

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

Good start for IS fund

THE RESPONSE to the International Socialists' fund for new premises and printing equipment has been promising. After one week the amount donated stands at £836.

In addition to a levy on IS branches we have been encouraged by the number of donations received from many of our readers.

It's a long haul to £30,000 and the Tory wage freeze does not make it any easier but I appeal to our members and supporters to maintain their efforts to reach the target. All donations will be acknowledged.

Send to: Jim Nichol, National Treasurer, IS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

400 strikers shake bosses and union

First the freeze, now back to the courts

UNIONS FACE NEW ATTACK

MAJOR CLASHES between the unions and the Tory law are on the cards—clashes that will show that, beneath Heath's new velvet-glove approach to the TUC, the more familiar knuckleduster is still in operation.

by SW Reporter

First clash involves the Engineering Union. It has refused to pay the £5000 fine imposed by Sir John Donaldson's National Industrial Relations Court.

Sir John is rigorously enforcing the 'law of the land'—the law that says that blackleg James Goad must be admitted to the AUEW against the wishes of the members, even though he has scabbed on a strike and three times been lapsed for not paying union subscriptions.

The union's refusal to pay the fine or attend the court means that Donaldson will either increase the fine or arrange for the amount to be taken from AUEW funds.

But Sir John does not uphold the rights of James Goad alone. Lords as well as blacklegs can be sure of his support. This week, too, the giant Vestey empire—owners of Midland Cold Storage—gave notice of an application to the NIRC.

This is the second clash—a claim of 'unfair industrial practice' against the Transport Workers Union and the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers. The Vesteyes complain that the unions have not stopped their docker members from fighting for their jobs.

Vesteyes have only given notice of a complaint to the NIRC. They hope Jack Jones and the TGWU leaders will dance still faster to their tune and force the lorry drivers through the dockers' pickets at their cold stores. If this manoeuvre fails then Sir John Donaldson can be relied on to oblige with fines or prison bars.

With the anti-union Industrial Relations Act once again going full blast, in addition to the wages freeze, what is the reaction of top union leaders?

Nipped off

TUC secretary Vic Feather has publicly broken off talks with Heath in protest at the freeze. But in private he nipped off for secret talks with the prime minister—architect of the NIRC and the freeze—on Thursday 17 November.

Jack Jones is equally busy—not mobilising his giant union in defence of dockers' jobs but assuring Lord Vestey that the dockers' pickets are 'unofficial', a claim denied by the pickets.

The London dockers are standing firm. They are carrying on their fight for jobs.

And the AUEW leaders, to their credit, are refusing to pay the NIRC fines. They reason that the Tories need a voluntary wages agreement with the unions after the freeze and may quash Donaldson's judgment.

The AUEW leaders would be well advised to rely on their members instead of backdoor diplomacy with the Tories.

The dockers gave the only possible answer to the anti-union law this summer when five of their members were jailed. They defied the law. They placed their future in the hands of mass action from the working-class movement.

They were not let down. And if any further fines are imposed or union funds seized then these too should be met with mass mobilisation and strike action.

The 'law of the land' is the law of the few. It upholds strike breakers like James Goad and international profiteers like the Vesteyes. It must be challenged by all-out action in defence of those it finds guilty for fighting for working-class interests.



THESE are just a few of the 400 strikers at the Mansfield Hosiery mill in Loughborough, east Midlands, battling magnificently against racism and an undemocratic union. They have struck for £5 a week more and an end to discrimination in the plant that gives the best-paid jobs to white workers. In a

special report on the back page, Paul Foot says that their stand has changed the face of trade unionism in the area.

Included in the picture are strike committee members J K Naik (first left), Dhurv Patel (fourth from left), A Maisuria (fifth left), A Sattar (tenth left) and M Z Shah (on the far right).

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BRIEFING

THREATS and intimidation have led 10,000 striking postal and telecommunications workers in Nigeria to return to work after one week.

Two days after the strike began, 25 shop floor leaders and union executive members were arrested and charged with subverting the Trades Disputes Amendment Decree, which had made all strikes illegal. Armed riot police kept crowds of angry strikers around the court at bay. At first the 25 were refused bail on the grounds that their action in bringing the country's postal services almost to a standstill was

unpatriotic.

The government ordered the strikers to return to work, and gave them a deadline after which they would all be sacked. The men voted to continue the strike.

Two days later, the 25 were unexpectedly released on bail, and after two angry meetings with the strikers they persuaded them to return to work. They pointed out that the government had promised to meet the strikers' demands for fringe benefits and a new promotion structure. The men wanted to continue the fight for a new salary structure as well.

The most decisive factor in getting the return to work seems to have been an appeal for sympathy for the 25, who would have been jailed if the strike had gone on, but will now probably be let off with a warning.

NEWLY published statistics show there were 1,622,000 industrial accidents in Italy in 1971, in which 4674 people died. On average a man dies every two hours and an accident occurs every 20 seconds.

Although this is slightly fewer than in 1970, because of rising unemployment, the percentage is still high. It becomes even higher if the 36,000 workers who suffer from a serious form of pneumoconiosis each year are included.

RUSSIAN leader Brezhnev's interpretation of the American presidential election result: Nixon's victory was an expression of support for his 'realistic and peaceful' policy of improving American relations with the Soviet Union.

AT A press conference during his visit to France last week, President Suharto of Indonesia explained his reasons for maintaining concentration camps on remote islands for political prisoners.

The main problem, he said, was with prisoners who could not legally be proved to have worked with the Communist Party, but who 'would not be accepted by society' if left at liberty. These have been settled on islands where their supposed crimes are unknown to the inhabitants, and allowed to cultivate the land with their families.

Ten thousand have been settled on the island of Buru in this way.

Suharto added that the central Indonesian island of Java has a serious overpopulation problem, and there is an urgent need for migration to the outer islands. Prison camps such as Buru, he said, could be seen as an exercise in the resettlement of population.

U.S. GETS READY TO DITCH SOUTH KOREA

by Nigel Harris

THERE are tanks outside the National Assembly building in Seoul, the capital of South Korea. Machine guns poke out from the tops of buildings.

Is it a war? No, a referendum.

On Tuesday, Koreans voted on whether the president should be allowed an unlimited number of six-year terms of office, instead of two four-year terms as at present.

They also had to decide whether they should elect some 5000 delegates (among whom political parties will be banned) to elect the president for them, instead of electing him directly. This body would also choose a third of the National Assembly members from candidates recommended by the president.

President Park, whose plan this is, seized power by military coup in 1961. In 1969 he had his own constitution amended to allow him a third term, which began in 1971.

Last December he declared a 'national emergency' because, he said, North Korea was about to invade the South. The US—remarkably—denied this, but it was the pretext for the president to take emergency powers, including the right to freeze wages, suppress strikes, impose settlements and order general mobilisation, all without recourse to the National Assembly.

ARREST

But even this was not enough. Now Park aims to strangle completely what little opposition survives.

He has dissolved the National Assembly—unconstitutionally—and put the opposition politicians under house arrest. He has shut down all universities and colleges, and tightened up press censorship: newspapers are now forbidden to compare the old and new constitutions.

In case anyone misses the point, Park has said that if his constitutional amendments are not passed, he will take the result as a vote against the reunification talks being held with North Korea.

Everyone wants reunification, because nearly every family has relatives in the North. So the choice is: vote for the dictatorship or against reunification—or heads I win, tails you lose.

Park's exercise is not unique. In Thailand and the Philippines, the reigning politicians have found it necessary to destroy what was laughingly called democracy. Even the tamest assemblies and newspapers are too dangerous now when all Asia is in economic crisis, taking the strain of the recession in world capitalism.

BANKRUPT

All three countries are American satellites. South Korea was supposed to be the model for 'Free World' economic development, and the Philippines for 'Free World' democracy. Now neither can survive with even the flimsiest concessions to an opposition.

South Korea's economic boom is faltering. Unemployment and inflation have soared and there has been a rash of bankruptcies in small firms this year.

US troop withdrawals around the world have hit South Korea hard, and military aid has been cut. US civil aid has also been cut by 200 million

dollars, and South Korea is being forced to reduce its exports to the US to protect the American home market.

The US no longer needs its puppets in the Far East. The shattering economic effect of this—and not some threat of an invasion from the North—is the real reason for Park's plunge into open dictatorship.

The students who in 1960 overthrew the first US agent in South Korea, Syngman Rhee, have continued to battle against the regime. But Park's carefully fostered war hysteria—continual air raid warnings, conscription and compulsory military drill, scares about 'infiltration'

and so on—kept them partly cowed.

Now South Korea's two main patrons, the US and Japan, have done a deal with China and may recognise North Korea. Like Taiwan, South Korea was invented to fight the Cold War, and is no longer needed.

The talks disarm Park in his efforts to bludgeon critics into obedience or silence. The bastion of free world democracy has begun to crumble at the first cold wind. Park's constitutional changes are an attempt to shore up the facade and make it easy for the 600,000 troops in Korea to remain in control.

Korean workers are now a sizeable force. Their militancy has pushed up

wages to the point where the flood of Japanese and US capital that came to the country in search of cheap labour no longer finds it so profitable.

Yet the workers have not so far produced any significant political alternative to Park's corrupt dictatorship. Indeed, the political level is so low that the constitutional amendments could well get the required majority, by fair means or foul.

But the result of this battle will not determine the war. The reunification moves could reopen links between the workers of North and South, and renew the prospect of a common struggle against the right-wing dictatorship of the South and the Stalinist bureaucracy of the North.

Can Peron fool the workers?

by Vic Richards

A WEEK ago General Peron finally returned to Argentina, where he is likely to win the presidential elections next March if allowed to stand.

The Argentinian TUC, the CG called off the one-day national strike it had planned in his support, but Peron's arrival still caused serious dislocation. More than 30,000 troops were stationed in and around the capital, Buenos Aires.

Thirty naval petty officers tried to stage a mutiny just before his arrival, apparently because, as Peron supporters, they were outraged at the military preparations to dampen down popular demonstrations of enthusiasm.

The military dictator of Argentina, General Lanusse, had invited Peron to return because the ruling class and the army have failed to smash the trade unions and the Peronist movement in the 18 years since Peron was overthrown.

As a result there has been continuous political unrest, and Argentina's economy has stagnated while its main rival, Brazil, has pulled ahead. Peron is being brought in as the master illusionist to calm the situation down and then sell Argentinian workers a cut in their living standards.

At first sight there seems little in Peron's record to justify the widespread support he enjoys, which is precisely in pulling the wool over his supporters' eyes while in power, and then making them forget the realities of the past after he had been overthrown.

In the 10 years of his dictatorship, up to 1955, Peron did give the trade unions a number of concessions and legal rights. On their own, the unions probably could have won these rights only after bitter struggles and over a longer period.



General Peron greets the crowds from the window of his villa after his arrival in Argentina

But the concessions were given selectively, in such a way as to bolster up Peron and his supporters while undermining his opponents. The opponents could then be blamed for causing discrimination against certain trade unions.

These tactics, together with judicious use of persecution against socialists, left Peron and his supporters in control of the main unions. The mass of workers fell into a passive role of grateful admiration and support for their 'benefactor'.

Legend

Meanwhile, as a contribution to social justice, Peron's wife Evita dispensed charity to the poor amid a fanfare of publicity. The funds for this selective and arbitrary distribution came from a levy on other workers' wages, and not from taxing the rich.

After the expulsion of this supreme 'Godfather', the union bureaucrats who supported Peron built a legend

around his name, and one which the returning general will find it difficult to live up to.

For Peron seems to have accepted the conciliatory role intended for him by the present dictatorship, and has been talking of peace amongst all classes in Argentina where in 1955—having escaped to Spain with several hundred million dollars—he was raging for revenge.

But by now Argentinian workers have had the experience of almost 20 years of fighting alone against vicious anti-working class regimes, and fighting undefeated. Peronism, because it is presented as an ideology close to socialism, has during this time given the working class a separate political identity and a set of goals to fight for.

Argentinian workers are, in fact, in a favourable position to discover the sham Peron really is. If the socialist left can then offer a real working-class alternative, the explosion could transform Argentina from top to bottom.

THE Brazilian postmaster general has announced the abolition of registered letters from next January. Registered letters assured the sender that his mail would not be opened and that it would definitely arrive—important with an unreliable postal system such as Brazil's.

But now the military dictatorship wants to be able to interfere with any letters it wishes, without legal constraints or the possibility of comebacks from the senders.

The postmaster general also announced that he is 'prepared to follow up any complaints, 'in order to punish the employee responsible'. For good measure, three people are being prosecuted for 'presenting false complaints'.

In exchange for greater ease in censoring mail, the Brazilian dictatorship is offering post office workers and users alike a taste of its own brand of law and order.

AT THE seventh Congress of Trade Unions in Poland on 13 November, the congress president, Kruczek, threw some interesting light on the conditions of Polish workers.

A surplus of workers in some regions and labour shortages in others, he said, resulted from 'failure to implement the policy of full employment, among other things'. He went on to name the areas of 'labour surplus' as Wroclaw, Poznan, Warsaw and Cracow.

Kruczek also said that despite certain improvements in safety and hygiene, accidents at work and days lost through illness had increased since 1967.

BOOM OR BUST?

The crisis in the aircraft industry

'The huge sums of money being spent on Concorde will only serve to save a few hours for businessmen or to carry on pleasure trips a tiny handful of privileged people. We have to ask what sort of society refuses to spend even a small amount of money providing a reliable and efficient bus service for ordinary people while at the same time wasting millions on Concorde.'

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ANCHOR DEATH TOLL NOW AT SEVEN

FIVE THOUSAND construction workers building the new £230 million British Steel Corporation Anchor steelworks in Scunthorpe went on strike on Wednesday in protest over the plight of Britain's old age pensioners.

But there is another crucial issue which is very much to the front of the minds of the organised trade unionists on the giant construction site. Like pensions that issue is another life and death one—industrial safety.

What concerns the construction workers is that increasing numbers of men from their ranks will not live long enough to pick up the first instalment of their old age pensions. They are being killed on the job.

When Socialist Worker first exposed the terrible goings on at Anchor four weeks ago, we wrote that since the project started five men had been killed on the site. Since then the death toll has risen to seven.

IMPOSED

The response of the BSC management has been characteristic throughout. Management last week instructed ambulance drivers not to disclose to the safety stewards details about injured men. And last Tuesday, after the second death in two days on the site, BSC representatives were stating that one man who had been seen to fall had died of a heart attack.

Now more than ever the Anchor Joint Sites Committee is determined that safe working must be imposed on the employers. They are insisting that the BSC give them full access to accident information and takes steps to enforce safe working conditions

by Laurie Flynn

on all contractors and sub-contractors.

The stewards' attention has been focussed on one firm in particular—J D and S Tighe, sub-contractors to Redpath Dorman Long. Tighe has the contract to paint the steel structures after they have been erected by Redpath Dorman Long, a British Steel subsidiary.

Tighe employs 300 painters on the job. So far two of its employees have been killed. The painters work 200 feet in the air, unprotected by minimally safe platforms because the firm will not employ the skilled scaffolders necessary to erect them.

Where the firm does have any safety equipment it is obsolete. And Tighe pays the painters on a piece-work system which encourages the men to work quickly and without cradles and safety nets. Trade unionism is 'frowned upon'.

These appalling conditions are not mistakes. They arise directly from the pursuit of profit on the contract, by J D Tighe and by nationalised Redpath Dorman Long, the firm which gave



The Anchor site: don't have a heart attack if you fall 200 feet

Tighe the contract. For it costs money to be careful.

Like all contractors, Tighe and Redpath Dorman get their contracts by offering the cheapest price. To keep to projected profit margins and hopefully to boost them in the course of the contract, management makes deliberate decisions on how little they will spend on maintenance and care. In effect they decide how many men will be killed or injured as a result of avoidable industrial 'accidents'.

OPTION

The management of J D and S Tighe has an extra inducement to boost profits as high as possible on this job. Tighe started out as a small family business owned and managed by 'Big Jack' Tighe and his wife Sylvia.

But in November 1967 the fast-growing London and Northern Securities outfit bought 75 per cent of the shares in the Tighe business. 25 per cent of the shares were left in the hands of the Tighe's, together with management control.

And London and Northern agreed an option to buy the outstanding 25

per cent of the shares at the end of five years—that is, in 1972.

The price paid for the remaining 25 per cent of the shares depends on how much Jack and Sylvia Tighe managed to improve their company's profitability over the period. The system is a common one, specifically designed to build personal incentives into the pursuit of higher profits.

At the level of the Anchor site, improvement of the Tighe company performance (and of the price Jack and Sylvia might get for their remaining shares) depends among other things on the firm's ability to resist trade unionism and generally reduce costs, including money spent on safety.

This is the business arrangement which lies beneath the surface of Anchor's toll of routine industrial accidents which have so far killed seven men.

So don't be surprised if on the safety question BSC construction workers take the same industrial action they have taken in support of half-decent pensions for the old. And don't be surprised if they are denounced as 'wreckers' and 'selfish men' by a press which applauds all manner of 'business arrangements'.

THE PRICES SWINDLE

THERE was much backslapping in Whitehall and Fleet Street last week at the news that prices had not risen in the first full week of the freeze. And reports of a massive increase in prices just before the freeze came into operation was actually used as evidence for the justness of the government's new 'incomes policy'.

The opposite is the case. Increases imposed before the freeze will continue throughout the period of the clampdown. On the other hand, wages that are frozen can never be recovered. The result: increased profits for the few, slashed living standards for the many.

The figures show that between 19 September and 17 October prices rose at a faster rate than in any month since April 1971. The annual rate of increase in the last six months is 8.7 per cent.

In October alone, prices jumped by 1.4 per cent. Included in the figures was the increase imposed by local councils who are operating the Housing Finance Act, which will take a sizeable chunk out of five million council tenants' frozen incomes.

But the extent of the prices explosion is masked by the figures. Wholesale prices also shot up just before the freeze but it takes some weeks before they make their impact on retail prices—that is, what you have to pay in the shops. So you can expect further substantial increases in the weeks before Christmas. If you think we exaggerate, listen to that big business bible, the Financial Times: 'The November statistics will reflect the burst of anticipatory price increases which were announced at the beginning of the month'.

All this, plus the fact that the government isn't even going through the pretence of controlling the price of meat and food-stuffs, indicates an inflationary mauling of living standards—unless trade unionists organise to stop it.

DANGER OF DODGY SPUDS

by Ian Gibson

FANTASTIC increases in the cost of food do not, you will be glad to hear, deprive the poor of their freedom of choice. People can always eat less. Or if they don't fancy that, they can eat less well.

They can fill out their diet with more potatoes. And when the price goes up (potatoes are not covered by the so-called price freeze) they can eat cheaper and poorer potatoes.

This might well have fearful consequences, but it is of no concern to the government, the potato growers or the Potato Marketing Board. They ignore scientific research and continue to jack prices up.

Recent experiments with marmosets—cotton eared monkeys—have shown that if pregnant females are fed with concentrates made from poor quality, blighted potatoes, their young will be born deformed. The young can be born without brains or hands, or with brain damage.

The cause of the blight is a fungus which infects stored or old potatoes, causes brown or discoloured parts to appear and softens the potato.

Potatoes are stored for long periods to manipulate the market and boost prices.

The degree of the effect is related to the time the female is exposed to the concentrate. The longer the female is given such potatoes, the greater the defects. Boiling the potatoes or freeze-drying them does nothing to eliminate the dangers.

Scientists who have done the work into potato blight and child deformity point out that marmosets are unlike other monkeys since they respond to thalidomide and doses of radiation just like humans.

The disastrous consequences of high and rising food prices in this field can be seen in countries where potato blight is common and potatoes are a major part of diet.

In Ireland, for example, poor potatoes are not thrown away. They are sold off to those who have so little money that they cannot afford to pay for the more expensive 'good' potatoes.

And Ireland does have a correspondingly higher number of babies born with head or brain damage or spina bifida.

Most of the babies die very early on. Those with spina bifida can be operated on leaving them paralysed all their lives. A similar situation exists in the poorest regions of this country.

It is yet another example of how a society geared for profit can indiscriminately cause hardship to unborn as well as living members of the working community.

Killing of the week

PRIZE this week goes to a company called Tremletts. The man who runs this firm, and whose family trusts control a large part of it, is called Jeffrey Pike.

Mr Pike is a mere 32 years old and is on record as saying he doesn't believe in money and is further to the left than Michael Foot. (He has also said: 'It's marvellous to walk into a company, go chop, chop, chop and save £50,000'.)

On 8 November 1972 our Jeffrey bought from Minister Assets 2.8 million shares in a printing company called Sir Joseph Causton. He paid 45p a share.

On 15 November 1972, with what some thought undue haste, Jeffrey sold all these shares to yet another company, Highcastle Securities at 50p a share. This gave Jeffrey a profit of £140,000 for a week's 'work', a sum which is considerably larger than the entire weekly wage bill of Sir Joseph Causton, Ltd, printers.

More victims of police muggers

SW Reporter

THE MAGISTRATES at Tottenham, North London, surpassed themselves on 17 November by finding five young West Indians guilty of various offences against three Tottenham police officers. They ignored the sworn statement of a Pentecostal Minister, who blamed the police for all the trouble.

Arthur Roache, 21, Robert Bantin, 17, Rory Mackintosh, 20 and two others who were 15 and 16, and so too young for their names to be mentioned in court, were found guilty of threatening behaviour and assault, and fined a total of £120. They are all members of a youth club in Tottenham's West Green Road which is run by the Rev Rupert Morris.

The police case was that on 15 August this year they had had a complaint by telephone from a woman who claimed to have been molested by some black youths outside the club. Accordingly, two police constables, Williams and Stewart, went to the club and found a milling crowd of about 150 black youths, 'fighting and shouting'.

The five boys were arrested, they said, after being asked to move on and refusing.

Pastor Morris, for the defence, told an entirely different story. There were, he said, about 50 boys outside

the club, preparing quietly to go home, when 15 police cars screamed up.

Policemen jumped out and waded into the crowd with their fists. He saw one boy being punched on the ground. When he asked the policeman to restrain himself, he (Morris) was punched and later bitten by a police dog.

Dog bite

The police had blocked off all routes of escape and Morris eventually got them to concede permission to two young black boys to go to the bus stop. As they made their way down the road, they were confronted by an aggressive policeman, who shouted: 'We'll have these two as well'.

The boys were bundled into the back of a police car. Rory Mackintosh was later treated for a police dog bite.

Pastor Morris told the court: 'It was the presence of the police which sparked off the trouble'. He also said that there had been no trouble at all at the club in the past, and the only time when he had been forced to

call the police was when the National Front organised a jeering picket outside.

The police failed to produce the woman who had made the complaint. Independent witnesses were available to support the boys' story. But the magistrates, who had ordered a retrial of the case the previous month, found them guilty of all charges and went on to praise the police.

One of the defendants told Socialist Worker outside the court: 'Of course this is the only justice we know. What can you expect from a police court?'

'If ordinary white kids, skin heads and rockers, come up before this court, they get the same treatment. But if you're respectable, you get a better hearing'.

The father of one of the juvenile defendants, a former policeman, argued with the boys outside the court: 'If the police won't leave you alone,' he said, 'you just go to work and get home quickly and stay there. The police are the law and they can do what they want.'

The boys replied: 'We've got to fight, or they'll keep on our backs forever.'



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editorial

Socialist Worker

WHAT WE THINK...

SUDDENLY everyone's concerned about the low paid. Millions of working people have suffered for years under the burden of near-starvation wages. Successive governments have done nothing to help them—on the contrary, their policies have further depressed the wage levels of the poor.

Press and television have studiously avoided mention of the conditions of farm workers and health service workers. They reserve the big headlines and the hysteria for groups of well-organised workers who use their industrial muscle to claw back a little more of the wealth that they produce.

But now scarcely a day passes without a weeping politician or newspaper tycoon beating his breast about the plight of the low paid. Is it a deathbed conversion to the cause of decency on the part of the Tories and their press friends—or is it just a cheap propaganda device to sell the swindle of the pay and prices freeze?

The fate of the farm workers answers that question. It is hard to find a more exploited and kicked around group of workers. Their job is essential to the well-being of the entire community. They provide a rather more important service than, say, property speculators and Stock Exchange gamblers. They work crippling hours, often in harsh conditions.

And yet, despite all the fanfares about fairness that heralded the introduction of the freeze, the farm workers have been denied a pay increase. Property men go on speculating, driving up the price of land and housing. Gamblers continue to make their fortunes on the Stock Exchange. But farm workers, officially, are denied the right to earn £19.50 a week.

SOCIALLY USEFUL

The basic wage for a farm worker is £16.20 a week. MPs voted themselves a 38 per cent increase last year to take them up to £6000 a year, while with true deference boosting the Queen's handout by 106 per cent. Do they deserve such enormous salaries while farm workers exist on an insulting pittance? The simplest answer is to imagine what would happen if the Queen, Members of Parliament and farm workers all went on strike (or, more likely in the case of the first two categories, disappeared to the Bahamas for a few months). We would quickly appreciate which group was the most socially useful and necessary.

The same goes for hospital manual workers, without whom the health service would collapse overnight. Their wage rates range from £14.40 for a catering assistant to £18 for those who pack sterilised dressings. They are asking for an extra £8 a week. Like the farm workers they will be told by Mr Heath (£20,000 a year) that such an increase is 'inflationary' and against the 'national interest'.

The freeze must be smashed. There is only one way to do it—by industrial action. Talks, petitions, lobbies of parliament will not budge this arrogant and vicious government of big business interests.

Every section that takes the industrial road to bust the freeze must have the full support of every other organised section of working people. And groups like pensioners who have no industrial strength can be helped only by trade unionists taking strike action on their behalf.

The strikes this week by steel workers, miners and others in demand of a £16 a week pension is a magnificent example of the collective strength and aspirations of working people. It throws back into the teeth of the gutter press the lie that workers are 'greedy' and 'self-seeking'.

Such action must grow and multiply. A concerted movement can defeat the Tories' aims. We must demand of our union leaders that they take the initiative in organising widespread strikes to pursue and obtain every wage demand in defiance of the 'Counter Inflation' law. But as their recent record proves, it would be futile to wait for them to issue such a call.

Mobilisation at the grass roots in every sector of British industry is the only way to ensure that the next 60 days mark a major breakthrough for the workers and implants a few inches of backbone into the men who claim to lead our movement.



THREE JUST MEN

THE High Court decision to ban the Sunday Times article exposing Distillers' cavalier attitude to the marketing of thalidomide was taken by three judges: Lord Chief Justice Widgery, Mr Justice Brabin and Mr Justice Melford Stevenson.

All three men have within the past six years felt the lash of a Sunday Times expose.

Brabin was mangled by the paper after his 1966 report on the Timothy Evans/Christie affair, in which he came to the absurd conclusion that although Evans probably didn't kill his child (for which he was hanged) he probably did kill his wife. The Sunday Times was the first paper to prove that no ordinary man in his right mind could have worked this out from the evidence.

Stevenson was hammered by the paper for his bias and spleen while conducting the trial of students involved in incidents at the Garden House Hotel, Cambridge in 1970.

The Sunday Times reminded its readers about a number of rather unfortunate bungles by Stevenson, which had led to genuine criminals going free on appeal.

The most aggressive mauling, however, was reserved for Lord Widgery after his whitewash on the Bloody Sunday murders in Derry. The Sunday Times took Widgery's report apart piecemeal, and left nothing of substance. Widgery was reported to be 'incensed' by the paper's insubordination.

We can only be thankful that judges are able to separate their judicial function from any bias or resentment they may have outside the courts.

Trust house

TREMENDOUS relief was expressed in government circles following Lord Carrington's forthright denial of the disgraceful allegation from Willie Hamilton, Labour MP for West Fife, that Carrington, Minister of Defence and chairman of the Tory Party, has been profiteering from improvement

Mountbatten fined £40 on watered milk charge

EARL MOUNTBATTEN, the Queen's uncle, and his grandson, Mr NORTON KNATCHBULL, were each fined £40 at Romsey, Hants, yesterday.

'Plain-clothes' car stopped Princess

By GUY RAIS
THE police car which stopped Princess Anne for alleged speeding on the M1 on Saturday was not

Lord Lichfield fined and banned on drink charge

THE Earl of Lichfield, a cousin of the Queen, was fined £50 and banned for a year at

LAW AND ORDER DEPARTMENT:
all from the Daily Telegraph of 17 November.

grants.

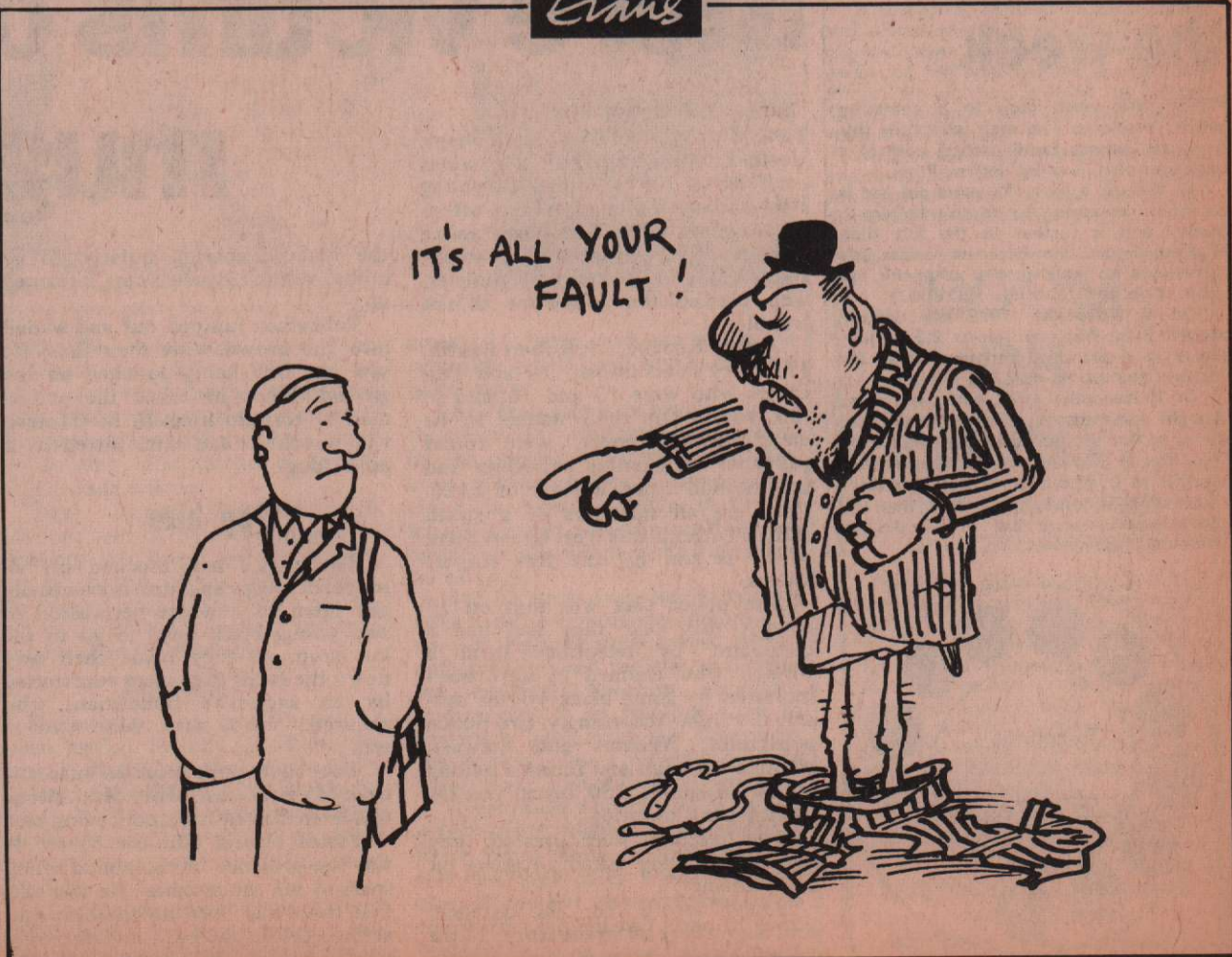
Nothing of the kind. What happened, according to Lord Carrington's solicitors, is that 'a family trust' bought two houses in fashionable Ovington Square, Kensington, next door to Lord Carrington's own house. The trust bought the houses 'to safeguard the amenities' of Lord Carrington's house, because it was frightened that the two houses might be turned into a hotel.

The trust then applied for improvement grants, which were quickly granted by Kensington and Chelsea Council. The two houses, which had been bought for £100,000, were then converted into six flats, which are being sold at £40,000 each. The net profit to the trust will be about £80,000.

The trust, the solicitors emphasise, has nothing to do with Lord Carrington. The sole beneficiaries are Lord Carrington's son Rupert, his two daughters and any grandchildren who are lucky enough to be born.

GEC workers with faith in their radical managing director will be interested in the following quotation

Evans



from the newly-published diaries of Cecil King, former boss of the Daily Mirror: 'Lunch today with Arnold Weinstock. He believed in equal pay for equal work, but that the men's wages should be brought down to that of the women.'

Stone sold

THE PEOPLE newspaper (19 November) exposed Mr James Stone, head of the National Coal Board's Doncaster area, for directing orders for steel covering in the mines to a firm in which he had a financial interest.

Miners in Yorkshire should also know that Mr Stone bought 4000 shares in Bonser Engineering when the firm went public in 1965. Soon afterwards, Bonser started to get some very lucrative orders for roof supports from the Coal Board—supports which were strangely similar to those patented by another firm, who had been forced to surrender their patent to the Board.

In 1967, the Hon Alfred Robens, son of Lord Robens, then chairman of the Coal Board, married the daughter of Frank Bonser, chairman of Bonser, and joined the Bonser board. As soon as orders from the Coal Board started to run down, but when the Bonser share price was still at its peak, Mr Stone and other officials sold their Bonser shares.

The Coal Board headquarters in Doncaster, incidentally, was designed by Mr John Poulson, the well-known architect and bankrupt. Mr Billy Sales, former head of the Yorkshire Coal Board, was one of Mr Poulson's best 'contacts'. He received lots of Poulson lolly, and after resigning from the Coal Board he joined the board of Poulson's companies.

FROM The Sunday Telegraph, 12 November: 'Ford's tangible "thank you", intended as a gesture of goodwill and encouragement to the staff, is distributed strictly according to rank the moment production records are broken. Managers get champagne, 300 foremen or supervisors get cigars, shop floor men get two free cups of tea.'

PRINTS

CHERRY RIPE

LAST THURSDAY, Mr Alan Cherry beat the freeze. He stood to gain 88p for each of his 922,758 shares in Countryside Properties, though the sale started poorly. If he sold them all, and the shares were an excellent buy, he pocketed £812,270.

Countryside Properties have built up a vast wealth for its directors and shareholders by buying up land with planning permission in Essex, especially in the area between Romford and Chelmsford. They have then built 'housing units' on the land and sold them through estate agents at a substantial profit.

The company was not particularly successful until the election of the Tory government.

PRE-TAX PROFITS

1965	6,696
1966	53,113
1967	23,268
1968	15,721
1969	102,185
1970	100,312

THE TORY GOVERNMENT

1971	147,958
1972	312,942
1973 (projected)	1,100,000

Until 1968 Mr Cherry was also the senior partner in Bairstow Eve, one of the biggest and most profitable estate agents in the Home Counties. The firm gets its name from its chairman, Mr John Bairstow, who is Alan Cherry's brother-in-law.

The parent company of Countryside Properties is called Countryside Developments. This too is controlled by Alan Cherry.

A small paragraph in the prospectus for the sale to the public of Countryside Properties shares points out that in 1971 and 1972 Bairstow Eve received £114,000 from Countryside Developments.

In 1972, the payments represented an estimated 97 per cent of all fees paid by the group to estate agents in that year.

This £114,000 was paid by Mr Cherry as managing director of Countryside Developments to Bairstow Eve, 22.5 per cent of whose shares were owned by Mr Cherry.

One of Countryside Developments' most lucrative developments was on the former site of Brentwood Football Club, which was taken over by Mr Bairstow and Mr Cherry in the spring of 1965. A prominent director of the new company was Jimmy Greaves, the former Tottenham and England footballer.

The ground was handed over for nothing by its previous owners—amateur footballers who had enjoyed playing football on it for generations. 'The new trust deed', reported the Brentwood Review on 9 April 1965, 'is designed to prevent the ground from being used for anything but football.'

The club went professional, and Bairstow and other directors emphasised that the club would remain in Brentwood.

In December 1969, however, Brentwood Town Football Club took over Chelmsford Football Club, and football at Brentwood was moved to Chelmsford.

The Brentwood ground was, for a time, used as a coach station by a firm called Bee Line Coaches (directors: Jimmy Greaves, John Bairstow and Alan Cherry). Finally it was sold for £161,000 to a subsidiary of Countryside Properties (managing director: Alan Cherry). The properties built on the football ground were promptly and profitably sold by Bairstow Eve, estate agents, or, to put it another way, by Alan Cherry and his brother-in-law.

A spokesman for the Department of Trade and Industry confirmed to Socialist Worker that there is nothing in the government's Counter-Inflation



Mr John Bairstow: the estate agent's business of which he is chairman got £114,000 from his brother-in-law's company in 1971-2

Bill which can take a penny from Mr Cherry's £800,000 haul.

If there were any measure freezing fortunes from property speculation it would, in the government's view, 'militate against the public interest'.

Ho-Ho-Ho

THE Territorial Army, who usually play games, are playing politics. In a recent TA exercise on the Isle of Man the troops were issued with a bogus leaflet, which was intended to be the kind of thing which the Lefties, having seized power in an area, would hand out to advancing, loyalist infantry.

'Young soldiers of Yorkshire Forces,' the leaflet starts, 'plucked from the arms of your weeping mothers to serve your imperialist masters and their lackeys, what do you think you will really achieve in this province?'

The leaflet enjoins its readers to 'turn your guns on your own masters and join us in the fight for Marxist-Leninist freedom.'

'JOIN NAILOR'S FREEDOM FIGHTERS and annihilate the imperialist running dogs. Remember our battle cry: "Ho-Ho-Ho Chi Mien" (sic)

'LONG LIFE TO OUR GLORIOUS CHAIRMAN MAO'.

The soldiers, by all accounts, managed after superhuman effort to withstand the subtle appeal of this siren call. They continued even more determinedly in rooting out and exterminating the Marxist-Leninists, as the exercise required.

By thumb

NOTHING could be fairer, so says government propaganda, than the industrial tribunals. For example, take the case of 61-year-old Michael Gardner, a West Indian who has been working for most of his life on the Lucas windscreen wiper assembly line in Birmingham. His case came up at the Birmingham Industrial Tribunal on 8 November because he claimed he had been unfairly sacked by Lucas.

Michael Gardner had for several years been 'grummeting', that is, pushing a piece of metal over a piece of rubber with his thumb. In his

heyday, he could do 2000 a day, but as he got older, he managed fewer and fewer.

The joint of his thumb degenerated with old age. His thumb became so painful that he had to get it operated on. When he returned to work from the operation, he refused to go on grummeting.

He was put on other work, to which he was not accustomed. When he could not tot up the necessary bonus points in three weeks, Lucas sacked him.

At the industrial tribunal, a Mr O'Neil, a shop steward at Lucas, appeared for the Engineering Employers, arguing that Gardner's rate of work, was unacceptable to the company.

O'Neil's fawning convinced the tribunal, who dismissed Michael Gardner's claim.

Unemployment in Birmingham for men is seven per cent. For black men it is 11 per cent, and Michael Gardner's chances of getting another job before his pension age are negligible.

At the inn

THREE weeks ago I reported that Sir David Burnett, of the notorious Hays Wharf company, had bought the Tillmouth Park Estate and Hotel, Berwickshire, for a mere £250,000. Sir David, who is a conservative and a conservationist, explained that he wanted to keep the hotel and estate 'just as they are'.

Two IS members from Leicester have written to me with an interesting account of the time they spent working at the hotel recently.

Their pay for a 60-hour week was £8, plus room (a small, hard bed) and board (cast-offs from the guests' table. The cook was once reprimanded for cooking the staff something extra).

The tips, meant for the entire staff, were usually drunk away by a particularly unpleasant supervisor. Sane staff stayed working at the hotel for an average of only about three weeks.

The owners of the hotel? The Church of England. Sir David is a devoted Christian, and does not want anything changed.

RAYMOND CHALLINOR



ALTHOUGH he does not make the point, Professor Atkinson's book, *Unequal Shares* (reviewed at length over page) merely serves to underline the political bankruptcy of the Labour leaders.

In the 1960s politicians like Crosland, Gaitskell and Strachey poo-pooed the traditional ideas of socialism. It was an old-fashioned dogma, they claimed, to argue for nationalisation with workers' control. The important thing was not this, they said, but to achieve a greater degree of equality—equality was the real aim.

Now, of course, their theoretical edifice lies in ruins. Professor Atkinson and others show that under the Wilson administration nothing was done to lessen income differentials. Indeed, inequality became more pronounced.

So our views have been vindicated. We claimed at the time that Crosland & Co were unrealistic, that inequality could only be abolished if the capitalist class were abolished as well: the concentration of wealth into a few hands and the concentration of power into a few hands buttress and bolster each other.

It is impossible to eliminate one without eliminating the other.

HOIST WITH HIS OWN PHRASING

THE LADS at a Durham factory were out on strike. The full-time EPTU official came to address them. He hoped to persuade the strikers to return to work.

But it was difficult going, and his speech was frequently interrupted with interjections. So he appealed to the men to stop heckling.

'I'm only doing my job,' he explained. 'I'm an arbitrator.'

'What kind of traitor did you say you were?' bellowed one of the blokes from the shop floor.

TROUBLE IS BREWING

ONE of the lowest forms of animal life is the police informer. Such a man is John Joseph Parker, implicated in the Aldershot bomb trial and the Hackney arms frame-up.

Parker, who says he has made a living as a police informer for the last 25 years, belongs to a long line of shady individuals, men who are paid to spy on working-class organisations and trap the unwary. Since they are paid by results, there is a natural tendency to colour their reports with lurid descriptions and fanciful tales.

This low type of work attracts a low type of person. Often he is somebody with a criminal record and against whom the police could take further action unless he collaborated.

As Alex Gordon—'dirty Alex' as he was called—confessed in 1917, 'government agents had a hold over me which made it absolutely impossible for me to break away from them.' They made him try to inveigle socialists in a plot to assassinate the prime minister. As a result, Mrs Alice Wheeldon received a 10-year sentence and died from the harsh treatment meted out to her.

Then there is the example of Carl Graves. In court Sir Thomas Munro, the chief prosecutor, described him as a most evil and dangerous man and asked for an

While the rich just stood by laughing

exemplary sentence to be given. He was sent to jail for a number of years.

In the meantime, Sir Thomas had been made Secretary of State for Scotland. Within two months of Carl Graves' release from prison, Sir Thomas was employing this man, who previously he had described as 'a menace to society', as a police spy to keep Clydeside militants under surveillance.

This information was given in a parliamentary debate on 8 March 1917. In the course of it, Ramsay MacDonald accused the government of using 'agents provocateur who make their money by the manufacture of crime.'

It may be argued that all this happened long ago. But we are now entering a period of intense social conflict and, as the behaviour of John Joseph Parker shows, the authorities are prepared to sink to the same depths as they were 50 years ago to defend their precious system.

SHADES OF DIRTY ALEX

I AM SURE you will agree that there is a group of workers for whom we should show special concern and interest. They perform a task vital to public welfare, spreading sweetness and light throughout the community. The group of workers I am referring to, of course, are those who manufacture beer.

But there is trouble brewing down at the brewery. The men at our local one complain that they are not supposed to sample the company's produce. But, naturally, this does not stop them from surreptitiously sampling a barrel with a flute bar while their mates keep watch to see that the foreman isn't around.

But this arrangement is not entirely satisfactory. Why should the foremen have their own special bar on company premises—and those in higher supervisory grades even have their individual barrels of beer—while most of the men have to resort to secret drinking?

Obviously, it is a diabolical case of class distinction.

VICTOR SERGE

Memoirs of a Revolutionary 1901-1941

TRANSLATED BY PETER SEDGWICK

The memoirs of Victor Serge, revolutionary, novelist and poet, are a testimony to the experience of three successive revolutionary generations—the anarchism of pre-1914 France, the syndicalism of Barcelona 1917, finally Russia as Stalin took over. Out of the annihilation Serge himself survived as virtually a lone witness.

70p including postage, from

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Another big step forward

From January International Socialism journal will move from quarterly to monthly publication.

This change marks a significant step forward in the development of the International Socialists and their contribution to Marxist theory.

The new journal, with a new design and format, will reflect the development of the British and international workers' movement. Monthly publication will enable us to write in depth on the contemporary political scene.

Although the journal will remain the theoretical publication of the IS group it will find space for debate, comment and polemic on the important issues of the day.

The price of the monthly journal will be 15p.

International Socialism 51



SPECIAL OFFER

Special bargain subscription rates will be available until 31 January 1973:

A six-month subscription to IS journal for 80p, including postage (normal rate £1.05)

OR

A combination offer of IS journal AND Socialist Worker: a six-month subscription to both for £2.25, including postage (normal rate £3.05).

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I enclose cheque/postal order for

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ADDRESS

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* delete as appropriate

How would you like to have £16,000?

ON THE BOARD of GEC, Britain's largest private employer, sit two gentlemen called Bond and Lewis. Between them, they hold 35 million shares in the company.

With the shares now standing at about £1.50 apiece, that gives these two gents a joint fortune of £51½ millions. Last year Bond and Lewis received (apart from directors' fees) dividends amounting to something like £1,350,000 between them.

They are by no means Britain's richest men. Lord Cowdray, for example, has a fortune estimated at £100 million. To understand how much this is, imagine it converted into 50p pieces. If all the noble lord's cash were then stacked in three-inch piles, placed end to end, they'd stretch from London to Birmingham and back again.

Professor Atkinson of Essex University has just published a book (*Unequal Shares: Wealth in Britain*, Allen Lane: The Penguin Press, £3) which highlights some aspects of the enormous inequalities in wealth in Britain. Most of the information that follows is taken from this book.

In 1966, the total personal wealth (physical assets like land and houses, plus financial assets like money in the bank, stocks and shares, etc) amounted to £106,600 million.

UNEQUAL

Add to that the total wealth of the public sector (£6000 million) and the net worth of the company sector (£25,000 million) and we get a figure for the total national wealth of Britain of something like £138,000 million [see footnote].

If the entire national wealth of Britain were equally divided among the adult population, every married couple, pensioners included, would have a sum of something like £16,000.

Of course, the wealth of Britain is not equally divided. In fact, Britain is probably the most unequal society in the world in terms of wealth holding. Even the USA, Greece and Spain are more 'equal' in this respect.

Inequality in wealth holding is even greater in Britain than inequality of incomes. The top managing directors may earn 40 times what the average worker takes home, but the top wealth holders have 1000 times the average.

DODGES

There are those who suggest that inequality in wealth in Britain has been declining. Indeed, Anthony Crosland, Labour's former Minister of Education, went so far as to suggest that 'we have now reached the point where further redistribution would make very little difference to the standard of living of the masses; to make the rich less rich would not make the poor significantly less poor.'

As Prof Atkinson shows, this is a lie: the top 5 per cent of the population own more wealth than the remaining 95 per cent. If there were a serious redistribution of wealth, the average couple would get a rise in weekly income of £9, if they invested their share at 6 per cent interest.

The reason there seems to have been a measure of redistribution of wealth is that the share of the top 1 per cent has fallen this century (from 69 per cent in 1911 to 'only' 42 per cent in 1960).

But who got the lion's share of this 'redistribution'? The short answer is, their families. The share of the next 4 per cent went up, by an almost equivalent amount.



LORD COWDRAY: up the M1, round Spaghetti Junction and back again



DUKE OF NORFOLK: unexpected bonanza for a 10-year-old

The reason for this 'sharing out' was simple—to dodge death duties. Those readers of Socialist Worker who have a few million quid no doubt take up the kind of offer made to them in the pages of *The Times*:

'GREAT NEWS for the AFFLUENT UNDER 60s! At last your Estate Duty problem can be solved without disturbing the composition of your assets in any way. Heirs . . . or estate duty? Choose while you still have a choice. If you let it, Estate Duty will make a mockery of your life's work.'

There are manifold ways of avoiding paying your wealth over to the state through death duties. As the rich know, only fools pay estate duty.

Give away your wealth before you die, or invest it in agricultural land, or in growing timber, or put it into the form of a trust, or emigrate or . . . The possibilities are as endless as the number of tax accountants ready to assist you.

And how easy it all is. Take the time in 1966 that the Queen's old uncle, the Duke of Norfolk, saw his financial affairs dragged through the High Court. The Duke has estates valued at £3 millions, and as he was pegging on a bit he was worried that the taxman might get his greedy claws into some of it.

So he 'rearranged' the terms of a trust. As a result, one of his beneficiaries, the 10-year-old son of General Fitzalan Howard, saw his expected inheritance grow from

It's simple: just divide up the national wealth...

£346,000 to £1,246,000, with the full approval of the High Court.

In percentage terms, the rates of taxation on wealth through estate duty is a mere 0.39 per cent, less than before the First World War.

Most of the really wealthy in our society, in fact, owe their riches to inheritance. There are a few 'self-made' men, who amassed vast sums for themselves by various dubious methods. A favourite, recently, has been through the exploitation of loopholes in the legislation on office building in London and other city centres.

But, by and large, it is almost impossible for the small saver to become rich. Adverts for the 'Save As You Earn' scheme showed a former worker in a chauffeur-driven limousine, billed as 'the small saver grown big'. In practice, the 'small saver', especially given today's inflation, is lucky if he ends up with what he put into the savings bank.

INSULTS

The rich have the advantage of holding their wealth, not in national savings (now a good way of actually losing money), but in industrial shares. Here, the degree of inequality is even greater than for wealth as a whole.

The top 5 per cent of the population hold 96 per cent of all company shares. And company shares are the most effective way of increasing your wealth.

The reason that wealth holding is so significant in Britain is not just that it guarantees the rich a very nice life. Wealth, in Britain, is a means to enormous power.

That power is exercised by the rich over the lives of working people. Every day the press is full of factory closures, rent rises, evictions and sackings.

Every day several workers die in industry and dozens are injured. The thousands of insults, attacks, humiliations of all kinds that we suffer are inflicted on us by our masters, whose power is guaranteed to them, in Britain, by their wealth.

The battle against inequality is also a battle for workers' power in society.

The 'public sector' has enormous assets, but these are matched by enormous debts, normally known as the 'national debt'. So the NET worth of the public sector is only just in balance. Until fairly recently, in fact, the public sector was in deficit.

The net worth of the company sector is the difference between the real value of all the companies in Britain, less the value of their shares on the Stock Exchange. Most companies are really worth a lot more than the total price of their shares on the stock market.

BY COLIN BARKER

ONE key reason for Labour winning the 1964 election was its housing policy. The housing problem was in everybody's mind.

Three million families lived in slum conditions—a fact that had become a hot political issue. The Rachman exposure of private landlords had been spotlighted in London with horrific tales of harassment of tenants. The growing problem of homelessness and the activities of land speculators and property racketeers had been given wide publicity.

As a result, Labour's pledges on housing won them great support and was certainly responsible for the party's narrow victory in 1964.

Labour's election manifestos of 1964 and 1966 both gave firm pledges that they would build 500,000 houses a year. 'We have announced and we intend to achieve a government target of 500,000 by 1969-1970' the Labour manifesto of 1966 boldly announced.

But Labour's firm pledges became worthless. In 1964 the Tories built 374,000 houses. In 1965 this went up to 413,000, well short of the 'firm pledge'. The figure declined until in the last year of the Labour government in 1970 fewer houses were built than in the last year of the Tory government in 1964.

This failure was not because Labour politicians were liars—though some of them are—but because they were unwilling to tackle the way the capitalist system controls, constrains and exploits housing.

The devaluation of 1967 and the credit squeeze that followed knocked back private house building. Also, the huge and increasing burden of interest charges meant that local councils could no longer afford to go on building houses.

Interest rates under Labour rose to a new high of around 9 per cent a year. This meant that a £5000 council house cost the council and the tenants more than £26,000.

More than 80 per cent of the extra subsidies given by Labour between 1964 and 1968 to encourage more council building went not to houses, but to higher interest charges.

Council tenants confronted with the vicious Tory Housing Finance Act might think they would like to go back to the Golden Days of the Labour government. On examination they don't appear so enticing.

Council tenants' rents went up on average nationally by 70 per cent between 1964 and 1970. Labour made no attempt to stop these rises—in fact they more than encouraged councils and corporations to raise rents. The only limit placed on rent rises was a maximum rise in any one year of 7s 6d (37½p) a week in 1969 and that was largely as a result of rent strikes by tenants in London and other places.

PUSHED UP

The record for private tenants is much worse. The 1966 Rent Act did give security of tenure to unfurnished private tenants, but it made sure they would pay for it.

The Act developed the concept and the machinery of so-called 'fair rents' which the Tories are now applying to council housing. Indeed, Peter Walker

has thanked Labour for thinking up the idea.

The system of rent officers and rent assessment committees has achieved the setting of rents which are 2.6 times higher than their previous controlled level. Many Labour supporters and even MPs assumed rents would come down, but instead they have been pushed up.

This is no surprise to Richard Crossman, Labour's Minister of Housing at the time, who has since admitted that the policy was designed to push up rents. He says the Tories are right to extend it to council tenants. In 1970, the last year of Labour government, of rents registered by rent officers, 75.8 per cent were increased and just 17.5 per cent were reduced.

Another of Labour's claims to fame in the housing field was the Housing Improvement Act of 1969. The Act gives grants to house owners to

modernise their houses and was going to 'rehabilitate our cities and stop the slide towards slums' according to Tony Greenwood, the 'left-wing' Minister of Housing at the time.

But the Act has become the biggest bonanza for landlords, property speculators and the rich who want weekend cottages. What happens is that property dealers buy an old house for up to £10,000, convert it into four flats, get government grants of up to £1000 a flat for modernisation then resell the flats. In London that's £10,000 each—a net profit of more than £20,000.

THE RICH

This has resulted in the decline of the number of houses available to rent in many towns and cities. It is also used by landlords to jack up their tenants' rents, for the Act

removes houses from rent control if landlords improve them. A recent study in Notting Hill showed that this resulted in rents doubling or trebling after improvement.

The rich have also taken advantage of the Act to buy country cottages and do them up with government money. This has resulted in the price of cottages in many areas trebling over the past two years and making the housing prospects of local people hopeless.

'Labour is for the working man' is a phrase that is used by working people to justify voting Labour at election time. If this was true we would expect a Labour government to redistribute the subsidies in housing towards the poor.

There is no evidence for this between 1964 and 1970. The truth is that under Labour owner-occupiers gained much more from government subsidies in the form of tax relief and

untaxed capital gains than council tenants got in subsidies. Since abolition of Schedule A tax, housing is the only form of untaxed profit. It is calculated that if Schedule A still in operation it would have brought in £727 million last year alone. Not only did property owners not pay this tax under Labour they got increasing amounts of relief on their mortgages. In this came to £302 million compared to only £157 million of government subsidy for council tenants.

FAILURE

And the Labour government not change the scandal of massive subsidies to the rich. A surtax on buying a £30,000 house gets a subsidy of £42 a week compared to council tenants' average 70p a week. All these points show that Labour failed not only to solve the housing problem but significantly to help the working class. Only a socialist programme that would take over the land needed for building, nationalise the building industry and expropriate the money lenders can solve the housing problem.

Few people now believe Labour in power will do these things. But many still argue that they will do better than the Tories.

It is true that Labour is pledged to repeal the Housing Finance Act but will it reduce rents back to 1971 level? On this the party is silent.

Six years of Labour government has shown us that not only is Labour incapable of bringing socialism, increasingly finds it impossible to bring meaningful reforms—and never more glaringly than in the case of housing.

Robert James



REDUCED TO RUBBLE...

—PLEDGE ON HOMES

Shachtman —renegade with a proud past...



Shachtman in the 1930s; with Cannon he represented Trotskyism in the United States

MAX SHACHTMAN is dead. Of recent years, age and the progressive and rapid rightward drift of his politics has meant that the new generation of socialists are unfamiliar with his name. Shachtman's later politics masked a not at all inglorious past.

He was a founder-member of the American Communist Party, a partisan of the James P Cannon group in the party and, with Cannon and Abern, was expelled in 1928 for adherence to Trotsky's Left Opposition.

Shachtman's abilities as a speaker and a brilliant journalist were a large element in the continued existence (success, in the circumstances of the late 1920s and early 1930s, was impossible) and modest advances made by the American Left Oppositionists, the Communist League of America.

Insofar as individuals can represent a movement, Shachtman, with Cannon, represented American Trotskyism throughout the 1930s. Cannon was the organiser and Shachtman the publicist and editor.

As a polemicist and debater only Trotsky was Shachtman's superior and if there is a note of self-indulgence in some of his work it cannot detract from its almost uniformly high quality, which can be admired whether one agrees with his conclusions or not. Some of the best translations of Trotsky's works into English were made by Shachtman.

In 1940 a struggle in the American party (by then the Socialist Workers Party), between the Cannon group and the Burnham-Shachtman group over the war question and support for Russia, developed wide differences about the party regime and the class nature of Russian society. A split followed, later that year.

Something like 40 per cent of the SWP split with Shachtman and Burnham to form the Workers Party. The argument

about the class nature of Russia had not been clarified in the SWP fight and it was only later that the Workers Party developed its own special characterisation of Russia as 'bureaucratic collectivism'.

Bureaucratic collectivism was, in the original model, more progressive than capitalism and an historical quirk confined to Russia. In later manifestations it was transformed into a species of barbarism, beside which Western capitalism was superior in several respects.

During the Second World War the Workers Party had made strenuous and partially successful efforts to get into industry. Their young, generally middle-class members sought and obtained jobs in factories expanded by war production and short of labour due to the draft. They fought against the Communist Party/trade union bureaucracy-supported 'No Strike' pledge, and made some impact, particularly in the United Auto Workers.

Isolation

With the war's end, however, the return of demobilised workers and the contraction of war production drastically reduced the party's influence. Post-war America, with its McCarthy witchhunt, was not an easy place for revolutionaries to exist, let alone expand. The Workers' Party was no exception.

Isolation and frustration are a poor guide for any movement, even with an impeccable theory. The bureaucratic collectivist theory was far from impeccable.

From a re-examination of the past of American socialism in the light of his theory, Shachtman came progressively to reject large chunks of the communist tradition. A brief resurgence of hope—with the defection of many Communist Party members after Khrushchev's 20th Congress speech and the Hungarian revolution—was quickly dashed.

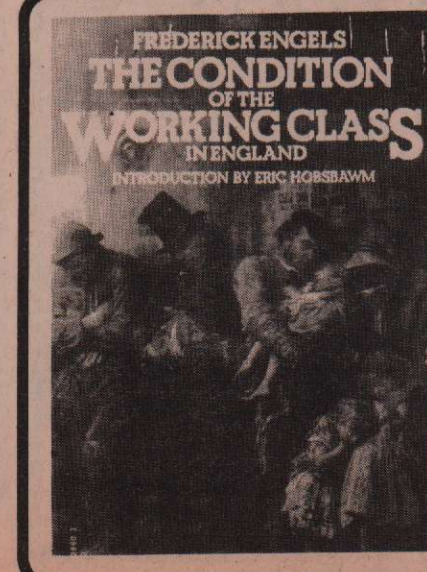
Shachtman prepared for a dissolution into the American Socialist Party, a

party that almost 20 years before he had described, with some justice, as a corpse.

Once in the Socialist Party, Shachtman moved rapidly to the right wing of this not notably left party. He supported Kennedy's Bay of Pigs adventure, American involvement in Vietnam and a realignment in the Democratic Party.

It was recently reported that he supported the right-wing Democrat 'Scoop Jackson' for presidential candidate. Shachtman's political odyssey had come to its miserable, if logical, conclusion.

He died on Tuesday 7 November (ironically Trotsky's birthday and the anniversary of the Russian Revolution). Politically his demise was much, much earlier.



ENGELS

It is common to think of Friedrich Engels as the shadow and rich benefactor of Marx, and nothing more. He was, however, a man of outstanding ability in his own right—and much of Marx's work based on Engels' knowledge of 19th century conditions.

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A victory for the 'civilised society'

NO CIVILISED SOCIETY would tolerate such barbaric behaviour, Mr Justice Sebag Shaw told Noel Jenkinson when he was found guilty of the Aldershot bombing at Winchester last week.

Jenkinson, a former full-time official with the Transport and General Workers Union, was sentenced to a minimum of 30 years in jail. He had strenuously denied all the charges. He told the court: 'My own experience as a trade unionist has shown me that a lot more can be achieved peacefully than by violence.'

Francis Kissane was sentenced to two years in jail for perverting the course of justice. Michael Duignan got three and a half years for having a sawn-off shotgun and perverting the course of justice.

The fact that Kissane and Duignan were in the dock at Winchester at all raises serious questions about the conduct of the Aldershot investigation. The state offered *no evidence whatever* that these two were involved in any way in the planting of the bomb.

Kissane was accused of loaning a false driving licence to Noel Jenkinson. It was accepted by the jury that, even if Jenkinson *did* use that licence to hire the car used at Aldershot, Kissane knew nothing of it.

In 'normal' circumstances a man with a clear record found guilty of loaning his driving licence to someone else would certainly not receive a jail sentence. He would be fined. At most he might be given a suspended sentence.

Railroad

By dragging him to Winchester and so associating him, however vaguely, with the Aldershot explosion, the police and the judge managed to railroad him into prison.

Duignan's case was even more grotesque. The 'perversion of the course of justice' of which he was accused concerned a driving offence committed in Ilford months before the Aldershot affair. Yet the police chose, and Shaw agreed, to have it dealt with in the emotional atmosphere at Winchester.

There was no suggestion that the shotgun, which was unlicensed, had anything to do with the Aldershot affair. Yet Shaw, despite



The men sent to prison (left to right): Francis Kissane, Noel Jenkinson and Michael Duignan. Right: the officers' mess at Aldershot after the explosion. The police were determined to fix the blame on anyone.

fierce protests from Duignan's lawyers, decided to hear that case, too, alongside the Aldershot charges.

What happened at Winchester was that the police and the Special Branch were determined to have someone—anyone—put away for the Aldershot explosion and that Jenkinson, Duignan and Kissane

were the likeliest candidates they could lay their hands on.

So all three were roped in on any charge—relevant or irrelevant—that could be dreamed up, the charges lumped together and the trial conducted in an atmosphere charged with recrimination, with the result that all three ended in jail.

The result of the trial tells us a lot about 'justice', as is understood by the police and the courts.

Michael Duignan goes to jail for having a shotgun. In Northern Ireland everybody knows—the army and the police certainly know—that there are tens of thousands of weapons much more deadly than shotguns in the hands of Unionist extremists. They refuse even to look for them, let alone charge their possessors.

Noted

The message that will come through loud and clear—to the people of areas like the Bogside—and which ought to be noted by every British worker, is this:

If you wear an army uniform and plan, supervise or participate in the murder of 13 innocent Irish civilians—as Lieutenant-colonel David Wilford of the 1st Paratroopers did—you will be invited to Buckingham Palace, congratulated by the Queen and invested with the MBE.

If, on the other hand, you are found guilty of causing the deaths of a soldier and six innocent civilians in attempted retaliation, you will be locked up in a high-security prison for 30 years

That is what 'justice' means in this society. Which is just one of the reasons for getting rid of it.



JOHN PARKER: Key witness at Winchester who admitted he had helped to frame the accused in the Hackney 'arms trial'



This is a

ONE of the key witnesses against Noel Jenkinson was John Parker. 'Last year I received £500 in one go . . . I have been a professional informer for 25 years,' Parker told the Winchester court.

Noel Jenkinson had alleged that Parker, posing as 'Pat Egan', had borrowed a driving licence from him and used it to hire the car which was later stuffed with explosives and parked outside the Paratroop officers' mess. The fact that the licence used to hire the car had been obtained by Jenkinson was the lynchpin of the case against him.

Parker first came to the public notice in June this year in another case involving alleged Irish Republican activities in England. Five people arrested at a shop in Hackney, East London, and charged with the theft and possession of 11 rifles and three automatic pistols, claimed that they had been framed by the Special Branch and that the guns had been planted by a man called John Parker.

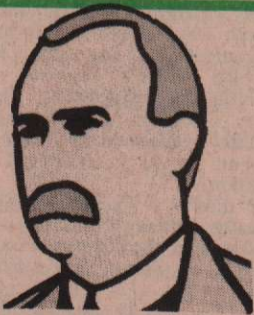
The prosecution denied this until defence lawyers traced Parker to 21 Forest Road, Witham in Essex. The authorities, threatened with exposure, suddenly dropped the case in mid-trial on 12 June.

Tapped

On 13 June the Attorney-General, Sir Peter Rawlinson, issued a statement saying that there was 'a need to protect the identity of certain persons in the interests of their own personal safety . . .' 'It emerged that the full facts could not be put before the jury and it was agreed that the prosecution should not, in the interests of justice, continue,' he said.

On 16 June Parker was interviewed by a member of the Sunday Times Insight team. He admitted that it was he who had brought

'Political and social freedom are not two separate and unrelated ideas, but are two sides of the one great principle, each being incomplete without the other.'



JAMES CONNOLLY

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NEWS IN VIEW

The message comes through loud and clear: if you wear an army uniform and plan, supervise or participate in the murder of 13 innocent Irish civilians, you will be invited to Buckingham Palace, congratulated by the Queen and invested with the MBE. If you are found guilty of causing the deaths of a soldier and six civilians in attempted retaliation you will be locked up for 30 years.

coppers' nark

...defendants in the case together, that suggested that they set up a shop to selling the profits to go for the relief of the troubles in Northern Ireland, that he had found and arranged the shop premises for them at 257 Wick Hackney. He also admitted that he had arranged for the installation of a telephone in the shop, was then tapped, that he had asked one defendant to hire a car and had supplied with a forged driving licence, that he had part in the operation which netted the defendants, and that he had done all this on the instructions of the Special Branch.

Denial

...named the Special Branch officer with whom he was working as Detective Constable David Chapman of Liverpool Road police station.

At Winchester, Parker admitted being involved in the Hackney affair—he could not deny it—otherwise—but vehemently denied the allegations made by Jenkinson regarding his involvement in the Aldershot affair. How much credence can be given to his denial is a matter to be decided by the demonstrable fact that he lied to himself at least three times in the Aldershot witness box.

Parker swore that he had given no information to the IRA, saying that the story must have come from the IRA. Sunday Times' journalists who had confirmed that they had indeed obtained the relevant information direct from Parker. The Sunday Times of 18 June carried a photograph of Parker—taken without his consent—speaking to an Insight reporter in the garden of 21 Forest Road, Witham.

When asked at Winchester whether he had called himself 'Pat Egan', Parker said:

'I have never used an alias.' He admitted to the Sunday Times on 16 June that he had on occasion used the alias 'Dave Lee'.

He claimed at Winchester that 'Dave Lee' was in fact the name by which he had known the Special Branch officer involved with him in the Hackney case. On 16 June he had given the Sunday Times the real name of this policeman—David Chapman.

All this adds up to a state of affairs usually described in the capitalist press as 'disturbing'. Parker is a self-confessed, paid, Special Branch agent-provocateur. Clearly he is also an unashamed perjurer.

The question one immediately asks is: in view of Parker's activities in the Hackney arms case and his later attempts to lie his way out of it, is not Noel Jenkinson's story of how he first came to be mixed up in the Aldershot affair as plausible a construction as can be placed on the known facts?

Answer

One final point: after the dramatic end of the Hackney trial and under pressure of questioning by the Sunday Times, Robert Mark, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, announced on 16 June an investigation into the circumstances, so far as the Metropolitan Police are concerned, which led to the discontinuance of a prosecution at the Central Criminal Court on 12 June.

Five months have passed, but not another word has been heard of this investigation.

Last week in Parliament Bernadette Devlin put down a question to Home Secretary Robert Carr asking what had happened to this investigation. The answer is awaited with interest, not least by Noel Jenkinson.

THE KEY SPEECH THE PRESS IGNORED

With its usual disregard for free speech and 'minority' opinions, the press ignored Bernadette Devlin's speech in the parliamentary debate on Northern Ireland last week. We reproduce it here

THE CLEAREST indication of the thinking behind the Green Paper, behind the policies of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and of the entire government, is possibly to be found in the simple questions in the referendum.

These also explain why the government are incapable of solving the Irish problem. In their starkest and simplest form, those questions ask whether the people of Northern Ireland want to be ruled by Ted Heath or by Jack Lynch.

They are formed on the basis that the only quarrel that we, the people of Northern Ireland, have is over whether we want to be ruled by a royal blue Tory or a white-flag-waving green Tory of the Free State.

That is not our problem. We are not two groups of the population arguing only about whether we should belong to the Republic of Ireland as it exists, with its low welfare benefits and its present constitution, or to the United Kingdom as it exists, with its present system of government.

MURDER

The implications of the struggle in Ireland go much deeper than that. The implications of the struggle in Northern Ireland are much more fundamental, and none of them is dealt with in the Green Paper or in the referendum.

We are not asking to exchange one flag for another. We are not asking the working class of Northern Ireland to take their pick between Long Kesh and the Curragh Camp.

We are not asking them to take their pick between the Special Powers Act and the Offences Against the State Act. We are not asking them to exchange the dole queues of British capitalism and Toryism for the dole queues of Free State Toryism.

I throw back in William Whitelaw's teeth without apology some of the words he spoke earlier. He asked of the Provisional IRA, 'How can they bring law and order who have brought nothing but murder and bloodshed?'

In the name of my dead constituents—in the name of the deaf mute Eamonn McDevitt; the youth Tobias Molloy, shot dead by a rubber bullet which struck his heart when he was returning from a dance; in the name of John Paddy Mullan and Hugh Herron, shot only within the past month—I ask the security forces of Britain, 'How will you bring law and order, you who have bought murder and bloodshed?'

RELEASE

Therefore, if the Secretary of State really wants to bring about peace he will not do it by repression, as it is called, in the South, or by having the Special Branch in the North of Ireland working in cahoots with the Special Branch of the South, turning over political prisoners from one side of the Border to another.

If Mr Whitelaw really wants peace, let him start by releasing all the internees—something for which we have been campaigning from August 1971.

It is not a question of bringing them before special courts. The most innocent people in Northern Ireland are the people behind the wire in Long Kesh. How can those men, who have been there since August 1971, be responsible for anything that has happened since 1971?



Bernadette on the recent anti-internment march in London

Whatever else they have done, they have not been responsible for the violence that internment brought about; for all that time they have been in Long Kesh.

I ask Members to consider the case already mentioned—the case of Mr McGuigan, who for 51 weeks was interned on remand and who for 51 weeks in succession, was remanded for seven days in custody. He was imprisoned on 36 charges for those 51 weeks until acquitted in open court by a judge.

Far from being compensated for wrongful imprisonment, as he went through the door of the court he was immediately picked up by members of the RUC Special Branch, who took him off for questioning—holding him for 12 hours—and then kept him on a 28-day detention order. If he is brought before the special court, will the three hacks of judges reverse the decision of the open court?

Will they tell a man who has already served a year's imprisonment and been acquitted of 36 charges, that because he cannot prove himself innocent he is presumed guilty, and is to be further imprisoned?

Someone asked about active

canvassing on the referendum. Let me assure the House that I will be canvassing very actively at the referendum, as will my friend the Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone (Frank McManus).

We will be canvassing very actively in the referendum, advising everyone with two ounces of wit to stay away from it. Electoral history may well be made; there may well be areas in the constituencies of Mid-Ulster and Fermanagh and South Tyrone where, from the opening of polling stations at dawn to their closing at dusk, not a single vote will be cast.

REFUSE

I return to the question of responsibility and bipartisanship. In all sincerity, I ask the British Labour Party how it can effectively fight Toryism in Britain and refuse to fight it in Ireland.

How can it fight unemployment queues and the policies of the Tory government in this country, yet acquiesce in their policies in my country?

It cannot lick the boots and kick the backsides of capitalism at one and the same time.

International Socialism 53



Lessons of the Sit-in
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'In Britain, as in every other NATO country, there is a 'counter-insurgency' plan providing for a military takeover'

OUT OF YOUR MIND

Duncan Hallas on socialist ideas and capitalist myths

IN JANUARY 1906 the Liberal Party was returned to power with a huge parliamentary majority. The Liberals were pledged to 'Home Rule for Ireland'.

They were also committed to some very modern social reforms, a response to the growing unrest among British workers. On the need for crumbs for the workers—a contributory unemployment insurance scheme, a very limited 'Health Service' on the basis of a weekly contribution stamp, Labour Exchanges, the reversal of the Taff Vale judgment and a few others—ruling class opinion, Liberal and Tory alike, was more or less agreed in principle.

The need to head off the growth of 'dangerous' discontent was recognised—the arguments were about detail.

The most important of these measures, unemployment and health insurance, were later described by a moderate conservative as 'a masterpiece. It took the sting out of socialism . . . and successfully disguised from the recipients of health and unemployment benefit how small a proportion of it came from the wealthy and how much of it came ultimately out of the pockets of their fellow workers.'

Ireland was a very different matter. The ruling class was deeply split about the best way to keep Ireland safe for private property and especially landed property.

The Liberal wing thought Home Rule—'an Irish parliament that would not have been very much more than a glorified County Council'—was the best way of ensuring that the Irish national movement remained in safe, responsible hands. The Tories thought this a dangerous concession that could trigger off an uncontrollable movement.

Armed

Eventually the Liberal government pushed through its Home Rule Bill which became due to take effect in 1914 after a two-year delay imposed by the Tory House of Lords.

The outcome provided the first, and as yet the only recent test in Britain of how the 'impartial' and 'neutral' commanders of the army and police behave when faced with a law fundamentally unacceptable to leading circles of their class. It was only a very partial test because Home Rule was not opposed by the whole ruling class, but it is sufficiently instructive.

A Tory MP, Sir Edward Carson, Solicitor-General in the previous Tory government, promoted an illegal but quite open force, the Ulster

How the army stopped Home Rule

Volunteers, armed with rifles smuggled in from Germany and trained by past and serving officers of the British Army.

The avowed purpose of the Ulster Volunteers, proclaimed by Carson and his associates in the House of Commons and elsewhere, was to prevent by force the implementation of an Act of Parliament, the Home Rule Law.

Needless to say neither they nor Carson nor F E Smith nor any other of the Tories who were calling for armed resistance to the government were ever prosecuted themselves. Indeed Carson and Smith were later raised to the peerage.

However, as the historians Cole and Postgate pointed out, 'what defeated Home Rule was not an Ulster rebellion but a mutiny in the British army. No one, to be sure, consulted the common soldiers about their willingness to coerce Ulster: it was a body of officers, overwhelmingly Tory in politics, who, encouraged . . . at the War Office, announced their refusal to obey orders.'

The encouragement is the key point. It was not merely the mutiny of 57 relatively junior officers at Curragh Camp that caused the government to surrender. It was the support the mutineers had from the Army chiefs.

Sir Arthur Paget, Commander in Chief in Ireland, openly encouraged them. Sir Henry Wilson, Director of Military Operations at the War Office, was a fellow conspirator of Carson.

Sir John French, Chief of the Imperial General Staff and later in

that same year C in C of the British Army in France, demanded that no action be taken against the mutineers and furthermore that the Liberal War Minister, Seely, be dismissed—and both 'requests' were granted.

The military and police authorities in Ireland 'allowed' to run in unmolested at Larne a large supply of guns and ammunition for the (Ulster) Volunteers, whereas an attempt by the Nationalists to run a counter-supply at Howth promptly brought British soldiers on the scene and led to an affray in which several Irishmen lost their lives.'

The whole episode is a particularly profitable subject for study by 'parliamentary readers'. For even though the ruling class was far from entirely united in opposing Home Rule, the opposition of its most prominent political spokesman—Bonar Law, the Tory leader, openly encouraged Carson and the army chiefs—was sufficient to turn the 'neutral' state machine against the government they were supposed to obey without question, against the 'sovereign parliament'. And government and parliament backed down.

Greece

At that time there was no standing plan for a military takeover. There is now. In Britain, as in every NATO country, there is a 'counter-insurgency' plan providing for just that.

It was by putting into effect the Greek version, NATO code-name 'Prometheus', that the Greek Colonels overthrew an elected government and established their dictatorship.

Not that their British counterparts—who are every bit as reactionary—are likely to try it on except as a last resort. The illusion in 'parliamentary democracy' is one of the ruling classes' best safeguards and will not be lightly exposed as the fiction it is.

Nor is an attempt at a military takeover anything but a desperate gamble in a highly industrialised country with a strongly organised working class. But the 'last resort' will undoubtedly be tried when the 'expropriation of the expropriators' becomes a real and immediate prospect.

And this menace from the state will never be smashed by speeches and votes in parliament.

BOOKS

REVIEW

Getting inside the revolution

YEAR ONE OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION, by Victor Serge, translated and edited by Peter Sedgwick, Allen Lane The Penguin Press, £3.95.

A GENERATION of Victor Serge's were exterminated by Joseph Stalin. Their thoughts, memories and experiences perished in Siberian labour camps and secret police files. But by a series of historical accidents much of Serge's own work survives.

As far as this reviewer is concerned a collection of Serge's bus tickets and shopping lists would receive a favourable notice. Son of Russian emigre intellectuals, Serge's early life took him through most of the political upheavals of Western Europe in the early years of this century, and most of the left-wing currents, from violent anarchism to Bolshevism and the periphery of the post-1928 Trotskyist movement.

Year One was written between 1925-28, and deals with the Bolshevik revolution from October 1917 to October 1918. Serge himself arrived in Russia at the end of this period (as he graphically describes in his *Memoirs of a Revolutionary*). So this book is a second-hand report. This fault (if fault it is) doesn't prevent the book from being the best one-volume account of the period I've read.

Serge's ability to get inside the period is the book's greatest virtue. The reader isn't reading about a group of obscure politicians shooting other obscure politicians for random reasons long ago in a far country. The revolution is shown as a conscious process, decisions are made, circumstance dictates retreats, there are genuine Bolshevik cock-ups and genuine Bolshevik triumphs.

The book breaks down two common but sterile ideas about the Russian Revolution. One comes from Western anti-Bolsheviks, who argue that the Revolution was the wicked act of a tight-knit ruthless group of plotters. This is mirrored perfectly in the Stalinist view of a tight-knit group of leaders with an astonishing gift for doing exactly the right thing at all times for all times.

Serge's account enables us to understand the far more complicated and fluid relationship between party and class in those early years.

For example, conventional wisdom has the Bolsheviks ruthlessly ousting all other tendencies from power once the October rising was accomplished. Serge shows instead the process of erosion by which other revolutionaries lost the will and ability to influence events.

He shows the astonishingly debased antics of large sections of the Menshevik Party and the mixture of futile courage and outright reaction which typified the behaviour of the peasant-intellectual Social Revolutionaries.

Serge also maps out the way the Bolsheviks were driven by circumstance and not by clear plan to move to the nationalisation and socialist control of industry. He touches on the year 1920, when a bizarre form of graveyard communism sprung into existence. The collapse of the money system drove Russia into a mixture of primitive barter and abolition of payment for all public services, rents, even theatre tickets. A mixture, in fact, of the most advanced and the most backward forms of social organisation.

BOOKWORM'S EYE VIEW

THIS month Pluto Press publish several books on the history of the British labour movement which not only make available some classic but hard to obtain texts but provide a surprisingly relevant discussion of the tactics and ideas of revolutionary trade unionism.

Pluto has launched this pamphlet series under the general title of Reprints in Labour History and plans to include many of the most important writings in the history of the British labour movement with the aid of the IS Historians Group. Each will give the complete text and an extended introduction placing it in historical and political context.

The first in the series, J T Murphy's theoretical analysis of the shop stewards' movement of the First World War and its structure, *THE WORKERS' COMMITTEE*, is already reprinting. It is now joined by Tom Mann's 1886 pamphlet *WHAT A COMPULSORY EIGHT-HOUR WORKING DAY MEANS TO THE WORKERS* (25p, including postage, from IS Books, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2). This fine piece of polemic writing is doubled in value by Richard Hyman's introduction.

Peter Sedgwick's informed and scrupulous editing provides the link from Serge's still optimistic view of the mid-1920s through to the nightmares of the following years. He also provides insights that give the reader a chance to use Serge to look not just at 1917 but at 1972—and the future.

Serge wrote a Year Two as well, based on his own experience, but it was seized by the KGB. Perhaps one day that Dead Sea scroll will re-emerge and continue the process of giving our movement its history back.

NIGEL FOUNTAIN

Uprooted into crime

THE EVACUEE, by Dick Pooley (Available from Agitprop Bookshop, 248 Bethnal Green Road, London E2, 42p including postage)

THIS short autobiography by the national organiser of the newly founded Prisoners' Union is a subtle and un sentimental picture of his own youth. It shows how crime was a logical response to the brutality of his childhood as an evacuee.

Nowadays we hear a lot about how marvellous evacuation during wartime was, how glad East End kids were to get away from the grime and the back streets of London, how well they got on with their middle-class 'foster-parents' in the country. Nothing is said about the dormitory-like lives forced on the evacuees by 19th century old dears who 'took them in' more like an orphanage than a parent.

In a series of simple colloquial scenes Dick Pooley shows how a small group of boys subjected to hunger, regimentation and isolation end up pinching what they can. That they end up in an approved school is inevitable.

It is an institution which attempts only to foster the boys' hard determination, not their deep sensitivity: 'One afternoon gym period I was forced to fight my mate, Peter. We sparred around and smiled a lot at each other.'

'Then 'Gnat-Bite' (a warder) stepped in and stopped the fight. He held us both by grabbing a handful of our hair. He looked at us in a threatening manner, 'Now get fighting'.

'We started to swop a few blows and then I caught Peter a blow on the face and knocked him down. I was alarmed and bent to pick him up. 'Gnat-Bite' started to scream and shout at me: "You're disqualified for picking him up!"

'I didn't give a damn. As I lifted him up . . . 'Gnat-Bite' stood by and sneered at this show of weakness.'

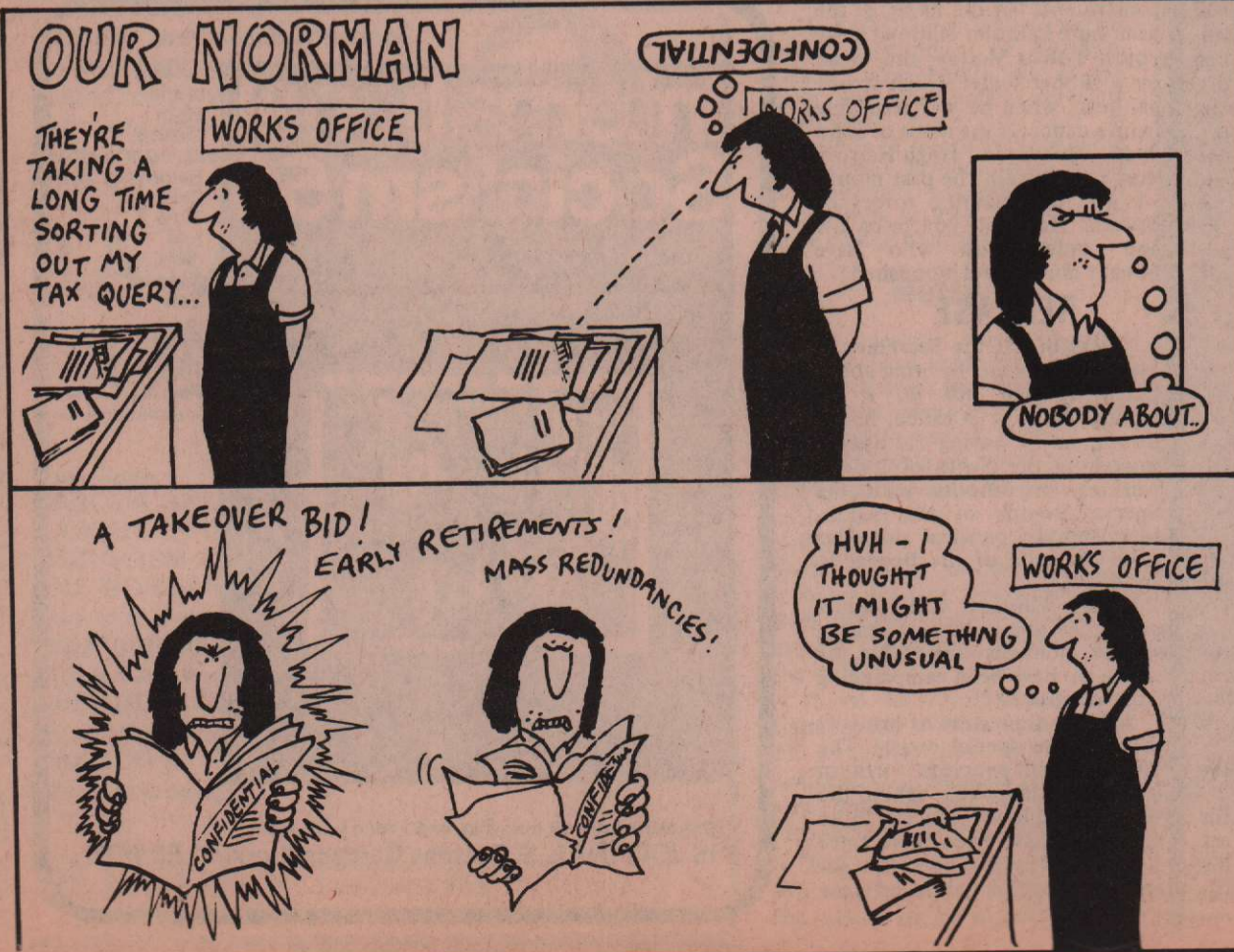
There is no sob story element about this book, no sentimentalising about modern Oliver Twists. Dick Pooley presents it as it was and as it still is for many kids.

We only have to be reminded of the horrific experience of Steven McCarthy, who was beaten up and died only a few months ago at the hands of borstal authorities and the police, to know that the institutions that Dick Pooley describes still exist.

Out of this sort of childhood was to develop a man who was to spend 20 years of his life in Her Majesty's Institutions of 'correction'. He makes no attempt in this book to find excuses for himself.

What the book does show is that right from the beginning these institutions don't achieve anything like their supposed aim and that this is a reflection of a society that believes and always has believed in victimising anyone who fights against it, whether directly political or by being 'anti-social'.

JULIET ASH





Tommy Handley, of ITMA, celebrating the end of the war. The BBC got its reputation for 'impartiality' by being on 'our' side

THE BBC: FAITHFUL SERVANT OF OUR RULERS

THE British Broadcasting Corporation are busy congratulating themselves on 50 years of faithful service to the system. The sound coming from Broadcasting House this month is of podgy hands slapping on backs.

And toasted most lavishly is the BBC's much-vaunted 'objectivity'. For like the British legal system, the BBC's effectiveness as a propaganda weapon has been its carefully cultivated image of impartiality.

Unlike French or German broadcasting there are no civil servants in the corridor or government censors blue-pencilling. But the BBC's commitment to upholding the system is equally strong if much more subtly disguised.

Two quotes sum up this relationship. The first is a circular from the first director-general, John Reith, to all departmental heads after the General Strike of 1926.

'The broadcasting of official communiques by the government would have been expected and demanded irrespective of its political complexion...

'Since the BBC was a national institution, and since the government in this crisis were acting for the people, the BBC was for the government in the crisis too; and we had to assist in maintaining the essential services of the country, the preservation of law and order, and of the life and liberty of the individual and of the community.'

What Reith actually means by the 'nation' is the interests of those very few people who own and control industry and state by 'preserving Law and Order', allowing the police and army to do what they want. As we see every night, it's still something called The Nation which requires us to make the sacrifices and something called The Country which has lost so many million pounds by a strike.

Impartial

Forty-four years after Reith's comment, ex-minister of posts and telecommunications and Tory athlete Chris Chataway was even more frank:

'The BBC has made it clear over the years that impartiality could never mean impartiality between right and wrong, tolerance and intolerance, or between the criminal and the law. No obligation of impartiality could absolve the broadcasting services from exercising their editorial judgment—and from exercising it within the context of the society they are there to serve.'

'The BBC have as trustees for the public to judge not only what is best in news terms, but what is in the national interest.'

So don't adjust your set, it's simply what The Nation thinks is fit for your ears.

Anyone, therefore, who believes that the corporation was set up as an impartial arbiter in the class war is sadly mistaken. It was set up in 1922 as a means whereby Marconi Company and others could stimulate the market for radio receiving equipment, and has over the years worked in close collaboration with the giant



IS AUNTY READY FOR A PENSION?

electronics firms, helping them make profits.

It was largely instrumental in establishing a stake in television for EMI from 1932 onwards.

Even the old age pensioner has not been spared the forced contribution of the licence-fee to subsidise this development.

Nor does this process stop at manufacturing and trade. With mammoth productions such as The British Empire, the BBC set up joint ventures with Time-Life International—the right-wing American magazine corporation—which have the net effect of helping to bail that company out of the current magazine doldrums in the United States and give it a stake in the telly business.

The British licence-holder has helped in this merciful rescue to the tune of several hundred thousand pounds, and more such ventures are to come.

The BBC is therefore a child of British capitalism and a continual source of help to it. But it would hardly have been able to do for the establishment what it has done, were it not for the aura of impartiality and sanctity which grew up around it.

This has something to do with the character of its founder, the strange, neurotic Calvinist Lord Reith, a civil engineer who had a naive belief in the ruling class and was seized by a lust to be an integral part of it.

It is true that Reith had his differences with his masters, particularly Churchill, against whom he harboured a lifelong hatred, but as A J P Taylor has said: 'In his cantankerous way he had done his best to serve an establishment that he did not properly understand.'

He paid for this lack of 'understanding' by being kept in the wilderness for the last 30 years of his life.

A far more important way in

which the BBC came to be accepted as 'impartial' is that in its formative 'golden' years—the 1930s and 1940s—it was faced (and continuously contrasted with) the outright, blatant use of radio by Goebbels' propaganda machine in Nazi Germany. In terms of objectivity, no more flattering contrast in the BBC's favour could possibly be found.

For virtually five years, from 1940 to 1945, the BBC was the only radio alternative to the Nazi propaganda all over Europe. As an institution, it has lived on the ideology created by this situation ever since.

Control

At the same time, it is true that the BBC has enabled many fine artists and communicators to be heard and seen. The fact that it was not set up to make a profit for itself meant that it was able to bring talks, music and drama to millions who would otherwise have been denied them.

There is little doubt that it was as significant in raising the cultural level of the country in its own way as the Education Act of 1870.

But now the BBC—faced with rising costs, 'rationalisation' and ever tighter censorship and control—cannot keep up standards. The decline is becoming evident in radio, much the poorer sister of the two, and in television, where repeats, imports of cheap American programmes (including fourth and fifth reruns of ancient Tom and Jerry cartoons at near-peak viewing time on BBC-1) and the various jointly-financed co-productions, are becoming clear signs of a near-desperate lack of funds.

All the signs show that British capitalism, while patting the corporation on the head for 50 years of faithful service, is thinking of ways

One man's fiftieth anniversary gift: The sack

ONE person not much mentioned in the lavish BBC press hand-out celebrating 50 years of the Beeb is Charles Parker. Although the hand-outs dwell on the cultural breakthroughs achieved by The Forsyte Saga, the Savoy Orpheans and Larry the Lamb, there's not a mention of Parker, one of the acknowledged radio greats.

Not a word on his prize-winning Radio Ballads which explored the texture of life of working people—fisher folk, engineers and miners—using their own words and songs. Not a hint that Charles Parker's radio documentaries on The Fight Game and The Big Hewer are now being turned into films. Not even a reference to Parker's work in regional radio and on the undervalued Long March of Everyman.

But then there's a reason. After years with the BBC Parker's 50th anniversary present has been the sack.

Parker is a victim of the McKinsey Report on Broadcasting in the Seventies.

McKinsey's recommendations are simple. Staff is to be reduced, output increased and central financial control tightened. 'Dead wood' which does not fulfil the new cost criteria is energetically sought out. Independent regional programmes are being slowly killed off and replaced by slots and series.

Rebels

And Parker is not alone. Mike Rosen, taken in at London on the graduate general traineeship two years ago and a member of IS and the Combine theatre group, has also mysteriously got his cards. Although the personnel officer was sobbing, there just ain't too many alternative employers outside Broadcasting House for radio men.

When taken on Rosen was told that: 'The BBC cherish their rebels.' Now suddenly he's sacked too and the general traineeship scheme, which used to allow some radical opinion into the corporation, is closed down.

The BBC used to like a few Labour lefties around the place but students nowadays are just a shade too left-wing for even the BBC's ample gullet.

Those who still have jobs are under increased work pressure. The BBC are no longer creating jobs and are cutting down on permanent staff. Junior recruits are heavily exploited by putting them under heavy pressure to prove themselves and get a contract renewal.

Refusal

The new media mekons are finding little opposition. The Association of Broadcasting Staffs, the BBC house union, cannot bring itself to question the sackings despite a rash of motions from its rank-and-file members. Parker's case must be judged, they say, 'on its merits'.

Rosen was sacked by a member of his own union. The ABS policy is simply to sit and wait for it.

The Times refused to publish a letter of protest organised by Stuart Hood—about the only left-winger who is not running for cover on the issue—because it had too many signatories.

Disgruntled BBC members have as their 50th anniversary contribution produced a record at their own expense. It has been clandestinely distributed within Broadcasting House. (Contact c/o Box 100, Private Eye, 34 Greek Street, London W1).

The record's funny. The situation inside the BBC is not.

Robert Harrington

David Widgery



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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'.

For equal pay and a better deal for young workers.

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 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 racialism 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.

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THE UNIONS

POSTMEN IN UNION CLASH OVER SORTING MACHINES

by a London postman
A CLASH has arisen between the rank and file and the union executive in the Union of Post Office Workers over the introduction of mechanisation in sorting offices.

The last union conference decided not to allow any further mechanisation until a full agreement had been made compensating postal workers for its introduction.

For the past few years the Post Office has been gradually installing sorting machines which can read postal codes stamped on letters and phosphorus dots. The idea is to cut labour costs by ending the present process where each letter may have to be sorted up to six or seven times by hand.

In this respect the idea is fully supported by the UPW leaders, who go so far as to criticise the Post Office for being too slow in increasing productivity.

The result was that one office after another was individually accepting



Jackson: bitter opposition

mechanisation without getting anything in return. By the time this had happened in a dozen places, the rank and file began to wake up to the danger, with the result that the conference decided to ban any extension of mechanisation, despite bitter opposition from general secretary Tom Jackson and company.

The union's executive decided to interpret the decision to mean that if machinery was already installed but not

in operation, then the workers in that office should carry on being co-operative — despite the uncertainty caused to their own future jobs.

In practice, this 'interpretation' means that mechanisation could go on unhindered, as it takes a long time for the machinery, once installed, to become operational.

A crisis has now arisen over this decision because one of the union's biggest branches in London, Western Central District Office, has refused to transfer from its present old buildings to a new, fully-automated one.

The branch is correctly upholding the policy of the annual conference, but the executive is issuing ever more serious directives which have behind them the full weight of the union's considerable disciplinary powers.

The branch is being fully supported by the London District Committee, which is by far the most militant section of the union, but it is clear that a vital struggle will follow if the executive committee refuses to withdraw its directive.

Teachers in thick of the anti- freeze fight

by Chanie Rosenberg
Secretary, Hackney NUT

TEACHERS are in the thick of the battle against Heath's wage freeze. 60,000 London teachers were promised an increased London allowance by 1 November.

The teachers' side of the Burnham Committee demanded £300 a year (it is £118 at present) and management was prepared to offer at least £200.

A few days before the Burnham meeting on 20 October to negotiate the claim, the teachers were told the government had stopped any offer being made. Management agreed to go with the teachers to twist Education Secretary Margaret Thatcher's arm. This resulted in an offer of an extra £12 a year, raised after ribald laughter to £15.

A hastily called meeting of the National Union of Teachers on 9 November was packed by more than 2000 teachers. The London union leadership, with official executive backing, called for a half-day protest strike on Thursday.

First step

The mood of the teachers went far beyond such limited action. A subsequent meeting of the Inner London Teachers' Association unanimously passed a motion stating that the half-day strike must be merely the first step in a campaign of militant action, including extended strikes to fight for the full claim of £300.

How did the teachers achieve such distinction in the trade union movement? They are, after all, a moderate 'professional' body of people, with a respectable, status-minded, feeble union, the NUT, which includes in its ranks head teachers—the equivalent of foremen—who dominate its executive.

Five years ago a small number of Wandsworth NUT members (two of whom had previously been expelled from the Communist Party), well known in the union for uncompromising militancy where other 'lefts' fell by the wayside, met up with another small, and as yet inexperienced group of teachers who were members of the International Socialists. The marriage bore fruit, and the child was called Rank and File.

It was a healthy babe and grew lustily. When a mere eight months old, it organised a sit-in at the NUT executive, from which arose a short-lived body called the Greater London Salaries Campaign, whose claim to



Morris: claps for Thatcher

lasting fame was a decision to seek an interim salaries award. Much persuasion was used to get Sam Fisher, a leading Communist Party member, to move this at the 1969 NUT conference. An IS member, Duncan Hallas, one of those who originated the idea, seconded. It was a good example of unity of the left in action, and it succeeded magnificently.

After that a battle was fought to get the first London half-day strike off the ground, with Rank and File members pushing the idea at meeting after meeting and the same Sam Fisher opposing until the wave of rank and file militancy was too obvious to be ignored.

The strike, unofficial and the first for decades, was so overwhelmingly successful that a whole winter of strikes was maintained, leading to a successful result.

Dug roots

Rank and File grew throughout this period. When the movement ebbed, Rank and File did not. It dug roots during the post-strike lull and now that militancy may once again be rising it is sufficiently well-entrenched to be a focal centre for the left and a nightmare for the establishment — particularly next year's Trotsky-baiting Communist Party president, Max Morris, the man who led a standing ovation to Margaret Thatcher at last year's conference when rank and file delegates walked out.

Rank and File has achieved this

position, and a circulation of its journal within sight of 10,000, through the development of a body of theory which it seeks to implement by militant action. The theory tries to analyse and understand the role of education in capitalist society, the way schools are structured to fit this role, and the forces which can undermine it—pupils and teachers in the schools as part of the general working-class movement.

International Socialists, though a minority of Rank and File members, have been the backbone of it. As with rank and file movements in all unions, it is those who see the class struggle in its totality, and have the clear aim of smashing capitalism, who give coherence and consistency to the actions of the mass of members.

Cut grain

By comparison, the Communist Party's fighting lead in the present campaign against the freeze is contained in their occasional journal Education Today and Tomorrow. The current issue, just out, starts off with next year's salary claim, then devotes six of its 12 pages to an attack on Rank and File as part two of a series 'Ultra-Leftism and the Teachers'. Such is the stuff of unity.

Rank and File has caught the imagination of the young generation of teachers coming out of the colleges and is schooling them in socialist principles and action. It has cut with the grain of the rising militancy of the whole trade union movement and left behind those who look towards headships, authority and the establishment. Rank and File members achieved a high point of influence at this year's Young Teacher Conference in September, where practically all their motions were passed despite opposition from the union establishment.

Rank and File still has far to go in getting massive teacher support. But it is on the way and is contributing to the battle against repression of working-class standards and for a better education.

SIMPLIFYING UNION FIGHT

I AM a member of the Communist Party but I read Socialist Worker regularly since, on the whole, I consider it of valuable assistance to the labour movement in propagating socialist ideas.

But one of the features I find less encouraging is the frequent recurrence of the theme that trade union and Labour 'bureaucrats' inevitably 'sell out' the workers' struggle and your conclusion from this that the only way forward lies in the formation of rank and file organisations independent of the union structure. This, I think, is a dangerous simplification of the problem of the relationship between leadership and membership in the unions.

No serious socialist could dispute that one aspect of a union leader's job is to regulate the otherwise chaotic relations between management and labour and that therefore some union leaders see their role as mediators between the two sides rather than as workers' representatives. However most of these leaders are subject to regular re-election and so must in some sense reflect the workers' wishes if only because there seems no credible alternative to them.

But of course the interaction runs both ways. Most

people seem to become convinced of the need for socialism by personal struggle in strikes—generally in successful struggles since failure leads to demoralisation. During such struggles there is generally a range of more or less militant courses of action which the leadership can adopt which will be 'tolerated' by the rank and file. According to which line is taken, workers learn more or less from the struggle.

I see the role of the revolutionary party in Britain as initiating an alternative leadership to the right-wingers in the TUC and supporting left-wing alternatives based on the aspirations of the rank and file that are already in existence.

This inevitably implies communist stewards and officials often taking a less militant line than they would like because of the state of workers' consciousness at the time but only in this way can the maximum political potential be realised from any union struggle. To adopt a policy of building independent rank and file organisations in the unions is to abdicate the recognised leadership of them to the right wing.—TONY WARREN, Sheffield 10.

LETTERS

Irish left must sink differences

IRELAND has never been short of tireless and resourceful men and women dedicated to ending class oppression and division and the establishment of a workers' republic. Yet it's surely about time that they organised a single party which could smash British imperialism and its agents in Ireland once and for all.

The various working-class parties that today exist in Ireland do have support, but by remaining fragmented and often hotly opposed to one another, they leave the workers as easy prey for sectarian and opportunist elements who seem to be making all the running just now.

If the people aren't visited by a terrible civil war no doubt a bogus settlement will be concocted and we'll see reformists like the SDLP going down among their Catholic followers saying that they've won for them a famous victory. Then with their reputations made for life, they'll hurry back for the re-opening of Stormont and get down to the real business of playing politics.

The parties of the revolutionary left must settle or at least accommodate their aspirations and beliefs they hold as one. If a concerted course of action is agreed upon and opportunities to widen the class struggle are grabbed with both hands no longer will the fat capitalists laugh at the easy money they've made at the hands of a colonial power which today still poisons the atmosphere with its all pervading presence. A strong working-class movement would quickly discredit the reformers, and with daily events showing Dublin's collusion with British imperialism, break the hold of Fianna Fail on people in the south.

Above all it would get enough support from the so-called Loyalist

community, thereby destroying the myth that the carefully contrived divisions among the workers have made them impervious to socialism.—TOM GALLAGHER, Manchester 20.

Sudan

THERE are several mistakes in Paul Foot's piece about Lonrho and sugar production in Sudan (4 November).

Common Market protectionism does not prove that 'This is not the best time to establish new fields of sugar'. World sugar consumption is rising rapidly, especially outside the developed nations. Regardless of the EEC there is an expanding market. Lonrho knows this well.

Having claimed, unconvincingly, that Lonrho can expect nothing more than the fees for the feasibility study, Foot calls the affair 'a pot of gold for Lonrho'. But the fees alone are chicken-feed.

Sudan's sugar needs are rising sharply and are way above domestic capacity. Expanded production will relieve the balance of payments, then add a useful agricultural industry to the narrow exports sector. This would be true, with or without Lonrho.

But apart from all this, and apart also from Lonrho's dirty political record in Africa, what of the larger issues? Is it 'inevitable' that in enterprises requiring substantial capitalisation, Sudan and similar countries will be under-developed by international capitalism?

So why snivel at Lonrho's behaviour in a world which still belongs to the Lonrhos? Or is there some other equally effective way to build the Sudanese sugar industry, say over the next 10 years?—SOME SOCIALISTS IN SUDAN

Don't build a wall round China

FOR MANY PEOPLE Socialist Worker is the introduction to socialist ideas. Many readers have just realised the lies and corruption that are part of our present political system and the dire practical consequences which these lies and robberies inflict upon the working class.

It is for this reason that I am concerned about the content of much of the recent persistent condemnation of China's action concerning various issues in your Briefing columns.

As socialists who believe in internationalism we must never forget our responsibility to offer criticism to our comrades from other countries. Also I feel that if we are producing a paper for distribution to the general public we must remember our obligation to help to gradually educate people to a stage where they are able to make a constructive socialist analysis of the class struggle.

Enoch Powell consciously, by the use of lies which relate to real problems such as housing and unemployment, builds up racial hatred. He is able to do this also because he is often building upon a base—the present level of consciousness of the working class—which largely consists of a lack of understanding of the class nature of the problems.

We must take care that we do not, unconsciously, build upon such a base which involves the lack of understanding of the political situation in China and a lack of understanding of the problems which the Chinese people face in their struggle to build socialism.

Short notes such as that found in your Briefing columns regarding the playing of the Eton Boating Song on Douglas Home's arrival in China are, if not accompanied or preceded by an analysis of China's responsibility to the international proletariat as regards such visits, detrimental to a socialist educational programme as they can only lead to the building up of a shallow and prejudiced view of China.

In short, criticism of individual events such as this are only valid if you present other information about the Chinese political situation as a whole so that the reader has a certain degree of knowledge and understanding which he can use when judging your criticisms of particular events or actions.—BARRY TURNER, Halifax.

Taxes

IF former tax officer Sandra Wells (4 November) thumbs back through the April budgets she will find tax reliefs for the rich on private education. For example the Tories recently re-introduced education endowment insurance policies which attract tax concessions at top rates. The Labour government had stopped this loophole back in 1968 or 1969.—BERN HARRISON, Manchester M14.

You'll wonder where the workers go if you invest in Calico

READERS of this column have had illustrations before of how workers are sacrificed to increase profits. One industry where this applies particularly is textiles. It is a badly unionised industry and when workers are unionised they are badly represented.

The textile industry has some of the lowest wages and worst conditions in the country. The number of workers employed has been reduced rapidly over recent years. But the rate of increase of productivity is among the highest in the land—around 13 per cent last year alone. What this means is that fewer workers have been toiling ever harder.

And their employers through the Textile Employers' Federation say that the going is hard for them too.

Back in April the chairman of Carrington Viyella was claiming that cheap imports were threatening the industry's viability. In August the same man announced a 30 per cent improvement in profits.

Lord Kearton of Courtauld says it is the workers who are responsible for the decline of the industry. Only last week his company announced a 30 per cent improvement in profits.

And then there is English Calico, the third major force in the British textile industry. The company was formed by the merger of English Sewing Cotton and Calico Printers Association in May 1968.

The story since then graphically illustrates how the interests of the workers are affected by mergers.

Slashed

At the beginning of 1969 the UK labour force of the group was 28,864. Sales were £156 million and annual trading profits were £6.6 million before tax. By January 1972 the labour force in Britain had been slashed to 23,697. The labour force overseas, where wages are even lower, had risen by 5 per cent.

The other end of the story concerns the shareholders. Profits this year are expected to be 90 per cent up on 1969, at £11.5 million. This is enough to pay each worker in English Calico throughout the world an extra £6.84 a week.

This slaughter of jobs has gone largely unnoticed and completely uncriticised. One reason is that English Calico has kept its mouth shut.

In order to avoid publicity they have even refrained from asking the City for more money.

During the last three years they have closed mills and factories, and installed labour saving machinery all at a cost of more than £27 million. This has been paid for by selling property worth around £11.5 million and using £17 million of 'depreciation allowances' provided by the tax man.

The shareholders of English Calico have received their dividends regardless. In one year the com-



pany was even willing to borrow £400,000 from the bank to pay those dividends.

In other words the cost of the merger and the 'streamlining' of the company has been borne entirely by the workers in the form of continuing low wages and redundancies.

Many textile bosses say the British textile industry is declining and shed crocodile tears for the jobs that are being lost. It is true that the labour force is declining and that cheaper foreign goods are taking a larger share of the market.

But these same men who seem so concerned for the plight of the workers are responsible for the jobs decline. Quite consciously they slash the labour force to increase profits and build new plant abroad where wages are even more pathetic.

And remember that the government and the City have greeted the story with unconditional approval because it is in the interests of the few, interests which cannot be reconciled with those of the working class.

T H Rogmorton

Rank and file paper needs your support

YOU will probably have heard of the libel action between the Electrical Trades Union and Voice of the Unions newspaper. Total costs of the action amount to £2300, the greater part of which has fallen on our printers, Ripley Printers Ltd. We obviously cannot allow a small producers co-operative to bear these heavy costs, and we therefore ask you to support this appeal.

Failure to raise the sum involved may well mean the end of the largest rank and file journal in the British trade union movement as well as the possible disappearance of a firm of printers who have served the needs of the labour movement over a great number of years. Please give generously and do all within your power to bring this appeal to the attention of your colleagues.—Frank Allaun, MP, Norman Atkinson, MP, Lawrence Daly (NUM), Michael Foot, MP, Brian Nicholson (TGWU), Ernie Roberts (AUEW), Ken Graham Appeal Treasurer, 73 Ridgway Place, London SW19.

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BIG VICTORY AT WORLD'S END

LONDON:—After 15 weeks on strike, building workers on the huge Cubitt's Worlds End site in Chelsea have won the most significant victory in the London construction industry for 10 years or more.

Work resumed on the multi-million pound council housing site on Monday entirely on the strikers' terms.

Worlds End building workers had decided to continue their strike the day the national building strike ended because the employers were trying to throw out the negotiated bonus scheme, victimise one shop steward and blacklist a leading militant in the industry.

The strikers have won on all three points.

'This is a magnificent victory and Worlds End workers return to work stronger than ever,' site convenor Don Quinn told Socialist Worker. 'Every site in London has been watching this one and we have shown that unity and determination can beat the employers back.'

'It will encourage every organised trade unionist on the city's construction sites,' he added.

Aside from ensuring that employers will have to continue negotiating bonus at site level, the importance of the Worlds End victory lies in the rebuff that has been given to victimisation and the blacklist.

Cubitt's subcontractor, Barcott, has been forced to guarantee that the next two carpenters it takes on will be Owen McSweeney, the victimised shop steward, and Lou Lewis, a member of the rank and file newspaper Building Workers Charter editorial board and shop steward on the Barbican at the time of the year-long unofficial strike.

Worlds End will be the first major



Bill Lloyd (left), UCATT district organiser, and Don Quinn, the Worlds End convenor

site on which Lewis has worked since October 1966. For six years the employers have successfully used the blacklist to keep him off anything but the most unimportant jobs.

'There can be no doubt that I would still be blacklisted without the fine struggle of the Worlds End lads,' Lou Lewis told Socialist Worker.

Victory was achieved this side of the New Year by a combination of the strikers' solidarity and organisation with a fairly firm official stance on the part of the union, UCATT.

Before the recent national strike, top officials of the union were involved in outright collaboration with the employers. Now they have

shifted into the centre, and over Worlds End threatened to withdraw from all conciliation procedures unless the employers toed the line.

The full significance of the victory can be seen from the fact that this is the first successful strike after which the employers have been forced to take back all the pickets on the first day. Usually they take back only one or two of the strikers alongside their own hand-picked men.

Peter Wing, deputy bricklayers' steward, said: 'This is a great victory because we've beaten the blacklist. Cubitts will think again before they take us on again. We have the whip hand now.'



Victorious strikers on the building site

Dublin repression against IRA leaders

by Brian Trench

DUBLIN:—The arrest of Provisional Republican leader Sean MacStiofain is the latest in a series of attacks by the Fianna Fail regime on Republicans, both Provisional and Official. The Minister of Justice, Des O'Malley, has been living up to his promises of some weeks ago to 'harass' Republicans in the South.

In the past few months three Republicans wanted by the police in Northern Ireland have been arrested in the South.

Michael Willis is now appealing in the high court against an extradition order. If his appeal fails then the Southern police will try to put into effect a dozen more arrest warrants which they have from the North. They are prepared to exchange wanted men with the Northern authorities.

While all this is going on, the Fianna Fail government—surpassed by none in its hypocrisy—is complaining about injustices in the Six Counties in the European Court of Human Rights.

The IRA is banned in the South, but the authorities have had diffi-

culties putting the ban into effect. To sharpen the harassment O'Malley will next week present a Bill to the Dublin parliament which will define IRA membership more closely.

Marched

The special courts, which sit without a jury, are continuing to pass sentences on Republicans. The government recently issued an order prohibiting pickets on the homes of judges in an attempt to stop members of the People's Democracy from campaigning in this way against the special courts.

The latest phase of repression against Republicans is not going unanswered.

Two thousand workers from the Shannon industrial estate marched to the local police station in protest against the arrest of Northern Republicans who were living in the area. The local branch of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union have threatened further action if their extradition goes ahead.

IS NEWS

NORTH LONDON:—120 people packed into the Willesden Junction Hotel last week to hear Tony Cliff and Paul Foot speak at a Fight the Tories meeting organised by Harlesden International Socialists, with help from neighbouring branches.

Harlesden includes a large industrial complex. The local IS branch was only set up six months ago. In July, when the five dockers were jailed, the branch carried out intense propaganda in the area to put over the dockers' case. Although some of the local factories were on holiday, Park Royal Vehicles, a large car plant, came out on strike in solidarity.

More recently the National Front organised a petition inside Park Royal Vehicles, protesting against the arrival of the Ugandan Asians in Britain. It received some support. The IS branch issued a leaflet for the factory dispelling the myths about immigration.

It had its impact and has now blossomed into a regular factory bulletin.

The strikers from Fine Tubes have visited most of the factories around the Park Royal estate and have received support. Delegates from these factories recently attended the conference to support the Fine Tubes strikers.

During the Fight the Tories campaign, all the local factories and most of the council estates and large shopping areas have seen leaflets being distributed. The Park Royal industrial estate is plastered with posters for the campaign.

More than 100 copies of Socialist Worker are sold inside and outside the factories of CAV, Park Royal Vehicles, George Meyers, Radio Times, Crawfords, Beatonsons. Factory bulletins are produced for three of these factories, with a fourth soon to be launched.

One Socialist Worker discussion group has been established, based on the Radio Times, and another, at CAV, is to begin in the next week.

KENT:—The struggle to build a fighting opposition to the Tories got off to a good start last Wednesday when more than 130 people heard Paul Foot speak at a meeting at New Ash Green, near Gravesend. The meeting gave added impetus to the building of IS in this important industrial area.

Further meetings are planned for Dartford, Maidstone, where a new IS branch is being formed, and the mining town of Deal.

WHAT'S ON

Copy for What's On must arrive by first post Monday or be phoned Monday morning. Charges are 5p per line, semi-display 10p per line. CASH WITH COPY. No insertions without payment. Invoices cannot be sent.

OTHER MEETINGS

IRISH PRISONERS' AID COMMITTEE Dance and Social: Thurs 30 Nov, 8pm, Finsbury Town Hall, London. Admission 50p. Proceeds to Irish Political Prisoners' Defence Fund.

WEST LONDON Anti-Internment League Social: Friday 1 Dec, 8pm-midnight, Kings Head, Fulham Broadway. Traditional Irish music, bar and disco.

WORKERS ASSOCIATION Forum on Green Paper: The Future of Northern Ireland? London School of Economics Room 217, Wed 29 November, 7.30pm.

CHINA: The Political Theory of Mao Tse-tung. Speaker: Sam Mauger. Chairman: Hung-Ying Bryan. Wed 29 November, 7.15pm, Holborn Central Library Hall, Theobalds Rd, London WC1. Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding, 24 Warren St, London W1. 01-387 0074.

TUPAMAROS

Maria Esther Gillio speaks about the present state of the struggle in Uruguay. Leeds University Union Friday 24 November, 7pm

NOTICES

HONDA 50: 1970 registration December, in good nick, minor (non-mechanical) faults: £50, phone 01-552 7085.

ANTI-INTERMENT LEAGUE Grand Christmas Draw: First Prize £100. Tickets 12p a book from Maureen McGuire, 88 Roslyn Road, London N15.

LARGE BEDSIT with meals, also use of workshop. Would suit comrade in mid-thirties, two miles up-river from Kingston-on-Thames. Write Box SW, Socialist Worker, 6 Cottons Gdns, London E2 8DN.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM JOURNAL: The following back copies are still available, but some only in limited numbers: 21, 33, 34, 37, 4q, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52. 20p per copy, including postage and packing. Money with orders please to: IS Journal, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

REPRINTS IN LABOUR HISTORY now available Tom Mann:

WHAT A COMPULSORY EIGHT-HOUR DAY MEANS TO THE WORKERS (1886) with a new introduction by Richard Hymn

William Gallacher and J R Campbell: DIRECT ACTION—an outline of workshop and social organisation (1919)

with an introduction by Alastair Hatchett. Normal price: 20p each plus 4p postage

SPECIAL OFFER to Socialist Worker readers: 15p each plus 4p postage

PLUTO PRESS, Unit 10, Spencer Court, 7 Chalcot Road, London NW1 8LH.

WHEN writing to Socialist Worker please mark envelopes clearly either EDITORIAL or BUSINESS.

IS MEETINGS

TOTTENHAM IS Christmas Social: Sat 9 December, Tottenham Community House (YMCA), High Road, Tottenham (near Lansdowne Road).

SWANSEA IS public meeting: IS's industrial co-ordinator speaks on WE CAN BEAT THE BOSSES, AEU House, Orchard Street, Swansea, Thur 30 Nov, 7.30pm.

CAMBRIDGE IS public meeting: Tony Cliff on The Labour Party. Thur 30 November, 8pm, Mawson Hall, Mawson Rd, (off Mill Road).

LONDON REGIONAL IS FORUM

The History of the Working Class and its Meaning for Today Speakers: Gareth Stedman Jones (author of Outcast London) and Fred Lindop

Saturday 2 December, 3pm-6pm Council Chambers, Holborn Town Hall, High Holborn, WC1 (nearest tube Holborn)

BUILDING WORKERS Fraction: meeting Saturday 25 Nov, 1pm, Milton Hall, Deansgate, Manchester. Important that all IS building workers attend.

LONDON IS TEACHERS MEETING: Sunday 26 Nov, 10.45am at 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2.



Lead: dusty answer for tenants

by Mary Phillips

LONDON: 'All families in Downtown to be rehoused as top priority,' said one newspaper headline. 'Lead factory closes down,' boasted another. According to them, the tenants in this part of Rotherhithe, London, can now relax.

After all, lead manufacturers H J Enthoven have been roundly exposed to the glare of publicity for pumping lead dust into the air which people breathe. The courtyards of nearby flats are now being washed down daily and last Friday the stairs were washed down in full view of the television cameras.

The true position is this. The London Borough of Southwark has handed out a leaflet. For 'personal guidance', this offers 'some simple elementary precautions'. These include washing your hands frequently using a nail brush—particularly before eating. Toddlers should not be allowed to play outside in streets or courtyards and prams should be kept indoors.

After a meeting between council representatives and J H Enthoven management, at which tenants from the five Downtown estates and their tenants' associations were allowed one representative, the firm has shut down the lead making process 'until a new filtration process is installed.'

Meanwhile lorries are still going in and out, stirring up the dust. Local children cannot play outside. In Acorn Walk carpets still have to be washed once a week.

The families of Barrie Jordan and Victor Lunn, both include pre-school children with high levels of lead in their blood. They have found out nothing definite from the council. Nor have the other three families most directly concerned.

Bob Mellish MP ('Why wasn't I told') says that it was a major error to build the housing estate here in the first place. But the houses are there and the people have to live in them.

Meanwhile tests have also been conducted on other factories in Southwark Bridge Road. The tests were 'negative' and there will be no follow-up. There have been previous tests around Enthoven which 'revealed nothing alarming'.

Asbestos workers out on strike

ROCHDALE:—80 maintenance workers at Turner Brothers Asbestos walked out last week in one of the first strikes prompted by the freeze.

For several years differentials between maintenance and production workers have been narrowed. The maintenance men's rate now stands at £27.80, low for the area. With yearly wage negotiations coming round, management rushed through an agreement for production workers before the freeze—but deliberately ignored the maintenance men.

The men, members of engineering, electricians' and sheetmetal workers' unions, are out for a fortnight's protest strike. They have received no help from their unions.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

FIGHT THE TORIES campaign

COVENTRY
Wednesday 29 November, 7.30pm
Room S107, Lanchester Polytechnic
(opposite the cathedral)
Speakers: Jim Higgins and John Palmer

NORTHAMPTON
Thursday 30 November, 8pm
Carnegie Hall
Speaker: Ross Pritchard (NGA)

BRISTOL
Friday 1 December, 7.30pm
Central Hall, Old Market
Speakers: Michael Kidron and Colwyn Williamson

ALSO
The General Will theatre group
PORTSMOUTH
Thursday 7 December, 7.30pm
The Oddfellows Hall, Kingston Road
Speaker: Tony Cliff

Steward threatened with court action

MIDDLESBROUGH:—The management of a steel fabricating firm have threatened to take a Boilermakers' Union shop steward to court under the government freeze measures if his members continue to press for a new bonus scheme.

Despite these threats the 300 boilermakers at Redpath Dorman Long plant in Middlesbrough have stopped all overtime and are striking one day a week in support of the claim, which would bring their earnings up to the average for other men doing similar

work in the area.

The threat of legal action was just one of three attempts by the management to force the men, who have never been on strike before, to give up their struggle.

Shop steward Ian Clark said that after months of considering their claim the management had come up with a straight refusal. It said if the men continued with their action it would firstly close the plant, secondly not pay the present bonus of £6.75 a week, and finally take Mr Clark and possibly his

colleagues to court for breaking the freeze.

But when pressed the manager, Mr W Rush, admitted the firm would not have paid the increase, which would bring wages up from £33.75 to £36, even if there had been no freeze.

Ian Clark, who lives in Darlingford, says the claim is simply to incorporate the present bonus into the basic rates and introduce a new bonus scheme, so not breaking the freeze.

WAGE FREEZE CHALLENGED BY STEELMEN

THE first big challenge to the Tory government's latest attempt to hold down wages looks like coming from 1000 Teesside steelworkers who decided on Monday evening to ban all overtime and enforce a strict work-to-rule.

In sharp contrast to the feeble protests of the TUC leaders, these workers are pressing ahead with their claim for an £8 a week increase and parity with steelworkers in South Wales.

This is a struggle that could defeat the freeze and give a lead to millions of other workers.

That is why Lord Melchett, the £25,000 a year boss of the British Steel Corporation, and Ron Smith, his £20,000 a year personnel manager, have both been to the Lackenby works within the past eight days.

The demand for parity was first made by the 1000 workers in the beam and rod mills but has since spread to every section of the works, both production and staff, and now includes another 4000.

The principle of the claim is simple. Arthur Affleck, chairman of the joint Lackenby British Iron and Steel Workers union (BISAKTA) branches said: 'We do not accept a freeze on inequality. Our claim is just and fair. We will not allow the Tory government to deny it to us.'

A recent study of the pay differences between Teesside and South Wales has revealed the extent of this injustice. On average the Teesside workers are paid £8 a week less than those doing the same work in Wales and in many instances the situation is even worse. A special pamphlet produced by the joint branches, and called Parity with Wales: The Facts behind Teesside Steelworkers' Claim, is crammed with details about this situation.

SPREE

The pamphlet rejects the idea of any productivity deals and explains how these have contributed towards the industry's heavy unemployment figures. It also answers the old story that the bosses can't afford a pay rise.

'Earlier this year, workers at Lackenby were treated to a magnificent example of the Steel Corporation's financial priorities. The official opening of the BOS plant, by none other than Lady Sonia Melchett, provided the setting for a huge spending spree by the corporation,' says the pamphlet.

'100 rates of pay' strike in fifth week

GLANAMMAN, South Wales:—Workers at the Crompton-Parkinson factory, a subsidiary of Hawker Siddeley which supplies stud-welded fastenings to the motor and aircraft industries, are now in their fifth week on strike.

At the centre of the dispute, which has been made official by the engineering union, is the management's system of paying a compensatory bonus. This system has lasted for 20 years, with management having the sole discretion in how much bonus is paid to each individual worker.

The bonus paid depends on co-operation, adaptability, punctuality, care of tools, speed of work, and so on. This means that out of 131 workers there are 100 different rates of pay.

It is a system which is designed to divide the workers on the shop floor. It also operates at Crompton-Parkinson factories at Newport, Derby and Doncaster.

The union put in for £6 a week rise across the board on all grades and

by Roger Rosewell

'First of all thousands of tons of steel were lost since production was reduced to an absolute minimum. This was because it was felt that too much dust or smell might be offensive to the visiting dignitaries.'

'Elaborate scaffolding and awnings were erected and torn down again the next day. Every available man was kept busy painting, scrubbing and polishing as if it were an Ideal Home Exhibition that was about to be opened rather than a steel plant.'

'After the ceremony, the assembled notables were whisked off to a reception . . . where food and drink were dispensed in 'inflationary' quantities. It would not be unreasonable for rank and file steelworkers to assume that the top brass of BSC is not short of a few bob when it comes to looking after themselves.'

Last week the Lackenby management, while admitting that their wages were only ninth compared to other steelworks, turned

down the beam and rod mill workers' parity claim and refused to offer a single penny.

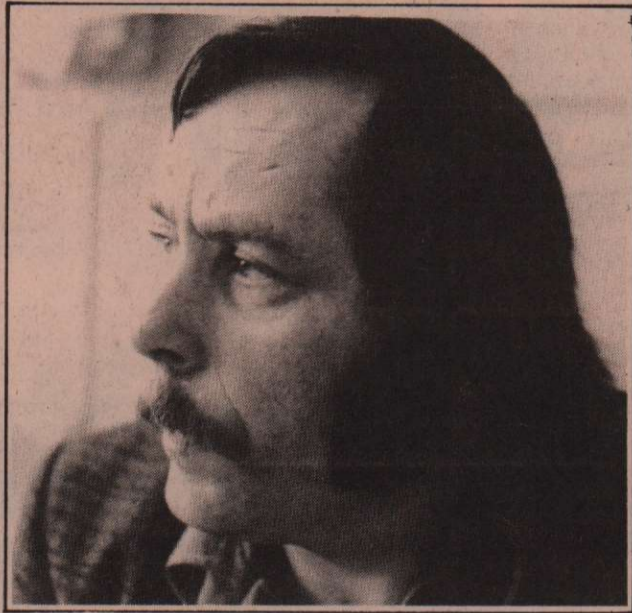
A major struggle has now begun. But in addition to having to fight the Steel Corporation and the Tory government, the Lackenby workers must also begin to protect their backs against any possible intervention by the right-wing leaders of their union.

The BISAKTA bosses have a long history of undemocratic purges of militants and close collaboration with the steel masters. Only a few years ago, for instance, its general secretary condemned strikes as 'blackmail' and urged employers to stand firm and not give in.

The Teesside steelworkers, confronted with these odds, have a hard fight ahead. It is one that they must not be allowed to face alone. The whole labour movement must smash the freeze and support others who try.

Members of the AUEW and other craft unions at Lackenby may also join the action for parity. Negotiations on the second phase of a productivity deal have broken down and stewards are now demanding a no-strings increase.

Fitters in the plate mill struck for two days earlier this week for a £2 interim payment, but so far no clear lead or policy has been decided for the whole site. One shop steward said: 'If we all linked up for a parity claim with the production workers nothing could stop us.'



Arthur Affleck: 'We do not accept a freeze on inequality'

Sackings plan proves BSC lies

by Bryan Rees

EBBW VALE, South Wales:—The British Steel Corporation announced last week that in the next three years 4500 men will be made redundant at its Ebbw Vale works.

Steelmaking will disappear from Ebbw Vale by 1976 with a loss of 3300 jobs and the closure of the hot strip mill will destroy another 1200 jobs.

The Steel Corporation says it is planning to invest £50 million in new tinplate works at Ebbw Vale, but it will only provide 400 new jobs, and there are vague promises being made of 200 jobs at the giant Llanwern plant once the new blastfurnace has been built there.

In March 1970, BSC gave an undertaking to the unions at Ebbw Vale that 8000 of the present 9000-strong workforce would be kept on. At the time Lord Melchett, BSC chairman, said that although steel-making would end at Ebbw Vale, the hot strip mill would remain and the open hearth furnaces would be developed to produce special steels, so that only 1000 jobs would be lost.

All this was so much lying. An internal BSC planning document, published in the rank and file paper Steelworker and in Socialist Worker, showed quite clearly that what BSC had planned for Ebbw Vale was exactly the closure programme announced last week.

Linked

The effect of the closure on Ebbw Vale would be enormous.

Three-fifths of the workers come from Ebbw Vale itself, a fifth from Tredegar, and the rest from Brynmawr, Abertillery, Rhymney, and South Monmouthshire. Unemployment in the area is around five per cent and the closures will push this up to between 30 and 40 per cent in Ebbw Vale alone.

Unemployment of this sort is not new to Ebbw Vale and the surrounding valleys. When the Ebbw Vale Iron and Steel Company folded in 1929 about 65 per cent of the working population in the town and surrounding area were out of work.

The social and economic consequences for what is a 'steel town' will be as severe. Business in the town is inextricably linked to the works, local tradesmen reckoning that more than 60 per cent of their trade is with steelworkers and their families. With no prospect at the moment of new industry coming into the town, and with nearly half of its workforce under the threat of redundancy, the consequences are likely to be of the magnitude of that other town that was murdered—Jarrow.

The response of the trade unions at the works has been clear and unequivocal. Colin Hudson, chairman of the works council, which represents 14 unions, said last week: 'The trade unions at Ebbw Vale reject as totally unacceptable the statement made by Lord Melchett. Under no circumstances are we prepared to see in the area any form of unemployment.'



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Socialist Worker

BIG BREAKTHROUGH BY INDIAN WORKERS

LOUGHBOROUGH:—Trade unionism in the sweat-shop mills of the East Midlands will never be the same again after the strike of 400 Indian workers at the Mansfield Hosiery mill.

Directors of the multi-million pound Nottingham Manufacturing Ltd., one of the largest employers of mill labour in the area, and the officials of the National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear Workers

by PAUL FOOT

have been forced to understand that they cannot forever ignore thousands of low-paid mill workers, many of whom are women and Indians.

The strikers, who are all bar-loaders and runners-on supplying the knitting machines, demanded a £5 a week increase to bring their wages into line

with other similar workers in the area. Even more crucially, they asked for an end to racial discrimination in the factory, which ensures that all the skilled, highly-paid jobs on the knitting machines are reserved for white workers.

The white knitters get a basic £35 for a 40-hour week. The Indian loaders get £20.35.

On 27 October the 120 bar-loaders and 80 runners-on, all of them Indians, came out on strike. At least 100 other Indian workers came out in support. Indian workers at small mills at Shepshed and at Clarence Street, Loughborough, have come out in support.

The National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear workers has no branches. Its only local organisation is its district committees, which elect its executive.

The factory committees are even less representative. In the Mansfield Mill, the committee chairman, Les Underwood, is a white skilled knitter. So is the vice-chairman, Dennis Parkin. Of the 19 representatives on the committee, only six are Indian, though the Indians make up the big majority of the labour force.

As even the Race Relations Board have now recognised, the union has implicitly accepted and encouraged a situation where race divisions coincide with skill and pay divisions in the mill.

PROPOSALS

When last week the union offered to 'negotiate' on training and redundancy discrimination if the men went back to work, the Indian strikers rejected it scornfully by 197 to three.

The officials hurried back to the management for more concessions. Their latest proposals indicate some movement in management and union circles. They are now offering assurances of no victimisation and immediate discussions to end the ban on blacks working on knitting machines.

The strike committee had some welcome help from sections of the labour movement in Loughborough. Collections have been held in the massive Brush electrical and engineering factory

Loughborough and Leicester IS helped organise a demonstration and leafletting outside Marks and Spencer, which uses all the Mansfield goods and owns 20 per cent shares in the firm's parent company.

Messages of support to: The Strike Committee, c/o Mr Naik, 31 Station Road, Loughborough.



Pickets stop a lorry from going into the mill

British Rail provoke strike move

BRITISH RAIL's action last week in instructing two members of the engine drivers' union, ASLEF, to drive the experimental Advanced Passenger Train (APT), was carefully-planned provocation.

The men were told to drive the train from its research centre to the nearby Derby works. They refused, in line with their union backing of the APT until a new wage agreement is reached, and supervisors drove the train instead.

British Rail made this provocative move knowing it would lead to threats of national strike action. It was an attempt to break ASLEF's black, which is in support of the claim for an increased rate for all drivers, not just those who will drive the APT.

The union is concerned that there should be no small elite group on higher payments for handling the new trains. This is essential if the whole membership of the union is to be united against the many extra redundancies British Rail is planning as it introduces its new technology.

Hook

So far British Rail has refused point blank to consider any across-the-board deal, insisting that only drivers who actually man the APT should be paid extra.

British Rail's other concern is to open up as widely as possible the split between the National Union of Railwaymen and ASLEF. The NUR leadership has fallen hook, line and sinker for British Rail's talk of ASLEF 'holding up progress and endangering NUR members' jobs'.

Thousands of redundancies have already been pushed through in the railway workshops without any resistance from the NUR leadership, and the NUR is already pledged to accept 6000 more sackings by 1980.

The NUR seems totally unconcerned at the strings that are to be put on the introduction of the new high-speed trains. These will include still more redundancies in the supporting grades which ensure trains can travel. The bigger trains will also have lower manning.

The attempt to cast the drivers as opponents of 'progress' is really laughable. They are taking the first stance in what will be a long and bitter fight for survival.

Bakery workers angry

LONDON:—Bakery workers are angry because the government freeze has robbed them of a wage rise. A protest meeting was held by workers at the Camden ABC Bakery and others are being called for.

Bakery hands get £14.75 for women and £19.50 for men for a 40-hour week. An agreement giving all workers over 19 a rise of £2.25 was signed on 19 October. But it was not to be paid until 3 December and is now frozen.

Women working at the Camden bakery

wrote a letter of protest to the national press, but it was only published by one newspaper—and then withdrawn from its later editions.

The Camden workers are demanding full payment of the increase and calling for further mass meetings.

The Bakers Union was one of those that broke trade union solidarity by signing on the register under the Industrial Relations Act. Now it must back the shop-floor demands for action.

Clay Cross rent rebels under fire

CHESTERFIELD:—The auditor has started work in Clay Cross in an attempt to end the council's resistance to the government rent rises. He will assess what extra rent should have been collected so that a surcharge can be imposed on the rebel councillors.

The amount due is already more than £700 for each councillor. Arthur Wellon, chairman of the council, told a meeting of tenants and trade unionists on Saturday: 'No one has got that sort of ready money. I certainly haven't.'

The meeting followed a solidarity demonstration organised by the Chesterfield Tenants' Co-ordinating Committee, when 500 people from Chesterfield and the surrounding area marched through the streets of Clay Cross.

Arthur Wellon promised continued resistance to this 'government-sponsored inflation'. He noted that the government freeze conveniently ended in time for the next round of rent increases in April, and urged those at the meeting to fight in their own areas to reverse decisions implementing the 'Fair' Rents Act.

Herbert Parkin, secretary to the Derbyshire miners' union, pledged his union's full support to the council. 'If any attempt at punitive measures is made, industrial action must be taken', he said.

Even if Clay Cross Council have been abandoned by almost every Labour council in the country, many rank and file trade unionists and tenants associations still support the Clay Cross stand.

PICKET LINES

LEADERS of the main teachers' union, the NUT, have abolished the annual conference of Young Teachers in an attempt to head off the growing influence of left-wing militants in the Rank and File group.

Last Friday's meeting of the NUT executive voted to abolish both the conference and the national Young Teachers' Advisory Committee. Local NUT associations can still organise Young Teachers groups, but the associations must take full responsibility for their actions, and the age limit for membership of Young Teachers groups has been lowered from 35 to 27.

● Teachers in anti-freeze fight: page 12.

UNION negotiators representing 250,000 low-paid hospital ancillary workers have ducked away from a confrontation with the government freeze. Last Friday they decided to join the Health Service employers in a joint approach to beg the government to treat them as a special case and allow them a wage increase.

But rank-and-file Health Service workers are not taking the freeze lying down. The London Alliance of Stewards for Health Workers (LASH) is continuing its preparations for industrial action to beat the freeze.

Mark Palmer, secretary of LASH, told Socialist Worker: 'All we've had from the unions are a few brave words. If the government would not consider the farmworkers a special case, then it will not consider us a special case.'

LASH is going ahead with its plans for a conference of rank and file Health Service

workers to discuss industrial action. The London stewards will be putting to the conference a call for all-out strike action.

Other workers hit by the freeze, such as teachers and agricultural workers, are invited to the conference, which will be held on Sunday 3 December at 10.30 am in the Fountains public house, Praed Street opposite St Mary's Hospital, Paddington.

COVENTRY:—Sacked Chrysler steward John Worth is back at work—but talks are being held this week between management and stewards on the possible withdrawal of his credentials. Engineering Union officials have been present at the talks.

The company has set a seven-day deadline after which it will withdraw recognition from him.

RENT STRUGGLE CONFERENCE

for Greater Manchester area
26 November, 11 am
Manchester University Students Union
Also delegates from rest of country.
All tenants, trade unionists, and IS comrades involved in the rents battle welcome.
Organised by the Greater Manchester Tenants Action Group.
Contact P F Robinson, 061-834 4406

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