

## WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

The big stories inside...



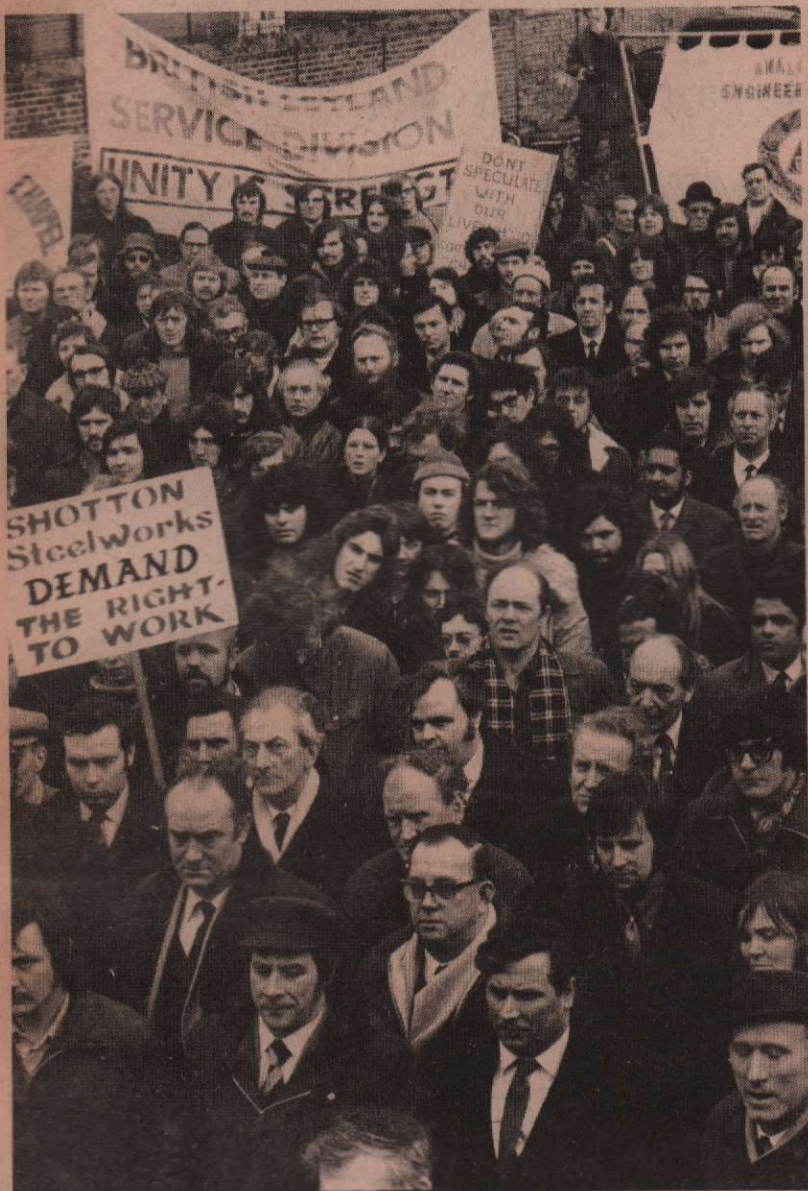
-CENTRE PAGES

Profits and pay—the truth



-PAGES 2 AND 3

Behind the US devaluation



Section of the mass meeting before the march on parliament. Picture: MIKE COHEN

## 3000 back the sit-in printers

THREE THOUSAND workers and students marched on parliament through the streets of London on Tuesday in solidarity with the workers of Briant Colour Printers. The workers have been occupying the plant for seven months in defence of their jobs.

On Tuesday their time to reply against writs for vacant possession of the factory and for costs and damages ran out and they now face arrests for contempt of court and possible police moves to evict them.

Shotton steelworkers, UCS shipyard workers, Rockware Glass workers and dockers from London's Royal Group—all of them groups of workers who have been fighting for the right to work—were in attendance.

Many engineering union branches and divisions brought their banners. British Leyland and Rover car workers were on the march, as were representatives from the Fine Tubes strikers. About 1000 students from various colleges and universities joined the demonstration.

Among the 500 printworkers on the march were representatives of the Fleet Street electricians who said that if the Briant workers were evicted or any of their number arrested they would shut down at least three national newspapers.

The Briant workers are asking for trade unionists and socialists to help them maintain a permanent vigil outside the plant against any eviction or arrest moves. London IS branches are asked to support this and should contact the London organiser.

IN THE LAST WEEK £1770 has poured into the office, pushing the total so far to £20,042. We are two-thirds of the way towards our £30,000 target.

IS branches are keeping up the pressure. Donations received include: Enfield £12, Oxford £100, Liverpool £41.75, Tower Hamlets £175, Manchester £27.20, Guildford £3, Edinburgh £126, Chertsey £22.50, Mid-Derbyshire £19, Stockport £15, Cardiff £20, Slough £105, Kilburn £11, Southampton £31.90, Glasgow South £23.45, Camden £133, Exeter £28, Bristol £28, Salford £44.20, Harlesden £16.45, Coventry £100, Darlington £5, Peterborough £16, Rugby £30, Reading £13, Lowestoft £60, York £48, Hackney £57.53, Hornsey £13.90, Colindale £50, Glasgow North £40, Basildon £25, St

THE KNIVES are out once more in Fleet Street and the television studios.

As the gas men start to work to rule, to ban overtime and to strike, the lords and masters of television and the press are using all their powers to win 'public opinion' for the government.

The gas men are being pilloried as murderous layabouts who have abandoned all other interests save that of their own greed.

But the truth is just the opposite. The gas men's case is one of the strongest of any group of trade unionists since the war.

**PAY.** The basic pay for a 40-hour week for a gas labourer is £19.10. For a skilled gasman it is £22.87. The 'average earnings' of £34, boosted as 'more than adequate' by millionaire Tory ministers, is made up by long hours of overtime.

**HOURS.** The average gas man works 46.8 hours a week. Many work very much more. In electricity supply, to which gas industry pay has traditionally been tied, the men work an average of 41.25 hours—for average earnings exactly the same as the gas man's.

**HOLIDAYS.** The gas men get three weeks' holiday. Their demand for a fourth has been contemptuously refused (along with a number of other 'fringe' demands on bonus) by the government.

### REFUSED

**REDUNDANCY.** This is the worst aspect of the gas men's plight. Since 1968 the industry's labour force has fallen from 69,555 to 47,000—more than a third. 18,500 of the sacked workers have been working on coal gas plants that have been closed with the introduction of natural gas. But the figures include a fall of about 10 per cent in the number of men maintaining distribution pipes and in the number of fitters working on consumer services.

The main charge made against the gas men is that they are careless of the dangers to the nation of shutting off gas production. Every accident involving gas, no matter how small, is likely to be proclaimed in banner headlines in the days ahead.

But it is the Gas Corporation which has been endangering people's lives in recent years by running down the workforce in distribution and consumer services at a time when they should be substantially increased.

Most of the conversion work to natural

Helens £30, Harlow £6.10.

We have been very encouraged by a number of individual donations. One old age pensioner wrote: 'Please find enclosed postal order for £1. Pensioners haven't much to spare these days, wish it was more. Keep helping to destroy capitalism, the curse of the world, and all the rats and cheats that fawn around it.' What a marvellous fighting spirit!

Another letter from an IS member: 'As unmarried-mum-of-one-on-Social-Security-with-an-immense-overdraft, I only wish I could give you £100 but £10 is honestly all I can afford.'

We received a number of collections from groups of workers in a number of places of work: GEC (Rugby) SW Readers Group £5.05, Scotts Shipyard Greenock

# GAS MEN MUST WIN!

by PAUL FOOT

gas has been undertaken by private enterprise contractors, many of them employing non-union labour on ruthless bonus schemes, which encourages the fitters to cut corners and rush jobs.

In October 1971, a gas explosion destroyed a shopping centre in Clarkston, Glasgow. 22 people died. The public inquiry into the disaster found that gas had leaked from a fractured main under the shops.

The Gas Board had been notified of the leak for nearly 24 hours before the explosion. For almost all of that time, the men employed by the board to find the leak were working for a contractor, R H McCulloch Ltd.

Mr Jack White, distribution engineer for the Scottish Gas Board told the inquiry: 'On the day of the disaster the board was dealing with seven escapes, which is one reason why contractors were working at Clarkston.'

Gas fitters' stewards in Glasgow argued then and argue now that if properly equipped and trained men had been on hand, the leak could well have been discovered and dealt with.

Yet in Glasgow there are only 20 gas fitter apprentices being trained by the local

Gas Board, which trained 100 five years ago.

The gas pipe system throughout Britain is not suited to natural gas. Natural gas is drier than town gas, and does not seal the hemp joints in the pipes as town gas did. The result is a sharp increase in leakages all over the country.

These gas leaks are occurring all over Britain. In the last week in January three old people died in Walsall sitting in front of their gas fires. Two died because the fire was improperly tested, the other because it was improperly fitted. On 6 January an explosion rocked a street in Daventry, Northants, when contractors working on a sewerage scheme fractured a main.

The gas men argue that these explosions and leakages could be cut out if the government and the Gas Corporation maintained a properly-trained and properly-paid workforce.

### HYSTERIA

The authorities' deep concern for public safety was well illustrated when stewards representing 300 Glasgow gas fitters proposed that the stewards run a service for dealing with emergencies during the strike. The local gas authorities, insisting that they should be in charge, promptly refused to operate such a service.

No worker in this country can afford to sit back and let the gas men wage this struggle alone. The government hopes that press hysteria will defeat this first group of workers who challenge the freeze. Each blow struck against the gas men is a blow against the workers at Fords, the miners, the hospital workers, the civil servants, the teachers. It is a blow against the right of any worker to fight for better wages.

As cuts begin to hit, some employers may try to run their factories without adequate heating. Shop stewards committees and trades unions must resist such manoeuvres, resist attempts to bring in new forms of heating. If government and employers want full production, let them first pay the gas workers a living wage.

If the rest of the working-class movement backs the gas men they can win a victory even more momentous than that of the miners last year: a victory that will spell doom not only for Heath's millionaire policies, but for his government as well.

● Rush donations to Tony Cliff, Acting IS national treasurer, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.



# THE NEW \$ CRISIS

John Palmer reports

# US move to export inflation

THE SIXTH major financial convulsion to have gripped the capitalist world in the past five years seems certain to lead to an intensification of trade and economic conflict between the leading economic powers.

Behind the flight of capital from dollars to marks and yen and the dollar devaluation is a major campaign by the United States to export inflation and unemployment to its principal trading rivals.

The immediate source of the instability which led to the financial crisis on the foreign exchanges is the chronic and continuing American balance of payments deficit. This deficit has been growing during the past decade but in recent years has approached 10,000 millions dollars a year.

There are several reasons for this indebtedness of the largest economy in the world. The first cause is the cost of

maintaining America's imperialist machine throughout Europe and Asia. In spite of the withdrawal from Vietnam this still involves the upkeep of military bases in scores of countries.

Secondly, there has been the outflow of investment capital from the US to support the investment and trading operations of the huge US owned multi-national corporations. These corporations have added to the problem by not remitting their profits back to the US but keeping them abroad, thus creating the phenomenon of the 'Euro-dollars'—a 70,000 million dollars pool of 'hot money' available for financial speculation across the international exchange markets.

## Rocketed

Thirdly, there has been America's trade deficit. This is a relatively new development and is largely the result of the export

of technology and production capacity by the international corporations abroad. In addition America's dependence on imported goods has rocketed, particularly since countries like Japan and West Germany have been able to penetrate America's market with cheaper goods.

For 20 years after World War Two the giant American economy was able to reconcile full employment, economic growth and relative price stability through massive dependence on production for waste—the permanent arms economy. But this stability could never last. The purely military needs of arms spending have meant few jobs and has produced less new technology within the United States. This in turn led to a steady rise in price inflation.

But the same growth in world trade stimulated by America's economic expansion meant that some countries could compete in world markets without the burden of huge arms spending. And the world trade boom created the very multi-

nationals which now contribute to America's financial weakness.

When the United States began to run up international debts some years ago there was not much reaction among the western European and Japanese ruling classes. But when these debts escalated to huge figures and, at the same time, the US refused first to devalue the dollar, then to honour a commitment to convert foreign dollar debts into gold, the rest of the capitalist world turned nasty. A dollar devaluation was forced on the US in 1971 but it has not produced an improvement in the US payments gap.

## Barriers

Now the American ruling class are saying to their rivals 'you must let us devalue again or else we will put up barriers against your exports coming into this country.' This time round the

IRELAND NORTH AND SOUTH: THE BEST SOCIALIST ANALYSIS FROM REPORTERS ON THE SPOT

# The terror goes on

THE BRITISH REGIME in Northern Ireland is desperately attempting to create the illusion that 'justice'—Six County style—is being administered equally in both Loyalist and Republican communities.

The pre-dawn swoops and the detention of a number of Loyalists should not obscure the fact that the Tory government is still tolerating the right-wing extremists while concentrating its repression on the anti-Unionists.

During last week's day of Loyalist strikes in protest at the detention of two men suspected of involvement in the bomb attack on a bus full of Catholic workers, gangs of armed right-wingers forced thousands to stay away from work by mounting road blocks and pickets throughout the six counties.

They also attacked Catholic

churches, pubs, shops and houses with little or no interference from 'the forces of law and order'.

When right-wing gangs threatened one Catholic school, police and British soldiers advised the headmaster to close down because they were 'unable to offer any protection'. No attempt was made to stop Loyalists from burning down a Catholic pub near the city centre, although scores of police and soldiers were on the scene. The same attitude prevailed among security forces throughout the North.

## Massive

But when socialists and republicans, led by People's Democracy, attempted to hold an anti-assassination demonstration in Belfast at the weekend, they were met with a massive show of military strength which in-



British troops: help for Loyalist shoot-outs

by Mike Miller: Belfast

involved sealing off the city centre and the usual baton charges and firing of rubber bullets.

On several occasions in the last fortnight British troops have joined with Loyalist gun-men in attacks on Catholic areas. The New Lodge massacre, when six unarmed men (three of whom were members of the Provisional IRA) were shot dead, was the most blatant.

But on the day of the Loyalist strike the army stood back as right-wing gunmen fired at the funeral procession of three of the New Lodge victims. When the IRA returned fire, the army joined in alongside Loyalists.

That night, although engaged in a shoot-out with the Loyalists in East Belfast, the army was again assisting Loyalists in a gun battle across the 'peace line' in West Belfast. Yet another unarmed Catholic was killed.

Recent court cases have followed the same pattern. Great publicity was given to the fact that more Loyalists were arrested on arms charges in December last year than were Republicans. But many of them have been put on suspended sentences or given very short jail terms while republicans continue to get up to 10 years on identical charges.

Although the UDA has publicly organised violence, including the

shooting of soldiers, it remains totally legal, as do a host of other Loyalist extremist groups.

Even if the British are unable or unwilling to deal with the extreme right wing, there are signs that many ordinary Protestant workers are very unhappy at what has been going on lately. The response to the UDA-UVF strike call was much smaller than they had anticipated.

In all 120,000 people were away from work out of a total workforce of 600,000. Most of those were either too scared to go to work, or were sent home when electricity cuts closed their factory. And there has been no attempt to organise any sort of protest at the most recent arrest of prominent loyalists in East Belfast.

## Sacrifice

It is now obvious to the leaders of the extreme right wing that they cannot call on the Protestant workers to sacrifice one day's pay and then rely on their shock troops to ensure that the call is heeded. Support for the Loyalist Association of Workers, a UDA front, is falling off. There is news of men tearing up their membership cards in the shipyards.

Inability to mobilise the mass of the Protestant workers around purely sectarian demands has forced a number of the leaders of the right wing to go into hiding. Hours after they announced the adoption of a

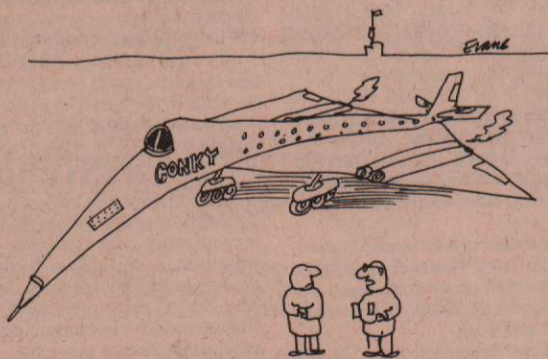
Provo-style campaign of selective bombings, a number of Catholic premises were blown up.

The long-term British strategy is to isolate the extremists on both sides and encourage those who now support them to give their allegiance to the so-called moderates who best serve the interests of imperialism.

By permitting, encouraging and participating in the sectarian murder campaign, the British regime has ensured that many ordinary Protestant workers have been alienated from those who advocate the indiscriminate killing of Catholics.

The attempt will now be made to present the Unionist Party as a moderate group in the hope that it will regain the support of these workers, support it lost over the last four years. Similarly, the assassinations have given new credence to the Social Democratic and Labour Party who have taken advantage of the confusion and fear in the Catholic ghettos to re-emerge after their betrayal of the internees.

Whether or not the British succeed in their strategy depends largely on what the socialists within the republican movement can do to win support from those Protestant workers who do not want a sectarian blood-bath and who do not support the politics of Craig—now calling for 'UDI'—and the right-wing leadership of the UDA.



## 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.'

15p per copy plus 3p postage, six copies or more post free, 1161h  
BRISTOL INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS,  
9a Oakland Road, Bristol 6.

## HELP OUR SALES TO SOAR

by Margaret Renn  
Circulation Manager

TO INCREASE the circulation and readership of Socialist Worker we need to get it read in more and more workplaces—whether factories or offices.

There is a limit to how many copies one person can sell in a factory simply because of the time it takes to see people on other sections and the difficulty in avoiding the watchful eye of the foreman.

One worker in a GKN factory in Birmingham told me how he has organised to increase his sales from six to 22 in three or four months.

'The key to selling the paper is to find those who are most trade union inclined, the interested people. Often, workers who buy it outside the factory are afraid to let others in their section see it—they wrap it up in their pocket and don't realise that

half a dozen others are doing the same.

'So it really needs to be sold inside. If you are selling six in a large factory there is no reason why you can't sell more. Ask the ones you sell to who they pass it on to, and sell them a copy as well.

'Or get each of your buyers to take two or three copies to sell in their own section during the dinner time or break. If you offer someone a copy 99 times out of a hundred they will take it, pay for it and ask for it the next week.

'In some factories people pass the paper on and don't sell it. If you are going to do this don't do it until the evening or better still a Friday after-

noon, when they have to take it home and read it. And always ask them the next week to buy a copy.

'I could have stuck with six papers a week, but have always tried to push it up, even selling my own copy at times. But I never give it away—it loses its value.'

If you read Socialist Worker and want to get copies to sell in your workplace contact me and we can send them through the post, or put you in contact with your nearest IS branch who will be able to supply copies.

For other information, details of where you can buy Socialist Worker locally, or if you have ideas about pushing up the sales, contact me on 01-739 2639. Every suggestion will be welcomed that will help us reach that 30,000 target.



# and unemployment

Europeans are less happy about a dollar devaluation since last time it led to the export of price inflation across the Atlantic.

But they would also lose heavily if America put up the trade shutters since economies like Germany, Japan, Italy and Britain are heavily dependent on export trade to maintain economic growth and anything resembling full employment.

The Japanese already have a protected economy and are threatening to divert their export drive to the Common Market if they are diverted from the American market. The Common Market governments are deeply divided among themselves about what response to mount to the US threat.

The French are worried about importing more inflation through a new dollar devaluation (which would happen if currencies like the mark were revalued or 'floated up' against the dollar). But the West Germans and almost certainly the British would do almost anything to avoid

a trade war. The Tories, in particular, are worried that economic conflict within the NATO camp would smash the facade of 'western unity'.

In the short term the bankers and finance ministers may well patch up yet another monetary agreement which will take the immediate panic out of the currency markets. But the deep-rooted imbalance in America's economic relations with her principal rivals will not be cured by mere currency changes. Within the US ruling class the trade protectionist lobby is steadily gaining ground. Sooner or later Nixon is going to give way under the pressure.

## Brutal fashion

This must mean that the international economic environment, which has deteriorated so sharply in the past five years, will develop in a still more brutal and irrational fashion. For the already weak

and declining British economy this spells out a very gloomy message indeed.

Nervous and uncertain currency markets are not going to take kindly to bad British balance of payments figures this year. So far the pound has escaped lightly amidst all the currency carnage, but any new evidence of a British payments crisis and sterling is likely to be the next object of the speculators' attentions.

With Heath's growth programme faltering, his anti-inflation policy transparently collapsing, the Tories must be very worried men when they contemplate the economic mess into which the international system has got itself. Socialists will point to last week's money panic as further evidence that capitalism is no longer capable of operating with a minimum of rationality.

It is high time that working men and women throughout the world took their fate away from the circus of bankers and finance ministers and into their own hands.

# Socialist Worker

## WHAT WE THINK

'IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to co-ordinate claims,' said Ray Buckton of ASLEF at last week's conference of representatives of 32 unions with members in the state sector of the economy.

Maybe so. But that is not the main issue. The point is united **action** in support of those groups now in the firing line—gas workers, health service workers, civil servants, London teachers and so on.

It is as plain as a pikestaff that all the old maxims—'It's easy to break a stick, it's hard to break a bundle of sticks tied together', 'united we stand: divided we fall' and the rest—apply today to organised groups of workers, not just to individuals in a trade or section.

The health service workers **alone** may be beaten. The gas workers **alone** may be beaten. That is not an argument against them taking industrial action. Quite the opposite. You can't expect other people to support you unless you show that you are willing and able to fight on your own behalf. But the chances of winning are enormously improved by solidarity action.

This is no ordinary situation. The wage freeze is make or break for the Tory government. Heath has completely reversed Tory policy and put all his eggs in the statutory freeze basket. If the freeze is decisively broken the government will be forced into the risky gamble of a general election.

It will do its damndest to avoid this. And that means that the gloves are off and the brass knuckles are on.

The conference did indeed agree to 'render maximum assistance' to unions involved in struggles against the freeze. But it carefully avoided any definite commitment to any particular assistance.

It even managed to avoid voting on the proposal—from Bill Kendall of the CPSA—to issue a 'general declaration of support' to unions now in dispute with the government. The 13-man 'co-ordinating committee' elected to co-ordinate work and publicise the case of the unions evidently sees its main job as lobbying the TUC.

## Hammer home

This will not do at all. A torrent of Fleet Street filth plus the full television 'treatment' is now descending on the gas workers. Tomorrow it will be the health workers, the Ford workers and any other group that acts in defence of living standards.

The very least that the union leaderships must be required to do is to launch a concerted counter-attack exposing Tory propaganda, hammering home the facts about price increases, shouting from the housetops that Heath's 'anti-inflation' legislation is a barefaced swindle, that every worker has a vital stake in defeating the freeze—which means, of course, defeating the government.

Much more is needed. Unless there is a serious attempt to co-ordinate claims, in spite of the real difficulties that exist, and above all to **co-ordinate action in support of them**, the government's 'divide and rule' tactics can be effective.

Nor can concerted action be confined to the state sector. The gas workers have a vital interest in the success of the Ford workers and vice-versa. One big hole cut through the freeze law will make the struggle of every section that much easier.

Of course the TUC is supposed to be the 'general staff of labour', is supposed to organise and lead concerted actions. It will do no such thing. Even its 'left wing' is terrified of the very idea. Hugh Scanlon has stated, at the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the General Council, that as far as he is concerned every union is on its own.

That policy is exactly what Ted Heath is praying for. Fortunately matters are not entirely in the hands of such leaders. The Ford convenors have taken an initiative which, if followed through, can transform the situation. Their decision to invite to Saturday's Coventry meeting, at which the call for an all-out strike from 1 March will be put, representatives of British Leyland, Vauxhall, the miners, hospital workers and others is a tremendous step forward.

United action will win the claims and finish off the Tory freeze. Lack of united action will mean a whole series of sectional struggles which can indeed succeed in some cases but only at much greater cost to the workers. The need for united action was never greater.

# LYNCH POLL BID AS RIVALS SQUABBLE

by Brian Trench: Dublin  
EIRE premier Jack Lynch condemned the British government two weeks ago for failing to take vigorous enough action against the Loyalist armed groups in the North.

Two days later he announced that he was calling a general election, making it quite clear to Heath that the speech was for electoral purposes only and was not meant to be taken too seriously.

The timing of the election shows that Lynch does not really intend to upset the British Tories. On the contrary, he aims to be in a strong position to approve whatever their White Paper next month proposes for the future of Northern Ireland.

He will then be able to present the creation of a weak and completely ineffective 'Council of All Ireland' as a significant concession to nationalist pressure.

There are other reasons why Lynch has called the election now. His own political position has probably never been stronger since he put some of his own former ministers on trial for arms smuggling in 1970.

## FAILING

Last year he took new and sharper measures for smashing republican organisations. The latest jailings of Provisional republicans have raised scarcely a murmur of protest and disillusionment is growing in republican ranks as the members see various attempts at 'civil rights' movements in the south failing.

The Irish Labour Party is more divided than at any time in the past four years. There is the distinct possibility that some official Labour candidates could be opposed by independent Labour candidates who object to the party's anti-republican position.

The main opposition party, Fine Gael, has not been a credible alternative for many years, either to the middle class or to workers. The alliance that the traditionally conservative Fine Gael has now established with the Labour Party is a case of unity born out of weakness.

The 14-point manifesto 'for a national coalition government' which they have agreed to contains virtually no specific proposals. And it means that workers who in the past have voted Labour can now only do so



LYNCH: strong position

by also voting for the coalition with the right wing party.

Despite the weakness of the opposition to Lynch, both inside and outside the Dail (parliament), his party has not had a clear parliamentary majority. Lynch aims to rectify this situation through the election, so that he will have the power to continue his 'law and order' drive more firmly.

He has another problem to handle as well—the likely growth of opposition to rising prices and unemployment.

All the most pessimistic predictions of those who oppose Ireland's entry into the Common Market are coming true. The increased prices paid to Irish farmers when they sell in Europe have hit consumer prices at home. Some food items have gone up 20 per cent or more in the last two months alone.

And there has been increasing evidence of government intervention

to halt wage rises—particularly in the public sector. Some groups of workers are being refused their 'due' under the current national wage agreement. Others are saying they will not be bound by any future national agreement.

One big branch of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, on the Shannon industrial estate, recently passed a resolution demanding that the union refuse to enter negotiations for another national agreement. This kind of pressure is likely to build up in the coming months.

## FRAUD

There are some signs that Lynch is considering legislation to hold down wage rises and would like to be in a stronger position in parliament to do so.

The elections are a carefully calculated fraud. Lynch has inherited from a well-known predecessor, Eamonn de Valera, a sense of the 'right time' to call elections.

If socialists in the south can succeed, even in a small way, in using this move to expose the sham that is 'parliamentary democracy', then something will have been achieved.

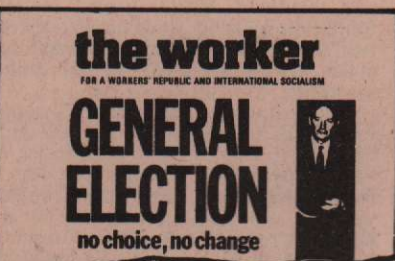
The Provisional republicans have expressed their aim of defeating 'Lynch law' through the ballot box. That hope is likely to take a knock. The job is to spell out a real alternative.

# No choice election say Irish socialists

THE mid-February issue of The Worker, the monthly paper of the Irish Socialist Workers' Movement, has just been published. It makes the point that Irish workers are being presented with 'no choice' in the election.

'No matter who is voted in—Fianna Fail, Fine Gael or Labour, we will still be slogging away on building sites, in factories, on farms and at kitchen sinks,' it says.

The paper also contains up-to-date information on the struggle in both the south and the north over unemployment, wages and the British occupation of the north. It reports on struggles against redundancy in Galway and Waterford, over working



conditions in Derry and for union recognition in Waterford.

In addition there are feature articles on emigration and the health service.

The Worker is obtainable in Britain from Kevin O'Doherty, flat 6, 117 Wandsworth Bridge Road, London SW6.





## puts 15,000 jobs at stake in France

by Ian Birchall

THE cancellation of the orders for Concorde poses a serious threat to French workers. The Toulouse factories where Concorde and the European Airbus are made employ 8500 workers. Including sub-contracting, 15,000 jobs are involved. The whole future of Toulouse is at stake.

Unfortunately the crisis has come slap in the middle of the French election campaign. First to jump on the bandwagon was Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, publicity-seeking president of the Radical Party.

Servan-Schreiber has long been an opponent of the Concorde programme and is now trying to cash in on the affair. He has professed concern about the danger to jobs, saying that no worker should be sacked until the director-general of the National Aerospace Company has been dismissed. He also says a Centre government ought to guarantee all Concorde workers full maintenance for five years.

Since Servan-Schreiber has rather less chance of forming a government than the average French worker of riding in Concorde, he can afford to make offers of this kind.

The attitude of the trade unions has been little better. The CGC, which organises supervisory staff, has made the Common Market the main issue, calling the American cancellations a 'declaration of war on the Common Market, of which Concorde is one of the most brilliant achievements'. Perhaps this is not surprising from such a union, but the metal federation of the CGT (France's biggest union federation, effectively controlled by the Communist Party) has taken a similar line.

With one eye on the Party's election campaign, the CGT statement stresses national loyalty: 'The decision by the American companies means that the US government, helped by the end of the Vietnam War, has embarked on a merciless war against the European aerospace industry.' It goes on to see the promotion of Concorde as the main question, denouncing Servan-Schreiber and others for their denigration of the Concorde, so failing to give the Concorde programme 'all the dynamism necessary for its commercial success.'

A successful fight in defence of jobs means greater co-operation between British and French workers. As far as French workers are concerned, this will have to mean not relying on leaders who put their political affiliations before the pursuit of their members' interests.

## BRIEFING

THE END of the war in Vietnam will bring no 'peace dividend' to American society, though for years opponents of the war have argued that the astronomical sums of money being spent in Vietnam could be used instead for homes, hospitals, better transport and other social services.

Now that the war has ended, the peace dividend is already being spent—on war. The total military budget is still rising, and the extra millions are going to the giant defence contractors for the production of missiles, submarines, bombers and space satellites.

Meanwhile social service spending has been drastically cut. Nixon's latest budget finally did away with what remained of the Johnson administration's celebrated anti-poverty programme.

WHILE civil servants are discovering a new militancy in Britain, their Dutch colleagues are going through a similar experience. Last week more than 40,000 of them marched to the Dutch parliament to protest over the raising of their pension contributions, without consultation, from 10 per cent to 12½ per cent. The demonstrators included teachers as well as local and central government officers. Unity was achieved between four of the five civil servants' unions concerned. Only the Protestant union did not take part because it thought the demonstration 'undignified'.

SINCE last December workers in sugar factories on the French West Indian island of Guadeloupe have staged a series of strikes. They are demanding that the remaining wage and conditions improvements from the 1972 agreement are settled in line with the increase in the cost of living.

Until mid-January the union limited itself to one-day strikes, but it then called a three-day strike in response to the widespread feeling of workers that a more militant policy was needed.

AS PRESIDENT SADAT steps up his purges in Egypt, more than 100 arrested students are on hunger strike. Last week 50 of the students' mothers staged a sit-in demonstration at Cairo University to demand their release, and were forcibly dispersed by the police.

# WORLD NEWS



THE MURDER of 21-year-old student Roberto Franceschi by armed police in Milan last month is the most serious incident in a wave of violence by police and neo-fascists against the left in Italy.

Franceschi and a comrade, who was seriously wounded, were shot between the shoulders as they tried to enter a meeting of one of Milan's universities. Although Franceschi was very soon clinically dead, he was kept in a state of 'vegetable' life for a week in the hope that protests would die down by the time his death was announced.

The huge protest demonstration two days after the murder, which included workers from some of Milan's big factories, was followed by a funeral procession tens of thousands strong.

On the night of the funeral, neo-fascist gangs in the Piazza San Babilla in Milan, which they have terrorised for a year, were involved in a gun battle, and the Socialist Party headquarters in nearby Brescia were blown up.

Our picture shows the offices of the Milan section of the Italian Socialist Party, wrecked by a bomb. A handwritten message left at the scene of the blast said: 'Nobody will ever discover the SAM—the Mussolini Action Squadrons'.

The Mussolini Action Squadrons are a minority neo-fascist group bent on terrorising Italian left-wing groups. Their bomb almost completely destroyed the Milan offices.

The police are now trying to round up left-wing student leaders on charges of using violence against the rector of the Milan State University. Students entered the rector's office to protest at his refusal to allow evening classes at the university, which would provide a link between students and young workers. The worst they are accused of is slapping the rector on the face with a magazine found on his desk. It just happened to be a neo-fascist magazine.

## Police move on South African strike wave

by W Enda

THE WAVE of militancy which bought a virtual general strike to heavily industrialised Durban, in South Africa, seems to have passed its peak. At its height, 50,000 African and Indian workers were on strike.

Africans are forbidden to have trade unions with negotiating rights, and strike funds are out of the question. On £4 a week, workers do not have savings to tide them over. They are being forced to accept paltry rises of 75p to £1 a week, and firms not hit by the strike forestalled the workers by granting similar increases.

As the tempo of the strike increased, the state police and military machine went into action. Troops in Saracen armoured cars (made in Britain) waited for confrontation while air force helicopters constantly hovered over the city and reinforced police patrols swarmed over the African townships.

On Wednesday last week 200 workers who broke away from a 7000-strong crowd of strikers to march on their factory were dispersed by tear gas and dogs. A flying picket of 150 African building workers which had been bringing out sites in the centre of Durban was surrounded by thugs from the notorious South African Police Mobile Unit and batoned to the ground. A mass arrest followed.

But the police couldn't be everywhere. The hated Bantu Administration Department was brought to a halt by invading pickets, and a group of white golfers had their game rudely interrupted and were chased into the clubhouse.

There have already been arrests and

# POMPIDOU ISSUES EMPTY THREATS

by Richard Kirkwood

AS THE French election approaches and the opinion polls show a continuing lead for the Left Union, the Gaullist government party is pulling out all the stops.

Both Prime Minister Messmer and President Pompidou have made speeches about how the president could not accept a left government which challenged the policies on which Pompidou has, he claims, 'received a mandate from the nation.'

These threats are of little constitutional significance but the Gaullists hope to use the prestige of Pompidou to swing things their way. But, unlike De Gaulle, Pompidou is a party man, not someone who can unite all factions of the ruling class round him.

The response of the Communist Party has not been to denounce the presidential system, which they once called a near-dictatorship, but to assure Pompidou that they will respect the constitution and to complain that the president is not playing the game fairly.

## WORRIED

At the same time there are all sorts of manoeuvres going on among the opposition. The centre parties are saying different things, some appealing to the Socialists and saying their first priority is to beat the Gaullist UDR, others reserving their main attacks for the Communist Party and its allies.

The Communist Party too is getting worried. The opinion polls show that within the 'Left' the Socialists, once a weak and discredited party, are gaining. In fact the Communist Party has made this

possible by building up Socialist leader Mitterand as a great figure. Now the Party is having to rush round whipping up its supporters. After all, they need enough MPs to be able to claim some government positions.

At the same time leaders of the 'Left Radicals' have assured the French ruling class that they will ditch the Communist Party if it tries to push the government too far left.

## ALLIANCE

To cap it all, Mollet, the veteran Socialist leader, the man responsible for French involvement in the 1956 invasion of Egypt at Suez, has shown how little his spots have changed. In a speech in which he explained that the Left Union showed that the Socialists were not going to take power in order to run capitalism better, he also said that the first priority was to beat the Gaullists and implied that if necessary a Socialist candidate would withdraw for a 'reformer' on the second round of the election.

This is back to the old policy of alliance with the centre leaving the Communist Party out in the cold. The Socialists are now busy explaining that he didn't mean quite that and the Party is expressing astonishment—but what can it expect if it lines itself up with men with a record for political double-crossing which makes Harold Wilson seem positively straightforward?

These sordid manoeuvres give even more point to the campaign for a working-class alternative run by the revolutionary socialists of Lutte Ouvriere (Workers' Struggle). This is now in full swing despite all the efforts of both Gaullists and Communists to interfere with their rights of free speech. Three Communist-controlled municipalities—Guesnain in the north and Stains and Aubervilliers in the Paris suburbs—have refused Lutte Ouvriere the use of municipal halls for meetings, and so has one Gaullist council, at Mongeron near Paris.

## RALLY

One of Lutte Ouvriere's candidates, electrician Guy Mouney, has been expelled from the Communist-controlled union at the suburban Paris Carbon Lorraine factory, because he stated in public that he was a revolutionary candidate.

In addition, last week the Paris council, dominated by the Gaullists and the centre, banned Lutte Ouvriere's mass rally in the last week of the elections on the grounds... that it was just before the elections! So Lutte Ouvriere is the only group which will not be able to have a mass meeting in the Paris Sports Palace in the period leading up to the election.

They have appealed to all groups and parties who support free speech to protest. It remains to be seen whether the Communist Party will be among them. Lutte Ouvriere also intends to hold a mass rally on 26 February as planned—if necessary outside the Sports Palace—and has appealed to other organisations to join it.



Last week's meeting of the national committee of the International Socialists sent a message of fraternal greetings to Lutte Ouvriere wishing them every success in their election campaign.





**FOOT**

## Getting off cop free

TRACEY FOX, aged 11, was killed last August when she was crossing the road with her brother Perry, who is eight. Perry was knocked down and suffered serious injuries to his head and legs.

The children were carefully crossing a pedestrian crossing when they were hit. The driver, an Islington man called Ramon Edwards, was driving at about 70mph as he approached the crossing. He completely ignored a signal from another motorist who had stopped at the crossing.

Mr Edwards came up at the Old Bailey last week on a charge of causing death by dangerous driving. He was found guilty.

He was fined £25. His licence was endorsed but he was not disqualified.

Mr Edwards, by the way, is a police officer, and he was driving a police car, horns blaring, when he killed the little girl. He was answering a 999 call about an alleged theft of lead from a roof.

Mr Edwards told the judge he had 'expressed deep regret' to the children's parents.

WHILE on the subject of driving offences, an interesting new defence to the charge of breaking the speed limit on motorways has been supported by magistrates at Whitminster in Gloucestershire. They were hearing the case of Mr Douglas Tuckett, the managing director of the Lex Mead garage, Cardiff. Mr Tuckett was up for consistently driving his Rover at more than 100mph down the M5.

Mr Tuckett's lawyer, Mr Richard Gaskell, begging the magistrates not to apply the almost automatic disqualification which would apply in such a case, said: 'My client is the youngest director and manager of any garage in this big group. Perhaps the court could extend leniency because of the importance of his driving licence, and place him in the distinguished category of Stirling Moss, Princess Anne, the Minister for Aerospace and the Bishop of St Albans.'

The magistrates agreed. They fined Mr Tuckett £25 and endorsed his licence.

A DEEPLY tragic tale of human suffering lies behind this advertisement which appeared in *The Times* on 8 February:

### PROPERTY WANTED

#### PEREGRINE WORSTHORNE

and family, evicted by property development, urgently need long lease of room, London flat. Would some generous property owner help restore their faith in capitalism. Ring 727 9233 before 10 a.m. and after 7 p.m. or 353 4242 daytime.

THE following very important item of news appeared in the *Morning Star* of 12 February:

### Princess Anne visits Soviet destroyer

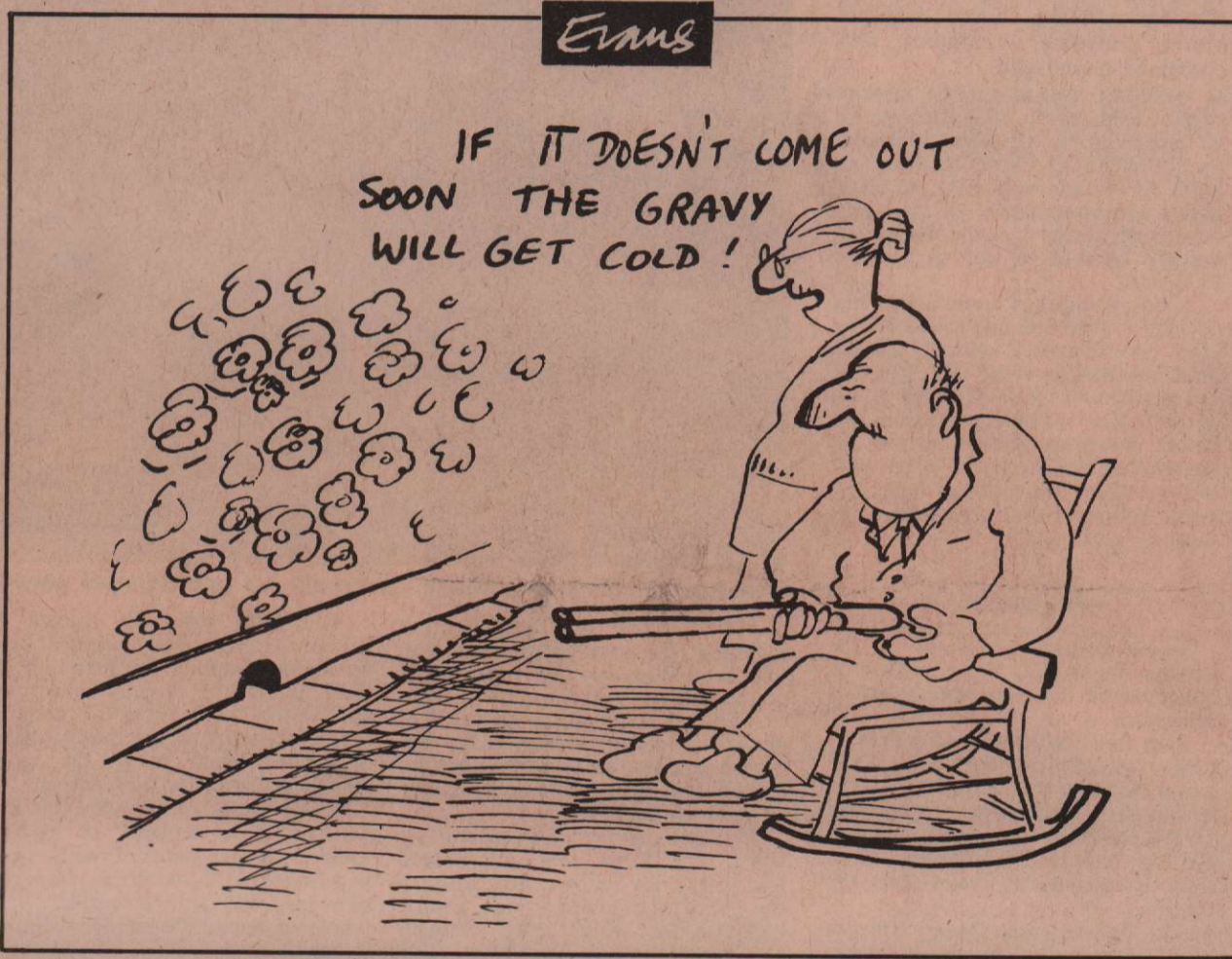
Princess Anne made an informal visit to the Soviet destroyer *Skrytny* at the Ethiopian port of Massawa yesterday.

She toured the destroyer and was offered Russian champagne and caviar in the officers' mess.

MANY CYNICS have accused *Rockware Glass* of inhumanity in its decision to close its Greenford factory, throwing 700 workers, many of them black, on the dole so that it can make £10 million from selling off the land on which the factory stands.



**PRINTS**



They are wrong. *Rockwares* and its philanthropic chairman, Peter Parker, have a social conscience. They have just donated £100 to the King Edward Memorial Hospital, Ealing, towards the cost of chairs in the psychiatric waiting hall.

## Three blind

THE radical proposals in Labour's plans for London, if they get control of the GLC in April, have delighted the left of the party. They should, however, be weighed against the refusal of two constituency Labour Parties to re-nominate three Greater London councillors for re-election this year. The three are Paddy O'Connor from Camden, Vic Collins from Camden and Brian Bastin from Lewisham.

By an amazing coincidence, these three councillors led the fight inside the GLC Labour Group for non-implementation of the Housing Finance Act (they were laughed out of court by the majority).

Greater London Labour officials were to be seen at all selection conferences. Their views on 'unlikely' candidates were taken very seriously and the three most left-wing GLC councillors are now out in the cold.

## Lunch hour

A LOT of work was done in the meeting called by the all-party Chemicals Group (chairman Ted Garrett, Labour MP for Wallsend, secretary David Crouch, Tory MP for Canterbury) in the Charing Cross

Hotel last Wednesday. The lunch that followed the discussion on the transport of chemicals by road was magnificent.

And Mr Lakhdar Brahimi, the Algerian Ambassador in London, greatly enjoyed his lunch in dining room 'B' of the House of Commons last Tuesday. His hosts, the British-Algerian Parliamentary Group, were headed by Dr J Dickson Mabon, Labour MP for Greenock, and Sir George Sinclair, Tory MP for Dorking.

Dr Mabon was in action again on the Wednesday when he chaired a meeting of the all-party Shipbuilding Group in the Commons addressed by Mr Anthony Greenwell, President of the Shipbuilding and Repairs National Association. Mr Greenwell is not a socialist. But neither is Dr Mabon.

## Coal grab

FEBRUARY'S edition of *Coal News*, the National Coal Board's monthly sheet, carries an exciting story about the tremendous success of the Coal Board's scheme to bribe miners and their families to sell heating appliances to their friends and neighbours. The reward for selling is payable in Co-Op stamps.

The headline is: 'The orders just come rolling in to an ex-miner,' and there is a picture of pensioner Jim Thompson, who retired from the Wellesley pit 11 years ago.

Coal News reports: 'Mr Thompson, 76, won 24,000 stamps worth £10 for persuading nine friends and neighbours to instal solid fuel heating—plus two bonuses of 24,000 for each four sales.'

# RUSSIANS SEE RED OVER BOYS IN BLUE

TOM CLARKE'S award-winning television play about a clay-miners' strike in Cornwall, *Stocker's Copper*, didn't win the top award at the Ninth International Television Festival in Prague last June, as it was expected to, because of a rather curious intervention of the Russian judges.

When it came to the vote, the Russian, East German and Czech judges voted for the Russian entry, a

worthy but boring saga of love on an oil rig. Almost all the other judges voted for *Stocker's Copper*. The Russians then made it known that they would on no account be party to an award to the BBC for *Stocker's Copper*. The film, they said, was a disgrace because it attacked a state institution.

'What institution?' the others asked.

'The police', replied the Russians. Westerners protested that these were after all capitalist police defending capitalist property. 'The police,' cried the Russians, 'are the same everywhere.'

The Polish entry was declared the winner and a special category of 'honourable mention' was created and applied jointly to *Stocker's Copper* and the Russian entry.

ONE of the men chiefly responsible for the marketing and distribution of thalidomide in Britain is George Ashford, who was chairman of Distillers' Chemical Division in 1961, when thalidomide reached its sales peak. In 1962, after thalidomide was withdrawn, he was shifted to the chemicals and plastics group.

Since then, Mr Ashford has never looked back. He became managing director of BP Chemicals in 1967, and a managing director of BP since 1969.

On 1 February he accepted a 'non-executive' directorship of Albright and Wilson. 'Non-executive' directors are expected to go to odd meetings and take their fees.

## Sugar on the Pill

MORE ABOUT Syntex, whose brand of contraceptive pill, Norinyl-1, was raised in price in spite of the freeze (see Footprints two weeks ago).

It seems that Syntex are having themselves a ball from the marketing of this pill. Their price list for local authority clinics is as follows:

**BUYING PRICE for LOCAL AUTHORITY**  
65p for 3 packs (3 months supply)  
**RECOMMENDED PRICE TO PATIENT**  
£1.15p per three packs

The recommended price in the shops works out at £1.32 for three packs.

In a promotion letter to local authorities last year, Syntex wrote: 'However, you may not know that Norinyl-1 can contribute significantly to the economics of running your clinics.'

'From the attached price structure you will see that every multi-pack of Norinyl-1 sold by the clinics can generate 50p towards your clinic overheads. This margin between buying and recommended selling price is greater with Norinyl than with any other "pill".'

Buy Norinyl—the pill which exploits its consumers MOST!

## Ross group

NO ONE seems to have noticed that one of the most prominent directors of the company which has got the lucrative contract for the commercial radio London news station is Mr Norris McWhirter, who names his brother Ross McWhirter as 'alternative' director. Ross it was who savaged the Independent Broadcasting Authority at the Court of Appeal the other day, when he successfully applied for an injunction temporarily banning a film on Andy Warhol.

On that occasion, Ross McWhirter said that the IBA were failing in their duty to protect the public from filth. He must have been right, for now the IBA has handed him and his brother and their colleagues by far the juiciest plum in the commercial radio racket. Of the 750,000 shares in the company, Ross and Norris own 100,000.

Radio-lovers had better keep an eye out to see whether Ross and Norris have any success in getting key editorial jobs on the new station for some of their friends in the Monday Club and the National Front.

PS: While we're on the subject of the Front and the Club, and the relations between the two, I see that the Front's chairman, Mr John Tyndall, was to speak to the Essex Monday Club in Chelmsford on Friday.

### LARCHGROVE REMAND HOME

1212 EDINBURGH ROAD, GLASGOW, G33

Applications are invited from

## MATURE MEN

used to working with unruly youngsters.

Training in H.M. Forces will be considered advantageous.

The Home deals with boys in the 7 to 15 years age group and its principal objective is to instill regard for authority in boys during the period in which they are in residence.

Apply, in writing, to:

**THE SECRETARY**  
**LARCHGROVE REMAND HOME**  
1212 EDINBURGH ROAD, GLASGOW, G33





## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

### Spied on by state snoopers

A STRIKER who has to fight the Social Security to get the benefit he is entitled to will soon come to appreciate the situation of those who have to live permanently on supplementary benefits.

Unsupported mothers, for example, are spied on by state snoopers, and may be deprived of their living on the mere suspicion that they are living with a man. An unemployed person in an area of 10 per cent unemployment may be humiliated by being asked to prove that he has looked for a job, or by being reprimanded for lying in bed too late.

But the social security system is not something isolated from the rest of society. There is a general attack being made today against the living standards of Britain's workers.

The 1971 Social Security Act was only a small part of this attack. It aimed to cut benefit paid to people involved in industrial action, and to cut for six weeks the benefit of people who left low-paid jobs to look for something better, or who were sacked for standing up to the boss.

The measures were part of the same attack that also included the reduction in welfare benefits—such as the mean decision to cut school milk, the Housing Finance Act—involving massive rent increases, and the Immigration Act—which aimed to divide workers and encourage harassment of the immigrant community.

### Tame pawns

And the lynchpin of the whole attack is the Industrial Relations Act, which aims to make the unions into the tame pawns of the government by attacking the rights of shop stewards and rank-and-file workers. Despite the magnificent resistance to the jailing of the five dockers, the Act is still being used to intimidate militants and weaken shop-floor organisations.

The whole social security system, with its contempt for elementary human rights, is an expression of the values which dominate the society we live in, a society which the Tory government, in launching the attack on workers, is committed to preserve.

But it is also a society which the Labour Party will not change in practice. Indeed, much of the present Tory policy is merely a slightly tougher version of what Labour did when in power.

The system has to be fought at every point. Every strike won, every successful battle with the Social Security is a gain for the working class. But in the longer term the only answer is to build a revolutionary socialist organisation that can sweep away the whole inhumane system. It is to this task that the International Socialists are committed.

**A REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST MANIFESTO** by Kuron and Modzelewski. The famous open letter to the Polish Worker's Party, written in 1964. A vitriolic analysis of the Eastern European regimes and a call for social revolution. 29p postage included, from PLUTO PRESS Unit 10, Spencer Court, 7 Chalcot Road London NW1.

## Vince Hall on life on the housing estates

# Barracks they call

## 'No one stays for long—it's a half-way house'

THE PLIGHT of the lonely old lady on the fourteenth floor of a council block has been given quite an airing in the press and on television of late. But little has been done about it. And the problems of the five-storey blocks, maisonettes and tenements haven't been given any attention at all.

But action that may prove to be a landmark in future council housing has been taken in Liverpool. After deciding to build no more tower blocks in 1969, the Liverpool corporation housing committee has also recommended a ban on the many-storeyed 'slab blocks' and will return to ordinary two-storey houses.

This recommendation should be framed and hung in the housing offices of every big council in the country. We hear too much public relations garbage about high-rise blocks providing a compact, self-contained community.

We don't hear about the massive cost of land whose price is driven up by speculators. Or that high-rise, terrace-in-the-sky blocks are cheap to build for people who have no alternative accommodation. Or that prefabricated blocks are dirt cheap and quickly finished as well as horrible to look at.

Leeds is another council that has decided to stop building tower blocks after excelling itself with 27 blocks on the outskirts of the city. But it is not known if this decision is to cover what is called medium-rise blocks. These are neither terraces on the ground, nor terraces in the sky, but terraces cut up and laid one strip upon another from three to seven storeys high.

### Squalid

Leeds council has a lot of experience in building these blocks but the repeated disasters have taught it no lessons.

The first massive development it built was called Quarry Hill. Television addicts will have seen it as Queenie's Castle—the Yorkshire Television series a couple of years ago. It was an appropriate name since it resembles a castle from the outside.

The idea on which Quarry Hill was based started with the massive workers' flats in Vienna built in the 1920s and 1930s. It was a relatively new idea to clear a large site of slum houses and to build entirely on the same land. Leeds plumped for ripping down a squalid overcrowded area near the city centre to erect its fabricated monster.

The design was very advanced when construction started in 1934. The blocks or 'houses' were built using a lightweight frame construction with prefabricated cladding. Also new for workers' housing was a passenger lift to every floor and waste disposal chutes in every kitchen.

### Slashed

Altogether 930 flats were built on the site, occupying only 20 per cent of the area, the rest being left free for recreation. The towering grey chunks of concrete were supposed to encompass every necessity. The 1930s plans showed gardens, sports grounds, playgrounds, a large social centre, two shopping parades and a communal laundry.

But as happens time after time, the facilities were slashed. The social centre was never built. One parade of shops was finished only 13 years after completion of the estate, while the other was never started. The sports ground and planned gardens remained pencil marks on the drawings.

When it was finished in 1939, the blocks did not even have the lifetime of an average house. The prefabricated structure proved as sound as the social facilities. Most of the external walls had to be re-



Quarry Hill—'Queenie's Castle'—a monument to municipal gerry-building

placed at a cost of £500,000. The piping of the waterborne refuse system was dug up and renewed at considerable expense.

The flats stand today in threat of demolition. Grey, shabby, pokey and decaying, they are a monument to former municipal pride and a lesson in neglected facilities.

Perhaps the reader from another town may think that the council has learnt its lessons. But with all the shortsightedness and penny-pinching for which most councils are justly famous, the Civic Hall whizz-kids have only recently finished their latest attempt at an updated workers' barracks.

This is the complex on Hunslet Road known in Leeds as 'Alcatraz' because anyone coming into the city from the south could be excused for mistaking the flats for the Leeds prison.

The grey-sided blocks that contain the 1400 prefabricated flats of the Leek Street estate are even drearier than Quarry Hill. They replaced the Hunslet community (made famous by the writer Richard Hoggart and others) by a cold concrete desert.

The site, officially known as Hunslet Grange, was designed by a consortium headed by Shepherd. In their publicity, lavishly illustrated and widely distributed to councils before the start of the Leeds scheme in 1966, they made the usual grandiose claims for their design.

'Each phase of the development consists of a "village" of housing each on the perimeter of public space and linked with pedestrian ways to a new proposed district centre... The whole of the development in Hunslet is contrived as a series of clusters of courtyards grouped round a public park.'

### Reality

It said that a pub and garages were planned as part of the first phase. It insisted that the flats would be quiet—'Thick solid concrete walls and floors, the latter covered in foambacked vinyl, effectively reduce sound from neighbours.'

'Access to the split-level flats is on aerial walkways or decks running throughout the estate as continuous paths... The decks are protected

from the weather, and provide a convenient route for household deliveries and are a natural meeting place for young and old alike.'

The hopes of the planners went so far that they claimed that when people had families they could move into a large flat unit and, then, when the family had grown up, they could move into a smaller unit.

The whole thing sounds like the working man's dream. But to test the reality behind these claims, I talked to a number of Socialist Worker readers on the estate and to Graham Spink, a member of the Community Association and secretary of the Anti-Rise committee, and his wife Tricia.

They told me that the first main fault was condensation. When complaints were made to the council, tenants were told that it was a 'design fault' and nothing could be done. Graham also told me of the problems of mice and insects that nest in the semi-porous concrete structures. I asked Graham and Tricia about some of Shepherd's promises.

'Well, we don't get much noise through the walls, but it travels up

## FLOODS, FIRE RISK: WERE THEY BUILT TO LIVE IN?

THE FIRST THING Mr J Hickie noticed when he moved into his brand new council flat in Doddington Estate, Wandsworth, South London, was the lack of fire precautions. Mr Hickie had been in the building business and he knew that the doors into flats in high-rise buildings should be fire-proof.

The same was true of all doors to staircases, staircase lobbies and the bridges from the corridors. He found that the material of which all these doors were made was not fire-resistant. Then he found that there were no proper facilities for turning off the water in case of flood.

He protested to the council and after a long delay he was visited by a council official and a representative of John Laing, who built the huge Doddington Estate in the late 1960s. Both scoffed at his complaints. Both have now accepted his allegations and are putting work in hand to repair the flats.

Mr Hickie has written down a list of the many other faults in the buildings, which have been taken up by the

newly-formed Tenants' Union. He has pointed out that severe sewage flooding has occurred in many flats. The bonding in the chute well walls has come apart in the staircases and corridors and covered over with plywood, easily removable by children.

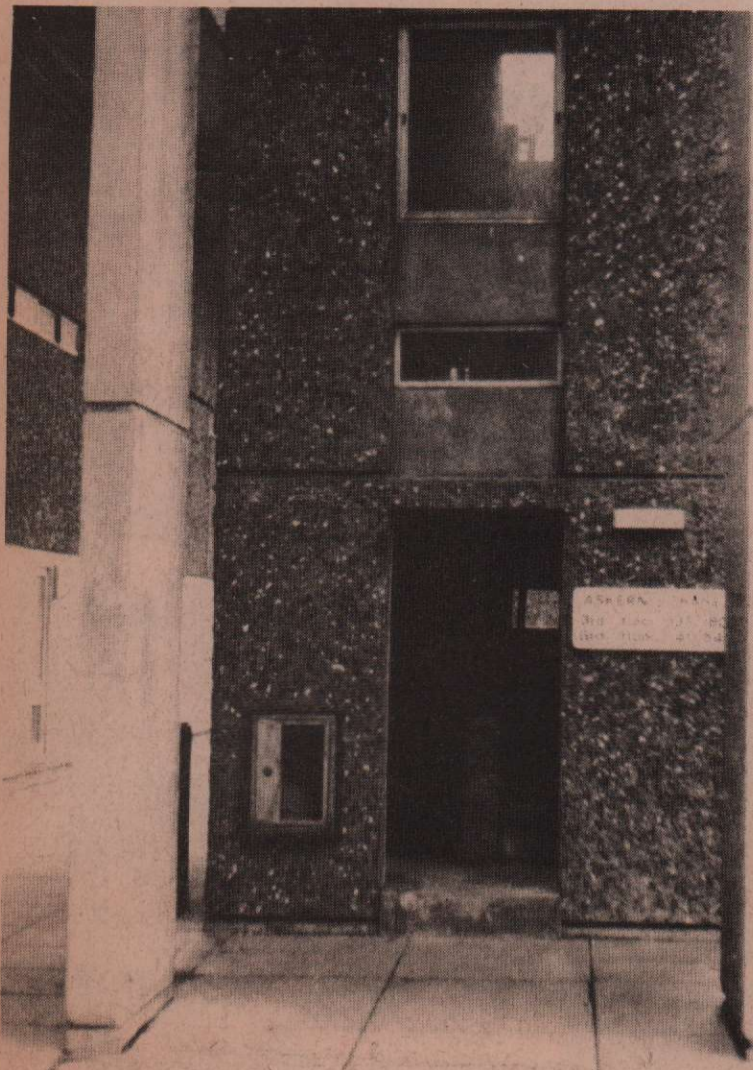
The floors are made of cheap wood, with a short life, contrary to all regulations. There is no ventilation or fans in the stairs or corridors. The hinges of the doors in the corridors are on the wrong side, so that the vibrations shake the wall frame. The indoor joinery is everywhere a disgrace.

There are no spare parts for hundreds of minor accessories. Often the loss or breaking of a small spare part means the replacement of a whole unit. There is a danger of the accumulation of sewage gas and a subsequent explosion. The flats, Mr Hickie reckons, would stand a worse chance of survival from a small gas explosion than did Ronan Point.

Mr Hickie's report ends: 'Were these vast monoliths really built to be lived in?'



# home...



Leek Street: better known as 'Alcatraz'

through the ducting in the floors. You can hear every time somebody bangs a door.'

They laughed when I mentioned the walkways. Walking to their flat I had to dodge falling sheets of water and jump over the large pools.

## Deserted

'They're neither sheltered nor a meeting place, not for nine months of the year.' Graham outlined other complaints. 'The place looks pretty bad in summer—even then it's drab and grey and dismal—but in winter it looks diabolical. They could have put some colour around the place to liven it up.'

'No one stops here for long. It's a half way house. Some people have four neighbours in one year. Very few from Hunslet stopped here, they went to Belle Isle and Middleton.'

'I suppose you could say this place is like a village—a deserted village. They've started bringing in people from outside of Leeds and there's a lot of students here too. A lot of the flats are still empty.'

Of course the pub and the garages

have not been built. There are about half a dozen shops on Leek Street estate. The phone boxes are a good walk away and the post office may be knocked down.

To walk round Leek Street for most of the year or most of the day is like walking round a ghost town. Rows of doors each with their spy holes. Dark gloomy passages where a number of women have been attacked. Garbage chutes situated outside people's front doors.

Everywhere a dullness and greyness that reflects the nearby factories of the last century. No wonder people don't want to live there.

Leek Street stands as Leeds' second monument to criminally-bad planning. The occupants have responded to it by the earliest possible summoning of the removal van.

It is time that the people of Leeds and other cities said no more monstrosities like Quarry Hill or Leek Street. Councils must put an end to these blots on the housing landscape.

For once a step into the past must be taken. Give every family a house and make estates places fit for working people to live in.

## Fighting with the fungus

THE ONLY WAY Stanley Pratt, who lives in the notorious Ellor Street flats in Salford, Lancs, could get the fungus out of his council flat was by going on rent strike.

Last October he refused to pay his rent until something was done about condensation in his flat which had caused a fungus all over his ceilings and walls.

Housing officials looking into Mr Pratt's case discovered at least four like it in the block of flats. 'In one flat,' the City's Deputy Housing Manager told the local paper, 'we practically tore the ceilings down and some of the walls.'

Lime Court was built by Seddons, a local building firm, in 1967. Seddons also built Apple Tree Court across the way in 1971. Mr and Mrs Lillian

Edgar moved into a flat there when the flats were opened.

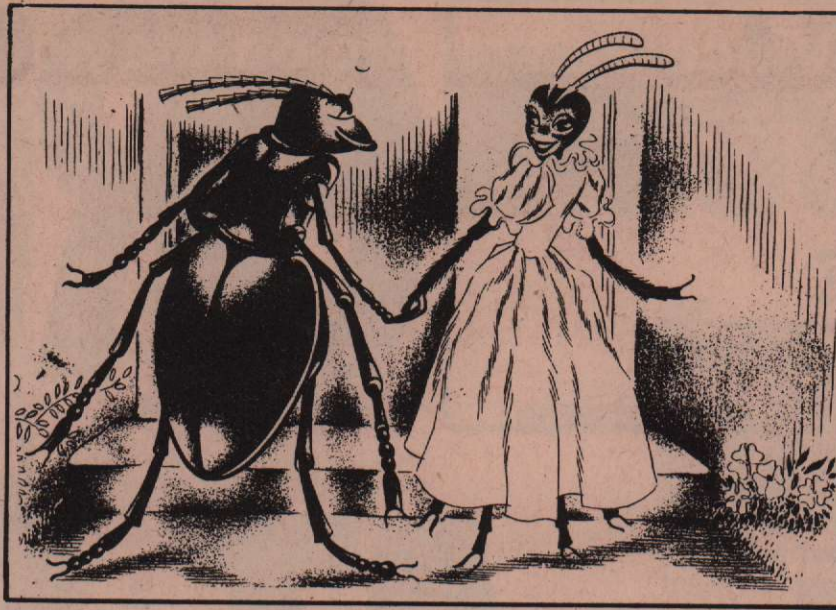
One night they woke up coughing. They turned their mattress over and found it was covered with green fungus.

The fungus also covered their walls and ceilings.

As for Mrs Edgar's larder, 'You can paddle in there,' she told the local paper. 'Even my plates have got fungus on them. I'm absolutely fed up with it.'

Mr Edgar is badly ill with rheumatism and spends most of the day in bed—on the floor.

A spokesman for Salford Housing Department said that the department had no responsibility for damage caused by condensation.



(Above) Black Ant marries Black Beetle: no mixing of the insect 'races'  
(Right) Neighbour: 'You could not tell what he was thinking.'



# THE BLACK AND WHITE WORLD OF SCHOOL BOOKS

by Audrey Kincaid

CHILDREN are not born racist or nationalist. Such attitudes are learnt.

Some of this learning occurs in schools, crudely in geography and history but more subtly in early education when they are learning to read.

What sort of world does the school reader present to the seven, eight or nine years-old child? It is a middle-class world without industrial workers except for the occasional oddity like Jack Pook in Macmillan's The Yellow Book Gay Way series.

Blacks and foreigners appear as comic, curious, stupid or sub-human characters—sub-human in that a close link is made between them and animals. Thus the Maoris learnt to carve from the fish of the sea and robins were given red breasts by the Red Indians.

Animal tales can contain racist themes. A play entitled 'A Happy Family' from book two of Harrap's New Dramatic Readers is apparently about two white snails. But look at this extract.

MOTHER SNAIL: It is a pity that you and I are the only white snails left. I wish I knew what had happened to the rest of our race.

FATHER SNAIL: They were boiled black. [Then referring to their adopted son:] It's a pity that he's not white like us. How will we find a mate when there are no others of our race here? Of course there may be black snails no doubt, black snails without houses, but they are so vulgar.

## REJECTS

An 'inferior' snail is eventually found for their adopted son.

That black must marry black re-occurs as a theme in the story of 'The Clean Little Ant' (The Violet Book, Gay Way series). Black Ant, a perfect housekeeper, takes 17 pages to find a suitable mate.

She rejects a range of technicolored suitors including a white tom cat, but finally she accepts the overtures of a dumb black beetle.

The Violet Book stories were first published in 1953, 1954, 1956, 1959 and 1961. As a school reader it was a best seller.

Racism isn't confined to animal tales. Sometimes it's more crude. Perhaps your nine years-old has reached book one of the Good Company series (first published by Johnson and Bacon in 1966 and written by A Elliott-Cannon). Along with the stories of Percy the Penguin, Shep the Sheepdog and Mick the Monkey he may be reading the one entitled 'Neighbour' (the black aboriginal).

Here is an outline of the story. Neighbour, in chains with three other blacks, is being led to prison by Mr Johns a policeman. They have been arrested for stealing food from a farmer.

The white man's law said they must be punished. The tribes must be shown that white men did not like this kind of thing. Neighbour did not understand it and neither did his friends. They did not know about right and wrong in quite the same way as the white men.'

Having dealt with their lack of moral standards, the story takes up the question of intelligence.

'When you looked at Neighbour's face you could not tell what he was thinking. He had a very black face and a rather flat nose and thick black hair. When you looked into his eyes you could not tell what he thought. But he was thinking all the same.'

Then comes the theme of the blacks' affinity to animals. The party arrive at a river full of crocodiles. This presents no problem to the blacks as 'They were used to swimming rivers.'

But an ugly, violent scene occurs when the policeman attempts to cross on his horse. The horse is called Judy and both its name and the description of its fears in the water give it an almost human personality.

Even though 'Mr Johns had trusted Judy,' the horse panics.

Mr Johns falls off and gets his head kicked, 'Three of the black men stood and did nothing' but Neighbour jumps in and saves the policeman.

'As a reward Neighbour was sent back . . . to his wife and children.' Thus the good, police-loving black man is left in peace and also given a medal for bravery.

The story has a final twist. 'During the Second World War another police-

man told how a black man called Nipper had been very brave . . . he had saved the lives of at least 3 people.

'The policeman thought that Nipper ought to have a medal. The it turned out that Nipper already had a medal. Nipper was really Neighbour. He was still saving lives.'

This contorted ending does two things. By fixing the time it becomes a true story for children. It also hastens to correct a possible impression that bravery and unselfishness are black characteristics by stressing that Neighbour was an isolated case.

It is difficult to say how common racist stories are in school readers. Junior school teachers lent me 10 books purely on the basis that they were used in their schools.

The extracts quoted come from four of these books though the generalisations were based on all of them.

When teachers have classes of 30 or more children and schools are often too short of books to allow them to be taken home and neither teachers nor parents may be aware of their contents.

Racist pornography written for the sole attention of young children is far more obscene than anything Lord Longford or Mary Whitehouse can dig out.

*Christopher Columbus landed first in the New World . . . and after praising God enquired urgently for gold. The natives, Red Indians, were peaceable and friendly and directed him to Haiti . . . He sailed to Haiti.*  
*The Spaniards, the most advanced Europeans of their day introduced Christianity, forced labour in mines, murder, rape, bloodhounds, strange diseases, and artificial famine. There was also slave labour. The pillage of Africa.*

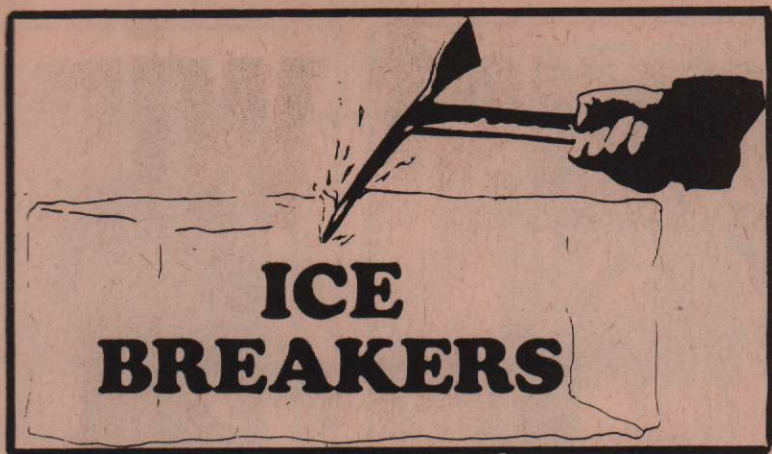
*In 1791 the slaves of San Domingo revolted, the struggle lasted 12 years. The slaves defeated in turn the local armed forces, a British force of about 60,000 men and a French expedition of similar size.*

*The revolt is the only successful slave revolt in history. It is this revolt that C L R James deals with in his magnificent book, The Black Jacobins.*

75p plus 5p postage  
IS Books  
6 Cottons Gdns, London E2 8DN







# CRUNCH

# AT FORD

TWO YEARS AGO Ford workers blasted the first hole through Tory wage policy.

Just as the men and women of Ford got to work, the Tories were flushed with enthusiasm at driving the postal workers to defeat. But within a matter of weeks the grins on big business faces were gone.

The unity and determination of Ford manual workers in their strike totally transformed the situation. The Ford empire was losing its market share to other British and international rivals. Carefully projected profits were wiped out. There was no one producing the goods.

It was time to call the fire brigade—Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon—who contrived a settlement to the strike and imposed it on their members.

They ordered a company-administered secret ballot to vote on a new offer—around £8 over two years, well short of the parity with Midlands car wages that Ford workers were within an ace of winning.

Now once again the men and women of Ford are back at the starting gate. They are engaged in a bitter struggle to make sure that Ford and the Tories do not again drive down their living standards and toughen the ruthless regime of exploitation which results from production for profit.

Since 1971 the law of the land has joined forces with government and employers. Those doormen for big business, the Tories, have enacted a Counter Inflation Bill which Henry Ford and his workers must obey.

## Copped

But Ford has been having a fine time with the law of the land for years. In April last year, while Ford workers were in the middle of an economic standstill enforced by the 1971 pay deal, the Tory budget reduced purchase tax on cars by 5 per cent.

But this 5 per cent reduction was not translated into lower price levels, and Ford copped the equivalent of a 4 per cent increase.

And even before Ford gave this particular display of deep concern at inflation, there was another. Immediately after the settlement of the 1971 dispute, Ford hoisted its prices by nearly 7 per cent, pleading that this was the inevitable result of the strike.

In fact Ford was aware of and



THE FIRE BRIGADE: Jones and Scanlon with their US counterpart Leonard Woodcock

anticipating the forthcoming CBI 'declaration of intent'. In July Ford put its name to this agreement to limit price increases over the next 12 months to 5 per cent.

Like many others it signed after lifting its prices. And as soon as this arrangement—extended for an extra six months—came to an end in November last year, Ford raised its prices by another 5 per cent. By sheer coincidence they did so on the day before the freeze was announced.

All in all the company boosted prices by 20 per cent in as many

months. And such was the expanding demand for its British-produced cars and components at home and abroad, plus the immense increases in productivity forced out of the workforce over the same period, that the company would have made record profits without any price increases at all. Indeed it should have been able to reduce its prices but, desperate to inflate already massive profits, Ford refrained from doing so.

For the past two years Ford has never known such a bonanza. From a £30 million loss in 1971 it has

recovered to an estimated profit of £60 million-plus for 1972.

Ford will do at least as well again in 1973. All this is a direct result of the expanding car market, the incredible productivity increases in its plants and the two year control of wages formulated in the last agreement.

Last year Ford management set almost insanely high production targets on, for example, the Cortina and Cortina estate production lines in Dagenham. And it has been getting production very near those targets. It has done the same in the Leamington foundry, without even replacing workers who have left.

## Avoids

Clearly there is no better time for Ford workers to take the company for every single pound they can extract. This is recognised by the same giant unions who are pussy-footing, twisting and turning and wringing hands over what to do about actually opposing the so-called freeze.

The current Ford claim, published by the TGWU, carefully avoids putting a figure on wage demands. But union leaders had a figure of £10 a week in mind.

It is a measure of the devastating attacks on working-class living standards brought about by the present crisis of British capitalism that the value of the 30 per cent rises Ford workers won in 1971 has almost entirely disappeared thanks to increases in the cost of living.

## Ruthless

And if this alone was not reason enough to fight the claim all the way to success, Ford workers are still fantastically poorly paid compared to the rates other car workers have extracted from much less profitable firms. Ford has reaped the profits from ruthless measured day work for longer than any other British car manufacturer.

And still in 1973 the company is paying something like £10 a week less

than British Leyland or Chrysler. The Ford worker only approaches these rates by putting in massive amounts of anti-social overtime.

But Ford workers have a responsibility that extends far beyond themselves. In 1971 they began the demolition job which cleared a way through Tory policy for millions of other workers. They can do so again.

## Build

By successfully fighting their struggle—repelling the attentions of the trade union fire brigade and the magistrates courts of the Tory Counter Inflation Act—they can open up new horizons for the lower paid.

By seeking the practical solidarity the trade union leaders are so incapable of forging the men and women of Ford can help to build a movement that will really see to other people's needs, particularly those of even lesser paid workers.

Ford workers can spearhead a united battle that could melt not just the freeze but the government behind it, too.



THE FIRE BRIGADE

# Health hazard on the line...

THE CAR WORKERS' UNION has accused Ford Foundry of greedy creature comforts, noise, pollution and health hazards.

Ford bosses are accused of cutting corners as a show piece for Europe for meeting schedules. Ford workers are in prison, but overtime, earned and white alike, is more than the appalling conditions of other industries.

Pollution is a major health hazard. A worker is currently taking legal action for damage to his health from regularly left over paint. Air pollution is a major health hazard. It happens to children, less identifiable on the body of a worker.

Inside the plant literally every worker made sick by the pollution. The plant are put on a list of health hazards.

## Die

Since their little or no health care, Management. Janitors are on strike. They don't pick up. More fumes coming back.

Did you miss the January International Socialism?

Demand for the new-style monthly journal was high—and it was sold out one week after publication.

All the more reason for ordering the February issue now or better still taking out an annual subscription.

Articles include:

Margaret Renn: **Equal Pay**

Colin Barker: **Strike Statistics**

Nigel Harris: **China since Lin Piao**

Vic Richards: **the Brazilian left**

Reg Groves: **Revolutionaries in the 1930s**

Roger Rosewell: **The Seamen**

plus reviews on Rosa Luxemburg, poverty, housing, French Communists

International Socialism journal, 6 Cottons

Gardens, London E2 8DN

Annual subscription £2.10 (12 issues)

## International Socialism 55

Equal Pay/China/Incomes Policy/Brazil/Seamen February 1973 15p







STRIKERS: strike vote at Dagenham, 1971

# 'We must win —for all workers'

Tony Barrow, TGWU steward machine section, Ford Foundry Leamington:

Any law which strikes against the interests of the people must be disobeyed. Direct action against such laws and those who inspire them is 100 per cent justifiable.

Such freedom as exists in this country and elsewhere did not fall out of the sky via the Houses of Parliament. It was fought for and won against the law by working people.

We must be prepared to select those among our ranks to take the full consequences of organising "unlawful" strikes. And we must defend them if they are attacked.

We must win. If we fail, then we fail not only for 50,000 car workers but for railwaymen, miners and dockers, for the whole working class. We must take the lead to crush this bloody government.



John Aitken, maintenance electricians shop steward, Dagenham.

If fairness had anything to do with it, with their soaring profits and massive sales, Ford would concede £10 a week, four weeks' holiday and the 35-hour working week.

Workers feel very remote from the company, frustrated and angry. There have been virtually no disputes for 12 months, an economic freeze for two years, a massive increase in productivity and fantastic profits.

You just can't tolerate a situation when someone then comes along and says: "Sorry lads there's nothing in return, the country's in dead trouble." People are starting to think about the whole thing, this whole desperate system of society.

## FORD MILITANTS TALKING



COLIN BEADLE: Dithering leaders



TONY BARROW: Crush this government

Everybody knows that this is the time to hit Ford. But people do falter on the "law of the land" and "greedy workers" stuff. People fear that the government could keep us out for months and send us back defeated. We know that the TUC is a shower and we know that we must not be taken in isolation.



Colin Beadle, TGWU shop steward, wheel and tyre assembly section, PTA plant Dagenham.

With this freeze, thousands of other workers are watching us, looking for a lead. Of course many of the men are in awe of the law of the land, because great amounts of time and energy have been spent on bending workers' minds, getting us to accept

dozens of rules, regulations and laws which on examination are blatantly against our interests.

This is where the dithering of the union leaders comes in. They are so tied to the present set up, they fail to give the members any lead in educating them for the struggle.

Of course this is a rich man's law and of course it can and must be broken. The only way you ever win anything is by action.

With the state inevitably ranged against us in all our battles, and with almost every plant in the industry on measured day work, we need to develop a national shop stewards movement in the industry. We also need to go out and win support like the miners and dockers. We do not need to be isolated and if we do not let ourselves be, we will win.

WORKERS of the Leamington are greedy for and lousy con-

view the plant, the best in production its workers it is a where black can, with massive something more ing rates paid in and plants.

so bad that one ntly threatening or compensation his car which he in the Ford car tion is not con- park but what est and lungs is than corrosion a car.

ant there is filth here. Only men working in the as janitors.

early

ckness stays with often absent and eaning is done. ould not care less. ly socially useful, duce profits.

snthan ever are into the plant



HENRY FORD: Polluted showpiece

tenance is regarded as acceptable. Ear protection is refused.

The truth of the matter is that the 'greedy car worker' propaganda is a gigantic lie. Car workers are the victims of the most ruthless and intensive system of exploitation of any industry.

If profit levels are chosen to make a real comparison, car workers are very lowly paid. In cars the scale of investment is so high and the trade cycle so severe that when demand is slack unit labour costs must be reduced.

Conversely when demand is high production must be got at any cost. Either way, management is in a constant search to make the worker more perfectly the servant of the machine.

In Ford there is more shift working than in any other firm or industry in Britain. Overtime is massive.

### Terrible toll

Shift working and overtime both stunt minds and bodies, so too does the awful monotony of the job. Even with an extra £20 a week Ford workers would have small recompense for the terrible toll of sleeplessness, difficulty in eating, conducting personal relationships and threats to mental health that this variety

of production for profit levies on its workforce.

All this is the background which makes the shorter working year aspect of the Ford demands so vital. The 35-hour week and four weeks' annual holidays are essential and socially necessary demands.

### Reaped harvest

They would do more to better the health of the Ford workers than a thousand wonder drugs. And they are gains that cannot be eaten away by inflation.

The word 'mutuality' is a strange one. It receives scant attention in the claim. It has been jettisoned before by the unions at Ford.

Ford has reaped the unrestricted harvest of the unrestricted right to speed up the line and further reduce manning levels for far too long.

To insist that Ford stewards can as of right mutually control line speeds and all the other aspects of the production process would be another massive gain.

To win it would mean that Ford workers could start on the road towards real workers' control and socialisation of the car industry whose very purpose and nature threatens more than those who work within its plants.

'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

Works include:  
LABOUR AND EASTER WEEK  
LABOUR IN IRELAND  
SOCIALISM AND NATIONALISM  
THE WORKERS' REPUBLIC  
—each £1.05 plus 5p post and packing

RECONQUEST OF IRELAND  
—18p plus 3p postage

LABOUR IN IRISH HISTORY  
—25p plus 3p postage

IS BOOKS 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN



# REVIEW

## BOOKS

# AN EQUAL FIGHT FOR EQUAL RIGHTS

**THE BODY POLITIC: WOMEN'S LIBERATION IN BRITAIN 1969-1972, Compiled by Micheline Wandor, Stage One, 60p.**

MOST ACCOUNTS tracing the history of the Women's Liberation Movement in Britain start with the strike of the Ford women machinists in 1968.

This strike was over the low grading of women's work despite the obvious skill involved. Out of it came the National Joint Action Committee for Women's Equal Rights, which organised a demonstration of trade union women for equal pay in May 1969.

Sheila Rowbotham, in one contribution to this book, cites the campaign of the Hull trawlermen's wives as an influence on the early stages of the movement.

But despite its working-class influences, the movement's appeal and consequent membership became largely, though not entirely, middle-class, and the small workshop groups are made up of mainly young professional women and the wives of professional men.

It is clear from reading this book that Women's Liberation is not an organisation with a single 'line' but is what it has always claimed to be, an umbrella movement of many different attitudes and analyses. Unlike the American Women's Liberation anthologies, *The Body Politic* contains no vitriolic attacks on marxist women.

This is not to say that there have been no women from the left groups in the movement, nor that they have not attempted to apply a marxist analysis to the position of women in our society. In fact women from left groups, including the International Socialists, were in the movement from the start, but unlike American Women's Liberation, the British movement cannot be seen as a reaction of women in left groups to the attitudes of their male comrades.

Rather, as Sheila Rowbotham points out, it was the initiative of women trade unionists in the origins

by Carol Sykes

of the movement that allowed women in left groups to raise the woman question again in marxist circles.

It is a platitude on the left that Women's Liberation is middle-class, and that it has so far failed in its attempts to involve working-class women, despite the efforts of marxist women and the constant claim of women in the movement that this is necessary.

But it is equally impossible to deny the reciprocal effect that the mere existence of the movement has had on the ideas of all women and men in Britain.

## FORGOTTEN

If the activities and campaigns of Women's Liberation around the four demands—for equal pay, equal education and job opportunities, 24-hour nurseries and free contraception and abortion on demand—are ineffective in themselves, they have raised awareness of the ways women are oppressed in capitalist society.

Although Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky did not doubt that women had to be involved in the struggle for socialism in their own right, the woman question has been largely forgotten in the past 50 years. An analysis of women's role in declining



Women march for equal pay—a recent Women's Liberation Movement demonstration

capitalism has not been developed.

It was left to the radical feminists in the movement to attempt this. The resulting theory that women's oppression stems from their biology and that women cannot be liberated except by 'extra-uterine reproduction' must be countered by an understanding of the prominent position of women in primitive societies in which property did not exist.

Feminism is not to be attacked on a purely theoretical level. It is necessary to involve working women in politics, in their unions and on their estates.

For anyone (and they are mainly blokes) who believes the women's movement to be a sterile monolith of middle-class feminists engaged in continuous 'talk sessions', or for those who claim the movement is dead, *The Body Politic* may make enlightening reading.

It is not entirely representative of the writings and activities of the movement and it is a pity that documents to conferences were not included, to give an idea of the debates which affected the development of the movement.

But it does include interesting articles and statistics on women and the unions, black women in the labour force and women in labour history.

# Where Agnew is master of sewers

**WITHOUT MARX OR JESUS, by Jean-Francois Revel, Paladin, 50p.**

**FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS, by Hunter Thompson, Paladin, 40p.**

THE FIRST of these books is sub-titled 'The New American Revolution has begun'. Unfortunately the author doesn't tell us what kind of revolution he means, where it has come from, or where it is going.

He is more concerned with the cultural and intellectual climate within France than with the revolutionary forces there are now in the USA.

In a rather indulgent afterword Mary McCarthy explains that Revel is an exploder of myths, a puckish scribbler, using his own peculiar concept of America to criticise the intellectual and political paralysis prevalent in French society. She praises him as a pamphleteer, a kind of 20th-century Swift, describing America instead of Lilliput.

This semi-literary justification seems inadequate, for, in translation, he has the most tedious of styles except when dealing specifically with the USA. There is a deceptive trendiness about the book which conceals an essentially conservative outlook. Revel is very much a part of the intellectual elite that he attacks, his perspective is middle-class, and he rejects tradition in an entirely traditional way.

## Rubbish

One feels that he would be happiest making safe but erudite speeches at Girardin clubs in the early 1790s. His politics, like his writing, are depressingly out of time.

The book is partly redeemed by its clever exposure of the mindless anti-Americanism that is commonly found in Europe, and all too frequently on the left. The Vietnamese make a clear distinction between that which is good and that which is bad in American society. Europeans, who have suffered infinitely less in the past 20 years, should be able to do the same.

Unlike *Without Marx or Jesus*, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* is not written by an observer. Hunter Thompson is down there, rooting around in the psychic rubbish-heap of the Middle American mind. He lacks Revel's sophistication but makes up for it in drive and an ability to ride the nightmare through to the very end.

He has written an intense, paranoid, hallucinated book that is repelling and fascinating at one and the same time.

Las Vegas is a garish, vicious town where 'the shark ethic prevails—eat the wounded'. It's the kind of resort where Nixon's biggest financial backers and Mafia capos would take a holiday. 'If Charles Manson checked into the Sahara Hotel tomorrow, nobody would hassle him as long as he tipped big.'

With Nixon on television and the Battle Hymn of Lieutenant Calley on the radio, Thompson uses every kind of drug, psychedelic and otherwise, to evade the realities of the city. Vegas becomes a microcosm of America in 1971, with Nixon as mayor and Agnew as master of sewers.

## Wave

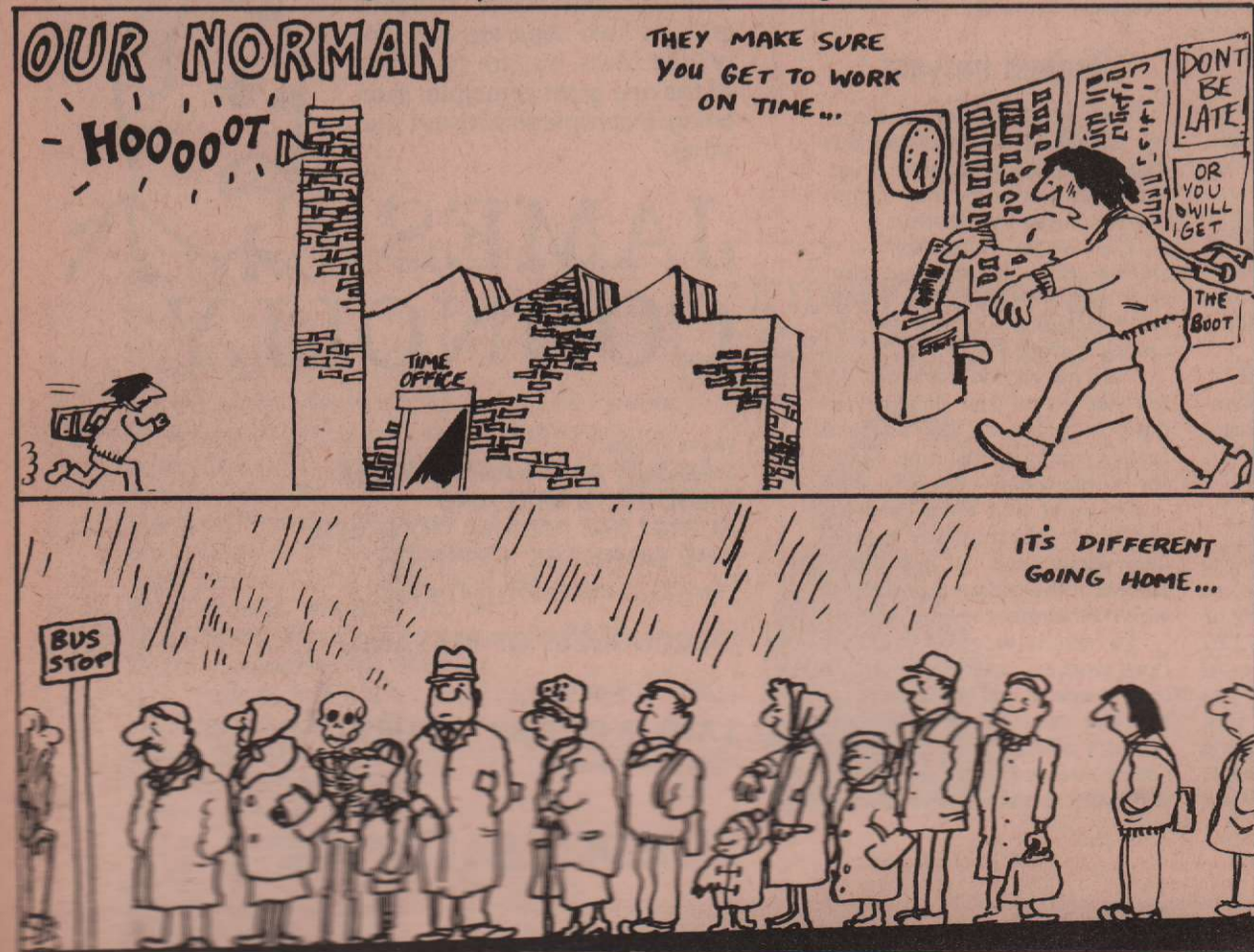
In a particularly perceptive passage Thompson traces the decline of the underground culture. He remembers the naive optimism of the mid-1960s. 'Our energy would simply prevail. There was no point in fighting—on our side or theirs. We had all the momentum; we were riding the crest of a high and beautiful wave... Now, less than five years later, you can go up on a steep hill in Las Vegas and look West, and with the right kind of eyes you can almost see the high-water mark—that place where the wave finally broke and rolled back.'

Thompson's disgust with the Nixons and the Joe Fraziers is matched by his despair at the decline of the opposition.

Some revolutionaries may be tempted to smirk at the failure of 'hippie' to cope with 'the grim, meat-hook realities of life', but before they do so, they should consider something of which even Revel is aware. The climate of opinion and the cultural attitudes that evolved in the USA opened up whole areas of discussion on the left. The thinking of an entire generation has been affected. Stock attitudes to blacks, women, homosexuals, and even the way we use our resources, have been challenged.

Politics has been brought into the home, the kitchen and the bed, as well as into the factory, because, quite simply, politics is not only about power but about how people live.

Roger Lewis





# THE TWO LAWS OF CENSORSHIP

Nigel Fountain on the TV bosses' tightening up

THEY don't go on about earthquakes too much in Russia, whose rulers, in their wisdom, consider that such information might lead to dismay among the population, grumbings that the system isn't all it's cracked up to be.

In South Africa and Ireland academics get paid large sums of money to read subversive books such as *Black Beauty* and the novels of Edna O'Brien in order to conclude that no one else should read these books at all, whether paid or not.

We don't do things like that in Britain. We've got a free press, television, parliament. Should an earthquake erupt under some unlucky reader of *Black Beauty* then there can be no doubt that the victim will receive massive coverage in the

popular press and quite likely serialise his or her sexual exploits in the *News of the World* for a large fee.

Censorship in this country is a far more subtle thing. It comes down to two techniques, both of which are becoming more popular.

**LAW ONE:** If you're going to expose anything, expose a wife-beater, or a man selling igloos to mentally retarded Arabs. It's really shocking and nobody gives a damn one way or another. Under no circumstances conclusively prove that the igloo seller is the Home Secretary.

**LAW TWO:** Nobble the exposé beforehand. Put blinkers over his eyes and wrap him in sufficient cotton wool to ensure that he won't be able to differentiate between an igloo and the Marrakesh Hilton.

Law One is magnificently demonstrated by the Granada World in Action programme *The Friends and Influence of John L Poulson*. The film was not banned on legal grounds—the lawyers of both Granada and the Independent Broadcasting Authority had cleared it. The issue was one of 'policy'.

## BANNED

Accusations were made that it was 'trial by TV', but trial of whom? There is no chance of court proceedings in the next 18 months. There were worries about 'contempt', but Poulson is at a bankruptcy proceeding, not a criminal court.

To the IBA, which banned the programme, the crucial point was

that the case raised the whole question of the conduct of public affairs—and that two members of the Authority itself had clear links with the wretched architect.

What now worries the people working in independent television is just how far they can go in future, now this formidable barrier to investigative journalism has been erected.

The IBA has created a precedent by which any unit which probes any sensitive nerve of public life can be immediately anaesthetised.

It conforms to a pattern. Last week I dealt with *This Week's* investigations into a children's home—and the difficulty of getting a film unit into one. Just try to get permission to film in jail, or borstal, or any area where the state exerts direct power.

Here's an example of how Law Two works. Recently I interviewed a man who had been prominent in the BBC drama series field in the mid-1960s. Because he wishes to go on eating over the next few years I have withheld his name. Over the years he had seen the layers of cotton wool forming, and lost his early optimism.

I went into TV because I thought it was the medium of the people—the important thing was to try to transform it. There was a liberal atmosphere within the BBC which allowed certain criticism of society. Ten years ago Stuart Hood, the controller, would defend our rights to make programmes. This is now an attitude very few BBC officials cling to, certainly not the people who actually control programmes.

## FORCED

This is where the entire climate of the corporation has changed. There was a directive which went round all light entertainment producers deploring the use of bad language, particularly the way that 'bloody' was used without any justification.

The only programme using it "legitimately" was *Till Death Us Do Part*, because everyone knew Garnett was a "foul-mouthed old man" and this helped "alienate the audience from him". That's a minimal thing—but if it isn't quasi-political censorship I don't know what is.

Ten years ago we had little interference, without forced alterations or changes in the script. The feeling was that I, as writer, director, or both, knew what I was doing, knew better than they did, and should be allowed to get on with it. If the programme was going—then they'd back it.

That's all going—the director is now a sort of functionary within an enormously top-heavy organisation including director of drama, head of plays and the head of series.

That person, the newly-honoured Andrew Osborne, has issued a statement through the Writers' Guild announcing that he isn't interested in politics, or political subjects, that the BBC wants "good family entertainment". Everything is checked before it's commissioned, when it's written, re-written, through rehearsals, through carefully choosing the director.

## CHANGED

Then of course the modern technology helps. It's recorded on video, which makes it easy to edit and control.

When I started with the BBC there was no such thing as a producer in the sense of a guy who sits and worries about the programme, supervising it. As a director you did it yourself, except in a series where you need someone to integrate all the episodes. In plays there was no producer.

The independence, the liberal idea of the creator, has changed. The director is now the object of the apparatus, someone doing a job, often not able to do the plays he

wants. I was asked to do certain plays—and could say no if I didn't feel for a subject, and this was accepted. Say no now and that's it—you get sacked, or shifted.

The changes took place as a reaction to the two years of comparative freedom between 1962 and 1964, the time of *That Was The Week*. It ties in with when the BBC became competitive in a big way, trying to overhaul ITV in the ratings.

I don't look back on the liberal period as a golden age. I can see why it existed, and why it went. It was a phase in the development of capitalism, a time when the rulers of this country had some sense of security and could tolerate dissidents. When they realised that dissidence meant challenging the structure of society, being overly critical of sacred cows, then it changed.

## POSTURE

A backlash has been whipped up in the community as a justification for political control. That's a process which has gone on ever since. It's been more intense over the past three years, but has accelerated steadily over the past eight.

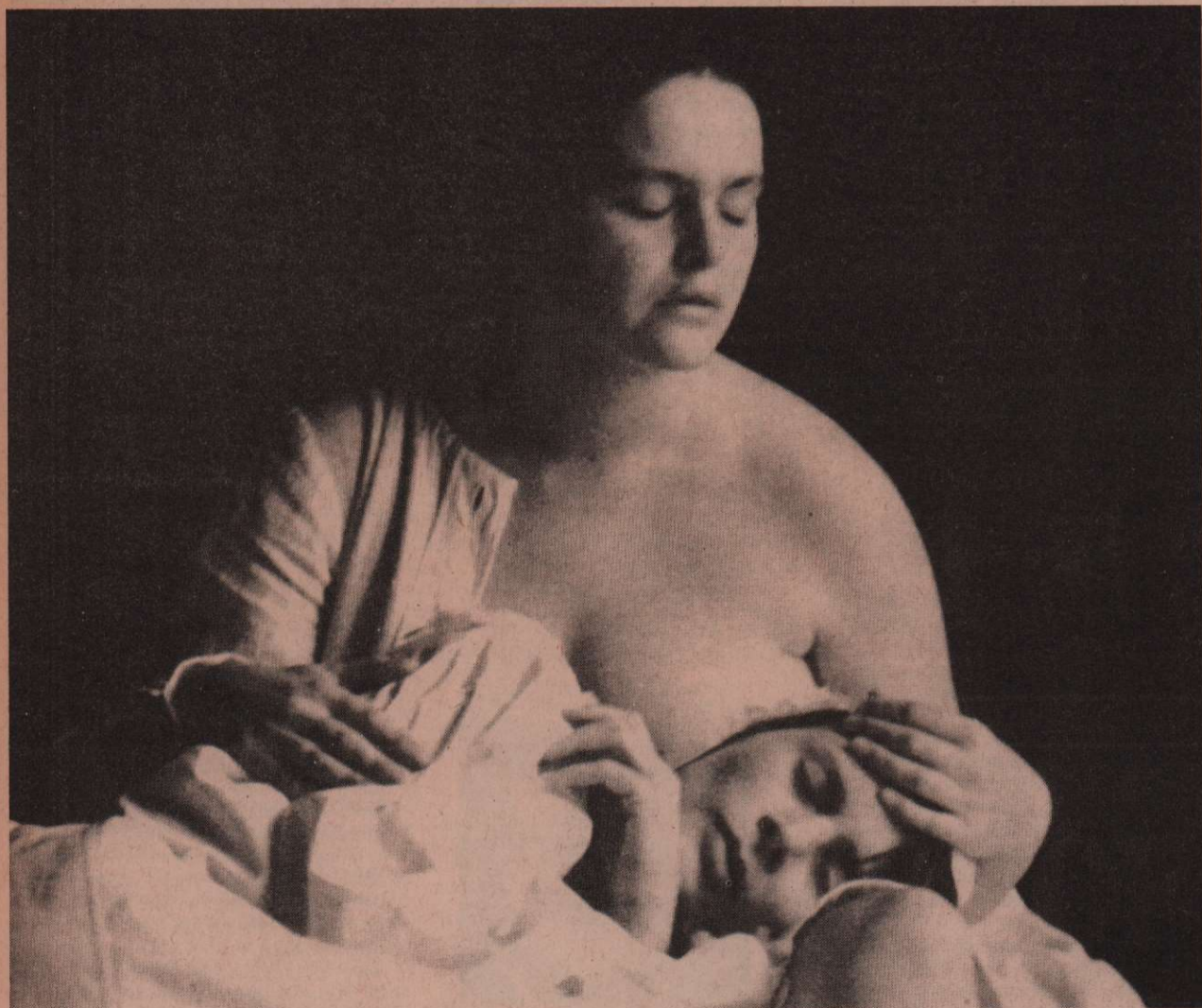
I thought it might have been possible to go on fighting, to become a group producer, and try to build a base, rather like Tony Garnett (of *Cathy Come Home* and *The Big Flame*) has managed through his Kestral Films.

Why do the BBC tolerate people like Garnett? Well there have to be safety valves, specifically *Play for Today* and *Kestral Films*. I think the corporation has got designated areas where it lets things happen, to keep up a quasi-liberal posture, so that it can control everything else more rigidly.

Another theory is that *Play for Today* and *Garnett* succeed. The powers-that-be have a great respect for success, big audiences, big reaction—that's good for the corporation.

It's a bit of both, I suppose, a contradiction which runs all through this society.

That's drama. But the same story can be told in current affairs, news—watch out for the weather forecast.



The servant Anna comforts the dying Agnes—a scene from Ingmar Bergman's latest film

# HOLDING THE MIRROR UP TO A DYING CLASS

INTERNATIONALLY acclaimed Swedish film director Ingmar Bergman (he has been featured on the cover of *Time* magazine) continues his pre-occupation with the themes of boredom, suffering and death in his latest, prize-winning film *Cries and Whispers*, now showing at the Curzon cinema in London's Mayfair.

Now that is probably saying enough for most readers, but in view of the esteem in which he, and his select company, are held by our cultural guardians, (arriving late, I was icily reprimanded by the manager, who took out a large schoolmaster's pocket watch and informed me, with a withering look, that I had already missed 12 minutes of the film) I would like to take the analysis further.

In this film, Bergman's bleak, Protestant vision (the son of a pastor, he was punished as a child by being locked in a cupboard) is mitigated visually by the use of colour, a device he has used only once before in his long career, and by music by Bach and Chopin.

The story concerns the slow and harrowing death of Agnes, observed by her sisters, Karin and Maria, and tended by the saintly Anna, the servant whose simple devotion is rewarded by the sack immediately after Agnes' death. 'She's a strong, healthy woman, she'll have no

difficulty finding work.'

It is set, at the turn of the century, in Agnes' stately country manor. This sense of the past is further compounded by a series of long flashbacks, representing the sisters' memories. Indeed what pleasure might have existed is felt only in retrospect (in bourgeois society, the past dominates the present) and this yearning sense of loss is accentuated by the use of Chopin's most sentimental mazurka.

## Hideous

Looking at those enormous rooms, long corridors and expansive grounds, it seems hardly surprising that the privileged inhabitants felt emotionally isolated. Sheltered from the outside world, even being undressed by a servant, they turn further inward, and attempt to fill the vacuum with formalism and ritual, the social graces.

Bergman holds up the mirror to this class, its studied indifference, and the sordid reality of the bourgeois marriage contract. Karin, in a hideous protest against her old goat of a husband, mutilates her vagina with a broken wine glass, and then presents herself in his bed, spreadeagled, with an obscene bloodstained leer.

The younger sister, Maria, seduced the family doctor, forcing her weak and dandyish husband to a pathetically ineffectual suicide attempt with a paper-

knife, which only increased her disgust towards him.

Clearly all is not well in this household, which could be seen as a symbol of a class without a future. At Agnes' death-bed, the priest speaks of her privilege in being called upon to bear such suffering on behalf of all, and asks her spirit to pray that God gives some comfort to those who must continue this 'wretched existence' here on this cruel earth. In the night, she is resurrected, her torment unabated, to the horror of her sisters. It is only in the arms of the servant Anna that her death becomes completed: symbolic again, perhaps, in terms of class.

In Bergman's vision, then, the exploited may triumph—but only in a Christian sense, by virtue of innocence and simple faith. He alludes to the meaning that solidarity and communion can give to existence, but remains deeply pessimistic about the outcome. Perhaps his punitive, Christian childhood, together with the rarefied world of 'art cinema' that he and his troupe have inhabited for so long, conspire to prevent him seeing a clear way forward.

Obsessive, doubting and pessimistic, he has made a career of passing on this state of mind—quite brilliantly indeed—to the tortured introspective world of middle-class intellectuals.

David Wild

### Reprints in Labour History

- All now available
- J T Murphy *The Workers' Committee* (1917)
- Introduction by James Hinton
- Tom Mann *8 Hour Working Day* (1886)
- Introduction by Richard Hyman
- William Gallacher & J R Campbell *Direct Action* (1919)
- Introduction by Alastair Hatcher
- South Wales Miners Unofficial Reform Committee *The Miners' Next Step* (1912)
- Introduction by Merfyn Jones

Special offer to SW readers  
15p + 4p postage each title





# 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.

## THERE ARE IS BRANCHES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

### SCOTLAND

Aberdeen  
Cumbernauld  
Dundee  
Edinburgh  
Dunfermline/  
Cowdenbeath  
Glanrothes/Kirkcaldy  
Glasgow N  
Glasgow S  
Greenock  
Stirling

### NORTH EAST

Bishop Auckland  
Durham  
Hartlepool  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
South Shields  
Spennymoor  
Sunderland  
Teesside E  
Teesside W

### NORTH

Barnsley  
Bradford  
Dewsbury  
Doncaster  
Grimsby  
Halifax  
Huddersfield  
Hull  
Leeds  
Pontefract/  
Knottingley  
Scarborough  
Selby  
Sheffield  
York

### EAST

Basildon  
Beccles  
Cambridge  
Chelmsford  
Colchester  
Harlow  
Ipswich  
Leiston  
Lowestoft  
Norwich  
Peterborough

### NORTH WEST

Barrow  
Blackburn  
Bolton  
Burnley  
Crewe  
Kirkby  
Lancaster  
Manchester  
Merseyside  
Oldham  
Preston  
Rochdale  
Salford  
St Helens  
Stoke  
Stockport  
Trafford  
Wigan  
Wrexham

### WALES and SOUTH WEST

Bath  
Bristol  
Cardiff  
Exeter  
Gloucester  
Llanelli  
Mid-Devon  
Neath  
Plymouth  
Swansea  
Swansea Valley

### GREATER LONDON and HOME COUNTIES

Bexley  
Camden  
Chertsey  
Croydon  
Ealing  
East London  
Enfield  
Fulham and Hammersmith  
Hackney and Islington  
Harlesden  
Harrow  
Hemel Hempstead  
High Wycombe  
Hornsey  
Houslow  
Ilford  
Kilburn  
Kingston  
Lambeth  
Lewisham  
Merton  
North Herts  
Paddington  
Reading  
St Albans  
Slough  
Tottenham  
Walthamstow  
Wandsworth  
Watford  
Woolwich

### MIDLANDS

Birmingham NE  
Birmingham S  
Coventry  
Derby  
Dudley  
Leamington and Warwick  
Leicester  
Loughborough  
Mid-Derbyshire  
Milton Keynes  
Northampton  
Nottingham  
Oxford  
Rugby  
Warley  
Wolverhampton

### SOUTH

Brighton  
Canterbury  
Crawley  
Eastbourne  
Guildford  
Portsmouth  
Southampton

# THE UNIONS

## BRIGINSHAW'S SECRET 'UNION'

AS FAR AS the members of the National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants are concerned, their organisation has always been implacably opposed to the Industrial Relations Act and all of its provisions.

The union's general secretary, Richard Briginshaw, has consistently appeared on the left of the TUC general council. He has called for the TUC to break off talks with the Tories until the Industrial Relations Act was suspended, later hinting that a general strike alone would bring them down.

He later insisted that the TUC boycott the Downing Street talks until the repressive freeze legislation is set aside.

At the March 1971 special TUC conference to discuss opposition to the then Industrial Relations Bill, the NATSOPA delegation naturally cast its votes in support of the successful TUC general council proposition strongly advising unions not to register and outlining an overall policy of non-co-operation with the institutions the legislation would set up.

As the April 1971 issue of the NATSOPA Journal proudly reported: 'Affiliated unions shall be strongly advised not to become registered under the Act and before any union decides to apply to be entered on the provisional register, or to take any steps to remain on the provisional register, or thereafter to seek full registration, it shall inform the General Council of its reasons for doing so, and give the General Council the opportunity to express a view ...'

## SPEECHES

At the annual congress at Blackpool in September of that year, the NATSOPA delegation voted with the engineering and transport unions to strengthen the TUC position from one of 'strongly advising' unions not to register to one of 'instructing' unions not to register. They won the day.

Two months later, NATSOPA took the appropriate steps to comply with the TUC instruction. On 5 November 1971, the union deregistered.

But throughout this whole period, the NATSOPA leadership had carefully been preparing what might generously be termed 'contingency plans'. Months before they took NATSOPA off the register, they set up another organisation which they registered under the old trade union Acts of 1871 and 1876 and which subsequently transferred to the provisional register set up by the Industrial Relations Act 1971.

All the time that they had been making militant speeches against the Act, the vicious class nature of the government and calling on their members to hold meetings and demonstrations to 'Kill the Bill', the NATSOPA leaders had been manoeuvring on the basis that the Bill would become an Act and the Act would be here to stay.

On 2 June 1971 at a secret meeting held in the NATSOPA offices in London's Borough Road, the full-time national officials of the union, its trustees and the general secretary's personal assistant set up the new organisation, the Association of Printing Technicians and Graphical and Service Personnel.

## NATSOPA complied with TUC rules—but leaders had contingency plans

by David East

This body went on to the old-style register on 19 July 1971 and on to the new Registrar's books on the same day as NATSOPA—1 October 1971. And while NATSOPA deregistered a month later, the Association of Printing Technicians and Graphical and Service Personnel did not. This secretly-registered body in fact came off the register three weeks ago, on Friday 26 January 1973.

The 'new' organisation had exactly the same head office as the deregistered NATSOPA and its membership covered precisely the same area. It had the same top official, Dick Briginshaw, known as treasurer or general secretary, who was to be in power until the beginning of 1976.

The first executive committee was composed entirely of full-time officers and employees of the union. Its members were Owen O'Brien, Arthur Davis, John Selby, Alf Skinner, Archie Smith and Joan Wing, the general secretary's personal assistant.

No mention of the operation was made in the annual report of the NATSOPA executive to the 1971 Governing Council of the union which



BRIGINSHAW: each-way bet

met less than one week after the new organisation was registered. And it appears that the matter was never raised even on the union executive.

In any case the union members were at no time consulted or informed. Their union journal led them to believe that they were part of an entirely unregistered union.

Nor was there any move to discuss the operation with the TUC general council (of which Dick Briginshaw was and is a member) in compliance with the original March TUC non-co-operation decision. And with this secret body on the register throughout 1972, NATSOPA's TUC delegates were placed in the peculiar situation of voting at the Brighton TUC in favour of the suspension from Congress of organisations like the National Union of Seamen, the National Union of Bank Employees and the National Graphical Association who were openly on the register.

One person who did know about the situation was the Registrar of Trade Unions and Employers Associations, the state appointee

charged with administering the registration aspects of the Tory Industrial Relations Act. Doubtless this gentleman passed his privileged information on to his Tory paymasters who would therefore be in a better position to evaluate rhetorical speeches about implacable opposition to and non-co-operation with the Industrial Relations Act.

No precise information can be gleaned about the exact relationship between the two bodies, the deregistered NATSOPA and the registered Association of Printing Technicians and Graphical and Media Personnel. A spokesman for the Registrar of Trade Unions and Employers' Associations told Socialist Worker that as far as his department was concerned these were two entirely different organisations.

## GAME

He could not say whether or not they had different memberships, nor explain how it came to pass that both bodies were accepted on to the provisional register at exactly the same time with the same office and the same top officials. 'Such matters are purely for the Registrar to decide and he does not have to make his reasoning public,' he added.

The most likely explanation for the NATSOPA leadership's shell game is that they thought they had found a nifty way of getting round the Industrial Relations Act's threat to an unregistered union's funds.

While this may seem an astute and clever thing to do, it can in no way be justified by an organisation with pretences to principled, outright, opposition to the Act. In any case why, if they thought they had found a sharp way round the Act, did the NATSOPA leaders operate so secretly? Why not cut the rest of the trade union movement in on the good news?

In any case such a move to protect funds in fact ensures a considerable measure of compliance with the Act because the funds cannot be released for the purposes for which they were originally intended—such as unhindered financing of strikes. Again such nifty moves have other consequences.

## QUESTIONS

They vest control of funds in very different hands from those indicated in the original rule book. And the registered organisation could be used as a base for applying for agency shops and the other so-called advantages offered in the Act.

The fact that NATSOPA's shell has been taken off the register as speedily and secretly as it went on is probably due to new legal advice and to the fact that a few people were beginning to ask questions. The style of the whole operation is, however, by no means unique.

The July 1972 issue of the union's journal carried a prominent article under the title 'City Strippers: the bare facts' which denounced asset stripper John Bentley for his 'rabid capitalism'. Three weeks ago the Sunday Times disclosed that NATSOPA was involved in bidding for a commercial radio contract in association with 'rabid capitalist' John Bentley.



## PUBLIC GET-TOGETHER

WE HAVE such an alliance as you refer to among public sector workers in operation in Lambeth and we hope to extend it by way of a meeting of all shop stewards in the public sector in this area.

At this meeting we hope to decide how best we can work together in order to defend ourselves against the calculated attempt by the present government to destroy the trade union movement. The ruling class and the Tory Party leaders are not fools but cunning,

calculating defenders of a vicious system of exploitation who have carefully worked out their every move to attack the working class.

The Industrial Relations Act, the Housing Finance Act and now the wage freeze legislation are all related in an endeavour to nullify any attempt by the working class to destroy this system of exploitation.—**HARRY HARPER, London SE11.**

# LETTERS

## Sliding into danger over pay

KEVIN WHITSTON (10 February) is wrong about his facts and his arguments are highly dubious. Wage increases have kept above the rise in the cost of living.

According to figures issued by the Department of Employment, hourly earnings during 1972 increased by 15.8 per cent. Consumer prices in the same period rose by 7.5 per cent. Let's accept that government statistics underestimate the rise in the bare essentials which working-class families are forced to buy. Therefore even if we add a further 5 per cent, wages still rose faster.

Nor should this be surprising. Of course trade unionists take as their starting point in any negotiations the increase in the cost of living. They then add on for comparability with other jobs, the profitability of the industry and a bit more to screw out of the employers' profits.

No trade unionist worth his salt would negotiate a claim for the same or less than the rise in the cost of living. The danger with Whitston's formulation is that it puts the working class unnecessarily on the defensive.

Of course the Ford worker should be fighting for £10 and not for a sliding scale. Of course the Teesside steelworkers should be fighting for parity with Wales and not for anything less. Of course clerical workers in my union, NATSOPA, should be fighting for comparable wages with machine men, not for a rising scale.

The more the advanced sectors of the class fight for and win, the more the lower paid fight for, the more it sets their horizons. Rather than hold back the fight of the advanced sections of the working class, their victory is our best hope.

The miners drove a coach and horses through the 'confrontation' stage of the Tory wage policy and their victory allowed other sectors to follow in their footsteps. A further defeat on that scale would really set the Tories back.

We should work for this possibility rather than be on the defensive. To argue for a sliding scale of wages in the trade union movement at present is to hand the right wing a tinsel-wrapped gift, which will then be used by the TUC to agree to a 'threshold agreement' with the Tories, bringing discredit on the revolution-

ary left.

The biggest flaw in Whitston's argument however is that it ideologically disarms the working class into accepting that they should be fighting to stand still by recouping for inflation, rather than go on the offensive and make encroachments into the bosses' profits. The working class at present is not defeated or demoralised. It has brought defeat upon defeat on the Tories.

With the right policies and leadership it still can smash the freeze and kick out the Tories. The prophets of gloom help only the right wing to hold us back.—**MIKE CAFFOOR, London E2.**

### Give us facts —not opinions

**SOCIALIST WORKER** is a good newspaper but it presents too few facts and too much comment. We readers pay our 5p to read a socialist version of the news. We have plenty of our own opinions and just need the facts to support them.—**W AYLAND, Briercliffe, Lancs.**

## Tenants

IT WAS with great disappointment that I read your last issue reporting 'Steward goes aloft in sites protest'. This report shows a complete failure of your paper to link up this struggle with the local tenants who are in desperate need of homes.

Three hundred tenants attended a public meeting at St John's Church Hall on site, on the same day as the steward went up the crane, at which they expressed their deep concern at the future of the World's End redevelopment scheme.

This meeting was organised by Hammersmith and Kensington Trades Council and adopted the following resolutions.

1. To call for a public inquiry.
2. The setting up of a joint worker-tenants action committee.
3. The meeting expressed full solidarity with steward John Fontaine's action.—**E P NEILSON, Secretary, Hammersmith and Kensington Trades Council.**

## THAT TV BLACKOUT —NEXT TIME A 'SHOW-IN'

HEARTY congratulations to the ACTT members who enforced a half hour blackout on ITV last week as a protest against the suppression of the Poulson film. This action by the ACTT makes it clear to all that the only people who can and will protect free speech and free inquiry are the organised workers.

Let us hope that this is only a beginning: that printworkers and journalists will take action similar to the ACTT when it is necessary, as it often will be.

Better still, perhaps the ACTT members will ask themselves: 'Who does Granada belong to anyway? To Sidney Bernstein who rakes in the money from our work, or to us who do the work?' And perhaps then they will go beyond a protest blackout (with no announcement that it was a protest, and the reason for it) and next time they will have a 'work in', and show the film themselves, with an announcement that the bosses have tried to suppress it.—**E DYER, London WC1.**

## Smith's barbarous policies

W ENDA's article on Rhodesia (27 January) explained extremely well the implications of Smith's panic move in closing the border with Zambia but there was another important measure which she failed to mention. This is Smith's introduction of the communal fine for communities (black or white) when one of their members has harboured freedom fighters or, in some way, aided so-called subversive activity.

Such a measure is nothing short of barbaric and it is interesting in the light that it sheds on the nature of the struggle now growing in Zimbabwe. Clearly, the African people of Zimbabwe have at last recognised that there is nothing to be gained from relying on British promises and constitutional manoeuvres.

The only way left open for them to liberate Zimbabwe is by organising themselves and using force to end the rule of the white racists. Although the number of people actually involved in fighting is still probably small the Smith regime is clearly alarmed at the support and protection that the freedom fighters must be receiving from the local population.

We have seen how the use of such tactics in Angola, Mozambique and Guine-Bissau has led to the liberation of vast areas of countryside and the departure of the white population into the strongly-defended towns. The situation in Rhodesia is somewhat different, however, in that the whites cannot necessarily depend on military support from a metropolitan power in the way that the settlers in the Portuguese territories can depend on Portugal.

Although many of the Rhodesian whites—especially those who are immigrants themselves—would no doubt leave the country if guerrilla warfare began on a large scale, the Smith regime could expect help from at least two other governments—those of South Africa and Britain. Of course, socialists in this country support the Zimbabwe liberation struggle but it seems to me that there are two ways in which we can specifically help the struggle because we live in Britain.

1 We must constantly be vigilant about this Tory government's plans for Rhodesia. Heath and co would be only too happy to make an independence deal with Smith. Not only would it be a sop (at little cost) to disgruntled right-wing back-benchers but it would also enable him to supply arms legally to Smith as guerrilla warfare increases. Already one can hear all the double-talk about 'saving a bastion of Western civilisation from the menace of terrorism.'

2 We must campaign against the resumption of a sale of arms to South Africa. The Vorster regime is obviously very worried about the instability of its buffer state and as the struggle there increases it will become even more deeply involved in supplying Smith with men and arms than it is now.

Ultimately, Zimbabwe can only be liberated by its own people but the struggle there is only one part of a world-wide struggle against racism. And it is only through a genuinely international effort by socialists that these racist forces can be defeated.—**BOB CANT, London N4.**

● Letters to Socialist Worker must arrive first post Monday. They should be typed or written on one side of the paper only. Letters may be cut for space reasons.

## THE TORY TAX FIDDLERS

VALUE ADDED TAX, which comes in on 1 April, is part and parcel of the Tories' shift to a more unequal tax system that places a heavy burden on the poor and handsomely rewards the rich.

Barber's '£1 in your pocket' budget never touched the problems of the lower paid, yet put hundreds of pounds in the pockets of big business. VAT will do the same.

VAT is a tax on 'consumers' (workers) and is collected in instalments by industry. It works like this: all goods that a business buys are surcharged 10 per cent tax. It also charges 10 per cent on its sales. The Customs and Excise claim (in some cases rebate) the difference.

The only person who cannot reclaim the tax he pays is the final buyer, the consumer. Every firm adds value to the materials it handles and the effect of the new system is to tax the value added by the standard rate (10 per cent).

When all the instalments are totalled they amount to 10 per cent of the price article. Price rises are 'value-added' and will be inflated a further 10 per cent.

At the moment the government raises its indirect taxes (on goods not incomes) from three sources—purchase tax, SET and excise duties. VAT replaces the first two.

Goods on which duty is charged—beer, wine, spirits, tobacco and petrol—should cost the same, bearing 10 per cent VAT and a smaller element of duty. Purchase tax was designed as a progressive tax—with higher rates on luxury goods bought by the rich. So VAT, which is a flat rate on most goods, must mean that more will be squeezed from the workers than before.

### Jewellery

The following items are zero-rated (no tax charged): food, fuel and power, public transport, rents and housing. These are released as necessities, a political expedient to ease the introduction of the tax. But food eaten out, in cafes or in the works canteen, will be taxable.

You will save money if you buy a colour television (£20) or £30 on a mink coat. Consumer durables like washing machines, dishwashers and radios will fall in price, as will cosmetics and jewellery.

Items increasing in price are cookers, car insurance, prams, second-hand goods, childrens clothes, cinema seats, even your ticket to the football match will cost 10 per cent more. The government estimates a 1 per cent increase in the cost of living with a VAT rate of 10 per cent. But the same people told you that decimilisation wouldn't alter prices at all!

Much is being made of the fact that a lower rate (7½ per cent) would lessen the risk of inflation. But VAT's introduction is part of the standardi-

# VAT 73: poison potion for the workers

sation associated with the EEC.

All that is required at the moment is that we operate a VAT system. But the aim is a single rate of VAT throughout the EEC. Every other nation taxes necessities between 2 per cent and 7½ per cent. Undoubtedly in future we will pay VAT on food.

A common view of VAT is that 'It will only add 1p to an article of 10p.' The correct way to see it is if you spend £10 per week on taxable goods you will have to pay £1 tax.

Another inflationary aspect of the new system is that big stores will undoubtedly employ extra staff to deal with VAT—and pass the cost on to you. (Incidentally they will save enormously by no longer paying purchase tax on goods subsequently shop lifted. VAT is only paid on goods actually sold).

And they will be more able to squeeze out the small shopkeeper, who is going to be hardest hit by the large amount of unpaid paperwork he will do for the Customs and Excise.

The reactionary nature of the VAT system was recognised by that prominent champion of the oppressed, Douglas Jay MP, when he wrote of its adoption: 'Much if not all the progress made in the last 50 years in Britain in achieving greater equality of income, which is the greatest single foundation of democratic stability, would be lost. We should risk moving back towards the sort of inequality prevailing in Italy and France and the widespread support for extremist parties which this always provokes.'

**Jeff Shaw**

# Preparing for Power

## J.T. MURPHY

IN this book first published in 1934, Murphy considers the role and success of the revolutionary left 50 years ago and its later isolation. The author was a key figure in this first shop stewards' movement.

Special offer to Socialist Worker readers: FREE hardback copy of Victor Serge's novel BIRTH OF OUR POWER with every copy of Murphy's book, £1 plus 21p postage. PLUTO PRESS, Unit 10, Spencer Court, 7 Chalcot Road, London NW1 8LH.



## Demonstrator acquitted of assault after police witness changes story



BRIAN SON: Second trial

LONDON: Brian Son, a 20-year-old apprentice printer and member of the International Socialists, was found not guilty at Newington Causeway Court last week of assaulting a police officer, causing him actual bodily harm, and possessing an offensive weapon.

He had been accused after last February's Anti-Internment League-sponsored demonstration in protest at the Bloody Sunday murders in Derry. The jury before which Brian was first tried last November had been unable to reach a verdict and a retrial was ordered.

Only one police witness appeared at the trial to support the accusation of assault by the police officer who arrested Brian. At the second hearing this witness significantly altered his evidence. Where he had said he had seen both the assault and the arrest, he now said he had not been able to see the arrest because of the dark and the confusion.

The judge, who constantly interrupted defence witnesses and insulted the defence counsel, said in his summing-up that this was quite immaterial. Judge Macleay is a former lieutenant of the Naval Volunteer Reserve, former member of the Kent Police Authority and former president of his local Tory Party.

### No action

It took the jury just 30 minutes to set aside his wisdom and reach their unanimous 'Not guilty' verdict.

The only assault in which Brian Son was involved was as a victim of the policemen at Paddington Police Station after his arrest. The Director of Public Prosecutions has already ruled that no action is warranted on two complaints brought against police officers, but Brian may bring a civil legal action against the officer he was accused of assaulting.

# UNION AGREES TO MASSIVE REDUNDANCIES

LOUGHBOROUGH: 836 men, more than half the workers at William Cotton's knitting machine factory, received redundancy notices in their pay-packets last Friday. The factory is part of Charles Clore's Bentley Engineering Group.

These sackings will raise unemployment in the town from 1.7 per cent to more than four per cent. Cotton's small suppliers, such as Production Patterns, may have to close too. There are no alternative engineering jobs in the East Midlands.

These are the second major redundancies at the factory. In 1971 400 workers were sacked, including 100 apprentices. The demand for fully-fashioned knitting machines,

### Bob Carter and Roger Crossley

which are made at Cotton's, has fallen steadily for several years, but management made no attempt to diversify, and took work on other machines to other factories.

The local branch of the engineering union (AUEW) has accepted management policies: the redundancies were announced in a joint management-union statement. The district secretary, Eddie Scrivens, wants the workers out of the factory with a minimum of fuss. He said: 'The cut-back of the labour force is needed to make the company a viable proposition in the future.'

### RUMOUR

Cotton's is 'not viable' because of deliberate Bentley Group policy. Without a fight to force management to change this policy, the factory will probably close completely within two years, with the small amount of remaining work going to Leicester. That will mean 1500 jobs lost in four years.

The rumour is circulating that

Chrysler, in Coventry, may employ all the redundant workers, but our man in Chrysler has not heard of that many vacancies. The rumour of alternative jobs is a deliberate management move to hold back the struggle.

If these redundancies are to be fought, they must be fought now. The district committee, despite some opposition, has approved Scrivens' line, but the fight is not yet over.

TASS, the technical and supervisory section of the engineering union, has 36 members in the factory. They want some action, and are prepared to give a lead. Already they have started a policy of non-co-operation with management, refusing to answer the telephone, take work to the shop floor and so on. Some members want to occupy the factory.

The combine committee of the Bentley Group has agreed, if Cotton's workers give a lead, to fight back around the demands:

- Shorter working week at Cotton's.
- Work sharing in the group,
- End to sub-contracts,
- No forced redundancies.

# WHAT'S ON

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

## IS MEETINGS

LONDON REGION IS public meeting: The Relevance of Lenin to the struggle today. Speaker Tony Cliff, Friday 16 Feb, 7.30-9.30pm. The Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 (three minutes from Holborn tube).

**SOUTH WEST REGION INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS DAY SCHOOL**  
Saturday 17 February 11am  
Students Union, Queens Rd, Bristol  
Patrick Goode and a national committee speaker on 'The Draft Programme'  
John Palmer and Moshe Machover on 'Imperialism and the Permanent Arms Economy'  
Admission only by IS membership card

**NORTH EAST LONDON Industrial Meeting FIGHT THE FREEZE AND UNEMPLOYMENT**  
Speakers: Alan Watts (AUEW) and Tony Cliff  
Saturday 24 February, 2pm  
YWCA, 628 High Road, London N17 (social afterwards)

**BIRMINGHAM DISTRICT IS public meeting UNITED ACTION TO SMASH THE FREEZE**  
Speakers Chris Davison (TGWU) and Chanie Rosenberg (NUT, secretary of Hackney Teachers' Association)  
Sunday 18 February, 7.30pm  
The Wellington (corner of Bristol Street and Bromsgrove Road)

**IS ATTI NATIONAL FRACTION MEETING**  
Saturday 17 February, 11am-5pm in London  
Details from IS branch secretaries or ATTI national convenor

After Cliff on Lenin... **HARLESDEN IS SOCIAL disco-drink-food**  
Bar extension until midnight  
Friday 16 February, price 40p  
Willesden Junction Hotel, NW10 (right next door to the station)

**EDINBURGH IS public meeting REVOLUTION AND THE THIRD WORLD**  
Speaker Martin Shaw  
Monday 26 February, 7.30pm  
Free Gardeners Hall, Picardy Place

**ENFIELD IS public meeting UNITE TO FIGHT THE FREEZE**  
Speaker Ross Pritchard (NGA)  
Also speakers from gasworkers, Fordworkers, Post Office engineers and teachers  
Thursday 22 February, 8pm  
The Falcon, South Street, Ponders End, Enfield.  
ALL WELCOME

**COLINDALE IS public meeting**  
Speaker Tony Cliff on 'THE WAGE FREEZE AND HOW TO FIGHT IT'  
Thursday 22 February, 8pm  
The Bald-faced Stag pub (junction of Watling Avenue and Edgware Road) Burnt Oak, Edgware

**WIGAN IS: 'The Freeze'—Why trade union leaders won't fight.** Speakers Bob Light (TGWU London Royal Docks), John Deason (AUEW steward) and a Wigan gasworker. Thursday 22 February, 8pm, Swan and Railway Hotel, Wallgate, Wigan.

**BRIGHTON IS DAY SCHOOL:** draft programme. Sunday 25 February, 10am, Labour Club, Lewes Road, Brighton. IS members only. Contact M Perkins, 13 Buckingham Place, Brighton.

**HOUNSLOW IS:** Harry Wicks on the 1940s. Thursday 15 February, 8pm, Isleworth Public Hall, South St, Isleworth.

**LEAMINGTON IS:** Current crisis in Ireland. Speaker Jimmy Grealy. Tuesday 20 February, 7.30pm, Prince of Wales, Warwick Street.

**GLASGOW IS public meeting:** Smash the Freeze, support the gasworkers! Wednesday 21 February, 7.30pm, McLellan Galleries East Hall, Sauchiehall Street. Speakers to include a gasworker and a member of the CPSA.

**ILFORD AND DAGENHAM IS public meeting:** Fight the Wages Freeze. Speaker Paul Foot (Journalist of the Year), chairman Tom Kelly (shop steward Watney-Mann). Thursday 22 February, 8pm, The Henry Green School, Dagenham (junction of Green Lane and Chittys Lane, buses 148, 145, 25, 150).

**WANDSWORTH IS public meeting:** The Industrial Relations Act: How it is and is not working. Speaker: Andreas Nagliati, IS Industrial Co-ordinator. Thursday 22 Feb, 8pm, The Foresters Arms, 76 Mitcham Lane (100 yards past Granada cinema from Tooting Broadway tube).

**IS IRISH FORUM**  
The Plough, Museum Street, London (near Tottenham Court Road tube)  
Sunday 25 February, 7.30pm  
Speaker John Palmer on 'The Crisis in Ireland'

**JUMBLE SALE: 2.30pm Saturday 24 Feb,** St Peter's Hall, Beechcroft Road, Tooting SW17. Organised by Wandsworth IS—All proceeds to Printshop Fund. JUMBLE still needed. Please bring to IS Printshop or ring 675 3709 for collection.

## OTHER MEETINGS

**SAVE FAMILY ALLOWANCES public meeting**  
Breakdown of the Green paper, questions and discussion with Molly Meacher of the Child Poverty Action Group, and the Claimants' Union Organised by North East London Women's Family Allowance Campaign  
EVERYONE WELCOME  
Monday 26 February, 7.30pm  
Conway Hall (near Holborn tube)

**WOMEN FIGHT BACK:** Crawley public meeting open to all sympathisers of Women's Liberation. Tuesday 20 Feb, 8pm, AEU Hall, Robinson Rd, Crawley. Speakers: Kathy Ennis, Caroline Charlton, Jenny Southgate.

**PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY SOCIAL:** Friday 23 February, 8pm onwards. Dame Collett House, Ben Johnson Road, London E3, (nearest tube Stepney Green). Disco, dance, folk and bar. Tickets 30p on the door, 25p in advance from PD.

**CAMBRIDGE SocSoc Forum on Roads to Socialism in Britain.** Duncan Hallas with speakers from CP, IMG and Labour Party. Saturday 24 February, 2.30pm-7.30pm, Keynes Hall, Kings College.

**LSE PARTY—For Medical Aid for Vietnam.** Passfield Hall, Endsleigh Place, WC2. Friday 16 February, 8pm. Admission ticket, 20p at the door.

## NOTICES

**FACTORY BRANCHES?**  
For the background to the debate, read Communist Organisation—a pamphlet containing the Comintern theses on organisation, with a new introduction by Harry Wicks.  
5p plus 3p postage from Comintern, 20 Stanley Road, Edinburgh 10.  
Ten or more copies post free.

**LAND WANTED HERTS/ESSEX area:** about 3 to 4 acres, NOT building land. Required by children's organisation (woodcraft) for weekend campsite. Rent or buy. Contact D Wheeler (01-888 2065), 85 Lyndhurst Road, London N22 5AX.

**BOOKS announce that the full range of books and pamphlets from the French left-wing publishing house of Maspéro is now available in England.** Orders can be dealt with by post. Write for 'Maspéro catalogue' to BOOKS, 84 WOODHOUSE LANE, LEEDS 2, Phone Leeds 42483.

**POSTERS OF TROTSKY—25p each plus 10p post and packing.** Send cheque or crossed postal order please, payable to Colchester IS, to Helen Lentell, 31 Cannon Street, Colchester, Essex. Orders for more than 10 post free. Proceeds to Printshop Fund.

**INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM JOURNAL:** The following back copies are still available, but some only in limited numbers: 33, 34, 37, 41, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52. 20p per copy, including postage. Money with orders please to: IS Journal, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.



## Glassworkers' one-day strike 'just the start'

WHAT'S the difference between a crook who robs your home and one who robs your job? Answer: the first will go to prison and the second will get the OBE.

This comment on the mentality of the owners of Rockware Glass, who are closing their plant at Greenford in West London, came from Arthur Harris, chairman of the Rockware Co-ordinating Committee, at a public meeting last Sunday morning.

More than 300 people, mainly local trade unionists, heard Arthur Harris and other speakers explain the background to the threatened closure.

The announcement that the factory would close came on 10 January. The reason given by management was that the plant was over-producing. Arthur Harris suggested: 'Perhaps we should have had more strikes in the past to cut down production.'

### Every effort

The real reason for the closure is rocketing land values in London. The site is worth more to Rockware empty than as a going concern. 'Between £15 million to £20 million instead of a mere £3½ million,' explained Harris. He made it clear that every effort would be made to fight the threatened closure. A one-day stoppage on Tuesday was just the beginning.

In a message of support from the Govan shipyard on the Upper Clyde, Stan McNeid, a boilermakers' shop steward, stressed the need for the official trades union leadership to give full backing to the struggle.

The platform at the meeting included a sprinkling of local Labour councillors and the two local Labour MPs, Sid Bidwell and Bill Malloy. But Arthur Harris noted in his speech that the managing director of Rockware, Peter Parker, is himself a member of the Labour Party, and that the local Labour Mayor and the leader of the Labour council had not bothered to address the Rockware shop stewards when they recently discussed the closure with local management. But he credited the two local Labour MPs for being behind the struggle.

Bill Malloy, who is MP for Ealing North, said that he had asked the government to set up a special commission to prevent closures in West Middlesex to arrest the drift of firms from the area. 'They cannot say that we did not try constitutional measures,' he said. Referring to the Rockware employers as a 'bunch of twisters', he recalled an assurance he received from them last September that production was about to be increased.

He also repeated warnings by earlier speakers that no one should be taken in if management improved its redundancy offers. The fight was to save the factory and the jobs and nothing less.

The briefest speech, and the only one to really touch the problems of fighting closures, came from Bill Freeman, of the Briant Colour Printers' work-in. He warned the meeting to expect the same kinds of pressures that the Briant workers had had to face in their struggle. They had been served with a writ but had refused to be drawn into the courts.

'It is a moral and social issue, not a legal one,' he said. 'We fight where the real fight is—on the shop floor and in the trades union movement.'

No speaker suggested the need for concerted national action throughout the Rockware combine, although Rockware have plants in Northern England and in Scotland. Reg Taylor, of the local district committee of the transport workers' union called from the chair for the establishment of an action committee to organise a local campaign made up of delegates from local trades union and labour organisations.

But no attempt was made to set this up at the meeting and no sign was given just how and when it would be set up.

## Secret meeting of right-wing extremists

THE SINISTER links between the right-wing Tory Monday Club and the near-fascist National Front are likely to get another powerful boost at a 'secret' meeting this week.

John Tyndall, National Front chairman, is to address the Monday Club's 300-strong Essex branch on Friday (16 February). It will be the first time a Front leader has been invited to address, rather than merely debate with, the Tories.

The meeting follows a series of friendly get-togethers between the Essex branch and the Front, which resulted in some protests and resignations.

News of the latest meeting leaked out despite desperate attempts to hush it up. Tyndall became NF chairman after the resignation 'in disgust' of John O'Brien. O'Brien quit last year because of regular visits to former Nazi SS men in Germany by 'certain evil men' running the Front. Chelmsford International Socialists are organising a picket outside the meeting, which is at Shire Hall, Chelmsford at 8pm.



# Militants take rent battle to estates

Phil Chetwynd

TENANTS and trade unionists met last week to discuss the next step in Camden's fight against the Housing Finance Act.

Now that the North London Labour Council has gone back on its promise not to implement the Act, tenants are faced with vicious increases of 85p on the rents in March, 70p-£1 on the rates in April and a further 50p on the rents again next October.

Most of the tenants' spokesmen at the meeting recognised the need for firm resistance to the first increase due next month and a call for a partial rent strike was recently welcomed. But many of the tenants were still unsure of the feelings on their own estates. This is because too much reliance has been placed on the Labour council's ability to fight the Act in the council chamber. Now that they have backed down, tenants have been caught ill-prepared and weakly organised.

Council tenant Leonora Kane, of the International Socialists, stressed that the only people who could meaningfully fight the Act were the tenants themselves. She urged all tenants' representatives to call mass meetings on their estates so that every individual tenant could be informed of the disastrous implications of the Act for working-class living standards.

Every effort should be made for tenants planning to withhold the rent increase to organise themselves into a committee that could co-ordinate and lead the coming struggle throughout the borough as a whole, she added.

## Eviction

Veterans of the great St Pancras Rent Strike in 1960 stirringly recalled how they had organised mass pickets and an elaborate system of communications and alarms in order to alert people to possible eviction attempts. The same degree of organisation and mass solidarity will be needed in the coming struggle.

The few Labour councillors present claimed that they would 'back the tenants all the way'. They maintained that Camden's Labour council had never evicted anyone for rent arrears, and saw no reason why this should change in the coming months.

Delegates from Camden IS said that this was not enough and the meeting demanded a firm pledge from the council that

- They would not evict any tenants for not paying the increase.
- They would claim no arrears sustained after 5 March (the date of the first increase).
- They would not manipulate rent rebates in order to victimise tenants on strike.

If the Camden Labour group is serious about its opposition to the Housing Finance Act, and will genuinely 'back the tenants all the way', it can surely not fail to get these demands accepted at the next council meeting.

If the council does not make absolutely sure that these demands are implemented, then tenants and trade unionists alike will be forced to draw the conclusion that its 'stand' against the Housing Finance Act was nothing more than a vote-catching charade.



Pickets outside the SOGAT head office

# Strike shuts down print union's head office

LONDON:-The strike by men workers at the head office of SOGAT, the print union, has developed into a full scale shut down of the union head offices.

The men's chapel have been on strike for the past week. They rejected an offer of £4 by the union, claiming that the new pay structure would leave them worse off than before.

Last Friday the union executive met at the Head Office, which is in Balham. The pickets at the gates allowed the executive members through on condition they would discuss a settlement of the claim. After discussion they decided they could not reconsider the previous recommendation of the finance sub-committee, so no new offer was made.

On Monday a delegation from the men's chapel was called in by Vincent

Flynn, the union's general secretary, who told them there would be a total shut down of the union's head offices. The reason he gave for such action was that the conscience of the officers of the union would not allow them to cross the picket line any longer.

This means that members of the women's chapel, all but two of whom crossed the picket lines last week, have been sent home on full pay. Pickets from the men's chapel state that this move is equivalent to a lock-out.

This incredible situation should never have happened. The SOGAT executive treating its head office staff in a way a self-respecting union would allow even the worst employer to treat union members. SOGAT members throughout the country should ensure that something is done about it quickly.

# SIT-IN MEN FIGHT TOP UNION-BUSTER

by Dave Peers

SUNDERLAND:-2500 workers from Coles Cranes marched through the town last Saturday. The workers, who have now been occupying their factory for more than six weeks, received support and encouragement from local shoppers.

When the Coles workers began their present dispute in defence of conditions and union organisation inside the factory, they called William De Vigier, the managing director of Acrow, the group that owns Coles Cranes, 'the Godfather'. At the time

it was something of a joke. But no one is laughing now. The activities of De Vigier over the past few years show him to be the worst sort of union-buster.

Coles Cranes convenor Norman Jackson read a letter to last week's mass meeting which detailed De Vigier's record in Lancashire. It was written by John Tocher, divisional organiser for the engineering union (AUEW) in Salford.

Acrow bought Adamson and Hatchett, in Dukinfield, in 1964

and unilaterally changed the conditions, indicating among other things that there was no need for union membership in the factory.

A nine-day dispute followed. When agreement was eventually reached a director of the company told the union's divisional organiser that De Vigier did not intend to honour the agreement and had already drawn up a list of people to be sacked. The director himself resigned in protest.

The attacks on union organisation continued, so that now one section

of the factory is non-union.

In 1968 Acrow took over S H Heywood of Reddish and tried to do the same thing, causing a three-week dispute. But this time union organisation was stronger, a new bonus scheme was won, and workers' earnings grew too high for management. So in 1971 they closed the factory.

Some of the workers were offered jobs at Thomas Storey, another Acrow factory in Lancashire. When they refused they lost their redundancy pay.

During 1971 Acrow made 55 workers at Storeys redundant. The factory was just becoming organised—and the redundancy list included the convenor and other activists. This move led to a five-week dispute. After three meetings with the directors those workers who wanted to return won their jobs back—including the convenor.

Four weeks later De Vigier arrived at the factory and immediately sacked the convenor. Job times in the factory are now so bad that workers have no time for meal breaks and have to eat at their machines.

## 'Ruthless'

Since then Acrow has re-opened the Heywood factory, this time with non-union workers. It is being organised again.

John Tocher ends his letter: 'Most of the factories Acrow have taken over have ended up with little or no union trade organisation. I would say this man is one of the most ruthless people one could meet on a day's march.'

As convenor Norman Jackson told the Coles Cranes workers: 'Our dignity is at stake in this dispute.'

Shop stewards from Acrow factories throughout Britain are meeting for the first time this weekend. This move, called by the Coles Cranes stewards, is the first step towards a long overdue combine policy and organisation.

Messages of support and donations to Norman Jackson, AUEW House, Roker Avenue, Sunderland.

## Student striker victimised

KEELE:-The first attempt by a university to victimise a student on rent strike as part of the latest campaign for increased grants has been made at Keele University. Jim Logue, who is in his final year, has been suspended for paying his fees into the student union's rent strike fund instead of to the university.

To confuse the situation, the university has set up a sub-committee 'to consider' his appeal.

The rent strike action committee has called for a mass demonstration when the university council meets on Tuesday. Dave Perkins, a member of the action committee and of the International Socialists, said: 'We must mobilise every university and college in the country to fight this victimisation. We cannot depend on the National Union of Students. They let us down last term and have shown themselves incompetent this term.'

'The students in each college must organise themselves. Our fight for higher grants is part of the fight against the freeze. Students must link up with workers fighting the freeze.'

## Building workers stewards occupy lump labour firm's offices

by Gerry Kelly (UCATT)

BIRMINGHAM:-Building workers took dramatic action last week to expose the new and growing danger to trade unionism on the sites. Six leading stewards occupied the city centre offices of the SOS Bureau, a labour agency which supplies lump workers to most of the large building firms operating in the area.

The stewards, accompanied by news reporters and cameramen, entered the office at 9am, just after opening time, and told the staff it was being taken over as a protest against SOS's practices. Files were piled against the door to keep the police out while the protest went ahead.

After an hour, police broke through the barricade and took the six stewards away for questioning. But one had had time to write down information on the firms supplied with lump labour.

In news reports later no names of firms

were mentioned although these were given to reporters at the scene. SOS are said to have 130,000 people on their books and regularly advertise in the local Birmingham Mail for craftsmen at £1 and £1.25 per hour.

Another frightening feature of this outfit is their use of grading. This is something the main building employers would dearly love to introduce on the site.

## Promise

Bricklayers for instance are graded A (£1.25 per hour), B (£1) and C (87p). And these men get no guaranteed pay for when their work is rained off, no holiday pay, no overtime rates, no notice of dismissal, and no travelling expenses. In other words they get none of the fringe benefits of direct employment.

It is obvious that the high rates of pay are a tactic to attract men to lump employment so as to smash trade unionism on the sites. The lump workers would then have their rates cut and would be unable to defend themselves.

The Birmingham militants promise that their latest action is to be only a part of a continuing and escalating campaign to smash the lump in whatever form it shows itself.

# Aircraft men ready to defend their jobs

by Bob Whitfield

BRISTOL:-Shop stewards representing all the city's aircraft workers have decided on a policy of resistance to any redundancies.

Faced with the threat of cutbacks following Pan-Am and TWA decisions not to buy Concorde, stewards and staff representatives from local plants have set up the BAC and Rolls-Royce Aerospace Liaison Committee to plan joint action.

So far the links only extend to the two Bristol factories, with six white-collar and six manual representatives from each, but stewards from BAC plants at Weybridge, Hurn and Fairford attended the first meeting of the committee, and representatives of unions in the French aircraft industry are visiting Bristol this week.

This link with French aircraft workers will be especially vital if the cheap nationalism surrounding the Concorde issue is to be countered. One possibility much discussed in the press recently is that one of the two assembly lines at Filton or Toulouse will be closed. There are real dangers of the struggle to resist redundancies being sidetracked into a campaign to 'keep Concorde for Britain'.

Already a 'Confidence in Concorde' campaign has been launched by a BAC staff man, who is asking people to give £1 to help mount a campaign to save the project. Any compromise with this sort of campaign could only weaken the struggle to safeguard jobs. The question of resistance to redundancies must be kept separate from any 'Save Concorde' campaign.

## Meeting

The urgent need now is to hammer out a policy to enforce the demand for no redundancies and work or full pay. No one is sure when the government and bosses will make their next move, but when they do aircraft workers must be ready to respond immediately.

The liaison committee is to call a mass meeting within a fortnight to discuss policy. The rank and file must be involved in deciding policy, because the success of any fight to save jobs will ultimately depend on them and not on the symbolic support of Tony Wedgwood Benn.

# WOMEN FIGHT FOR UNION RECOGNITION

BLACKPOOL:-65 women at Empire Football Pools have been out on strike for union recognition since last Friday. The youngest striker is 16 years old.

The strike started after the shop workers' union, USDAW, received a letter from the Empire management which said: 'We are not recognising your union and are advised that there is no reason at the present why we should do so.' The strike is official.

Wages at Empire are appalling. Girls starting at 15 get only £9.20 before deductions for a 40-hour week. Management has doubled bonus rates for those still working, giving them free meals in the mice-infested canteen and providing free taxis to break through the picket. Some strikers have been rammed by cars entering the premises. Police refuse to do anything.

The blacklegs are mainly older, and single women. Old age pensioners who were working part-time are now working full-time. The firm relies entirely on the post and blacking is being arranged with Post Office workers. More women are joining the determined strikers every day.



I would like more information about the International Socialists

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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



# ALL OUT — HOSPITALS CALL

## Socialist Worker

### Ford hiding behind Tories says convenor

by Merfyn Jones

SOUTH WALES:—At a crowded meeting in a Neath cinema last Sunday 2300 Ford Swansea workers decided on a 24-hour strike and an indefinite ban on overtime.

Convenor Hugh Wallace explained that this action was being taken in order both to impress upon national union officials the seriousness with which Ford workers view the situation and to protest at the failure of the Ford Motor Company to make a serious reply to the workers' claim.

Last week Ford offered £2.40 a week, the figure stipulated by the pay freeze. The unions officially rejected the offer and the national convenors' committee voted for an all-out national strike from 1 March if the offer is not boosted.

'They are simply hiding behind the government,' said Wallace, 'and in effect they are offering us no more than £1.95 a week. This is despite their £60 million profit, higher productivity and our good faith over the past two years. If they met our full claim, that would still leave them with a good chunk.'

Swansea is a crucial plant and the overtime ban should soon have a drastic effect on production throughout the company, especially at the Langley, Halewood and Dagenham works.

The meeting also supported the call made by the Ford national convenors' committee for a conference to be held in Coventry on Sunday. At this conference will be delegates from gasworkers, miners, civil servants and hospital workers as well as Ford.

Wallace explained that this conference was being held to co-ordinate action between those different groups of workers whose present wage claims challenge the Tories' freeze.

'By the end of the month there will be one-and-a-half million workers in the same boat as us,' he said. 'Unity is strength. We are having to take this step as the TUC have completely failed to give a lead.'

#### Students jeer Duke

SALFORD:—Sixty university students demonstrated as the Duke of Edinburgh arrived for a university court meeting last week. The demonstration, organised by the university's Left Society with the Anti-Apartheid group, was in protest at Portuguese exploitation in Southern Africa. The Duke is to visit Portugal in June as part of the celebrations for the 600th anniversary of the Anglo-Portuguese alliance.

### MILITANTS PLAN ACTION

MANCHESTER:—Members of the main civil service union, the CPSA, are drawing up plans for action as the union executive has refused to give any lead and is trying to ensure industrial action has as little effect as possible. On Monday, CPSA members began a total overtime ban and 'non-cooperation', reducing the speed of work.

The first local meeting of Redder Tape, the new rank-and-file movement in the union, was a great success. Militants agreed



Moss Evans: Ford negotiator —militants want action

### Shop staff on march

LONDON:—The shop workers' union, USDAW, organised a 1500-strong demonstration last week to protest at the freezing of a pay increase agreed for grocery workers last November.

A third of men shop assistants earn less than £20 a week and half of women assistants less than £14 a week, yet the government has frozen their pay since November, while prices have risen six per cent. Now it is indicating that its '£1 plus four per cent' norm must apply to them. This means that when they finally get the increase, the maximum for a shop assistant earning £15 a week will be £1.60.

The union's reaction has been virtually nil. It has not even organised a token stoppage. Workers who took part on the demonstration last week were told to ask their employers if they could have the day off.

there had to be a grass roots organisation capable of pushing union officials into action. Redder Tape meetings are to be held each week. They will enable a discussion of the tactics needed if the one-day strike called for 27 February is to be effective.

The union executive must now be forced to call extended selective strikes, backed by a national levy, which should continue until the full claim is met.

### STRIKE OVER TRANSFERRED STEWARD

RUGBY:—700 workers at the GEC Machines factory returned to work on Tuesday after two days on strike in protest against management insistence that Steve Evans, a militant AUEW shop steward, be transferred out of the large machines section so that he would lose his steward's card.

The strike ended after GEC management agreed to requests from the General and Municipal and electricians' union convenors that a works conference be held on Wednesday to discuss the transfer move. Before the strike, management refused to abide by procedure and was insisting that Evans be moved immediately even though they were putting extra work through his section.

#### COMPLAINTS

Even before Wednesday's works conference, AUEW stewards decided that if the negotiations did not result in the withdrawal of the transfer, they would not move for an all-out stoppage of AUEW members and only call on 30 workers in the sections directly affected to take action.

GMWU and EPTU convenors have lodged a complaint against Steve Evans with the AUEW district, a move that can only be interpreted as designed to get his own union to take away his shop steward's credentials.

The GEC bid to transfer Evans, a member of the International Socialists, is the first shot in an attempt to get rid of him altogether.

'The basic point is that GEC management is out to crack effective trade union organisation before it gets off the ground. That is why they have picked on me,' said Steve Evans, 'My membership of a socialist organisation only makes me more determined to build shop floor organisation.'

### GASMEN: 'SPREAD STRIKE'

GLASGOW:—A meeting of the rank and file co-ordinating committee last weekend made final preparations for picket duty when gas workers in Scotland strike on Sunday. 50 shop stewards discussed arrangements that would close the main gas-producing stations in the west of Scotland and make it impossible for management to use the holder stations.

It was agreed that after three days' strike action the gas-producing stations in Glasgow would be at a complete standstill. Then the emphasis would shift to organising flying pickets at all holder stations, as well as covering the North Sea gas stations at Glenmavis.

The meeting agreed that Wednesday's one-day stoppage was inadequate, as the stewards expect widespread support for the week's strike.

The gas workers are convinced that the week's stoppage will force the government and the Gas Board to meet their demands. Within a few days they expect the strike to involve more than 3000 gas workers throughout Scotland.

The stewards are calling for support from other areas to take up their action, to

HEALTH SERVICE WORKERS in the Transport Workers Union voted unanimously for indefinite, all-out strike action at a special delegate conference last Friday. The decision will put great pressure on the executive of the main health service union, the National Union of Public Employees.

NUPE was the first to decide on industrial action but there have been rumours that the leaders are planning long-drawn out, selective action. Pressure against the selective strike tactic has been building up from NUPE militants.

They say it would undermine the new-found solidarity of health workers. The NUPE executive is likely to face angry members at a special delegate meeting today (Saturday).

The demand will be put for quick, all-out action to place such a strain on hospital administration that intervention by volunteers, armed forces or white-collar workers will be unable to relieve it.

There is also anger at the failure of the NUPE leaders to come up with joint plans for action against the freeze with other unions involved.

The meeting of public sector union leaders last week (see editorial, page 3) completely failed in this respect. This inaction stands in sharp contrast with the links that are being built at local level.

Ford shop stewards have invited health workers, civil servants and miners to their meeting in Coventry on Sunday. Teachers' union branches in London are planning to link up with health workers and other public sector unions.

And in Manchester a delegate conference on 'How to beat the freeze' has been called for this weekend.

#### DEMAND

A major testing time will be the one-day demonstration called by the civil service union, the CPSA, on 27 February. Other sections have been called on to take part and rank and file members of the teachers' union, the CPSA and the health workers' unions are planning to issue a joint leaflet demanding that their union leaders co-ordinate action to smash the wage freeze.

HOSPITAL managers started flexing their muscles for the coming struggle when shop steward Mick Banton was arrogantly dismissed from his job as senior head chef in St George's hospital Tooting (South London) last week.

St George's, along with its sister hospital at Hyde Park Corner, had been hit by a 24-hour strike called by the local NUPE branch the week before. Mick put up a notice saying that the catering department would feed on-duty doctors and nurses, but not ancillary staff who had ignored the branch's decision.

He was ordered to take it down by the management. He did so, but another worker replaced the notice. Mick was then ordered by management to sign for six weeks' pay and then get off the premises.

Almost the entire ancillary workforce at both the Tooting and Hyde Park hospitals walked out in protest. They were soon followed by workers at the third hospital in the group, Atkinson Morley's, not noted for its militancy in the past.

Management was forced to reinstate Mick Banton when NUPE gave the strike official backing.

#### Joiners down tools

MANCHESTER:—Twenty joiners employed by Fram Gerrard on the Market Place site came out on strike last week after the site agent had threatened the men's steward.

Two other Fram Gerrard site have pledged financial support and assistance with picketing. And joiners on one site have already come out in support. With Laing's Moss Side job also out, the dispute could spread.

#### SW Reporters

set up stewards' committees and to force the union leaders to seriously fight the gas workers' case. The committee has also asked that other trade unionists employed in the gas industry join them in their fight and refuse to blackleg.

#### First option

WIGAN:—A mass meeting of Wigan gas workers have voted overwhelmingly to continue their three week old strike action. Workers in Ashton-in-Makerfield and Liverpool are also staying out.

The decision by national officials of the General and Municipal Workers Union to call for selected strikes, overtime bans and a work to rule is seen by militants as the direct result of the unofficial action.

Wigan gas workers have been told by phone that the national officials are giving first option to take official strike action to those areas that have already been out.

But in Wigan and Ashton feelings are



### 'United action is vital'

by Paul Holborow

WOLVERHAMPTON:—Tom Griffiths, secretary of the 4500-strong Wolverhampton branch of NUPE and formerly chairman of the Midlands Area Conference of NUPE, spoke to Socialist Worker about the feeling of his members.

'Recently all the nine hospitals in my area were balloted about the action the workers wanted to take in support of their £4 claim. 75 per cent were in favour of total strike action, and nobody favoured



Tom Griffiths: taken advantage

any further token demonstrations or token strikes.

'The resolve of the members is heightened when consultants on £5000 a year tell them that the latest offer is very good and that we should accept it. Have they ever tried to live on £15 a week, as many of our members have to?'

'For years government and management have taken advantage of the dedication that our members have towards the patients. By playing on this, they hope to keep us on a Victorian wage.'

'But our members have learnt a great deal from the car workers, miners and dockers.'

'The only way to get fair play from this government is to compel it. This anti-working-class government will never be impressed by the justice of our claim, but only by the action we are prepared to take.'

'They are not only seeking to stop us winning our claim, but also want to stop the wage claims of all other trade unionists. That is why united action by the organised trade union movement in the public sector is absolutely vital.'

'All the workers in the country have an interest in seeing that we have a decent living wage.'

strongly in favour of continued strike action. As one Wigan Gas Action Committee member said: 'We started off fighting the gas board and the union—but now we are all aware that it's the government and their freeze that we are fighting. It's up to areas like Wigan now—to spread the strike.'

The Gas Action Committee plan to spread the strike by sending flying pickets to other areas and co-ordinating action committees for the regions. It realises that only a national strike will win the claim.

An action committee member explained: 'If the strike were made national it would take only a day or so to affect supplies of town gas and two weeks or so to affect natural gas supplies. This would affect glassmaking, food and chemical industries particularly. That would put pressure on the government to grant our claim.'

Wigan gas workers have been out for three weeks without strike pay. Rush donations and messages of support to: Wigan Gas Action Committee, c/o Eddie Parkinson, NUGMW, 30 King St, Wigan.

## Subscribe Now!

I enclose £\_\_\_\_\_ for one year/six months

Socialist Worker

(£4 for a year, £2 for six months)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

→ Socialist Worker 6 Cottons Gardens London E2 8DN