

Workers' fight

3p

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Labour is back, with an overall majority and with an opposition splintered into numerous fragments. It is a small majority — but nevertheless it is a working majority. There is now no excuse for the Labour Party if it waltzes on any of its promises or buckles under ruling class pressure to introduce a wage freeze. And that pressure on the Labour Government will be immense.

Serious commentators predict that the world economic recession will hit Britain as badly, or worse, than it was hit by the world crisis after 1929. Workers Fight has insisted that the social contract is a shoddy contrick and the proof of it is that working class living standards have already dropped back to the level they were at during the Tory wage freeze of 1972. The threshold agreements, the Tories never believed would trigger jackknifed on the bosses. But next month even the inadequate protection of the thresholds is to disappear.

Freeze

Then the fall in living standards will continue and accelerate.

The ruling class and its outspoken representatives consider the social contract a limited 'protection' for workers but 'disastrous' for their own interests.

They need drastic action to freeze all wage rises while freeing prices and freeing profits from the taxes imposed by the Labour Government.

The question facing the Labour Government is this: does it use the difficulties of capitalism as a challenge to force through changes, even those limited changes promised in its manifesto. Or bail out capitalism at the expense of the working class.

Prospects

The 'Economist' lays the prospects on the line very plainly.

"Within a few months the social compact between the Government and unions will almost certainly have been and gone. World slump, unemployment and inflation mean that the tide for a return to a freeze on incomes will come in — however much King Harold commands it to go out".

Double-edged

A Labour Government is a double edged weapon. Because of Labour's dependence on the organisations of the working class, it is a weak ruling class government when it clashes decisively with the working class base — as with In Place of Strife in 1969. In a period like now, however, it can, with the aid of the trade union leaders, well chain whole sections of the working class, for a time, to the chariot wheels of crisis ridden capitalism. The swing to Labour in the traditional central areas of Labour support may well include an element of belief in the social contract.

Ruling class commentators dreaded a big Labour majority which would lessen the power of the Right wing. Now they are counting their blessings. It is, they think, in their interest to have a Labour government in power under these conditions, for the first period of the crisis.

The 'Times' editorial of

Saturday 12.10.74 puts it graphically.

"Yet it may be better for the nation that Labour should face the inflation with the responsibilities of office rather than as an uncommitted opposition."

"One is reminded of the story of the Arabs in Libya, who before the war had been

accustomed to walk ahead followed by their donkeys. During the war minefields were laid, and the Arabs learnt that the prudent course was to walk behind and drive the donkey forwards. The Conservatives could well feel that it was now the Labour Party which was walking ahead into the minefield".

BOSSES HOPE LABOUR WILL TIE US DOWN

Labour's election campaign is an ominous warning that the working class would be foolish indeed to rely on the Labour Government, instead of on our own direct strength. Labour presented itself as a party of National Unity — the party that could avoid social ructions and confrontation. Last February's swing to the Liberals reflected a conservative, 'yearning for yesteryear' resistance to the polarisation between the Tory government and the unions, with Labour identified with the unions. This time Labour made a partly successful appeal to the spirit of non confrontation, offering a magic solution through the social contract. Labour won votes, if not always seats, pushing the Liberals back to third place in a number of Tory held seats. The big swing to Labour in its traditional working class areas of support was the result of the fact that the bedrock working class support that Labour still enjoys actively approved of the Government's work of repealing Acts like the Industrial Relations and Housing Finance Acts.

Unity

On balance Labour appeared as the most convincing party of national unity, and the record of 'Confrontation Heath' was an albatross round the neck of the Tory party, which had its lowest share of the poll this century. The Tories lacked conviction as the party of peace. Labour was more convincing, though the limited swing showed that it was neither entirely trusted, nor was it inspiring. As the Daily Express of 12.10.74 put it, "Moderation is King". Wilson will act the honest broker between the Confederation of British Industry and the Trades Union Congress — "in the national interest".

The question is, is such unity possible? It can only be a snare for the working class. Someone must pay for the

national crisis. Whose belts are to be tightened? The bosses say, the workers' must. The social contract, and any wage freeze, mean the Labour government is saying the same. Unity is not possible between the exploiters and their victims. The crisis brings class struggle, not national unity.

A lead

Unity of the working class is what is needed in the coming period — unity against that part of the nation which owns the means of production and exploits the working class. Unity of the working class in the fight against those 'people' would create further unity with many 'small people', shopkeepers, white collar workers, now vacillating for lack of a lead: only a strong



Jack Jones: Wilson can count on him to back up the Social Contract.

working class lead against the exploiters can win the vacillating 'middle' elements to a workers' party. Labour's option for a fake National Unity approach is a recipe for helping the Tories and Liberals. Labour can be a 'national' government of the financiers and industrialists or a class government of the working class, the creators of the real wealth of the country. Unfortunately there is no sign that it will be the latter.

Passively

It is not for socialists to accept this prospect passively! We demand nationalisation of the monopolies — without compensation! Abandon the policy of coercion in Ireland — withdraw troops

JOHN O'MAHONEY

immediately! Against the threat of inflation, we need to demand zero thresholds, fully compensating for price rises, a national minimum wage, and step up the struggle for straight wage increases. The Trade Union leaders can afford to play games with the Government over the Social Contract — the rank and file can't.

Unemployment on a massive scale is a real threat — whatever Labour says or even intends. Paralleling the sliding scale of wages (zero thresholds), we need to fight for a sliding scale of hours: no redundancies; divide the work and the hours without loss of pay. Seize the factory when the employer tries to use his ownership to throw workers onto the streets and on the dole queue.

Slogans

Labour is in: now continue the fight! You can rely only on direct action. The central slogans in the coming period must be these: Cut hours, not jobs, with no loss of pay; No wage freeze — wages must rise with the cost of living, on a zero threshold; Work or Full Pay!!

The National Front, despite losing its 90 deposits, got more than 100,000 votes. That is a result of the scandalous silence and often complicity of the Labour Party, in government and out, in the racist politics out of which the initial forces of British fascism are being recruited today. Those small forces of the National Front today are the framework of an army that will attempt to smash down the whole labour movement tomorrow.

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URGENT: MOBILISE FOR THE 2

A NEW GOVERNMENT doesn't mean a new start. Especially if it's the same party as last time. It means carrying on the same struggle as before — and finishing of some old fights too.

One unfinished fight is the battle to get the charges against the Shrewsbury 2 dropped. Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson will have their appeals heard on October 24. Years in prison await them if this appeal fails.

And what faces us? A mark on our record which says that the Tory Government was able to proceed with charges against over a score of building workers...and we couldn't organise to step them. A mark which says they slapped savage charges of up to three years on militants for picketing, framed them and railroaded them to jail...and we couldn't organise to stop them. And when we got a delay in the carrying out of the full sentences by lodging an appeal we still couldn't mount enough organised pressure to wrench them from the clutches of the bosses' law.

The misery of jail for them. The shame of weakness for us. But their's is a limited sentence and ours is for life.

But it doesn't have to happen like that at all. We can still save Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson if at this late hour we still get organised. So far many of the pledges of support have, frankly, meant little or nothing. After all, where is the result of Charter's promise to get stuck in and campaign on this issue...campaign for its own supporters! Where is the evidence of IS's trumpeting and their pledge at the first National

Rank and File Conference to make this issue a priority? Look at the Morning Star: election news enough, but where's the campaign for the Shrewsbury lads?

The Shrewsbury committees seem to have folded up, but the job isn't over. We've still got the big one to come...and that's on October 24.

The picture is, however, by no means all gloom. The Greater London Association of Trades Councils is organising a demonstration of solidarity, from Euston Station to the Law Courts in the Strand. Two white collar unions have given their support, the British Library CPSA branch and West End ASTMS branch.

But the lads need more! They need the sites to stop and come out — particularly in London; they need bags more support from every section of the trade union movement, the rank and file of the Labour Party and Young Socialists.

The fact that in the time that we had a Labour Government they did not release the 2 and quash the charges against them proves that we cannot rely on the leaders of the Labour Party, even if some of them, like Eric Heffer, show their faces on our platforms.

A massive protest outside the Courts, a sign of serious organisation within the rank and file even at this late stage can deter the Courts.

If you haven't started organising, do it now. If you have, redouble your efforts. If you don't Des and Ricky have only got the 'mercy' of the courts to fall back on: fine friends the judges are — fine friends you turned out to be!

Andrew Homung

FORDS: 'MODEL' FOR SOCIAL CONTRACT

DESPITE the recent official statement that living standards have fallen 4%, the major car unions are going ahead with negotiations on the £63 million pay and productivity offer made by Fords.

The decision of the press shop workers at Halewood and Dagenham, under pressure from National union leaders and suffering lack of solidarity from other car workers, to go along with negotiations, is a big boost to the Social Contract. This proposed deal gives us a rough 'model' of what the Social Contract means. It is the shape of things to come if we allow the TUC-Labour Party pact to be a framework for our demands and actions.

The pay offer is 39% over the next two years (not 18 months, as the unions demanded). The first instalment is from £7.20 to £9.40, and the next two instalments, in October 1975 and April 1976, will give £2.70 to £3.50 each. On top of that, there is a threshold agreement — with a threshold of... 36%!!

Along with the pay increases — apparently large in terms of money over the counter now, small in terms of meeting price increases over two years — goes a big drive to boost productivity. Fords have demanded "finalisation of the talks on the Works

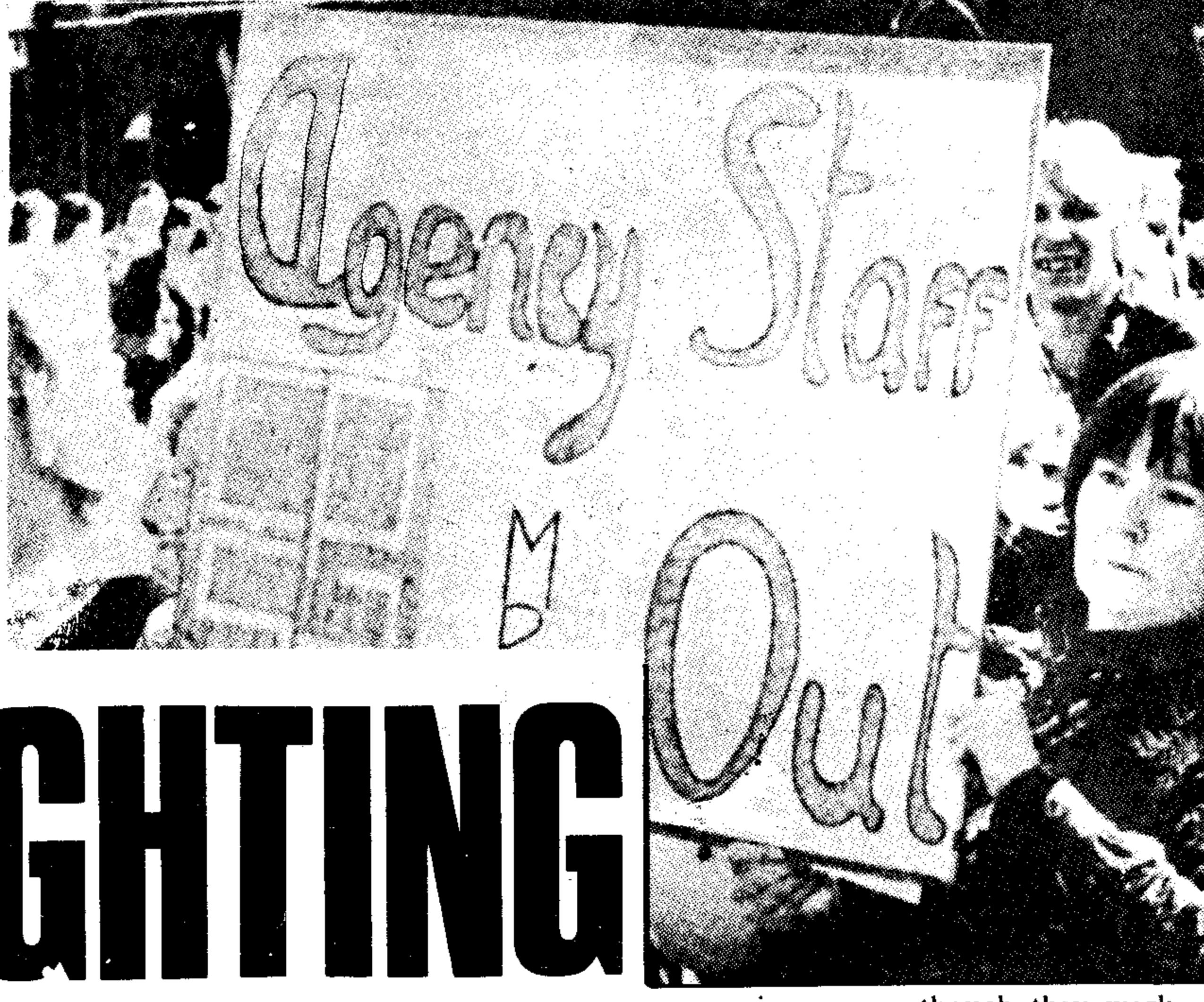
Standard sub committee". The intention is to begin a more rigorous implementation of the nationally agreed deals like Measured Day Work, and this will lead to reduced manning scales, higher track speeds, and obviously lost jobs.

To 'pace' this productivity drive, Fords are insisting on the introduction of 2,000 'utility' workers, in their own words, 'to iron out bottlenecks'. This 'utility' force, with no trade union cohesion or loyalty, trained to work in all sections, would be a powerful tool to break shop floor organisation.

The lesson from the Fords pay offer is that the Social Contract will be used time and time again to tie rank and file workers in struggle, and aim to shift the balance of control in industry in favour of the employers.

But such deals to increase employers' control and keep down real wages can only be imposed where solidarity fails to develop. The key to that solidarity is unified demands, for a reduced working week and a sliding scale of wages; for nationalisation without compensation and under workers' control; together with support for all workers' wage demands.

Stephen Corbishley



FIGHTING AGAINST THE AGENCIES

AFTER a lightning strike at Moorfields Eye Hospital by porters, the hospital management committee promised to pay porters' rates to weekend domestics employed by the Crothalls agency. The committee also promised not to re-employ Crothalls when their present contract runs out.

An Industrial Tribunal is currently looking into the case of Mrs Pratab Kaur, who was sacked by Pritchards, the owners of Allied Industrial Cleaning who have the contract for doing the cleaning at London Airport. Mrs Kaur was one of the leaders of a recent strike that won overtime pay, shift allowances, and a rest room from AIC.

Recently Asian injection moulders employed by Combined Optical Industries in Slough had their picket lines broken by students recruited to work through the strike period by Industrial Personnel Services Ltd.

PROFITS

But if you want to look into the common factor — private employment agencies — you will find some important "official sources" have shut up shop; you will find that the Department of Employment will not release "confidential material" and Labour MPs interested in legislation against agencies and subcontracting have "lost their files".

No-one bats an eye when an actor uses an agent. They, and a pair of girls, seasonal agricultural workers, and a few others, have traditionally been supplied by agencies. But agency labour, subcontract labour and other forms of "lumping" are increasingly displacing permanent labour in many areas.

For instance, it is estimated that there are around 350,000 "lump" building workers and about 100,000 "temp" office workers. In some areas "lumpers" are organised and used for strike breaking. "Temps" are given a much more glamorous image by the advertisements. They are encouraged to see themselves (to use the words of Germaine Greer, who somehow sees "the growth of agencies as a manifestation of women's liberation") as "a personification of the liberated

woman... carving its own course". Every effort is made to get them to see themselves as high flying individualists — not of course as trade unionists or workers with a number of rights to be protected and advanced.

UTILITY

The temporary force of office workers is currently controlled by about 3,000 agencies throughout Britain. According to the Financial Times, they have "billings of about £45 million per annum". The four largest agencies — Brook Street Bureau, Alfred Marks, Reed and the Ray Turner group — collectively increased their turnover during the year 1972-3 from £26,137,000 to £43,124,000, and their profits from £2,252,000 to £4,476,000.

The growth of temporary workers is beginning in certain occupations to fulfill the hopes of the agency owners and the employers who use them. These hopes were outlined by the journal 'Personnel Management', as follows: "that the pattern of the future will show a small core of permanent staff 'topped up' with temps. One office agent, for example, thought that: 'employers should think not in terms of people but in terms of the work to be done'".

This, of course, does not just refer to secretarial or domestic work; it refers to the entire range of industrial work. For instance, in Japan — famed for employer paternalism — the steelworks are organised so that there is a small core of production workers; all craft workers, transport workers, and security workers are employed by subcontracting agencies. All these are employed as "go anywhere" utility workers.

CAPITAL

One area very much seen by the agencies as a growth area is the National Health Service. Hospital workers, including nurses, porters, cleaners and domestics have all been involved in struggles where the central issue was 'agencies'. Another area of penetration is the contract cleaning industry. Contract cleaning agents employ about 100,000 workers in Britain, 90% of them

women. The eleven largest companies involved in contract cleaning account for 60% of all workers in the industry, according to a TUC report.

One of the biggest companies is Pritchards Ltd. This firm's profits have grown from £116,000 in 1961 (when they moved their capital out of rubber plantations in Indonesia) to £1.45 million in 1973, making it one of the darlings of the speculators' paper, the 'Investor's Chronicle'. That paper advised readers to hold on to their shares in anticipation of faster growth next year. In 1972 this company employed 19,000 workers who, like the workers at Crothall's, received an average of £500 a year. The airport workers at Heathrow, most of whom are Punjabis, earn on the day shift the princely sum of 38p an hour. In this case we find a combination of three kinds of exploitation over and above the usual extraction of surplus value: they are exploited as agency staff, as women, and — most of them — as blacks! And they receive precious little help from the G&MWU and the T&GWU, of which they are members.

Only in the "night cleaners' struggle" of 1972 have such

Russell Davis

grotesquely oppressed workers received any press attention. In the 27 storey Ministry of Defence Building in Fulham, 11 women cleaned over 100 offices accommodating 1,500 people. For their labour power, Clean-agents Ltd paid them £12.50 plus £1.50 bonus if they completed five nights over a 45 hour week. Again, needless to say, it is estimated that profitability in the industry is high, with an average return to capital of 40%.

LIMITED

The conditions and wages of agency workers tend to vary considerably from industry to industry and job to job, according to the state of supply and demand of labour, and the degree of organisation. For instance, because of the limited supply of nursing skills, agency nurses receive about £5 per week more than the National Health Service rate. Building workers on the lump might earn two or three times the union rate. Agency

miners, even though they work alongside Coal Board employed miners and are in the union, are receiving £100 per week.

Labour only subcontracting is also a problem in the engineering industry. As a result of the Phelps Browne inquiry of 1968 and the TUC survey of 1970, certain facts have come to light. It was revealed in replies from AUEW districts that an average of some 20 to 25 members in each district were subcontract workers. "The problem was most acute in site construction, maintenance services, and some technical and skilled occupations in engineering". A More exact estimate of the numbers involved has not yet been compiled. However, the TASS section of the AUEW managed, about 12 months ago, to combat the threat of 'self employed' draughtsmen employed by agents in engineering.

TASS considered the signing of an agreement with the Employers' Federation as a start to the elimination of 'the thousands' of 'self employed' in

the industry, but made the distinction between 'agency' and 'contract' draughtsmen. The former were seen as 'undermining unionisation' whilst the latter are 'fully eligible for membership because they are employed by firms on conditions subject to collective bargaining...' (TASS News, May 24th 1973)

Again, statistics are difficult to collect, but what is certain is that agencies controlling draughtsmen, also control technical clerks, refrigeration engineers, sheet metal workers, lathe turners, fitters, toolmakers, test engineers and inspectors. Still other agents control similar groups of workers in the electrical and electronic industries, whilst computer personnel appear to operate from a wide range of agencies. There are also large numbers of agency architectural draughtsmen, particularly in areas with a high labour demand. Some agents operating in the industrial field are offshoots from the clerical agencies where less skilled trades such as drivers and warehousemen are also supplied to industry. Names such as 'Manpower', 'Industrial Overload', and 'Technistaff' are common.

LABOUR

So why when many firms and sections of industrial capital are suffering from a decline in the rate of profit, is capital prepared to pay extra, not to, but for, labour power?

Apart from the desire of the employers to smash organisation, or potential organisation, by introducing the casualisation of labour, the process itself opens the way to increased exploitation and productivity. Thus an employer, by allocating the function of 'employment' to a middle man, is able to increase surplus value over the long term as long as he is willing to share some of it with the labour agent. (In some cases, of course, the worker is encouraged to become 'self employed'. When this happens, the agent can be dispensed with, but the benefit to capital remains the same.)

On the most obvious level, the benefit to capital of agency labour is shown by these figures. Suppose an office needs 50 workers. To get 50 permanent workers they would have to pay, say, £30 per week, so their total wages bill would be £1500 per week. If,

instead, they make do with 40 permanent workers, at £20 per week, and employ a varying number of temps — say 10 on average — at £40 per week, the wages bill is £1200 per week.

The temporary, casual, or lump worker removes the responsibility of holiday pay, sickness benefit, pension rights, redundancy payments, the employers' share of national insurance, in some industries, industrial training levies, a weekly minimum wage, and job security and opportunity. Thus the employer gets labour on the cheap. In short, then, capital is striving for a situation of cheap, unorganised, and highly exploitable wage labour working on the employers' terms.

The Union; have accepted a policy of modifying the system of agency labour, although some have paid lip service to abolition. Hence the comments from the TUC in recent years about the 'abuses' of the lump, by which is meant tax evasion, failure to make national insurance contributions, etc. Not for them a concern about the 'abuse' of labour, its greater exploitation and the removal of hard fought for conditions of working. With impending slump and unemployment, agents could quite easily begin charging workers for jobs, as they did in the American depression, rather than as at present, the employer. Under the law, agent; can charge either the employer — or the employee, but not both.

POOL

A resolution banning the activities of fee charging agencies was passed by the International Labour Organisation as far back as 1932, and today some countries, notably Italy, Sweden, and Norway, are still banning them. In other places, France and Belgium for example, temporary workers are not allowed by law to be used for strike breaking.

We should press for similar laws in Britain — nationalising all the existing agencies without compensation, banning private agencies, and centralising provision for short term employment with the Employment Exchanges as the 'agency' and with 100% unionisation.

Even under a socialist state, some people would want or need to take casual or short term jobs. A central state run pool of temporary workers, unionised, with freely available training, and with a guaranteed fall back rate, could accommodate them without destroying or harming permanent workers' organisation.

Under capitalism, though, temporary workers will always be used to keep down permanent workers' wage rates and destroy or prevent workers' organisation. Campaigns like that of the Civil and Public Servants' Association (CPSA), to remove agency workers, or NALGO's successful ban on agency workers in local government in London, are really



Strike breaking lumpner

needed. Among office workers, the precondition for much progress is a big drive for unionisation of the permanent staff by unions like APEX and ASTMS. In the building industry, the key demands are nationalisation, decasualisation, and registration of building workers. With cleaning subcontractors, again, the best policy would be to organise around the demand for all workers on a particular site to be employed by the same employer.

PARITY

In every case, a useful lever could be the demand for parity with the rates paid to the agencies. It's an obvious and simple demand, but one that would quickly convince many employers to stop using agencies.

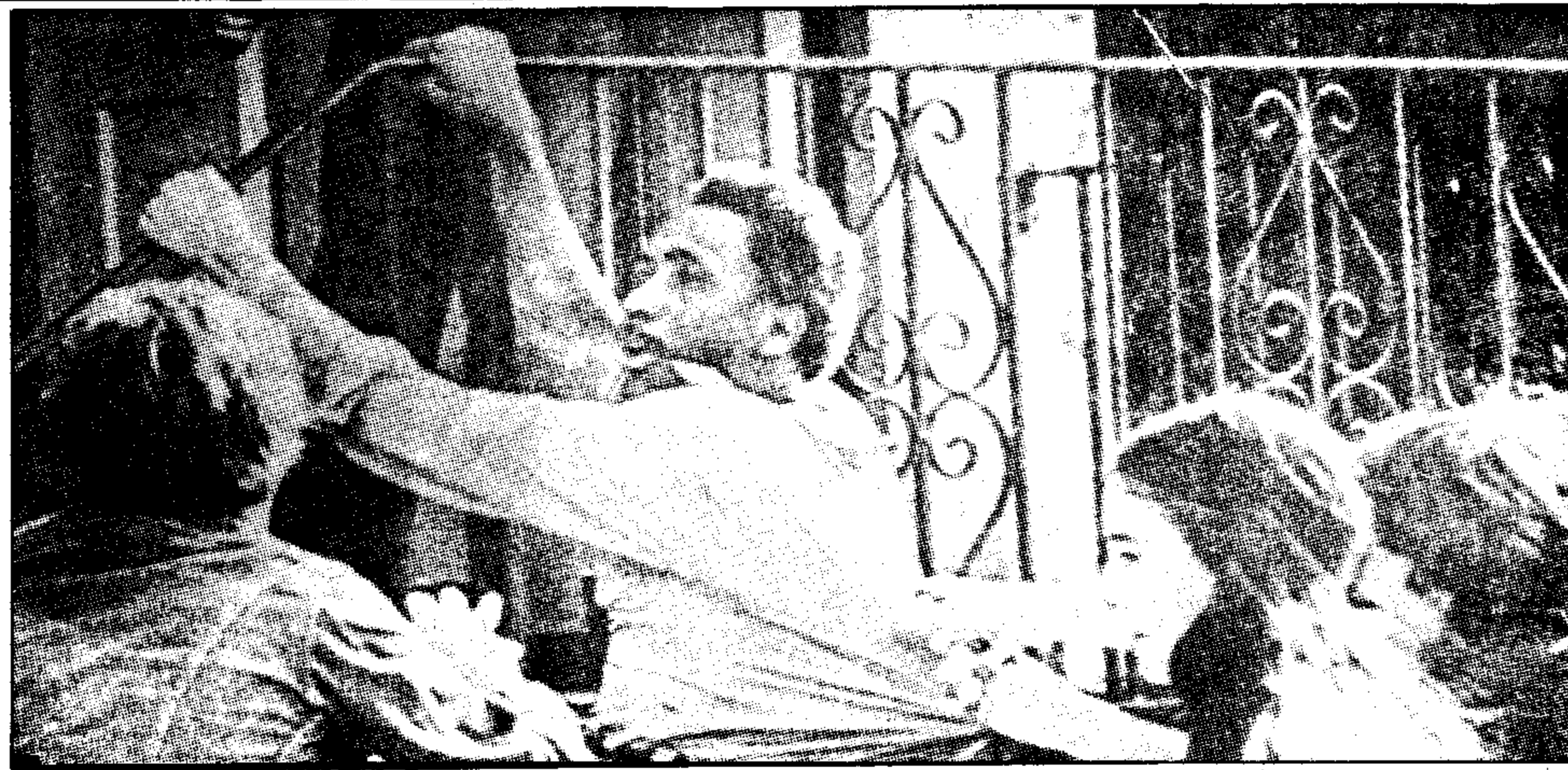
If we don't take action quickly, we could find that in the coming struggles, agency workers will be a strike breaking force at least as serious as the better publicised "citizens' militias".

BOSTON RIOTS OVER BUSING

ACCORDING to figures released by the US office of Education, movement towards desegregation of public schools in the Northern and Western states has all but halted.

In fact, schools in the Deep South, once the stronghold of resistance to racial integration, are now virtually the only school system in the nation that reflects substantial progress towards desegregation.

In the so-called more liberal North, in Boston, Massachusetts, the attempt to achieve racial integration in schools by



Young Whites try to beat up man who has come to pick up his daughter

"busing" has led to full scale race riots.

The idea is that because the inner city areas are mainly black and the suburban areas mainly white, there is a de facto racial segregation. Busing, many liberals claimed, will help integrate the school system so that there can be a meaningful degree of equality in education.

But the busing project has another side to it which is not nearly so pleasant sounding. It is seen by many as a pro-

gramme of dispersal of blacks, both so that their own self awareness and organisation will be undermined and so that the struggle for black control of black schools will be defused. (A similar project has been looked into for feasibility in Britain as far as housing is concerned.)

In opposition to busing many blacks are calling for black control of schools where there is over 50 black attendance and a much larger slice of the budget so as to bring these

schools up to the standard, at least, of the suburban white schools.

In any event this opposition to busing has nothing in common with that of the 400 Bostonians screaming "Nigger go home", outside the South Boston High School on opening day.

Fundamentally we are for blacks being schooled wherever they choose; to use busing at the state's expense if that's the best way they feel they can guarantee reasonable education; to control their own schools if that's the way. It is their right to choose.

GREEN PAPER ON AN ORANGE ECONOMY

AMID a massive blaze of press and television publicity, Merlyn Rees announced his spectacular 'Green Paper' on Northern Ireland's economy.

Like a schoolboy after working out a difficult sum, Rees declared that it should put out of people's heads once and for all the notion that there could ever be any form of independent Northern Ireland state.

His main purpose in the Green Paper seems to have been to knock the ideas of UDI which have been bandied about by some Loyalists. But in trying to disarm the 'UDI' propounders, Rees has given perhaps the best clarification yet on the British army's real role in Northern Ireland. For his figures disclose that British firms own 45% of the N.I. factories which employ over 500 people. That is,

they control almost half of the biggest industries in the Six Counties. So-called Northern Ireland firms control one fifth, while America has one fifth and the EEC the remaining one tenth.

These figures apply only to large firms, and the Green Paper hinted that the balance was the same for those employing 200 to 500 or less.

Rees went on to proudly boast that the British



Merlyn Rees

government grant to Northern Ireland was £330 million, suggesting that the people were really indebted in a very big way to Britain. Brian Faulkner was quick to back him up, as was Bob Cooper of the

Alliance Party. But in the rash of implications that Britain is a dear generous old soul shelling out millions of pounds to us each year just because she is so worried about our welfare — one important thing is conveniently overlooked. That is the amount of British money invested in Northern Ireland.

Take Rees's figures that almost 50% of all Northern factories are British owned and consider the value of the average factory premises and machinery.

Such premises as the vast Sirrocco engineering works in Short Strand have buildings and machinery which run to a value of tens of millions of pounds, not to mention the vast plants owned by Courtaulds and Goodyear. Further, the firms which are classified in the Green Paper as being N.I. owned are only so in name — many are effectively the subsidiaries of British and foreign companies which take on Irish directors to give them the appearance of being

native.

Proponents of UDI have quoted the total value of such buildings and equipment at the colossal sum of £7,000,000,000 — or approximately twenty two times the amount of the annual British subsidy, and 333 times the amount spent in the current year on the maintenance of the 'security' forces. And the value of that property rises each year.

Further, the Green Paper states that the maximum amount of profit leaving Northern Ireland each year to British owners is £37,000,000 approximately. Even accepting the doubtful word of the imperialists for that, that figure alone is almost twice the cost of 'security' each year!

Police

And while announcing that £37 million worth of Northern Ireland workers' labour went into the bank accounts of British profiteers, the Green Paper also says that emigration runs at 6,600 per year, that wages are £4 less than in England, and that 20% of

houses are regarded as unfit to live in.

From these figures it is clear that Britain is not running a state and an army and a police force for charity — she is protecting her own vast economic investment in Northern Ireland.

Britain is not interested in creating the 'peace' she talks about for any honourable reason. She is merely interested in getting stability — stability to continue to exploit Six County workers. But more importantly, she is fighting to hold on to the factories — the means of production. Any realistic settlement of the North's problems can only be a socialist one, it must include Irish unity, and that means sharing the natural resources of the country and the means of production throughout the 32 counties. In short, it means confiscation of all foreign-owned property, to be used for the benefit of all the Irish people. That Britain fears and that she is at present paying £33 million a year as a bribe to prevent. **From UNFREE CITIZEN, newspaper of the People's Democracy.**

THE sheer physical horror of bombings hits us hard. The sight of blood and bodies even in a photograph almost makes us reel back stunned or wince in sympathetic pain. But not only the vile injuries and not only the numbers dead or maimed shock us — it is the fearful suddenness of it.

Nothing seems safe any more. The war — assuming, although we so far have no hard evidence, that the Guildford bombings were the work of the IRA — has come in off the well marked battle fields with their lines and trenches, fronts and sectors: it has come into a cheery Saturday night pub and blown our brains out.

This time it was not us, but, we feel, it could have been. It was people like us: soldiers, yes, but soldiers just like us — not trigger happy, not maniacs, but thorough like you have to be, tough like you have to be, and occasionally irritable like anyone else, no

The bombings at Guildford

more no less.

But we only saw the horror after. What happened before?

Before — assuming, once again, that it was the IRA — before came nightly searches of Catholic families in the north of Ireland. Before came internment without trial and torture in the jails. Before came military occupation by Britain in the six counties that the vast majority of Irish men and women think of as a rightful part of Ireland.

Sometimes the connection between before and after is clearer, as at Aldershot. There, the attempt two and a half years ago to blow up the officers' mess came as a clear response to the cold blooded killing by the

British Army of thirteen people on Bloody Sunday two weeks before... none armed and a number younger than the Guildford victims.

This time the connection is not so clear. The Guildford bombing was not preceded by any single act on the scale of Bloody Sunday — only countless raids, searches, arrests, humiliations, abuses... all carried out by the British Army.

But that is usual in a war, isn't it. The pain and brutality inflicted by one side is not usually the direct result of one particular direct provocation by the other side. And between the Irish Republican Army and the British Army there is just that: a war. It is an unusual war, an

urban guerilla war as far as the IRA is concerned because that is the only way for a David to beat a Goliath.

That means terror and violence. War cannot mean anything else. All that can redeem the perpetrators of terror and violence is the cause that they are fighting for. And it is for that reason that we say — in no way indifferent to the pain, and the horror — we are for a united Ireland. And we are for those who are fighting for it. And we are against those who are the enemies of that unity.

The British Army is in Ireland because it wants to prevent the unification of Ireland "from below" and it wants to protect the property and the interests of British capital until such time as it suits the British bosses to unify Ireland... and then dominate that united Ireland.

If the British Army were out of Ireland then the bombings would stop. It's as simple as that.



The aftermath of Guildford

TROTSKY ON YOUNG LENIN

READING this book is like a breath of fresh air if all you have had in the way of a biography of Lenin is by David Shub, which reads more like the sentimental maunderings of a "Women's Own" journalist.

Here we have an uncompromising search for truth even at the expense of appearing more prosaic and ordinary. But this is much more rewarding because instead of having some fantasy figure we have a real person and his relationship to the world around him. As Trotsky put it, the object is to "show how the general historic forces were refracted in a particular individual with all his traits and peculiarities." In this he succeeds brilliantly.

However, this does mean that if you are just after a racy account of a man and his exploits then you will find this book fairly heavy going. The first six chapters are devoted to the history of Simbirsk (Lenin's birthplace), Lenin's family, the development of revolutionary politics at the end of the 19th century, his older brother Alexander, the "back to the peasants" movement of the 1880s, and the execution of Alexander after his unsuccessful assassination attempt on the Tsar.

In the style of the epic, Trotsky starts from the general and works towards the particular. At the end of the six chapters one is ready to accept Lenin as an ordinary mortal even though he was later to carry out an exceptional role in history.

The next third of the book is devoted to Lenin up to the age of seventeen, when he entered and was quickly expelled from Kazan University. It shows that Lenin up to that time was not a political animal. Trotsky's motive for dwelling on this part of Lenin's life is partly polemical. Many of Lenin's admirers do him a disservice when they short cut his development as a revolutionary, missing out all the hard work and effort.

This would not have been so serious had it not been for the Lenin cult under Stalin. He did not come from a political milieu, but in fact a rather apolitical one. His father was a fairly liberal district schools inspector high up in the local educational establishment. Alexander's execution did not suddenly fill him with revolutionary energy, nor did it fill him with abhorrence against terrorist politics. At that time he was more concerned about his mother, brother, and sisters who now

had to move about the country, since they were 'tainted' with Alexander's crime. And, indeed, it is reckoned that his first sympathies in politics a few years later were with terrorist politics, those of "People's Will", not Marxism. Although the terrorists' strategy was limited to assassination of Tsarist ministers, it had the appearance of revolutionary politics.

Brushing aside the hero worship and the 'man of

destiny' approach, Trotsky looks for those aspects that were to hold Lenin in good stead later on. In particular he likes the description of Lenin by someone who was not particularly sympathetic... "the ironic twinkle of his eyes, and his short 'Russian' laugh — what a brain!" Far from the grim, humourless person, as many people tried to portray him.

But what was noticed above all was his concentration and self-discipline — "the ability to

push aside anything that got in the way" — and an intellectual stubbornness that did not in the slightest degree leave to chance that which could be prepared for in advance.

The last third of the book deals with Lenin's development as a revolutionary, finally a Marxist revolutionary. His studies in law at Kazan University came to an abrupt end because of the unhappy coincidence of his being a minor participant in a student protest and being the brother of "the hanged Ulyanov". The Tsarist police felt that he would be safe if he and his family went to Samara, on the edge of the Steppes.

At first his main concern was to get back into university to finish his law studies. But when this failed he decided to take his exams externally, and at the same time began to study Marx's "Capital" and Plekhanov's polemic against "People's Will", called "Our Disagreements".

TERRORIST

In this he was following a general trend in Russian revolutionary politics of the early 1890s, which realised that "in their objective role, yesterday's anarchist rebels who would not hear of bourgeois democracy had become today's armed squadron in the service of liberalism" and that what was needed was "not anarchism but political liberty".

It was at this point that, in spite of their later differences, Plekhanov became Lenin's spiritual father. It was from Plekhanov that Lenin learned how to combine a revolutionary outlook with sound

statistical analysis, and it was from Plekhanov that Lenin learned that, in spite of its comparatively tiny size, it was going to be the Russian working class that would take the leading role in that country's fight against Tsardom.

After four years in Samara, in spite of a short period practising law, Lenin had determined to become a full time revolutionary, to go to Moscow and from there to Switzerland to join the emigre Emancipation of Labour Group. That was when he was 23, in 1893, and the book ends at this point.

SURGEON

Trotsky describes him as a man like a surgeon, who cannot function in an atmosphere of scientific hesitation but must at all times attempt to use his theory as a guide to action. But perhaps Trotsky put it most succinctly in this passage: "True he was a confirmed cotrinair: ever since his youth he had understood that even as heavenly bodies cannot be observed without a telescope or bacteria without a microscope, so public affairs must be viewed through the lens of doctrine. But he also knew how to work the other way round and look at doctrine through the isolated fragments of reality; he knew how to observe, question, listen to and watch life and living people. And he performed these functions as naturally as he breathed. It may have been that, if only unwittingly, he was preparing to become not a theoretician, not a writer, but a leader".

IVAN WELLS



M153 strike now in 13th week

BUILDING WORKERS from the M513 motorway site in Ellesmere Port are now in their 13th week of strike.

As we reported last week, the men have recently attended the Building Industry Conciliation Board, and this panel found generally in their favour — including on the most important demand, reinstatement of all strikers. When they met Parkinson's (the main contractor at the start of the strike), local management rejected these findings. This was not surprising, as it represented the ninth time that Parkinson's had rejected findings from the Conciliation Board.

On the particular question of reinstatement, Parkinsons are only prepared to definitely take back 61 strikers, on a phased basis. This represents only one third of the original total of men on strike. The offer was firmly rejected by the strikers.

These developments were reported to the men at a mass meeting on Monday October 7th. At this meeting there was a unanimous decision to continue the strike. The meeting was followed by a march through Ellesmere Port town, followed by a delegation to the mayor. The mayor agreed to attempt to get a meeting between the County Council contractors and the strikers.

support

At the mass meeting there were delegates from Vauxhall, Ince Power Station, and Liverpool Hospital site, and these also supported the march. Alan Abrahams from the Hospital site spoke at the mass meeting.

Recently, however, it was discovered that Parkinsons are no longer the main contractors on the site! In fact they have just been taken over by Faircloughs, a subsidiary of McAlpines. Parkinsons had gone bankrupt — mainly as a result of trying to compete through cut price tenders for government contracts, and attempting to get profits by skimping work and anti-trade union policies. They have come unstuck because the men have not stood for this.

The strikers are now insisting that they will deal only with Faircloughs.

Seeing through the game that Parkinsons and Faircloughs have been playing is an important step. The strikers are still solid. There is increasing pressure on Faircloughs. It will be necessary to try to involve other Fairclough sites in the dispute — particularly by using the tactic, so successful in 1972, of the flying picket. At the same time, messages of support and donations are still needed. Send to R.S.Walls, 24 Crescent Rd, Wallasey, Merseyside.

LEN COLLINGWOOD

MEETINGS

LIVERPOOL WORKERS' FIGHT SOCIALIST FORUM
Andrew Hornung on THE NEED FOR A RANK AND FILE MOVEMENT at 8.00 Wednesday, October 16th Stanley House, Upper Parliament St.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WORKING WOMEN'S CHARTER
London, October 26
DETAILS: write to Pat Masters, Flat 4, 20 Queens Gardens, London W.2.

SECOND NATIONAL RANK AND FILE CONFERENCE
Saturday 30th Nov Digbeth Hall, Birmingham.
For credentials, get your trade union branch or shop stewards' committee to write to
The Secretary, Rank and File Conference Organising Committee, 214 Roundwood Road, London NW 10

THE CRAFTSMEN of IMI Witton remind me of an animal that has been in hibernation for many years and is then woken up, rather suddenly, in the middle of a nightmare, only to find that the nightmare is not a bad dream, but reality.

This nightmare has a name: inflation. The workers have suddenly realised what inflation is, or more correctly how it affects them. It means rising prices and the lowering of living standards.

To combat the drop in living standards due to a twenty per cent rise in prices, we have put in for a £15 per week wage rise, which is quite a reasonable claim given the fact that our take home pay is only about £30 per week, whereas elsewhere in the Midlands the take home pay is £40 or more. The newspapers will claim we are asking for a 50% increase, whereas really after tax and all other deductions this £15 is reduced to about £8.50, or less if you are single. This, then, in actual fact works out at a 28% rise — no more than reasonable in the face of 20% price rises!

In furtherance of our £15 claim, the stewards planned a series of one day lightning strikes. In actual fact, in seven weeks, we have the sum total of three one day strikes to try to force management to meet our claim. This is like trying to kill an elephant by attempting to drown it with a half full water pistol.

Management's offers in the face of this 'massive action' were hardly surprising. They ranged from £1.50 to £4 plus a few pence extra if we were prepared to accept an absolutely ridiculous productivity deal involving some 150 items of plant in one area. The outcome of this was quite predictable, a big fat "no". But what next?

The stewards came up with the bizarre idea that management

HALF MEASURES WILL NOT WIN AT IMI

JOHN BRYANT

were trying to force us to strike, therefore we should wait so as not to hinder Labour's chances of re-election. Otherwise the social contract would be discredited. But what is the social contract but a way of making us accept a wage freeze while prices go on rising. It is nothing more than another ploy to make the working class pay for capitalism's difficulties. So we must not listen to any of

AS A MEMBER of T&GWU, I feel I must express my disgust at the way my own union has done absolutely nothing to support the AUEW in their fight for a wage claim. Even the fact that we have also put in for £15 has not made them bother to do anything about it. Do they honestly think that by just sitting back and waiting they are going to get it anyway?

Of course, they're not, they have got to fight just like other unions before they can get what they want, that age old saying "It always comes to those who wait" is merely so much rubbish.

We have been laid off because of this strike anyway, and we're not getting paid — so why the hell can't we support the craftsmen

this clap trap.

Eventually, after seven weeks of talking about nothing and doing nothing, a mass meeting was called and the stewards' committee had no choice left but to recommend strike action. This recommendation was overwhelmingly supported by 80% of the 1,000 men present. The recommendation was that as from Monday 7th October, strike action would be taken until management were prepared to talk about our £15 claim and not

occupy offices, make office staff come out as well. And I only hope that the wives of these strikers take a part in the organisation of the strike too. After all, they should know that they need more money, because, as women's lib may not have reached them fully, they almost certainly have to do the shopping, and already pay the bills with extra care. So they ought to realise that the situation is going to get much, much worse. These women must give full support to the strike, just as the T&GWU must support the AUEW in every way possible. If they don't it is going to lead to nothing but divisions and defeat for the working class.

JENNY JONES

Over 300 women vote to carry on strike at SEI

Management at Salford Electrical Instruments (S.E.I.) at Heywood near Manchester have increased their offer to the 300 women strikers from 40p a week to...62p a week on top of present rates. Yes, per week!

Management's ridiculous response received an appropriate rebuttal from the strikers, who decided by an overwhelming majority to continue their strike for equal pay and a new bonus agreement.

Pickets are now, however, faced with a slightly bigger problem than before, as a few of those who voted to go back have joined the tiny force of women who have been scabbing from the beginning of the strike.

Some of these scabs have attacked the pickets, and it is clear that a big effort needs to be made to strengthen the line. The male workers in the factory are also scabbing. They have been called out by the local AUEW official, Peter Bramah, but have resisted the call. They even stood by while Bro. Bramah was escorted off the premises

by security officers on the management's instructions when they refused to allow him facilities to address the workers in the factory.

Peter Bramah has asked local Labour M.P., Joel Bennett, whose rosettes were much in evidence on the picket line, to write to Michael Foot demanding an enquiry.

Funds are urgently needed to strengthen this struggle. Donations and messages of support to the strike committee, c/o Peter Bramah, AUEW Office, Bury.

NF beaten

ANOTHER victory against the National Front was scored on Friday 4th October, when they were prevented from holding a meeting in Bethnal Green in support of their election candidates. About 300 anti fascists formed a picket outside the hall while a further 100 occupied it. Two NF members turned up with large dogs, hoping to force their way in, but were turned back by police, who, however, were unwilling to let a good chance pass, and arrested three anti fascists at random.

The National Front were forced to hold their meeting in a corridor, and were so outraged by their reception that they briefly lost their respectable facade.

Kingsley Read said, "God willing the police will go home so we can trample them under foot" and, stating he was "proud to be a racist and an

imperialist", added that the NF would "whip juvenile delinquents until the skin comes off their backs" and hang IRA members. His reason for this was that "only law and order will bring this country back to rationality".

John Tyndall was even more honest when he said, "While there is an election on we must be restrained. But it is only a matter of time — and when the moment of reckoning comes there will no longer be any International Socialists or International Marxists — or any of the rest of the rabble".

Unless the whole of the labour movement also prepares for Tyndall's "day of reckoning", it may see itself seriously damaged. Local trades councils, district committees, and trade union branches must throw their support behind Anti Fascist Committees.



SEI strike leader Bella Fullard and pickets

Teachers take action on staff shortage

IN THE WAKE of the London Allowance Campaign, the Executive of the National Union of Teachers has fallen back on the 'magic wand' syndrome. A settlement has been reached, so he presto! the teacher shortage has disappeared. Hence the sanctions of no covering for nonappointed staff, or staff absent for more than three days have been withdrawn by the Union bureaucrats.

Anyone actually involved in the job of classroom teaching knows what nonsense it is to say the teacher shortage has gone. The situation now is hardly better than it was last year. In London alone we are still nearly 300 teachers short. The sanctions have been operating nationally, and we must fight to strengthen and extend them where they are not widely in use.

The September issue of the militant teachers' paper Rank and File outlines the para-dox facing teachers pushing to maintain the sanctions and the arguments we must use to counter our critics. "On the one hand we must be totally opposed to accepting permanent part time schooling; on the other hand we must fight

to extend the sanctions on staff shortages, of no covering for absent or non-appointed staff, sanctions which effectively mean more part time schooling. How do we resolve such a paradox? Firstly, by stressing that the short term disruption caused by the effective operation of the sanctions is minimal compared to the permanent disruption of institutionalised part time schooling. Secondly we must scotch the argument that teachers can't be found. Why then is the government cutting back on the numbers of teachers being recruited into the colleges of education? Why exacerbate the shortage by strangling the supply?"

In anticipation of dirty tricks

by the NUT Executive, London Rank and File pushed motions in June calling for keeping the sanctions until all schools are fully staffed, arrangements for staff absences have been agreed by the Staff Associations in each school, and a properly negotiated contract of service (along the lines of the Rank and File Teachers' Charter) has been negotiated. Following on from this, North London Teachers' Association passed an emergency resolution on 7th October, reiterating its policy and setting up a Staffing Action Committee to circulate all Islington schools and start a campaign aimed at winning parental support for the sanctions.

Ian Hollingworth, 7.10.74

One aspect of the recent glare of publicity over the private armies of Messrs Stirling, etc, which has been overlooked somewhat, is the virtual autonomous power of the various security firms up and down the country.

The Shop Stewards' Committee at Heathrow Airport have decided "as a matter of policy" to get private security firms off the Airport. They are concerned at the increasing powers the security men are being allowed. They are making on the spot checks and demanding passes. As one steward remarked, "We don't want private armies in the airport".

This lead by the Heathrow shop stewards can only be welcomed, and other sections of the labour movement would do well to follow their example.

A dossier is being compiled by the Community Relations Officer in Hounslow, following complaints that immigrant teachers are being discriminated against by the council.

Many immigrant teachers are forced to travel out of Hounslow for work, despite the fact that there is a staff shortage in Hounslow.

10% of the children at school in Hounslow are immigrants, yet immigrant teachers are only 1% of total staff. One teacher has made 15 applications to Hounslow council without success.

L.G.

Essex University students' union has unanimously rejected the report of an inquiry, headed by Lord Annan, into the 'unrest' of last year.

Among other things, the report recommends "swifter disciplinary proceedings" and, as usual, the old rubbish about conspirators and wreckers is dredged up.

The Students' Union is demanding recognition as an autonomous body, and a procedure for negotiations applicable to students and university employees. Their other main demand is for a separate Union building.

J.C.

The management at Wingrove and Rogers, Liverpool, have made a quite fantastic offer. They will, they say, take all the women back, they will provide for threshold and bonus payments if... if the women can find financial backing for the firm.

The firm, claim the bosses, will be in severe financial difficulties if it pays a decent wage.

The answer should be: if the firm can't pay — take it over, without compensation! But Bert Broderick, local AUEW official, has given the firm a week to put the offer in writing! Is he going to try to get the Government to fill the pockets of the exploiters who have kept these women outside the gates for so many weeks?

B.W.

On the Saturday before the election, just after four o'clock, a car carrying several members of the Communist Party of England Marxist Leninist, who were campaigning for their candidate in the elections was stopped by police in Queenstown Road, South London.

Several different excuses were offered by the police as to why they did this. One policeman said that the "car had come from the area of a robbery"; another said that "the car looked as if it were stolen".

The occupants of the car got out of it, at which the police drew their truncheons and laid into them. The CPE(ML) members fought back, but were finally bundled into a police van.

The whole incident was watched with interest by a number of National Front members on the other side of the road.

The police smashed some of the election equipment of the CPE(ML), whose members were assaulted both in the police van and in the cells of the police station. After being detained for 26 hours, they were finally charged with... assaulting the police.

J.P.