

Gas and shop workers challenge Tories

BUST FREEZE

by Socialist Worker Industrial Correspondent

GAS WORKERS on a basic pay of £19 a week and shop workers—many on the princely basic of £14—are among two of the groups of low paid and ruthlessly exploited workers now on the move against the Tory wage freeze.

Last Friday, the Gas Council broke off negotiations with the General and Municipal Workers Union and the Transport Workers Union over a claim for a wage increase, shorter hours and more holidays.

The Gas Council received orders directly from the Heath government that no more pay talks should take place during the pay freeze. And Heath's letter to Lord Cooper, GMWU general secretary, makes it clear that private employers too should not talk money until after the freeze.

For years the General and Municipal has co-operated in running down the labour force in the gas industry. This has been reduced by one-third in the last five years alone. At the same time productivity per man has risen 200 per cent, the highest of any industry.

By tradition gas workers' pay rates are supposed to be comparable with the electrical power industry. By April this year the average gas worker had to work six hours longer than a power worker to earn the same wage.

And the gap has been considerably widened again even by the miserable £3 rise the electrical unions accepted just before the freeze.

LAST STRAW

As far as gas workers are concerned Heath's order is the last straw. That is why a meeting of shop stewards representing 8000 GMWU members in the North Thames Gas Board voted overwhelmingly on Monday to press the union executive to authorise all-out industrial action on 28 January unless negotiations are resumed. Both the GMWU and the TGWU are to call delegate conferences of gas worker members after Christmas.

And in Scotland 7000 workers in the big multiple grocery stores are to strike against the freeze and for an improved offer on the last two shopping days before Christmas, and every Friday and Saturday afterwards. The North East and the Midlands are also expected to be hit.

Shop workers are demanding a minimum wage of £20 and a 40 hour week. The employers' latest insult of an offer would give workers on £14 a rise of only £2.30 a week. The Union of Shop Distributive and Allied Workers has made the strike official.

It is appropriate that USDAW members should move into action. They know all about high prices from both sides of the counter.

In the same week as the law of the land moves against the AUEW and the low paid, meat prices are up another 2p in the pound and still more chain stores declared record profits.

MOVE BY LOW PAID

Pickets at Marks & Sparks



MORE THAN 50 Marks and Spencers' stores throughout Britain were picketed by International Socialists' branches last Saturday in solidarity with the Asian strikers at the Mansfield Hosiery mill in Loughborough. M&S owns 20 per cent of the shares of Nottingham Manufacturing, the giant hosiery combine that controls the Loughborough firm and bars Asian workers from the best-paid jobs. M&S also buys all the products of the group.

Picture shows the picket mounted by Hornsey and Tottenham IS branches at the Holloway, north London, store. In Manchester pickets with placards and loudhailers had a big impact on shoppers. The store, hit where it hurts most—in the cash till—summoned the police, who dutifully arrested four IS members on charges ranging from obstruction to insulting words and behaviour. Despite this, the branch along with others throughout the country will continue Saturday pickets until the strikers win. LOUGHBOROUGH REPORT: page 12.

IS FUND TOPS £6000

THIS WEEK'S post bag has taken the £30,000 fund to £6649. Bearing in mind the heavy Christmas spending, the addition of £775 is a generous effort.

Branch levies include: Birmingham £59, York £150, Harlesden £11.70, Hemel Hempstead £100, Harlow £6.05, Cambridge £10.

Again I thank all the readers who sent contributions, many of

whom share the sentiments of D Morris from North Wales, who writes: 'Please find enclosed a postal order for 70p as a contribution to the printshop fund. If this is not a good cause I don't know what it is! Keep fighting.'

Donations to: Jim Nichol, IS National Treasurer, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

Eviction threat to 500 tenants by Labour Council

UP TO 500 council tenants who have withheld their rents since October in protest against the government's Rent Act may be turned out of their homes by a Labour council early in the New Year.

The policy committee of the Labour council at Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, decided at its meeting last week to give the strikers 22 days—to 8 January—to pay up their arrears or face eviction.

After the meeting, Labour's leader, Reg Lane, made the following heroic declaration: 'I am sorry it had to come to this, but we are not prepared to break the law. We asked the government what to do, and they told us to take this action.'

When Newcastle's Labour Group decided last summer by one vote to implement the government's Rent Act, Lane gave a personal assurance to tenants' association chairman Bill Richardson that the council would 'not stand in the way of your protest'. This pledge was made several times in public and the tenants' association committee accordingly advised their members not to pay the rent increases.

The council then wrote to the Department of the Environment hoping to 'pass the buck' to the tenants' strike to the government. Back came the reply from the DOE: If the tenants were not evicted, the Labour councillors would be surcharged.

The Labour councillors promptly changed their mind.

But the tenants' association is standing firm. At a meeting last Wednesday, the association's management committee voted 29-17 to continue the strike.

Holiday behind bars

JUDGE DAVID WILD, the new judge at St Albans Crown Court, was full of seasonal good cheer on 13 December when 13 young men, most of them 17 and 18, appeared in front of him charged with unlawful assembly and possessing offensive weapons last June.

The incidents took place outside the Railway Hotel, Harrow, after what appears to have been a confrontation—though not a fight—between two groups of Hells Angels. Though some of the men pleaded guilty to the unlawful assembly charges, all pleaded not guilty to possessing offensive weapons.

These are all minor charges, and the young men have been on bail since last June when they were arrested. All six of their counsel at St Albans Crown Court asked for an adjournment of the case so that more inquiries could be made about

The judge agreed to adjourn the case until Wednesday 27 December—two days after Christmas—but the barristers all complained that this was too early. Crossly, Judge Wild agreed to put the trial off until 1 January.

'I know why you want an adjournment,' he snapped. 'So that these boys can be out of prison for Christmas.' And with that he coolly refused to grant bail, though bail had been granted for six months for all the men.

GREETINGS

Socialist Worker sends greetings to all its readers for Christmas and the New Year. The paper will not be published next week. The next issue will be dated 9 January 1973. Have a good holiday.

BRIEFING

THE Bulletin of the Committee to Defend Czechoslovak Socialists, published in Britain, contains the following report on the conditions of political prisoners in Czechoslovakia:

'Political prisoners receive worse treatment than those convicted on criminal charges. They are usually allotted the hardest jobs—labouring on railway construction, sewing sacks—and labour squads are headed by non-political prisoners who are generally unqualified and often bear a grudge against intellectuals.

'This work carries the lowest pay, and since prisoners serving sentences are not allowed to receive money from their families, this amounts to a serious deprivation, especially as deductions have to be made for legal costs and board and lodging in the prisons.

'Another serious complaint is that work norms are set so high as to be almost impossible to fulfil. In any case, the work

done is often assessed by group leaders, so that any prisoner can be turned into a 'non-fulfiller' at will. Non-fulfilment of norms makes the prisoner liable to a scale of punishments, which range from a ban on TV viewing through Saturday or Sunday shifts, special fatigues, reduced rations and withholding of parcels, to isolation in punishment cells.

'Political prisoners are also excluded from prison 'self-management committees', whose members receive certain privileges, and they are not eligible to lead hobby groups and so on. Discriminated against in these ways, they are targets for the sadists among the warders, who can make life a misery.'

TWO FRENCH revolutionary socialist organisations, *Lutte Ouvriere* (Workers'

Struggle) and the *Ligue Communiste* will between them be running 309 candidates in 80 of France's 95 departments in the first round of the general election next spring. *Lutte Ouvriere* will have 176 and the *Ligue Communiste* 133. It was explained at a press conference last week that they had been unable to reach an agreement on mutual support with a third revolutionary organisation, the OCl. The two groups will run on their own respective programmes but with a joint appeal to vote for the revolutionary alternative on the first round of the elections.

A COMMITTEE of the Egyptian parliament has attacked the government of Dr Sidqi for not backing up with serious war preparations its statements on Egypt's determination to recover the conquered territories from Israel. The committee said

it was worried whether Egypt could survive a war, since Cairo's telephone, electricity and water supply systems all broke down recently after two days of heavy rain.

IN ITALY, top state officials have been given a magnificent Christmas present, a salary increase amounting in some cases to 159 per cent. Only 11,000 people are involved, but the cost to the state runs into thousands of millions of pounds.

By contrast, an increase in pensions, which the Italian Communist Party campaigned for last summer, was refused on the grounds that the state finances would not stretch to it. The total cost of this measure, which would have benefited pensioners of all kinds, would have been less than £1000 million pounds over five years.

TRYBUNA LUDU, the Polish Communist Party Newspaper, has complained of widespread absenteeism among workers. In the Polish consumer goods industries last year, workers took an average 200 hours off work—the equivalent of 25 working days each—over and above official holidays and sick leave.

The paper goes on to say the main task of the party organisations should be to reinforce work discipline.

THE ARMY has been called in to clear rubbish from the streets of Paris after five days of a dustmen's strike. The dustmen are claiming a wage increase, job security, protective clothing for certain jobs, and decent housing for immigrant workers, who make up 80 per cent of Paris dustmen.



PAY CUT THREAT IN YUGOSLAVIA

Vesteys feel the breeze in Argentina

LAST WEEK'S kidnapping of the Vestey organisation's Argentinian boss Ronald Grove once again highlights the involvement of giant British and American companies in an international regime of repression and exploitation.

Frigorifico Anglo, of which Grove is the managing director, was until fairly recently one of the ten biggest companies in the Argentine, packing beef raised on Vestey's large Argentinian ranches, slaughtered in its slaughterhouses and exported all over the world in Vestey's shipping lines, Blue Star, Booth, Lamport and Holt.

But over the past few years Vestey's have slashed their labour force in the Argentine with precisely the same ruthlessness as they have used here in Britain. The major Anglo packing plant has now been shut.

Over the years Vesteys have co-existed with each successive repressive government in the Argentine and directly manipulated them. This has been the case particularly with the firm's shipping interests. Vestey's have repeatedly been able to have elementary safety regulations imposed by the Argentine customs authority changed to suit the profitability of their companies.

The Vestey man in the Argentine was kidnapped by the People's Revolutionary Army, the same guerrilla group who last May seized Stanley Sylvester, honorary British



Grove: in cold storage

Consul in the Argentine and by pure coincidence boss of the giant American meat company Swift.

This company is now much bigger in the Argentine than the Vesteys and owns whole towns and everything in them, including schools, churches, cafes and cinemas.

Repression, particularly of trade unionists, has become even more severe in recent months as increasing power splits appear in the army and navy, the foundation of President Lanusse's military dictatorship.

by Peter Hitchcock

ABOUT one million Yugoslav workers are being told they must take cuts of between 10 and 25 per cent of their wages from 1 January in order to save 'socialism' in their country.

This ferocious move, which will affect 40 per cent of the work force in Yugoslavia's largest republic of Serbia, and hundreds of thousands of workers in other republics, is only the latest crisis caused by the growing contradictions in the economy.

Last year 671,908 Yugoslavs found themselves forced to go abroad to look for jobs in the underpaid and overworked conditions facing migrant workers in the Common Market. Another 300,000 were officially recorded as unemployed in Yugoslavia. Now one million of those with jobs find themselves facing wage cuts.

The move follows an investigation of hundreds of enterprises in Yugoslavia which had quite simply run out of cash. The new economic 'reform' programme begun in 1965, whose main purpose was to open Yugoslavia to the world market in the hope of 'modernising' it that way, has been all too effective.

MODERATE

Firms which had to import machinery from the West have found themselves paying ever higher prices because of the inflationary tendencies in the capitalist market.

At the same time Yugoslavia's exports have been confronted by tariff barriers in the Common Market. Many enterprises tried to blast themselves out of this blind alley by investing furiously. Workers were told to moderate their wage demands so that enterprise could re-invest its profits.

Now the moment of truth has come. Literally hundreds of firms are on the verge of bankruptcy, because in terms of the world market they are no longer profitable.

Over the last year some of them tried to postpone the reckoning by paying workers late, often a month or two months in arrears. President Tito's financial experts have now stepped in, and blocked their accounts.

Union-buster bosses back off

by Richard Kirkwood

FRANCE'S biggest commercial firm, Berliet, seems to be retreating from its attempt to smash the two major unions, the CGT and the CFDT.

Last month it attempted to use the notorious 'anti-riot law', introduced in 1970 to deal with so-called 'terrorists', against trade unionists who had led workers to occupy management dining rooms. Last week the firm withdrew the charges.

This is the first time a major firm has tried to use this repressive law against unionists. Paul Berliet is an old-fashioned boss who has never really liked unions. Now he has been forced to climb down.

But the issues that sparked off a wave of strikes remain unresolved. Since the end of September, the workers in Berliet have

been holding 'rolling strikes'—one or two departments a day on strike. The strikers have also paraded round the factory with effigies of their boss, banners and even trumpets and drums.

Determination

Three one-day or half-day strikes with demonstrations in the centre of Lyons supported by workers from other local factories have shown the strikers' determination. The last, on 27 November, brought out at least 12,000 people from many factories—the biggest demonstration in the city since May 1968.

The workers are demanding a flat-rate increase of 200 francs a month (£4 per week). So far the management's best offer



Tito: 'socialism' equals competition and attacks on wages

First priorities of course are foreign customers who will get their debts paid. Workers must take a wage cut, giving them 90 per cent of the wage they got in 1971.

But because of the rise in the cost of living that could mean 75 per cent of their current wage this year. Even before the cuts official figures showed that in two of the poorest republics, Macedonia and Montenegro, real incomes went down by 3 per cent between January and August.

Tito's lieutenants are taking no chances with possible unrest. In different parts of the country workers are being told that demands that the cuts be postponed will be treated as subversion. People who oppose them

will be sacked.

In this harsh climate, the one surprise is that the normal rhetoric one would expect to hear about the need for 'sacrifice' has not been forthcoming. With some embarrassment, Mr Kiro Gligorov, Tito's economic overlord, recently told a party meeting that they must try to 'sell' the measures to workers.

SCANDALS

'What have we done to make people feel and believe that sacrifices are necessary in order to consolidate the economy, and blaze the trail for the further development of self-management?' he asked. 'Instead at meetings throughout Yugoslavia we are talking about the consequences collectives will face if they do not implement the measures,' he went on.

A major public relations drive can now be expected. One facet of it is already underway. This is the sudden 'discovery' of a number of huge financial scandals.

The mayor of Zagreb has just resigned in connection with an affair in which a group of factory managers embezzled £2 million and sent it to bank accounts.

Serious though these scandals are, the focus on them now serves two purposes. It is meant to give the impression that the regime is hitting the rich as well as ordinary workers, and that the economy's present crisis is an aberration and due to a few scandals.

In fact the system's contradictions go deeper than that.

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BOMB SQUAD'S NEW VICTIM

AT half past six in the morning on 3 December 1971, everybody at 128 Camberwell New Road, in south London, was asleep—but not for long. In the front door came eight policemen and an Alsatian dog.

Mrs Bevan and her four children were sleeping on the ground floor and were the first to meet them. The children cried but the Bomb Squad were looking for the lodger on the first floor, 22 years-old Michelle O'Callaghan from Liverpool.

In Michelle's bedroom was a plastic bag, and in the bag an alarm clock converted, claim the police, into a detonator, a couple of crushed jetex tablets, and a piece of paper torn from a magazine with the word 'sabotage' written on it.

DISAPPEARED

Michelle didn't see her room again. She spent the next five months in Holloway prison on a conspiracy charge. Eventually in June her case came up for committal and the charge promptly disappeared at the first challenge from Michelle's solicitor, to be replaced by unlawful possession of explosive substances. Last week she was on trial at the Old Bailey.

Michelle's case is simple. She'd moved into the house in September 1971. The bag had been there before and had remained in the bottom of a cupboard. She hadn't examined or touched it.

by John Telfair

There's a simple test—fingerprints—but the police never took them. She was interrogated for more than 14 hours and from it came a 'statement', 'admitting' making the clock detonator. But Michelle denies its manufacture.

Just what are the police up to? The evidence that has been used in the case has ranged over the whole of Michelle's political background, which is that of a militant revolutionary socialist, but not a bomber. 'They're trying to say I'm an isolated bomber, but I don't believe in isolated bombing—it's counter-productive,' she said.

The trial is a trailer. In the aftermath of the Stoke Newington Eight trial, Commander Ernest Bond, head of the Bomb Squad, apart from announcing that he regarded all eight as guilty despite the four acquittals, said that the police were now looking for another two suspected 'bombers', Sarah Poulidakou and Jerry Osner. They had been the two previous tenants in Michelle's flat.

A friend of Michelle has an explanation: 'They're treating Osner and Poulidakou as public enemies number one, yet Michelle's bail has been incredibly low. It's as though they're trying to use Michelle against them.'

Michelle supports this: 'They tried to use me as a source of infor-

mation. I didn't have any, so they charged me, otherwise they'd have let me go.'

What has happened has been that the trial, ostensibly about possession, has turned into a thinly-disguised conspiracy trial. Michelle's politics and her correspondence have all been introduced, and so continuously have the missing Osner and Poulidakou.

Another friend said: 'In the Prescott Purdie trial, six people were tried in their absence and their guilt was assumed. Similarly in this trial Osner and Poulidakou are being tried in their absence. Their guilt is being assumed by the police.'

SINISTER

'What has come out of this trial,' he went on, 'is the sort of motivation and activity the Bomb Squad are involved in. Gilham (the detective-sergeant responsible for interrogating Michelle at the flat) was a key witness at the Stoke Newington Eight trial, particularly over the allegation that the police planted explosives.'

It's interesting that in this trial he's admitted he's very bomb minded. Going on all the explosive raids led him to a state of mind where he was likely to jump to sinister conclusions.'

This country has had a secret police called the Special Branch for a long time. It now has in the Bomb Squad a group whose reason for existence is the discovery of plots, bombs and nationwide conspiracies.



'Let Jackie go' demand jail pickets

ON SATURDAY supporters of Jackie Paddon picketed Holloway prison in north London, demanding her release. Jackie is the young Southend girl jailed for 21 months for taking a baby from its mother for 15 minutes.

The picket was organised by the Southend Women's Liberation group. They say that Jackie is in need of urgent psychiatric care and locking her away in Holloway will only add to her mental problems.

NO CHANGE AT TOP IN OFFICIAL SINN FEIN

by Brian Trench

DUBLIN:—Last weekend's Ard-Fheis (Conference) of the Official Sinn Fein was one of the best attended and most important in recent years. The Official republicans have been forced to re-examine some of their policies in the light of recent developments.

Differences did emerge among the 300 delegates. There were some lively, even heated, discussions. But no new policy emerged.

In spite of criticisms from members about the lack of clear socialist politics and undemocratic behaviour by the leadership, the incoming

executive is an almost exact replica of last year's.

While the Officials were engaged in debate over a wide range of policies, several leading Provisionals presided at the founding meeting of the Irish Civil Rights Association. This broad front of Provisionals and prominent people aims at 'increasing the stature and human dignity of man'.

Appeals for 'human rights' or the call for an Ombudsman are unlikely to stop the arrest of Provisionals. The opportunity has been presented to mobilise workers in a fight against repression—and the Provos look like throwing it away.

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK...

IT IS GOING to be an expensive New Year. The latest figures from the Department of Employment show that retail prices are still rising at about 8½ per cent per year in spite of the 'freeze'.

Government spokesmen have tried to explain away these figures produced by their own officials. Most of the increases, they claim, took place before the freeze was fully effective. This is a half-truth at best.

Food prices, uncontrolled for fresh foods, are rising at much the same rate as before. The average price of beef, for example, has risen by 6½p a pound in the six weeks since the freeze started. Land and house prices, which help to determine the level of rents, are also uncontrolled.

Manufacturers are allowed to apply for increases on grounds of increased cost of imports and the government has shown its usual tenderness to big business by allowing the giant Rio Tinto-Zinc company to make substantial price increases on these grounds. The bread manufacturers have already announced increases of a penny on the standard loaf from February. The pound sterling has been effectively devalued by 10 per cent in the last six months—in other words there has been a 10 per cent increase in import prices which will work itself through to retail prices—and that is quite legal under Heath's 'freeze'.

But the biggest source of continuing price rises will be the government itself. The big business weekly, the Economist, which is an enthusiastic supporter of wage-freezing, has to admit this: 'The freeze is now due to end just as its [the government's] own policies push up prices. The first stage of the common agricultural policy [of the Common Market] comes in on 1 February. This will add at least 2 per cent to food prices—and more if allowance is made for sterling's downward float. Food prices in 1973 could well rise by 8 per cent . . . All this coming on top of the 22 per cent rise since the election . . . Then there is Value Added Tax, due in on April Fool's day! And, of course, the next wave of 'Fair Rent' increases under the Housing Finance Act also starts next April.'

TUC co-operates

It is now certain that the 'freeze' will not end in February but will be extended for just as long as the government can get away with it. The aim is to push through government-induced price increases whilst freezing wages. The fact that the government has forbidden the gas industry bosses to negotiate about an increase for gas workers after the formal end of the 'freeze' proves it to the hilt.

Higher prices plus frozen wages equals lower living standards and higher profits. That is what it is all about.

The lower paid workers, for whom Heath was shedding crocodile tears in the negotiations with the TUC in the autumn are, as is always the case in wage freezes, the first and worst sufferers. Agricultural workers, hospital manual workers and shop assistants have lost increases they would otherwise have had.

Meanwhile the TUC chiefs continue to co-operate with the Tories. At the last meeting of the National Economic Development Council there were what press reports called 'long and amicable discussions' on prices and incomes between leading TUC representatives including Jack Jones and government representatives led by Chancellor Barber. Vic Feather has continued to attend secret meetings with government and CBI representatives and now a deputation is to be sent to hear Heath's latest proposals for permanent wage regulation.

There is no doubt that the majority of the TUC bosses are content to be permanent junior partners in a Tory wage-freeze swindle. With the exception of the AUEW leadership, they have abandoned all pretence of a fight against the Industrial Relations Act. A deafening silence from leading 'official' trade union circles greeted the latest fine on the AUEW.

Where were the 'left wing' giants of the General Council? No doubt they have been given 'informal' assurances about the use of the Act by Tory negotiators, assurances that are entirely worthless except as an excuse for trade union leaders to give up the fight.

It will be an expensive New Year and an icy one too if Heath and the employers get their way. The TUC will do nothing to melt the wage freeze. Fortunately it does not depend simply on the TUC. Already health workers and others are showing that they will not take real wage cuts without resistance.

FOOT

PRINTS

FISHING or GOADING?

MR D J STEWART is the full-time Conservative agent for Guildford, Surrey, and he is making an awful fool of himself.

A few days ago, Geoff Hardy, the Engineering Union district organiser for Guildford, got hold of a copy of a letter sent to the personnel director of a prominent Guildford manufacturing firm.

'Dear Sir,' it ran, 'I have been asked to write to you to inquire whether you might be able to put me in touch with any of your employees who might, as Conservatives, be prepared to join a Trade Unionists' Advisory Committee. Should you be able to give me any names, the source, of course, would be kept strictly confidential.'

'We consider that it is of the utmost importance that we foster and maintain the closest links with those of our supporters who are trade unionists and any help you may be able to give us would be greatly appreciated.'

The letter, which bore the letter-head of the Guildford Conservative Association, was 'dictated by Mr J D Stewart and signed in his absence by his secretary', M E Bishop.

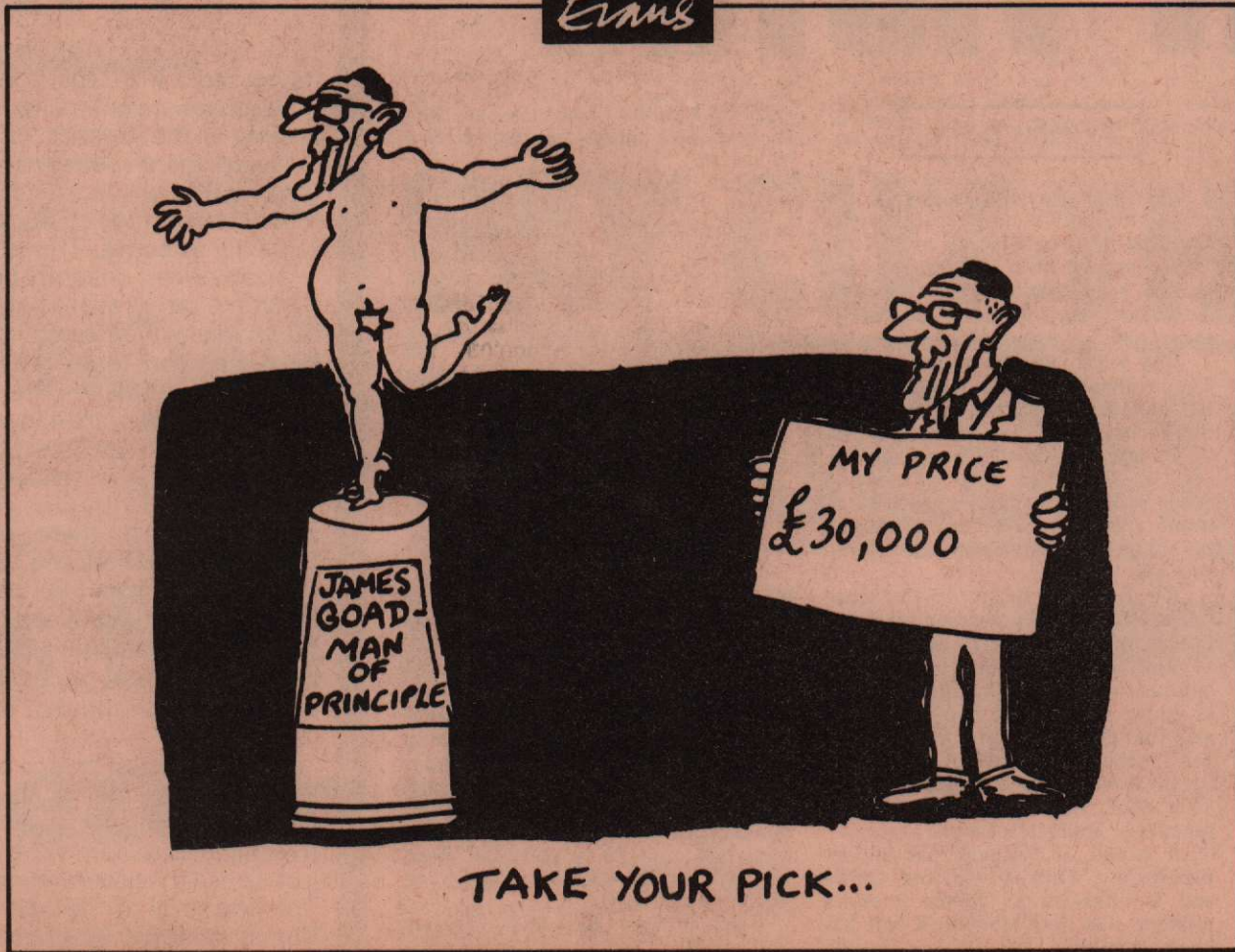
Geoff Hardy promptly wrote to Mr Stewart asking if he could confirm or deny rumours that documents calling for names of Tory sympathisers were circularised to local employers by the Tory Association.

Back came the reply, signed by Mr Stewart: 'I am glad to be able to tell you that your fears are unfounded since no document has been issued by me at all.'

The letter went on to ask Geoff Hardy whether 'as one who is in close touch with trade unionists' he would be prepared to pass on the names of Tory sympathisers.

The response from the AUEW will, I gather, be brief. The letter dictated by Mr Stewart will be sent by Geoff Hardy to Mr Stewart with a compliments slip, just to remind him.

'I think I shall also outline some ideas as to why it is that we think that any co-operation with the Tory Party at this juncture would be disastrous for the trade union movement,' says Geoff Hardy.



Directly, sir

A FREE copy of the booklet 'What Does the Institute of Directors Do?' can be obtained by application to the Institute of Directors. Under the heading 'What does the Institute do for the individual director?' the booklet states:

'Over 250 members of both Houses of Parliament are Fellows of the Institute. They can be counted on to see that the views of directors are adequately voiced in parliament and their interests protected whenever the occasion demands it.'

NEWS OF THE WORLD readers who are still eager for information about Violence in Industry, their appetites whetted by that newspaper's recent Strife Makers series, may not recall the case of H W Joy

versus the News of the World last May.

Mr Joy is a member of NATSOPA and was working in the machine room at the News of the World when his hand was caught in a machine, part of which was unguarded. His hand was smashed and three fingers had to be amputated.

The News of the World's insurance company fought the subsequent action in the courts on the grounds that there was 'contributory negligence' and that as the machine was running slowly, it wasn't really running at all. The court found against the company, and Mr Joy got £4000 damages.

Double Beds

THERE has been a lot of protest in Bedford about the meat processing plant of the butchery firm, Canvin Ltd, in the middle of the Brancaster Close council estate, which has been causing a lot of nuisance from noise and flies.

So there was some relief at the news that Bedford Corporation Estates Committee had agreed to buy back the one acre of land from Canvin, on condition Canvin moved the plant elsewhere.

The council paid £50,000 to Canvin for the one acre, and agreed to sell 20 acres of council land on the outskirts of the town to Canvin for £20,000. Canvin, in short, gained 19 acres, and a clear profit of £30,000.

The decisions to buy and sell the land was taken by the estates committee. The chairman of the estates committee is the managing director of Canvin, Noel Canvin.

Mr Canvin declared his interest, and left the meeting at the appropriate time.

Wise guy

THE ONLY place in Britain where there is rejoicing over the appointment of Professor Sir Michael Swann as the new chairman of the BBC Board of Governors is the campus of Edinburgh University, where this ageing whizz-kid of the technological revolution is known as 'Thatcher's darling'.

Sir Michael's political views can best be estimated from the fact that he contributed to the arch-reactionary Black Paper No 3 on Education.



Professor Swann: denial about South African shares

In summer 1970 he told the university court, after some student protest, that the university had no funds in any company which supported apartheid in South Africa. The following autumn the students found a list of the university's investments, which included shares in 20 firms based in South Africa, including several mining companies. The students promptly called for Swann's resignation.

Sir Michael also has strong views on broadcasting, which will greatly please Mrs Mary Whitehouse and other Tories.

In a speech to the General Council of Edinburgh University last summer (published in Student, 19 October), he said: 'People who dislike and mistrust authority are no new phenomenon, of course, and they have simply found a nice new way of irritating authority, much aided and abetted by the press and radio and television.'

Swann song

SHORTLY before the first issue of the new rank and file paper The Dockworker was published, its supporters in the London docks plastered the Royal, Tilbury and West India Docks with posters announcing its imminent arrival. The message was short and to the point: 'Employers beware. Dockworker is coming.'

Within 24 hours the printers who had printed the posters received dozens of telephone calls from gentlemen with extremely fruity voices, asking how they could take out a subscription and who was involved in the paper.

Following publication of the first issue, the employers and the editor of the independent employers' paper

The Port, Michael Guy, are not only concerned, but deeply disturbed.

In the course of a telephone conversation with Alan Williams, one of the three dockers threatened with arrest under the Industrial Relations Act and a sponsor of The Dockworker, Michael Guy offered the dockers a page in the next issue of The Port to put their case. This offer was declined and Mr Guy was told that one of the purposes of The Dockworker was to build an alternative voice in the docks industry.

This thought, coupled with his own knowledge of just how successful the first number of the rank and file paper was, deeply upset Mr Guy and over the telephone he launched into a denunciation of the International Socialists, whose printshop handles the technical side of producing The Dockworker.

According to the objective Mr Guy, the International Socialists were an organisation receiving massive subsidies 'from abroad' to 'sow subversion in British industry'.

But more startling revelations were to come. According to Mr Guy, Socialist Worker got its information on the Vestey's ownership of Midland Cold Storage by one of its reporters sneaking into his offices and stealing material out of the files.

Laurie Flynn, the Socialist Worker reporter concerned, has now written to Michael Guy pointing out that this is a totally unfounded and extremely serious allegation and demanding an unreserved apology. I await with interest news of his reply.

Anchor man

EVERYONE knows that the law is completely unbiased, and so is the Coroner for Scunthorpe and District, a gentleman by the name of Mr A A Collins. On 7 December, Mr Collins presided over the inquest into the death of Laurence Leonard, aged 17, who died on 13 November after falling 37ft from a steel converter at the notorious Anchor steelworks site at Scunthorpe.

The coroner was furious with Granada Television's World in Action programme which had exposed the hideous scandal of the safety situation at Anchor, where seven men have died in as many months.

Mr Collins ordered the jury to ignore everything they had seen or heard on the television programme.

'In this country,' he said, 'the facts relating to serious accidents are investigated by this coroner and his inquest jury, who return their verdict in accordance with the evidence given in open court, where it can be tested by cross-examination.'

'These matters are not decided by militant workmen, encouraged by the producer of a television programme who arranges for a film camera to be smuggled into the employers' site, in blatant and irresponsible defiance of a previous refusal by the employer to permit the film to be taken.'

After this outburst, the jury applied themselves to the question of how the hole through which young Laurence fell had not been guarded, as the law insists it should be. They decided it was all an accident, and the British Steel Corporation once again escaped scot free.

If it hadn't been for militant workmen and a courageous TV producer, no one would ever have known about the corporation's shocking record of slaughter on the Anchor site.

THE Bradford Labour Party general management committee has passed a resolution calling for the proscription of the International Socialists.

Explaining the resolution to the Bradford Telegraph and Argus, Mr Bill Panton, the local party agent said: 'The International Socialists are particularly active in Bradford. (Telegraph and Argus, 3 December.)'

This activity must stop or it will get the Labour Party a bad name.



Guildford Conservative Association

Member of Parliament: DAVID HOWELL

9 HIGH STREET
GUILDFORD
Telephone Guildford 75151

29th November, 1972

Dear Sir,

I have been asked to write to you to inquire whether you might be able to put me in touch with any of your employees who might, as Conservatives, be prepared to join a Trade Unionists' Advisory Committee. Should you be able to give me any names, the source, of course, would be kept strictly confidential.

We consider that it is of the utmost importance that we foster and maintain the closest links with those of our supporters who are Trade Unionists and any help you may be able to give us would be greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

M. E. Bishop

Dictated by Mr. D. J. Stewart and signed in his absence by his secretary.

**THAT BUSINESSMAN SCROOGE
CALLED CHRISTMAS 'HUMBUG'
TODAY'S PROFITEERS KNOW
BETTER—IT BRINGS THEM THEIR
BIGGEST KILLING OF THE YEAR**

Ding dong merrily on high, the cash registers are ringing!



THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS
PRESENT—ARTWORK BY
RED SAUNDERS

BIG BUSINESS is a discriminating beast. Its leaders have so far made no attempt to canonise Che Guevara, make his birth an occasion for public holidaymaking and celebration and (purely as a sideline) for stage-managing a bonanza of consumer spending which grants even bigger killings than usual.

Yet this is precisely what the captains of industry have done with the birth of an earlier guerilla leader by the name of Jesus Christ. To ensure the success of this operation they concluded a marvellous agreement for promotional purposes with organised religion.

The scale of the Christmas bonanza is quite staggering. Just before the appointed date, people very nearly double their spending on food, drink, paper hats, presents and pleasure.

They are persuaded by one means and another that they must buy a

jingle jangle of other commodities whose value is akin to the literary worth of the poetry inside Christmas cards. It is some time since big business discovered that, once pointed in the appropriate direction, human generosity could be quite ruthlessly exploited.

Above all, Christmas is a time for the young, for the growing to have access to new things and toys that should enlarge their world and help them grow.

Comics

But what sort of stuff does this sort of society make available, for purchase to be sure? Well there is a hefty line in comics. Come Christmas-time these are bound in annual form. The price is suitably high. This year returns are better than ever.

For this year, as every year, the boundlessly rich International Publishing Corporation produces its comics on cheap, very cheap labour. And since the Christmas annuals were not on sale before the government's price freeze, IPC is free to name its price for its 'occasional publications'.

With that spirit of human generosity so typical of the season and the giant corporation, prices have risen

steeply since last year. So have IPC's profits. All for the good of the children, you understand.

But over recent years, IPC and others have faced some slight problems with their comic fare. A sudden outburst of sanity among the common people, old and young, has meant that the civilising-soldier war books are no longer so eagerly swallowed.

Still football, an exhilarating game, can always be rendered as a star-gazing competitive way out of the ghetto.

Then there are dolls which cost nothing to produce, a little to pack, quite a lot to advertise. Despite this one slight hitch they turn in fantastic profits which can be reproduced by ensuring that the dolls break rather easily or are constantly in need of new and costly 'extras'.

You will be glad to know that Cindy is selling well again. The expensive little number she requires to go riding like lovely Princess Anne is working well for her maker's share price.

Grotesque

But some things never change, much to the relief of Mary Whitehouse and her kind, who really do have the

future of our children very much in mind. Cindy and Action Man still have no sexual organs. God forbid that children should learn about such subversive things as biology and sex—quite pornographic.

It is in this spirit that next year Mettoy hope to introduce 'The dockworker' range. These actually applaud when trade unionists are imprisoned.

Turn now to the adult world. What has big business laid on for us now that we really are action men and women with a few days off from the daily grind? Don't shop around for an answer. Try a gift pack.

For mums and wives, sisters and sweethearts, soap and bathsalts will give pleasure, always providing you own a bath. Yardley's Bond Street gift pack, which costs almost nothing to produce, sold at 75p a time, will only cost you 15p more than the inflated prices you would pay to buy Yardley's soap and bathsalts separately.

Nor do Yardley and their ilk operate any sex discrimination. Women too are free to buy their men nattily packed and grotesquely expensive packs of soap and talcum. It is pleasurable again this year to record a continuation of this move towards equality of exploitation.

Despite all this and a thousand other examples that could be given, the Christmas holidays are a happy time, not least for those who, in between checking their share prices (an arduous task), complain about those ransomers of the nation, the working class, who insist on prolonging their break. Absenteeism is the word. The New Year's papers will no doubt remind you of this desperate problem.

For the past week in that totally essential area of the economy, the City of London, there has been no work done at all and there will be none for a week after the birthday celebration of our Lord. The wealthy and the powerful take their devotions seriously. Throughout Britain at this time of year managing directors and their minions will be plundering their expense accounts to celebrate their devotions to the system that devotes itself to them.

After an extended break, they will return to count the spoils and embark on the essential task of making yet more.

They have one message for the likes of you and me—try not to enjoy your leisure more than last year. That might infringe the freeze.

LAURIE FLYNN

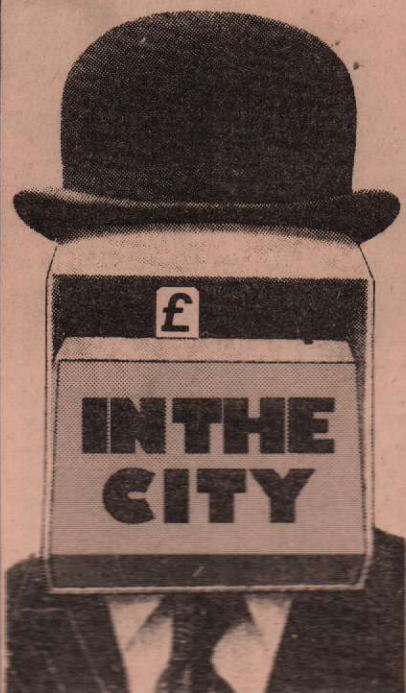
In 1960 the council tenants in St Pancras, London, fought against a rent scheme which contained many of the elements which have now been incorporated in the Housing Finance Act. The story of that fight is told in this pamphlet by Dave Burn, with an introduction by Hugh Kerr of the Harlow Tenants Federation.

Rent Strike: St Pancras 1960

Dave Burn

Pluto for Architectural
Radicals Students
Educators
15p plus 3p postage.
ISBN 0902818 309
Unit 10 Spencer Court
7 Chalcot Road
London NW1 8LH
also from
IS Books
6 Cottons Gardens
London E2 8DN

£3500 profit—by lifting a phone



T H ROGMORTON

WITHIN the first month of the freeze, the Financial Times Share Index rose by nearly five per cent from 487 to 508. That means that while wages were frozen, the average value of shares had risen by five per cent.

With the paper Accountancy Age talking of the freeze 'being good for profits', and further rises expected in the share index, it is worth looking at one man who makes a lot of money on the Stock Exchange, and how he does it.

Speculators are normally rather reticent about their killings but the Investors Guardian, like Accountancy Age owned by Michael Heseltine MP, helps fill the gaps. Each week it has an interview with a prominent person about his own policy for making money on the Stock Exchange.

Recently it was the turn of Paul Hamlyn, publisher. He is described as 'only a dabbler', but said 'If I think something is right, I'll put at least £100,000 into it.' Perhaps there are a few readers who would be only too happy to dabble with £100,000.

He later goes on to say he dabbles in 50 different shares. That would make him worth more than £5 million, which is perhaps not surprising, as he sold his own company, Paul Hamlyn Ltd, to the giant International Publishing Corporation in 1964 for £2.25 million.

Similarly, readers will notice how their wages have more than doubled in

the past five years.

Now let's suppose that someone like Hamlyn decided to buy £100,000 worth of ICI shares on the afternoon the freeze was announced. At 273p each he would have been able to buy around 35,000 shares.

A month after the freeze began he would be able to sell these at 290p a share. After all expenses—we must be fair—he would have made a clear £3500 profit. And the hardest work he would ever have done is to lift the telephone twice, once to buy and once to sell.

Drunk

In fact the hard-working speculator may never even have had to lift his telephone. You will remember that Mr Hamlyn wasn't exactly poor at the beginning of this saga. What the happy businessman can do is trot along to his stockbroker with the certificates of the shares he already owns and hand them over as security. The stockbroker will then lend him three times the face value of these shares to 'invest'.

This money will have originally been lent by the bank—the hard-earned savings of people like you and me. According to government figures, bank overdrafts to the sector that includes stockbrokers were 137 per cent higher in August this year than August last year.

The stockbroker then plays with this money as he sees fit. The businessman does nothing but collect the profits and the stockbroker collects his commission. Occasionally they may get very drunk over lunch together. They both get rich, or even richer.

When you consider that around £17,000 million worth of shares are in the hands of less than 10 per cent of the population, you will realise what scope there is for the rich to get richer.

It is not true that anyone can join in, as people like Harold Lever, Labour MP, and his friends on The Wider Share Ownership Council say. The possession of money and knowledge and access to these things is limited to such well-known ordinary people as millionaires Harold Lever and Paul Hamlyn.

Even the number of shares is limited—so the more people buy them, the higher goes the price. Eventually it can go no higher, but someone has to be left with those shares. It is not often the likes of Hamlyn are left with dud shares.

Such activities contribute nothing to society and are an affront to the pensioners as they receive a mean £10 this Christmas—that would not even pay for lunch with your stockbroker.

These activities are not stopped by the freeze. In fact the freeze is increasing the opportunities to make money like this. Yet the press, always so concerned about 'the greedy workers', says nothing.

VIC WHITTINGTON

A CAUTIONARY TALE FOR CH

Once upon a time, a long time ago, there was born in a town in the North of England a boy called Vic Whittington. Vic's parents were very poor and Vic had no shoes and only rags for clothing. All day he would walk the streets looking for work and begging a few odd pennies to take home to his starving family.

One day he stopped to clean the shoes of a rich merchant who was passing through the town. The merchant was talking about the City of London and how the streets were paved with gold. When Vic got home that night, he asked his father: 'Is it true, father, that the streets of the City of London are paved with gold?'

'Oh, yes,' said his father. 'But it's no place for the likes of you and me.'

That night, as he lay in his cold bed, Vic decided to go and seek his fortune in the City of London. When his father and mother were fast asleep, he crept out of the house, taking with him only a few rags and his best friend, his cat, Tom.

After many days on the road, he came at last to the great City of London. He walked about the streets in amazement. Here were ladies and gentlemen in clothes the like of which he had never seen before. Most surprising of all, however, were the streets. They were paved with gold!

After walking for a long time, Vic reached down to take one of the gold paving stones. A roar went up from a man in blue uniform who stood nearby.

'That's enough!' shouted the man. 'This gold belongs to the City of London. Now you clear off before I put you in prison.'

Vic ran away, terrified and crying. He ran, with Tom by his side, for what seemed like hours, until he found a doorway, where he collapsed into a fitful sleep.

He awoke to find someone shaking his shoulder, and looked up to see a kindly looking man, dressed in a brown coat.

'And what is a young lad like you doing sleeping in the street?' asked the man.

Vic blurted out his story, adding that he and Tom, who was mewling quietly, were very hungry.

'Come in,' said the man. 'This is my house.'

He led them into the house and took Vic and Tom into a large garden at the back which stretched away into the distance.

'I am Friar TUC,' said the man. 'And this is where I grow my unions. You and Tom can work here, looking after the unions. And I will give you free board and lodging. If you work hard, you will be happy.'

'Oh, thank you, Sir,' said Vic. And before he could ask how he could ever repay, the friar turned on his heel and walked away.

So Vic worked in the union garden and grew into a tough, handsome young man, while Tom became one of the best rat-catchers in the district. But the union garden was not an exciting place and Vic soon yearned for more adventures in the City of London.

One day when the friar was out, Vic and Tom sneaked out of the garden and walked to a palace near the City of London, where lived the Great King Cecil. As luck would have it, the gates were open, and Vic and Tom sneaked inside. They found a door open at the back of the palace and walked through numberless gilt corridors.

Pausing outside a huge door, Vic heard a man speaking inside. Crouching down, he peeped inside the keyhole.

There, seated in the middle of an enormous room, was the Great King Cecil himself! He was talking earnestly to a huge Mirror which was fixed onto one of the walls.

Over and over again he repeated the rhyme: 'Mirror, Mirror, biggest sell Work for me your magic spell. Mirror, Mirror on the wall Who is the Greatest man of all?'

And then, as Vic watched, the Mirror began to speak!

'Thou, Oh King of Great and Small Thou art the Greatest Man of All.'

And the King laughed heartily and clapped his hands.

Suddenly the door fell open and Vic and Tom tumbled into the room.

'What are you doing here?' bellowed the King.

'Oh, King, forgive me,' stammered Vic. 'I was walking in the corridors and couldn't help hearing the Mirror speak.'

The King smiled kindly, and said:

'You are lucky. All who hear the magic Mirror must come under its spell. If you return here every week, I will pay you ten gold sovereigns. But you must always do as the Mirror tells you.'

So Vic and Tom returned every week, and told the King and the Mirror what was going on in Friar TUC's union patch. And every week for four years the King handed over ten gold sovereigns.

And Friar TUC knew nothing of all this.

One day, when four years had passed, Vic and Tom went as usual to the palace to find everything in confusion. King Cecil was weeping bitterly.

'I am no longer the Greatest,' he cried. 'The Mirror has chosen a new champion. He is Desperate Don, the Paper Tiger.'

Hardly had he spoken than with a mighty roar a huge Tiger, made entirely of paper and plastic, leapt into the room. 'Out, out!' he bellowed, 'all of you! It is my magic Mirror now and all who worked for King Cecil are banished forever.'

King Cecil ran, screaming like a madman from the room, never to be seen again. Some say he is still alive, locked in an attic, completely mad, writing nasty things about the great men he used to know.

Vic and Tom walked out of the palace for the last time.

'We cannot bear to live in London without our golden sovereigns,' said Vic sadly to his cat. 'I think we must travel up North to see my family again.' And so the two companions, without so much as a goodbye to the gentle friar, started the long walk Northwards.

They got as far as Holloway when they took a rest by the side of the road. Vic heard the bells of his beloved City of London. They were chiming what seemed to him to be a song:

'Turn again, Whittington, Thou worthy citizen Lord Mayor of London'

Nonsense! he said to himself, and set off again. But at Pentonville the chimes started again.

'Perhaps it's true!' Vic said to Tom, and on an instinct he turned again back towards the City.

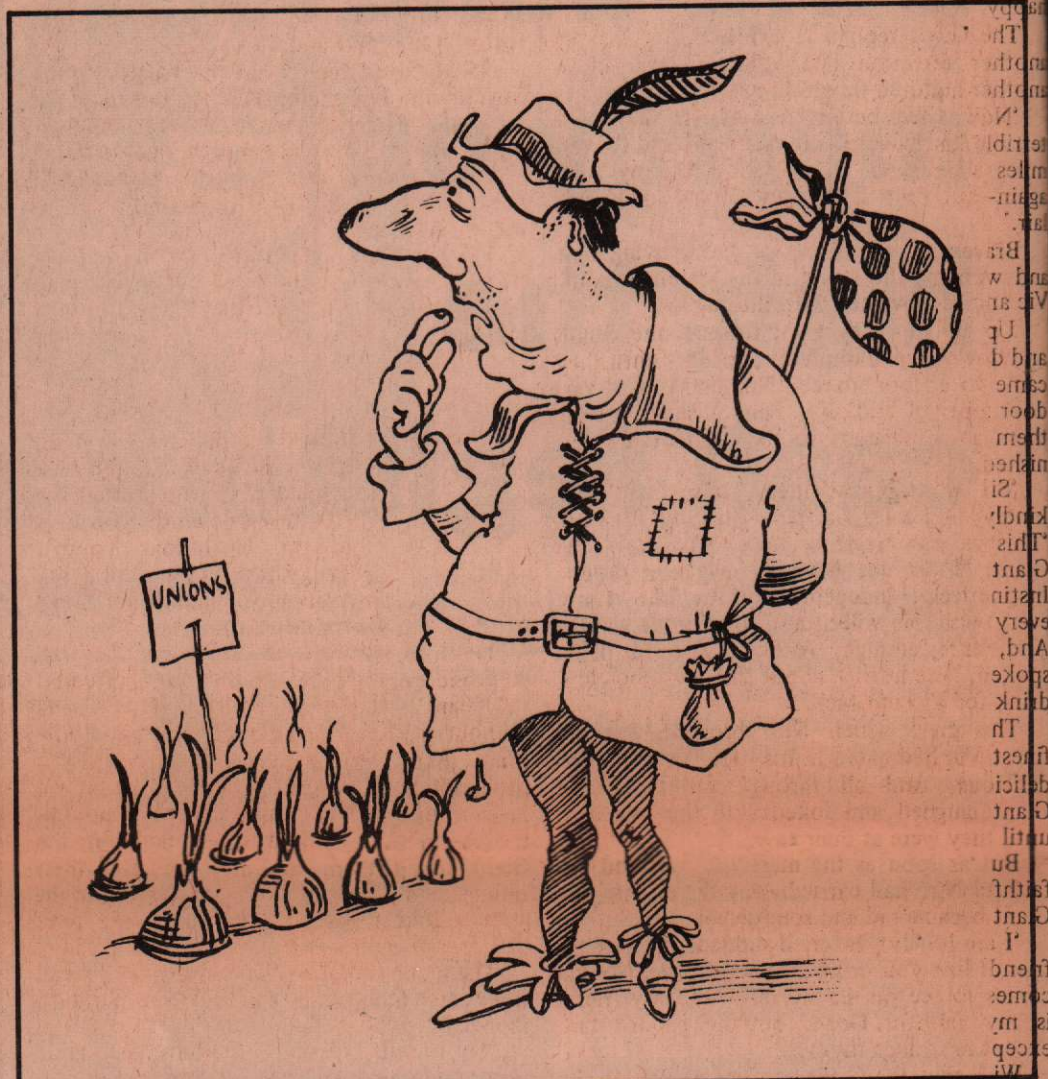
Wearily they climbed the high Mount Pleasant which looks over the City. On Mount Pleasant, everything was in confusion. 'The rats,' people were saying. 'What can we do about the rats?'

A small grey man came hurrying past. 'My mountain for a cat,' he was shouting.

'What's that, sir?' asked Vic.

'I am the Pleasant Mount General,' said the man. 'The PMG. I must have a cat to bring order to my mountain.'

And so it was that, to please the PMG, Vic Whittington sold his best friend for ten



So Vic worked in the union garden and grew into a tough handsome young man

thousand sovereigns, and returned to Friar TUC's union garden as if nothing had happened.

Tom, by the way, lived happily ever after. He kept order on Mount Pleasant, and everyone made a great fuss of him. Many years later, as a reward for his services, he became the first cat ever to be PMG.

Another year passed in the union patch, and the friar called Vic to him and said: 'I am getting old, and I want you to become my secretary. You must go and sell unions for me in the City of London and other cities. Here is a key to the garden. You can come and go as you like.'

Vic was delighted. What he liked most about his new position was the chance it gave him to visit the City of London and to gaze in awe at the mysterious House of Stocks which reached up beyond the clouds and where all the lords and masters of the City did their work.

One day, when Vic was travelling to the House of Stocks, he saw a dreadful sight. Hundreds of thousands of ragged men and women were gathered under the House of Stocks and were pulling it to pieces!

The windows were all broken and the bricks of the house were being pulled out. Another few hours, and the whole building would collapse! A thick-set man with a Northern accent was giving orders in a voice which was inspiring all the ruffians to work harder!

Vic hurried up to the man. 'Who are you?' he asked anxiously.

'I am Jack the Giant Killer,' said the man.

'Giant Ted of the Terrible Teeth and the Dreadful Acts is coming down to the House of Stocks and we are going to cut the building down before he gets here!'

Vic listened and, above the hustle and the bustle of the ragamuffins, he heard the dreadful roar of the giant above the clouds:

'Fee Fi Fo Fum
I smell the blood of a union man.
Be he alive or be he not
I'll grind his bones to make my yacht.'

'Please Jack, call off your men!' shouted Vic, as he listened. 'I have read books about the Giant Ted of the Terrible Teeth and the Dreadful Acts. He is a friendly giant. He does not use his Acts unless he is very angry. If you annoy him by cutting down the House of Stocks, he will use his Acts, but if we make friends with him, we will all be happy.'

So urgently did Vic speak that Jack was persuaded. In a fierce command, he ordered his men away from the House of Stocks.

Everyone stood in hushed silence as the Giant Ted roared down the building, shouting all the while:

'Fee Fi Fo Fum
I smell the blood of a union man!'

When he got to the ground, he wielded the bloody Acts which he carried always by his side and a hundred thousand men and women lay dead on the ground.

Vic hurried forward, with Jack nervously trotting by his side.

'Great Giant!' said Vic, remembering the way he used to speak to the magic Mirror. 'Do not use your Acts any more. We are your friends. I am Vic and I look after the unions in Bloomsbury. And this is Jack the Giant Killer, who promised me he will not kill any giants any more.'

'Please be friends with us so we can all be

GET ON

CHRISTMAS

happy.
The Giant replied by whirling his Acts in another direction and killing in one blow another hundred thousand men.
'Now, I feel better,' he said, and laughed a terrible laugh which shook the ground for ten miles all around. 'I will not wield my Acts again—but only if you two come up to my lair.'

Bravely, to the cheers of the surviving men and women who stood in the streets around, Vic and Jack walked with the giant.

Up and up they went through the clouds and down several dimly-lit corridors until they came to a door marked Number Ten. A vast door opened and shut behind them leaving them in a pleasant room, comfortably furnished.

'Sit down, gentlemen,' said the Giant kindly, and a servant came hurrying forward. 'This is my magic servant, Nirc,' said the Giant. 'I do not have to give him orders. Instinctively, independently, he knows my every wish. He will attend to all your wants.' And, sure enough, without a word being spoken, Nirc hurried about fixing up food and drink for Vic and Jack.

The meal which Nirc brought was the finest Vic had eaten in his life. The wine was delicious. And all through the meal, the Giant laughed and joked with the two men until they were at their ease.

But as soon as the meal was over and the faithful Nirc had carried away the dishes, the Giant became sad and sombre.

'I am lonely!' he cried suddenly. 'I have no friends like you ordinary people have. No one comes to see me in my lair. My only friend is my faithful Goad, but he cannot talk except in strange rhymes.'

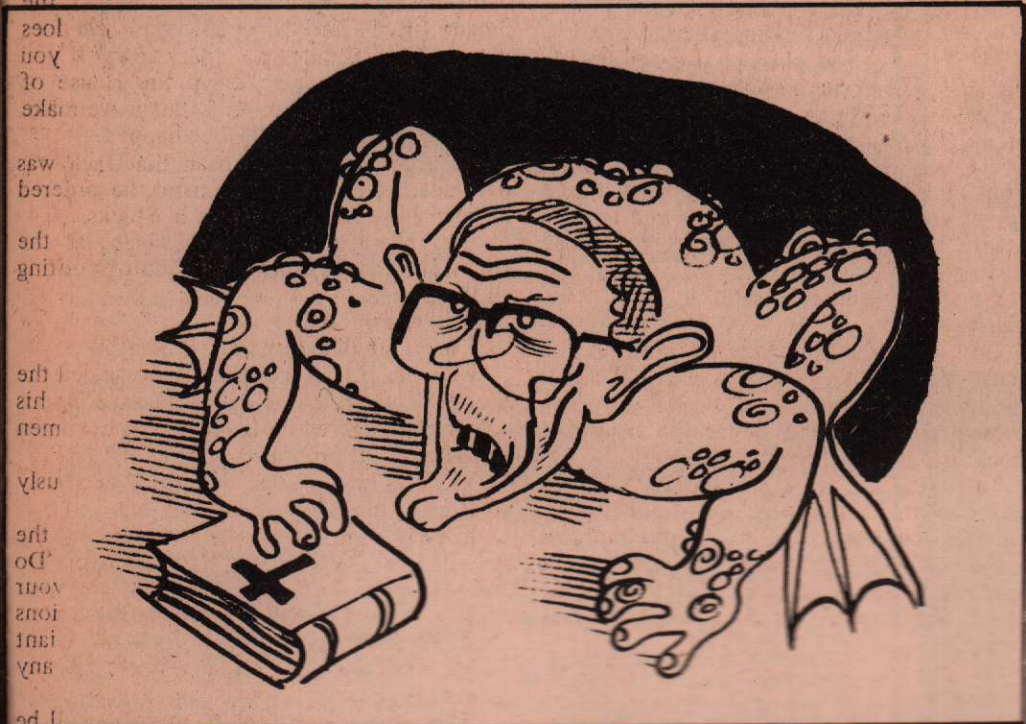
With that the Giant turned a switch on the wall and a great light shone in the corner of a room where sat a huge, fat and ugly toad, belching slightly.

'Talk to me, dear Goad,' moaned the Giant. 'Say something to make me happy.'

Vic and Jack watched amazed as the disgusting creature started to slobber and spit. Suddenly, in a croaking voice, it started to sing. It sang the same verse over and over again to a tune which Vic remembered from his days in the Methodist chapels in the North:

'Onward Christian workers
To the battle grounds!

A disgusting creature started to slobber and spit



What's the price of Jesus?
Thirty thousand pounds!
'What does that mean?' said Jack the Giant Killer.

'I don't know,' sobbed the Giant. 'I will never know. If I knew what he wanted, I could break the spell, and Goad could talk to me again. Until then, he is cursed to sing that fearful hymn over and over again.'

'Please gentlemen,' said the Giant turning towards the two men. 'Will you come and see me again? I have so enjoyed this evening talking to you. If you will come and eat with me every day at seven o'clock, I promise that I will never climb down the House of Stocks to use my Acts again.'

Vic and Jack agreed at once. To tell the truth, so good was the food and wine served by the faithful Nirc that they longed to visit him again.

And so it was that every evening at seven o'clock Vic and Jack made their way up through the clouds and down the corridors to the mysterious Number Ten, where they ate and drank the marvellous food and wine served by the faithful Nirc.

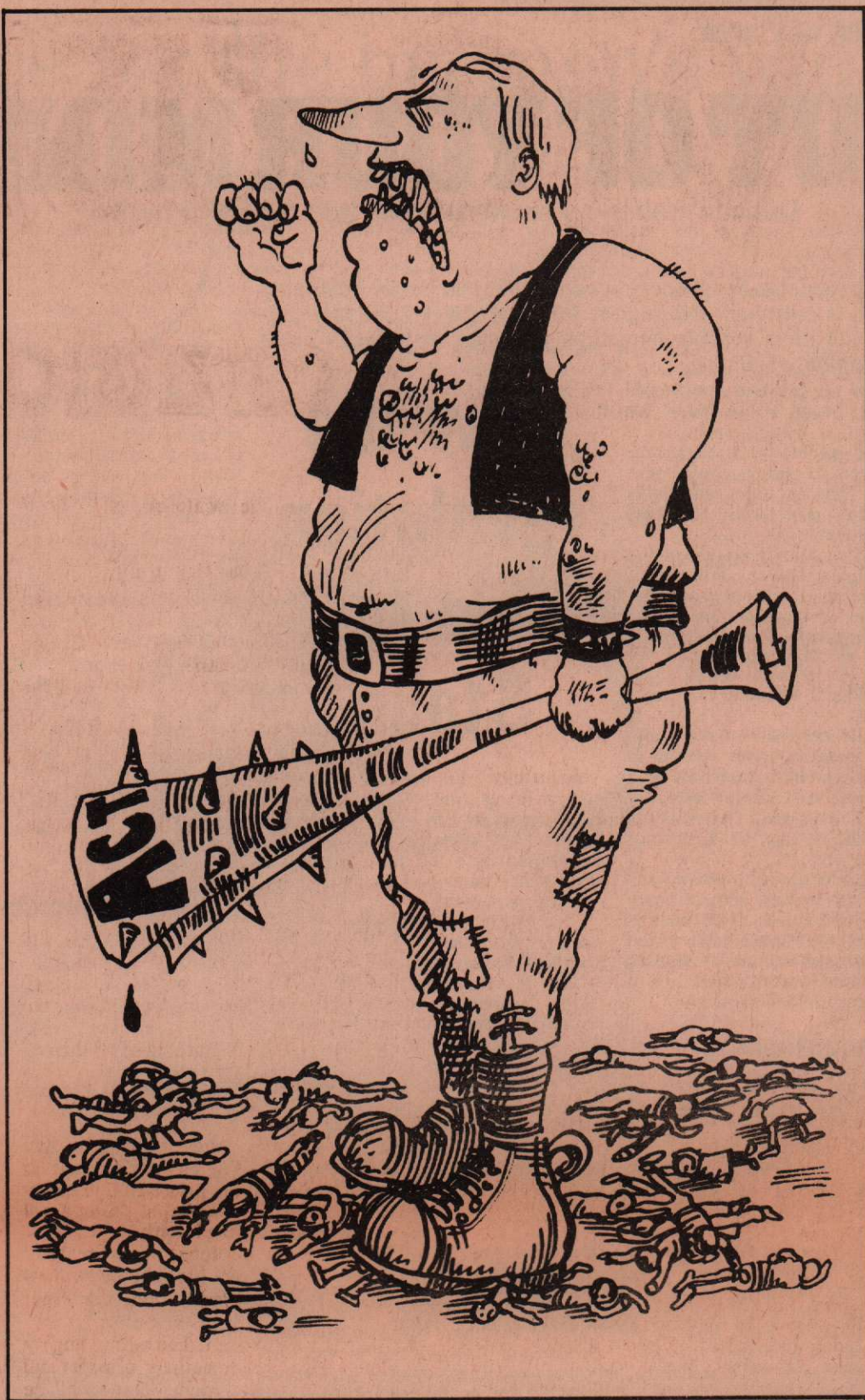
Jack became fat and careless. But the wily Vic noted as the months went on that the Giant's mood was changing. His zest and humour vanished and he did not crack any more jokes. He sat silently, whimpering a little, and hardly touching the wonderful food in front of him. Vic tried to cheer him up, but it was no use. Without an explanation, the Giant urged them to hurry up with their dinner and leave him on his own. But he always told them to come back the next day.

Then, one Christmas Day, after they had all three eaten their turkey and Christmas pudding, the Giant spoke.

'My friends,' he said, 'you have been good to me and now I will show you my secret.'

With that, he beckoned Vic and Jack to follow him through a secret door which they had never noticed before. He led them down a long, dark corridor and through three heavily locked doors. Finally, they came into a brightly lit room in the middle of which sat an enormous goose. It was mainly of gold but had all the colours of the rainbow. It lay, drooping on many velvet cushions, with one eye half-open, staring balefully in front of it.

'It is the goose which lays the golden eggs,' said the Giant sorrowfully. 'All our wealth, all our carriages and decorations and stately



The Giant whirled his Acts and killed a hundred thousand in one blow DRAWINGS BY PHIL EVANS

buildings depend on the goose's golden eggs. If the goose dies, we all die—and it is dying for lack of food.'

'But why, sir,' said Vic anxiously, horrified to see so fine an animal so ill. 'You have all the wealth in the world. Can you not buy food for the goose?'

'Because,' said the Giant, huge tears welling up in his vast eyes, 'the goose will only eat unions. For a long time now, Friar TUC has delivered enough unions to keep the goose fed, but now he says he cannot deliver any more because the unions must be left to grow on their own or they will all die out.'

'As long as the friar is alive and in charge of the union garden, the goose cannot eat. And we shall all perish. Alas, my Acts is no good to me. It is too big to dig up the unions. Only the friar and those who work in the garden know how to do that.'

And the Giant started to sob so dreadfully that Vic and Jack began to sob, too.

'Cheer up, sir!' shouted Vic, drying his tears. 'We will rid you of the selfish friar! He cares more for his union patch than for the country! Tomorrow, all will be well.'

Silently, Vic and Jack left the House of Stocks. As silently they crept through the streets to Bloomsbury, where they let themselves into the union garden with Vic's special key.

The weary friar was hoeing his last union row before going to bed. Vic stole up behind him and, with a quick movement of a special knife supplied to him by the faithful Nirc, he

stabbed the friar in the back. TUC died almost at once, and they buried him at the bottom of the garden.

When they returned with the news and forty cases of unions to the House of Stocks, all the bells of the City of London were set ringing. Strange men in bowler hats and umbrellas lined the streets, cheering Vic and Jack as they were carried through the streets in the Giant's special chariot.

The goose gobbled up the unions, and instantly recovered. The golden eggs started to flow again and the Giant became a quite different person.

'I must celebrate,' he beamed. He swept in huge strides through several cities in the North of England, slaughtering thousands of men and women with his Acts and basking in the cheers of the ones who were left alive.

'And now for you two heroes,' he proclaimed on his return, 'I have a special treat. Kneel down!' As Vic and Jack knelt down he touched them with a magic sword.

'Arise, Sir Victor!
'Arise, Sir Jack!' he cried excitedly.

They became knights of the realm, and, as the bells had promised, Vic became Lord Mayor of the City of London three times over.

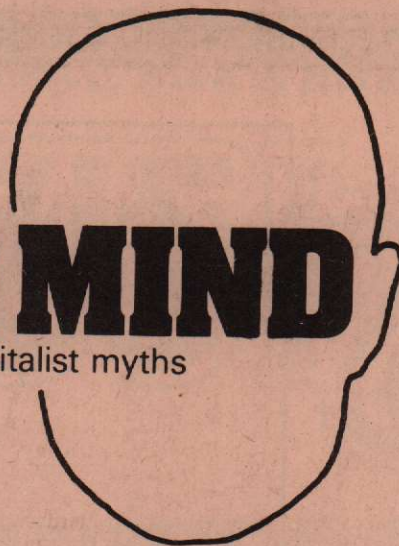
And to this day, when children ask about the Giant and the goose who lays the golden eggs, they are told the story of how Vic Whittington and Jack the Giant Lover delivered up the unions and saved the country in its hour of peril.

THE END

'Money lubricated and befouled the entire machine just as under capitalism...Classes were reborn under our very eyes'

OUT OF YOUR MIND

Duncan Hallas on socialist ideas and capitalist myths



'OUR unprecedentedly dislocated country is just barely beginning to recover, is only just realising the full depth of its ruin, is suffering from the most terrible hardships—stoppage of industry, crop failures, famine, epidemics.'

So wrote the head of the Soviet government, Lenin, at the end of the civil war.

'And the proletariat is declassed, dislodged from its class groove,' Lenin continued. 'The factories and mills are idle—the proletariat is weak, scattered, enfeebled.'

So much so that it was incapable of ruling Russia. The continuation of the 'workers' state with bureaucratic deformations' depended now on the Russian Communist Party acting on behalf of a class that could no longer act on its own behalf. This could only be a temporary arrangement at best.

Meanwhile the mass of the population—the peasants—were ceasing to support the Soviet regime now that the danger of white counter-revolution had passed. That was the lesson of the risings of Kronstadt and Tambov.

At the same time European capitalism had survived the revolutionary wave of 1919-20 and, as the fourth Congress of the Communist International recognised, had stabilised itself and had the prospect of a period of economic expansion.

Requisitions

What then was to be done to preserve and develop the 'beleaguered fortress' of Soviet Russia?

One thing was quite clear. It was impossible to continue with the 'siege economy' of so-called War Communism that had existed through the civil war. War Communism had been based on feeding the armies and the cities by forced requisitions of food from the peasantry. That was precisely what the peasantry would no longer tolerate. They had to be offered goods in exchange for their grain and that meant that, somehow, industry had to be revived.

The way out the party adopted was the partial revival of private capitalism, the New Economic Policy (NEP) of 1921 onwards. It was summarised as 'an end to requisitions, free trade in grain, concessions to foreign capitalists, tolerance towards the small trader, the artisan and even small scale (private) industry.'

How the revolution led to Stalin

Politically this meant, as Lenin said, 'as many concessions as possible' to the peasants and at the same time 'a bloc, or alliance, between the proletarian state and state capitalism against the petty-bourgeois element (i.e. the peasantry)'

The NEP was essential. There was no other way of reviving the primitive Russian economy. Economically it succeeded. By the middle 1920s, output of most goods was beginning to exceed the 1913 levels. But the success was obtained at a terrible political and social cost.

Victor Serge, a Belgian revolutionary who spent these years in Russia, described how 'money lubricated and befouled the entire machine just as under capitalism. A million and a half unemployed received relief—inadequate relief—in the big towns. There was gambling, drunkenness and all the old filth of former times.'

'We knew that most of the money thus squandered had been stolen from us; we knew the state had been cheated out of this money by crooked brokers and functionaries. Classes were reborn under our very eyes; at the bottom of the scale the unemployed receiving 24 roubles a month; at the top the engineer receiving 800 and, between the two, the party functionary with 222 but obtaining a good many things free of charge.'

'There was a growing chasm between the prosperity of the few and the misery of the many.'

In this demoralising atmosphere were fought out the inner party struggles that led finally to the unchecked dictatorship of Joseph Stalin. The various oppositions, the workers' opposition, the democratic-centralists, the left opposition, the Leningrad opposition, the united opposition of 1926-27, all sought in various ways to check the growing power of the party-state bureaucracy and to reverse the drift to the right in the country.

The left opposition, in particular, pressed for more rapid industrialisation, the resources for which could be found by sharply increasing the tax burden on the growing layer of rich peasants and speculators—kulaks and 'nepmen'. In this way the working class could be strengthened and the social base for democratisation expanded.

Bureaucracy

The oppositions were all defeated. Basically they failed because the working class remained politically paralysed, in spite of the economic revival, by mass unemployment. The official figure for registered unemployed in April 1927 was 1,478,000. The opposition claimed that the true figure was two million. And this in a country where, before 1929, the total number of workers never exceeded five million!

The struggle necessarily remained within the party, and the bureaucracy more and more came to be the core of the party. 'As the life of the bureaucracy grew in stability', wrote Trotsky, 'it generated an increasing need of comfort. Stalin rode in on the crest of this movement for creature comfort, guiding it, harnessing it to his own designs.'

By 1928 the privileged bureaucracy had strangled the party. They thought they could look forward to 'stability' and 'comfort'. But to defeat the opposition they had built up the power of General Secretary Stalin.

And as events were soon to prove, Stalin was not 'first among equals'. He was a ruler as powerful and despotic as Ivan the Terrible or Peter the Great.

BOOKS

REVIEW

Offered council flat—rent too high

NO PLACE LIKE HOME, by Frank Allaun, Andre Deutsch £2.50.

FRANK ALLAUN has long been acknowledged as the Labour MP most concerned about the housing problem in Britain. As he says in this new book: 'When they dig me up they will find the words "baths, hot water and inside lavatories" inscribed on my heart.'

His book documents in a series of interviews what bad housing, slums, high rents and long waiting lists actually mean to the people who suffer from them.

For example, Mrs Hooper, a tenant in London: 'We all sleep in the same room, two children, me and my husband. We were offered a council flat but the rent was too high at £9.50 a week, we can't afford a mortgage as my husband only brings home £25 a week.' That sums up what the housing problem is about—bad accommodation, high rents, impossible house prices.

Frank Allaun also shows why the problem exists: not enough resources spent on housing—only 3.7 per cent in 1968 compared to 6.7 per cent in France, crippling interest rates for councils which build new houses, the activities of land speculators and private landlords. He also points out how little Labour achieved in its period of office—how the 1965 Rent Act has pushed up rents, how the 1969 Housing Improvements Act has benefited the speculators, and Labour's failure to build the promised 500,000 houses a year.

But like all reformists, when it comes to solving the housing problem Frank Allaun can offer no strategy by which this can be done. He argues we should spend less on defence and more on

housing, that we should nationalise land abolish interest charges, and so on, but he offers no reasons why any future Labour government will do this.

His view is that if we tell people the 'facts', then the government will have to carry out their wishes. He ends his book pathetically by saying: 'We live in a democracy with all its limitations. If men and women want something badly and determinedly enough, they can get it.'

Apart from the highly questionable statement about living in a democracy, this argument ignores the evidence he has just presented. People in 1964 did want more housing and stable rents, but they didn't get it.

They didn't get it because of the way housing under capitalism is used as a source of profit. Unless you smash the institutions of capital, expropriate the money-lenders, nationalise the building industry, take over the land and the landlords, you cannot solve the housing problem. To do this would require a frontal attack on capitalism—which there is no evidence that Labour could or would wish to do.

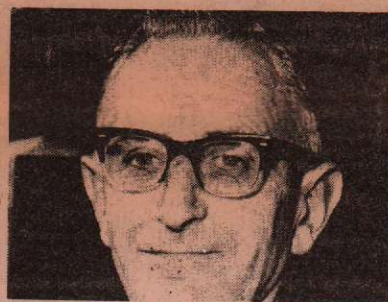
So not only are Frank Allaun's 'reforms' hopelessly unachievable under capitalism, but he offers no way in which to fight for better housing. His parliamentary strategy and reformist illusions deliberately exclude action to achieve these aims.

Two examples of this from his own career. Firstly, during the parliamentary debates on the Housing Finance Act he warned Housing Minister Julian Amery that tenants might go on rent strike, though he personally was against the idea. Secondly, at the last Labour Party Conference he spoke for the executive and opposed a motion calling for a future Labour government to reimburse councillors penalised because of their opposition to the Housing Finance Act.

This is not a book which is required reading for anyone.

The documentary material can be found more graphically and much cheaper in the Shelter reports. The economics and politics of housing can be found in the Socialist Worker pamphlet on the Tory Rent Robbery, for 2p. Far better to buy that and give the rest of your £2.50 to your local tenants' association or the International Socialists' printshop fund.

HUGH KERR



Frank Allaun: not required reading

From the man in Hampstead to the man in Whitehall

ONE FOR SORROW, TWO FOR JOY, an anthology of 10 years of New Society, edited by Paul Barker, Allen and Unwin £4.75.

THE WEEKLY sociological magazine New Society, like the BBC, has recently been engaged in an orgy of self-congratulation. Despite its obvious financial success, it is difficult at first to imagine who bothers to read it. Its combination of cramped format and dull articles hardly makes for a stimulating read.

A glance at the job advertisements gives a ready answer—social administrators and social workers. Its approach embodies the social engineer's dream about cumulative bits of information which, stuck together like a collage, will provide the data necessary to evolve the good society. Another survey and we'll have THE answer.

It calls for an enlightened regulation of the present order but rarely points in the direction of real change.

New Society represents the considered appeals of the man in Hampstead to the man in Whitehall. It embodies the weighty politics of OXFAM, the tortured conscience of SHELTER and the trendy narrowness of RELEASE.

The world appears to such worthy engineers as a chequered hotchpotch of irrationality. The government, because of lack of know-how, is balling things up—so give the trained mind a go and he'll soon iron out the regrettable creases in the World.

As part of these tenth birthday celebrations, New Society has published a collection of its most prized articles entitled One for Sorrow, Two for Joy. Here we have the accumulated insights of a decade of verbiage.

One thing becomes readily understandable: the common resistance of academics to the popularisation of their work. For popularisation generates an unpleasant recognition that what has

passed as erudite learning is naive in the extreme. For, deprived of the smoke-screen of jargon, nothing very much is being said and precious little is understood.

We have to be thankful, therefore, that New Society provides an arena where all can see that the emperor of academic sociology really has no clothes.

As the magazine's contribution to our understanding of these troubled times we are treated to an analysis of Enoch Powell's postbag, a study of vaginal odour, a survey of John Lennon's schooldays—after which a Mr Greenstein informs us what children think of the Queen—and we are regaled with an analysis of methods of bible-teaching in schools.

We are informed by Nathan Glazer that the solution to ghetto rioting is that 'all men of good will' should expand 'old reforms and experiments and invent new ones', and George Melly comes to the startling conclusion that the gesture has become classless.

Pretty thin soup! Bric-a-brac accumulates on bric-a-brac—for what purpose it is difficult to understand.

The 'trained mind' is like an intellectual beachcomber scrabbling desperately around for insights. For there is as much chance of understanding the world around us through this collection of essays as there is of forecasting the future from the Daily Mirror's astrology column.

One last proviso: one article of genuine substance has been swept up on to these pages. E.P. Thompson's 'Sir, Writing by Candlelight' looks at the power workers' strike as it was reflected in the letters page of The Times. Thompson's socialist polemic is as sparkling as ever—though why he gives his talent to the insipid New Society is still a mystery.

But this article is the exception which proves the rule—and a handy photocopy machine is recommended.

JOCK YOUNG





Parlour pink's Queen Mum

What chance for the big man's widow?

THE PERSONAL LIVES of socialists are often hard to uncover—only recently has it become common knowledge that Karl Marx and Lenchen (the comrade, home-help and friend of the family) produced an illicit son right in the midst of a heavy domestic scene already encumbered by debt, politics and the usual miseries.

But, once uncovered, the private cares of the activist may reveal chasms of blackness or further enigma. Aneurin Bevan, for example, apparently left no personal material

in writing that would record for other eyes any early intrigues or tentative tryings-out, whether of a political or a romantic nature.

'Nye was fond of saying in those days he would give no hostages to fortune,' reports his widow, Baroness Jennie Lee, in an interview with The Observer. How seriously a person must take himself to safeguard his reputation against enemies and posterity. Nye Bevan actually believed that his own rise into parliamentary power represented the advance of the working class.

Jennie Lee's remarks on 'My Life with Nye' are perhaps one more subtle blow directed against the institution of marriage. Despite its exceptional liberality, with months-long separations on political business ending without those prying questions being asked, the Bevan monogamy was achieved at the expense of the wife's development.

'What was most important was that I came to care more for Nye's happiness than my own. I had to learn to do that.' And this without the alibi of child-rearing.

In a male-dominated world, where interviewers and job-selectors are much more interested in the dead husband than in the living woman, the exuberant Jennie Lee—so careful always to keep that separate surname—can find only two possible full-time occupations: that of Baroness and that of widow.

Dredged out for occasional viewing at Labour Party conferences to bestow a Bevanite benediction on right-wing policies, Lee has become the parlour pink's substitute for the Queen Mother. And in her prime of vitality she must have been as productive and as independent as any woman liberationist of nowadays. It remains to be seen whether the coming decades are any more tolerant of the strong-minded female than our previous masculine millenia have been.

THE LATEST NEWS from the Black Panthers (USA) confirms their rumoured tendency towards small-scale do-gooding. The party has sponsored 35,000 tests for sickle-cell anaemia among West Coast blacks, Bobby Seale goes around lecturing the churches, and there is now this escort programme (SAFE—Seniors Against a Fearful Environment) whereby Panther militants drive old people from home to bank their welfare cheques without running the risk of being mugged on the way.

Is this co-optation in the system or the groundwork for some creative revolutionary politics? For the moment it's neither.

Any revolutionary organisation worth its salt has to push for whatever gains can be got out of this bloody social order and must identify itself with all sections of the oppressed.

But, in the outcome, do-gooding will remain do-gooding, a liberalism of the left, unless two conditions are fulfilled.

Firstly, the active work of the militants must enable the less militant to organise themselves. The activist can launch, impel, stimulate: he cannot carry the campaign.

And much of the Panthers' work will leave the initiative where it began—with the party members, transformed from revolutionary leaders into individual community notables.

Secondly, campaign work on separate local issues must be situated within an overall picture of the transition of socialism which has some fields as priorities over others: the main priority being the working class in industry. The Panthers never had priorities.

The system can get you so much on the run that you never have time to work out what you should be doing. If you let it do that much to you.



Austin Mitchell (above) and Ludovic Kennedy: respectable Ding-a-Ling men

ALL RUNG UP AT THE BBC...

ACCORDING to Theodore White, author of *The Making of the President 1960*, Hubert Humphrey's bid for the Democratic nomination finally crashed in West Virginia when the ill-fated Hubert hired prime time television for a phone-in show.

A farmer came on the line to complain about grain prices. He continued to complain for most of the 45 minutes. Exit Humphrey.

The American media have more grass-roots 'participation' than Britain. Only in the last two years has the BBC begun to run programmes where listeners have any chance to put their views.

The first of these was *Its Your Line* on Radio 4, usually compered by Robin Day. It's pretty indifferent. Politicians attempt to keep the programme as tightly controlled as possible and usually succeed.

Discovery

The phone-in technique was then brought to Sunday mornings with four wise people answering questions on the meaning of life, phoned in to the world heavyweight man-in-the-street, Cliff Michelmore. Here 'politics', are excluded, which means that the four experts have probably spent some time digging up the remains of pre-historic man, thus giving them a ten million year lead over the rest of us.

After a few months the BBC had made a discovery. Programmes where people rang up don't immediately lead to the collapse of family life. The strike rate in this country, while rising, cannot be directly blamed on people in Harlow talking about it on the radio. Best of all, it is cheap!

This is a very useful discovery for the Corp now they're on hard times, so it has been extended to television and is being used particularly by the *Midweek* programme.

Midweek is the very sick offspring of *24 Hours*. Now *24 Hours* may have been bad, but that wasn't really why it died. It died through the power of *Panorama* and the news department to crush any rival.

Kenneth Allsop, one of its presenters, complained bitterly of the way that hapless programme was bounced around the schedules so that it could appear as near as possible when most Dimpleby-fearing people were in bed.

Now *Midweek* was different. There was going to be plenty of money for a start and new-look announcers, straight from the *Grass Roots*, starting off with Ludovic Kennedy. Now there's a man who knows the people—why he'd even been a Liberal candidate!

And Austin Mitchell, he may have been to Oxford University but that didn't stop him going to Wigan to ask the local Chamber of Commerce what they thought about things.

But it didn't work. In fact the programme has flopped. One estimate said it's audience was down to about two million and these were probably dogs and budgerigars.

The reasons were fairly simple. The show was supposed to do in-depth coverage but didn't have the money. Secondly the *24 Hours* disease of chronically shifting time and finally, of course, it was very boring.

So the answer was simple. Get the audience to ring up and ask questions—after all, they are paying the phone bills—and, Heh Presto! Wedgwood

Benn style participatory television.

And so, most nights now, it seems there'll be Nicholas Harman in front of a battery of boxes from which people ask questions of the expert. And, fair do's, it's an improvement. I'd sooner hear a bloke in the industrial heartlands of Cheltenham telling Hugh Scanlon that he's part of the world-wide marxist conspiracy than hear it from Nicholas Harman.

It would be even better to hear a revolutionary on the programme, for in the case of Hugh Scanlon it was pitiful to hear the prevarications and liberal rhetoric where a straightforward socialist answer would have been more convincing.

Penetrate

At one stage in the Scanlon phone-in, Harman gave the classic give away line when a viewer said he was 'someone who is interested in current affairs.' 'I'm very pleased you are,' said Harman, 'I wish more people were.'

Does it ever penetrate the mind of Harman that he is part of the problem? Does he ever see 'current affairs' as human beings, not as a product to be dished out every night to keep him in the upper income bracket to which he has become accustomed?

Harman had touched on the primary problem, the desire of the BBC to keep its all-purpose experts in control.

The flaw is the basic assumption of broadcasting—that they know better than we do. By all means let people argue about the meaning of life—but they don't have to do so in a way that assumes the existence of a group of people on a pedestal dishing out the 10 Commandments.



One excellent exception to the general pattern is the *Radio London Phone-In* show which is on from 1.30 to 2.30 each weekday. There the compere, David Simmons, allows the listeners to put their views, argue with each other and, most relieving of all, doesn't patronise his audience.

The programme doesn't set the world alight but does deal with people who are actually interested in the subject they are talking about. A lot of them are barmy, but so are most of us, and with the normality of Michelmore, Mitchell and Kennedy, it's a good thing to be.

Nigel Fountain

Peter Sedgwick



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LETTERS

News of the World's vicious slanders of Irish militants

NOT CONTENT with featuring a series vilifying industrial militants in Britain, the News of the World is now mounting a campaign of black propaganda against socialists and republican militants in Ireland.

We wish in particular to express our disgust at the foul claim in its issue of 10 December that Peter Graham, a member of the Young Socialists at the time of his assassination in Dublin in October 1971, had misused funds and informed on 'republican militants, who had him put out of the way'.

At the time of Peter Graham's murder, leading officers of the Belfast brigade of the Provisional IRA attended his funeral.

The Leinster command of the Provisional IRA, Saor Eire, the Young Socialists and the League for a Workers' Republic issued statements condemning the savage murder and praising Peter's qualities as a revolutionary.

Not one shred of evidence exists to besmirch his name. We are proud to have been associated with Peter Graham.

We also deplore the compounded slanders against Mairin Keegan and Liam Dalton in the same issue. In this filthy article, Mairin Keegan's death from cancer, a death resulting in the loss of another fine comrade, is attributed by the gutter journalists to the possibility that certain explosive substances are cancer-producing.

'Selfless'

The article is a concoction of lies and fantasies—indicated by the fact that Mairin Keegan's tragic illness has a history going back almost 10 years before her death.

Liam Dalton's death by suicide in London was a fearful shock to all who had worked with him. A selfless man of powerful intellect, he had been involved in the revolutionary movement for long years and had fought for revolutionary socialist politics since the late 1950s.

Yet some paid hack takes it upon himself to suggest that this most courageous of men 'fled from Dublin' due to 'fear that he was going to be killed by an Irish undercover agent' and that 'suicide was his only way of escape from a horrible death'. This is a total fabrication.

The tissue of lies betrays itself by its errors. Peter Graham died in October, not November, 1971. Mairin Keegan was in her forties, not her early twenties and was in Derry in August 1969, not 1968. Liam Dalton did not 'succeed' Mairin Keegan in her capacity in the organisation to which she belonged—he died within weeks of her—especially if he had 'fled' to London. Nor did he 'die on a London suburban line' but jumped from a bridge to the road below.

Assassinations

The bombs that exploded recently in Dublin, the murder of Peter Graham and now this renewed attempt to smear his name, can be of benefit only to British imperialism and its hangers-on here, the Irish capitalist class and its political parties.

Assassinations and bombings are totally in line with the philosophy of the sinister Brigadier Frank Kitson as expounded in his recent book 'Low-intensity Operations'. Could it be that the same black hand that struck down two busmen in Sackville Place, Dublin, recently had struck a year earlier in a flat in St Stephen's Green in another 'low-intensity' operation?

And surely it is this same hand that pulls the strings in the editorial rooms of certain British Sunday papers?—BASIL MILLER, CAROL COULTER, PADDY HEALY, central committee members, League for a Workers' Republic, Dublin.

FARM WORKERS NEED OTHER UNION SUPPORT

IF FARM WORKERS' wages are to be raised to a humane and realistic level then there must be one of two results—either food prices or subsidies and, consequently taxes, must rise.

High food prices or high taxes can seriously injure any government, therefore neither of these alternatives can be viewed with great pleasure by the powers-that-be. Thus the farm workers are taking on a fight considerably more difficult than most unions and must not only look but have every right to expect 100 per cent support from any other union that brings its strength to bear on their cause.

In your article on Norfolk farm workers

Not alone

I OBJECT to the statement made in Socialist Worker (9 December) regarding the demo at Clay Cross. You state: '... with the exception of the ICI Doncaster shop stewards, trade union banners were entirely absent.' Although I went as part of the Birkenhead Rent Action Group, I lent a hand in carrying the Merseyside Docks Shop Stewards banner.—BOB BOYD (Docker), Birkenhead.

Wrong on Ireland

THE CONTENTS of the letter on Sean MacStiofain (9 December) tempts me to believe that it was written deliberately to discredit the International Socialists. Unfortunately it can be safely assumed that it more or less reflects the views of many on the Left. It is a considerable achievement for a short letter to contain so many inaccuracies.

A minor point is that the 'very courageous Irishmen' who is 'dying for his country' was born in England. More important are the other inaccuracies.

The supposition that when 'they speak of trouble between Catholics and Protestants' it is only 'propaganda' indicates a surprising degree of ignorance or a deliberate blinding to the reality of the situation in Northern Ireland.

To suggest that the 'one aim is freedom from British rule' as far as Ireland is concerned ignores the fact that in the south the political wing of the IRA has very little support. (In the north the majority are Protestants who clearly do not want to break with Britain.)

British policies, both historically and more recently, must take a great part of the blame for the problems of Ireland, but to suppose they are a full explanation for all the present troubles in Northern Ireland shows a simplicity of approach unworthy of a serious political organisation. While this approach may achieve short-term gains in that it may be easily understood and arouses strong feelings, it reflects little credit on the capacities of those who hold such views.—ALLEN ESTERSON, London W6.

Why 'gay'?

I AGREE completely with Don Milligan's criticism of the use of the word 'bent' in my review of the General Will. I believe I should have put the word in inverted commas. What I cannot understand is that he thinks the word 'gay' is complimentary.—ROLAND MULDOON, London NW1.

● Letters for the next issue of Socialist Worker must arrive first post on Monday 1 January. Letters—as short as possible—should be typed or written on one side of the paper only and may be cut for space reasons.

(2 December) it was suggested that meat products should be prevented from leaving the farm. Surely it would be far more effective to prevent them—and other produce—from reaching the markets and abattoirs?

Effective picketing at centres of collection and distribution would be easier to organise and enforce. Farm workers should certainly look to other unions to stop moving 'blackened' produce—and if necessary the dockers could play their part as well, if not by total blacking then by selective blacking of certain imported produce.—PETER MARTINDALE, Westwood Farm, Hittersleigh, Devon.



John Fontaine: reinstated

Worlds End builders win again

CHELSEA, London:—The doughty fighters of the multi-million-pound Cubitt's Worlds End council housing site have inflicted another defeat on the employers.

Last week a regional conciliation panel recommended that victimised bricklayers' steward John Fontaine should be reinstated and that work on the brick-laying sub-contract should restart immediately.

Mark Prince, the bricklaying sub-contractor who sacked Fontaine, ostensibly for low productivity, has declined to appeal to national conciliation panel to have the decision reversed. Had he done this, the strike would have been prolonged for some considerable time. Building industry conciliation machinery is so pro-employer that no decision is actually binding.

John Fontaine was sacked only two weeks after the settlement of the 15-week Worlds End strike on the strikers' terms. The employers' strategy was to test the strength of the job organisation yet again at the height of the winter and see if Fontaine could be winkled out. This would have paved the way for another bout of black-listing and victimisation.

One of the most important achievements of the Worlds End workers' 15-week strike was to break the blacklist and force the employers to agree to employ a prominent militant in the industry, Lou Lewis.

The continued solidarity and unity of the bricklayers and brickies' labourers has broken this ploy, although there will undoubtedly be more struggles to come.

'Once again we have proved that we can maintain our organisation against heavy odds,' bricklayers' steward John Fontaine told Socialist Worker this week. 'The task now is to keep our lads united and build a united organisation on the major London sites.'

Vestey closure aimed at Midland militants

LONDON:—The docks employers' newspaper The Port printed last week an item of news it has known for some time: that the Vestey organisation is to close its Thames Stevedoring Company.

Most of the work done at Thames Stevedoring—the Vestey's cut of the South American meat trade—is to be transferred to Southampton where, they claim, costs are cheaper.

In fact this is only a front for a much more complex operation. What concerns the Vestey's is that dockers in London's Royal Docks where Thames Stevedoring is situated have provided the mainstay of the Midland Cold Storage pickets.

Over the past fortnight it has become clearer that the dockers were on the point of winning a major victory at the Midland. With Vestey's unable to go back to the Industrial Relations Court for relief from blacking and picketing, the firm was being forced into a situation where it would have to sell the depot to the Port of London Authority, which would employ registered dockworkers.

Clearly, the decision to move its ships to Southampton is seen by the Vestey's as an act of revenge for the hammering they and the Industrial Relations Act have taken at Midland Cold Storage.

SCOTTISH RENTS REBELS IN RETREAT

by Steve Jefferys

SCOTLAND:—Labour councillors are now in full retreat before the Tories. Until Heath announced his wage freeze, 22 councils were refusing to implement the rents Act, but one by one they are surrendering.

As late as 18 November, when tenants and trade unionists marched against the Act in Glasgow, 20 councils were still holding out.

These included the 'big four', with a quarter of a million council tenants—Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Falkirk and Kirkcaldy—who were all appearing over the next week at legal inquiries to establish whether or not they were breaking the law.

At that rally Labour Party spokesmen breathed fire and brimstone against the Tory Act, but still gave the game away. Dick Dynes, the Labour group leader on Glasgow Corporation, complained that 'none of the leaders of the Labour movement are here today'. A correct reference to Harold Wilson, who had got cold feet after being invited.

SWITCH

Without their own leaders present the speakers were not prepared to give tenants a lead either. None of them, including the chairman of the Tribune group, Jim Sillars MP, and James Jack, general secretary of the Scottish TUC, even mentioned the need for tenants to organise themselves, let alone to prepare for a rent strike.

Having made an honourable council chamber show of opposition to the Act, the next step was to find a suitable way of leaving the ring.

Six Glasgow Labour councillors started the retreat on 7 December. They switched their previous vote

against the Act to vote for implementation, joining 13 other Labour and 29 Tory councillors.

The majority in Glasgow against implementation was then cut to five on a 'free conscience' vote by councillors. This narrow division in Scotland's biggest city helped to ease the consciences of Labour councillors throughout Scotland.

The following Monday the second largest authority, Lanarkshire, voted by the narrowest of margins, on vote, for implementation. Many tenants' leaders are convinced that this margin was no accident, but was rigged by the Labour Party to guarantee implementation with the least amount of discredit to its councillors.

FORCE

The retreat was now in full flood. Next day two more councils, Falkirk and Fife, followed suit. Kirkcaldy jumped the dyke too.

Gordon Campbell, Tory secretary of state for Scotland, then made his next move.

Determined to force implementation of the first section of the Act, the part which obliges councils to raise rents from 1 October last, Campbell is now taking Glasgow Corporation to court. He wants to crush all outstanding opposition before the Act's second section is scheduled to come into force in January, giving a few private tenants the right to rent rebates.

Glasgow Labour councillors were shocked by Campbell's action. They had always expected him to do the 'honourable' thing by taking over their powers to raise the rents himself. This would have allowed the Labour Party to continue to appear angels, while the Tories would be further discredited.

In taking the council to court this week the Lord Advocate will apply for a court order instructing the corporation to raise the rents. It is almost certain that enough councillors will feel obliged to obey the judge and so end Glasgow's official resistance.

That will be the signal for 'unofficial' resistance from tenants themselves to begin.

Redder Tape in a white collar

A NEW rank and file journal just makes its appearance. Redder Tape, produced by left-wing members of the civil service union, the CPSA, is named in contrast to the union's official journal, Red Tape.

The aims of Redder Tape, as set out in its editorial column, are to make the union more democratic and to press for militant policy on pay and conditions based on the strength of the membership rather than comparison with wages already won by other workers.

The journal also opposes productivity deals and any denationalisation of the public sector.

So far the editors of the journal have contact with about 200 CPSA members in the provinces and several hundred in the London area. As the editorial puts it: 'Militancy tends to be absorbed as filters up through the union hierarchy we must build an effective grass root movement to combat this.'

Anyone interested in aiding this task or in getting copies of the journal (3p each) should write to Redder Tape, 9 Manor Road, London E1.

Rank and file teachers oppose union leaders

RANK AND FILE technical teachers showed their strength and influence at the most militant salaries conference of the Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions last Saturday.

The conference voted to push for a £9 a week flat rate claim for all grades of teachers in polytechnics and colleges of further education. Strike action was agreed if the claim is not met and the TUC called on to organise solidarity action between workers in the public sector.

The leadership of the union was forced to organise the conference by a petition signed by 1400 teachers from all over the country. They were showing their disgust at the executive's lack of fight over pay claims and its tendency to put on claims that gave twice as much to those at the top of the scale to those at the bottom.

Last year's settlement of 7¼ per cent actually cut the standard of living for most teachers.

Executive attempts to continue the same policy were rebuffed. The conference called for the abolition of the lowest grade, that of assistant lecturer, and defeated a proposal to demand an extra two per cent for teachers at the top of the scale.

The union president, John Bevan, declared that he wished the press to know that the union had made some of its worst decisions that day.

The conference was marked by a significant shift leftwards among the delegates, with the International Socialists and other left-wing members of the Rank and File Technical Teachers group giving much of the lead.



Women Health Service workers on the London protest march

55,000 Health Service workers join massive protest

HEALTH SERVICE workers throughout the country last week staged their first massive protests against the freezing of their wages by the government.

Their unions had called for half-day protests in support of the official demand of £4 a week, but in many areas workers stopped for the whole of Wednesday and made it clear that the official demand of £4 was not enough.

In LONDON more than 7000 workers marching to the headquarters of the Department of Health chanted 'Eight pounds now' and 'Freeze Health'.

These slogans were backed by 55,000 other strikers who staged similar demonstrations in 40 towns.

Hospitals throughout the NORTH-EAST were hit by 24-hour stoppages. Newcastle was one of the most affected areas, with staff out at the General, the Royal Victoria Infirmary, and St Nicholas's. Other hospitals staged a half-day strike. A spokesman for the hospital board said that the situation was 'difficult'.

Hospitals at Ashington and Morpeth also staged all-day stoppages.

More than 3000 hospital workers marched through the streets of Newcastle, led by a pipe band, and were joined by many off-duty nurses. Shouting 'Heath Out', they demonstrated outside the offices of the Department of Health.

At a meeting afterwards many were angry at the lead given by the unions. One man demanded to know why they had not called all their members out, instead of leaving the choice to local branches.

Further action is expected, including

lightning strikes without advance warning. In BIRMINGHAM 5000 West Midlands health workers joined the protest march.

'This is the first time the union has asked us to express our opinion, and the call was resounding for action,' said Keith Taylor, secretary of Selly Oak public employees' union branch. 'We will get the rise ourselves, through our own action.'

Hospital workers in the WEST OF SCOTLAND responded 100 per cent to the call for action. 18,000 workers took strike action, and at 48 hospitals the angry workers came out for the whole 24 hours, disregarding the advice of their officials and threatened intimidation by management.

More than one-third of the strikers came out to demonstrate their anger on the march from George Square to Glasgow Green. Chanting 'Heath Out', some carrying their mops and others wearing their uniforms, the 7000 marchers made an immense impression on the huge Christmas crowds in central Glasgow.

Defying

The health workers staged a very militant strike and demonstration in MANCHESTER despite adverse publicity, pressure from hospital management and even opposition from their own union officials. More than 2000 demonstrators occupied the regional headquarters of the Department of Health, and booted union officials who were 'negotiating'.

Most hospitals in the area were affected and most came out for 24 hours, defying the official call for token stoppages only. For most of the workers this was the first industrial action.

Women workers, who are discriminated against in the Health Service, with appalling low pay, were the most militant.

In many hospitals white-collar staff scabbed on the strike, helping volunteer schoolchildren do non-essential jobs. But where NALGO unionisation is well organised and where belated union instructions had reached the members in time, most, particularly in the low-paid grades, sympathised with the strike.

The demonstrations also showed growing support for the policies of the National Alliance of Stewards for Health Workers, who are demanding that the union fight for £8, for equal pay for women and a 35-hour week. Alliance banners were prominent in some of the demonstrations and several new local alliances have been set up since the strike.

There is likely to be widespread participation in the week of action called by NASH starting on Friday next week—rolling strikes, private patient boycotts, lightning strikes, mass meetings, leafletting at visiting times. Many areas are arranging public meetings to discuss the fight against the freeze, including speakers from other unions.

Print unions plan deal for Briant Colour

LONDON:—The leaders of the printing unions concerned with the Briant Colour Printing work-in, now six months old, were planning last week to sign a deal with a prospective buyer, David Brockdorff.

Their press statement is as vague as the fight they have put up against unemployment and closures. They talk hopefully of being able to employ the existing workforce fully within two years, without saying anything about how many are to be taken on now. No firm details—apart from the closure of the reproduction department with the loss of 15 SLADE members—have been disclosed.

The spokesman for the Briant's joint chapels committee said 'No comment' when asked about the deal. It is clear that the fight for the right to work and against closures is not yet over and that the joint chapels will continue to need financial and moral support from the movement.

SACKING AFTER LEAD POISON COMPLAINT

by Paul Foot

RAY FIRTH, a shop steward at a lead refinery, is trying to make ends meet this Christmas after being suspended without pay for two weeks and reinstated on a wage cut of £9 a week.

His crime was that he complained about the lead poisoning of his five-year-old son Stephen.

Mr Firth is a Transport and General Workers steward responsible for 122 of the 160 workers at the Derbyshire Lead Refinery, Darley Dale. The factory is

owned by H J Enthoven and Sons, whose factory in Southwark, London, has recently caused a lead poison scandal, and led to the re-housing of more than a dozen families from surrounding estates.

Last June, Dr Donald Baltrop of St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, conducted a series of tests on the level of lead in the blood of children of workers at the Darley Dale factory.

Among the children tested was Stephen Firth. He was found to have 95 micro-

grammes of lead per 100 millilitres of his blood. The official 'danger level' is 40.

He was taken to Derby Hospital, where he was tested again. Once again, the levels were shockingly high. He was kept in hospital for three days, and was released only on condition that he was not allowed home. He spent several days with relations at Matlock Bath.

Not surprisingly, Ray Firth complained. In the local and national press he was quoted as saying that it was a disgrace that proper precautions were not taken to prevent lead contamination passing from lead workers into their homes.

SCANDAL

The management at H J Enthoven reacted with anger. 'They told me I'd been a naughty boy,' Ray Firth told Socialist Worker. 'They said that as a shop steward, I should know better than to criticise the firm in public.'

Ever since then, Ray Firth has been continually pulled up on petty details by the firm's works manager, Mr E J Moore.

At the end of November, London Weekend Television, following up the Enthoven scandal in Southwark, sponsored more tests in the Darley Dale area.

On 21 November, a few days after these tests were first publicised, Ray Firth was approached by the foreman and ordered to clean out some lead pots.

'It's a dirty job,' he explained, 'and it carries extra money. It's always been voluntary for workers who wanted the extra money. I didn't want the money and I didn't want to do the job. So I refused.'

REFUSAL

Instantly, Ray Firth was sacked for 'industrial misconduct'—that is, disobeying an order.

Pleas from other stewards and union officials met with no response from the determined E J Moore. At one stage, Mr Moore admitted to other stewards that if any other men had refused to clean out the pots, he would have got away with a reprimand. Firth, however, was a trouble-maker and had to go.

Twelve days later Ray Harris, the Transport and General's Nottingham official, deputising for Jim Hunt, the union's official in Derby, told Mr Moore that unless Ray Firth was reinstated the entire factory would walk out on strike.

The next week was ready to walk out on Firth's behalf—even though there has never

WHAT'S ON

Copy for What's On must arrive by first post Monday or be phoned Monday morning. Charges are 5p per line, semi-display 10p per line. CASH WITH COPY. No insertions without payment. Invoices cannot be sent.

IS MEETINGS

KINGSTON IS Christmas Social: Friday 22 December, 8pm. Music, food, noggin and natter at the Union Hotel, Penrhyn Road, Kingston. Tickets 25p from 393 5751 or at the door. Proceeds to the printshop fund.

LONDON BRANCH SECRETARIES MEETING: Sunday 7 January, 2.30pm at 6 Cottons Gdns, E2. All branch secretaries must attend.

NOTICES

ENGLISH TRANSLATION of a Russian protest leaflet: 'It is not towards Communism that we are going... Our system is State Capitalism.' January Socialist Standard. 40p, 6 months; 80p 12 months. Dept SW, The Socialist Party of Great Britain, 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4.

RENT STRIKE: St Pancras 1960. In 1960 the council tenants of St Pancras, London, fought against a rent scheme which contained many of the elements now contained in the Housing Finance Act. The story of their fight is told in this pamphlet by Dave Burn, with an introduction by Hugh Kerr of Harlow Tenants Federation.

PLUTO PRESS for Architectural Radicals Students Educators, 15p plus 3p postage from Pluto, unit 10, Spencer Court, 7 Chalcot Road, London NW1 8LH.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM JOURNAL: The following back copies are still available, but some only in limited numbers: 33, 34, 37, 41, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52. 20p per copy, including postage. Money with orders please to: IS Journal, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS' GLASGOW OFFICE is now on the telephone. Ring 041-221 3426 for IS Books, Glasgow area committee, and Socialist Worker.


ENTERTAINERS WANTED: Chertsey IS need entertainers (especially a pianist) for IS social on 12 January, expenses paid. Contact R Hayden at Chertsey 60666.

When writing to Socialist Worker please mark envelopes clearly either EDITORIAL or BUSINESS.



Cleaners breakthrough

LONDON:—The Transport Workers Union has formed a London area branch exclusively for cleaners—a major breakthrough for the Cleaners Action Group and the struggle to unionise cleaners, one of the country's most exploited groups.

 I would like more information about the International Socialists

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HOSIERY STRIKE MILL TOOK ON 100 BLACKLEGS

LOUGHBOROUGH:—More than 100 blacklegs have been employed by the Mansfield Hosiery Mill with the co-operation of the National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear Workers during the official strike of Asian workers at the mill during the past eight weeks.

The figure drew gasps of surprise from the large audience—including 100 of the strikers—at the public inquiry into the dispute set up by the Department of Employment under the chairmanship of Kenneth Robinson, former Labour Health Minister, now personnel and social director of the British Steel Corporation.

The employers—the multi-million pound Nottingham Manufacturing Group—explained to the inquiry that they had been forced to take on the extra workers because production had fallen by 15 per cent because of the strike, and the 'livelihood of the other employees was at stake'.

The union did not dispute the figure, and made no statement about the company's recruitment of union members while several hundred other union members were on strike.

The union's spokesmen protested bitterly at the Race Relations Board charge that they had discriminated against black workers. The board replied in evidence that when they had asked the union to discuss their findings, the union did not reply for five weeks.

No tears were detectable in court when Mr Peter Pendergast, the union's president, told the court: 'I have been a trade union official for 27 years, and I never cease to learn that when you hold out the hand of friendship it gets bitten'.

The strikers were not impressed either by the union weeping or by the liberal rhetoric of the management representatives, who made out that they had always done their best to end racial divisions in the factory.

The strike continues until Mr Robinson can decide whether to back the strikers, and recommend to the union that they face up to their minimum responsibilities and demand equal training opportunities for black workers, or whether to seek an 'employers' compromise, which will unleash a wave of racial antagonism throughout the Midlands mills.

The strikers will have a hard Christmas. Donations and messages of support to: 31 Station Street, Loughborough, Leics.

Whites scab on Indians' struggle

SMETHWICK:—100 white workers at the Middlemore Road plant of Midland Motor Cylinders are scabbing on a strike against redundancies and 'rationalisation' by the mainly Indian workforce.

The strike is over the management's attempt to smash the strong union organisation built up mainly by the Indians. White workers attended the mass meeting where the strike vote was put, voted against, and then ignored the majority decision.

The management's rationalisation proposals are blatantly racist and anti-working class. They propose to close the most organised foundry with the highest rates of pay in the group, the Middlemore Road plant.

In late 1973 the North Works, which has a mainly white workforce, will close and Middlemore Road will re-open. Former Middlemore Road and North Works employees will have first priority for jobs at the new plant but re-employment depends on three conditions—individual foundry workloads at that time, satisfactory manning of those foundries, and capability and seniority.

The last two conditions are a direct attack on the Indian militants. Both satisfactory manning of those foundries and capability will ensure that only those with a low record of militancy (the white workers) will be re-employed.



Indian workers on the picket line outside the Mansfield Hosiery Mill

Textile union publishes National Front tract

IN THE reactionary and undemocratic National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear Workers there is one rule for known members of the racist National Front and quite another for anyone left of centre.

Norman Bordoli, a member of the union's national executive and also of the Communist Party, has an article on Britain's class structure in the most recent issue of the union's journal. An editor's note appears at the end of the piece stating that it 'represents the personal views of the writer and not necessarily those of the national executive.'

But no such disclaimer appears on the end of another article in the very same issue of the journal. This masterpiece, entitled 'Put Britain first' and written by the union's Leicester representative, W K Sanders, was described in last week's Socialist Worker as 'reading like a National Front tract.' In fact it IS a National Front tract.

Mr W K Sanders is a prominent member of the National Front in Leicester. In May he stood as National Front candidate in the Belgrave ward.

His racist 'wisdom' which appears without a disclaimer in the union journal also appears word for word under the same title in the current issue of The Nationalist, a magazine put out by the Leicester branch of the National Front. The rest of the magazine is full of anti-socialist and anti-Jewish rubbish, and calls to 'fight the Asian invasion'.

The union journal is edited by a Mr Eaves, a journalist on the Leicester daily paper, the Mercury.

Mr Eaves told Socialist Worker that all copy for the union journal was vetted by union general secretary, Harold Gibson, MBE, JP.

'Mr Gibson told me to put in a disclaimer on Mr Bordoli's article but did not ask for one on 'Put Britain first', said Mr Eaves.

* Socialist Worker

BIG BACKING FOR THE AUEW

HUNDREDS of thousands of engineering workers have been taking part in the strikes against the £50,000 fine in the Engineering Union (AUEW) despite the failure of the union's national executive to lead and co-ordinate the protests.

In Kent, the union's Erith district committee organised a one-day strike last Wednesday and 8000 workers came out, including the factories of Klinger, Schweppes, Sovex, and Seager. The strike was also backed by dockers at Erith Deep Wharf.

In North Hertfordshire the strikes were on Friday. At a protest meeting in Letchworth every major factory was represented by contingents of workers and shop stewards, while Morse Chains and K & L Steel Founders both stopped for the day.

At Stevenage, however, there was disappointment when British Aircraft Corporation workers decided against taking any action. Doug Collins, secretary of the BAC stewards committee, told Socialist Worker: 'Many members are a bit confused and do not see the issue as one of defence of the trade union movement. They say "What is the use of us coming out if Lucas do not." I am afraid there will be moves to reverse the union's policy if there is not a firmer lead from the executive.'

OFFICIALS

In most of the country strikes were called for Monday and Wednesday this week.

On Monday, 28,000 engineering workers stopped in Sheffield and organised a demonstration through the city centre. Some Transport Union members joined the protest, but without any real lead from

their officials. District secretary Bill Owen said: 'We have left it to our members at shop-floor level to decide whether to support the AUEW.'

The call for strike action by the North London district committee of the AUEW shut down industry in the area, including the newspaper presses of Fleet Street. 3000 workers in Harlow and workers at Ford and at Main factories at Edmonton also struck.

Massive stoppages were expected for Wednesday, when engineers in the West of Scotland, Liverpool, Manchester and Wolverhampton were due to come out. In Liverpool support for the engineers' stoppage was promised by 9000 dockers and 3000 construction workers on the Stanlow Refinery site.

REFUSED

In Birmingham stewards voted to shut all plants in the East district by 750 to 50. This is the district where the main Lucas plants, which refused to strike last week, are situated.

The stoppage in Manchester, Salford, Warrington and Stockport also have the support of AUEW district committees in Bolton and Oldham.

The only cloud on the horizon in Greater Manchester is the feeling among militants that once again they are carrying the can for Hugh Scanlon and the national leaders of the AUEW who so far have refused to give a constructive lead on the Goad issue.

It is only eight months since Manchester was forced to fight alone for the national engineering wage claim.

As Mike Smith, convenor at Ferranti, Hollinwood, told Socialist Worker: 'Either we all come out until this diabolical law is smashed or we accept that the Tories are going to achieve their goal of smashing the labour movement.'

'Those are the real choices now, because, let's face it, you can't defeat the whole power of the state and its law with a one-day token strike in just a few areas of the country.'

**Thousands out
on 24-hour
stoppages**

GLASGOW:—Meetings last week of thousands of engineering workers in the West of Scotland pledged themselves to 24-hour stoppages on Wednesday in defence of the Engineering Union.

But militant engineers criticised the failure of the leading AUEW shop stewards to call for immediate strike action when the Glasgow district shop stewards' quarterly met a fortnight ago, the morning after the £50,000 fine was imposed. James Airlie, chairman of Govan Shipbuilders shop stewards' committee, merely moved that the national executive call industrial action against the fines.

When the district secretary then pointed out that Scanlon had asked for action to come from the shop floor, Airlie had nothing further to add. Only last Wednesday was real action planned—five days had been lost.

In Paisley some 200 shop stewards were called together by the Chrysler Engineers' Works Committee. They rejected proposals for an absolute overtime ban until the Industrial Relations Court backed down, and decided instead to recommend the 24-hour stoppage for Wednesday.

In Glasgow the same night the regular district committee meeting was held. It has a 'left-wing' majority and its decision to call for a one-day strike did not come as a surprise. It was strange, though, that it failed to specify a particular day for the strikes.

The confusion was only settled finally last Thursday, when workers at Chrysler and Wier decided on strike action for Wednesday. The delay allowed some of the initiative to pass into the hands of the right wing, who got resolutions through the Edinburgh and mid-Lanarkshire district committees rejecting strike action and calling for the recall of the AUEW national committee to reverse union policy.

At the Babcock and Wilcox factory in Renfrew the recommendation from the Paisley district stewards for strike action was rejected.

500 walk out over sackings

ROCHDALE:—500 workers at Whipp and Bourne, at Castleton, Lancashire, walked out last Friday over the dismissal of three men, including convenor John McHale.

The reason given by management for the sackings was alleged irregularities in clocking in. But management has provided no evidence to support its allegations.

The real reason for their action is obvious. Whipp and Bourne has traditionally been a weakly organised factory. But

over the past nine months, under the leadership of McHale, the shop stewards' committee has at last got off its knees and shop floor organisation has been considerably strengthened, particularly in regard to enforcing safety regulations.

Now with wage negotiations imminent management has decided to try and smash the shop-floor organisation by picking off the leaders.

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