

Socialist Worker

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WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

Nixon's 'peace' by terror



THIS North Vietnamese News Agency radiophoto is an indication of the destruction caused by the massive US terror bombing of recent weeks. The ruins are of the An Duong living quarters for

workers in Hanoi after raids by B52s. The carpet bombing destroyed more than 200 homes and killed or wounded more than 200 people. ANALYSIS and more pictures: page 2, EDITORIAL: page 3.

Death or Mr Hughes? Press makes a choice...

by Ron Knowles

MARY McCOY, aged 68, died a horrible and degrading death last week, choking on a piece of cardboard she tried to eat after running out of food. Her body lay in her Liverpool home for almost three months before it was discovered.

On Saturday, 52 years-old Barbara Nappin was found dead after two months in a Portsmouth council maisonette.

And on Monday 83 years-old Lucy Sparrow was taken for emergency treatment when she was discovered by neighbours in Wellingborough eating lard—the only 'food' in her pre-fab home.

The facts about Mary McCoy shocked the coroner, whose business is death. He recognised them as a sordid indictment of our so-called civilised society.

They did not shock the Express, the Sun, the Mail, the Guardian or the Telegraph.

Drivel

On its main inside news page the Daily Telegraph managed to find six inches for the story. Alongside it was a 20-inch item of drivel about Howard Hughes and the hotel that he might be hiding in in London.

The last thing we can expect from Fleet Street is a little honest probing into the kind of society that starves and freezes thousands of people to death each year. They prefer to pay huge sums to photographers and reporters to humiliate themselves in a scramble to catch a glimpse of a multi-millionaire, rather than engage in a crusade against death by poverty and social indifference.

If New Year Resolutions are in order, then the trade union movement should make a pledge now to launch a massive campaign this year over the plight of old people.

The demand must be raised in every union branch and district committee for the TUC to be forced to launch a national campaign for a £16 a week pension and properly supervised housing for the old—a campaign underlined by a clear commitment to all-out strike action to force the government to move.

I S FIGHTING FUND GETS XMAS BOOST

THE RESPONSE to the International Socialists' Fighting Fund over the Christmas period has been magnificent. A total of £1977 in donations has pushed the total to £8626.

Our own branches in particular have responded well and include: Birmingham North and South £41, Glasgow North £37.50, Salford £35.50, Harlow £36, Leeds £84, Hull £30, Swansea Valley £10.30, Coventry £150, Hackney £83.00, York £50, Trafford (Manchester) £38, Guildford £9, Lambeth £25, Milton Keynes £2, Ealing £20, Brighton £31, Scarborough £1.74, Dundee £13, Bristol £45, Edinburgh £36, Fife £6.54, Teesside £50, Durham £10, Cambridge £510, Camden £100.

Readers have again given generously and in particular I wish to thank 19 workers at Rushton Paxman Diesels who sent £6.50, Standard Triumph £1, Chryslers (Scotland) £1, GKN (Birmingham) Socialist Worker readers' group £3—and a Labour MP who sent £5.

The support for the fund is growing but we must not relax for a minute if we are to reach our £30,000 target and establish a modern printshop and better paper to step up the fight against the Tory system.

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

BIG COAL SCANDAL - UNION AIDS WHITEWASH

IN A DESPERATE attempt to hush up a series of scandals over Coal Board finances, the government and the National Coal Board have turned for assistance to the National Union of Mineworkers.

The union is currently locked in a passionate embrace with the Tories following a massive write-off of Coal Board debts with promises of more government money to come.

In exchange for these handouts the government and the Coal Board are demanding 'moderation' in wage claims and silence over the scandals.

The way was shown this week in a fantastic outburst from Mr George Tyler, general secretary of the British Association of Colliery Managers. Mr Tyler will be remembered among miners for his letter to the NUM during last year's miners' strike, in which he stated that he was instructing his members to break the picket lines.

EXPLAIN

In an interview on the front page of the Sunday Express on 31 December, Mr Tyler speaks out on behalf of those colliery managers who have had letters from the Coal Board's auditors asking them to explain their shareholdings in Bonser Engineering, a company which benefited hugely from Coal Board orders for pit props during the mid-1960s.

The daughter of the Bonser chairman was married in 1967 to Alfred Robens, adopted son of the then Coal Board chairman, Lord Robens. Young Alf joined the board of Bonser. He is also a director of Alfred Robens Associates, a public relations firm which handled publicity for a number of mining machinery firms and the Coal Board.

At least 20 senior Coal Board officials, including many who are now in office in Yorkshire, the East Midlands and the North East, bought and sold shares in Bonser at exactly the 'right' time, ensuring substantial profits for themselves.

These men are now subject to an internal Coal Board inquiry, much to the fury of Mr Tyler. 'I accuse the



ROBENS: time for miners to expose his policies

Coal Board,' he told the Sunday Express, 'of being cowards for yielding to the blackmail of the gutter press... The inquiry is a waste of time and money. What is wrong with these men investing in coal-mining equipment? When you invest, you invest in something you know about.'

Mr Tyler's wife Sarah, incidentally, bought 1500 shares in Bonser when shares were cheap before the bonanza.

She sold them at the height of the company's share boom at a handsome profit.

Mr Tyler's reference to the 'gutter press' is to the few papers who have over the last few months exposed the Coal Board scandals: Private Eye, the Morning Star, Socialist Worker and the Collier. These papers have revealed a far worse situation than a little inside gambling in Bonser Engineering. They have shown how during the 'Robens miracle' (1960-1970) the Coal Board

● Carved up the lucrative pit-prop market between three companies. All three companies made enormous profits from the deal.

● Made millionaires out of private opencast and tip coal contractors, when the job could have been done by the Coal Board itself. (NCB payments to these fly-by-nights increased from £24.8m in 1967 to £43.9m in 1972.)

● Set up a number of leasing companies with finance houses and industrialists which leased equipment to the Coal Board. The main beneficiaries of this operation were the Coal Board's private enterprise partners, who included the Orion Bank (director Lord Melchett, chairman of the British Steel Corporation).

● Handed out about £18m in grants and loans to private companies who either went bust or proved a miserable return on investment. International Hotel Reservations went bust, losing the Coal Board £800,000. Draiseley Ltd went bust, costing £500,000.

LOST

Phthalic Anhydride went bust, costing well over £1m. Nypro, British Drilling, Staveley Chemicals, Joseph Sankeys, Associated Heat Industries, Barcross Air Distribution—all of these firms had Coal Board money which was either lost or squandered.

Distributor-in-chief of all this largesse was Lord Robens, Coal Board chairman, who is now one of the most important people in the country. He is

chairman of Vickers and of bankers Johnson Mathey. He is a director of Times Newspapers (watch the Sunday Times for an expose of his activities—yes, keep watching) and a member of the court of the Bank of England.

Robens it was who attacked the 'greedy' miners who went on unofficial strike for better pay and conditions in 1969.

MESS

Robens it is who stays on the board of Sankeys, of British Fuel and of British Anthracite, three of the private companies who benefited hugely from his policies at the Coal Board in the 1960s.

It is high time Robens and his policies were exposed once for all. The tragedy is that the NUM, taking its lead from Mr Tyler, is yearning for whitewash to cover up the mess.

At a recent meeting of the NUM executive, when the matter was raised amid general embarrassment, it was decided to 'seek assurances' from new Coal Board chairman Derek Ezra that everything is 'above board'.

The assurances have been given, but the questions are still being asked.

The miners' new pay claim goes into the Coal Board on 10 January. If the claim is to be fought for, the miners' union must expose the profiteering and skulduggery in and around the Coal Board during the last decade.

All miners' lodges should call for a full public inquiry NOW.

SPECIAL REPORT BY PAUL FOOT



BRIEFING

A TURKISH publisher has been sentenced to seven and a half years in prison for publishing Trotsky's Permanent Revolution. Fifty-nine members of the Turkish teachers' union, including the president and general secretary, have also been sentenced to more than 10 years' imprisonment for having 'transformed the union into an illegal left-wing organisation'.

COLONEL GADAFY, the Libyan nationalist ruler, has been reconciled with President Tombolbaye of Chad, whose government has for some years remained

in power solely through the supporting presence of the French Army.

Gadafy has promised Tombolbaye over £30 million in aid for social and economic projects. He has also promised to return members of Frolinat, the Chad opposition guerrilla movement, found on Libyan soil.

This is an about-face for Gadafy.

ARNOLD MILLER, candidate of the Miners for Democracy movement has been elected president of the United Mine-workers' Union in the United States.

The election was held under government supervision after a court declared the 1969 election null and void. Three weeks after that election the losing candidate, Joe Yablonski, his wife and daughter were murdered. An official of the union, which is notorious for its corruption, later admitted complicity in the murder.

Miller, a West Virginia miner party crippled by pneumoconiosis, has promised that one of his first actions will be to cancel the 50,000 dollars a year pension that the annulled president, Tony Boyle, fixed for himself while in office.



Wreckage of a B52 bomber shot down over Hanoi (left) and part of a US airman's uniform with a badge denoting 200 missions over Vietnam. Official North Vietnamese News Agency photos.

Harry Truman: Man of violence

HARRY TRUMAN, who died last week, was President of the United States from 1945 to 1952. It was his job to help wind up the Second World War and ensure as big a slice of cake as possible for America in the post-war world.

Truman's view of the world had been reported by the New York Times in July 1941: 'If we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany and that way let them kill as many as possible, although I don't want to see Hitler victorious under any circumstances.'

If he became more tactful in his utterances once he was president, his basic cynicism did not change. It was Truman who took the decision to drop two atomic bombs on Japanese cities.

Desperate

This, he claimed, was to save the lives of American soldiers, but in fact when the bombs were dropped Truman was well aware that the Japanese were anxious for peace negotiations. And he summed up clearly the logic behind US aid to Europe: 'Desperate men are liable to destroy the structure of their society... If we let Europe go cold and hungry, we may lose some of the foundations of order on which the hope for world-wide peace must rest.'

Truman was a loyal servant of the American ruling class. Of the 125 major government appointments he made in the first two years after the war, 49 were bankers, financiers and industrialists, 31 were military men, and 17 were lawyers, mostly with big business connections.

On 12 March 1947 Truman announced US intervention in Greece, in a speech which set out what was known as the 'Truman doctrine', in effect a promise that the US would intervene against any revolution it chose to class as 'communist'. US troops were dispatched to every point of the globe, US money flooded out to organise splits in trade unions and buy politicians and intellectuals as pro-American spokesmen.

Threatened

Despite all this Truman came under attack from Joe McCarthy and his anti-Communist witch-hunting mates. But if Truman had enough sense to see that the excesses of McCarthyism defeated their own ends, he had himself opened the era of the witchhunt.

In 1947 he introduced a massive security check covering eight million people employed by the government, armed forces and defence contractors. This defined disloyalty as association with any body 'designated by the Attorney General as totalitarian'.

The American working class in particular were victims of Truman's policies. In 1946 he broke a rail strike by threatening the use of troops and in January 1947 he urged Congress to prepare anti-strike legislation.

The result was the notorious Taft-Hartley Act, which banned the closed shop, made certain strikes illegal and gave the President the right to impose a cooling-off period. Before the 1948 Presidential election, Truman got support from the trade union bureaucracy by promising to repeal the Taft-Hartley Act—a promise he never kept.

DEADLY ROAD TO 'PEACE WITH HONOUR'

THE LAST ACT of the Vietnamese tragedy is turning out to be a bloody one.

by Ian Birchall

The murderous bombing of Hanoi over the past couple of weeks has shown that US imperialism will stop at nothing to achieve even minor concessions.

Claims that the bombing was of military targets only are laughable. The US has made no secret of its sophisticated technology, its ability to guide bombs to their targets with an accuracy measured in feet.

Yet not only has one of Hanoi's main hospitals been badly bombed for the second time within a year, but reports speak of massive destruction in the working-class suburbs of the North Vietnamese capital.

The squeaks of outrage from politicians around the world can be largely disregarded. Harold Wilson and Roy Jenkins did a valuable job of support for Lyndon Johnson's bombing when they were in office, now they are in opposition they can afford a brief protest. The way to effective opposition has been shown by the Australian Seamen's Union, which decided to boycott all American shipping.

STRUGGLE

North Vietnamese claims that the American bombing halted because of the large number of B52s shot down is almost certainly a—justifiable—exaggeration. But it is quite clear that, vicious as the bombing was, North Vietnam was nowhere near outright defeat.

North Vietnam has developed an impressive capacity for resisting and recovering from aerial bombardment. During the recent raids half the population of

Hanoi was evacuated in a couple of days. Forces sympathetic to the National Liberation Front now control large areas of Laos and Cambodia which could serve as bases for continuing the struggle in the South.

Short of massive escalation of the war throughout Indochina, Nixon cannot win the war.

HAGGLING

But the North Vietnamese have got their problems too. They are clearly under strong pressure from both Russia and China to settle the war. Neither can afford to be publicly seen to desert the Vietnamese, but as the war becomes less of a guerrilla struggle and more conventional, North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front become more and more dependant on their allies.

So in the negotiations over the past year, the North Vietnamese have made much bigger concessions than the Americans or the South Vietnamese.

But, apparently, not yet big enough. It is not yet clear what are the precise points still being haggled over. One much-discussed issue has been the fate of prisoners of war. Nixon's contempt for his own captured men has been shown by the fact that some captured US airmen were probably killed by the recent indiscriminate bombing of the North.

But the more vital question is that of political prisoners in the South. Throughout the year moves towards a settlement have been punctuated with reports of mass arrests, and the torture and murder of political prisoners.

Thieu and the bunch of political criminals who surround him know they

would stand little chance in a Vietnam from which the US had finally withdrawn. While Thieu realises he cannot prevent US withdrawal, he is playing for time so that he can stamp out as many as possible of his political opponents.

And the US cannot afford to ditch Thieu too blatantly. For when they talk of 'peace with honour' they mean the international credibility of the US as a supporter of corrupt regimes against popular opposition.

Thieu has taken advantage of the recent hold-up in the peace negotiations to tighten his political grip. On the Wednesday after Christmas he signed a decree revising the law dealing with political parties. Parties not meeting certain arbitrary conditions will be considered dissolved. The law making political party headquarters immune from police raids has also been repealed.

In effect Thieu has outlawed every oppositional political party.

His main target at present is not the Communists, but the so-called 'third force'—a motley bunch of nationalist political careerists who are anti-Communist but reject Thieu's pro-American line. Figures like General Duong Van Minh ('Big Minh'), the man who led the coup against Diem in 1963 are crawling out of the woodwork again. Despite their professed anti-Communism, these elements could probably take advantage of a peace settlement to come to some agreement with the Communists and consign Thieu to the waste-bucket.

The liberals who have criticised the bombing have had little to say about Thieu's suppression of all opposition in South Vietnam. Yet this is what is really at stake: as long as Nixon is committed to pulling Thieu's chestnuts out of the fire, the bombing, torture and murder will go on. The overthrow of Thieu will be the beginning of real liberation for South Vietnam—but only the beginning.

The dictators who own earthquake capital

NICARAGUA, scene of the recent earthquake, is a show-piece of law and order in what is termed America's 'own backyard'. The country has had only four presidents in the past 40 years, since the US Marines withdrew.

'Tacho' Somoza ruled until 1956, when he was killed after building his family's fortune. Luis Somoza then governed until 1963, when it was found expedient to hold elections. The Alliance for Progress, the aid programme set up by Kennedy to stop the example of the Cuban Revolution from spreading, was unwilling to grant aid to too obvious dictators, so a Somoza associate was elected president (open rigging had led the main opposition candidate to withdraw).

The armed forces remained under the command of 'Tachito' Somoza, who recently inherited the presidency and the duty of protecting the Somozas' fortune of more than £100 million (most of the country's wealth belongs to US companies).

Disaster

Most of this fortune is in and around the capital Managua. As a report in The Guardian noted, martial law was introduced after the earthquake in Managua mainly to protect the Somozas' property. Nicaragua's population has had one of the highest mortality rates in Latin America without causing the Somozas much concern.

The natural disaster has had an effect beyond all proportion due to the total lack of resources, as all the wealth has been pocketed by US companies, the Somozas and their associates. Lack of roads, vehicles, medical assistance and, above all, any organised social services has meant that aid (which is plentiful) has not been getting to the people.

Most of the relief operations have been mounted from the US, but behind Nixon's public concern for the victims is a cynical attempt to avoid an explosion of anger in Nicaragua against those responsible for present and past miseries, by timely charity.

BLACKMAIL BY POLICE IN RAIL QUIZ

by Laurie Flynn
CHRISTOPHER BUSHELL is one of a very select group of people. The Home Office admits to tapping 12,000 telephones in London and Chris Bushell's is one of them.

But even among those 12,000 Chris Bushell is out of the ordinary. He knows for sure that his phone is being tapped.

In every sense he is an unlikely target for the attentions of the thought police. He could not in any way be classed as a dissident, far less cast as rebel, revolutionary, or trade union militant.

When pay negotiations at IPC Magazines, where Chris Bushell works, broke down in the summer of 1972, he was the only member of his 90-strong union chapel to vote against strike action. He also votes Conservative. Yet despite this, Chris Bushell is being taken in hand by the phone tappers and by Detective Chief Inspector Croucher and Detective Sergeant Wisker of Scotland Yard.

These two gentlemen recently paid a call on the young journalist at his home in South London. Their visit was in connection with police investigations into the leaking from the Department of the Environment of details of the massive cuts in railway routes mileage at present under consideration by the Tory government.

The details were published in full in the Sunday Times on 8 October last year and led to a storm of protest from the railway unions and many other people who remain unconvinced that this society's most pressing need is still more motorways.

IMPLICATED

Richard Hope, the editor of the magazine Railway Gazette International on which Chris Bushell works, was involved in preparing the Sunday Times article which exposed the Tory plans. With the usual amazing police powers of logic and deduction, officers Croucher and Wisker, doubtless with the assistance of their own superiors, government ministers and a computer or two, concluded that this meant that Hope, assistant editor Ian Yearsley and Chris Bushell knew or might know the source of the information inside the Department of the Environment.

When first interviewed by Croucher and Wisker at his home, Chris Bushell simply declined to answer their questions. But then one of the officers said to him that it would be a pity if friends of Bushell's were to be implicated.

This, Mr Bushell was given to understand was a reference to aspects of his personal life which 'might prove embarrassing' if 'his employers were told about them'. Such information, according to Mr Bushell, could only have been obtained by tapping his telephone.

These police tactics achieved their result and Chris Bushell began to answer the questions directed at him. His answers would be of no direct value to the police, since Mr Bushell knows nothing whatsoever about the sources of leaks in government departments.

A repeat dose of intimidation on some new names might just turn something up for the police. The whole exercise in blackmail and brutality would then not only have been 'necessary', it would have proved worthwhile.

Prior to visiting Mr Bushell at his home, Croucher and Wisker had been to his office. They gave Hope, Yearsley and Bushell to understand that they were being questioned under the Official Secrets Act. Government spokesmen later said they were raided and questioned under the Theft Act.

All three journalists stated that they were unable to help the police and for the remainder of their three hour stay, the police rummaged through anything and everything in the Railway Gazette office.

Particular interest was shown in desk diaries and address books which list journalists' contacts and identify where these people work, another certain indicator of possible guilty parties at the Department of the Environment.

The editor and assistant editor of Railway Gazette also feel sure that their work and home telephones are being bugged. All three journalists have lodged



Richard Hope: office raided by detectives

complaints on the matter and on the despicable police harassment of Chris Bushell. The National Union of Journalists IPC Dorset House chapel of which they are members has also protested, as has their union branch.

In fact Railway Gazette made no mention of the Sunday Times' revelations until the month after publication. The raid followed, with the police saving their more totalitarian tactics strictly for those journalists who, they supposed, were rather less 'influential' than those at the Sunday Times.

But the Sunday Times' turn came early last month. The editor and two staff writers were cautioned and questioned under the Official Secrets Act, not the Theft Act, and told that charges could arise.

EXPOSED

The government is concerned at this particular leak which has forewarned the railway unions. But even if the courageous bureaucrat who started the ball rolling is never found, the raid and the general intimidation serves a very useful purpose in putting the frighteners on other people who are also in positions to do the same with piles of other awkward documents.

Over the past year the secret diplomacy of the present government has taken a fair old knocking with the Maudling scandal, the exposure of the Bloody Sunday white-wash and the much less publicised disclosures of the steel industry redundancies.

But the forces of the state have been hitting back. No longer do they rely on shoving things off for consideration by a

tribunal or the courts to guillotine information and discussion. No longer do they trust to the Official Secrets Act and its D notice scheme which forbids reporting, to do their dirty work.

The judgment in the Nora Beloff case against Private Eye means that people who obtain and publish information without the consent of its legal owners can not only be sued for breach of copyright but are likely to be heavily penalised.

Added in with the Industrial Relations Act, accomplished or forthcoming changes in the jury system and the increasing use of the conspiracy laws, what we are witnessing amounts to a major offensive against hard won, basic civil liberties.

Neither the Trades Union Congress nor the Labour Party (aside from a few individuals) have had anything to say on the matter. They, after all, are an integral part of secret diplomacy. Defence of basic civil liberties has been left to rank and file dockers, their supporters and the engineering union.

The leadership of the National Union of Journalists has not made one single murmur of protest about the Railway Gazette raid. Fortunately there are people like Hope, Yearsley and Bushell who have found the courage to speak out.

And there are many people who support them. People like Mick Elliott, the young National Union of Journalists' father of the chapel in the IPC offices where Railway Gazette is housed.

He says: 'This is a deplorable threat to all our freedoms. The phone tapping and the police pressure is nauseating. It is unbelievable in what people think is our free society. It must be fought at every level.'

NEW LYNCH CRACKDOWN

by Brian Trench

DUBLIN:-Jack Lynch's government is keeping up the pressure on republicans in the 26 counties. After the arrest of Sean MacStiofain, still on hunger strike in a military prison, Rory O'Brady, the president of Sinn Fein, and Martin McGuinness, former IRA commanding officer in Derry, were arrested last weekend.

This time the public response was poor. The new Irish Civil Rights Association, sponsored by the Provisional IRA and prominent people, held a rally on Sunday attended by only 500 people. The Provisionals seem undecided about how much effort they are going to put into the association and its programme does not call for the release of political prisoners, even though leading republicans are in jail.

The platform for Sunday's rally included Matt Larkin, leader of the tenants' organisation now on rent strike to smash the 1966 Housing Act, and Kevin Boland,

ex-Fianna Fail minister, who drafted the same Act. What this 'broad front' can achieve is hard to see. Some rank and file Provisionals resent the backing that their organisation is giving to it.

At the same time some Official IRA members are critical of their organisation's recent inactivity over the recent repression. They may begin to see the relevance of Socialist Workers Movement's call for 'a united front of anti-imperialist and working class organisations against repression'.

In a letter sent last month to some 60 political organisations and trade unions, the SWM called for 'working-class action against repression and Fianna Fail' and advocated a united front on a five-point programme. But the SWM said that such a united front must leave room for tactical differences. Other socialists have taken up the call and are campaigning for a united front on the same basis.

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK...

THE SICKENING HYPOCRISY of the national press reached a new low on what they are pleased to term the 'bullying' of the egotistical, publicity seeking Joseph Langston. It was, of course, pure coincidence that the television cameras, photographers and reporters just happened to be hanging about outside Chryslers, Ryton, when Langston dropped in to collect his unearned income.

Now that an Industrial Tribunal has upheld his 'right' to enjoy the benefits of trade union organisation without accepting the modest obligation of membership, this would-be parasite is talking about going to the NIRC to enforce the decision. Fortunately the Chrysler workers have already shown a very proper contempt for the Tribunal's decision. However the real crunch will come if a NIRC decision is given against the shop stewards.

The Langston case is yet another proof that without a vigorous fight against the Industrial Relations Act, the attacks on union organisation will continue. Nothing but industrial action each and every time the court attacks basic trade union rights can prevent crippling defeats—and defeats on 'organisational' questions will necessarily lead to defeats on pay, hours and conditions.

The trade union leaderships as a whole have abandoned the fight—and that is just as true of Jack Jones as of Frank Chapple. The AUEW continues, for the time being, on its solitary path of passive resistance. But passive resistance is not enough, indeed in and of itself it is a recipe for defeat. In the here and now the responsibility for leadership of the struggle falls on shop stewards, on local and district leaderships. That is no reason for ignoring the national organisations. On the contrary, the fight to enforce them to live up to their promises and really oppose the law is as vital as ever.

Left's failure

In the key case of the AUEW, it is clear that unless passive resistance is turned into active defiance, the right wing will succeed in forcing a change of policy in the opposite direction. In the Goad dispute we had the spectacle of certain notorious right wingers calling for official national action—as an excuse for opposing local action and as a means of exposing the weakness of the line of the Scanlon left. The right wing have good reason to believe that aggressive action on their part will pay off. 1972 was not a successful year for Scanlon and the 'broad left' coalition. The national pay claim struggle, conducted according to the new 'plant by plant' strategy, could hardly be called a brilliant success by any standards. The essential settlement was less than half of that won by the miners and only two-thirds of that achieved by the railwaymen. Nothing was gained on hours and only two days (from 1973) on holidays.

Conway's subsequent election victory was significant not only for the size of his majority but even more for the failure of the 'broad left' to conduct a campaign for Ernie Roberts remotely comparable to those it was able to mount in the 1960s. The 'broad left'—and its biggest organised component, the Communist Party—are also influenced by the drift to the right. Their lack of enthusiasm for new struggles, demonstrated for example by the failure of the Glasgow leadership to make any real effort to convince their membership of the necessity for action in the Goad case, naturally encourages the right. The immediate period ahead will see intensified pressure from that quarter. It will not be beaten by 'passive resistance' strategies and the shrugging off of national responsibilities, still less by concessions.

HYPOCRITES

HEATH has written, in his reply to Roy Jenkins, that it is 'not necessarily useful' to denounce the super-terrorist Nixon. Relatively small scale violence by the IRA Provisionals brings forth torrents of moral indignation from Tory ministers. The most savage, murderous, wholesale slaughter since Hiroshima does not produce a murmur.

Her Majesty's ministers cannot 'condone the use of violence for political ends'—unless of course it is being used by themselves or their allies. The greatest terrorist since Hitler cannot be condemned because that might upset Heath's visit to Washington.

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FOOT

PRINTS

ENOCH BACH

THE SEAMY side of Welsh Nationalism has been on display during the last two weeks in the small town of Brynamman, Wales. A vacancy for a medical practise in the town arose recently, and 16 people applied to Carmarthenshire County Council's health committee for the job.

One of them was Brian Cronin, who lives in Cefnbrynbrain, a neighbouring village, and speaks Welsh. The other 15 were Indians and Pakistanis, who do not speak Welsh.

Bearing in mind a recent complaint to the Race Relations Board about the appointment of a Welsh doctor to a post in Wales in preference to several Indian applicants who were better qualified, the committee chose the best-qualified man for the job—an Indian with an MRCP medical qualification.

Mr Gwynfor Evans, the President of Plaid Cymru, who sat as Welsh Nationalist MP for Cymarthren from 1966 to 1970, exploded in protest. There would, he warned, be 'a strong response from the people of Brynamman' if the Indian doctor was appointed.

The pacifist Mr Evans has written a letter of protest to the Central Practitioners Committee, saying that 90 per cent of the people in the village speak Welsh. 'It is essential,' wrote Evans, 'for patients to be able to converse with their doctor in their first tongue.'

Mr Evans was supported in this cause by the losing candidate, Mr Cronin, who said in a radio interview that the Indian and Pakistani candidates for the job 'had been huddled together like something from an Eisenstein film.'

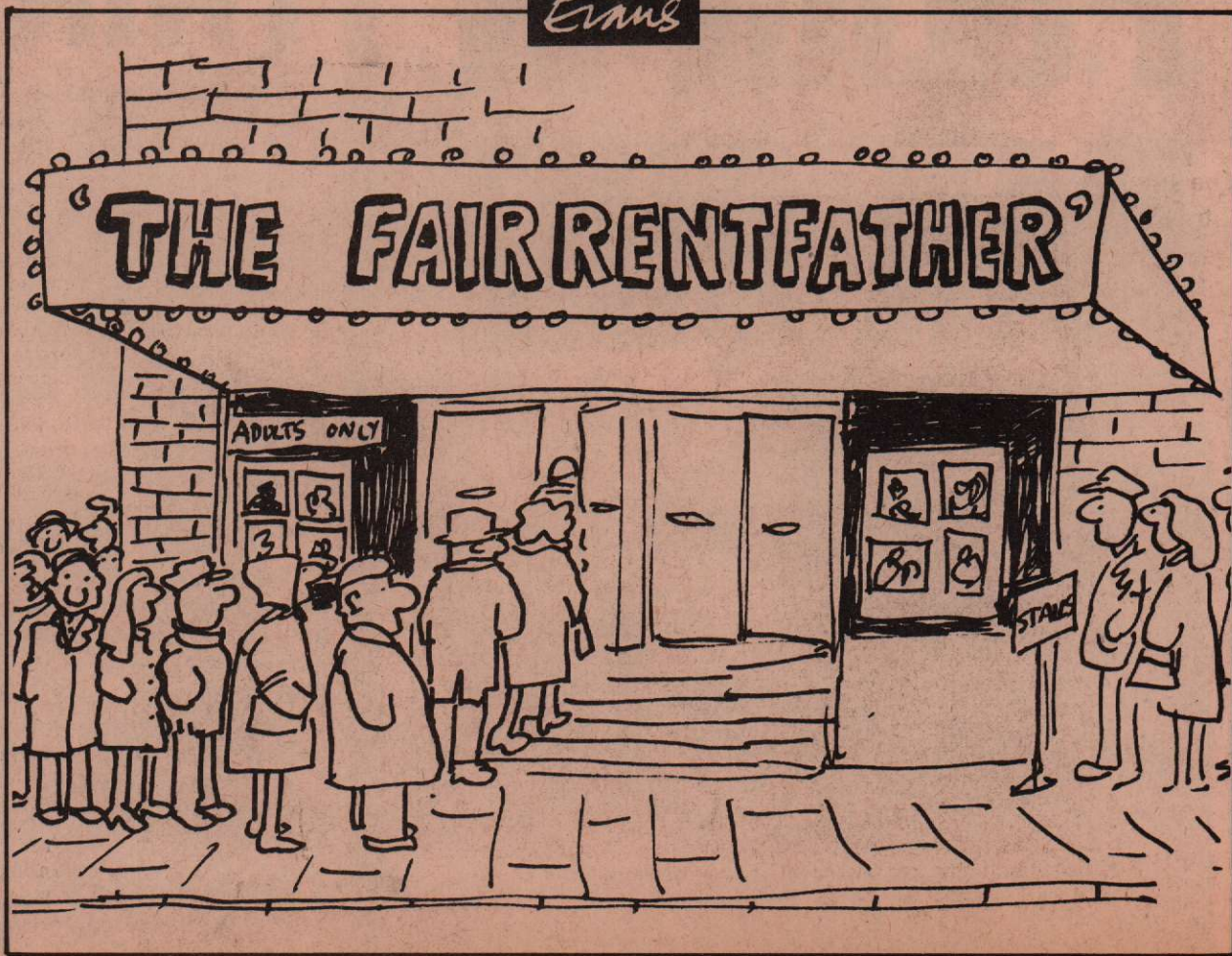
Asked about the successful candidate's superior qualification, Mr Cronin sniffed: 'A man with an MRCP qualification should be a consultant!'

Neither Mr Cronin nor Mr Evans pointed out that the man who had just retired as doctor at Brynamman for the last 24 years had not spoken a word of Welsh, and that this had not troubled the town's inhabitants.

At any rate, it seems that the full weight of the Plaid is going to be put behind the candidature of a lesser-qualified man on the grounds of his racial origin.

Which all goes to show that the distance between nationalism and racism is rather less far than from Brynamman to Cefnbrynbrain.

Evans



QUESTION: To what was Willie Hamilton, Labour MP for West Fife, referring when he wrote in his column in the *Scottish Sunday Mail* on 17 December: 'a horde of men and women, verging from crypto-Communists to near fascists—from those who have a sneaking affection for Enoch Powell and the IRA thugs to those who love the prison of East Germany and the utopia of "Communist" Russia.'

ANSWER: The Labour Party.

Jim's in

DUNCAN HALLAS, who works approximately two yards away from me, has sent me the following note:

'The December issue of the AUEW journal features on its front page a large photo of General Secretary Jim Conway. Turn over and Bro Jim appears in a picture of a 'Japanese Labour study team'. The third page features yet another picture of our modest hero at the head of an editorial in which he berates 'so-called progressives' and congratulates himself on his recent re-election.

'Just in case any member should be unfamiliar with Jim's physiognomy, he appears again on p.553 ("Japanese

MP visits general office") and yet again on p.555 ("winner of the Jim Conway Table Tennis Championship receiving the cup from Brother Conway") and yet again (Lincoln 13 visit). Is this a record?'

The answer is No. The December issue of the *Journalist*, the monthly organ of my own union, carries six huge pictures of the union President, Harold Pearson, on the front and back pages alone.

The 'record' in my experience is also held by an NUJ president—Allen Hutt. Hutt was president in 1967-1968, and in one of the issues of the *Journalist* during his reign carried 13 pictures of him.

Any advance on that?

WHATEVER you say about Dick Taverne (and most things you can't say in print), everyone agrees that he is very precise about his facts.

Consider for instance his brusque treatment of the candidature of Mr Jean Justice, who is standing in the Lincoln by-election in protest against Taverne's part in the Labour government's refusal to hold a public inquiry into the guilt of James Hanratty, who was hanged for the A6 murder in 1962.

Speaking to the *Lincolnshire Echo* (30 November) about Mr Justice's

candidature, Mr Taverne said, testily: 'They [the A6 murder committee] are very careless about their facts, because the inquiry was turned down after I left the Home Office.'

On 6 December Mr Justice wrote to the *Lincolnshire Echo* pointing out that Mr Taverne was Parliamentary Under Secretary at the Home Office from 1966 to 1968, that the inquiry was turned down on 1 November 1967 and that Mr Taverne had previously boasted about his part in the decision not to hold an inquiry.

The following week, Taverne had to write to the paper admitting his crass error. Still, Taverne may have discovered a new line for former Labour ministers when confronted with their dismal record in office: **PRETEND YOU WEREN'T THERE.**

Poor marks

THE following two facts are in no sense related.

1. Four weeks ago, Wigan International Socialists organised a picket outside Marks and Spencers to protest against the firm's involvement in Nottingham Manufacturing, the parent firm of the Mansfield Hosiery mill where 500 Asians were on strike against racial discrimination.

2. On 19 December, Marks and Spencers organised a tour of their store for four Ugandan Asian families who had come to Wigan. Free gifts were provided—so was free space for generous multi-racial Marks and Spencers on the front page of the Wigan Evening Post and Chronicle.

Meir Xmas

BY ALL accounts, Harold Wilson had a wonderful holiday in Israel as the personal guest of the Israeli Prime Minister and leader of the Israeli Labour Party, Golda Meir.

He certainly enjoyed himself more than Vanessa Stilwell, a social worker from Putney, who also travelled from London to Israel for her Christmas holiday.

Before leaving, Vanessa visited Moshe Machover, a member of the International Socialists and a prominent anti-Zionist Israeli, and asked if he had any literature which she could take for him to his comrades in Israel. Moshe gave her a few single copies of Palestinian newspapers and a book of poems for his friend, the Israeli journalist Haim Hanegby.

Vanessa's luggage was vigorously searched when she arrived by plane at Tel Aviv and she was closely questioned about the papers, none of which are illegal. She refused to answer questions, and as a result was kept for six days over Christmas in jail.

The Times (27 December) faithfully reported a press release from Tel Aviv as follows: 'A 24-year-old English Jewish girl has been arrested for trying to smuggle pro-Palestinian propaganda into Israel, newspapers here reported yesterday.' This was nonsense, of course, as even The Times had to admit when they reported Vanessa's release the following day.

This petty thuggery of the Israeli customs is yet another instance of the repressive fever which has gripped the authorities there since the Munich killings.

Handy Andy

THE influence of Andy Cunningham, the Northern boss of the General and Municipal Workers Union, does not seem to have been in any way impaired by the revelations that he and his family were sent on luxury holidays by the distinguished bankrupt, John Poulson.

Andy is still the king of Chester-le-Street, the working-class town south of Newcastle, where he lives and where GMWU full-time officials play a more than prominent role in the local councils.

The Labour candidate for the forthcoming Chester-le-Street by-election is none other than Giles Radice, suave, well-educated boss of the GMWU's research department.

The GMWU, incidentally, is the main union in Distillers, the manufacturers of thalidomide, and David Bassett, the union's new gensec, is enthusiastically responding to an appeal from Vic Feather of the TUC to pressurise Distillers into offering decent compensation to the thalidomide victims.

Turn now to the Sunday Express of 10 December, to the 'city profile' on page 25, which is headed 'Union boss who deals in high finance'. The hero of the piece is Lord Cooper of Stockton Heath, David Bassett's predecessor as head of the GMWU.

Lord Cooper, according to the profile, 'has turned his union into one of the richest in the country... he has doubled the union's funds from £5 million to £10 million.'

The profile goes on: 'A look at the last report of the GMWU's accounts reveals holdings in such controversial companies as Rio Tinto-Zinc, Distillers and Consolidated Gold Fields.'

Lord Cooper told his interviewer: 'With proper advice and plenty of money in your hands you cannot go wrong.'

PAGE 24 IPC NEWS NOVEMBER 1972



New women's magazine beats hoodoo

FOR the first time in 14 years, a new women's weekly has appeared on the bookstalls. But there were times during a traumatic six months when *Candida* staff wondered if that announcement would ever be made.

'It's as though there's been a hoodoo on us,' said co-ordinating editor Pamela Masingham, former *Daily Mail* assistant women's editor and *She* associate editor.

Harder blow was the tragically unexpected death of editor Jean Twiddy in the middle of the launch, and the first issue was put back three weeks. But a series of industrial disputes—starting with the builders—who haunted the embryonic magazine. It was formulated amid the turmoil of carpenters completing its four-floor Long Acre home.

The strike by NUJ Magazine and Book Journalists came at a critical time in September.

Booked

Then, a special pre-launch advertisement booked in the *Sunday Times* failed to appear. Even normally routine matters caused problems.

For instance, we spent three months finding a secretary,' said home editor Margaret Selranek.

CANDIDA AT LAST!

who used to edit *Women's Home* and *Home*. She joined *Candida* in May with antiquary editor Geoffrey Warren, production editor Maggie Birch and news editor Joyce Robins.

The idea for a new magazine for discriminating, up-market readers was conceived by publisher James McMillan, and Jean Twiddy began work on *Candida* soon after Christmas.

When she became ill, her friend Angela Wynn—*Editor of the Year* for her work on *Woman and Home*—took over.

Everyone's worked tremendously hard and with great enthusiasm and determination to overcome 'the problems,' said Angela, who has given several radio and TV interviews about the magazine.

Now, the 44 staff—including art editor Dennis Barker, literary editor Jenny Hassel, fashion editor Ann Chubb and handicrafts editor Shiona Huff—hope for a happy ending to the story.

More than £250,000-worth of advertising has already been sold, and circulation is guaranteed at 300,000 a week until June.



HAPPY ENDING: from the left, Pamela Masingham, Angela Wynn and Dennis Barker

THE above two headlines appeared on the back page and front page of consecutive issues of IPC News, the house journal of the largest publishing corporation in the world. The NUJ chapel at Tower House, the IPC

division which included *Candida*, has passed a number of resolutions protesting bitterly at the editorial incompetence of IPC in their handling of the 'new women's magazine that beat the hoodoo' (or did it?).



The newspaper of the International Publishing Corporation
DECEMBER 1972 Vol. 2 No. 6

A MERRY TO ALL OF YOU
Last post for old Reveille? W/O KID

CANDIDA CLOSES

CANDIDA'S last issue appeared on December 2. It has been closed because the magazine's 300,000 sale guaranteed until June 1973 cannot be met.

IPC Magazines' chairman Edward Pickering said: 'Actual sales of each issue are difficult to determine—those blessed with that wonderful but not particularly helpful gift of hindsight. Four magazines have been launched by the Magazine Company since we began to publish in 1968. Seven issues seem a very short time in which to decide to close a magazine. But as Edward Pickering told IPC NEWS: 'The reason for this is there has been no extensive editorial policy change rushed through to combat declining sales, but I don't propose to attach any blame here.'

1972 Tremendous year for the workers

1972 was a tremendous year for Britain's working class. The struggle rose to new heights, both in terms of the number of workers involved, the size of strikes and their length, and above all in the quality of the struggle.

There have been far more large-scale and prolonged strikes this year than in the previous 10 years, as the table below shows.

November and December figures have not yet been published, but there is no doubt that the total number of strike days has reached or exceeded 30 million this year. If one excludes miners' strikes, only once in British history has the number of strike days been greater—that was in 1919.

The 1972 figure is more than four times 1969, and some nine times the yearly average for the previous 20 years.

1972 saw the first national miners' strike since 1926—and this time the miners won—and the biggest building strike ever 300,000 out over 12 weeks. The last similar confrontation was in 1923, when the employers locked the builders out.

The quality of the struggle has also been very advanced. There has been a purely political strike, to free the Pentonville Five. There has been a solidarity strike of 50,000 Birmingham engineers in support of the miners, 10,000 of them marching to Saltley Coke Depot. For the first time we have had strikes in support of old age pensioners, 6000 construction workers in Anchor, near Scunthorpe, coming out.

The workers have shown great initiative. But the trade union bureaucracy has been treacherous. Look at the miners' strike. The government offered the miners only £2. The official claim of the miners' union was £9, £6, and £5. Joe Gormley declared on the eve of the strike that if the government had raised the offer just a little the strike would not have taken place—he would probably have signed for £3.

The Tory press was absolutely convinced the government would win this round as they won against the postmen. They were looking for a confrontation. It was the initiative of the miners' rank and file, in picketing power stations instead of wasting effort on picketing the pits, that led the way. Helped by railwaymen, lorry drivers and workers in the power industry, they won a magnificent victory.

Union sabotage

While 60 per cent of the miners of Barnsley went on picket duty outside Yorkshire, the Labour MP for Barnsley contributed to victory by standing for a whole 10 minutes on the picket line at Battersea power station. By sheer accident the television cameras were there at the same time.

We shouldn't criticise. It was cold, and he had to rush back to the House of Commons for some important vote, probably on dog licensing.

The Shadow Minister for Fuel and Power, Harold Lever, attacked the Tories for mismanaging the dispute, declaring that if Labour had been in power they would have settled the miners' wage claim for less than the Tories.

While the leaders did not manage to prevent the miners' victory, they did manage to sign an agreement sabotaging future battles, by allowing the date of the agreement to be shifted from November to February. Until now the annual agreement has run from November to November. The present one runs until February 1973.

If at the end of February the coal board rejects the NUM claim, the executive will have to organise a ballot and prepare miners for action, which will take a month or two. For miners to go on strike in summer is not the best of tactics. The 1926 general strike, remember, started in May.

Ice-cream workers should have agreements from May to May, miners from November to November. Although the rank and file miners won the battle in spite of the bureaucrats, the latter managed to sabotage the next round.



The solidarity that won the miners' struggle: 10,000 Birmingham workers completely closed Saltley

by Tony Cliff

Executive committee member of the International Socialists



	Number of workers involved (000's)	Number of working days lost (000's)	Average number of days per worker on strike
1953-64 (average)	1,081	3,712	3.3
1965	876	2,925	3.3
1966	544	2,398	4.4
1967	734	2,787	4.0
1968	2,258	4,680	2.1
1969	1,665	6,876	4.1
1970	1,801	10,980	6.1
1971	1,171	13,551	12.1
Jan-Oct 1972	1,353	22,202	17.1

Again, look at the dockers' struggle. It was a magnificent victory over the government when the five dockers were freed.

The strike was unofficial. Jack Jones kept his mouth shut, and did nothing at all to help the dockers. Reg Prentice, the Shadow Minister of Labour, attacked the five dockers for breaking the law, and seeking self-advertisement.

Barbara Castle was more hypocritical. The Pentonville Five were arrested on the anniversary of the Tolpuddle Martyrs. 'In Place of Strife' Babs put a wreath on the grave of one of them. If he were not dead, and if she were in power, she would surely have put him in Pentonville instead.

After the Five were freed Jack Jones threw his weight and that of the union on the side of the dockers and job security, declaring an official strike, which lasted three weeks. If 41,000 dockers could win an unofficial strike, the support of a union of 1,700,000 should surely have won them the official one.

But the result was the Aldington-Jones sell-out. Lord Aldington, former Tory MP, former vice-chairman of the Tory Party who gave £30,000 to buy Morning Cloud for Ted Heath, the vice-chairman of GEC that sacked more than 50,000 workers over four years, was sold to the dockers by Jack Jones with promises of job security.

After the Pentonville Five affair the Tory government was reeling. In July and August, the Tory press spoke of Ted Heath's government being bankrupt.

But in September, the TUC snatched victory out of defeat for this government. It was Vic Feather and the TUC who suggested the idea of an incomes policy at

the September conference in Brighton. Ted Heath spelt it out by suggesting an all-round price of £2, and thus the ground was prepared for the 90-day freeze.

The fantastic potential power of the rank and file and the treason of the trade union bureaucracy make it necessary now, more than ever, to build rank and file organisations in the unions to fight for democratic control, and to create combat organisations connecting workers from different places of work, so that they can discuss questions of strategy and tactics.

Shop stewards

The struggle over the past year has also shown that it is important to bridge the gulf that exists in many factories and other places of work between the militants and the rest of the workers. For a long time battles were won in individual shops by mobilising a small number of workers, or by threatening to do so. With today's mass confrontations, the key problem is how to involve a massive number of workers in the struggle.

Often militants in one factory are without any contact with workers in the factory next door, or with the workers in another factory of the same empire. No less serious, however, is that militant shop stewards do not always involve their own workers in discussing the strategy and tactics needed to raise their fighting strength and understanding of the issues facing them.

During 1972 members of the International Socialists participated in launching a number of rank and file papers—The Collier, The Steelworker, The Dockworker, among others. We decided also

to build Socialist Worker groups in factories.

The aim is to discuss with workers the general question of socialist politics facing the working class. Such groups should be active and intervening at all stages of the struggle. They should dig deeper roots for Socialist Worker inside the factory, by increasing its sale, getting reports for it, criticising it, and collecting donations.

The paper is more and more a workers' paper—not a paper just for workers. It is written to a large extent by workers in struggle. But however good the paper improvements and criticism are always necessary.

When Lenin said the paper is an organiser, he meant not only, say, the carworkers' paper, but also separate factory bulletins in different car factories, written by militants in the factory itself, read by the whole workforce in the factory, not only the minority of militant socialists.

If decisive proof were needed that cabbage-patch militancy is not enough, the case of James Goad and the Lucas Birmingham factories has given it.

The Sudbury Lucas workers, where Goad used to work, went on strike against the Industrial Relations Court's £50,000 fine on the Engineering Union and called on their Birmingham colleagues to come to their aid. But under the influence of the right-wing officials, the Birmingham Lucas shop stewards decided not to take any action.

Monthly bulletin

If they had decided differently and the 20,000 Lucas workers had come out in solidarity with Sudbury, the impact would have been tremendous. The snowball effect could have been as big as the Pentonville Five.

Things could have turned out very differently if the left in Lucas Birmingham were better organised. Many of the militant stewards did not know about the stewards' meeting. Not one of the stewards knew that a request from the Sudbury strikers to send a delegation to the Birmingham meeting had been turned down by the district secretary.

For lack of space I cannot deal adequately with the bankruptcy of the AUEW leadership in the Goad affair—a subject I will return to in the next few weeks.

Members of the International Socialists and other militant workers in Lucas Birmingham factories started a monthly bulletin called Lucas Worker about a month ago. Had they started, say, a year earlier . . . if . . . if . . . A different initiative from the local Lucas leadership could have brought a totally different outcome.

The struggle in one field—in Birmingham Lucas—can become decisive for the whole labour movement. In the great chain of events, even an individual link can be decisive at a particular point in time. Socialists, organising in their place of work, should see their work as relevant not only to the workers directly involved, but also, potentially, to the whole of the working class.

In the second issue of the Dockworker, published a few days ago, a docker's wife wrote a marvellous letter. I shall quote just the final paragraph: 'After trying for 10 years "officially" to get these [thalidomide] kids some money, without success, it's about time that something was done "unofficially". I am surprised that dockers have not done something about blacking Distillers' products, which I am sure are exported through some docks in the country.'

She is absolutely right. The dockers who could free the Five have the industrial power to force Distillers to cough up money for those unfortunate children.

The workers have the power to force the Tory government to give a £16 pension to the old age pensioners. They have the power to smash the Tory government. They have the power to blow capitalism to kingdom come.

1972 has gone. Welcome to 1973.

EUROPE:

From the first of January, Britain is part of the 'European Economic Community'—the Common Market.

Entry was opposed by the majority of the labour movement, the grounds ranging from outright nationalism ('end of a thousand years of history') through defence of what some so-called 'lefts' styled 'the sovereignty of parliament' to real concern that 'the faceless bureaucrats of Brussels' would be even less vulnerable to working-class pressure than our own ruling class and that big business would exploit the EEC to lower real wages and worsen conditions.

Blame

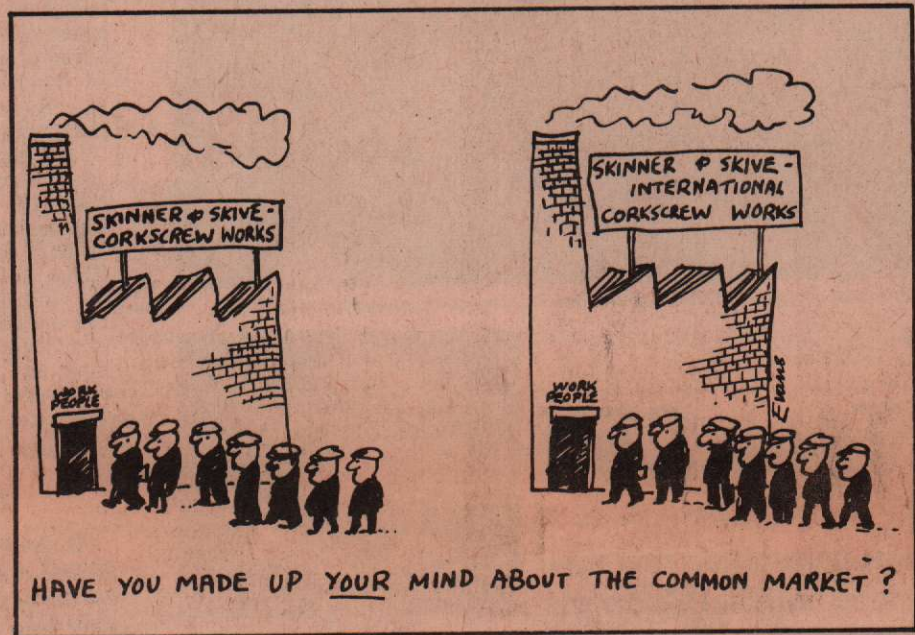
Socialist Worker supported opposition to entry as part of the general struggle against the Tories and their policies and equally as part of the struggle between left and right inside the labour movement.

At the same time we argued that there is no long-term solution to the problems facing working people under capitalism, whether inside the EEC or outside. Now that opposition has failed, what next?

One thing is sure. Some sections of the 'left' will now try to blame all our ills on the EEC. The implication is that nothing can really be done until the Labour Party wins an election and 're-negotiates' the terms of entry or pulls out altogether.

Would a Labour government in fact do any such thing? There are, to put it mildly, good grounds for doubting it.

Tories are in— what must left do now...?



True, Harold Wilson assures us that it would, but it is not so very long ago—1966—to be precise—that a Labour government headed by the same Harold Wilson applied for entry. And we have it on the authority of Mr Wilson's own chief negotiator, George Thomson, that the cabinet was prepared to accept

entry on substantially the same terms as those agreed to by the Heath government.

Of course, the parliamentary 'lefts' and their supporters will tell us that all has changed since then. The Labour Party conference has gone firmly on record and the decision not to allow Labour MPs to participate

in the fake 'parliament' of the EEC—a parliament that is not elected and has no real power in any case—proves that Labour will be as good as its word.

Only people with very short memories will swallow that tale. Remember, in 1964 the Labour party gained office with a firm pledge that, among other things, it would do away with British nuclear weapons ('the independent deterrent').

The British atomic and hydrogen bomb programme had been started by the previous Attlee Labour government. But then the 'left' gained one of its famous revolutionary victories and Harold assured us that the British bomb would go. It is still with us.

Fraud

And wasn't the Labour Party pledged to maintain full employment (unemployment doubled under the Wilson government), to build 500,000 houses a year (target never approached and fewer and fewer houses built each year after 1967), to 'care for the old, the sick and those in great need' (social services cut and massive extension of means-testing under the Wilson government), and many other things besides?

In any case the argument that the EEC is the main cause of rising prices, redundancies and unemployment, social service cuts and the rest is plainly fraudulent.

True, Value Added Tax and the Community Agricultural Policy will give another boost to inflation, but inflation was roaring ahead before entry into the EEC, and VAT was Tory policy quite apart from entry.

As the bosses' union, the CBI, pointed out three years ago, VAT would 'encourage investment because of the incentive effect of a shift from a tax on profits'. Unemployment topped the million mark last year before entry. For years governments, Labour and Tory alike, have been hacking away at welfare. The Industrial Relations Act had nothing to do with the EEC nor had the 'Fair Rents' swindle.

Of course the government will use the *excuse* of the EEC Commission to carry through unpopular policies it would attempt in any case. But excuse it will be.

The French government has repeatedly vetoed policies agreed by the Commission and by all other EEC governments. The Italian government, a member of the EEC since its inception in 1957, has only just decided to introduce VAT.

The fact is that, under the Rome Treaty, the EEC Commission cannot enforce any policy decision without the agreement of the Council of Ministers (representing the member governments), and the big governments—West Germany, France, Italy and now Britain—can effectively veto a decision they seriously object to.

certainly the EEC is an institution devoted to defending the interests of big business. But so too is the British government. The truth is that many of the parliamentary 'left wingers' are seizing on 'EEC bashing' as a diversion from the real job of fighting the Tories.

Parliamentary shadow boxing and paper victories over the Jenkins pro-marketeers will help, they hope, to create the impression that our pathetic Labour

left actually have... them. Just how serious is can be seen from Michael Foot, Eric... the rest are oppo... disciplinary action... Jenkins and his friend

Indeed Eric Heff... ly told readers of peoples' newspaper, that Michael Foot... Tribunes have gone way to speak in... in favour of pro-mar

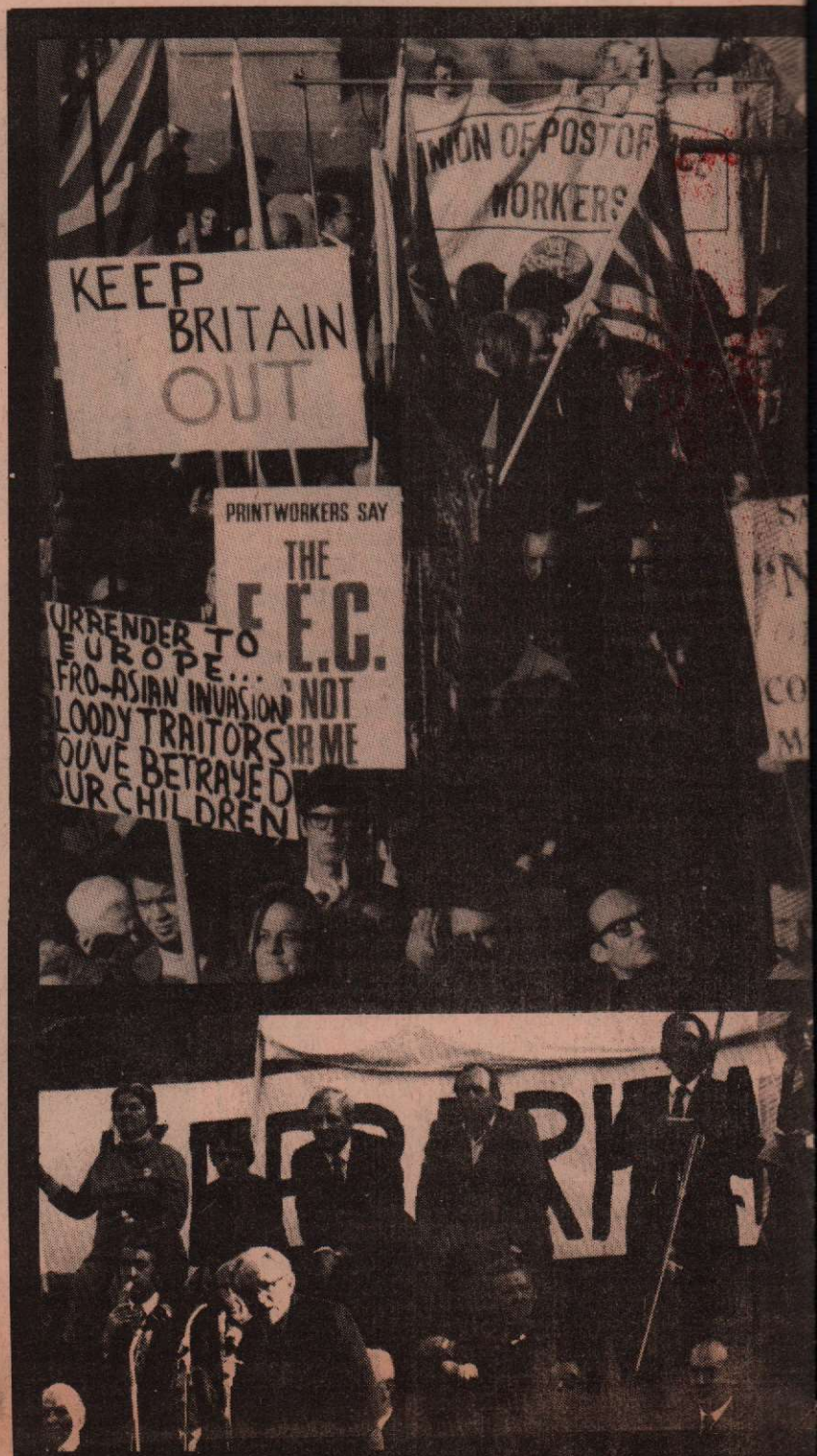
Hogw...

It goes without the arguments of L... wing, to the effect... is some sort of s... 'socialist internatio... that the job is to... it, are the purest ho...

The Common Ma... ly what its title... business arrangeme... different capitalist... It can no more be... than a wolf can be... protector of lambs.

The only real s... nationalism is base... against our own ru... the development... links with Europea... all workers on the... common struggle... ism.

We are oppo... Common Marke... to 'rationalise'... the expense... people, but no... to the reaction... that a 'sovereig... Britain is in a... better alternat... working class.



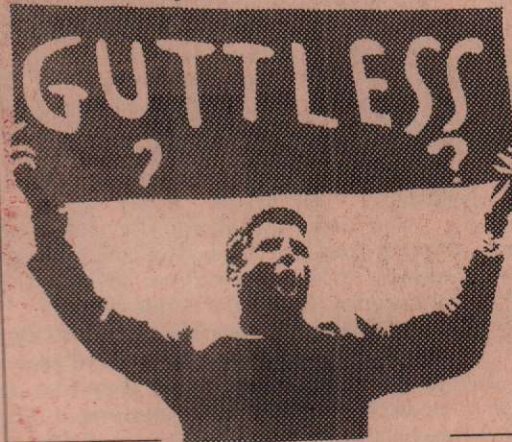
Some sections of the left opposed entry on nationalistic lines: top picture shows trade union and an openly racist placard on an anti-EEC march. Below: Michael Foot speaking at a Square rally, sharing the platform with Tories

NEW!

International Socialism goes monthly

International Socialism 54

Breadless Russia
Wilhelm Reich
Who Owns Britain
Anarchism
Seamen Betrayed



In the last 12 years International Socialism has built a reputation as the leading journal of marxist theory. Its move to monthly publication marks another major step forward by the International Socialists.

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Special analysis by Duncan Hallas

HARRY WICKS

Harry Wicks, International Socialist, had just returned from a 12-day speaking tour of South Wales when I spoke to him. It was a busman's holiday for Harry, a return to his old haunts as a Young Communist League organiser before the war.

His memories of the Welsh valleys go back to 1927 when he was a YCL delegate on the South Wales section of a great hunger march that converged on London from all over Britain.

Harry was booked to speak at the mass rally in Trafalgar Square but he got stage fright at the sight of tens of thousands of working people and couldn't speak.

He learned to overcome that fear and became one of the most effective speakers and educators on the left. Now, 67 years' young, a founder member of the Trotskyist movement in Britain, he has joined IS and put his vast experience of the labour movement at the disposal of today's militants and revolutionaries.

'I'm impressed by the outward, industrial orientation of IS—particularly of Socialist Worker. It's a break with the sectarian productions that have dogged the movement for so long. It reminds me forcibly of the Workers Weekly in the 1920s—a brilliant agitational paper.'

Harry had an early introduction to socialist ideas. In 1919, aged 14, he went to work on the railways at Battersea signal box in south London, just after the 1919 rail strike.

Forum

'The signalmen were old socialists. One had been in the Social Democratic Federation. The signal box became a forum for political debate with plate-men, linemen and others gathered in the box.'

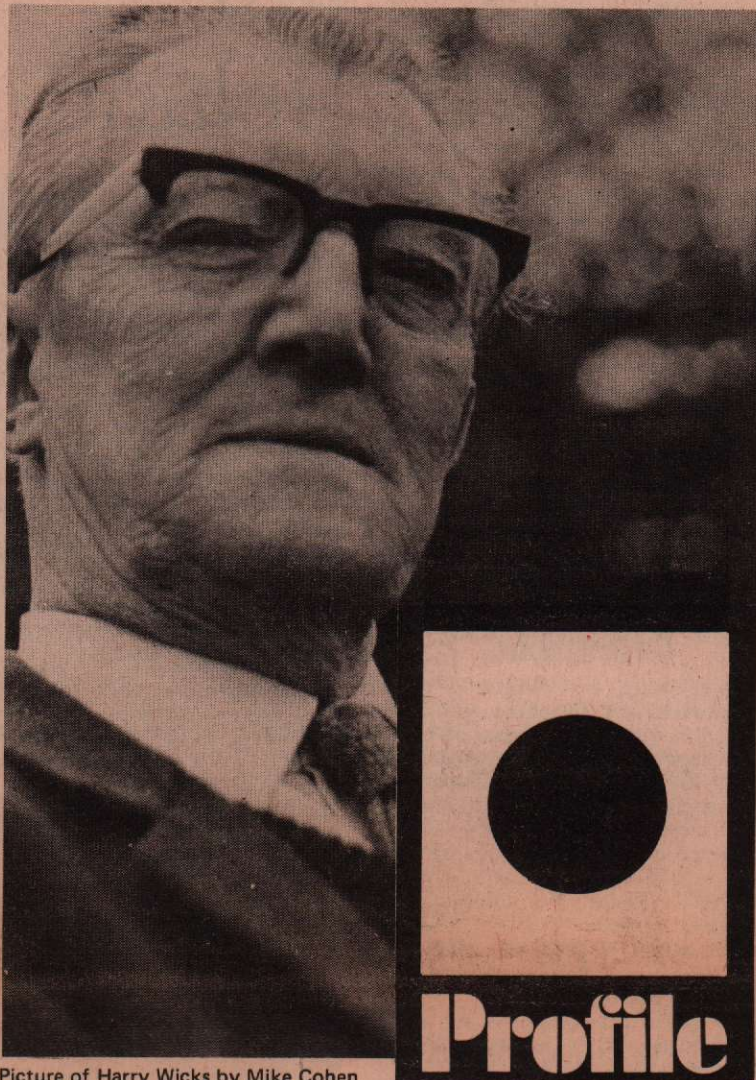
Harry threw himself into the Battersea labour movement. He joined the Daily Herald League, which sent delegates to the founding conference of the Communist Party of Great Britain.

Harry moved to Victoria Station. Just over the road were the offices of the newly-formed Labour Research Department. He met many of the leading LRD figures, including A E Reid, who held lessons in marxism in Battersea. This was the time of the fundamental struggle in the Russian party and Reid was the first to support Trotsky's position in Britain.

At a London Communist Party aggregate, he moved adoption of Trotsky's Left Opposition platform against the Stalin group in Russia. Harry supported him. A majority of the party members were against Reid and Wicks but were in favour of publishing Trotsky's side of the debate.

The party's industrial policy was based on building factory groups. Harry, a lone party member at Victoria Station, published a duplicated paper, the Victoria Signal, which appeared until after the General Strike.

'I was still at the station during the General Strike in 1926.



Picture of Harry Wicks by Mike Cohen

A small group of us met in the lavatory—the lavatory attendant supported the paper.

'Copies of the paper travelled up and down the line. It had big support and was bitterly attacked by Jimmy Thomas, the railway union leader. We were on the May Day march to Hyde Park behind the Victoria Signal banner when the news came through of the General Strike.'

The defeat of the strike brought a ferocious witchhunt of militants on the railways. Harry was moved to Deal in Kent and was forced to pay penance by cleaning out freight wagons.

He could not get to the YCL conference that year but his policies and record had sufficient support among the London delegates for them to demand that his name be included on the list for election to the national executive. He was duly elected and was pitchforked into the top ranks of the League.

Then in 1927 he was picked to spend three years studying at the International Lenin School in Moscow. It was a tremendous opportunity for a young revolutionary of 22 to see the land of the first workers' revolution.

But the Soviet Union of 1927 was a vastly different place to the Russia of the immediate post-revolution years. Lenin was dead, Stalin was perfecting his monstrous lie and slaughter machine on the bones of the revolution and Trotsky and his supporters, the representatives of Bolshevism and international revolution, were being hounded.

The lessons at the Lenin School began, fittingly, with a six-week crash 'induction course' on the evils of Trotskyism. It was just a few weeks before the 15th party conference voted to expel the Left Opposition.

The course ended with an obligatory resolution naming Trotsky as a 'counter-revolutionary'. An American delegate at the school moved an amendment to delete the caricature of 'counter-revolutionary'. Harry seconded. There were no other votes in favour.

When Harry came home he was called on to set up a secretariat of the YCL. He tried desperately to enthuse some life into the diminishing League but he fell out with the line of the Russian-based Young Communist International, its instructors from Moscow, and its impossible political demands.

Removed

This was the time of the lunatic 'third period' when, on orders from Stalin, all non-communists in the working-class movements were officially defined as 'social-fascists' and agents of the employers.

Harry was removed from the YCL leadership and went back to local work in the Battersea branch of the party. After a spell out of work he was given a job in the economics department of the Russian Oil Products trading agency where he discussed Trotskyism with a number of Russians working there. And it was here that he met Reg Groves, who was to become a life-long comrade.

'Reg showed me the American paper, the Militant, produced by Trotsky's supporters, and Trotsky's Spanish pamphlets. I was impressed. Reg started writing for the Militant—articles that reflected mass activity in Britain.'

'In 1931 Max Shachtman [a leading American Trotskyist] came to London and suggested we should publicly proclaim our

67 years' young—and still fighting for socialism

allegiance to Trotskyism.

'We refused—we only had four supporters!—and insisted on the need to build a base. But we started a paper, The Communist, that disseminated Trotsky's writings, particularly on Germany.'

The thirties were the time of mass unemployment and the great hunger marches. Harry was active in the National Unemployed Workers Movement and recalled vividly a massive demonstration of unemployed in Battersea in 1931 that coincided with the Invergordon mutiny in the navy.

'The town hall was ringed with mounted police. A deputation went to the council to demand action on unemployment. The Communist Party didn't participate—they were holding an education class at the time.'

In 1932 the 'Balham Group' of Trotskyists around Wicks and Groves were expelled from the Communist Party—Groves writes of this experience in the January issue of International Socialism journal.

The rest of the 1930s were devoted to putting down the fragile roots of the Trotskyist movement in Britain. That experience and the often intense and bitter in-fighting of small group politics, has left Harry Wicks with a powerful and healthy distaste for sectarianism.

'On the eve of the war we needed to work in a mass movement. We were active in launch-

ing the Socialist Anti-War Front which published an anti-war declaration. Then we entered the Independent Labour Party in an attempt to turn it in a revolutionary direction.'

But by the end of the war the leaders of the ILP were determined on merging with the Labour Party and the party began to disintegrate. For two decades, Harry went back to the grass roots of south London, and became, in his own humble words, 'a student of the movement', still talking and lecturing on marxism while remaining active in his union, NALGO, and on the London and Battersea trades council.

Now, as optimistic and active as ever, he has joined IS. 'There is a qualitative difference between the potential of the movement today and the 1920s and 30s. The left movement then was under the direct influence of Stalinism.'

'Revolutionaries today have a distinct image from reformism and Stalinism and that offers great possibilities. An independent movement that has assimilated the betrayals of the past and looks out towards the working class must be able to lay the basis for a revolutionary party.'

Armoury

In the 1920s the trade union leaders tried to accommodate the working-class movement to the requirements of the system, he says.

'Left leaders then and today are not wedded to a different ideology to the right wing. They are in the same camp. But today the left leaders face a far more militant challenge from the shop floor.'

'And unlike the revolutionaries of the early 1920s, today we have the armoury before the battle unfolds.'

To today's younger revolutionaries, who tend to look back at the pre-war era as 'the golden days', it is stimulating to hear from a tireless fighter like Harry Wicks that we are potentially more powerful to achieve the goal he and countless thousands have sought for 50 years and more.



FREDERICK ENGELS

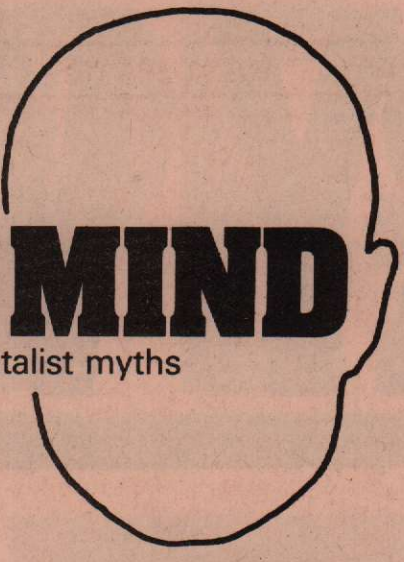
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Interview by Roger Protz

'Tsarist Russia has been described as "a prison house of peoples". It was an apt description of the Russia of the first Five year plan'



OUT OF YOUR MIND

Duncan Hallas on socialist ideas and capitalist myths

'STALIN'S greatness is a halo around the constellations of the firmament.' So wrote the Ukrainian poet Vetchova in 1935. A Russian contemporary countered with: 'Oh wise master, genius of geniuses! Sun of the workers, sun of the peasants, sun of the world!'

A delegate to the 19th congress of the Russian Communist Party in 1939 recounted: 'At that moment I saw our beloved father, Stalin, and I lost consciousness.'

Years later, in 1956, Stalin's successor Khrushchev was to tell the 20th party congress—for no congress had been held since 1939: 'The cult of the individual acquired such monstrous size chiefly because Stalin himself, using all conceivable methods, supported the glorification of his own person . . .'

'His Short Biography (1948) . . . is an expression of the most dissolute flattery, an example of making a man into a godhead, of transforming him into an infallible sage, "the greatest leader, sublime strategist of all times and nations". Finally no other words could be found with which to lift Stalin up to the heavens.'

Khrushchev knew what he was talking about. A member of Stalin's faction in the 1920s, then a senior official of the ruling group, he had been in the inner circle—Stalin's politburo—from 1938 and had contributed his own share of 'dissolute flattery' to the 'beloved leader and teacher'.

But how was it possible for Stalin to make men like Khrushchev grovel? The short answer is that they were terrified of him and with very good reason.

Apparatus

The Communist Party, as a workers' party, had been destroyed by the growth of a privileged bureaucracy and the destruction of the various oppositions during the period of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in the 1920s. This development had been possible because of the numerical and political weaknesses of the Russian working class and the isolation of the revolution.

As Trotsky wrote in 1932: 'The party as a self-controlling vanguard of the working class no longer exists. The party apparatus has been fused with the administration. The most important instrument of the general line within the party is the GPU [the police].'

But that is still some way from the unrestrained despotism of a single tyrant. The key to Stalin's personal dictatorship lies in the economic situation and the measures taken to deal with it.

The NEP ended in a new economic

Stalin, the 'beloved' dictator

crisis in 1928-9. The rich peasants were becoming more and more ambitious and aggressive and were withholding grain from the market (the 'grain strike') in order to push the government further to the right, to force more and more concessions to private farmers and capitalists.

The bureaucracy, which had resisted opposition demands for a more rapid industrialisation and a squeeze on the rich peasants in the name of peace and quiet, now found itself faced with the danger of a new famine in the towns.

Stalin changed course completely and swung the bureaucracy behind him. He had a little earlier derided the plan for the great Dnieper hydro-electric scheme as like 'a peasant buying a gramophone instead of a cow'. Now the scheme was to become the showpiece for the first Five Year Plan.

The oppositionists had been described as 'super-industrialisers'. Now Stalin adapted plans which far exceeded the most ambitious schemes of the most extravagant 'super-industrialisers'. With an output of pig iron of 3.5 million tons in 1928, Stalin now demanded: 'At all costs we must produce 17 million tons in 1932.'

As to the peasants, which the opposition had been denounced as 'underestimating', they were to be forced into collective farms in short order, and the rich peasants—the kulaks—were to be 'liquidated as a class'.

It was done. The industrialisation of Russia did leap forward. Of course the absurd target figures were not reached—pig iron output did not reach 17 million tons until 1941—but real and substantial progress was made.

It was made, just as in Britain a century earlier, at the expense of workers and peasants. Real wages were drastically reduced by a raging inflation coupled with a complete destruction of all trade union rights. Forced labour on a massive scale built canals, roads, dams. Mass discontent was met with iron repression.

In the countryside, as the Polish Communist Isaac Deutscher, who was an eye-witness, records: 'The overwhelming majority of the peasantry confronted the government with desperate opposition. Collectivisation degenerated into a military operation, a cruel civil war.'

Catastrophe

'Rebellious villages were surrounded by machine guns and forced to surrender. Masses of kulaks were deported to remote unpopulated lands in Siberia . . . In desperation they slaughtered their cattle, smashed implements and burned crops.'

Some idea of the scale of resistance and repression can be got from the livestock figures: '18 million horses were slaughtered. So were 30 million cattle, about 45 per cent of the total, and nearly 100 million or two-thirds of all sheep and goats.'

It was a catastrophe from which Russian agriculture has still not fully recovered.

Tsarist Russia had been described as 'a prison house of peoples'. It was an apt description of the Russia of the first Five Year Plan.

In the upper ranks of the bureaucracy itself, previously impeccable Stalinists like Syrtsov and Lominadze began to call for an easing of the police terror and breakneck industrialisation in order to moderate the seething discontent. They were removed from office.

But Stalin had seen the writing on the wall. If he was to continue in power then not only the workers and peasants but also the party-state bureaucracy itself must be terrorised. The seeds of the great purges were sown.

BOOKS

REVIEW

No book is an island

THE SOCIOLOGY OF LITERATURE, by Diana Laurenson and Alan Swingewood, Paladin, 50p.

THE 'sociology of literature' is a newly invented subject rapidly gaining a following in universities and colleges. This book's authors have grabbed the title doubtless in the hope of passing off this book as the manual for students of the subject.

It isn't. In fact it's hardly a book at all, but three long and only partly connected essays.

The sociology of literature as an area of study has a useful contribution to make. It also has great dangers. It is healthy because it insists that the writer is a person living in society and that all writing is a social art. Every work of art is in some way, however indirect, a comment on society, and there are no purely artistic judgments.

But there is a 'narrow gap' between explaining and explaining away, and a sociology of literature can all too easily fall into seeing literature as the product of a society, like the scum floating on the surface of the water.

Alan Swingewood reminds us that the sociology of literature has its origins with the 19th century French thinker Hippolyte Taine, an extreme conservative who devoted the second half of his life to digging up atrocity stories about the French Revolution. Taine claimed that all literature could be explained by the social situation in which it was produced, and gave special attention to racial factors.

For example, he believed that the history of English literature could be explained by the fact that Englishmen's staple diet was meat and ale.

Taine's view of social science was that it was an essentially conservative study. He wrote: 'Science engenders prudence, and detailed study diminishes the number of revolutionaries by diminishing the number of theoreticians.' His whole theory seeks to obscure the fact that every society centres on a struggle bet-

ween opposed social groups and that no writer can be neutral.

Laurenson and Swingewood make some bows in the direction of class analysis. Diana Laurenson reminds us that writers have to earn their living the same as everyone else, and that their life is shaped by how they do it. She has some interesting glimpses of the writer's life in the past, as in this picture of the 18th century writer by Walter Besant:

'Only the writer was to be seen all day long; he haunted the coffee houses, the eating houses, the taverns of Fleet Street and its neighbourhood. Alone among men he had no uniform, yet he could be recognised by his rags. Everybody knew the company of wits in the tavern; they were notoriously, horribly poor. Notoriously they had neither principles, nor honour, nor dignity: . . . the world saw very plainly that they had no independence but they were the servants of the miserably paid—and the hacks of the booksellers.'

Since Marx offers a better and keener analysis of modern society than anyone else, much sociology borrows from him, and the sociology of literature is no exception.

Alan Swingewood draws heavily on the works of the French scholar Lucien Goldmann. Goldmann saw himself as a marxist, and argued that different social groups see the world in different ways because of their different positions in society. Great works of literature are expression of these world-views. On this basis Goldmann produced studies of writers which, despite their difficulty, are well worth reading.

But Goldmann believed working-class revolution was not possible in his period. So marxism became for him just a superior method of analysis. Although his little book, Philosophy and the Human Sciences, is a brilliant demolition of the myth of a 'neutral' or 'impartial' social science, in the last resort he is more interested in interpreting the world than changing it.

But beneath all the analysis lies the crucial question of working-class revolution which alone can decide that our future be socialism instead of barbarism. Any so-called 'sociology' that avoids this question must be merely trivial. This is not to say that all good literature must be by workers, or even about workers. What it does mean is summed up by what Trotsky wrote to Partisan Review in 1938:

'Art cannot escape the crisis nor partition itself off. Art cannot save itself. It will rot away inevitably—as Grecian art rotted beneath the ruins of a culture founded on slavery—unless present-day society is able to rebuild itself. This task is essentially revolutionary in character. For these reasons the function of art in our epoch is determined by its relation to the revolution.'

IAN BIRCHALL

THE COUNTER-CULTURE: TRIPLE-DECK CONFUSION

OUTLAWS OF AMERICA, by Roger Lewis, Penguin, 40p.

THIS book is a passionate and politically committed report on the radical movement in America. Its gusto and real concern with revolutionary politics make it a vast improvement over both the dry aloof tone of academic writers on America and the incoherent frenzy of 'underground' stupidity.

Women's lib and male chauvinist piggery, black power, Woodstock, Vietnam, gay liberation, dope, the 'mystic impulse', communes, funky underground cartoon and graphic art, street fighting men, rock'n'roll music—it's all here, and what's more, Roger Lewis loves it all.

Now that's not a bad thing in itself—foreigners usually fall in love with America, just as Americans fall uncritically in love with English policemen. But that's no reason to write a book.

But even as a useful little handbook it is unsatisfactory: first because that's exactly what its author says it isn't, and second because useful little handbooks have to be accurate, and this one isn't that either.

They're not inaccuracies over addresses, or dates, or quotations, but they add up to a misleading overall picture of the spirit of the white underground both in America itself and in this country.

Roger Lewis' rosy enthusiasm slides over a good deal that needs criticising in 'the movement'. He can claim without any hesitancy or qualification that the underground press . . . emphasises individual involvement at every stage of production and escapes the alienation that comes with a rigid division of labour . . . the underground refuses to be dependent upon advertising and, usually, everybody who works for a paper helps to determine content and policy . . . The underground press is not publishing for

money . . . its economics are part of its overall philosophy, which is inherently anti-capitalist.'

Ho, ho, ho, might be a forgivable reaction.

All that would perhaps be fair enough as a statement of what the underground press ought to be like, but since the book claims to put the press in context, its author should have discovered and dealt with the vast credibility gap between how things should be and how they are.

The depressing and sordid truth is that in underground journalism, just as much as in 'straight' media, you can rise to the top of the pile if you're a hustler.

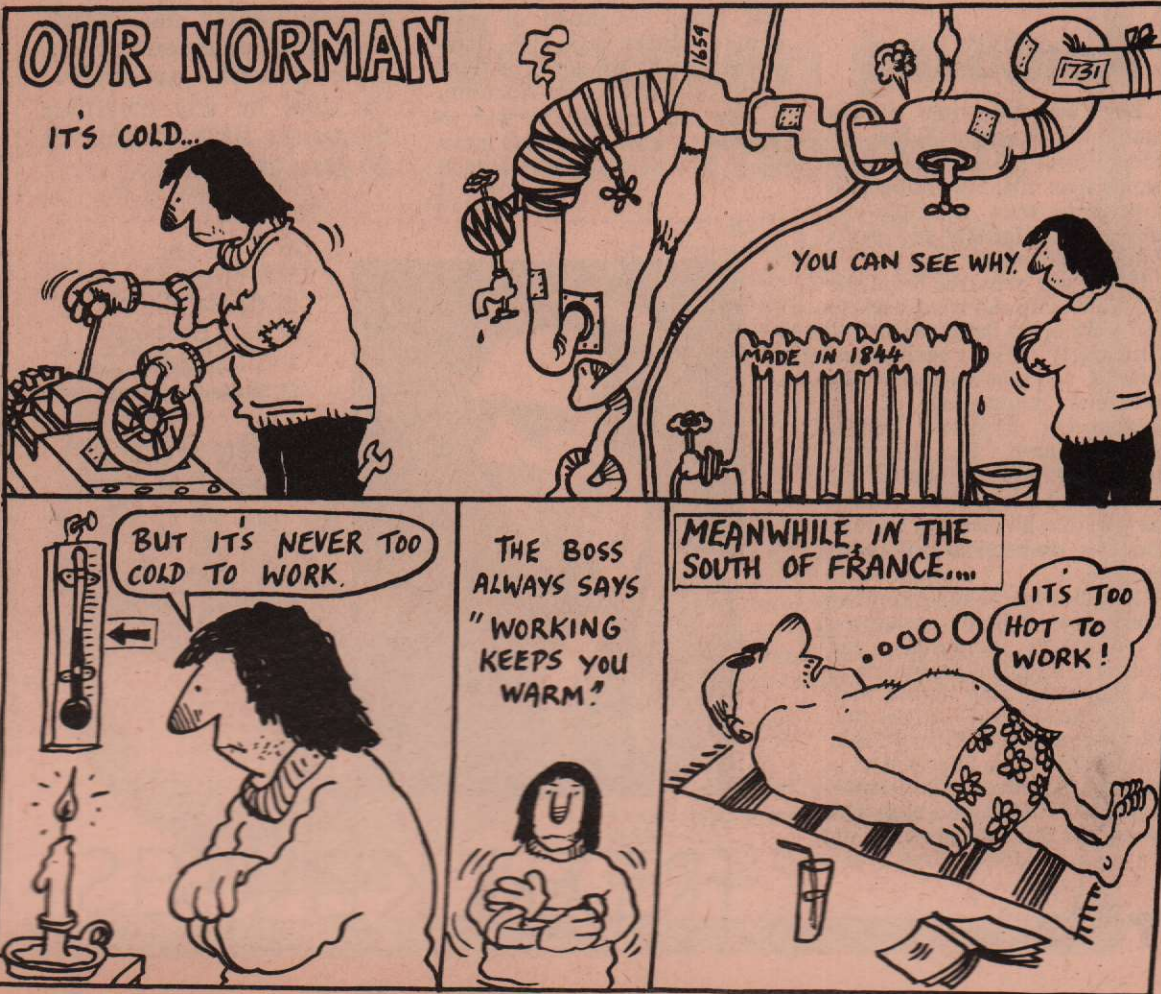
Even if the underground press did offer a living alternative reality to us all, Roger Lewis' starry-eyed approach would still seem dubious if we can't see where, in Nixon's America and Heath's Britain, all the energy and rebelliousness of the 'cultural revolution' has got us. In Britain the underground press gave people a whole new set of games to play, and most are getting tired of playing them; in America, where it has all been much more for real, a lot of people have been shot, beaten up, busted, drafted, jailed and disillusioned.

The people who've survived it all intact have only inherited a rather tatty collection of myths and collective dishonesties, and those are going to seem just as blatantly stupid to the next generation as the myths and dishonesties of, say, the Old Left, seem to us today.

The author signs the foreword of Outlaws of America: 'Roger Lewis, Carbondale, Illinois, April 1971, Ockbrook, Derbyshire, September 1967.'

It's not unfair to judge the relevance and importance of the things this book is about by asking: how much have conditions improved for the ordinary people of either Carbondale, Illinois, or Ockbrook, Derbyshire, since all this great multifarious flowering of counter-culture happened?

MICHAEL GRAY



Success for the Citizens

GLASGOW Citizens' Theatre has had many theatrical successes in its chequered history. They had the first production of Joe Egg, and notable among their many excellent productions of Bertolt Brecht was Arturo Ui. Their interpretation of this modern classic was highly praised at the Edinburgh Festival and in London.

But the Citizens, situated in the heart of Glasgow's Gorbals, has never really been able to attract a true cross-section of Glasgow's people. Despite attempts (The Clydesiders was one) through trades councils and trades unions, their audience has remained by and large middle class.

But for the Edinburgh Lyceum Theatre production of Willie Rough

the audience composition changed. For its two-week run there have been capacity houses, with trade unionists from all over the city clamouring for tickets.

The reasons for the play's success are not difficult to find. Willie Rough is set on Clydeside between 1914 and 1916 and traces the rise of Willie from naive yard worker to committed shop steward via strikes, clashes with scabs, and a term in jail for writing an alleged sedition article in a workers' paper. All this is set against the backdrop of Greenock during the First World War.

All the characters are true to life, as is the language. Fulton McKay and Roddy McMillan—as the foreman

who can't make up his mind whose side he's on—are outstanding.

But playwright Bill Bryden's politics leave something to be desired. Although there are references to rent strikes—which are particularly relevant just now—his character McGrath, the avowed revolutionary who in prison tells Rough that he is out for a soft job in the union, rings false.

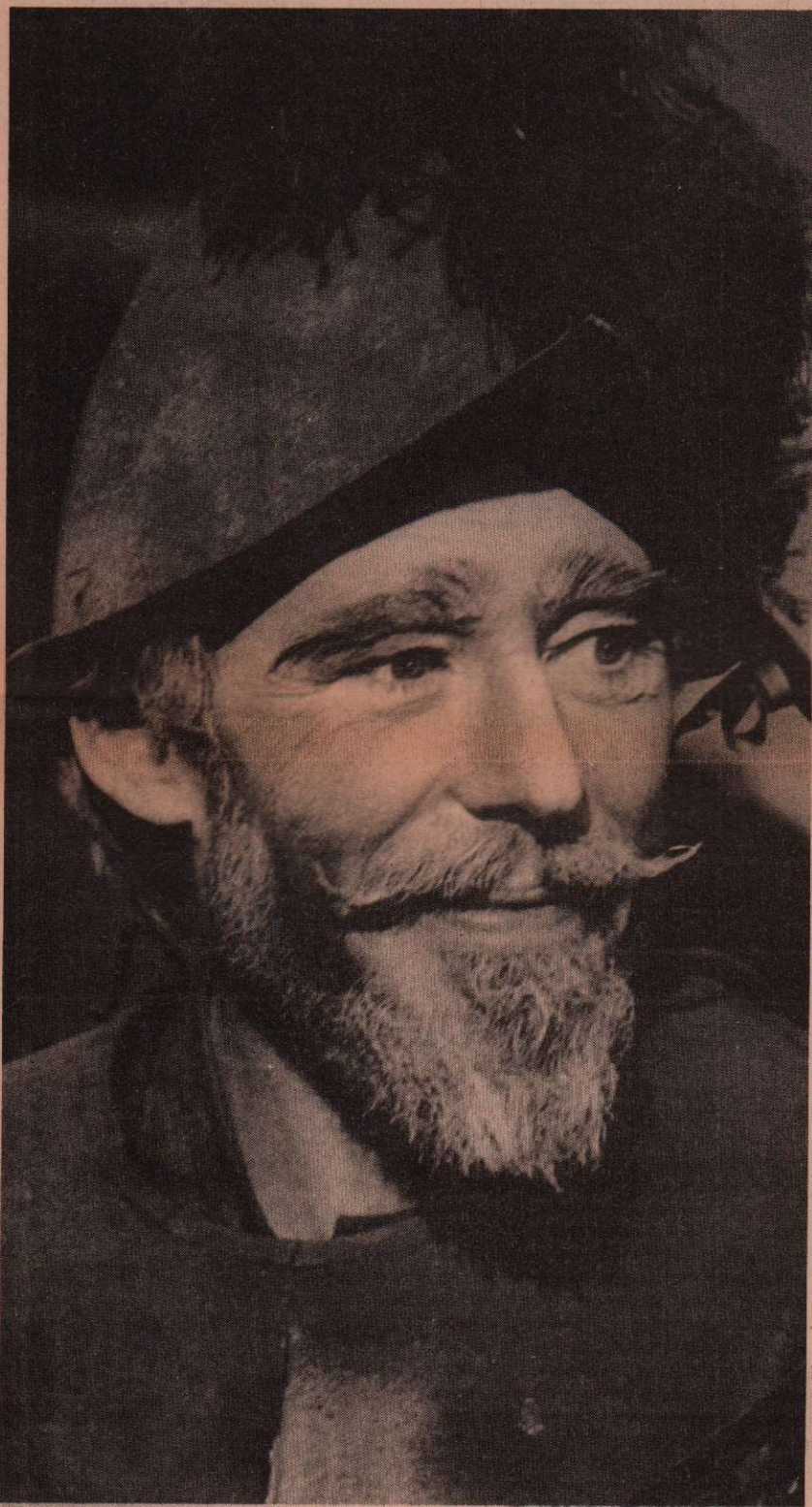
Bryden also gives Willie Rough a closing speech indicating his distrust of 'politics' and emphasising individual activity.

Political criticisms apart, the play is a huge success. Although it may be a little difficult for those south of the border to understand fully the

West of Scotland dialect used throughout, this is a play not to be missed by socialists. It is due for a short run in London's Shaw Theatre from 15 January.

From this experience the Citizens' Theatre should learn that to attract workers they must regularly put on plays that have a real working-class base. Their previous attempt, The Clydesiders, was a success. Willie Rough has furthered this success. Now Citizens should not lose the opportunity to keep interested the workers they have attracted.

George Kelly



QUIXOTE: TILTING IN EVERY DIRECTION

MAN OF LA MANCHA is a film about a man so horrified by the squalor, misery and degradation of the world around him that he seeks to channel his own frustration through a great work of art.

It will be a work of art about a man driven out of his mind by the squalor, misery and degradation of the world around him, who resorts to a fantasy world where ideas of chivalry have some meaning, where the enemy can be a monster, or an enchanter, not just degradation and squalor.

The man is Cervantes, the monster a windmill, the enchanter his future son-in-law.

The film is about Don Quixote. What the portly Victorian John Bull is to Britain, what the grasping and wily Uncle Sam is to the USA, so Don Quixote, endlessly chasing imaginary enemies to avoid the horror of the real ones, is to Spain.

From this brilliant and harrowing story comes, oddly, a Hollywood musical. And it is not a total disaster.

On stage Man of La Mancha was a big hit on Broadway and a moderate flop in London. Not that that affects most people anyway. The number who get to the West End to see anything except traffic jams are pretty few.

BIZARRE

As a screen musical it could get a pretty big audience. After all, old ladies proudly announce their 94th visit to The Sound of Music and the sound track of that terrifying and appalling film has outsold any other LP in the past six years. So maybe this one will be similarly successful... but probably not. Principally because of the music.

What is odd about it is the way that it combines about three different

traditions. Firstly the original Spanish story, secondly aspects of European 'art' films of the past 20 years, and lastly the American musical. There is a 'Climb every Mountain' song, a 'Gee Officer Krupke' song, and of course 'Rain in Spain' can hardly be far away.

A further bizarre note is that the cast is largely composed of veterans from Italian westerns, the Royal Shakespeare Company and Z Cars, all filmed in Rome with Peter O'Toole doing one of his specialities, the agonised aristocrat (Cervantes/Don Quixote), and Sophia Loren in one of hers, a moody magnificent serving wench.

But the story line is so good that one's attention, while not riveted, is largely held. The film reminds one of similar themes—but in much better films, specifically those of the great Spanish director, Luis Bunuel.

Over a period of 40 years Bunuel has tirelessly and brilliantly dissected European society, and particularly Spain. Where Bunuel follows every argument through, examines and makes interesting every detail and emerges with totally revolutionary films, Man of La Mancha plays with arguments, cheapens them and uses sentiment to try to duck the issues.

OK, so it's a musical, but that doesn't imply that the film has to be like that. Had it taken the subject

seriously it could have been a more serious (and funnier) film. As it is, because it is dealing with a great work of art, the novel Don Quixote, and the life of its author, Cervantes, it can never quite destroy the story's impact.

One of Bunuel's most famous films is Nazarin, which is about a latter-day Christ's attempts to do good and change the world. The results are catastrophic. A group of robbers are prevailed upon to stop their murder, rape and pillage for a few minutes by force of Nazarin's example, yet when he has passed down the road they turn on each other with new fervour.

In Tristana an old man who has spent his life proclaiming his belief in some kind of better world winds up lumbered with the Catholic church and the landowners he had professed to hate.

O'Toole's Don Quixote is in the same place, Spain, and here it is Sophia Loren who becomes transformed by his simple faith, and who winds up in the middle of nowhere, victim of a gang-bang. Cue for a song, and not a very good one.

RITUAL

The crucial difference between Bunuel and most of Hollywood (here in the shape of director Arthur Hiller) is that Hollywood can't bear to look reality in the face, and Bunuel can't bear to look away.

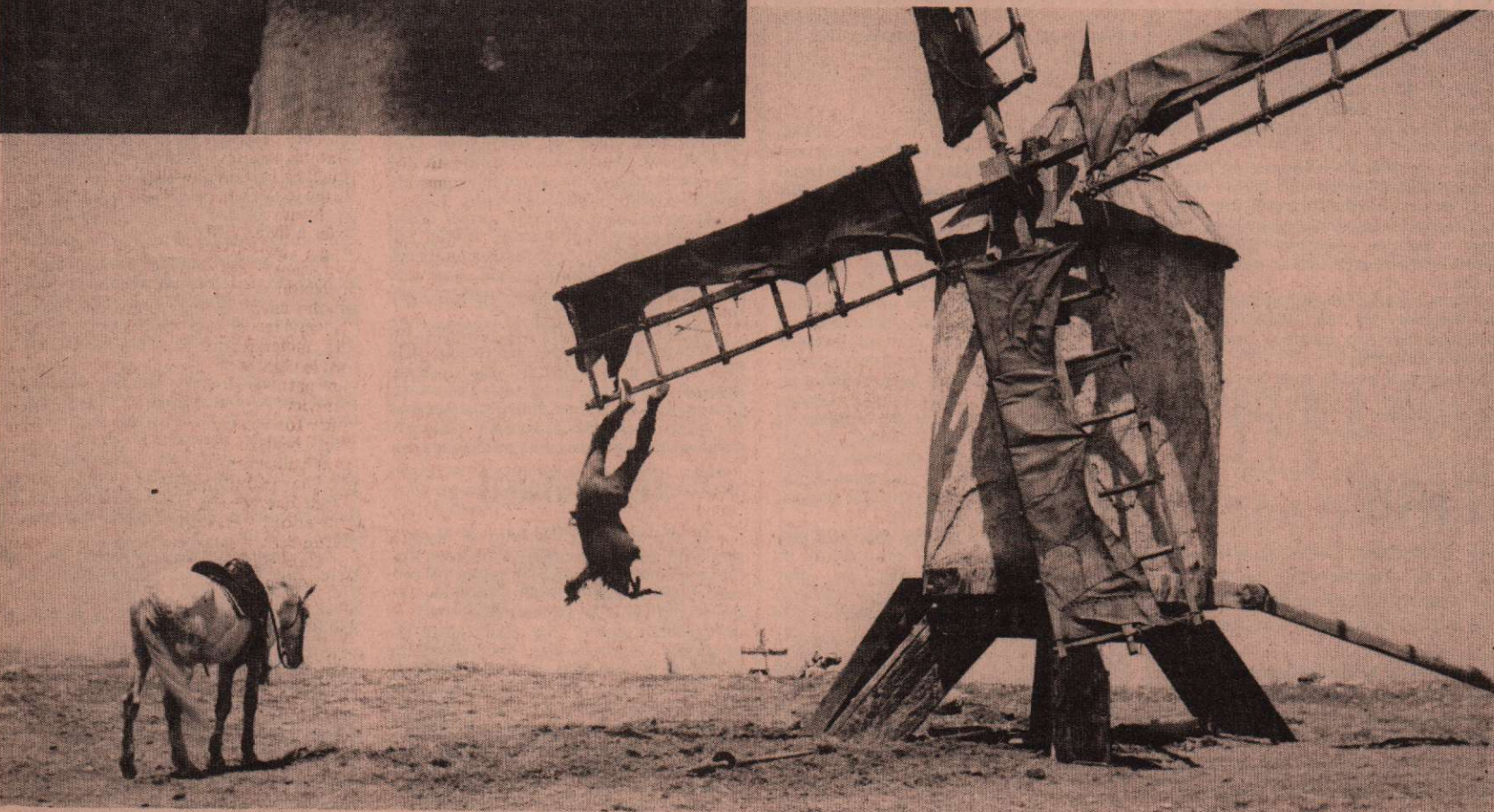
Much of Bunuel's work is concerned with the Catholic church. He can't look at it without being fascinated by its ritual, which he depicts so humorously and yet so clinically that one sees it both as totally evil and as an integral part of corrupt societies. Hollywood always winds up with some version of the honest nun out in the West taming wild man and wild nature with a serene smile and a trowel.

In Man of La Mancha Ian Richardson does a male version, seeing virtue through a haze of vaseline over the lens, but failing to do anything about it through his line up with the in-it-for-the-money Quixote family.

Ultimately the subject matter provides the film with what virtue it has. Dry, parched Spain, condemned to centuries of repression and squalor, with Quixote hanging on to fossilised ideals of knighthood in a wasteland.

It goes oddly with the last gasps of the American musical, and while it compares favourably with most of the later attempts in the field, you'd still be better off with Tristana, Nazarin or Viridiana, even if they lack O'Toole's version of the 'Impossible Dream'.

Nigel Fountain



Peter O'Toole as Don Quixote (top). His imaginary combat with a windmill—which he takes to be a giant—ends in defeat

LETTERS

Expose fascists —dangerous fifth column for bosses

YOUR RECENT leading article on the dangers of fascism was more than timely. The poison is affecting sections of the working class who were formerly considered militant trade unionists.

The forces rallying behind the National Front are everything which is hostile to socialist, working-class aims. They exploit fears and prejudices, blaming all social ills on to coloured immigrants.

These neo-fascists hide their evil designs behind the Union Jack, pretending to be the only genuine defenders of popular British interests.

The National Front and their rag-bag supporters are in fact apeing foreign examples like German Nazism and the military fascism now existing in many different countries in the world. Their patriotism is phoney—they are really the tools of right-wing circles inside the capitalist class who hate not only socialism but all forms of liberal rights of working people.

As in Nazi Germany, they want to destroy trade unionism and political expressions which they think are hindering their drive for all-out super-profits. Like the German capitalist bosses before them, they finance and support fascists, hoping they will mislead the masses with racialist and nationalist propaganda in order to put the working class in chains.

The main job of the International Socialists is to expose day by day the fifth column role of British fascism. When their placards say 'Britain for the British' ours must say 'Britain for the workers'. When they use anti-semitic slogans, ours must say 'Remember the Nazi gas chambers and concentration camps'.

We cannot expect help from the Labour leaders who by their anti-working-class policies have laid the roots for the growth of right-wing extremism. They keep silent instead of warning the workers of the fascist danger.

Fascists can count on the sympathy and direct help of state organs and leading military circles who consider the South African and Rhodesian rulers as their bosom friends and who hate the guts of striking workers and socialists. The danger is real—let us act!—E RADCLIFFE, Huddersfield.

Goad

YOUR PRESS COLUMNIST Spike should spike his guns before he fires them. He writes good lefty knockabout stuff, but it scarcely amounts to a marxist analysis and hence invariably mystifies rather than clarifies the postures of the media.

To argue, as Spike on 16 December, that the press treated Hugh Scanlon as the union's ring-leader in the Goad affair because their view of a union's structure is determined by the autocratic regime that exists on newspapers themselves is nonsense.

We can be absolutely certain that if Scanlon had shown himself to be unequivocally to the right of the AUEW's membership (as opposed to his predictable vacillation and failure to lead the opposition to the NIRC), the press would have immediately celebrated a new hero.

Neither did the press mindlessly apply the David v Goliath formula, as Spike claims. Those with their finger on the pulse of the ruling class recognised from the start that eccentrics like Goad would upset the state's plan to avoid another head on collision with organised labour.

The media is part of the ideological arm of the state. In the main, press and television move with precision according to the requirements of any particular situation or conjuncture. Psychological or impressionistic explanations of their interventions in the class struggle are hopelessly unscientific and misleading.—ALICE MATTHEWS, London N6.

BRILLIANT SATIRE

IN THE AFTERMATH of Christmas, Bloody Christmas, I want to write and congratulate the author of Vic Whittington, your 'pantomime', on a quite brilliant piece of satire. And in case this sounds patronising I would add that I wish I had written it myself—which from one author to another you can't say fairer.

I don't know whether Socialist Worker has been editorially reorganised lately, but I find it nowadays much improved from when I first knew it a couple of years ago. I like the new names I find in the paper immensely (new anyhow to me coming back to the paper recently).

That was a nice piece about the parlour pinks' Queen Mum. I knew Jennie Lee in the old Independent Labour Party days of the 1930s when she was the bonnie Lancashire Lassie, and ever so impassioned (not arf!).—ETHEL MANNIN, London SW10.

Fight for steel jobs

MICHAEL FOOT (16 December) doesn't like my saying that neither he nor the BISAKTA leadership has anything to offer the Ebbw Vale workers faced with losing 5000 jobs. He says that the Labour Party is 'fighting' to save jobs.

The simple truth is that the Labour Party, which has received the undivided loyalty of the people of Ebbw Vale, is not prepared to give undivided loyalty in return. It is 'fighting' the British Steel Corporation's redundancies just as it is 'fighting' the Tories' rent increases: it is opposing in words and co-operating in practice. Tenants throughout South Wales could tell Michael Foot a story about the willingness of the Labour Party to fight.

In my article I mentioned Michael Foot's idea that the Ebbw Vale workers should set up a 'scrutiny committee' to look into the corporation's economic calculations with a view to making alternative recommendations. I quoted a member of the works council who said, quite correctly, that the idea is 'bunkum'.

The point is that you must choose between the interests of the British Steel Corporation and the interests of Ebbw Vale. However much Michael Foot may try, you cannot serve two masters at once.

Michael Foot thinks I underestimated the powers of the 'scrutiny committee' because I forgot to mention that it can 'recruit independent investigators'. He was also upset by my pointing out that he cannot make up his mind which side of the fence he is on. His own nonsensical talk of 'independent' people makes it evident that he has even forgotten that a fence exists.

Michael Foot claims to be in favour of 'industrial democracy' but he says that 'internal dispute' is the 'worse danger' faced by Ebbw Vale. It is natural that he should be against dispute when he is being criticised, but what he says is not at all true.

The worst danger faced by the workers of Ebbw Vale is that, like lambs to the slaughter, they will follow leaders who can offer nothing but vacillation, compromise and defeat.—COLWYN WILLIAMSON, Swansea.

Why gay

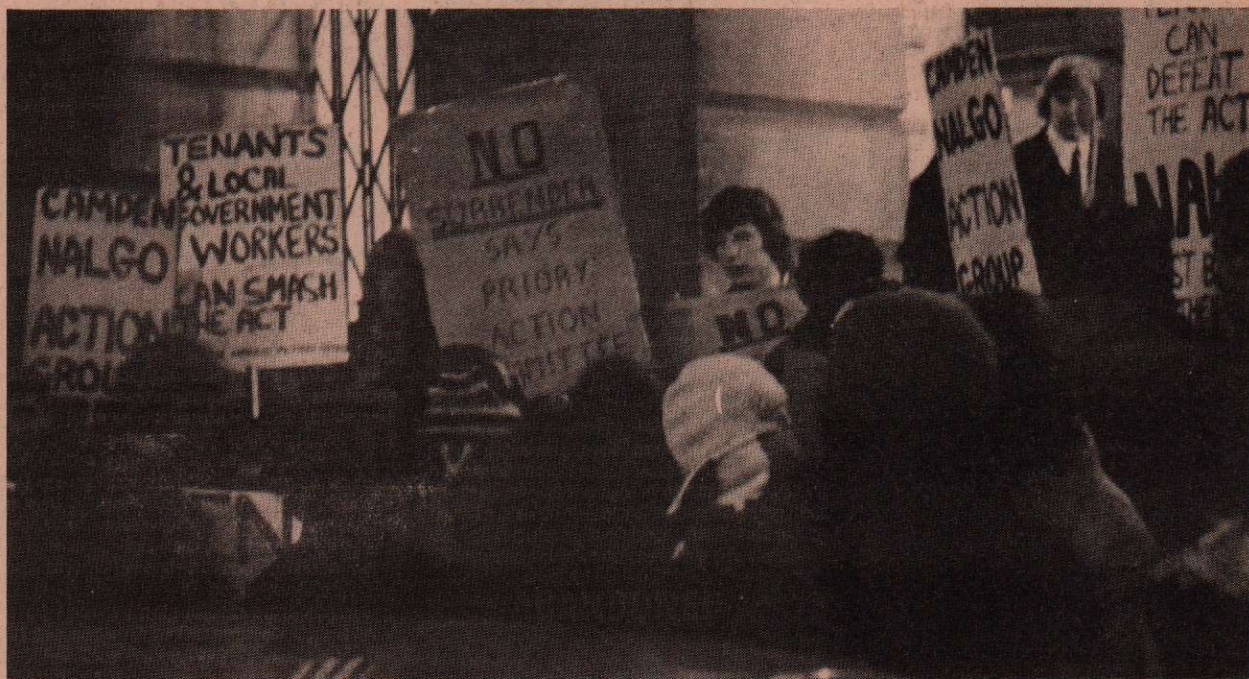
ROLAND MULDOON (23 December) asks why do homosexuals call themselves 'Gay'? The use of the word gay for homosexuals started in the United States. It is used because all other words are negative and insulting.

It is important for all oppressed people to begin to understand and define themselves. To do this they have to throw off the stereotypes imposed upon them. The 'nigger' had to become Black and Beautiful. The 'queer' had to become Gay and Good.

Only by taking control of the way we see ourselves can we shake off the oppression that eats into our confidence, pride and self-respect.

Homosexual people must be called gay rather than bent or queer, because that's what we choose to call ourselves.—DON MILLIGAN, Lancaster.

CAMDEN STILL SAYS 'NO' TO RENT ROBBERY



Tenants and trade unionists demonstrating at the last meeting of Camden council

AGAINST all the odds and predictions, the Labour Council in Camden, one of the largest boroughs in London with 225,000 people, is continuing to defy the government's Housing Finance Act.

by Paul Foot

On 11 December the council, by a majority of four—the same majority as last August when implementation was first discussed—voted down a Tory motion to co-operate with the government and increase rents.

All the facts and all the arguments are on the side of the majority. The scandal of housing in Camden is interest charges on money borrowed for house building.

The figures speak for themselves:

	RENTS COLLECTED	INTEREST PAID
1970	2,853,145	4,088,270
1971	3,141,931	4,698,359
1972	3,686,506	4,539,930
	9,681,582	13,346,559

Every year, the accumulated gap between the money paid to moneylenders and the money collected in rents grows wider and wider.

The government's proposals in their Rent Act are no more than a crude robbery of Camden tenants in the interests of moneylenders and property speculators.

GLOOM

So it is in every other borough. Camden has stood out alone in London and almost alone in England because of the traditional struggle against high council rents in the borough, which culminated in the great St Pancras rent strike in 1960.

Camden Labour councillors backed by marginally more active and left-wing Labour parties than elsewhere in London are prepared to stand up for principle more readily than in other areas. Yet the mood even among the most militant Camden councillors is one of gloom and pessimism.

Personal pressure has been building up against many councillors. George Trevelyan, who works for the Ministry of Agriculture, has been warned by his department that if he continues to defy the law, his job will be in jeopardy. He voted against implementation last August, but did not vote in December.

The Law Society has discussed the possibility of striking off any solicitor on the council who votes for non-implementation. There are four solicitors on Camden Council, three of whom have voted for implementation.

St Pancras' Labour MP, Jock Stallard, has supported implementation and throughout the controversy the Labour Group has allowed complete 'freedom of conscience' to councillors who vote with the Tories on this issue.

Worries about personal financial loss have been increased by the decision of the Labour Party National Executive (by 15 votes to five) to overturn last year's conference decision which committed the

next Labour government to reimburse Labour councillors surcharged for not implementing the Rent Act.

Council leader, Mrs Millie Miller and deputy leader Peter Best are openly discussing among colleagues ways and means of getting themselves 'off the hook'. There is talk of going to court to force the government to send in its Housing Commissioner and of holding by-elections to 'assess support' in the borough.

Even the 'hawks' on the council have been disturbed by the government's threat to cut their subsidies for Camden housing—which would mean a 25 per cent rise in rates.

'Unless we can come up with some way of beating this subsidy cut,' says Phil Turner, a councillor and chairman of the Camden Action Committee which is fighting the Act, 'we are lost'.

The government has skillfully written the law to make martyrdom difficult. If the subsidy is cut, Camden councillors will have to charge their ratepayers 25 per cent more. If they refuse to pay the interest charges, they will not get the money to build more houses.

If the rents are not increased, the District Auditor can declare the present levels 'unreasonable' and disqualify the councillors for five years.

All this deludes councillors into the view that the 'only thing left' is to implement the Act, raise the rents, and hope tenants will realise that it is all the Tories' fault.

The truth is, however, that the government can be fought, however cleverly they draw up their laws. It is possible for councillors to refuse to pay the interest charges and to challenge the District Auditor's disqualification.

At some stage, probably sooner rather than later, as the dockers found last summer, a policy of deliberate confrontation with the government will come into conflict with the 'free market' and therefore with the courts.

In such a confrontation, however, the councillors will need one asset which they have tended to ignore: the militant support of the mass of tenants. The crucial flaw in the councillors' brave stand against the government has been their failure to develop and maintain rank and file support.

ABANDONED

All the emphasis has been on negotiation with the government in the hope that the government will expose itself in the process. The negotiations, backed by threats of non-implementation, have so far gained a paltry 15p reduction in the proposed £1-a-week rise. Meanwhile, the hard slog of building up tenants' support for the anti-government fight has been almost abandoned.

Brian Loughran, one of the toughest 'hawks' among the Camden Labour group, says that there is still a substantial body of Labour councillors prepared to act as a 'kamikaze squad' against the Tory government. He sees January as a 'month of mass agitation in the borough'.

'We will plaster the borough with posters,' he says, 'and with leaflets directed against the District Auditor. We have plans for a huge demonstration on 7 January. We have written to the North London district of the AUEW and the miners' union asking for their support. We hope the TUC will threaten to break off their talks with the government if the government picks us off.'

Loughran is active with Phil Turner on the Camden Action Committee and criticises the International Socialists, who, he says 'have not been notable for their presence on the committee.'

Leonora Kane, a member of IS who is a delegate from the Agar Grove estate to the Camden Federation of Tenants Associations, says that IS have sent delegates to the Action Committee, but that the Action Committee has proved to be 'little more than a paper organisation'.

Evelyn Barker, another IS member active in tenants work, explained: 'We've concentrated almost all our work on the estates. We've gone round on the knocker, warning people about the Act, encouraging them to join their local tenants' associations and the Camden Federation of Tenants' Associations and to fight inside them for defying the Act.'

APATHY

'Some of the estates, especially the newer ones where there is no hope of rebates for almost anyone, are militant and ready to fight. Others, especially the Regents Park Estate, which was at the centre of the 1960 rent strike, are apathetic. People there remember too easily that the Labour Party sold them down the river when they were re-elected after the strike in 1962.'

'Everywhere there is a great gap between the tenants and the town hall. You can't bridge that gap by one brave gesture.'

There is in Camden a real base for mobilisation of tenants' resistance. There are 20 associations affiliated to the Camden Federation, and at least nine of them have already organised mass support for a partial rent strike.

In a ballot held by the Ainsworth Estate Tenants' Association, 70 per cent of tenants voted to withhold any rent increase and to support the council's stand.

Bill Budd, chairman of the association and an executive member of the Camden Trades Council (he is also chairman of his local branch of the post office engineering union) told me:

'All praise to the councillors in their stand, but the fight should be fought with 100 per cent union support and every tenant, council and private, should be involved in the fight.'

There is no substitute for the mobilisation of the people most affected by the Housing Act, the tenants.

The International Socialists will be supporting the Labour council at Camden at its demonstration on Sunday and as long as it continues to defy the government's Rent Act. At the same time, IS political activity will continue where it has always been—in the rank and file of the working class movement.

Councillors betray rents struggle

GLASGOW:—The City Council finally voted to implement the Tory Housing Finance Act just before Christmas.

The end of three months of defiance came when 14 more Labour councillors went over to the Tories. They joined the 19 who had been voting for the rent increases in the earlier debates, and the motion to implement had a comfortable 58 to 41 majority.

Two of the leading opponents at previous council meetings, Councillors Dynes and Shaw, took on the job of moving for implementation. Dynes claimed that now a quarter session order had been issued instructing them to put up the rents, they had come to the end of their power to resist the Act. In previous speeches he had made much of his readiness and that of other councillors to risk jail and fines in the struggle. This was now water under the bridge.

The Reverend Jeffrey Shaw, a councillor with a reputation as an honest man, still had an 'intense hatred of the Act, which will bring considerable hardship to the city', he said. But because it would be hypocritical for the leaders of the Labour group to ask other councillors to place themselves in danger of fines of £500 or £1000 or even imprisonment, he too said the Act must now be pushed through.

Abandoned

He was now interested in ensuring that 100 per cent of those eligible for rebates, a tiny proportion of Glasgow's 150,000 council tenants, would claim it.

In complete contrast to these men of principle stand the Labour and Communist councillors of Clydebank.

This small adjoining burgh to Glasgow is beginning to look like Scotland's Clay Cross. Councillors and trade unionists did not simply wait for the government's inquiry to take place. They mobilised and demonstrated so effectively in the hall where the inquiry was taking place that the proceedings were abandoned after only a few minutes.

So, with the score 1-0 in favour of the tenants of Clydebank, the ball is back in the Tory government's court. They are certain to use the same legal steps as in Glasgow.

Whichever way the Clydebank councillors then vote, the key to successful resistance is the same—the organisation of militant, active tenants' associations ready for complete rent strikes if rents are put up, and the preparation of workers in local factories for strike action to defend any councillors or tenants threatened with legal action. These are also the only paths now open to tenants of any of the Scottish local authorities which have now given up resistance.

SITE BOSSES WAGE WAR ON BUILDERS

LONDON'S building employers chose the Friday before Christmas to resume their guerrilla war against trade unionism in the city's construction industry.

Once again their key target is trade union organisation on Cubitt's World's End council housing contract in Chelsea.

The purpose of the operation is not necessarily to smash union organisation on the site completely. By continuously provoking disputes and strikes the employers hope to instil into as many building workers as possible the idea that working on a well-organised site means being on

by SW reporter

strike most of the time.

On the Friday before Christmas three bricklayers and two brickies' labourers were told that they would be sacked at the end of the first full week of the New Year. Four of the five are union representatives on site and the fifth is readily identifiable as an activist since he has stayed solid throughout the many strikes and other disputes that the employers have forced on the men at World's End.

In a pitiful attempt to cover up

this act of victimisation, sub-contractor Mark Prince again gave 'low productivity' as grounds for the sackings.

This latest sacking move came only eight working days after the reinstatement of John Fontaine, the brickies' steward sacked for low productivity, had ended a strike of World's End bricklayers. A conciliation panel found that there were no grounds for sacking Fontaine.

It seems likely that a conciliation panel might again order reinstatement

and a return to work. But even so the employers will have had some success in trying to wear down the men. This would be very useful in helping the employers to break the agreement they were forced to give guaranteeing Lou Lewis, a leading militant in the industry who has been blacklisted since 1967, priority of employment.

UCATT, the building workers' union, which organises virtually all the men on the site, seems intent on playing the situation strictly by procedure when what is needed is a determined and concerted effort by all its members on major London sites to put an end to this instance of employers' gangsterism.



MICHELLE: pleaded not guilty

Political jail sentence for Michelle

MICHELLE O'CALLAGHAN, who was tried at the Old Bailey just before Christmas accused of having explosives, has been jailed for 18 months. The all-male jury was out for 4½ hours before returning a 10-2 majority verdict.

So Michelle, who is 22, has joined the growing number of people behind the bars of British jails for political reasons. 'This is a criminal trial based on criminal charges,' claimed the judge in his summing up. But it hadn't looked like that.

Michelle's letters, her politics, her books, her friends, had all been roped in to convince the jury of her guilt.

PAY WALK-OUT

BIRMINGHAM:—Women workers in the pump section of SU Carburettors—part of the British Leyland Combine—walked out on Friday when they found that their £8 Christmas holiday pay had been docked.

Management decided to enforce the new engineering industry agreement that only allowed work to stop three hours early before Christmas. The women had ignored this ruling and gone ahead with their party. The walk-out was backed by the rest of the Transport Union members.

Telephonists walk-out wins inquiry

LONDON:—Most of the men at the Garrick international telephone exchange walked out on Wednesday last week after management failed to take adequate precautions following a bomb threat.

The threat was made at 6pm, but the men were not told of it for 10 minutes, and then the exchange was only cleared for a few minutes without a proper search. When the men refused to accept this, the acting chief supervisor threatened to discipline them.

The exchange has a long history of intimidation by the management. When the workers met the next night, they decided to stay out until a full joint inquiry into relationships within the exchange was held.

They contacted the headquarters of their union, the Post Office Workers' Union, but they were told by the assistant general secretary, Norman Stagg, to return to work. They ignored this instruction, and on the Sunday night were backed by a 1½-hour meeting during work-time by other telephonists at the Wood Street exchange.

Their branch secretary and chairman were called to see the union general secretary, Tom Jackson, the next day. He told them to return to work, but when it became clear that no-one would listen, he eventually contacted management—who then agreed to the request for a joint management-union inquiry, including representatives from the men's branch.

Equal freeze

THE government has at last made it clear that the wage freeze is to hit equal pay negotiations and agreements. It has been invoked against a recent settlement between the print unions and the British Paper Bag Federation which would have given four increases, in December 1972, December 1973, September 1974 and September 1975, to bring the women's basic rate up to that of the men.

The claim covered 15,000 women who at the moment get 76 per cent of the rate for a man doing the same work. Even according to the government's own statistics in the recent Equal Pay report this is particularly bad.

Why Scottish stewards failed the AUEW

by Steve Jefferys

SOCIALISTS and active trade unionists are rightly interested in why there were no big pre-Christmas strikes in the West of Scotland against the £50,000 fine on the engineering union.

What happened was this. The day after the fine was imposed James Airlie and other leading West of Scotland shop stewards failed to use the Glasgow district shop stewards quarterly meeting to launch a strike call. This failure meant it was impossible to organise token stoppages over the next few days.

The earliest that token strikes could then take place was in the week before Christmas, the most sensitive week for Scottish workers because during it they earn their New Year's holiday pay.

By itself this delay would not have accounted for much. Two large factories, Weirs of Cathcart and Chrysler at Linwood, held meetings and voted for a 24-hour stoppage. Other smaller factories followed, including Standard Telephones of East Kilbride and John Brown Engineering of Clydebank, voting the day before the strike was due. The stoppage in Dundee on Wednesday 20 December was nearly 100 per cent.

But another factor entered the situation. There is unfortunately no other way of describing this than in terms of the lack of fight shown by many of the Communist Party senior shop stewards in the area. Despite decisions committing the West of Scotland Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions to immediate action in the event of the use of the Industrial Relations Act, it did not even hold a meeting to co-ordinate the fight.

Decisions

Waiting for the 'official' movement to act allowed the right wing inside the trade union movement, the press and TV to sap rank-and-file readiness to act.

At Marathon Manufacturing and Govan Shipbuilders, the old Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, where Jimmy Reid and Jimmy Airlie are both AUEW shop stewards, the wait never ended. Mass meetings were only scheduled to be held after all the other major factories in the area had held theirs.

The failure of the UCS stewards to take the lead is a repetition of their failure in July. Then they did not even call a meeting at Clydebank while the five dockers were in jail.

Early decisions at Marathon and Govan would undoubtedly have helped other

stewards get a positive response from their workers.

As it was, at the big Babcock and Wilcox factory in Renfrew and at Rolls-Royce on the Hillingdon Estate, decisions were taken against local strike action and in favour of a national lead. At both the convenors are Communist Party members.

With these two 'left' factories leading the retreat and UCS sitting on the fence, smaller workplaces were given no clear lead.

Then Chrysler workers, remembering the isolation they suffered on the September Liaison Committee one-day strike, held another meeting and voted 2-1 not to strike before the holiday. At Singer, Clydebank, a big engineering factory with a predominantly right-wing shop stewards' committee, the vote was also against a strike.

When this news reached Callum McKie and Alex Ferry, AUEW district secretaries for Paisley and Glasgow, they telephoned all factories that had decided to strike, instructing them to call it off.

Magnificent

But at their second meeting of the day workers at John Brown Engineering, Clydebank, refused to reverse their earlier decision to stop. They then became the only workers in the West of Scotland to strike on the Wednesday.

Dundee workers responded magnificently, and Weirs, which until a few years ago rarely took on Catholic apprentices, was one of the first to get a positive decision.

The main responsibility must lie with the lethargic approach of the Communist Party-led local trade union 'establishment'. It is not that Reid, Airlie, Grant and McCormack, of UCS, Babcock and Wilcox and Rolls-Royce, did not want strike action. They clearly supported the idea.

But they have not done their homework, keeping the dangers of the Industrial Relations Act before their members, and when the crunch came they preferred to leave the initiatives to others.

The Communist Party strategy of gaining respectability and positions within the official trade union movement and adapting their day-to-day tactics to that end has clearly been successful on Clydeside. In their strongest area they have now become virtually indistinguishable from the soggy centre of the trade union political spectrum, and with as little capacity for mobilising independent rank-and-file action.

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

IS HEALTH WORKERS' public meeting: Health Workers and the Freeze. Speakers from LASH and others. Friday 5 January, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, London NW1.

LAMBETH IS public meeting: The AUEW and the Fines. Speaker Roger Cox (AUEW). Wed 10 January, 8.15pm, Brixton Training Centre (opposite Brixton Town Hall).

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

NOTICES

HARINGEY TRADES COUNCIL sends greetings to all workers fighting international capitalism. 1973 must be a year to defeat the Tories for good.

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.

COULD any readers who have spare copies of Socialist Worker issues 96 (9 November 1968), 100 (7 December 1968), and 156 (29 January 1970) please contact Socialist Worker editorial at 01-739 9043.

COMRADE wishes to share flat in Glasgow or London areas. Contact Angus, 58 Frederick Street, Dundee DD3 9DF (phone 85561)

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.

WIGAN IS: Anna and John thank all those IS branches, WL groups and individuals who sent money towards their legal expenses for charges arising out of the Blackburn anti-fascist demo.

CORRECTION: The address of Redder Tape, the Civil and Public Services Association rank-and-file magazine, was wrongly given in the last issue of Socialist Worker as 9 Manor Road, London E1. This should have read 9 Manor Road, London E10.

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



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Super-scab mark II

—see leading article, PAGE 3.

* Socialist Worker

NOW CIVIL SERVANTS FIGHT THE FREEZE

CIVIL SERVANTS, the state employees in museums, tax offices, the Department of Health and Social Security and many other public offices, are the latest group of workers to join the fight against the wage freeze.

They are to stage protest meetings in working hours on Wednesday under official instruction from their union executives, who are also threatening to call selective official

strikes if the government does not pay increases due from 1 January.

Walter Kendall, general secretary of the main union involved, the Civil and Public Services Association, has also called on the Trades Union Congress to co-ordinate the action of the unions involved, and of public sector unions in general, against the freeze. Once again the TUC has refused, preferring to talk yet again with the Tories.

Civil servants have their pay reviewed every two years on the basis of com-

by Laurie Flynn

parability studies done by a government statistical department. They are then awarded an increase which is supposed to bring them into line with other workers.

Over recent years there has been growing dissatisfaction with this comparability scheme, not least because the rewards are very slight compared to those other workers extract by struggle. Government action in freezing this week's award is seen as the last straw and resolutions demanding action have been pouring into the union head offices.

Union members need an immediate 20 per cent rise to maintain their living standards of two years ago. Wages and conditions can be atrocious in the so-called civil service. A youngster going into the Department of Health and Social Security aged 16 as a clerical assistant starts on the princely sum of £7.73 a week rising to the maximum of £21.60 after nine years.

Robin Butler, a member of the Stoke Newington Department of Health and Social Security CPISA workplace branch committee, told Socialist Worker that this resulted in a situation where virtually every worker in his office had to have a second job.

'Members are beginning to have a taste of militancy and this grows with experience. A lot more people are prepared to take all-out strike action now,' he said.

Mike McGrath, chairman of the CPISA British Museum branch, one of the biggest in London, said: 'The freeze hits civil servants, especially the younger ones, with great severity. I welcome this initiative on the part of our union—an initiative that was brought about by pressure from below.

'For years civil servants have taken what's given to them. Now we're fighting back against a wage freeze designed to lower the living standards of all workers. It is pathetic to see the TUC doing nothing to help us or anyone else.'

Gas workers militancy grows

SCOTLAND:—Anger has been building up among gas workers, since mid-November, when Glasgow Gas Board shop stewards held their first rank-and-file meeting on the present pay negotiations.

Even before Heath had prevented the General and Municipal Workers' Union conducting negotiations over the pay claims, the stewards had proposed an unofficial strike. Now they have finalised their plans.

The Glasgow gasworkers plan to strike for 24 hours on Wednesday 17 January and gasworkers in Edinburgh and Dundee have promised support.

The Glasgow stewards are by no means happy with the claim being submitted by the trade union side of the Gas Industry Industrial Council, believed to be for a wage rise of only £5. They want to make the fight one for a £10 rise across the board, parity with electricity workers, and no compulsory redundancies.

● In the South East this week gas workers at London's two main town gas works, Beckton and Greenwich, stepped up their overtime ban campaign to force the Gas Council and the government to negotiate on their wage claim immediately. Major areas of London and the Home Counties were hit by cuts in the gas supply.

Work-to-rule teachers sacked

by Liz Clay (NUT)

TEESSIDE:—Towards the end of last term more than 200 teachers were suspended. They are members of the National Association of Schoolmasters and the Union of Women Teachers who had been operating a work-to-rule in protest at the procedure laid down by the education authority for appointments in the proposed re-organisation of secondary schools.

The employers, a Labour-controlled authority, dug their heels in and set a shining example of anti-trade unionism.

The national executive of the main teaching union, the National Union of Teachers, has also disgraced itself. It lifted the national 'black' on one of the schools, despite the express wishes of the Teesside branch.

Although many teachers may disagree with the way that the NAS has handled the dispute, there is a fundamental obligation to support another union in dispute with an extremely reactionary employer.

The NAS offered to take the dispute to arbitration, but the authority refused to co-operate. After a hearing of five hours in which Terry Casey, general secretary of the NAS, put the case for the first teacher after the union barrister had been refused entry, the teacher was sacked. Another was sacked the following day.

A demonstration of more than 800 teachers was organised outside the town hall, with leaflets and posters.

The chairman of Teesside Education Committee, Peter Foulton, claims to be an active trade unionist. The vice chairman is an active member of the Boilermakers' Union. These people who call themselves trade unionists have seen fit to sack others for taking industrial action.

SUPPORT CAMDEN COUNCIL
DEMONSTRATE
Camden Town Hall, 2pm Sunday 7 Jan.

Big fight needed against steel closures

by Colwyn Williamson

THE Tory government has now officially approved the British Steel Corporation plan to centralise steelmaking and axe another 35,000 jobs.

This Christmas gift, about as attractive as a stale mince-pie, brings the number of jobs now being cut to 55,000 and the number lost since nationalisation to around 85,000.

Bulk steelmaking is to be concentrated in five places: Port Talbot and Llanwern in South Wales, Ravenscraig in Scotland, Scunthorpe in Yorkshire, and on Teesside where the Lackenby plant is to be augmented by the new one at Redcar.

This plan will cost an estimated £3000 million in investment, but it has been devised with scant regard for the human cost. Cardiff will be severely hit by the loss of 4500 jobs at the East Moors plant. Communities like Shotton in Flintshire, where 7000 jobs are at stake, and Ebbw Vale, with 5000 jobs threatened, will be virtually crippled if the corporation and the government are successful.

Ruthless

The provision of new jobs must be an absolute condition of old jobs being closed. Not a single job must be closed until there is another ready to take its place. And not any job will do.

Can these 55,000 jobs be saved? Is there any way of making sure that no man goes without a satisfactory wage packet, that no job is closed without another just as good filling its place?

Basically, this depends on steelworkers themselves. The Tories have embarked on this ruthless scheme knowing well that they will encounter serious opposition, but they calculate they will win. Steelworkers can prove them wrong.

If it were a question of muscle alone, there would be no doubt about the outcome. Steelworkers have the strength to impose their own terms, decent, human terms, on any rationalisation programme, but they have to know how to use it intelligently.

They are held back by two things: weak leadership and the lack of a national strategy. In this sense, the corporation and the government have definite advantages. They possess determined leadership and a national plan.

Neither the Labour Party nor the steel union (BISAKTA) leaders are prepared to put up anything more than a sham fight, and the danger is that steelworkers, lacking a national strategy, will resist only in a localised and fragmented way.

Resistance

Whether the Tories can carry through their plan depends, as always, on the success of a policy of divide-and-rule. They are gambling that other steelworkers will stand on the sidelines while opposition is isolated in the plants most directly hit by the schemes.

It is vital that a national counter-strategy is developed. Shotton workers have quite correctly called for a national committee to organise and co-ordinate resistance throughout the country.

The committee must be a rank-and-file committee of delegates from steelworkers across the country. It is pointless expecting national union officials to organise such a committee. What is needed is a committee that can lead the fight, and no one can expect leaders who are not themselves prepared to organise resistance to set up a worthwhile committee to do their job for them.

It is a matter of the utmost urgency that steelworkers in the various BSC plants, those threatened and those not threatened, establish contact to set up a national rank-and-file action committee as soon as possible.

Whether the steelworkers win or lose will be decided by their unity or lack of it. As long as they remain divided, the Tories will pick them off one by one. United they will be invincible.



Mansfield Hosiery strikers leaving the Nottingham Film Theatre, where the inquiry was held

Victory for anti-racist strikers

by Victor Knight

LOUGHBOROUGH:—The strike for more pay and against racial discrimination by more than 400 Indian workers at Mansfield Hosiery Mills has ended after 10 weeks. They went back to work on Tuesday, accepting most of the terms laid down by the court of inquiry which gave its findings shortly before Christmas.

The Department of Employment has given guarantees that it will supervise the hiring of trainee knitters to ensure that the choice is fair. And the Race Relations Board is also watching to see that no racial discrimination takes place.

The 41 blackleg trainee knitters who were hired during the strike will go into a common pool with the strikers and all may apply for the jobs. The catch is that the

blacklegs have already had the six weeks' training required for the job and are obviously more qualified than the strikers.

The Hosiery Workers Union tried to get the strikers to return to work without any assurances. The strikers threatened to occupy the union's offices for a second time on Friday but the Department of Employment quickly came up with the assurances they demanded.

The strikers have won a victory by breaking down the official racialism of the union and management and also getting a £1-a-week increase. This is a major step

forward in an area where racialism is growing and the National Front is active.

The strikers recognise that they will have to wage a continued struggle within the union and against the management. The first sign of recognition of their struggle came on Friday from Les Underwood, secretary of the white-dominated factory committee. He said his members would not strike if Indians got the knitting jobs.

The white workers have had a dose of what the Indians have been experiencing. The 80 workers laid off during the strike will not get dole money as ministry officials have decided that workers do not get benefit when laid off due to an industrial dispute.

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