

# Socialist Worker

FOR WORKERS' CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM 211 13 MARCH 1971 2½p

## After Post Office defeat rank and file must say:

# NO RETREAT

THE TORIES, big business and the millionaire press have been cock-a-hoop this week. They regard the calling off of the postal workers' strike as a victory for their efforts to force down workers' living standards.

UPW members returned to work with bitter feelings. They had stayed out for nearly seven weeks without strike pay and there were no cracks in their ranks. But they went back to work with little more than they had before the strike started. While prices rise at 10 per cent a year, the only straight wage increase they are so far guaranteed is a miserable 8 per cent.

There will be an inquiry into their wages, but there is no doubt that if this suggests a further meagre rise in pay it will be in return for heavy productivity concessions.

Workloads will be increased and postal services will deteriorate still further.

And the reduction in the work-force that will result will increase unemployment for all sections of workers.

Victory for the postal workers was possible — but only if they had received real support from the rest of the trade union movement.

Other unions did make donations and loans to the UPW. Many rank and file militants organised extensive workshop collections.

### EMBARRASSED

But the trade union movement as a whole did not give the massive aid the strike demanded.

According to The Guardian, Tom Jackson intended to go to the TUC to ask for further help. But he was persuaded not to by unnamed union leaders on the grounds that the General Council would be 'embarrassed'.

Even unions like the Transport Workers and the Engineers were not prepared to give the sizeable donations — as opposed to loans — that were necessary to ensure that the 50,000 strikers dependent on the union's hardship fund could be provided for.

But the postal workers' strike was not the fight of one section of workers alone. It was part of an offensive by the Tories to force down real wages of all workers in the public sector — except for privileged groups like policemen.

### INCREASED

The postal workers' dispute will not be the last struggle in the public sector. We have to make sure that their bitter experience is not repeated with the railway workers or the teachers.

In every union pressure must be increased to make sure that unity between unions is built to defeat the government's offensive.

United industrial action by other sections would smash such plans. If the railwaymen had struck for their wage claim at the same time as the postal workers, the Tories could have

## Full support for 18 March strikes

been forced to give in to both.

An alliance of all unions with members in the public sector has to be built. Such an alliance would take effective solidarity action every time one section was under attack and would present a united front, millions strong, to the government and employers.

The ghost of the post strike will haunt the debates at the recall TUC Congress in Croydon on Thursday. The retreat by the TUC General Council, its willingness to compromise with the Tories and talk of 'incomes policy' while it sees the post strikers isolated and beaten, must be rejected and condemned.

The Industrial Relations Bill is part and parcel of the Tory-employer attack on wages and conditions. If it becomes law it will enable the bosses to crack down on shop-floor militancy and outlaw sympathy strikes.

### MILITANT

The General Council's recommendations should be voted down to allow the key unions to draw up a policy for militant industrial action to kill the Bill.

The rank and file of the unions have a key role to play. Nationwide support should be given to the official AUEW, TGWU strike on Thursday, backed by a massive lobby at Croydon.

And after Croydon the struggle must go on to force every union executive to commit itself to outright refusal to co-operate with the laws if they go through.

The labour movement has the power to win. The Post Office setback must not lead to despondency. The mammoth demonstration on 21 February shows the strength of the united trade unions.

With militant policies and an active rank and file, both the Bill and the Tory government can be defeated.

Dave Percival on the UPW collapse: page 8

## BIG TURNOUT FOR WOMEN'S MARCH



5000 supporters of the Women's National Co-ordinating Committee marched through London to voice their demands for equal pay and improved educational and nursery facilities. snow and rain last Saturday in London Report: page 2. Picture: Mike Cohen.

## Czech socialists on trial

by Chris Harman

NINETEEN revolutionary socialists continue to face long prison sentences in Czechoslovakia. Their trial on charges of 'subversion' resumed on Monday.

The real crime of the 19 — who

have already spent more than a year in jail awaiting trial — is that they were associated with an organisation called the 'Revolutionary Socialist Party'.

The party stood for the replacement of the present bureaucratic set-

up in Czechoslovakia and the other so-called communist countries by workers' control and the rule of workers' councils.

Socialists who fight for similar aims in the West must give their full support to those on trial in Prague.

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## All-out action must be Croydon key-note

THE TUC special congress meets on Thursday to discuss further action on the government's anti-union Bill. On the same day three million or more workers will follow the lead of the AUEW, the TGWU and other unions and show their disgust at the government measures by direct industrial action.

But the fact has to be faced that the TUC leaders have no policy for fighting the Bill. Most of them have gone out of their way to condemn strike action against it. They will present a document to Congress that will reject such a course and which will not be open to amendment by the delegates.

Again, although the TUC leaders talk of 'non-registration', they are not prepared to seriously defy the laws the government hopes to enforce. They refuse to make non-registration obligatory on member unions — thus making it easier for the government to lure one union after another to register with promises of certain legal immunities. Rank and file members of these unions will pay the price as their ability to defend their conditions and to control their officials is carefully curtailed.

Vic Feather has shown how little he appreciates what needs to be done to fight off the government's attacks. Last weekend he claimed that the postal strike had not been a fight between the UPW and the government. Does anybody believe that the attempt to stop a government deliberately forcing down the living standards of workers in the public sector can somehow not involve a fight against that government?

TUC leaders hope they will be able to come to some compromise with the Tories. That is why they were so eager to meet Heath on Thursday. They hope that they can do some sort of deal with the government.

This would involve those sections of the Bill most harmful to right-wing union leaders (particularly some aspects of the provisions concerning the closed shop) being amended in return for the TUC supporting an 'incomes policy'. In other words, the government would be a bit nicer to the union leaders and they in return will try to hold down their members' wages.

The 'left' unions, in particular the Transport Workers and the Engineers, have shown a much greater fighting spirit than the TUC. They have called for one-day stoppages and are much firmer on the question of non-registration.

But the AUEW has said that it will accept the TUC's policy if it gets the majority at the 18 March meeting. Acceptance of such a policy of defeat and compromise would be to abandon the struggle. Rank and file militants must keep up the pressure for a continuation of the struggle. The building of Councils of Action — local bodies made up from as many factory and union branch delegates as possible — are needed to make sure this happens.

The call must go out for the unions to organise militant and united industrial action to kill the Bill. At the same time it must be made clear that if the Bill becomes law, the large unions will continue to defend their members' interests in defiance of it.

This means refusing to register, continuing to defend 100 per cent trade unionism, making the blacking of goods and the respecting of pickets in defiance of the law official union policy, and making all strikes ('unfair' or otherwise) official.

The fight does not end at Croydon. Big business and its government are determined to make workers pay for the crisis of the capitalist system. The key unions must be forced to launch a counter-offensive that will cripple the Bill and kick out the Tory government.

## STRANGE BED-FELLOWS

AS THE GOVERNMENT attempts to negotiate its way into the Common Market, increasing numbers of workers are becoming worried by the consequences. They see that entry would be used as an excuse to attack working conditions and push up prices still further.

But some of the groups in the working-class movement that claim to be campaigning against the Common Market do so in ways that can only divert us from the real struggle to defend conditions and wages. Typical of this approach is a protest being organised in London this Sunday. Speakers include Ernie Roberts, assistant general secretary of the Engineering Union, Rene Short, MP, and Michael McGahey, president of the Scottish miners and a member of the Communist Party. There are some other more dubious personalities on the speakers' list. The most well-known is Sir Gerald Nabarro, racist, union basher and owner of three Rolls-Royces. Some of the lesser known names include Air Vice-Marshal Don Bennet, formerly of the National Democratic Party which in turn was linked to the Immigrant Control Association and Sir Ian McTaggart, ex-Tory candidate, extreme Powellite, and chairman of the ultra-right wing Society for Individual Freedom.

Such a collection of speakers, with those who claim to be socialists and communists standing on the same platform as near fascists, can in no way help anybody fight the attempt to foist on ordinary workers the costs of Common Market entry. There they will talk about the need to defend 'our national sovereignty' (even if some of the speakers tactfully drop their usual talk of 'racial purity') — as if workers had any control over the policies of the present government. There will be speeches about 'threats to the national interest' — as if the interest of the mass of the population could be the same as that of the small minority who own all the wealth.

There is an alternative to the Common Market. It lies in a fighting unity of the workers throughout Europe to oppose all attempts to cut wages or welfare benefits, worsen working conditions and raise prices. Such unity could prepare the ground for the only real, long-term solution to our problems — a United Socialist States of Europe.

Those on the 'left' who stand on the same platform as those who speak of foreigners as 'scum', deliberately turning one section of workers against another, make the building of such unity more difficult. To that extent they make the present government's job easier.

# PRINT UNIONS SWALLOW LIES AT DAILY MAIL

by ROGER PROTZ

Committee member, Magazine and Book Branch, National Union of Journalists

THE TRAGEDY OF the Daily Sketch and the Daily Mail is that the leaders of all the unions involved have been conned by a cunning and ruthless management into accepting the big lie of the impending financial collapse of Associated Newspapers.

The management of two newspapers that have been a byword for their reactionary anti-union policies can sit back and chuckle as 1700 workers are thrown on to the stones in a diminishing industry and their officials cluck around bemoaning the 'threat to democracy' contained in the collapse of the Sketch.

All the workers concerned have been bemused and browbeaten by the repetition of the facts that the Mail has been losing £824,000 a year and the Sketch £250,000. These facts have been accepted at their face value by union officials who are backed by research departments with the supposed ability to spend a little time finding out the truth of the situation.

The truth is rather different from the evidence supplied by the assorted bunch of former Mosley supporters and get-rich-quick merchants in control of Associated Newspapers. Two closely interlocking companies are involved: Associated Newspapers and the Daily Mail and General Trust, both with extensive interests beyond the newspaper industry and both highly profitable.

Associated Newspapers owns 44 provincial papers as well as such lucrative offshoots as the London General Cab Company, Southern Television, Purfleet

Deep Wharfage and Storage Company and Blox Motor Services. Its profits in 1969 were more than £3,200 million and its current assets in 1968 totalled £11,641,460.

The Daily Mail and General Trust made a profit of £1,238,012 in 1968 when the value of its investments stood at £13,984,143.

Papers that claim to be upholders of 'free speech' have cynically disguised the truth about their trading position and the union leaders have been willing if unconscious partners to the deception.

## Incompetence

And so 277 members of the National Union of Journalists, 304 of the National Graphical Association, 45 of the Process Workers, 191 of NATSOPA (clerical), 539 of NATSOPA (machine room) and 253 of SOGAT 'A', plus 18 engineers and 19 electricians face redundancies because of the incompetence and spinelessness of their union officials.

It is not too late for a fight-back from the rank and file. Joint chapel meetings, armed with the facts about the companies' financial position, must raise the demand of no redundancies and seek solidarity action from other Fleet Street printworkers that they will close down the rest of the profiteers' press unless the sackings are stopped.

Democracy is also about the right to work. That is what is at stake in Fleet Street this week.

## Women marchers stress need for union action over equal pay

by Irene Bruegel

SATURDAY's march of 5000 people in bitterly cold conditions marked a new stage in the women's liberation movement. It destroyed the myth of women's liberation as shrieking ultra-feminism.

The demands of the march for equal pay, equal opportunity, free 24 hour nursery schools and free contraception and abortion were not directed against men but were related to the everyday social experience of women in this country, particularly working-class women.

In making the demand for equal pay, the marchers did not see the fight primarily as a parliamentary campaign, nor even as an isolated union struggle. It was clear that in fighting for equal pay women were involved also in fighting the Industrial Relations Bill.

May Hobbs of the Cleaners' Action Group called for the self-organisation of women at their workplace, emphasising the need for women to fight their employers and to press for greater democracy within their unions.

While employers still determine which jobs are women's jobs and the unions in industries employing women are weak and dominated by unsympathetic men, the Equal Pay Act, when it finally comes, will not remove the fundamental inequalities.

Average female earnings are less than 60 per cent of male earnings — or £12 a

week for a 40 hour week in industry. Not only are women paid at a lower rate for the job but throughout industry they have the unskilled, lower grade, boring and low paid jobs.

The demand for equal pay must always be linked to a demand for equal opportunities.

## Second class

The biological fact of childbearing is used as a device to tie women to their homes, to isolate them and reinforce this second-class mentality. With only five nursery school places for every 1000 children under five, it is working-class women who suffer particularly, forced either to leave their children with inadequate attention or to take those part-time or night jobs that are available.

The 'free 24 hour nurseries' demanded by women's liberation are not intended to 'free' women for drudgery outside the home, but are seen as a means of destroying the idea that a woman's place is exclu-

sively in the home.

The demands of the march were oriented particularly towards working women and working-class women. But the working-class women who came did so as housewives with local groups and only the night cleaners and the claimants were represented as working-class groups.

While thousands of women telephonists have been marching weekly over the same route, and tens of thousands of women trade unionists were out on 21 February, they have not yet seen the demands of women's liberation as relevant.

The women's movement has a long way to go — but a start has been made. In many parts of the country working-class women are coming together in women's groups and questioning their position in capitalist society.

Women's liberation need not and must not remain the right of students and professional women. The socialist movement has now recognised the position of working class women, but a revolutionary programme that does not incorporate women's liberation is today not revolutionary.

## LABOUR AND THE ANTI-TORY FIGHT

LAST WEEK's editorial appears to contain certain ambiguities in International Socialists' policy. We agree with the view 'that the working class can, if it acts in a united and militant way, get rid of the present government' and that 'we also have to suggest what should replace it.'

Similarly, we agree that the demand for a Labour government committed to socialist policies is 'impracticable' and 'helps foster illusions in the real nature of the Labour Party.'

It is then proposed 'that workers should use their strength in the trade unions to impose on any future Labour government a programme of pro-working class measures' and correctly stated that such a programme would not actually be put into practice.

But it is then assumed that the mass of workers will fight through the unions to impose such demands on the Labour Party and in the process 'will see how opposed to their interests the Labour leaders are and learn how their strength as a class can be used to implement such demands.'

1. How and why does such an exposure of Labour leaders lead to independent working-class action?  
2. Where do the demands for Councils of Action and the building of a revolutionary party voiced in previous editorials fit in

with the above demands? — CHRIS RUSSELL, secretary, Merseyside IS branch.

Socialist Worker replies: The problem many militants face at the moment is that when they say 'Kick out the Tories', other workers ask who should replace them. We have to persuade those workers who are far from being revolutionary yet to fight for an alternative that represents their interests.

In doing so they will come to see that those interests cannot be satisfied without an all-out struggle against the present organisation of society.

We have to argue for revolutionary politics and organisation but we have also to suggest ways in which workers can fight for a political alternative here and now.

The demand for a Labour government forced by the trade unions to carry through a series of pro-working class reforms is such a demand. It seems eminently reasonable to vast numbers of workers.

What matters of course is not just to fight for it, but also build up the organisation of rank and file workers that can make sure it is really taken seriously.

This is where the need to build Councils of Action comes in. If we could draw enough workers into these organisations to fight around such a set of demands, then we would develop a force capable of fighting for them even if the Labour leaders, as is likely, turn their backs on the struggle.

## Housebound women are needed too

WE WERE SORRY to see that last week's announcement of the Women's Day March gave the impression that it was primarily for women workers. The Women's National Coordinating Committee is not composed solely of working women but also of housewives and students.

Of course we wanted women workers and students to turn out for the demonstration but we were just as keen that housewives and their children supported it. One of our aims is to involve housebound mothers in political and community action and socialists within the women's movement hope this will link housewives more strongly to the rest of the working class. — MARGARET RENN, VALERIE CLARK, London N8.



# Maudling's race Bill: please Powell and split the workers

**NEW IMMIGRATION PLANS GO  
HAND IN HAND WITH UNION BILL**

by Paul Foot

**E**ver since he went into the Home Office last June, Reginald Maudling, well known for his past connections with property fraudsman Jerome Hoffman, has been reflecting on a deep and distressing problem: how to frame legislation on immigration that is more racist than the previous Labour government's.

Lesser men would have taken fright at the task. The Labour government had cut the rate of black immigration into Britain by more than 50 per cent. They had ensured that only the most skilled workers were allowed into Britain and that the families of those already here were held up from entry by a bureaucratic insistence on entry vouchers.

Scampering in headlong flight from Enoch Powell, they had written racialism into the law in the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1968 better known as the Kenyan Asians Act, which broke specific pledges to the Kenyan Asians that they could be certain of unconditional right of entry to Britain.

## Hypocrisy laid bare

Nevertheless, Mr Maudling has performed his task superbly. Nudged and bullied by the Prime Minister and the other Monday Club sympathisers in the Cabinet, he has produced what is probably the filthiest and most overtly racist immigration legislation yet drafted.

For years we have been told that the case for immigration control rests on numbers. What mattered, claimed the supporters of control, was that this 'overcrowded island' was too full of people, its industries too overemployed, its houses too overcrowded to allow more people.

The original Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962 was passed with a deluge of assurances that it applied equally to white and black citizens of the Commonwealth. This myth was prolonged by the Labour government through all its control measures.

Now the thin constitutional logic has been torn aside and the hypocrisy laid bare. The new Immigration Bill removes immigration control for approximately 10 million people in the Commonwealth.

A word has been dug up from the textbooks of imperialism to describe this new class of citizens. They are 'patrials'.

They are people who can prove that their parents or grandparents were born in the United Kingdom. They have a right to enter the country free of all controls. And they are white.

On the other hand, the already savage immigration controls for Commonwealth citizens are tightened still further for 'non-patrials' (blacks), as follows:

1. Entry into this country by work voucher will be conditional for 12 months, after which the immigrant must re-apply to stay in this country.
2. Those who do get in with work vouch-



**The Ford strike: black and white solidarity against the bosses that the Tories want to smash**

ers, or as families of people already here, will be subject to deportation at any time on the say-so of the Home Secretary.

Previously, Commonwealth citizens could only be deported if they committed a crime. Under the Bill, the Home Secretary simply has to satisfy himself that the deportation would be 'conducive to the public good'. There is no right of appeal against his decision.

If a man is deported, his wife and small children can be deported with him without any right of appeal. If a woman is deported, her children, up to the age of 18, can be deported without right of appeal.

There is no way whereby any immigrant can insure himself against being deported. New immigrants will have to apply after five years for British citizenship. This can be refused to anyone who is regarded by the Home Secretary as 'not conducive to the public good.'

## Deport whole families

If so refused, the new immigrant will be harried all his life by the prospect of deportation.

Political or trade union activity regarded by the Home Secretary as 'not conducive to the public good' would be more than enough to ensure a black man's passage and that of his family out of the country.

Despite all sorts of bureaucratic restrictions, it is still the right for the families of workers already here to enter this country free from control. Nothing in the new Bill ensures such a right.

On the contrary, paragraph 37 of the instructions to immigration officers says that close families of immigrant workers should only be admitted if they are 'not likely to be a charge on public funds'.

If a man is 'likely' to lose his job for instance (and which worker in Britain can prove to an immigration officer that he is definitely not likely to lose his job?) his

family can be deported without his ever having a legitimate legal complaint to anyone.

On and on it goes. Every clause discloses some new authoritarian trick of the trade.

Clause 30 extends the Mental Health Act of 1959 to ensure that any Commonwealth immigrant in-patient of a mental hospital can be arbitrarily deported.

Clause 25 (ii) establishes a new criminal offence of 'harbouring' an illegal immigrant, of which the harbourer is guilty unless he can show that he had no reason-

able cause for believing the man he harboured to be an illegal entrant.

Clause 24 (v) (b) shifts the onus of proof that he has not entered illegally on an immigrant charged with illegal entry. If a man enters legally and loses his passport he probably could not prove that he entered legally, and so could be instantly deported without appeal.

Finally, perhaps most importantly, the Bill insists that Commonwealth immigrants must regularly register with the police, and inform the police and employment authorities of any change of job or

address.

Such measures will ensure still tighter control over and harassment of black people by a police force already corrupted by racist ideas.

The Bill has been written with two clear aims. The first is to appease Enoch Powell, the National Front and the growing support of both in the lower ranks of the Conservative Party.

## Weaken union fight

The second, more fundamental, is to create 'two nations' within the working class: to establish a substantial body of workers whose rights before the law are not as strong as those of the indigenous white workers, and which will therefore be more prepared to break strikes and accept low wages and poor conditions.

Between these two groups of workers hope Maudling and his hatchet-men in the Home Office, there will be permanent friction and race war. The fight against other Tory policies, they imagine, will be weakened. The Industrial Relations Bill, for one, will pass more easily.

The liberal press, by and large, has scuttled away from any root-and-branch criticism of the Immigration Bill. The Labour Party reaction to it has been predictably lukewarm.

The labour movement had better wake up to the real motives behind the Bill and fight it with the same enthusiasm as they are fighting the Industrial Relations Bill.

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# Paris 1871: when th



Parisian workers dragging cannons to the safety of Montmartre at the start of the Commune

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO this month, the working masses of Paris did what is impossible: they took the direction of society into their own hands. On that day they took that first giant step down the road that we are travelling still, the road to social freedom, the beginning of a truly human history.

The Paris masses took to themselves a direct democracy that conducted its affairs in their own hands, paid them at the going rate for a human being and sacked them if they did not do what they were charged to carry out. Paris, 100 years ago, gave birth to the first social democracy to become socialist even as the most brutal terror was unleashed on it by a terrified bourgeoisie.

Certainly, less than two months later, that first experiment in working class democracy lay dead in the streets, with upwards of 18,000 working-class men, women and children piled as corpses along the pavement.

But in that failure there lies a timeless success and a laboratory on how the working class can change the world and what it must do to succeed.

French society throughout the last century was always in crisis.

The first great French revolution has cleared the way for industry to develop. But so deeply divided was the nation along completely new lines that the common slogans of political freedom were regularly jettisoned in favour of some kind of caretaker regime.

From 1830 on it was quite clear that there was no profound social crisis without the working class — tiny though it was by present-day standards — coming out with its own distinct demands. And those demands were for a freedom more thoroughgoing than that of the ballot box.

The defeat of the Paris crowd in 1848 produced one of those caretaker regimes. An anti-democratic empire was erected around a descendant of the first Napoleon.

## Outlawed

Alongside a fairly rapid development of the economy — mainly around the railways — the regime stifled all independent thought and action through a massive state and military bureaucracy.

While indulging in all sorts of counterfeit democracy, the Bonaparte regime outlawed such elementary rights as the trade unions, the press and freedom of assembly.

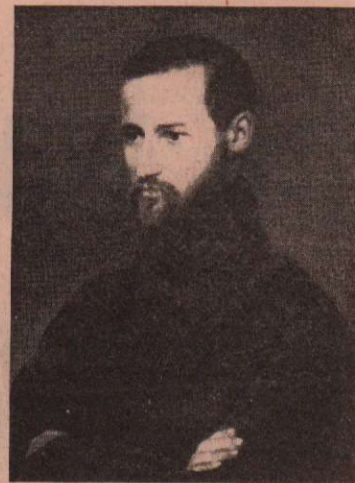
But the labour movement was organising. Bookbinders led by the future communist leader Varlin were winning strikes.

Women workers were unionising. A trade union bank had been formed to give loans to strikers. The first move for a French-TUC came in 1869.

But Bonaparte had other plans. Dreaming of glorious empire, he sought to take — or take back — what was then a piece of Prussia.

He had war and jingoism on offer. Sadly it was taken up with enthusiasm in Paris and elsewhere.

## First of two articles by LAURIE FLYNN



BLANQUI: French workers' leader

in such a fashion that the seeds of social revolution were sown in the glasshouse of the National Assembly.

The National Assembly, people armed with committees like the one.

Its programme was a by-street demonstration of the political situation, the apportionment of necessary food and the distribution of social ideas.

Terrified at the prospect of a socialist republic, the National Assembly fled about the time of the surrender.

By January 1871, the National Assembly had started in anticipation of a National Defence Government, a radical new government.

During negotiations, the Prussian leader, Otto von Bismarck, French representative, Adolphe Thiers, and the Prussian enemy, 'Provost-Marshal' General Frossin, while you still order that you are good'.

The French war effort was a disaster. Declared on 15 July 1870, it was over within a month. Led by courtiers and degenerates, the rank and file soldiers had as little enthusiasm as they had food.

Massive corruption and profiteering took place as businessmen made their usual patriotic deals in the stock exchange and fancy restaurants.

Huge contracts were drawn up and settled before any armaments were even produced. Fake announcements of French war victories spread by speculators filled Paris with patriotic delirium.

But by 27 August a minister wired one of his great generals that another defeat would see Parisian patriotism change into revolution. As soon as defeat was announced, it did.

By 14 September the empire had been shoved aside and a republic proclaimed under the 'Government of National Defence'.

One Paris workman declared: 'The Prussians won't dare come now we've got it'. In his mind Paris was already his.

But come they did, laying siege to the city. This launched the Commune.

## what we stand for

THE International Socialists is a democratic organisation whose membership is open to all who accept its main principles and who are willing to pay contributions and to work in one of its organisations.

We believe in independent working-class action, that we must overthrow capitalism and not tinker with reforms to patch it up.

We work in the mass organisations of the working class and are firmly committed to a policy of internationalism.

Capitalism is international. The giant firms have investments throughout the world and owe no allegiances except to themselves and the economic system they maintain.

In Europe the Common Market has been formed for the sole purpose of increasing the trade and profits of these multi-national firms.

The international power of capitalism can only be overcome by international action by the working class.

A single socialist state cannot indefinitely survive unless workers of other countries actively come to its aid by extending the socialist revolution.

In addition to building a revolutionary socialist organisation in this country we also believe in the necessity of forming a world revolutionary socialist international independent of either Washington or Moscow.

To this end we have close relationships with a number of other socialist organisations throughout the world.

We believe in rank and file control of the trade unions and the



regular election of all full-time officials.

We are firmly opposed to secret negotiations and believe that all settlements should be agreed or rejected by mass meetings.

We are for 100 per cent trade unionism and the defence of shop stewards.

We are against anti-trade union laws and any curbs on the right to strike, whether the strikes are 'official' or 'unofficial'.

We are against productivity deals and job evaluation and are for militant trade union unity and joint shop stewards committees both in the plant and on a combine basis.

We support all demands for equal pay and for a better deal for young workers.

We believe that there should be a minimum wage of at least £25 per week.

We are opposed to unemployment, redundancy and lay offs and support the demand of five days' work or five days' pay.

We support all workers in struggle and seek to build militant groups within industry.

We are opposed to racialism and police victimisation of black workers.

We are opposed to any immigration restrictions and fully support the right of black people to self-defence.

We are opposed to all nuclear weapons and military alliances such as NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

We are opposed to secret diplomacy. Neither Washington nor Moscow but international socialism.

We are opposed to all forms of imperialism and unconditionally give support to and solidarity with all genuine national liberation movements.

We are for the nationalisation of the land, banks and major industries without compensation and under workers' control.

We are for the introduction of a democratic planned economy in which resources can be devoted to social need.

We are opposed to all ruling class policies and organisations. We work to build a revolutionary workers' party in Britain and to this end support the unity of all revolutionary groups.

The struggle for socialism is the central struggle of our time.

Workers' power and a world based on human solidarity, on the increasing of men's power over nature, with the abolition of the power of man over man, is certainly worth fighting for.

'It is no use just talking about it. Over a century ago Karl Marx wrote: 'The philosophers have merely interpreted the world. The point is to change it'. If you want to help us change the world and build socialism, join us

### THERE ARE 15 BRANCHES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- SCOTLAND**  
Aberdeen/Clydebank/Dundee/Edinburgh/Glasgow N/Glasgow S/Stirling/Fife
- NORTH EAST**  
Durham/Newcastle upon Tyne/Teesside (Middlesbrough and Redcar)
- NORTH**  
Barnsley/Bradford/Derby/Doncaster/Huddersfield/Hull/Leeds/York/Selby/Sheffield
- NORTH WEST**  
Lancaster/Manchester/Oldham/

- Bolton//Merseyside/St Helens/Wigan/Potteries
- MIDLANDS**  
Birmingham/Coventry/Northampton/Leicester/Oxford/Nottingham
- WALES and SOUTH WEST**  
Bath/Bristol/Cardiff/Exeter/Swansea/Plymouth
- SOUTH**  
Ashford/Brighton/Crawley/Folkestone/Portsmouth/Southampton

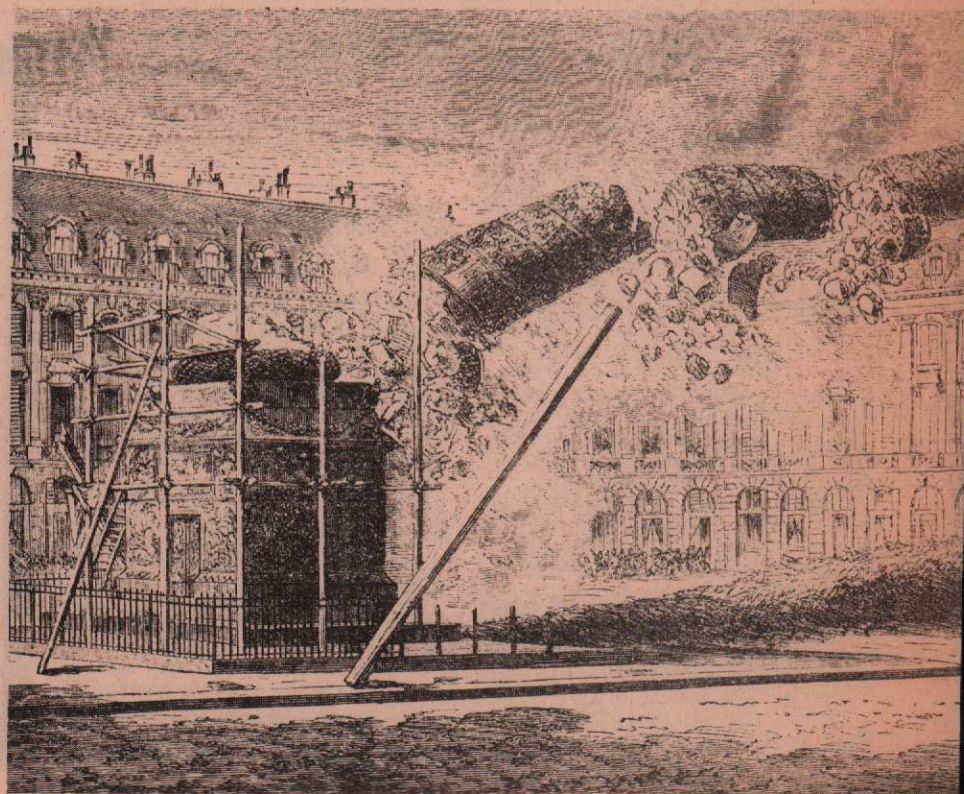
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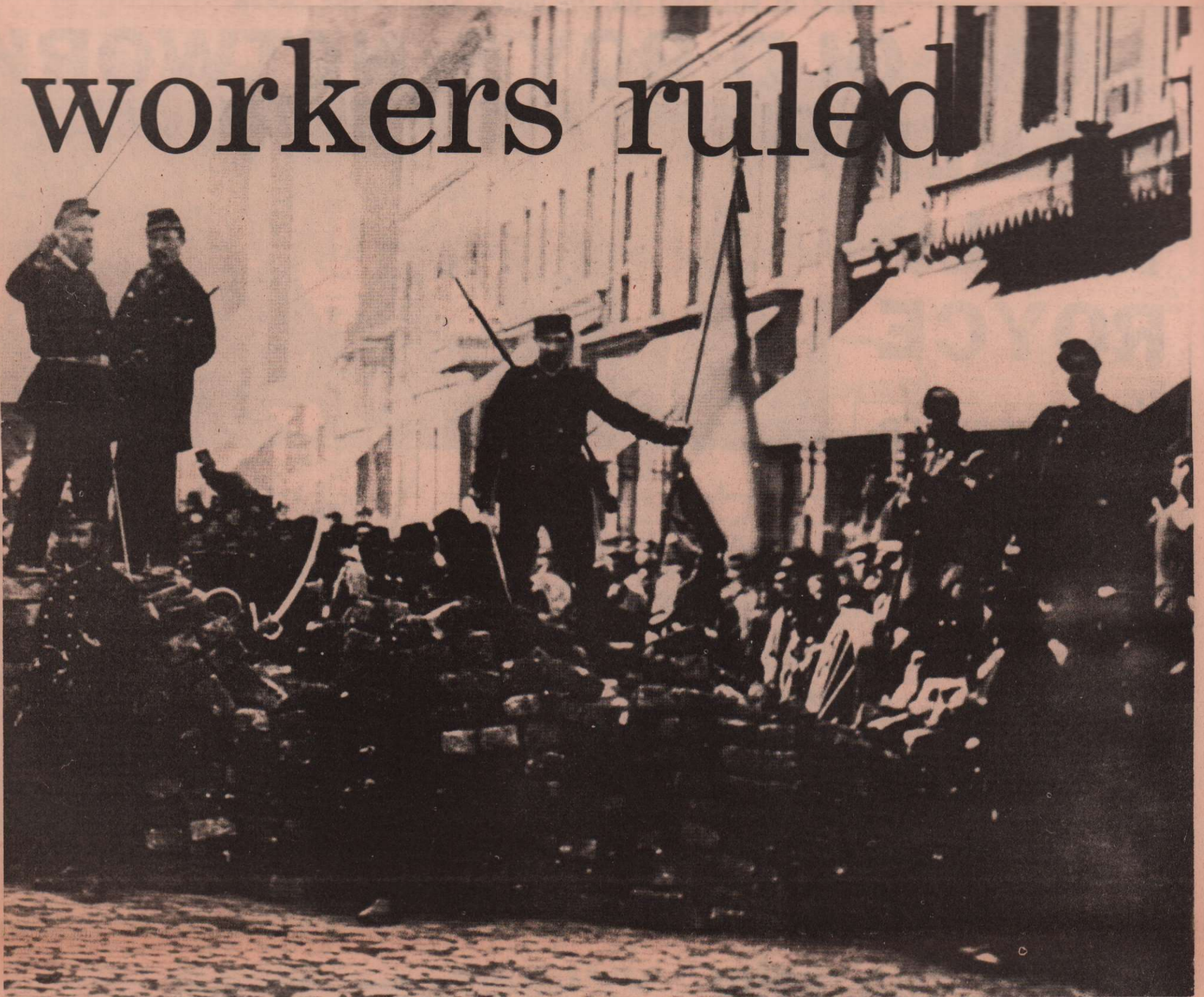
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National Guardsmen — the shock troops of the revolutionary masses — man a street barricade during the Commune.

ack by calling in outstanding loans from the pawnshops, all back-rent accumulated during the siege and all the bills on which trading was conducted. Even the shopkeepers were driven into the hands of the masses and the socialists.

After many attempts to disarm the radical armed workers had failed, the government executive decided to quit Paris and sit in nearby Versailles.

And so on 18 March the Paris masses found themselves masters of their city and their lives.

However, the wily bourgeois had gone but not forgotten. Thiers, leader of the counter-revolutionary bloc, had taken himself off to Versailles only to return once what

remained of the standing army had been reorganised, and his supporters had been brought to fever pitch by lies and propaganda. Civil war had been declared on Paris.

The Central Committee of the National Guard was staggered when it awoke to the fact that it was the government. Some of its members were for an immediate attack on Versailles, but the majority were for getting ready to abdicate in favour of the Commune, the directly elected representatives of the people.

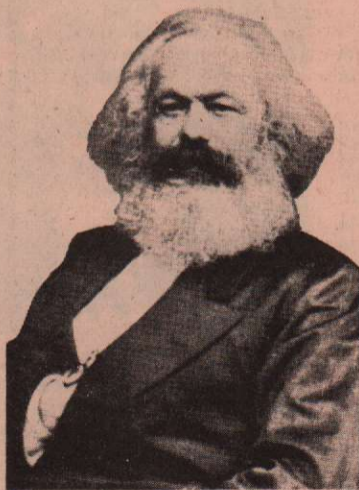
Days were lost while elections were arranged and the Commune officially declared on 28 March. Already other communes had been declared and defeated in Lyons, Perpignan, and Narbonne.

On 30 March the Paris Commune abolished the standing army and enshrined the power of the people in arms. All rents were again remitted and all pledges at the pawnshops returned.

## Abolished

The guillotine was publicly burnt. Patriotic statues were torn down amidst scenes of festivity. Slowly but surely the mood of the communal regime shifted towards the left, towards socialism.

Plans for a democratic organisation of labour were discussed and seen to flow from getting production going again. By mid-April the hated pawnshops were abolished and the bakers' nightshift was scrapped, giving those workers their first taste of economic free-



MARX: Defection not defence

dom.

But time was short. Civil war had already been declared by Versailles. The Commune however was rent with personal jealousies and by the erection of trivial points into those of cardinal principle.

Lack of practical verve and real initiative were the main characteristics of the Commune's debates. Rivalry between the Commune and the much more purposive Central Committee of the National Guard led to attention to detail obscuring the need to unleash the energies of the masses on the rival power of Versailles.

The Commune suffered for the lack of an organised group with a theory and programme.

Indeed the leadership of the

Commune seemed to stand out against an immediate settlement of accounts with Versailles. One of its members, Beslay, summed up the magnificent but fatal decency of their conduct. He talked of the 'dictatorship of example', rather than the victory of popular power.

Meanwhile, the Versailles power was unleashing all its venom in a highly organised fashion. The Commune's persistence in localising its actions to Paris, its inability to speak to the peasantry and its concern to deny the phoney allegations made by its opponents rather than to defeat them, were doubtless of great assistance in this task.

Slowly but surely the Versailles army marched to Paris, entered it, and proceeded not to argue with the Commune but to smash it. The most dreadful reign of terror was let loose. The fight to the death continued through May and by 3 June 'law and order' had been restored.

## Ferocious

Law and order — a familiar cry-murdered, killed and tortured, committed the most ferocious and bestial acts. For these forces understood the message of the Commune.

Despite its weaknesses, its mistakes, the people had risen and had to be put down.

At least 18,000 people were killed. Corpses were piled up in the streets to act as a reminder.

The prisons were packed with

those heroes of the Commune awaiting death, deportation and torture, occasionally with a trial thrown in. Tens of thousands had to flee.

A pile of dead Communards outside the Polytechnic School 100 yards long and three yards high testified to the seriousness with which the master class took their rule. Strange that their barbarism should be so little known.

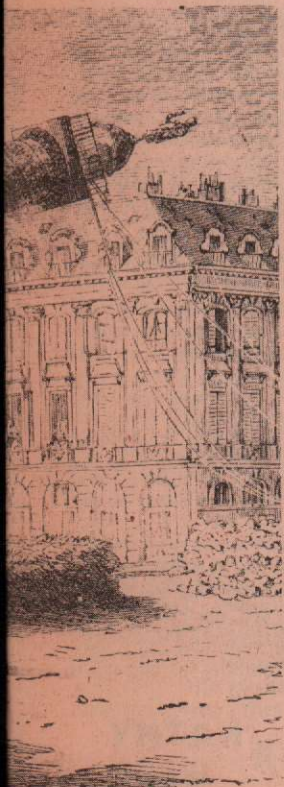
## Unlocked

All is never lost however. For the Communards had unlocked the secret of working-class emancipation in life as in death.

They had devised a way of organising political life that was leading directly to human emancipation. This would have so thoroughly reorganised society from the bottom up that freedom of a completely new kind was more than possible. They were exterminated to prevent the next revolution.

But elsewhere there were others waiting in the wings to turn the Communist key another time, and who approached the success and failure of the Commune in the proper way.

These men and women pandered no revolutionary legends, but sought to draw the fullest implications from 1871 for the continuing struggle for working-class emancipation. It is to them and their appraisal of the Commune that we will turn next week.



The Vendôme, a hated symbol of Napoleon's imperialist policies, was destroyed by the Communards

# Next week: the Commune's example inspires the Russian revolutionaries



A BRISTOL MILITANT ON THE GREAT AERO-ENGINE CRASH

# HOW OLD BOY'S NETWORK MILKED ROLLS ROYCE

by  
**MARTIN BARKER**



Rolls-Royce shop stewards at a conference called last week to discuss the crash

The Rolls-Royce crisis has symbolised for socialists the increasing weakness of capitalism today. It has also symbolised for thousands of workers just how insecure their jobs are. What caused the collapse? I interviewed TED KEY, who works at the Rolls-Royce Patchway Bristol works, and is also newly elected secretary of Bristol Trades Council.

What is the background of the present crisis?

Armstrong Saurer, a Swiss component of the international arms ring, put in a bid to take over the Bristol Engine Division of Rolls-Royce. This international ring of arms companies goes back as far as Basil Zaharoff, who made his money selling arms to one Balkan state by telling them he had just sold some to their current enemy.

Armstrong-Whitworths used to be part of this ring. They were linked with the Birmingham Small Arms Manufacturers, and used to own the Bristol aircraft division. To have let the bid go forward would have involved revealing Rolls-Royce's finances on the Stock Exchange.

Why were they so afraid of revealing their finances?

I think it worked like this. The heyday of the aircraft industry was after Neville Chamberlain returned from Munich in 1939.

Both the government and the military were in a panic expecting war, so they wanted arms at any price. They had to get together a skilled labour force even if they weren't doing any vital work at the time.

So a number of 'feather-bedded' sections emerged. Their financing was never scrutinised.

## ALTERATION

Rolls-Royce is renowned for its financial manoeuvres. The form of the financial statement has been repeatedly changed, so that it is impossible to compare one year with the next. Development costs will be included one year, omitted the next.

Management has always been tied up with the West Country county families (in Bristol it is the Clifton Old Boys). So if a firm owned by one of the old boys found itself short of work, he would contact Rolls-Royce who would sub-contract work to him.

This has meant on occasion that jigs and tools made in this way have needed

so much alteration that it has cost more to correct them than the original estimate.

I suspect that methods of this sort are used in all the arms industries. Think of the Ferranti Bloodhound scandal, with the overinflating of costs by millions of pounds.

Under the system before the crisis, accounts did not matter. You had the technical men led by Sir Denning Pearson, who spent at random.

But that could not last long. They were dependent on finance capital, in particular on Lazards bank. Both Lord Cole and Hugh Conway, manager of Bristol division, are Lazards' nominees.

Eventually when the finance houses had acquired enough debentures, they wanted to control the whole show. No more 'hands in the till'. So Denning Pearson went in 1970 and now it is management by accountancy.

What about the RB-211?

The RB-211 was a panic measure. They had no new engines on the books. They sold a dream, an engine that didn't exist.

Like Micawber, they kept 'hoping something will turn up'. They were panicked by international competition into making a god out of technological advance. That is why they had to try to do an alchemists' job on carbon fibres,

making them do things they couldn't.

They had perfectly good engines like the Spey, but with competition forcing the airlines to go for bigger and not necessarily better planes, they had to develop a new engine.

Is there any connection with the Concorde case?

Yes. I have never regarded Concorde as anything but a military aircraft. It was never designed as an economic plane.

But presenting it as non-military meant that the government could 'prove' that it was spending more on education than on defence. But look at the number of courses just at Bristol University run for the Army and Navy.

## TROUBLE

The aircraft industry could not survive as it is without its military contracts. It's like the shipbuilding industry. I think everybody should know that subsidies for shipbuilding are conditional on modifications for possible military use.

I want to see production for use, not for profit. But as long as there is this idiotic drive for 'megadeaths' and so on, we are going to have this stupid technology race, and a lot of trouble for the workers in the industry.

What about the Rolls-Royce workers

themselves?

I think that the mass of the workers don't realise how serious the dangers are. They still believe the company can be saved.

And there is no real fight coming from the stewards bodies. They have put out a petition which reads: 'Save Rolls-Royce, Save Britain's credibility'. But it's not our job to produce short-term solutions for capitalism, even if we could.

The Morning Star had an article saying we ought to save the RB-211 to keep us an independent aero-engine industry. I think that is dangerous nonsense.

The trouble is that the workers do not understand what has caused the crisis. When I went to Derby, the stewards there could not understand what had gone wrong with the RB-211. After all, they had worked all that unpaid voluntary overtime!

The real job for the stewards and for socialists is to worry about redundancies, and also the effects on the local communities. After all, for every Rolls worker made redundant, there will be six in related industries.

I have been working for link-ups with Trades Councils in the other areas.

I think the lesson is clear. Capitalism is dog eats dog, and the working class gets chewed up either way.

# Banning the tally man won't free working women...



Marchers on last Saturday's Women's Liberation march: anger is more important than 'happiness'

GERMAINE GREER's book, *The Female Eunuch* (MacGibbon and Kee £2.25) is a detailed analysis of how women have been robbed of their personalities and relegated to the role of 'slaves' in modern society.

It is a scholarly, sympathetic and well-researched book. Much has been written on this subject recently and the majority of it has proved a disappointment—especially to women.

Germaine Greer's book is no exception. It does much to pinpoint and explain woman's exploitation through advertising and the mass media in general, as well as through the work process.

The sections devoted to the role of social workers, doctors and psychologists who encourage women to look away from their real problems are really interesting.

She clarifies much that has puzzled us in the past—the reasons for so many sexual attacks on women and female children—and rightly shows that this is not an inherent 'human failing' in men but is self-loathing of the sexual act which is repressed by society.

All this is fine stuff—but we are let down in the end. It comes as a disappointment to find that her answers to the problem of the liberation of womankind are confined to refusing to buy things on hire purchase, buying second-hand clothing instead of new things, even to make your own perfume from attar of roses instead of being tempted by the more expensive brands.

This, after a lively, entertaining and eye-opening discourse on the place of women in society! What working class wife would find time to buy, let alone make, her own perfume. How many wives are forced, through economic circumstances, to buy

second-hand clothes for the family, in any case.

Her solutions are merely 'tilting at windmills'. The capitalist system will not come to a halt because housewives refuse to buy things on hire purchase.

All it means is that hire purchase companies will flounder and die a slow death and working class wives will be denied the few comforts they can afford because of HP. The only way they could possibly have these material things is an increase in their husbands' wage packets, which isn't likely to be forthcoming.

It would be a better solution in the long term (or short term) to encourage women to forego the humiliation of HP by backing their husbands up in their campaigns for higher wages, by demanding equal pay for themselves, and refusing to give in to the employers by forcing their husbands to go back to work during a strike.

## Stay single

While she criticises the system which exploits women, Germaine Greer gives examples of women who have become 'successes'. They all fit neatly into the system; they run their own businesses where they exploit typists, or they've invented their own formula for an aerosol depilator, or they invest huge sums on the Stock Exchange. Big Deal!

At the same time, she seems to think that those of us poor unfortunates who have been trapped into marriage are the unlucky ones and advises her single sisters to stay that way. Most of us would not place such an importance on the marriage act.

It makes no difference under the capitalist system whether you are married or not. Human loneliness and isolation is a

part of this society, whether you bind yourself through a 7s6d contract or try to find some kind of meaning by being 'free'.

There are vague suggestions that the best way a woman can serve the community is to be 'happy'. I should have thought anger would have been a better service, but anger must be directed against something more concrete than the indefinable MAN.

A woman must become angry because she is being paid low wages, because she is not allowed to join a union and fight for economic equality, because her husband is forced to work overtime in order to earn a decent living wage, because her family can only afford to wear second-hand clothes (whether they want to or not) and because her husband has to take it out on her because he can't get back at the boss.

If we see man as the enemy of woman, even though as Miss Greer admits, men are not free either (although she doesn't elaborate on this) we are falling into a trap. The trap is as old as the hills—set the masses fighting among themselves and they won't find out who the real enemy is.

In other words, it is only this sort of anger that will involve a working class woman in Women's Liberation movements.

The 'problem of the family' isn't half as serious as writers on Women's Lib like to believe. It is not the one essential thing that must be destroyed before women can gain any semblance of freedom.

I shall stick my neck out and say that under the present circumstances, the family, with all its inherent weaknesses, is a necessary evil, especially for the working class. It is the one refuge that men and women have from an alien society.

Those without it are terribly small and afraid. Ask any Irish navy who has to work up and down the country and whose 'home' is one desolate working man's hostel after another.

Ask any young girl who lives in a room in the big city and who hasn't the opportunities for self-expression and whose life is a struggle for recognition at the expense of her own personality.

The oppression of women within the family certainly hasn't prevented the women of Ireland from fighting in the streets against the British troops.

I hope no one will take Germaine Greer's advice and 'let the men leaflet the factories'. I truly hope that no woman will let her ambitions be so low as to merely try to be 'happy' and be satisfied with merely being free to 'take possession of your body and glory in its power'...

What does this rubbish mean? Of course we must be proud, noble and sympathetic people. Of course women must assert themselves in the face of authority. What working man doesn't aspire to this too?

## Unobtainable ideal

Come to think of it, what's a man? I'm sure I don't know one. I only know there are another set of people on this earth, who through a barbarous system called capitalism are forced to live up to some sort of ideal that is unobtainable and who consequently turn their frustrations upon women.

Some of these men work at machines and lathes all day—they don't have degrees in English or cushy jobs at universities. Some of them die because they fall into machines, or because the earth swallows them up.

Some of them have female comrades who work in factories with them and who are exploited even more. Some go home to the housework and kids because their wives are on night-duty.

Most of them attempt to make a life together out of the small fragment of happiness that is allowed us. This life together is all that most people can grab hold of.

It is quite obvious that these two sets of human beings need each other and must learn to fight the system together. Anyone who can be so insensitive as to suggest the destruction of that happiness under the present circumstances won't be thanked for it by working class women.

A woman who is a militant in her workplace will, through her own activity, help to release herself from the bondage of femininity because those things will become irrelevant. Not that working class women have time for that sort of thing in any case—they just don't have the urge to mix their own cosmetics over the kitchen stove.

It's up to girls who are already involved in the revolutionary movement (usually middle-class girls who've had the guts to heave themselves out of the stagnation of the middle class way of life) to try to reach those women in factories who are being directly exploited by the system.

'Nobility' and 'pride' in oneself can only come through the realisation that you can control your own life—and this can only be achieved by the complete overthrow of the capitalist system. The family will then disappear as we understand today, yet without the risk of human beings being isolated in a cold world.

Anybody who suggests that 'women can't wait that long' is a sucker. The capitalist system can accommodate the slow disintegration of the family, it can accommodate a demand for better nursery facilities and can put up with eager extroverts on television.

What it can't accept is women confronting them at the centre of power, the factories, where demands will be made by women workers that cannot be met by the capitalist class. Men are also making these demands—and the answer can only be the most obvious.

Anyone who denies the right of women to involve themselves in the wider political issues of the day is denying that women are equal and is stunting their growth, preventing them from struggling out of the narrow mediocrity of their lives and clamping down on their abilities to become a truly revolutionary force

**KATHY SIMS**



NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN!



## CINEMA

MIXED UP in the current mood of reaction is a growing hysteria against 'permissiveness' in art, literature, television and cinema.

Socialists must fight vigorously against the blue-pencil-waving philistines who, given the chance (and we have a government prepared to give them the chance) will witchhunt and book-burn in the best Nazi tradition.

But while we demand no restrictions on the limits to which art, literature and drama can be extended and oppose censorship, it is necessary to condemn the cheap exploitation of actors and the debasing of artistic standards that are the hallmarks of many recent films.

The publicity accompanying two current films, *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* and *Myra Breckinridge* (now on general release as a double feature presentation) shows the depths to which the movie moguls will descend to boost their sagging profits.

*Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* is a visual-aid version of the dog-eared 'dirty books' that were once the staple reading of army barrack rooms.

### Between the sheets

The 'story' concerns an unlikely group of West Coast hippies — well-heeled, well-endowed, short-haired and well-scrubbed — who spend their lives either between the sheets or at parties where the expression 'give me a stiff one' takes on a new and deeper significance. With well-timed regularity, the dialogue stops every 10 minutes or so to allow any two of a rotating team of performers to take part in an activity variously described as 'balling' or 'screwing'.

The film is 'pornographic' in a sense that is far wider than the one used by the enemies of free expression: its attitude to sex is a cheap, squalid and sniggering one, but the real crime of this celluloid travesty is its complete contempt for any style or distinction.

'Shove as many bums and tits on the screen as you can' is the motto of the men desperate to fill the cinemas. Dialogue and direction are largely irrelevant and we are subjected to such timeless lines as 'Man, you really turn me on' and 'Drop your laundry, daddy-o' from actors who would be hard put to reach the first round of 'Opportunity Knocks'.

### Dangers of depravity

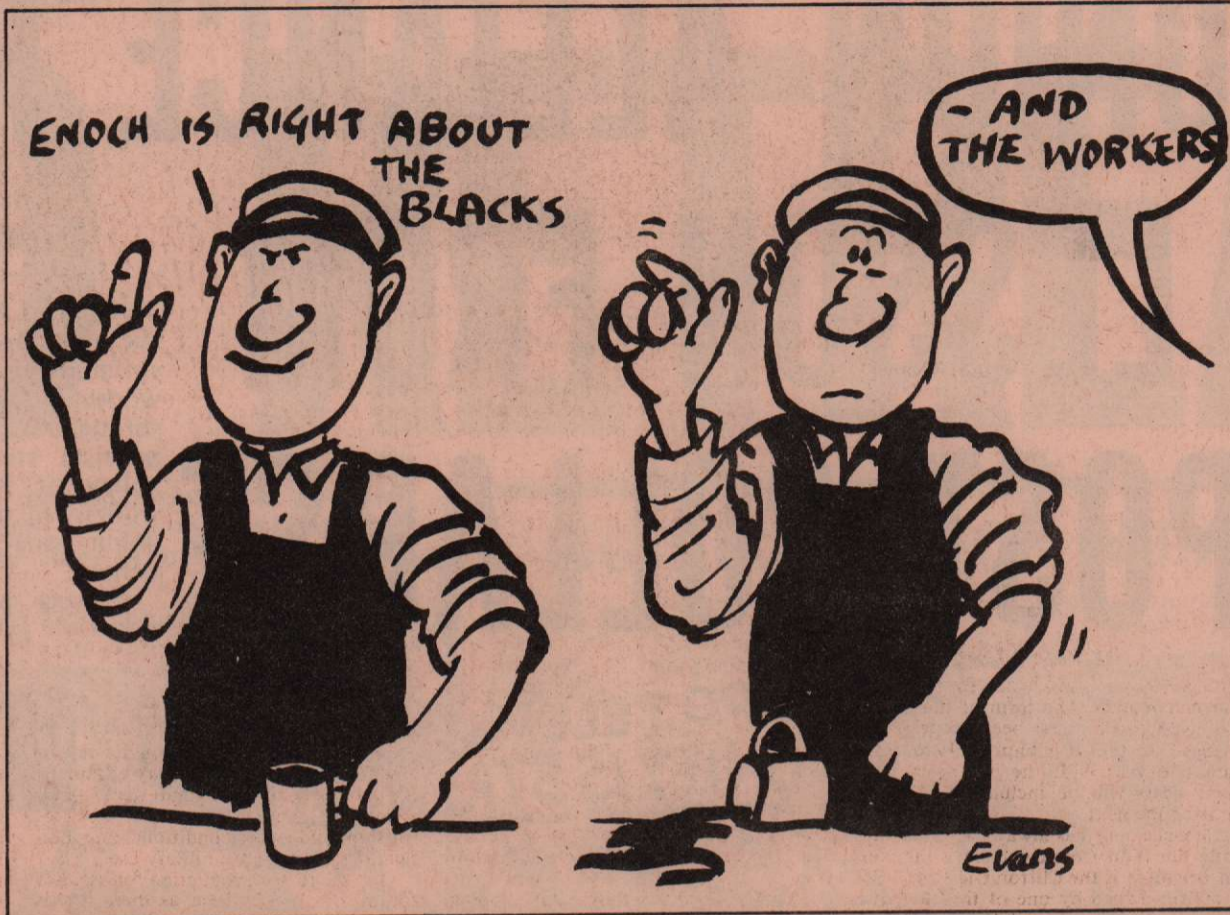
But just to give the whole 90 minutes of rubbish a clean bill of health from the industry's moral watchdogs, the film ends, after a gory finale in which a transvestite fascist murders most of the leading contenders, to a Billy Graham-style sermon about the dangers of depravity and fleshly delights.

*Myra Breckinridge* is bad for rather different reasons. Based on Gore Vidal's novel, it is a satire on Hollywood with Myron Breckinridge undergoing a delicate operation that turns him into Myra. She sets out to revenge herself on men in general and male directors in particular for the artistic rape of womanhood in the movie jungle.

That much was clear to me but the rest was total confusion. Atrocious editing makes the rest impossible to follow, with the cast looking as bemused as the audience. The only saving grace was the welcome but inexplicable insertion of clips from old Laurel and Hardy films.

Those were the days—when stars were stars, comedians were funny and cinema organs rose and fell to announce the arrival and departure of the ice-cream ladies.

**Roger Protz**



## COTTONS COLUMN

THE LABOUR PARTY's working class roots are somewhat withered these days. A militant Manchester power worker, invited to speak to a suburban party meeting on the industry, found the assembled comrades not in a grotty Co-op Hall or Workingmen's Club but in a ritzy private house standing in large grounds.

He was roundly condemned for his views — 'holding the country to ransom' — and last December's work-to-rule — 'damaged the party's electoral hopes.'

But tempers cooled when a maid entered to serve coffee and the master of the house had the good grace to offer the speaker a lift home — in his Rolls-Royce. 'But it's not new,' he was at pains to stress. 'It's four years old'.

Arise, ye starvelings . . .

*COLLAPSE of fascist rally: the Trafalgar Square hate session planned by the National Democratic Party for the end of March has been cancelled. The alleged reason — difficulty in drumming up support because of the post strike. The real reason is the fear of the massive counter-demonstration planned by the left.*

### Bobbing up

A FEW YEARS ago one of the private police outfits, Complete Security Services, wrote giving employers details of one fascinating branch of their activities. The firm's manager, L Davenport, wrote offering:

1. To supply undercover agents — a man planted among employees to provide a complete appraisal of any unauthorised happenings.
2. To follow vehicles used by employees in the course of their work.
3. To investigate thefts, frauds and embezzlement.
4. To report on any person suspected of causing dissension or inciting



CARR: I spy . . .

employees to 'defection'.

5. To screen prospective employers and investigate their antecedents and background.

Spying activities are a regular part of security firms' services. What is particularly interesting about this case is that when the circular was sent out, a director of the firm was none other than Mr Robert Carr, now union-basher extraordinary.

*A COOL refutation of the ignorant but oft-repeated line about wage increases causing inflation comes from the highly respectable National Institute Economic Review, published last week.*

*Taking the years 1967-69, the Review said the rise in consumer prices above the level for previous years was located in indirect taxation (purchase tax, for example) and rising import charges following devaluation.*

*In 1967-68 these increases accounted for two-thirds of increased prices. It was only in 1970, after three years of such increases, that workers began to demand higher wages and 'wage push' added to inflation.*

### Cover up

THE COLLAPSE last week of the giant Vehicle and General Insurance Company that left 800,000 motorists without cover gave rise to some illuminating examples of the 'moral-

ity' of the business community that spends so much time screeching about strikers acting like highwaymen.

One inmate of Cottons Gardens joined a long queue at his insurance brokers and saw bewildered, elderly working-class motorists, who had driven for 20 years without an accident, forced to double their premiums to get cover from other companies. Like vultures descending on a rotten carcass, the other firms quickly boosted their rates as soon as V&G collapsed.

The brokers were chirpy, of course. They had been selling V&G like mad because of the 17½ per cent rake off they received but they disclaimed any moral responsibility to pay back lost premiums.

Arch villain of the piece, of course, was the appalling John Davies, Minister for Lame Ducks, who had known of the impending collapse for six months but had hushed it up for fear of damaging insurance generally. Come back Emil Savundra, all is forgiven.

### Read up

FOR two months now, 32 members of the AUEW, mainly Indians and Pakistanis, have been on strike at a small North London plastics firm, Laricol Ltd. They are demanding the reinstatement of six sacked colleagues.

It is a strike over basic trade union rights but it is doubly important in that it helps to destroy the myth that immigrant workers are hard to unionise and reluctant to strike.

Kilburn International Socialists have produced an excellent little pamphlet on the strike. Copies are available at 5p each from 13 Pandora Road, London NW6. All proceeds go to the strike fund.

The series 'The ABC of socialism' has been discontinued.



THE MESSAGE has seeped through to the boardrooms of the BBC that there is growing disquiet among viewers at the bias of news bulletins and the general lack of democracy in television, where the viewing public finances the media but has no say at all in programme content.

The result is the development of programmes like *Talkback* (BBC1, Sundays) where selected viewers are able to express their opinions on the previous week's offerings. *Talkback* goes no way at all towards meeting the demands for greater viewers' control: once a programme has been screened, the assembled critics can merely comment on an accomplished fact.

Last Sunday's edition was a good example. Harsh things were said about the previous week's instalment of *Softly, Softly* and its damaging effect on race relations in Britain. The writer, Allan Prior, agreed with some of the criticisms made, but we were left with an increased feeling of impotence and rage at the way in which a handful of uncontrolled writers and producers can thrust their ideas and values at us.

The *Softly, Softly* play under attack dealt with a demonstration against a firm accused of racial bias in its choice of employees.

The rank and file were portrayed as mindless sheep blindly following the black leader. We were even treated to that old cardboard standby, the 'violent' communist, complete with molotov cocktail.

Even worse was the disgraceful whitewashing of the police. The black leader is arrested and taken before Charlie Barlow who, would you believe it, turns out to be a nice old liberal who argues and pleads with the black to call off the demo before violence occurs.

The *Softly, Softly* writers prepare their scripts with the aid of police advisers. Allan Prior must know that this picture of the police is a grotesque lie and an insult to those black people who have had first hand dealings with them.

MAI ZETTERLING, who survived as a film 'starlet' of the early 1950s and now operates from behind the camera, presented last Saturday's *One Pair of Eyes* (BBC2).

Miss Zetterling is a revolutionary, concerned at the total lack of freedom in the world and the need for massive change to save us all from destruction. The programme included a short documentary film that showed a humdrum, middle-class couple sleep-walking through 25 momentous post-war years, rearing a family, eating processed plastic food, becoming bored and resigned to each other and all the while completely unaware of the global disasters going on around them.

I thought the film provocative and stimulating, but I was less happy with Miss Zetterling's own thoughts and attitudes. She has an unconsciously arrogant approach to her audience. 'I want to make people angry,' she declared and told the viewers that they fill their stomachs with rubbish and are conned day in and day out by the consumer society.

In fact, people are not the dupes Miss Zetterling thinks them to be. Working people are very aware of being rooked and kidded by a society over which they have no control: what they need is the confidence to see that, collectively, they have the power to take control of society and develop it for the common good.

What was missing from Miss Zetterling's view of the world was the feeling that change must come from the conscious act of working people, not by a handful of middle-class intellectuals who have the opportunity to enjoy — her own expression — 'creative leisure'.

**David East**



# Socialist Worker

## Rail talks hit pay deadlock

S W Reporter

INDUSTRIAL ACTION will hit the railways on Monday unless British Rail offers more than an insult to its 190,000 workers.

Leaders of ASLEF, the footplatemen's union, voted unanimously on Tuesday to tell their 29,000 members to work to rule from Monday if the management failed to improve on its 8 per cent pay offer by Friday.

And the militant North London District council of the main union, the NUR, warned on Tuesday night that 'it had every intention of taking the most effective industrial action' to win a reasonable claim.

No time limit was put on the talks, but the feeling in North London was that strike action could start on 4 April if Friday's talks broke down.

ASLEF's executive has previously voted three times against industrial action but the increasing anger of the rank and file has forced the leaders to move towards a work to rule.

ASLEF and the clerks (TSSA) have claims in for 15 per cent while the NUR is demanding 25 per cent. The footplatemen were urging talks between all three unions to plan 'maximum unity'.

Any improvement in the BR offer is likely to be linked firmly to productivity concessions that would make further inroads into the depleted workforce.

Unity of the three rail unions is vital but it is equally important for the rank and file to press for solidarity action from the Transport Workers and Engineering Workers.

The complete shutdown of all road and air transport services is essential for a rail victory if strike action goes ahead.

## NOTICES

NEXT WEEK'S Socialist Worker will be published one day early to allow maximum sales on 18 March.

**PUBLIC MEETING** On Immigration Bill, Sunday 14 March, 3pm, Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham, IWA, PWU, OAU and Afro-Caribbean Society.

**GLASGOW** IS Day School, Community House, Clyde St, Saturday 20 March, 11am Rank and file trade unionism. 2.30pm TUC recall congress. 4pm Next steps to kill the Bill. Speaker Jim Higgins POEU.

**EDINBURGH** IS: Rank and File Against the Bill: Sunday 21 March, Trades Council Club, Albany Street. Speaker Jim Higgins, POEU: 2pm, The Minority Movement, 4pm TUC recall Congress.

**VINCENT FLYNN, SOGAT**, on 'Building a Council of Action to defend union rights': 12 March, 8pm, St Peters Hall, Kohat Road, Wimbledon.

**IS** Open meeting on immigration and race, All Saints Hall, off Westbourne Park Road, Notting Hill. Thursday 18 March, 8pm. Speakers: Paul Foot, Mike Caffoor and Darcus Owusu.

**STOKE NEWINGTON** IS: public meeting Roger Rosewell on The Industrial Struggle plus films on the Anti-Union Bill. Monday 15 March 8pm, Committee Room, Stoke Newington Library, Edwards Lane/Church St. N16. Bus: 73.

## NEW RETREAT BY TUC LEADERS: OFFER TO HELP CURB WAGE RISES

THE WILLINGNESS of the TUC leaders to reach a compromise with the Tories is underlined by the publication of their Economic Review.

In the very week when they are going cap-in-hand to see Prime Minister Heath, the TUC spokesmen once again raise the call for an incomes policy, even though Congress has voted against such a policy.

General Council member Alan Fisher said on television on Monday

that the TUC were quite willing to accept an incomes policy. He repeated the Review's argument that such a policy would limit earnings to a 5 per cent growth a year.

The General Council also wants more productivity dealing. Their review calls for economic expansion to curb rising unemployment and promises that if such a policy were adopted by the government the TUC would readily co-operate in negotiating productivity

agreements.

Instead of organising a fighting campaign against the government, the TUC are trying desperately to prove that they are not as unreasonable as the Tories claim.

The reverse side of the coin of compromise with the Tories is the refusal to aid the postal strikers and the outright rejection of decisive action to kill the anti-union Bill.

# UNION ALLIANCE IS KEY LESSON FROM POST COLLAPSE

by DAVE PERCIVAL, UPW

THE COLLAPSE of the UPW after more than six weeks on strike is one of the worst defeats suffered by a large section of the British working class since the war. The key issue throughout the strike was whether it was a political struggle against a deliberate Tory policy of making a cut in real wages for workers in the public sector or a simple trade union issue between the UPW and the Post Office.

Although the government is bringing in legislation against the unions, is determined to clamp down on

wage increases and installed its own hatchet man as the chief of the Post Office, Tom Jackson allowed the dispute to revolve around a question of the 'profitability of the Post Office'.

He was able to show that the Post Office Corporation as a whole made a profit of £40 million a year because of the profits from telephones.

But Post Office profitability was irrelevant. The government had decided that a major union was going to take a beating as an example and that the UPW, with a long tradition of weakness and no strike fund, was the ideal candidate.

### ABSOLUTELY FIRM

Under these circumstances it was clear that victory could only be won if other groups of workers with claims in the public sector awaiting settlement had immediately been called to assist us. Instead, the leaders of the railway unions allowed the Railways Board to delay replying to their claim.

And the financial aid from other union leaders was really quite small. Even Jack Jones of the Transport and General workers donated only £10,000 out of a fund of £27 million. Compare this with the £600 donated by Ford workers at Dagenham from their strike pay.

But the UPW members remained absolutely firm even up to the seventh week of struggle. A member of my own branch at the meeting to discuss the recommendation to return to work produced a threat from the Gas Board to cut supplies for non-payment of a bill. He declared his willingness to continue the strike even without heating in his home.

Many active members of the union were surprised by the role of the Communist Party members of the executive. They remained indistinguishable from Tom Jackson, even when the final sell-out was agreed.

### FEEBLE CHAIRMAN

Maurice Styles was particularly feeble as chairman. He refused to accept rank and file motions pointing out the political nature of the strike and every week at Hyde Park he made a special point of thanking the police for their help.

He made no mention of the harassment of pickets by police which led to a number of arrests.

The lesson for militants in the UPW is that it is not sufficient just to capture leading positions for a handful of people but to fight for demands which can revive the fighting spirit of the members after this defeat.

First the UPW must end its collaboration with the bosses through Whitley Councils and Joint Productivity Committees. It was largely due to the integration of the union with the management that gave the Tories confidence that the UPW was an easy nut to crack.

No further co-operation should be given on mechanisation until a minimum wage of £25 has been achieved. No concessions on part-time labour or other productivity strings should be agreed to.

For the trade union movement as a whole, the strike has shown the urgent necessity for an alliance of unions in the public sector that can respond to a government attack by bringing out other workers on sympathy strikes, whatever the Industrial Relations Bill says.



## No splits in strikers' ranks

Throughout the six weeks' postal strike the 220,000 UPW members showed magnificent solidarity. Their will to win was defeated by their isolation and lack of effective support from other unions.

## CLOSURE THREAT BY FORD TO SPLIT STRIKERS

by COLIN BEADLE, TGWU

FORD STRIKERS, out for six weeks for parity with Midlands' car rates, are standing firm against a massive propaganda bid by the management to break their nationwide solidarity.

Threats to rundown British factories, shift components manufacture abroad and sack thousands of workers have been met with a 'we've heard it all before' shrug by the strikers.

Every dispute at Ford in recent years has been accompanied by similar warnings from the management that are withdrawn as soon as work resumes but that serve the purpose of covering up for the combine's low wage rates and top-of-the-car-league profits.

### Trip to York

The degree of desperation underlying the management bombast can be seen from the decision by labour boss Bob Ramsey to go to York on Thursday for talks with the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions and the Engineering Employers' Federation. Ford is not a member of the EEF and Ramsey's appeal for help in ending the strike shows the effect of six weeks' lost production.

So far Ford has offered £3.20 and the unions are pressing for £14-16 a week more to win parity of rates. The main danger now is that the union leaders will accept £5 to settle the dispute and leave

their members at the foot of the car wages table.

Union officials will report back to a mass meeting in Dagenham on Sunday. The management will be watching for any signs of a weakening in the men's determination.

But if Dagenham is in the same mood as Halewood, there will be no cracks in the ranks. The Liverpool workers voted by more than 2000 to four last Sunday to continue the strike until total victory is won.

The voting gives the lie to the witch-hunt launched on Tuesday by Tory MP Tim Fortescue who claims that a majority of Halewood men want to go back and are being led by the nose by their stewards.

Henry Ford II arrives in Britain on Saturday, determined to smash the strike and save his new Pinto car with engines made at Dagenham.

### LESSONS OF THE POSTAL STRIKE

IS meeting 21 March, 11am  
6 Cottons Gardens London E2

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