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● They have given the green light for their leader, Hugh Scanlon to enter new open-ended talks with the Tory government.

● They have deliberately refused to lay plans for a political and industrial campaign to bring down the government.

● Yet they have drawn up a wages and hours claim that cannot succeed unless the government is forced from office.

Though these policies have been hedged by all kinds of verbal 'safeguards' the executive of the unions are saying 'it's business as usual' and will meet Heath with the rest of the trade union leaders.

The reason for this retreat is simple. Not one of the delegates, from the Stalinist-dominated 'left', to the extreme right, had the courage or principle to take up the political challenge laid down by the Tories.

That is why resolutions demanding mass industrial action to defeat the government, a national strike over wages and no talks with the Tories under any circumstances vanished from the agenda of the week's debate.

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ever on the national committee. But all their efforts have been devoted to what they call 'left unity'.

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SECONDLY they have continued the now desperate task of boosting Hugh Scanlon as a genuine 'left'.

This is becoming very difficult. This week's discussions have seen Scanlon on the right — the words are different, but the principle is the same.

On all questions he has had the right-wing's agreement.

So what guarantees have rank-and-file engineers hard-hit by rising prices, rents and mortgage payments that Scanlon will lead a national pay fight on this claim?

None whatsoever. Just over a year ago he atomized the national pay fight with his treacherous plant-by-plant bargaining which wiped out the central demand of shorter hours.

This strategy produced minimal pay increases which were immediately eaten up by Tory-inspired inflation and price rises.

Scanlon justified this bankrupt, reformist strategy on the grounds that a national strike would have involved the NIRC and the application of a court-enforced 'cooling off' period.

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The national committee

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The policy adopted

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It also demands that a Labour government repeal the Act and pay back the fines with interest.

A UEW executive member Bob Wright said that to recognize the court was the first step to recognizing the Act.

He said the union was willing to set up a voluntary body for conciliation of disputes with the CBI.

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● See fuller story on p.3.

NEWS DESK

01-720 2000

WORKERS PRESS

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DAILY ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

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If the George Bassett confectionery group gets its way the 750 workers at Barratt's Wood Green sweet factory in north London will start losing their jobs in August. In two years the factory — biggest employer of labour in the area for 100 years — will be completely closed. Union representatives in the factory are planning to call meetings of their members in the next few days to discuss possible action in defence of their right to work. They met management yesterday.

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What we think

STALINISTS JUSTIFY SCANLON

THE COMMUNIST PARTY is now openly supporting Hugh Scanlon's plan for a corporatist deal with the Tory government. The 'Morning Star' yesterday reported approvingly from the engineers' national committee conference in Torquay:

'The resolution does not prevent the union president Hugh Scanlon taking part in talks with the government on matters other than incomes policy and at no stage in the day's debate did any delegate suggest that he should be barred from talking to the government.'

In the first place, the resolution did not specifically instruct Scanlon to take no part in talks with the government where incomes policy is to be discussed, and it is perfectly obvious that as things stand at the moment, Scanlon will be back to Downing Street with the rest of the TUC leaders as soon as talks begin again.

Secondly, the issue is not talks as such, but talks of the kind that have already been held at Chequers and Downing Street regularly since last summer.

These discussions have taken place in the middle of a historic offensive by the ruling class to push back the working class, stifle free trade unionism, and impose a corporate state on Britain.

In a period of unprecedented class battles over rents, the Industrial Relations Act, the jailed dockers, the wholesale arrest of pickets, and the abolition of free collective bargaining, Scanlon and the TUC leaders want to capitulate to the Tories.

Scanlon told the March 5 special Congress: 'We went out of our way to reach agreement even in the knowledge of the slings and arrows that would have to be faced if the Chequers' deal had come off.'

'We offered the government something that no trade union movement has ever offered before in peace-time: to limit wages at a fixed level in return for statutory controls on all prices.'

The Stalinists, as usual, are deliberately distorting the facts. Their editorial is a blatant cover-up for what Scanlon is really doing. It declares: 'While it can be argued that it would have been better to decide to refuse any talks with the government in which questions of pay were involved, the terms of reference laid down by the engineers rule out talks concerning any form of wage freeze.'

The issue is to stop Scanlon and company doing a deal to 'limit wages', which they tried but failed to conclude at Chequers only because they felt they could not sell the terms of the deal to their members. The 'Morning Star' resolutely refuses to deal with this question.

In fact the Stalinists go on to tell an outright lie in order to cover up their capitulation. Their editorial continues:

'This is a defeat for Heath and those on the right wing whose aim in talks with the TUC and the government is to achieve an agreement on some form of wages freeze and restriction on collective bargaining.'

It was SCANLON who told Congress of the plan to 'limit wages at a fixed level'.

It was SCANLON who offered the Tories a corporatist deal in his Parliamentary Press Gallery speech.

It was SCANLON who supported the TUC pledge to discourage other breaches of Phase Two if the hospital workers were made a special case.

It was SCANLON who was reported in the same issue of the 'Star' (yesterday) saying: 'There could never have been a permanent arrangement with the government even along the lines of the deal proposed by the TUC leaders in the talks last year, as the present form of society does not allow for this.'

'But a 12-month agreement would have given a breathing space "for putting our respective houses in order".'

Certainly Scanlon and any union leader have a right to talk to employers and on occasions may even need to talk to a Tory government. The issue, however, is this: Are they there to wage a tactical war against the class enemy as part of the developing struggle to expropriate the capitalist system in its entirety? Or are they there to help impose corporatist restraints on the working class in order that the capitalists can get through their economic crisis?

It is now clear to everyone where Scanlon and the Communist Party stand.

CIA set-up Beirut raid

YASSIR ARAFAT, leader of the Palestinian liberation organization, Al Fatah, has accused the US Central Intelligence Agency of responsibility for the Beirut terror operation in which three Palestinian leaders were murdered.

The Palestinian command said that some of those responsible for the attack were still in the US embassy in Beirut. Israeli naval vessels had been off the coast opposite the embassy, but they had not been able to pick up the assassins.

The operation had all the hallmarks of participation by the CIA's 'department of dirty tricks' which specialized in the murder of revolutionaries and anti-imperialist fighters.

This organization is closely entwined with the Israeli special services.

Six agents carrying foreign passports—three British, two Belgians and one West German—booked into hotels near the scene of the Israeli landing on the Beirut coast.

They hired cars in readiness for the invaders and left without paying their bills after the raid.

Important documents are reported missing from the homes of the murdered men.

These include details of the Fatah organization in Israel and the occupied territories.

One of the victims, Kamal Adwan, was a leader of the

Arafat claims

Fatah intelligence organization.

Israel is no newcomer to the business of anti-Palestinian terror. The men who



carried out the massacres of Arabs at Deir Yassin and other towns in 1948 have an honoured place in Zionist circles.

After all, without their efforts, Palestine could never have been 'cleared' of its original inhabitants to make way for large-scale Jewish settlements.

Barcelona shooting

BIG WORKERS' demonstrations have continued in Barcelona against the shooting of a striker by police last week.

On Wednesday afternoon over 2,000 demonstrated in the main streets and petrol bombs were thrown to halt traffic. An estimated 7,000 were on the streets in the evening when armed police turned out in jeeps.

A series of strikes has

taken place in the city's factories. Underground sources claim about 50,000 have been involved.

At the shot worker's firm, 1,600 staged a lightning strike and were sent home by their employers.

A group of lawyers and professors have called for an inquiry into the original shooting, which occurred when construction workers in the suburb of San Adrian de Besos called an illegal strike for higher wages.

Oil war warning

WAR COULD break out 'at any moment' in the Middle East, according to premier Abbas Hoveida of Iran, currently the Tory government's guest. He is not referring to Arab-Israeli struggle, but to the tension in the oil-soaked Persian Gulf.

This is the richest oil-producing area in the world, supplying 35 per cent of the world's oil and containing 60 per cent of proved oil reserves.

It has long been a focus for the attention of the imperialist powers, notably Britain and the United States.

These powers have woven a tangled web of intrigue, setting up statelets along the Arab coast of the Gulf which are totally subservient to their requirements as is the Iranian Big Brother in the north.

Iran has been singled out

as the most reliable pillar of imperialist influence in the Gulf in the wake of the British forces' withdrawal in 1971.

Many British mercenaries are still engaged in the area and units like the notorious Special Air Service undertake 'training' missions in the Gulf states.

But the main role has passed to Iran, which is being militarized on the grand scale.

The Shah has budgeted some 50 per cent of the country's oil revenues—about £2,000m—for sophisticated weaponry and equipment.

Areas like Baluchistan are closed off to visitors and have become vast training camps where, it is said, Iranian troops are receiving instruction from Israeli advisers.

All this activity is being masterminded from Washington and London.

The Shah has been appointed to keep the Gulf safe for imperialism.

He is already waging a pitiless internal war against any opposition.

Student demonstrations against the huge arms purchases earlier this year were met with bullets and 16 students were killed.

As investment adviser J. T. Laurenson put it earlier this year:

'1972 was the year in which the United States finally woke up to the fact that its energy resources were being consumed at a frightful rate and that it could no longer remain virtually independent of foreign supplies at least in the short term.'

Profits of the oil monopolies for last year 'make depressing reading, with a general drop in net income of over 50 per cent in the case of BP and over 28 per cent in the case of Shell', according to the 'Financial Times'.

Heath, Nixon and Hoveida are getting together to make sure by violent means that this trend does not continue.

Israel's tradition of terror

BY A FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

THE TRADITION of terror is built into the Israeli state machine. Money is lavished on the Mivtza Elohim (God's Wrath), Tel Aviv's own 'dirty tricks' department.

Headed by Gen Aharon Yariv, the military police chief, it is under the constant supervision of premier Mrs Golda Meir herself.

Its men are specialists in assassination, terror, sabotage and murder.

It was they who murdered Mahmoud Hamchari, Paris representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization at his flat last December.

Other victims have included Hassan Khanafani, Wael Zuaiter, and most recently Basil Raoud al Kubaisi, murdered in Paris only last week.

It was this organization, which for many years had infiltrated the Palestinian guerrilla organizations in preparation for its present murderous attacks, that began the 'export' of the struggle for which the Zionists now like to blame the Arabs.

In fact it was Israel which began the 'export' of conflict by attacking refugee camps in 1966 outside its own borders.

The first Arab operation outside Israel was the hijacking in 1968 of an El Al jet.

It is important to note that this operation was carried out by a minority of Palestinians who were disavowed by many of the other fighters, whereas the Israeli acts of terror are carried out with the full backing of the Zionist state.

The Israeli terror-state is allowed to operate under cover of diplomatic privilege with active backing from the imperialist powers, despite a lot of hypocrisy about 'terrorism'.

They would actually welcome a situation in which the Palestinians would be regarded as international outlaws, to be shot, hung, bombed or mutilated with impunity to ensure continued domination of the Middle East by the monopoly interests of imperialism.

Soviet car production is cut

SOVIET car production for 1973 is to be dropped by 10 per cent according to revised target figures published in Moscow. This will still mean an increase over last year's output, but will enable scarce materials to be switched to other lagging sectors of the economy in the 'third, decisive year' of the Five-Year Plan.

Pitching the target lower will make it possible to claim a big success if it is exceeded and gloss over the real failures.

Brandt tames his left wing

WEST GERMAN Chancellor Willy Brandt won an initial victory over his 'left' critics at the conference of the ruling Social Democratic Party in Hanover on Thursday. He re-affirmed his support for keeping American troops in Europe.

He linked the maintenance of the alliance with the United States to the policy of detente with the Soviet Union and eastern Europe, of which he has been a main protagonist.

Despite the challenge to the leadership from the left wing, mainly concentrated in the 'Young Socialists' or 'Jusos', the party apparatus

seems to have the conference well in hand.

One of the most applauded passages in Brandt's speech came when he insisted that there was no place in the SDP for Communists or pro-Communists.

Brandt is determined to resist any pressure to push the party to the left and has said that he will resign if the conference does not endorse his government's policy.

The 'Jusos', which includes party members up to 35 years of age, wants a revision of the party programme adopted at Bad Godesberg in 1959 which

dropped all reference to nationalization or socialism.

The party hierarchy's firm stand appears to have cowed the centrist 'Jusos'. Its criticism of the party's right-reformist policies reflects deep currents of dissatisfaction in the German working class.

It voted en masse for the SDP in the last election to defeat the extreme right around Franz-Joseph Strauss and expecting big changes from the government.

Brandt is anxious to conserve the alliance with the Free Democrats, a capitalist party, upon which the fate of his government depends.

Sir William's reds

Sir William McEwan Younger, chairman of the Conservative Party in Scotland, yesterday warned Tory women about the 'reds' menacing British industry.

Speaking at a women's rally in Alford, Aberdeenshire, Younger said:

'There are in industry today reds, not under the bed, but in positions of power and influence.

'Reds and near-reds, so near as to make no difference, so near that they are united in their desire to use

They're everywhere Tory ladies told

industrial action to pull down the capitalist structure of industry, which, whatever its fault—and it has faults—has done more to raise the standard of living of the mass of our people than has any other form of organization yet devised by man.

'We are menaced by near-anarchy and certainly anti-social forces to whose malevolent activities our

complex industrialized structure is particularly vulnerable.'

Younger is chairman of the wealthy Scottish and Newcastle Breweries Limited. This group contributes mightily to the Tory Party coffers.

Part of the success of the company's finances has been its link with Mr Reo Stakis, the Glasgow businessman,

who has been awarded a surprising number of licences in Scotland.

Younger's defence of the 'capitalist structure' as the finest system devised by man, is laughable.

It's a glorious system, of course, if you happen to be in Younger's position—millionaire, landowner, director of Scottish Television and the British Linen Bank.

Those who want to end this exploitation of the many workers by the few at the top are called 'anti-social'!

● See **'breweries' profits, Monday P.4.**

Full backing to toolroom strike

THE EXECUTIVE council of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers has declared official the strike by 211 toolmakers at the GEC factory in Coventry.

According to district officials this is one of the quickest endorsements by the EC on record.

But despite this encouraging step, the pickets have received little moral support from Frank Chater, the district organizer.

He spoke to them the other day in 'a mood of despondency', according to one of the pickets.

'He seemed to be telling us we were on a hiding to nothing,' he added.

Chater went into the works on separate union business, but pickets were alarmed when they saw him followed by the toolroom superintendent.

The strike has been called in protest against the company's refusal to negotiate on the annual pay claim.

G & M officer at Industrial Society Union 'good sense' outdates 'bad law'

BY OUR OWN REPORTER

THE NEW national officer of the General and Municipal Workers' Union, David Warburton, told shop stewards and supervisors yesterday that it now fell to the unions' good sense to stabilize industrial relations.

The Industrial Relations Act, he said, had done great harm to industrial relations. 'It needs ditching in the same wastepaper bin as other anti-union legislation.'

Warburton, formerly officer for the G&MWU's clerical section, MATSA, recently succeeded to the post made vacant when David Basnett became union general secretary.

An ardent supporter of the right-wing witch-hunt against the majority of the National Committee of the Young Socialists in 1963-1964, he is now in charge of negotiations for a £5.64 pay claim on behalf of the Pilkington glassworkers.

His speech yesterday was delivered to a joint stewards' and supervisors' conference on industrial law—organized by the corporatist Industrial Society.

During the last week the society has also been patronized by HM the Queen Mother and HRH the Duke of Edinburgh.

Shambles

Claimed Warburton: 'There is now no doubt that the present government's Industrial Relations Act is a shambles.'

'It is so, not merely because of the attitude of the trade union movement, but because employers recognize it as a hindrance to good industrial relations and choose to avoid it as far as possible.'

This passage of the speech was presumably drafted before Lord Widgery's judgement on Tuesday using the Act to place new clamps on picketing.

Warburton then insisted that the Act must be repealed 'or amended to such an extent that it is unrecognizable to the one we have'.

There was no half-way house for bad law, he said.

There was no trace in his speech, however, of any call for a campaign to mobilize the trade union movement to remove the Tory authors of the Act from power.



One of the many pickets at the American-owned Fine Tubes plant in Plymouth where workers have been fighting for union recognition for over three years. Now the engineers' union will not even put it on the agenda.

Fine Tubes motion ruled out of order

THE ENGINEERS' policy-making conference at Torquay yesterday refused to discuss a call for action to back the three-year-old Fine Tubes strike, Plymouth.

An emergency resolution from the AUEW's West Cornwall district committee instructed the engineers' executive and the Transport and General Workers' Union executive to 'co-ordinate' their members to settle the Fine Tubes strike.

But the AUEW national committee yesterday accepted a recommendation from the Standing Orders Committee not to discuss the issue.

Cornwall delegate Ron Baumbach said the resolution had been ruled out because standing orders thought there was nothing new in the situation.

They also argued that under rule the resolution should have come from the union's divisional committee and not a district committee.

'I feel pretty rotten

about this. The divisional committee should have done something about this.

'It should have been discussed here. I consider a three-year strike is an emergency,' said Mr Baumbach.

The national committee has rejected a plea to back union members involved in a struggle for the right to organize the engineers' union at their factory.

But it has accepted another emergency resolution on the jailing of journalist Peter Niesewand by the Smith regime in Rhodesia.

Home from home dole

Playgroups suggestion by MPs' committee

MAKE YOUR local labour exchange a home away from home. That's the message to come from a Commons select committee report published yesterday.

The report says that play areas for children should be established in employment exchanges. This should encourage larger numbers of women to make use of the services there.

As the employment service is to be 'substantially rehoused' by 1980, it seems opportune to incorporate play areas into the new 'Jobcentres'.

These centres should be staffed by people with specialist knowledge of matters most closely affecting women and able to give advice.

All-party

The report on the employment of women is by the all-party Employment and Social Services sub-committee of the Expenditure Committee.

CORRECTION:

In yesterday's Workers Press, page 4, it was incorrectly suggested in a caption that Derek Robinson, deputy chairman of the Pay Board, was chosen for the job by the head of the electricians' union Frank Chapple. As made clear in the text, the job Chapple in fact chose Robinson for was the presentation of the power workers' case to the 1971 Wilberforce inquiry.

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FINGER PRINTS— TO KEEP TABS ON EVERYONE

Commander John du Rose, former deputy assistant commissioner at Scotland Yard, has called on the government to introduce compulsory fingerprinting.

Du Rose, head of the special squad which hunted the Richardson and Kray gangs, says that 'thousands' of crimes are unsolved because the police don't have a national file of fingerprints.

The calls for such a file are also being echoed in right-wing sections of the Tory Party.

In an article in the 'Daily Mirror' du Rose says: 'Next year the first national crime computer begins operating. It will produce any crook's record within seconds. But it will be at least another year before the computer can be geared to cope with fingerprints—those of known criminals and many more unidentified ones.'

'Even when the machine produces fingerprints, the police will still be without the key to many of the offenders' identities. That is why more and more police officers are saying that the government must compel every one of our 55 million population to have their fingerprints recorded.'

'I think that in this age of world-wide travel, an increasing number of air disasters, and the risks of accident or death to which our nomadic teenage population is exposed, most people would welcome such a move to assist in identifying the seriously ill or injured or killed.'

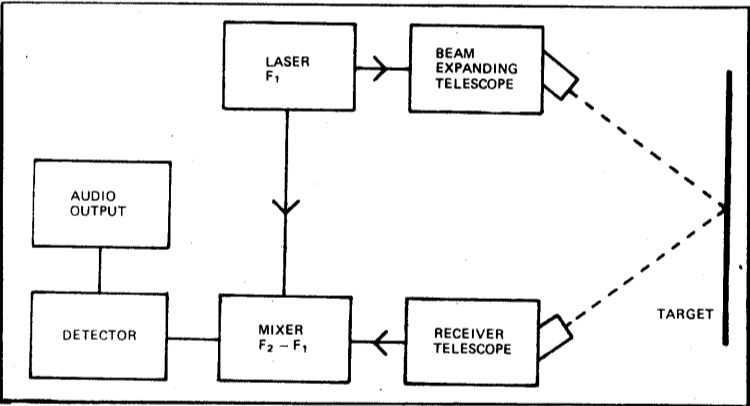
But du Rose can't be serious. The clamour for a national fingerprint bank has nothing to do with helping the police trace disaster victims. It is to do with extending state repression.

Having stealthily introduced their national police computer at Hendon, armed the police and formed special anti-picket squads, now the police want to introduce further weaponry to keep tabs on people, people who haven't committed any crimes.

The police are all in favour of increasing the surveillance of the ordinary citizen, but how they bridle if it is suggested that the police force be investigated to examine the amount of corruption that is going on.



Above and below: The principle of the laser bugging device as shown in the magazine 'Electronics Today International'.



BUGGING WITH A LASER BEAM

Details of a highly-sophisticated laser bugging device have been compiled by a group of academics and scientists and published in 'Electronics Today International'.

The journal says that the eavesdropping equipment has been developed and is being used by state security and intelligence organizations.

In a footnote, the editors say: "'Electronics Today International' would like to thank the many academics, scientists and industrial organizations who supplied us with background material for this article.

'They are not named—their unanimous request!'

The article says that the newly-developed equipment is able to monitor conversations in rooms up to two miles away.

The laser bug has two major advantages over more traditional devices:

- No equipment whatsoever needs to be installed in the premises to be bugged. Nor, in fact, does access have to be gained to the premises at any time.

- It obviates the need for telephone-tapping. The basic principle is very simple. Any sound generated within a room will cause the windows—and, to a lesser extent, the walls—to vibrate in sympathy with the generated sound.

This effect can readily be demonstrated by applying one's ear to the end of a stick, the other end of which is pressing against the outside of a pane of glass. And sounds within the room will be heard quite clearly.

An even more dramatic demonstration is to turn up the volume of a record player in a small room; the window glass can often be seen and felt to be moving.

The laser bug exploits this effect. The laser beam is directed against the window and monitors the minute vibrations.

These are then fed from receivers, mixer and modulators until the voices can be recorded. At first sight it would seem essential—in order to receive the reflected beam—to have the receiving and transmitting devices set up so that the beam is normal (at right angles) to the window glass.

'In practice, when the incident ray strikes the glass, diffuse reflection takes place (as well as normal reflection)—i.e. some of the energy is reflected in all directions. Therefore the laser may strike the window from practically any angle and sufficient energy will be diffusely reflected to provide a usable signal.'

Many such instruments are available commercially which, with slight modifications, can be used for snooping. These are known as 'laser velocimeters' and are being bought in large numbers for use in industrial control applications.

Mr Laisk, a physicist at the Macquarie University in New South Wales, Australia, has shown how easy the laser gear is to operate. He and his third-year students made one of the devices and monitored conversations in a room 30 yards away.

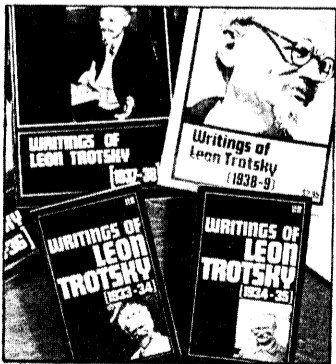
The magazine suggests two ways of beating the invisible bug. One is to ensure that no confidential discussions are held in a room with an outside wall.

Secondly the bug's effect can be dashed by installing heavy doubled-glazed windows with the air space open to atmosphere while the outer pane should be mechanically excited by a white noise generator.

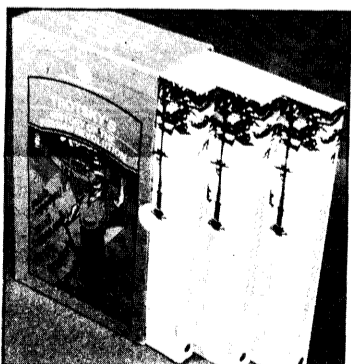
In a less serious vein the magazine suggests: 'A very effective approach would be to paint the entire outside of the premises matt black. This would totally absorb the energy of the laser beam thus preventing reflection!'

Quite simple equipment can be used to detect whether a beam is being used to bug your office. You merely check your windows for heat energy.

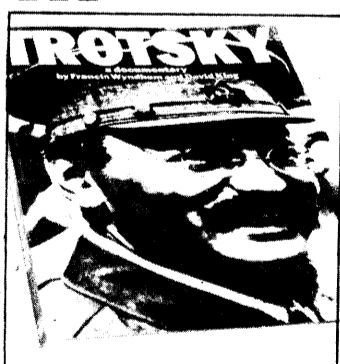
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OLD JUDGES MOVED TO HIGHER COURTS

The Tories plan to allow ex-magistrates—too old to preside in their own courts—to sit in the higher Crown Courts.

This ludicrous and reactionary proposal is included in the Administration of Justice Bill, now before parliament.

It provides for some ex-magistrates, aged between 70 and 72, to sit at Crown Courts, even though they can no longer sit in their own courts.

Magistrates who sit with a circuit judge at the Crown Courts have as much say as the judge in a sentence.

The proposal has been criticized by, among others, Professor Gordon Borrie, director of Birmingham University's Institute of Judicial Administration.

'Surely it is very odd,' said Borrie, 'that a man or woman is considered too old to sit in a magistrates' court, but not too old to engage in the work of a higher court.'

'These septuagenarians are barred by statute from sitting in a magistrates' court.'



Lord Denning, the Master of the Rolls—aged 74.

The judiciary is staffed by an inordinate number of septuagenarians. Lord Denning, the Master of the Rolls, is 74, while Lord Morris of Borth-y-Gest, who often sits in the House of Lords, is 76.

BY JOHN SPENCER

The New York Stock Exchange is reeling under the impact of the Equity Funding disaster, which promises to be one of the biggest financial scandals ever to hit Wall Street.

Already badly shaken by the fall in share prices, which has wiped over 10 per cent off average share prices since January, the Wall Street magnates are now thoroughly frightened.

Some of the biggest names in United States finance could well be tarnished by the crash and already a fraud of gigantic proportions, literally involving thousands of millions of dollars, has come to light.

Equity Funding, until last week, was one of the glamour stocks on the Wall Street market. The glamour stocks—a diminishing group—were the only bright spot on the market.

Now, as the 'Financial Times' put in on Saturday, 'even those fund managers who got off lightly will be taking another look at the other glamour stocks in their portfolio.'

Equity Funding stock was held by some of the most prestigious names in US finance, among them the Boston Co, John W. Bristol Cp, Fiduciary Trust Co, Chemical Bank, Bankers Trust, Ford Foundation, Morgan Guaranty Trust, Fidelity Corp, Sears Roebuck Pension Fund, Dreyfus Fund and Lowes Co. The company's sudden demise came as a particularly severe shock in the offices of the American National Bank and Trust Co in Chicago. Officials of the Illinois Insurance Department found that the bank had exercised a little too much trust.

They forced open a safe deposit box belonging to Equity Funding which was supposed to contain some \$25m worth of negotiable securities. The box was empty.

Also caught in the crash are the First National City Bank of New York, Wells Fargo and Franklin National Bank. They were in a banking consortium which loaned Equity Funding more than \$55m.

Equity Funding has a \$75m revolving credit with this banking consortium and at least \$55m was outstanding when the crash came. The banks are planning to seize \$12.5m in other Equity Funding accounts to offset their loss.

In addition the banks want to lay their hands on the Equity Funding subsidiaries, Bankers National, Northern Life and Equity Funding Life Insurance. Outstanding stock of these firms was used as collateral for the loans to the parent corporation.

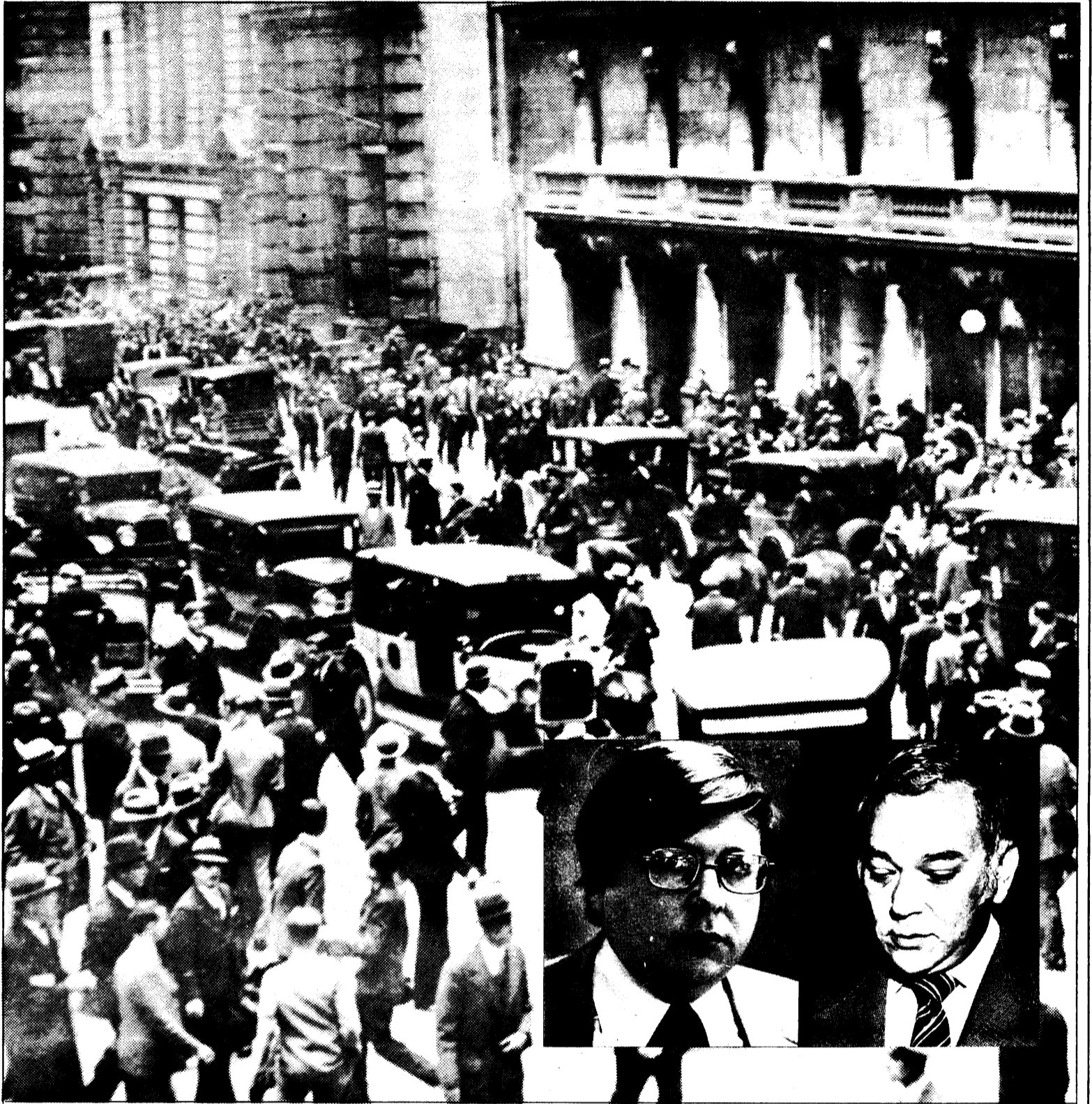
This grab is being challenged in the courts and practically everyone involved is taking out writs and demanding court orders in what promises to be a bonanza for securities lawyers.

Equity Funding's downfall also hit investors who had purchased the company's shares on margin—paying only part of the purchase price and hoping to be able to sell at a profit later.

It was this form of trading which accelerated the catastrophic fall of share prices in 1929: margin purchasers are forced to sell their shares if their price drops below a certain point to avoid losing the entire investment.

To freeze the situation a Federal judge last week ordered Equity Funding into immediate bankruptcy. Now investigators from the Securities and Exchange Commission (the government-appointed 'Watchdog' on Wall Street) have moved in.

WALL ST IS HIT BY THE EQUITY FUNDING FRAUD



Wall Street 1929. Inset left: Raymond Dirks, Wall St analyst. Right: Stanley Goldblum, Equity Funding's chairman who sold out and resigned.

They plan the most thorough-going investigation in the commission's 40-year history, questioning the entire staff if necessary to try and find how Equity Funding got away with it so long. If Equity Funding was fraudulent, the argument goes, how many other big names are equally rotten inside?

The basic fraud which Equity Funding was involved in consisted of dreaming up phoney life insurance which was then re-sold to other insurance companies at a discount.

The bankruptcy is also a blow to the prestige of a number of prominent Wall Street analysts. At least eight of them recommended investors to buy Equity Funding shares during the past six months.

The existence of the fraud was first revealed by Ronald Secris (37), a former employee of Equity Funding, who told a prominent Wall Street analyst, Raymond Dirks, that at least a third of Equity Funding's life insurance was phoney.

According to Secris the company was not content simply with creating fake insurance, it also put in fake death claims on the re-insurers and falsified the accounts to fool the auditors.

The practice became so extensive inside the firm that a special department, No 99, was created to dream up new variations on the fraudulent theme.

What happened between March 6 and March 27, when the New York Stock Exchange suspended trading in the company's shares, is likely to occupy a good deal of the investigators' attention.

It seems almost certain that 'insiders' who knew a crash was imminent unloaded their holdings of Equity Funding shares onto innocent bystanders who were left holding the parcel.

Among the insiders who sold were Stanley Goldblum, the company's chairman and president, who resigned these offices on April 2 together with two other top Equity Funding men.

An insider report filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission shows that Goldblum arranged to sell 50,000 Equity Funding shares on March 26. Three days before the Equity Funding chief executive assured the Stock Exchange council 'there was no truth in the rumours' about his firm.

The holding Goldblum sold was worth \$900,000 when he

sold it. But today it is worthless. One firm which was sold a large block of shares on the day Goldblum sold his was the Loew's Corporation, a tobacco, hotel and theatre company which is now suing its stockbroker.

Goldblum is a former scrap dealer and meat salesman who started the corporation in Delaware in 1960. Until 1966 it was engaged almost exclusively in the sale of life insurance policies and mutual fund shares issued by other firms.

Then it bought four insurance companies and moved into the insurance and mutual fund businesses. Goldblum believed that the real competition in both insurance and mutual funds was for salesmen, not clients.

He offered big commissions and built up his sales force from under 200 to 2,500 in seven years. By 1968 the firm was selling individual life insurance at the rate of \$425m a year. Mutual fund sales were at over \$100m a year and net income was up from \$800,000 a year in 1965 to about \$6m in 1968.

The next year Equity Funding's shares reached an all-time high of \$80 each. But it seems likely that despite its size the company was on the decline. Ronald Secris dates

the beginning of the great Equity Funding fraud at least as far back as 1970.

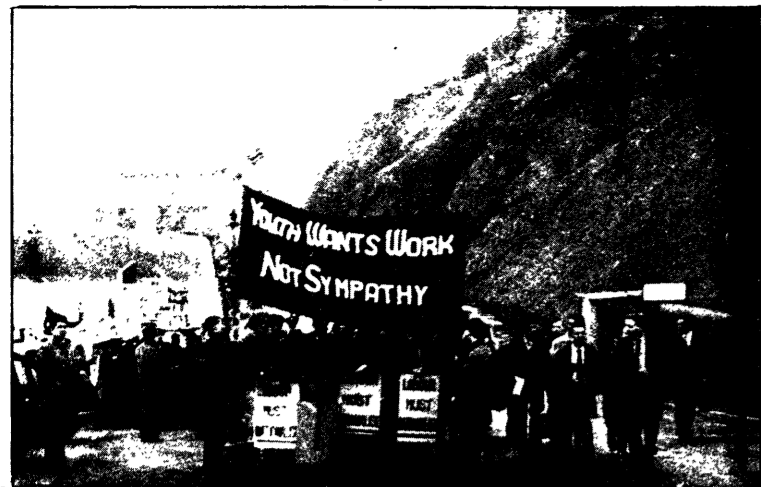
Such fraudulent operations are the classic desperate resource of managers who cannot raise ready cash any other way. The idea of creating fictitious life insurance business and then selling it at a discount was ingenious.

But there was one problem. The re-insurers expected to be paid their share of the insurance premiums after the first year and the company had no option but to sell further fraudulent claims to other insurers in order to raise the necessary funds.

The significance of the Equity Funding crash can hardly be underestimated. The company's total life insurance sales were supposed to have been \$3,240m and much of this is owing to the firm's creditors.

At a time of unprecedented inflation the revelation of the Equity Funding fraud is certain to undermine confidence in the stock market still further and to speed up the existing wave of selling by share-holders.

But the question that will be uppermost in everyone's mind is how many other glamour companies of the New York Stock Exchange are built on sand like Equity Funding?



Demonstration outside the 1963 Labour Party YS conference.



Young Socialists in Trafalgar Square, 1964 demanding socialist policies.



1966: YS members march against Wilson's anti-union laws. Below: At Alexandra Palace, 1971, 4,500 gathered for Anti-Tory rally. Right: Empire Pool, Wembley, 1973, the Pageant of Working Class history.



TEN YEARS OF THE YOUNG SOCIALISTS

BY SHEILA TORRANCE
YS NATIONAL
SECRETARY 1966-1970

WHAT faced young people ten years ago? Unemployment was high — over the million mark. A Tory government was in power. In the Young Socialists three National Committee members who fought for socialist policies and supported Keep Left were expelled from the Labour Party.

The Labour Party leadership was determined to avoid any challenge to the Tory government. At this time our paper had been banned because it spoke out in a forthright way.

On January 12 of the same year, the Young Socialists held a mass demonstration in defence of those expelled and taking up the fight against unemployment and the Tories.

By March the whole of the trade union movement staged an

enormous lobby of Parliament against the steady growth of joblessness.

By Easter those who supported Keep Left had won growing support for their policies and became a majority inside the Young Socialists, when six members out of 11 were elected to the YS national committee.

It was a tumultuous year. Unemployment continued to increase. The frustration of the youth began to reveal itself in different forms: savage battles between 'mods' and 'rockers' broke out in different areas.

1964: The Young Socialists National Committee called a demonstration during the winter against unemployment and forced the national executive committee to give its official support.

It was the first time that the Labour Party had been forced to come out on issues facing the working class.

In order to turn attention away from the hardship of unemployment, youth were encouraged to remain divided between 'mods' and 'rockers', and were given sensationalized treatment from the capitalist Press.

The Young Socialists actively intervened.

Large numbers of these young workers were won into the YS branches and were united in a common struggle against the real enemy — the Tory government.

By July the Labour Party leadership had decided to act. Working class youth and their frustrations with this system had no place in the Labour Party. Five members of the Streatham Young Socialists were expelled for campaigning for support among the 'mods' and 'rockers' and for winning large numbers of these young workers into the Young Socialists.

A huge lobby of the Labour Party's National Executive Committee took place, against these expulsions. But it was the eve of a General Election.

The Labour Party called for unity in the guise of 'don't rock the boat' and tried to silence its youth movement which was demanding that 'Wilson must Stand for Socialist Policies'.

Expulsions began and Young Socialist branches and federations were closed down.

On September 27 thousands of YS members marched through the streets of London to demonstrate against the witch-

hunt; demanding that Labour must fight or socialist policies as the only way to fight the Tories.

The election of the Labour government did nothing to stop these attacks being carried out and the leaders of the Young Socialists National Committee who supported Keep Left, were all expelled.

1965: Young Socialist branches and federations continued to function but independently. Keep Left became the official paper of the YS.

The true nature of this Labour government became rapidly clear for everyone to see. It was determined to help the bankers and the monopolies and ignore the working class. The first thing they did was to break their election pledge to help the old age pensioners.

The Labour government gave itself a wage increase and turned its back on the pensioners.

The Young Socialists demanded the pension increases be granted and by September we organized a mass demonstration in Blackpool outside the Labour Party Conference which called for support for the OAPs the

removal of Wilson and a fight for socialist policies.

The 'majority' on the YS National Committee convened the Fifth Conference of the YS and founded an independent youth movement. It elected a new National Committee to lead this fight.

1966: Gradually the Young Socialists began to win support for their policies amongst the trade union movement. Workers began to see the Labour government for what it really was, to realize that it helped the bankers' property-owners and ignored the working class.

In January a mass demonstration was held against the proposed anti-union legislation 'In Place of Strife' by Barbara Castle.

And by the Sixth Conference of the Young Socialists, a body of fraternal delegates came from the factories and union branches and gave their support.

June brought the seamen's strike. The Labour government launched its attack on the seamen: the era of political strikes had begun.

In Vietnam, as the US government pressed forward

with full-scale attacks by air and land, the policy of the Young Socialists stood firm for victory to the Vietnamese revolution. In October a contingent of 500 Young Socialist members took part in a massive international demonstration in Liege calling for the victory of the Vietnamese people over the American imperialist aggressors.

1967: The Young Socialists led the struggle inside the labour movement to force the left MPs to fight Wilson in order to bring about socialist policies. The persistent betrayals of the Labour government became increasingly apparent to thousands of workers.

Meanwhile, by the summer, support for an international youth movement had grown and a big international assembly was held under canvas for 800 young people from all parts of the world.

In October, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Russian Revolution with an exhibition, a rally and films.

But the wage freeze brought about by the Tory government was having its effect. The dock strike broke out. The Labour

government did everything in its power to defeat the strike.

1968: All sections of the labour movement were now calling for a socialist alternative to Wilson.

The Eighth Young Socialists' Conference was dominated by the demand that we must not sit back and allow the Tories to be returned to power. Unemployment was growing again in Britain. Then in May and June came the greatest manifestation yet of the international crisis in the General Strike action in France and the city of Paris brought to a standstill by the action of thousands of workers. In Czechoslovakia workers rose up in a bitter struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy; in Ireland riots broke out in Derry.

1969: The year opened with a strike by the postal workers driven to action after a period of 40 years.

In February a mass demonstration was held against the proposed anti-union legislation and the Ninth Young Socialists Conference was held around the demand that the TUC call a General Strike action against this

legislation. A serious movement was growing to pose a socialist alternative to Wilson and an emergency Labour Party conference was demanded.

On the eve of the Labour Party Conference in Brighton we launched our greatest achievement — on September 26 the first edition of our daily paper, The 'Workers' Press', was run off the press. The struggle for an alternative leadership was underway.

1970: The year of Lenin and Trotsky was a momentous year. Wilson visited Washington for talks with Nixon and the YS called a demonstration against his visit.

At the Tenth Annual Conference in Scarborough it was clear to everyone that Wilson's policies were opening the door wider each day for the return of a Tory government.

In June the Tory government was elected. Right from the start the Young Socialists campaigned for the bringing down of the Tories and the return of a Labour government pledged to socialist policies.

Unemployment was on the increase. Our Charter of Basic

Rights was launched on December 19 from the All Trades Unions Alliance Conference at a time when all the basic rights won by the working class over hundreds of years of struggle and deprivation, now came under the sharpest possible attack from the Tory government.

1971: A big campaign began for the Right to Work, particularly, at first, in defence of the Pilkington Glass workers.

In February, the largest demonstration for several years, of 200,000 workers, was called by the TUC in protest against the anti-union laws. The class conflict in Ireland exploded and civil war broke out in Ulster.

We led the campaign against the Tory government, against British troops in Ulster and in March we held the biggest rally in our history when 4,500 workers came to the Alexandra Palace in support of our demands to fight the Tories.

The Tory government stepped up its attacks against the health service, school milk, trade union rights and wage demands. In the summer a fair was organized which raised £1,200 for the Pilkington workers who were in



the forefront of the struggle for the Right to Work.

On August 15 the world was stunned and the course of history changed by Nixon's statement that gold would no longer back the dollar on the world market. Immediate attacks were launched against the working class. Unemployment grew and our Right to Work campaign began.

1972: The Right to Work Marches began with the Glasgow march on February 5. Five marches culminated in the biggest rally ever, of 8,500 who gathered to demonstrate against the Tory government at the Empire Pool, Wembley on March 12.

Keep Left expanded to a weekly paper and the first issue appeared on May 13.

Inflation was beginning to have serious effects on the working class as the Tories stepped up their attacks against basic democratic rights.

At the Twelfth Annual Conference a warning was made to youth everywhere that this Tory government was determined in its blatant efforts to destroy workers' rights.

The anti-union legislation came into full effect and as a result of its use, in the summer, five dockers were jailed. The enormous movement of the working class against the imprisonment forced the government to release the dockers. Soon afterwards the T&GWU was fined under the new laws and for the first time since the Taff Vale Judgement of 1901, a union was held liable by the law of the land for the actions of its members.

Unemployment mounted during the summer and regional Right to Work marches were held in Scotland, the North East, the North West and Yorkshire gaining big support.

Meanwhile food prices had already begun to rise. The Young Socialists launched a winter campaign of 'Fight the Tory' rallies, showing the colour film 'Right to Work' marches made by the ACTT. These rallies were used to strengthen and build a mass Young Socialists' movement.

Attacks by the Tories went on: Young Socialists entered Councils of Action to join with the local labour movement in order to fight back against the government.

The Tories pushed their attacks to new heights and brought in openly dictatorial measures. State control of wages was introduced and Britain went into the Common Market.

1973: The year began with the unmasking of the real face of Toryism. A new offensive was launched by Heath in which wages were held down by legal measures while prices rocketed after entry into the Common Market.

The Tories began to arm the police and brought in a special Security Committee under Lord Jellicoe, strengthening the 'law and order' brigade within the ruling class.

On March 11, at the Empire Pool Wembley, the biggest demonstration we have ever staged was presented in the form of a Pageant of Working Class History: 10,000 trade unionists, housewives and youth attended this anti-Tory rally in defence of their basic democratic rights and to support the building of the Revolutionary Party.

At each stage of development in the objective situation, the Young Socialists have intervened and provided a decisive lead to hundreds of thousands of workers and youth in this country.

Our history is one of principled struggle. We have never backed down from any fight; and in every occasion we have remained firmly on the side of the working class. We have always exposed the treachery of the reformist and Stalinist leadership within the trade union and labour movements.

Our Thirteenth Annual Conference on April 14 and 15 marks the beginning of a new year — a year in which the working class will be called upon to arm itself as never before in face of the attacks that will be launched by a Ruling class in unprecedented crisis: let us go forward and win thousands of young people everywhere to bring them right to the forefront of the struggle to transform the Socialist Labour League into The Revolutionary Party.

An astonishing attack on a Workers Press article which concerned the Lancashire port of Heysham has been made at a meeting of the Morecambe Trades Council. The article was described by an NUR delegate as a 'vicious attack' on his members while a delegate from the National Union of Seamen claimed that statements in the article were 'dastardly lies'. The article called—'A day in the life of an unregistered port'—appeared in Workers Press on February 9. The authors, Charles Parkins and Andrew Laurence, described the wages and conditions of casual labour employed at Heysham on the new fruit wharf being operated by the firm, James Fisher and Sons. Here the two authors reply to the trades council delegates and reiterate the facts about the situation at Heysham.

THE FACTS ON THE HEYSHAM FRUIT WHARF

Our article was based on first-hand experience at the docks. It described how, when a ship comes in to Heysham, casual 'dockers' turn up in the morning hoping that their names will be called for a day's work.

The article pointed out that with the high unemployment and low wages in this area of Lancashire, there were numbers of young workers willing to turn up for the chance of a day's pay at Fisher's.

It went on to quote statements by Mr R. S. Robinson, United Kingdom shipping manager of the Citrus Board of Israel, which is sending fruit into Heysham, to the effect that the great advantage of using Heysham was its cheapness compared with Liverpool, and that another advantage was that there was 'no problem or difficulties with labour'.

Nowhere in the article was the National Union of Railwaymen mentioned, let alone its members attacked. On the contrary, the article advocated that Heysham should be made a registered port, and that all trade unionists should unite to demand that a Labour government would nationalize all docks, under workers' control and without compensation.

It seems rather strange, therefore, that instead of discussing the threat to trade unionism that must be posed by the use of casual labour, the delegates of the NUR should be denouncing Workers Press for publicizing it, and accusing us of 'attacking' trade unionists.

It is likewise noteworthy that the representative of the National Union of Seamen—whose members are themselves expressing concern about the threat to jobs and conditions from the increasing use of foreign ships by British Rail—should apparently fail to recognize that dockers in ports like Preston and Liverpool are equally concerned about what is going on at Heysham docks.

In fact the NUS delegate, Mr Bill Rowlands, declared: 'I think there is a bit of jealousy over Heysham. Not many weeks ago, there was a letter sent to the employees congratulating them on breaking the British record for unloading a ship. That in itself has perhaps caused people to be jealous.'

This seems a rather peculiar statement to come from a

trade union officer. Exactly who is supposed to be 'jealous'? And does Mr Rowlands regard it as the job of trade unions to encourage a competition between workers in different ports to see who can do the most work for the employers?

There are a number of peculiar aspects, in fact, to the Morecambe Trades Council attack.

For one thing, how is it that, from early in February, when the Workers Press article appeared, it has taken the delegates until the beginning of April to decide that they objected to it? It seems rather a long time for spontaneous indignation to boil up!

Secondly, Trades Council secretary Owen Spencer is reported as saying that he has made 'exhaustive inquiries' as to the origin of the article, but has been unable to trace where it appeared.

Yet the article appeared in Workers Press, in an issue which, like every other, clearly bore the address of the publication and a telephone number for our news desk.

If anyone wanted to query anything in the article, to contest any of the facts in it, or to make any comment on it, it should have been a fairly simple matter either to write or telephone the paper.

Which can only bring us to the question: did those who condemn the article actually read it? And if they did not, then how, as a matter of interest, was it actually brought to their attention?

'Dastardly lies'

One delegate who actually seemed able to quote from the article was Mr Rowlands. He condemned it for allegedly attacking both the NUR and the company, James Fisher and Sons.

He further alleged that statements in the article were 'dastardly lies' and should be refuted.

This is a serious allegation to make.

Workers Press has a large and growing circulation among trade unionists, including dockers and railwaymen, throughout Britain, who regard the paper as a reliable source of information on industrial questions and a vital instrument in the struggle against the Tories.

If, as a result of misinformation, we had printed anything that was inaccurate, or untrue, about Heysham docks or any



Picketing at the unregistered port of Heysham during the national dock strike last summer.

other matter, then we should be glad to hear from any workers who wished to point this out, or to correct us.

The February 9 issue with the article on Fisher's wharf was sold in the Lancaster area to, among others, workers who had been employed at the wharf the previous month.

Although it aroused some interest and discussion, none of them complained, either to the paper itself or to the sellers who are in the area regularly, about anything in the article.

We also have NUR members who read our paper regularly, none of whom told us he saw the article as an attack on his union.

To say that the article consisted of 'dastardly lies', implies that not only was it not factually correct, but that the writers deliberately made statements that were not true.

Was it a 'lie' that casual labour is employed at Fisher's wharf?

Was it a lie that, when a ship comes in to dock, unemployed workers turn up at the dock gate hoping to be picked for a day's work?

Was it a lie that, the faster the 'casuals' unload a cargo—perhaps quickly enough for Mr Rowlands to boast that they have 'broken a record'—the

sooner they are all out of a job again?

Was it a lie that Mr R. S. Robinson of the Citrus Board of Israel was quoted in the 'Lancaster and Morecambe Guardian' as saying:

'One of the port's great advantages is the cost. Last year it cost the Board about £8 a ton to discharge ships in Liverpool. We can discharge ships in Heysham and forward the crates to Liverpool for about £2.50 a ton less than that price.'

Was it a lie, that Mr J. Anthony Grant, on behalf of the Tory government, described the new wharf as 'an example of excellent industrial relations'?

Uniting workers

We are not out to attack trade unionists at Heysham or anywhere else. Our fight is with the Tories and employers, and Workers Press aims to unite all workers in this fight.

We do not wish to see workers competing with each other for jobs, whether as individuals outside a dock gate—evoking memories of the 'bad old days' of muscle-

feeling and the 'blue-eyed boy' system—or as work forces in a particular area or port competing to offer themselves as cheaper labour than those in other parts of the country.

It was no pleasure last summer to see dockers from Preston and Liverpool having to picket Heysham and Glasson Dock, where other dockers, equally worried about their future, were handling extra work.

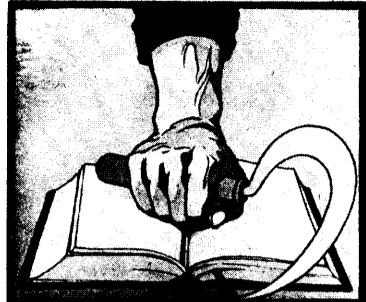
We know that the pickets did not enjoy it either; and we suspect that the trade unionists at Heysham were themselves not exactly happy about the situation.

As one Liverpool docker remarked at that time, as he watched the police escorting a lorry out of Heysham: 'The Tories are just laughing at us so long as this sort of thing is going on.'

Our article on Fisher's wharf was written as part of the fight to stop that 'sort of thing' from developing any further; to alert workers to the dangers posed, and to achieve unity of dockers, and all trade unionists.

We are out to stop the Tories laughing, once and for all. And we think most trade unionists, including those in Morecambe and Heysham, are with us on that one.

BOOK REVIEW



'Economic Management: China 1972', by Joan Robinson. Anglo-Chinese Educational Institute, March, 1973. 20p.

BY TOM KEMP

'The basic characteristic of the Chinese economy is that 80 per cent and more of the population, organized in communes, is responsible for feeding and housing itself. The surplus provided by the communes feeds the rest of the population and provides raw material (particularly cotton) to industry.'

In this way, on page 12 of her pamphlet, Joan Robinson sums up the present level of development of the Chinese economy. It is still predominantly agrarian and underdeveloped, capable of producing an adequate supply of basic food and clothing for the masses, but with only a limited capacity for investment in industrialization.

Joan Robinson is well known as an enthusiast for Mao's China, to which she has been a regular visitor, and particularly for the 'cultural revolution'. Her account of the organization, or, as she calls it, 'management' of the Chinese economy is uncritical.

Nevertheless she does provide some useful material which is fairly up-to-date, collected as it was during her visit in the spring of last year.

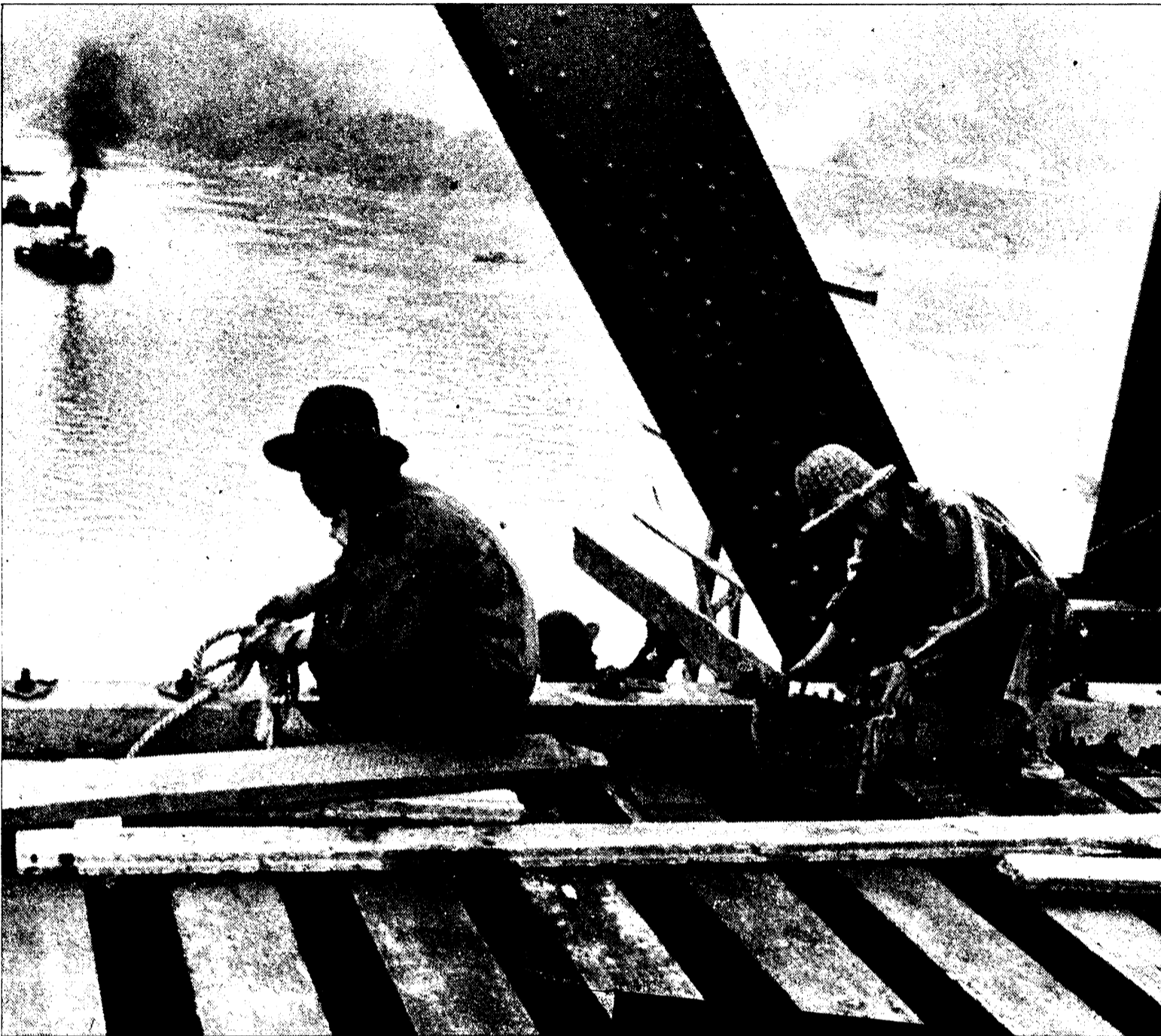
She brings out the main differences between the present form of planning in China and the methods used in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe and which were favoured by the former head of state, the now disgraced, Liu Shao-chi and other 'capitalist-roaders'.

Planning is still highly-centralized in some respects—prices are laid down for each enterprise which has to work out its targets in association with the higher bodies. But the Soviet planning system favours producers and there is much dependence on individual incentives, cash bonuses and plan fulfilment in physical terms without much regard for market requirements.

These have been done away with in China, according to Mrs Robinson:

'The Chinese system depends on a high level of morality (or political con-

THE ECONOMY OF CHAIRMAN MAO'S CHINA



sciousness) in every sphere from top to bottom.'

Hence the constant campaigns and exhortations backed up by group pressure: 'The individual is not free to please himself, he is kept up to the mark by his neighbours.'

Both in industry, and even more in the communes, some of the methods imposed during the 'cultural revolution' have been abandoned as 'ultra-left'.

There is an interesting account of how the communes are organized and the way in which a surplus is drawn off from them to enable the rest of the economy to function.

Because Mrs Robinson is an enthusiastic Maoist fellow-traveller the reader should approach some of her judgements with caution. Nothing is said about the power struggles in the Chinese leadership,

the continued adherence to Stalinist methods or the Maoist version of 'socialism in one country'.

It is all a little too good to be true when she writes, at the close: 'Chinese patriotism and socialist ideology are pulling together, and every individual can see in his own little corner what that can achieve.'

'In this atmosphere, even the dreariest work ceases to be a bore.'

When Mrs Robinson visits China she is received by officials as 'a friendly foreign personage' and goes on a conducted tour.

She does not speak Chinese and is now an elderly lady full of enthusiasm for 'a way of life so different from her own before her retirement—teaching 'bourgeois' economics at Cambridge University.



Chairman Mao. Above: Chinese construction workers engaged in bridge building.

BOOKS BY TROTSKY

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WORKERS NOTEBOOK

CLOSE DOWN UNIVERSITIES

The recent splurge of publicity to the annual conference of the National Union of Students has seriously bothered Mr K. M. Young, a reader of the 'Birmingham Post'.

He wrote to the paper saying that 'we, the public, now demand that, for the time being, the social and political departments of all British universities be closed down.'

'When we have ceased turning out from our institutions of higher learning people who have demonstrated beyond all doubt that all they have

learned is a passionate desire to destroy all facets of the existing society, and sanity has been restored to student affairs, we might then consider reopening those departments with very limited intakes of students and new staff chosen to teach a curriculum comprising only the beneficial and academic aspects of sociology and politics respectively.'

And if students still revolted, we could burn books on politics and sociology and lock up the agitators until their minds had been retrained. . .

CASUALTY

The Labour Party has suffered another casualty — Manchester councillor John Goldstone. He is not standing as a Labour candidate because he 'believes there is a certain business morality no matter what political colour a person is'.

The morality Goldstone refers to is the Manchester Labour council's correct decision to halt the sale of council houses.

The Tories brought in the sale of council houses as part of their strategy to destroy public sector housing. Together with the effects of the Housing Finance Act they hope to reduce the stock of council property. Council homes that are sold pass forever into the private sector and ultimately into the hands of the housing sharks.

Goldstone, who represents one of the most solid working-class areas of the city, voted with the Tories over council house sales. He also voted with the Tories over the Housing Finance Act (with many other Labour councillors).

Because of his position, he feels unable to stand as a Labour candidate in the next election.

All Trades Unions Alliance meetings

EAST LONDON: Monday April 16, 8 p.m. Bromley Public Hall, Bow Road, E.3. 'Fight rising rents and prices. Build Councils of Action'.
TOTTENHAM: Tuesday April 17, 8 p.m. 'Bricklayers Arms', High Road, near White Hart Lane. 'Make Scanlon retract'.
CRAWLEY: Tuesday April 17, 8 p.m. AEU Hall, Robinson Road. 'Make Scanlon Retract'.
ACTON: Tuesday April 17, 8 p.m. 'Six Bells', High Street, W.3. 'Make Scanlon retract'.
PADDINGTON: Tuesday April 17, 8 p.m. 'Prince of Wales', corner of Harrow Road and Western Road. 'Make Scanlon withdraw his proposals. No collaboration with the Tories'.
WOOLWICH: Wednesday April 18, 8 p.m. 'Castle', Powis Street, E.18. 'No collaboration with the Pay Board'.
WALTHAMSTOW: Wednesday April 18, 8 p.m. 'The Bell', Hoe Street. 'TUC must call a General Strike'.
FULHAM: Thursday April 19, 8 p.m. 'The Swan', Fulham Broadway, S.W.6. 'No collaboration with the Pay Board'.
WANDSWORTH: Monday April 16, 8 p.m. 'King's Arms', High Street, S.W.18. 'Build Councils of Action'.
TOOTING: Tuesday April 17, 8 p.m. Tooting Baths, Tooting Broadway, S.W.17. 'The crisis of capitalism'.
MIDDLETON: Thursday April 19, 8 p.m. 'Assheton Arms', near the Middleton Gardens.
FELTHAM: Thursday April 19, 8 p.m. 'Three Horse Shoes', High Street. 'TUC must call a General Strike to make the Tories resign'.
SLOUGH: Wednesday April 25, 8 p.m. Community Centre, Farnham Road. 'TUC must call a General Strike to make the Tories resign'.
CROYDON: Thursday April 26, 8 p.m. Ruskin House, Coombe Road. 'Marxism and the trade unions'.
WILLESDEN: Thursday April 26, 8 p.m. Brent Labour and Trades Hall, Willesden High Road, N.W.10. 'Build Councils of Action'.
HOLLOWAY: Thursday April 26, 8 p.m. Co-op Hall, Seven Sisters Road. 'The economic crisis and the rising cost of living'.



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TODAY'S TV



Playwright Harold Pinter with Henry Woolf who is cast as The Man in Pinter's 'Monologue', written specially for TV. It's on BBC2 tonight.

BBC 1

12.30 Holi hynt. 12.55 News. 1.00 Pebble Mill at one. 1.30 Chigley. 1.45 Look, stranger. 2.05 Portrait of a musician. 2.35 Badminton horse trials and racing from Newbury. 4.00 Slip and slap. 4.10 Play school. 4.35 Jackanory. 4.50 Deputy dawg. 5.00 Crackerjack 73. 5.40 Sir Prancelot. 5.45 News. Weather.

6.00 **NATIONWIDE.**

6.45 **FILM: 'Hostile Guns'.** George Montgomery, Yvonne de Carlo, Tab Hunter, Brian Donlevy. Western.

8.15 **THE GOOD OLD DAYS.**

9.00 **NEWS.** Weather.

9.25 **THE REGIMENT.**

10.15 **DIMBLEBY TALK-IN.**

11.00 **LATE NIGHT NEWS.**

11.05 **FILM: 'Arabian Nights'.** Maria Montez, John Hall, Sabu.

12.30 **Weather.**

ITV

9.30 Charlie Brown show. 9.55 **FILM: 'Munster Go Home'.** 11.30 A tale of two hawkers. 12.00 Cartoon. 12.05 Hickory house. 12.25 Happy house. 12.40 First report and election results. 1.30 Crown court. 2.00 General hospital. 2.30 Good afternoon. 3.00 Junkin. 3.25 A summer story. 4.20 Lassie. 4.50 Magpie. 5.20 Arnie. 5.50 News.

6.00 **TODAY.** 6.35 **CROSSROADS.** 7.00 **SKY'S THE LIMIT.**

7.30 **THE FBI.** The Extortionist.

8.30 **WHO DO YOU DO?**

9.00 **JUSTICE.** Dummy Scouler Against the Crown.

10.00 **NEWS.** 10.30 **POLICE FIVE.**

10.40 **FILM: 'Last Holiday'.** Alec Guinness. A man with only a few weeks to live decides to spend his last weeks at a fashionable seaside hotel.

12.10 **ONE POINT OF VIEW.**

12.15 **JASON KING.** Toki.

BBC 2

11.00-11.25 Play school. 5.25 Open University.

7.05 **MISTRESS OF HARDWICK.** They Expect a New Queen.

7.30 **NEWS SUMMARY.** Weather.

7.35 **GARDENERS' WORLD.**

8.00 **MONEY AT WORK.** The 95:5 Society. 95 per cent of the wealth in Britain is owned by 5 per cent of the population.

9.00 **FILM: 'Capricious Summer'.** Second of two films directed by Jiri Menzel.

10.15 **PLAY: 'Monologue'.** By Harold Pinter. With Henry Woolf.

10.35 **FILM NIGHT.**

11.00 **NEWS EXTRA.** Weather.

REGIONAL TV

CHANNEL: 1.15 News. 1.30 London. 2.30 Yoga. 2.55 Short story. 3.25 London. 4.25 Flintstones. 4.50 London. 5.20 Junkin. 5.50 London. 6.00 News. 6.10 Report. 6.35 London. 8.30 Comedians. 9.00 London. 10.35 **FILM: 'Miami Exposé'.** 11.50 News, weather.

WESTWARD. As Channel except: 9.50 Danger man. 10.45 Dr Simon Locke. 11.15 Homes of history. 11.30 London. 12.37 Gus Honeybun. 12.40 London. 1.27 News. 6.00 Diary. 6.25 Sport. 10.32 News. 11.50 Faith for life.

SOUTHERN: 10.15 Paulus. 10.40 Yoga. 11.05 Dr Simon Locke. 11.30 London. 12.00 News. 12.05 London. 2.30 Women. 3.00 Galloping gourmet. 3.25 London. 4.20 Weekend. 4.25 Pebbles and Bamm Bamm. 4.50 London. 5.20 Cartoon. 5.25 Crossroads. 5.50 London. 6.00 Day by day. Scene SE. 6.35 Upper crusts. 7.05 Sky's the limit. 7.35 Madigan. 9.00 London. 10.30 Weekend. 10.35 **FILM: 'The Two Faces of Dr Jekyll'.** 12.15 News. 12.25 Weather. Guideline.

HARLECH: 9.55 Sesame street. 10.55 Sara and Hoppity. 11.05 Coastguards. 11.30 London. 2.30 Women. 3.30 London. 4.25 Rainbow country. 4.50 London. 5.20 Chuckleheads. 5.25 Crossroads. 5.50 London. 6.01 Report West. 6.15 Report Wales. 6.30 Doctor in charge. 7.00 **FILM: 'Return of the Gunfighter'.** 9.00 London. 10.30 Comedians. 11.00 Profile. 11.30 Our kid. 12.00 Dr Simon Locke. 12.30 Weather.

HTV Cymru/Wales as above except: 4.25-4.50 Stesion cantamil. 6.01-6.15 Y dydd. 10.30 Sports arena. 11.00-11.30 Outlook.

HTV West as above except: 6.15-6.30 Report West.

ANGLIA: 9.30 Images. 9.50 Paulus. 10.00 Gilbert and Sullivan. 10.50 Gourmet. 11.15 Cartoons. 11.30 London. 12.04 News. 12.05 London. 2.30 County vote. 3.00 London. 4.25 Romper room. 4.50 London. 5.20 Partridge family. 5.50 London. 6.00 About Anglia. 6.35 London. 7.30 Hawaii five-o. 8.30 Comedians. 9.00 London. 10.30 Probe. 11.00 **FILM: 'Night Creatures'.** 12.30 Epilogue.

ATV MIDLANDS: 11.00 Acres for profit. 11.30 London. 12.00 Guide. 12.05 London. 4.20 Forest rangers. 4.50 London. 5.20 Flintstones. 5.50 London. 6.00 Today. 6.35 London. 7.30 Hawaii five-o. 9.00 London. 10.30 Police surgeon. 11.00 **FILM: 'Bunny Lake is Missing'.** Weather.

ULSTER: 11.30 London. 1.29 News. 1.30 London. 2.30 Cartoon. 2.40 Romper room. 3.00 London. 3.25 Randall and Hopkirk. 4.23 News. 4.25 Rainbow country. 4.50 London. 5.20 General hospital. 5.50 London. 6.00 Reports. 6.35 London. 7.30 Pathfinders. 8.30 Comedians. 9.00 London. 10.30 Spectrum. 11.00 Name of the game.

YORKSHIRE: 9.35 Ed Allen. 10.00 Gilbert and Sullivan. 10.50 Dr Simon Locke. 11.15 Cartoon. 11.30 London. 4.25 Flintstones. 4.50 London. 5.20 Me and the chimp. 5.50 London. 6.00 Calendar. Weather. 6.35 London. 7.30 Who do you do? 8.00 Hawaii five-o. 9.00 London. 10.30 **FILM: 'The Misfits'.** 12.25 Weather.

GRANADA: 9.30 Enchanted house. 9.45 Gilbert and Sullivan. 10.30 Galloping gourmet. 10.55 Spiderman. 11.15 Fishing. 11.30 London. 12.00 Cartoon. 12.05 London. 4.25 Joe 90. 4.50 London. 5.15 Dick Van Dyke. 5.50 London. 6.00 News. 6.20 Sky's the limit. 6.50 **FILM: 'Maracalbo'.** 8.30 Comedians. 9.00 London. 10.30 Kick off. 10.55 **FILM: 'Weekend at Dunkirk'.** 12.50 Spyforce.

SCOTTISH: 10.00 No easy answer. 10.45 Batman. 11.15 Serenade. 11.30 London. 12.00 Gustavus. 12.05 London. 2.30 Dateline. 3.00 London. 4.20 Nanny and the professor. 4.50 London. 5.25 Crossroads. 5.50 London. 6.00 Today. 6.30 Who do you do? 7.00 London. 8.30 Comedians. 9.00 London. 10.30 Friday night. 11.00 Late call. 11.05 **FILM: 'Kill Her Gently'.**

GRAMPIAN: 11.30 London. 12.00 News. 12.05 London. 4.25 Cartoon. 4.50 London. 5.20 General hospital. 5.50 London. 6.00 News. 6.10 Gramplan week. 6.35 London. 7.00 **FILM: 'The Undercover Man'.** 8.30 Comedians. 9.00 London. 10.30 Jobs. 10.35 Points North. 11.05 **FILM: 'The Terror of the Tongs'.** 12.35 Meditation.

United we can win—Healy

FIGHTING the Tory government means fighting politically if we are to win, Gerry Healy, national secretary of the Socialist Labour League, told a public meeting in Methyr Tydfil, South Wales.

Organized by the local branch of the Socialist Labour League, the meeting was well attended by workers from the town, the local collieries and the Ebbw Vale steelworks.

Gerry Healy said that it was nonsense to say that any section of workers had been beaten. The hospital workers found themselves isolated today because the trade union leaders were too frightened to give assistance.

When engineering union leader Hugh Scanlon declared the Tories had won a victory it was appropriate to ask what victory?

The Tory government had won

no fight at all on the question of inflation. With dwindling wage packets, increased rates and mortgages and VAT, the increases awarded under Phase Two of the Tory government's wages policy were completely wiped out.

The Tories were back to square one. They knew that the fight was in front and that is what they were preparing for.

This was why the maximum unity of the working class was needed.

'It is a fight to a finish with a leadership which is prepared to put the Tories out,' he said. 'We must begin the task to transform the Socialist Labour League into such a leadership.'

Speaking on behalf of a group of hospital workers, Cissy Powell, from St Tydfil's Hospital, declared that no one was going back to the conditions which

prevailed when she first started work 22 years ago.

Reading a letter which she and her workmates had prepared earlier in the day she said:

'Like thousands of other workers we want a living wage. Our wages are a mere pittance.

'Maybe it is our own fault, as many people seem to say pack it in, there's plenty of work in the factories. But somehow, like the medical staff, we get dedicated to our work.'

Third speaker in a personal capacity was Elwyn Williams, National Union of Mineworkers' branch secretary at the Bedling Colliery.

Speaking about the recent miners' ballot he said: 'I am not despondent about the vote. We are asking for a living wage. In the autumn, if prices go up as they are now, then the miners will be out.'

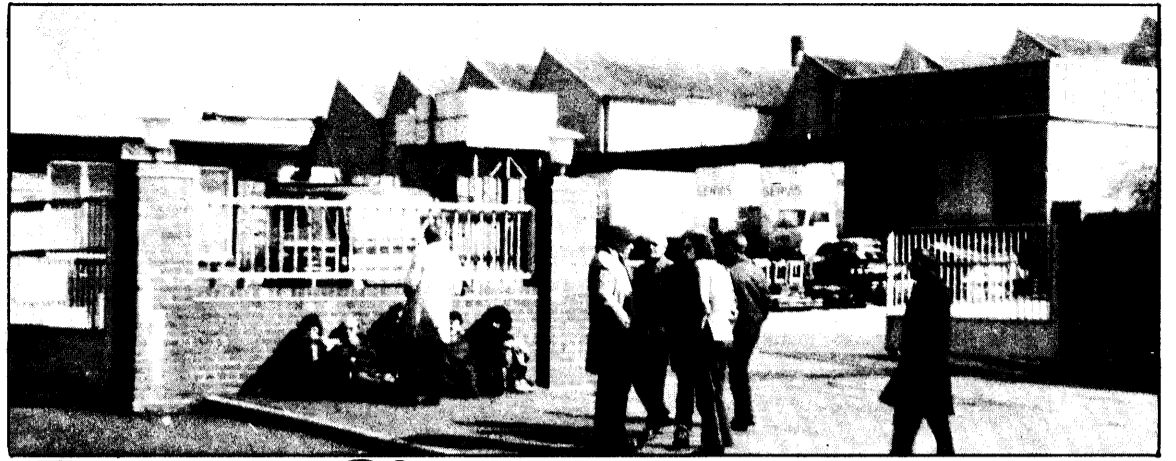
Pickets out at three Staffordshire engineering plants

PICKETS have been active at the gates of three Darlaston, Staffs, factories hit by strikes: Rubery Owen, Guest Keen Nettlefold (GKN) and Wilkins and Mitchell.

At Rubery Owen the picket is being mounted 24 hours a day. The police are also on the scene throughout the day and night. One picket told Workers Press that on the first day of the strike, Monday April 2, there were more than 200 police at the King's Hill factory.

More than 2,500 workers from Rubery's Seven Acre site and 200 from King's Hill are out in protest against a management attempt to end piecework and substitute a new Measured-Day Work system of payment. This would slash wages by between £6 and £9 a week for many pieceworkers.

The management has been pressing its demands, backed by the local Tory Press. Despite the widespread disruption to the Midlands car industry, the management seems determined to break the present pay structure and impose MDW under the Tories' new state pay laws. In other words, men will have to work harder for less money.



Above: Pickets outside the Wilkins and Mitchell Servis domestic appliance factory in Darlaston Road. Below left: Police keeping their eye on pickets at Rubery Owen's Booth Street gate. Below: A vehicle entering the GKN Bolts and Nuts Division factory in Salsbury Street is halted by pickets.

Pay law fight hits Darlaston

'Unions weaken'

In the face of this onslaught the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers' national organizer, Mr John Foster, told the 'Wolverhampton Express and Star' on Monday:

'No one is going to tell me that after two years of talking there is nothing more to talk about.'

Prior to this, on April 2, the Transport and General Workers' Union organizer in Wolverhampton, Mr Harry Littlehales, told the same newspaper:

'No one in his right mind would accept a substantial reduction in earnings. Formal support from the T&GWU executive committee would be sought.'

'Stoppages may also be called in factories directly or indirectly concerned with Rubery Owen.'

One of the pickets commented sourly: 'As the management

200 toolroom and plant maintenance workers are on strike.

Ken Wilkes, on behalf of the shop stewards in the engineering manufacturing division, told Workers Press:

'We have been negotiating since last October. The company wants to give us £2 a week on top of our present £36 in four 50p steps tied to performance on the delivery of orders out of the door.'

First strike

'This claim should have been settled and paid by January 1, but the government freeze has held it up. So two weeks ago we introduced a work-to-rule and ban on overtime.'

'Management retaliated by laying off 23 workers on Tuesday and Wednesday, April 3 and

entials within appliance division factories.

Management is refusing to pay the claim because it says it breaches Phase Two of the government's counter-inflation policy.

This strike, like Rubery Owen, is in its second week.

ONE THING is clear about this three-pronged attack on wages and trade union organization in this Black Country town: the employers feel stronger following the passage of the Phase Two pay laws and the retreats by the trade union leaders.

Workers at the three factories must now allow their struggles to become divided and isolated. They are common struggles because they are against the pay laws.

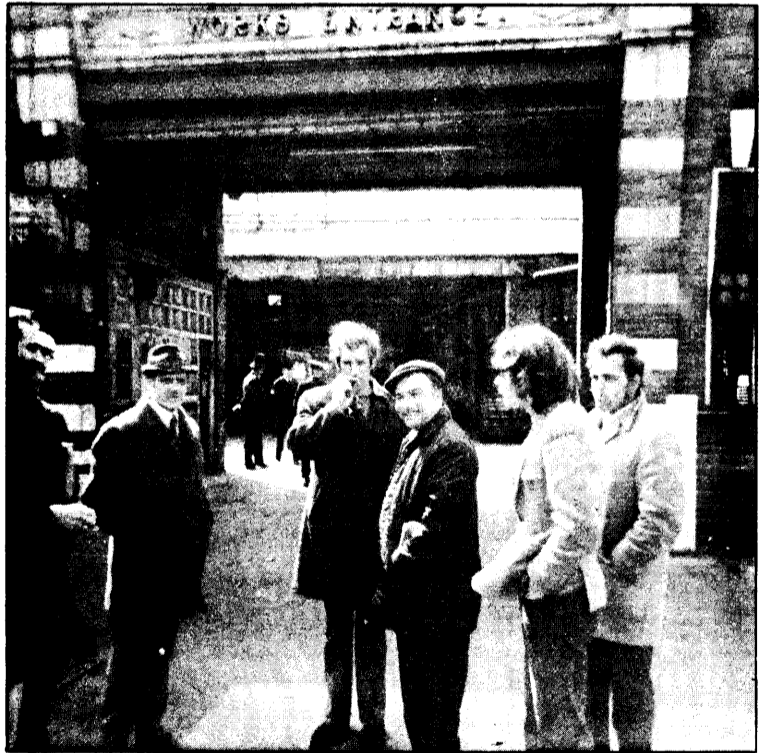
Tories out

And by introducing these laws the Tories have given each wages fight a political content.

Because to beat the pay laws immediately means a fight against the government.

The Darlaston workers must fight through their trade unions for a policy to call on the TUC to mobilize the whole trade union movement in a General Strike to force the Tories to resign.

The incoming Labour government must be pledged to implement socialist policies, including the repeal of all anti-union and anti-working class legislation.



grows more determined, it appears the official union position weakens.'

Brian Doughty, one of the Booth Street pickets told Workers Press: 'I work on the presses making axle cases for the Land-Rover.'

Wages drop

'Management's proposals would mean for me a drop in wages from £53 a week down to £44 for the same amount of work, only under Measured-Day Work conditions of about 120 performance rating.'

'True they are offering me a lump sum of £536, but they are trying to buy out piecework, trying to buy out mutuality. They are trying to implement this new scheme without discussions with the union.'

JUST DOWN the road from Rubery Owen is GKN Bolts and Nuts Limited, where

4. So the rest of us also took time off.

'When we returned on Friday, April 6, management told us that unless we called off the sanctions, then 32 men would be laid off indefinitely. At a mass meeting last Friday, 200 workers decided that we would come out with the 32 rather than call off the sanctions.'

Pickets on one of the Station Street gates, said: 'We are the only section not to be offered £1 plus 4 per cent without strings. This is the first strike at this group of factories in over 30 years.'

DARLASTON'S third strike is at Wilkins and Mitchell Limited, Servis domestic appliances division, in Darlaston Road.

At the plant, between 100 and 200 AUEW technical and supervisory staff members are out on official strike in support of a wage claim based on a past agreement to reduce pay differ-

Press shop out

THE EARLY shift at Ford's Dagenham, Essex, press shop walked out yesterday after a man had been suspended for working to rule. They will not return to work until Monday.

The suspension follows a management circular on Wednesday which declared they would resort to 'the necessary action' to get the press shop back to normal working. The work-to-rule has cut press-shop production by a third.

MARPLES Ridgway was fined £150 with £150 costs yesterday for a construction failure on a motorway bridge at Reading which resulted in an accident killing three men.

At a court in Bracknell the company pleaded guilty to a summons that a temporary span over the M4 was not of adequate strength and stability.

Mr John Griffiths, QC, defending said the company pleaded not guilty to a second allegation that the temporary span was not 'of good construction'. He successfully applied for an adjournment *sine die* of this summons.

SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE MEETINGS

Liverpool

Transform the SLL into the revolutionary party
Monday April 23,
7.30 p.m.

'The Mona', James St
(Entrance at back in Moor St)

Make Scanlon retract!
No collaboration with the Industrial Relations Act!
No acceptance of Phase Two!
Force the Tories to resign!
Build the revolutionary party!

South London

TUESDAY APRIL 24,
8 p.m.

Clapham Manor Baths,
Clapham Manor Street,
SW4

North London

WEDNESDAY APRIL 25
8 p.m.

Woodlands Hall,
Crown Street,
Acton, W.3.

SLL LECTURE SERIES

The revolutionary party and the history of the British working class

Merthyr Tydfil

Caedraw School
Merthyr Tydfil
7 p.m.

Sunday April 22
Lectures given by Peter Jeffries

The Unions and the working class in Britain.

The Revolutionary Past of the British working class—and its future.

The Transformation of the SLL into a Revolutionary Party.

READING

Trotsky, Where is Britain Going? Problems of the British Revolution.

Perspectives for Transforming the SLL into a Revolutionary Party.

Marxist Analysis of the Crisis.

SLL LECTURE SERIES

The Socialist Revolution in Britain

Middleton (nr Manchester)

Hollins Social Centre
Tintern Road, Hollins Estate
7.30 p.m.

Monday April 16
Lectures given by Cliff Slaughter
(SLL Central Committee)

The Socialist Revolution in Britain:

3. The state and revolution. Reformism and revolution in Britain. The fight for democratic rights today means preparing for working-class power.

Basic reading: Perspectives for transforming the SLL into a revolutionary party.

Marxist Analysis of the Crisis. Problems of the British Revolution (Trotsky).

Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International, Communist Manifesto.

Shotton steelmen face big fight

RANK-AND-FILE action committees from doomed steelworks meeting at Shotton today must think carefully about the next stage in their campaign. About 6,500 men are to lose their jobs at the Deeside works and the jobs of more than 40,000 others are to be axed in the next two years or so.

Shotton, Ebbw Vale and Glengarnock, where some of the biggest redundancies are due to take place, have now all had their days of protest. British Steel Corporation officials have watched with interest from the windows of Steel House in Victoria to see which march would be the largest.

Labour MPs at Westminster have somehow managed to maintain the verve and sincerity of their speeches over three months while the platitudes have stayed the same.

But as the MPs pointed out in lobby after lobby, their hands were tied despite what they felt in their hearts. The fact was that the Tories outvoted them in the divisions.

Not only have they admitted that they cannot halt the Tory plan for steel but some of them, including Mr Michael Foot, showed considerable unease by confessing that it was not the plan to which he objected but rather the manner of its execution.

With a record of creating redundancies on the railways, in the mines and in steel, many workers were left to wonder whether a Labour government would serve them any better than BSC chairman Lord Melchett and premier Edward Heath.

The protest campaigns have signally failed to persuade the Tories or the BSC to alter their plans in any way.

The only trifling concession the Corporation has made is to agree to make Ebbw Vale closure dates negotiable.

Cold comfort to men who know that at the end of the day they will not only be out on the stones but will have no chance of another job in the remote areas in which they live.

At Shotton there is already evidence that the hopeless, reformist protest-policies are spreading disillusionment.

Right from the beginning, at many of the doomed works, there was a strong and right-wing current of opinion which favoured setting the BSC the best possible example in a bid to persuade them to call off their closure plans.

At Shotton there is a growing danger, now that the protests are over, that this tendency will be allowed to come to the fore.

Criticism of the action committee for supporting the Shrewsbury builders is a reflection of this movement and could lead to changes in its membership.

Sources say the number of Transport and General Workers' Union and BISAFTA members on the committee may be increased.

'Militants' may be elbowed out.

Committee spokesman Mr Don Caddick said:

'We have been sensitive to criticism that has been levelled at us lately. As the crunch could still be 12 months away we are working at ways of making sure we carry everybody with us through this campaign.'

But even the most super-

BY
IAN
YEATS



One of the Shotton jobs marches.

human efforts to make the doomed works pay will save neither Shotton nor any other open-hearth steel plants.

In general Basic Oxygen Steelmaking had slashed production time from 12 hours to 40 minutes and more than doubled output.

This sort of rise in productivity is vital if the BSC is to force down costs and maintain its competitive edge in world markets.

The Tories have persistently refused to permit the Corporation to raise prices—still at least 8 per cent lower than prices charged by Common Market producers.

To avoid slipping into the red, to increase returns and to maintain its advantage in world markets the BSC was left with no alternative but to draw up drastic modernization plans to cut costs.

It has already been shown that these government backed policies cannot be beaten by protest.

Neither the 13 steel unions

individually nor the TUC steel committee have so far shown any hint of serious willingness to throw the Tory challenge back in their teeth.

Indeed at last month's Sheffield steel conference union leaders conspicuously avoided committing themselves to a fighting policy to defeat the government's plan for the industry.

Resolutions must be passed immediately in every branch of the steel unions calling on their executives to mobilize the campaign to kick the Tories out of office by means of a General Strike.

A Labour government must be returned to power and forced by mass action to carry out socialist policies.

This must include an extension of nationalization, without compensation, in the steel industry to include all those finished products works still in private hands.

Together with all other major industries steel must be put under full workers' control.

CP AND SCANLON

FROM PAGE 1

was not discussing revolution, he said, but the survival of free collective bargaining.

Unfortunately for Mr Birch the government have decided that the destruction of free collective bargaining is an issue on which they stand or fall.

Unless the coalition of interest between the Stalinist Party and the right wing is

exposed before the working class and smashed, it could lead to a serious defeat for workers in all sections of industry.

That is why we have invited the widest possible participation in the discussion of the Draft Perspectives to build a new leadership and transform the Socialist Labour League into a revolutionary party in the immediate period ahead.

● See What We Think

April Fund now stands at £271.39 — A long way yet

BY THIS weekend we must reach nearer our half-way mark. Our total to date stands at £271.39, which is a long way from our £1,750 target. So don't sit back. We urge you all, dear readers, step up the campaign today.

We realize we are in the midst of raising two funds, and that, in itself, is a tough assignment. We also realize that all of you must be feeling the huge increases in the cost of living, particularly with VAT.

Thousands of workers everywhere must be feeling the same. It is, therefore, more important than ever that we use Workers Press to reach out to these new forces. Our paper must be used to build a revolutionary leadership which is necessary in the fight against the Tory government.

Let's now raise as much as possible. Give something extra yourself if you can. Make a special effort to pull our fund right up. Post every donation immediately to:

Workers Press
April Appeal Fund
186a Clapham High Street
London, SW4 7UG

Mersey docks stop

THE ENTIRE 4,700-strong labour force of Mersey Docks and Harbour Board's cargo-handling division decided to strike yesterday at a mass meeting in Liverpool Stadium.

About 1,200 men have been on strike all week in protest against unregistered staff doing the work of registered dockers.

A mass meeting has been called for Sunday. The dispute arose in the Alexandra-Hornby-Gladstone area of the dock when staff began doing check-in work for the Clan Line.

Some stewards are playing down the implications of the strike because it is understood the staff involved are T&GWU members.

Schoolboys (13) worked faulty presses

SMETHWICK magistrates yesterday fined Valor Partridge Limited for using defective power presses and employing three 13-year-old boys as operators at 16p an hour.

The Valor factory of Cradley Heath in Worcestershire pleaded guilty to nine charges of employing children and six charges of allowing defective machinery to be used after being notified of its defects and before the defect had been remedied.

The company was fined a total of £650 with £5.78 costs. Mr Alfred Pritchard, the works director, admitted nine charges of employing children.

The court was told that the three schoolboys who worked the presses were approached in the street by a company official and asked if they wanted to work operating power presses.

They were given a minimum of instruction. One of them was shown how to work the press by Pritchard, after a tool setter refused to teach the boy because he was too young.

Another boy worked for two days on a power press that should not have been in use because it had a defect.

Mr John Bacon, prosecuting, said this particular machine was 'an immediate source of danger' to employees.

'The mind boggles at the number of cases that could have been brought against the firm every time these presses were used.

'These boys were employed by a director who knew their age and the power press regulations. Defects needing immediate attention had been brought to his notice previously, yet he did not attempt to stop the use of these presses,' Bacon added.

The three boys all worked about 19½ hours for the company and were paid £3 each.

VALOR group's chairman Mr Michael Montague said last year that the company's profits had 'handsomely exceeded' expectations. The company had made more than £1.1m.

In the first six months of last year the company made a pre-tax surplus of £621,000 compared with £303,000 in the corresponding period the previous year.

Turnover was up from £3.9m in 1971 to £4.7m last year.

The company's financial position was so buoyant that £1m was allocated to promote South Africa's largest gas liquefying firm.

13th ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF
YOUNG SOCIALISTS
BLACKPOOL APRIL 14/15 1973

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, APRIL 14 & 15, WINTER GARDENS, BLACKPOOL

FOR DETAILS
TELEPHONE
01-622 7029