

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

MASS

ACTION

SHOWS THE

WAY



Pictures: MIKE COHEN

Striking Civil Servants (top) and teachers demonstrating at Speakers Corner, London on Tuesday

THIS WEEK has seen the growth of the biggest bout of wage struggles known in this country since the 1920s. Three-quarters of a million workers are now directly involved in the fight against the government's pay freeze.

Some, like the gas workers, are involved in all-out strikes. Some, like the London teachers and the hospital workers, are taking selective strike action. Hundreds of thousands of others—including civil servants—have been involved in one day strikes.

The strikes of the last few days have shown that the feeling exists among rank and file workers for real, united action to break the government's freeze. The rantings and ravings of establishment figures have not been able to prevent previously non-militant groups like civil servants joining the struggle. The scare campaign against the gas men in the press has not produced anything like the public hysteria that isolated the power workers two years ago.

The government insists that it will never give in to the strike movement. No one should be fooled by its empty bravado. The same Tory ministers gave in to trade union militancy no less than three times last year after equally emphatic statements.

They said they would never pay the miners more—and then they did. They said they would never raise their offer to the railwaymen—and then they did. They said they would never free the five imprisoned dockers—and then they did.

This time they pretend they are in a stronger position because the 'law' is on their side. But they control that law by marshalling Tory MPs from the bars in the House of Commons in to the voting lobby. They can be forced to reverse it if industrial action begins to bring key sections of the economy to halt.

The press claim that would be a 'defeat for democracy'. They do not explain how it can be undemocratic for those who actually

labour to create the wealth of this country to demand a bigger share of it. They do not explain what is democratic about a law that enables Ford management to keep last year's record profits and forces tens of thousands of hospital workers to take home less than £15 a week.

The real difficulty facing the trade union movement is that its own official leaders are refusing to give the movement the necessary lead and direction. Instead of uniting the struggles of different groups of workers, they seem to have been doing their utmost to keep them in separate compartments.

No lead can be expected from the TUC's special congress on Monday. The General Council's resolution does not call for any form of united action from the trade union movement against the freeze. It suggests verbal protest only.

SHOW SOLIDARITY

This means that the initiative has to be taken by the rank and file in every industry. Action not words must be demanded from trade union leaders now. And where they will not act, rank and file militants must. There must now be a massive show of solidarity with those taking industrial action, in particular with the gas workers and the hospital workers.

Sections like the miners must not let their leaders put off their own struggles while weaker groups battle alone. Unofficial action must be taken to force the officials' hands where possible.

Different sections of workers fighting the freeze must form joint action committees of delegates from trade union branches and stewards committees to organise joint mass meetings, pickets and demonstrations.

The fight goes on! This week's strikes and demonstrations have shown the potential of mass action. United and resolute, the working class movement can smash the freeze and topple the government behind it.

DON'T FLAG ON FUND FRONT

£1085—that's the amount collected last week, for the IS fund, pushing the total so far to £22,368. A few more heaves, and we will arrive at £30,000. Comrades, make the effort.

IS branches are keeping up the pressure. Donations received include: Norwich £163, Nottingham £8, Oldham £12, Ealing £45, Leicester £64, Brighton £17.60, Bradford £43.55, Colindale £36.13, Kingston £2, Cardiff £1, South Birmingham £57.38, Harlesden £6, Huddersfield £7, Edinburgh £2, Hull £31.50, Ilford/Dagenham £97.83, Leiston £5, Mid-Devon £19, Ipswich £20, Birmingham North £7.

Two IS members at present in Khartoum, Sudan, have sent £50, and two comrades from Michigan, USA, £100. An excellent method of raising funds was used by Wandsworth IS, who held a jumble sale and raised £70. The IS branch in Harlesden held a social that raised £16.60. Birmingham IS Women's Group donated £3.

We received a number of collections from groups of workers in places of work: Workers at the BP refinery at Llandarcy £10.66, workers at Hawker-Siddeley, Bolton £3.50, Clerical workers at BEA West London Air Terminal £2.50, Office workers at Bradford University £6.85.

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



Policy that spells disaster —page 8

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Troops hand out savage beatings

AFTER the Provisional IRA shot three soldiers of the Coldstream Guards in Belfast last week—in direct retaliation for the murder of six unarmed men in the New Lodge area the week before—that regiment has been taking its revenge on the people of the Falls Road.

Scores of men have been lifted and beaten up in army vehicles. The men have been selected purely at random and age seems to be no protection. One of them was in his seventies.

Two men whom I spoke to explained how it happened to them. They were walking along the

by Mike Miller: Belfast

Falls Road after dark when a Saracen armoured car passed them. Soldiers shone a light on them, called them over and ordered them into the vehicle.

They immediately started beating them, demanding to know who had shot the three soldiers. The soldiers had no reason to believe that the two men knew anything of the shooting. They did not even search them. After 10 minutes of head-butting, kicking and punching, the men were thrown out and told that if they

dared complain they would have their houses raided.

In Belfast that means that their homes would be wrecked and that they would probably be taken in for interrogation and more beatings. Naturally they did not complain. One effect of the Coldstream's terror campaign has been that the people living in the areas they dominate are now too scared to mount vigilante road checks to stop hit and run sectarian murderers getting in.

In the past British soldiers have fired on unarmed vigilantes and with the present attitude of the Coldstreams to the civilian population it is quite likely that they would do the same thing again.

It must be abundantly clear to everyone now that the British Army's presence in Northern Ireland has nothing to do with restoring peace. It has no intention of protecting the anti-Unionist population. Instead it has encouraged and assisted the assassins. And the continuing policy of harassment in the Catholic ghettos is preventing the people from defending themselves.

Tragedy or murder?



Wreckage of the aircraft shot down by Israeli fighters

IF YOU are a Palestinian refugee driven to adopt the tactics of taking hostages in a strange and distant land to draw attention to your people's plight, you are a threat to civilisation.

When, under attack from the German police force, you kill a total of 12 Israeli Olympic athletes, you are a 'murderer' and a 'butcher'.

But if you are an Israeli air force general who, in consultation with your head of state, coldly and cynically order your bombers out to destroy un-protected Arab villages a few days later, killing 70 people and maiming untold numbers of women and children, you are engaged in a 'reprisal'.

And if your Phantom jet fighters respond to Arab civilian aircraft straying into territory that you have seized by force of arms and you shoot it down murdering 106 people, you have merely committed a 'tragic blunder'.

For weeks after the events at the Munich Olympics, the entire world's press was united in denouncing the activities of the Arab guerrillas, youngsters brought up in refugee camps without work and without food who were driven to violence to oppose the daily violence committed against their people.

But there is no such sense of outrage at the activities of the Israeli state last week. After all, the very regimes and the self-same newspapers which denounce the Arab guerrillas support the insane system of standing armies and airspace that inevitably gave rise to last week's 'tragic blunder'.

And further, the various so-called democracies provide the Israeli state with the weapons and the jet fighters to carry out 'reprisals' and make 'tragic blunders'!

They do everything in their power to shore up the Israeli regime and those of the reactionary Arab leaders, all with a view to maintaining their worldwide system of exploitation.

And in addition to supplying arms to assist in the process, their servile newspapers readily provide the appropriate double standards so vital to continuing the operation.

GREEK STUDENTS SHOT DOWN BY POLICE

On page six we feature a major article on recent developments in Greece. The report below covers events that took place after the article was completed.

THREE YOUNG DEMONSTRATORS, two in Athens and one in Salonica, were brutally murdered last Friday and Saturday when the Greek junta's police, reinforced by gangs of thugs armed with knives, attacked student demonstrations being held despite martial law restrictions.

Faced with mass mobilisation among the students and unable to placate or intimidate them into submission, the government has resorted to murder. A news blackout was immediately imposed to prevent popular solidarity with the students from erupting.

BOYCOTT

The student mass movement in Greece reappeared as an organised force last autumn when it forced the junta to concede, at least verbally, the right to hold elections in student unions. But the 'elections' allowed by the junta were a farce and the students responded with a mass boycott.

Clandestine students' struggle committees were set up in a number of faculties. The next junta attack on the students came with the announcement of a 'university charter' that promotes a reorganisation of the universities in favour of monopoly interests. Leading industrialists were to be appointed to governorships and students' rights even further restricted, delivering the students gagged and bound to big business.

HYSTERICAL

Mass mobilisation against the charter began last month in various schools. The strike movement spread rapidly. In a vain attempt to break the movement the junta issued a decree that drafts strikers into the army. Militant leaders were called up.

But the measures boomeranged on the regime. A solidarity movement



Plainclothes police getting rough with a student at Athens Polytechnic

spread, more demonstrations were held, growing in militancy all the time.

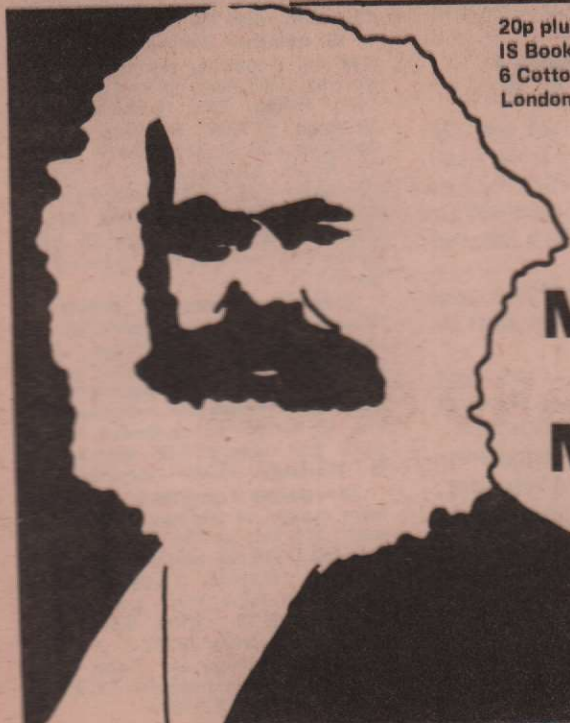
In an hysterical move, the police invaded the Athens Polytechnic, beating up everybody in sight, students and professors alike. But still the movement spread. 5000 students occupied the Law School in Athens and the authorities were forced to accept the students' demands and promised to lobby the government.

The junta decided it was time for

drastic measures. The murderers went into action.

Socialists in Britain must mobilise the student and labour movement to express solidarity with the struggles of the mass movement in Greece. 2000 Greek and British students marched on the Greek Embassy in London last Friday.

It is vital that more expressions of solidarity are organised to stop the bloody repression unleashed by the junta.



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The Meaning of Marxism

by Duncan Hallas

'NO MONEY IN THE KITTY...'

IN THEIR DEFENCE of the wage freeze the government argues that there is just not enough wealth around to concede all the wage claims being put in by millions of workers. Because of that, they claim, when wages go up, prices must go up and in the end everyone suffers.

What the government never mentions are the vast sums it spends itself in ways that are of no benefit to the mass of the population.

Yet last week a Defence White Paper was published that announced massive increases in military expenditure. This is to shoot up by £523 million over the next year, to a total of £3365 million—enough to give everyone employed in British industry a wage increase of about 8 per cent.

For the first time for many years military spending is rising faster than the growth of the economy as a whole. It was 5½ per cent of the national product last year and will be 5¼ per cent in 1973.

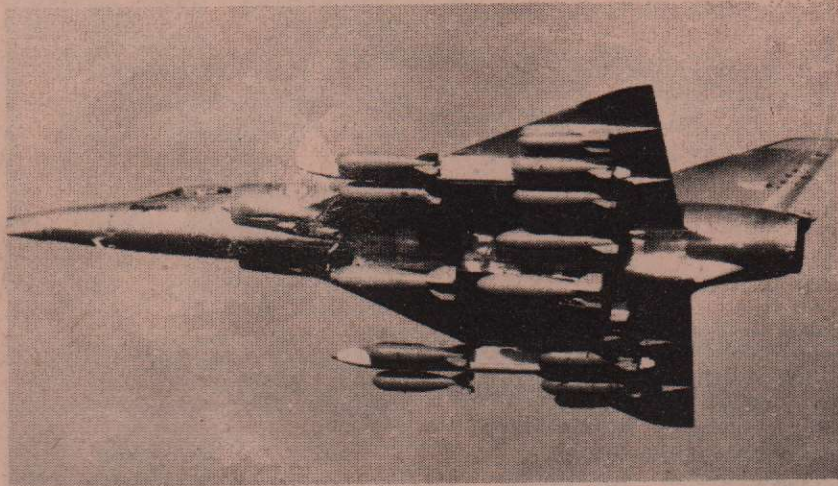
'HARMLESS'

A government which says it cannot afford wage increases for hospital workers or more for the pensioners is planning to spend £2-3 million each on 300 new combat aircraft; £30 million on tactical nuclear (the small 'harmless' bombs of the sort that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki); three new cruisers for the navy at £60 million a time and an unspecified number of submarines at £15 million a time.

Arms spending is not the only thing that is rising. Government expenditure in general is growing faster than it is letting real wages or pensions rise. The Tories have been the traditional opponents of such expenditure, but are keeping rather quiet now.

That is not surprising. The main beneficiaries of lavish government hand-outs are not working-class children, who have had free school milk taken from them, or those who use the health service, who have been faced with higher charges and deteriorating standards.

Those who will gain most are the wealthy few who own most of British



Except for arms and roads



industry. Direct government grants to industry are expected to be around £518 million this year and £643 million next. And that takes no account of the way in which shareholders will gain as a result of tax changes introduced last year.

PRETEND

They will gain in other ways as well. For example, in order to maintain for British big business an aircraft industry that can at least pretend to compete internationally, the government is pouring money into projects like Concorde and the RB 211—an estimated £76 million on Concorde next year (five times as much as the total spent on welfare foods) and £48 million on the RB 211.

Big business prefers new motorways to the railways and bus services that most people have to use to travel to work. And so next year

nine times as much will be spent on building new roads as on railways. Half the total spending of £607 million on roads will go on motorways.

That means that rather more will be spent on motorways than on slowly replacing the ageing Victorian buildings that still house most hospitals.

Such are the priorities of the system which the Tories defend. Yet there is no real likelihood that things would change if a Labour government were elected, committed to the kind of policies urged on it by the TUC. The TUC in its pamphlet Economic Policy and Collective Bargaining seems to imply that there should be still larger hand-outs to industrialists to go to certain regions.

And all that it demands of the arms budget is a cut of £150 million, which would still leave Britain with the highest military expenditure in Western Europe.

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

'IN THE PAST three months real incomes have shown no growth and may even have been reduced.' That is from the horse's mouth—the horse being the big business weekly, the Economist, assessing the economic situation for the benefit of its readership of shareholders, managers, stockbrokers, speculators and the rest.

Of course it is only half true. Incomes should read **wages**. Unearned incomes are growing as profits rise. It has just been announced that the big four banks showed profit increases of from 30 to 50 per cent last year and stand to do even better this year as a result of the record 9½ per cent interest rate.

Incidentally the effect of higher interest charges will be, according to the Financial Editor of the Sunday Times, 'a staggering £1 a week rise on the cost of living for British families.'

Unearned incomes will also get a big boost with the budget, in which Barber's scheme to abolish surtax will make a present of £300 million a year to the rich. A parasite getting £15,000 a year from shareholding will get, as a free gift, a cash increase of nearly £30 a week from 1 April. Meanwhile more big price increases are in the pipeline due to the soaring costs of industrial raw materials and fuel.

This is the situation in which the Tory government is going to make it a crime for workers to strike for more pay. Because that is what Phase Two means. The right to strike for better wages, the basic trade union right for which so many trade unionists of earlier generations have struggled and suffered, is to be abolished by government order.

If we allow it to be abolished! The government cannot enforce its tyrannical law in the face of massive, organised working-class resistance. That is the real issue before the TUC Special Congress on Monday.

If ever there was a case for a general strike it is now. The right to strike—without which the working class movement would be castrated—is at stake. But that would be a challenge to 'the sovereignty of parliament'? It would indeed.

The government has ensured that all strike action under Phase Two is **political** by making it illegal, irrespective of the details of the claims. The choice before us is to lie down and be trampled on or to challenge the government by industrial action and bring it down. For there is no doubt at all that the enforcement of the Phase Two freeze is make or break for the Tories. The government cannot survive a big defeat.

The TUC will not lead such a movement. It will do its best to hold it back and therefore, whether it wills it or not, to keep the Tories in power and assist the employers' attack on the living standards of working people. The TUC will not even, in spite of brave words about 'concerted action against Phase Two' take any practical steps to mobilise the resources of the movement in support of the gas men, the health workers and the other groups struggling against the Phase Two norms at the present time **before** strike action has become illegal.

The responsibility falls to the real left wing. The groundwork has to be done at the grassroots. A sustained and systematic effort has to be made to develop links between groups of workers in committees or councils of action to defend fundamental trade union rights, promote solidarity and prepare for the mass strike movement that is the only alternative to submitting to the Tory diktats.

We are not speaking of meetings of representatives of political groups. We are speaking of committees of genuine representatives of trade union and shop floor organisations. A call from this month's conference of the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions for the setting up of such councils of action would be a great step forward. Every effort must be made to push the vacillating leadership of the Liaison Committee into giving the lead.

LAW AND ORDER

'I fired immediately. I caught him straight through the ticker,' said PC Conley. The other young Pakistani at the Indian Embassy last week 'was shot by the policeman in the head.' Eleven shots were fired by PCs Conley and Barrows: none by their victims.

There is a name for this sort of thing. It is murder. The 'law and order' brigade and their Labour sycophants in parliament applaud 'police gallantry'. They thereby prove themselves contemptible scoundrels.

6 COTTONS GDNS, LONDON E2 8DN

Students and pensioners: two new areas to extend sales

by Margaret Renn

Circulation Manager

SINCE we started our sales drive six weeks ago the circulation of Socialist Worker has risen by 3000 copies to 27,600 a week. More and more people are reading the paper and also feeling that they should sell it too.

Not only are the sales increasing in factories and on estates, but also in colleges. A letter from a student in London says:

'Three weeks ago I began selling Socialist Worker in my college. The first week I sold five copies, the second week it rose to 12 and last week 20 papers were sold. I was surprised by just how easy it is to sell Socialist Worker, especially in a college. Everyone gathers in the canteen at dinner time and I'm generally sold out in ten minutes.

'Sales of the paper have led to the formation of a readers' group which has called its first meeting this week. Judging by the success so far, sales should go on rising. It's really been worth the effort.'

Another letter from a reader suggests that Socialist Worker is important reading to all groups of workers, even old age pensioners.

'I'm 75 and in decline. I seldom go into town on Saturdays. A fortnight ago I did and saw a young man holding up Socialist Worker for sale. I bought one and was more than pleased with the content.

'Although my time is approaching I still love to see the propaganda of what has been to me an earnest belief since returning from World War One. I have, since then, trailed around newsagents but am informed that the only place where it is obtainable is from street supplies, on Saturdays only.'

The problems of distribution are enormous for us, as we cannot get the commercial distributors to take Socialist Worker to the newsagents. If you have a local newsagent who is interested in taking copies please encourage him to do so.

We can send copies direct or arrange for them to be delivered. If you have any difficulty in obtaining your own copy of the paper please contact me and I can give you details of local street sales, or IS branches which will be able to deliver direct.

● Any suggestions for increasing sales are welcome. Please phone me on 01-739 2639.

HELP MAKE



OUR SALES SOAR

FRENCH GO TO THE POLLS

FRANCE goes to the polls on Sunday. At the moment the united left, the Communist Party, the Socialist Party and the Left Radicals, are well in the lead in the opinion polls.

Despite the panic-mongering of the present government and its supporters there is no chance that a 'left' victory will bring in socialism. Even the Communist Party does not claim this will happen.

But they do claim that their victory will bring 'profound changes' and will lay the basis for later moves towards socialism. But the least that the millions of French workers who will vote for the 'Left Union' expect is some real reforms and above all real improvements in their living standards.

So what does the 'Programme for Government' of the left parties have to say?

The first point it makes is that 'no wages should be less than 1000 Francs a month' (£19.50 a week). But this is what workers were demanding back in May 1968 and the present right-wing government reckoned it will reach this level sometime this year.

And the programme does not promise to make this the legal minimum nor to bring it in straight-away. It also talks about a general increase in wages but is equally careful to make no specific commitment on when and how much.

The second promise is the re-introduction of the legal maximum 40-hour week without loss of pay. This was won by the great strikes back in June 1936, although it hasn't been in operation for many years. So it can't be seen as that revolutionary a proposal.

But in fact the common programme is careful not to guarantee its immediate introduction. Given that some of the leaders of the 'united left' have been at pains to point out that the programme is a five-year one, the workers may have some time to wait.

SUFFER

The programme is equally vague on other questions affecting people's working lives, such as redundancies or working conditions. In particular it has nothing to say in support of immigrant workers who suffer the worst conditions and are often forced to live in company-run slum 'hostels'.

All it does say is that immigration will be 'planned' to suit the needs of the economy, in other words to help the bosses who run the sweatshops.

On pensions workers could expect some clear pledge. But again the programme is vague. Retirement age will be brought down to 60 for men, 55 for women. When? No commitment. Pensions 'shouldn't' be less than the minimum wage and 'should' be 75 per cent of the average of the best 10 working years' wages.

But no definite promise. Although the Communist-controlled CGT—the main union—has demanded 800 Francs per month, the programme doesn't mention this figure.

France has no national health service so any reform programme should have something to offer—maybe the creation of a free health service? But no. They will move 'progressively' towards free treatment, particularly for in-patients and 'severe cases'—not even a mention of prescriptions.

On housing there is a similar failure to actually promise cheap rented accommodation for workers or to offer anything to the thousands of people being driven out of the centres of French cities by the speculators.

PROCLAIM

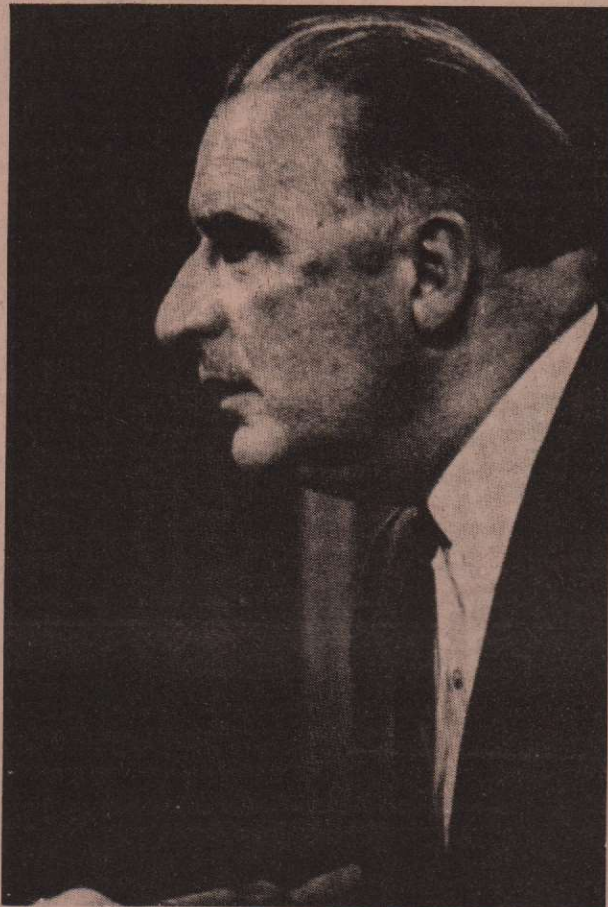
On women the programme talks of 'equal rights' but is careful not to guarantee job equality. It talks of reforming the divorce laws but doesn't even go as far as British divorce laws.

The programme proudly proclaims that it will free France from the grip of the great monopolies. There will be democratic control of the economy. What does this mean in practice—nationalisation of major industries? Workers' control?

Well, there will be some nationalisations. The few remaining private banks and insurance companies will be taken over.

But this is not very significant as the biggest ones are already nationalised. The one remaining private aircraft manufacturer, Dassault, already dependent on the nationalised sector, will be absorbed.

The only real nationalisations will be the whole of the drug industry and parts of the electronics and chemical industry. A grand total of nine companies.



POMPIDOU: president and leader of the Gaullists who threatens to veto a 'left' victory



MITTERRAND: tipped to be the 'left's' prime minister with a long history of political twisting

Here again there is no time scale. The government will also buy shares in some firms. But the firms left strictly alone include companies like Citroen.

In any case, as workers in British Rail or the mines know, nationalisation on its own is meaningless for the workers without workers' control. The programme says there will be 'democratic' nationalisations.

But when it comes down to it what do we find? Public corporations just like in Britain. And the 'democratic' part? Trade union

bureaucrats on the boards in no way responsible to the workers.

All in all a 'left' victory will mean very little. Even if they were to carry out all their promises it would not really hurt the French ruling class.

And all the left leaders have been careful to assure French business that nothing will be rushed. In any case it is unlikely that the programme will be carried through. If the ruling class objects, it will still have the economic power to do what the bankers did to Wilson and force the government to toe the line.

For all these reasons the revolutionaries of Lutte Ouvriere (Workers' Struggle) are pointing out how little the programme really offers and that it is only in struggle that real gains can be won.

Only a minority of workers will accept this argument now. But if the left wins more and more workers will come to see that the revolutionaries were right as they watch the new government do just the same as its predecessors—run the country in the interests of big business.

Election line-up

THE ELECTIONS take place in two rounds a week apart. If any candidate gets more than half the total votes in the first round, he is elected. Otherwise there is a run-off on the second round—when the candidate with a simple majority is elected, as in Britain.

Between the first round and the second candidates can withdraw and advise their supporters to vote for one of the remaining candidates. This system was devised to assist the formation of blocs and alliances among France's many parties—thus the different parties of the right or left can all run on the first round and then withdraw for the one most likely to win in their alliance.

It was also hoped to reduce Communist Party representation because at the time this system was invented the party had no allies and could thus be isolated on the second round even if it was in the lead on the first. Now it may work the other way with the party's big block of votes joining its allies on the second round.

THE MAIN BLOCS:

The Majority: Three conservative parties make up the Union of Republicans for Progress.

The UDR: Originally the supporters of De Gaulle now a more or less traditional conservative party with its support coming from the catholic rural areas. Some of the French ruling class are still suspicious of it because it is not quite 'respectable' (as witness some recent scandals).

The Independent Republicans: The party of respectable business, banking

etc, led by Finance Minister Giscard d'Estaing.

The CDP (Centre for Democracy and Progress): the moderates, represents the conservative middle class 'progressives', once a 'centre' group, now lined up with the conservative government. The UDR is by far the biggest of these three.

THE CENTRE—THE REFORMISTS: Three middle-class parties which refuse to support the government.

The Centrists: originally part of the same party as the CDP but refused to support the government, stand for limited reforms within the same basic framework as the government.

The Radicals: middle-class party once the biggest French party, now in decline and split between moderate wing led by 'Kennedy-style whizz-kid' publisher Servan-Schreiber and the 'left radicals'. The Servan-Schreiber wing stands for economic reform and regionalism, main support from the 'progressive' middle class 'technocrats'.

The Social-Democratic Party: tiny right-wing split from the Socialists—similar to Radicals.

THE LEFT:

Three parties make up the Union of the Left or People's Union.

The PCF (Communist Party): the main working-class party, controls the biggest union federation the CGT, firmly committed to the 'parliamentary road to socialism'.

The Socialist Party: newly reorganised including people from other small parties. Similar policies to British Labour right-wing, mainly a lower middle-class

and white-collar party. The Socialists are led by Mitterrand, tipped as Prime Minister if the left win—a man who has a sordid record of political opportunism dating back to the 1940s. Minister in governments of all political tendencies up to 1958, joined the Socialists only two years ago.

The Left Radicals: split from the Radical Party including most of the MPs, support from small farmers and lower middle-class, supports the reforms in the 'left programme' but nothing further.

OTHER GROUPS AND PARTIES:

To the left of the 'People's Union'.

The PSU (Unified Socialist Party): Left Socialist party, criticises 'left union' for not going far enough 'but itself unclear on whether it wants more reforms or is revolutionary. Has some local pockets of working-class and peasant support.

Lutte Ouvriere (Workers' Struggle): independent Trotskyist revolutionary socialists with fraternal links with the International Socialists, running candidates on the first round in common with the Ligue Communiste (Communist League)—French equivalent of the International Marxist Group.

There are also various extreme-right groups, some running under the common title of National Front, others include the Republican Alliance.

Opinion polls at present give around 35 per cent to the majority, 15 per cent to the centre and 45 per cent to the left with the Communist Party taking almost half the left vote (20 per cent).

BRIEFING

LAST WEEK'S big news in France was the snatching of the body of ex-Marshal Petain. Petain became a national hero by presiding over the bloody slaughter of Verdun during the First World War.

Between the wars the right wing occasionally thought of him as the man who could save the nation from the 'red menace'. His chance came with the defeat of the French army in 1940 when he became the leader of the section of the French ruling class who jumped on what they thought was the winning bandwagon and collaborated with Germany.

After the war he was stripped of his honours and died in disgrace. But a substantial section of the French right wing, including people who are supposed to have been on the other side, still think of him as a hero and want him buried on the battlefield where he sent thousands to the slaughter.

In addition there are still sections of the French right who support his policies. It was one of these people, a candidate for the extreme-right Republican Alliance (which is led by one of his ex-ministers) who organised the body-snatch. What they are trying to do is win a section of French right-wing opinion away from the Gaullists by reminding them of Petain.

It is unlikely they will have any success. Money talks louder than sentiment and the French ruling class can't afford a split-off to the right.

Sugar strikes

THE STRIKES by workers in the sugar factories of France's West Indian colony Guadeloupe are still going on. In addition to the strikes in the factories, the sugar workers are refusing to cut the cane as are the small independent sugar growers.

In some factories the management has responded by a lock-out. Despite the failure of the union bureaucracy to give a lead the movement has spread and could spread into other industries.

Also in Guadeloupe and in the other West Indian island still ruled by France, Martinique, there will be revolutionary socialist candidates in the election. The group Combat Ouvriere (Workers' Combat) is putting up candidates in the three constituencies on each island. In theory Martinique and Guadeloupe are part of France so they elect MPs to the French parliament.

Combat Ouvriere will combine a clear working-class position with the struggle against colonialism as opposed to the nationalists who preach class unity and the so-called workers' parties (Communist Party and Socialists) who refuse to fight colonialism.

In addition three supporters of Combat Ouvriere, black workers in France, are running on Lutte Ouvriere's list in Paris constituencies where there are large numbers of immigrant workers, thus demonstrating the real meaning of socialist internationalism.

Left banned

THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN by the revolutionaries of Lutte Ouvriere and the Ligue Communiste continues to face harassment from the authorities and the Communist Party. After the banning of a Lutte Ouvriere rally in Paris it is the turn of the Ligue Communiste to be hit by a ban.

They have been denied the seven minutes' television time to which they are entitled because they are putting up more than 75 candidates. The excuse is that the Ministry of the Interior didn't get their request and now all the available slots have been allocated.

Lutte Ouvriere were lucky to get their time as they were only informed one hour before they had to send a representative to the allocating meeting. Even the liberal paper Le Monde is demanding that they be given this time which is theirs by legal right.

But it is not only the conservative government which is harassing the revolutionaries. At the Dunkirk docks a group of Lutte Ouvriere supporters including the 'reserve candidate' for the constituency were set upon by a group of Communist Party thugs and two of the LO supporters ended up in hospital seriously knocked around the head and face.

Lutte Ouvriere is continuing its protest against the banning of its meeting. A number of prominent intellectuals and political figures have signed the protest including sociologist Pierre Naville, Daniel Meyer, President of the League for Human Rights, and the Secretary of the Socialist Party. Rather than risk a major clash with police by defying the ban, Lutte Ouvriere planned to devote Thursday 1 March to a day of public campaign with local demonstrations and street meetings all over Paris.

So far the Communist Party has still failed to make any protest and not one of the left municipalities in the Paris area has offered a hall.

Blacklegs' ghosts

THE press' deep concern for accuracy when dealing with industrial disputes was well illustrated on Tuesday last week when the Daily Express carried a front page story about the alleged 'crack-up' of the proposed Ford strike.

Age reporter Brian Steel wrote: 'The anti-strike rebels—still without organised leadership—repeated claims that the 400 stewards were acting "over the heads" of the men in calling an all-out stoppage on 1 March.'

'Bodyworker Tom Osman said: "I am sure the shop stewards had the men's full support when this strike talk started. But I am convinced that given the chance of a second vote in a secret ballot, most men would want to stay at work."

'Mr John Haylock, who works in the body group, said: "It is one thing fighting the Ford Motor Company, but when you take on the government as well you must be on a loser".'

This was good stuff for the Express campaign, which up till then had been forced to rely on 'anonymous' quotes of alleged Ford workers. The names of these two dissident bodyworkers enormously increased the credibility of the 'blacklegs' backlash'.

They also surprised workers in the body plant at Ford, who knew Tom Osman as one of the toughest and most militant stewards at Dagenham, who has consistently voiced his contempt for the secret ballot. Tom Osman has spent the past few weeks in urgent talk with the men he represents, always arguing that the alternative to a strike on 1 March is a long step backwards for trade unionism at Ford.

Surprised

John Haylock's views on these matters, as most workers there know, differ hardly at all from those of Tom Osman.

The article also surprised Tom Osman and John Haylock. Neither had spoken a word to Brian Steel or any other reporter from any capitalist newspaper, let alone the Daily Express. And if they had spoken to any newspaper, they would have said exactly the opposite of what was printed in their names.

On Wednesday morning Tom Osman rang Brian Steel with the news that he was not the man whom Steel had interviewed the previous day.

'I'm frightfully sorry,' said Steel. But Tom wasn't having a private apology. 'I think you ought to apologise to your readers,' he said, 'all five million of them.'

Steel explained rather nervously that the man who had given Osman's name had said he was a member of the Tory Party—a fact which Steel had not included in his article. He agreed with Tom that he had made no attempt at all to check the identity of the Tory informer.

The following day, on page five, down page, the Daily Express printed a tiny news item stating that Ford stewards 'claimed' that 'trouble-makers' were using the names of stewards and militants to sow disaffection among the workers. There was no apology, and not even an official retraction. Tom Osman is still being confronted by people who read the original front page story and did not read the correction.

'I tell them what I've always told everyone about these things,' he says cheerfully. 'Don't believe a word you read in the capitalist press.'

THE press and television, in fact, are having a lot of difficulty tracking down the millions of Ford workers who are against the strike. The producers of Weekend World, ITV's Sunday morning current affairs programme, were delighted when they found Andy Wilson, a Ford worker, who was prepared to go on telly and denounce the stewards' action. Weekend World then asked Danny



BACHING UP A BANK SPREE

THE DEBATE late at night in the House of Commons on 19 February on the vexed question of second mortgages was one of those nasty occasions when real dirt was flung across the gangway.

Mrs Sally Oppenheim, the Tory MP for Gloucester, and Mr Peter Fry, Tory MP for Wellingborough, spoke at some length about the plight of constituents who had been foolish enough to borrow money from a company in the Hodge Group, whose chairman is Sir Julian Hodge, the pride and joy of the Welsh Labour Party.

Mrs Oppenheim spoke of a constituent who had borrowed £350, and paid back £559.80 in five years at an annual interest rate of some 22 per cent. The constituent was constantly harassed by Hodge's bully boys even though he hardly ever fell behind with his payments. Even after the payments were finished, he still received letters claiming payment and threatening legal action.

Mr Fry told of an ageing lady who fell behind with her payments to Hodge and received a letter from



Hodge: Labour's pride and joy

Sir Julian himself suggesting that she might be able to get help with her interest payments from the Ministry of Social Security.

Said Mr Fry, 'I do not see why the taxpayer should help support such a system, or Sir Julian Hodge, even if he does have members of the Opposition Front Bench as his fellow directors of the Bank of Wales.'

Mr Elystan Morgan, who speaks on Welsh affairs for the Labour Opposition, jumped to his feet,

'Humbly!' he cried. 'The Hon Gentleman should look to his own side.'

Later in the debate, Mr Morgan interrupted a minister to explain: 'No person on this side of the House, with the sole exception of the leader of the Liberal Party, is a director of or in any way concerned with the hire purchase company or a money-lenders' concern.'

Mr Morgan's touching solidarity with his colleagues has, unfortunately, little connection with the facts.

The Observer (18 February) carried an excellent exposure of the £300m, money-for-nothing racket of second mortgages, in which half a million people a year are charged fantastic rates of interest by moneylending companies who contribute nothing and stand to lose nothing. (The whole house reverts to the lending company if the payments are not kept up).

The article explained that low rates of interest are available on second mortgages from building societies, and asked: 'Why do borrowers flock to second mortgage giants like Financings, Hodge, Cedar Holdings and UDT, to fast-growing operations like Guardian Capital, London and County and Western Credit and to newcomers like the Commercial Bank of Wales?'

FLOATED

The Commercial Bank of Wales is chaired by Sir Julian Hodge. It was floated last year amid much publicity.

Among its directors were James Callaghan, former Labour Home Secretary and MP for Cardiff South East, and George Thomas, former Labour Minister for Wales and lifelong supporter of Harold Wilson.

Callaghan has 1000 shares in the bank. Mrs Callaghan has another 4000. George Thomas has 5000. If the bank is as successful as Sir Julian is already claiming, these shares are likely to be worth about £3 each.

More remarkable is the number of Welsh Labour MPs who have managed to get shares in the Commercial Bank. Mr Leo Abse, for instance, a wealthy solicitor who is also Labour MP for Pontypool, has 4000 shares, Mr E Davies (Rhondda East) has 500, Mr T A Jones (Rhondda West) has 500, so has Mr William Edwards, MP for Merionethshire. Mr Alfred Evans (Caerphilly) has 1000, Mr Cledwyn Hughes (Anglesey), former Labour cabinet minister, has 1000, and so has Mr A R Probert (Aberdare).

The list is not exclusive (other names will be appearing in Socialist Worker soon), but it shows how many Labour MPs are anxious to declare their faith in the courage, faith and Welshness of Sir Julian Hodge.

HEROIC

Rank and file Labour Party members will recall the heroic efforts made at the Labour Party Conference in 1971 by James Callaghan, Labour Party Treasurer, to do a deal with Hodge whereby Labour Party members would become salesmen for insurance policies of the Hodge organisation. The party would get a cut and Sir Julian would get the biggest cut of all.

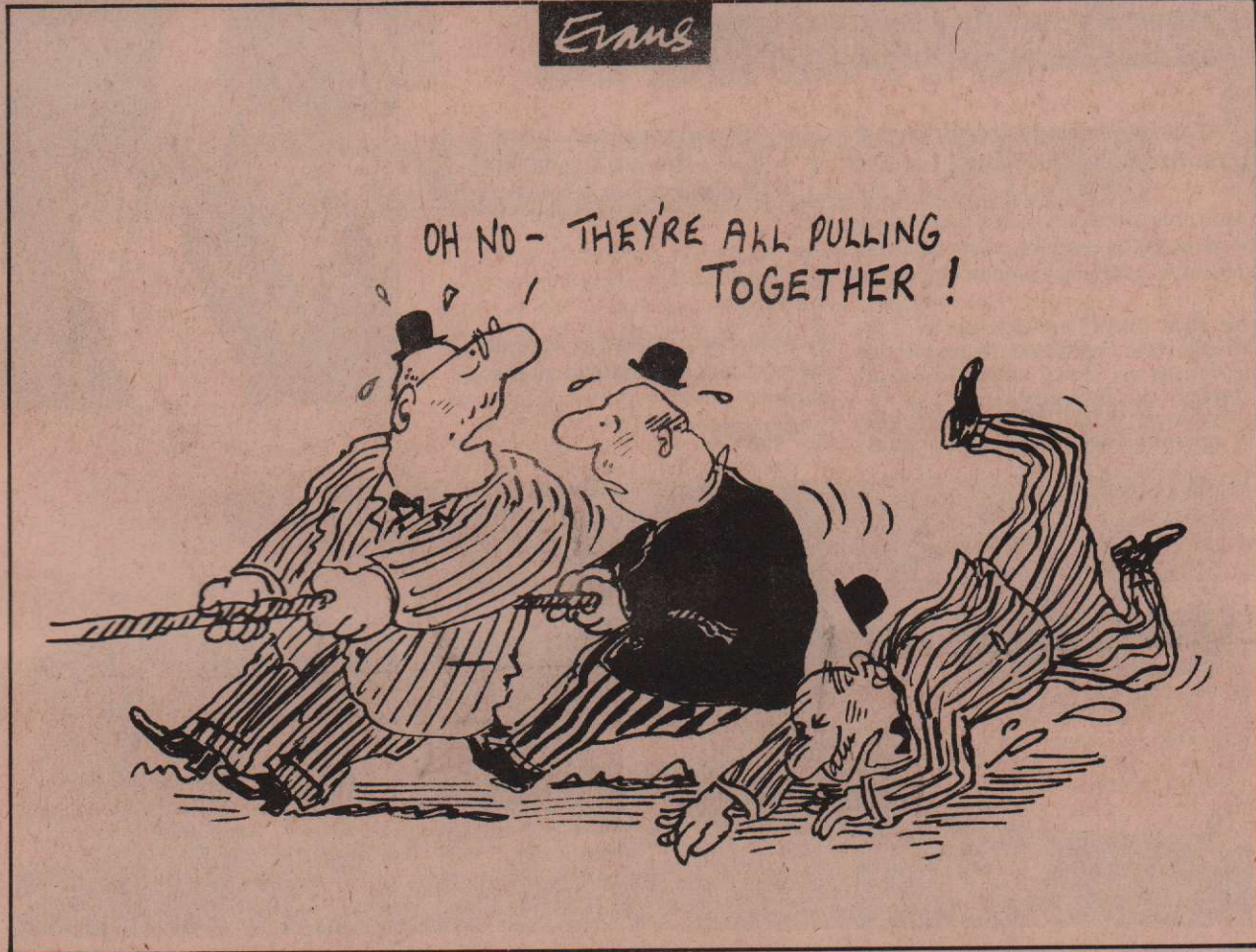
Callaghan's proposal was voted down by an enormous majority.

Less than a year later, Sunny Jim Callaghan was to be seen in the lobbies and smoking rooms of the House of Commons offering his Labour colleagues shareholdings in the new bank of which Sir Julian was to be chairman and Mr Callaghan the most distinguished director.

BERNARD MANNING, the comedian, found a useful defence against the charge of speeding when he came up recently before magistrates at Bury and pleaded guilty to driving too fast along Manchester Road. He had two previous endorsements, and a third meant an automatic disqualification.

Mr Richard Henry, Manning's lawyer, told the magistrates: 'My client has recently bought a Rolls-Royce, something of which he is very proud. It would cause a great deal of sadness to Mr Manning to have to sell it.'

The magistrates agreed. They told Mr Manning that in view of his plea he would not be disqualified—on grounds of hardship. He was fined £20.



Connor, a well-known militant steward, if he was prepared to answer Andy Wilson's arguments and charges on the programme. Connor agreed.

When Wilson heard that Connor was going to appear opposite him, he quickly made his excuses and ducked out of the programme. It seems that Danny Connor is Wilson's own steward, and Wilson knew only too well who would come best out of the argument.

Perhaps Mr Wilson was also a little nervous in case Danny Connor revealed that Wilson is the secretary of the Chapel Heath Conservative Party.

Parliament Puffs

THE All-Party Anglo-Thai Parliamentary Group met last Monday evening to elect new officers. Mr J D Concannon, a miner and Labour MP for Mansfield, presided along with the secretary, Mr Charles Fletcher Cooke, Tory MP for Darwen. A small attendance was expected since there was no food provided. Only cocktails.

There isn't much hope of a big turn-out either at the lunch in Dining Room C organised for 3 April by the

Anglo-Irish Parliamentary Group, with the guest of honour His Excellency Danal O'Sullivan, the Irish Ambassador in London. Hugh Delargy (Labour MP for Thurrock) is the chairman of the group, and John Farr (Tory MP for Harborough) is the secretary. The reason for pessimism about the attendance is that this is a 'paying do'—MPs who want to meet His Excellency will have to shell out £3 a head—exclusive of wines.

On the other hand there has been quite a rush from both sides of the House to join the very important trip to Heathrow, to have a look at security measures at the airport. An early start was necessary in order to be in time for the 'presentation by the British Airports Authority' at 10am (a coffee pot was not presented) followed by a leisurely tour of the airport.

The important part, of course, was the lunch, hosted by BEA, BOAC and the BAA. By all accounts the food was marvellous, and the drink lubricated the 'discussion' which went on until after 2.30pm. The organiser, Mr Cecil Parkinson, bright young property speculator MP for Enfield West, was congratulated by all.

Whisky-loving MPs who also have yachts had their work cut out on 22 February. The House of Commons Yacht Club met under chairman Tom Normanton (Tory, Cheadle) at

4.30pm and the All-Party Scotch Whisky Association collected to hear the Minister of Agriculture speak at 5pm.

Smailes' race

THE outstanding fairness of the Industrial Relations Act to all workers of whatever race, colour or creed, was demonstrated yet again at a tribunal in Bradford on 5 February chaired by Mr G M Smailes. Before the tribunal were two cases involving Mr Qurbhan Hussain and Mr Mushtaq Hussain, both of whom had been dismissed by William Hutchinson (Yarns) of Greengates.

There was no time wasted over Mr Q Hussain. After all, as the chairman pointed out, he had been taking part in a strike, and as section 26 of the Industrial Relations Act makes clear, if the main reason for dismissal is that a worker was on strike, the dismissal is automatically 'fair'.

The case of Mr M Hussain raised more problems. He had been a shop steward for a section of the mill which had not been paid a 10 per cent increase handed out to every other section of the mill. He had organised a strike to force the management's hand.

Mr Hussain later had his shop steward's credentials removed. The pay dispute was settled but, three days later, according to evidence from a foreman, Hussain was again heard inspiring night shift workers to strike. Hussain vigorously denied that he had ever done any such thing, but the management sacked him instantly.

Unanimously, Mr Smailes and his colleagues found that 'the firm did act reasonably'.

FREEZE EXCEPTIONS DEPARTMENT

'There will be no exceptions' Prime Minister, 14 February

1. Church of Scotland Ministers have had a rise of £147 a year (nearly £3 a week) backdated to last December. Although the rise occurs in the middle of the freeze, it has been agreed by the Department of Trade and Industry. 'These are stipends,' says the DTI, 'and are not payments or transactions within the scope of the Counter-Inflation Act.'

The government has found a new, revolutionary cure

for inflation. Wear a dog-collar.

2. Nottingham Manufacturing, the firm which owns the Mansfield Hosiery mill where 500 Indian workers were recently on strike for nine weeks, seems to have survived. Profits moved to a record £6,967,313 (last year: £6,168,714). With Treasury permission, the company has increased dividends (which are 'frozen') from 12 per cent to 14 per cent.

NEW THREAT TO COLONELS' GREEK TERROR REGIME...

by members of the Greek group Socialist Revolution

TWELVE-YEARS jail sentences on the general secretary and former general secretary of the Greek Communist Party have been handed down by an Athens court.

Babi Drakopoulos and D Partsalides were charged along with other leading members of the party of 'conspiring to overthrow the established social order.' Other sentences ranged from three years to one year and some of the defendants were discharged.

The trial, which started last month, coincided with the re-emergence of the mass movement in Greece. University students staged an illegal demonstration in the streets of Athens, shouting such slogans as 'Down with the Junta', 'Yankees Out—Bosses Out' and 'The workers are our brothers'.

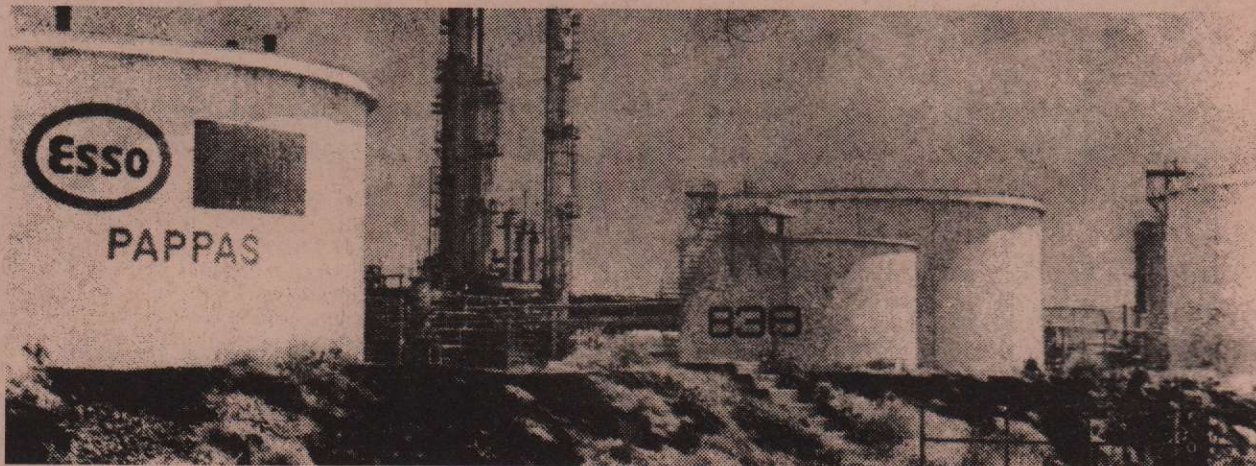
Such militancy was not reflected in the court. Babi Drakopoulos's main defence was that the Communist Party opposes only the present military regime and hopes to co-operate with the army and the exiled king for a return to . . . normality.

The sentences must be condemned and the release of the jailed men demanded, but it should be noted that, by Greek standards, the sentences were comparatively light.

At the trial both Drakopoulos and Partsalides asserted their belief in a Greek multi-party, humanist 'socialism' along the lines of Dubcek's programme for Czechoslovakia before the Russians moved in. This policy was to be achieved through parliament after the army had overthrown the junta and the king had sworn in a coalition government to hold free elections.

Defence lawyers stressed that the Communist Party would be just like any other party if democracy returned and one defence witness explained apologetically that references to Marxism-Leninism in party literature were an 'unavoidable formality'.

The judge, who is normally under instructions to forbid political speeches in court, allowed the defence proceedings to carry on for a whole



A new Esso refinery: foreign capital is a mainstay of the regime

Papadopoulos, head of the junta: workers' organisations suppressed



week so that the Communist Party line could be fully expounded.

What has happened in Greece that has forced the official left to adopt such timid, reformist positions?

WHEN the military group under Papadopoulos seized power in 1967 its first aim was to silence the popular movement, a movement

largely unprepared for a fight because of its orientation on parliamentary politics under the influence of the Communist Party.

The junta, using terror on a large scale—mass arrests, systematic torture, police harassment—succeeded in disbanding every unofficial workers' and peasants' organisation and placed its own appointees in the unions and co-operatives. The slightest attempt to organise was ruthlessly persecuted and suppressed.

It was a stunning blow, especially as large sections of the working class and the peasantry had illusions about a 'centre-left' victory in the then forthcoming elections.

SMOKESCREEN

The colonels set about implementing a vicious anti-working class, anti-peasant programme of economic development and reforms to bring Greece up to 'European standards' and to join the Common Market. Behind this smokescreen a vast process of monopolisation was launched.

THE major Greek capitalists, the shipowners and industrialists who as junior partners to US and British interests control the whole of the Greek economy, are being helped to get a bigger and better grip. Agriculture is being rationalised by forcing hundreds of thousands of small-scale peasants off their land to create large farming enterprises tied to major export corporations or canning industries.

Commerce is being centralised for the benefit of a few monopolies. Incentives and subsidies are handed out by the government to industrialists to promote takeovers. Huge amounts are spent on new works in industrial development zones

to attract foreign investment.

Taxation is increased to finance all these development efforts and repay the ever-increasing international debts. Wages are frozen while prices soar under the pressures of the world monetary crisis—the Drachma was devalued last year—and increased direct taxation.

No effort is spared to convert Greece into a worthwhile investment proposition for American and European capital and its local partners.

At the same time a political offensive has been launched to bolster up the shaken political institutions of the Greek ruling class by reorganising them around that pillar of western freedom, the army. NATO-equipped and trained, with an officer corps developed under US advice, the Greek Army proved in 1967 its ability to safeguard capitalist interests.

Not surprisingly, the colonels proceeded to change the constitution, stiffening its repressive side and reorganising the legal and executive powers of the state.

The various political parties at first reacted against the junta, first because they were not sure whether it would succeed in silencing the popular movement and secondly because their own role was being curtailed.

But once the junta had demonstrated its ability to push through the economic development programme so crucial to Greek big business, middle-class politicians, urged on by their American and European friends, swung from resistance to loyal opposition.

Today they are actively supporting

a process of 'normalisation', meaning the full application of the junta's constitution.

FACED with this situation, the Communist Party planted itself firmly at the tail of middle-class politicians. With an analysis that explained the junta as just a bunch of incompetent, power-hungry colonels in conflict with all democratic elements, the party advanced a line of no class or social struggle until all democrats united and succeeded in restoring democracy.

In keeping with its search for such a broad union of democrats, the party has followed every twist and turn of its potential allies. When liberal politicians were strongly opposed to the junta, the party trumpeted that the colonels were about to fall. Today the party is turning to the right even on a verbal level.

ILLUSION

In the meantime Greek workers are recovering from the shock of their defeat. Every day more and more people abandon the illusion that any improvement can come about by waiting for pressure from European governments or deals among politicians to topple the junta.

Although strikes are illegal, strike action by railmen, bank employees and department store workers have been stopped only after desperate efforts—a combination of concessions and pressure—by the government.

At the same time, students are challenging the junta's restrictions on political activity. The faculties of engineering and technology in Athens have been shut for two weeks now by a massive student strike against the government's plans to legalise repression in the universities and to formally approve ties between the college authorities and big business.

In this climate of refound militancy, more and more workers are breaking with reformist ideas. They are joining the revolutionary left in the struggle to build fighting mass organisations among workers, peasants and students and to create a new revolutionary socialist leadership able to lead the fight against the local capitalists, their foreign backers and the colonels' tuggish regime.

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.

Foreign capital helps bolster military junta

Inflation and the wage freeze—a special Socialist Worker analysis

THE GOVERNMENT has been using one main argument to justify its introduction of laws that prevent workers striking for better pay. It says that rising wages are responsible for rising prices and that inflation cannot be prevented without stopping wage increases.

The hollowness of the Tory argument is easily proved. For four months wages have been completely frozen. Yet prices are rising faster than ever.

Again, the rate of inflation in Britain is higher than in almost all other western countries. But wages are not. The rise in real wages in Britain between 1964 and 1972 was 26 per cent. In Italy the rise was 53 per cent, in Belgium 42 per cent, in Germany 41 per cent, in Holland 39 per cent, France 37 per cent, Luxemburg 28 per cent.

The National Institute for Economic and Social Research concluded last year 'that for manufacturing industry as a whole, the total cost to employers of an hour's work was lower in Britain than anywhere else in continental Europe except for Finland and Austria.'

It is certainly not the fault of workers if the British economy is once again entering a state of crisis. But for those who support the present system of society there is no way out of the crisis other than by attacking workers' living standards and basic rights.

The problem facing the owners of British industry is simple. Any growth of the British economy leads to imports rising more quickly than exports and to a balance of payments crisis.

TURNING POINT

Because of this, between 1966 and 1971 government policy, Labour and Tory, was to deliberately hold down the rate of growth of the economy. In that period the rate of growth of the British economy was only half that of West Germany, France and Italy and a fifth of Japan.'

Meanwhile productivity deals were pushed through, forcing up unemployment. Interest rates were kept at a high level, ensuring high rents and mortgage repayments and attempts were made to hold down wages through wage freeze and income policy.

All this, it was said, was a necessary preparation for a prolonged non-stop period of economic growth later on. If only everyone would make sacrifices, in the long run things would be all right.

The turning point was proclaimed last year. The economy was to be allowed to grow and unemployment would automatically fall. Previous balance of payments problems were to be avoided by allowing the pound

THE CRISIS: WHO IS REALLY TO BLAME?

WRITTEN BY CHRIS HARMAN

to 'float', that is decline in value compared with other currencies.

Now, after only a year with a growth rate of five per cent—considered normal by most other western countries—all the old problems are re-emerging on a bigger scale.

A surplus of exports over imports has turned into a surplus of imports over exports. Experts calculate that this year's balance of payments deficit will be an all-time record.

Unemployment remains around the 750,000 mark. And the 'floating' downwards of the pound means rising food and raw material prices.

The basic fact is that years of slow industrial growth has left British big business in no shape to compete internationally. Half its machine tools are more than 10 years old (as against only a third in Germany and Japan). A relatively backward industry cannot keep up with its rivals. So last year imported cars, for instance, accounted for a record 23 per cent of the British market.

Entry into the Common Market is unlikely to help matters. The stockbroking firm of Phillips and Drew recently pointed out that 'the effects of Common Market entry are likely to be unfavourable to a large and important section of manufacturing industry.'

Faced with this situation, there are two reactions among the one per cent of the population who own 80 per cent of industry. One is to cut investment in Britain down to the minimum and to channel it instead to more rapidly expanding countries.

So while investment in British industry fell by 10 per cent last year, British investment abroad doubled. Many major British firms are beginning to set up shop in other Common Market countries, if they are not there already.

TAKE STEPS

But this can only make the long-term situation of British industry deteriorate even further. The main sections of big business do not want this. So their reaction is to demand that the government take steps to prevent imports rising faster than exports and to ensure higher profits for British industry. Then they say they will be willing to invest here.

That is the rationale behind the government's present policy. It knows that unless it stops wages rising as fast as profits, then the long-term decline will go on at an ever faster pace.

That is what it means when it says that 'industrial action threatens the nation'. That is also why its freeze

policy allows three-quarters of big companies to raise their profits quite legally.

The Labour Party and TUC leaders are critical of the Tory approach.

But if Labour was in power it would be forced to follow policies virtually identical to the Tories. Its policies, as much as the Tories', presuppose that the one per cent of the population who own most of industry are free to invest when and how they please. What else can talk of 'agreement' mean?

This means that any Labour government—however radical its words—can only run the economy as long as it keeps the one per cent happy. In 1964 Harold Wilson was elected to power on a programme of very moderate reforms, such as the abolition of prescription charges. As big businessmen moved their money out of the country he was forced to abandon even these limited measures.

If a Labour government were elected today it would be forced to abandon its promises even more quickly. Within a matter of weeks all that would remain would be 'wage restraint'—voluntary or otherwise.

Working people certainly need a

positive alternative to the present situation. Rising prices and high unemployment are by-products of the decline of British capitalism that hurt all of us.

The only real way out is through revolutionary change. While a small minority control industry, it can always blackmail the rest of us by threatening to run down industry unless we comply with its wishes.

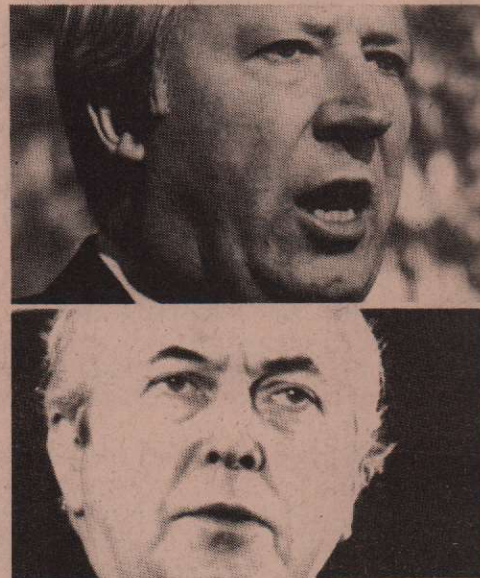
RUN SOCIETY

This state of affairs can be ended—but only when those who create the wealth take control of its production and distribution.

It would demand a mass intervention in the affairs of every factory and office by a working-class movement that enforced its own plans on the economy.

A movement capable of pressing for such action from the organised working class has to be built in the months and years ahead. The long-term decline of British capitalism means that even the most meagre improvements in working-class living standards now involve massive confrontations with the state.

The important point is that workers learn from these battles that they have the ability to run society much better than Heath and his friends.



Heath and Wilson: both support wage restraint

New nazi bid in the North

by Richard Jones

Huddersfield International Socialists

EVENTS of the past few months make it quite clear that extreme right-wing organisations, led by the fascist National Front, are mounting a concerted campaign in Lancashire and Yorkshire.

Following hard on the heels of race-hate marches in Blackburn and Bradford and an abortive rally in Manchester, the National Front is planning another meeting, this time in Huddersfield.

Boasted

Speaking at the annual dinner of the Huddersfield branch of the Front, the national president, John Tyndall, (a former side-kick of goose-stepping, self-styled Führer of the British Nazis, Colin Jordan), boasted that Huddersfield would be the centre of the fascists' Yorkshire campaign.

The first shots have already been fired in the attempt to get that campaign off the ground. Two secret meetings have been held to discuss plans and organise for a meeting and march on Saturday 10 March in Huddersfield.

Ostensibly, these will centre on the Front's opposition to the Common Market. But as past experience has shown, this almost respectable veneer will merely serve as an excuse for another anti-immigration demonstration—a continuation of the Front's attempts



National Front leaders Tyndall and Webster (right) in their less 'respectable' days with Colin Jordan

to make political capital out of racial intolerance wherever it can.

The leadership of the Front is becoming increasingly confident. Enoch Powell's carefully calculated racial provocations has given them something they needed badly—superficial 'respectability'—and they have come increasingly into the open.

Prior to the last Conservative Party conference, Front members were ordered to infiltrate the party at local constituency level. The increasing influence of the Front

within, for instance, the Monday Club, shows the success of this policy.

The 4000-strong vote for Jim Merrick of the British Campaign Against Immigration in the Rochdale by-election gave them a fresh boost and this was followed almost immediately by a 3000-strong vote for the Front's own candidate at Uxbridge.

This disturbing rise in electoral support for the racials has been taken by them as the green light for increasing their agitation in what

they consider to be the most fruitful areas. Tyndall has personally ear-marked the north because he claims that 'there is more support here for our ideas than in the south.'

What he really means, of course, is that he hopes that opposition to those ideas will not be as well organised here as elsewhere. But so far his hopes have been dashed.

At Blackburn and Bradford the racist turn out was dwarfed by counter-demonstrations.

At Manchester, a united front of socialist and trade union organisation succeeded, with barely a week's notice, in getting together a strong picket,

Picket

Already, police officials in Huddersfield have expressed fears that there will be similar occurrences here and they have promised to protect the fascists with as great a force as they can muster.

This makes it even more important that there should be massive support for the counter-demonstration that is now being organised. Because of police interference with the route already planned, no precise details are yet available as to the final arrangements.

These will be published in Socialist Worker. Make sure you play your part in keeping these people down.



The trade union movement is willing to fight the Tories. Section after section has voted its determination to mobilise for industrial action to defeat the freeze. And alongside the traditionally militant groups like car workers come civil servants and hospital staff to underline that this is no ordinary struggle but an unprecedented

revolt by the low paid against state shackling of wages.

But the spirit and determination at the grass roots is not matched by action at the top. Our industrial reporter traces the shabby vacillation and retreat of the TUC General Council

Because of this glaring lack of

leadership from the top, firm organisation at rank and file level is crucial if the present revolt is to be welded into a collective assault on the government. Councils of action are not an empty slogan but a necessity for every area and a veteran revolutionary looks back to the experience of such councils in the turbulent 1920s.

FEATHER-BRAIN POLICY SPELLS DISASTER

by LAURIE FLYNN

Socialist Worker Industrial Reporter

IN BRITAIN, unlike France and Italy, we don't have general strikes, said Vic Feather in one of his more revealing remarks last week. After all, he might have added, here in Britain we have something much more valuable than some outdated (and un-British) notion of mass struggle—we have the General Council of the TUC.

Faced with the latest twist of the employers' offensive—the wage freeze and Phases Two and Three of the so-called Counter Inflation Policy which makes strikes illegal—the TUC General Council has once again come up with some new tactics which will be of great assistance to the striking gas workers and the millions of other workers under attack. They have published a document and called a conference.

The document 'Economic Policy and Collective Bargaining in 1973' contains all the information anyone needs to know about the TUC leadership's attitude to the wage freeze and the rest of the Tory government's drive to shackle the working-class movement.

Towards the end of its heart cries for a higher growth rate, slightly less unemployment and a few other worthy softening of the Tory assault, the document records the General Council's 'hope that the government will change its policy at an early date.'

In addition, to set the scene for the debate of the document at the special TUC next Monday, the TUC makes it clear that it will not be party to the implementation of a policy decided on and pursued unilaterally by the government. Accordingly, the TUC General Council will be advising member unions not to help in staffing the Pay and Prices Boards which the Tories have created.

So here we have it once again—the policy of 'non-co-operation' adopted and then abandoned in relation to the Industrial Relations

Act. And it is worse even than that in one important sense. For the TUC is again pleading for a voluntary deal where—at a price—they will help to keep down wages and patch up the ever larger cracks in the big business system.

In any case there is collective agreement that nothing at all should actually be done about opposing the Tories, least of all when 'specific industrial situations of some gravity' do arise.

Those grave situations are with us already, precisely as intended by the Tory government and the employing class. But as far as the TUC leadership are concerned the gas workers can be taken on alone.

The Ford workers, the civil servants and a host of others can follow them. The TUC leaders will do nothing except monitor the

specific gravity of each 'separate' industrial situation.

It has such a familiar ring, this recipe for disaster. When the Tories first came to power in June 1970 Vic Feather talked briefly of industrial action to counter any more-than-usually vicious attacks which might result.

Presumably he felt he had to impress upon the new Prime Minister the fact that he, Vic Feather, was a very important person.

And then came the Industrial Relations Bill, described by Feather as 'this most vicious piece of class legislation'. The TUC announced that such legislation would be resisted to the bitter end.

But 'infamous' proposals were allowed to become an 'infamous' law. The TUC leadership would do no more to translate their volumes of defiant speeches into action than call a one-day demonstration.

STAGE ARMY

It was a marvellous demonstration, too, showing 250,000-strong that the real battalions of the working-class movement would not be found wanting if their leaders chose to treat them as something other than a stage army. But that too was impermissible.

In 1971 the miners showed the way and smashed through the government's policy of effective wage cuts. The TUC declined to call a meeting of the transport unions to co-ordinate solidarity action of even the most basic kind. Presumably that too sniffed of something that happens in France and Italy, not Britain. Miners in their thousands went out and got the solidarity that was needed.

And then came the railway crisis and the fines on the Transport Union over the dockers' battle for the right to work. In the most amazing display of somersaulting that has been seen outside of an international gymnastic competition, the TUC's opposition to the Industrial Relations Act collapsed into rubble.

Speaking in Glasgow on Saturday 15 April, Victor Feather stated: 'The divisiveness intended by the Industrial Relations Act has been



February 1971: 250,000 marched—and were dispersed

nullified and destroyed by the unity of the trade union movement.'

Six days later—at the end of the week of state assaults on the transport unions and the railway unions—Feather was saying that there would have to be a change in the TUC line. Unions would be allowed to attend the National Industrial Relations Court to defend themselves 'after consultation with the TUC.' Talks and more talks with the Tories were going on throughout this period.

And even as the rank and file initiative of thousands upon thousands of workers forced the release of the five imprisoned



FEATHER: general strikes 'not British'

dockers in July, the TUC leadership were dodging in and out of talks with the Tories. And finally they were forced to declare for that hated thing, a general strike (only 24 hours to be sure) to prevent unofficial bodies assuming leadership.

At no time was there any move to develop a movement that could and would smash the Tory anti-union laws and challenge the very survival of the government. That would be 'lawless', it would be 'political' to take on the government of the day.

And so they acquiesced. Apparently it is not a political act to collaborate.

The wage freeze resulted, the direct product of their inability to lead a real challenge. A freeze was necessary because the rank and file had rendered the Industrial Relations Act inoperable and had shattered the Tories' 'unofficial' wage norms.

Scarcely were the dockers out of jail when more talks took place. Scarcely had the September Trades Union Congress in Brighton voiced

its opposition to Incomes Policy, when the TUC leaders were once more across Heath's table talking about a voluntary incomes policy which they would help to police.

Throughout the whole period unemployment was at record heights. The TUC found this unacceptable—and suggested a level higher than they had found unacceptable a few years earlier. The economy should grow at an extra one per cent, they pleaded.

At the special congress next week, the TUC leaders may, just may, be forced to call a few token demonstrations of the movement's opposition to Tory policy. They will do so to strengthen some illusory negotiating position with a government obliged to try to force the working class to pay the price of the system's problems.

REAL CHALLENGE

But the TUC leaders will do everything in their power to avoid anything that smacks of a real challenge to the Tory government and the employing class.

They will be looking for a deal, a resurrection of their Conciliation and Arbitration Service ideas. They will do so because for them the working-class movement must always be subordinate, must never really mount a challenge to the social system of which both they and the government of the day are so integral a part.

Fortunately there are other sections of the movement that can provide the basis to defend the gas men, the Ford workers and the other sections of the working class who have nowhere to run and nowhere to hide.

The construction of effective bodies in solidarity with the gas men, in solidarity with Ford, most certainly involves a political challenge to a government which economically and politically is threatening the very basic freedoms which previous working class struggles have given birth to.

To 'keep politics out of it' is a very definite political position, an invitation to celebrate your subordination.

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*.



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Councils of Action ...

SPECIAL
TUC
CONGRESS

COUNCILS OF ACTION were born in the turbulent days of the summer of 1920. The ruling class of Europe, particularly that of Britain and France, were concerned that the sweep of the Russian armies towards the West would stimulate the socialist revolution in central Europe.

In those circumstances the government sent Lord D'Abernon, who was then British ambassador in Berlin, together with General Radcliffe and the secretary to the Cabinet, to form with the French an Anglo-French military mission in Warsaw. It was on the eve of what D'Abernon described as 'The eighteenth decisive battle of the world'.

The Red Army was at the gates of Warsaw. On 5 August, 1920, Sapieha, the Polish Foreign Secretary, urged that Britain and France should declare war against the Soviet government.

D'Abernon radioed the call from Warsaw for a British expeditionary force. It seemed at the time that the government of Lloyd George and Curzon were once more preparing to plunge the working people into war.

But they had not reckoned on the will of the working class. In an unprecedented display of unity, overriding all sectional interests, by extra-parliamentary action, the warlike moves of the government were defeated.

Following the massive demonstrations in all the major towns of Britain on the weekend of 7-8 August, the leadership of the movement, the Labour Party executive, the parliamentary Labour Party and the parliamentary committee of the Trades Union Congress, met in a joint meeting.

They announced the formation of a Central Council of Action and summoned all affiliated organisations to an emergency conference in Central Hall, Westminster.

From that joint meeting went a warning to the government 'that the whole industrial power of the organised workers will be used to defeat this war.'

Threadbare

Throughout Britain in those critical August days, no less than 350 councils of action were formed which inspired and co-ordinated the national protest movement against the government. This indeed was an example of the united power of the workers movement, concentrated on influencing the course of events by other means than the threadbare system of parliamentary debate.

The effectiveness of the councils of action as the organiser of a unified workers movement in the localities was not lost on the militants. In the days preparatory to the General Strike of 1926, five years later, the revolutionary left and the rank and file Minority Movement campaigned in earnest for the trades councils to once again transform themselves into councils of action.

The employers' attack on the working class became ever more threatening. In the days and months that the employers and the government were preparing all the forces of the state to crush the mine-workers of this country, the National Minority Movement called a special national conference of action on 21 March 1926.

No less than 883 delegates attended that conference. Significantly, 52 trades councils were represented and these included delegates from the principal towns in the country.

Message

In this day and age it is difficult to recapture the spirit of militancy that spread through that conference. From that conference of action went the clear lead to the rank and file militants to prepare and unite once again the workers in the localities by transforming the trades councils



by
HARRY WICKS

into councils of action.

This message, although the voice of a minority, found an echo throughout the country.

When in May 1926, the General Strike was called there had been precious little preparation by the official leadership of the grass roots organisation of the working class. This in the circumstances was not unexpected.

A leadership which neither believed in the struggle, and from the first day of the struggle sought ways of ending it, was not concerned with the developing of an effective machine to prosecute the strike.

Stirred

True, there were hundreds of meetings on the justice of the miners' case. In that respect the late A J Cook was a tower of strength. His speaking campaign stirred thousands.

It was left to the rank and file in the localities to fashion their own machinery. Here memories of the earlier battle in the summer of 1920 and the bold lead of the Minority Movement proved of inestimable value.

When the crunch came, the working class displayed, overnight as it were, an amazing capacity to improvise and organise. All the memoirs of politicians, all the studies of academics, all the piddling excuses of trade union leaders, from left to right, have been unable



Police attacking strikers at London's Elephant and Castle: councils of action played a key role in building workers defence

Rank and file fashioned their own machinery

cils of action, where such a sub-committee was formed, it had the responsibility of organising the stewarding of the council's meetings and assisting with the organisation of picketing where and when required.

Entertainment and social committees helped to build the community of interest in the struggle. In most cases the chairman of each of these sub-committees were either members or co-opted members of the executive of the council of action.

Rebirth

This local fighting machine, by no means uniform throughout the country, was nevertheless able to create in the nine days of the General Strike a solid working-class front in defence of the striking mineworkers.

In the battles ahead, against rising prices, the freeze and inflation, we will without doubt see a rebirth of councils of action.

These delegate bodies were admirably suited to unite all the trades in common struggle. With a genius for organisation, these delegate councils in the first days of the General Strike from their ranks created a whole range of sub-committees.

Publicity and propaganda: such a committee organised the meetings and local strike bulletin.

Welfare and relief: in those days the labour representatives on the old Boards of Guardians together with the representatives of the Unemployed Workers Movement sought out and dealt with giving help where it was needed.

Communications: this sub-committee maintained liaison with the TUC and the London Trades Council.

Workers' Defence: in those coun-

to erase that indelible memory of the British working class unifying the ranks of workers in the localities by means of the councils of action.

How was the class organised at rank and file level? It was the tradition in this country of trade union organisation, however, sectional it had been, for all the various trades to meet together in both towns and localities in a trades council.

International Socialism 56



The March issue of International Socialism journal takes a critical look at the state of the left as the working class prepares for a major confrontation with the government and analyses the experience of recent key struggles. Articles include:

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Workers showed amazing capacity to organise

Ford: the betrayal last time

AS FORD rank and file leaders marshal their troops in preparation for a major battle over the government's wage freeze, it is important to recall the sordid tale of how the magnificent nine-week strike two years ago was sold down the river by Hugh Scanlon and Jack Jones, leaders of the two main unions at Ford.

To sweep this story under the carpet would be to leave the Ford workers once again at the mercy of the machinations of these leaders.

After eight weeks the 1971 Ford strike was solid. Although rumours had been circulating about breaks in the ranks at Basildon, Southampton and Daventry, these were soon shown to be false. A mass meeting at Daventry on Friday 26 March voted unanimously to continue the strike, and two days later a meeting at Basildon attended by 3500 workers turned out to be a triumph for the militant stewards.

There could be no doubt that the balance of power was weighted firmly in favour of Ford workers, who were backing to the hilt their strike committees. The official union representatives on the national joint negotiating committee were in turn solidly behind the rank and file leaders.

The union leaders, faced with this strength of the rank and file, were becoming increasingly anxious. They had paid out £2 million in strike benefit, and the problem of raising loans and selling off assets was raised. In the transport union, busmen had started to complain about the 'wastage' of union funds on these 'high-paid car workers'.

The euphoria that followed the Basildon mass meeting was to be short-lived. While the trade union side of the negotiating committee was hardening its line at its meeting on Thursday 25 March, Stanley Gillen, chairman of Ford Europe, was put in touch with Scanlon and Jones through the good offices of Vic Feather, TUC general secretary. A meeting was arranged for the following Monday.

Rejected

It took place not only without the knowledge of the union members of the committee but even without the chief official negotiators, Moss Evans and Reg Birch, being informed.

On the Tuesday, a meeting of the union side of the committee was hurriedly convened for the next day. Scanlon and Jones appeared unexpectedly.

During an angry meeting it emerged that the settlement agreed by Scanlon and Jones not only failed to win parity but did not even achieve substantial progress towards it. The union leaders had accepted a two-year deal which conceded an immediate £4 increase and a further £4 spread over the two years.

This was an increase of 9p an hour. In the fifth week of the strike, the committee had rejected an offer of 8p. Four weeks later, Jones and Scanlon were settling for a whole 1p.

Scanlon and Jones also revealed to the committee that they had accepted for the duration of the agreement a clause forbidding industrial action in support of economic demands. A

BY SABBY SAGALL

majority of the committee voted in favour of these proposals: they were carried by 22 to 6 with two abstentions. Two of the convenors sitting on the committee voted against, while the meeting itself was convened with such unseemly haste that two others had not even been notified.

After this vote, Scanlon and Jones dropped the final bombshell—that the settlement would be recommended to the membership through a secret ballot organised by the company. When the convenors present protested that this was one of the provisions of the Industrial Relations Bill, their protests were unceremoniously overruled. Scanlon and Jones clearly did not want militant plants such as Halewood and Swansea to continue the struggle on their own as they had the previous year and as mass meetings would enable them to do so.

The ballot itself was totally chaotic. Some workers received several ballot forms, while others received none. It was also undemocratic since it was organised with the deliberate aim of by-passing any collective discussion such as would be held at strike committee meetings or mass meetings. The shop stewards did organise 11th-hour mass meetings and did win majorities against accepting the offer.

But those who attended the

meetings were a minority of the total who voted. The final result was 17,818 in favour of accepting the offer, 7043 against.

Clearly, the confidence of the majority of Ford workers had been destroyed by the action of their union leaders and by the fact that most of the official union members of the negotiating committee had timidly fallen into line with their bosses. The surrender of the union leaders—coupled with the fact that strike pay would be discontinued and that no more tax rebates were available—sapped the Ford workers' confidence that they could keep up the struggle independently.

Alternative

The Jones/Scanlon sell-out made clear to many militants how impossible it was to rely on the union leadership for a consistent lead.

The task that still remains is to build within Ford and the car industry an alternative leadership based on the rank and file and capable of mobilising workers in ways that can prevent another sell-out by the union bureaucrats.

Ford workers should now be raising the demand at union branches that any strike be made official. However, to build an alternative leadership, once the struggle is under way the following demands must also be raised:

- No secret deals
- The rank and file workers to keep control of the strike
- All decisions to be taken at mass meetings.



1971: Ford workers cheer their officials—but when Jones and Scanlon stepped in the cheers turned to jeers

Keeping unions out saved \$40m a year

THE STORY of Ford has been one of the greatest hostility to trade union organisation. The owners and managers of Ford used every method to keep unions out of their American plants, finally using widespread physical intimidation.

The benefits of an open shop for Ford were of course absolutely enormous in terms of the size of profit made from paying very low wages.

Ford was one of the pioneers of the moving assembly line. By controlling the speed of the line, and determining the effort of his workers, Henry Ford extracted ever greater production for the same fixed wage.

Few could stand the monotonous driving pace. In the twelve-month period from October 1912 to October 1913 the company had to hire 54,000 to keep a stable workforce of 14,000—an annual turnover of over 400 per cent.

In a union campaign to organise Ford workers, Henry Ford was labelled the 'Speed Up King'. But Ford police arrested leaflet distributors, and the workers were forbidden to leave the factory during the lunchbreak.

However, the union's threat obviously shook Ford, and in 1915 he took measures to maintain an open shop. From paying two dollars a day, Ford raised the wage to five dollars and brought in three-shift working.

The day that hiring started under this new system, ten thousand turned up and a riot started. With people flocking to Detroit from all over the country, conditions inside the plant were bound to suffer. Anything less than total obedience could mean the sack. And to qualify for the five dollars all Ford workers were investigated by the 'Ford Sociology Department.'

Most women were not eligible for the full amount, nor were divorced men, nor single men under 22. A whole series of other qualifications meant, for example, that any worker caught drinking, or taking in male boarders, or even sending money back to Europe had their pay cut.

Speed-up

There was also a probation period. In 1916 alone, some 7500 workers were hired, kept on the \$2.72 a day probation rate for six months, only to be fired and then replaced by new starters on \$2.72.

The savings from unpaid wages and the speed-up accounted for the phenomenal increase in Ford profits from just over one million dollars in 1907 to sixty million dollars nine years later.

In 1919 Ford went one better and brought in the six dollar day. It was more than paid for by accelerating the line to a 'six dollar speed'. And it was little compensation for inflation. For six dollars in 1919 were equivalent to 3.36 1914 dollars.

Throughout the 1920s, while Ford workers were forced to support themselves and their families on their six dollars a day or less, the Ford family drew \$25,000 a day in cash dividends to cover their 'personal expenses'.

During the depression Ford revealed further proof of his statement that a 'great corporation is too big to be human'. In the city of Dearborn, stood the giant River Rouge Ford plant, so huge that it

processed its own coke, iron and steel. Ford blocked a plan for a tax to establish a welfare scheme to help the unemployed, many of whom were Ford workers.

In its place he set up a private welfare programme to take care of the unemployed Ford workers in that city. But when these men and women were rehired, the cost of their relief was deducted from their pay.

In the 1930s, the Ford Service Department organised its own private gestapo to keep unions out of Fords. Workers were spied on, union organisations were infiltrated, and anyone suspected of pro-union sentiments was sacked and often evicted from their home. Physical beatings became increasingly common.

The man in charge was Harry Herbert Bennett. He presided over a private army numbering several thousand, mainly men with criminal records.

Life magazine described the situation 'There was a Mafia-like atmosphere about the company, for Bennett usually wore a .45 automatic and his entourage included armed men.'

In 1937, the year that sit-downs won union recognition in General Motors and Chrysler, union leaflet distributors were severely beaten up by Bennett's men outside the River Rouge plant in front of press photographers.

Fired

It was estimated that by keeping the union out, Ford was saving 40 million dollars a year in unpaid wages.

But the massive strike wave that hit American employers at the end of the 1930s was bound to affect Ford workers. And the company fed the flames of unionism by openly defying federal legislation on collective bargaining.

On 13 March 1941 some 3000 men in one division of River Rouge sat down in protest against the firing of eight union men. Within an hour, Harry Bennett had caved in and rehired them. This was the first strike victory in the history of Fords.

Other victories were notched up in the next few days. All were won by determined sit-down action. Ford retaliated. Eight union committee men in the rolling mill were fired and Ford refused to meet workers' representatives over it.

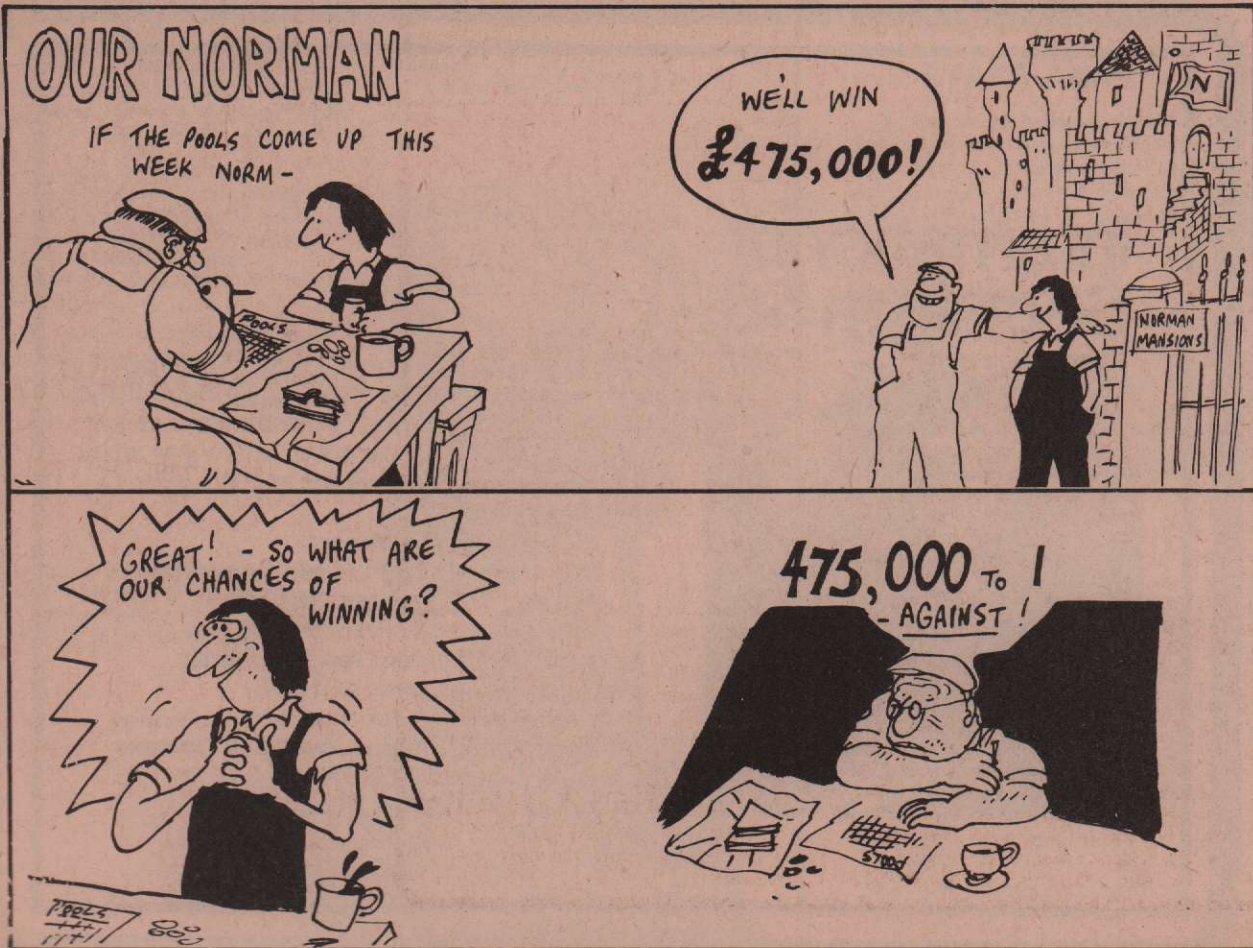
When the Ford empire was shut down on 2 April, Ford hoped to use his 10,000 black workers as strike-breakers. But he had miscalculated their basic working-class solidarity. The majority turned out on the massed picket lines that were thrown around the River Rouge plant.

All road entrances into Fords were blocked off by massive barricades of cars. The bloody showdown never took place as no scab stood a chance of getting through alive. The union had not had time to retreat as the men had taken the initiative themselves.

Ford conceded the inevitable and recognised the union.

But the Ford Motor Company has never stopped trying to undermine shop floor organisation in its plants all over the world. If unions had to be recognised then all negotiations would take place as far removed from the shop floor as possible.

DAVE LYDDON



TRIBE AND BUNIONS:

Diet that keeps women chained to the system

THE 1950s were the boom time for women's magazines. The weekly *Woman* sold 3½ million copies and claimed a readership of 12 million.

Sales slid in the 1960s, but recently there has been a slight recovery. *Woman* now sells two million copies. Whether the circulation graph is up or down, women's magazines remain very big business.

More importantly, they continue to exert a tremendous influence on the ideas and attitudes of the women who read them. The typical magazine is packed with apparently harmless articles on cookery, knitting and child care, romantic short stories and sensible answers to readers' problems.

But this collection of trivia is very powerful. It gives women the goal to aim for, the image of the perfect mum who keeps her home thoroughly disinfected, cooks like an angel, plays endlessly with happy, well-dressed kids, and still manages to look cheerful and sexy when her husband comes home from work.

These magazines, with their homely advice and sentimental stories, have a direct influence on the personal morality and ambitions of millions of women.

BRASH

Since the 1950s times have changed. The earlier emphasis on security and docility is being challenged by new ideas about careers and emancipation. Increasingly efficient contraceptives and changes in the abortion law have given women more control over their lives. The traditional role of women is being questioned.

Women's magazines are frantically adjusting and trying to keep up with the change. New publications are being launched and their subject matter is becoming wider.

The new dynamic image has at least boosted flagging sales. But the overall results are little improvement



Wondergirl against the arrogant male—even the 'liberated' woman is only allowed to see herself in terms of the advertisers' images

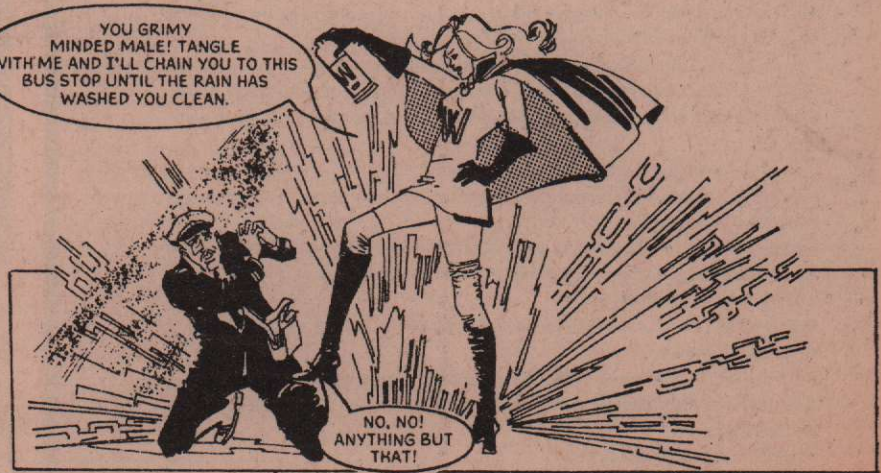
on the tripe of yesterday. *Cosmopolitan* has a brash new type image, presumably aimed at the lively young career girl, but it's the same old junk, tarted up a bit, given a more appealing layout and brighter photographs.

'How to meet a man on a working holiday' and 'Clothes to make him hungry' are typical stuff, true to the traditional idea that women have no real minds of their own, and need to capture a man to guide them through life.

The treacly prose of women's magazines peddles an image of women which coincides well with the drivel poured out by other sections of the establishment. The Queen said in



Wondergirl, a strip cartoon from the teenage magazine Jackie: the success girl is a model for TV commercials



her Christmas broadcast of 1966: 'It has been women who have breathed gentleness and care into the harsh progress of mankind... the devotion of nuns and nurses, the care of wives and mothers, the services of teachers and the convictions of reformers are the real enduring presents which women have always given.'

Such speeches go hand-in-hand with the influence of publications which deny women anything but a servicing role in society and keep them well removed from public life.

The easy dismissal of Women's Liberation is typical. These magazines use many ways to discredit the growing spirit of independence and self

confidence among women.

One of the most obvious is a recently-published story of a young office worker who jeopardised her romance by getting involved in 'The Movement'. She wakes up in hospital injured after a violent demonstration. Her young man has come to see that she is all right. She swoons into his arms and the instant he proposes marriage she forgets all her 'silly' ideas about the movement. The moral is clear. Who needs a movement when you can have a man?

This raises another point. The emphasis in these magazines is always on the individual. The problems are always individual and so are the solutions. The fault is always yours

and the solution is always before you in the form of cookery recipes, dress patterns, do-it-yourself hints, or sincere advice from Evelyn Home. There is never a mention of collective experience, or of a collective solution.

Articles about girls who work are equally useless. True Story occasionally includes stories about girls who work in factories, but in general the grim realities of working-class life, particularly of working-class girls, are discreetly ignored. After all, it's not a nice thing to talk about—is it?

DOPEY

There is never a mention of the indignities and exhaustion of work in factories (where most women actually work). Never a mention about the petty rules and the spiteful supervisors. Not a squeak about appalling conditions and how to organise within the trade unions to change them.

Whatever the presentation, the function remains the same—to reinforce the female image of the uncomplaining mum, girl back home, always waiting, always faithful, always warm, always dopey.

But the image is not reality. Women don't live in a dream world, they have found out that waiting for things to get better is not the answer: things got worse. So we're getting involved, for there is no individual solution, strength lies in numbers and organisation. When it comes to this, *Women's Own* has nothing to say, except sit back and let men run the world.

It's no surprise that the women's papers say the same thing. The same people own them—IPC, Thomson Publications and the National Magazine Company.

For women to organise is a threat to that power, a power based on the exploitation of millions.

This is why we need *Woman's Voice*, a magazine not concerned with keeping things as they are but with destroying the tinsel dreams.

We hope our readers will help us to build up a campaigning magazine that will challenge and destroy the traditional myths about women's inferiority, and change once and for all the society we live in.

Anna Paczuska

Please shout back at the box

DO YOU talk back to your telly? Do you get angry with it? I do.

'For God's sake get it up!' I shout to the couple playing diddly-poo with each other in the latest 'Love Story'.

'Kick the fascist bastard in the crutch,' I yell at Ludovic Kennedy, who's just sprained his knees leaning over backwards to be fair to Harold Soref on 'Midweek'.

And as for Our Harold, I fairly slayed him on the Farty Hypocritical Broadcast the other night.

Of course, apart from diverting my latent aggression from the wife, kids and the Mother's Pride men it doesn't do much good, I can quite see that.

There was a play on the radio the other night in which material from Roger Casement's diaries was used. Those were the diaries the British Government swore didn't exist. The BBC reckoned the thing was so controversial they set up a special exchange to deal with the flood of calls from listeners.

The girls sat there with their knitting and never dropped a stitch all night because nobody phoned at all. I'm not saying anyone ought to have done, but it does show they'd like us to. I wonder why we don't?

It seems it takes a flash of the full frontals or a phrase or two of the sort of language we all use at work to get the wires buzzing. Why should the nuts be the only ones to reach for the Basildon Bond?

Are we all apathetic? I don't think so. I think that because it is the candidates for the funny farm who cause all the bother we get the feeling there's something a bit off in telling the BBC or ITV what we think of



their programmes. And I think we feel that the telly's so big and anonymous that whatever we write will end up in some nameless wastebasket.

I'm here to tell you it won't.

Making programmes for the telly is like putting messages into bottles and flinging them into the sea. It's a real kick if someone picks it up and gets in touch. Producers who get viewers' letters have been seen staggering round the corridors in the Television Centre groaning hollowly: 'There's someone alive out there.' A couple of weeks on 'Call my Bluff' soon restores them to inanity.

Of course, if you're going to criticise the work of these people, you've got to watch critically.

I don't mean you've got to sit there with a notebook. I mean that the programmes are made for you and paid for by you and that it's you who gives them the thumbs up or down. And it's you, if you tell them, who can make 'em and break 'em.

All right, they aren't going to get down on their knees and ask your humble pardon or double anybody's salary be-

cause of a single letter. But little drops of water wear dents in the granite ego of telly pundits, so what I'm saying is: Get Dropping.

Don't write to Lew Grade or Sidney Bernstein. The only things that bother them are trouble with the butler or how to fiddle the supertax. Write to the people who make the programmes—producers, directors or writers.

Try to be specific. Of course, it does no harm to write and tell them you think a play is lousy but it's better to tell them why you think so, and better still if you can criticise content rather than merely execution.

Begged

I mean everyone likes *Z Cars*, don't they? But what sort of values does the series express about private property, human rights and civil liberty?

Or take a 'left wing' documentary like 'A Life Apart' in which Mike Grigsby took a look at the slave-labour in the Fleetwood fishing industry. Good solid stuff in which the decks were allowed to say what they felt about working hundred-hour weeks for a basic £20 plus a share of the catch.

But it begged a lot of questions it didn't try to answer. Only 60 per cent unionisation in a closed community. Why? No injury benefit scheme. Why? Trawler owners' profits not disclosed. Why? Private companies? Or was it insufficient research? Write to Mike Grigsby at Granada and ask him and any other questions you want the answers to. If he doesn't answer, write again. In Dennis Potter's play 'Only Make-

believe' the main character, a playwright, says something to the effect that 'words are produced out of struggle, pain and anguish.' So are lumps of coal, aren't they? And steel strip and detergents and mercuric oxide. Maybe Dennis Potter's never thought of that. He might like to be reminded.

When you write to a writer or a director or producer you may well be helping him by criticising his work. You may be providing him with just the ammunition he needs when he goes to his immediate boss and asks for a bigger budget, or more air-time, or better research facilities.

One of the basic faults of television programme planning, by which I mean the selection of one sort of programme rather than another, the decision to allocate money to one project rather than another, is that the deciding factor is always, in the end, the magical number of the Jictar rating, the viewing figures.

All that viewing figures tell a producer is that more or less people watched his programme. One articulate voice speaking out of that miasmic cloud of figures, telling him it liked or disliked his programme and why has a very profound effect.

So next time you sit down and watch the box do so with the thought in your mind that whether you liked it or hated it you're going to let them know about it.

Don't leave it all to the Festival of Light.

Tom Clarke

Tom Clarke, author of *Stocker's Copper*, will be writing regularly on television.

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

**GREATER LONDON
and HOME COUNTIES**
Bexley
Camden
Chertsey
Croydon

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

**WALES and
SOUTH WEST**
Bath
Bristol
Cardiff
Exeter
Gloucester
Llanelli
Mid-Devon
Neath
Plymouth
Swansea
Swansea Valley

SOUTH
Brighton
Canterbury
Crawley
Eastbourne
Guildford
Portsmouth
Southampton
Woolwich

THE UNIONS

Left-right clash in Scots AUEW ballot fight

ELECTION addresses from the candidates in the coming election for the AUEW engineering section Number 3 division organiser, based in Edinburgh, make extremely interesting reading.

The contribution from Ernie Leslie, the present divisional organiser who is hoping to be re-elected for his second term of office, waves the familiar flag of 'keep politics out of trade unionism'. He does point out that he is a member of the Labour Party, presumably in his spare time only.

Leslie is known among militants in the engineering union as a thorough-going right-winger, keen on productivity deals and general 'co-operation' with the employers. He also advocates that the AUEW should change its line of opposition to the Industrial Relations Act and recognise the National Industrial Relations Court.

Leslie's election address does not contain one single mention of the Tory government and its onslaught on the organised trade union movement. But he does find space for a paragraph on a much more important threat to the trade union movement—'Unofficial Bodies'.

Rival

He feels it necessary to 'put on record my complete opposition to all parties outwith the Labour Party.' These include, he adds, 'those so-called Left Wing Organisations such as the International Socialists and the Liaison Committee for the Protection of Trade Unions whose philosophy appears to show that they are not democratic nor are they socialist.'

One of the other unofficial 'bodies' that must have been very much to the front of Leslie's mind when he drafted his address, is one of his rival candidates, Ron Brown, who is a Labour councillor in Edinburgh

SW reporter

and a well-known militant employed in the power industry until he was sacked almost exactly a year ago.

Ron Brown had committed a very dangerous crime then. During the miners' strike and with the power industry claim not quite sold down the river, Ron Brown issued a leaflet in his capacity as a councillor calling on power workers to come out in pursuit of their own full claim and in solidarity with the miners.

Immediately after this, in a letter dated 16 February last year, the chief personnel officer of the South of Scotland Electricity Board wrote to the AUEW district office complaining of Ron Brown's behaviour, and stating that he was not the sort of man who should be a works committee member.

Magically the letter was in the hands of Ernie Leslie, divisional organiser, on the afternoon of the very day it was written. It was presented to the district committee that same evening and the committee decided to recommend to the union's Engineering Section executive that

Ron Brown should be expelled.

In addition, Ron Brown was dismissed from his job with the electricity board for the crime of issuing a leaflet in his own time (he was off work with an injury) urging power workers to strike for themselves and in support of the miners.

The move in the union was not quite so successful. It was reversed on appeal to the executive council, since Ron Brown had not been informed of the charges and had not been given an opportunity to defend himself. The district committee met again and decided to withdraw his credentials and fine him £5. This was also reversed at the union's Final Appeals Court last month.

Challenge

In the first paragraph of his election address, Ron Brown lays his cards squarely on the table: 'I have accepted nomination because I believe that the fight to maintain and improve living standards must be stepped up both industrially and politically.'

'It is clear that no trade unionist worthy of the name can ever be satisfied by his wages and conditions (even if he is fortunate enough to have a job),' he adds. 'But this view is political and it would mean a direct challenge to the Tories and their anti-union legislation.'

Ron Brown also stresses the need for a genuinely democratic, fighting union, criticising 'the many leading AUEW figures who talk about union democracy but in effect mean the opposite—a tightly controlled structure where officials dictate and members obey.'

There are two other candidates in the election. Peter Easton, from the Bathgate North branch of the union, submitted no election address. The fourth candidate is William Morrison, convenor of the combined craft force at BP Chemicals in Grangemouth continuously since 1965 except for one year absent through injury.

Expense

This is the first time that the election for the No 3 divisional organiser has been run under the new postal ballot system which has been introduced in the AUEW engineering section. Apart from the fantastic expense of this system, it is far from democratic, since it cuts round participation in branch life and does not encourage real argument and debate.

Another interesting fact is that while the ballot forms go out through the post to individuals, the election addresses do not.

These are still printed on the basis of one for every 10 members and distributed through the branches. This means that while more individuals may return ballot papers obtained through the post, they do so without any real information on which to judge the candidates unless they are active in their branch.

Apology

A REPORT on a civil servants' rally in Manchester in our issue of 10 February stated that Jean Donoghue, of the executive of the CPSA was a member of the Communist Party. She has asked us to point out that while she is a socialist she is not a member of any political party. We regret the error.

Steel conference: extraordinary is the word for it!

by Rob Clay

THE Executive Council of BISAKTA, the largest union in the steel industry, has called an Extraordinary Delegate Conference. It will indeed be extraordinary, since it is the first conference that has been called in the history of the union.

For years the executive has resisted pressure from branch and divisional level for an annual delegate conference. It has taken the attitude that the executive, once elected, should make policy without further interference.

This attitude has only been one part of the extremely undemocratic and right-wing policies and practices of the union. It has a history of victimising militants and disbanding dissident branches. Until last year the union had not made one strike official since 1926.

The executive and full-time officials have presided quietly over one of the lowest wage rates in heavy industry and tens of thousands of redundancies. The system of elections is highly complicated and open to all kinds of dubious manoeuvres by the clique who run the union, including breaches of its rule book.

Attack

In the past year tremendous pressure has built up in several areas against the union's present regime. The executive has been forced to make strikes at Teesside and Scunthorpe official and also take serious account of the mounting fury over proposed British Steel Corporation closures. The new rank and file paper, Steelworker, has already made a considerable impact in many steel areas and has served to link militants throughout the industry. Recently Sir Dai Davies, general secretary of BISAKTA, spoke at a meeting in Ebbw Vale and spent more than half his speech attacking Steelworker and members of the International Socialists connected with it. Incidentally this strengthened support for the paper!

It is in this context that the executive

has decided to call a conference. It is expected that as area committees have their annual meetings in the next few weeks more than half will pass resolutions calling for an annual conference and also for militant policies to resist closures and redundancies. The executive has decided to make a move before its hand is forced.

The calling of the conference is a tremendous victory for militants in the union. It shows what persistence and organisation can achieve in a situation where many members resigned themselves to cynicism years ago. But no one should have any illusions about the nature of the conference.

Closures

Delegates are to be elected by the same system used for executive elections. This means a long and complicated ballot system in which combinations between divisions and trade groups take place. The only people who have contact across divisional boundaries are—of course—executive members and full time officials. Nominations have to be in before 28 February. This has given the branches three weeks to select nominees. No date has been set for the conference itself and the only topic for discussion is closures.

To be a delegate you have to have been a branch officer for the past two consecutive years and a member of the union for the past five consecutive years. This means that some members who have 20 years membership will not be able to attend due to a break in the past five years because of redundancy or victimisation.

It seems that the conference will be hand-picked and stage-managed by the executive. Nevertheless it presents some chances for rank and file militants to get together and for posing alternative policies and leadership for the union. It is an important step forward in the battle to make the union democratic and introduce fighting policies.

Profit before people

Blackshirts fear a united left

What you need to keep abreast

COULD I correct an error that appeared in my article (27 January). I suggested there that a third of every pay increase is raked back as income tax (which is true, if you pay income tax), but I then concluded that this meant that to get 8 per cent you therefore need a 12 per cent rise.

This is only true of the worker who is just entering the income tax net. For workers on higher pay, the real tax effect is actually less than a third.

So when Mike Caffoor (17 February) quotes a 15.8 per cent increase in earnings in 1972, he is correct in thinking this is a real increase. And David Yaffe (24 February), quoting my incorrect calculation, is wrong. My apologies to all concerned.

On the general question of the demand for pay rises to be tied to the cost of living, I should like to lend support to those who oppose such a demand at this time. Such a demand fits the circumstances of a defensive struggle, but hardly a situation in which at least a million workers are currently battling to smash the Tory freeze.

The very fact that the Tories and the TUC have toyed with the idea of price-related pay rises should warn revolutionaries off that particular patch.—COLIN BARKER, Manchester 21.

SOCIALIST WORKER's shock report on old people was right. In the present gas dispute, politicians and the press pose as saviours of the elderly, wanting to protect them from the wicked conduct of the anti-social strikers.

They forget to mention that old folk are dying all the time because of inadequate heating. Somehow or

other, this is only remembered during a coal or gas strike.

Your report, quite correctly, says that many die because the old age pensions are insufficient to keep them in warmth and comfort. Their deaths—or, rather, murders—can be attributed to the callous indifference of the government. Heath & Co would rather give tax concessions to the rich than higher pensions to the poor.

But there is another aspect of this question, which your report overlooks. It is the differential pricing policy of nationalised bodies like the Gas Board. In 1960, John Hughes, the Oxford economist, calculated that big business gained a hidden subsidy of £500 million a year from the public purse.

It received cheap coal, gas, electricity, etc. I have seen no figures on this point since then, but it would seem probable that at present the sum involved is much greater.

Gas is the same—it costs the same to produce—whether it comes out of a tap that belongs to an old age pensioner or a large industrial firm. The only difference is that the big consumer gets it for about half the price. Since, by Act of Parliament, the Gas Board is supposed to break even, if it charges one consumer less than production cost, it has to charge another consumer more.

This means that old people provide an involuntary subsidy to help the profit-making activities of big business. As a result, 20,000 pensioners die of the cold each year.

The Gas Board's policies, however, are scandalous from another standpoint. It makes a highly explosive mixture. Frequently we hear of houses and streets being blown up. Last year, in one tragedy, thirteen people lost their lives when gas exploded in Scotland. But have you ever heard of the Gas Board paying compensation for loss of life or damage to property?

Its usual excuse is that it is not the board's responsibility, that the pipes fractured through road subsidence and similar things. Whatever the reason, the board denies that it is to blame. It would be interesting if a list of explosions over, say, the last two years could be compiled, the estimated damage each caused, and what—if anything—the Gas Board paid in compensation.—RAYMOND CHALLINOR, Whitley Bay.

AS the only Communist Party member to attend the anti-immigration meeting at Houldsworth Hall, Manchester last month I would like to give you my impression of the meeting. I got inside by the simple expedient of waiting until the police had cleared a route for the Blackshirts and following them into the Hall.

Once inside I persuaded them that I was interested in their cause and could be a potential recruit. Whilst waiting for the meeting to start I overheard a conversation between two Blackshirts which is most illuminating.

They were discussing the problems that are caused when the different groups in the labour movement (IS, Communists, left-wing Labour etc) forget their differences and join together in solidarity action against them.

Inferior

I quote: 'The trouble is that the Commies, the IS, the IMG and the Labour Party people forget their differences as far as we are concerned. They join up together and give us a hell of a problem.' The point is obvious.

The first speaker, a Mr Jim Merrick, made it quite clear that he considers coloured people to be of an inferior race and that the object of his movement is the deportation of people of what he termed 'non-British origin' whether they were born here or not. At this point I stood up and objected to his racist remarks and was promptly and violently ejected.

So much for their claim to be solely concerned with the problems of immigration. It is also obvious that the Blackshirt attitude to free speech has not altered.

I have discussed the problem of the anti-immigration policy with black men at work. They seem to think that like all ignorance it will disappear in time and they did not take this group too seriously.

I disagree. History shows that bigoted bullies do not go away of their own accord and I would like to see more people—both black and white—involved in the struggle against this evil doctrine of Mr Merrick and his followers.—GEORGE TAYLOR, Swinton, Lancs.

LETTERS

DECLYNE AND FALL

J R CLYNES may not have been a great Home Secretary (he was not. As leader of the Labour Party in the early 1920s he was very bad. His socialism was anaemic, but Paul Foot (24 February) in factually inaccurate in stating that he joined Ramsey MacDonald in 1931.

On the contrary, he remained with the Labour Party and with his colleagues went down to defeat at Manchester (Platting). Furthermore, unlike the present leaders of the Labour Party, he did not make a modest fortune. In his later years he lived in considerable poverty and died a poor man.—I C BELL, 1 Benbow Close, Sketty, Swansea.

Paul Foot writes: Yes, many apologies, I was wrong. Clynes, incidentally, was re-elected for Platting in 1935.



MacDonald: arch-traitor—but not Clynes

UNSKILLED GET RAW DEAL FROM THE UNIONS

I HAVE ORDERED Socialist Worker every week as I think it states the blunt truth and has no hypocrisy about it. It takes up the facts about the lower-paid workers better than any union now in existence.

I think the unions only bother about skilled and semi-skilled workers, and don't care a jot about the unskilled. What we unskilled, lowest-paid workers should have is our own union or association to represent us as otherwise it is going to be very grim indeed for us.

I like your paper also because it is written in ordinary everyday language, not in high-falutin words like the other papers are.—W LORD, Knottingley, Yorks.

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

Housing

VINCE HALL'S article on housing development schemes in Leeds (17 February) gave a clear picture of the shortcomings of high-density accommodation provided in working-class areas. They lack amenities, are often badly constructed because contractors and city councils alike save money by omitting to install such unnecessary luxuries as damp-proofing, and generally look downright ugly.

It is important that these failings should be publicised, but it is also important to look at the underlying concepts of this kind of building.

The endless rows of back-to-back houses, pulled down to make way for Hunslet Grange, were built by Victorian capitalism to house its slave labour. They were unsightly, unsanitary and degrading.

The anonymity and boring sameness of the streets would depersonalise and dehumanise the working man. Vegetables don't organise because they don't think. This kind of environment was chosen for the worker not only because of the economy involved, but also because it denied to him, in theory, the possibilities of his own personality, and thus of his class-consciousness.

Fortunately the northern industrial cities did develop a working-class culture and the back-to-back areas, despite their overt bleakness, did develop into meaningful communities. The worker, obstinate beast, insisted upon his humanity.

The approach today is more sophisticated. Every flat in Hunslet Grange has warm-air central heating, a streamline kitchen complete with stainless-steel fittings, and some have two toilets—both inside. Cosy, comfortable interiors, but go to the windows and the cosiness vanishes.

Every flat on the estate has a television ariel socket built in. The deadening aspect of work under the capitalists, the deadening impact of the environment are thus easily soothed away by the deadening narcotic the establishment gives us on the faceless telly-screen.

TV is a customary refuge, but it serves the same purpose as the architecture. Both should enhance and articulate the individual—both, in a situation of exploitation, deaden him, hold him down and stamp all over him. Only the tenants of Hunslet Grange won't take it. The turnover in tenancies is 40 per cent per annum. Their demand for a decent environment in which to live shows a contempt for the planners that they would do well to note.—S ZADE, 'Alcatraz', Leeds 10.

Big banks blow a hole in the freeze

EVERYONE will be familiar with the friendly local bank—Midland, Barclays, National Westminster or Lloyds—that adorns the High Streets of towns up and down the country. Recently these companies have produced their profit figures for 1972 which present a dramatic picture of the freeze as far as the big companies are concerned.

The banks make their money from the simple risk-free activity of taking money from one set of people at one rate of interest, adding anything from 4 per cent upwards to this rate, and relending the money. Generally, the bigger the company you are, the cheaper the money is to borrow.

Dominate

During 1972 a great deal of money was lent to property developers: in September 1972, total bank lending to property companies was 116 per cent higher than a year before.

The four main banks account for nearly 10 per cent of all bank deposits in the country. The rate they charge for loans is based on 'Base Rate' with each bank allegedly competing with the others.

As you might expect with this cosy arrangement of four banks dominating the business, when one bank changes its base rate the others immediately follow suit.

It was against this background of 'free competition' that the banks produced their profit figures for 1972. The following table shows the pre-tax figures:

	1972 £ millions	1971 £ millions	% change
Barclays	126	91	+39.5
Lloyds	74.645	58.749	+28.7
Midland	72.122	52.496	+37.4
National Westminster	126.620	84.492	+49.8

And already stockbrokers in the City are forecasting the profits that might be made in 1973. One firm, Philips and Drew, expect the four banks between them to make more than £550 million.

Readers will notice that the figures in the last column are rather greater than the wage increases most people have experienced during 1972. In fact the second half of the year was the best part of the year—that is the half of the year that includes the government's Phase One freeze. Midland profits were 55 per cent up on the second



half of 1971. National Westminster were 65 per cent up.

The dividends paid out by National Westminster amounted to £18½ million. That is enough to pay the gas men around £8 a week for a full year.

Bonus

But the lucky workers of National Westminster are to get a chance to share in the profits that are made: 4 per cent of the profits (but with a threshold at £100 million) are to be paid out in a bonus to the employees. That would mean an

average of £100 per worker, against an average director's salary of £11,000. Lord Stokes, a director, will receive more than £100 in dividends on his 1000 shares.

Lloyds Bank, in addition to announcing its profit figures, also told us that the bank's property had been revalued, showing a £120 million surplus over the last valuation. In 1971 the wage bill of Lloyds Bank was £53 million.

Surplus

In other words, it took the workers of Lloyds Bank 2½ years to earn £120 million in wages. The shareholders did nothing to get their £120 million but just sit there, and they received £11 million of dividends as well this year.

In fact, none of the shareholders of any of these companies (or of any other) does anything to earn these dividends. The banks made the profits simply by taking the money with one hand and lending out from the other: no factories, little risk.

The profit represents the surplus made in this way: the money is paid by companies, who often have a director on the local boards of the bank, who pass on the cost of money in higher prices.

It is only when the banks are taken from private ownership that this eminently respectable profiteering will be removed and the bank workers paid a decent wage.

T H Rogmorton



Bryn Williams: 'We must give the lead'

'STOP RETREAT' MILITANTS TELL NUM

by Tony Goodchild and Brian Rees

THE FAILURE of the miners' union executive to decide on a strategy for fighting the wage claim for an extra £5 to £7 a week is having repercussions throughout the coalfields.

The policy of waiting for the TUC, advocated by the union president Joe Gormley, is now being recommended in all regions—not only by the right wing, but by much of the left as well.

DANGERS

Last week, when the South Wales miners delegate conference met, the left-wing dominated area executive urged them to vote for a resolution that effectively meant 'wait and see'.

It urged the national union leadership to call a special conference and the TUC to 'organise the unions for industrial action'. But it did not specify what should be done in the meantime about the miners' own claim.

The danger of this approach is that it leaves the national executive with plenty of room to organise a sell-out. It is likely to try to use the

prospect of increased fringe benefits to obscure the fact that the claim is about increased wages.

The fringe benefits talked of—higher pensions, restoration of the value of the smokeless fuel allowance, extra holidays and concessionary coal—should be the miners' by right and not subject to negotiation.

After the South Wales conference, some of the militants who opposed the 'wait and see' policy spoke to Socialist Worker.

Bryn Williams, secretary of Cwm lodge argued that if 'we are in a worse position than last year, then the fight should be greater. But right-wing leaders like Gormley and Co want to wait for the army, the navy and the air force to fight with them.

is backsliding. We should reject the proposals and declare what we are going to do in South Wales.

'We are wasting our time walking the streets and lobbying. . . We should demand the right to discuss wages with our employer. We should take action in South Wales and show other trade unions where we stand.'

Gareth Williams, secretary of Morlais lodge and a member of the International Socialists, argued that the conference had been 'Gormley's conference'. 'The resolution was what Gormley spouted on TV and the whole leadership backedpedaled. They are relying upon the TUC, which you can forget about. We learnt that lesson in the miners' strike last year.

'Leadership is non-existent. Action has got to come from the pits themselves. Let's not forget that unofficial actions in 1969 and 1970 led to the solidarity of 1972.'

THE COLLIER, the rank and file miners' paper, already officially sponsored by the Cwm and Morlais Lodge, has distributed more than 8000 Collier leaflets over large areas of the South Wales coalfield. Its programme for victory is centred around the following four points:- Fight for the full claim, No productivity deals, Force the union leaders to fight, All out on 28 February. This is the key to victory.

BACKSLIDING

'The miners went it alone last year. South Wales went alone the year before. 1969 saw the biggest unofficial strike the country had ever had, resulting in the biggest wages we ever had. The miners should be giving a lead to the rest of the country now.'

Terry Thomas, secretary of Brinllw lodge, emphasised similar points. 'I believe the national execu-

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

- WANDSWORTH IS Public meeting**
Crisis in the Middle East
Speaker: Moshe Machover
8pm, Thursday 8 March at the Spread Eagle, Wandsworth High Street
- WALTHAMSTOW IS public meeting**
Unite to Smash the Wage Freeze
Speakers: Paul Foot (journalist) and George Peake (building worker shop steward)
8pm, Thursday 8 March at the Ross Wyld Hall, Church Hill Rd, E17
- NW Region IS Tenants Conference**
Sunday 11 March, 2-6pm
Liverpool Polytechnic
Clarence Street entrance
- CHELMSFORD IS public meeting**
SMASH THE FREEZE
Speaker Paul Foot
Tuesday 13 March, 8pm
Chelmsford Civic Centre
- NEWCASTLE IS Public Meeting**
Public Employees and the Fight against the Freeze
Speakers: Mike McGrath, London civil servant, Mike Atkinson, Darlington Hospital Worker
Sunday 4 March, 8pm, Bridge Hotel near High Level Bridge, Newcastle
- BLACKBURN IS Public Meeting**
The Revolutionary Party and how to build it
Speaker: John Deason (AUEW)
Monday 5 March, 8pm
Duke of York, Blackburn
- MERSEYSIDE IS Public Meeting**
Marxism and the working class
Speaker: Tony Cliff
Wednesday 7 March, 8pm
Strand Hotel, Brunswick Street near Pier Head, Liverpool
- SALFORD IS Public Meeting**
Advertising, Modern Life and Womens' Magazines
Speaker: Wally Preston (AUEW)
Wednesday 7 March, 8pm
Broad Walk Ellor Street, Salford 6
- STRETFORD IS Socialist Worker Benefit Concert**
Alex Glasgow, Roy Bailey and full supporting bill
Dog and Partridge, Chester Road, Old Trafford (by United football ground)
Friday 9 March, 8pm
Tickets 25p in advance from IS, 30p at door if any left
All proceeds to printshop fund
- EAST MIDLANDS DISTRICT IS DAY SCHOOL**
1. The Draft Programme
2. Economic perspectives and the Freeze
Saturday 3 March, 11am-4pm
The Charnwood pub, The Rushes, Loughborough
Admission to IS members only
Further details from branch secretaries

- Hackney and Islington IS SOCIAL**
Benefit for Strikers at Worlds End Site, Chelsea
LIVE BAND—DRINKS TIL MIDNIGHT
Friday 9 March, 8pm-12 midnight at NW Poly, Ladbroke House, Highbury Grove, N5 (Bus 19 or 4)
- LONDON IS region public meeting**
Nigel Harris on 'The Underdeveloped World and the Chinese experience.'
Friday 9 March, 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square (3 mins walk from Holborn tube)
- WANDSWORTH IS SOCIAL**
Friday 9 March
Live entertainment and Disco
The Wheatsheaf, opp Tooting Bec tube
Tickets: 25p 8pm-12 midnight
- EALING IS Public meeting**
Smash the Pay Freeze
Speakers: John Palmer with local trade union speakers
Wednesday 7 March, 8pm
George and Dragon, Uxbridge Road, Southall
- YORK IS Public Meeting**
Taking Britain for a ride—what have they done to public transport?
Speaker: Laurie Flynn
Thursday 8 March, 8pm
Lowther Hotel, Kings Staith

- NOTTINGHAM IS public meeting: Tony Cliff on The Fight against the Freeze.**
Thursday 8 March, 8pm, Lion Hotel, Clumber Street.
- LONDON IS TEACHERS' MEETING:**
Sunday 4 March, 10.30am, at 6 Cottons Gdns, London E2. All IS teachers must attend.
- LANCASHIRE REGIONAL AGGREGATE:** meeting on Socialist Worker, Spkr Margaret Renn. Sun 4 March, 12am, Swan and Railway Hotel, Wallgate, Wigan.
- IS HEALTH WORKERS' DAY SCHOOL:** Sat 3 March, 10.30am, at 6 Cottons Gdns, London E2. Speakers include Tom Snow (NUPE) on the reorganisation of NUPE and work in the union. If you need accommodation, contact Graham Jones, 86 Mount Grove Road, London N5. All health workers welcome.

OTHER MEETINGS

- Swansea Fight the Wage Freeze Meeting**
Speakers: Tony Cliff, workers from Fords, the local NUM and the CPSA
Tuesday 6 March, 7.30pm
Dyneover School Hall, near Albert Hall cinema, town centre
- Socialist Medical Association Public meeting**
The Politics of Smoking and Health
Speaker: Dr John Dunwoody, SMA President
Thursday 13 March, 7.30pm
House of Commons
- Oval 4 Solidarity Meeting**
Sunday 4 March, 3pm
Notting Hill Adventure Playground Church Hall, Faraday Road, W11
Speakers from BLF, BUFP, Black Panthers and George Peake of IS
- YORKSHIRE INDOCHINA SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE**
Speakers: Tariq Ali, Lek Hor Tan (representative from the National United Front of Cambodia), Malcolm Caldwell, trade union speaker
Saturday 10 March, 10am to 7pm
Tickets 10p from 13 Park Hole, Harehills Avenue, Leeds 8

EALING Rank and File. Race and School in Ealing. Local speakers. Monday 5 March 7.30pm, Three Pigeons, High St Ealing W5.

UNITY THEATRE, 1 Goldington Street, London NW1: Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays at 7.45pm—HOW WE KNOCKED 'EM IN THE OLD KENT ROAD, a dramatised version of the Briant Colour Printers' saga. Tickets 40p, associate membership 50p, bar. Box office phone 01-387 8647.

IRELAND: National Liberation and Socialist Revolution. Public debate between the IMG and 'Militant.' IMG spkrs: Bob Purdie (national organiser AIL), Gery Lawless, 'Militant' speakers: Peter Taffe (editor, 'Militant'), Peter Haddon (Belfast YS). Friday 2 March, 8pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.

NOTICES

RANK AND FILE Defence Committee has been set up to defend Eric Peagam, a member of the Rank and File editorial board and the two other teachers suspended by the Inner London Education Committee. The Committee calls for the unions to withdraw from the employers' hearing and for the reinstatement of the three suspended teachers. Further information and petitions are available from the address below. Messages of support and solidarity from trade union branches etc should be sent to Rank and File Defence Committee, c/o 82 Acre Lane, London SW2.

UNIQUE GIFTS to friends (or just you!). Chinese pure silk woven portraits of Marx, Engels, Lenin, etc. Sizes 16in x 10 1/2in—70p each; 28in x 19 1/2in—£1.10. LP gramophone record, Chinese choir and orchestra singing the Internationale—37p. Immediate delivery. D Volpe, 16 Belmont Court, London N16 5QD.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM JOURNAL: The following back copies are still available, but some only in limited numbers: 33, 34, 37, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53. 20p per copy, including postage. Money with orders please to: IS Journal, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

FINE TUBES National Picket: Monday 19 March, 6am. London Region IS are organising a coach. For details ring Alan Woodward at 01-808 2369.

PLUTO PRESS urgently needs typists for manuscript work at home. Please contact Diane at 01-722 0141 during day.

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.

Sparks' stewards prepare for fight on jobs and pay

A NUMBER of important battles taking place in the electrical contracting industry are having a significant bearing on the future of the 70,000 electricians covered by the industry's Joint Industry Board.

A national shop stewards conference meets this Saturday in Liverpool to discuss a fighting programme against the JIB.

Electricians on the Inland Revenue Office site in Bootle were the first to strike against the JIB two years ago. Their action was followed by a strike at the Alcan site in Northumberland. Despite union-backed scabbing, this won important concessions from the employers.

Since then things have snowballed. Electricians at the Beecham's site at Irvine, Ayrshire, have secured a rate of £1.10 an hour, and 70 employed on the new brewery site in Edinburgh have gained an extra 13p an hour.

They also succeeded in getting rid of penal clauses for time keeping.

Twelve hundred sparks at the Anchor steel works were granted £2 a day parity money by the JIB to keep them quiet and since then have managed to push their

earnings even higher. And at the Bass Charrington site in Runcorn the men have been awarded 35p an hour above the JIB rate after a two weeks' strike.

A number of other disputes are still going on. The IRO strike is still solid, and so is a strike at St James hospital site, Leeds.

Buy off

The JIB has just announced a new agreement for the whole industry for 1973-4. This concedes £1 an hour for approved electricians as from next January—an increase of 25 per cent that is almost certain to be ruled out by Heath's Phase Three. It is clearly just bait to buy off present militancy.

The agreement also contains a big danger. There is to be a re-classification of work previously done by skilled electricians so that it can be performed by unskilled labour—a move designed to get cheap labour and to divide the workforce.

The militants meeting in Liverpool will be calling for an end to the JIB agreement, a national shop stewards' conference to be the policy-making body for the industry, for £1 an hour now and for a 35-hour week.

FILM WORKERS BATTLE FOR UNION RIGHTS

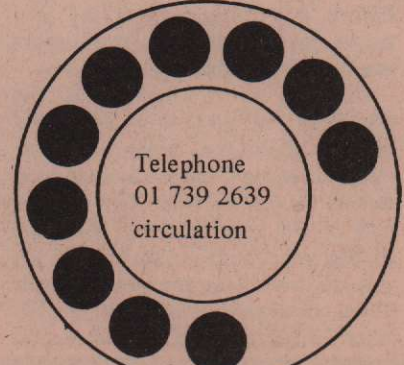
WORKERS at Grunwick film processing laboratories in North London have been on strike for five weeks in defence of their union organisation. The story of the strike throws considerable light on the state of the photographic industry generally and the official movement's attempts to change it.

When the Transport Workers Union first began recruiting members in the factory, management transferred all known members into one department and then sacked four of them, including the stewards,

claiming the department was 'unprofitable'.

It has since advertised in the trade paper for staff to work this so-called 'unprofitable' department. The union members are all out on strike, with the 'nons' still working.

The scandal of the strike is that there is still no official support from the union. For years the TUC has complained about the house union policy of Kodak and the lack of organisation in photography generally. But now that one of the stronger unions has a chance to get a foot in the door, it does not want to know.



GAS WORKERS FIGHT PRESS SMEARS

NORTH EAST: Jack Wonders, union branch secretary at the Whitehill Point gas plant North Shields, was featured as 'The Man Who Wants to Make You Suffer Even More', and as 'Mr Hardheart' in last Thursday's Sun.

It was a calculated and vicious attack on Jack and the gasworkers, designed to turn public feeling against them. As a result of the Sun's smear campaign Jack and his family have received threatening letters and a bomb threat.

This is the kind of treatment the electricity supply workers got from the national press two years ago, but the only effect it has had on the gas men so far is to increase their determination. As Jack Wonders told Socialist Worker, 'This will harden the men.'

He went on to say: 'We have made it clear that we do not want to hurt the general public. In fact when I saw the Sun reporter I had just come from a meeting with the social services department where I had been explaining how we were trying to prevent any hardship to the old age pensioners and the general public. But the Sun twisted everything I said.'

The GMWU has submitted a complaint to the Press Council about the article.

Meanwhile the strike is beginning to bite in the North East. The Gas Council has refused to cut off the gas still being supplied to industry.

Gas worker Dave Hill told me: 'We must hit industry. If the Gas Council won't agree we'll have to pull out the production men at Blaydon and Hartlepoons and shut off gas supplies to the whole region.'

'We're standing up for our principles against the government,' he added. 'They said this strike wouldn't have effect when we started. That's what they said about the miners last year, but this country couldn't do without gas any more than it could without coal. If we came out all over the country the strike wouldn't have to last any more than a week.'

But as Jack and Dave stressed time and time again, the gas workers did not want to use their industrial power to hit the housewife and the pensioner. Stewards and GMWU officials had tried for seven hours last week to persuade the Northern Gas Board to cut off supplies to industry so that pressure could be maintained for the domestic consumer.

But the Gas Council wants to shut down whole areas in what looks like an attempt to blackmail the gas men by turning public opinion against them.

The two-week strike in the Northern Region was due to end on Friday but the gas workers have decided to extend their action for another week. And unless there is a sharp change in the tactics of the management all town gas production in the area will be shut down.

The gas workers are leading the fight against the Tory freeze. If they are forced to cut off supplies of gas to the domestic consumer they should get the support and solidarity of workers everywhere.

Blacking

BIRMINGHAM: Engineering and transport workers union stewards at Lucas, Chester Street, have given a lead in solidarity with the gas workers. They have blacked the use of Calor gas for alternative gas supply in the factory, even though two departments are laid off.

Vic Collard, an AUEW steward, told Socialist Worker that in other factories in the Birmingham area gas conversions had taken place while men were laid off, and then were called back to work once this was carried out. Such actions, he said, seriously weakened the effectiveness of the gas workers' attempts to curb supplies of gas to industry.

In order to prevent employers getting stocks of bottled gas into factories in the Midlands, Bill McGuinness, GMWU regional officer, has written asking Alan Law of the TGWU in Birmingham to stop supplies of such gas. It was similar action by the TGWU during the miners' strike that stopped oil and oxygen getting into power stations.



Strikers in Wigan (seen above picketing the local gas works) have been among the most militant in the country. Now they want a strike rota throughout Lancashire to hit industry hard and make their action more effective.

Pickets in London's Old Kent Road (right) are seen holding up a van trying to enter the strike-hit depot.

Bill McGuinness, after meetings of gas workers' representatives throughout the West Midlands last Saturday and Sunday, explained that gas workers were out now to reduce output of gas by about one third, as well as working to rule in service and distribution departments. These actions would hit hardest at industry.

Bill McGuinness said that it was unfortunate that moderate unions were having to bear the brunt of the fight against the freeze, and it would make the impact of the gas workers' industrial action greater if other unions gave more active support.

It is here that the closer links between workers in different factories with the gas workers are necessary, so that information about the use of alternative gas supplies by firms can be acted on and stopped.

The actions of the gas workers in Birmingham and the West Midlands will bite in the next week or so and factories like British Leyland's transmission plant in Washwood Heath will lay off workers along with other major car and component factories. Workers in Birmingham should not need reminding that it was only a year ago that the united action of engineers and miners played a decisive part in the victory at Saltley. The same applies with the gas men now.

Strike rota

LANCASHIRE: Last week gas workers in most towns in Lancashire including Wigan, Warrington, St Helens, Blackburn, Runcorn and Liverpool voted to carry on strike action indefinitely.

The effects of strike action are already beginning to be felt. Several hundred commercial firms have been cut off. But militants feel that strike action must be total if it is to be effective.

Under union rules a national strike would require a postal ballot with a two-



thirds majority. The Wigan gas action committee has therefore sent a resolution to the GMWU executive whereby strike action can be escalated without a postal ballot.

They have asked that all fitters and distribution workers should be brought out and that all town gas plants should be put on a strike rota. To this end the Lancashire region of the GMWU has instructed its plant members at Bradford Road, Manchester to take strike action this week.

The other town gas plants which will follow on the rota are Linacre, Partington in Manchester, Warrington and Preston. If gas pressure falls below safety level during the rota strike then supplies will be sealed off.

Picket

NOTTINGHAM: At a mass meeting on Tuesday 250 gas workers voted unanimously for an all-out stoppage. They also voted unanimously for a national gas workers' strike.

And they agreed to send a flying picket to shut down the Leicester gas station. This decision follows on the flying picket sent by Mansfield gas workers to close down the Killingholme Station in Lincolnshire.

Frustrated

NORTH HERTS: At a meeting in Luton of 80 GMWU stewards, representing gas fitters and storemen from all over the Eastern District, the Regional Officer, Harry Heath, was given a rough ride by the men.

Stewards demanded that the union call a national stoppage. Heath argued against this on the grounds that safety could not then be guaranteed.

But the militant feeling of the stewards was that safety could still be maintained by emergency crews. David Cox, a shop steward at Letchworth, told Socialist Worker: 'There was a feeling that the action taken so far would come to nothing if things were allowed to drag on.'

Stewards sensed that Heath was trying to palm them off. Demands from the floor that industry should have its supplies cut off led the full time officials to close the meeting.

THE executive of the National Association of Local Government Officers on Saturday carried a resolution by 40 to 19 to boycott the government's pay and prices board. The vote was a defeat for the right wing, in particular general secretary Walter Anderson who is in favour of union participation.

A motion from the metropolitan district was put calling on NALGO's delegates to the TUC special congress to vote for general industrial action against the freeze. The motion was defeated, but the fact that it was discussed is a measure of the growing strength of the left in the union, particularly at branch and district level.

NALGO members have not been affected by the freeze to the same extent as other public sector workers, but a claim is due soon for an increased London weighting allowance. This is likely to result in a massive campaign within the union for some kind of industrial action.

Even the leadership have called for demonstrations and lobbies in support of such a claim. They have clearly been influenced by the London teachers' strike. This issue, together with the usual round of spring wage claims, will bring more than 250,000 of NALGO's members right up against the government's freeze.

WORKERS in Zenith carburettors factories in Harrow and Deptford have recently been organised by ASTMS and elected stewards. But management at Deptford told a steward to tear up his union card and accept the house 'union' or face demotion or the sack. When he refused he was sacked and ASTMS members at both factories were called out on strike.

At Deptford the strike has been solid and the chances of getting recognition for the union and reinstatement for the steward are good. But at Harrow only two of the 56 union members came out. They are manning a picket and are confident that the better conditions and wages that will be won by the organised factory at Deptford will prove to the Harrow workers the benefits of union organisation.

THOUSANDS of steelworkers in South Wales attended mass meetings last Thursday to protest at closures planned by the Steel Corporation.

At Ebbw Vale the steelworks stopped production as 6000 men discussed what action to take. It was decided unanimously to strike for 24 hours on 14 March. They will lobby parliament and the Steel Corporation headquarters to demand the lifting of the closure date for the plant and that there should be no redundancies unless alternative employment was provided.

Colin Hudson, chairman of the works council said that if the Steel Corporation did not accept these demands there would be an indefinite strike.

Three thousand workers also backed a call for action at the East Moors plant outside Cardiff. And the BISAKTA crane drivers' union branch called on the works council to call for a strike on 14 March to join the Ebbw Vale workers' demonstrations.

GLASGOW: The strike of maintenance workers employed by the Labour controlled corporation at Glasgow airport is now entering its twelfth week. The manager is insisting that the men work the continual, 'continental' shift system and is only willing to offer less than £3 extra payment for this. The workers had agreed to seven-day, 24-hour manning, but rejected the continental shift system.

On Friday a demonstration in support of the strike was backed by 150 shop stewards from nearby factories, including Chrysler, Rolls-Royce and Babcock and Wilcox, as well as by maintenance workers from Glasgow Corporation bus garages. The airport manager photographed the pickets and is threatening to prosecute them.

All out strike call

MANCHESTER: More than 300 gas workers meeting at Hulme Labour Club on Monday passed two militant resolutions within ten minutes of the meeting being opened. The first motion proposed to continue the strike for two weeks and was passed with only three votes against.

Almost immediately a second resolution was passed unanimously calling on the national committee of the General and Municipal to organise an all-out strike throughout the country. Feeling ran high

throughout the meeting as speaker after speaker criticised the union officials, especially the north west organiser Mr Wilkinson for a complete lack of leadership in the strike.

As rank and file militant Tony Dugdale said: 'If this strike continues I'll have to sell my car, but we are prepared to stick it out to the end.'

One rank and file militant called for a link up with all the other groups of

workers preparing to tackle the freeze. Others pointed out the need to stop contractors crossing the picket lines as they are doing at the moment.

The men will meet again in a fortnight to vote on whether to continue the strike. Meanwhile a hardship fund is being set up by the union. Contributions to the hardship fund and messages of solidarity to: Tony Dugdale, 11 Acres Road, Chorlton, Manchester 21.



I would like more information about the International Socialists

Name _____

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

300,000 CHALLENGE FREEZE

THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND civil servants showed their hostility to the government's wage freeze on Tuesday. They gave overwhelming backing to their unions' official call for a one-day stoppage.

Although they have not had a wage increase for two years and although many of the younger ones in the lower grades take home less than £20 a week, their wages have been frozen since November.

In London 80,000 struck, closing down government buildings, museums, customs buildings and airports. Two thousand attended a meeting at the Central Hall, Westminster.

When Bill Kendall general secretary of the main union involved, the CPSA, spoke there was barracking from members who resented his refusal to take a militant stand. About 500 of them had marched to the hall from Hyde Park in an unofficial demonstration.

The union had taken no official action to involve the bulk of its members in demonstrations or rallies. And although officials claimed the response to the strike call was magnificent, they themselves had done next to nothing to ensure its success.

HEARTY RESPONSE

WOLVERHAMPTON:-In the Black Country there was a hearty response to the strike call. The Department of Health and Social Security, employment and customs offices in Dudley, Smethwick, West Bromwich and Wolverhampton were closed to the public because there was not enough staff to man the counters. At Walsall and Darlaston, the offices had to be shut down completely.

There were pickets at all major centres and postmen refused to deliver mail across the picket lines.

SHARP IMPACT

BIRMINGHAM:-The impact of the one-day strike by CPSA members in Birmingham and the surrounding areas has been sharp. Birmingham South, Washwood Heath, Northfields and Dudley offices were closed and in others no work was done because clerical officers were out.

Bill Haigh, regional officer of the CPSA, said that if work was done by non-unionists in these offices they would be blacked. Birmingham airport was also affected, with flights delayed as CPSA air traffic control supported the day strike. Cumberland House was picketed and a barrier erected to stop people driving in to the car park.

Police were called and ordered the removal of the barrier. Cars drove straight

SW Reporters

at pickets, but the police turned a blind eye.

PICKETS MARCH

NEWCASTLE-upon-Tyne:-The one-day strike was 98 per cent effective among the 9000 members of the CPSA who work at the social security offices. There was no officially organised demonstration, but 300 pickets marched round outside the building.

MASSIVE RECRUITING

NORWICH:-Ninety per cent of the 1100 workers employed at the Stationery Office building joined the strike on Tuesday. Since plans for industrial action were announced a couple of weeks ago there has been massive recruitment by the union.

At a meeting last week a proposal was put forward for a five day strike. This was defeated, but got the support of about a third of the workers. Militants hope that when they put the proposal forward again it will be carried.

SHUTDOWN

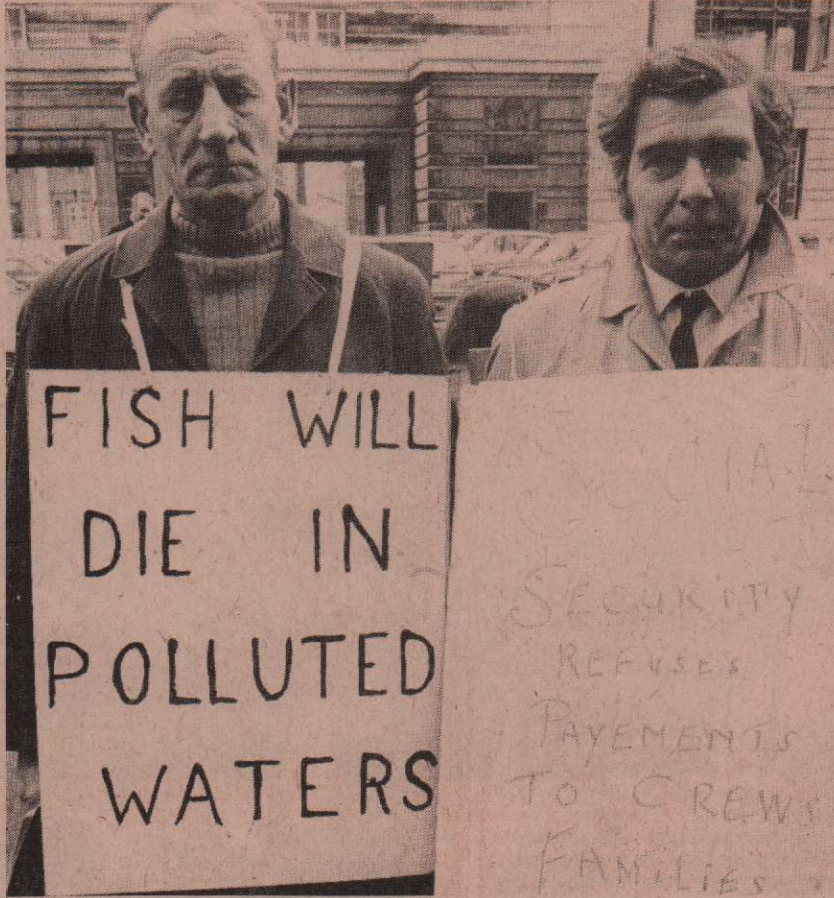
GLASGOW:-There was massive support for the one-day strike in Glasgow. 98 per cent of the workforce joined the strike and thousands turned up for picket duty.

After picketing their own offices from 7.30 in the morning they met together at the union's HQ where groups went off to the National Savings office and the customs and excise building—which they shut down—and to the airport and Edinburgh.

STRONG REACTION

SWANSEA:-The attempt by the head of the civil service, Sir William Armstrong, to stop Tuesday's strike with a 'personal' letter to all civil servants met with strong reactions in South Wales. 300 members of the CPSA at a Swansea vehicle testing station staged a one-hour walk out in protest on receipt of the letter and Tuesday's strike was completely solid.

* Socialist Worker



BOATMEN FIGHT ON

THE LOCK OUT of Greater London Council sludge boat men is now in its ninth week. The men have refused to sign ships articles which give officers arbitrary powers of discipline, including the levying of on-the-spot fines. Two of the locked-out men are seen demonstrating outside the GLC's headquarters, County Hall, on Friday, in an effort to get the Tory council to revert to its old staff disciplinary code.

Guerrilla strikes wave at Ford

FORD WORKERS are adopting an overtime ban and selective strike strategy in pursuit of their claim for £10 a week pay rise, the 35-hour working week and the fourth week's holiday.

Ford management, backed to the hilt by the Tory government and its wage freeze and anti-strike laws, were this week trying to exploit the hesitation and shilly-shallying of the trade unions with a view to settling the claim without a fight at £2.40 a week.

And the trade union's policy of negotiating right up to the day the current wage agreement expired this week, has strengthened Ford's and the government's hand.

Deprived of a clear lead from the top men in the trade union movement who want to avoid a real show-down with the government, the ordinary Ford worker is in two minds about a real fight to win a bigger share of the record Ford profits they have produced.

As a result there have been fears that the call for a stoppage from Thursday would not meet with the anticipated response. And the yellow press has got into the act on every possible occasion in order to sow dissension in the ranks.

Result

It has had some success. Last week some plants lifted their locally imposed overtime bans and others voted against an all-out stoppage despite votes to reject the company's offers. As a result, in Swansea, where the clearest lead was given, workers have now decided to strike only for three days in the first instance.

Nonetheless, the union leaders could not simply lie down in front of the Ford-Tory government wage offer. The selective strike and overtime ban strategy is the result.

If the selective action approach is to become really solid and hit the company then it will have to be co-ordinated on a national basis by convenors and shop stewards. Unco-ordinated guerrilla action will allow Ford to isolate certain plants and encourage it to root out as many militants and militant sections as possible.

What is clear is that an all-out national stoppage in Ford can force the company to give its pathetic wage offer a massive boost, and smash a way through the Tory government's pay policy for all workers.

Stewards and convenors will have to lay hold of the minimal action sanctioned by the official unions and develop it in such a way that the company and the government is forced to concede.

Now hospitals join wages revolt

AFTER four months of being held in check by their official leaders, 250,000 hospital workers started selective strike action for their claim on Thursday. Although many of them earn as little as £15 a week the government is refusing to allow them a rise of more than £1.84.

In London the Royal Free group of hospitals will be out on strike for a week, the St Mary's Paddington group for three days, the St George's hospitals at Hyde Park and Tooting for three days also.

The Kings group of hospitals are to stop completely for a week. Only 150 patients who cannot be moved will stay there. A joint committee of the different unions in the hospitals—including NALGO, which organises white-collar staff, the students union and the Transport Workers—has been formed to back the strike. A number of nurses have pledged support for the ancillary workers.

Similar action is being taken up and down the country with stoppages planned in Leeds, Sheffield, Hull, York and Bristol. In London a mass meeting has been

called by stewards at St George's and St Mary's hospitals at Speakers Corner at 2.30 this Friday.

PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS in Camden and Islington in North London have taken practical steps to link up their struggles at local level. Last week a joint action committee with delegates from the Public Employees, General and Municipal, Teachers, Technical Teachers, Local Government, Clerical and Civil Servants unions was set up 'to co-ordinate and further the common struggle against the freeze'.

The committee has been backed by many important trade unions in the area and by the Camden Trades Council.

The committee was set up at a meeting called by the British Museum branch of the main civil servants union, the CPSA.

Those present expressed frustration and anger with their union executives

The CPSA executive had refused to call an official demonstration to accompany the one-day strike. The main hospital union, NUPE, resisted demands at the London shop stewards' conference for all-out strike action and have substituted less effective selective strike action.

The action committee planned support for the teachers and civil servants' demonstration on Tuesday, for the lobby of the TUC special congress on Monday and for a mass meeting of all Camden and Islington trade unionists in the Friends Meeting House (opposite Euston Station) next Wednesday evening.

Local trade union branches and shop stewards committees wishing to endorse the action committee should write to: F Williams, 79 Brougham Street, NW1.

Students in takeover

STUDENTS at Thames Polytechnic in Woolwich, South London, occupied the main building this week to demand higher grants and better accommodation for students. Thames is the first college or university building to be occupied in the course of the National Union of Students' campaign for higher grants.

A spokesman for the Thames students stated this week that the occupation was designed to highlight the broader issues of which the appalling treatment of students is only a part—the level of pensions, the government's pay freeze and the plight of all lower paid sections of society.

SUPPORT FINE TUBES NATIONAL PICKET Monday 19 March

Information about numbers attending picket to be received by 2 March Full details from Fine Tubes Strike Committee, 65 Bretonside, Exeter Street, Devon. Phone 0752 65459/65667

Derby lock out ends

DERBY:-Management at Birmid Qualcast foundry have conceded a first victory to the 1500 men and agreed to end the lock out while they maintain a work to rule and overtime ban.

The unions involved had refused to make the work to rule and overtime ban official. The general feeling of the shop stewards was voiced by David Bull, electricians' union shop steward, when he said that the men 'are being treated shabbily not only by the management but by the unions as well.'

What started as a claim to have all holiday pay calculated from average earnings has become an issue of major importance for Qualcast workers. Union attempts to improve traditionally bad wages and conditions, with six day working for most men to enable them to get by, has come up against resistance from the main company board.

Stewards see total victory in this dispute—the first for 40 years—as essential if they are to be in a strong position in the main negotiations due later this year.

Clydebank retreats on rent struggle

by Steve Jefferys

THE CLYDEBANK rent rebel councillors decided on Monday to pay the £5000 fine imposed on them by arch-reactionary Scottish Judge Lord Wheatley. This decision followed two weeks of soul-searching by the seven Labour and three Communist councillors at the centre of the burgh's refusal to implement the Tory Housing Finance Act.

This retreat in the face of the courts was masked by Jimmy Reid, one of the Communist Party councillors involved, at a meeting of West of Scotland shop stewards held five days earlier. At that meeting Reid advocated the 'militant' policy of refusing to pay the fine from the funds of the Clydebank Burgh Council, arguing instead that the whole West of Scotland labour movement should chip in and pay it. This, he claimed, would involve

the whole working class in the struggle.

The fight, Reid argued, was not against the courts. It was against Gordon Campbell, the Scottish Secretary of State, who had not done the honourable thing and stepped in to impose the increases himself. If the fine was paid by the working-class movement instead of by the town's rent and rate payers, then the Tories would know that if they went to the courts again and a further fine was imposed then they would really be met by industrial action.

This excuse for a fighting policy is highly dangerous. By paying the fine and accepting the Edinburgh High Court's dose of Tory law, the broader fight against the Housing Finance Act is being disarmed.

Other councils in Scotland and elsewhere who are defying the Tories will feel even more isolated and will be encouraged to take similar action, avoiding a real fight.

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