

Political plot to bail out Poulson

THE POULSON BANKRUPTCY case is as good as over. Leaders of both main political parties have had enough.

With the willing help of top lawyers, Labour councils and the press, they have put a stop to any further embarrassing revelations from the Wakefield hearing. We have heard the last from that quarter about the close relationship between Mr John Poulson and leading politicians.

Suddenly and mysteriously, Mr Poulson's enormous debts have vanished.

The barrister for the creditors, Mr Muir Hunter, QC, a leading member of the Society for Labour Lawyers, has abandoned his role as Poulson's persecutor.

The money for his clients, he told the latest hearing on 5 March, is coming in. £200,000 has already been recovered.

Felling Urban District Council, which is Labour controlled, is no longer suing Mr Poulson for £1 million to cover the strengthening and repairs of the five tower blocks which he designed for the town. Felling is now prepared to settle for £9552.

Leeds Corporation, which is Labour controlled, has decided to contest the claim against it from the builders of an international swimming pool, designed by Poulson, for which Leeds in turn was suing Poulson.

Three months ago, Leeds was suing for £200,000 over the swimming pool. Now, the corporation doubts whether Poulson will have to pay more than 'a few thousand pounds'.

Scaled down

Hartlepool Corporation, which is also Labour controlled and whose swimming pool, designed by Poulson, is too shallow, has also scaled down its original demands. It is prepared to settle for 'about £10,000'.

So Mr Muir Hunter has only a few more thousands to collect, and, at the rate the money is arriving, he has every hope of getting more than enough by the time Mr Poulson again comes to court on 25 June.

If the creditors are happy, of course, there is no need for any more examination of what he did with his money.

These delicate matters can now be left in the safer hands of the police.

The change in the creditors' financial hopes and in Mr Hunter's tone at Wakefield follow a series of meetings involving leaders of both major political parties.

Mr Harold Wilson, in particular, has been gravely worried by more revelations involving gifts rather more substantial than coffee pots which found their way from Mr Poulson to former Labour Ministers even more senior than Mr Anthony Crosland.

The Poulson bankruptcy case has been discussed by Wilson with John Silkin, former Labour chief whip, and Sir Elwyn Jones, former Attorney General, who have made his anxieties felt at the highest legal level.

These anxieties are shared by Sir Peter Rawlinson, Conservative Attorney General, who has already tried to stop the bankruptcy hearings.

Once Sir Peter's crude attempt failed, there was only one way to stop the bankruptcy hearings—and that was to find Poulson's money.

After urgent fund-raising by both parties' well-oiled machines, the money has been found. Needless to say, Mr Muir Hunter is not obliged to say where the money comes from.

PAUL FOOT

Fine Tubes National Picket Monday 19 March

Starts 6.30am outside factory gates followed by meeting at Plymouth Athenaeum Theatre, 9.45-12 noon
London IS coach leaves 12 midnight on Sunday from Kings Cross Stn, Pancras Road and 12.30pm from Brixton tube station.
Return fare £1.50

Hospital workers must not fight alone

SOLIDARITY NEEDED NOW

A CRUDE AND VICIOUS WITCHHUNT has been launched against the striking hospital workers. It is designed to demoralise them, divide them and drive them back to work for starvation wages in nineteenth-century conditions.

Already a few groups of strikers have called off their action, browbeaten by

SW Political Correspondent

the constant barrage of yellow press propaganda that shrieks 'This strike can kill' and brazenly suggests that the ancillary workers are indifferent to the plight of the patients.

The press campaign should sound the

warning bells for the rest of the trade union movement. The millionaire newspaper barons, the most vociferous supporters of the Tory government's anti-working-class policies, are terrified by the mounting opposition to the wage freeze.

They are horrified in particular by the revolt of low-paid and traditionally non-militant groups such as health workers and civil servants

But because of the lack of industrial strength of such workers there is a grave danger that they will be left to fight alone.

The key question for the trade union movement, especially the powerful sections, is: will you stand by and see the hospital workers driven to defeat?

The situation is grave. Because the hospital workers' unions are calling them out for only three days at a time, the members are not receiving strike pay. It is vital that factories and work-places in every locality hold collections for the strikers and take the money straight to the picket lines or strike committee headquarters.

ARDUOUS

It is equally important that solidarity action is organised to break down the isolation the strikers feel. Wherever possible, other trade unionists should join the hospital workers' pickets, organise solidarity marches with them and tour other factories to argue the strikers' case.

And their case is simple: they work long, arduous hours for wages that are a scandal in a so-called civilised society. Many would still take home as little as £15 or £16 a week if they accepted the £1.84 increase permitted by the government.

It is not the strikers who are hurting hospital patients, but a government of rich hypocrites (made richer by last week's budget) which refuses hospital workers more than £20 a week.

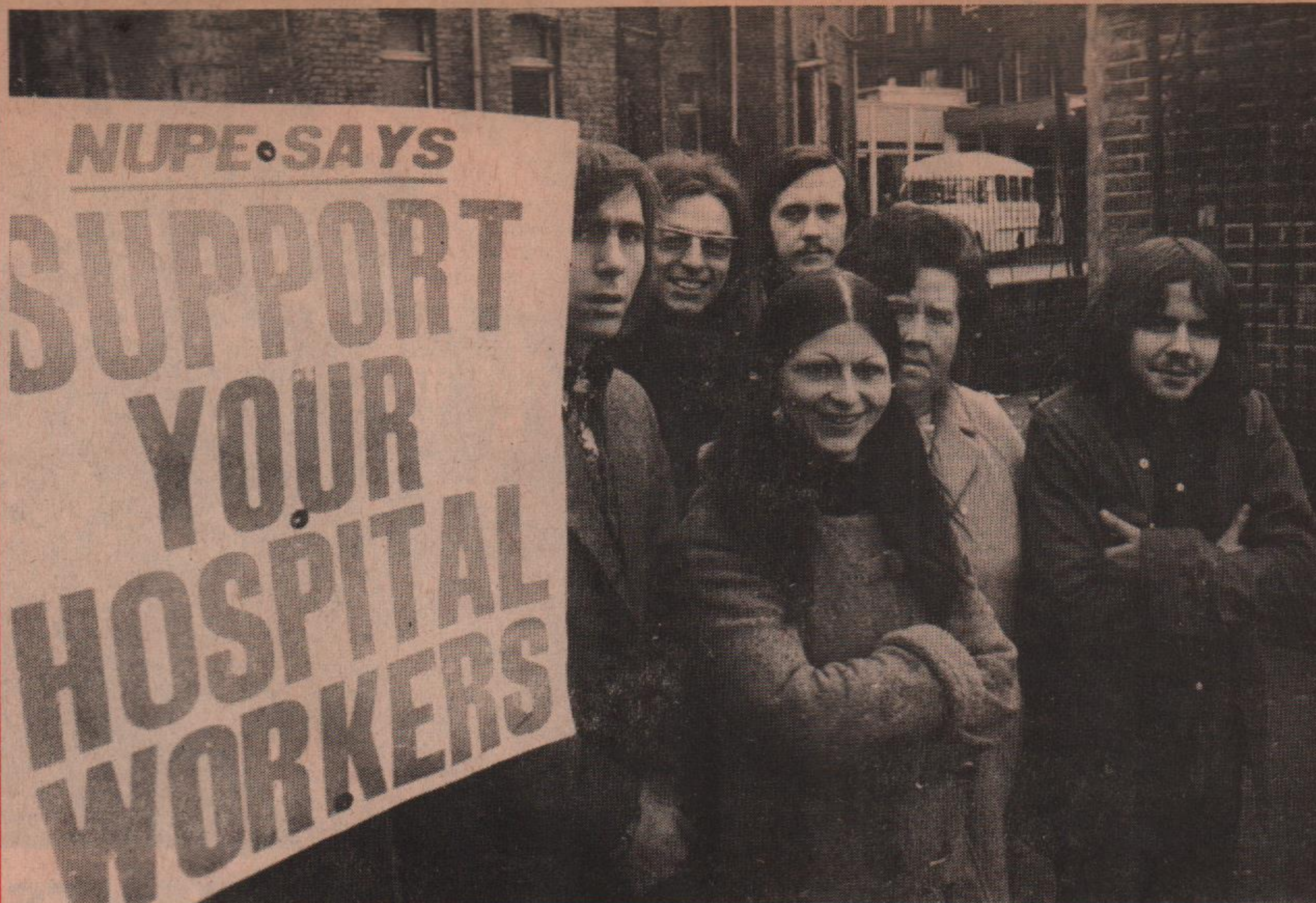
The hospital workers can win. Despite the press witchhunt there is enormous support for them in every working-class community.

REDOUBLE

Once again the burden of responsibility falls on the rank and file. All workers in the public sector must redouble their efforts to build grassroots joint action committees in every area. And those committees must call upon other groups for united action NOW.

In particular, the hospital workers must appeal over the heads of the vacillating union bosses to such powerful sections as miners and car workers. If the miners mobilise now to fight for their own claim they can—as they showed last year—bring Heath and his government to their knees.

That is the stark choice facing the trade union movement: either to mobilise now for united action and win—or stand back and see the hospital workers beaten into humiliation. And that will be a defeat for each and every one of us.



Hospital ancillary workers seen on picket duty this week at St Leonard's Hospital in Hoxton, north-east London. Like their fellow union members up and

down the country, they are not receiving strike pay and urgently need financial and industrial support from other workers to win their battle

Don't relax on fund

A TYNESIDE WORKER getting his redundancy pay sent us £70 with a letter saying 'to help ensure that the real issues continue to be put before the working class in your excellent paper.'

Joiners at the Framm Market Place Development building site, who recently returned to work after a week's strike, donated £2.50. Socialist Worker readers at Scott's Cartburn Shipyard (Lower Clyde) donated £4.50. Readers at Parson's at Erith collected £2.00 and readers at Parson's Newcastle sent £12.45.

IS branches as usual did their bit: Swansea £28.14, Wandsworth £18, Lewisham £42.50, Lancaster £8,

Aberdeen £4, Hackney £200, Dundee £5, Edinburgh £3, Ealing £18, Southampton £217.57, Harlesden £6, Newcastle £34.57, Walthamstow £7, Colchester £28, Leicester £32.14, Ilford £1.50, Enfield £150 and Stoke £14.

Altogether we received £986.41 this week, bringing the grand total to £24,319.

The last stretch of the road is perhaps the hardest, but we will reach our target of £30,000, if readers keep up their efforts.

● Rush donations to: Tony Cliff, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

Turmoil ahead on the money markets

THE AGREEMENT reached by the central bankers and finance ministers first in Paris and then in Brussels last week will not solve the world monetary crisis. The best which any of the governments involved can hope for is a little breathing space before the next currency turmoil.

The formula agreed at the Brussels meeting is a complicated one which aims to preserve some elements of Common Market monetary unity after the savaging it has received during the recent run on the dollar. The majority of the Common Market currencies will attempt to stay linked together (joined possibly by some non-EEC European states) while the Italian lira and the British pound will be left to go their own way on the world currency markets.

The decisions reached in Brussels reflect the growing hostility of the ruling class in Europe to the US authorities and their seeming indifference to the contribution the dollar crisis has made to endangering the whole monetary system. They also fear that the relatively protection-free world trade system is threatened.

But the crisis also reflects their own internal disunity and weakness in the confrontation with Washington.

The American objective is reasonably clear: to force her trading partners to concede exchange rates against the dollar which will give US firms such a massive competitive headstart in world trade that the US will be able to turn its payments deficit into a surplus.

Doubts

Indeed the US ruling class, dominated as it is by banking and financial interests, wants a big enough payments surplus to finance not only the massive investment requirements of the overseas US multinational corporations but also to re-establish New York as the main world capital and banking centre.

It is extremely doubtful whether the United States can turn the clock back so completely and restore the conditions of unchallenged US domination which were such a feature of the 1940s and the 1950s. There are grave doubts that even with a huge dollar devaluation—about 30 per cent in total over the past four years—that US industry can prevent its gradual loss of competitiveness in world markets.

After all successive devaluations of sterling did not really halt the decline of British capital's share of world markets either.

What seems certain is that this massive dollar devaluation will give further stimulus to the world-wide price inflation which is now gripping almost every advanced capitalist economy.

The money crisis has contributed directly to inflation. Since the speculators (that is the bankers, the big corporations and the smaller governments and central banks) basically do not trust any of the major currencies they have been switching out of money and into gold, and also copper, tin and other basic commodities.

Deficit

This boost to the price of the basic commodities will do very little for the poor neo-colonial countries, which produce them but it will force up import costs for countries like Britain.

In any case the decision to continue the free float of the pound seems bound to send sterling even lower in relation to important currencies to purchase food and essential industrial components. This must at one and the same time send up prices even faster at home and also add to the developing British balance of payments deficit.

The development of monetary uncertainty which, at times has come close to all out panic, is increasing the influence of the 'hawkish' elements in the western governments. The demands for trade protection—that is barriers against other countries imports—are getting stronger not only in the United States but also in France and other European countries.

Japan is the most immediate victim of an outbreak of trade war but other highly exposed economies like Britain's are bound to enter the firing line soon.

The pow-wows of the bankers and finance ministers proves one thing that socialists have been saying for a long time: there is no lasting solution to the world-wide economic crisis open to any capitalist government.

But in spite of the comings and goings of politicians and bankers the world is drifting steadily closer to open trade and currency warfare among the leading capitalist states. It is the working class which stands to pay the price.

John Palmer

Police beat up tenants on eviction protest

SW Reporter

KIRKBY:—Tenants lobbying local councillors on Monday were viciously attacked by police with truncheons.

The police dragged tenants down four flights of stairs by their hair and waded into a crowd that included pregnant women.

Two hundred tenants had gone to the council building to protest at plans by the housing manager to evict eight tenants almost immediately and to issue eviction notices against several hundred more.

The crowd lobbied councillors as

they went in to a meeting and then 11 tenants followed the last councillor up to a committee room inside. There they knocked on a door.

Tony Boyle, secretary of the Tower Hill tenants, told Socialist Worker what happened next. 'Five or six coppers just grabbed us. There was no provocation on our side.

'We just sat down when the police

came. But they pulled us down four flights of stairs, kicking us as we went down. Some of the lads have long hair and the police pulled them down by their hair.'

At the bottom of the stairs the police threw out most of the tenants. But one was kept inside and the police hit him with truncheons.

The tenants demonstrating outside

could see this happening through the glass doors. When the crowd tried to surge forward against the doors, Tony Boyle said: 'The police just hit out indiscriminately with batons. One girl was dragged by the hair.'

'Another pulled out from the crowd was eight months' pregnant and just stood there, with her arms up, screaming.'

Sit-in students say 'stop the sackings'

SW Reporter

THE AUTHORITIES at Stirling University have been shaken by the solidarity shown by the students in defence of their elected union representatives. The president of the students' union, Linda Quinn, and its secretary, John Davenport, have been sus-

pended from the university for taking part in meetings that organised demonstrations against the Queen's visit last October.

When Linda Quinn's appeal against the sentence

was rejected last week, more than a thousand students voted overwhelmingly to occupy the university administration building. They are demanding the rescinding of the guilty sentences, the resignation of the principal, Tom Cottrell, and a public inquiry into the running of the university.

The building has been completely sealed off and students have been negotiating with the Transport Workers Union in the area about a complete blacking of the university by goods vehicles.

Local trades councils, the Public Employees Union branch and building workers on the campus have expressed their complete solidarity with the students. Academic staff have also voted in support of the students' demands.

SOLIDARITY

The solidarity of the students is forcing the authorities to backpedal fast. Last Friday Cottrell was insisting that there could be no negotiations while the student occupation continued and argued that the university's court of governors could not, in any case, meet to consider the question for at least another fortnight.

But on Monday he was overruled by the chairman of that body, Lord Wheatley, who called an immediate meeting that offered a one-man inquiry into the situation.

The students regard this offer as inadequate and a 900-strong meeting on Monday night voted to keep up the occupation. Nevertheless, they also see the offer as tangible proof that the authorities are being forced to give way and can be beaten if the solidarity is maintained.



MARCH DEMANDS HIGHER GRANTS

Students from Dundee and St Andrews marched through Dundee last week in support of the National Union of Students' campaign for increased grants. The maximum grant is £445 a year. The NUS wants a £65 increase. Picture: BRIAN S MILNE

Scots Orangemen blow up their own premises

GLASGOW:—An Orange Hall was wrecked by an explosion last Saturday. The hall, in Bridgetown, a working-class area in the east end, was owned by the Orange Lodge, and shared with the Apprentice Boys of Derry and the Bridgetown No Surrender Club.

Glasgow's assistant chief constable said 'no outside agencies were involved' and the police bomb disposal squad was brought in to examine the wreckage.

It is clear that the explosives were being kept on the premises and people living in the tenement

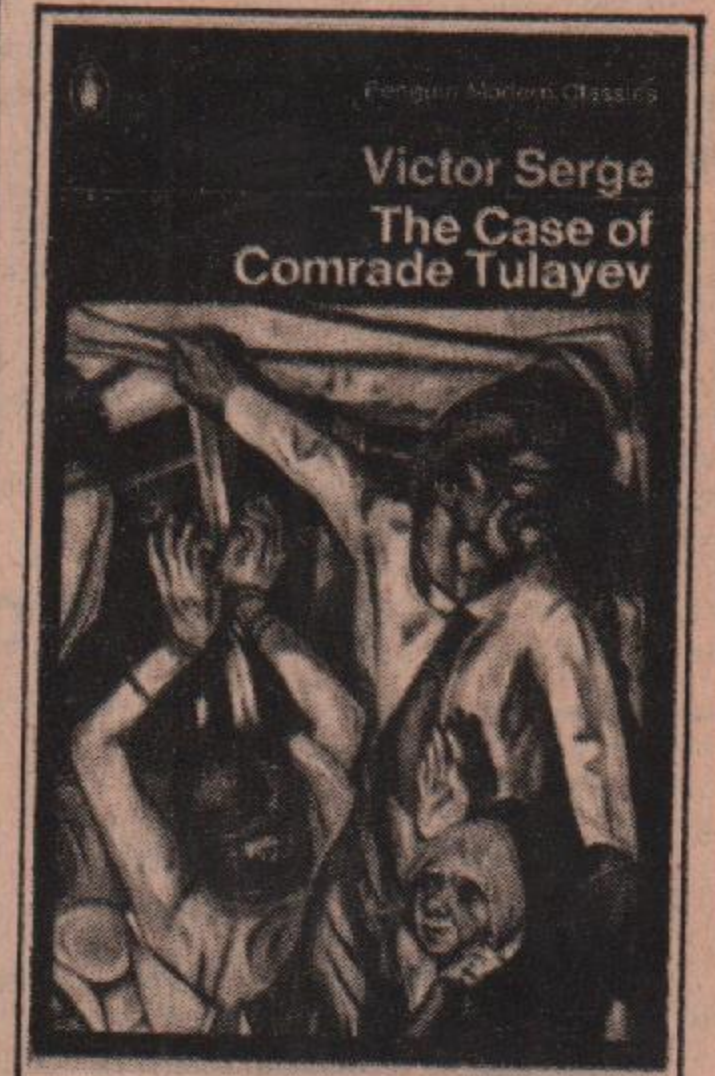
buildings above the ground floor hall have not been allowed to re-enter their homes.

The organisations using the hall have close links with Glasgow's leading Protestant extremist, Pastor Jack Glass. When demonstrations took place in the city in support of those fighting British imperialism in Ireland, the Orange counter-demonstrations were organised

principally from the Bridgetown area.

It was apparent at that time that the Orange extremists were armed and prepared for violence.

The explosion on Saturday is yet another indication of how far they are willing to go and the only question is: were the explosives bound for Ireland or were they being held in readiness for future use in this country?



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TWO-FACED WAIL ON BOMB 'TERROR'

THE TWO BOMB explosions in central London last week produced a wave of hysteria in the press. 'Outrage' screamed the Daily Mirror. 'The bloody blitz that hit London' . . . 'The horror and the devastation.'

In the House of Commons and the House of Lords, speaker after speaker rose to condemn the 'despicable behaviour' of those who planted the bombs.

It is important that no active socialist or trade unionist falls into the trap of taking seriously such phrases from the mouths of newspaper owners or politicians. For they are compounded of the purest hypocrisy.

The same newspapers that screamed 'horror' at the injuries to more than a hundred revelled in the murder by the police of two Pakistanis waving toy guns just a fortnight before.

The same politicians who express such outrage at 'violence' recently approved a new government White Paper on defence. This will spend a total of more than £3000 million on the armed forces in the year ahead—and armed forces that employ atomic bombing devices several million times more powerful than the 150lb bombs that exploded in Great Scotland Yard and outside the Old Bailey.

They are also prepared to use their fire power ruthlessly against unarmed civilians when it suits them. They did so in Derry on Bloody Sunday last year, killing 13 people.

APPLAUD

They did so in the New Lodge area of Belfast a month ago, killing six people. They have done so in numerous other cases, before and since, killing dozens of individuals.

Ministers who have organised such killings, Labour spokesmen who have supported them and press barons who have applauded them, have no grounds at all for expressing righteous horror when bombs explode in London streets.

It has been said that a dissident section of the Provisional IRA from Belfast were responsible for the London bombings. Those who live in the Catholic ghettos there experience daily the havoc to their lives which the British Army has deliberately caused.

The army ransacked their houses, seized arms which people have used to protect themselves from the sectarian murder squads that killed a hundred people last year, has torn men from their wives and families to imprison them without proper trial and has killed scores of others.

It would be scarcely surprising if some of those in the ghettos did not nurture the desire to avenge themselves against the politicians, the police officers and the judges who have helped organise that reign of terror.

Nevertheless, revolutionary social-



Scene near the Old Bailey after one of last week's bomb blasts

ists do not believe that such bombing can help in the fight against repression in Ireland—or, for that matter, anywhere else.

The ability of the British government to carry through its campaign of repression flows from its immense wealth and power, the source of which lies in its day-by-day exploitation of millions of workers in Britain and in what used to be the British empire.

Destroying a few buildings in London does nothing to weaken that power. Nor would the successful assassination of individual members of the ruling class. For every politician, policeman or judge killed, there exists thousands prepared to take their place.

STRENGTH

And in practice, bombing and assassination attempts inevitably hurt innocent bystanders more than their intended targets. Those who suffered from the Aldershot bombing a year ago were not the parachute officers involved in the Bloody Sunday killings, but women cleaners. Those hurt last week were not the rich and wealthy, but dozens of ordinary working people.

Far from such bombings weakening the ruling class, they actually strengthen it. The press has a heyday as it hammers home the message that revolutionaries are inhuman, cold-blooded killers who care little for the welfare of ordinary people. It is

an excellent pretext for diverting attention from the growing revolt against Tory policies.

Of course, revolutionary socialists are not against violence. We aim at wresting control of society from a ruling class that has proved repeatedly that it is prepared to resort to any scale of bloodshed in order to maintain its rule.

Murderous activities like those of Bloody Sunday are only the most recent example.

But the violence socialists support is the collective power of the majority of society as it fights against a vicious exploiting minority, the violence of mass movements seeking to neutralise the privileged few that oppose them.

Precisely because such movements are movements of the majority, they actually need to employ less violence than is employed by the minority they oppose.

The violence of small groups of activists, trying to deal with the problems of capitalist society through bombing campaign, is a quite different thing.

We oppose it because it does nothing to weaken the ruling class and because its victims are often precisely those people who will have to be drawn into the fight against the present system of society if that fight is to be successful.

Chris Harman

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

'I DO NOT share the desire . . . to push what may roughly be called the leftward half of the Labour Party and their supporters in the country out of the mainstream of British politics,' said Roy Jenkins in his Oxford speech last week.

'The country today suffers from too much alienation and confrontation,' he added. 'Such a development, if successful, could only fortify this. It would be designed to remove from a large and significant section of the nation both the discipline and the benefits of participation in a governing party. It would increase and not diminish the divisions in our society.'

It would indeed. The longer the illusion that the Labour Party can be turned into a weapon of the working class can be kept alive, the better for British capitalism. Far better, from the point of view of Jenkins and the more far-sighted right wingers, that rank and file left-wingers spend their political lives in the futile pursuit of a 'Labour government with socialist policies' than that they should turn to the 'dangerous' course of actually building a socialist organisation in the course of working-class struggles.

That is the essence of Jenkins' argument against a new 'centre party' built around Labour's right wing. From a ruling-class standpoint it makes good sense.

Verbal leftism

At the same time Jenkins and his friends are clearly worried about what he calls 'the slide to weakness of the past two years'. He means the verbal leftism of the party leaders, the fact that in opposition they are willing to attack the policies—statutory incomes policy, anti-union legislation, welfare cuts and 'selectivity', Common Market entry—they supported when in office.

It is as well to be clear what really worries the Jenkins' wing of the party. It is not that they have the slightest fear that a new Labour government will actually implement the famous 'socialist policies' produced by the revolutionary victories of the left at party conferences. They know as well as anyone, and better than most, that Wilson, Healey, Castle, Benn and company are firmly wedded to the preservation of capitalism.

After all, 'left' and right sat together in the Labour cabinet of 1964-70 and, as the present row has revealed, 'Red Barbara' Castle was a last-ditch defender of statutory incomes policy after even Jenkins was prepared to drop it. No, what concerns Jenkins is the 'widespread public disillusionment with the two major parties'. People 'turn away in boredom', he says, 'when they listen to hyperbolic denunciations of the other side for doing what they have a shrewd suspicion the denouncing party would itself be doing if it were in office.'

It is the same point that Wilson made in his Edinburgh speech a few weeks ago. The parliamentary fakers, 'left' and right alike, sense the groundswell of working-class discontent—the 'alienation and confrontation'—that signifies the first big movement away from the charade of Labour versus Tory electoral politics for 50 years. They are mortally afraid of the prospect of a revolutionary socialist party with serious working-class support.

Posing as champions

The basic division among the party chiefs is how to prevent this and to restore the party's credibility. Wilson and the Labour executive's 'left' majority support the strategy of bending to the wind, of talking left. They hope to re-channel working-class discontent into Labour's electoral machine by posing as champions of the people. As for the problems this creates for a new Labour government, well, as Wilson used to say, a week is a long time in politics. That hurdle can be crossed when they reach it. In the meantime the vital thing is to keep the 'left' and win back the militants.

Jenkins sees that this is merely staving off the evil day and that unless the party opts for 'responsibility and consistency' now, it will face a vastly bigger revulsion in the future. And in fact each has grasped an essential part of the truth. Whatever course it follows, the Labour Party faces crisis. For the times they are a' changing.

Our paper is vital weapon in the propaganda war

by Margaret Renn
Circulation Manager

EDWARD REDCLIFFE has been involved in the socialist movement for more than 50 years. A retired textile worker, now aged 73, Ted is a member of Huddersfield International Socialists.

'The job of Socialist Worker in this "propaganda war" cannot be overestimated,' he says.

At a time when the media is trying to turn the rest of us against the gas workers, health workers and teachers, by playing on the hardship their strikes may cause, the only place where workers can read the truth about these disputes is in a paper like Socialist Worker.

As Ted says, 'Our enemies are not only powerful economically and politically, but also dominate the media of mass information through radio, television and the press. This enables them to influence the minds of the people and use misinformation, distortion and outright lies, as the weapons of capitalist propaganda.'

'This situation creates great difficulties for the revolutionary part of the working class in getting over

to people the truth and real facts of life in capitalist Britain.

'Our main weapon is obviously Socialist Worker. It is already an excellent paper and prints detailed information about the practices and personalities in the enemy camp. Its factual and correct exposures have won respect and admiration even among circles who do not share our views. For active, militant workers, Socialist Worker is an invaluable source of information and inspiration.'

Ted welcomes the sales drive. 'Socialist Worker is doing a wonderful job, but its circulation is still pitifully small, when measured by the enormous task history has laid in our hands. All members and friends must see the sale of Socialist Worker as a foremost activity. Our paper must become the acknowledged centre of working-class ideas, organisation and action.'

Please contact me on 01-739 2639 if you want to be sent copies of Socialist Worker—or fill out the subscription form on the back page of this issue.



Allende's 44 per cent is victory

by Ian Roxborough and Vic Richards

THE PARTIES that make up Chile's Popular Unity coalition government picked up nearly 44 per cent of the votes in the Congressional elections last week.

This is seen as a victory, for it is a large increase on the 36 per cent which brought Allende to the presidency in 1970. The government had feared that its major social and economic reforms would be disregarded by many voters because of resentment over present economic difficulties.

The election results provide a breather for the Popular Unity government, since the right-wing parties failed to obtain the two-thirds majority they would have needed to impeach President Allende in Congress, but the fundamental problems the government faced before the election still remain.

Congress is still dominated by a right-wing majority, able to block any measures that threaten further the economic and political power of the upper and middle classes. Unless its power is challenged and broken—this would mean a real battle outside Congress—the right will prevent any extension of reforms.

But unless there is serious change, Chile will continue to suffer from a half-nationalised economy. Inflation last year was 163 per cent, and there is shortage in the shops as a result of balance of payments problems and increased consumption. Lengthy queueing has become an irritating feature of Chilean life.

Increased incomes for workers, rural labourers and peasants are the main reason for greater consumption. But as major sectors of the economy, particularly commerce, are in private hands, the government cannot solve the problem. Because of the situation in Congress, Allende has only limited control even in the nationalised sector, which could be countered only by workers' control over the factories. Instead, nationalisation is leading only to further growth of the state bureaucracy, which provides some of the right wing's political base.

The only positive feature of the economy is that the price of copper, Chile's main export, has risen.

The Popular Unity is still on the defensive, and increasingly split. The debate over economic policy between the left (Socialist Party and MAPU) and the right (Communist Party, Allende and military ministers) within the coalition has prevented a clear programme to solve the economic crisis. For the elections, they presented only a warmed-up version of their 1970 platform, which they cannot carry out in full because of the right-wing majority in Congress.

Defected

The coalition is now likely to make an approach to the opposition Christian Democratic Party, with the support of the Communist Party, Allende and the military ministers, to solve the economic problem. The result of such a conciliatory policy in the past has been disastrous and has seriously embittered relations between left and right in the coalition. Popular enthusiasm for change, which could have by-passed Congress, has repeatedly been allowed to ebb away.

As the election approached, Allende and the Communists moved to the left verbally, but attacks on workers' gains persisted. The stronger sections have resisted this policy, and there have been defections from the Communist Party, especially to the revolutionary MIR.

The right-wing parties now expect a pay-off from their electoral majority, and will try to use the strength of the military ministers to stop any further reduction of social inequality.

Workers can expect no lead from the reformists in government, who are seeking a dialogue with the right. As in the past, they will resist any conquests being made outside Congress, and will lead attacks on workers' gains in the interests of 'dialogue' with the right.

In recent months, workers of all shades of opinion have had to unite to fight the bosses and the government reformists. The question now is whether their disgust with reformism can force the Socialist Party and MAPU to live up to their revolutionary rhetoric and break decisively with the reformists.

The way forward in Chile lies in a regrouping of the various revolutionary groups to form a real workers' party.

BRIEFING

FOUR young members of the National United Freedom Fighters of Trinidad were shot in cold blood by police last week.

The National Freedom Fighters claimed responsibility for a raid on Barclays Bank in Port of Spain, in which more than 200,000 dollars were stolen. Since the robbery the hysteria of the yellow press has risen to fever pitch.

Acting on a tip-off, a raiding party of about 30 policemen went to a house in the Laventille Hills overlooking Port of Spain. As they approached the house, they opened a barrage of fire. When one of the young men ran out of the house, he was shot down.

When the police went into the house, they found the four other men dead riddled with bullets. Two have been identified as John Bedeau and Nathaniel Jack, both of whom have been wanted by the Trinidad police for 'political offences'.

In a leaflet soon after the Barclays robbery, the Freedom Fighters proclaimed: 'The rope arm of this whole group of oppressors is the police force. Our attempts to effect the changes denied us in the years following 1962 were met with ruthless suppression, injury and death. Since then the state police machinery has been expanded and a specialised anti-people police force (the SSS) developed. Its brutality has been perfected and openly tested, as evidenced by the James Brown incident in September 1972 and more lately the western-style execution of a citizen in St Anns in January.'

'Williams [Trinidad's Prime Minister] has come out in parliament and openly supported the actions of his ropemen so we can expect these actions to continue and increase in future.'

ZIMBABWE freedom fighters are extending their attacks as the Rhodesian air force and army desperately try to bomb them out into the open. Fighters are escaping quickly after attacks on farms while the white soldiers are hampered in their rescue attempts by land mines. An air strike firing rockets and landing army patrols from helicopters in the Centenary area drew a complete blank after scouring thick bush and searching caves. As usual they were too late.

The Smith regime is terrorising the African population on a massive scale to try to stop people supporting and hiding the liberation forces. 4000 Africans have been rounded up. Schools are being used as interrogation centres. Shops, mills and missions have been closed down.

Three freedom fighters, captured after a battle lasting three days, were sentenced to death in Salisbury last Wednesday. One said from the dock: 'Although you are going to sentence me to death, I am not afraid. I am dying for my country.'

IN SOUTH AFRICA last week the eight leaders of the black student organisation SASO have been put under banning orders harsher than those imposed on the leaders of the white student movement NUSAS the previous day. Three have been put under house arrest for five years. They include Drake Koku, a founder member of the Black Peoples Convention and general secretary of the black Allied Workers' Union, and Gerry Mondisane, president of SASO.

Unlike in the case of NUSAS no reasons have been given for the bannings, but such a move had been expected since SASO was first formed in 1969. During the Durban strikes last month SASO distributed pamphlets encouraging the strikers. The government, sticking to its line that agitators were behind the strikes, moved in.

OVAMBO workers in Windhoek, the capital of Namibia (South West Africa), continue their militant protest in the Katatura compound against South African domination of their country.

An African stooge brought from the white-created Kavango Bantustan was chased from the compound as he tried to persuade the workers of the virtues of the system. He was rescued by the security police. The workers then stormed the council building in the compound, broke every window and burnt out two rooms. Police armed with machine guns and tear gas rushed to the compound and sealed it off.

The Katatura has repeatedly erupted in rebellion against South Africa since the general strike of Ovambos more than a year ago. Constant raids by police and the jailing of militants have not weakened the workers' will and ability to fight.

ELECTION DEAL SAVES THE FRENCH RIGHT

by Richard Kirkwood
THE conservative majority has won a clear victory in the French elections. With 271 seats to the Left's 181 and 30 for the Centre it can govern alone.

Despite the French Communist Party's attempts to prove its respectability it has failed to convince the French ruling class.

Last week saw a massive campaign designed to convince middle-class voters of the grave dangers of a Left victory. This culminated in the blatant breach of the spirit of French election law when President Pompidou broadcast to the nation on Saturday to call on voters to vote against the Left. As the campaign had officially closed the Left leaders were denied radio and television time to reply.

This intervention also showed up the timidity of the Left, who had talked of being willing to constitute a government with Pompidou as President.

STRONGER

Even more significant had been the decision of the Centre 'Reformers' to do an election deal with the 'Majority' and to stand down in many constituencies where the Left looked near winning. With the blatant unfairness of the constituency boundaries this gave the conservatives a far bigger majority in seats than they had in votes—which were almost equally divided.

Last week's manoeuvres were designed to convince middle-class voters that the government was willing to change its policies by an 'opening to the centre' and that they didn't have to vote Left to get change. This shows in the coalition where the non-Gaullist conservatives are now much stronger.

Gaullism has done its job in stabilising the French Right and the ruling-class is now anxious to get rid of some of its more embarrassing aspects, scandals, corruption and, more politically, its ultra-nationalism, which is bad for business in the world of international capitalism.

FAILED

The French working-class has once again been shown that it cannot win its essential demands through the ballot-box. Only the industrial strength of workers in struggle will win a decent minimum wage or the 40-hour week.

Even in defeat the Communist Party leader, Marchais, failed on Sunday night to call clearly for such a struggle. The furthest he went was to say that he would support the workers if they struggled and that the Party would continue its campaign by 'legal and peaceful' means.

In this situation the performance of the revolutionary socialists of Lutte Ouvriere (Workers' Struggle) and the Ligue Communiste on the first round of voting becomes significant. Almost 300,000 people voted revolutionary, showing that they had no confidence in elections to



Arlette Laguiller, a candidate for the revolutionary group Lutte Ouvriere, speaking at a Paris meeting.

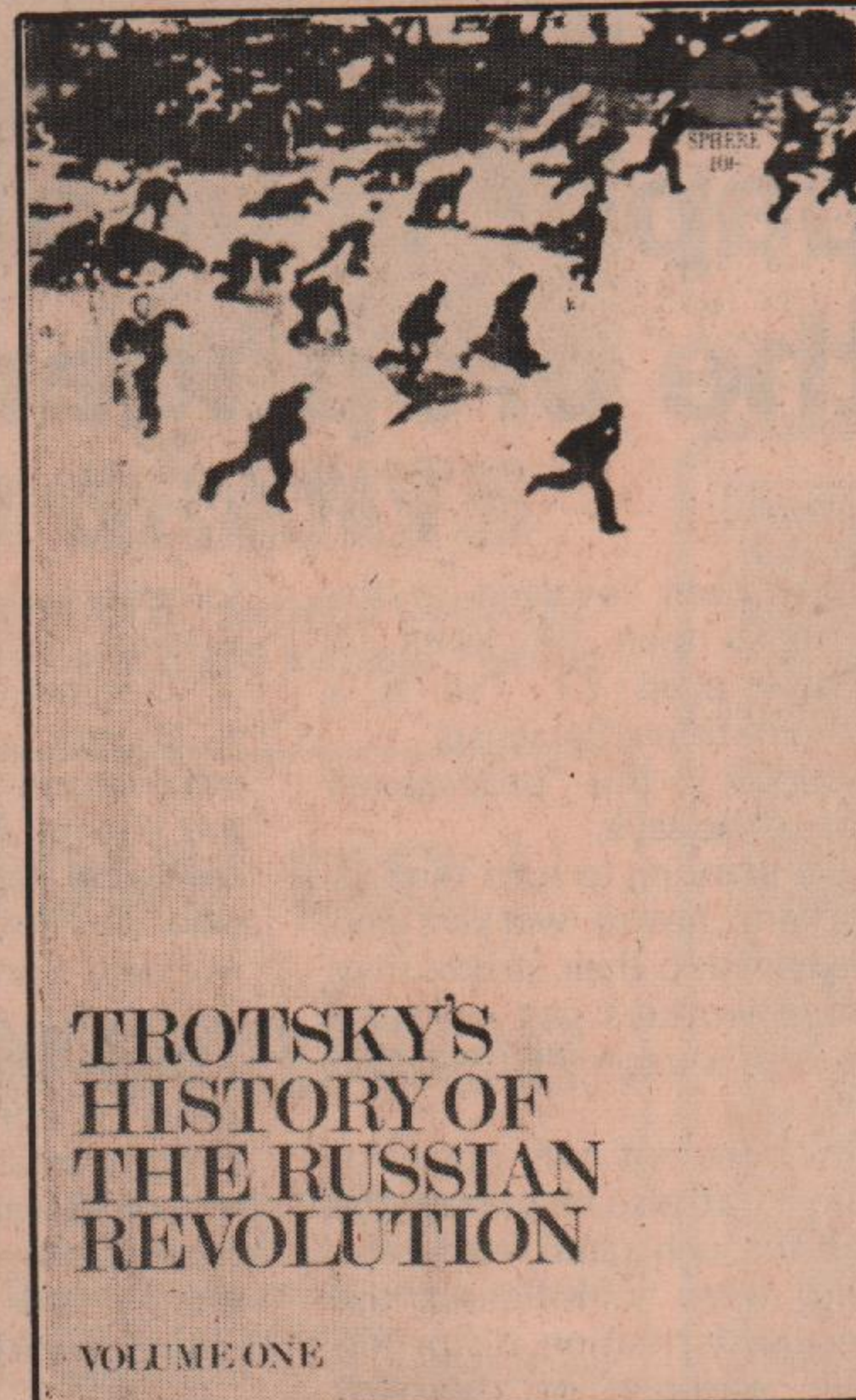
solve their problems, that they aren't going to wait five years till the next election.

These were not freak votes, as is shown by the strong vote for electrician Paul Le Blay in the constituency dominated by the Peugeot car factory where he is a well-known militant. Lutte Ouvriere got similarly relatively good results in other areas where it has played a role in industrial struggles during the past few years.

Lutte Ouvriere pointed out last week that almost a tenth of the Communist voters chose revolutionary candidates where they could. Add to this the fact that immigrant workers, who include supporters of the revolutionary socialists, have no vote but can play a major role in the industrial struggle and also the fact that some sympathisers of the revolutionaries voted Communist or Socialist, and it shows that a significant minority of French workers are already convinced of the need for real struggle to win basic improvements in their living standards.

They recognise, as Lutte Ouvriere put it as the results were announced, that 'a million workers on strike is worth more than 11 million Left voters.'

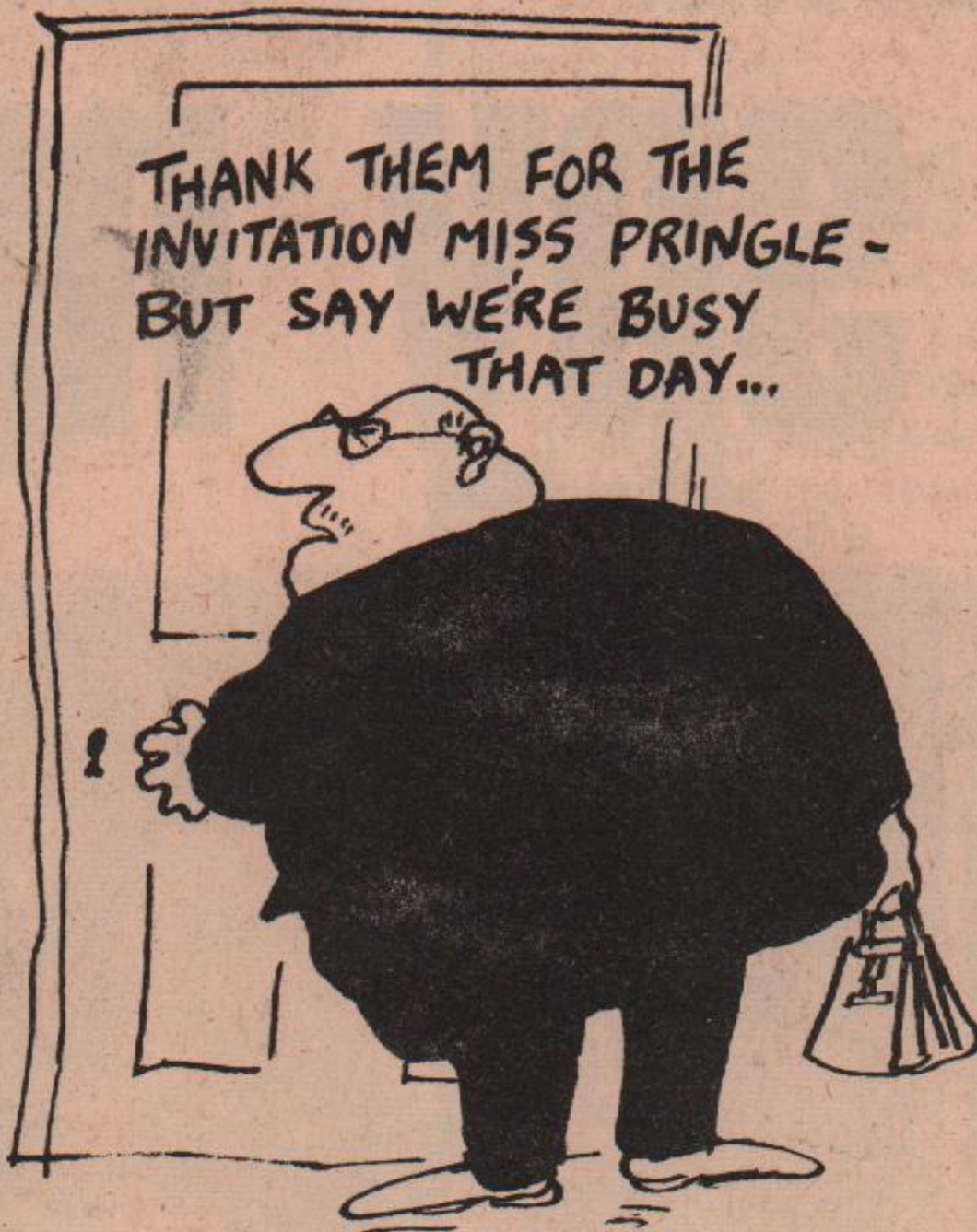
This minority will not let itself be conned into being respectable and waiting another five years as the leaders of the Left have always tried to do. It is vital that the mass of workers learn this lesson too.



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'The language of the civilised nations has clearly marked off two epochs in the development of Russia. Where the aristocratic culture introduced into world parlance such barbarisms as czar, pogrom, knout, October has internationalised such words as Bolshevik, soviet... This alone justifies the proletarian revolution, if you imagine it needs justification'—Trotsky.

Evans

UNION OF AGREERS
AND NEGOTIATORSTHANK THEM FOR THE
INVITATION MISS PRINGLE -
BUT SAY WERE BUSY
THAT DAY...

Hodging the issue

ON THE NIGHT of Mr Barber's budget, the BBC television programme Midweek invited three men to take part in a discussion on the budget's merits.

They were Mr Jim Callaghan, Labour MP, a director of Sir Julian Hodge's Commercial Bank of Wales, which specialises in second mortgages; Mr Jeremy Thorpe, Liberal MP, a director of London and County Securities, which also specialises in second mortgages; and Mr Reginald Maudling, Tory MP, the first president of Mr Jerome Hoffman's Real Estate Fund of America. (Mr Hoffman is currently in an American prison for fraud).

The three men spoke exclusively about the need for unions and management to get together, about wage restraint and about the good of the country.

The following subjects were not even mentioned:

Sir Julian Hodge, The Commercial Bank of Wales, London and County Securities, second mortgages, offshore property funds, bankrupt architects, Mr Jerome Hoffman . . . or obscenity on the television.

For example the sight of three politicians who enrich themselves by the quickest and slickest means available, and appear on TV urging the nation to more self sacrifice.

MR DAVID WICKENS, a property developer, has bought a new home. It is Toddington Manor, near Cheltenham, and it has 300 bedrooms.

Mr Wickens is to live there alone. He has bought the house 'to escape from business pressures'.

For the first 18 months of his life there, he will sleep for a week in each of the bedrooms. The house has 25 bathrooms, and two libraries.

Mr Wickens is a supporter of the government's wage freeze.

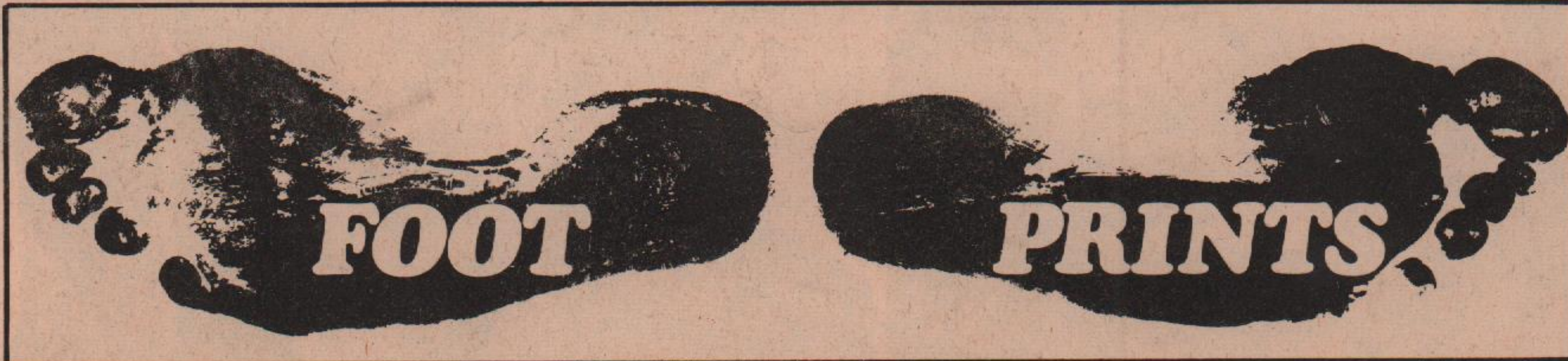
Dead steel men going cheap

ON 2 AUGUST last year Ben Eynon, 61, a fitter who worked for the British Steel Corporation's East Moors works, and his mate, Fred Stitfall, 65, went down inside the largest of the two gasholders on the site to do some greasing repair work. They put on the oxygen equipment provided by the corporation so that they could breathe while at work.

They had almost completed the job when Ben Eynon collapsed, coughing and spluttering. Stitfall shouted for help, and Peter Davies, a foreman, shoved on his equipment and went down into the gasholder to help.

A minute later all three men were dead. They had been suffocated by carbon monoxide because in each case the oxygen equipment, which is the sole responsibility of the British Steel Corporation, was faulty.

At Cardiff magistrates court on 20 February, the Factories Inspector told the magistrate that the Mines



This is the house Jack bought



Jones: future profit?

TO THE considerable disappointment of the poorer tenants of one of the Greater London Council's finest blocks of council flats, Mr Jack Jones, general secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, is buying his council flat at a 20 per cent discount.

The flats, at the top of Denmark Hill, Southwark, have a fine view over Ruskin Park. They are built for 'middle income' tenants.

For more than a year the Tories on the GLC, led by the chairman of the Housing Committee, Mr Bernard Perkins, have been desperately trying to rid the local authority of this valuable property. The 'residents association' in the flats turned itself into a 'housing association' and immediately co-opted two new members.

One was Mr G A Esposito, chief of Esposito Bros, the prosperous Wholesale Provision Merchants, who also owns a very comfortable cottage near Basingstoke, Hants.

Another co-opted member was Mr Edwin Sherrington, who happens to work in a senior capacity in the housing department of the Greater London Council.

The housing association started to bombard all the tenants on the estate with leaflets, advocating the purchase of the block from the GLC. Rents, warned the leaflets, would go up, and for every tenant the purchase of the flats would be a good investment. These leaflets were welcomed by the GLC and Mr Perkins.

But a number of tenants were worried. Some of them could not

afford to buy their houses. Others were worried about repairs, especially to the central heating system and the costs of rewiring.

Tom James, a former policeman, who disapproves of selling council houses on principle, organised opposition to the association's plans.

'I was approached by Mrs Jones (Jack's wife),' Tom James told me. 'She expressed sympathy, but also said the sale was inevitable. I got the impression that the Jones' would buy their house in the end.'

As a result of Mr James' work, the GLC were forced to make a survey of the block, and Mr Perkins was forced to come and speak to the tenants. He made a poor impression, and the first GLC survey showed that only 55 per cent of the tenants wanted to buy.

Mr Perkins had already told the tenants that he would not consider selling unless 131 of the 241 tenants

TODD'S VALENTINE LETS IN THE LIGHT AT KODAK

THE CHIEF BARRIER to unionisation of one of the most anti-union firms in Britain, Kodak, is the insistence of the Union of Kodak Workers, the company union, that they should be dealt with on equal terms with the genuine trade unions. At the moment, the unions are refusing to negotiate with management as long as the UKW has equal status.

The general secretary of the UKW is a gentleman called Todd Sullivan. On St Valentine's Day, Mr Sullivan issued a statement to all workers about himself. One fascinating passage told of his 're-establishing contact' with 'old friends in the trade union movement such as Frank Chapple.'

Mr Sullivan wrote on: 'I had previously met and worked with Frank in the late fifties when I was a contracting electrician and we were both in the Electrical Union Communist Group.'

'I played a minor role with many others in helping him, Les Cannon and Jock Byrne in the attack on corruption in the union, and was a witness for Frank and the others when the Communist Party in the union was brought to court. I am ashamed to say that I have not been active in politics since the court case, although I am a sleeping member of the Labour Party. That, briefly, is me, trade union nurtured, management and government trained and now ready to use that training for the UKW.'

The press release is reported to have greatly strengthened the determination of Kodak workers to join proper trade unions, although some have their doubts about the EEPTU.

Ashton under slime

JOE ASHTON, the bluff MP for Bassetlaw, who is a member of the Tribune group, has an interesting article in Labour Weekly (9 March) in which he attacks Labour's campaign against Dick Taverne in Lincoln for being 'too bloody honest'.

A choice passage read as follows: 'We had ample opportunity to reply in kind but either bit our tongue, or left it too late. There was the report tucked away in the Guardian that Taverne was not born in the UK and didn't become a naturalised Briton until he was 21. Foreign Englishmen fighting Scottish Labour seats in Dundee get mass publicity. In Lincoln we kept it quiet.'

What a pity bluff Joe didn't give a few examples of the kind of slogans Labour would have raised in Lincoln if only he had had his way.

How about:
TAVERNE IS A WOG, VOTE FOR DILKS, THE REAL BRITON.

Or:
DON'T VOTE FOR DOUBLE DUTCH DICK.

What a comment on the bankruptcy and hysteria of the Tribune group of MPs that Mr Ashton should resort to such vulgar racism. As long as Taverne and his millionaire friends get opposition like that, they will win the argument as well as the elections.

THE GOVERNMENT is advertising for tutors, aged 35 or over, 'to conduct day-to-day studies and to lead discussions among senior officers on the broad issues of home defence in relation to the changing socio-economic environment in this country.'

The courses are for senior local government officers, senior civil servants and army, naval and air force officers. Their main subject will be 'the utilisation of peacetime services to meet wartime needs and major emergencies.'

Wages will start at £2460 rising to £3335 a year. Applications should be made to the Principal Establishment Officer, Room 708, 271-277 High Holborn, London WC1. There is nothing in the advertisements (see for example The Times, 28 February) about the political views of the applicants.

Rent Strike: St Pancras 1960

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CIA's high-powered anti-communist machine funds trips abroad and

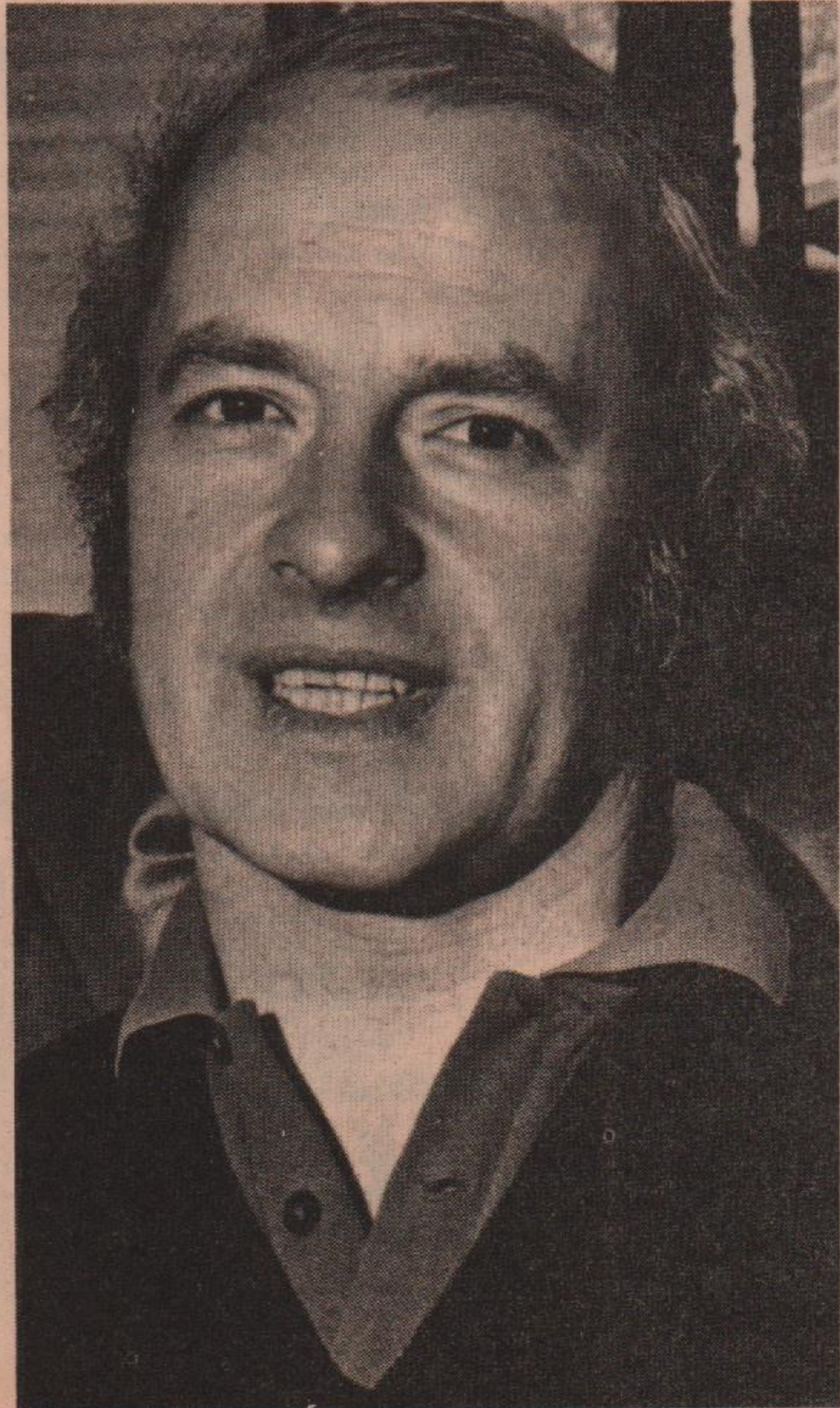
How dollar spy men back

DICK TAVERNE's election victory at Lincoln has inspired some press excitement about 'independence'.

The voters of Lincoln, it is argued, have struck a blow for the independence of their Member of Parliament and his right to say and think as he likes, free from the party machine.

Mr Taverne's victory has been heralded, rather more secretly, by many members of Labour's right wing, who have been complaining recently that they have lost their rightful places in the party leadership. Mr William Rodgers, for instance, the right's most ardent organiser, has said that he hopes Mr Taverne's success will give the Labour Party a 'new vision'.

To men like Mr Rodgers, Mr Taverne is a prodigal brother. They remember him as a keen supporter of the rich and efficient machine which Labour's right wing established in the 1950s and 1960s to 'win the movement for progressive social democracy'. This machine was funded from sources a very long way from the British labour movement.



TAVERNE: joined the 'Bilderberg Group'



FOLEY: briefed army agent



RODGERS: beat the bomb banners

Moderate

In the mid-1960s, Taverne joined the European Steering Committee of the Bilderberg Group, an international organisation of 'moderate' businessmen and politicians, which took its name from the luxury Dutch Hotel where it first met in 1954, and whose most distinguished sponsor was Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands.

The group's founder members included Hugh Gaitskell, later leader of the British Labour Party, Denis Healey, who had been chief of Labour's International Department in the late 1940s, and Guy Mollet, the French social democrat who masterminded the invasion of Suez in 1956.

Other members of the European Steering Committee were Sir Frederick Bennett, Tory MP for Torquay, and Mr Reginald Maudling, Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1962 to 1964. The first chairman of the American steering committee was Bedell Smith, the first director of the Central Intelligence Agency the world-wide spy organisation whose main aim is to smash progressive movements that challenge

the capitalist system.

The European group sponsored meetings and discussions between prominent moderates in every sphere of public life all over the world. Its huge expenses were met by 'counterpart payments' from the American Marshall Plan.

It was an important part of the high-powered anti-Communist machine which was built up with the help of CIA funds to 'counter communism' in the social democratic parties of Europe, especially in the British Labour Party.

The chief publications sponsored by this machine were the New Leader, of which Denis Healey became London correspondent in 1954, Socialist Commentary, re-organised in 1947, and Encounter, started in 1953.

Until 1967, Encounter was subsidised by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, which was started in the early 1950s with openly anti-



by Paul Foot

communist objectives. The Congress, which, again until 1967, was itself financed almost entirely by the CIA, sponsored conferences, discussions and visits of 'moderate' Labour Party personalities.

The machine grew even stronger after the 1959 election, which was disastrously lost by the Labour Party. Bill Rodgers became the paid chairman of a new pressure group which called itself the Campaign for Democratic Socialism.

Projects

CDS won its short-term campaign to 'free' the party of the leadership of 'subversives' who supported unilateral renunciation of nuclear weapons. More long-term projects were the infiltration of the then rising African nationalist movement, and the 'integration' of Britain in the European Common Market.

For both these purposes the right-wing apparatus in the British Labour Party needed new recruits, and it found them among the bright young men who rose to the top of the National Union of Students.

The president of the National

Union of Students from 1958 to 1960 was Dennis Grennan.

Soon after leaving office, Grennan helped to found an 'educational trust' called the Ariel Foundation. The object of Ariel, which was registered on 24 November 1960, was the 'advancement of education of men and women of whatever race or colour.'

The five founders were Grennan, Geoffrey Martin, who was already a rising star in the NUS, and three members of the British Council of the World Assembly of Youth: Maurice Foley, Barney Heyhoe and Charles Longbottom.

The British Council of the World Assembly of Youth was paid for almost exclusively by the British Foreign Office. The WAY, in America, was paid for by the CIA. In 1965, the CIA paid WAY 314,000 dollars.

Charles Longbottom was Tory MP for York. In 1963, Maurice Foley became Labour MP for West Bromwich. In 1970, Barney Heyhoe became Tory MP for Heston and Isleworth.

In the early 1960s, the Ariel Foundation concerned itself with communications with the African Nationalist movement. The Foundation effectively wrote the development programmes for the Kenyan African Nationalist Union (Jomo Kenyatta's Party) and UNIP, the Nationalist party of Kenneth Kaunda in Northern Rhodesia.

All sorts of functions (including a training programme for UNIP youth) were organised by Ariel, who never disclosed their sources of revenue.

Dennis Grennan became personal adviser to Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia, but not before he had helped to ensure the election of Gwyn Morgan as his successor as NUS president.

Gwyn Morgan and his successor, Aneurin Rhys Hughes, both found themselves in difficulty with the union's affiliation to the International

Student Conference, which had been formed in 1950 among Western student unions as part of the fashionable anti-communist hysteria.

By the early 1960s more and more student unions were growing suspicious of the NUS' subservience to American foreign policy. At the tenth ISC conference in Quebec in 1962, 26 student unions walked out after the American delegation asked the conference to refuse recognition to the union of Puerto Rican students.

Revealed

The British NUS leadership were keen supporters of the ISC and their politics. After leaving the NUS in 1962, Gwyn Morgan joined the staff of the ISC and became secretary general in 1964. In 1965, the NUS conference overturned the NUS leadership line on ISC affiliation, despite the assurances of the NUS president, Geoffrey Martin of the Ariel Foundation, that none of the ISC's funds came from American business.

In 1965, Gwyn Morgan left the ISC secretariat and joined the international department of the Labour Party.

No one at Transport House seemed to mind very much when the magazine Ramparts revealed in 1967 that almost the entire funds of the International Student Conference (about 1.8 million dollars) had been provided by the CIA. Gwyn Morgan, who had been ISC's general secretary at the height of its power, was by then in charge of international affairs for the British Labour Party.

Maurice Foley of the Ariel Foundation had climbed even higher. He was a junior minister in Her Majesty's Government. In 1969, he was a parliamentary under secretary at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and among his responsibilities was the

Preparing for Power

J.T. MURPHY

IN this book first published in 1934, Murphy considers the role and success of the revolutionary left 50 years ago and its later isolation. The author was a key figure in this first shop stewards' movement.

Special offer to Socialist Worker readers: FREE hardback copy of Victor Serge's novel BIRTH OF OUR POWER with every copy of Murphy's book, £1 plus 21p postage. PLUTO PRESS, Unit 10, Spencer Court, 7 Chalcot Road, London NW1 8LH.

Africa and Europe: right's twin targets

'front organisations'

Labour's far right

Nigerian civil war.

In that year, Major Ian Walsworth Bell, a British army officer, was appointed a member of the International Observer Team in the Nigerian Civil War.

The purpose of the team was to supervise events on both sides of the firing line, and report accordingly. The main point of the team was that it was neutral.

Major Walsworth-Bell was well trained in British intelligence work. In 1964, for instance, he was introduced by Maurice Foley of the Ariel Foundation to the Zambian government, to which he was appointed 'chief administrator in charge of the training service'—a post which he held from July 1964 to October 1965.

In September 1969, Major Walsworth-Bell was suddenly dismissed from the international observer team in Nigeria. No explanation was given. He returned from Nigeria, and applied for unemployment benefit. This was initially refused on the grounds that he had been correctly dismissed. The resourceful major appealed.

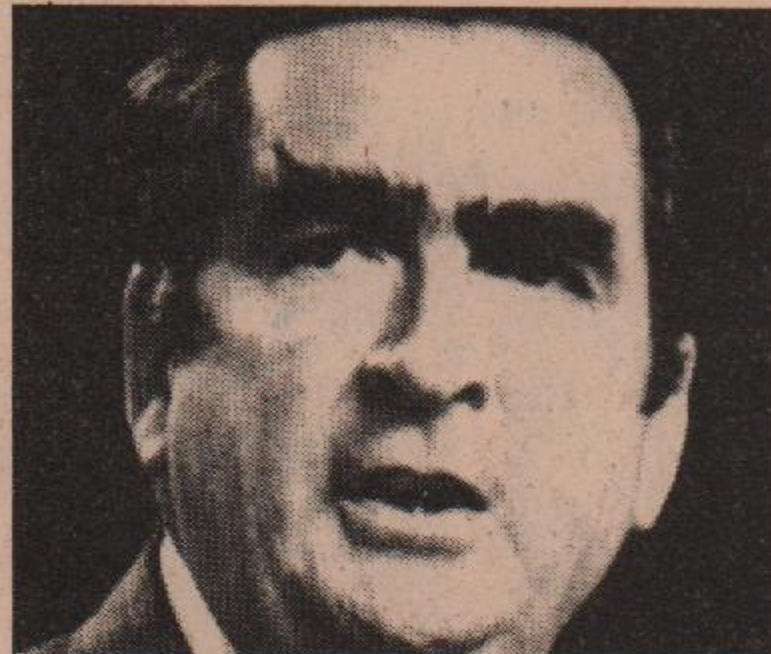
Briefed

Before the Appeals Commissioner, Mr J Temple QC, the major told the following story. His post on the international observer team, he said, had been a cover for a more important 'secondary role'—to spy on the Russians and to help win the war for the Federal government. For this role he had been briefed by Maurice Foley and Donald Burroughs, a senior civil servant in the Foreign Office.

Foley and Burroughs met him over a drink on 5 March 1969 and filled him in on his duties. He was briefed again on three separate occasions. Once in Nigeria, he dispatched several secret reports on the state of the Nigerian army and the political situation, to Foley at the Foreign Office. After seeing Foley again at the House of Commons on 30 June, the reports had been sent to Foley's private address.

Mr Foley and the Foreign Office refused to appear at the hearing. The Appeals Commissioner upheld Major Walsworth-Bell's appeal and granted him benefit. In his summing up, the Commissioner made it clear that he believed the major's story in every particular.

Even outside government, Mr Foley seems to have had a strange influence in foreign affairs. In January 1972 while the Pearce Commission was still sitting in Rhodesia, Mr Foley and Mr Nigel Fisher, Tory MP for Surbiton, made a surprise visit to



HEALEY: London correspondent



MARTIN: Student star

Rhodesia.

The Rhodesian regime had just refused entry to Sir Dingle Foot, former Labour solicitor general, Mr David Steel, spokesman for the Liberal Party, and even to Mr Denis Healey.

Foley and Fisher were only allowed into Rhodesia after special assurances from the British Foreign Office that they would not 'rock the boat'.

From there they went to Addis Ababa, and addressed a meeting about a Pan-African UN resolution on Rhodesia. 'The Africans,' reported the Times (2 February 1972) 'dropped any mention of the Pearce Commission from their final resolution after two British MPs, visiting Addis Ababa, after being in Salisbury, said that the Pearce Commission would report a huge African rejection of the settlement proposals.'

Lusher

Two months ago, Mr Foley decided to leave British politics for the lush pastures of the European Commission. He has been appointed a director-general there.

Mr Gwyn Morgan, after failing by the chairman's casting vote, to be the first Foreign Office man to become general secretary of the Labour Party, has also gone to Europe. He will be head of the private office of George Thomson, European Commissioner, and himself a doughty champion of the Labour right.

No doubt both men will be delighted to link up again with their old friend and colleague, Dick Taverne, if and when he fills one of Labour's 11 vacant seats in the European parliament.

Glass strike ghost

haunts union and Pilks bosses

PILKINGTONS and St Helens will never forget 1970. In April and May that year a strike of thousands of glassworkers challenged the monopoly glass company and rocked the right-wing General and Municipal Workers Union.

Today that struggle is still not over. The repercussions continue and so too does the victimisation of the militants who led it.

For nearly three years some of these men have fought the company and the union that protects it, and now in the last three weeks new developments have occurred.

Gerry Caughey, the strike committee chairman and a man who was sacked and blacklisted for 18 months after the dispute, has been to the Industrial Relations Court and won re-admittance to the GMWU. Caughey and 650 others were sacked at the end of the strike and after they had protested against the non-recognition of their unsuccessful breakaway Glass and General Workers Union.

Despite a widespread campaign in the St Helens area and in other parts of the country, the Pilkington bosses re-employed only 350 of the men. The rest were treated as outcasts.

The union has done nothing to aid the victimised men. Privately it was pleased that the militants were no longer in Pilkingtons and in a position to cause them any 'trouble'. Publicly it maintained a stonewall silence.

But the 1970 strike did deeply affect the union. It revealed its undemocratic structure and sweetheart arrangements with the employers. For part of the union bureaucracy it was an image that had to be changed if the GMWU was to stop the decline in membership and have any influence with the TUC and the government.

New men in power

The recent retirement of the extreme right-wing Lord Cooper as general secretary gave this section of the leadership its chance. David Basnett, the official at the centre of the Pilkingtons defeat, had learnt from the resultant bad publicity and internal unease. He was brought to power.

His policy is one of centralising the union and weakening the influence of the regional secretaries. At the same time he has supported a limited and controlled dispute in the gas industry, not in order to break the freeze, but to show the government that he has power and must be listened to.

Some organisations, most surprisingly of all the Communist Party's Morning Star, for whom Basnett has recently written an article, have called this new regime 'progressive', but as the continuing treatment of Gerry Caughey and others has shown, this is a dangerous illusion.

Ever since the Pilkington strike, the GMWU has kept the victimised militants out of the union. Several months ago Gerry Caughey threatened to take civil proceedings against them unless they allowed him to rejoin.

The union's reply was typical. Walter Aldritt, a former Labour MP and current North West Regional Secretary, told him that he would only be re-admitted on condition he accepted a life-long ban on holding office and gave a written promise of 'good behaviour'.

Caughey refused and, disgusted by the fact that the GMWU then announced that they and the company were jointly prepared to defend the action at the National Industrial Relations Court, he decided to go to the NIRC and fight them.

It was the wrong decision. Gerry Caughey has since admitted this.

Last week he told me: 'I don't think I was right to go to the court. I regard the Industrial Relations Act as anti-working class legislation. I think that it was a mistake for me to go to the court.'

Victim of scab union

By giving the NIRC the respect of his attendance Gerry Caughey did a disservice to himself and to the struggles that he has led. The court has jailed dockers, supported scabs, and fined trade unions. No militant should ever appear before it.

But Gerry Caughey is not the same as James Goad and the other scabs who've flocked to Sir John Donaldson and his Tory law.

Goad used the court because he was a scab. Gerry Caughey used it because he was bullied and victimised by a scab union leadership. It is an important difference.

By placing his reliance in the capitalist courts Gerry Caughey has won his reinstatement into the union, but only in a hollow way. He went to the court on 27 January but has still not received his union card or any details about his membership.

By relying on capitalist justice instead of mass rank and file pressure Caughey has been promised re-admittance but has done nothing to change the union and mobilise the membership against its right-wing rulers. In fact he has actually strengthened it against his criticisms and the betrayals of St Helens, by providing them with ammunition to use against him and the cause that he has so ably and loyally represented in the past.

But last week showed the beginnings



GERRY CAUGHEY (with mike) speaking at a Pilkington strike meeting in 1970

by Roger Rosewell

of a new spirit in Pilkingtons. After Caughey had applied for his old job back he was told by management that he had been rejected because: 'We have done this with great care and have concluded that, at this time, it would not be in the interests of the company or its employees to re-engage Mr Caughey.'

The Triplex workers narrowly voted against banning overtime until he was re-employed. The result was 530 for and 541 against. Brian Roberts, the local GMWU branch secretary, has accused the company of interfering with the ballot and intimidating some of the workers.

Before the result was announced he

said: 'The management has said they will not pay us lay-off money if we take industrial action. They are bearing in mind that orders from Ford could slump because of the gas strike and the possibility that some Triplex workers may have to be laid off. It is an attempt to influence the vote.'

Nonetheless the fact that 530 workers voted to ban overtime not for more money or better conditions but in support of an elementary trade union principle could be the beginnings of new hope for the victimised men and Gerry Caughey. Despite our disagreements with him we hope it will succeed.

Christopher Columbus landed first in the New World... and after praising God enquired urgently for gold. The natives, Red Indians, were peaceable and friendly and directed him to Haiti... He sailed to Haiti.

The Spaniards, the most advanced Europeans of their day introduced Christianity, forced labour in mines, murder, rape, bloodhounds, strange diseases, and artificial famine. There was also slave labour. The pillage of Africa.

In 1791 the slaves of San Domingo revolted, the struggle lasted 12 years. The slaves defeated in turn the local armed forces, a British force of about 60,000 men and a French expedition of similar size.

The revolt is the only successful slave revolt in history. It is this revolt that C L R James deals with in his magnificent book, The Black Jacobins.



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POSTSCRIPT

IN GWYN MORGAN's and Denis Healey's old seat as head of the international department at Transport House sits Mr Tom McNally, whose slavish support for American foreign policy is almost a legend.

Last year, the publicity department of the Labour Party drew up a party propaganda poster calling, in strict line with recently-declared executive policy, for the withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam. The poster was seen by McNally, who promptly vetoed it, without giving reasons.

Mr Geoffrey Martin, after a year or two at the merchant bank, Hill Samuel, has recently been appointed director of Shelter, the organisation which claims to look after the interests of the homeless.

In March 1970, Mr Burroughs of the Foreign Office was appointed UK representative in Northern Ireland. He is now in Algeria.

In May last year, a detailed article on the relationship between the funds of the CIA and the politics of right-wing Labour was researched, written and laid out ready for publication in the Sunday Times magazine.

The proof went to Harold Evans, the paper's editor. 'But these are the people we support,' exploded Evans. The article was hastily and expensively replaced.

Mr Evans is an 'adviser on the press' to the Congress for Cultural Freedom.

Loopholes for the rich in Barber's softly, softly budget

WHAT DOES a Tory Chancellor do when he wants to pad the pockets of his rich friends without letting anyone know that's what he's doing?

One way out is to make the move in such a roundabout way, that everyone is blinded by technicalities, and only those who benefit realise what's going on. And that's exactly what Anthony Barber did in his so-called neutral budget last week.

Most tax payers probably thought that the budget contained a morsel for the very poor and nothing for the rich, but that's not quite true. Tucked away half way through the speech, Barber mentioned a new issue of government stock, hardly a subject likely to stir up the interest of the general public.

This stock is called Treasury 3 per cent 1979. That means that 3 per cent interest is paid per annum until 1979, and in that year it is paid back to the purchasers at £100 per block of stock.

Bear with these technicalities because they are important. The point is that though these stocks are worth £100 per unit in 1979, they are being offered for sale by the government now at £75 per unit, and they will rise slowly in value over the next six years to redemption date.

Gold mine

For those very wealthy men who are paying surtax at the full rate of 90 per cent, this stock, of which £400 million worth is being issued, is an absolute gold mine, because they don't pay any tax on the capital appreciation, even though they pay some on the 'fixed' 3 per cent interest.

This is the equivalent of offering them a special taxable stock at interest rate of 50 per cent per annum.

There is another feature of the budget that hasn't received much publicity. The government has confirmed it will introduce a new system of company and personal tax that will mean a 20 per cent increase in dividend income during 1973/74, for those people who are lucky enough not to have to work for their living but who can instead live off the earnings of others.

The tables below show the difference. The column on the left shows how the old tax system works for every £100 of profit that a company makes. The company pays the government



BARBER: stocking up

40 per cent on the profit (in fact it is often lower because of the tax allowances for companies that invest in new labour saving machinery).

That leaves the company with £60 to pay in dividends. The amount paid out varies from company to company, but our example represents the average pay-out for UK industry. The shareholder then has to pay personal tax on his dividends. In this case that leaves him £24.50.

The new system will work as in column two. The company pays 50 per cent tax on its profits. It then pays a net dividend (that means free of personal tax). The only thing is that the tax rate on the first £2000 of dividends has been dropped to 30 per cent.

Now, the Phase Two freeze allows companies to increase their gross (that's before personal tax) dividends by 5 per cent. 5 per cent on £40 is £2, see line 4. The individual then pays 30 per cent tax and keeps the rest, which is 20 per cent more than he received the year before.

But the story hasn't ended yet. Because the company can offset that personal tax against its own company tax. So in the example here, the company's tax bill would fall to £37.40 which is lower than last year and the amount of money left in the business will increase from £20 to £20.60.

In this way the government's new tax measures to be introduced in April and confirmed in the budget, will increase the dividend income of the rich.

OLD		NEW	
Pre-tax profits	100	100	
Tax @ 40 per cent	40	50	
Dividends	60	50	
Personal tax @ 38% per cent	40	40	
Personal tax @ 30 per cent	15.5	12.6	
Leaving in shareholders' hands	24.5	29.4 + 20 per cent	

GALE THAT CAN BLOW DOWN THE TORIES...

WE ARE in the midst of a gale. The industrial struggle has risen to a high level in a short period of time. The unfolding of this class struggle makes it possible—and necessary—to have a clear picture of the whole field of battle.

The 1950s and 1960s were a time of localised fragmented struggles, involving small groups of workers for short periods. Now there are something like one million workers in direct conflict with employers and government. The difference between a fragmented struggle and one involving large numbers of workers is a qualitative difference.

The results of a fragmented struggle, whether victorious or defeated, do not affect the entire class. But a victory or defeat for tens of thousands of workers in one battle affects the morale of millions—and morale is the key to every struggle.

The central problem of the current confrontation is one of strategy. The labour movement does not move forward in a cohesive manner.

The struggle is uneven. Readiness to fight is not necessarily accompanied by organisational forms that can sustain the movement effectively.

Workers can move extremely quickly—as teachers, health workers and civil servants have proved—from comparative backwardness to a high level of militancy. But the organisations necessary to sustain such militancy and lead it to victory take time to create.

BASIC CAUSE

When the level of struggle and the form of organisation are not compatible one of them will give way. Either the form of organisation will rise to the level of the needs of the movement or the struggle will slow down to the level of the existing organisational framework.

This is the basic cause of the extreme volatility of the new sections of workers now engaged in action.

In addition, ideas develop unevenly. Take the question of the need to generalise the present struggle. Civil servants, teachers and health workers are ready to accept the idea that what is necessary to beat the government is a link-up between all workers in the public sector and to



by **TONY CLIFF**

Executive Committee member, International Socialists

connect them with other workers in the private sector.

But this willingness to see the struggle in general terms flows from the weakness of those sections, their inability to inflict serious damage on government and employers. Sections which have considerable economic power, like Ford workers, are less ready to accept the idea of the need for a general, united fight.

Another crucial problem in a massive confrontation is for militants to have the active support of the mass of workers they work with. Here again, in sections that have little experience and tradition of struggle, the militants have close links with the less advanced workers. In the case of teachers, their unit of work is small, and superficially, it might seem more difficult to organise them than engineers or car workers.

But because they are latecomers to the struggle, the militant socialist teacher is in close touch with the rest of his or her colleagues at the place of work.

On the other hand, sections with long traditions of militancy have created institutions, such as shop stewards' committees, that have won many concessions from the employers. But often those concessions were gained with little involvement of the members at a time when capitalism was expanding swiftly and the employers were ready to give way to even slight pressure.

Now that battles are taking on a more decisive character, the fact that

Ford stewards have not been used to involving their own rank and file or keeping in close touch with one another appears as a grave weakness.

This situation is a result of the past and must be overcome. Mass meetings and leaflets outlining the workers' case could have, and should have, overcome these bad traditions.

Government and employers are well aware of the weakness of health workers and civil servants and the danger of a united struggle between them and sections with strong economic power. One of the main aims of the Tories is to avoid pushing the sections together.



HEATH: talk sweetly to unions

The Financial Times, the big business paper, has spelt out that the government must avoid provoking such a confrontation. Heath must play it quietly and talk sweetly to Vic Feather in order to mark time and let the gas workers, health workers, civil servants and teachers sweat it out.

Workers must draw the obvious lessons from this. It is vital to create

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DEVON'S LONG RUNNING TRAGEDY

by Jimmy Rule

AUEW shop steward, Holman Brothers, Camborne, Cornwall

AS FAR AS Tom Barclay, boss of the American-owned Fine Tubes of Plymouth, is concerned, the most successful show currently running in the West Country is the strike now universally known as 'the Fine Tubes dispute'.

Now entering its third hilarious year, with the whole trade union movement unable or unwilling to help, Tory employers everywhere must be curled up laughing, watching the trade union movement in retreat once more.

The strike is for a basic right, namely to be recognised as trade unionists. The 37 members still courageously holding out stomp the country for financial and moral support with hardly a union official in sight.

At the time of writing 14, or is it 40, Labour MPs say they are going to do something about this strike in the House of Commons. Where are all the other Labour MPs?

But then it really doesn't matter because we are all beginning to learn the hard way that the parliamentary Labour Party are becoming mere spectators in any working-class struggle.

The bosses have nothing to fear while Mr Wilson is prepared to go on television and say that he is going to give Phase Two a speedy passage through parliament. Or when we are all treated to lunatic statements from Reg Prentice about 'the law of the land'.

Where does co-operation end and suicide begin?

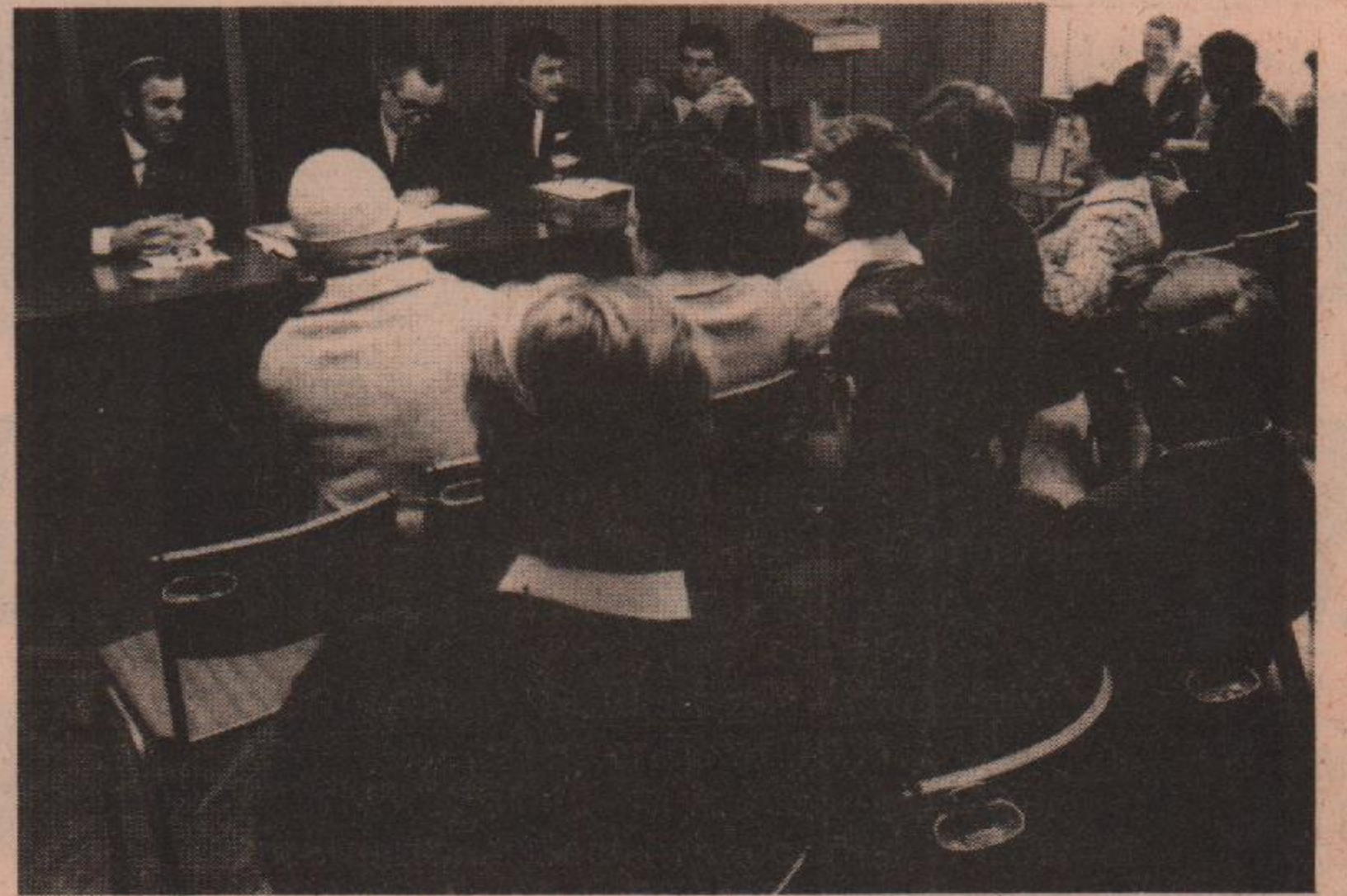
FRUGAL

The cry of the courageous 37 in the wilderness goes unheeded. Perhaps if we keep quiet they will one day go away and then we can all go back to safe ground once more offering up our prayer for 'the low paid', 'old age pensioners' and 'those on fixed incomes'.

Sad to say, also, it is the West Country trade unionists who have been most frugal with support for their brothers and sisters in Plymouth.

It is a pity that the China Clay workers of St Austell, who found the energy to join their boss in a march against the dockers last summer, and who were promptly congratulated by Vic Feather on their excellent standard of industrial relations, could not find the same energy to march in support of their brothers and sisters at Fine Tubes.

We should not complain about the capitalist press when we are hard put to recall any publicity ever given to the Fine Tubes dispute or, for that matter, any other dispute in the AUEW Journal, the magazine that gave Robert Carr ample space to explain his reactionary Industrial Relations Bill.



Fine Tubes strike committee: hardly a union official in sight

We have seen a photograph of Jim Conway, our general secretary, presenting a cup for some obscure table tennis championship. But to the majority of trade unionists, the faces of our brothers and sisters at Fine Tubes, leading an important fight, remain unknown.

It is hoped that on Monday 19 March large numbers of trade unionists and people from other bodies connected with the working-class struggle will travel to Plymouth for a national picket day, in the hope of successfully ending this strike.

For the benefit of those who missed the details of the dispute the first time round, here is a brief outline once more.

The strike was originally for a wage increase, but with the advent of a Tory government this was soon changed to a struggle for trade union recognition.

There are 37 members still on strike—31 TGWU members and six AUEW members. Despite efforts by the executive councils of both unions, the TUC, a government Committee of Inquiry and numerous other prominent bodies, the dispute is no nearer to being settled than it was when it first started on 15 June 1970.

After the government inquiry which came down on the side of the strikers, Mr Barclay, the boss of Fine Tubes, said that if all the strikers signed on the dole, they would be given preferential consideration for re-employment if and when a job came up, providing they

were still on the dole. This offer was naturally thrown out.

At a Fine Tubes national conference held in Birmingham last October, support was given for, among other things, the blacking of Fine Tubes' products, which is very disappointing to say the least since rank and file efforts in this area could have been tremendously effective.

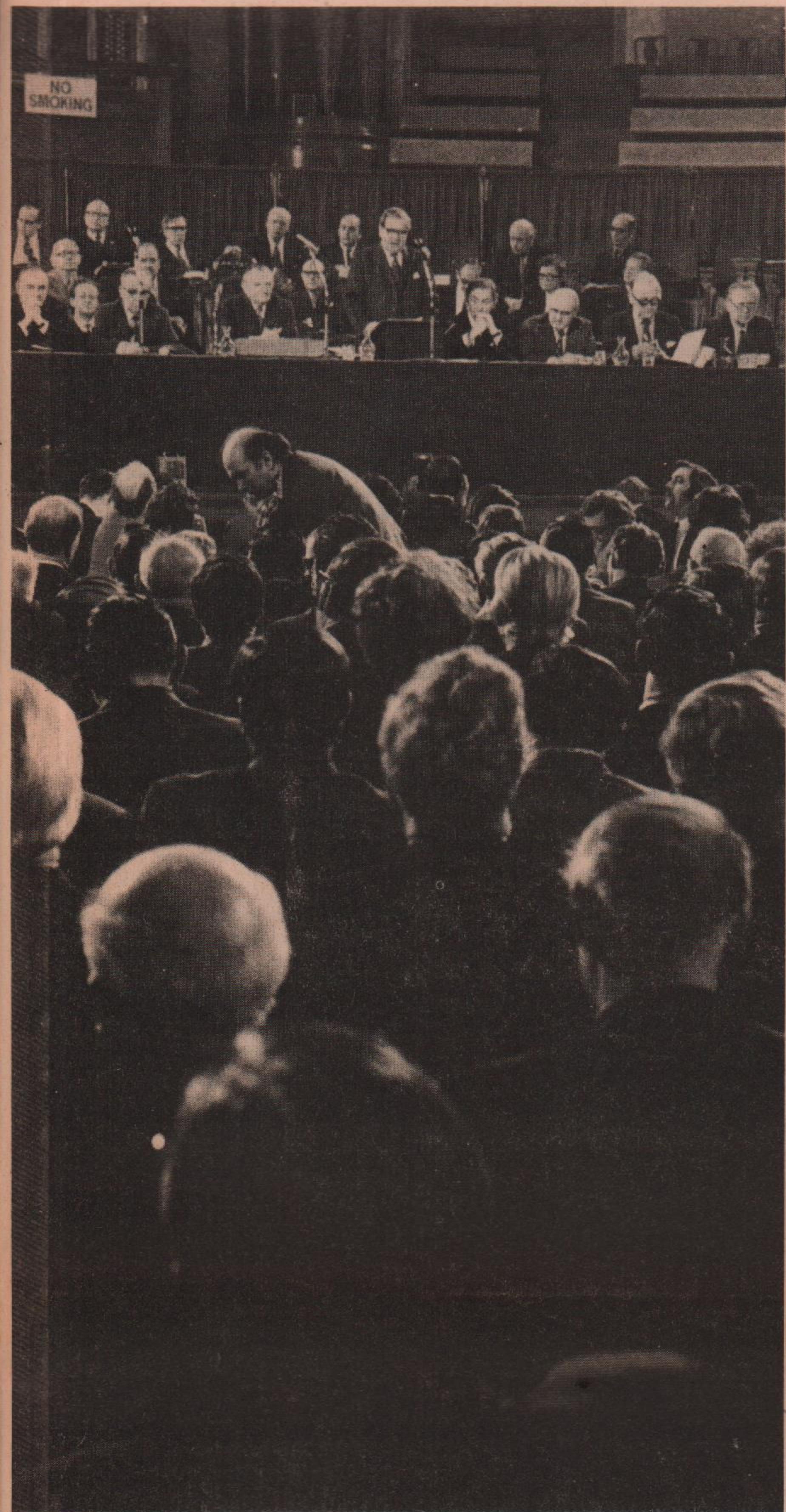
RETREAT

We have had the Industrial Relations Act, Phase One and Phase Two and God knows what else to come. The trade unions are in retreat when their best form of defence is attack.

Trade unions are the ones with the real power because of their numbers. They should start using it for other things besides the annual wage claim.

The Fine Tubes' fight is a fight that surely must not be lost after three years of struggle. It can be won with the full support of other trade unionists, not only by turning up at Fine Tubes on Monday at 6.30am for the national picket day.

● Jimmy Rule's article was submitted originally to the AUEW Journal but rejected for publication. The address of the Fine Tubes Strike Committee is 65 Bretonside, Exeter Street, Plymouth, Devon. Telephone 0752 65459.



The TUC special congress: no challenge to the Tories—now it is up to the rank and file

and enlarge the public sector alliance and to bring it into touch with other workers in industry. They must campaign for an immediate strike by groups such as the miners who have an important wage claim in and who could certainly beat the government.

Workers already engaged in the battle must spread their action. For example, gas workers should insist that the Gas Corporation switch off natural gas supplies to major industrial consumers.

The miners' effective use of flying pickets should be taken up. Picketing of power stations can have quite dramatic results.

URGENT TASK

Authentic councils of action need to be built in every area, uniting workers involved in struggle and cutting across sectional boundaries. The Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, which played an important role in getting half a million workers on strike against the Industrial Relations Bill in December 1970, should have created solidly-based local liaison committees. That task is now more urgent than ever.

The fight must also be waged on the ideological front. There will be enormous pressure on workers not to take on the government after 2 April, when strikes for higher wages under Phase Two will be illegal.

One question will be asked time and time again: 'Is it possible to beat the government?'

Any struggle demands knowledge and the will to win. Where a small group of workers are involved and the battlefield is familiar, will-power is less important than knowledge.

The fight is a familiar one. It has been fought many times before. You know your own army, you know the enemy.

But when the battle is between massive forces, with armies of workers that have no previous experience of struggle, daring and will-power are vital ingredients of success.

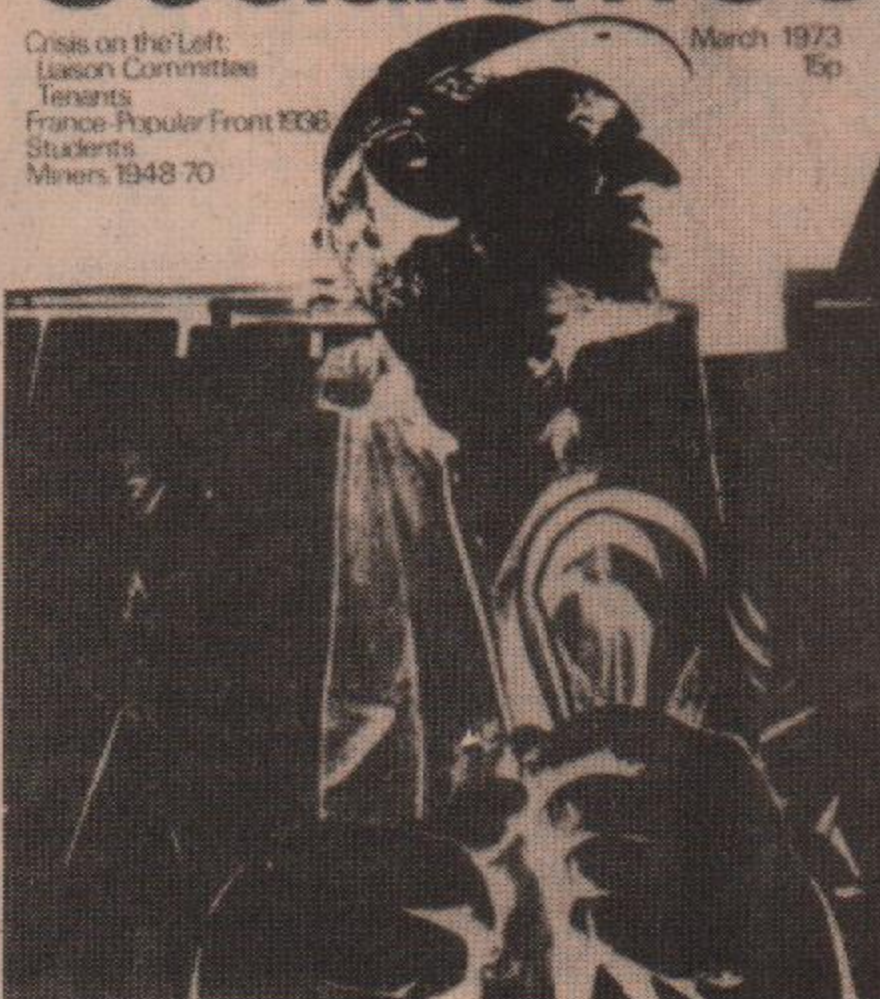
'Can we beat the government?' The question will not be answered if we shrink from the possibility of success. If we can mobilise and unite workers at present in action and those currently on the sidelines there is no doubt that a massive and potentially successful challenge to the government can be mounted.

The working class suffers from unevenness between different sections and in the development of consciousness and organisation. Under such conditions, daring to act is far more important than the 'safety' of guaranteed victory.

To help overcome this unevenness the working class and especially its advanced sections vitally need a revolutionary party that is a school of strategy and tactics and at the same time a combat organisation of the class.

ence is vital

International Socialism 56



The March issue of International Socialism journal takes a critical look at the state of the left as the working class prepares for a major confrontation with the government and analyses the experience of recent key struggles.

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Jules Townsend: **The Liaison Committee**

Hugh Kerr: **The Tenants' Struggle**

Richard Kirkwood: **France 1936**

Martin Shaw: **Student revolutionaries**

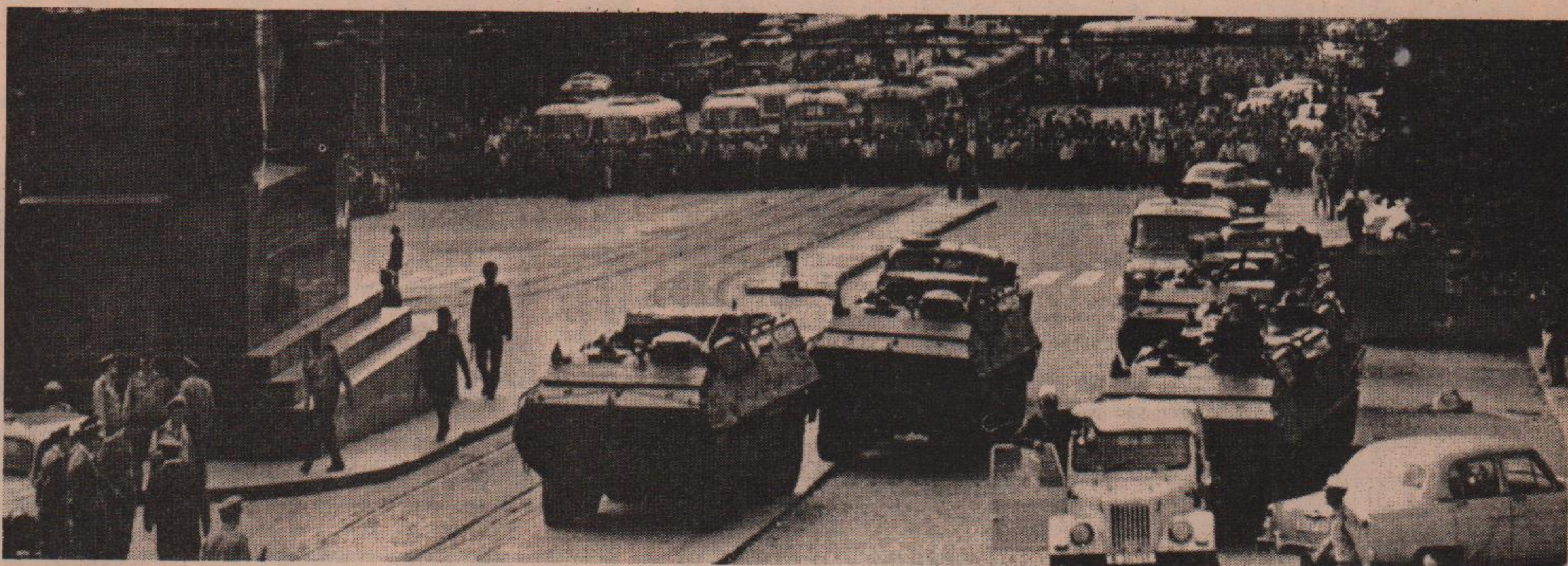
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WHEN WORKERS' RIGHTS MEANT 'COUNTER REVOLUTION'



Prague 1968: the tanks rolled in and reform was crushed

THERE is still a good deal of confusion on the left about what happened in Czechoslovakia in 1968. Many people continue to think that what took place was a 'counter-revolution'. At the other extreme are those who believe that Alexander Dubcek was God's gift to socialism.

The value of this book is that it brings together writings from many of the people involved in the struggle to transform Czechoslovakia. In doing so it provides a clear refutation of the idea that a 'reactionary movement' developed. The movement was confused, it had little clarity as to what its final goals were, it brought together a variety of people from a variety of backgrounds.

But it was above all a movement that aimed to change a society that had become oppressive to the majority. As Gustav Husak, who was to later play such a prominent role

Czechoslovakia: The Party and the People. Edited by Andrew Oxley, Alex Pravda and Andrew Ritchie, Penguin Press £4.50.

in destroying the movement, admitted: 'The question of the redress of the wrongs which have happened in the last 20 years is being felt acutely by the general public... Wherever we turn we come across a sea of demands and complaints, many grievances which have built up through the years...'

What is even more significant is that those who demanded the greatest changes were those who tried most to base themselves upon the working class in the factories and mines. The manifesto '2000 Words' was denounced as 'counter-revolutionary' by the Russians because it urged workers to intervene in politics through 'electing as their representatives on trade union bodies their natural

leaders' and by 'strikes' and 'demonstrations'.

And the Prague philosopher Ivan Svitak gained a notoriety in the eyes of the Russians—who again denounced him as a 'counter-revolutionary'—because he urged workers to raise their own demands: 'The writers... forget to explain to the workers the elementary matter of what civil rights mean for the basic class in our society, the working class... They mean firstly, the right to strike, secondly, elections of directors by producers, thirdly, the defence of the rights of workers by free trade unions.'

By contrast, the 'moderate' reformers, like Dubcek, were frightened of any independent initiative by workers. Although their own

speeches were sprinkled liberally with phrases about 'socialism' and 'working-class leadership' they, like the Russians, denounced '2000 Words' as providing 'directions as how to disorganise state and social organisations', precisely because of its talk of action by workers through strikes and demonstrations.

The major fault with the book is that its editors have not themselves fully grasped the significance of the divisions between the different groups pressing for change in 1968. They argue that 'Dubcek genuinely wanted to do what the people wanted', although it is probable that, given the chance, Dubcek would have re-established an oppressive regime in Czechoslovakia under his own control.

Chris Harman

Nipping through a little Nipponese history...

FEW PEOPLE know much about the regime that took Japan into the Second World War or about its origins. What gave Japanese capitalism and fascism its particular character?

For most people in the West at the time, the Japanese had hardly got beyond Madam Butterfly and Gilbert and Sullivan's Mikado.

Bergamini's book sets out to reconstruct what happened. It takes him 1018 pages of text—which must be just about all the notes he gathered in the 3½ years' work (the back cover

Japan's Imperial Conspiracy, by David Bergamini, Panther, £1.00.

contradicts the introduction and says it took seven years' work)—to run through the years from AD50.

It is the sheer detail which excites our author ('the conferees agreed that the note should be dispatched at 4am Japanese time, on 7 December—23½ hours before the scheduled time of attack—and should be handed to the President at 3am, 8 December, Japanese time: that is at 1pm, 7 December Washington time, or at 7.30am, 7 December,

Pearl Harbor time'), and all the anecdotes about the factional infighting within the highest segment of the ruling class.

The Japanese people do not figure except as the instruments of imperial policy. Nor does the great depression of the 1930s which pulverised the Japanese economy and working class.

Bergamini's main aim—apart from stringing together innumerable detective yarns—is to prove that Emperor

Hirohito was primarily responsible for the course of events that led to Japan's entry into the Second World War and the conduct of the war. This was denied by the US Occupation forces in Japan since Washington needed Japan as its eastern bulwark against the Soviet Union and later China.

Hirohito became the key element in making conservative the reforms the US introduced, in preventing the destruction of Japanese feudalism laying the basis for a socialist revolution.

However, Bergamini's aim might seem now a bit odd. Surely only the blindest legal pedant could care whether Hirohito was or was not personally responsible? In the catastrophe of the Second World War, it is enough to identify the responsibility of the barbarous capitalist powers, of the system.

Personal responsibility in Bergamini's sense only becomes important if you want to *acquit* the ruling class of Japan and the US (and the rest) of collective responsibility by finding a scapegoat. Indirectly, buried in this account, is a generalised defence of the US ruling class.

Wilful

Bergamini expresses his beliefs quite clearly in the introduction. He believes that 'history is not determined by blind economic and demographic forces; that the much maligned masses of a country play little part in it; that the responsibility for it belongs primarily to a few wilful individuals who take upon the professional duties of government.'

This is why we end up with anecdotes, without the real participants.

But, on occasions, the account leaps into life as it comes close to real history. Roosevelt, fully aware from espionage reports, that within five days the US would be at war with Japan, and mainly worried about keeping the record straight (ie ensuring Japanese forces fired

the first shot).

Or Stalin in 1941 hugging the Foreign Minister of Japanese fascism (Japan was long since a member of the anti-Comintern pact)—'Stalin raised a glass of red juice and boomed: "Banzai for the Emperor... The US may build a large navy but it will never have the spiritual strength of the Japanese navy... You are an Asiatic and so am I... The European problem can be solved naturally if Japan and the Soviet Union co-operate".'

But on the left, Bergamini is awful. Listen to him describing what the inner core of key noblemen hoped to create in pre-war Japan—'a parliamentary marxist theocracy; a monolithic one party super tribe built on racism'.

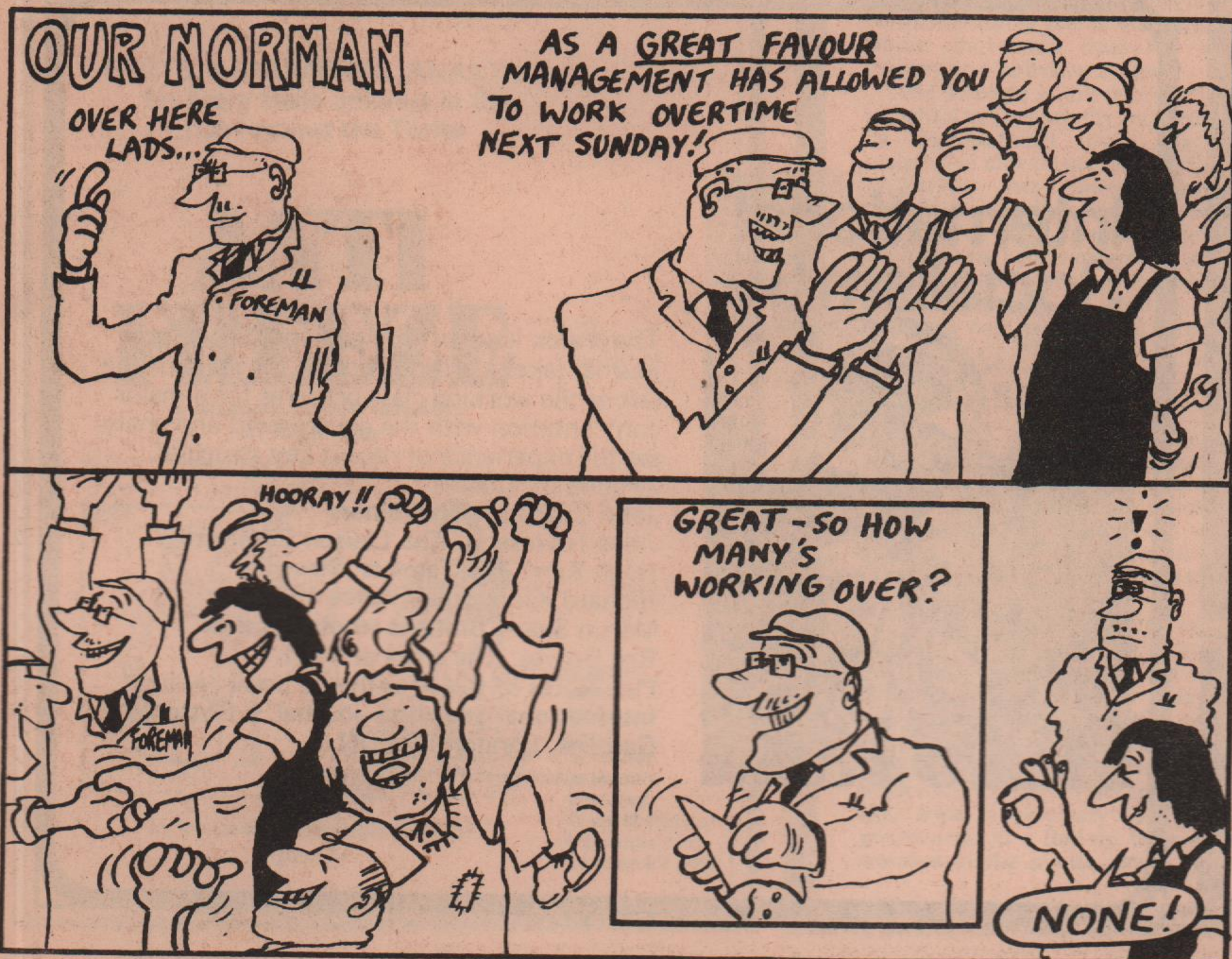
Platoon

And on the modern Japanese left, he asserts without qualification that 'most mass movements in Japan have been mobilised as instruments of policy for dealing with the United States. Demonstrations outside the US Embassy in Tokyo have regularly featured a platoon of vociferous leftists accompanied by regiments of common folk who turn out because they enjoy demonstrating and because they respond to the hints of policemen, ward heelers or student leaders.'

'Rioters may feel in need of expressing indignation, students may think they are genuinely radical, but in politically sophisticated Japan they are masterminded by organisers who can usually be identified as the ambitious retainers of staid public figures.'

No matter that he is a liar. It expresses an attitude of mind. The liberal centre will love Bergamini's book, for it offers them a painless and conservative way of being critical of US policy: Washington was wrong to let Hirohito off, but right in most other things.

Nigel Harris



A new Peckinpah movie on the American dream turned sour...plus the 'alternative' cinema

FILMS are usually sold on their stars. Occasionally the director is big enough to get the audience into the cinema: Kubrick for *Clockwork Orange* and *2001*, Ken Russell for *Music Lovers* and *Women in Love*. A third example is Sam Peckinpah.

Peckinpah has directed a series of box-office smashes—*The Wild Bunch*, *Straw Dogs* and, currently on general release, *The Getaway*. He's been around a long time and in between the blockbusters have been a string of excellent movies which have attracted smaller notice: *The Ballad of Cable Hogue*, *Ride the High Country*, *Major Dundee* and recently another Steve McQueen vehicle, *Junior Bonner*.

The Getaway is about a bank robber Doc McCoy (McQueen) serving five years in a Texan prison. Through the intervention of a corrupt politician he obtains his release. The price? One more bank job, and, as he later learns, his wife (Ali McGraw) has slept with the politician.

The bulk of the story is concerned with the aftermath of the last robbery. McQueen is double-crossed, kills some of his fellow robbers, is pursued across the arid Texan landscape and through the neon lit towns of the south-west by the law and by the remains of the gang.

Not an unfamiliar story line. Large chunks of it are reminiscent of *Bonnie and Clyde*. The interest comes from Peckinpah's direction.

Peckinpah is in love with the American frontier tradition. And that makes for a very ambiguous relationship.

On one hand, one man in it for himself, trusting nothing but money ('In God we trust,' says McQueen fingering a dollar bill), on the other a hatred for a system which has built a million hamburger bars and destroyed the adventure and freedom which were the supposed features of the American West.

The opening sequence of the film is a deer, eating grass on a green pasture. The camera cuts back and reveals a wall, cuts back again and reveals a building, concrete and brick, cuts back again and reveals the electrified fence of the Texan prison.

The rampant individualism has created the concrete wilderness and all the guy who believes in freedom can do is to try and break out of it.

The result is that the heroes in Peckinpah movies are always men out of their time, too old, too tired, forced into situations against their choosing but always with the capacity to break out—a capacity which usually reveals itself in supreme technical competence at killing, robbing or organisation.

In *The Wild Bunch* a gang of outlaws have been driven into the south-west by the advance of



McQueen and McGraw: trusting in the paper god

NO ESCAPE FROM THE GREEN BACK

civilisation in the shape of church parades, dime stores and General Pershing's army (the year is 1910).

Amoral, rootless, concerned with nothing but the fast buck, the survivors of the gang are at the end of the film driven to go with a group of peasant revolutionaries not because they decide to be good but for a much more plausible reason: 'There's nothing else going.'

If the heroes are flawed, so is the opposition, which in the *Getaway* mixes crime and the law in the shape of the corrupt politician.

Not only is the system corrupt but it is also based on meaningless rituals which conceal clashes in society but can't prevent them. A church parade in *Wild Bunch* is interrupted by the holocaust of a bank robbery, in *Straw Dogs* a church social is the backcloth for a near lynching, in *Junior Bonner* a Country and Western band plays on as the bar dissolves into a huge drunken brawl. A similar situation develops during the robbery in *The Getaway*.

The Getaway is not about 1910 or 1880, but 1972 and escapes don't

come on white horses. The most telling scene in the film is when McQueen and McGraw are trapped at night by the police in a small town. They escape in a garbage truck, buried under tons of rubbish, and are dumped in the desert.

The tool Peckinpah uses to analyse America is the myth of the West. It isn't adequate, but it's a lot better than the empty platitudes of *Midnight Cowboy* or the phony romance of *Butch Cassidy*.

Nigel Fountain

Liberated ladies keep on the blinkers

WE'VE ALL got the 'flu at our house, which brings me to Pauline Black, Frederica Lord, Liz Ferris, Dorothy Denham, Juliet Mitchell, Brigid Segrave, old Auntie Lis Custow and all.

'No Man's Land'. ITV Saturdays. Don't get the idea it's taking over the shopping, cooking, cleaning and child-minding for the last five days which has forced Women's Lib to the forefront of my mind. (Ever tried deep-fried sprouts? Done to a turn in 45 seconds).

Honest, I've been fighting male-chauvinist indoctrination all the way through childhood, school, National Service and the public bar of the Princess Louise. I don't think I've quite won the battle against the instestinal urge to male conformity. I've been living in sin for 14 years but I still call Ann my wife to the neighbours.

But still, some of my best women are friends, so I hope no one's going to think I'm attacking The Movement when I criticise No Man's Land.

D'you mind if I break off for a moment? I want to say that I don't see any point in my trying to criticise particular TV programmes. I can see no profit in telling you lot what I think you ought to have thought about last Wednesday's 'Marker', or whether there's any social significance in the fact that 'Man Alive' is repeated on Saturday afternoons.

In picking on 'No Man's Land', I do so because it represents something which bugs me about TV in general and about the attitude which is responsible for it. And also because the women named promised us some Liberated Television and that, viewers, is what we have not got.

What we've got is a lot of vacuous liberal chit-chat about a subject which, whether you regard it as a threat or a promise, is a serious political issue. What



we've got is some snippets of film in which your actual real people talk about themselves, followed by a studio discussion between a crowd of Dames of the British Empire and Peregrine (Blue Rinse) Worsethorpe.

Just to make things democratic the women out of the film clips are given seats in the back row and allowed to speak if they can get a word in. There are also a number of well-known liberated woman and well-mannered lefties to challenge Peregrine or any of the other interchangeable Instant Reactionaries invited onto the programme to placate the IBA.

Let me say at once that the women interviewed on film are all first class. They prove once and for all that ordinary working-class people are perfectly capable of putting their own point of view in a perfectly articulate fashion.

So who needs the debating society? Why use these clear-cut cases of social injustice as fodder for a crowd of pundits and the pontifications of a lot of do-it-yourself-Portias?

I'm sorry about that. It was the alliteration tempted me.

Why does Brigid Segrave think she has to put on a programme on behalf of suffering and deprived people when all

she has to do is to let the suffering people put on their own programme? She ought to know by now that a programme which has nine-tenths airtime devoted to experts discussing a social problem is a programme about experts discussing a social problem.

What it is not is a programme about the social problem. The fact is that people like Segrave are not primarily concerned with the difficulties of the people who let her use them in the film clips. She's concerned about the 'programme content' of the show she's putting on. And the show she's putting on is a chat show.

Otherwise why doesn't she give the people in the film clips the free run of the studio? Why doesn't she let those women face the social security officials who've been persecuting them? Why doesn't she give the kids a chance to interrogate their headmasters and mistresses? The assembly-line wives their male employers, the secretaries their bosses, the models the advertising tycoons? Why not?

Arbitrate

I've a strong suspicion that Segrave and her mates consider that they and they alone think themselves qualified to arbitrate on what the programmes are to be about. And what these programmes are about is a middle-class intellectual liberal's view of female solidarity. Solidarity in the face of any kind of contradiction.

In the programme about single-handed mums there was film of a couple of working-class girls, and a middle-class girl who'd also been left by her husband. We were supposed to conclude that where the single-parent family's concerned hardship knows no barriers of

class.

But it was screamingly obvious that the life-style of the working-class women was totally different from that of the other girl. The latter was studying for a degree, had well-scrubbed wallpaper and flower-patterned children. You wouldn't get any psychiatrist telling her she might as well accept the fact that she was no different from a tart and ask her boy-friends for the rent to make up the social security payments.

The point I'm making is that this glaring difference of class, background, educational level, articulacy and social mobility, is obliterated in the need, dictated by Segrave, to make the one isolated point—women are badly treated.

It's true that women are badly treated. We can't be told often enough that women are badly treated. We need to be told it by the women themselves, not by a lot of experts who happen to be women.

I'm willing to bet that if the three women in the programme I've mentioned, together with a dozen more, had been let loose in front of the cameras we'd have learned a lot more about the economic and class victimisation of the female that we did from the Dames and the Poverty Action lot we had to listen to.

What I'm accusing Segrave of is using the old formulas, the old 'discussion' format, which appears to encourage a free-for-all, while in reality it suppresses any kind of free expression. Or truth.

Shame on you, Segrave. You've been pussyfooting around and aping BBC mannerisms. Male chauvinist mannerisms at that.

Tom Clarke

FILM CUTS

THE EVENTS of May 1968 in France had many effects on the European left. One of the less dramatic, but nonetheless useful, was the establishment in London of the Other Cinema.

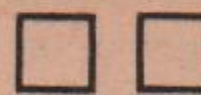
There are several groups of revolutionary film makers at work in Britain producing useful material, Cinema Action and the Berwick Street Film Collective being examples. The problem is distribution.

Making movies is one thing—showing them is something else. The Other Cinema is an attempt to get round the problem. Writing about the type of film makers represented in the Other Cinema's catalogue, Nick Hart-Williams says:

'They are film journalists or film artists. They seek to change people's perceptions of political, social or personal situations, often with the aid of new film forms... With the support of many people (both within and without the "industry") the company was formed two years ago, as a non-profit making distribution organisation, to promote and distribute the work of independent film makers.

'We must, for the moment, use every means to get the films shown in whatever manner possible. This would include screenings in local public cinemas. But in fact the major film companies in conjunction with the two circuits have a near stranglehold on the cinemas in this country. Only a handful of cinemas in this country are independent of circuit films, and even they have little space—if any—for independent films.'

As a first stage the Other Cinema is attempting to set up in London a permanent centre and the hope is to establish some kind of national network, whether based on individuals and halls or permanent buildings elsewhere. As it is the group have a large number of films for hire, as is shown below, all available on 16mm.



Punishment Park was Peter Watkins' last film. Watkins achieved fame with his *War Game*, banned by the BBC which graphically portrayed the effect of 'limited' nuclear war on southern England. *Punishment Park* is about the USA in the near future and a bizarre method of coercion used against political prisoners. It lasts 88 minutes and is in colour.

ICE is also set in the States and deals with a revolutionary group operating once again in the 'near future'. Heavily slated by *Socialist Worker* when it came out, it remains an interesting if nutty movie of one sort of struggle which ain't gonna work.

The Baddest Daddy in the Whole World is a 50-minute colour movie on Muhammad Ali. *Who Cares?*—18 minutes on the reactions of the ordinary people of northern cities to the waves of 'redevelopment' which have swept over them.

South America has produced a string of films on the struggle against the regimes of that continent, and they're good. *The Hour of the Furnaces* is a massive film on Argentina, Mexico: *The Frozen Revolution* deals with 50 years of Mexico from 1910.

Also available is an incredibly rare Russian film of the 1920s made by the famous Soviet director Medvekin which shows how the Russians solved their distribution problem with an 'agitprop' train, complete with cinema and printing press.

All the above, and the *Other Cinema's* catalogue, are available from 12/13 Little Newport Street, London WC2H 7JJ.

On Friday 16 March, BBC2 is showing Jean Luc Godard's *Les Carabiniers*. The film is about war, the technique is revolutionary and it's worth seeing.

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WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

We believe in independent working-class action for the abolition of capitalism and its replacement by a classless society with production for use and not for profit.

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

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

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

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

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

In addition to building a revolutionary socialist organisation in this country we also believe in the necessity of forming a world revolutionary socialist international independent of either Washington or Moscow. To this end we have close relationships with a number of other socialist organisations throughout the world.

We believe in the necessity to unite socialist theory with the day-to-day struggles of working people and therefore support all genuine demands that tend to improve the position and self-confidence of the working class.

We fight:

For rank and file control of the trade unions and the regular election of all full-time officials.

Against secret negotiations. We believe that all settlements should be agreed or rejected by mass meetings.

For 100 per cent trade unionism and the defence of shop stewards.

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

For equal pay and a better deal for young workers.

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

For a minimum wage of at least £25 a week.

Against unemployment, redundancy and lay offs. We support the demand: Five days' work or five days' pay.

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

Against racialism and police victimisation of black workers.

Against immigration restriction.

For the right of coloured people and all oppressed groups to organise in their own defence.

For real social, economic and political equality for women.

Against all nuclear weapons and military alliances such as NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

Against secret diplomacy.

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

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

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

The struggle for socialism is the central struggle of our time. Workers' power and a world based on human solidarity, on the increasing of man's power over nature, with the abolition of the power of man over man, is certainly worth fighting for.

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

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THE UNIONS

Make or break conference of the trade union Liaison Committee

STAGE ARMY OR FIGHTING FORCE?

by Andrew Sayers
THE LIAISON COMMITTEE for the defence of trade unions is organising another conference in London on 31 March. Hundreds of delegates from trade union branches, districts, trades councils and shop steward committees are expected to attend.

As usual they will discuss and vote for a 'resolution of intent' on the way forward in the present industrial struggle. Many of those same militants will, on the past record of the LCDTU, have lurking doubts on the value of the exercise.

Many will leave the hall with the nagging feeling of having achieved little. Yet they will still travel to the conference, and probably the next one as well.

The reason for the support of the LCDTU enjoys is quite simple. This year working people up and down the country are faced with tremendous tasks and difficulties.

The Industrial Relations Act is still on the statute book. The freeze threatens the living standard of all workers, at a time when inflation is bound to accelerate rather than decrease.

FIGHTING

In a number of major industries such as steel and mining massive redundancies will lay waste whole areas of the country.

The trade union movement enters all these struggles with one hand tied behind its back. It is fragmented, divided, and with a leadership bent on defending the rights of the bosses' laws and government rather than those of its members.

Those attending the LCDTU conference will be looking for unity and a clear fighting perspective. They will be there because they recognise the need for a rank and file movement of militants to orient and direct the struggle and to unify all sections of the class in action.

The LCDTU is the only organisation in this country at the moment that has the potential to fulfill such a role. It was started back in 1966 as a 'parliamentary lobby organising committee' against Labour's incomes policy. The driving force behind its formation was the Communist Party.

When Labour's In Place of Strife was published, the activities of the committee were stepped up. In February 1969 it was instrumental in bringing out 150,000, mainly on the Clyde and the Mersey.

GROUNDSWELL

On May Day that year 250,000 downed tools in response to its call. There can be no doubt that its activities played an important part in the defeat of Labour's attack on the unions.

It was in the mobilisation against the Industrial Relations Act that the LCDTU scored its greatest achievements. It was effectively able to tap the great groundswell of opposition to the Heath government.

In the autumn of 1970 a conference was held in London to organise opposition to the Act. It was to be the high point of the LCDTU's life.

So many attended that they could not all be contained in the hall and an overspill meeting had to be held. The atmosphere was electric and full of confidence.

The conference resolved to organise stoppages on 8 December and despite TUC attempts at sabotage 600,000 struck.

In 1971 the committee organised



The 1970 Liaison Committee conference: the potential was squandered

stoppages on 12 January. Its example and activities were no doubt one of the factors which led to the two official engineering strikes of 1 and 18 March. But the LCDTU's active opposition waned from that moment;

Other conferences were held but compared to earlier ones, they were not only smaller, but lacked a fighting spirit. They became essentially showpieces.

Last year saw some of the most important battles which the working class has fought in the last few years, including the massive wave of strikes to free the 'Pentonville five' and the engineers' opposition to the Industrial Relations Act.

SHRUNK

The committee did not play any significant role in either. The present conference is being called as Phase One of the freeze is ending.

In a real sense the potential which existed in 1970 has been squandered. The committee has lived an uneasy life between pressure group politics and an interventionist organisation. Ready at times to call token strikes, it has shrunk from becoming a meaningful body organising activities locally as well as nationally.

Unless the nature of the committee can be changed its decline is inevitable. Last week's recall TUC amply demonstrated that even right wingers like Joe Gormley can make left-wing noises and call for token action.

What they will not do is to give effective support to those sections of workers that are fighting. The postmen's defeat was the direct result of the inactivity and lack of solidarity of other sections of workers.

The miners' victory was due to the support that they received from

the labour movement. Today the gas men, the hospital workers and teachers are fighting for all workers against the freeze. They do not need words and protest strikes alone, they need concrete help.

Unless this help is forthcoming, token action becomes a way of preventing a struggle taking place, not an aid to it. The LCDTU, if it is to fulfill its potential, must relate to these problems, it must co-ordinate locally and nationally militants in all unions and industries, day in, day out.

At the LCDTU conference last year some delegates tried to put forward resolutions that would have led to the creation of local committees, affiliated to the national body. They were turned down by the chair, which traditionally refuses to take any resolutions. The result was a year of inactivity, of lost opportunities.

BUSINESS

This year the choice facing the committee is clear. Rank and file pressure is forcing even the right wing of the union bureaucracy into calling profest action.

The committee can bask in the reflected light, claim successes in pushing the union leaderships to the left, praise to the sky the TUC's meek, two-faced efforts.

On the other hand it can get down to the business at hand. That is the development of committees of action, local branches of the LCDTU, to help and co-ordinate all sections in struggle against the government.

● Applications for delegates credentials for the LCDTU conference from trade union organisations should be sent to: Mr Jim Hiles, 137 Wanstead Park Road, Ilford, Essex.

Local committees in every area essential

John MacLean anniversary

I RECENTLY had a letter published in many of the left papers appealing for support from all those who are interested in activity to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the death of John MacLean, the courageous and beloved revolutionary, who was at the centre of the struggles on 'Red Clydeside' during and after the First World War.

The response to this letter was very good, and a

meeting has now been arranged to discuss and set in motion the activities that are decided upon. It is hoped that organisations will send representatives, but I would appeal for anyone interested to make a special effort to attend. The meeting will take place at The General Picton, Caledonian Road, Kings Cross at 7.30pm on Monday 19 March.—BOB PURDIE, London N8.

LETTERS

Way forward in Rhodesia

ROGER TEMBO's article on Rhodesia (24 February) was very good as an outline of the political situation but lacked any explanation for the non-involvement of black workers in the struggle against white supremacy.

I think the reason is the lack of a coherent socialist perspective in both ZANU and ZAPU. The problem of black workers is not only to get rid of the white ruling class but also to get rid of an increasing parasitic black boss class.

Exploitation is exploitation whether the boss is black or white and a purely nationalist revolution which creates a black ruling class over workers is no solution to the problem.

So what is the position of ZANU and ZAPU on the character of an independent black Rhodesia? Nothing but vague assurances that 'we are in favour of a socialist government—but whether it should be the Moscow sort or the Peking sort (!) we are not sure.' I quote from a conversation with a ZANU-ZAPU official in Britain.

ZAPU statements rarely refer to anything but nationalism and the ZANU manifesto reads like something from the Labour Party with no indication of who actually controls the state or the means of production. Which means that a black ruling class will take power by default if ZANU or ZAPU win.

The Pearce Commission led to an explosion of political activity among Rhodesian Africans and the very fact that it was necessary for the settlement to be rejected has led to the realisation that their future is in their own hands.

This means that a black takeover is virtually impossible without the active support of black workers and that there is a good basis for the growth of a socialist liberation group in Rhodesia.

This makes the adoption and development of socialist policies by ZANU and ZAPU vital. It is not feasible to suddenly develop socialist theory after a black takeover and socialist policies are the only answer to the threat of South Africa, Portugal and the phoney 'independence' enjoyed by other African states.—BRIAN JONES, Salford, Lancs.

VAGUE DEMANDS THAT DETER NEW MEMBERS

I HAVE been reading Socialist Worker for just over a year now, and agree wholeheartedly with virtually all of your analyses of current situations.

However, in your aims, there are a couple of points about which I am not absolutely certain.

Firstly, 'We fight against immigration restriction.' There seems to be some evidence that immigration, and the upheaval and disorientation which travelling to the other side of the world, to a foreign environment, entails, can cause a lack of socialisation, and result in insecurity and maladjustment (in extreme cases, admittedly).

Also, it would seem to me that even a socialist economy could not survive absolutely unlimited immigration. Although there is the question of the freedom of individuals involved, I think it is mistaken to oppose immigration restriction unreservedly.

I think your meaning may be: 'We fight against immigration restriction on racialist grounds', which nobody can fault.

No strike

MY ATTENTION has been drawn to an article appearing in your issue of 3 March under the heading 'Now Hospitals Join Wages Revolt'. The article states that NALGO is one of the unions that has joined the committee formed to back the strike at the Kings Group of Hospitals.

This is not true. NALGO members have been told to carry out their normal functions only in the strike situation and not to undertake duties usually performed by members of other unions.

Our branch at Kings College Hospital Group is not represented on the joint committee formed to back the strike. I shall be pleased if you will make this correction in your next issue.—ERIC SMYTHE, Publicity Officer, NALGO, London NW1.

Klowns

WE ARE a political theatre group formerly known as CAST, and now called Kartoon Klowns. We have, over the past seven years, been performing political plays to students, trade unionists, political party meetings, etc, on subjects ranging from the whitewashing of imperialism, Vietnam, the student movement, the left and the contradictions of life in a capitalist society.

We are at present performing a play called Mr Oligarchy's Circus which demonstrates the antics of the bourgeoisie and the growth of militancy in the working class.

If you are interested in booking the Kartoon Klowns, would you please contact us at the address below and we will send you further details and booking sheets.—JACKY GARKIN, Kartoon Klowns, 41 Great Windmill Street, London W1.

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

Man will never have power over nature. We can either live in harmony with nature, or destroy it, and thus destroy ourselves, as more and more people are realising.

The idea that man can control nature by progressive scientific advances seems to stem from capitalism and does you discredit. The threatening ecological catastrophe will never be averted under capitalism, which is another reason why socialism must be implemented throughout the world.

All socialists must recognise this. I think that you may be excluding many possible members who, like myself, are concerned about environmental problems and also take your aims seriously.—MERVYN HUGHES, Cambridge.

Readers comments on the points made by Mervyn Hughes are welcomed.

Readers' letters are welcomed on all issues affecting the labour movement. They must arrive first post Monday and should be written or typed on one side of the paper only. Letters may be cut for space reasons.

Political prisoners need help from left

A NEW COMMITTEE has been formed to campaign for the release of the Stoke Newington Five who are now all serving very political and very long jail sentences.

The committee has been initiated by two defendants acquitted after the five month trial at the Old Bailey and is supported by the other acquitted defendants, the families of those convicted and the Five themselves. It aims to carry on the campaigning previously carried out by the Stoke Newington Eight Defence Group and to work closely with the newly formed Welfare Group for the prisoners.

We intend to forcibly raise once more the political implications of the entire trial from the formation of the Bomb Squad to judgment and sentence by Justice James. And we aim to build up political pressure for the release of those so narrowly convicted last December.

To do this we have written and printed a summary of the trial which contains the arguments for the release of the Five. On the basis of this case we aim to gain the active support of far more groups and individuals than have so far given public support to the Five.

We plan to hold public meetings about the trial right away and aim to hold a national speaking tour of the acquitted defendants. We plan a large protest march and mass meeting in London on 12 May to coincide with the appeals of the Five to put the case for their release.

The committee is at present small, overworked and poor. To carry out our plans effectively and to force the Stoke Newington Eight back into the prominence it deserves, we need your active help.

We need money urgently to establish the committee and finance its work. We need the widest possible distribution of the pamphlet and information about the committee's aims and work. We ask you to get your own group or newspaper's formal support and sponsorship for our committee. We need help in organising really large and representative local meetings.

Above all we need a new commitment that the Five will not simply be allowed to fade from political memory but that instead a campaign for their release will put real pressure on the state and build a new sense of solidarity on the left.—ANGELA WEIR, 54 Harcombe Road, London N16.

IS annual conference

The annual conference of the International Socialists will be held in London from 17 to 20 March. Delegates will be debating policies to intensify the struggle against the Tory offensive and to aid the building of IS as a working-class based revolutionary organisation.

A full report on the debates will be published in next week's Socialist Worker.

Profits get a lift from crane boss's union-busting

WORKERS OF COLES CRANES in Sunderland have been occupying the factory for ten weeks. Steel Group, the company that owns Coles, was taken over by Acrow Engineers last year.

Acrow has a long record of anti-union activity. Acrow Engineers made profits of well under £900,000 in 1964 and now makes profits of well over £2,500,000.

Mr William de Vigier, the hero of this story, has shares in the company valued at more than £2 million. This thriving prosperity has been achieved by various illustrious activities.

First, it is worth pointing out that Acrow's profits are actually in excess of the £2.16 million shown in the Profit and Loss account.

By some unconventional accounting techniques, Acrow hides the importance of the profits earned by the overseas 'associates': an associate is a company in which Acrow holds anything between 20 and 50 per cent of the shares. Taking account of these profits, the real pretax profit is £2.8 million.

Mr de Vigier has good reason to try and hide the importance of these overseas companies in Australia, Spain, South America, South Africa (venue of the 1972 Acrow World Convention) and India.

They employ 1700 people and they are becoming increasingly important as the UK workforce is cut: down from 3060 in 1971 to 2798 in 1972.

Mr de Vigier isn't exactly the unions' best friend. In 1964 the company bought Adamson and Hatchett. They immediately said there would be no need for a union and unilaterally changed the working conditions.

Closed

The workers took industrial action and the local director reached agreement with the union (AUEW). De Vigier refused to honour the agreement and the director had to resign. Since then the trade union organisation has deteriorated substantially.

But the union was prepared when Acrow tried the same thing with another company it bought in 1968 S H Heywood. The workers' militancy was such that soon wages exceeded the worse expectations of the management. So they closed the factory in 1971.

But de Vigier's problems weren't solved so easily. Some of the sacked workers went to work at another Acrow factory, Thomas Storey.

The company quickly announced 51 redundancies when it looked as though the factory might become unionised. Among the redundant were the convenor and other activists.

Industrial action achieved reinstatement for those, including the convenor, who wanted it. Four weeks later de Vigier himself arrived and sacked the convenor.



Not long after this the company bought the Steel Group whose president, Sir James Steel conveniently serves on the local board of the company's bank. When Steel Group was taken over, Acrow said: 'Acrow has assured the directors of Steel that it intends to continue the existing business of Steel and that all rights of the existing employees of Steel will be fully safeguarded.'

Almost the first thing that Acrow did was to break nearly every agreement that the unions had made with the old management. Now the company is threatening massive redundancies or 'integration' to the shareholders.

The fact is that Acrow bought the Steel Group at one of the worst times for the crane industry and so profits were below previous levels—'only' £2.3 million in 1972, against £3.4 million in 1971.

But already orders are improving, as most financial newspapers say. De Vigier, by the same union-busting activities he has used in the past, hopes to concentrate large amounts of the Steel Group business elsewhere within the Acrow group, presumably overseas. This should increase profits even more impressively than over the last nine years, and make de Vigier worth £4 million instead of the meagre £2 million at the moment.

T H Rogmorton

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STEEL UNIONS NOW REFUSE TO FIGHT

SHEFFIELD:—400 angry steelworkers from Shotton in Flintshire and East Moors, Cardiff, picketed the official TUC Steel Conference last Wednesday demanding industrial action to save their jobs.

About 220 delegates representing the 16 steel unions discussed the

by Robin Doughty

government's White Paper on the future of the British Steel Corporation.

Inside the conference, the theme was consultation not action. Several

attempts were made to move resolutions calling on the TUC to launch a campaign of action, but the platform, consisting of the TUC Steel Committee, adamantly refused to accept resolutions.

There were also moves from the floor to commit the TUC to a policy of non-co-operation with the Tories' task forces set up to look into each area's problems. These were seen as an attempt to dampen down the growing militancy and try to lull steelworkers into a false sense of security.

The Tory plans to chop tens of thousands of jobs and slaughter whole towns were ably defended by Sir Dai Davies, chairman of the TUC Steel Committee and president of BISAKTA, the largest steel union. 'The Steel Committee could not logically oppose modernisation in the industry,' he said, and attacked those delegates who were demanding industrial action, saying that delegates had no right to call for action which would cut across the sovereignty of individual union executives.

EVIDENCE

Sir Dai made it quite clear that he was fully in favour of co-operating with the Tory plans. 'We are insisting that where BSC propose a closure this has to be subject to analysis in depth and there has to be meaningful consultation,' he said.

It was also plain that the platform, against all the available evidence, accepted the government's figure of 50,000 redundancies by 1980. Outside the meeting supporters of the rank-and-file newspaper Steelworker handed out a special bulletin, pointing out that 'the manpower required by BSC for 1980 to produce the 36 million tons capacity outlined in the White Paper will be only 100,000.' So predicted redundancies by 1980 should be 130,000 and not the 50,000 given in the White Paper.

It was clear that inside and outside the meeting there was growing understanding that the unions did not intend to put up any real fight against the closures. As delegates left the meeting there were cries of 'Traitors', and bitter exchanges with the pickets.

Building workers call for action

SPEAKER after speaker called for action against the building employers' offensive on trade unionism when the fourth Building Workers' Charter conference met in Birmingham last Saturday.

The 550 delegates unanimously decided to end the industry's long-term wage deal in June, with full payment then of what is due in 1974, followed by a national building strike on 6 June to campaign for a £40 wage for a 35-hour week.

The conference also decided to support the stoppage on 18 May called by the Midlands Regional Council of UCATT, the biggest builders' union, against the lump.

Peter Carter, a leading militant in the Birmingham building industry, told the conference that the employers were on a relentless offensive against trade unionism in the industry. They were determined to ensure that there would never be a repetition of last summer's national strike victory.

Their tactics were to hold out against the unions until the second stage of the present long-term wage deal expired in 1974. At the same time they were out totally to undermine and wreck union organisation by a massive expansion of lump labour. Building trade unionists had to fight back for their very livelihoods.

No Challenge

The conference once again demonstrated that there is no lack of willingness to fight and to follow the lead that the Charter gives. But the conference lacked a thorough discussion of strategy.

Dennis Dugen from Liverpool set the tone in his secretary's report, saying that the Charter was in no sense a challenge to the official trade union machine.

The trade union machine must be strengthened and made more democratic if there is to be any real progress towards a national campaign to end the lump and extract decent wages from the employers.

For as long as there is no real discussion about a national rank-and-file strategy in the unions, the officials, particularly in London, will continue to pull their usual strokes. They will not be put in a situation where they have to engage the whole strength of the union in particular struggles.

The Charter conference also decided to support moves to defend the 18 building workers from Deesside who are now on conspiracy charges for the 'crime' of picketing building sites during the national strike last year.

'We'll go to jail' council turns tail

GLASGOW:—The 13 rent rebels on Clydebank Council collapsed completely last week and voted unanimously to implement the Tory Housing Finance Act, so joining the ranks of turncoat Labour councils all over Britain.

The three Communist Party councillors, including Jimmy Reid of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders fame, voted along with their Labour colleagues.

All previous talk of principles and mandates to oppose the Act was forgotten. Betty Brown, the leading Labour 'rebel', said: 'We realised that the axe is likely to come down tomorrow... in the Court of Session bringing a heavier fine and we felt that if we had taken the defiance stand any further it would have shown us to be irresponsible.'

Principles apparently must take second place to the 'responsibility' needed for public office.

The speeches the councillors had made only four weeks earlier, when they said they were ready to go to prison rather than implement the Act, proved to be empty rhetoric.

A few weeks ago the council was fined £5000 at the High Court for refusing to implement the Act after it had been instructed to. At that point the retreat began. Many socialists and trade unionists expected the Communist councillors to fight. Old-timers in Clydeside's labour movement such as Finlay Hart and Arnold Henderson had built their reputations by defending the working man.

AGREED

Such hopes were quickly dashed. These Communist councillors made no attempt at all to prevent the retreat. Indeed, they planned and justified it.

Instead of refusing to pay the fine and leading a fight to win the whole working class movement to defend their refusal, the councillors agreed unanimously to pay the fine. They then attempted to hide this betrayal. Local trade unionists, they said, should involve themselves in Clydebank's refusal to implement the Act, by raising collections to pay the fine.

This kind of appeal for 'solidarity', as they had the cheek to describe it, fell predictably on deaf ears. It further demoralised other councils who were



A Clydebank protest at the 'unfair rents' Act. To the left of the banner marches Jimmy Reid, Communist Party councillor and UCS shop steward. Last week he voted in favour of the rent rises.

still resisting the Act and the courts.

When the money to pay the fine did not come rolling in, the councillors then declared that the workers were not supporting them, that it was the workers' fault, and that they therefore had to agree to implement.

The Morning Star, the daily paper of the Communist Party, explained 'The 13 rebel councillors felt that they had no other course as the response to their appeal for solidarity from the trade union and labour movement did not come in any volume.'

The next day it tried to turn black into white by writing: 'Clydebank fights on against rent rises.'

Many socialists and trade unionists on Clydeside are now seriously questioning the role of the Communist Party in this fight.

It emphasised respectability, conducting the struggle within the council chamber, and 'unity' with the Labour Party and Scottish Nationalist 'lefts'. But when it finally came to the decisive issue of voting for or against implementation, the Communist Party was shown to be considerably to the right of the rebel Labour councillors of Clay Cross.

GLASSMEN READY TO FIGHT

THE possibility of a national fight within the Rockware Glass Group to save the 900 jobs at the company's factory in Greenford, London, was brought a step closer by the formation of a Rockware shop stewards national combine committee last week.

Forty shop stewards representing workers in the transport, engineering, General and Municipal and electricians' and plumbers' unions from the five major factories at Greenford, Knottingley and Wheatley in Yorkshire, St Helens in Lancashire and Irvine in Scotland met to discuss the fight against company plans to close the Greenford factory by the beginning of next year.

There are at the present time 18,000 unemployed in the Greenford area, chasing just a few hundred vacancies, half of which pay less than £20 a week. The Rockware bosses hope to make £15 million by selling the factory's valuable site to property speculators.

Last Wednesday's meeting at Greenford

laid the seeds of plans which could lead to a co-ordinated fight throughout the group against the closure.

The first priority of the combine committee is to save the jobs at Greenford, but they have already set their sights on building a rank-and-file liaison committee for the entire glass container industry.

Stewards from the United Glass factory at Harlow, Essex, visited the meeting to pledge their support.

Until now, there has not been sufficient effort put into developing the local campaign. Local union officials, backed by the Communist Party, seem more concerned that the campaign should draw in local councillors, churches and the Chamber of Commerce rather than rank-and-file bodies with some desire to fight.

As in all such struggles, the message is clear: only strong organisation at the shop floor level, linking up with other workers throughout the Rockware empire, can force the management to back down and save the jobs from the hands of the property speculators.

WHAT'S ON

Copy for What's On must arrive by first post 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 CONFERENCE SOCIAL Saturday 17 March, 8.30pm Camden Town Hall 'Kilburn and the High Roads' Admission 25p

LEEDS IS Public Meeting The Communist Party: Past and Present Speaker: Ray Challinor Thursday 15 March, 8pm Trades Hall, Upper Fountaine Street

DARLINGTON IS public meeting: Friday 23 March, 8pm, Co-op Hall, Priestgate, 'Rents up, prices up, wages down. Fight the Tories!' Spkr David Skinner (Clay Cross).

DARLINGTON IS DAY SCHOOL: Sunday 25 March, am/pm, College of Education, Vane Terrace, Main speaker Colwyn Williamson. British capitalism since the war. The need for a revolutionary party.

LONDON REGION IS lectures: Fridays at 7.30-9.30pm. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 (three minutes walk from Holborn tube). Friday 23 March: The nature of imperialism and the anti-imperialist struggle today. Speaker Steven Marks. Friday 30 March: The struggle for the British revolution. Speaker Jim Higgins.

HOLBORN IS public meeting THE CRISIS IN BRITISH CAPITALISM Speaker: John Palmer Tuesday 20 March, 5.30pm The Plough, Museum St, London WC1

HORNSEY IS BRANCH SOCIAL for printshop fund Friday 23 March, 8pm Ladbroke House, Highbury Grove, London N5 General Will Theatre Group Frankie Armstrong, folk singer Disco - food - late bar Tickets 40p at the door

IS IRISH FORUM REPUBLICANISM Speaker George Johnson (Coventry IS) The Plough, Museum Street London WC1 (near Tottenham Court Road tube) Sunday 25 March, 7.30pm

OTHER MEETINGS

NORTHERN IRELAND—The Way Forward. Public meeting Monday 26 March, 7.45pm, St Pancras Library, 100 Euston Rd, London NW1. Organised by London Group of the Communist Federation of Britain (Marxist-Leninist).

EALING RANK AND FILE TEACHERS meeting: Leni Solinger on Work in the NUT. Monday 19 March, 7.30pm, Three Pigeons, High Street, Ealing, London W5.

BRITISH ARMY TERROR IN IRELAND Joint meeting of London local branches of AIL, Clann and ICRA (NICRA) Thursday 22 March, 8pm Co-op Hall, Seven Sisters Road

LIFE IN A CHOCOLATE FACTORY York Shoestring Theatre's show about Rowntrees (remember the SW article last month?) 'Brisk, funny, deeply felt'—S.T. Tuesday 20 March—Saturday 31 March 9.30pm Bush Theatre, phone 743 5050

WEST LONDON Anti-Internment League Social, Kings Head, Fulham Broadway, Friday 16 March, 8-12pm. Disco-Bar, Admittance 30p.

SOCIALIST MEDICAL ASSOCIATION Day Seminar: Health Care, Social Needs, and Educational Requirements for Children. Sunday 25 March, 10am-5pm. Assembly Hall, Unity House, Euston Road, London NW1.

WORKERS' ASSOCIATION public mtng: Ireland—the economics of partition. Friday 23 March, 8pm, The Metropolitan Farringdon Road, London WC1.

GLASGOW PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS' meeting: United action can smash the freeze. Speakers Mick Napier (EIS) and Ian Irving (CPSA). Wed 21 March, 7.30pm, McLelland Galleries. Sponsored by Rank and File Teachers.

ST PATRICK'S NIGHT SOCIAL: Saturday 17 March, 8pm-11pm, Fountain pub, West Green Road, London N15 (nearest tube Seven Sisters). In aid of Anti-Internment League. Tickets on the door 35p.

MANCHESTER United Trade Union Demonstration against the Freeze Saturday 17 March, 2pm Meet at Albert Square Called by Manchester Trade Union Alliance Against the Freeze

FINE TUBES National Picket: Monday 19 March, 6am. London Region IS are organising a coach. For details ring Alan Woodward at 01-808 2369.

NOTICES

FEMALE COMRADE, 23-year-old teacher, seeks own room in mixed flat or house in South West London. Ring 01-684 8339.

CAST want to try out new play at a social in Greater London. Phone 402 6087.

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IS BOOKS can now undertake to obtain any paperback under the following imprints within two weeks: Aldine, Armada, Arrow, Bantam, Carousal, Corgi, Coronet, Everyman, Faber, Fontana, How and Why, Knight, Lions, Mayflower, New English Library, Paladin, Pan, Pan Piper, Panther, Paperback (fiction only), Peacock, Pelican, Penguin, Piccolo, Puffin, Signet/Mentor, Sphere, Tandem (not soft-cover library), World Distributors. Write to IS Books, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.



Tenants' leaders call for big rent strikes

LIVERPOOL:—200 tenants' representatives from all over the North West called last Sunday for a national tenants' conference to organise co-ordinated 'total rent strikes backed by industrial action' to defeat the Tory rent Act.

The resolution, put forward by Oldham Tenants Association at a conference called by Liverpool Trades Council, also called for a national lobby of parliament. Many delegates stressed the limited value of this—the power to defeat the Act lay on the estates and in the factories, not in parliament.

Ethel Singleton, of Liverpool Tenants Executive Committee and the International Socialists tenants sub-committee, argued for the rebuilding of estate organisations and a campaign for total

rent strikes 'to hit the buggers where it hurts: in their pockets.' She called for maximum unity of the tenants with the trade union movement, especially gasmen, hospital workers and others fighting the freeze.

Threats

The dangers of relying on the Labour Party and other 'lefts' in the tenants' fight was spelt out to the meeting in no uncertain terms by David Skinner, one of the Clay Cross councillors defying the Housing Finance Act. He told how the official Labour Party, Labour MPs and the TUC had given Clay Cross no real support and seemed embarrassed by the whole affair. Even left-wing members of the labour movement had capitulated to Tory threats. He expressed dismay at the

collapse of Clydebank council despite the fine words of Jimmy Reid.

David Skinner finished his speech by declaring that he and the other Clay Cross councillors would continue to fight. He was sure that the rent and rates strike in Clay Cross would begin again soon.

The conference revealed the real need to revive the tenants' movement and to unite with other sections of workers fighting the Tories.

One of the first duties of the new North West Tenants Co-ordinating Committee that was set up will be to defend tenants who are threatened with eviction for going on rent strike. Tenants in Bolton and Bootle are expecting the bailiffs any day and a flying picket was organised after the meeting by Tower Hill Rent Action Group from Kirkby to come to their aid.

HALEWOOD SHOWS THE WAY FOR FORD

AS UNOFFICIAL selective strikes hit hard at Ford Halewood and parts of Dagenham last week, the leaders of the Ford unions have been moving for new negotiations with the company.

They hope to win a deal over extra fringe benefits, such as holidays and pensions, which will allow them to settle for the £2.40 pay offer—the exact sum permitted under the Tory wage control policy to which the unions are supposed to be militantly opposed.

Right from the start of the negotiations the unions have played them in a very low key. They would not put an actual money figure on the claim, not least because the research they had commissioned from Ruskin College, Oxford, into the company's profitability indicated that they should claim what might superficially have seemed a really fabulous sum.

SURRENDER

When the negotiations reached breakdown point the union leaders had effectively made their decision not to wage an unofficial strike against the freeze at Ford. They felt this would be too much of a drain on union funds. With both Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon involved in the TUC talks with the government, they felt it would also be 'bad public relations' to lead supposedly highly-paid carworkers in a real fight against the freeze.

This complete surrender to the ideas of the millionaire press brought the union leaders into a position where they would give no lead whatsoever when Ford's 'final offer' was still firmly within the freeze limits.

They quite happily stood aside while the convenors' unofficial call for an all-out national strike fell apart. Last week they undermined the struggle further by refusing to attempt to spread the lead given by Halewood and parts of Dagenham in

continuing the overtime ban and implementing selective strikes.

The trade union leaders' refusal to fight has also led shop stewards to blame one or another's personal inadequacies for the crisis of confidence among the workers while the vacillating role of the trade union leadership at Ford goes unrecognised. Because of this, shop stewards and convenors do not themselves assume full responsibility for constantly building up rank and file confidence for the fight against the company and the government's anti-strike laws.

Ford has used the situation to its own advantage. At Halewood they started to put the boot in last week against shop stewards. But each time someone has been attacked, workers have acted speedily to defend their representatives.

This readiness to fight in a difficult position shows that the situation is not the disaster the Tory press would like every worker to believe it is.

Sit-in workers hold out against Coles slaves' charter

by Dave Peers

SUNDERLAND:—The 10-week occupation of the Coles Cranes factory remains united despite a campaign against it by the local paper, the Sunderland Echo.

The newspaper has been giving lavish publicity to the views of a local vicar, the Rev Taylor, who has been intervening in the dispute. Mr Taylor has just returned from factories owned by Coles parent-company Acrow, in Stockport, where he was taken round in the company chairman's chauffeur-driven car. He is now convinced that the Acrow workers are happy, the company a glorious success, and its chairman—William de Vigier—a truly wonderful man.

But when it comes to misrepresentation de Vigier's new ally is an amateur in comparison with de Vigier himself.

Just over a week ago union officials and shop stewards were convinced that agreement had been reached with the company on the major issues in the dispute. De Vigier had accepted the four points regarded by the unions as a basis

for negotiating a return to work:

- That all notices issued by the management cancelling agreements, customs or practices be rescinded.
- That all previous agreements, customs and practices be restored.
- That the company enter into meaningful discussions with the unions for security of employment for all employees.
- That there would be no victimisation.

It appeared that all that remained to be negotiated was the details of a return to work.

'Crawling'

But on Friday the company issued a document which laid down 68 conditions for a settlement which would have destroyed shop-floor organisation in the plant and insisted that any return to work should be phased over three weeks. One paragraph stated ominously: 'All employees wishing to return to work under the company's rules and requirements will be accepted.'

Convenor Norman Jackson told the workers' mass meeting: 'If we go back on these terms we'll be crawling back.'

The meeting again voted that the occupation would continue until the unions' four points were met, and that no phased return to work would be acceptable. 'When we go back, we'll all go back together,' said shop steward Gerry Barry.

Prospects of an early end to the dispute look remote. The attacks on union organisation and agreements which provoked the occupation have been included in the 68-point document. De Vigier has not given an inch.



A gasworker speaking at the public sector workers' rally last week

200 support public sector rally

NORTH LONDON:—Nearly 200 workers from hospitals, gas depots, schools, colleges and government offices demonstrated their determination to win their struggles and beat the wage freeze when they attended a public sector rally last Wednesday.

Many showed their anger at the lack of support from union leaders for the rank and file. 'I wouldn't consider myself a militant,' said one gasman, 'but I'd like to put water in the mains.'

The rally, called by Camden and Islington Public Sector Workers Action

Committee, revealed that hospital workers in the area urgently need financial support if they are to continue their struggle against the freeze. The committee, expanded and strengthened as a result of the meeting, is organising appeals for money and a hospital workers' delegation to win solidarity action from other trade unionists.

The committee has already organised joint pickets, demonstrations, strike bulletins and leaflets. Further details from: F Williams, 79 Bayham Street, London NW1

Workers strike on for sacked steward

LANCASHIRE:—Workers at Ruston Paxman's GEC Newton-le-Willows factory voted last Friday by an overwhelming majority to continue their strike until sacked machine shop steward John Deason is reinstated.

Engineering union staff workers agreed to support the works action but many members of ASTMS, the supervisors' union, continued to cross the picket lines in spite of contrary advice by local officials. The strikers have retaliated by mass pickets. On Monday a militant picket of 500 successfully kept out most of the 1300 staff, though about 200 managed to get in when the gates were suddenly opened by security men aided by local police.

On Tuesday a large force of police was at the gates, clearly intending to disrupt picketing. The workers outwitted them by entering the factory and occupying it. They then locked all the doors and gates from the inside, and prevented any of the staff from breaking the strike.

Attempt

As the strike nears the end of the second week attitudes are hardening. Encouraged by unprecedented solidarity from significant sections of the staff and the success of the picketing, spirits are high.

The importance of this strike cannot be underestimated. The sacking of John Deason for using normal shop floor language to an assistant superintendent is a crude attempt to break the strong shop steward organisation in the factory.

Ruston Paxman has been one of the key factories in the recent attempt to work towards a GEC combine committee and John Deason is on the editorial committee of the new GEC rank-and-file paper, the first issue of which is due out in a few weeks.

GEC management have quite clearly worked for this showdown. Since Christmas an artificial work shortage has been created by subcontracting while trivial disputes have been provoked in an attempt to intimidate the work force and weaken shop-floor organisation. Meanwhile the stewards have exposed managerial fiddling of average bonus figures.

Donations and messages of support to George Harrison, AUEW convenor, 431 Downall Green Road, North Ashton, Wigan.

Water men add anti-freeze

WATER board workers joined the struggle against the pay freeze last week when about 1200 struck unofficially last Friday. The men are disgusted with a pay offer of a mere £2 a week. Their claim for £5.50 has been frozen while prices have continued to rise.

In London drivers at the Battersea depot of the Metropolitan Water Board struck for the first time ever, with transport men and fitters at Chingford South, Lea Bridge, Hornsey, Hampton and Surbiton. One picket pointed to his basic take-home pay of £17.20 as the reason for the strike—his council rent alone comes to £13.

The depot shop steward and General and Municipal Workers Union branch secretary said the men were striking on their own account, not as newspapers had reported in sympathy with the gas workers. But he added that all the workers in the country should stand together to break the freeze and get rid of the Tories.

2000 dockers picket on wharf

HULL:—Dockers resumed their mass picketing last weekend of unregistered wharves where cheap casual labour is used to unload cargo diverted away from the registered ports.

2000 went to a small wharf on the river Hull to prevent a cargo of timber being unloaded. They were met by a massive display of police strength. Despite 800 policemen blocking their way, the dockers won their point. The timber will now be unloaded by registered labour.

This incident, following an overnight

alert on both sides, shows that the dockers' fight continues. But their determination and organisation is matched by the vigilance of the police in defending 'property'. As police coaches poured in from all over Yorkshire, no one could be left in any doubt of the state's vigorous and potentially violent support for the 'rights' of employers. Events like these put a particularly sinister face on police preparations for the use of fire-arms which have been receiving considerable publicity in Yorkshire recently.



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HOSPITALS:

Revolt against freeze snowballs

THE REVOLT of hospital workers against appalling low pay, frozen by the government's freeze, has now snowballed until about a thousand hospitals have been affected.

Throughout the country hospital workers have taken action on a scale far greater than that planned by their official union leaders, who have ignored the result of a national ballot calling for all-out industrial action.

In LONDON, more than three-quarters of the beds in King's College Hospital, Southwark, were emptied last week as almost 800 members of the transport workers union came out on strike for a week. Two hundred jubilant pickets turned away all but mail deliveries on the first day of the strike. Only about 200 patients were kept in the hospital, and the private wing was completely closed.

Apology

Catering services for the duty staff and the remaining patients were supplied by five union members on each shift. More than 20 nurses joined the picket line in uniform in solidarity.

Management tried to force a theatre sister who backed the strikers to resign, but was forced to back down and issue a formal apology after ancillary workers, electricians, engineers and boilermen threatened an all-out strike.

A mass meeting of pickets was addressed by representatives of teachers and civil servants, and delegates from the hospital workers joined a 150-strong march and demonstration organised by Southwark teachers.

But at a meeting on Sunday, the local union official, Ted Sheehan, played on the strikers' fears of isolation and used management arguments about the danger to patients. He persuaded a majority to vote to return to work, though a work to rule and ban on private patients is now being organised.

In MANCHESTER workers on unofficial strike at the Royal Infirmary staged a peaceful march of pickets through the hospital and succeeded in bringing out some non-union porters who had been working.

Power

The following day the workers occupied the laundry when management refused to remove strike-breakers. Eventually management gave in and closed the laundry. The jubilant pickets then went on to St Mary's Hospital and occupied the Central Sterile Supply Depot, which was successfully closed.

Management put up a barricade to stop pickets occupying the Eye Hospital laundry, but had to step down when boilermen threatened to cut off the power. Strike-breaking porters are being forced to use candles in their residences because members of the electricians' union have removed fuses.

A regular strike bulletin has been important in spreading the strike in the Manchester area. The first was produced by local members of the International Socialists, one of whom works in the Royal Salford Hospital. Production of the second number was taken over by the local rank-and-file health workers' alliance.

The secretary of the Confederation of Health Service Workers branch in the Royal Salford Hospital tried last week to argue that his members did not want to strike. The following day the branch voted unanimously to go on unofficial strike, even though a full-time official refused them strike pay and argued the action could not last longer than three days.

Manchester hospital workers have been getting financial help from other organised workers in the city. A magnificent collection raised £50 at the GEC-AEI plant and rank-and-file teachers gave £5.

In DARLINGTON a total strike of NUPE workers in the Darlington Memorial Hospital laundry began this week. Strong picketing has completely prevented scab or volunteer labour from being used. If this situation should change, pickets are prepared to occupy the buildings. Electricians and engineers in the hospitals have said they will sabotage any attempt by

management to use scabs to man machines.

The strike is being co-ordinated by an elected action committee in the hospital—both union organisers have been conveniently absent on holiday for the past two weeks.

In SWANSEA NUPE members rejected a plea from hospital management to operate an emergency service in the laundry. They are going ahead with their plans for a series of three-day stoppages. After the meeting many members made clear their anger at the failure of the union nationally to take more militant action.

GASMEN:

Union leaders say No

THE LEADERS of the two unions involved in the gas dispute, the Transport Workers Union and the General and Municipal, drew up a plan on Monday deliberately designed to sell out their members.

They are refusing to step up strike action to put the squeeze on big business and the government. Instead they are telling their members to

keep industrial action at a low level while a ballot is held on whether to call off the strikes completely.

The excuse they are using is an offer from the Gas Corporation which would give next to nothing to most of the workers. Under this offer, pension contributions from the workers would be reduced.

For half the workers this would be equivalent to an increase in take-home pay of a mere 40p a week on top of the £2 already offered—nothing like sufficient to match the escalating rate of price and rent increases. For the other half the 'concession' would be worth even less—a mere 16p to 20p a week.

The union leaders, having refused to give a lead in the five months since the freeze first hit the gasmen, now think the rank and file will be demoralised enough to vote for virtual acceptance of the freeze. Significantly, the ballot is so organised that its results are unlikely to be known until after 1 April, when phase two of the freeze becomes law. The union leaders clearly hope that fear of taking on the law directly will intimidate their members.

The gasmen must step up action now if they are not to suffer the consequences of this betrayal.

In NEWCASTLE stewards representing Northern Region gasworkers passed a motion of no confidence in the national executive of the General and Municipal Workers Union. They had wanted to extend sanctions to affect factories using natural gas but national union officer John Edmunds and the national executive refused to back them.

So they decided to return to work on Monday. One shop steward told Socialist Worker: 'We've just been wasting our time.'

In SCOTLAND there will be no all-out official strike despite a massive vote in favour of indefinite strike action in a ballot of Scottish gasworkers.

The result of the ballot was announced last week: 1048 voted for an indefinite strike, 549 against, with 898 not voting. But officials are insisting that all those who did not vote be counted as votes against strike action. These include a large number of apprentices under 18 who were prevented from voting by branch officials.

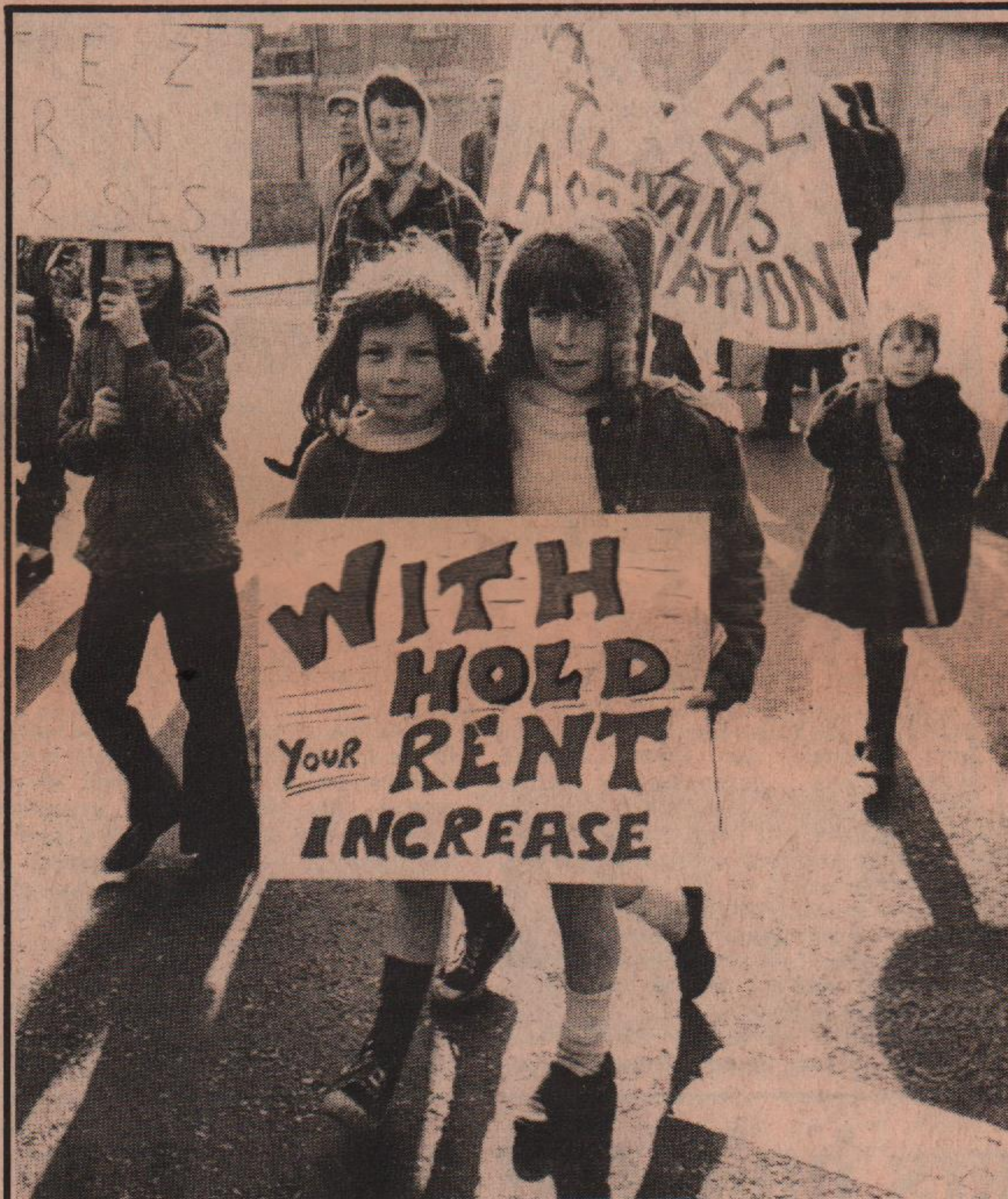
Pickets in court

DEESIDE: The case against 24 building workers who have been charged for their part in organising picketing in last summer's national building strike opened in Shrewsbury Magistrates Court on Thursday.

The Director of Public Prosecutions has chosen to bring this case under criminal law because of reluctance to use the Industrial Relations Act since the five dockers were freed from jail by mass industrial action. The 24 face a battery of conspiracy, assault, damage to property and demanding money with menaces charges.

Socialist Worker will be carrying a full report of this latest vicious legal attack on workers' rights next week.

* Socialist Worker



Tenants' children took part in a march against rent rises in Greenwich, London, on Saturday. PICTURE: Mike Cohen

CLAY CROSS: WE'RE STILL DETERMINED

'WE'RE still as resolved and united as we were when the White Paper came out,' says David Skinner, chairman of the housing committee at Clay Cross, the only local authority in England where the Housing Finance Act rent increases have not been implemented.

Last week the council called off a five-week rent strike, but councillors made it clear that the strike had been a demonstration of tenants' support for the council, and that the council were more determined than ever to resist the government's rent increases.

The resistance in Clay Cross, David Skinner assured Socialist Worker, will continue in spite of the decision of Clydebank Council to implement the Act. 'I've the fullest regard for Betty Brown, Jimmy Reid and the others,' says Skinner, 'but their decision was like a belly blow: a shattering blow to the morale of the other Scottish authorities who are still holding out. I can't understand how they could come to such a decision.'

The Clay Cross Council is organising a demonstration of solidarity in the town for Saturday 14 April. 'Once again,' says David Skinner, 'we are asking tenants up and down the country to come to Clay Cross, to paralyse it and to show the government and the leaders of the Labour Party and the TUC that what we are doing in Clay Cross is right.'

British Rail disrupts trains

TRAIN drivers and footplatemen, members of ASLEF, this week continued their one-day strikes and policy of non-co-operation demanding a new wage structure independent of the 1973 wage negotiations.

And the Tory press continued with its witch-hunt—bewailing the plight of hundreds of thousands of commuters on the Southern Region whose journeys to and from work were being disrupted by the train drivers.

In fact when the disruption is not being caused by the government's attempt to cheat the ASLEF members out of a deal that was agreed in principle last year, before the freeze, it is being caused by railway management.

For there is one factor in the situation that neither British Rail nor the Tory press dare mention. This is the scandalous fact that 441 engines on Southern Region have been operated for three years with the speedometers blanked off.

The speedometers are faulty. For three years the drivers have been co-operative and have driven without them, forced to estimate speed reductions from 75mph to 45mph in as little as two hundred yards.

Southern Region drivers have been insisting that they will not drive engines where the speedometer is blanked out unless they get double manning to help in the difficult task of estimating speeds. If British Rail had accepted this demand, then 50 per cent services could have been run every day except on the weekly strike day. British Rail has refused to concede, preferring to inconvenience as many members of the public as possible.

Southern Region management agreed in 1969 that the faulty speedometers would be replaced by 1972. Those three years are now up and British Rail has done nothing whatsoever. Management clearly expects the drivers to carry on working without proper instruments for ever.

'On top of the mounting anger our lads are feeling over British Rail's treatment of our claim, this was the final straw,' Dave Bush, ASLEF branch secretary at Slade Green in Kent, told Socialist Worker.

MINERS:

NCB pay offer is not enough

MINERS' UNION leaders, after weeks of negotiations with the Coal Board, are being forced to recognise what the militants have known from the start of the freeze—that the board's 'best' offer under the freeze is not enough.

The latest offer would give an increase of £2.29 a week, while miners have demanded £5.50 to £7. Derek Ezra, Coal Board chairman, has offered other meagre fringe benefits, including a doubling of pensions to £3 and increase in the smokeless fuel concession.

Even the right wing of the NUM national executive are now feeling betrayed by the board. They were expecting the concession of an extra week's holiday, which they hoped would give them an excuse to ballot the membership with a neutral recommendation. The NCB, prompted by the government, has now refused this outright.

The miners received another kick in the teeth last week when one of the clauses in

last year's Wilberforce settlement was hit by the freeze. Nineteen-year-old miners were to be paid the adult rate from last week, but because of the freeze they are being told they must wait.

The union executive is still dithering, despite the obviously unbridgeable gap between the wage demand and the board's offer. By 14 votes to 11 they decided to take no decision at their meeting last week. They were to meet again on Friday.

The executive should remember that last year's conference called for a ballot to consult the membership about industrial action 'in the event of an unsatisfactory offer'.

Joe Gormley, the NUM president, now finds himself in a very awkward position. At last year's conference he argued strongly against industrial action to dislodge the Tories. At last week's special TUC he argued for industrial action, hoping to lose so that he could go back to his membership wringing his hands, and saying that this year the miners had no support.

Unexpectedly, he won his vote at the TUC and he therefore has no logical grounds left on which to argue against a strike for the full claim. But Gormley is an experienced bureaucrat. If he can possibly turn another somersault then he will.

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