

## AS WAGES FIGHT GROWS

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By ALEX MITCHELL

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That is why today's talks at No 10 Downing Street are not really to 'discuss' anything. Everyone knows that the legal machinery to control wages is now a foregone conclusion.

These laws will be backed by the criminal courts. Any union or section of workers who defy the state-regulated 'norms' will be open to unlimited fines or prison.

With this corporatist-style legislation only weeks away from the statute books, it is the most monumental treachery for the TUC to be seen grovelling at the doorway of No. 10 today.

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Briginshaw of NATSOPA leading the minority vote.

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But Feather's statement is patently false. The Tories aren't juggling different policies—they have a carefully-prepared plan which went into operation during the time-wasting tripartite talks. From Phase One, came Phase Two and Heath even has further 'Phases' up his sleeve for state control over wages.

If Heath has his way, wage-bargaining as we know it will be completely abolished. The trade unions will be drawn into the state machinery to apply wage 'guidelines' which the ruling class will frame.

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The enthusiastic meeting at Central Hall, Westminster, showed its willingness to endorse strike action if the Tories refused their wage demands. The meeting also voiced criticism of Feather and the TUC leaders for their 'submissive attitude'. (See story and picture, p. 12.)

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West End actors have been forced to take a pay cut, gas-workers are demanding industrial action next week, miners want an answer from the Coal Board in a fortnight, carworkers are claiming up to £10 a week increase, while hospital workers finish their ballot on industrial action on January 15.

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He said civil servants had not caught up with the cost of living increases in 1971 and 1972.

Amid cheers, Mr Gerry Gillman, deputy general secretary of the 60,000-strong Society of Civil Servants, declared:

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A resolution was passed warning the government that unless it took account of the special circumstances of the civil servants there would be a danger of repudiating the whole existing civil service negotiating machinery.

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The magistrate commented, however, that he thought the charges had been properly brought and cautioned the defendants.

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The incident took place outside a union inquiry into the conduct of five dockers at a mass lobby of the T&GWU's national headquarters, Transport House, on August 16 last year.

Both the stewards involved are supporters of 'The Dockworker', the self-styled 'rank-and-file' paper



Dockers picket court—p. 12

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The incident ended when the two stewards were restrained by other dockers participating in a picket of the inquiry. One of the two subsequently apologized for his actions.

We wish to make clear that none of the five men who appeared before the inquiry—with whom we have enjoyed the most cordial relations—was in any way concerned in yesterday's incident.

# workers press

INCORPORATING THE NEWSLETTER ● THURSDAY JANUARY 11, 1973 ● No 968 ● 4p

DAILY ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

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## Portugal: Anti-war protest ends with sack

BY A FOREIGN  
CORRESPONDENT

THE PORTUGUESE Minister of the Interior has announced the dismissal of civil servants who took part in a New Year's Eve vigil in protest against the colonial wars in Africa of Portuguese imperialism.

After the vigil, 15 people were imprisoned and 80 others had their names and addresses taken.

Among those in jail is Dr Francisco Pereira da Moura, a Professor in the Economics Faculty in Lisbon University.

# 'Accidental bombing' was a pitched battle

BY A FOREIGN  
CORRESPONDENT

THE 'ACCIDENTAL' bombing of the giant Da Nang air base in South Vietnam on Monday was, in fact, a pitched battle between US and troops belonging to puppet President Thieu's regime.

A National Liberation Front Press agency report quoted on Hanoi radio claims US troops opened fire and that planes were sent in. There were many casualties on both sides and ammunition dumps were blown up.

## US and puppet troops clash: NLF claims

The US command had said the base had been accidentally bombed by five jets flying in low cloud and one South Vietnamese had been killed

and nine American servicemen wounded.

A US army spokesman described the reports as 'a lot of bunk'. 'We have no reports of any disturbances', he added.

In Saigon President Thieu has appointed his cousin, Hoang Duc Nha to head the government's propaganda machine in an intensified drive to win the support of the South Vietnamese after any ceasefire.

NLF propagandists have been active in preparing the ground for a take-over.

The Thai government, which

is completely subservient to US imperialism, has agreed that the airbases from which B52s and other bombers fly to bomb Vietnam can remain after a ceasefire.

Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn said that planes operating from Thailand would be able to take immediate action against any violation of the ceasefire by North Vietnam.

Hanoi claims that two more B52 bombers were shot down in raids just south of the 20th parallel yesterday bringing the total now claimed to 37.

## 'Provocations' scare over Maoist's death Overney trial gives CP election jitters

BY OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

THE Renault personnel officer who murdered the young Maoist militant, Pierre Overney, told a Paris court on Tuesday that he shot the youth 'accidentally' while trying to frighten demonstrators at the massive Billancourt factory on the outskirts of Paris.

Jean Antoine Tramoni stated that he was 'only waving his pistol to intimidate the truncheon-wielding Maoists into leaving the factory-grounds'.

At the time of the murder, the French CP came to the defence of Renault's gunmen by accusing the Maoists of 'aiding the repressive aims of the bosses and the government by provocative actions'. The CP boycotted Overney's funeral. But over 100,000 marchers joined the cortège at the beginning of last March in what was the biggest demonstration in Paris since the May-June events of 1968.

The CP and the CGT are once again refusing to mobilize the working class against the Renault murderers. In a statement issued by the CGT (Stalinist union federation) on January 6, the bureaucracy claims quite fallaciously that the CGT has always denounced the existence of private armed police in Renault and condemned the murder.

The CGT's main intent is to warn against provocations over the trial, which takes place at the beginning of the election campaign when 'the representatives of power, including the president of the Republic, are trying to use the spectre of disorder'.

The CGT, however, is worried by the fact that their secretary in Renault and two other militants have been called to appear as witnesses, 'although they have never in any way been involved in the tragic events'.

It concludes by expressing 'complete solidarity with the CGT-Renault union' and 'rejecting in advance any attempt at a political exploitation for anti-union ends, of the summoning of CGT militants, the reasons for which it is permissible to question'.

Behind all the evasive phrases, there could be no clearer statement from the CGT leaders' refusal to defend Overney and their complete prostration before the terrible spectres of 'public opinion' and 'electoral polls'.

This shows up the phoney campaign initiated last weekend by Communist Party and Socialist Party deputies on the extension of trade union rights. The rights in question were inscribed in the infamous Grenelle agreement of 1968, the formal basis for ending the May-June General Strike.

Marchais and the CP leadership are opposed to the independent mobilization of the working class—the only way to defend trade union rights.



Pierre Overney (with baton) seen minutes before his death facing Renault guard Antoine Tramoni who has raised his gun and pointed it at Overney.

## 267 in latest Turkish mass trial

THE LATEST mass trial of oppositionists in Turkey began yesterday when 267 defendants faced a military court on a wide variety of charges. They are alleged to be members of the underground Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Party and the charges include attempting to overthrow constitutional government, insulting state authorities and harbouring criminals. Many could face the death penalty.

The accused come from many walks of life and include university professors, peasants and an actor. After the 500-page indictment has been read, 82 defendants are expected to be cleared.

The others will be judged by three army officers in a specially-prepared courtroom in an Ankara barracks.

One of the best known defendants is Dogu Perincek who taught law at Ankara University and was in hiding for 18 months before being caught by security forces. There have been a number of mass trials since the latest crack-down on left-wing activities began 21 months ago.

An even bigger trial of over 400 people is expected to begin next month. Nearly 200 youth and students are also awaiting trial by a military court accused of organizing university demonstrations.

**MORE  
FOREIGN  
NEWS P.11**

### BRIEFLY

**ISRAELI MP** Avraham Levenbraun has claimed that his son has been tortured in prison by the Israeli police. Levenbraun, a member of the Moscow-oriented Rakah Communist Party, said that his son, Rami Livneh, had been subjected to electric shock treatment. His son was arrested recently on charges of belonging to an alleged Syrian spy ring.

**WEST GERMAN** ship-builders have urged the Bonn government to work out a long-term policy aimed at 'keeping the industry healthy'. Dr Norbert Henke, spokesman for the Federation of German Ship-builders, said that government-backed investments were necessary to ensure the continued viability of

the industry on world markets. Last year West Germany built 155 ships with a total of 1.4 million gross registered tons worth £385m.

**PARIS** representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Mahmoud Hamchari, has died from injuries he received in a bomb explosion last month. Mr Hamchari (33) was seriously hurt in his flat on December 8 when he picked up a telephone to which a bomb was attached. His condition deteriorated last week and doctors had to amputate one of his legs. The Israeli secret service is believed to have been responsible for the blast.

**MOROCCAN** students started a 48-hour strike

yesterday against the intervention of police and armed forces in the Mohammed V University in Rabat, on Monday. Government security forces raided the campus in order to break up a mass protest meeting being held against new regulations. 300 students were arrested, including Students' Union President Abdelaziz Meenebhi and several executive members.

**ASSEMBLY** work at the Massey-Ferguson tractor factory, Coventry, was halted yesterday by a strike of 1,150 day and night shift assembly workers. The strike began when the management attempted to move 50 assembly men to different work.

**PRESIDENT MOBUTU** of Zaire, formerly the Congo, has arrived in Peking to a 'warm welcome', Reuter reported yesterday. An official spokesman said a state banquet would be given to Mobutu tonight. The official welcoming party was headed by premier Chou En-lai. Mobutu came to power through a military coup organized and financed by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). He has since been responsible for the execution of hundreds of political opponents, some of them on a private set of gallows. He is on record as a fanatical anti-communist. Last year he expelled the diplomats of all eastern European countries.



Socialist Labour League North West Rally

**FORCE THE TORY  
GOVERNMENT TO RESIGN!  
BUILD THE  
REVOLUTIONARY  
PARTY!**

SUNDAY JANUARY 14, 7 p.m.  
The Everyman, Hope Street,  
LIVERPOOL

'RIGHT TO WORK' FILM

**G. HEALY** (SLL National Secretary)  
**CHRISTINE SMITH** (Young Socialists)  
In a personal capacity:  
**CONNIE FAHEY** (Manchester Tenants)  
**ALAN STANLEY** (Vauxhall Shop Stewards)  
**BRIAN GEENEY** (U.P.W.)  
**WALLY FOUCHS** (CAV Occupation Committee)

**NEWS DESK**

01-720 2000

**CIRCULATION**

01-622 7029

## Tunnel work stops over sackings

WORK ON the construction of the second Dartford tunnel is still halted by a strike of building workers following the sacking of six men three weeks ago. The £15m tunnel—scheduled to open in 1977—will eventually link the Kent and Essex sides of the Thames.

But preparatory work on both sides of the river came to a swift halt on December 15 when six workers, including a shop steward, were sacked by the main contractor, Balfour Beatty. Management turned round and said they suddenly found it unnecessary to have so much labour until the following July.

Yesterday, Derek Wheaton, construction engineers' union steward, said the situation was completely different to the picture painted by management: 'They said they weren't going to do any compressed air work for seven months. But the

previous Monday the company took on two welders, after going all the way to Southend to interview them.'

A branch secretary in the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers' construction section (CEU), Derek Wheaton, told Workers Press that he had been sacked once before from the site after only four days work. 'That was because of my previous record,' he added.

When he was reinstated, he began to organize the site. 'December 15 was the final trade union organization day when we were going to elect a shop steward for the Transport and General Workers' Union members. And on that date we were all sacked. Now every worker is out, including all those employed by sub-contractors.'

Local CEU officials are said to be pressing for the strike to be made official.



Strikers at the second Dartford Tunnel gather round a brazier on their picket line.

# Rents: Camden caves in

CAMDEN LABOUR council was certain to have put the seal on capitulation to the Tory government and its 'fair rents' Act when it met last night.

Although a minority of Labour members were planning to vote against implementation, over 20,000 tenants will now be facing 85p increases in March.

Eight months of formal opposition to the Housing Finance Act came to a swift and sudden death at the Labour group meeting on Monday night, by 35 votes to 17.

The Tory government had only to threaten to withhold subsidies and the game was up. The non-implementers collapsed like a pack of cards.

Turning their back on the working class, refusing to issue any call for their open support, the majority in the Labour group had decided to face 'reality'.

In that sense the Tory government has always known the Camden Labourites for what they are. No Housing Commissioner or district auditor was sent in for a good reason.

It was not so much the Tories were afraid of the reaction of the tenants—which no doubt

## Eight months of opposition ends with 85p rent rise

BY PHILIP WADE OUR HOUSING CORRESPONDENT

would have been fierce. They also knew that the 'Hampstead socialists' on the council had soft underbellies.

They were proved right. The council collapsed without a real shot being fired.

The mood in the key policy and resources committee on Tuesday night, which decided to recommend implementation to the council meeting, was symbolic of the sort of stuff the newly-converted implementers are made of.

### Little jokes

Little jokes were swapped with the Tories who suddenly found themselves agreeing with council leader Mrs Millie Miller and others. She had already admitted that the rent arrears position was deteriorating fast, without the new 85p increases.

All she could say was: 'The government, in forcing us to take this action, must take the responsibility for what happens.'

Few government officials will be trembling as a result of that statement.

With the majority of the party group for a change was Cllr Ernest Wistrich. Wistrich is also Director of the European Movement, the organization partly subsidized by the Foreign Office.

It was this outfit—with its smart headquarters in Whitehall—which last week organized the Hampton Court Palace 'celebrations' when Britain entered the Common Market.

Only two councillors opposed the implementation on the committee. One was Phil Turner.

'The Act,' he told the other Labour members, 'would put market values into council housing, something which is abhorrent to us as socialists.'

But his call to oppose implementation and to seek the backing of Camden tenants through a referendum was only supported by Cllr Brian Loughran.

Former non-implementer Peter Best, chairman of the committee,

brought out a four-page document which was supposed to have the effect of decently clothing the retreat and betrayal.

After the blustering introduction against the Act we had the inevitable word 'nevertheless', followed by 'we have to recognize that apart from Camden there are now only two authorities in England continuing not to implement'.

Any tenants reading the statement will see through it extremely quickly.

### No consolation

'Most council tenants,' it says, 'will have been saved £20 each by the non-implementation policy to date.'

That, of course, will be of little consolation to those facing the 85p increase and a further rise in October, with more to follow until rent levels are doubled and many tenants have to quit their homes.

It also pledged the council would 'continue to campaign for the next stage of rent increases due in October to be dropped,



CLLR PHIL TURNER... One of few opponents.

and for the Housing Finance Act to be scrapped'.

But what is that pledge worth alongside last night's decision to cave in when the going got just a little tough?

Cllr Turner told me after the meeting there was a need for a complete change of leadership at the top of the Labour Party, among the National Executive, who had at all times refused to back up any councils planning to defy the Tory government.

This process needs to be carried into Camden itself, to clear out the right wing and the 'left'-talkers who have now joined hands with them.

# CAV may deduct subs to weaken unions

BY A WORKERS PRESS REPORTER

THE MANAGEMENT at the CAV factory in Acton, west London, is offering to take over responsibility for deducting union subscriptions from workers' pay each week.

Already the General and Municipal Workers' Union has agreed to the scheme. Similar arrangements have been made with the G&MWU in other industries; it fits in with the union's kind of 'low contact with membership' policy.

The check-off system of deducting union dues is usually confined to factories where there is 100-per-cent membership of one union: e.g. all AUEW, all T&GWU, etc.

But in a multi-union plant like CAV it is going to pose problems—not least of which is the stand against the scheme by some leading shop stewards.

Now the local full-time officials of the T&GWU are trying to 'sell' the system which is due to come into operation on February 2.

It is believed that a branch circular has been distributed which thoroughly recommends the scheme and describes it as 'very successful' in other factories in the region.

When the Acton joint shop stewards meet to consider the subject they might take into account the following points which have been learnt the hard way in other factories which have been 'sold' the check-off system:

- The collection of dues by shop stewards is an important point of contact between the shop-floor leadership and the membership. In some cases in very large factories, the only contact.
- The shop-floor collection is a vital element in shop-floor organization. To let it go to management would weaken trade union organization among the membership.
- By giving the responsibility to management the unions hand over a convenient list of all

trade unionists and their union affiliation.

- In some factories men starting on the job often have the choice of joining one of two unions. If management is subtracting dues they can play a role in directing men to a union of their choice.
- In many cases trade unionists at present pay their dues at branch meetings and thus are obliged to attend branch discussions. If management is surreptitiously removing the dues in the pay office, some trade unionists will stop going to branch meetings altogether and local organization will be hit.
- It seems ironic that a firm that is prepared to put 1,000 men and women workers out the gate at its Fazakerley plant, Liverpool, should be so keen to do the workers such a selfless service in Acton!
- With such a helpful management, why have a union at all?

Socialist Labour League Yorkshire Rally

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PARTY!**

SUNDAY JANUARY 21, 7.30 p.m.  
Great Northern Hotel,  
Wellington Street (near Leeds station),  
LEEDS

**FILM: THREE YEARS  
OF WORKERS PRESS**

Speakers:

**G. HEALY** (SLL National Secretary)  
**PAUL WHETSTONE** (Young Socialists)

In personal capacity:

**GEORGE LUBY** (U.P.W.)  
**ROBBIE ROBERTS** (N.U.M.)

# PROPERTY MILLIONS AND THE POST OFFICE

BY STEPHEN JOHNS

What have a retired postman, the Crown Agents and the Moscow Narodni Bank in common? The answer is property—approximately £100m worth in the City of London.

Both the Bank, the Agents and the 104,000 pensioners of the Post Office are directly or indirectly involved in one of the largest real estate deals in the history of British capitalism.

For the agents and their partners, Jack Walker and Ramon Green, two of the brightest stars in the world of property speculation, it has meant a cool £40m profit. In return the pensioners, who had no direct say in the deal, have found a greater proportion of their hard-earned savings sunk into fast-moving property portfolios.

The organization that has shattered the image of pension funds as ultra-conservative bodies investing their millions in the safest blue-chip shares or gilt-edged securities is the Post Office Staff Superannuation Fund (the POSSF).

It has bought from English and Continental Properties buildings in the City of London, in Wales and in Scotland at an estimated value of £100m.

These include such well-known London monoliths as Cunard House and Bush House in the Strand.

## SUPER PROFIT

The principal benefactors have been the Crown Agents, an organization responsible for mainly overseas government interests and property and Messrs Green & Walker.

The 49-per-cent stake held by the two property men who entered the market three and a half years ago has realized a super profit.

Cunard House, for example, was bought for £6.5m but valued in the POSSF deal at £23m. Bush House (Finance arranged c/o Moscow Narodni) was acquired for £23.5m and valued now at over £30m, making it Britain's most expensive office block.

The purchasing prices of the properties, which come with mortgages, is reported to be between £30m and £50m. The money was paid out of POSSF's fund, made up of the 6 per cent contributions paid each week by the Post Office's 400,000 workers, plus the contributions from the Corporation itself.

The transaction raised eyebrows in some quarters. Many people, including Jack Walker, consider the property boom to be 'peaked out'—things can go down faster than they go up.

But it is not the first time POSSF has been involved in property dealing. As far back as January 1971 the Trustees announced that they were moving into this market.

The first purchase was a relatively modest one—£14m worth of short leases and town centre developments.

These included a shop development undertaken with Corby Development Corporation, Northamptonshire; a £2m freehold on nine supermarkets in Redhill, Surrey; a joint industrial development with Rush-Tompkins at Haydock, Lancashire, and the ten-year residue lease on an office block

in Finsbury Circus, London.

Later, POSSF added another scalp to its belt when it provided finance for the Hay's Wharf development in London—the riverside property project that was the graveyard for hundreds of dock jobs.

But the English and Continental deal is the biggest of them all and it takes POSSF very close to the policy margin on property laid down by the Trustees.

The Fund was set up in October 1969 when the Post Office became a corporation. It took over all responsibility for paying benefits to 104,000 pensioners and collecting the contributions from the staff. Workers with 40 years' service can retire on half pay.

The sums involved are enormous. POSSF is probably the fastest-growing pension fund in the country: contributions add £100m a year. Such vast sums are a pole of attraction from the cash hungry City—millions of pounds are needed to finance the big deals.

Three weeks ago the Fund stood at £250m. There is a policy rule that only a quarter of this may be used for investment in property. POSSF already had £20m in earlier deals and the English and Continental transaction would appear to take the property portfolio right up to the margin.

The Trustees have their own property advisers—Bernard Thorpe and Partners, and a spokesman for the Crown Agents considered POSSF had got a good deal. He said escalating value of the Cunard Building alone demonstrated the millions to be made from property speculation.

But Jack Walker does not entirely agree. He told 'The Guardian' that he thought the property market had 'peaked out.'

He admitted to Workers Press that he had made a 'sub-

stantial profit' on the deal.

'We are a property company that believes in going out and creating values,' he said. 'We have no business sitting on these properties just holding onto them and paying taxation.'

How are these values created?

'By the mere passage of time, the inflationary growth of property value or the loss of value in money if you like. We also prepare and renovate the property for sale. Cunard House has had a complete renovation and floor space has been added. It's a very worthwhile building.'

## SPECULATION

The attitude of the 104,000 pensioners to the activities of the Trustees is unknown. Whether they approve of property speculation—which is opposed by the trade union movement—is not clear either.

However, it would be hard for the pensioners to influence the Trustees. They are appointed by the Post Office Board in consultation with the unions.

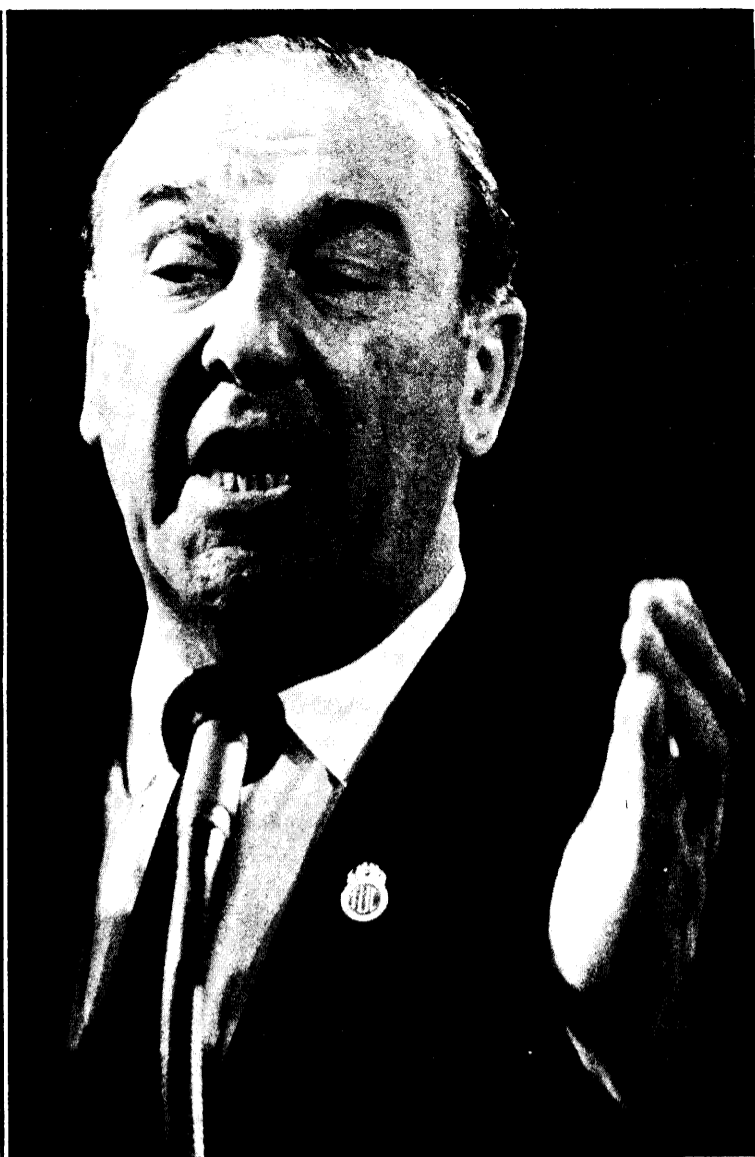
The employers' side has three members: Kenneth Cadbury, PO director in charge of the planning and purchasing; Norman Holmans, PO director, head of finance; and K. Young, PO director in charge of personnel.

The chairman of the Trustees is Alan Wolstencroft, secretary to the Post Office and special adviser to Corporation chairman Sir William Ryland.

The unions are allowed three places which they fill with ex-senior officers.

Workers at ICI and Leyland's have already voiced concern about the wisdom of the investment policy of their pension funds. Post Office workers, too, should take note of the way their money is managed.

Below: Messrs Greene and Walker—a 49-per-cent stake.



# UNION CHIEFS ON THE MOVE INTO EUROPE

The trade union bureaucrat most identified with the pro-Common Market cause is undoubtedly Sir Frederick Hayday of the General and Municipal Workers Union (above).

Until recently Hayday was national officer of the union and chairman of the TUC's international committee. He is also one of the five presidents of the European Movement, the organization partly financed by the Foreign Office and big business.

The other presidents are the Tory Foreign Secretary and friend of Franco, Sir Alec Douglas Home, Lord George-Brown, Roy Jenkins and Sir Arthur Norman. The G&MWU leadership has always been fervently in favour of entry. Lord Cooper, its retiring secretary, is a vice-president of the Labour Committee for Europe.

The union has been busily sending members to Europe as part of a public relations exercise to get them to accept EEC membership. 'Europe Left', the newspaper of the Labour Committee for Europe, reports the following G&MWU junket to Europe:

'Nineteen members of the General and Municipal Workers' Union have made a little bit of trade union history by going to Brussels to find out at first hand how the Common Market has affected the workers.'

'The visit, arranged by the Department of Contemporary European Studies at Sussex University,' runs the blurb, 'was the first of its kind and other unions are to be asked to send similar delegations. Tony Carew, from the Univer-

sity, accompanied the delegation and arranged for meetings with leading Belgian trade unionists.'

One very interesting topic of discussion between the two sets of trade unionists was the problem of trade union independence.

According to 'Europe Left' the Belgians strongly expressed the view that 'their unions must retain complete independence and if there was to be any participation in management it must be only in such matters as they wished to be involved.'

Some of the British delegates, it seems, were more old-fashionedly forthright in their opinions about management. Said one: 'My job is to oppose management, not to join them.'

The Belgian trade unionists told their British counterparts about the influx of workers from other parts of the European continent and said that they were experiencing language problems in representing them.

Another point mentioned was a devious plot by eastern Europe to exploit their cheap labour by offering special facilities to multi-national companies.

'Wage structures were gone into at length', reports 'Europe Left'. The head of Belgium's public services union told the delegation that by law all their workers at the age of 21 must take home a minimum of £108 a month, free of deductions.

There was no 'closed shop', but 'union members could get special benefits'.

And the report ends: 'The talks did much to clear the air and there is nothing to suggest that the British unions will find fundamental difficulties as we move into Europe.' (!)

# KREMLIN BOOSTS ITS SUPPORT TO THE BUTCHER OF SUDAN

The reactionary dictatorship of Sudanese president General Jafaar Numeiry receives unstinting support from the Soviet Communist Party leaders.

The support is forthcoming despite—or perhaps as a result of—Numeiry's black record as a killer of communists and an enemy of elementary rights.

In July 1971 the Sudanese dictator drowned in blood an attempted coup d'etat led by military supporters of the Sudanese Communist Party. The party leader and the head of the trade unions were murdered after drum-head courts martial.

The unions were outlawed, the Party driven underground and thousands of CP militants and supporters rounded up and held under concentration camp conditions in the hands of the Sudanese army.

The Soviet Union was at pains to dissociate itself from the abortive coup d'etat and went to considerable lengths in an effort to persuade the Sudan government it could still rely on Moscow's support.

Added urgency was given to these overtures by the fact that China had stepped in immediately after the coup attempt to offer financial and military aid to the Numeiry regime.

The USSR, which had contributed large amounts of economic and other aid to the Sudan regime prior to the 1971 coup attempt, felt its position being usurped.

It was determined to restore good relations with the sinister Numeiry however much communist blood he might have shed. This explains the fulsome tribute paid to the Numeiry government in a recent Moscow broadcast.

The broadcast marked the 17th anniversary of Sudanese independence from Britain. The anniversary was marked in Moscow by a meeting held at Friendship House and attended by Amin Abd Al-Latif, Numeiry's chargé d'affaires in Moscow.

Igor Belyayev, a functionary of the USSR African Institute, said that the USSR had had good relations with the Sudan 'right from the start'.

He added: 'The Soviet Union has always worked for friendship with the Sudanese people and for normal relations and co-operation in all fields. We are happy to note that all practical measures by the USSR had this aim in Soviet-Sudanese relations.'

In reply Abd Al-Latif pointed out that the Sudanese people were for the first time celebrating their anniversary united—no doubt implying that the disruptive elements had been disposed of by Numeiry's firing squads.

He added: 'We are grateful for everything offered or which will be offered by the



Numeiry—unions outlawed, Communist Party driven underground and its militants rounded up by the army—yet he still receives the backing of the Kremlin bureaucracy.

Soviet Union. We hope our relations will develop further every day . . . I assure you that you have loyal friends in the people of Sudan who are full of appreciation and admiration for you.'

In a commentary to mark the occasion, Moscow radio said that 'the experience of the past year [sic] testifies above all to the need for solidarity between all democratic and patriotic forces on the basis of struggle against imperialism and reaction [and, presumably, the local Communist Party!].'

It pointed out that the USSR had always backed the Sudanese government and spoke in particular of the 'progressive aims of the revolutions of October 21, 1964 and May 1969'. This was the date at which a military coup brought Numeiry to power.

These progressive aims (unspecified—for good reason) were opposed, according to Moscow, by the imperialists who 'hatched plots to obstruct co-operation between the patriotic, democratic and progressive forces of the Sudanese people'.

As the most noteworthy 'plot' since May 1969 was the attempted coup organized by the left wing, this must mean that the Soviet Stalinists consider the Sudan CP was acting as an agency of imperialism in trying to oust Numeiry.

This position has not been

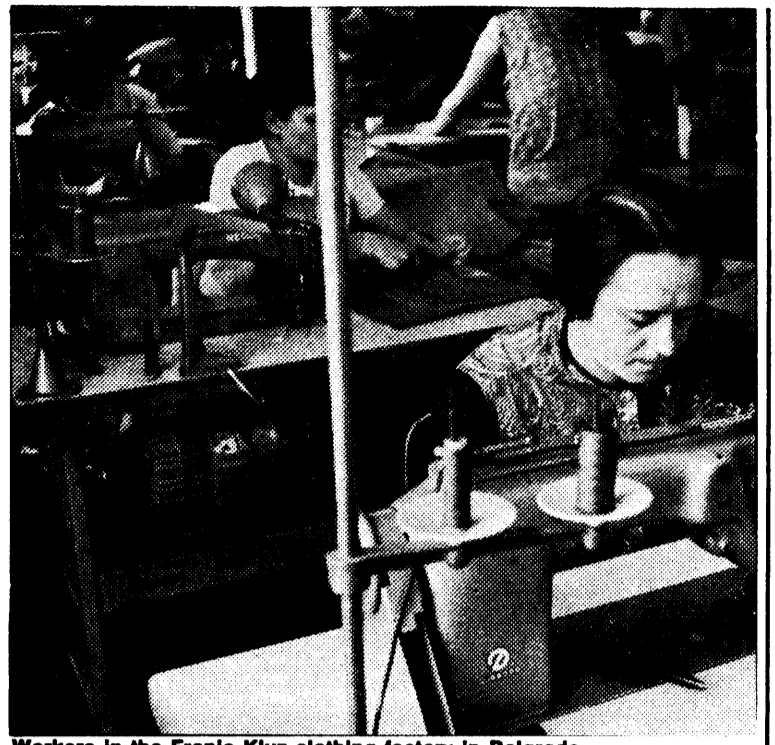
put forward in public before, but it was advanced at a key secret session of the ultra-orthodox Czechoslovak Communist Party Central Committee by the servile Czech leader Vasil Bilak.

Bilak was speaking less than four months after the execution of CP leader Abdel Khaled Mahgoub. He accused the dead CP leader of ' . . . moving towards sectarian positions [in relation to] Numeiry's democratic revolutionary regime of progressive officers. . . .'

Moscow's broadcast confirms that Bilak was indeed speaking for the Kremlin when he put this line forward. Not only does it indicate the counter-revolutionary cynicism of Soviet Stalinism, it also implicitly indicts the British CP.

This Party was on record before the 1971 coup with extravagant praise of the Numeiry regime, but now claims to be opposed to Numeiry's atrocities. Periodically it carries correspondence from Sudanese CP members telling of the butchery and barbarism in the Sudan.

But it has never carried any criticism of the Soviet leaders' diplomatic and commercial friendship with the Numeiry government. Until it does so its supposed support for the persecuted Sudanese communists is an unprincipled fraud.



Workers in the Franjo Kluz clothing factory in Belgrade

## YUGOSLAV WORKERS ANGRY AT WAGE CUTS

The New Year opened with a cold economic blast for nearly a million Yugoslav workers and their families. They are the victims of the government's wage-cut proposals which came into effect on January 1.

The proposals affect all workers in so-called illiquid enterprises—factories and offices where the management has run into debt. The policy was first put forward last year, but implementation was postponed following union protests.

Some of Yugoslavia's largest industrial enterprises are deeply enmeshed in a network of indebtedness which could take a long time and a lot of money to unravel. Meanwhile they have been ordered to cut all wages and salaries to 90 per cent of the 1971 level.

This will of course, automatically wipe out all wage rises won in 1972, cutting pay rates in some cases by as much as 25 per cent. To lessen the resentment of the industrial workers who are hardest hit by the cuts, the government has frozen wages of 1.2 million white-collar workers for six months.

The workers' anger is unlikely to be cooled by this measure any more than a government promise to 'slow down the cost of living' will be much comfort to families living on three-quarters of present income.

The measures make nonsense of the supposed 'self-managing' character of Yugoslav industry, which in theory consists of innumerable autonomous collectives each controlled by the workers. In practice the workers had not control over the cuts.

### Resistance

Already there have been a number of strikes against wage-cutting in factories where the management tried to jump the gun and implement wage-cutting on their own initiative. At Elektronska Industriya at Nis, the workers struck and won the dismissal of the old management.

The Tito government is nervously awaiting the reaction of the mass of workers to the New Year measures, and Party officials have warned that resisting the application of the measures will be met by police action.

The government measures will not only hit the workers in the factories, but also other sections who depend for finance indirectly in the indebted firms. These include, for example, students and schoolchildren whose education is

financed by factory grants or scholarships and even apprentices paid compensation for their schooling.

Until the firms in question have settled their accounts to the satisfaction of the government accounting service, they will not be able to pay more than 90 per cent on these items of expenditure either.

From January 1 these firms will also be barred from sending any of their employees on official journeys. Those employees who do travel will not be able to claim return of their expenses, even for limited items.

The state accountancy service is running daily checks on the financial state of the 2,000-odd firms which have officially been declared illiquid. Their bank accounts are also under tight scrutiny.

It is worth noting that the firms concerned include many of the largest factories and offices in Yugoslavia. They are victims of the frantic search for investment capital by managers over the past few years. Many have borrowed heavily to raise capital without proper collateral.

### Bankruptcy

Their inability to pay their debts has in turn created problems for their creditors, leading to a position where much of the commanding heights of the Yugoslav economy is in theory at least, bankrupt. Now the workers, who had little if any say in the matter to begin with, are being forced to pay.

The trade unions, which are dominated by pro-Tito functionaries and have little independence from the state, have raised only mild protests against the wage-cutting policy.

Marjan Rozic, secretary of the council of the Yugoslav Trade Union Confederation, said the unions supported the measures to stabilize the economy, but added that the 10 per cent wage-cut was acceptable only where the enterprises concerned were entirely or primarily at fault for getting into debt.


With the average Yugoslav wage at only 1,636 dinars a month for workers in the social sector—that is the bulk of industrial workers—the cuts will bring many right down to the breadline.

On these figures, the original average wage is less than £50 a month and by the time it has been cut to 90 per cent of the 1971 level, it is likely to be nearer £40.

No wonder the Yugoslav government is worried about what the effects of the wage-cuts will be on the workers' tempers.

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# THE BIG DOLE QUEUE AT QUALCAST

BY PHILIP WADE

Ten years ago many foundries in the Smethwick area of Birmingham began taking on immigrant workers as business expanded with the boom in the motor car industry.

Originally seen as a useful pool of unskilled and relatively cheap and pliant labour, the immigrants—mainly Punjabis—soon began to take an opposite view of things.

They organized trade unions where few existed before or where they were in existence but quite weak, and were soon driving up wages and conditions.

Today, a decade on, with Britain in the throes of its deepest economic crisis, Common Market entry requires a fundamental restructuring and reshaping of all the main industries.

Competition is hotting up as the trade war opens. Monopolies like Birmid Qualcast—which supplies most of the castings for the car industry—are beginning to rationalize production to prepare to fight European competition.

And it is this firm—based in Smethwick—which has just inflicted a serious defeat on

a group of its most militant workers.

Birmid, with 13 works on the site, has—with the open agreement of the Transport and General Workers' Union officials—been able to close its Middlemore Lane plant, said to be one of the most modern in Britain. It employed over 300 workers, mostly Punjabis. Wages were high and union organization was over 90 per cent.

The Punjabis—all of whom have refused offers of labouring jobs at half their former money—are now all out of the gate and off the company's pay-roll.

The company, led by the Marquess of Exeter, plans to reopen the Middlemore Lane factory next year with labour from another, older plant, which will then be shut down for good.

With the militant Punjabis on the stones, the company can now proceed to modernize the Middlemore Lane plant.

There are said to be plans to introduce new, automatic machinery from Germany which will probably reduce the required labour force.

And when the plant re-opens in a few months' time, as it definitely will, the labour

force will have to begin afresh to build up shop-floor organization.

In a sense the firm has got what it has been after for some time.

In 1969, the right-wing leaders of the Labour government felt the working class was getting a little out of hand.

## SERVILE TUC

A strong wages offensive had begun and Wilson—at the request of the bankers—hit back with 'In Place of Strife', the key which eventually proved to be the one to open the door for the Tory government's Industrial Relations Act.

At the same time—the servile TUC bureaucrats wanted to show how willing they were to serve capitalism.

There was no need for laws against the unions, they said. Let us be the policemen—and we won't even ask to be paid for the job!

All sides seized on the components sector of the motor industry. Here any sort of strike was deemed treasonable because it quickly brought the car industry to a halt.

So the Labour government instructed its pet anti-union

body, the Commission on Industrial Relations, to make an investigation of the Smethwick subsidiaries of Birmid Qualcast.

The CIR's brief was to investigate the state of 'labour relations' at the plants, immediately putting every worker into the public gaze.

Among the Commissioners were George Woodcock, ex-general secretary of the TUC, then CIR chairman; Alf Allen from the shopworkers' union, USDAW; and, last but not least, Will Paynter, ex-Communist Party member and former general secretary of the National Union of Mine-workers.

Three companies were studied: Dartmouth Auto Castings (DAC); Midland Motor Cylinders (MMC) and Birmingham Aluminium Castings (BAC).

All three were subsidiaries of Birmid Qualcast, itself a product of a merger in 1967 between Birmid Industries Ltd and Qualcast Ltd.

The principal customers of the three—who employed 4,300 workers—were British-Leyland, Ford, Vauxhall, Rootes, Massey Ferguson and Perkin's. They had a near monopoly position, sharing

production of the vital castings with only one or two other firms.

Chairman of the components giant was the Marquess of Exeter, the former Olympic sportsman, Tory MP and one-time governor of Bermuda.

The Marquess, whose lineage can be traced to Baron Burghley of 1571, is also a director of several other companies. Master of a number of hunts in his time, the Marquess is also Lord Paramount of the Soke of Peterborough.

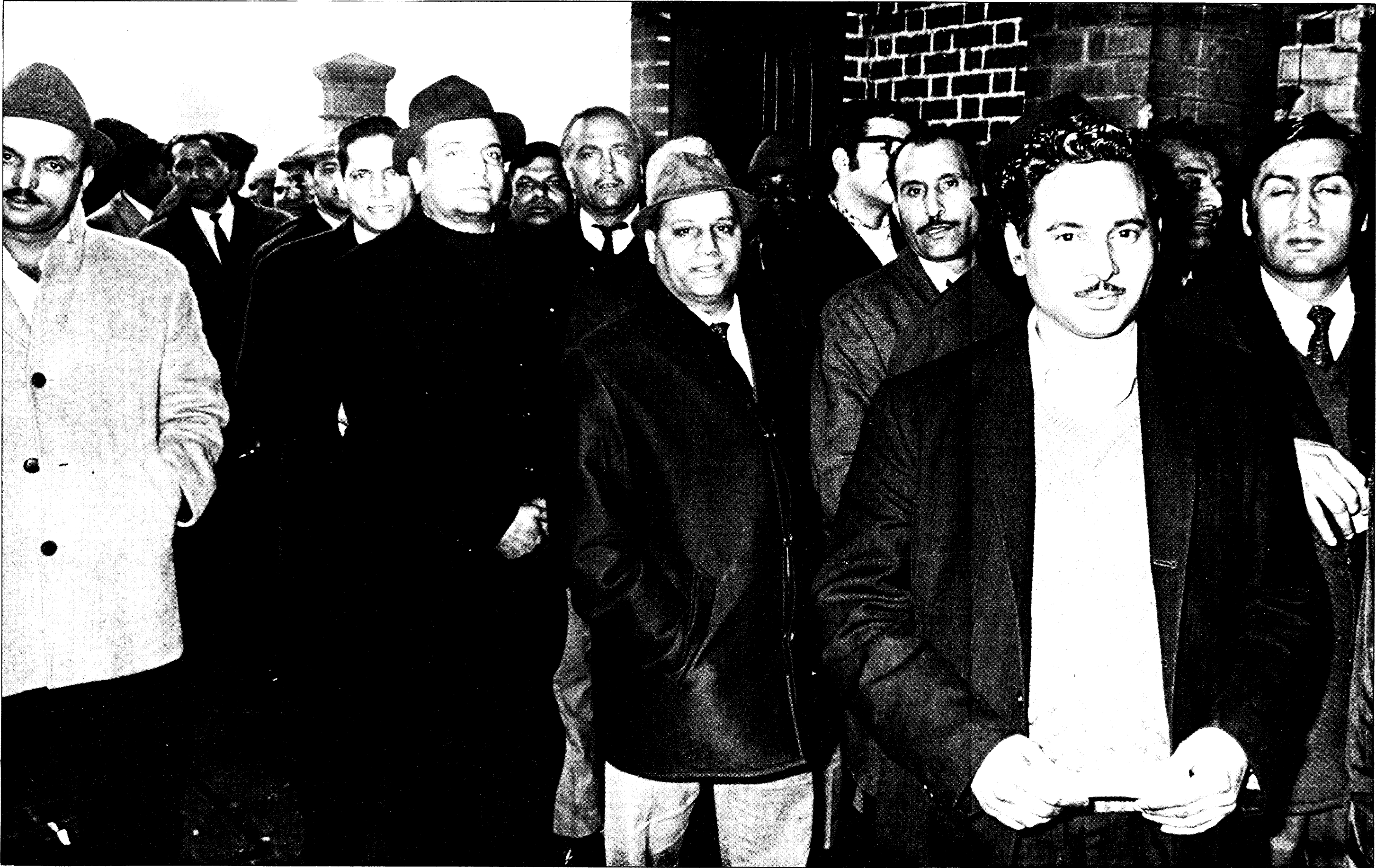
The CIR investigation found that before the 1960s 'management was usually able to carry out decisions without formal consultation or negotiation with its employees'.

In fact, up to the end of the 1950s, the degree of union organization in the plants, except among skilled workers, was poor and the management could obviously do much as it pleased.

The company unashamedly turned towards immigrant workers when business boomed during the 1960s.

'Foundry work is by its nature carried out in unattractive conditions,' reported the CIR. 'As a consequence of these changes, the companies . . . turned to Indian and

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Pakistani immigrants, especially Punjabis, to find employees in the numbers they needed.'

Trade union organization quickly spread with the new recruits driving up membership in the 13 plants to between 80 and 90 per cent. The companies tried to resist accommodating such a move, refusing to recognize, for some time, senior shop stewards.

Probably the key paragraph in the entire report reads:

'The companies' output forms such a high proportion of the national production of certain components that it is crucial to continuity of production in many motor assembly plants.'

British employers—finding the world moving into a period of intense and ever-deepening economic crisis—desperately needed to establish some sort of discipline over the working class to stand any chance of surviving.

## TRADE WAR

The strength of the working class organized in its unions was—and still is—the barrier standing between British capitalism and its need ruthlessly to reshape and reorganize production to meet the growing trade war.

In the end the CIR recommended the training of shop stewards in 'industrial relations' and tighter procedure agreements. But clearly this did not work—at least as far as the Punjabis at the Middle-

moor Lane plant were concerned.

It is true that the number of strikes fell after the CIR report. But the shop-floor organization remained unbroken. Wages were high and the unity of the workforce very powerful.

Rambir Singh, who was senior Transport and General Workers' Union (T&GWU) steward at the plant before its closure, takes up the story as it unfolded in the summer of last year:

'In August 1972 the company tried to close the North Works. They told shop stewards it was old and dilapidated and the closure was for the "benefit of every employee". The Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, which represents most of the 400 workers there, said it was opposed in principle to the closure.

'Work was to be transferred to the Middlemoor Lane plant. At that time we had an industrial dispute at our plant in the moulding section. They had introduced new machinery which was almost twice as fast. We asked for more money.

'The company gave us the threat they would not concede more than £46 for a 40-hour week as the top rate. They gave us an ultimatum that if we didn't give in, they would close the plant.

'We had the threat on a Monday in early September. We were given 16 hours. We

said we couldn't agree because the T&GWU district organizer, Don Higgs, was on holiday at the time.

'At a meeting on the Wednesday we agreed and acquiesced on that point. Then the company said we were too late and they had changed their minds.

## UP-TO-DATE

'They said they would now close Middlemoor Lane and keep North Works open,' said Rambir.

The plant is six years old, the most modern in the Midlands and one of the most up-to-date plants in Britain.

'Talks were continuing on the threat until November 3 when we found out they had already transferred half the work to their Stirling Metals factory in Nuneaton. On the same day management met the unions and the unions said no to the closure.

'Then all of a sudden the company said they wanted to reduce their six plants to five because of the need for "rationalization". They had changed their minds again. Before that the loss of orders from industrial disputes was the reason given.

'On November 6 it was rationalization and they brought out a "proposed agreement" which said they wanted to reopen Middlemoor Lane towards the end of 1973.

'North Works No 1 was to close at the reopening of

Middlemoor Lane and the labour requirements would be met by the absorption of workers, most of whom are white, from the North Works.

'On December 6 the union officials accepted the proposals. They said they had to accept or "it would be disastrous". We tried to get support from the North Works, but the shop stewards there told us they had been instructed not to support our fight,' he told me.

Last Friday the entire factory queued up to collect their final pay packets and what redundancy money was coming. 'It's an amazing scene,' said an English worker from one of the neighbouring factories.

Why did the trade union leaders agree to the closure? 'That's a good question,' he replied.

Although they have appealed for the Race Relations Board to intervene, not many Punjabis feel that will achieve anything.

It is true that the workers at North Works No 1—who will eventually be offered the jobs at Middlemoor Lane—are mostly non-Asians.

Mostly there is nothing to suggest that the union leaders would have hesitated in agreeing to the Middlemoor Lane closure if the workers there had been white instead of Punjabi.

Gurdev Singh, another former steward, claimed:

'In this plant we've fought for our wages and got ourselves well organized. But it

**Left: Punjabi workers from the Birmid Qualcast factory in Smethwick line up last Friday for their final pay packet after the whole factory was sacked. Right: A group of workers study their redundancy notices.**

seems the union leaders don't want to see militant workers.

'The union leaders did not fight for us and now they will lose members at Middlemoor Lane. The leadership has got to be changed,' he said.

What has happened at Birmid gives a glimpse of the future for the working class under the present trade union leadership.

Meanwhile the Tories are busily preparing the framework for the corporate state, launching attack after attack on basic democratic rights to negotiate wage increases and to strike.

An alternative leadership must now be built in the unions, through the construction of a revolutionary party in the working class.

Only such a leadership can take the working class forward to force the Tory government to resign and return a Labour government which must be pledged to socialist policies of nationalizing basic industries like Birmid Qualcast under workers' control and without compensation.

Only this policy can guarantee the jobs and basic, democratic rights to workers—coloured and white—and their organizations.

# WHEN THE EMPLOYERS ARE TAKEN TO COURT

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

When the engineers' union executive refused to order its Sudbury, Suffolk, branch to reinstate James Goad it did not take long for the National Industrial Relations Court to order £61,000 of the union's funds to be seized. It is a somewhat different story, however, when it is employers who refuse to accept the ruling of industrial tribunals.

This has proved particularly true in cases of unfair dismissal.

There were some right-wing Labour and trade union leaders who tried to give the impression that the Industrial Relations Act is rather like the curate's egg—good in parts. One of the 'good' parts, it was said, was that for the first time employers could be brought to book if a worker could show that he had been unfairly dismissed.

The Act laid down procedure either for his re-engagement or for compensation to be paid by the employers to a maximum sum of £4,160. The actual sums awarded, however, have rarely exceeded £300-£400.

When the Bill was going through parliament, there were arguments in the House of Lords that the word 'reinstatement' should be substituted for 're-engagement'.

After all, it was pointed out, when a worker is sacked he loses much more than just a job. Apart from wages, he also loses all the rights associated with continuity of employment, such as pension entitlements, status and promotion prospects. 'Reinstatement' would ensure that he would get his old job back on precisely the same terms as before without the loss of these other rights.

## No change of wording

Lord Drumalbyn, on behalf of the Tory government, explained that there was no need to change the wording.

'Our intention here,' he said, 'was to provide for both reinstatement and re-employment of the employee . . . So it will be appropriate, in any case where a tribunal thinks it to be so, to recommend that an employee be given his old job back on such terms as if the dismissal had never taken place.'

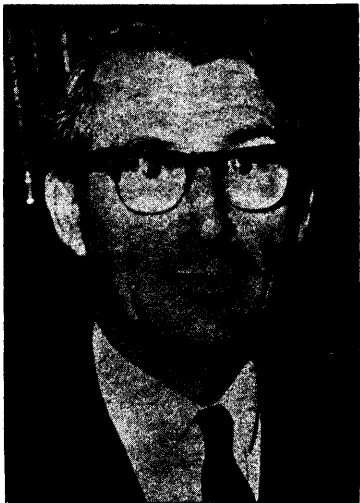
The Act lays down that if a recommendation for re-engagement is made but not complied with, this can affect the amount of compensation awarded:

'(a) If the tribunal or court finds that the reason for which it was not complied with was that the complainant refused an offer of re-engagement or engagement on the terms stated in the recommendation, and the tribunal or court considers that he acted unreasonably in doing so, the tribunal or court . . . shall reduce the assessment of his loss, or

'(b) if the tribunal or court finds that the reason for which the recommendation was not complied with was that the employer in question refused or failed to make such an offer and the tribunal or

court considers that he acted unreasonably in doing so, the tribunal or court shall increase that assessment to such extent (in either case) as in the circumstances the tribunal or court considers just and equitable.'

It is, appropriate perhaps, now that the Act has been used in all its viciousness against dockers, railwaymen



and engineers, and at the start of a year in which it will be used time and again against the trade union movement, to look back for a while and see how this 'good' part of the Act has worked out.

In only about 2 per cent of the cases where unfair dismissal has been proved (less than 1 per cent of the applications brought before them) have the industrial tribunals recommended re-engagement. In most cases they have simply accepted the word of the employers that they cannot, or will not, take a dismissed worker back.

Where the company is engaged in a shake-out of labour and has taken the opportunity to declare redundant someone they wanted to get rid of for other reasons, the tribunals have invariably agreed that it would be impractical to insist on the worker getting his old job back. The only recompense left to the unemployed man is a few hundred pounds compensation.

In several other cases the tribunals have, without demanding any other proof than the say-so of the employer, accepted that there is no vacancy for the worker to go back to. When the personnel officer of GEC-Elliott Automation, for example, told a tribunal that there was no suitable vacancy for a Mr Jones, who had been unfairly dismissed, it was agreed by the tribunal that no recommendation for re-engagement could be made.

In the case of Field v Leslie & Godwin, a tribunal decided that they 'had to consider whether to make a recommendation that the applicant should be re-engaged by the respondents.'

'The tribunal was minded to do so, but the respondents have argued that it would be impracticable for the applicant to be re-engaged having regard in particular to the fact that there was now no suitable vacancy. We accept this submission.'

In neither case was it considered that the employers' refusal to re-engage men they had unfairly dismissed was unreasonable. No increase in compensation was awarded.

There have been other cases



Workers from the CAV, Sudbury factory. When their AUEW union branch refused to reinstate James Goad it led to the order of £61,000 of the union's funds to be seized.

in which the employers do not appear even to have gone to the extent of stating they have no vacancies.

When Grimwood Heating Elements was found to have dismissed a Mr Maxwell unfairly, the tribunal merely noted that 'we do not think it is practicable to make a recommendation for re-engagement because the respondents have indicated that they would not be prepared to give effect to it'. There was no indication that the employers' refusal to accept the tribunal's recommendation was taken into account in assessing Maxwell's compensation.

In one case (Lumb v Charcon Pipes), a tribunal was even prepared to help the employers. It suggested that the dismissed worker should accept re-engagement in another area at less pay.

The employers had said they had no vacancies in their factory. 'The ideal solution in this situation, we think,' the tribunal replied, 'would be for Mr Lumb maybe to go to another part of the country, maybe to accept a lower salary and carry on in some engineering managerial post elsewhere in the organization.'

The employers would not accept even this suggestion and the situation was finally resolved by paying Lumb compensation, although once again the employers' attitude does not seem to have resulted in their being made to pay out any more.

One employer went even further. He said that while he would, under normal circumstances, have been happy to take the dismissed worker back, he would not do so 'under duress'. On a matter of principle, he said, since he resented the case being taken before the tribunal, he would refuse to re-engage him.

Faced with such a direct challenge to its authority, the tribunal concerned did, in this case, decide to increase the compensation awarded to the dismissed worker. This is one of the very few cases in which such an increase has been awarded against an employer.

In several cases where dismissed workers have refused to go back to their old jobs, however, compensation has been considerably reduced.

In some instances workers have found other jobs in the meantime. Even if they are lucky enough to do so, however, they have, of course, lost all the rights of continuity of employment which they would have had if they had not been unfairly dismissed from their

previous employment. This tends to be ignored by the tribunals, when assessing compensation, even when the loss is acknowledged.

In one case, where a worker refused to take up his old job since he was hoping to get a better one elsewhere, the tribunal considered his decision as 'possibly unwise but not unreasonable'. Nevertheless, compensation was reduced since it was not considered that he 'is entitled to have his loss of continuity of employment taken into account directly. This is a result of his own deliberate choice, since he has rejected whatever value that continuity might have had'.

There have been other cases in which the tribunals seem to have set themselves up as judges on moral issues, quite apart from the questions they are supposed to be ruling on. They then use their powers to reduce compensation as a punishment for what they consider to be 'bad behaviour'. A case in point is that of Dobson, Bryant and Heather v K. P. Morrill Ltd.

The three men were dismissed for demanding either a wage increase or a sickness benefit scheme. They were given no notice, but summarily sacked. The tribunal recommended that all three should be re-engaged.

Mr Heather stated right at the beginning that he would not go back to work at K.P. Morrill Ltd. The company agreed to re-engage the other two, but later both Dobson and Bryant changed their minds. They said they believed that life at work would be made very unhappy by the employers and Dobson even accepted another job at £5 a week less rather than return.

## 'Fears were genuine'

The tribunal accepted that their fears were genuine and probably well-founded and awarded compensation. In the case of Heather, however, compensation was considerably reduced since the tribunal considered that, although he had said from the start he would not return to Morrill's, he had made little effort to find another job.

There is, of course, nothing in the Act which empowers industrial tribunals to base compensation awards on whether or not they consider a man is genuinely looking for work—only on whether he was unfairly dismissed in the first place and whether or not he

acted unreasonably in not wanting to return to his old employers.

In another case the remarks made by the tribunal showed clearly that their sympathies were very much with the employers, even though the applicant had been unfairly dismissed. When apprentice Stanton was sacked by Woolfenden's Cranes Limited, the tribunal recommended he should be re-engaged so he would have the opportunity of completing his apprenticeship.

They went on, however, to issue a stern warning—not to the company which had unfairly dismissed him, but to Stanton:

'We hope that he will bear in mind, if he is re-engaged, that he must respect the authority of Mr Woolfenden and his senior employees or he may find if he does not carry out his work in a satisfactory manner that he may again find himself without employment before his apprenticeship has been completed . . .'

In only a very few cases have re-engagement recommendations been back-dated to the time of dismissal, so that the applicant receives his wages for the time he was out of work. Otherwise, he receives no money from the time he left the company until he starts work again, which may take months.

In the meantime, if the employers tell the Department of Employment that he has been fired for industrial misconduct, he receives no dole money either.

Far from being able to use the 'good' parts of the Act, more and more workers are becoming aware that they are little more than the jam used to hide the nasty taste of the Industrial Relations Act as a whole.

Unions can be bankrupted for refusing to accept men into membership, workers can be jailed for carrying out normal trade union practice, but employers, at the cost of a few hundred pounds at the most, can continue to sack workers at will.

Those who tried to tell the working class that the Act could be used to our advantage were lying. The only defence workers have, as always, is the organized strength of the trade union movement.

And the only way to protect that movement from the ravages of the Act is in the political struggle to force the Tory government to resign and make the next Labour government repeal all the anti-union legislation.

# WORKERS NOTEBOOK

## POLITICAL ART

Can art treasures be used as political symbols? In line with the 'Fanfare for Europe' programme which the government is sponsoring so we can all 'celebrate' entry into the European Common Market, an exhibition of works of art from the various member-countries is being held at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Our philosophical reflections on works of art as symbols are prompted by news of the French entry. Apparently, it was originally thought that the French contribution would be to send over the Louvre's Mona Lisa.

Reflecting perhaps, the Gioconda smile of France's diplomacy?

Instead, however, the French galleries have apparently been instructed by their Minister of Culture to send a painting appropriate to a mood of ruling-class optimism about the European Common Market.

At any rate, this is what we presume, as the painting being shown at the Victoria and Albert is a work by La Tour entitled 'The Gambler holding the Ace of Diamonds'.

## GOD & VIETNAM

God did not ask Billy Graham to use his influence with President Nixon to stop the bombing of North Vietnam.

The well-heeled evangelist, who is on equally intimate terms with the President and with the Almighty, issued a statement to this effect after numerous requests to persuade Nixon to stop the bombing.

His statement was superb in its implication that if he had wanted to intercede, both his intimate friends would have listened. It said: 'While some may interpret an evangelist to be primarily a social reformer or political activist, I do not. An evangelist is a proclaimer of the message of God's grace and love in Jesus Christ and the necessity of repentance and faith.'

Graham went on: 'Everyone knows that President Nixon and I have been personal friends for many years and that I believe him to be motivated by a desire for peace. History will have to judge whether his decisions were right or wrong.'

## MANPOWER

Although claiming a 'continuing spread of business confidence', the private employment agency Manpower forecasts little change in the level of joblessness in the first three months of this year.

A report just out from the agency says that labour forces throughout the country are expected 'to remain stable with broadly a "no change" position'. The effect of a slight upturn in recruitment will be offset by seasonal trends, it explains.

Manpower, which supplies staff to firms throughout the country, bases its quarterly report on employment trends on returns from its 2,465 client companies.

Only 26.7 per cent of firms thought they might increase staff during the January-March quarter. This would make hardly any impact on the 800,000 jobless total.

## FRIENDS



General Idi Amin used to proclaim that his greatest friends were the Heath government and the British army. Whenever he could corner a foreign correspondent he would rave about the gigantic qualities of both these imperialist institutions.

Times have changed. Amin told a Press conference last week that his 'best friend' was now East Germany. Welcoming an East German trade delegation, the bloody tyrant said he hoped the visitors would soon open factories for tractors and pharmaceuticals in Uganda.

## MAN IN RENAISSANCE DRAWING

Art review  
by a guest reviewer

**The greatest practical discovery of modern Europe is that man is a part—the highest and best part—of the natural world.**

One of the first cockpits of this discovery was the city of Florence in the 15th and 16th centuries. Turning from the medieval attitudes which prostrated man before religious beliefs, the artists of Italy set out upon an inspired investigation of the world about them, using observation, reason and imagination to distil into their works the beauty that grows in the human body and the forces of nature.

It was a 'renaissance'—a rebirth—of the childhood of man in classical Greece, in whose myths and art the Gods were brought firmly down to earth and became an idealized expression of man—his body, passions vices and all.

Naturally, this process of rebirth required both conception and labour, and these can in many ways best be studied in the drawings and sketches of the artists rather than their major, finished works. An exciting selection of these drawings are being shown in the Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, in an exhibition centred around Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael.

In Michelangelo's study of a male nude the muscles and bones step through the skin, showing the living structure that holds the body together. It allows it to stand, move and be powerful. You see not so much what your eyes show you, but what you would feel.

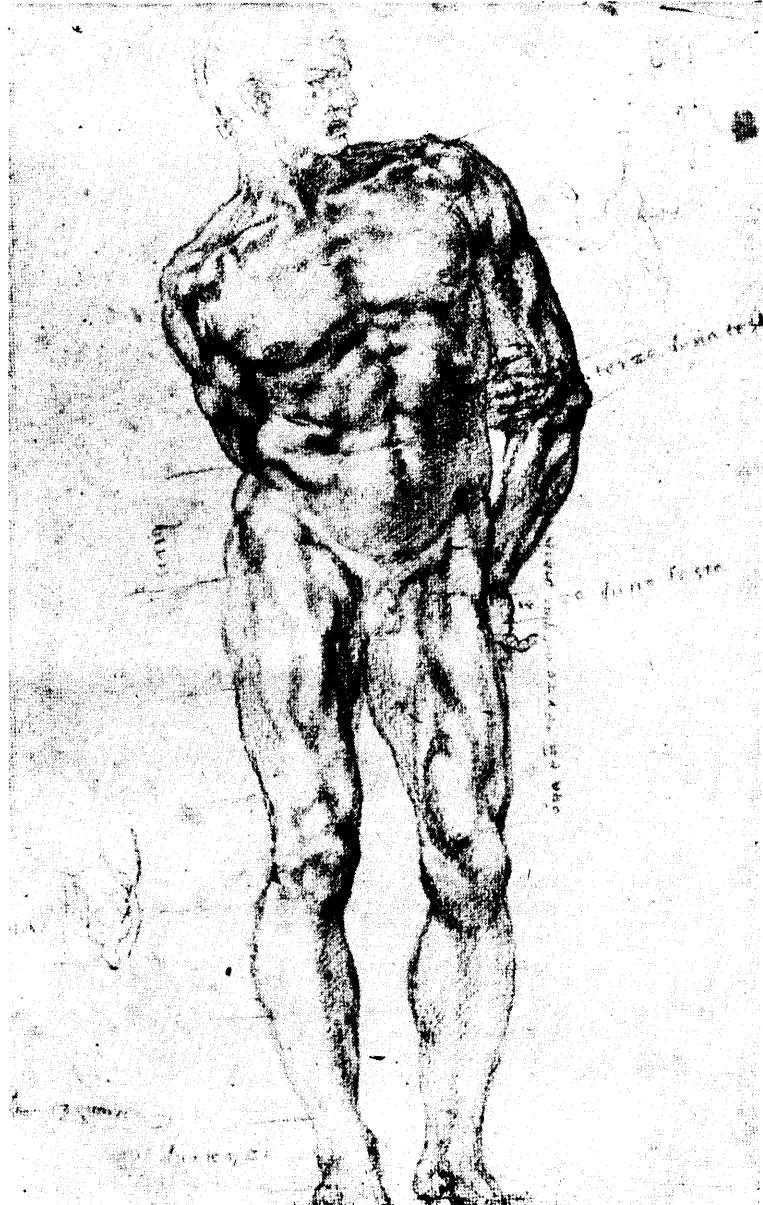
Death also enters into the life of the figure: we sense that only Michelangelo, who had carefully dissected real muscles could recombine them together and resurrect a body as alive as this.

But there is in the drawing something in conflict with observation and experiment: the figure is also perfect! It was made to demonstrate to a pupil the ideal proportions of the human body. Michelangelo was highly contemptuous of the Flemish artists who, according to him, simply copied what they saw before them. He believed that true beauty was to be found in ideal forms, more-or-less imperfectly reflected in the real bodies around us.

The task of the artists is not, however, to make some abstract attempt to carry the ideal form directly on to the paper, but actually to study nature—not as it is immediately given, but in order to draw out of it the underlying content. Michelangelo had, in fact, a theory of his own conscious processes. As he wrote in a poem, about ten years after this drawing:

**'As my soul, looking through my eyes, draws near to beauty as I first saw it, the inner image grows, while the other (ie. the immediate one) recedes, as though shrinking and of no account.'**

In his drawing therefore, as in any work of human consciousness, there exists this eternal struggle between the actual object and the concepts and feelings with which he grasps it. Since he is a genius this conflict is explicit and its resolution is supremely beautiful because (not in spite of) being the reflection of nature. Ironically it was this talent which earned for him from his contemporaries the compliment: 'Michelangelo the divine'.



'A Deluge'—da Vinci, c1515. Above: 'Male Nude'—Michelangelo, c1516

Leonardo da Vinci was a less religious man than Michelangelo. He was not only a painter and draftsman but also a scientist, an engineer and an inventor of machines. There exists in him the same conflict of theoretical conception and fidelity to the real world, but in a more abstract and developed form.

In his notes on painting he insists that art requires the exact imitation of nature, not only the selection of beauty from it. He urges that figures should be varied, since:

**'A man can be well-proportioned, if he is thick and short, or tall and thin, or medium; and whoever does not observe this variety will always make his figures on a single model, so that they will all look like brothers, which is greatly to be condemned.'**

But the artist is not only a scientist, he must also 'invent', starting not with any external standard but with his own creativity:

**'That divine power, which lies in the knowledge of the painter, transforms the mind of the painter into the likeness of the divine mind, for with a free hand he can produce different beings, animals, plants, fruits, landscapes, open fields, abysses, terrifying and fearful places.'**

In Leonardo's drawing of 'A deluge' this power of 'invention' stands above any 'imitation'. In a few square inches he brings in front of our eyes the terror of uncontrollable forces.

Man, as well as the water, is in the drawing, only not as a human figure but in the building which is being des-

troyed by the flood.

The destruction is expressed above all in the way the stones are caught up in the vortex of the deluge; but to do this Leonardo must contradict his own teachings on 'imitation'—the waves are drawn in a most 'unrealistic' way, not fluid as they would spontaneously appear, but formed and structured to become part of the same moving pattern as the stones.

The drawing is realistic only because it abstracts. Unlike Michelangelo, who shows us a body which is idealized but visually possible, Leonardo's drawing is a hybrid between pictorial depiction and a formula of physics. In this sense it is the more objective, it is an attempt to carry drawing beyond what can be seen and felt as physically present. It is because Leonardo is a less religious thinker than Michelangelo that he starts from the necessity for a theory. As he writes:

**'In fact, whatever exists in essence, in material form or in imagination, all this the artist has first in his mind and then in the work of his hand.'**

While Michelangelo still thinks of the ideal as lying outside himself, in God, Leonardo feels it as being his own creation, and so to transform the world to its ideal form he must first—practically—become master of himself.

To see the best of the drawings in this exhibition is to witness one of the essential steps of human consciousness on the road to scientifically understanding ourselves and our world. It is a humbling and exhilarating experience.

## BOOKS



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## No backing for Scunthorpe steel sparks

NINE HUNDRED electrical workers at Scunthorpe's Anchor site, who walked out after 38 men were sacked, have failed to get strike backing from men in other trades.

The British Steel Corporation has refused to re-

employ the men and an electricians' and plumbers' union (EPTU) spokesman said yesterday that the strike could not be given union support because it was called in breach of agreed procedures.

But Scunthorpe EPTU official Mr O. H. Hancock

said every case of the sacked men would be fully investigated.

The men were dismissed after all the electricians decided to work to maximum safety in December as a protest against safety conditions.

Mr Hancock said he had

not been told of any safety problems at the site. He said: 'If they had brought it to me, the chances are we could have solved it in five minutes.'

We understand the men may be working to maximum safety as a means of putting pressure on BSC to increase their pay.

An 8p-an-hour rise negotiated by the union nationally has been frozen by the Tory government's pay standstill.

Electrical work at the site is nearing completion and the final labour run down is expected to begin in about two weeks' time.

## 'Monetary union' far from reality Pompidou attack on sterling

BY A WORKERS PRESS REPORTER

PRESIDENT POMPIDOU called for the ending of the floating pound and the return to fixed parities 'in a relatively short time' at his press conference on Tuesday. Replying to a question from 'The Times' correspondent, he said: 'I strongly regretted that Britain could not return to a fixed parity before January 1. I thought I could rest assured on this point, and I regret it'.

Referring to a letter from British Prime Minister, Edward Heath, saying that the floating pound should not disturb the working of the Common Market or its agricultural policy, Pompidou insisted 'this situation cannot go on for long'.

He went on to say: 'The decision taken by the Paris summit to take the step towards economic and monetary union implies fixed parities. So I hope sterling will return to one soon. Otherwise it would raise problems for the Community and for Britain's role in it.'

Pompidou's attack on the floating pound reflects French fears that Britain's role inside the Common Market will be to work with the United States to disrupt the plan for European monetary union aimed at the dollar.



POMPIDOU

Bitterness over the pound shows the tremendous contradictions which are building up inside the Common Market as each 'partner' struggles to improve its position in the trade war.

Behind all the ballyhoo which greeted British entry, there is deep suspicion that Britain will act as a Trojan horse representing American interests in Europe as well as blocking moves against the dollar.

A further devaluation of the pound would sharpen British competition in the Common Market and also act as a protective device to keep out European imports.

Most of the issues dealt with at the press conference concerned internal policies. It marked the entry of the President into the election campaign intended to win support for the Gaullists.

### Tyre return

SOME 950 T&GWU members who have been on strike for the last week at the Shellhaven oil refinery, Essex, returned to work today. The dispute was over a management directive that a tyre change should be carried out by non-maintenance workers under the terms of a new productivity deal.

The workers walked out on January 4 when six men were suspended for refusing to do the work. The management has now agreed to pay the six the wages they had lost during their suspension. The dispute will be referred to arbitration.

## Hasn't King's audience dwindled!

BY ALEX MITCHELL

CECIL Harmsworth King, the ex-head of the International Publishing Corporation (IPC), has fallen on hard times.

Once he could air his views in the largest newspaper chain in the world. He had editorial control of such mass-selling papers as the 'Daily Mirror', 'Sunday Mirror', 'People' and 'Daily Record' in Scotland.

King would pontificate to his tens of millions of readers on everything from the state of the Vietnam war, to politics, to economics.

But he got the push from IPC three years ago.

And hasn't his audience dwindled. At the 'small hall' at the Conway Hall, London, on Tuesday night, King was speaking on the subject of inflation.

His lecture was organized by the Ethical Society and its secretary, Mr Peter Cadogan. Only 50 turned up!

This die-hard band slum-

bered in their chairs as King droned on about the 'ethics of inflation'.

It was a sad come down for the Fleet Street baron who once aspired to high office in a self-styled businessmen's government.

King was offered a peerage on two occasions (or was it three?) and a place as 'Lord of Exports' in Wilson's government.

But he preferred to wait for the economic crisis and the chance to take more superior positions in the corporatist Britain.

Since his fall from office and from grace—because

of the publication of his controversial diaries—King appears only to have the ear of the Ethical Society.

Mr Rupert Murdoch, the high-flying Australian newspaper tycoon, might well examine the case of Mr King. There is a moral in it for him.

FOOTNOTE: Other guest speakers at Cadogan's five-week-long seminar include George Young of the Monday Club, economics journalist Paul Einzig, who has made flattering remarks about Mussolini, and right-wing Tory MP Hugh Fraser.



Cecil King (l) with Ethical Society secretary Peter Cadogan on Tuesday night.

## 'Closed border' will not stop Rhodesian guerrillas

RHODESIA has closed the border with Zambia in an attempt to stem a mounting guerrilla campaign aimed at overthrowing the Smith regime.

The border is closed to all road and rail traffic except copper exports through Rhodesia which is a highly-lucrative trade. This significant exception demonstrates the weakness of the Rhodesian economy.

Smith's security forces are scouring the frontier areas in an effort to track down guerrillas who are raiding farmsteads and planting land mines on remote dirt roads. Three South African policemen were killed and five injured by a 'landmine' near the

Zambesi river frontier on Monday.

A Rhodesian government spokesman said that Zambia had been warned that measures to restrict border traffic would be taken if 'terrorists' were permitted to operate from its territory.

About 50 per cent of Zambia's imports come through Rhodesian territory, including equipment for the copper mines. Speaking at the opening of parliament in Lusaka, President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia described southern Africa as 'a den of iniquity and mass exploitation'.

He said that the liberation of southern Africa must be regarded as an unfinished task of decolonization and that Zambia

could not be a passive observer.

While not referring to the border closure, Kaunda said that Britain could not escape responsibility for the 'unfolding Rhodesian tragedy'.

'We welcomed the "No" verdict given by the Pearce Commission whose visit to Zimbabwe 12 months ago rekindled anew the nationalist spirit among the suffering masses.'

● Three Africans have been sentenced to 12 months in prison with hard labour in Bindura, Rhodesia, for giving assistance to guerrillas. The case was heard behind closed doors 'for security reasons' and the identity of the men and details of their activities were not revealed.

## Weekly pay strike threat to Hoover

ABOUT 3,800 engineers and electrical workers took part in a one-day strike at Hoover's factory in Cambuslang, Lanarkshire, yesterday.

They were protesting against a management offer of £2.90 a week in answer to a claim for a £4 rise.

The workers, who have also imposed an overtime ban, are threatening to strike every Wednesday until agreement is reached.

A management spokesman said: 'The stoppage is 100 per cent. It is a token one-day strike which is completely unofficial.'

## Goodyear men snub officials

A MOVE to end the week-old strike at the Goodyear tyre factory in Wolverhampton failed yesterday.

Only 87 of the 250 mill workers in dispute turned up for a meeting called by local Transport and General Workers' Union officials.

So peace proposals which emerged from union-management talks yesterday will not now be put to the strikers until a meeting they themselves have arranged for Friday morning.

The dispute, over the company's refusal to discuss pay differentials during the freeze, has stopped Goodyear tyre production and 2,500 other workers have been laid off.

## Dock strike talks fail

TALKS to end the three-day old unofficial strike by 200 Merseyside dockers broke down yesterday and will be resumed on Friday.

The dispute between dockers and the British and Irish ferry line is over manning. It followed the withdrawal from service for overhaul of one of the Dublin car ferries. Dockers claim this has meant a loss of work and earnings.

## SLL LECTURES

### TODMORDEN

Monday January 22

'Stalinism'

Monday February 5

'Trotskyism'

THE WEAVERS' INSTITUTE, Burnley Road, 7.30 p.m.

### HULL

Wednesday January 17

Stalinism and Trotskyism

Wednesday January 24

Marxist theory and the revolutionary party

WHITE HART HOTEL  
Alfred Gelder Street  
(near Drypool Bridge)  
8 p.m.

### DONCASTER

Sunday January 21

What future for the labour movement.

Sunday January 28

The crisis and the socialist answer.

Sunday February 4

The revolutionary party in Britain.

Lectures given by  
Cliff Slaughter.

SPREAD EAGLE HOTEL  
Westlathgate  
7.30 p.m.

# Airports and Social Security hit by civil servants' walk-out

THERE were airline traffic delays at Britain's main terminals yesterday as white collar workers walked out in protest against the state pay laws.

About 200 government workers staged a meeting in a lecture room at Heathrow's Queen's Building creating big bottlenecks, particularly at passport control in Terminal One.

At Gatwick, London's second airport, Civil Aviation Authority staff attached to the signals centre walked out at 10 a.m.

At Prestwick, near Ayr in Scotland, air traffic control and teleprinter operators walked out to attend a rally at nearby Kilmarnock.

An official spokesman said that delays at Manchester Airport were 'minimal'.

But a protest meeting was held

of more than 3,000 staff from the Department of Health and Social Security. A union spokesman said that Giro payments to the public would not be disrupted. 'The action is to show that we are disgruntled. It is to show what we could do if we wanted to.'

More than 300 Manchester customs officers walked off the docks in protest, while at York 200 defence ministry civil servants stopped work and went on

parade at Imphal Barracks square to hold a protest meeting.

Over 3,500 Civil Servants attended a mass meeting at the city hall, Candleriggs, Glasgow, yesterday. A further 2,000-strong overflow meeting was organized to cope with the numbers who turned up.

The meeting was followed by a demonstration around the City Hall and George Square.

Reg Williams, of the CPSA

national executive told the meeting he wouldn't be opposed to an all-out strike of civil servants, but that he would want to see it fully prepared.

He called for selective strikes and pointed out that prices had not been frozen and that all the sham committees in the world couldn't change it.

Social security payments offices were among government departments hit when about 2,000 civil servants held protest meetings in Bristol.

Swansea civil servants closed down a new computer department when they walked out.

In Aberdeen three separate meetings were held, attended by Civil Servants from the Social Security, Forestry, Ministry of Defence, Torry Fishery Research Station and the Customs and Environment offices.

In the Midlands, more than 3,000 downed pens at 46 Social Security offices.

Skeleton staffs stayed on duty, but payments of disablement, sickness and supplementary benefits were delayed for up to two hours.

About 800 civil servants attended a Birmingham city centre rally. Hundreds left their desks in Cardiff to attend two separate meetings in the city.

12,000 Customs and Excise men joined the strikes.

Jack Morrish, general secretary of the Customs and Excise Group, said: 'We cannot rule out the possibility of industrial action. Warnings have been given.'

## 'We'll not be kicked around'

OVER 2,000 civil servants voted unanimously at London's Central Hall, Westminster yesterday to pledge 'total support for whatever action the executive proposes is necessary to achieve justice' in their pay fight.

The resolution also condemned the 'action of the government in again breaking the civil service pay agreement'.

General secretary of the 200,000-strong Civil and Public Services Association, Mr Bill Kendall declared that civil servants were not going to be kicked around any longer by their government employers.

'We are serving notice on the government as our employers that we are not going to be kicked around in the future,' said Kendall to loud applause from the meeting.

'We are telling the government that the freeze is legalized robbery,' he went on.

'We are developing national industrial action for the first time in our history and I think we can be proud of that.'

And Kendall added: 'We are telling the rest of the trade union movement that we have a moral right if necessary to ask for wider industrial action from other affiliates of the TUC.'

Feeling at the meeting was overwhelmingly in favour of industrial action to secure 'justice' from the Tory government on the issue of the 'civil-service fair-comparison pay award which was due on January 1, 1973.

Cheering and clapping erupted throughout the hall when CPSA secretary for the Environment Department, Mr John Ellis, told the meeting that any threats of disciplinary action against members who took part in yesterday's action would be met by an immediate walk-out of all CPSA staff in the Department of Environment.

Mr Kendall also told the meeting that in spite of the fact that the TUC Economic Committee had rejected a meeting of public sector unions on pay in favour of going to see the Tory government, they were going to go ahead with preparing such a meeting.

He was disgusted, he said, with the TUC's 'weakness of approach' and its 'submissive attitude' to the government.

The possibility of strike action, said Kendall, would be conditioned by what was said in Phase Two of the government's White Paper on pay legislation. It would also be conditioned by meetings up and down the country and by the support civil servants got from other unions similarly placed.

Mr John Dryden, secretary of the 60,000-strong Society of Civil Servants which was also involved in yesterday's action, declared:

'We are not protesting solely about the present situation—we are protesting because this is the fifth time in the past 10 years that the government has broken its agreement with civil servants.'

Civil servants, he said, were due to have a further fair-comparison pay settlement from January 1, 1973. 'We know now we shall not get one penny and we



The civil servants' Central Halls meeting votes for action

shall get no retrospective payment either.'

Over the past two years, said Dryden, the living standards of civil servants have gone down 20 per cent.

'At the end of the freeze, if we do not get justice, then the mood of the civil service will be of far greater protest than it is today.'

'We will go on until we get satisfaction in our fair and just demands,' he concluded.

## British-Leyland profits up on forecast

BRITISH-LEYLAND'S pre-tax profits for the year ended September 30 were £31.9m—£2m higher than most City experts had been expecting. The news sent the company's share price up to 37p as against an overnight price of 34½p.

British-Leyland made £32.4m the previous year, but this year

were hit by miners' and engineers strikes.

This year's figures were also affected by a loss of £4m by Leyland's South African company.

Group sales for the year hit a record £1,281m, compared with the 1971 figure of £1,177m.

During the year British-Leyland sold 935,000 cars, an increase of 83,000. But sales of trucks, buses and vans were 13,000 lower at 180,000.

Agricultural tractors kept level at 12,000 to make a total of 1,127,000 vehicles of all types against 1,057,000 in the previous year.

Over 20,000 British-Leyland car workers at the Cowley assembly-line plant expect a reply this month to their claim for increases of between £5.80 and £7.

## Dockers picket 'court'

LONDON DOCKERS yesterday picketed a union inquiry into the conduct of five men during a mass lobby of dockers' delegates last August.

The five men—from the riverside and enclosed docks—face possible expulsion from the Transport and General Workers' Union if the inquiry finds them guilty of misconduct under the union's rules.

Placards carried by the 20 or so dockers picketing the inquiry condemned the organization of a 'kangaroo court' by the T&GWU leadership.

Most of the pressure for an inquiry came from the Tory Press, the dockers pointed out.

The five men—Con Clancy, Ray Halsey, Tony Merrick, John Hatton and Ray Holmes—were called separately into the inquiry, which was conducted by a sub-committee of the union's No. 1 regional committee.

All five said no specific charges or evidence had been laid before them. But the questions they had been asked were similar—centering on whether they had been involved in a disruption of the workings of union headquarters.

According to the union's rules, the committee of inquiry will report back to the regional committee on whether it thinks there is a case against the five dockers. The regional committee's decision will then be referred to the national executive.

## Actors' pay £12 lighter today

THE GOVERNMENT'S decision to slash West End actors' pay by £12 under the laws banning wage increases is expected to have its first major effect today.

Thursday is pay day at most of the West End theatres and many actors, particularly those working on the existing minimum of £25 will be put back on the old pre-November 13 minimum of £18.

The anger at the first cuts is expected to strengthen the campaign for industrial action in preparation for a special meeting of the actor's union, Equity, scheduled for January 28.

Some theatres imposed the cut last Friday, affecting in particular members of the chorus of many big London shows.

The cuts are the result of government orders issued under the anti-inflation legislation. They ban a £5 increase in actors' pay, which would take the minimum up to £30 this week and also cancel a £7 increase paid from November 13.

The cuts will also affect actors with parts in long-running shows and plays. Rehearsal pay has also fallen from £20 on November 13, to the old £12 minimum. With the latest increase, rehearsal pay should have been £25.

The Equity Council is expected to meet next Tuesday or the Tuesday after to decide whether to recommend any course of action to the special meeting which is open to all members.

WE ARE still a long way behind raising our £1,750 target for this month. Let's press ahead as never before and push our figure right up. We know we can do it. There is still time to pull the situation around.

Civil servants, gasmen—sections of workers who have not been involved in struggle for years—are now taking up the fight for wages. Everywhere new sections of workers are being drawn into the battle to defend their basic rights.

Workers Press is needed more than ever before to prepare these workers politically for the decisive fight against the Tory government. Only our paper warns of the continuous treachery of this trade union leadership and struggles to build instead a revolutionary alternative.

Give us all your support. Help us make a very special effort for January's Fund. Raise extra wherever you can. Post every donation immediately to:

Workers Press  
January Appeal Fund  
186a Clapham High Street  
London SW4 7UG.