP Michael Meacher pointed out that the Barber Budget's changes in capital gains tax 'is giving the wink to the tax-avoidance industry in the City. Yet tax avoidance as a systematic and sophisticated art already exists on a scale that must surely constitute one of the great uncovered scandals of our time. It is likely that... the yield of death duties alone is some £750m less each year than it might be'.

Who says they can't take it with them?

*IN these times of accelerating housing problems, spare a thought for Mr Jack Heinz of the American tinned food empire. He has two homes and he is having difficulty in getting rid of one of them, Binfield Lodge near Bracknell in Berkshire. It has 71 acres, 12 bedrooms, six bathrooms, five reception rooms, lake, tennis court and a garden laid out by Lanning Roper, the famous architect.*

*The price—£100,000—may be a little beyond your pocket. But it is our factual duty to point out to homeless readers that the property at the moment is standing empty.*

FREE PRESS: talks on a possible merger are going on between the Mirror group and the Sun-News of the World.



JUST when you begin to think of sending the television back to the rental shop and joining the local amateur theatrical society, up pop two programmes that grab you by the short and curls and reaffirm your faith in the medium.

Last week gave us two fine and memorable offerings. 24 Hours, which usually more than lives up to its nickname of 24 Bores, gave over one entire slot to a showing of the Columbia Broadcasting System's documentary, The Selling of the Pentagon.

A CBS reporter had decided to get stuck into the American military headquarters, to probe and investigate the enormous lie machine which the Pentagon has lovingly built on taxpayers' money to bend the nation's mind about the need for war, the communist threat and the peaceful intentions of the American rulers.

The Pentagon was outraged at the result, and, using pliable mouthpieces in the government, right up as far (or as low) as Spiro Agnew, attempted to get the show banned. But the CBS bosses, fighting for their independence within the system, dug their heels in and the programme went out.

And riveting stuff it was, too. CBS showed how billions of dollars are used every year to put on displays and exhibitions glorifying war and producing crude propaganda films that would make the late Senator McCarthy spin in his grave with pleasure.

Most of the films were so unsophisticated as to be laughable but apparently they are big hits among the Silent Majority in the Mid-West. My favourite was one called Red Nightmare starring Jack Webb of Dragnet fame. It showed the Red Army invading America and marching into one small town, where the good people quietly cave in, with the exception of our brave hero.

He goes home to find his daughter leaving to join the communist forces. 'You are a member of a decaying bourgeois class,' she tells him as he is dragged off to prison camp. Funny, he looked like a worker.

All this justifies the invasion of Vietnam, the use of napalm and fragmentation bombs, the liquidation of whole villages of people. It's a big, expensive job, saving the real decaying bourgeois class. BBC2's Man Alive last week was a moving documentary on unemployment called Love on the Dole.

Harold Williamson went to the North East, to towns like South Shields ravaged by government-connived unemployment. The camera played along the queues of men, and women, young and old, waiting for their pittance from the state, denied the basic democratic right to work because of the overall needs of the 'national interest'.

Williamson is a brilliant, unobtrusive interviewer. He took three couples, a married engineer and his wife, a boy and girl getting married in spite of both being jobless and an engaged pair who preferred to wait until something turned up. Williamson drew from the engineer, a skilled man without work for a year, an eloquent and heart-rending condemnation of a society that reduces human beings to monthly figures in the climbing graph of unemployed.

It was a programme that gave hope, too. All the people interviewed expressed a quiet determination to fight and not be beaten down by the apparent hopelessness of their position.

We went to press before Thursday's Loach-Allen play The Rank and File. Review next week. Meanwhile, there is a splendid and amusing new classic serial on BBC2 on Saturdays, Guy de Maupassant's Bel Ami.

**David East**



# JACKSON COVERS UP FOR COLLAPSE OF POST UNION STRIKE

## Strikers declared 'redundant'

Tony Bywater and Dick Wigham  
ASTMS Strike Committee

CO. DURHAM:- Four weeks ago management at Courtaulds, Spennymoor, declared 158 supervisory workers 'redundant' because they went on official strike against the sacking of the group secretary of their union, the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs.

Employers in the area are confident that high unemployment and the sack will intimidate trade unionists fighting for just demands.

The strikers at Spennymoor see this as a fight of principle, to defend the right to organise and belong to a union. We know that our jobs are still there—individual strikers have been contacted by management and asked to return to work on an hourly-paid basis, while blacklegs are being recruited to do the same work under a different name.

The entire quality control staff has been sacked. This shows that the firm's claim that redundancy notices are not connected with the strike is a lie.

More than £30,000 in redundancy cheques has been returned by the strikers, while women workers have swelled our numbers to 173. A strong picket line has been maintained, the Transport Workers' Union has been contacted to stop deliveries, and meetings are arranged for Courtaulds' workers at Grimsby to stop the supply of raw fibre.

Out of the strike, a national Courtaulds' joint union committee has been formed, and local support has been widened through the Durham Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions.

The practice of declaring workers on official strike redundant is becoming widespread and makes it essential that trade unionists unite in supporting each other now, to lay the foundations for resistance to the Tories' Industrial Relations law. We appeal to all trade unionists to black the factory.

### NOTICES

BRISTOL IS: Roger Protz, editor of Socialist Worker, on the Millionaire Press. Sunday 23 May, 8pm, Old England pub, behind Henley's Garage, off Cheltenham Road, Stokes Croft.

TONY CLIFF on the Tory offensive. Public meeting at the Duke's Head, Addlestone Surrey, 8pm, Monday 24 May.

IMMIGRATION BILL and Industrial Relations Bill: Notting Hill IS public meeting, 8pm, All Saints' Hall, Powis Gardens, Westbourne Park Road, W11. Speakers: Roger Rosewell and Fennis Augustine. Tuesday 25 May.

HULL IS public mtng: The Tory Offensive and how to fight it. Speaker Tony Cliff, Tuesday 25 May, 8pm, Bluebell, Lowgate.

COUNCIL WORKERS No 3. Articles on work study, 'musical manual workers', bonus schemes etc, plus letters. Price 1p plus postage from 16 Kew Gardens Road, Kew, Surrey.

ACTON IS Thursday 27 May, 8pm at the Boltons, Duke Street, Chiswick High Road, Paul Foot on the Aliens Bill.

PRESTON IS public mtng: Roger Protz on the Millionaire Press, Lamb Hotel, Church St, Friday 28 May, 8pm.



A group of Carreras strikers, out since February for parity of hours

## Pay battle at car parts firm

HULL:- 800 members of the Transport Workers' Union at Armstrong Patents at Hull and Beverley have been out on strike for 10 days in support of a £7.50 pay claim. Armstrong are the world's leading producers of shock absorbers.

The firm has told the strikers that their jobs are at stake unless they return to work. But at the same time the 'Making Money' section of the Observer has been telling investors about the record Armstrong profits that are a dead cert for next year. In the same article, managing director Mr Harry Hooper was described as a 'dab hand at squeezing more and more out of the same pint pot.' It's about time the workers who fill the pint pot got more money for doing it.

This year's profits will be up £200,000. Next year's profits will probably rise at least £300,000 to £1.5 million.

The pay claim is to make up for the effect of rocketing prices. It has been in the pipeline since January. The TGWU supported the claim throughout negotiations, but when the Armstrong management failed to cough up, the union refused to support the strike.

Armstrong have just landed a £1m contract for the Morris Marina. They are the sole suppliers of suspension units to Ford. They are expanding internationally, especially in Canada. It is obvious to all workers that they can pay up.

Two things are now vitally necessary for the workers to win:-

1. The TGWU must make the strike official.
2. AUEW members must come out in support of the claim.

## Victory near for tobacco men

MAINTENANCE workers at the Basildon, Essex, tobacco firm of Carreras have won a crucial concession from the management. The 124 men, mainly members of the Engineering Union and the Woodworkers' Society, have been locked out since 22 February.

They took industrial action to press their claim for a 37½ hour week. Carreras, who have a dominant South African interest on the board, employ 4000 workers, 2000 in Basildon and they all work a 37½ hour week with the exception of the 124 maintenance men.

Carreras rejected a claim for equal hours from the AUEW and ASW and tried to impose a nine-grade job evaluation struc-

ture that seriously devalued the status of the 124 engineers, all skilled workers. The men were locked out when they refused to accept the scheme.

Last Friday, the shop stewards and union officials met the management at the Department of Employment where Carreras finally agreed to drop the job evaluation scheme and implement a 37½ hour week—but beginning on 1 July. The men remained firm not to return to work unless parity of hours was implemented straight away. A further meeting has to be arranged.

Financial support is urgently needed and should be sent to J Walker, 120 Butneys, Basildon, Essex.

## POWER WORKERS FIGHT THREAT TO THEIR JOBS

FULHAM power station workers have angrily rejected the proposed productivity 'lead-in' scheme. The proposals, a result of the recent Wilberforce Inquiry, would mean that nearly half of the present jobs at the station would disappear by 1972.

In return they have been promised wage increases of between 10 and 16 per cent, which more and more workers are beginning to see as 'blood money'. The unions have already signed the agreement on the dotted line.

The chairman of the works committee, Peter Shillingford, told me: 'In view of the national unemployment situation this productivity scheme is scandalous. On my union card there is a clause which says I will advance the cause of all workers, and this is what I stand by.'

The agreement is the latest turn of the screw which has meant a shocking reduction in the number of jobs in the power industry. At the Fulham station in 1968 there were 658 men, at present there are 472, and the management's estimate for January 1972 is 278 men.

4104 redundancies are planned in the South-east region. The management wants to enforce the reduction through voluntary redundancy and compulsory transfer and to cover the work load by 'extension of skills'.

Under pressure from workers, the management admitted that the scheme would involve the scrapping of the present 'Five days out of seven stagger' shift system, and its replacement by a 'work-load stagger'.

This means that the present shift system, which is not exactly paradise, would

be replaced by a completely arbitrary system under which men could be called in when required. Peter Shillingford estimates that this could mean working 60 hours in one week and 20 in the next.

In a secret ballot, the Fulham men rejected the scheme by 228 votes to 131 and only three stations in the S E Region have accepted the deal. But regardless of the men's decision, the Board is determined to push forward with the scheme.

Peter Shillingford believes that the trade union officials have been 'shaken rigid' by the number of redundancies which may result from the deal they signed. 'The reaction of the blokes is forcing the union officials to think again.' He says that the AUEW is supposed to be a left-wing union and 'The fact that it is in a minority on the negotiating committee is not a valid excuse for failing to raise its voice against the agreement.'

He added that 'the national combine committees must think very carefully about the situation and if the trade union leaders fail to put up a fight the rank and file will have to lead the resistance themselves.'

Workers at Newton Abbot power station in Devon have voted against accepting the lead-in scheme in order to save the jobs of 15 men. They could have had an extra £1 now rising to £1.50 in October and £2 next January if they accepted the deal.

They voted 56-16 to reject it. Engineering Union steward Bill Groves said: 'We decided that if redundancy was the price of the pay rise then we were not interested.'

by Roger Rosewell

Bournemouth, Wednesday

THE 230,000-strong Union of Post Office Workers will submit a new 5 per cent pay claim to management this week. The decision was taken on Wednesday by delegates to the union conference who also voted down a motion of censure on the executive for their handling of the recent 47-day strike.

But the defeat of the strike dominated the conference. The failure of the TUC and both left and right union leaders to support the strike financially was not only condemned by rank and file speakers but meant also that the union ended the dispute £696,000 in the red.

The huge deficit resulted in decisions to increase subscriptions by a third and to adopt a three-year programme cutting back on union expenditure.

### DOUBTS

The extent of the union debts has raised doubts in many delegates' minds about the attitude of the union executive towards the Industrial Relations Bill. Sylvester McGovern of the London Overseas Telephones No 2 branch told me he was concerned about the possibility of the UPW now co-operating with the government.

More than half of the debts are loans that have to be repaid to other unions. It is disgraceful that these have not been made gifts and militants should fight in every union for the loans not to be repaid.

In the major debate on the strike on Tuesday, general secretary Tom Jackson attacked the Tories and said: 'The government has deliberately set out to reduce public service wages.'

Commenting on the result of the court of inquiry that awarded a miserable 9 per cent increase, Jackson said it had been 'government inspired' and the outcome of this biased and rigged inquiry proved that the UPW was initially right to refuse to go to arbitration.

Although he admitted the strike was political—a fact denied during the dispute—Jackson failed to attack the role of the TUC General Council and the Post Office Engineering Union, which refused to take solidarity action.

### ANGRY

But some delegates were not so silent. Ted Salisbury attacked the lack of support given to the UPW by other unions and criticised especially the role of Lord Delacourt-Smith, POEU general secretary.

These attacks produced an angry response from the executive. Willie Failes, a member of the Communist Party, said Salisbury's speech was disgraceful and paid tribute to the help given by other unions, including the General and Municipal Workers. He did not mention that total financial donations from the giant Transport Workers was only £7500.

The rising militancy and bitterness of postal workers was expressed throughout the conference. A resolution was carried overwhelmingly instructing the union not to supply counter staff or any other free services in future disputes. A vote of no confidence was carried in the chairman of the Post Office Board, Bill Ryland. Both motions were opposed by Jackson and the executive.

The conference also decided to withdraw honorary membership from Sir Richard Heyward, a former UPW deputy general secretary. He is now a member of the Post Office management and Jackson again opposed the critical motion.

One delegate called Heyward a traitor and said his actions were an equal betrayal to that of Jesus Christ by Judas Iscariot. But, he added, there was one difference between Judas and Heyward: Judas hanged himself and Heyward hadn't.

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