

WORKERS PRESS

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DAILY ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

IN A COLLISION COURSE OVER WORKERS' WAGES TORIES READY FOR A SNAP ELECTION

BY ALEX MITCHELL

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A key factor in the Tories' planning is the results of the forthcoming by-elections in Lincoln, Chester-le-Street and Dundee on March 1.

Then, on March 6, the Tories intend introducing an extraordinarily early budget. This will aim at making some insignificant dispensations on VAT and creating the fraudulent atmosphere that with a 'firm prices and incomes policy' the country can be 'saved'.

In the past few weeks the Tories have been feverishly getting the party into shape for an election.

This was the meaning of the secretive campaign by Tory ministers to visit schools in marginal constituencies spreading Tory propaganda among sixth formers, many of whom will be voting this year for the first time when they turn 18.

Also in recent weeks no less than 13 Tory MPs have announced that they are standing down. These include ageing reactionaries who are unwilling to face another turbulent election campaign—Dame Irene Ward, Sir Harry Legge Bourke, Sir Henry d'Avigdor Goldsmid, Duncan Sandys, Sir Clive Bosson, Sir Tufton Beamish and Sir Tatton Brinton.

They are being cleared out as Heath and his party managers find places for young asset-strippers, financiers and ambitious military men like Colonel Colin ('Mad Mitch') Mitchell.

All these preparations are underway because the Tories know that they are fighting the battle of their lives. They have introduced state pay laws which amount to savage wage-cutting—the standard of living of the working class will be cut 'at a stroke'.

This legislation will get through parliament on schedule because of the Parliamentary Labour Party's decision 'not to impede' its passage. But its implementation is another question!

Eventually and inevitably this legislation must be used against at least one section of workers. Certainly there are plenty of candidates:

● 50,000 workers in the Ford Motor Company have already shown what they think of the pay laws by holding stoppages at Halewood and Swansea.

● 270,000 civil servants yesterday began a work-to-rule and overtime ban leading up to their first-ever national strike on February 27.

● 47,000 gas workers tonight begin selective strikes, a ban on overtime and work to rule.

● 250,000 hospital ancillary workers in the National Union of Public Employees and the Transport and General Workers' Union have decided to call strike action at a date to be fixed.



Ford workers from the Dagenham, Essex, plant leave a meeting yesterday at which they decided on strike action from March 1—and a head-on clash with the Tory government—if their pay demands are not met. See story page 3.

The Tories know that their legislation is nothing more than a provocation to the working class.

They hope to use the flood of indignation from the rank and file to create conditions in which 'reds', 'agitators' and 'subversives' of one description or another will be blamed for the outbreaks of industrial strife.

In this Tory-inspired climate of hysteria the Tories will try to stampede the middle class into voting Tory in a snap poll.

What is most treacherous about this political conspiracy against the working class is that the Labour and trade union leaders are fully aware of it.

They know about it, but they have decided not to challenge it.

Victor Feather, general secretary of the TUC, has become first president of the European Confederation of Trade Unions, despite the overwhelming vote by last year's congress to fight against entry and to boycott all EEC institutions.

At the same time Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon have recommended to the TUC that the unions participate with the EEC legislation for worker-directors on the boards of all public companies with more than 500 employees.

These moves by the trade union

bureaucrats are steps towards acceptance of the corporate state.

The Labour Party 'lefts' and the Communist Party are completely behind these proposals. The 'Morning Star' has made not a single criticism of Feather's role as a trade union Eurocrat, nor of the Jones-Scanlon proposals.

The Stalinists won't criticize these moves . . . because they support them.

On the eve of the big wages struggles and the fight to preserve a decent standard of living in the face of soaring prices, workers are not unaware of treachery going on.

Sections of industrial, manual and middle-class unions are being forced into struggles in which they feel already deserted by their own leaders.

In this situation the Socialist Labour League is working towards its biggest campaign ever—'The Road to Workers' Power', a Pageant of working-class history to be staged before 10,000 workers, housewives and youth at the Empire Pool, Wembley, on Sunday, March 11.

Inseparable from this monster anti-Tory rally is the struggle to transform the SLL into a revolutionary party in the coming weeks.

Socialist Labour League Public Meetings

Unite in action to defend basic rights
MIDDLETON **JARROW**

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 14, 8 p.m.

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 18, 7 p.m.

Middleton Baths, Middleton, Manchester

Civic Centre, Jarrow

Speaker at both meetings: G. HEALY (SLL national secretary)

workers press

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WHAT WE THINK

MUGGING AND 'LAWBREAKERS'

SOME 2,300 Ford workers were on 24-hour strike yesterday as 5,000 other Ford men returned to work at Halewood, Liverpool. Altogether 55,000 Ford workers are in a struggle for a 'substantial' wage increase plus a five-hour cut in the working week and other fringe benefits.

The 1,300 British Road Services drivers from 18 Midlands depots are on strike for a £2.50 'skills bonus'. 47,000 gas workers are involved in strikes and overtime bans in support of a £5.50 wage rise. 272,000 civil servants are committed to work to rule as well as to a one-day strike in support of their demand for a pay review. 25,000 hospital ancillary workers have decided in principle on strike action for a £5 claim.

All of these actions, involving 625,300 workers, are illegal under the Tories' state control of wages legislation.

In addition 280,000 miners, 30,000 Vauxhall workers, 180,000 busmen, 22,000 dockers, 380,000 teachers, 300,000 Post Office workers and 70,000 rubber industry workers have substantial claims in excess of the Tory government's pay limit.

In a variety of other industries almost 1.5 million workers have had wage awards or claims hit by the Tory pay laws. So a grand total of some 3.5 million workers can be branded as 'lawbreakers' for fighting for a decent standard of living.

The real lawbreakers, however, are the Tory government who created this situation.

Everyone knows the cost of living for working-class families has soared as a result of deliberate government policies like the rent Act. Food prices are allowed to escalate while wages are held down. Inflation was consciously encouraged by the floating of the pound last June.

The working-class housewife has been robbed of pounds by these rocketing prices. This is one kind of 'mugging' that the Tories approve.

Workers have shown their determination to fight, but they face enormous dangers as their leaders hang back. Heads of unions, like Tom Jackson of the Union of Post Office Workers and Walter Anderson of NALGO openly declare their desire to collaborate with the corporatist-style legislation of the Heath government.

Trade unionists run the risk of prosecution in the Tory courts as their leaders allow them to go into battle in piecemeal fashion.

If the working class is divided it can be defeated and smashed. Its leaders, leaving it open to this risk, are preparing a worse betrayal than 1926.

This must not be allowed to happen. Councils of Action must be built in each area to unite every aspect of workers' struggles. They must work to create the industrial and political conditions which will force the Tory government to resign.

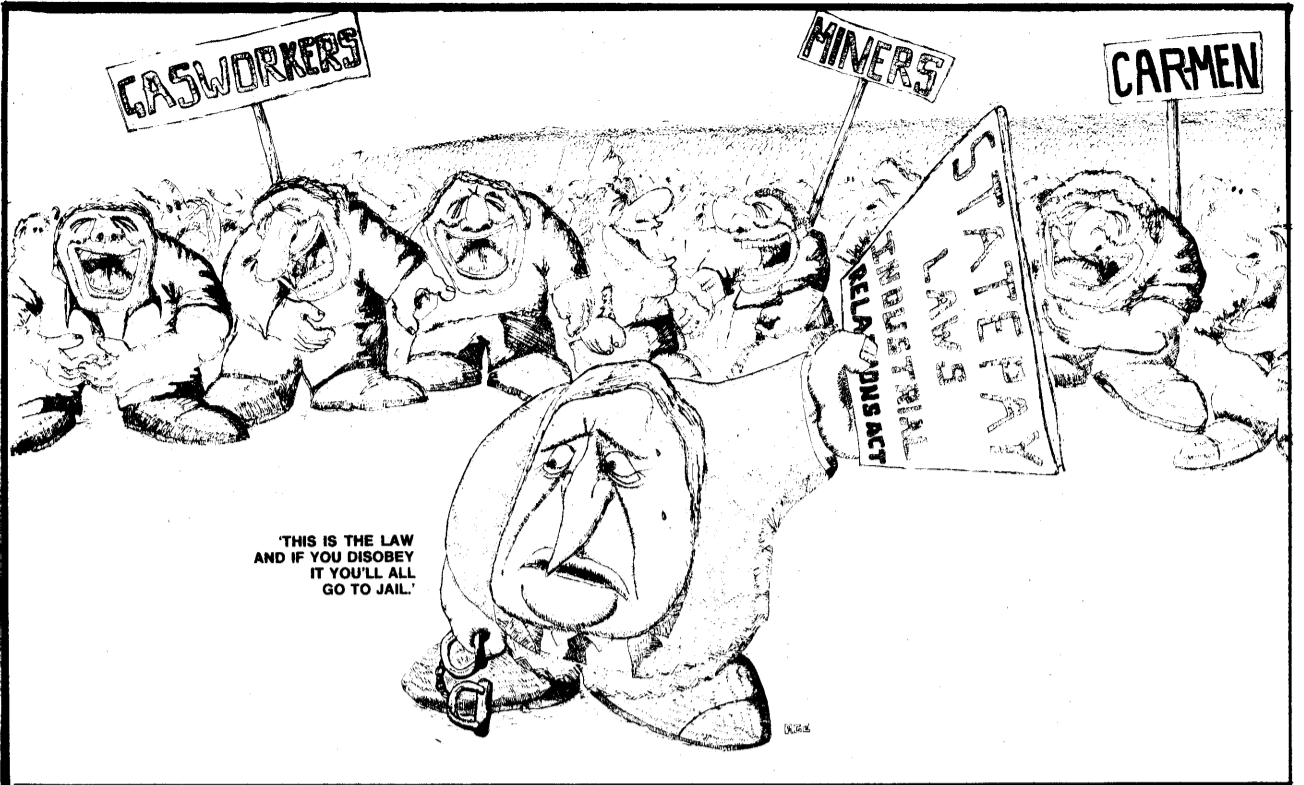
Cairo students in clashes with police

ABOUT 300 student demonstrators were dispersed with tear gas and baton charges after they stoned riot police near Cairo university.

The official Middle East News Agency (MENA) said the students were dispersed without injuries on Sunday after they staged a sit-down strike, handed out pamphlets to passers-by and ignored police requests to leave the streets.

The clashes came just one week after students returned to the university from their mid-term vacation which President Sadat had ordered to start one week early following anti-government student demonstrations on January 3.

Many students have this week been avoiding classes as a protest against the detention of about 120 of their colleagues in last month's disturbances.



Around the world

'Stalemate' as markets close

BY JOHN SPENCER

THE ENTIRE currency and international trade system of world capitalism was paralysed yesterday by the closure of the foreign exchange markets.

About the only foreign currency market left open was the Beirut exchange, where trading was described as 'quiet'. Currency transactions were at a standstill, but there was feverish activity between representatives of the various countries involved.

The Japanese envoy, Takashi Hosomi, special adviser to the Finance Minister, flew to Bonn yesterday for talks with the West Germans. Japan wants to know what the Germans will do before it takes any action itself.

President Nixon's envoy Paul

Volcker held five hours of talks with Finance Ministers of Britain, France, Germany and Italy in Paris. Earlier, he had made a flying visit to Rome to see the recalcitrant Giovanni Malagodi and persuade him to attend. Malagodi had previously demanded a full conference of Common Market Finance Ministers as the only forum in which the question could be discussed.

The talks at the private residence of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the French Finance Minister, lasted until after 2 a.m.

Asked on his return to Rome whether the Ministers had decided to hold a meeting of the Group of Ten, as had been widely rumoured, Malagodi simply replied: 'There was no decision.'

This 'stalemate' reflects the enormous political tension between the European capitalists and the Americans. It is now every man for himself as currency relations break down and the United States threatens to impose punitive tariffs on its competitors.

Even if the Group of Ten—the Europeans, Japan and the United States—can get together to agree a new currency alignment, nothing will be settled. It took only 14 months for the Smithsonian agreement of December 1971 to break down completely. The life-span of any similar deal now would be far shorter.

One thing is absolutely clear: neither Germany nor Japan can continue to hold out against the huge influx of dollars which has overwhelmed them in the last ten days. In the last three weeks the central banks of the countries outside the United States have been forced to buy an estimated \$10,000m—more than their total intake of the US currency in the whole of last year.

To buy the incoming dollars, the Bundesbank has had to pay out about 20,000 million marks, increasing the country's money supply by 50 per cent in just over a week.

Despite the most stringent controls, inflation on a crippling scale is the only possible outcome if the German government continues to try and hold the mark at its existing parity.

Japan, faced with a similar problem, has only two courses of action open: it can either revalue, as the US wants, or float the currency and try to keep its parity as close as possible to the present rate.

Both countries are vainly hoping that other capitalist powers can be prevailed on to assist them: but it is clear that there is no inclination on the part of those countries to bail out the two main victims.

The exchanges cannot remain closed for any length of time without precipitating a credit collapse.

On the other hand, a minimum of international agreement is necessary before countries will agree to open their foreign currency markets again.

The dignitaries of world capitalism are discussing stop-gap expedients while the whole structure of world currency and trade collapses around their ears.

Quebec union chiefs in jail after appeal fails

BY A WORKERS PRESS CORRESPONDENT

QUEBEC'S three top labour leaders are serving one-year jail terms after the Supreme Court of Canada refused to hear their appeal on contempt of court charges.

The men, Marcel Pepin of the Confederation of National Unions, Yvon Charbonneau of the Quebec Teachers' Corporation and Louis Laberge of the Quebec Federation of Labour were originally sentenced following last year's public service strike.

They had refused to obey a court order telling them to end the public ser-

vice strike. The court which rejected their appeal specifically stated they were being jailed to smash the unions.

Leaders of the New Democratic Party—Canadian equivalent of the Labour Party—and the Canadian Labour Congress have yet to take any action against the jailings.

When the sentences against Pepin and his colleagues were first pronounced there was a mass strike throughout Quebec.

Some towns, like Sept-

les, were occupied by angry workers against state troopers.

But Pepin, Charbonneau and Laberge have since done their best to dissipate the unity built up in this struggle.

On December 15 they postponed indefinitely a meeting of the three union bodies due to have discussed joint action.

Six days later, the Liberal (Tory) government introduced its anti-strike Bill 89, which effectively abolishes the right to strike for public sector workers.

Under the pretext of protecting public services, the government can impose compulsory arbitration in any such stoppage.

The government has also brought in sweeping cuts in unemployment benefit which leave thousands of workers penniless.

Student fees are to be raised across the board.

And despite rank-and-file opposition the government and union leaders have combined to foist a derisory 4.7-per-cent pay rise on postal workers.

The reformists, like their counterparts in Britain, claim that the Quebec government can be 'pressurized'.

The NDP is in a treacherous alliance with the Liberals. It must be forced to fight for the downfall of the Liberals through a General Strike to bring the government down.

Uruguay take-over: CP co-operates

THE MILITARY take-over by the army and air-force commands in Uruguay marks a new stage in the war against the Latin American working class.

The coup was carried through on the pretext of opposition to Defence Minister Antonio Francese (73).

Troops in revolt clashed with naval units still supporting Uruguayan president Juan Maria Bordaberry last Friday.

But most of the navy opposition has vanished.

Admirals have given support to the objectives of the new movement,

although they disagree with the methods.

Whether Bordaberry is removed completely or not, the basis for a military Peruvian-style regime has now been laid.

In the November 1971 elections, the Communist Party joined broad alliance with the Christian Democrats.

They suffered a severe defeat and since then the regime has attacked workers' democratic rights.

Under the 'state of internal war', Bordaberry's forces rounded up the Tupamaros urban guerrilla movement.

Aid from the International Monetary Fund is tied firmly to a pledge not to allow any wage increases.

A 10 per cent a month inflation rate is already eating into the masses' meagre wages.

There is also a ban on domestic meat sales in order to boost exports and prices of vegetables, potatoes, pork, fish and poultry have soared.

The Stalinist trade-union federation (CNT) responded by calling a series of one-day national strikes for government reforms.

But now the CP has rescinded the old policy of

calling strikes and factory occupations against any attempted military coup.

The regime's programme stresses that 'infiltration by Marxist-Leninists is incompatible with Uruguayan life', but both the CP and the Tupamaros have been quick to grasp the 'positive' aspects of the military clique.

Its programme is based on populist demagoguery: the eradication of financial corruption in government and the civil service, redistribution of land, the break up of monopolies, incentives to producers to increase exports, and social benefits to the poor.

PAGEANT DIARY

The Road to Workers Power



Historic episodes take shape

IT IS FOUR WEEKS to the Empire Pool, Wembley, and the episodes in the Pageant are beginning to take shape.

In JARROW a script reading was held on Sunday night with a group of local supporters. The script in this area centres on the struggle to build the miners' union and the execution of a union leader, Jobling, on a frame-up charge of murder.

The choice of Jobling as a main character in the episode has caused some indignation.

A local vicar has communicated with the Pageant committee saying that we can't use his church hall because he has heard we are 'glorifying a murderer'.

The role of the church in the last great class con-

flict in Britain, the General Strike of 1926, is vividly illustrated by this extract from the scab 'British Gazette' published by Winston Churchill.

'At High Mass in Westminster Cathedral His Eminence Cardinal Bourne made the following declaration:

'It is necessary that Catholics should have clearly before their minds the moral principles which are involved.

'There is no moral justification for a General Strike of this character.

'It is a direct challenge to a lawfully constituted authority, and inflicts, without adequate reason, immense discomfort and injury on millions of our fellow countrymen.

'It is, therefore, a sin

against the obedience which we owe to God, who is the source of that authority, and against the charity and brotherly love which are due to our brethren.

'All are bound to uphold and assist the government, which is the lawfully constituted authority of the country, and represents, therefore, in its own appointed sphere, the authority of God himself.'

● On the Langley estate, Middleton, on Sunday night a concert received enthusiastic support.

For the first time a section of the Pageant material was performed.

Those in the Middleton group re-enacted the sketch on the Peterloo massacre of 1819.



The preparation for the plays has gone hand in hand with street campaigns.

FEBRUARY FUND NOW £222.53

IT IS A slow uphill fight for our Fund this month. Time is slipping by leaving only 16 days to raise most of our £1,750 target. But, we are confident that you, our readers, will do everything possible to achieve our final total.

We urge you therefore—do not waste another moment. Step up this fight today.

Battle is also raging throughout the working class. Every day, workers feel the real nature of the Tories' legislation which keeps wages down and allows prices and rents to rise. Our basic right to a decent standard of living has been taken away by this Tory government.

Workers Press remains the only daily paper to speak out on behalf of workers everywhere. We will continue to defend all these basic, hard-won rights. We will do everything possible to unite the working class to force this government to resign.

We know you will back us up all the way. Therefore let's go into action today. An all-out effort now can and will change the position for our February Fund. See how much you can raise. Post all your donations immediately to:

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

GEC return for talks on steward

THREE HUNDRED GEC-AEI Rugby strikers voted yesterday to return to work this morning at 7.30 a.m. until 1.30 p.m. on Wednesday to allow a works conference on the transfer of militant AUEW steward Mr Steve Evans.

Rugby AUEW district secretary Mr Jim Hunter told the workers they had two choices: a long, drawn-out strike to prevent the steward's transfer or a return to work to allow negotiations to take place.

Mr Evans told the meeting the firm had a long history of transferring stewards in order that they lose their steward's card.

Swansea Ford men set ball rolling

ABOUT 2,000 workers at the Ford plant in SWANSEA staged a one-day stoppage yesterday in protest against the company's state-regulated pay offer.

Within hours of the £2.40 offer being made last Friday, two shifts at the HALEWOOD plant, Liverpool, walked out.

Production restarted at Halewood yesterday morning after assembly workers accepted a

shop stewards' recommendation to return to work.

At the same time at DAGENHAM in Essex, workers met in a canteen to decide what action to take in support of their £10-a-week claim.

A resolution calling for a one-day strike was defeated, as was one calling for an overtime ban. But the meeting did agree to commence strike action from March 1 if a better offer is not forthcoming.

The focus of the Ford's fight

now turns to COVENTRY next Sunday when shop stewards representing 52,000 hourly-paid workers from 21 plants will meet.

Commenting on yesterday's Swansea strike and imposition of an indefinite overtime ban, a company spokesman said:

'We are disappointed that Swansea is once again in the forefront of another conflict. Action like this and this sort of publicity cannot do any good in the long run.'

Closure-hit plant told 'work harder'

THE 600 workers who will retain their jobs at hosiery machine manufacturers William Cotton Ltd, Loughborough, have been told they must put their hearts and souls into their work to restore the business to profitability.

It was announced on Friday that nearly 700 workers are to be sacked by the company.

Workers on the shop floor have not yet discussed what action can be taken to resist the redundancies.

A meeting of the joint shop stewards' negotiating committee has been called to discuss the run-down.

Yorkshire gasmen's leaders to decide action today

BY OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

STEWARDS representing gas workers from the Yorkshire district will meet in Wakefield today to decide their next course of action.

The men—from Leeds, Wakefield, Doncaster and Castleford—returned to work on Monday after leading a three-week unofficial strike.

But they immediately introduced an overtime ban and work-to-rule in advance of the official action which the General and Municipal Workers' Union is starting at midnight tonight.

The strike action was taken when a complete vacuum appeared in the local leadership. It is understood that in the face of rising militancy, a local branch secretary suddenly resigned.

One wage slip seen by our reporter showed a man had worked for 82 hours 12 minutes for a take-home pay of £35.19. The man has a wife and

three children to support.

Philip Smith, a young fitter from Methly, near Castleford, told Workers Press the present action being proposed by the G&MWU was inadequate. The work-to-rule could be broken and permit confusion, he said.

It is ineffective and represents 'a sell-out', he said. A national strike should have been called 'and the backing of all other unions if



Mr Hart . . . Basic wage is atrocious

possible should be mobilized behind us'.

Mr Smith added: 'After seven years' training the wages we get do not allow us to live, especially with prices going up so much.'

Mr Hart, a mains layer in the Wakefield group, said: 'The union has let us down for the

last 18 months. The basic wage is atrocious. Somebody has to stand up to this government and it looks like it will be us.'

'There must be a combined effort by the whole trade union movement. The cost of living has gone up 10 per cent since November.'

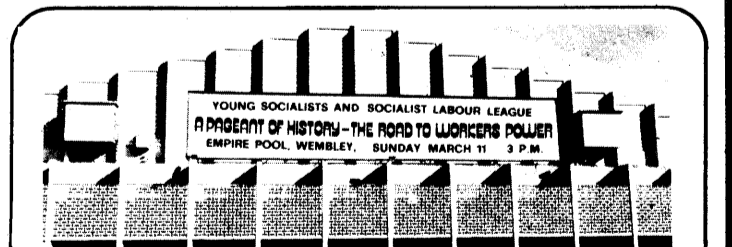
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DEFEND ALL DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

Defend trade unionism and basic living standards

Unite in action to make this Tory government resign

The road to power is through the building of the revolutionary party



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FARM WORKERS LEADER HAS FAITH IN TORIES

The 236,000 agricultural and horticultural workers in England and Wales whose £3.30 wage increase was halted by the Tories state pay laws, are being fed certain illusions by their union leadership.

In the year October 1971 to September 1972, the average earnings of all hired men in the industry were £22.61 for 47.7 hours. General farm workers earned only an average of £20.93 for 46.4 hours.

Horticultural workers got £21.28 for 45 hours, tractor drivers £22.78 for 48.8 hours and dairywomen £27.33 for 53.5 hours.

Seasonal workers' hourly rates were 41p for men aged 20 and over and 34p for women.

Wage structure rates at Grade I were £24.69 a week, at Grade II £23.07 a week and for craftsmen £21.45.

In addition, half the labour force in England and Wales live in tied cottages and their wages and Social Security costs are among the lowest in Europe.

Yet an article by general secretary Reg Bottini in the current issue of 'Land Worker'—the journal of the National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers, says: 'April 1 is end of standstill.'

Bottini totally ignores the fact that the Tory government has no intention of returning to the days of free wage bargaining and is by no means bound to honour agreements already made.

'If we are realistic,' continues Mr Bottini, 'we should recognize that the position as it affects farmworkers could be worse—a good deal worse.'

This bland statement is based entirely on 'assurances' from the Tory Ministers, who have already halted the pay rise, that they will allow it to be paid in April.

Even if they did, the rise is by no means adequate in the face of soaring inflation and it still leaves farmworkers among the lowest paid in the land. Yet Bottini urges them to take comfort from the fact that other workers will receive less than they!

'If the government is able to impose its proposed ceiling on wage increases, it is unlikely that—at least until the autumn—any pay increase awarded to other large groups of workers will reach the level of that of the farm workers,' he writes.

Not a hint of a fight against the Tory government and its policies from this trade union leader whose members have borne the brunt of the government's pay control laws while their employers' profits have soared—particularly in beef production.

Boroughs Association, warned. Inflation had wrought havoc with council finances. Rating revaluation also means a built-in increase for domestic rate-payers in many boroughs, he said in a statement.

The Association supported the Association of Municipal Corporations in its request to meet the Prime Minister. There was a need for more government money to keep rates down to the 5-per-cent increase suggested by the government, and for selective assistance to those boroughs suffering even more because of revaluation.

The statement went on: 'There has been discrimination against council tenants in the revaluation so that, everything else being equal, in some cases they will have to pay as much as 20 per cent more.'

'This is the second time in six months that council tenants have been clobbered.'

THIRTEEN AGEING TORIES STAND DOWN FOR HEATH

The Tory Party is placing itself on war-footing to fight a snap General Election. In the past few weeks no less than 13 ageing Tories have stepped down.

They have all announced that they do not intend standing at the next election. The local constituency parties are busily finding new candidates and these are coming from among the 'Heath-men', the band of journalists and businessmen who are machine politicians connected with the party's Central Office.

There are certain intriguing characteristics about the 13 standing down. They belong to the older Churchillian period of the party's history. They are mostly right-wingers and the majority are titled.

They have military backgrounds and they are pronounced advocates of the Common Market. The party's headquarters is reluctant to talk about the sudden number of retirements, but it is believed there are still more on the way.

It is known, however, that they all deeply distrust the state pay laws which Heath is trying to march through parliament. They belong to the Powellite school of economic theory which believes in the 'free market forces'. They regard Heath's wages legislation as 'creeping socialism' and think the whole show will blow up in the government's face.

One political correspondent told Workers Press: 'By and large they appear to be getting out while the going's good.'

Those who are standing down are:

- Sir Malcolm Stoddart-Scott, MP for Ripon, and deputy lieutenant of the West Riding of Yorkshire.
- Sir Charles Taylor, Eastbourne division of East Sussex, president of Grosvenor House (Park Lane) Limited, ex-colonel in the Territorial Army.
- Colonel Sir Tufton Beamish, Lewes division of East Sussex, a member of the executive of



Duncan Sandys, one of those who will not stand in next election

the European Movement, chairman of the Conservative group for Europe, formerly of Sandhurst.

● The Honourable Sir Clive Bosson, Leominster, major and member of the Kent County Constabulary, president of the Anglo-Belgian Union, and director of an aggressive merchant banking group run by John Cuckney, former head of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board.

● Major Sir Harry d'Avigdor-Goldsmid, Walsall South, who became temporary chairman of the embattled Pergamon Press group when Robert Maxwell, Labour MP, had to quit.

● Sir Tatton Brinton, Kidderminster, served with the Royal Lancers, former Sheriff of Worcestershire, and chairman and managing director of Brintons Limited of Kidderminster, carpet manufacturers.

● Joseph Hiley, Pudsey, president of the West Leeds Conservative Association, director of Readicut International Limited and a member of Lloyds.

● The Right Honourable Robert Turton, MC, Thirsk and Malton, deputy lieutenant North Riding of Yorkshire, joint under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs from 1954 to 1955, owner of 1,900 acres at Upsall and 500 acres on the western slopes of the Hambleton Hills.

● Gilbert Longden, Hertfordshire South-West, served with Durham Light Infantry, UK delegate to the Council of Europe in 1954 to 1956, on the executive committee of the British Council and the 1922 committee. He is also chairman of the Great Britain-East Europe Centre and vice-president of the British Atlantic Committee.

● The Right Honourable Michael Noble, Argyllshire, ex-Secretary of State for Scotland, and a senior director of the fish monopoly, Associated Fisheries.

● Duncan Sandys, Streatham, member of the wartime army council, chairman of the war cabinet committee for defence against the 'V' weapons; founder of the European Movement, forerunner of the EEC, president of the European Nostra since 1969, now chairman of the Lonrho mining and finance group.

● John Jennings, Burton, Staffordshire, sponsored by the National Union of Teachers, ex-chairman of the Tory Party's education committee, ex-headmaster of a Church of England primary school near Burton.

● Dame Irene Ward, Tyne-mouth, ex-member of the parliamentary public accounts committee, former private secretary to a leading industrialist and coal owner.

RATES SHOCK FOR SMALL BUSINESS

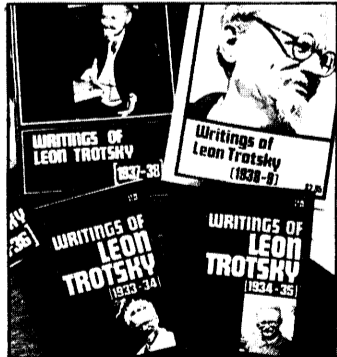
Rate shocks for small businessmen are on the increase. We recently reported massive rate rises in Kidderminster of 1,000 per cent.

Now a filling-station tenant in Ashfield Road, Sale, Cheshire, has had his rateable value hoisted from £226 to £2,226.

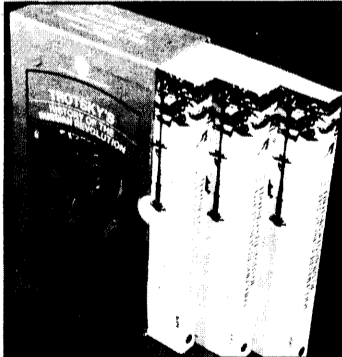
The tenant—Mr David Mazdon—says that even if the figure were cut, it could well put him out of business.

Rates in some London boroughs may rise by between 20 per cent and 30 per cent this year, Alderman Lou Sherman, chairman of the London

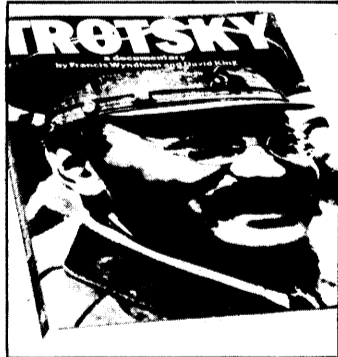
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THE COLLAPSE OF THE MITCHELL CONSTRUCTION GROUP

The collapse of the Mitchell Construction group has meant the sacking of 1,000 Scottish building workers.

It had earlier been suggested that the brunt of the company's financial problems would fall on its employees overseas, particularly in Zambia. Mr Tom McTurk, Scottish regional organizer of the Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians (UCATT), has announced: 'About 1,000 Scottish building trades workers—800 in our union—have lost their jobs.'

'The situation is serious. We are trying to arrange a meeting with Mr Paul Shewell, the Receiver, who is working from the company headquarters at Peterborough.'

The sackings are mainly from Mitchell Camus Limited,

which builds houses, and its sub-contractors. Sites at Cumbernauld, Greenock, East Kilbride, Irvine, Glasgow, Hamilton and Coatbridge are at a standstill.

Mitchell Construction, building and civil engineering contractors, has completed about 60 per cent of the work on a town centre development at Greenock, worth almost £1m, and is 85 per cent of the way through an open drainage and sewer contract for Renfrew County Council at Erskine, worth more than £500,000.

There are other unfinished jobs: work is nearing completion on a seawall for Edinburgh Corporation at Seafield worth about £1m and a sewage purification scheme valued at more than £500,000 for Dunfermline Town Council.

THE OUTCOME OF THE GAULLIST REFORMS

The disastrous fire which killed 23 victims in a Paris secondary school last week is becoming a serious embarrassment to the Gaullist regime with less than a month before the National Assembly elections.

The school, which was built less than three years ago, burned 'like a box of matches', according to eye-witnesses. A fireman who arrived on the scene shortly after the outbreak said it had spread 'with stupefying rapidity'.

Situated in a working-class area a few yards from the Buttes-Chaumont in the north of the city, the school was being used for an evening music class when the fire broke out.

The blaze began at about 7.45 p.m. and firemen were on the scene within minutes. But they had hardly time to start their pumps before the whole building was in flames.

Many of the 60-odd children at the music class fled to the first-floor balcony where passers-by rescued them. But others must have been overcome by fumes and perished inside the school.

Distraught parents had to wait for hours before they were told the fate of their children and many sat in the local council offices all night while firemen brought out the charred bodies.

The final death toll was 23—19 children, three teachers and a woman caretaker. On Monday, parents from all over France joined a demonstration outside the local council offices in mourning for the dead and demanding the punishment of those responsible for the disaster.

Some of the parents have already taken steps to initiate court proceedings and two inquiries—one judicial, the other set up by the Ministry of Education—are already underway.

The disaster is dynamite for the Gaullists, whose Education Ministry has built at least 50

schools along almost exactly the same lines in different parts of France.

Behind the Paris blaze is a story of official neglect and indifference which springs from the regime's huge cuts in education expenditure. Jerry-built schools, built without any noticeable safety standards, have been run up for working-class children all over the country.

Almost from the day it opened this particular school was the subject of parents', teachers' and local councillors' protests, which were received with bureaucratic complacency. Nothing was done to remove the basic causes of disaster.

According to Mme Colette Jacob, of the parent-teacher association, the ground under the school began to subside almost as soon as the pupils moved in in September 1970.

DEFECTS

By March 1970, part of the school yard and an outside staircase were already unusable. The subsidence undermined the pipes linking the oil storage tanks with the school's central-heating system.

An examination revealed defects in the heating, plumbing and electricity. But nothing was done about them. The situation became so bad that the headmistress grew tired of writing letters to the Ministry and called a special meeting on January 3, 1971.

An architect and builders' representative were called in to meet the school board.

The minutes of the meeting reveal that the electrical fittings were sub-standard, with short-circuits and badly-insulated wires. The fuses blew whenever sewing machines, television sets, vacuum cleaners and teaching aids put any load on the circuit.

Others claimed the subsidence was threatening to burst the oil pipeline. They also said that the paving tiles were being blown about and broken by the wind in bad weather.

Attempts to get these defects put right were not suc-



Above: the burning school in Paris last week which killed 23 children

cessful. The work that was done did nothing to change the underlying problems. More than a year after this debacle, local Communist Party councillor, Andre Sibaud, wrote to the Prefect of Paris.

Sibaud's letter, dated March 11, 1972, drew attention to the 'particularly worrying difficulties' facing the school. It summarized the history of the defects in the school's construction:

'On March 4, 1970, an inquiry drew attention to a certain number of defects in the heating, plumbing, electricity and subsidence and slippages of earth around the school. Despite the seriousness and the urgency of these problems, nothing was done, making it necessary to hold a further meeting on January 3, 1971, with an architect and representatives of the firms which built

the school.

'But the administrative council (of the school), when it met on March 1, 1972, was only able to record some improvement which did nothing to solve the basic problems. It is particularly urgent that action is taken to stop the continual slippages of earth.

'Part of the yard is unusable, as well as an exit staircase. The slippages of earth—behind the school and the caretakers' residence—are becoming very worrying because the pipeline linking the oil storage tank to the heating system is in danger of breaking.

'It seems that some of the firms involved do not want to undertake the necessary repairs. More than two years after the school opened, the administration has yet to certify that all building work is finished. We ask Monsieur the Prefect of Paris to take immediate action to put right this alarming situation.'

Sibaud and his colleagues had to wait over three months while the Prefect mulled over his reply to their letter. Finally, on June 20, 1972, he wrote back as follows:

'The state [Ministry of National Education] as overseer of the construction of the school, has assumed charge of and responsibility for the work.' He assured the councillors that the repairs were in hand.

RISK

The architect had been told several times about the situation and asked to put it right as soon as possible, the Prefect wrote. He was more complacent than the pupils. In an essay on the topic 'The Consequences of Scientific Progress', one 14-year-old at the school recently wrote:

'My school is prefabricated. It's nice, but it's falling apart. When there's too much wind the cardboard ceiling lifts off. The ground in the yard is split in two: you'd think there had been an earthquake. It's really not very reassuring. You risk your skin every day at my school.'

The school at Buttes-Chaumont was built in a Ministry-

approved 'modular' style. This involves the construction of a light steel frame into which factory-built walls and floors are inserted. The wall units in some cases were of plastic, in others of cement and wood.

The metalwork is covered in 'fire-resistant' plaster or cement and there are false ceilings which are supposed to provide extra protection against the spread of fire. The rooms are supposed to be able to retain a fire for one hour without it spreading.

According to the Ministry and the builder, this system is standard and conforms to the normal fire regulations. But in fact experts cast considerable doubt on the effectiveness of this system of fire protection. They say that under certain circumstances the metal framework can become a fire conductor due to insufficient insulation.

They add that the dividing walls and the space between the false and real ceilings can act as a fire transmitter, carrying flames and hot gases from room to room.

Perhaps the biggest danger arises from the allocation and overseeing of the estimated 4,000 similar contracts throughout France.

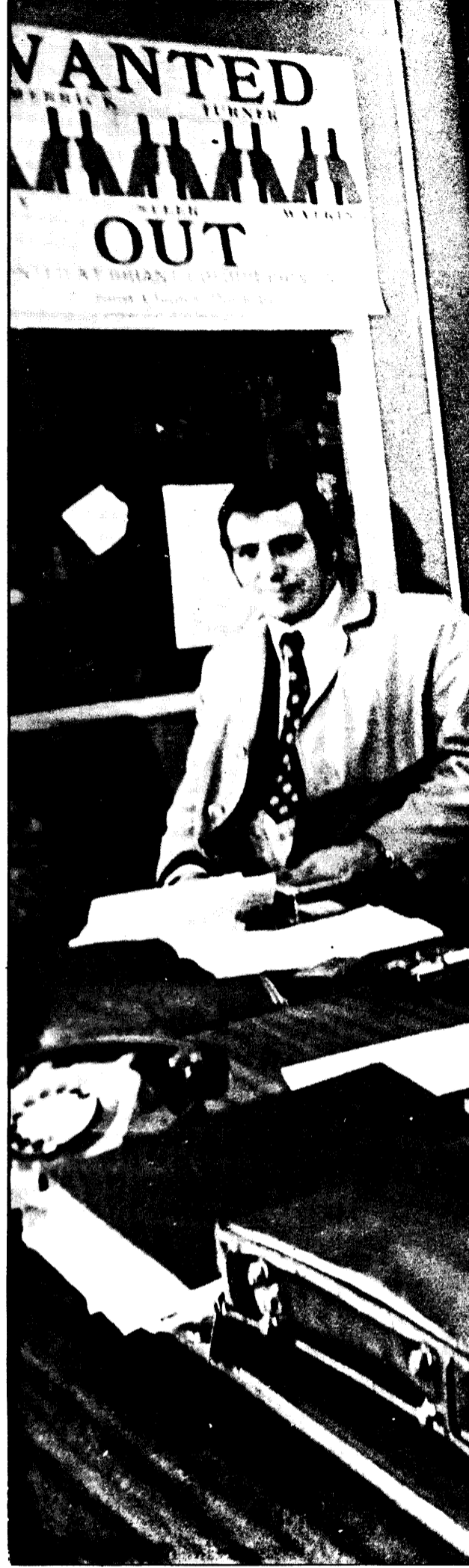
This gives the contractor every incentive to skimp as much as he can on the work and to ignore problems caused by the lie of the land and the situation of the building. The price of a contract under this system is based on the floor area of the building, according to a Ministry formula.

Any additional costs have to be met by the local authority. The system puts a high premium on cheapness and a low premium on safety.

This is the outcome of the Gaullist educational 'reforms' which have considerably undermined the standard of the entire education system.

Certainly the Ministry of Education and the government have a lot to answer for. They have not heard the last of Buttes-Chaumont. Their electoral opponents, and particularly the Stalinists, are determined to make the most of the disaster.





COURT DEADLINE FOR BRIANT WORKERS

'ELIZABETH the SECOND, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Our other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith.'

These words preface the High Court writ which has been served on the five leaders of the seven-month occupation at the Briant Colour Printing plant on the Old Kent Road. The writ goes on: 'We command that within 14 days after the service of this writ on you, inclusive of the day of service, you do cause an appearance to be entered by you in an action at the suit of Briant Colour Printing Company Limited and take notice that in default of your so doing the Plaintiff may proceed therein, and judgement may be given in your absence.'

'Witness, Quintin McGarel Baron Hailsham of St Marylebone, Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain.'

Today the 14 days are up. Unless court appearances by the five defendants are made, they face contempt of court proceedings. In British 'law' contempt charges can mean unlimited fines and imprisonment. The decision to defy the writs was taken at a mass meeting of more than 100 Briant workers on Wednesday, January 31. A statement from the joint chapels committee said: 'It was decided that we would resist all moves to enforce the writs.'

'This is not a legal issue. It is a social and moral

issue of men and women's right to defend the right to work. If our actions bring us into contempt of court or into conflict with the law, then it is about time the law was changed. If it is a crime to fight for the right to work, then we, the Briant workers, plead guilty. But let the men and women of this country judge us, not the High Courts.'

The writ demands that the plant, the building and the books be handed over to the liquidator, Mr P. Granville-White. The writ says that the Briant employees 'on the level of manager and below thereupon wrongfully and unlawfully and acting in concert together seized physical control of the said factory premises and the machinery and equipment therein and to this day retain such control and refuse to quit the said premises or to permit the plaintiffs or their agents to enter freely or have possession of such premises or any part thereof.' The court writ also includes a claim for costs which could run into thousands of pounds.

In London this afternoon a march and mass lobby of parliament has been organized by the Briant committee. Workers Press has maintained consistent support for the Briant men's fight for jobs—though we have often been critical of the tactics and politics of the leadership.

● In tomorrow's Workers Press we will be publishing an assessment of the Briant struggle and its future.

Above left: In July last year London dockers marched from... Below: the five occupation leaders, left to right;





Above left: In July last year London dockers marched from Tower Hill to Briant Colour to assist pickets being intimidated by police. Above: Bill Freeman publicly burns the original of the High Court writ served on him at the end of January. Below: the five occupation leaders, left to right; William Freeman NATSOPA FoC; Norman Pennington SOGAT FoC; John Wickham NGA FoC; Christine Brazil SOGAT (Division A) FoC; William Sawyer NATSOPA and RIRMA FoC.



London dockers marched from Tower Hill to Briant Colour to assist pickets being intimidated by police. Above: Bill Freeman publicly burns the original of the High Court writ served on him at the end of picket line; William Freeman NATSOPA FoC; Norman Pennington SOGAT FoC; John Wickham NGA FoC; Christine Brazil SOGAT (Division A) FoC; William Sawyer NATSOPA and RIRMA FoC.



PART TWO

The present Brazilian government has elaborated a 'Doctrine of National Security' — the country is declared to be 'a privileged satellite' of the USA within the 'Democratic and Christian' bloc.

It says it has a 'non-competitive economy' in relation to the USA and to be engaged in 'a struggle against communism and all socialist ideologies'.

A Council of National Security (CSN) and a National Information Service (SNI) carry out this 'struggle'.

Electors have a 'choice' between the ruling Alliance for National Renewal (ARENA) and the 'opposition' — the Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB). But all candidates on both lists have to bind themselves in advance to accept the policies of President Garrastazu Medici, boss of ARENA.

In 1967 Decree 314 was passed. This declared: 'National security guarantees the realization of national objectives against all opposition, whether internal or external.' It designated 'abuses of the Press' and strikes as political crimes.

On December 13, 1968, the then President, Marechal Costa e Silva, signed Institutional Act No 5.

This was a discretionary act which adjourned Congress for an indeterminate period, suspended *habeas corpus* for political crimes, suspended all rights of the individual and gave full powers to the President. It was accompanied by a list of thousands of people whose civil and political rights were simply revoked.

This Act provided for sentences of four to 12 years imprisonment for 'infiltrating ideas incompatible with the constitution'; two to four years for 'a moral offence to anyone in authority'; six years for 'offending the honour or dignity of the President'; and ten to 20 years for 'subversion of the socio-political order' (15-30 years if this is done via Press, radio or TV).

In March 1959, Decree 510 added to the list of political crimes and increased the penalties.

In September 1969, Decree Law 898 reintroduced the death penalty for political crimes. (The death sentence had been abolished in Brazil in 1822 after independence.)

Decree Law 477, passed on February 26, 1969, gave police powers to heads of university faculties, including the right to suspend teachers and students without inquiry.

Student newspapers and unions were banned under this law and 1,000 students were expelled from the universities in the first year of its operation.

Schools were compelled to teach a 'Morals and Civics' course in which one of the main books was written by Plinio Salgado, the secretary of the Brazilian fascists — the 'Brazilian Integralist Action'.

Known Salgado supporters in the government include Raimondo Padilha, the second-ranking leader of ARENA, and Filinto Muller, its chairman.

The most rigid censorship operates in Brazil.

Article 16 of the 1967 Press Law prohibited 'propaganda for political or social subversion' or news 'tending to promote a lack of confidence in the banking system or the credit of any company or government body'. Breach of this law is a political crime. Police censors were placed on the news desk of papers, radios and television companies.

On June 7, 1969, the Ministry of Justice circularized restrictions on what could or could not be reported by Press, radio or TV. This included the

BRAZIL: THE TORTURE MACHINE

BY JACK GALE



Above: Interrogation of a captured guerrilla. Thousands of political prisoners have been in jail for years 'awaiting trial'.

following list. **DO NOT:** DIVULGE news, commentaries, manifestos or declarations against the acts of the Federal government relating to expulsions from elected positions, suspensions of political rights, the decrees of expulsion, compulsory retirement, discharge or transfer to the reserves of public officials, civil or military; only the official decrees should be reproduced.

DIVULGE any news that is of a nature that could create tensions among the authorities or could provoke differences of opinion.

DIVULGE by any means news relating to events of a political nature whose truth has not been duly proved.

DIVULGE tendentious criticisms of the Institutional Acts and Complementary Acts or resulting legislation.

PUBLISH news relating to arrests of a political nature or to censorship unless it is furnished by the competent authority.

DIVULGE news or commentaries capable of provoking ill-feeling within the armed forces or between them and the public authorities or public opinion.

PUBLISH news, commentaries, interviews or declarations, even via a third party of a person who has been the object of any sanction established in Institutional Acts nos. 1, 2 and 5 of April 9, 1964, October 27, 1965, and December 13, 1968, relating to political subjects.

PUBLISH news, commentaries, interviews or declarations of any kind relating to student bodies legally dissolved or whose functioning has been suspended by act of government (UNE, UME, FUEB), or referring to the political or extra-mural activities of stud-

ents, such as protests, school strikes, demonstrations, conflicts between themselves, with teachers or with the agents of authority.

DIVULGE by any means news, commentaries, interviews or declarations which could prejudice the economic policy of the government.

DISSEMINATE news of workers' movements, strikes or any other kind of act capable of subverting public order, nor use large headlines relating to subversive movements in foreign countries, violent plans of action, guerrilla fighting, etc., nor show television films of movements of this nature.

On the visit of Nelson Rockefeller (in 1969):

1. DO NOT publish or divulge, in any form whatsoever, news of acts hostile to our illustrious visitor in any country in Latin America or news which refers to the adjournment or suspension of his visit.

2. DO NOT use any photograph of demonstrations hostile to him.

3. COLLABORATE in the creation of a welcoming atmosphere for the representative of the United States of America during his goodwill mission.

A further censorship measure in January 1970, made compulsory the submission of all books, magazines and foreign publications to the Federal police before publication.

And in May 1972, all live television broadcasting was banned — apart from pre-censored news bulletins. All programmes have to be videotaped in advance and submitted to the censors.

In September last year a special Press code from the Minister of Justice banned the publication on September 5 of Amnesty's 'Allegations of

Torture in Brazil', which included an appendix of 1,081 tortured prisoners and the names of 472 torturers.

Institutional Act No 13 established banishment as a penalty and Decree 69.534 authorizes the President of the Republic to promulgate 'secret decrees'. Banishment can be imposed at the suggestion of the Ministers of State for Justice, the navy, the army and the air force. This is not subject to inquiry or appeal.

Article 53 Section 11 of the Constitution says that the death sentence, life imprisonment, banishment or confiscation of goods can be applied in case of war or 'an internal and psychological, revolutionary or subversive struggle'.

Political trials — and there are at the moment thousands of political prisoners who have been in jail for years 'awaiting trial' — go through three phases. THE FIRST is the 'police investigations' stage, during which the prisoner is held in the army or police barracks reserved for 'interrogations'. Article 18 of the Code of Military Penal Procedure allows for detention for a period of 50 days during this stage. This detention is kept secret and it is here that most of the torture sessions take place.

THE SECOND stage of the proceedings is the 'police inquiry' stage, or Inquerito Policia Militar (IPM). These take place in the interrogation centres of the Department for Political and Social Order (DEOPS), of which there is one in each of Brazil's 22 states. Defence lawyers are not informed of these inquiries, which can continue incomunicado for several months.

The interrogations carried

out during the 'police investigation' are repeated at DEOPS, although the 'investigations' stage goes on until the prisoner has confessed or admitted all the charges brought against him.

At the 'inquiry' stage, prosecution evidence is admitted and the prisoner is required to sign the depositions made by him during his 'investigation'. If he refuses to do so he is returned for more of the 'investigation' stage.

THE THIRD stage takes place only when the prisoner has admitted to all the accusations laid against him and signed a statement of his guilt. He then goes before a military tribunal for his 'judicial hearing'. Brazil is divided into 11 sections for 'military justice', each section having two military courts. In addition, Rio de Janeiro has three military courts supervised by the army, two by the navy and two by the air force.

Throughout Brazil there are 20 such courts (there are three in Sao Paulo) which, since 1968, have heard on average 70 to a 100 political cases each a year.

Above the military tribunal stands the Higher Military Tribunal which consists of five civilian magistrates and ten generals.

Prosecution witnesses are frequently police employees, or they may even be the people who have tortured the defendant — in which case they are merely there to say that the accused has signed his statement of his own free will.

Defence witnesses are rare, for the excellent reason that such witnesses are invariably called to the police station to 'explain' their sympathy with the accused.

CONTINUED TOMORROW

WORKERS NOTEBOOK

Ironic

Poor Jewish families living on plots of land at Givat Amal A' outside Tel Aviv have protested to the municipal council that the land has been sold over their heads.

They want the council to reveal to whom the land has been sold. The irony of the situation is that the land where the families live was originally taken from a Palestinian Arab village whose inhabitants were forced into exile.

The expansion of Tel Aviv has caused a rise in land prices and property speculators are now making a fortune out of the expropriated land. The sitting tenants who never had title to the land are then asked to leave.

Protected

Pictured here is union bureaucrat John Edmonds protected by part of a squad of 60 policemen on duty outside the executive committee meeting of the General and Municipal Workers' Union which finally acceded to members' demands to call a national gas strike.

The protection was needed. The announcement, made over the police microphone of course, while calling the first official stoppage since the General Strike, also asked for a further delay of seven days

before starting the action in order to give the Gas Corporation official notice.

The announcement was also hedged around with other unclaritys. What is proposed is a 'campaign of stoppages, works-to-rule, and withdrawal of co-operation', details to be worked out locally, instead of the all-out strike the 1,000 lobbyists were demanding.

Edmonds, who went straight from Oxford University into the General and Municipal Workers' Union hierarchy at Ruxley Towers, Esher, has never been an ordinary worker. As he announced the executive's foot-dragging decision, he was howled down with shouts of 'Tory bastard' and 'If you haven't got the guts to lead a strike, get out of your job and let someone else take over'.

He was then escorted through the jeering crowd of gasworkers by a solid phalanx of the guardians of state property back to the stylish comfort of the Bonnington Hotel where Edmonds's expensive suit and executive appearance seemed more at home.

As he returned from his rough treatment, he was heard to comment:

'Even if I had announced an immediate all-out strike, that lot would still have jeered me.'



POLITICAL PROFILES

By LEON TROTSKY
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Sharp pen-portraits of leading figures of the Second International in Russia and Europe, for the first time published in an English edition. The translations were first commissioned by the Young Socialists' paper 'Keep Left'. Their enormous success has led to the completion of the translation of the whole book, which is the first part of Volume 8 of Leon Trotsky's 'Works' published in the Soviet Union in 1926. It provides the most vivid picture available of the historic figures of the Second International, their strengths and weaknesses, written by an observer who was also a participant in the daily struggle of the European and Russian working class.

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PEACEFUL ART THAT REQUIRED A REVOLUTION

ART BY A GUEST REVIEWER

In the first half of the 17th century, while the English bourgeoisie were preparing the revolution against Charles I and the social relics of feudalism, the Dutch United Provinces were already enjoying the fruits of their revolution

Some of these are on display this month in a small exhibition at the National Gallery of land- and river-scapes attributed to the Dordrecht painter Aelbert Cuyp (1620-1691).

The Dutch bourgeois revolution took the form of a long war of national liberation against the Catholic monarchy of Spain. The Dutch forces were led by the Orange Protestant, William the Silent, and his descendants.

By 1609 they had virtually expelled the Spanish from the northern Netherlands and with peace came prosperity, a swift growth of sea power and trading and a rich empire in the East and West Indies—rivalry with the Dutch was one of the main concerns of British foreign policy under Cromwell.

With the prosperity came Europe's first flowering of 'democratic' art. The new middle class were prosperous, but seldom very wealthy. Unlike the great aristocrats and churchmen of Catholic Europe they commissioned small easel paintings rather than palaces, statues and murals.

Even famous and successful painters, such as Rembrandt, painted for the small tradesmen in Amsterdam. For the first time paintings became a commodity, traded in hundreds at the town fairs—the 'Kermesses'.

Artists were faced with a critical and appreciative mass clientele—according to an English traveller in 1640: '... blacksmiths, Cobblers etts., will have some picture or other by their forge and in their stalle. Such is the generall

Notion, enclination and delight that these Country Natives have to painting.' ('The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia: 1608-1667').

These 'delighted' (and patriotic) Dutchmen were above all interested in themselves and their country—and therefore in portraits and landscapes. Cuyp was a landscape artist who lived a long, tranquil and charitable life in Dordrecht, where he married a rich woman and spent his later years managing her estate. He painted several hundred canvasses, mainly before 1660, and most of them contain identifiable landmarks from the area.

Paradoxically, the landscapes of the 17th century—the great age of landscape—usually contain less 'land' than earlier works. Cuyp's small painting, 'Horseman, peasants and cattle', shows some of the best results of this.

Imagine with him that you are standing on the plain near Dordrecht, gazing past the cows and across the broads with the sun high on your left. Most of what you see—that is, what actually meets your eye—will not be land or sea or cow, but sky. Realism, that is to say, brings the horizon down below your eye and 'fills' the canvas with airspace—the source of light.

Consequently the land, the plants, the animals and the figure are lit from all directions, each bright surface shaping only into relative shade. Instead of an oversimplified single light source, the rays scatter, as in reality, throughout the painting's space.

But Cuyp is not only a realist, but also a patriot. And since the northern sun is too cool and unflattering to illuminate his beloved countryside properly, he has borrowed a warm, golden Italian light from the earlier Dutch painters who travelled south and painted the Roman campagna. As if to underline the presence of this sunshine, the lower foreground is planted with a rich, almost



Cromwell, maker of the English bourgeois revolution. Above: The painting entitled 'Horsemen, peasants and cattle' by Aelbert Cuyp, painted about 1640.

tropical, line of leaves.

It is Cuyp's eye for the effects of light that gives such vanishing distance to the horizon and sky and it is this light, rather than anatomy, that gives the cows their shapes, pressed close to the earth from which they have grown. It suffuses the scene, coming up from the water as well as down from the sky; it seems to make the whole countryside happy and virtuous.

And this is the inner meaning of the light, of the painting and of the spiritual youth of this Dutch bourgeoisie.

At that time the court painters of Italy were trying to make convincing pictures of heaven for the princes and cardinals who paid them by cramming their scenes with all the luxury, ornament and spectacle that earth could provide. But Aelbert Cuyp put on canvas the conviction of his class that it was possible to create, here below, by diligence, good works and kindly imagination, an entirely recognisable human paradise.

The bourgeoisie could not realize his vision, but his paintings are well worth studying. Peaceful as they are, they required a revolution to produce them.

Corporatist co-operation with the Act UPW conference by courtesy of lawyers

'NOW WE'VE got the solicitor. Very soon it's going to be the policeman, on the shop floor. What I want to know is, is the union backing down over the Industrial Relations Act?'—Frank O'Rourke, Accrington postman, at Bournemouth on Sunday, February 11.

FRANK O'ROURKE'S 33-word warning, delivered in a shouting-match with the chair, sums up the Union of Post Office Workers' conference just ended far better than any of yesterday's closing speeches.

For the conference—the first big union get-together since the imposition of statutory pay control—gave just a hint of the things to come if the Tories get their way in the unions.

A UPW activist of long standing, Frank O'Rourke speaks rarely. But he has a knack of hitting the truth on the jaw.

Last May he chided the executive on its attitude to the Industrial Relations Act; within five months it was co-operating with the National Industrial Relations Court. On Sunday he spotlighted the increasingly corporatist attitudes and procedures of the leadership.

I talked to Frank shortly after his clash with the platform, sparked by their attempt to arrange the agenda on solicitors' advice in line with the anti-union Act.

'Where are we going in this union?' he asked. 'What's all this about "legality" all of a sudden?'

'My feeling is that gradually the Industrial Relations Act is being accepted here.

'First we're told we can't debate wages at the conference, now this. If this goes on we'll all be sewing mail-bags rather than delivering them.'

Two hours later an outspoken speech from UPW secretary Tom Jackson amply bore out what Frank had said.

Jackson's 60-minute address to the conference was, in essence, a classic apology for the corporate state. If the unions didn't co-operate with Heath, he said, Heath would be replaced by Powell. An all-out strike movement against the Tories, with fighting in the streets, would open the door to a more repressive government.

Asked by a London overseas telephonist, Alf Slowman, why the unions couldn't either keep away from the Tory highwaymen or go in hard against them with the boot, Jackson answered reluctantly with the claim: 'I can't keep well away, and I haven't got a big boot.'

So today Jackson and the leaders of five other unions in the Post Office will visit the Tories' Employment Secretary, Maurice Macmillan, to offer a deal over their mem-

FROM DAVID MAUDE
OUR LABOUR CORRESPONDENT



Alf Flower, a Stoke-on-Trent postman, takes home less than £19 a week after 18 years in the Post Office. He harried the executive for a statement on pay.

bers' £5 across-the-board pay claim.

The form of the proposed deal—as reported in Saturday's Workers Press—is acceptance of Phase Two state pay control in return for promises of a 'fairer' Phase Three.

Although pointing out that thousands of his members were now finding it difficult to make ends meet, Jackson admitted on Sunday that this was his executive's policy. He attempted to appease rank-and-file anger by saying they were 'arguing very strongly' to make as much as possible out of the government's £1 plus 4 per cent Phase Two guideline.

Again this is classic. Sharply aware that a major clash between the Tories and the working class is inevitable, the union bureaucracy tries to infect those who pay its wages with its own cowardice. Meanwhile the employers and the extreme right utilize the time lost in this way to prepare their own measures.

But the UPW conference also demonstrated the extreme weakness and vulnerability of this bureaucracy.

Only by the most blatant procedural manoeuvring was the platform able to prevent a major revolt by the floor. Using the UPW rule book as a giant steamroller, all policy discussion on the pay laws was cleared off the agenda. But this is a situation which plainly cannot be maintained for long; sooner rather than later there must be a reckoning.

This much became clear when the conference burst into life on Sunday morning over the twin issues of wages and the Industrial Relations Act.

The eruption started over two controversial rulings by conference chairman, Beryl Treble.

No discussions on Jackson's wages statement would be allowed, the chairman announced. Questions only would be taken.

A Londonderry delegate, Paul Grace, was told to 'Sit down and be a good boy' when he protested at the procedure.

Stan Hyde, a South Shields postman, who said he hadn't travelled hundreds of miles to be told he couldn't debate wages, was warned that if he pressed his point, wages might not be discussed at all.

Similar techniques were deployed against a London resolution on compulsory overtime, which Post Office workers can be forced to work at extremely short notice.

The London postmen's district council had wanted to move that in the event of Post Office compulsory overtime rules not being rescinded by October 1, 1973, 'the executive shall advise or instruct members of the union not to comply with those rules after that date'.

The chairman had ruled this out of order—allowing no



There was no policy debate on wages at the UPW conference—but delegates were allowed to agree financial measures giving the executive £8 a week extra. Tom Jackson (centre) discusses tactics with treasurer Fred Moss (right).

discussion of her decision.

But after Jackson had sought the advice of the union's solicitors, Treble told the conference that the motion would be admissible—if amended in line with the Industrial Relations Act.

Reference was made to the NIRC judgement in April last year on the railwaymen's overtime ban, that it constituted 'irregular industrial action short of a strike' within the terms of the Act.

The UPW solicitors proposed a revised wording of the London motion that 'in the event of compulsory overtime rules not being rescinded by October 1, 1973, conference recommends to the executive council that the executive council should then seriously consider advising or instructing members of the union not to comply with those rules after that date'.

Continually interrupting delegates who attempted to raise points of order, the conference chairman refused to allow a debate on this proposal.

'A formal proposition is not open to debate,' she declared.

On a show of hands the platform's position was clearly defeated. But then a card vote was called. A narrow majority of 8,607 to 7,480 was obtained for the platform.

Sunday's statement on wages came only after continuous pressure from the floor throughout Saturday—and written demands from more than 40 branches.

As delegates debated whether to increase contributions by 1p from April or July this year, rather than next January as the executive proposed, Alf Flower (Stoke-on-Trent) went to the rostrum to declare:

'If we were going back to the branches to tell the mem-

bers we're getting a £5 rise, all right. But we're not. So until that happens I will have no part of it.'

The proposals to start the increased contributions earlier than January 1, 1974, were defeated.

Jim Birnie (Edinburgh) asked whether Jackson intended making a statement on wages, and was told that the decision rested with a Saturday lunch-time meeting of the executive. But after that meeting had proved abortive, breaking up without a decision, the clamps went down hard.

John Pegg, a London overseas telephonist was interrupted by the chairman for even mentioning the wage freeze in a speech on push-button dialling equipment. And the platform rode out later demands for a statement in silence.

The cynicism of this particular intervention showed up later when Jackson let slip that the payment for installation of the push-button equipment, for which the executive had by then obtained the go-ahead from conference, would probably be blocked by the Tories.

Bournemouth has brought out with great sharpness the urgency of the struggle for alternative, revolutionary leadership in the unions.

The only answer to Jackson is the diametrical opposite of his position: mobilization of the unions to force the Tories out of office, and replace them with a Labour government pledged to socialist policies.

There can be no half-measures in the fight for the independence of the unions from the capitalist state. The only organizations fighting on this perspective are the All Trades Unions Alliance and the Socialist Labour League.

Socialist Labour League Public Meetings UNITE IN ACTION TO DEFEND BASIC RIGHTS

CLAPHAM
WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 14,
8pm
South Island Library
South Island Place
Stockwell, SW9
speaker: MIKE BANDA
(SLL Central Cttee)

WATFORD
MONDAY FEBRUARY 19, 8pm
Trades Union Hall
near Watford Junction stn
speaker: MIKE BANDA
(SLL Central Cttee)

NORTH KENT
MONDAY FEBRUARY 19, 8pm
The Shakespeare,
Powis Street
Woolwich
speaker: G HEALY
(SLL National Sec)

ACTON
TUESDAY FEBRUARY 20, 8pm
Woodlands Hall,
Crown Street
speaker: G HEALY
(SLL National Sec)

London

WANDSWORTH
THURSDAY FEBRUARY 22,
8pm
Wandsworth Town Hall
Wandsworth High Street
speaker: MIKE BANDA
(SLL Central Cttee)

SLOUGH
WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 28
8pm
Britwell Community Centre
Long Furlong Drive
Britwell Estate
speaker: G HEALY
(SLL National Sec)

MEDWAY
TUESDAY FEBRUARY 27, 8pm
Aurora Hotel
Brompton Road
Gillingham
speaker: MIKE BANDA
(SLL Central Cttee)

DAGENHAM
THURSDAY MARCH 1, 8pm
Manor Park Library
Romford Rd/Rabbits Road
opp Rabbits Pub
speaker: G HEALY
(SLL National Sec)

BRADFORD
THURSDAY FEBRUARY 22,
7.30 p.m.
Central Library
Top of Hall Ings.
Speaker:
Cliff Slaughter
(SLL Central Committee)

BIRMINGHAM
SUNDAY FEBRUARY 25, 7pm
Digbeth, Civic Hall
Digbeth, Birmingham
speaker: MIKE BANDA
(SLL Central Cttee)

ARMY private Paul Rees Owens (21) was remanded in custody at a special Belfast court on Sunday accused of murdering Private James Francis Leadbeater

(23) at Holywood barracks. Owens, of Thornaby-on-Tees, Yorkshire, will appear again on February 23. Both men were in the 1st Battalion, the Prince of Wales' Own Regiment.

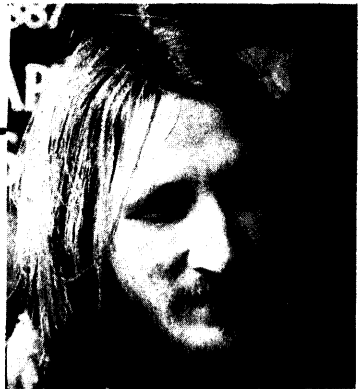
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THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

Fill in the form below and send to NATIONAL SECRETARY, SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE, 186a CLAPHAM HIGH ST, LONDON SW4 7UG.

Name.....

Address.....



John Sheen

GASWORKERS in Scotland, the north, the Midlands and the London area are ready to follow a lead for all-out strike action. As it is, despite the lack of leadership, men have voted at a good half of the yards to strike rather than work-to-rule.

Even when the official recommendation was to end the unofficial guerrilla strikes in favour of the officially-approved mixed campaign, large votes were still recorded for staying out indefinitely.

John Sheen and Van Barrett, of the Hornsey depot, are typical of the young gas-

workers who have provided the main impetus for the militant industrial action so far.

They want an all-out strike and leafleted their London stewards' latest meeting. They say the biggest obstacle is their lack of experience of industrial action and the stewards' naiveté in not putting pressure on the union officials.

☛ The militancy this year is the result of the deplorable settlement last year, which nearly every branch condemned.

Young gasmen say: Given a lead we'd all strike



Van Barrett

were started against them.

We ought to have a rational shop stewards' movement, but it would be a big task to set up because we have no previous organization.

We are held back by lack of information. We don't know anything about what the lads in the north are doing. We don't get told about other yard meetings.

We don't even know what our union has officially asked for in this dispute. It should be £6. All this talk about £3.05 like the electricity workers got is dangerous. It means men will ask is it

worth striking for the difference between £2.24 and £3.05?

We need £6 to catch up with the electricians and our leaders should make this clear. And a delegate conference should be called before any offer is accepted.

These protest strikes won't achieve anything and the ban on maintenance work will make no difference. In some areas, maintenance work is already six months behind schedule anyway.

But if we all came out, the cost would quickly be unacceptably high for the government. ☛

Tories try to intimidate gasmen

BY ROYSTON BULL OUR INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

A MASSIVE CAMPAIGN of intimidation has been launched against the gasworkers. The capitalist Press yesterday tried to crucify the men who start official industrial action from tomorrow against the Tory pay laws.

Overtime ban planned by postmen

BY DAVID MAUDE

POST OFFICE workers will start refusing to work compulsory overtime from October 1, if the corporation has not itself rescinded its compulsory-overtime rules by then.

This pledge was given at the Union of Post Office Workers' Bournemouth conference yesterday by general secretary Tom Jackson after a unanimous vote by delegates.

Delegates voted on a revised wording — suggested by the union's solicitors — of a motion from the London postmen's district council. The revision was made in line with the Industrial Relations Act.

Earlier in the day, Jackson persuaded the conference not to demand a three-hour cut in the working week on the grounds that it would be a breach of Phase Two of the Tories' pay-control law.

● Conference round-up, page 11.

THIS THURSDAY'S WORKERS PRESS

Karl Marx on Money and the
Falling Rate of Profit
An article by Peter Jeffries

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Other middle-class Tory agencies like 'Task Force' and 'Age Concern' are letting their prejudices against strikes run away with them by predicting the possible death of 500,000 old folk if the gas supplies are disrupted.

The 'Daily Mail' headline read: 'This strike could kill'. The 'Sun' splashed with 'Gasmen's roulette', meaning a game of death like Russian roulette.

Suddenly the popular papers are full of concern at the plight of old age pensioners. In normal times, they leave them to die from neglect without paying any attention.

This stampede has already had its desired effect on the gasworkers' leaders. They are now devoting all of their time to making sure their campaign does no damage and none of it to ensuring that it bites hard.

Yesterday, they trooped in again to see the Industry Minister Mr Tom Boardman to assure him that no one would come to any harm and that they were fully co-operating with the Gas Corporation to make sure that gas supplies kept going!

The position on safety is this: If gas pressures are reduced below a certain minimum level, then there is danger of explosions from appliances being used or from permanent pilot lights and the like—due to the gas being likely to go off and then coming on again.

But the solution is quite simple: Turn the gas off completely if the gas reaches dangerously low levels.

The authorities are, in fact, obliged by law to do this. If the gas pressure goes below its statutory minimum level, then the Corporation is obliged to discontinue the supply completely.

The gasworkers' leaders are refusing even to contemplate such a development. They know that only a total stoppage of gas supplies will have any effect on the government, but they are resolutely opposed to doing it.

Instead, they are proposing to reduce gas pressures in all the big cities of Britain to a level just above the safety level which would mean that no-one is cut off, but that everyone's gas fires, ovens, water heaters, and other appliances will still work with reduced efficiency.

The union leaders' big hope is that the ban on all plant maintenance work will mean an eventual interruption of supplies of mainly North Sea gas to the major industries like cars and chemicals which use gas for factory heating and other purposes. But they admit this is a long shot which might take months to become effective.

Cutting off town gas would be

doubly effective for the strike in that all premises using it would have to be turned off individually, and then, when supplies re-started, individually turned on again. This could mean an extra two months without supplies once the gas was turned off, however quickly the dispute was resolved.

North Sea gas may be cut off too, by turning it off at the east coast landfall points.

Leaders of the General and Municipal Workers' Union are admitting that the slight squeeze of inconvenience they are going to put on consumers will not change the government's mind over its pay laws.

G&MWU chief sees Industry Minister



David Basnett, general secretary of the General and Municipal Workers' Union, talks to Press men at the Department of Trade and Industry after leading a deputation to see Tory Industry Minister, Mr Tom Boardman yesterday about the gasmen's pay action.

They are embarking on a niggling campaign of works-to-rule, non-co-operations, and selective stoppages which will demoralize the men without achieving anything.

The real way forward for the gasmen's leaders is not to spend all day reassuring the do-gooding liberals in 'Age Concern' and 'Task Force' but to turn to the rest of the trade union movement for complete solidarity, which they would undoubtedly get, for creating the industrial and political conditions to make the Tory government resign.

● Wakefield gasmen, see P.3.

Full support promised for Briant Colour 5

BY IAN YEATS

A NUMBER of print chapels and trade union branches have passed resolutions calling for a national stoppage in the event of evictions or arrests at Briant Colour Printing, work-in leader Mr Bill Freeman revealed yesterday.

Anthony Wedgwood Benn, MP had thrown his weight behind their fight for jobs with a promise to call for government funds to be made available, in effect, to bail out lame ducks.

Thousands of workers are expected to mount a mass picket at the Old Kent Road factory in London today where 105 men and women have been working-in for eight months.

A writ summoning the five-strong work-in committee before the Chancery Division of the High Court to surrender control of the plant to its owners expires today.

Speakers at a factory gate meeting will include Upper Clyde Shipbuilders joint shop stewards' co-ordinating committee chairman James Airlie, Kent miners' leader Jack Dunn, Labour MP Eric Heffer and print union leaders.

Printers from all over London are expected to be joined by students, engineers, electricians, miners and dockers at the mass picket and in a march to parliament.

Many trades councils are claimed to have asked their members to down tools and back the demonstration.

CORRECTION: In yesterday's Workers Press we reported a meeting of Rover shop stewards representing 'direct workers' in all the Midlands plants. This should have read 'indirect workers'.