

workers' ACTION

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A message from the Prime Minister —

IT CAN ALL BURN... JUST SAVE MY IOpc RULE

THE FIREMEN'S strike is now in its 8th week. It has had to overcome many obstacles: the arguments about "social responsibility", the government ordered press blackout, the TUC's refusal to fight the 10% limit, the NUM leadership's sell-out to incentive schemes, and the council manual workers' unions' acceptance of 10%.

The government have tried to make out that everything is under control. But in November, fire damage reached £42.7 million as against a monthly average of £18.5 million for the first ten months of the year, according to a New Year's Eve statement from the British Insurance Association.

The firemen were working for the first thirteen days of that month; and the figures don't allow for "consequential loss" such as lost production which results from fires.

Meanwhile the army has been stretched to the limit to provide scabs. They have even been forced to release prisoners from the Military Detention Barracks at Colchester, to fight fires.

The troops' efficiency is likely to be reduced still more from January 4th, when the Marines — who all have some fire training and who have been doing much of the fire-fighting — are replaced by ordinary soldiers.

Although a few firemen in country towns are drifting back to work, the general mood is still one of grim determination to fight to the finish. At last week's meeting of the FBU Executive, only one member proposed re-calling the delegate conference which alone can call off the strike. He was the member for the South Eastern region, which covers Kent, Surrey and Sussex — one of the few areas to approve the emp-

loyers' pre-Christmas offer.

But the rest of the EC (which voted 12-3 to accept 10% in the first place) did not dare to go along with this, for fear of it back-firing on them.

Instead they are hoping for some concession at the joint meeting with the government and the employers on Tuesday — although the government has said that the discussions must be on the basis of accepting the 10%, and the employers' chairman now says they should get no increase at all.

The FBU Executive also

* The 17 who voted for the TUC to support the firemen were: Parry [FBU], Ken Gill [TASS], Ray Buckton [ASLEF], Harry Pemberton and Moss Evans [TGWU], George Guy [Sheetmetal Workers], Alan Sapper [ACTT], Clive Jenkins [ASTMS], John Morton [Musicians' Union], Alan Fisher [NUPE], Doug Grieves [Tobacco workers], Fred Jarvis [NUT], Reg Birch [AUEW], Joe Gormley [NUM], Frank Chapple [EPTU], Bill Keys [SOGAT], and Ken Thomas [CPSA].

decided to call for a re-call TUC conference to discuss campaigning against the 10% limit. Good: but the TUC General Council is unlikely to agree to it and in any case it won't decide until it meets at the end of this month.

Action can and must be demanded now — especially from the 17 General Council members who voted to support the firemen.*

Clearly some of them recognised which way the vote was going to go, and decided to make a cheap show of militancy. They can't be relied on.

But there is nothing to stop the 17 from organising a trade union conference right now for concerted national action to support the firemen.

Days of Action were held in most major cities before Christmas. But in most cases there was little

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BELFAST PAPER SEIZED

The offices of REPUBLICAN NEWS, an Irish Republican weekly published in Belfast, were raided in the early morning of Thursday 15th December by a 400-strong force of the RUC. On the same day the homes of 36

people involved in producing and distributing Republican News were raided. Fifteen people were arrested.

That week's edition of the paper was seized and so was a 16-page Christmas Special Issue which had been prepared. Files, literature, typewriters and duplicators were also seized and taken away by the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

The same afternoon a second surprise raid was made on the RN offices by plainclothes RUC backed by the British Army, disrupting the attempt to reorganise the editorial office.

Despite this, a special single sheet issue of Republican News was quickly produced, telling of the attempt to suppress the paper. 15000 copies were distributed. RN declared firmly: "We will continue".

A normal issue of the paper was published on December 24th.

The attack on the paper may in fact be the beginning of a drive to snuff out the activities of Sinn Fein, the legal political organisation which has the same political goals as the Provisional IRA.

In recent months the British military authorities have, as RN reports on December 24th, "attempted to close down the social clubs, they have attempted to put the Peoples Taxis off the Falls Road, they have harassed and arrested members of the Peoples Fire Service, disrupted the distribution of the Peoples Postal Service in Belfast and Derry and have heavily fined and jailed political demonstrators. They have now attempted to drive the Republican News underground."

Roy Mason, who is in charge of British military rule in the 6 Counties of Northern Ireland, has time and again demanded that there should be a tight control of information concerning the war zone in Ireland and especially on the activities of the British Army and the RUC there.

Last year he upbraided the BBC's top officials for being "pro-terrorist" because the BBC coverage of the North of Ireland was not entirely made up of British Army propaganda. [See WA84 for some instances of British TV censorship.] In fact the last year has seen a notable drying up of British press reports about Army anti-Catholic activity in Northern Ireland.

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CARTER BACKS ISRAEL'S BANTUSTAN PLAN

ISRAEL'S response to Sadat's so-called "peace initiative" has been exactly as expected: whatever concessions they are prepared to make in the Sinai peninsula, the Zionists are not prepared to concede to the Palestinians even the mock self-determination of a West Bank and Gaza Strip state.

What Israel proposed instead was a tri-partite trusteeship over those areas, to be exercised by the Israeli government, the Jordanian government, and representatives of the population of those areas. Not even Hussein of Jordan has dared lend support to this clear denial of Palestinian national rights.

What has angered Sadat most, however, is that President Carter has backed the Israeli proposals... after last year seeming to indicate he would be ready to force Israel to recognise the Palestinians. Carter's actions will appear to Sadat as a stab in the back, though in reality they were the logical continuation of US policy.

As Sadat knows, one of the biggest obstacles to the realisation of the US plan — a sort of half-way house between the present Egyptian and Israeli positions — is the continued intransigence of the West Bank Palestinians. Despite considerable efforts to sway leading West Bank Arabs to support his policy, Sadat had to admit shortly before the Christmas 'summit' in Cairo that the overwhelming majority of mayors and other Palestinian notables — even those officially outside the PLO — as well as the population in general is against the so-called 'peace initiative'.

Cairo press and radio therefore concentrate now on vilifying the PLO leadership and accusing them of having committed crimes against the Palestinian people. Unfortunately, the accusation is just, in a way: the PLO have committed crimes against the Palestinian people... in putting trust in the bourgeois Arab leaderships of Egypt, Syria, Jordan and others.



ON 27th December the eight French technicians who had been held by Polisario flew in to Paris, and six of them held a press conference. They had been released unconditionally by Polisario, a guerilla force fighting against Mauritania and Morocco for the independence of the formerly Spanish territory of the Western Sahara.

The press conference, confirming statements made by the technicians before they left Africa, was a slap in the face for the French government. They condemned the French bombing expeditions in December against Polisario, and said that bombing had in no way helped their liber-

Polisario's hostages expose French plans

ation. (Indeed, the expeditions took place after the Polisario had announced its intention to release the French prisoners.)

They admitted that they had been involved in Mauritanian military preparations against Polisario. They were working for the Mauritanian national mining corporation at Zouerate, and a former manager at Zouerate (between 1971 and 1977) confirmed, in a letter to the Paris daily *Le Monde* on 24th December, that the resources of this mining corporation were indeed used by the

Mauritanian army. Further evidence was provided by letters published in another Paris daily, *Le Matin*.

The former prisoners refused to condemn their treatment by the Polisario guerillas, and one of them, Jean-Yves Dumaine, said that "They are men who are fighting for a just cause..."

All this evidence fits together to prove that France's intervention in the Western Sahara is motivated solely by a wish to maintain neo-colonial control over this probably oil-rich region.

Russia's worker opposition emerges

VLADIMIR Klebanov worked as a coal miner in the USSR for 16 years. He objected to the fact that long hours of overtime were being worked in order to meet plan targets. Frequently men were working 12 hours a day instead of the miner's standard six-hour shift.

This meant a high death and injury rate. After Klebanov became a shift foreman in 1968, he refused to require overtime from his men or to send them into the mine when safety equipment was missing or broken.

He was charged with slandering the State and committed to a mental hospital.

Vladimir Klebanov is now the principal leader of a group of "worker-dissidents" in the USSR, who have recently published an Open Letter reported in the 'Financial Times' on 8th December.

Perhaps out of prudence, the workers' group says it has no "philosophical" objections to the system in the USSR, but merely wishes to defend rights which the

USSR's Constitution is supposed to grant. The members of the group met each other in the reception halls of the central authorities of the USSR while trying to pursue individual complaints.

Typical of their experiences is that of Nadezhda Kurakin. The manager at the Volgograd restaurant where she worked for 25 years were docking pay from her and other waitresses for fictitious broken crockery, and then ordering new crockery for themselves.

In 1975 she raised the issue at a Communist Party meeting and was fired for shirking. She has been unable to get a job since.

Anatoli Poznyakov, a locksmith, was also sacked. His crime was to ask for a pay increase and then to appeal against the refusal. Valentin Poplavsky, a manager at a factory outside Moscow, was sacked for refusing to reprimand a woman employee who protested against the use of factory funds for drinking parties. When he complained about the sacking, he

was beaten up and jailed for 15 days, and his wife also lost her job.

All these stories are proof that the USSR is not socialist — that it is dominated by an arrogant and corrupt bureaucracy, against which the workers do not even have the elementary defence of genuine trade union organisation. The official trade unions are nothing but a department of the Soviet bureaucracy. And it is only by overthrowing that bureaucracy that the Russian workers will be able to win genuine trade union rights for themselves.

ANOTHER BLOW has been struck against the Charter 77 movement for civil rights in Czechoslovakia, with the sacking of Petr Uhl. Uhl was sent a letter by the management and unions in the factory where he works, dismissing him from his job as from 31st January.

"The reasons for this dismissal", says the letter, "are as follows: you do not meet the political-moral requirements which the Potrubí works, in view of the importance of its tasks, has a right to expect from the workers which it employs as technicians. As a signatory of the so-called 'Charter 77 declaration', you have identified yourself with this slanderous pamphlet..."

Uhl has already been jailed for four years (1971-75) on charges of organising a "Trotskyist group". Unlike most supporters of Charter 77, he considers himself a revolutionary Marxist.

Workers' Action is able to inform our readers, exclusively, that the installation of Jack Jones as a Companion of Honour is only a diversion to fool the House of Lords and the Sunday Telegraph.

Prime Minister James Callaghan has sent WA a Xmas souvenir copy of the Government's secret plan to bring the British Constitution up to date.

After the next election the House of Lords will be abolished. It will be replaced as upper chamber by an enlarged General Council of the TUC.

The CBI, the TUC and the Labour Government have established a secret joint commission to oversee this operation to reward the Barons of the TUC for being a reliable safety net for the capitalist system for so many years.

Details have still to be finalised but it appears that the plan is for every Secretary of an accredited trade union to have automatic membership.

EXCLUSIVE!

Outstanding capitalists will be eligible for cooption to the new body on the approval of the Monarch and the Prime Minister of the day. George Ward is at the top of the present list of nominees, sponsored by Len Murray, Roy Grantham and Tom Jackson.

Jack Jones' guarded comment on being made Companion of Honour, and his reiteration without abashment that he is still opposed to the House of Lords was neither cynicism nor muddleheadedness. It reflects his knowledge of the Government's plans.

In fact, it was none other than Jack Jones who negotiated the new deal for the trade

union bureaucracy with the Government and the CBI.

True to his principles he angrily rejected an offer by Healey and Callaghan to enoble the entire trade union leadership as part of the deal for Stage 4 wage curbs. Pointing to his flat cap he invited Callaghan and Healey to have a proper respect for the working class origins and traditions of men like himself. So Callaghan had to think of something new.

The PM in turn rejected a proposal that there should be a compulsory uniform in the new Chamber: cloth cap, ermine muffler, gaiters and galoshes. This will now be optional.

David Basnett of the GMWU proposed that the new Chamber should be on the hereditary principle. But Michael Foot strongly defended the trade union principle of simple seniority, pointing out that trade union leaders were not, thank God, hereditary chieftains. The commission felt it would be premature to propose that the TUC should make leading trade union positions the property of the families of their incumbents.

A proposal from Mr. Frank Chapple to bring back the death penalty for unofficial strikers was left to 'lie on the table'.

Jack Jones used the talks to obtain permission for Moss



Evans to organise the members of the Royal Family, lest anyone mistook the TUC for republicans now they were ousting the Lords. Misunderstanding this side of things, H.M. apparently rang up APEX, but was informed that despite reports to the contrary it was still a trade union...

'Republican News' raided

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But whereas Mason can, so far, only complain and try through pressure to force voluntary self-censorship on the media in Britain, in the Six Counties he can use military and police harassment, and maybe, too, trials before

no-jury courts, to impose a news blackout within the Six Counties.

Republican News is a hard hitting newspaper whose viewpoint is usually that of the populist left in the Irish Republican movement —

those who see the struggle for national liberation as a struggle for social revolution in Ireland.

It also expresses the attitudes of the hard-pressed Catholics of Belfast who have been in the front line of the struggle against the British Army and the Orange murder gangs for the last seven years.

Its reports expose British activities in the Six Counties. For example, the confiscated edition contained a detailed report of the assassination earlier that week of 18-year-old IRSP member Colm McNutt in Derry. [See this page].

The Special Emergency Issue of Republican News listed its work which had hit

at the British rule in Northern Ireland: "In the last year we have been biting into the British propaganda assault on the war of liberation. We have highlighted RUC torture, named the RUC criminals who brutalise people, and who would brutalise more if they thought they had the cloak of anonymity and a dopey respect from us for a pro-British sub-judice process.

"We have exposed the UDR [the British Army auxiliary regiment] as a corrupt regiment of Loyalist fascists and murderers.

"It was research first undertaken by Republican News which established that 80% of people convicted

through the non-jury politico/military courts were convicted on the sole evidence of signed statements extracted in the RUC torture centres throughout the 6 Counties. This was later taken up by other bodies."

If Republican News is put out of business it will not only be a blow to the Republicans but will also hit the labour movement in Britain, which is already starved of information about what is being done by the Labour Government in Ireland.

Labour movement bodies should protest against the attack on Republican News and demand that Labour MPs, the NEC of the Labour Party and the National Committee of the LPYS should condemn the attack.



SAS terror in Derry

A REPORT FROM THE SUPPRESSED "REPUBLICAN NEWS"

This report was originally scheduled for the 17th December issue of **Republican News**, which the RUC confiscated. It eventually appeared the following week, in the issue produced just one week after the RN offices were ransacked by the RUC and British Army.

WORKERS downed tools and walked off their jobs in factories all over Derry last Tuesday [13th December] in disgust and protest at the murder of young Colm McNutt the day before.

Eighteen-year old McNutt, of Balbane Pass, Creggan, was walking across a car park at the bottom of William Street with a friend at 2.45pm on Monday when the occupant of a red Hillman Hunter, registration number CJI 6826, produced a large hand gun and fired a number of shots at him, hitting Colm three times in the stomach. ... [The car made off and] was last seen entering the RUC barracks at Rosemount.

Colm McNutt died shortly

after arrival at Altnagelvin hospital. His companion at the time of the murder, Patrick Phelan, who accompanied Colm to the hospital in a vain effort to save his life, was followed to the hospital by the RUC. As soon as he was located the Special Branch arrested him.

Young Phelan, taken whilst still in shock at the sudden and brutal murder of his friend, was then interrogated and eventually charged with possession of a gun. Three hours after the shooting the RUC claimed it was found at the scene.

March

Eye-witnesses to this shocking murder have sworn that no gun could have been 'found', for the car park is quite open ground and many people rushed to the youth's side after the shooting... The RUC manufactured this statement about the gun in an attempt to cover up the activities of their criminal colleagues in the British Military Intelligence and confuse the public...

The record of the Brits and the RUC with regard to young McNutt, a member of the [Irish] R[epublican] S[ocialist] P[arty], is unsavoury to say the least; incriminating to put it mildly. Many

times in the past few months Colm had been arrested and threatened like many another young Derry man. The week previous plain-clothes members of the crown forces told him, "You will not see Christmas". Colm, in reporting this to his friends, took it to mean that he would be arrested yet again, but this time imprisoned on a "holding" charge. He did not realise they meant to murder him.

The most serious incident occurred when he was arrested in Creggan one night and taken out to a lonely by-road by a gang of Brits, where he was beaten and intimidated. This "interview" culminated with a gun being forced into his mouth and the trigger pulled. In a statement issued by the Derry IRSP they noted, "There is a touch of black farce to the statement issued by the RUC, that they are conducting a full investigation into Colm's murder. We remember only too well the wall of silence that surrounded the murder of Sammy Devenney by the same RUC. Under no circumstances will the IRSP participate in any RUC inquiry, and we would call on the public to do likewise".

They called on the people of Derry to show their revulsion at this brutal murder by

attending the funeral and paying their last respects to Colm McNutt.

A massive demonstration of Derry workers took place on Tuesday to show their revulsion and outrage at the murder of Colm. Workers from the STC in Springtown, LEC Refrigeration, the Derry Shoe Factory, RUCOLA and the ESSEX walked off their jobs to protest on the streets of their own town. Coming up to Christmas in a town of such massive unemployment, this meant that these workers not only lost their pay but also risked their jobs to condemn the murder of young Colm McNutt. Phones in the Republican information centre in Cable Street rang all morning as workers from factories from around the city sought advice on how to express their disgust and condemnation at this cowardly deed.

Cover

The first protest took place at noon time as workers from the Springtown shoe factory marched from Pennyburn to the Strand Road RUC barracks to hand in a petition demanding that those responsible — now sheltered behind the high stone wall of the barracks — be brought to justice.

The main protest formed up at 2pm at the scene of the assassination in William Street... A chant rose from the workers gathered there: "Murderers Out". The RUC's response to this was to send Special Branch photographers to photograph the crowd from inside the safety of their barracks.

After a one-minute silence in respect to Colm, the protesters, led by women carrying black flags, marched down the length of Strand Road to Derry's Guild Hall Square. There sited is the city council's Christmas tree...

With one thought those carrying the placards decorated the Christmas tree with reality, hanging their placards on its branches: "SAS Santa Claus gives Derry one dead body. Whose Next?"

... As soon as the protesters

left the square to return to the Bogside, the Brits and the RUC jumped from their land-rovers, raced over to the Christmas tree, and tore down the placards, throwing them into the jeep in an effort to blot out from the notice of passers-by that the protest ever took place.

Murder

In returning to the Bogside through the check-point, the crowd smashed open the large security gates. A statement was handed out by Sinn Fein, stating: "Young people are against the victims not of mere harassment this time but of an assassination at the hands of the Crown forces... In the five weeks since SAS man Creasy took over as G[eneral] O[fficer] C[ommanding], numerous threats of assassination both by the RUC and British troops have been made to Derry's men and women.

"We warn people here to be on their guard against British and RUC assassins in unmarked cars. We condemn the cold-blooded murder of Colm McNutt. But we draw the people's attention to the fact that murder, door step and car park assassinations, torture and other brutal and degrading treatment are not simply isolated incidents, but are the very method and means of British control here in our land".

ID cards for Belfast?

New identity cards being issued in Northern Ireland may be the thin end of the wedge for an overall pass system. British Army chiefs have long been pressing for such a system.

The identity cards are being put out for pensioners and school students aged 14 to 16. Although the cards are supposed to be simply half-fare passes for buses and railways, they will include a photograph of the bearer together with name and address. Already Northern Ireland driving licences carry a photograph of the bearer.



THE LIGHT at the end of the tunnel, the reward for all our sacrifices, is here at last. This is the message of the news Bulletins; such is what we hear in interviews with a beaming and satisfied Denis Healey.

Just what does it all add up to for workers who are told: turn your backs on the striking firemen, accept your 10% pay rise with a good grace, just come along quietly and riches will come your way next year.

According to the international economic agency OECD and other forecasters, Britain will see significant economic growth in 1978 for the first year since 1973. Yet unemployment will continue at around 1½ million, and the government is already preparing Phase 4 wage controls to follow Phase 3.

The OECD predicts 3.2% growth for 1978, with 9.5% inflation (while the London Business School forecasters say 2.3% growth and 11% inflation). This means that at last, after two years' lag, Britain is being drawn into the world recovery from the 1973-74 recession.

Pick-up

The pick-up after the recession began in late 1975 in the USA, West Germany and Japan. But it was, and has continued, very slow. In 1978 about 4% growth is expected for the USA, and about 3.5% for Western Europe. Unemployment in the imperialist countries was 16.3 million at the end of 1977, down only marginally from the figure of 17.5 million at the depth of the recession.

In 1975 and 1976 the pick-up hardly affected Britain. Within an economically sick capitalist world, Britain is especially sick. Its share of world trade declined from 12% in 1950 to 4.7% in 1974. Profits have fallen more sharply in Britain than elsewhere, and more and more of British capital is invested overseas.

However, the relative upturn on a world scale, coupled with the boost from North Sea Oil and the rise in profits resulting from real wages being pushed down hard in the last three years, has finally yielded a slight increase in the pulse-rate of British capitalism. The financial situation has improved, with a favourable balance of payments, reserves up to \$20,390 million, and the pound improving against the dollar from £1=\$1.702 to £1=\$1.917.

Although domestic demand has increased very little, exports have risen. Trading profits were about 30% up in 1976. The 'Minimum Wages Order' has gone up by 15% in late 1976 to

AFTER THE BIG STICK, THE VERY SMALL CARROT

5% in mid-October 1977 and 7% now, which means that it is easier for industrial capitalists to borrow money for expansion. Total investment in manufacturing increased by 5%-7% from 1976 to 1977 and a bigger increase is expected for 1978 by the forecasters.

The clearest indication that the bourgeoisie feels more confident is that share prices have risen sharply, the *Financial Times* Index being 37% up on the year.

All these factors lay the basis for some growth in production next year, and probably also some rise in real wages — though not enough to make good the decline since 1974-5. Inflation in Britain will probably stabilise because world prices are levelling out.

Low

Nothing like a boom is in sight, though. Despite the probability of a rise in industrial investment, the capitalists in the machine tools and engineering industries are cautious. Asked by the *Financial Times* for their views on prospects for 1978, Chairman of Tube Investments B.S.Kellett said that "Demand for capital equipment for expansion projects seems likely to continue at a low level while there is still so much under-utilised production capacity"; and W.R.Vaughan, president of the Machine Tools Trades Association, said that "As we approach 1978 ... much of the industry (is) working at less than 75% capacity... the future is going to be increasingly tough."

Investment fell dramatically from 1974 to 1976, and will scarcely reach 1974 levels again even if the most optimistic forecasts for 1978 are proved correct.

Unemployment is unlikely to fall significantly even if production increases, because there is a lot of slack capacity to be taken up, be-

cause any new investment is likely to be in technology which reduces manpower requirements, and because the employers will be going for increased productivity.

The capitalists have received their rewards for our "sacrifices", in the increased profits and the rising share prices. The *Observer* (1st Jan.) smugly commented "It would have been possible last year to have turned an

investment of £1,000 into £1,969". No 10% or 5% limit there!

But for the working class, even the prospect of a limited restoration of real wages runs up against Denis Healey's promise to the City that Phase 4 wage curbs will follow the 10% and 12-month rules.

Harness

The recession would, of course, have worked itself out in one way or another without the Government's wage controls. The effect of those wage controls was not to end the recession (if anything, by reducing domestic demand, they prolonged it) but to put the capitalists in a better position to make big profits during the upturn. With equal inevitability, another recession will follow the upturn—and a new world recession, which is unlikely to be postponed beyond 1979, may well cut short the British upturn before it has run its course.

The bosses' propagandists are holding out a carrot. But unless workers can break through the harness, it'll be another hungry year.

PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPMENT IN ONE COUNTRY

IN THE TALKS over the future of Rhodesia, President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania has stood out as the most militant supporter of the rights of the black majority. Tanzania has also appeared to be the most consistent model of "African socialism" south of the Sahara. Like many other states it claims to steer a middle road between capitalism and communism.

What is the reality behind these claims?

Tanganyika was seized as a colony by Germany in the late 19th century — not so much for immediate economic reasons as for political and strategic ones. Its economy then rested almost entirely, and still rests largely, on subsistence agriculture by land-owning peasants.

Britain grabbed Tanganyika from Germany as part of her

booty of victory in the First World War. Independence was granted in 1961. Nyerere and his party, TANU, have ruled the country ever since. The name of the state was changed to Tanzania after fusion with the island of Zanzibar, and TANU changed its name to CCM in February this year after fusing with its Zanzibar counterpart.

The Arusha Declaration of February 1967 laid down Nyerere's principles of "socialism" and "Self Reliance". "Socialism" was never clearly defined, and tends to change as circumstances change. "Self Reliance" was an attempt to establish national state capitalist development without too close neo-colonial ties with any one country.

Five Year Plans were put forward to guide economic progress. But eleven years

HUGO Dewar's short book describes the twenty years of the Communist Party between its founding and its response to the German attack on the Soviet Union on 21st June 1941.

It gives a readable history, more wide-ranging than L.J. Macfarlane's much better book ("The British CP... until 1929") or Woodhouse and Pearce's collection ("Essays on the History of Communism in Britain"), and is relatively cheap and easy to obtain. Its main purpose is to show how the line of the CP after the mid-'20s was a reflection of the needs of the bureaucratic caste which had usurped power in the Soviet Union and "had subordinated all the communist parties to themselves, used them in the interests of their own power struggle in Russia, in the interests of Socialism in One Country, masquerading under the guise of internationalism"



The Party, founded under the impetus of the Russian Revolution, was a fusion of many small revolutionary groups with sections from the Independent Labour Party and other left-reformist trends. Its composition was overwhelmingly proletarian; the training of its small but enthusiastic membership almost solely in general socialist propaganda combined with militant trade unionism. The British CP cadres did not have the theoretical education in the struggles of and within the Second International possessed by the cadres of the German, Polish, or Bulgarian CPs. But it was willing to learn and get on with the job of fighting the ruling class.

This ensured that it was the party of the most dedicated class fighters in Britain — and that their instinct was to take their political line from those who 'knew best'.

Unfortunately the Comintern under Stalin — and sometimes even before Stalin's domination — often did not know best.

later Tanzania is no more self-reliant than it was, and no nearer to socialism.

The only political party is CCM, largely based on the aspiring middle class. All decisions are made by the Party and passed down to the masses for implementation. Although local and regional committees exist, they have no real influence except in local matters.

Membership of CCM has recently been made open to all, but there is a rigorous entry procedure requiring a candidate to be recommended by three CCM members.

Though Nyerere claims he is steering a separate course from "Communism" — meaning Stalinism — this party-state is borrowed straight from the Stalinist model.

Bureaucracy and inefficiency are widespread, and charg-

How the Communist Party was wrecked

After describing the CP's origins, Dewar gives a good brief account in his second chapter of the process by which the CP transformed itself from a socialist propaganda society into a fighting party. The third chapter, on the CP and the Labour Party, is not so good.

Dewar tries to prove by a series of quotations that the CP was confused about the Labour Party. Although he cites approvingly Lenin's advice to the CP to seek affiliation to the Labour Party, he argues that CP efforts to 'penetrate' the Labour Party were false because they "diverted activity from the party as such to the auxiliary 'left wing' inside the Labour Party".

He concludes that "The key to the problem of how to shake the workers' faith in reformism thus lay primarily in the industrial struggle, among rank and file trade unionists".

This conclusion echoes the way many CP militants felt in the early days of the Party. It took a long fight by Lenin and the Comintern to persuade them that they should, and could, combine activity alongside rank and file workers in the Labour Party with a firm revolutionary opposition to reformist politics. In



PAUL ADAMS REVIEWS "COMMUNIST POLITICS IN BRITAIN", BY HUGO DEWAR (PLUTO PRESS, £1.80).

correcting their views, they often said confused things (which help Dewar 'prove' his case). Yet that strategic re-orientation towards the Labour Party, away from the sectarian traditions of previous British Marxism, was the most vital lesson of the early years of the CP.

Dewar's account is backed up by a false analysis of the Labour Party. "The true situation was that the Labour Party had been established to represent the interests of the workers organised in trade unions, interests that the Liberals, hitherto trusted by the



The first Central Committee of the Communist Party

workers, had demonstrably betrayed. With the growth of the Labour Party it had become infiltrated by all kinds of careerists, its original basic working-class character diluted but by no means destroyed. It became precisely the aim of the reformist bureaucracy to destroy this working-class character..."

In reality the reformist character of the Labour Party was ensured from the start by the conservative, reformist trade unions — which were just as much infected by careerism as the Party!



Despite Dewar's syndicalist bias, his book tells us little about the CP's industrial work in the period when it was a communist party. The Minority Movement — the great militant opposition movement in the trade unions in the 1920s, led mainly by the CP — gets as little coverage as the National Left Wing Move-

ment, the communist-influenced opposition in the Labour Party.

The brief mention of the Minority Movement contains a first-rate blunder: Dewar describes the movement as based "on the appeal of limited economic ('transitional') demands". The 'transitional' demands of the early CPs were demands like workers' control, aimed at developing the class struggle in a revolutionary direction, and not just "limited economic demands"; and the Minority Movement's programme included many non-"economic" demands. It openly declared for socialism, against British colonialism and imperialism, against the Dawes Plan.

Dewar, however, concentrates on the opportunist errors of the CP and the Minority Movement in the period round the 1926 General Strike.

Despite numerous warnings to 'watch the leaders', the drift of CP policy in the period before, during and even after the General Strike was fate-

fully soft on the 'left' trade union leaders; it expected them to be a secure bulwark to stop imperialist aggression against the Soviet Union, and even to short-cut the arduous process of building a revolutionary party in Britain by leading the trade unions to seize power.

The General Strike was sold out by the 'left' trade union leaders. Meanwhile in Russia the battle between the Stalin faction and the Trotsky-Zinoviev Joint Opposition, over trade union policy in Britain among other issues, was being fought out — with tragically scarcely any echo in the theoretically-backward British CP.

To quote Dewar, "The Fifteenth Congress of the CPSU [December 1927] gave the death-blow politically to the Opposition inside the party, expelling members of the Joint Opposition and allowing them to be re-admitted only

Contd. on page 6



Tanzania's President Julius Nyerere

es of corruption are often made against officials.

The trade unions are state controlled, and it is practically illegal to take strike action. The small working class of Tanzania is nevertheless not entirely subdued; and strikes do take place: the workers at Kiltex textile factory in Dar es Salaam have recently come out on strike against a new wages agreement, despite condemnation from Party and Government officials.



The emphasis on "self reliance" and the drive to build an industrial and commercial sector mean there is a need for more efficient food production, providing the surplus necessary for such ex-

pansion. This could not be achieved by the scattered, subsistence-farming peasantry as they existed at independence. So in 1962 Nyerere announced the Ujamaa Village Settlement Scheme. The aim was to bring the peasants into permanent fixed communities based on cooperation and community help, each village being allocated a certain amount of land to be worked communally, with small individual plots as well.

Since then, 85% of the population has moved into registered villages. But this was often achieved through coercion, as peasants do not — for reasons they don't fully understand — readily leave land they've farmed for generations.

Several hundred people were shot for resisting the scheme. In Arusha in the

north, Ujamaa has failed because this wealthy region successfully resisted, and private farming continues there as before.

The facilities in the Ujamaa villages undoubtedly make for higher productivity, but many problems still exist. The peasants are still very poor, many continue to live in mud huts, and disease is still rampant. A recent outbreak of cholera testifies to continuing social problems.

Some areas suffer from food shortages, and bureaucratic inefficiency means a lack of co-ordination in selling and transporting produce between regions.

The 'enlightening mission' of the German and British colonists left the population of Tanzania not only poor but illiterate. Only this year has primary education been made

compulsory — but many regions doubt that they'll be able to cope with the thousands of extra children. Books, equipment and teachers are all in short supply.

Only a small proportion of children get secondary schooling, despite the existence of private and mission secondary schools.

Hence there is a great shortage of trained technicians, and expatriates educated abroad command higher salaries and better conditions. The one university, in Dar es Salaam, takes only 2000 students, and is an elite institution for the rising black middle class.

In order to avoid over dependence on one country, Tanzania has sought for aid from a variety of sources, ranging from China to West Germany and Scandinavia. It is heavily dependent, though, on finance

from the imperialist World Bank, and thus subject to the goodwill of a number of capitalist countries and institutions.

The Tanzanian ruling class wants to be able to develop its economy free from domination by the big powers. For a small country with meagre resources in the midst of today's highly intermeshed world economy, even the most modest beginnings along that road are, however, impossible.

That is why even Nyerere's "self reliance" doctrine is ultimately a sham; and why on the Rhodesia question he will never come out decisively, in a principled way, against any limitation by British and American imperialism of the self determination of the black majority.

ROS MAKIN
Lushoto, Dec. 14th

ANYONE who gave up 7 hours of the holiday to watch the first showing here [by BBC2] of the full, uncut Russian War and Peace, hoping to see Tolstoy's full uncut War & Peace, will have been bitterly disillusioned — even if the battle scenes WERE magnificent.

Apart from bad acting and casting (Natasha never grows up, Pierre, played by the film's director Sergei Bondarchuk, is a lump of wood that can only look sad or surprised), the remarkable thing about this film was



Bondarchuk as Pierre Bezuhov

Travesty of Tolstoy

that, along with half the plot, it cuts out every vestige of social comment and observation from Tolstoy's great epic novel.

Not a hint is left in of the Rostov family's gentle financial slide and increasing concern with money which is intimately bound up with the projected marriages of Natasha and Nikolai. Sonya appears a couple of times as an extra, but we don't find out about her sad, thwarted romance with Nikolai, whom she can't marry because she hasn't got a bean. And there is no sign of the social and financial elevation involved in the planned marriages with the Bolkonskys.

Indeed, in this film version Nikolai Rostov never even meets Princess Maria, let alone marries her. And that also cuts out the revolt of her serfs, which

is the occasion of their first meeting.

It isn't only bad acting that reduces Pierre; the script simply leaves out his attempts to break from the prevailing feudal ideology. He neither joins the Freemasons nor does he go near the Decembrists.

Likewise, Andrei Bolkonsky's disgust with the stuffed uniforms of the Czarist army is omitted.

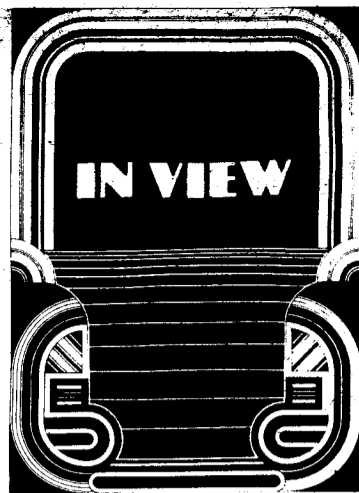
Above all, Bondarchuk's film is seeped in Russian patriotism. The social significance of the clash of Napoleonic France and feudal Russia is eliminated, with Napoleon presented simply as an evil foreigner who got his come-uppance from the heroic Russians.

And they, poor and rich, serf and prince, are united in suffering and sacrifice. Natasha's

dramatic gesture of humanism (central to her character and budding relationship with Pierre) where she abandons the family's precious pictures and crockery in Moscow so that wounded soldiers can have the Rostovs' carts, is reduced to insignificance. Every privileged Muscovite, it is implied, was doing the same thing as the French advanced on the city.

When "Socialist Realism" was first decreed as the style for Stalinist art in 1932, the bureaucracy was able to pull out the testimonials of Marx and Engels on the revolutionary character of the bourgeois realism of their time.

To make sure nothing was left that was revolutionary, the cultural commissars hedged their invention in a dozen and one restrictions. Their stifling



secret-police regime must never be glimpsed in the supposedly 'realistic' products. The "seamy side of Soviet life" was never to be shown.

And when "Socialist realism" meets up with Tolstoy, the same cosmetic face-pack is slapped down, so that we don't even see the "seamy side" of Russian feudal autocracy either.

SOPHIA CAPLAN

How the Communist Party was wrecked

From page 5

if they recanted... Then, in 1928-29, the Stalinists turned towards a policy of break-neck industrialisation and forced collectivisation in the USSR; and, in parallel, made a 'left turn' internationally.

According to Stalin, the communist parties were now in the 'Third Period', one of revolutionary upsurge and capitalist collapse. In Britain, it was said, "the bureaucracy had succeeded in consolidating its influence in the Labour Party... rendering all left-wing work in that body impossible" (Report by J.R. Campbell, February 1928).

The Minority Movement sections were turned into sects and sometimes into breakaway unions. The National Left Wing Movement was broken up by the Party that had built it — it was now no longer a 'bridge' but a 'wall' — and the Party degenerated into complete sectarian stupidity, referring to the left of the Labour Party as 'social fascists' and 'left social fascists'.

The policy of the Third Period was one of the chief factors in aiding Hitler's victory in Germany. The Comintern at first continued to insist the Stalinist policy was 100% correct; and then, in 1935, turned to a new line. As Dewar puts it, "Unity at any Price". "The party promptly executed the right-about-turn. The slogan, 'For a Soviet Britain' gave way to the slogan, 'For a Labour Government'".



What had been a right-wing, even a "Trotskyite-fascist" deviation a few months before, was now put forward as the new gospel according to Dimitrov. The world was divided not into warring classes or social systems, but between the fascists and warmongers on one side and on the other "the anti-fascists and peace-lovers, classified under the category of 'all men of good will'".

To justify the switch Pollitt, the party's General Secretary, merely had to say: "We of the Communist Party of Great Britain, in line with every section of the Communist International, support 100%, and without any reservations, everything that the Soviet Union does in its foreign policy, because we understand that this foreign policy is in accord with the interests of the international interests of



May Day 1926



Palme Dutt

the working class as a whole and is helping forward to the path of revolution".

With the new line the CP began its Unity Campaign — for a bloc with the ILP and the Socialist League, a left-wing group in the Labour Party led by Sir Stafford Cripps. The campaign soon ended when the Socialist League was disaffiliated from the Labour Party and dissolved itself.

The CP policy then turned further to the right. This was the heyday of the 'Friends of the Soviet Union', the intellectuals and academic pretenders who would say a good word for what Robert Boothby MP (now Lord Boothby) termed "the note of practical realism which has been struck in the Kremlin ever since Mr Stalin came to power".

Dewar captures the atmosphere well by reporting a December 1935 Congress of Peace and Friendship. There was Sidney Webb telling the audience that "There is no unemployment among actors in the USSR. You get a regular enthusiasm for more production among the workers. They go mad in their desire and determination to turn out more stuff... to work harder... They cry for piecework".

Professor Blackett "explained why Soviet citizens were taking to tennis and dancing — 'the ordinary ballroom dancing'. This, he said, was considered some people 'to be inconsistent with socialism'. The good professor set his audience's minds at rest by assuring them that there was no inconsistency between Bolshevism and ballroom dancing.

Dr Maude Royden announced: "We Christians see realised in actual fact in Russia, several of the most important teachings of our Master". Dr Edith Summerskill praised the state of operating theatres in Russia and "other speakers delivered addresses of a like kind on Soviet sport, Soviet art and Soviet literature".

The Communist Party clearly directed itself towards the petty bourgeoisie, the "teachers, doctors and other professional workers, small shopkeepers and traders, small farmers and market gardeners, civil servants and local government officials, scientific workers and intellectuals generally [who] can be brought to realise that their own interests are harmed by the interests of the millionaires and the millionaires' National Government".



Along with this orientation went a toning down of revolutionary language. The revolutionary spirit of the 1920s had now been broken by years of bureaucratism and twists and turns in line with Stalinist foreign policy. "A resolution of the Central Committee in September 1937 explained that 'the dictatorship of the proletariat', although remaining party doctrine, since after all it meant no more than 'a very broad form of democracy for the

working people', was not to be referred to in the future: 'we need to make it clear that this issue is not now on the order of the day in the present situation in Britain'".

On 28 September 1939 it was 'all change' once again. After the Nazi-Soviet joint 'Declaration' on the war, the Daily Worker announced: "This war is not a war for democracy against fascism. It is not a war for the defence of peace against aggression".

But Pollitt's pamphlet published only a few weeks before said it was. The pamphlet was withdrawn, Pollitt was temporarily disgraced, and the line of the previous three years was said to be a personal quirk of Pollitt. Now this was the line: "After German fascism had been compelled by the strength of the Soviet Union to retreat from its anti-Soviet aims, the main world conflict is more and more clearly revealed between British imperialism, as the principal and the most aggressive force of world reaction, and world socialism, led by the Soviet Union".

Arguments from the Third Period were revived. "Ivor Montagu, another of the Party's intellectuals, wanted to know what the difference was between the Labour Front of Dr Ley [the Nazi Minister of Labour] and the Labour Party... Pursuing this analogy, R. Page Arnot wrote that in Germany there was the Labour Front, in Britain there are the trade unions". Or again, "How many further steps have to be taken", asked Page Arnot, "before the distinction from the Labour Front disappears?"

Palme Dutt argued that Britain was worse than Ger-

many because "While Hitler is holding only 90 million in subjection, Britain is holding 250 millions".

On 21st June 1941, everything switched back again. Germany had attacked the Soviet Union. While months before the cleverest Party theoreticians could find no difference between British bourgeois democracy and fascism, now Stalin announced, "Our war for the freedom of our fatherland will merge with the struggle of the peoples of Europe and America for their independence, for democratic liberties. It will be a united front of peoples standing for freedom and against enslavement and threats of enslavement by Hitler's fascist armies".



To prove their good will the CP vigorously supported the Tory Sir James Grigg against the ILP candidate Fenner Brockway in the Cardiff East by-election, and began a four year policy of strike-breaking. The CPGB stood four-square behind the 'democratic' war effort, against strikes, against the revolts of the subject nations, against independence of the voice of Labour.

The Communist Party had started life bristling with a no-nonsense anti-authoritarian spirit, a rebel fire. That fire had been put out, the lackey's spirit had dominated the party for years, and while the line could be changed to order, the organisation had long become unchangeable in its cynicism, its petty bourgeois reformism, and its ability to corrupt the revolutionary spirit of those it made its own.



CP rally in Trafalgar Square, 1932

SEIZE GRUNWICKS

NOW!

DEAR COMRADES,

AS FAR AS George Ward is concerned, the Grunwick dispute is over, says Tory MP John Gorst, Ward's adviser during the Grunwick strike.

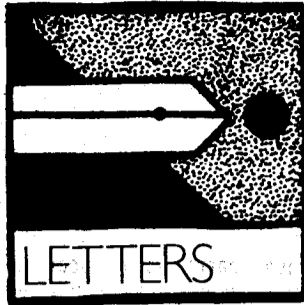
For the traitors, cowards and scabs who 'lead' the working class movement in this country Grunwick is not quite over — they are still busy hammering nails into the coffins of the strikers.

But for the working class the issue cannot be over yet.

Facts have to be faced. At Grunwicks defeat has been snatched from the jaws of victory by the Trade Union leaders and the contemptible complicity of the Labour Government. George Ward could have been swept away by the mass action of the working class during the summer if mass picketing had not been sabotaged and blacking had been implemented by workers in the supply industries after the example of the UPW members in Cricklewood. While it is still essential that these supplies are blacked, the fact is that Ward's chums in NAFF have supplied him with anything he wants, including the money to make good his losses. The whole ruling class stands behind Ward. We must be sure that the working class lines up solidly behind the Grunwick strikers.

For revolutionaries the question is now posed — how do we stop the collapse? Some say that nationalisation is the only answer. This position is nothing but a craven adaptation to the people who have been fighting tooth and nail against the Grunwick strikers: "Please, Mr Rees, would you, please, expropriate George Ward and allow the workers to control the factory, if you could". Others have nothing more useful than "Build the rank and file movement".

The seizure of Grunwicks by the working class is now the only tactic which will defeat the ruling



class offensive. Mass pickets must be organised to this end, to kick Ward and his cronies out of the factory and defend the occupation against the scabbing forces of the state. Occupation is the only way in which we can transform the situation where Ward is sitting on a pile of NAFF money inside and we are standing outside. It is the only way we can wipe the smiles off the Tories' faces.

Of course it will be difficult — and illegal. It is, however, the only answer. Occupation and successful defence of the factory will make "Nationalisation under Workers' Control" a reality, not a pipe-dream. The Government would either legalise it or face the wrath of the mass movement in support of it.

PETER HADLEY, JACK BAKER
Manchester.



George Ward

REPLY

Unrealistic demagoguery isn't what's needed

The problem of the Grunwicks dispute is not lack of a tactic. The tactics used by the strike committee, of seeking mass pickets and blacking, have been perfectly well-suited. The problem is that the treachery of the official leaders of the labour movement has been able to deprive those tactics of the necessary forces.

It is not within the power of the revolutionary left to change that through our own forces. We are not strong enough. Trying to conceal our weakness by inventing spurious 'magic' slogans — 'Nationalise', 'Build the rank and file movement' — does not help.

We can pledge our full support to the strike committee in any action they may plan. If and when we are able to gain the ear of forces greater than our own, we can point out that a re-launching of the campaign against George Ward is possible, only given a sufficiently strong force to set it in motion. If the trade union bodies which sit — on paper, at least — support mass action to win the dispute were gathered together in a national Grunwicks support committee, they would represent a real factor in the labour movement.

If the mass action were set in motion once again, if it gathered strength, then 'occupy Grunwicks' might become a timely slogan. But as a slogan now for the strikers and

supporters from the revolutionary left, in the face of direct opposition from the whole official labour movement, it is crazy.

Would the slogan, by giving a perspective for new mass mobilisations, help to call forth those mobilisations? (This, presumably, is the comrades' line of thought). We don't think so. It is too disproportionate to the present reality. To seize Grunwicks from the outside would be an open crossing of swords with the capitalist state in a way that an 'ordinary' occupation of a factory by the workers inside it isn't. Such insurrectionary actions don't spring fully-formed from a lull in the struggle, however energetic the revolutionaries' propaganda is.

Thus the slogan, 'Occupy Grunwicks Now', would be demagogic. Instead of contributing to a clearer picture of the real situation — which must always be the aim of revolutionaries, even when it means telling bitter, unpleasing, unsatisfying truths — it clouds it over with rhetorical 'calls to action'.

One other point must be made. It is not true that "The whole ruling class stands behind Ward". Many more sober-minded capitalists would have preferred APEX to win recognition. What is true is that the weight of the capitalist state has been decisively on the side of the "rights of property" and thus of Ward.

Scots NUM

gives way to right wing drive



THE UNIONS



THE RIGHT wing of the national executive of the NUM has so far successfully led the rearguard action to sabotage the unity of the NUM and introduce area incentive schemes.

The biggest victory in their campaign to reverse the conference decision and the decision of the November 1st ballot — in which miners voted 110,634 to 87,901 against incentive schemes — came with the reversal by the Scottish NUM of its "hard line" against the scheme.

Obviously the resolve of the Scottish NUM, led by Mick McGahey, did not frighten the employers. Ten days before the area backed down to demands for an area incentive scheme, study teams were sent in by the Coal Board "to prepare the phasing-in of the productivity schemes in the Scottish pits".

The Financial Times echoed the dismissive attitude of the NCB: "Board officials are confident that they will meet no effective resistance from Mr Mick McGahey, president of the Scottish area of the NUM, or from his executive, in spite of their formal opposition to local incentive schemes".

McGahey certainly admitted that the decision was a set-back, but then trotted out the pretext for

capitulation. "We have always said that the Scottish area would not be isolated, nor would we see living standards decline in relation to miners in other coalfields".

The pretext is very flimsy. All that the area has done is increase the pressure on those coalfields — South Wales and Yorkshire — which are still sticking to their guns. Yorkshire is to ballot its members on whether they will support industrial action to bring their wages up to those of men in the area that have



accepted the incentive schemes.

It is difficult to estimate just how strong the movement for area and local schemes is. There are reports that 14 Yorkshire pits have asked the NCB to measure their output. Other figures give the number of pits covered by local or area schemes or due to be covered by them as 120 — one-half of all British pits.

Many of the pits hoping for incentive schemes are those with very high outputs. For instance, Solsgirth in Clackmannanshire, where miners staged a week-long strike to protest at the Scottish NUM's stance, has one of the highest outputs in Scotland.

Men at Desford in Leicestershire, however, struck a week before Christmas because productivity targets set there were too high. Meanwhile 33,000 Nottinghamshire miners were the first to 'benefit' from an area scheme.

Conference rules? Not OK, says judge

TWO MONTHS ago the Kent area of the National Union of Mineworkers took NUM President Joe Gormley to court, hoping to get an injunction to stop the union from carrying out its ballot on incentive schemes. It lost. The bigwigs upheld Gormley's actions.

Now again the judiciary has backed the right wing of the executive and has rejected the case put by the Kent, Yorkshire, Scottish and South Wales areas. The judgments are perfect models of ruling class justice.

Both in the first and the second applications, the main point put to the judges was that under Rule 8, the NEC administers the affairs of the union between conferences but cannot go against conference decisions.

On October 20th Lord Denning gave his judgment on the first application. There was no reason why the executive could not ballot the membership, he said. A ballot was not itself against conference decisions. Indeed, "the ballot was a sensible and reasonable proposal by the NEC to take the views by the democratic method of a secret ballot

of all the workers affected. It was a far more satisfactory way than leaving it to the delegates of a conference".

So the ballot was held... and the NEC lost. Still they went ahead with their plans. This time the judges omitted from their rulings any mention of how democratic a ballot would be. Now they ruled that a ballot's result was in no way binding on the NEC.

And Rule 8? Was that not binding? Particularly as it had been reinforced by an explicit conference ruling in 1976. Mr Justice Watkins summed up the Rule admirably: "Rule 8 provided that the government of the union should be by conference, and that in the periods between conferences the committee should administer union business and perform all duties laid down for it by rule of conference. The rule also said that the committee should not at any time act contrary to, and in defiance of, any resolution of conference".

Having stated all that, the learned judge, with a piece of cheap sleight of hand, concluded: "The result of the ballot was not binding on the

committee between conferences, so Rule 8 did not apply..." Brilliant! Forgotten were the two conference decisions that the NEC was defying, let alone the so-very-democratic ballot. A masterpiece of British justice!

Arthur Scargill commented: "We think all the evidence was overwhelmingly in our favour. I think it is incredible that the ruling could have been against us. What is now required is an intensive campaign inside the union to ensure democracy at all levels."

"Reference was made in the High Court on more than one occasion to the national interest, and I believe this judgment should firmly convince any trade unionist that it is useless hoping for justice in the courts of this land".

Quite true. But then why did the militant areas go to the High Court at all? The only result is to suggest to trade unionists — in spite of Scargill's angry reaction — that the High Court may be a place to find justice. It also suggests to the trade unionist that the High Court has the right to rule on the meaning of union rules and thus to be the ultimate authority in the affairs of workers' organisations.

WORKERS IN ACTION

FIRE STRIKE

from page 1

attempt to get support from other unions, and in some towns (such as Reading and Leicester) it was actually rejected. And there was no national call for solidarity action on a specific day, but a scattering of local efforts. Efforts are still scattered. The South Eastern Regional TUC has called a rally for January 12th in London.

There is to be a lobby of parliament on 16th, which is to be preceded by a "hunger march" of firemen from Worcester to London. Liverpool Trades Council have called a Day of Action for January 17th, and are calling for as many factories as possible to strike for the day.

Days of Action should be organised in other areas, without waiting for a TUC re-call, and with a serious effort to coordinate the dates. And support from other unions must be sought energetically.

It's high time the FBU executive started organising a proper plan of national action in support of the firemen. If they won't, the rank and file should. Regular collections and messages of support are essential, but solidarity strikes would bring a quick victory.

The army's next scab job

NOT CONTENT with fighting it out with the firemen, the government are preparing for battle with workers in the road transport industry.

As we reported in our last issue, army commanders have been instructed to draw up a list of all soldiers with HGV licences so they can be brought in to break a possible tanker drivers' strike.

Now, it has been revealed that William Rodgers, the Secretary for Transport, has urged the Road Haulage Association (the transport employers' organisation) to set up a fighting fund, to help them beat strikes

against the 10% limit. Given the fragmented state of the industry this could be a powerful weapon for the bosses; especially in the less well organised areas where negotiations are often on a company-by-company basis.

On top of this Sir Dan Pettit, the chairman of the state-owned National Freight Corporation, has been told not to pay over 10% and warned that he will be sacked if he does. The Corporation is a major force in road transport with subsidiaries that include British Road Services, National Carriers, Pickfords and Roadline UK.

SIMON TEMPLE

Will Swan Hunter's bluff misfire

OUTFITTERS at Swan Hunter shipyards, Tyneside, and their union officials, are meeting management for new talks on January 3rd. The Central Arbitration Committee, on 21st December, made a recommendation which goes a long way towards the outfitters' claim for parity with the boiler-makers: £5.40 increase, which leaves them still £2.87 behind the boiler-makers.

If the outfitters find this sufficient to end their overtime ban, then the question will be whether British Shipbuilders and Swan Hunters will remove their threat to reallocate the seven Polish ship orders assigned to Swan Hunter and to sack 700 workers.

Four out of the seven orders have not yet been reallocated, and it looks as if the shipyard bosses have no real intention of taking them away from Swan Hunter. If the bosses go ahead with the sackings, then the real meaning behind the whole affair will be clear: an attempt to push through sackings while putting the blame for them on workers fighting for their rights.

Meanwhile there is a hitch

with the two orders transferred from Swan Hunters to Smiths Dock, Teesside. About 70 middle managers at Smiths Dock have imposed an overtime ban in protest against British Shipbuilders' refusal to recognise their union. They have withdrawn their signature from the pledge of full cooperation to meet target dates which Smiths Dock demanded from all their employees for the Polish order.

Bookshop attacked again

ON the Tuesday night after Christmas the offices of Ealing Community Relations Commission and Bogle L'Ouverture, a local black bookshop, were vandalised by racists. In the case of Bogle L'Ouverture, this was the fourth attack in less than a year.

The attackers left behind a copy of a paper called THE GRUSADER, subtitled "Voice of the White Majority", which is the organ of a US organisation called "Knights of the Ku Klux Klan". The last time the bookshop was attacked, slogans and

UPW leaders fine Cricklewood heroes

ON November 23rd the TUC General Council decided against any action to support the Grunwick strikers; and on December 14th the House of Lords, in the final appeal to law over the ACAS recommendation to recognise the union at Grunwicks, declared the recommendation was invalid.

But — having got away with so much — neither George Ward nor the trade union bureaucracy left the matter there. The Union of Post Office Workers has imposed fines totalling

£1,400 on union officers involved in the blacking of Grunwicks mail. London district council organisers John Taylor and Derek Walsh are fined £500 and £300, other members of the district council have been penalised, and two officers of the Cricklewood branch have been fined £50 each.

The reason given was that the blacking was in breach of the union rule-book. But the UPW leadership's actions have been in breach of the most elementary principles of working-class solidarity

for which the union was founded!

Brent Trades Council secretary Jack Dromey has said that a fund may be set up to pay the fines.

Meanwhile Grunwick boss George Ward is still pursuing his anti-union battle through the courts. Just before Christmas he had solicitors' letters sent out to various journals and organisations demanding they retract statements about the dispute. The charity War on Want was one of those involved.

Students have lost ground to make up

LAST DECEMBER's National Union of Students conference was the most bitter for ten years. The struggle by the left to transform the union into a fighting body capable of mobilising mass action had a real setback.

The Communist Party and the Broad Left have been in control of the Executive for the past few years. Under strong challenge from the revolutionary left, they have shifted to the right, allying with the Federation of Conservative Students. This year the Broad Left/Tory alliance was open and shameless, and the result was several narrow majorities for anti-working class and reactionary policies. The Tory students celebrated this dirty deal with badges showing Sue Slipman and Pete Ashby (NUS President and Executive member, both Communist Party members) with the caption "We're Tories Too".

A two-year old NUS policy of banning racist and fascist speakers in colleges was reversed by a Tory/Broad Left alliance. Although the motion talked of the need to oppose racism and fascism, it clears the way for fascist groups like the National Front to campaign openly, especially in colleges where the left is not strongly organised to oppose them. This is an attack on the democratic rights of not only Jewish, black, and overseas students, but all students.

Secondly, a most serious defeat for all students came in the debate over student union auto-

nomy. This long-standing issue in the student movement has deep implications: should the NUS continue with the status of a public charity, and be accountable financially to the government and "the public", or should it be a fighting trade-union type organisation. The Broad Left points out the financial advantages of being a public charity, and argues that any use of union funds to aid non-student causes or any other activity contravening its status as a public charity will put the union into financial difficulty.

The revolutionary left have always argued for unions to be free from interference by college authorities and the government, and student unions have often given financial and organisational aid to striking workers.

This year, in the midst of the firemen's strike, the executive steered through a motion to forbid unions to donate their funds to non-student causes. So any student unions giving funds to the firemen stand alone to take the legal consequences, without the support of the national union. Some Broad Left supporters voted with the revolutionary left on this question, reducing the Executive's majority to a mere dozen.

The third major debate at conference was on Zionism. In some union students had proposed to ban pro-Israeli student societies. Taking up NUS policy of banning racists, they asserted that Zionism was a form of racism.

Most of the revolutionary left and Arab students opposed these attempts to ban Zionist societies. Zionism is indeed racist, but it does not follow that a Jewish student in Britain who sympathises with Israel is a hard-core racist who can't be reasoned with! However, the Broad Left took advantage of this issue

Against a resolution "that the State of Israel is a racist state founded on the expulsion of a group of people who are defined racially and who are discriminated against inside Israel — the Palestinian Arabs", the executive pushed through a resolution saying that "Both the Palestinians and the Jews have a right to national self-determination" and that Zionism means national self-

determination for the Jews and should not be equated with racialism".

For overseas student, conference was unsatisfactory because it hardly discussed the question of fees, quotas, and the new definition of "specified student", which will include even more students in the restrictive quotas of about 10%. The Broad Left's record of verbal opposition to racialism, but failure to coordinate and lead effective struggle during last year's wave of occupations, bodes ill for these new victims of the Labour government's policies.

In the coming months, left wing students will need to campaign vigorously to make up the ground lost at this conference.

CHEUNG SIU MING

'Call the NEC to order' - Allaun

LABOUR MP and NEC member Frank Allaun has called on constituency parties to pass resolutions protesting at the NEC's shelving of the 're-selection of MPs' issue.

A motion calling for MPs to be automatically subject to re-selection between general elections was more widely supported at the October Party conference than any motion since the days of the nuclear disarmament campaign in the early 1960s. The NEC put off debate on this motion, promising that they would prepare a constitutional amendment on this issue for the 1978 conference.

Now the NEC has 'passed the buck' to a 'working party', saying that no NEC can be bound by the previous NEC's decisions! Behind the 14-11 decision at the December NEC were many of the trade union representatives, unhappy about having their sponsored MPs subject to more democratic control by Labour activists.

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