

# Socialist Worker

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

## Police tap rail leaders' phones

ALL EIGHT executive members of the Associated Society of Loco Engineers and Firemen have had their telephones tapped throughout the current wage negotiations with British Rail.

The bugging was done by the Special Branch with the express intention of obtaining advance information on secret union decisions and the standpoint of individual executive members on the wage claim.

Commenting on Socialist Worker's information, ASLEF general secretary Ray Buckton stated: 'I have attended several meetings over the years where it was quite clear to me the employers knew what I was going to say before I said it.'

'It is of course nearly impossible to prove such a thing, but I have always been suspicious and acted accordingly. It does make you wonder what sort of society we're really living in.'

Behind the rail pay talks: special feature on centre pages

## RAIDS: WHAT I.S. SAID

LAST WEDNESDAY (15 March) the International Socialists issued the following press statement:

'At 6.30am this morning the Special Branch raided the homes of 60 people, among them four members of the International Socialists. Under the flimsy pretext of looking for explosives the police spent up to six hours scrutinising documents and magazines, some of which were illegally removed. One of our members, David Widgery, had his passport seized, again illegally.'

'This blatant attempt to reproduce the police intimidation and repression currently in operation in Northern Ireland will not deter the International Socialists from fighting for the withdrawal of British troops or from campaigning in solidarity with those in Ireland struggling against British domination.'

We learned subsequently that seven, not four, IS members were among those raided. The statement appeared in full in The Guardian, but both that paper and the London Evening Standard seriously distorted further statements made to them by the editor of Socialist Worker, Roger Protz, and the National Secretary of IS, Jim Higgins, on the IS attitude to the IRA. A letter was sent to The Guardian making clear our position but it has not been published to date.

In view of the confusion which these garbled press reports have caused we would like to make it quite clear that the International Socialists give unconditional but critical support to the IRA. In this we do no more than revolutionary socialists have always done in relation to national liberation movements.

We do not impose conditions on national liberation movements but reserve the right to criticise those actions we consider not conducive to the creation of a united mass movement. In Northern Ireland our unconditional support extends to both wings of the IRA in their defence of the nationalist areas and their offensive actions against the British Army, and to the working people of the beleaguered Catholic areas struggling to end British domination. —Executive Committee, International Socialists, 21 March 1972.

What happened on police raids: back page.

### DAY EARLY

Next week's issue of Socialist Worker will be published a day early for Easter and will be reduced to eight pages for one issue only.

## Barber's Budget: joy for the rich, no help for unemployed

# CON TRICK

by Chris Harman

UNEMPLOYMENT will remain at or near its current high level. Millions of pensioners will continue to live below the official poverty line. Workers on miserable wages in industries without strong union organisation will still get miserable wages.

That is the real message of this week's Budget. The Tory press has screamed with delight about 'millions given away in Barber's bonanza'. But they don't say how little this really means to working people, that it will do next to nothing

to improve the lives of those of us whose labour creates all the wealth.

If you earn less than £20 a week and have two children, you will get nothing at all from the Budget. And there are millions of workers in that category.

If you are an old-age pensioner or on the dole you will get nothing at present. You have to wait until the autumn—for a miserable 15 bob (75p).

That's hardly enough to keep up with the astronomical rises in food prices.

The press has headlined the £1 a week most wage earners will gain from the tax allowances. They don't tell you that most people will lose half of that £1 immediately when the government's Housing Bill forces councils to put up rents by at least 50p a week next month.

Barber claims he is giving 'us' £1200 million in tax cuts. But this is a mere quarter of what has been taken by £4000 million in increased prices in the last year. And insurance stamps are going up too.

The biggest con trick of all is the claim that the Budget will start to cut the dole queues. It is true that, after a period of deliberately encouraging unemployment, the Tories now feel compelled to try and call a halt.

Unemployment pleases their big business backers. It frightens workers into accepting meagre wages. But it also hurts sections of big business by making it more difficult for them to sell their goods.

And the Tories fear the anger that unemployment has caused among working people. They are making a desperate effort to appear to be doing something to tackle the problem. Don't let that fool you. The Financial Times calculates that even if the government succeeds in making the economy grow at 5 per cent in the next year unemployment would be cut by not more than ¼ of a per cent.

### PRODUCE MORE

That means there would still be between 800,000 and 900,000 on the dole queues this time next year.

The reason is simple. At the heart of big business's policy is the drive to increase productivity, to make fewer people earning less money produce more goods. That means more factory closures and redundancies.

The Budget gives massive handouts to industrialists who build new plant in areas of high unemployment. Big business will gladly take the cash—but that does not mean that any new jobs will necessarily be created. The trend will be for new factories and machines to replace existing ones. The only difference will be that the new plant will be 'capital intensive'—that is, will give work to fewer people.

The Budget means no real concessions either to workers with jobs or to the unemployed. It is a bonanza only for the rich, through investment grants and cuts in capital gains tax and estate duties.

The Tories know they cannot solve unemployment and rising prices. They hope the press hullabaloo will make it easier to blame their failures on the growing militancy of many sections of workers.

It is a strategy that must be rejected by every worker. The only real way to help the jobless and the lower paid is to step up the fight to defeat the Tory government.

### Noel Jenkinson

THE POLICE are holding North London trade unionist Noel Jenkinson, whom they claim was implicated in the Aldershot explosion. They are charging him with murder. He is making a clear plea of not guilty.

The International Socialists express their solidarity with him. We do not believe that those who run the police force—Maudling and Heath—have a right to hold anybody for the Aldershot events. For it was they who organised the cold-blooded murder of 13 people in Derry and are behind all the horror and bloodshed resulting from the Irish situation. All socialists and trade unionists must demand the immediate release of Jenkinson and the other men held by the police.

## We're staying in say shoe women



FORTY workers—39 of them women—are occupying the Fakenham, Norfolk, footwear factory of Sexton Sons and Everards to stop the bosses' redundancy plans. They have barricaded the plant. This week 180 redundancies were declared at the main factory in Norwich. The Fakenham workers are showing once again that only tough, militant action can beat back the bosses' plans. Picture: Tony Skipper.

### ANTI-INTERMENT LEAGUE MARCH

## ALL OUT THIS SUNDAY!

Withdraw British troops from Ireland  
Release the Internees

March from five districts  
Clapham Common, 1.30  
Hammersmith Broadway, 1.00  
Tower Hill, 2.30  
Archway, 1.30  
Crown, Cricklewood, 1.00

March will now go past Trafalgar Square to Aldwych,  
Fleet Street and meeting on Victoria Embankment

All London IS branches MUST support the march. Branch secretaries should ring Mike Caffoor (739 9043) for full details.

### FIGHTING FUND—ONE LAST PUSH

THE International Socialists' Fighting Fund now stands at more than £4000 and we are confident of reaching our £5000 target by the end of the month. With the Tories determined to weaken our organisation through police raids and the confiscation of Eamonn McCann's pamphlet What Happened in Derry, the fund takes on an even greater importance. We need the money for extra political organisers and to take legal action against the police's seizure of our members' documents.

Don't delay. Make sure the fund goes over the top. Cheques and postal orders to: Jim Nichol, IS National Treasurer, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

AT LONG LAST the trial of Angela Davis began on 1 March in San Jose, California. Angela's release on bail on 23 February follows a long struggle which began when it became clear that the state of California intended to make sure she never saw the outside of a prison again.

Thousands of petitions were circulated to demand bail, but she would still be in prison today—and throughout her trial, expected to last six months—but for the California Supreme Court's ruling which abolished the death penalty in California.

This ruling wiped away the legal figleaf the courts had used to keep Angela locked up—that if convicted she could be sent to the gas chamber.

There were other reasons for trying to keep Angela locked up. The first was to reinforce the climate of opinion which believes that a black revolutionary should be locked up as a menace to society, regardless of 'innocence' or 'guilt'.

## What Angela's trial really means

A report from David Finkel, of the US International Socialists

The second was to keep her from speaking out about her own trial, from appearing in public or even giving interviews. The third was to restrict her ability to prepare her own defence, in which she will take an active role.

Thus her release was a real victory, although major battles lie ahead.

Angela Davis represents many things to many people.

To the state of California she symbolises everything that the state

is attempting to crush and destroy—the revolutionary movement, the struggle for black liberation, and defiance of 'established authority'. The state will spare no effort and expense to imprison her forever, and if possible may even try to find a way to restore the death penalty to silence her completely.

To many liberals Angela represents yet another 'test of the system'—can a black revolutionary receive a 'fair trial' under the American system of

justice? Such people, who want to believe that such things as a 'fair trial' really exist in this system and want others to believe the same delusion, will bend over backwards to be fair—to the system itself.

They will overlook everything, from 16 months in jail without bail to the selection of a virtually all-white middle-class jury, to the arrest of demonstrators supporting Angela outside the courthouse, provided only that it is possible to 'get to the facts'

of the case.

If the state can construct some sort of proof that Angela Davis bought the guns, then the liberals who half-heartedly defend her today will heave a sigh of relief and abandon her to prison or the gas chamber.

To millions of black people in the United States this case has a deeper importance than an abstract test of 'fairness'. Black people who know that the system is stacked against them from the start realise that the attempt to victimise Angela is directed against them as well.

The issue will become an explosive one in black communities as the trial comes to a conclusion this summer.

### Strangle

To the Communist Party, of which Angela Davis is an outspoken member, this case represents an opportunity to restore some of the party's badly-tarnished image. As the Davis case develops, and as the radical movement of the 1960s continues to collapse, hundreds of militants and radicals, both black and white, are being attracted to the Communist Party.

But the American Communist Party, which has always been one of the most servile Stalinist parties to be found anywhere, remains committed to a course of strangling rather than building movements for social change in America.

In the labour movement and the black liberation movement alike, the party argues for support of 'progressive' trade union officials—including some of the worst bureaucrats—and liberal politicians of the Democratic Party, of whom some are black but none would lift a finger in defence of Angela Davis or other political prisoners.

The task of revolutionary socialists now is to build demonstrations of support for Angela Davis in every city throughout the US—and internationally—during the trial. By throwing the brightest glare of publicity on the trial and by explaining to the people who Angela Davis is and what she stands for, we can expose the truth about the frame-up trial and throw back the forces of oppression.

## French rulers exploit divided left

THE MURDER of the Maoist militant René-Pierre Overney at the Renault factory continues to haunt French politics.

In particular, the relations between France's two biggest trade union federations, the Communist-controlled CGT and the formerly Catholic CFDT, have become increasingly strained. While the CGT is concerned to resist any threat by the militant left to challenge its influence over workers, the CFDT is anxious to attract young militants and divert their energies into safe and 'responsible' channels.

It is in an attempt to exploit this situation that Pompidou has declared a referendum on the enlargement of the Common Market.

Pompidou realises that an electoral alliance of the Communist Party, the Socialists and various centre groups could mean a defeat for his party in next year's elections. The Gaullist Party has recently been weakened by the loss of a number of members of its 'left-wing' tendency.

Pompidou hopes that the Socialists will remain true to their commitment to the modernisation of French capitalism and support the expansion of the Common Market, while the Communist Party will oppose on a nationalist basis.

Pompidou knows his enemy very well. He realises that any 'unity of the left' which is based on electoral pacts rather than a commitment to class interests is essentially fragile and is always vulnerable to manoeuvres.

This is the reason for the referendum, not any belief in democracy. What price democracy in a society where militants who try to take political discussion into the factories are gunned to death?



The murder of René-Pierre Overney (left, with pole) by a Renault secret policeman (centre).

## Congo army chief purges 70 socialists

ON 22 February the excuse of an attempted coup led to the arrest of some 70 revolutionaries in Brazzaville, capital of the People's Republic of the Congo (formerly French).

Two of the accused men, Claude-Ernest Ndalla and Ange Diawara (who is reported to be still in hiding) were members of the central committee of the Congolese Workers' Party—the ruling party in the republic, which is a one-party state.

Interviews with them figure prominently in Eldridge Cleaver's pamphlet *Revolution In The Congo*. Cleaver, the leader of the US Black Panthers in exile, praises them for building socialism in the heart of Africa.

They identify themselves as marxist-leninists, and see China as a model of socialism. They scathingly attack other brands of African 'socialism'—Senghor's 'negritude' or Nyerere's 'communalism'—as varieties of the Uncle Tom attitude.

Ndalla and Diawara say that class struggle is the most important struggle in

Africa. They warn unceasingly against the classes they call the bureaucratic bourgeoisie and the neo-colonialists, who will try to sabotage the revolutionary Congo they are trying to build.

It seems that these classes have succeeded.

Diawara was party political commissar attached to the army. He was attempting, by intensive political propaganda, education by work, and various other techniques, to turn it into a people's army, which would be self-sufficient by growing its own food, and helping the peasants harvest, and so would not be a tax burden on the workers and peasants.

### Fear strength

He was also trying to force the army to train civilians in arms so that the army did not rise above the people in military technique.

It seems that certain commanders in the army, particularly chief of staff Opango, were not keen on such changes. They also

feared the growing strength of the People's Militia, which had been built up by Ndalla from urban trade unionists, youth and intellectuals after 1963.

In that year the president, Abbe Fulbert Youlou, who had been left in power by the departing French, was forced to resign after mass demonstrations and a three-day general strike.

Youlou was replaced by the moderate Debat who tried a delicate balancing act between Ndalla's militia, which was growing rapidly with Cuban aid and training, and the army.

Debat tried to give more power to right-wing elements in the government. Scared by army mutinies, he dissolved parliament in 1968 and tried to ban the political arm of the militia.

An army coup saved him temporarily from the ensuing rage of the left. The militia tried a counter attack, but gave up after a two-day shoot-out with the army.

Debat at this point resigned as president, admitting exhaustion. There followed a power struggle in the army between left

and right. A paratroop captain named Ngoubai emerged as the army leader, willing to mediate between the army and the militia. He was made president.

The events of 22 February seemed to take President Ngoubai by surprise. Opango broadcast that he had arrested the 70, including members of the central committee, because they had attempted a left-wing coup.

Ngoubai, still in the middle, or at least trying to be, later announced that peace had been restored.

Reports do not indicate the extent of militia resistance, though arrests seem to have been fairly rapid, so that the leadership was chopped before the militia could be mobilised. Ngoubai has alternated between calling Diawara a 'CIA agent' and an 'extreme leftist'.

But with Diawara still at large, and a militia with nine years experience of mobilisation against the right, the struggle is far from over.

W. ENDA

THE violent death last week of left-wing Italian publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli was the climax of three years of state persecution for his support of the revolutionary movement in Italy and abroad.

Feltrinelli was the founder of an Institute of Contemporary History and of one of the leading publishing houses in Italy, both devoted to marxist and Third World literature.

Feltrinelli looked to the Third World guerrilla movements as the centre of world struggle against imperialism. At the same time he gave considerable support to revolutionary groups in Italy.

Because of this support and because of his influence as a publisher, Feltrinelli was under constant harassment from the police and Fascist squads. The police tried to incriminate him in a series of explosions which were clearly Fascist in origin, and he was forced to live abroad in hiding.

His death bears all the marks of a characteristic frame-up and murder by the police. His body was found blown to

bits near an electric pylon. The police and right-wing press at once claimed he had blown himself up trying to destroy the pylon, which supplies electricity to a wide area near Milan.

It's a very useful claim. The state prosecutor's case against the anarchist Valpreda for allegedly blowing up a Milan bank in 1969 has crumbled in the face of overwhelming evidence that it was the work of fascists. The image of the left-wing extremist as a terrorist needed to be restored.

Feltrinelli's death also comes at a sensitive moment. The general elections come up in May, and if the police are successful in framing Feltrinelli it will help to strengthen the right-wing demand for more law and order and increase the repressive powers of the police and the courts.

**SPEAKERS** at a political meeting in Salisbury, Rhodesia, on 10 March attacked the British and Rhodesian governments and the settlement pro-

posals. They also called on the government to resign.

The meeting, sponsored by the *Candour League*, was attended by more than 700 people. The loudest applause was for Mr Idensohn, of the *Rhodesia National Party*, when he put on a black gauntlet, raised his fist in the black power salute and said: 'Black Power has never taken away white rule in Africa. It has always been the white hand in a black glove.'

## BRIEFING

WHILE a 14-year-old British boy remains imprisoned in Turkey for alleged drug-smuggling, the moral fibre of the Turkish regime is revealed by the arrest of a member of the Turkish Senate for smuggling morphine base. Two other senators are said to be involved.

The worthy senators are doubtless in

support of the present policy of political repression. Nineteen militant opponents of the regime are at present under sentence of death, and the first executions are due to be carried out any day now.

**REPORTS** that the civil war in the Sudan had come to an end now seem to have been premature. Colonel Lagu, leader of the *Anya-Nya* (the guerrilla forces for the liberation of the south), has now asked for a delay of six to eight weeks before making the peace agreements final.

Supporters of the southern struggle have said that the delegation at the peace talks was unrepresentative and that Lagu had agreed to unacceptable terms.

CYPRIOU leader Archbishop Makarios seems to have survived the recent crisis sparked off by the delivery of Czech arms. To understand the crisis the following points should be borne in mind:

Firstly, although more than 10 years ago the people of Cyprus won freedom from British rule through armed struggle, the island still houses Britain's largest overseas military base. Western imperialism will not relinquish this because of its potential importance in controlling the Middle East. And Makarios, whatever 'red scares' are launched by his fellow bishops, will not challenge this.

Secondly, Makarios owes much of his power to the support of AKEL, the Cypriot Communist Party, which claims the support of 35 per cent of the electorate. As long as AKEL worries about Russian interests in the Mediterranean and 'peaceful coexistence' it will be unable to fight imperialism.

Thirdly, the conflict between the Greek and Turkish communities which CIA agents are trying to keep alive, cannot help the interests of the working people of Cyprus. They can hope for nothing from the governments of Greece or Turkey, both engaged in witch-hunting left-wingers and smashing working-class organisations.

## Unity can defeat police repression

THE UNIONIST BULLY BOY, William Craig, ex-Home Secretary of the Orange-Tory police state in the Six Counties of Northern Ireland, threatens to 'liquidate' the 'enemies of the state'. A man called Reginald Paget, a so-called 'Labour' MP, calls on the Tory government to start shooting its Irish political prisoners. Is any police action taken against the authors of these incitements to murder? Of course not. The police—or more accurately their political bosses—are pre-occupied with other matters. Their targets are the revolutionary left and the Irish national movement.

Last week's raids by the political police on the homes of socialists and Irish republicans are part of a developing pattern of repression. It includes prosecutions against publications like 'OZ' and the 'Little Red Schoolbook', the tapping of the phones of trade union officials and political activists and increased police violence against pickets and demonstrators.

The main purpose of all this police activity is intimidation. The government is becoming worried at the increasing opposition to its reactionary policies. Badly shaken by its defeat by the miners, it knows that there is a real danger of large scale resistance to its Fair Rents swindle. It fears that an 'inappropriate' attempt to use their Industrial Relations law by some maverick employer would produce a real explosion.

And in the Six Counties of Northern Ireland in spite of its much advertised 'political initiative', it is in a blind alley from which it is becoming harder and harder to escape.

The government desperately needs to frighten off those of its opponents who can be frightened off and to isolate and harass those who cannot. It can be predicted with some confidence that the attacks upon previously well-established democratic rights will be stepped up and that more and more attempts will be made to victimise members of left-wing and nationalist organisations.

At the same time the government has not resorted to a policy of out and out repression, the Six Counties excepted, nor will it do so in the immediate future. Its aim, following the miners' victory, is to draw the trade union leaderships into some sort of accommodation around an 'Incomes Policy', probably under a new name.

This necessarily involves certain concessions. The failure of the National Industrial Relations Court to enforce the law against the shop stewards of Ideal Castings is very significant. The Tories do not want another serious confrontation, which might lead to widespread solidarity action, until they have the TUC in the bag.

## The best defence

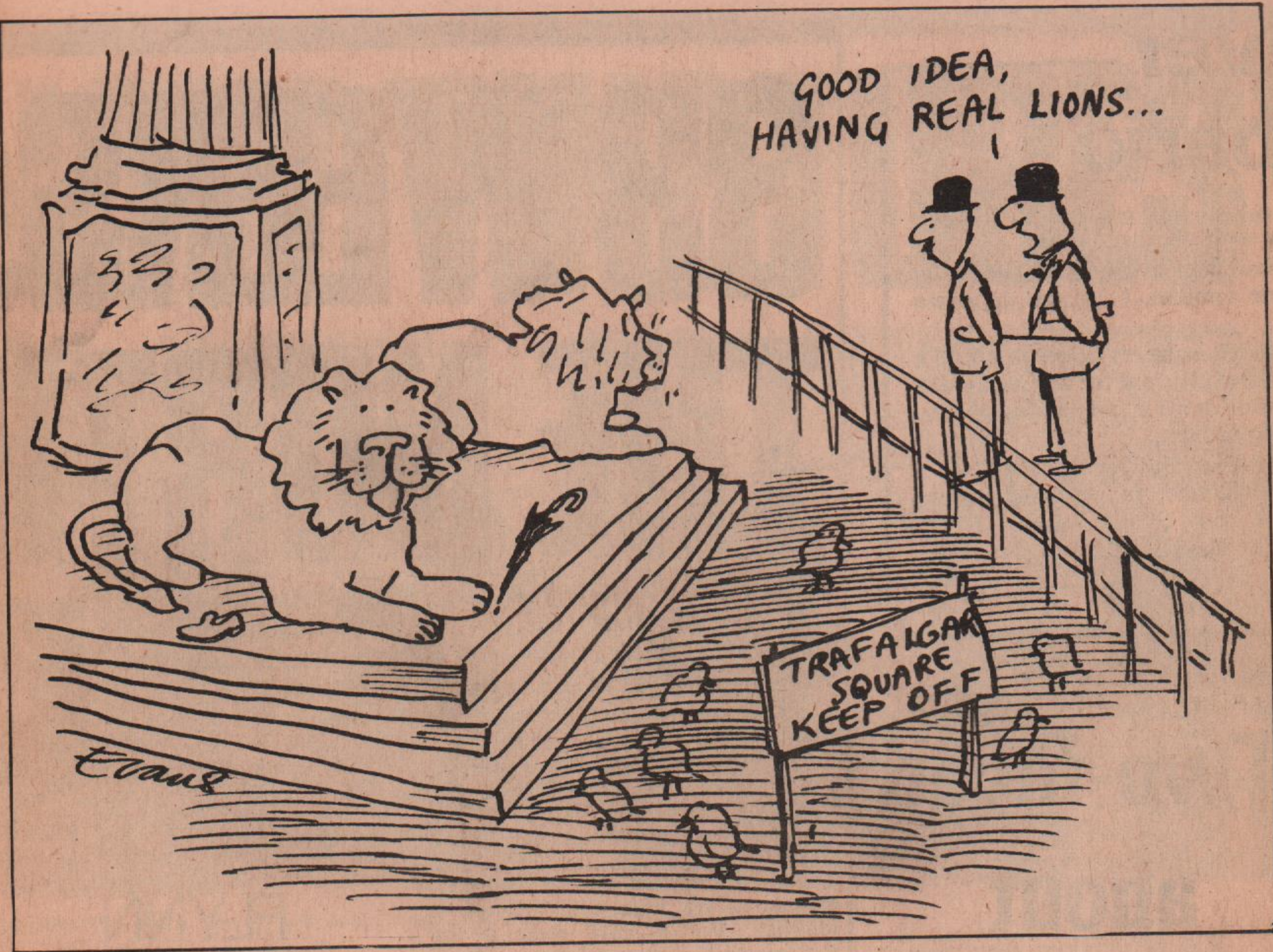
The defence of victims of police harassment requires the maximum unity of all who are seriously concerned about democratic rights, irrespective of other political differences. The reaction of the Morning Star, Workers Press and some Labour MPs to last week's raids is an encouraging sign that this is widely recognised.

What also needs to be understood is that, in these circumstances, attack is the best means of defence. The government is vulnerable, very vulnerable, on wages, trade union rights, rents and welfare. The fight against incomes policy and pay norms, defiance of the Industrial Relations law, resistance to rent increases—these must be the central activities of the revolutionary left.

The defence of civil liberties and of the oppressed Catholic minority in the Six Counties, both essential duties for any socialist, can gain mass support to the degree that substantial numbers of workers can be mobilised in day-to-day struggle against the policies of the government and the employers that it represents. For it is from these struggles that more and more workers gain an understanding of the need to fight the Tories in every field.

Much progress has already been made. The government has been enforced to retreat on miners pay, on UCS, on the enforcement of the Industrial Relations law and so on. The current attacks on the left are a sign of Tory weakness, not of Tory strength. So too is the government's failure to impose on its former Orange stooges, a 'settlement' of the Irish problem that can be sold to the Green Tory government in Dublin.

To turn the partial defeats that have been inflicted on the Tories into a general defeat, to bring the government down, it is necessary to unite larger and larger sections of the working class around the fight for wages, conditions, housing, welfare and the rest. And that task is part and parcel of the struggle to create a socialist alternative, to build a revolutionary socialist party.



# COTTONS WARS

## Musical chairs

MA FOI—quelle kerfuffle over le Common Market. Old Pompidou announces that he will hold a referendum in France on British entry to the EEC, with the result that British politicians start performing a series of weird pirouettes.

Ted the Teeth, keen supporter of all things European, says there is absolutely no question of holding a similar referendum here. It's not British, doncherknow.

But what is this we hear from the Labour benches? None other than Chairman Wedgie Benn, fierce opponent of British entry, always screeching about loss of sovereignty and erosion of our parliamentary institutions, now demanding that Heath follow Pompidou's lead and call a ghastly, Froggie-type referendum.

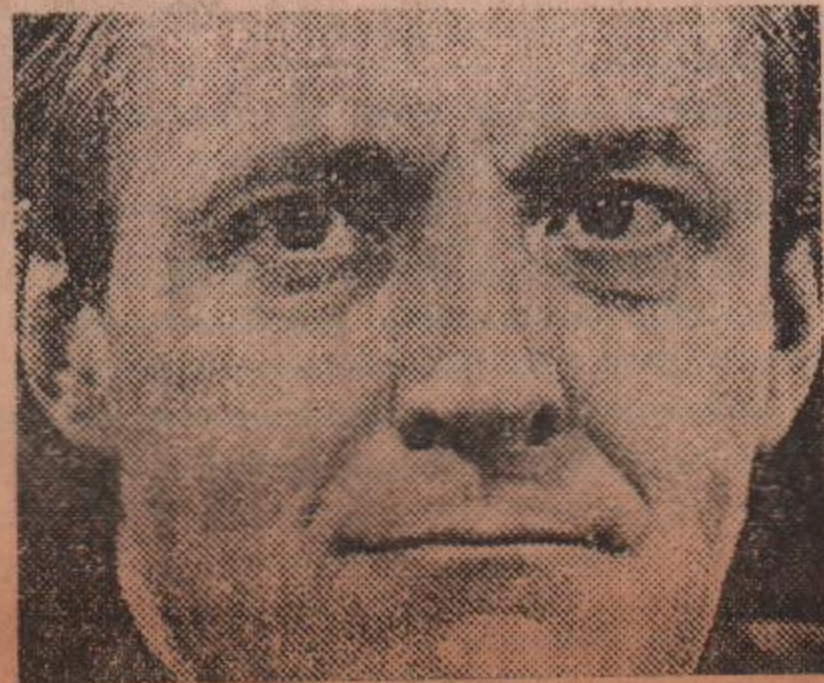
If you are filled with nausea by the gyrations of these opportunists then at least your stomachs are on the right political wavelength.

## Clip joint

COLLEAGUE D East writes about the Man Alive programme on Ulster on page 9. Latest information shows that the producer's determination to keep politics out of the discussion did not meet with support from all those taking part. In fact the air got pretty hot at times as supporters from both sides weighed in against one another.

Of course, none of that was seen on the programme. It was smartly edited out, leaving the low-key, flaccid result seen by the watching millions. One hopeful sign was that Catholics and Protestants did momentarily unite at the end of the show to berate Desmond Wilcox for his handling of the discussion.

THE dust has settled on the Socialist Labour League's Empire Pool rally for the Right to Work marchers, but it seems that the more orthodox wing of the Trotskyist movement is keen to get in on the act. Giant posters in



BENN: new tune

London are now announcing 'Fourth International Folk Song Concert' at the Empire Pool. Everyone's getting in on the act.

## Coch-eye

THE LABOUR government's industrial development grants were an astonishing gravy train for big private industry. For instance, between 1967-1969 ICI received £40 million in investment grants and produced no extra jobs whatsoever in the development regions.

A new twist to this tale came last week with a House of Lords appeal involving Babcock and Wilcox, the big process plant engineers, and the government.

What Babcock and Wilcox had been doing was to claim Scottish employment tax for all employees in the well known Scottish towns of Fulham, Barking and Didcott (all in or near London) and Carrington (near Manchester).

The firm whose registered offices and head offices are both in London, achieved this little bonus by locating its construction division headquarters in Renfrew, Scotland. All employees on the four sites had their gross wages calculated locally. Net pay was calculated at Renfrew and the Renfrew office sent a cheque back to the sites to cover the pay-out.

This cosy arrangement should have

yielded Babcock's upwards of £150,000 a year from development funds. But tragic to report, the House of Lords decided last week—after much legal argument—that men employed at Didcott, Carrington, Fulham and Barking were not employed in Scotland and the firm was not therefore entitled to the refunds. Other big construction firms are reported to be deeply saddened by the result.

## Refund

THE aim of the Tories' humorously-titled Fair Rents bill is to turn council housing into a straight profit-making concern, taking half of any surplus in the housing revenue accounts of local councils. But one council at least is already making a tidy profit from its tenants. The Northern Echo reports:

'A bid to give 16,000 council house tenants in South Shields three rent-free weeks next month was defeated by 30 to 29 at the monthly town council meeting... Ald Ernest Mackley, leader of the opposition Labour group, proposed the motion as a means of spending a surplus of £200,000 on the housing revenue account. But the Progressive-controlled council confirmed a decision that the money should be transferred to the general rate fund.'

Progressive is one of the fancy names used by the Tories on some councils. South Shields cannot be a loner. How many other councils are sucking thousands in profits from buildings that have paid for themselves over and over again? It may be worth finding out as tenants prepare for action.

AFTER last week's activities by the police in raiding the homes of socialists in the London area, perhaps the endless search for Martin Bormann should be switched from the forests of Latin America to our own Home Office. Tear off that rubber mask, Herr Maudling, ze game is up.

## MR ROBERT EDWARDS, MP: An Apology

In our issue of 22 January 1972, we alleged that Mr Robert Edwards, Labour and Co-op MP for Bilston in Staffs, had associated with Ellis Seillon, an international swindler, in cheating various banks of some £13,000,000, and in particular of the Co-operative Bank, and that Mr Edwards had gained certain advantages from loans which that bank had made to Mr Seillon.

It was also suggested that Mr Edwards owned 12,000 shares in Mesco Consolidated Limited, one of Seillon's companies.

We wish to apologise to Mr Edwards for alleging that he was in any sense associated with the illicit activities of Ellis Seillon or that he had participated directly or indirectly in any activities with Seillon which were designed to swindle any bank and, in particular, the Co-operative Bank.

We further understand that Mr Robert Edwards, MP, has never been a shareholder of Mesco Consolidated.

We wish to apologise for the aspersions which were cast on the integrity of Mr Edwards and unreservedly withdraw the allegations which have been made against him.



# 'Fair Rents': Never anything so barbaric

I HAVE taken a slight interest in politics since I got the vote at the age of 21. I was widowed in 1953, with three young children to bring up.

I took more interest in 1966 when my children were wage earners. I found that if you lived in a council house with a rent of £4 a week and were of low income, Social Security allowance for twins earning more than £5 a week was £1.30 a week. If one left home this rose to £1.50 a week on top of the £3 I charged for food and help with replacement of household.

I have been reading the government's 'Fair Deal for Housing', which will become law next month and

will scrap these allowances, replacing them by a means test. I have never read such a barbaric ruling.

When a country has fallen so low as to kill family unity for low income families, I can see only two solutions:

Bring all Her Majesty's subjects down to £9.50 a week, which is said to be sufficient for our needs—the only ones to gain would be our old age pensioners, who are the salt of the earth.

Or when a person falls to the low income of £6 a week, bring in a gas chamber ruling, which would release the pressure on finance.—(Mrs) JOAN RUSSELL, Burgess Hill, Sussex.

## LETTERS

# Return to the Two-faced Labour fold about Aldershot

WHAT a strange letter you publish from Iris M Ashford. She starts off by telling us that Marx intended only one interpretation of his philosophy. Quite right, but what was it he wrote in the Manifesto of the Community Party? 'Do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties'.

In this country the political party of the working class is the Labour Party. It has the support of and is financed by the trade union movement, a working-class movement if ever there was one.

In spite of all attempts to blur its objective, to abolish rent, interest and profit and so obtain for the worker, by hand and brain, the full results of his labour, this is what the Labour Party still stands for. If all the comrades in the various splinter groups she mentions and others got into, or back into, the Labour Party our objective could very soon be achieved.

If it is right, as she demands, for the splinter groups to join together how much more right it is for them all to join the mass party of the workers of this country, i.e. the Labour Party. There is no reason why they should not go on printing their papers if they want to. They could increase their sales much better inside the movement than outside it.

She finished up with the oddest suggestion of all. When we have abolished the capitalist system then start having separate elections for all sorts of ideologies.

Believe me, Mrs Ashford and other comrades in the splinter parties, when we have abolished rent, interest and profit, we shall have plenty of better things to do than holding elections about ideologies. There will be at least 20 years hard work to do to clear up the mess left by capitalism and in building up our socialist economy.

There is also what is to be done with the rest of the world to think about.—TOM BRADDOCK, East Preston.

IN this country is one group of people represented in almost every village, town and city who have been exploited beyond measure. Their potential for political action is greater than that of the TUC. Their only weakness is their lack of organisation. I mean council tenants.

One fifth of the population live in council housing—10 million people. Council rents are going up in April, again in October, yet again in April and October next year and will cause a lot of ill-feeling. A campaign starting now could culminate in the creation of a truly revolutionary force.—RICHARD G FIELD, Croydon, Surrey.

WE HOPE to publish a selection of letters next week taking up the points made by Yorkshire miner Jimmy Miller last week.

## Soledad and The Old Grey Whistle Test: corrections

TWO CORRECTIONS to your Review page of 11 March. Ruchell Magee is not one of the Soledad Brothers and two of them, John Cluchette and Fleeta Drumgo, are still alive. The most convincing explanation so far of the death of George Jackson is that he ran into the prison yard to divert the fire power of the guards from himself and others inside.

On the Night Assemblies Bill, Derek Taylor did break outside the narrow interests of the music industry in the interview on the Old Grey Whistle Test. He stated that the Bill would deal with 'marxists at midnight vigils' while leaving alone jamboree events 'such as Boy Scout ones and those like the biggest jamboree ever, the First World War'.

The current amendments to the Bill show that this sort of criticism has had some effect. The right to appeal to the courts against local authority decisions on festival sites is not included in the Bill and Derek Taylor poured scorn on the naive idea of the puppet MP responsible for the Bill that appeal could confidently be made to an 'expert' appointed by the government. The interview with Taylor was terminated as soon as its democratising effect became obvious.—JOHN PEARSON, London SW6.

## UCS: time for analysis

NOW that the miners' strike is over and the UCS work-in has faded from the headlines I think it is time the Socialist Worker contained another article on the UCS work-in.

So far the Socialist Worker's reports have tended to be limited to criticising the weaknesses of the leadership and to posing occupation against work-in. But I think we need a fuller analysis from a political, economic and trade union aspect, if militants are to learn something more from this struggle.

Of course, these aren't the only points which need to be dealt with but a deeper analysis is certainly needed.—FRANK MANN, London NW2

## The women of Ireland

THE British press and TV have ignored so far the part played in the struggle in Ireland by the women there. About 30,000 families are refusing to pay rent and rates, and this strike is kept going almost entirely by the housewives of Ulster.

In reports about internment the press gives reports which sound as if only men have been imprisoned, but in fact we have heard of one case in particular where a mother of four was taken to Long Kesh the same day as her husband was released.

She is still there, and has received no treatment for gunshot wounds she was suffering from. Her nine-year-old son spent Christmas Day crying outside the camp gates.

Your paper has already reported a mother and baby were arrested together.

Could one of the Socialist Worker Irish reporters give us more general information on the part played in the fight against British imperialism by women, and how many have been interned? This information would be of interest to all women in the socialist movement here.—JUDITH BARKER, MARGARET MOONEY, Bristol.

I WAS very surprised to see Socialist Worker refer to the Aldershot explosion as 'A policy of individual terrorism' and 'senseless retaliation'. In their own statement on the explosion the official IRA pointed out that the 'target chosen was a military target... The IRA certainly regrets any civilian casualties, and with far more sincerity than the hypocritical canting politicians. We would emphasise however that the target was a military one and that responsibility for civilians lies entirely with the British authorities'.

The statement goes on to discount the rumour of any bombing campaign but reiterates that 'Regiments guilty of atrocities and leading officers of those regiments are valid targets wherever they be.' It ends by condemning Lynch's collaboration and pointing out that 'the need for reprisals would not arise if the British Army were withdrawn.'

I cannot help feeling that the very two-faced article on Aldershot stems from a basic contradiction in IS's position on Ireland.

On the one hand it says it gives unconditional but not uncritical support to the IRA and Sinn Fein, while at the same time it appears to believe in practice that their strategy and tactics are so fundamentally wrong that it throws a considerable part of its resources into building another organisation in Ireland which has a totally different plan of campaign to either 'officials' or 'provisionals'.

I don't dispute IS's right to withdraw any sort of support from Irish republicanism, but if this is the case they should say it openly and not allow the point to seep into their reportage on such crucial events as Aldershot. Such an approach reflects no credit on British socialists.—PADRAIG YEATS, Birmingham 12.

## IN DEFENCE OF THE IRA

SOCIALISTS are against the use of terror as a short-cut to the revolution or as the substitution of the gun for politics. This is what we mean by 'individual terrorism'. We do not condemn violent acts because they are carried out by one individual. We do condemn however acts that set the struggle back because they lack a basis of support in the mass of the working class. Nor was it a 'senseless' or 'indiscriminate' act of 'blind desperation', to use your words. They very discriminately went for the officers' mess and avoided the men's billets. Such retaliation works wonders for nationalist morale and has the opposite effect on the army. As such it is a valid tactic, particularly against the paras after Bloody Sunday.

In your comment on letters (11 March) you write that you support the IRA in Northern Ireland (only?) in defending the mass movement of the nationalist population. But surely the best form of defence is attack? And in a guerrilla war you attack with snipers and bombs and retaliation. All Irish freedom fighters must be supported everywhere and every time they attack British imperialism. Retaliation against officers is part of that struggle.—JIM RAFFERTY, SHELAGH DUNCAN, JOHN GALVIN, Southampton

Letters to Socialist Worker must arrive not later than first post Monday. Write or type on one side of the paper only. Letters may be cut for reasons of space.

# 33 WEEKS: THE NORTH

THE SATURDAY CALM of North Ashton in Lancashire was troubled last weekend. Trade unionists from many parts of the country and beyond came to demonstrate their solidarity with the workers of Millingford Engineering.

These men—originally 45, but whittled down to 19 by fear of unemployment and the boss—have been on strike for 33 weeks now. They came out at the beginning of August last year in pursuit of trade union recognition. They have since been sacked, like the longer running and better known Fine Tubes strikers. And their struggle too goes on.

At Millingford's, the specific grievances are none too difficult to identify. For a start there is the factory itself.

When first you see it, it is difficult to reconcile with any image of a factory you might carry in your mind. It looks a faithful if outside imitation of a broken-down allotment hut. Conditions inside are in turn a faithful reproduction of the crumbling roof and walls.

The place has a permanent stink about it, and the floors are encrusted with layer upon layer of metal cuttings and oil.

But happily this is covered over from time to time. When there is heavy rain the factory is flooded. The men then work on at their lathes and grinding machines, producing parts for highly profitable oil pumps.

There are no proper washing facilities. After two men have cleaned themselves in the water drawn from the electric geyser, the others have to make do with cold.

## WHIM

Safety precautions are non-existent: no proper accident book, no safety officer, hoists and lifting tackles never checked. Although there are fire extinguishers, the strikers say these are empty.

When the factory inspector came last June he instructed management to fit guards to all the relevant machines. Millingford's bought six guards for a dozen spindles. Joe Boffey then was told by the foreman what the drill would be if the inspector should return. The foreman would turn to him and say: 'Why haven't you put the guards on?'

But it was pay and bonus considerations which really decided the men to join the AUEW, the engineers' union. Men doing the same jobs were getting five or six different rates of pay. The men were all on a bonus which could be given or withdrawn according to the whim of the foreman.

The top rate in the factory was £18.20 basic plus the £3 withdrawable bonus. The so-called apprentices had no indentures, and one was paid as little as 12½p an hour. They too were

by LAURIE FLYNN

favoured with a 50p production bonus, only if they matched adult output.

One of the so-called apprentices, Raymond Wadsworth, was only 14 years old when he started at Millingford's last year. Now 15, he too has been on strike for 33 weeks.

A rise had been promised for July. When it came it was £1 a week. Shortly before this, management had ended tea breaks, promising compensation. But July's £1 was meant both to boost their wages and compensate them for losing tea time. Elsewhere workers were winning £4 and drinking tea.

Everyday grinding oppression changed into a sense of being cheated. Workers went to the district office of the engineering union for information and advice. The union was on the way.

Recruitment was slow but sure. Soon it was 100 per cent. The men asked for a meeting. Immediately their spokesman, Bernard Lowe, was threatened with the sack. Bill Deluce became shop steward. He too was threatened.

Then quickly the Millingford management rang the AUEW district office and intimated that they had drawn up a redundancy list. There were eight names on it—the two appointed union spokesmen and six committee members.

The men said they could not stand for this. How could there be redundancy when overtime was being worked and old age pensioners employed? They struck.

It was four weeks before the strike was made official.

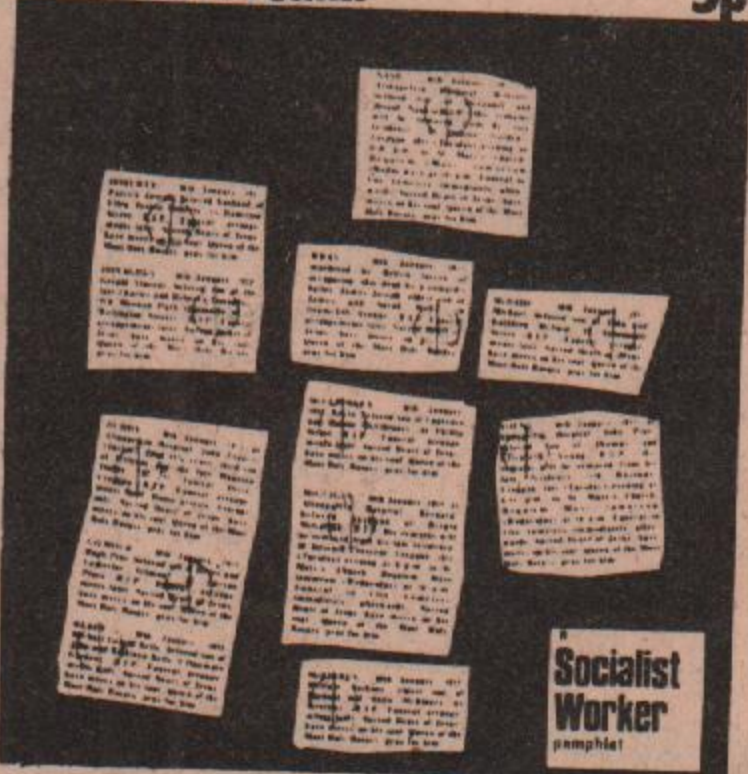
FOR those first four weeks the strikers were almost totally unorganised—no strike committee, secretary or treasurer. The organisation came not from their full-time union officials, but with the help of stewards from Ruston Paxman Diesels, who brought money and a message of solidarity.

## TRUTH ABOUT 'BLOODY SUNDAY'

### WHAT HAPPENED IN DERRY

Eamonn McCann

5p



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# NOW 'FINE TUBES' COMES TO



A picket line at the factory, with police escort. For once the pickets outnumber the police.

The strikers tried hard for a compromise, offering four and then three-day working. Millingford's management refused to attend the first conciliation meeting, sponsored by the Department of Employment.

At the second a pretty tawdry agreement was being drafted when foreman Walker screamed he wasn't having any of it. Certain strikers must agree to be made redundant before any settlement, he said.

Conciliation had led nowhere, but the union took no steps whatsoever to develop the battle to a speedy climax. Thorough and officially organised blacking was not considered. A strike for recognition was already being allowed to slip into a long uphill battle.

Immediately the Millingford employers went on to the offensive by the back door. Foremen and directors went round and tried to persuade people to go back. They met with some success. Some strikers drifted off elsewhere for work.

## PANDA CARS

This was countered by mounting solidarity pickets, without any help whatsoever from the union. Millingford's turned to the police, making a directors' office in the factory available to them.

Chief Superintendent Lindsay later said: 'It was very kind of the company . . . we're paying rent of course.' Millingford's have since returned the praise: 'The Police are marvellous'.

Here are some examples why. At 9pm on 21 October last, there were five pickets. They were being 'looked after' by three Panda cars, three police vans and at least 12 policemen. At 6.15pm on 27 October, there were five pickets, 2 police vehicles and 10 policemen. At 11am on 29 October, two pickets and 11 policemen. At 9am on 31 October, there were six policemen and no pickets whatsoever.

Police started visiting the homes of

strike committee members in the early hours, making accusations but bringing no charges.

Among the accusations were that they were stopping milk to certain families, arranging deliveries of soil and manure to blacklegs, and had been seen near an electric generator—with the implication that sabotage was intended.

The police and the local press built this into a home-movie of strikers terrorising a whole community. In fact the only occasions when anyone was actually hurt both involved actions by the management.

One of the directors drove his Jaguar straight at two pickets, knocking them down and injuring a policeman, who was off work for six weeks. Although there were 30 witnesses, no prosecution was brought.

The Millingford foreman drove the firm's van directly at an electrical union member on the solidarity picket, and caught him.

On November 10, Bill Deluce, the Millingford shop steward, was charged with driving in a manner dangerous to the public, and using offensive language. He was fined £30 and

ordered to pay another £36 costs.

He had been accused of trying to knock down one of the foremen at a roundabout and convicted despite contradictions in the prosecution evidence. Two blacklegs described the incident as taking place on different sides of the roundabout.

Later another Millingford striker, Tony Fagan, was charged with obstructing a seven foot wide pavement and the police, all by himself. He got off.

**I**N NOVEMBER the Labour group of Ashton Council unanimously drew the attention of the Lancashire Police Authority to the police resources tied up at Millingford's, stating that the council considered this unnecessary and asking the cost.

Failing a prompt reply, Councillors George Harrison and A Bentham wrote individually. The reply from Sir Patrick McCall, clerk to Lancashire Police, states that 'the circumstances would not justify the time and expense . . . required to produce special costings.'

The police then sent Chief Superintendent Lindsay to the

January meeting of Ashton Council to explain the situation.

In a 75-minute speech, he made much of so-called terrorism, but put it down to people from dreaded Merseyside, a fearsome name in Lancashire.

When asked by Councillor Harrison how many charges and how many arrests had arisen out of this 'terrorism', Lindsay replied: 'I can't say . . . None . . . you're not being fair.' He insisted that the police had taken no sides.

But by this time the solidarity picketing had been stopped following direct discussions between police and AUEW full-time officials.

In fact the Millingford strikers found early on that the great union they had joined was reluctant to do anything firm to help at Millingford's. During the strike they have learned that lesson again and again.

They have never once been visited on the picket line by any of the three full-time officials responsible for the area.

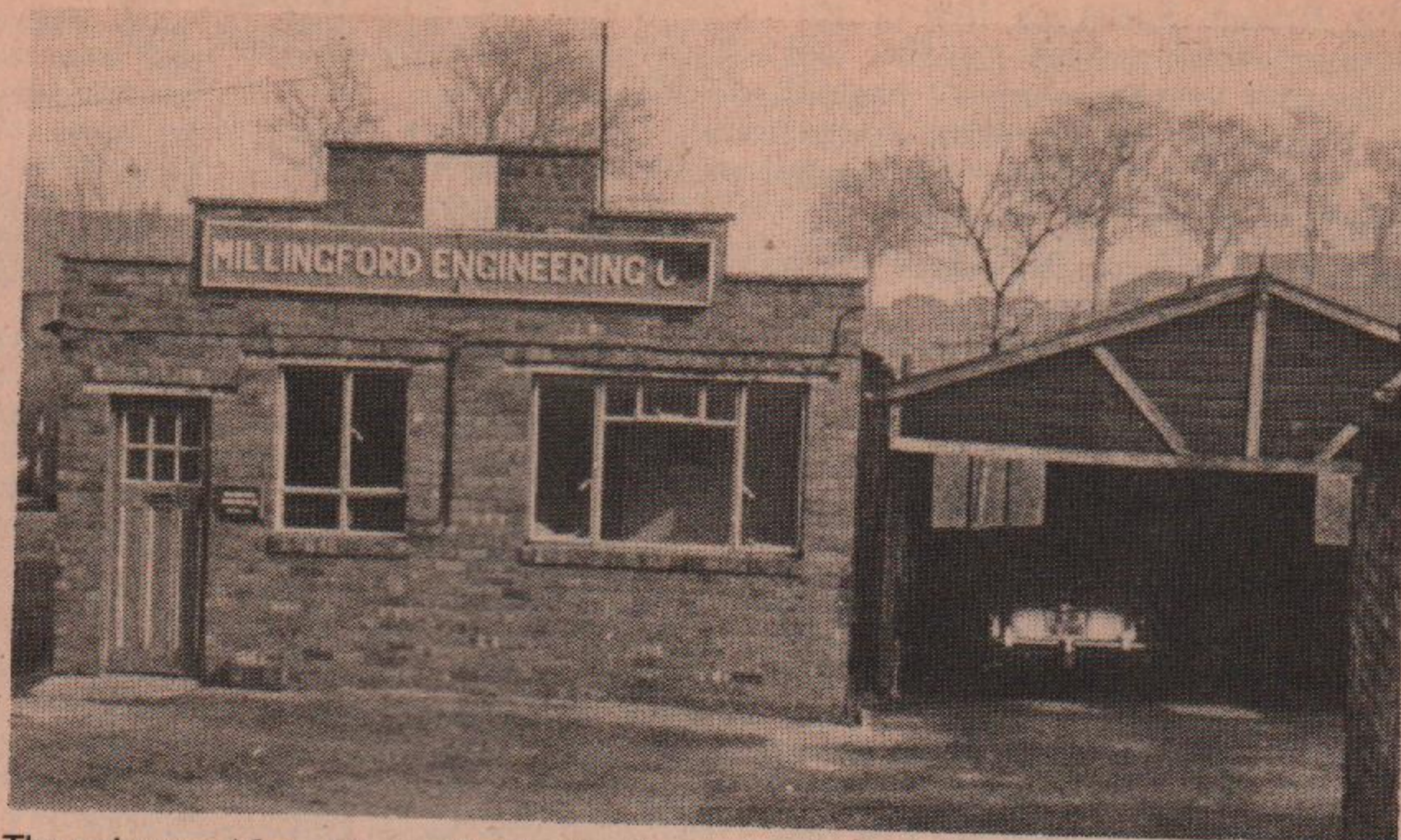
The AUEW district office has refused to do anything about blacking at the official level, and since supplies for Millingford's come in small quantities the firm has devised methods to frustrate the picket lines.

## CHEAP LABOUR

But in the 25th week of the strike, the AUEW executive did take one very direct interest in the strike. They drew local officials' attention to the paragraph in a letter from Millingford management dealing with the so-called apprentices.

This pointed out that the six apprentices should not have taken any part in the strike. The executive instructed the apprentices to return to work. In fact the lads are not apprentices since they have no indentures, but cheap boy labour. They had been getting strike pay all along. Those who are still out still do.

The AUEW district secretary,



The only cared-for object at Millingford's: the boss's Jag

Billy Broxton, has repeatedly said he will have nothing to do with blacking or solidarity picketing. On the latter at least he is wrong, since he helped the police to end it.

**B**UT PERHAPS the most pitiful aspect of the AUEW's record lies in their failure to launch a district levy for the men of Millingford. In February the men's branch delegate asked the district committee to hold a ballot to see if the membership wanted a levy. He could not find a seconder. The stalwarts of Wigan AUEW argued that such a ballot would be too expensive.

It is of course expensive to ballot 8000 members. But only at the beginning of January this year, the AUEW changed its rules to hold postal ballots to 'increase democracy'. Democracy now seems to be 'too expensive'.

Meanwhile the inexperienced trade unionists of Millingford soldier on. They lack nothing by way of courage though all of them are in great need after 33 weeks.

Men and women like them built the trade union movement. At great cost to themselves they constructed giant organisations like the AUEW which today will do little or nothing to crack a tiny firm of dictators growing fat on cheap labour and high profits from specialised oil pumps.

## BOSSSES' PALS

While it is a little strike, and there are just 19 workers determined to fight on, theirs is a vital struggle. There are dozens of places like Millingford's in and around Wigan, and many more up and down the country.

The local employers are solidly behind their pals in North Ashton. For if the union catches a hold there, forces up wages and improves conditions, they could well be next in line.

After widespread solidarity action closed down Roberts Arundel in Stockport, Hugh Scanlon wrote the foreword to a book on that fine victory. 'We must be vigilant that, if necessity arises, such victories, with such determination, are made possible in the future,' he wrote.

If the men of Millingford are to win now, and other downtrodden wage workers in Lancashire are to have new possibilities opened to them, we will have to look for that determination in places other than the district offices and the executive committee of the AUEW. There is no doubt it can be found.

Already there has been a fine response from rank and file members of the AUEW and other unions, particularly fearsome Merseyside. What they did with Roberts Arundel they can do with Millingford's. And if so-called 'terrorism' really does hit North Ashton you will at least know why and be glad.

## FIGHT FOR

Industrial Relations  
A Guide to the  
Industrial Relations Act 1971  
**ir**  
UNION RIGHTS

PART SIX

## One law for the boss, one for the men

THE Industrial Relations Act cannot possibly be imposed if workers refuse to let it. The Tories know this: that is why the Act relies heavily on the British sense of 'fair play'. For this is the appeal to the silent majority.

If you play to the Tories' new rules—lots of talking with the bosses, no strikes without 30 days' notice—then that's 'fair'.

But do anything else—such as join a walk-out because a man has been wrongly sacked—and that's an 'unfair industrial practice'.

So the Tories hope to blunt most of the workers' weapons in their fight for their share of the national cake and control over the wealth they alone produce. Any industrial action in breach of contract becomes an 'unfair industrial practice'.

So go-slows and unofficial mass meetings in working hours are out-

lawed, though work-to-rules and overtime bans remain possible—so long as overtime isn't written into your contract.

Of course the ruling class is not attacking the workers directly. If 3000 workers go slow they cannot all be prosecuted. The aim is to pick off the militants.

The 'inducers' of such 'unfair' practices can be sued in court.

### Fund

Support for other workers' struggles by blacking goods or other sympathetic action is also outlawed as 'unfair' if used against an employer who is outside the original dispute.

But the law is careful to leave the bosses as much room for sympathetic action as they like. It says an employer remains outside the dispute even if he has previously contributed

to a fund available to compensate the other employer for losses caused by the dispute.

He is outside even, incredibly, if his company is controlled by the same parent company. So the parent company could, it seems, move work from the firm in dispute to the subsidiary—and then sue the workers' leaders if it was blacked.

In effect this allows employers to take sympathy action but not workers. One law for the rulers, another for the ruled.

The new law reproduces the existing law for the protection of peaceful picketing, but there will be no protection where picketing could lead to an 'unfair' industrial practice.

A picket who belongs to an unregistered union and who persuades a lorry driver not to deliver goods to a

factory will be inducing the driver to break his contract of employment. So the picket's employer or the driver's employer can complain to the National Industrial Relations Court to get compensation or an order restraining the picket from similar action in future.

### Action

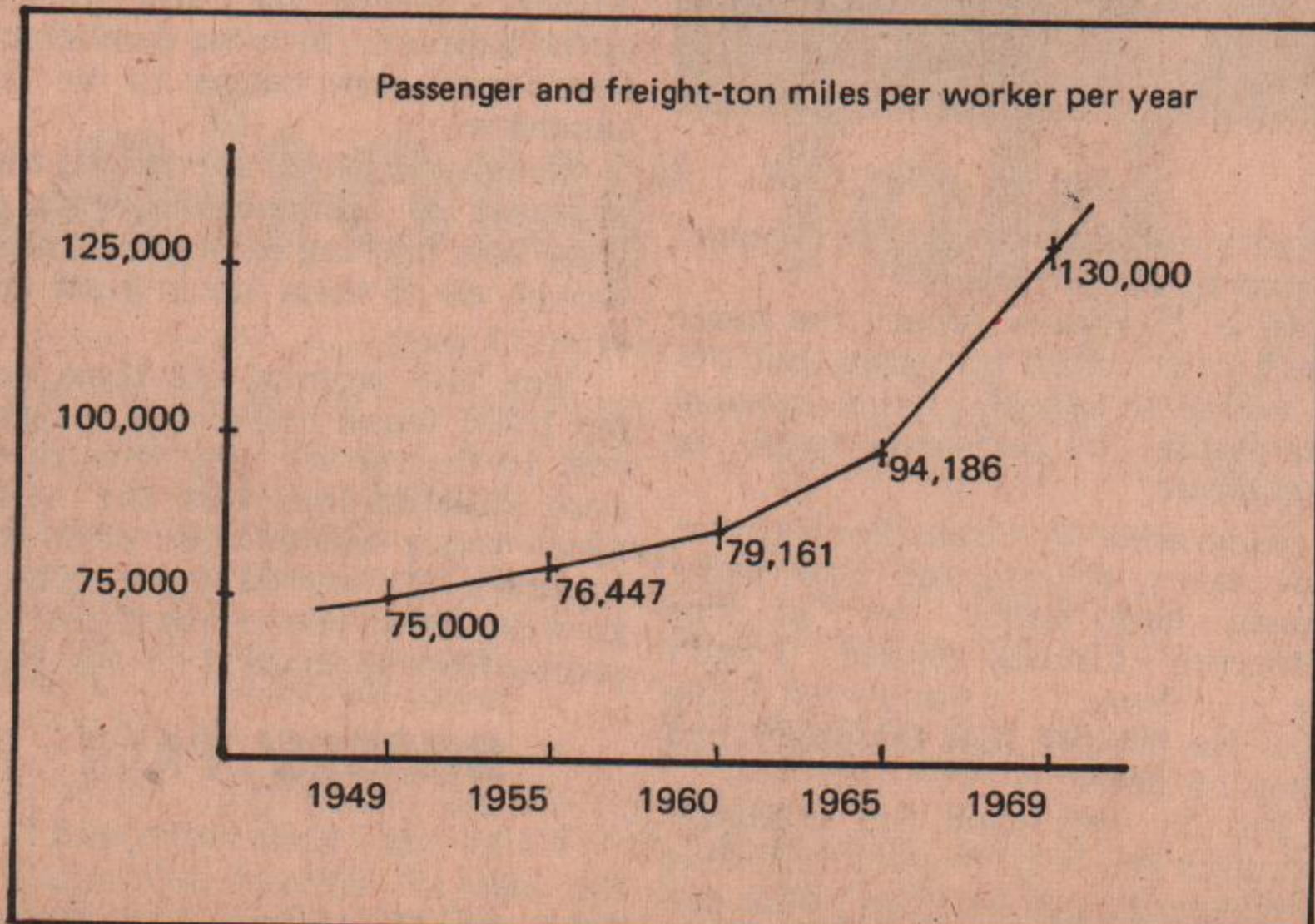
The new law is designed to intimidate workers. It will often be used only when the employer calculates the balance of forces to be in his favour.

If every time an employer takes a worker to court widespread action is arranged in solidarity, then the bosses would be 'intimidated'.

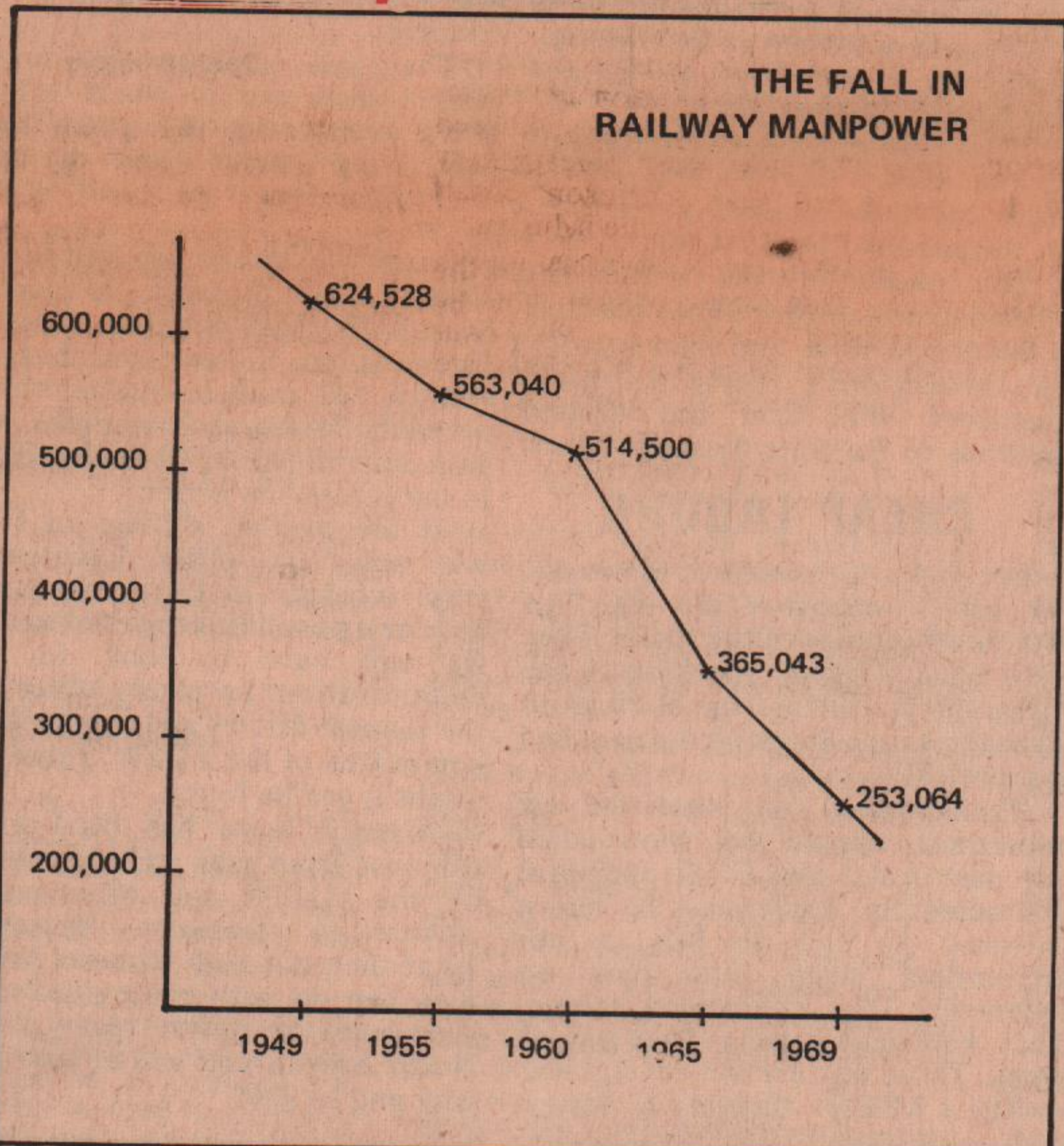
ROGER ROSEWELL



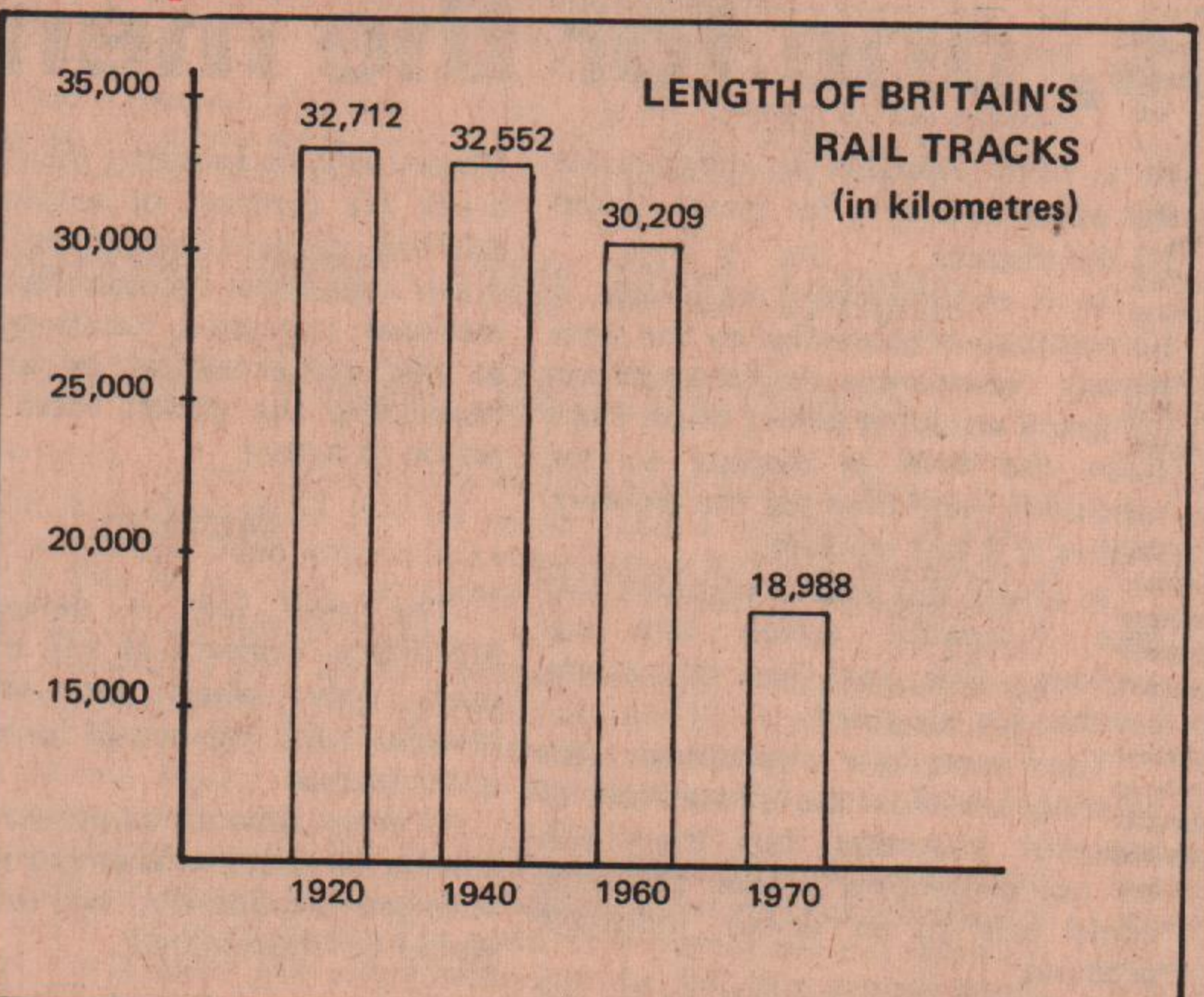
# Goodbye jobs! British Rail makes the going easy...



**Productivity** While railwaymen work regular overtime to make ends meet, their productivity soars



**Manpower** Massive cuts in the workforce have been the result of productivity dealing



**Beeching's axe** The big axing showed British Rail's attitude to social need

ALMOST every time Britain's railwaymen have put in for a substantial pay increase two things have happened: The British Railways Board has said 'We can't afford it' and the leaders of the rail unions have either taken them at their word or quibbled a little and settled the matter over late night drinks at Downing Street.

As a result in 1972 the basic wage rates of some 90,000 out of a total 130,000 wage grade staff are below the Tory government's official poverty line. The current railway minimum of £17.20 is £4.55 below that gained by the Post Office Workers after being defeated by the Tories last year. And postmen, like railwaymen, rely on overtime working for anything approaching a living wage.

The union's claims have never been formulated to tackle the terrible scandal of the lower paid in the railways. So the situation today is little different that it was in 1940.

Then the notoriously low pay of British railway workers was a regular theme in Nazi Germany's propaganda war.

One thing has changed dramatically though. There are many fewer railwaymen picking up even more lousy wages.

For staff has been reduced by more than 56 per cent in the years 1960-1970. This is the fastest rate of run down in any British industry, including the mines.

Only half these staff reductions can in any way be attributed to closure of lines.

### Lost jobs

Scarcely had the industry recovered from Beeching's 'if it doesn't pay, close it' surgery when the British Railways Board, galvanised into action by the last Labour government, pushed through rapid productivity deals.

They met with wholesale support from the unions.

From 1962 to 1966 there was a 103,000 reduction in staff. Passenger ton miles (output) hardly changed—meaning a 26 per cent increase in productivity over the same period. Wage costs were to be held 'broadly constant'.

Again in 1968-70 still further staff reductions meant a further 23.5 per cent rise in output measured on the basis of passenger ton miles.

In both 1968 and 1969 about 22,000 jobs disappeared—none of them due to closures. For the process of so-called modernisation bit just as deep on the main lines, where passenger and freight traffic was increasing.

### Big deal

Signalling, where rates of pay are relatively high, is being decimated at no cost to British Rail. The new power-operated and electronic signals will mean a reduction of signalling staff on the London-Glasgow line from 2000 to 224.

The 1965 scheme which saw a new agreement on mileage rates in return for a reduction in loco manning was estimated to save British Rail £6 million a year. £80,000 extra was paid to the guards for the favour. One year after signing the agreement the unions said it was 'grossly unfair'.

In the railway workshops the story is the same, with staff halved in 10 years, with savage productivity concessions attached. These include Saturday and Sunday rosters put into the normal working week, and lower grade workers doing higher grade jobs for part of their time—but being paid the lower rate by agreement.

## by ARTHUR MALONE

There is plenty more to come if British Rail has its way. Workshops are virtually to disappear as the remaining contracts are turned over to private firms.

On the main lines, railway management is pushing hard for 'improved utilisation of locos and train crews, further reduction in the wagon fleet and much faster turn rounds.'

Of course railway management argues that much of the improved productivity is not produced by labour at all, but by capital investment. But where has the capital come from?

Railwaymen have for many years serviced an enormous capital debt and created most of the new investment by their labours. The public has assisted through high fares.

### Problem

The situation, now as ever, is that the only way railwaymen find a way through their appalling rates of pay is by systematic overtime and weekend working. On average they do nine hours a week, with footplate staff on four or five.

This is regarded both by British Rail and most of the men as part of their basics, rather than as an inconvenience payment. Nor, more importantly, is it seen as something no one should be taking, never mind relying on, in a situation of massive and continuing redundancies.

The NUR has never once framed a wage claim to tackle the problem of low pay. It never states a figure when making a claim, but half way through negotiations puts down a percentage. This makes it difficult to mobilise the membership and prevents unity between the grades since the percentage impact is very different at the top end.

### Drinks

In 1960, the railwaymen (after a decade of disgust) became Tory Britain's only 'special case' before the miners.

Four years later they were back 'out of line' again. Since that date they have financed their own increases many times over, and the real problems have remained untackled in favour of midnight drinks with prime ministers.

Imposition of an overtime ban now would prepare the membership for the fight they must put up sometime. But the NUR seems totally unprepared to make any such move.

British Rail is relying on being able to swing the union leadership

to accept an 11 per cent increase dressed up as 16 per cent. This will be done by the simple device of consolidating some of the bonuses into the basic and paying nothing extra in cash terms. As the secret terms of the claim admit, the unions need 10.5 per cent right now just to get the difference between last year's claim and what they settled for.

The unions' affair with productivity dealing, with fighting not redundancy but for more redundancy pay, a bigger bounty to 'cop it and hop it', continues. It may be that this year something will go sadly wrong with the normal sweetheart relations with management.

It's about time it did, for the railwaymen too are once again 'a special case'. And the only way that will ever get righted is by taking very out-of-the-ordinary action.

**High safety record always second to the costs**

There is that rail form of For ever miles the people k on the r  
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The railway

# 1948: all change, but

# not for the workers

THE STORY of railways since nationalisation is about their transformation from one insane condition to another. When they were taken over by the state in 1948, they were in a shambles. Four private companies (previously 100) were not integrated in their operations. Even their technology was not standardised.

In a constant financial crisis, there was almost no re-investment and there was absolutely no possibility that they would make a profit. Not surprisingly, they were dumped on to the shoulders of the public.

At the time of nationalisation only five per cent of the total route mileage was electrified—less than any other country. Southern Rail alone had proceeded with a modernisation programme.

This involved a high capital cost—£21 million. But services were trebled with an extra working cost of only £164,000 a year.

Estimated cost at that time for total main line electrification was a massive £261 million, which the railway companies could not afford.

But the companies with heavy state subsidies did manage to spend more than £300 million in the same period just to renew and reconstruct existing stock.

## Slumped

In the last year of private enterprise the railways had a £60 million deficit. 20 per cent of all coaching stock was over 35 years old, as was 29 per cent of the wagon stock and 39 per cent of the locos.

It was estimated there was an immediate need for 3000 new vehicles a year for five years, and, in addition to renewal expenditure, at least £500 million needed spending on a capital investment programme.

Book value of all four companies' ordinary stock at the beginning of the Second World War was £275 million. The market price, on the eve of nationalisation 10 years later, had slumped to around £200 million.

Needless to say compensation was generous if not lavish. The nationalised transport board was



Beeching the axeman

saddled with sole responsibility for paying the interest charges on the compensation stock.

This alone meant that railwaymen had to produce around £30 million a year just to service the debt owed for borrowing the funds to take the private owners' rotting railways off them.

But times were good for some. The pits had just changed hands, too, and since the two industries were indissolubly linked at director level, many powerful individuals lived happily on their compensation rake-off from unprofitable private railways and mines.

The railway unions had long favoured nationalisation and their leaders were soon firmly meshed into the new state bureaucracy which had taken control on behalf of the rest of big private industry.

In 1949 the NUR accepted the view that wages could not be increased substantially for about 10 years because 'railways are running on square wheels inherited from the past.' In the first 15 months of nationalisation 25,000 jobs disappeared.

## Ruthless

Labour's nationalisation plans had created a transport commission and the railway losses were offset against profitable ventures in nationalised road transport.

By a policy of wage and staff reductions and ruthless economies on the railways, the publicly-owned transport system turned in operating surpluses every year. By 1953 the British Transport Commission's massive debt was reduced to £27 millions. Eight years later it had soared £697 million.

The re-election of a Tory government in 1951 and a renewed crisis of investment in the industry led to new policies.

All the profitable sectors of transport were hived off. The railways alone were left with the statutory obligation to pay their way. Beeching was the eventual result. Nearly a third of the total route mileage was closed down.

Ernest Marples, Tory Minister of Transport, said he thought he knew the meaning of the term 'vested interest' until he took up that job. Sure enough, the Tories pursued a policy whereby the road and car industry was supported by massive public expenditure while the railways were kept in constant financial crisis. Wagon and loco construction was progressively transferred to the giant private engineering firms and the run down of the railway workshops started. It is still going on.

It was left to the Labour government to tackle the more difficult problem of the industry's workforce. This was reduced by a fifth in 1964-66, considerably faster than anything the Tories had ever managed.

The financial crisis of the railways continued, and was sharpened by the overall difficulties of British industry.

Labour brought in a new Transport Act in 1968. This reduced the interest-bearing debt of the Railways Board, which had increased by about 43 times since 1953, from £922 million to £365 million and the entire suspended debt was extinguished.

But the basic purpose of the Act was to separate remaining British Rail activities and put them into competition with one another as well as other transport.

For many years railway trade unionism at the official level has been an extremely spineless affair. Wage claims in the industry have long involved a claim for 'substantial increases' (no figure mentioned) but settlements have been for pennies and halfpennies with large productivity strings attached which reduce both earnings and the labour force.

## Scandal

Although the labour force has been halved since the war the railwaymen do have a great deal of potential power. They also have a watertight case any time they care to present it.

That case doesn't just centre on the scandal of low pay, the heavy reliance on overtime, shift and inconvenience payments. It is about the whole priorities of our society.

What do we organise our lives for? To pay interest payments to bankers and stagger from one crisis to another or for human need?

Within our system there is no way of changing these priorities, as the experience of coal and rail and the desperate attempts of successive Labour and Tory governments to shift wealth in favour of profit and kick the cycle off once again have shown.

The future for Britain's railwaymen lies in militant action, in putting over their case not to some anonymous general public, but to the working people of this society.

John Ogilvie, a research and development engineer, has recently shown that the projected £600 million cost of the third London airport would pay the entire cost of the London-Birmingham-Manchester rail electrification scheme four times over. The figure includes the cost of all rolling stock and locos.

The new airport will have a peak output of 20,000 travellers per hour, or one person per acre per hour. Charing Cross Station, in London, has a peak output of 28,000 passengers per hour.

It is not quite as large as the third London airport, its passenger per acre per hour output is 6000 times that of the projected airport.

Charing Cross Station did not cost £600 million.

The way this or any other present society is run does not allow rational choices about how human beings and goods are to be transported. The railwaymen have a convincing case to make and plenty of room to make it in. It would sound much more convincing coming from mass picket lines.



...broke down in winter 1947, and the resulting coal shortage halted much industry. Nationalisation followed

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## Warning

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companies except the  
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armal inquiries were held  
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if private enterprise had  
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first invented in 1905,  
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have been saved—399 people.

After nationalisation, such was the burden of capital debt and the necessity to reorganise that no speedy progress in introducing automatic control was made. It took the 1952 disaster at Harrow, when 112 died, to initiate any programmatic action.

The private companies and British Railways also shared a profound antipathy to being covered by any state legislation on industrial safety. They campaigned vigorously against inclusion under the Factories Act. It was only in 1963 that railways were brought within the scope of this law.

On Christmas Day 1970 a railway trackman called Cherry was struck down and killed by a locomotive at Lochgreen Junction in Ayrshire. The look-out man did not see the train coming until it was 200 yards away. Cherry and two other men did not hear his belated warning because of a plane passing overhead and the noise of the tamping hammers they were using.

Graham, the look-out man, was too late to warn them by touch, and because of his working position Cherry was killed. High productivity was the norm too. Instead of only two men working the hammers, and

two look-out men, Graham was watching both up and down lines.

In his confidential accident report on this death, the railway inspector notes that the generator for supplying power to the hammers, which was being attended by the look-out man, was not equipped with a cut-out switch.

## Siren?

'Had this modification been available, Graham (the look-out man) might possibly have succeeded by stopping the hammers in warning the men in time, even though he failed to see the locomotives until they were only 200 yards away,' he reported.

The reason the generator was not equipped with such a cut-out switch is most revealing. In March 1969 (21 months before this death) the British Railways Board decided to modify all such generators to fit leads so that a look-out man could stop the hammers working.

This was specifically intended to act as a warning. The operators would know that they should immediately lay down their hammers and step clear of the track.

Yet 21 months later, 39 out of 130 such generators in the Scottish region had not been equipped with

such leads. This was because 'it had been decided that the modification should include the fitting of a siren which would operate when the hammers were stopped.'

The machines in use however 'happened to be of a design which did not readily permit of this.' So, rather than scrap the machines, the Scottish region chose to deprive overburdened look-out men of an aid which could save lives.

This contradiction between the capabilities of human labour and the aims of production is every bit as serious and damaging in the railways as in private industry.

A particularly tragic example is to be found in the door handle design for the mark 11D rolling stock, the new air-conditioned trains plying the east coast route. Originally these handles were located on the inside of the doors.

## Killed

On 19 August last year a seven-year-old boy opened the door in one of these air-conditioned carriages while the train was moving, was sucked out and killed. After this accident, British Rail launched a programme to design a replacement.

Then on 1 October a man was killed in identical circumstances. After this, British Rail started production and fitting of new handles.

But on 25 October yet another man was killed and British Rail was forced into the decision to remove all such locks forthwith.

In fact before production of these handles was ever started, the vehicle-building staff at BR's Derby carriage and wagon works—where the new carriages are produced—severely criticised them as a serious hazard, particularly to children.

The experience and knowledge of the production workers was set aside, in an attempt to solve the narrow problem of how to open the doors without opening windows and interrupting the smooth functioning of the much-advertised air-conditioning. If nothing else, the adverts did look good.



Keep death off the rails

# WHEN LONDON HAD ITS 'BLOODY SUNDAY'...



## Three killed, hundreds battered by police on march by jobless

RECENT EVENTS in Derry have been given the name Bloody Sunday. England too had its Bloody Sunday in November 1887, as the final incident in a long unemployment campaign waged by the Social Democratic Federation, the first socialist organisation of national importance.

The campaign was given headline news by Black Monday—8 February 1886—a few hours of rioting which sent London into a state of panic for the next two days. A meeting in Trafalgar Square on Black Monday was followed by an unorganised march of the 'out-o-works' to Hyde Park.

As the procession went through the heart of 'Clubland' and 'shopland', members of the Carlton and Reform clubs jeered at the 'great unwashed'.

The unemployed retaliated with bricks and stones and the windows crashed in. Near Hyde Park, passing carriages were rocked and overturned, and any jewellery which fell from the upended was quickly pocketed.

More determined looting began in Oxford Street. As a finale, the unemployed, on the way back to their East End haunts, struck up Rule Britannia. Rioting under the socialist banner had spontaneously relapsed into a nationalist feeling for Queen and country.

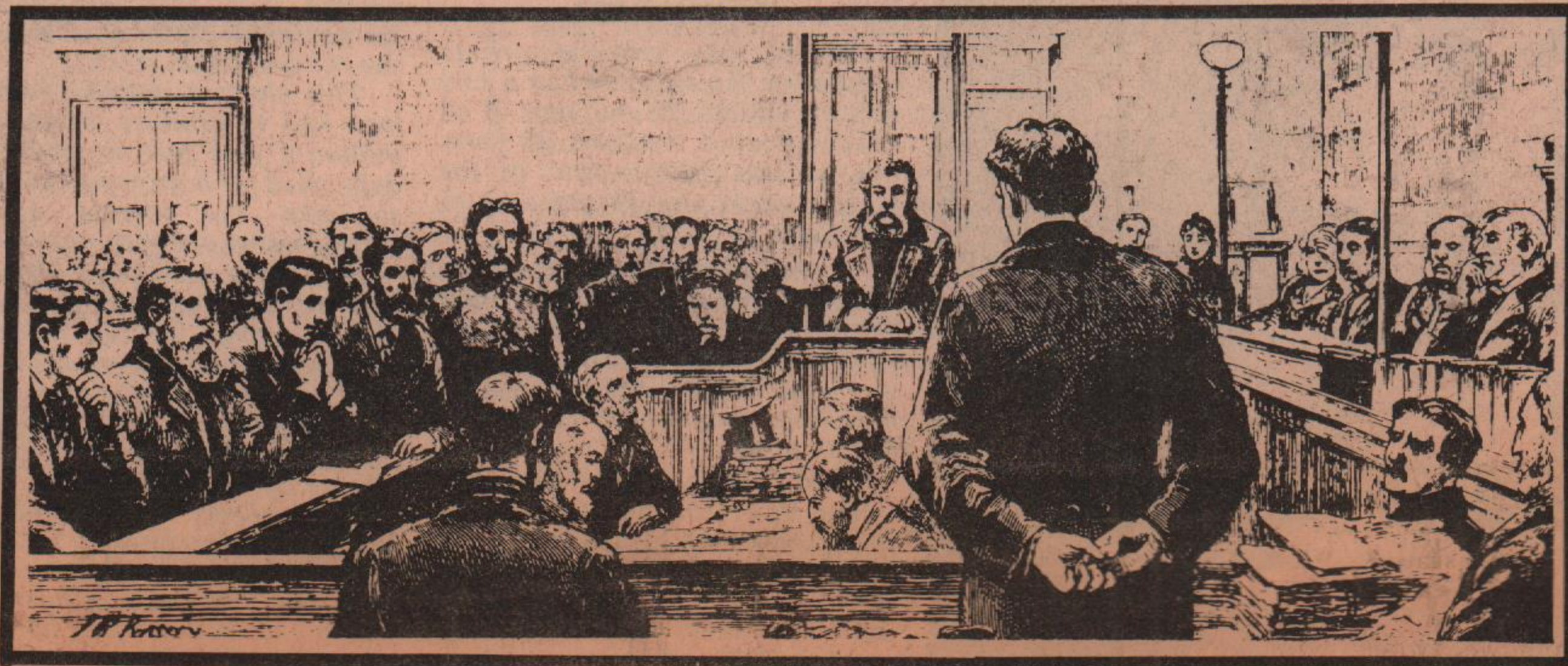
The long period of the Great Depression in Britain was broken by bouts of real slump with mass unemployment, as in 1885-7. For such workers as the shipwrights, builders, and dock labourers, an unemployment crisis intensified a regular plight of long spells of unemployment or under-employment.

### Degraded conditions

Workshops and factories closed down when trade slackened and the workers, thrown on the streets, joined the ranks of the seasonal unemployed. The workless had few savings of their own, and were forced to rely on pawn money from the 'Pop Shop', on the generosity of employed friends, on charity organisations, and on the Poor Law.

Only the workhouse offered permanent support—the dreaded 'Bastille', in which independence was left at the front door. The SDF retaliated against these degraded conditions of relief by aggressive processions to the workhouse, and demanded public works for the workless.

The SDF varied their processions to the workhouse with parades to the local churches. After one parade to St Paul's Cathedral in February 1887, the unemployed chorused 'No' when



SDF leaders in the dock

the Reverend Dr Gifford said, 'There must be the rich and the poor.'

But Trafalgar Square was the arena for the most vehement displays—on 8 February 1886, John Burns spoke in favour of looting bakers' shops to dying in the cold garret. This was the prelude to the West End riots.

Worse riots had occurred in colliery or anti-Catholic disturbances—but not on the hallowed ground of Pall Mall. The riots had challenged the supremacy of the middle class.

### 'Reign of terror'

The press, on the following days, reported the fear of the East End unemployed resuming their attack upon property in the West End. Further rumours spread of '80,000 socialists marching from Deptford'.

Letters of indignation poured into the newspaper offices, and completed the self-inflicted 'reign of terror'. The well-bred swore never to defend the cause of 'the people again and to axe their subscriptions to charities.'

Meanwhile, other members of the middle class were escalating the

by Vic and Sheila Bailey

Mansion House relief fund to an eventual £60,000. All alike had been deaf to the unemployed's slogan, 'Justice, not Charity'.

The attitude of socialists to the events of Black Monday varied. The SDF leaders were delighted at the free advertisement the issue had given their organisation. William Morris of the Socialist League thought the riots illustrated an awakening of the English working class.

But Friederich Engels, Marx's collaborator, thought the SDF had been leading only the casual labourers, along with the 'rough' or criminal elements. The bust-up, Engels said, had linked socialism with looting, and damaged the socialist cause.

Yet the unemployment agitation was not discredited. The SDF continued their campaign. The next showdown came when the authorities decided to rid Trafalgar Square of the homeless unemployed who used the square as a sleeping place during the summer months of 1887.

The banning of meetings in the square resulted in the demonstration of 13 November 1887, when contingents of radicals and socialists

approached the square along different routes and were ferociously assaulted by the police. Defenceless marchers could not possibly penetrate the droves of police

The day became christened Bloody Sunday. The threat posed to the authorities by Black Monday had been avenged on Bloody Sunday with the lives of three demonstrators.

Bloody Sunday shattered the illusion of untrained unemployed combatting such vast police strength. Some of the discouraged labour militants turned to labour representation in parliament.

William Morris kept his revolutionary ideas but adopted a wider perspective—a recognition of the spade-work needed to create a working-class party.

### Harmless stick

Those marching in the unemployed demonstrations from 1884-1887 had not been united into any solid organisation for continuous activity. And their positively hostile attitude to the trade unions ensured that the SDF remained a sect and did not develop into a strong political body.

The SDF's reliance on the natural collapse of the old society meant that they used the unemployed riots as a harmless stick to wave at the government.

During the riots, and at the following court cases, the SDF basked in the sunlight of attention. The euphoria of the whole occasion distanced them from the rank and file in the unions.

Spontaneous riots can frighten the middle class, as on Black Monday. But political success cannot be measured by the number of police heads broken.

If the working class is to avoid the confusion of motives within riots and to develop a many-sided offensive against the structure of the capitalist system—an offensive involving employed as well as unemployed—a sound revolutionary party is fundamental.

## Stout year for beer men

BEER PRICES have shot up again. Greene King have increased the cost of a pint of bitter at their 950 pubs by 1½p, and Tollemache, who have 500 houses, have lumped 1p on the price of most of their beers.

Only two days before Tollemache announced that the price of a pint of bitter was going up from 12p to 13p the company's chairman, Lord Tollemache, was telling the world that group profit after tax for 1971 was £279,746, more

than £67,000 up on the previous year.

It must be nice to declare an increase of more than 31 per cent in profits and then add more than 8 per cent to your prices.

What is particularly interesting about the Tollemache price leap, however, is that they were signatories to the much vaunted CBI voluntary ceiling of 5 per cent for 'unavoidable' price increases.

Lord Tollemache described 1971 as 'a very successful year.' Well, here's to 1972. Cheers!

The Greene King increase on bitter is even bigger. It represents more than 3½ in pre-decimal terms, or a rise of more than 13 per cent.

In their press statement announcing the increases Greerde King were quick to point out that they had been forced into jacking up prices to meet the problem of inflation. Wages and costs were going up.

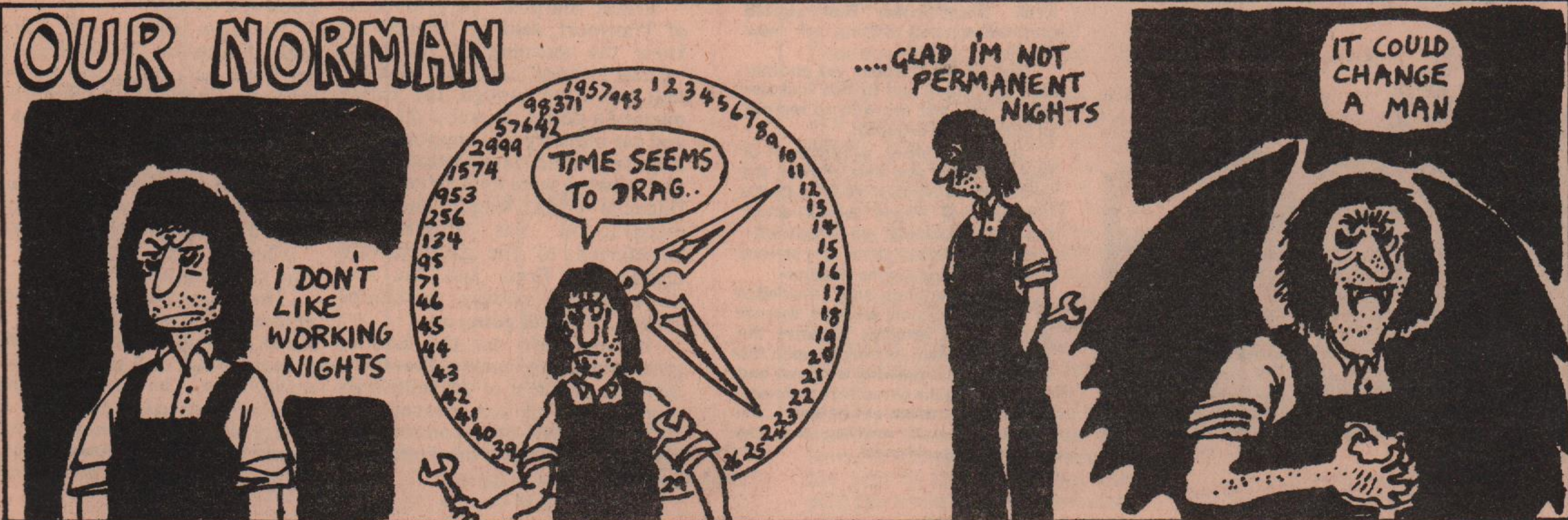
They are not the only things going up. Another item that has been inflating nicely has been Greene King's profits.

In 1968 they were £802,807 before tax and £484,315 after tax. In 1969 the figures were up to £891,855 and £528,554. In 1970 they had risen to £922,915 and £546,753.

If Greene King are genuinely anxious to cut back on expenditure they might start by stopping their annual £50 donation to the Economic League.

This pernicious organisation is a secretive group of big business panjandrums, founded in 1919 to 'crusade for capitalism'.

Ron Knowles





## REVIEW

# Friends in high places: blinkered view of Clyde struggle

THE GOVERNMENT's decision to force Upper Clyde Shipbuilders into liquidation last June set in motion a train of events that will affect the labour movement for a long time to come. It is therefore essential for socialists to analyse what took place and is still taking place on Clydeside in order to draw the positive as well as the negative conclusions from that experience.

Alasdair Buchan's book\* is written from the standpoint of those who believe that the work-in is an important contribution to the fighting tactics of the working-class movement.

Buchan was the only journalist allowed to attend meetings of the UCS shop stewards' co-ordinating committee and it is not surprising that the struggle tends to be presented in terms of how the fearless shop stewards outwitted the nasty Tories.

What Jimmy Reid said to John Davies receives more attention than how a mass movement developed that forced the government to retreat and conceivably could have swept them from office.

## Surprised

Yet in the first page of his book Buchan states: 'Their action and the public campaign which sprang up around it involved much more than a redundancy fight. It stemmed from a reaction to the rundown of industry and employment in Clydeside and Scotland... They had taken up arms against the government and its policies.'

Everybody who took part in the first great demonstration in Glasgow on 23 June was surprised at the response. People who had never been on strike before stopped that day.

Workers from biscuit factories, jam factories, cigarette factories, unorganised clothing workers all took part in the 40,000-strong march through the city along with thousands from the shipyards and engineering factories. At the meeting at Glasgow Green, sensing the mood of his huge audience, Jimmy Reid was greeted with tumultuous applause when he said: 'If the system can't provide us with jobs then we will have to change the system.'

In the weeks before the work-in started shop stewards in every factory met and pledged their support for the UCS workers. Hundreds of other meetings enthusiastically welcomed the stewards' claim that they would 'take over' the yards.

## Uncritical

The atmosphere on Clydeside at that time—central to any understanding of the UCS struggle—is strangely lacking in the book. Anyone seeking a serious examination of what was going on in the working-class movement outside the UCS stewards' meeting room will be disappointed.

Instead Harold Wilson's visit to John Brown's is described at some length. 'If the Labour Party was to support it [the work-in] then Wilson would have to be the man who would commit the party'.

On the next page the following is reported uncritically as emanating from Wilson's lips: 'I am here to assert the right of the shipbuilding workers of Upper Clyde—the right to work'. Wilson incidentally wrote the introduction to the book.

Vic Feather's intervention, essentially an attempt to confine the Clydeside workers' anger to orthodox, controllable channels, is described as follows: 'Vic Feather's involvement added much to the campaign. He added the weight of



The UCS shop stewards' committee: negotiators, but was there ever any real control?

the 10 million workers affiliated to the TUC behind the stewards, and by so doing removed any last traces of stigma or doubt about the personalities involved and their motives.'

After stating what Anthony Wedgwood-Benn demanded from the UCS directors, Buchan adds 'Manpower would have to be reduced as well'. Indeed it would. By 3200 to be precise, according to Benn. But since only the Tories are baddies, this episode is glossed over.

Buchan's approach is essentially that of the UCS co-ordinating committee's. Great emphasis is placed on winning support from the leaders of the trade union movement.

The argument that the rank and file of the labour movement was the only force capable of forcing the government to retreat and had to be mobilised for a general campaign on the unemployment situation is answered: 'The UCS men, afraid of the dissipation of effort, argued that the first priority must be to win their case.' In practice this also meant that no shop stewards conference was called for almost three months after 10 August.

Linked directly to the question of how to fight unemployment is the question of the conduct of the struggle inside UCS itself. The stewards claimed to be in control of the yards from 30 July. Yet, says Buchan, talking of those actually

working in: 'Convenor Sam Barr claims that the local yard management contributed to this by nominating the best known radicals for redundancy. Certainly, within a few weeks of the lay-offs beginning he was the only leading steward in the yard still on the payroll.'

We are even told: 'The bonus rate for steelworkers actually went up by 4p an hour the week after the takeover.' Did someone mention work sharing?

## Worried

Constant references are made to the stewards' militancy, and their claim to be in control of the yards is repeated frequently. Three examples of this control are given.

When the liquidator heard of the stewards' decision to move the keel of a ship from Linthouse to Scotstoun, he ordered the transfer himself. This occurred in August when the government was extremely worried about the Clydeside workers' attitude.

The second example concerns a refusal to allow drawing boards which had been sold to leave an office. Third, the liquidator re-employed six painters working in.

And that's it. The author, who attended every meeting of the shop stewards' committee, gives no other example of stewards' control.

By October, we are told, 'The UCS struggle had ceased to be primarily a political struggle and

became once again a struggle based on industrial negotiations.' If the jobs were to be saved, then of course at some stage there had to be negotiations with the employers or the government. But how did the leading stewards approach the question?

Jimmy Reid is quoted as saying: 'In the last year we had established with the management a phased programme of production which moved from one vessel to the next. In such circumstances you can start talking about productivity and we served on the committees and responded. The productivity records at the end were second to none in Britain.'

Reid and Airlie both spoke of 'harnessing the skills and in some cases the genius of the workforce to production' in any new company which emerged. They spoke of giving 'co-operation the likes of which no employer enjoys in this country at present.'

By allowing the struggle to be prolonged and by avoiding a direct confrontation with the government, the UCS leaders created the circumstances which look like forcing them into making further productivity concessions as well as a reduced workforce. (As it is there are 1500 fewer workers than last June.)

Was this really the outcome envisaged by the tens of thousands who took part in strikes and demonstrations, who contributed

money to the UCS men?

By refusing to accept redundancy and rejecting the employers' 'right' to throw men on the scrapheap, the UCS workers lit a flame in the British labour movement.

But the course followed by the UCS stewards flows directly from the 'popular frontism' of the Communist Party's British Road to Socialism. Another option was open. On 29 July last year, Provost (mayor Fleming of Clydebank, and hardly a revolutionary socialist, could say: 'If the men barricade themselves in the yard and behave with dignity, they will get public sympathy and support from everyone.'

And had this been linked to a general campaign against unemployment, who can say what the mass pressure of the labour movement might have gone on to achieve?

Sadly, almost satirically, on the last page of the book, Alasdair Buchan seems to suggest that what the whole thing was really about was some inner craving which, he asserts, makes Clydeside workers want to build ships. Anyone who believes that the events at UCS can be explained in this manner has learned nothing from the experience of the last nine months.

PETER BAIN

\*The Right to Work by Alasdair Buchan: Calder and Boyars, 65p.

# TV

THERE was an air of unreality about the Man Alive team's programme The Question of Ulster, shown at peak viewing time last Friday on BBC 1. 75 people had flown to London to represent the views of 'all walks of life' in the Six Counties and for 50 minutes they spoke quietly and sometimes movingly of what life was like for Catholics and Protestants, working class and middle class.

Viewed dispassionately, it seemed a small step forward that they could sit down together and agree on the awfulness of the situation, even laugh at the cracks of an amateur entertainer ('I don't like making political jokes—they sometimes get elected').

Yet next day close on 70,000 people were marching in Belfast in support of the Unionist extremist Craig, cheering him as he spoke of the need to 'liquidate' their enemies. How many members of the Man Alive audience were on that march? Do they really favour the physical removal of republicans? Just how deep is the divide between Protestants and Catholics?

These are the kind of questions that perhaps cannot

be answered in neat, televisual terms, but they need to be aired.

But Wilcox ruled out politics from the very start. What he wanted was a picture of life in the province and he got some sort of picture: the affect upon children in contact with daily violence, the claustrophobic lives of families locked up in their houses, afraid to go out, the catastrophic affect of the 'problems' on publicans and fish-shop proprietors.

But after a while I began to writhe in my chair. How is it possible for a woman to say calmly that her husband has been interned and that she has told her children he is 'away for a while' and leave it at that? Half the audience must firmly believe that it is right for that man to be imprisoned without trial. What possible point is there in thinking that the divide between the two communities can be bridged by burying the differences rather than bringing them out into the open?

Those differences are rooted in the historical need of Britain's rulers to keep Ireland divided, to dress up economic and political repression with carefully cultivated religious hatreds. To believe that these differences can be wished away is to live on a different planet.

Only the frankest discussion can begin to chip away at the barriers that divide the Irish working class, but such a discussion must be geared to a political perspective that will be worked out in action on the streets and in the factories, away from the dream

factory and pious platitudes of well-meaning liberals.

TELLY DRAMA seems to go in a familiar, well-oiled circle. We are back now with the problem of the distressed gentlefolk of the middle class. Last Thursday's BBC1 play was a second showing of Ingmar Bergman's *The Lie*, about the disintegration of an apparently happy and contented marriage.

The theme was the emptiness of life. The husband, a top executive in some unspecified job, got no satisfaction. His wife sought but failed to get hers from a lingering love affair. Violence crackled beneath the surface and burst out at the end with an exhausting, horrifying fight between husband and wife.

It was probably the best-acted, best-directed play for a long time, with Frank Finlay adding to his growing stature as the husband. But the characters were somehow implausible, unbelievable, unsympathetic.

The breakdown of the traditional form of marriage under capitalism can provide a useful peg for dramatists. Strange that they almost invariably choose the frothy lives of an insignificant section of society.

How men and women survive, or fail, under real, sometimes immense pressures, passes them by. The best glimpse of that came last Friday not in a play but in BBC2's *Money Programme*, devoted to one mining village, Clipstone, before, during and after the miners' strike. That was real drama.

DAVID EAST

# 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 throughout 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 restriction.

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 man'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.

## THERE ARE 15 BRANCHES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

**SCOTLAND**  
Aberdeen  
Cumbernauld  
Dundee  
Edinburgh  
Fife  
Glasgow N  
Glasgow S  
Stirling  
St Andrews

**NORTH EAST**  
Durham  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
Spennymoor  
Sunderland  
Teesside (Middlesbrough & Redcar)

**NORTH**  
Barnsley  
Bradford  
Doncaster  
Grimsby  
Halifax  
Huddersfield  
Hull  
Leeds  
Mid-Derbyshire  
Ossett  
Scarborough  
Selby  
Sheffield  
York

**NORTH WEST**  
Barrow  
Blackburn  
Bolton  
Crewe  
Kirkby  
Lancaster  
Manchester  
Merseyside  
Oldham  
Potters  
Preston  
St Helens  
Wigan  
Wrexham

**MIDLANDS**  
Birmingham  
Coventry  
Leamington  
Leicester  
Northampton  
Nottingham  
Oxford  
Redditch  
Rugby  
Telford  
Wolverhampton

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

Plymouth  
Swansea

**SOUTH**  
Ashford  
Brighton  
Canterbury  
Crawley  
Folkestone  
Gurdford  
Portsmouth  
Southampton

**EAST**  
Basildon  
Beccles  
Cambridge  
Colchester  
Harlow

Ipswich  
Leiston  
Lowestoft  
Norwich  
Peterborough  
**GREATER LONDON and HOME COUNTIES**  
Acton  
Camden  
Chertsey  
Croydon

Dagenham  
East London  
Enfield  
Erith  
Fulham  
Greenford  
Hackney & Islington  
Harrow  
Hemel Hempstead  
Hornsey  
Hounslow  
Ilford  
Kilburn  
Kingston  
Lambeth  
Lewisham  
Merton  
Newham  
Paddington  
Reading  
St Albans  
Slough  
South Ealing  
Tottenham  
Walthamstow  
Wandsworth  
Watford  
Woolwich

# FIGHTING TO CLOSED

THE east end of Newcastle upon Tyne is dominated by the massive engineering works of C A Parsons, where in the past few weeks workers have been in the forefront of the battle against redundancies. Their resistance has already produced results.

The company has withdrawn the threat of the sack from 300 shopfloor workers, and has promised no redundancies for the remainder of 1972. But 600 staff are still threatened and the struggle continues.

On 16 March the company announced it intends to close its plant at Erith in Kent. Just over 60 jobs are under threat, almost all are members of AUEW-TASS. All negotiations for this plant have been conducted at Newcastle.

Since the beginning of January the staff unions at Newcastle have held one-day strikes every week. All overtime has been banned by both staff and shopfloor, and all sub-contracting of work has been stopped.

## Torn up agreement

As up to half of Parsons' production is sub-contracted, these sanctions have had a crippling effect.

At present the situation is a stalemate. The company's tactics seem to be concentrated upon separating the staff—particularly the technical staff who will bear the main burden of the redundancies—from the shopfloor.

But although the immediate threat of sackings has been lifted from shopfloor workers, the ban on sub-contract work remains, and though support for the staff has now been left to the individual shopfloor unions to decide, no overtime is possible as long as the supervisory staff are in dispute.

On top of this struggle, the management have torn up their closed shop agreement with the Technical and Supervisory Section (TASS—formerly DATA) of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers. This is the Tory industrial policy with a vengeance: after softening up organisation with redundancies, bring in the body blow of the Industrial Relations Act.

Parsons is now a test case for the whole labour movement.

If these members of TASS, who have demonstrated their militancy and effectiveness in the Parsons' offices for many years, are allowed to be defeated, then the

But without Clive Jenkins' help



closed shop is in imminent danger everywhere.

TASS won the closed shop and sole negotiating rights for all technical staff at Parsons in May 1970. Non-union members were given a year's grace to join or leave the factory.

The agreement was a breakthrough of fantastic importance for the union. For the first time in a major company the closed shop was extended right up to fringes of senior management.

This historic agreement was the result of a two-year campaign, which culminated in a five-month lock-out of a section of the union's membership. But the company finally caved in when faced with the threat of a total strike and an impressive display of support from the union's annual conference.

The final stages of the fight for the closed shop at Parsons were complicated by the intervention of two other organisations: the United Kingdom Association of Professional Engineers (UKAPE), and Clive Jenkins'

## Big profits at no risk at all

### IN THE CITY

TWO weeks' ago I told the story of how the Takeover Panel altered its rules so that the City could safely use confidential information to make a lot of money. This week I shall illustrate just how this is possible, and without having any money.

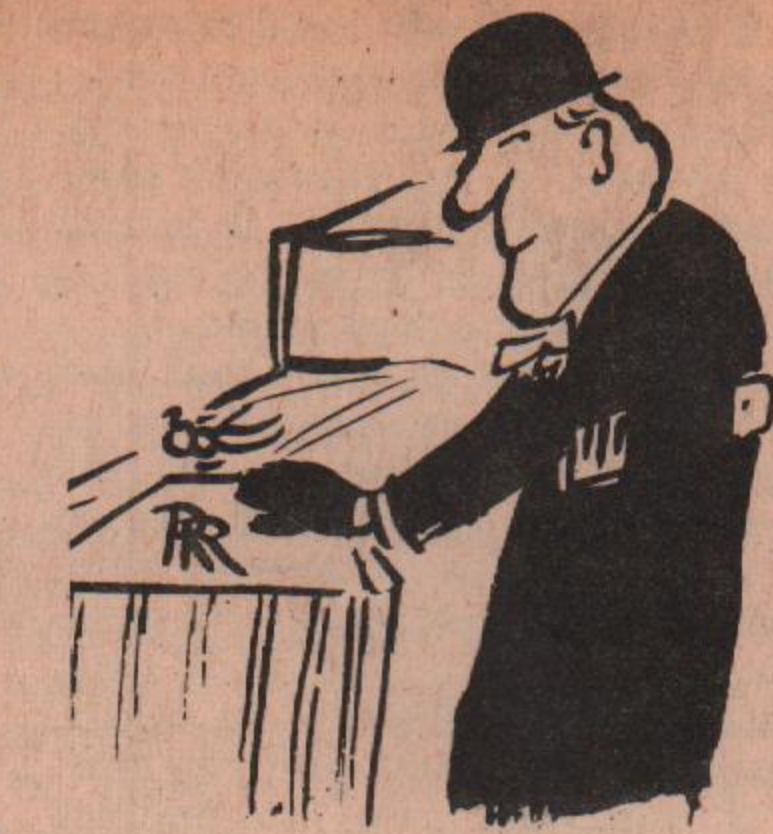
The Stock Exchange system works on a two-weekly account system: that is, you settle up for any shares you have bought every two weeks. It is thus possible to buy shares at the beginning of the account and sell them before the end of the account and you never have to pay: if the share has gone up in value you receive the difference.

Recently there has been a good example of this. On Tuesday 29 February the giant brewer Watneys made a bid for Samuel Webster, a smaller brewer in which they already had a 28 per cent stake.

### A leak

By the end of that week the shares of Samuel Webster were 485p and by the end of the second week of the account they were 620p. At the beginning of the account they had been 380p. They rose 20p to 400p on Monday, the day before the bid.

As Webster's financial advisers said: 'There certainly appears to have been something of a leak', or, as some might say, speculators who knew the bid was coming filled their boots with shares, and



with T.H. Rogmorton

then sold them a couple of days later for an extra £1 or more.

And they need never have had a penny in the bank, though many of them probably have considerably more than a

penny in the bank anyway.

But surprise, surprise, it's easier even than this. A new account began on Monday 28 February, so people who bought Webster shares on Friday at 350p (up 30p on the day) would, you might expect, have had to find the cash for their shares.

Not necessarily, though. There is an arrangement called 'buying for new time': you can buy on the last Thursday or Friday of an account but not have the deal registered until Monday. In other words, they pretend that you bought the shares on Monday. So those speculators who bought on Thursday or Friday made even more.

Now it sounds like a licence to print money. And for some it is. For those who are wealthy enough to get bank overdrafts to speculate in shares and for those well connected enough to know what is going on, a lot of money can be made.

The City makes its own rules and is largely there to benefit those people.

The workers of Webster's Brewery have not benefitted as City speculators played around with their jobs like counters on a Monopoly board. All they will get is the sack, as more breweries are closed down to increase productivity.

Somehow the benefits of productivity never seem to come to working people in cheaper beer, but only to shareholders in higher profits.

# WHAT'S ON

Copy for What's On must arrive first post Monday or phoned Monday morning. Notices are charged at 5p per line. Semi-display 10p per line. Cash with copy. No insertions without payment—invoices cannot be sent.

## MEETINGS

**MARXISM VERSUS REFORMISM.** Scottish Region Day School. Saturday 25 March 2-6.30pm. Speakers: Jim Higgins and John Palmer. Two sessions: 'Trotskyism and Leninism', 'Contemporary Reformism: the Labour and Communist Parties.' Details of venue and accommodation from your nearest IS Branch.

**UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE PRESENT CRISIS.** Public meeting. Glasgow Area International Socialists. Saturday 25 March, 10.30a.m., McClellan Galleries, Sauchiehall St. Speakers: John Palmer, EC member IS, and Jim Higgins, National Secretary.

**LONDON BRANCH SECRETARIES' meeting:** Sat 25 March, 2.30pm, at 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2. All branch secretaries must attend.

**WARLEY IS public meeting:** The Unfair Rents Act. Wed 29 March, 7.30pm. Co-Op Hall, 393 High St, Smethwick. Speaker Jip Kincaid.

**NORTH LONDON ANTI-INTERMENT LEAGUE SOCIAL**  
Thursday 30 March  
Irish Centre, Murray St, NW1  
Tickets: 30p from NLAIL, 'Hole in the Wall', Rochester Rd, NW5, or at the door.

**WOOLWICH IS public meeting**  
The Tory Attack on Wage Claims Who's The Next Special Case? Speakers Frank Campbell (UGATT) and local unionists from SOGAT, NUR, AEUW and NUT  
Thursday 28 March 8pm  
The Royal Oak, Woolwich New Road, SE18 (next to Woolwich Arsenal station).

## NOTICES

**IS WOMEN'S NEWSLETTER** No 6 now out. Articles on women workers, women's lib, the welfare state. Price 5p. Money with orders please to: M Renn, c/o 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

**WANTED: cheap bicycle.** Phone 01.278 4960.

**COMRADE (male)** seeks to share flat in London—box 1, Socialist Worker.

**IS BOOKS opening hours:** Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday: 2-5pm. Thursday: 2-7pm. The bookshop will be closed Friday 31 March to Wednesday 5 April inclusive.



# DEFEND THE SHOP

this statement from the executive committee makes clear: 'TASS refused to submit evidence to the NIRC. To do so would offend its own policy as well as that of the TUC. TASS asked the TUC to prevent ASTMS from entering an overcrowded field where its presence would only tend to confuse the fight against anti-trade union organisations.

'While recognising the right of any union to recruit, TASS insists that to intervene in this dispute is playing the government's game and giving substance to the Industrial Relations Act...

'While confusion reigns and the state intervenes, we still have 1400 members. None of the other organisations have more than a handful. Nevertheless, the conditions for disruption, bitterness, strife and division now exist.

'TASS says to its members: This case is central to our claim to represent all technical engineering staff. We will defend our signed agreement. We will act against individuals, who, for selfish anti-social reasons, resign from the union.

## Vital concern

'We will have the support of the AUEW in taking action to defend the agreement or to fight off encroachment however sanctified by law.'

The work of all UKAPE members and others who have resigned from TASS is now blacked by staff and shopfloor at Parsons. This is in open contravention of the Act, as are the weekly one-day strikes and bans on overtime and subcontract work on the redundancy issue.

The struggle at Parsons is of vital concern to trade unionists everywhere, and the Parsons workers should not be left to fight alone. Socialist Worker fully endorses this appeal by the executive of TASS:

'We believe that the TUC and its affiliates must declare their complete support for TASS in its fight to maintain its rights. The recent miners' struggle ensured that the Wilberforce Inquiry did not function in a vacuum.

'In the same way NIRC and CIR must not be allowed to deliberate in silence. Trade union voices must be heard, not in the courts, but where trade unionists will hear, see and understand.'

DAVE PEERS

union, the ASTMS. Both attempted to poach members from TASS.

The intervention of UKAPE was predictable. It openly projected itself as an anti-militant pro-employer organisation. It offered itself to the higher-paid staff as a lesser evil to TASS. Now it hopes to use the Industrial Relations Act to gain a foothold.

Here again Parsons is a trial of strength for staff unions everywhere against the real threat of yellow unionism.

Less expected however, was the intervention of Clive Jenkins. The ASTMS began a recruiting campaign among technical staff at Parsons in 1969, at the height of the closed shop struggle. The recruiting leaflets appealed to the 'professional status' of the higher-paid staff, as against the shopfloor links of TASS.

The climax of this disgraceful campaign was to take Parsons through procedure, to use the pressure of the Engineering Employers Federation to force the company to grant negotiating rights to ASTMS.

## Paper tiger

But Jenkins' challenge evaporated in face of the determination of the TASS members' closed shop campaign. After May 1970 two-thirds of the ASTMS members joined TASS. Most of them had become convinced that the Parsons office committee was right to describe him as a 'paper tiger'.

Now after two years' absence Clive Jenkins has reappeared on the scene. On 9 March the ASTMS convened a recruiting meeting for senior technical staff at Parsons.

If press reports are to be believed he is touting a 'plan' for solving the closed shop problem at Parsons which involves TASS and ASTMS collaborating with the NIRC and CIR to keep out UKAPE.

But TASS is not going to play games with Clive, as

# Man jailed after being attacked by the police

JOSHUA FRANCIS is a 38-year-old Jamaican who came to this country 10 years ago. He works for London Transport and has spent most of his time preaching and working in the local church. Last week he was sent to prison for nine months, following a harrowing experience with the police in November 1970.

He was woken one morning by the sound of breaking glass. He went into his kitchen to see what was happening and found four white men there. They set upon him, one of them with a shovel, and knocked him to the ground.

One of them was an off-duty policeman, who has since left the force. Then five vehicles containing 20 uniformed police arrived. Joshua Francis claims that they beat him with truncheons.

After that, he says, 'six or more policemen dragged me through the kitchen by the legs, on my back over broken glass, out into the yard and into the road. Policemen were standing on my arms and groin.'

At his trial, a doctor confirmed that Francis had injuries consistent with a beating.

Yet the court with an all-white jury disregarded all facts and sentenced Francis for 'assaults on the police'.

The black community in Brixton has been angered by the blatant brutality of the police and the injustice of the court. The Black Panther Movement and the Black Unity and Freedom Party called a protest meeting at which Joshua Francis' sister spoke. She stressed that this was not an isolated incident, and several other speakers gave accounts of their own personal experiences of similar treatment.

## Brutality

A committee has been set up to launch a campaign demanding:

- Joshua Francis' immediate release from prison.
- His acquittal on all charges.
- The bringing to trial of the police concerned and the three civilian thugs.
- A public inquiry into police brutality and corruption in Brixton.

The committee needs money for the legal costs of the appeal and for civil action against the police.

Donations to The Joshua Francis Defence Fund, 1 Meir Road, London SW9.

# COUNTER-RALLY ANSWERS VANGUARD DEMO

by Brian Trench

DUBLIN:—The British government's chances of implementing any new 'initiative' for Northern Ireland faded last weekend as supporters and opponents of the Stormont police state entrenched themselves further in their positions.

Craig's Vanguard rally last Saturday, which drew 75,000 people, must have shaken Heath and Faulkner. This pressure will be much felt when the two Tory

premiers meet this week. Craig's intention seems to be not to provide an immediate alternative to Faulkner, but to create a situation in which the Belfast government cannot move.

On Sunday the answer to Craig came from a large anti-internment rally in Belfast and road-filling demonstrations on the border.

The rally in the Andersontown district of Belfast was called by the local Civil Resistance Committee, and backed by both the Civil Rights Association and the Northern Resistance Movement. All speakers declared that any 'initiative' that stopped short of a complete end to internment would be quite unacceptable.

In the border areas of Fermanagh and Armagh demonstrations filled in craters that the British Army had made in border roads.

Later more than 2000 people demonstrated for the release of three IRA men arrested by the Irish police.

The Irish police and army tried to break up the crowd with baton charges. The demonstrators let down the tyres of an armoured car and when soldiers tried to push it away, three of their rifles and a radio were captured.

Heath may be prepared to put up some limited opposition to the more extreme Orange elements, but that will not stop the growing militancy and opposition to British domination from the nationalist section of the population.

## Rents fight goes on

GLASGOW:—By a narrow majority the delegates to Glasgow City Labour Party's municipal policy-making conference last weekend defeated a move to defy the Tory Housing Bill.

So when the Bill becomes law, council rents in Glasgow will be increased by an average of 75p-a-week—by the Labour council.

This refusal to oppose the Tory rent rises contrasts markedly with the decision taken 15 miles away in Cumbernauld by a public meeting of tenants organised by the trades council.

They decided to form an action committee to fight the increases and co-ordinate a united campaign. The committee's immediate aim is to ensure the new rent increases are withheld. Later a complete rent strike may be possible.

# Union leader backs boss in BP lock-out

SOUTH WALES:—57 construction workers who have been locked out of the BP site at Llandarcy for ten weeks by contractors Simon Litwin now find that their union leadership is working openly with the contractors to smash their struggle.

Eddie Marsden, general secretary of the construction workers' section of the AUEW and a leading member of the Communist Party, signed a joint management-union advertisement in the South Wales Evening Post. It announced that union members could apply for the jobs previously held by the 57.

The situation is a classical example of the collaboration between union full-time officials and management which is rampant in the large industrial plant construction industry.

## Forbidden

Work at Llandarcy, as at other sites throughout the country, is regulated by a site agreement drawn up by and for management with the co-operation of full-time union officials.

At no stage are rank and file trade unionists consulted and men arrive on site to find that an agreement has been signed and sealed 'on their behalf'.

On sites where the rank and file have been able to organise they have been able to force protective measures on management. Where, for example, even meetings on site are forbidden in agreements, the strong cabins have been able to ignore the bosses.

Strong organisation has forced management to agree to the principle of 'first in, last out' in case of redundancies.

BP has started a drive to remove

## SIMON LITWIN LTD. CONTRACT LLANDARCY SITE

### JOINT STATEMENT TO A.U.E.W. (CONSTRUCTION SECTION)

### MEMBERS

By agreement between Simon Litwin Ltd. and Mr. E. Marsden (General Secretary - A.U.E.W. Construction Section) the Simon Litwin Contract is now open for recruitment for A.U.E.W. Construction Section Riggers and Erectors, including former employees.

Applications for employment will be accepted from 8.00 a.m. Monday 13th March 1972 at the Simon Litwin Site Office.

E. MARSDEN (General Secretary - A.U.E.W. Construction Section)  
D. J. GORMAN (Construction Manager - Simon Litwin Ltd.)

obstacles to complete control of the work-force.

The lock-out at Llandarcy is part of this strategy. Three months ago the management announced 11 redundancies, including two men who had been among the longest on the site. The steward opposed this, for the principle of 'first in, last out' is written into the site agreement.

The management refused, and when the men held a meeting to consider what action to take, they were all sacked on the spot.

new labour loads without consultation, in spite of a mutuality clause in the existing productivity deal.

In protest the vehicle builders' and sheet metal workers' union stewards imposed an overtime ban, but lifted it in January when the company said it was in a bad financial situation. Soon after that the company made it clear that it was going to sack 80 men.

At no time would the company negotiate over worksharing, yet when it was taken over by its present owners,

H Tenens (Services), last summer the deputy managing director stated that the policy was to have short-time working when there was a drop in work schedules.

The company has been pleading financial difficulties for the past few months. But, as Arthur Tudor, vehicle builders' union convenor, and Albert Sweet, sheet metal workers' steward, point out, in the same period there has been a 45 per cent increase in the number of staff employees and each director has received an increase of £1000 or £2000 a year.

officials. The sacked men were reinstated, but on BP's terms.

Now the same tactic is being repeated, but in a more extreme and disgraceful form. The advert Eddie Marsden has signed does not even mention the dispute on the site. Instead it announces quite blatantly that the jobs of the 57 are open to all-comers.

Clearly it is aimed directly at the many construction workers being laid off in the area, particularly as the Baglan Bay site is being run down.

## Speeches

When contacted about the advertisement, a spokesman for the AUEW constructional section said, 'Mr Marsden was dealing with this, but as far as the union is concerned the matter is closed.'

Marsden is a man who often makes fine sounding left-wing speeches. He was one of the key speakers pushed by the Communist Party members who organised last month's conference of the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions.

But his actions at Llandarcy show his true face.

Meanwhile the men face a hard fight. Although they have been officially sacked, they are being refused the dole, and are having to try to live on the miserable sums provided by the social security for their families.

Contributions to their fighting fund should be sent to: Bryan Rees, 90 Bryn Road, Swansea.



I would like more information about the International Socialists

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

# Strike opposes sacking threat

WOLVERHAMPTON: Willenhall Radiators workers are showing the way to fight against redundancies. All 170 production workers have gone on strike in answer to management's attempt to sack 80 men.

The factory is at a standstill, and the transport section has given seven days strike notice.

The dispute with the company began November when it tried to impose

# Socialist Worker

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**BIRMINGHAM:**—Crucial negotiations are due to start at Austin Longbridge over management's attempt to replace piecework by measured day work. The piecework stewards have put forward a long list of demands as their price for any change. It includes full mutuality, full lay off pay and worksharing instead of redundancies.

Management have been helped in their attempts to undermine the position of the negotiating committee by the failure of the Works Committee to give a determined lead. The seven-man committee includes the works convenor, Dick Etheridge, a leading member of the Communist Party.

The committee has produced only one leaflet, saying it would have nothing to do with measured day work. That was issued last year and it has changed its mind since. But no attempt has been made to explain the new position to the shop floor. Yet only an informed rank and file could really fight the management's plans.

Even before negotiations start, the negotiating committee is in a weak position. Management have already managed to lure large sections away from piecework by offering a £38.25 interim agreement. The lack of leadership is allowing the company to divide the pieceworkers among themselves.

**HULL:**—As the strike of 1800 Hawker Siddeley workers at Brough entered its eighth week on Monday, two other plants in the combine stopped work for the day in sympathy at Hatfield, Herts, and Hamble, Hants. The Brough workers are pushing for a £4 a week across-the-board rise. In return the management have offered a deal which would raise the rates of lower paid workers, but cut the higher rates—in other words, the workers would be paying for their own rise.

As the AUEW convenor, Bill Gawthorpe, says: 'The morale of the workers is good and we are determined to win.' The strikers have learnt from the miners and their mass meetings and mass pickets, with leaflets going into other local engineering factories.

**ST HELENS:**—The occupation at the St Helens' Plastics factory is now in its third week. The workers have won support from miners, engineers, building workers, Fisher-Bendix and many other factories. Lin-Pack, the new owners of the plant, have sent the workers a form headed 'factory personnel recruitment'. It includes such questions as 'have your habits as regards the use of intoxicating liquor always been strictly sober and temperate?' It also asks if applicants have ever had VD.

**PROTESTS** are growing against attempts to victimise two Scottish power workers, Ron Brown and Rab Jeffery, who organised solidarity action with the miners. Petition forms supporting their case (obtainable from Advance, 68 Fountains Road, Stretford, Lancs) have been circulated in every North West power station and are now being sent to the secretary of the trade union side of the NJIC for the industry. And many AUEW branches have passed resolutions calling on the executive to reject attempts by the Edinburgh district of the union to expel Ron Brown.

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## Stewards fight Tory law

**READING:**—Three shop stewards received summonses under the Industrial Relations Act last week.

Workers at the Ideal Casements factory had been pushing for a pay review for several weeks and gave seven days' notice of strike action. But the works manager, James Wallace, had deliberately allowed the discussions on a new pay and procedure agreements to drag, waiting for the new Act to come into force.

He argued that the end of the agreement ended his obligation to recognise

the union—and under the Act it is illegal for shop stewards to act as workers' representatives without a recognition agreement, or to take industrial action while a procedure agreement is being negotiated.

The stewards ignored the summonses and the Industrial Relations Court heard the case against them in their absence and ruled in favour of the company.

But it was clear that neither the court nor the government felt strong enough to push through the decision. The court president complained the com-

pany was being too 'legalistic', while the Department of Employment exercised pressure during negotiations the next day for the works manager to talk to the union and withdraw the legal action.

Eventually he agreed to a two-week truce. Attempts are to be made to negotiate a new procedure, though the stewards remain adamant that it shall not be legally binding.

The withdrawal of the summonses even if only temporarily—shows that the law means nothing against determined working class opposition.

# 1000 NW ENGINEERS DEFY BOSSES' THREAT

by SW Reporters

The example of the Bredbury workers has added to the determination of engineers throughout the area not to submit to any attempt by the bosses to lock the gates.

Two weeks' ago, more than 800 stewards in the North West decided to commence day work from 27 March in pursuit of a demand for a £4 increase on the basic rate—some factories

want £6—a 35 hour week and an extra day holiday. Shop floor militancy, however, has brought forward day working at a whole number of factories in the Stockport area. The Engineering Employers' Federation has declared its determination to break the united movement in support of the claim.

Although the Manchester engineering agreement allows for an immediate reversion to day working, the bosses at Bredbury reacted ruthlessly. Men were suspended and it was announced that the gates were to be closed on the night shift.

The reaction of the men was immediate. 'We've never had such unity as we've got now', says AUEW convenor Alec Reece. 'The feeling is terribly high. There's no backing down now'.

The anger that has surfaced at Bredbury is the result of years of frustration at chronically low wages, miserable conditions and a ruthless management. A series of productivity deals has whittled down the labour force over the past two years from 2400 to 1500.

## PROFITABLE

Yet what has this produced in terms of pay? 'Three years ago my potential earnings and take home pay were greater than they are now', said one steward.

Cleaners at the plant are left with a take home pay of £13. Setters are on a basic rate of £17.33. Few skilled men take home more than £20. It is no wonder that the plant is so profitable and is reputed to have made more than £1 million this year.

The management's eccentric habits are well known. The managing director Geoffrey Wilson, who has fled to Germany, sacked two workers leaning against the firm's fence smoking a cigarette. Unfortunately for him, they were employed by the council and were repairing the road outside.

'The lads in this factory have had so much. They've pushed them over the hill now', says Alec Reece.

Even if the management agreed to day work, it is unlikely that the workers at Bredbury would call off their occupation. Feeling in other Stockport factories is equally high. And it is clear that the militant response of Bredbury workers has forced other bosses in the area to reconsider their lock-out policy.

## DILEMMA

**John Deason, Wigan AUEW shop steward, comments:** The threat of a rash of occupations places the employers in a delightful dilemma. They can try to wear us down by prolonging the day work/work to rule situation which could prove demoralising for the membership.

But daywork is a commonly used tactic in the Manchester District. This means that we are well versed in the arts of producing next to nothing in return for our basic pay.

Alternatively, following the example of a few non-federated firms, employers may attempt purely monetary settlements. There are some six or seven firms who have already settled for pay increases of £3.50-£5.50.

We must make it clear that at a time of high unemployment, the 35 hour week is the most important of our demands. By maintaining unity and continuing the use of the occupation strike, we can win all our demands. The previous arrogance of the employers is now giving way to panic. It is vital that we do not let them off the hook by accepting their peace-making carrot.

The continued inability of the national union leaderships, including the 'left' Scanlon/Jones variety, to give proper leadership in the engineers' struggle raises some important issues. Shop floor militants are now looking beyond the verbal militancy of these leaders.

The enthusiasm of the engineers to adopt tactics like the occupation raises the question of revolutionary politics on an unprecedented scale.

A MIGHTY WAVE of factory occupations will greet any attempt by engineering bosses in the North West to enforce a lock-out. Almost one thousand workers at the James Mills steel works at Bredbury, Cheshire, are maintaining a round-the-clock occupation of their factory in the first skirmish of what promises to be a crucial battle for engineering workers.



Behind locked gates, not bars: sit-in strikers at Bredbury

## What happened on police raids

**IN THE** raids by Special Branch, accompanied by officers of the Hampshire police concerned with the Aldershot explosion, people were woken at 6.30 in the morning and questioned for up to six hours while their homes were searched.

Although the alleged reason for the raids was to search for explosives, the police concentrated on reading documents, diaries and magazines, many of which were illegally removed. Such dangerous and explosive materials as a half-finished child's dress and a toilet roll holder were taken away.

Journalist John Palmer, a member of the IS executive committee, was among those raided. He commented this week: 'The object of the police was two-fold: Firstly to collate information on political opponents of the Tory government, secondly to deter socialists from supporting

the struggle of the IRA against British imperialism and from supporting those in Ireland struggling to build the 32 county Irish Socialist Workers' Republic. This campaign of coercion will not succeed.'

Building worker Frank Campbell, another IS executive member, was ordered by the police to raise his hands over his head when they first entered his home. He told Socialist Worker: 'I have never in any way wavered in my support for the right of the Irish people to self-determination. I have never doubted that violence would unfortunately be a necessary part of that struggle.'

'I know that the violence is not of their making but an inevitable and justifiable reaction to the violence of the British Army. John McLean, facing a capitalist court, stated: 'We declare war on the warmongers'. The Irish people and IRA are doing so. They have my unconditional support.'

IS member Ben Galvin, an official of the Tailors' and Garment Workers' Union, had union documents and minutes removed.

Another IS member raided was NALGO trade unionist Rachel Carroll. Staying at her home was Seamus O'Kane. Eamonn

McCann writes:-

Last Thursday, when Tottenham MP Norman Atkinson protested in the Commons about the arrest of Seamus O'Kane, the Tories fell about laughing. The name seemed to them to be hysterically funny.

Meanwhile O'Kane was being transferred from Rochester Row police station to Aldershot where he was interrogated for more than 24 hours. O'Kane was not in Britain at the time of the Aldershot explosion. He had come from Ireland five days before his arrest.

By taking him to Aldershot the police managed to associate him in the public mind with the explosion there. Thus they were able to send him back to Northern Ireland with a minimum of public protest. The charge was that two years' ago he issued worthless cheques to a total value of £34.

The real reason was that the RUC wanted him back in Northern Ireland to question him about his political activities and, possibly, to intern him. The British courts were used as a transmission belt for conveying people into the arms of the Orange machine in the Six Counties. Stormont has come to Westminster.

## BENDIX FACTORY IS SOLD

**KIRKBY:**—A mass meeting at Fisher Bendix on Monday unanimously agreed to the Thorn group's plans to transfer ownership of the factory to a new holding company called International Property Developments—a relatively new firm whose financial position is at best uncertain.

The massive occupation of the factory in January had forced Sir Jules Thorn and his directors to shelve their closure plans.

The terms of the factory sale—endorsed by workers on Monday—include the payment of substantial 'transfer fees' to the present workforce. For a man who has worked eight years at Fisher Bendix this

will amount to around £300 tax free.

For the workers the new agreement will involve a non-legally binding 'no strike' clause and 'no resistance to reorganisation' for a similar period.

As the new company requires only half the present workforce to start with, work sharing will be introduced on a 'week on, week off' basis. The company has agreed, however, to 'do all in their power to employ the entire 730-strong workforce on a full-time basis by September.

In terms of the success of the occupation, this agreement is a retrograde step both for Fisher Bendix workers and the fight against unemployment.