

## Tory lord's



Lord Polwarth

## oily hands

by Paul Foot

LORD POLWARTH, the newly-appointed overlord for the booming North Sea oil industry, is up to his neck in investments in North Sea oil.

Following startling revelations in this week's Glasgow News, a community paper in Scotland, Mr Robert Hughes, MP for Aberdeen North, has written to the Prime Minister asking whether it is proper for a government minister—Lord Polwarth is the £7500 a year Minister of State at the Scottish Office—to hold substantial interests in the industry which he is supervising 'in the public interest'.

Glasgow News reveals that according to the latest records of the registrar's department of the Bank of Scotland (of which Lord Polwarth is a former governor) Lord Polwarth owns:

On his own account: 11,100 shares in Atlantic Assets Trust, British Assets Trust and Second British Assets Trust.

Together with his brother, an Edinburgh chartered surveyor called Francis Hepburne-Scott, and others: a further 35,600 shares in the three trusts. The value of all these shares is £46,642.

### Exploit

These trusts are part of a huge accountancy and banking group which has set up a chain of companies to exploit the rich oil market.

British Assets, for example, owns 15 per cent of Caledonian Offshore Ltd. Atlantic Assets owns half of the Mount St Bernard Trust, which in turn owns Onshore Investments Ltd, the Cromarty Forth Development Company, Nordport Ltd and Peterhead and Fraserburgh Estates.

In one way and another, these companies form the bulk of the Scottish interests which are seeking to reap the booty from onshore and offshore dealings in North Sea oil.

One of the subsidiaries, Nordport, is said to have bought up 40,000 acres of land on the Shetland Islands which can now be sold off at goldmine prices.

Lord Polwarth was appointed in response to heavy pressure from Scotland about the exploitation of North Sea oil by a handful of accountants, bankers and speculators. It is now clear that Polwarth himself is one of them.

## Living standards take a Tory battering

# PRICES ZOOM PROFITS SOAR

by CHRIS HARMAN

AFTER FIVE MONTHS of total wage freeze, prices in April rose by a staggering 1.9 per cent—the second-highest rate in recent inflationary history. Prices were 9.2 per cent higher than in April last year.

Working-class families will not be able to make up for this huge rise through wage increases. The government's

regulations under Phase Two of the present policy restrict rises to about 8 per cent—substantially less than the annual increase in prices.

And further sharp increases are on the way.

The Tories' Prices Commission has approved rises for margarine, cooking fat, breakfast cereals, synthetic fibres from which clothing is made and steel manufactured goods.

Most working-class families have been much harder hit than the official prices index indicates. Essential items have risen in price far more than luxuries that are bought in the main by the better-off sections.

In the period from June 1970—when the Tories came to power—up to March this year, before the most recent rises, this was how just a few essentials had risen:

- Food 33 per cent.
- House prices 75 per cent.
- Rents 28 per cent.
- Eggs 50 per cent.
- Bacon 50 per cent.
- Cheese 75 per cent.
- Fruit 39 per cent.

Such figures show just how dubious is the Tory claim that wages and pensions have kept ahead of prices. Both have increased by an average of 35 per cent in the last 2½ years.

### STANDSTILL

Some workers have been able to force increases in their purchasing power through militant action, but most sections have been left behind.

The figures give the lie to the Tories' attempt to blame wages for price increases. If that were true, then prices should be at a standstill after five months of wage freeze.

And the figures also disprove the other government claim that price increases are due to the rising cost of food from abroad.

Home produced food rose in price by 44.3 per cent between June 1970 and February this year—far more than imported food.

It is the giant food companies and big farmers who have benefitted from these increases.

For example, Unilever is among the firms given permission to hike up its prices. Last year Unilever reported record profits—14 per cent up on the year before. The Prices Commission is keen that it should continue to make such record profits.

### ORGANISE

Backed by government policies, it is not surprising that profits in general have risen by 16.4 per cent in the last year, twice as fast as wages are allowed to rise.

That is the real meaning of Phase Two and it makes even more ludicrous the grovelling attempts by the union leaders to reach a pay deal with the Tories.

With living standards of working people under the hammer, the duty of the unions is to organise to smash the freeze—not to cuddle up to its architects.



Picture: CHRISTOPHER DAVIES (Report)

## GUNBOAT BULLIES

THE TORIES have sent the Royal Navy into Icelandic waters to bolster the efforts of Britain's trawler bosses to over-kill the fishing grounds in their frenzied rush to grab maximum profits. The Tories' bully-boy tactics, backed by the Labour Opposition, must be condemned by all sections of the labour and trade union movement, with the demand for the immediate withdrawal of the gunboats.

Analysis: page 2.

## Builders step up the lump fight

THE BATTLE against the lump goes on—that was the clear message of the strikes and demonstrations last Friday. Workers in a number of major centres—including London, pictured here—stopped work to march

The demonstrations were timed to coincide with the second reading of Labour MP Eric Heffer's Bill in parliament to outlaw the lump—but the Bill was quashed by the efforts of Tory MPs backed by the big building firms. Also on Friday, building workers from North Wales engaged in the fight against the lump were committed for trial at Shrewsbury on a number of serious charges.

Parliament report and Shrewsbury court hearing: pages 2 and 3. Birmingham march picture and report: page 15.



# Coal bosses out to

# dodge killer dust claims

LAWYERS for the National Union of Mineworkers will prepare next week to bring to trial claims for damages for pneumoconiosis—lung disease—from four Durham men, William Robson, Robert McKercher, Ralph Davidson and David Prior.

The actions are the four the NUM has agreed to use as test cases in the battle to get the National Coal Board to pay up for the ruined lungs and wracked bodies miners have obtained from exposure to dust at work.

The normal legal timetable would suggest that the cases should actually come to court within 12 months of being set down. A judge would then try the issue of whether the NCB has been negligent and whether the men's claims are formally sound.

But the National Coal Board is determined if possible to escape responsibility to pay compensation. Its legal officials will do everything in their power to engineer a decision that the miners' claims are 'out of time'.

At the moment 3500 miners or ex-miners have issued writs claiming damages from the NCB for pneumoconiosis. And there are an estimated 37,000 other men suffering from the disease.

It is true that many of the men who have lodged claims have been suffering from the disease for a considerable length of time. But union lawyers insist that they did not know until very recently that they had any basis for a claim for damages.

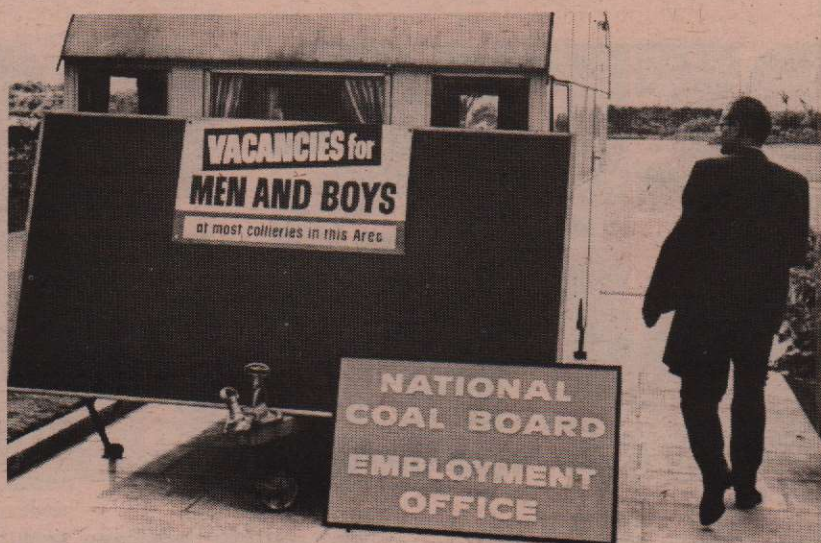
## Defeat

The law on suing an employer for damages for negligence insists that actions be brought within a limit of three years of contracting a disease or—if the worker could not reasonably be expected to discover the existence or the cause of injury or that he had grounds for an action for damages—that the action was started within 12 months of the date on which he could reasonably be expected to make that discovery.

What NCB lawyers are attempting to do is to get this issue (whether the miners' claims are in time) decided quite separately from the actual claim of damages and negligence.

And the Board hopes to defeat as many actions as possible on the purely technical grounds that the plaintiffs could reasonably have been expected to claim long before now.

The 3500 men who have set actions in motion divide equally into those who are current members of the NUM and those who are ex-miners and now members of other unions. The NUM has organised a concerted



Come on it—the dust is marvellous

action so that its lawyers can endeavour to control the course legal decisions take.

The other unions are co-operating in this. What the NCB hopes is that another lawyer with just one isolated claim will push ahead unknowingly.

On this basis they will be able to test the limitation issue entirely on its own, going as far as the House of Lords for a reversal of legal decisions in other disease compensation claims which have been favourable to plaintiffs who had difficulties in bringing actions.

All the claims for compensation now underway have followed in the wake of the January 1970 Leeds Assizes case where William Pickles,

an ex-miner backed by his new union, the engineers, won £7500 damages for pneumoconiosis from the NCB.

Pickles had originally contacted lawyers over a quite different matter and they advised that he had good grounds for a suit for damages. Just before the trial was due to start the NCB offered an adequate out of court settlement which ensured that the question of negligence would not be aired in court.

Pickles' action was initially ruled 'out of time' by the judge, Lord Thompson, sitting in chambers. Prior to the Pickles case, the NUM offered absolutely no encouragement or advice to miners crippled with the

disease to bring actions.

If the spate of claims is successful then the NCB faces a massive bill for damages to the mining community. It is this which prompts Board officials to seek every possible way to get round the NCB's responsibilities.

Among the other avenues the NCB is pursuing to this end is the notion that while it took over the private coalowners' pits lock, stock and barrel it did not take over responsibility for compensation for diseases contracted or initiated prior to nationalisation.

The NCB continues to use this argument despite the fact that its own documents indicate that it did assume this responsibility from the private coalowners. Even so, NCB lawyers hope to insist that miners and ex-miners will first have to sue the former owners and then, if the actions are successful, the NCB would pay up. This would further fragment and complicate the actions.

The Board is also doing all it can to prevent the introduction of compulsory standards of dust suppression in the mines. And this is despite the fact that the incidence of pneumoconiosis is rising again.

In recent negotiations on this issue the Board has returned to its usual 'We'll have to close the pits' blackmail as a way of sabotaging union moves for dust levels backed by law.

The NCB is also perfectly willing to use the other side of the same argument, namely pushing through more pit closures under the guise of a new found concern for miners' health.

## The Tory lumpers talk out Heffer Bill

LAST Friday, as construction workers up and down the country struck, marched and lobbied in support of the outlawing of the lump, Labour MP Eric Heffer's parliamentary Bill to do just that failed in the House of Commons.

It was a Private Members' Bill and was therefore given time on a Friday—the day of the parliamentary week when most MPs are away looking after their other interests or doing a bit of work in their constituencies.

More MPs voted for the Bill than against it but there were not enough of them there even to get it through its second reading.

It was firmly opposed by the Tory government. And even if it had been passed these people would have had a chance to amend it out of existence in committee or have it sat on in the Lords.

Heffer spoke ably about the iniquities of the lump—how it led to bad workmanship, an even higher level of accidents, tax evasion, the disappearance of training and union busting. The men from Merseyside who were outside the House of Commons lobbying, he stressed, were delegates sent down to represent sites that were working.

## Prepared

In short, Eric Heffer did everything to put across his Bill reasonably and sensibly. The only effect within the august walls was that everyone agreed it was a fine debate.

But the building employers were well prepared.

There are plenty from among their number who have seats in the Commons if not in the Cabinet. On this occasion their spokesman was Idris Owen, Tory MP for Stockport North, a director of his own construction firm Omar Investments which uses lump labour, and a former vice president of the National Federation of Building Trade Employers.

Mr Owen's speech took all its cues from the special briefing the building employers had produced for 'selected' MPs. It spoke of their honest desires to treat with the unions, of the way they all condemned the lump but had to make some use of sub-contracting.

It was a fine study in hypocrisy. For these are the same employers who are spreading the most vicious forms of the lump up and down the country to ensure there is no repetition of last year's national strike by busting the union.

## Defend

'Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater' was Mr Owen's cry. In the middle of his speech he made one slight mistake and disclosed what kind of baby it was he loved. 'Now if the rain comes and it may only be drizzle . . . those with a guaranteed week come off the scaffold. They go into the mess room and out come the cards.'

So much for union men who look after their safety and health and won't work up scaffolds when it is raining. The lump men, to the delight of Mr Owen, just carry right on.

So the Bill was lost with Paul Channon, millionaire, stating that as Minister of Housing and Construction, he was advising MPs to vote against.

The fight against Mr Channon and his paymasters goes on—on the picket line up and down the country and in the struggle to defend those pickets who are being intimidated by the law.

Shrewsbury trial: page 3  
Birmingham march: page 15.

# Codswallop and greed of the fish warriors

THERE IS a story that in the last century the British Consul-General in La Paz so annoyed the Bolivian government that they arranged a 'spontaneous demonstration' against him. The demonstrators tied the consul to a donkey, facing the animal's rump, and drove him through the city amid jeers.

The Foreign Office, furious at this 'insult to the flag', demanded that the Navy send a gunboat to chastise these 'lesser breeds without the law'. Unfortunately, the Admiralty had to inform the Foreign Secretary that Bolivia does not have a coastline.

Iceland does have a coastline. Indeed the country has practically no other resources than the seas around it and the fish they contain. It is therefore extremely vulnerable to gunboat diplomacy, even in the

present enfeebled state of the British Navy.

Now just as the 19th century dispute with Bolivia had nothing to do with the interests of working people in Britain—the Liberal government of the day no more represented their interests than the Tory government represents ours—so today, the 'cod war' dispute with Iceland is being conducted by the British government simply in the interests of a particularly nasty gang of profiteers, the British Trawler Owners Federation.

The basic issue in dispute is very simple though, of course you wouldn't know it from watching television or reading our millionaire press. It can be summed up in one word—over-fishing.

## Destroy

For years, modern trawlers, West German and Russian as well as British, have been scooping up cod and other fish at a rate that threatens drastically to reduce the breeding population and ultimately destroy the fisheries.

The Trawler Owners Federation is interested in big profits in the here

by Duncan Hallas

and now and to hell with the future. They can always shift the money they make from trawling into other profitable fields.

Just as the Dundee whaling ship owners had the Greenland Right Whale hunted to near extinction in the last century (Dundee was then the major whaling port in Europe) and then put their money into landed property, jute and stocks and shares, so the trawler owners know they can always find other fish to fry.

The important thing for them is to make as much as possible regardless of the breeding stock of fish or the health and safety of their crews. And when they kill the goose that lays the golden egg and the crews end up on the beach, well, too bad for the crews but that's life.

The Icelanders don't have the same possibilities and so they want to keep the industry going indefinitely by restricting the total catch in their waters to a level that enables the fish to reproduce themselves. That is the point of the 50-mile limit.

The Icelanders are *not* out to exclude foreign trawlers from these waters (again you wouldn't know that from television). They merely want to force an agreement to restrict catches *within* the 50-mile limit. Actually that is in everybody's interests, everybody's that is except the get-rich-cowboys of the Trawler Owners Federation.

## Gunboat

But then they are good Tory supporters of 'free enterprise' and so their friends in Westminster and Whitehall send in the muscle-men—otherwise known as the Royal Navy. With the full support of Harold 'Send a gunboat' Wilson.

*POSTSCRIPT. There is something called off-shore oil. There is a lot of profit in exploiting it. Does the British government accept a three-mile limit or a 10-mile limit off British shores for off-shore oil? Not on your life. They claim their full share of the 'continental shelf' (that's the whole North Sea). What is sauce for the Iceland goose is definitely NOT sauce for the British capitalist gander.*





# Labour goes back to being a mouse

SHOCKED by their ability to roar like a lion—albeit a rather senile lion—and even mention such words as 'nationalisation' and 'socialism', Labour Party leaders rapidly turned tail last week and reverted to squeaking like a pathetic mouse.

When members of the party executive and the 'shadow cabinet' met last week they agreed almost unanimously to drop from the party's draft manifesto for the next election proposals to nationalise 25 of the most powerful companies.

The decision came just a few days after the national press, which acts like a barometer for its big business friends, had shrieked with horror at Labour's cloth-capped cheek in daring to think of bringing some of the giant firms under public control. After all, such socially-responsible monopolies as the drugs giants and the chemicals cartels don't need the 'public' to tell them what to do. They have shareholders to do that job for them.

The original plan to include in the manifesto 25 unspecified firms out of the 100 most powerful in Britain came from those latter-day converts to 'left socialism', Tony Benn and Mrs Judith Hart. They were the only two to vote in favour of retaining the

## SW Political Correspondent

clause at last week's meeting.

The rest of the party leaders immediately succumbed to the virulent campaign of abuse from the Tory press. Harold Wilson, backed by multi-millionaire city man Harold Lever and Tony Crosland, the apostle of the 'mixed economy', argued forcibly against including the 25 firms for fear of 'alienating public opinion' before the next election.

The public opinion they had in mind clearly included the victims of Thalidomide and the many thousands made redundant by monopolies like ICI and GEC who benefitted so generously from Labour grants when it was last in office.

## Corrupt

But Wilson and co had some strange supporters. Also arguing against the proposal were the Tribune MPs, led by spokesman Ian Mikardo. Tribune is in favour of extensive nationalisation—except when it comes to naming names.

Labour's pussyfooting comes at a time when the corrupt, anti-social and profit-and-be-damned attitude of big business has never been clearer.

Yet in the week when the Lonrho scandal was at its height, the Labour leaders gulped nervously and tip-toed back from the edge of actually committing themselves to a battle with the small minority who hold the country to ransom.

Wilson won the day by offering as an alternative a Labour 'pledge' to hold a full-scale investigation into the workings of the Stock Exchange when the party is returned to power. The giveaway clause here was that Wilson spoke of such an investigation going 'as high as a Royal Commission'.

Royal Commissions notoriously take years, if not decades, to reach any conclusions. Even if Labour honoured such a pledge—and it is not renowned either for its honour or its willingness to stand up to the City—it would be likely to lose office long before the commission was concluded.

Fittingly enough, the Labour meeting took place in a brand new London hotel—the Churchill—which is both an edifice to the new Heath capitalism and to the hollowness of Labour's pledges. In the Churchill, all is plastic, even the 'leather' chairs and the fake books in the library, where the Labour leaders met.

# BUILDERS FACE BIG TRIAL ON LUMP

SW Reporter

SEVEN building workers were committed for trial at a special sitting of Shrewsbury Court on Friday charged with intimidation, damage to property, fighting and making an affray.

The seven men will be back in the same court on Friday 15 June when, along with 19 others, they will be committed for trial on further charges. And among their colleagues on that day will be several like Kenneth O'Shea who are being charged with conspiracy to intimidate 'lump' workers to abstain from work.

## OFFENSIVE

This massive prosecution—six more have been committed for trial already in courts in Flintshire—are part of a highly-organised offensive against trade unionism being pushed through by the powerful building employers.

The cases are being brought by the Director of Public Prosecutions. But they are being engineered by the building employers, in particular the directors of Sir Robert McAlpine.

By the beginning of last August the building workers of North Wales had succeeded in shutting down every 'lump'—non-union—site in their region. At that time they started to receive invitations from less organised areas to send in their flying pickets.

## INTIMIDATION

They went in some strength to Telford where McAlpine's have the plumb contracts for the new town development sewn up with the lump.

After their picketing on 6 August, the police congratulated them on their behaviour and escorted them to other sites. Five months later the same police arrested them on trumped up charges of conspiracy, intimidation and damage to property.

For Friday's hearings and the solidarity demonstration through the town afterwards, the police again mounted a massive show of strength. So thorough was their frisking of people trying to gain entry to the court that initially they refused entry to the seven defendants.

After the short hearing, with its inevitable result, the seven men came out and joined the rally outside. They



Shrewsbury solidarity march—with large police contingent—marching through the town on Friday. Picture: John Rea

then led the march through a town that was seeing its second mass demonstration this century. The first was one month ago, when the 26 first came up in court.

At the solidarity rally, speaker after speaker drew attention to the new twist to the state onslaught on workers' rights that the Shrewsbury prosecution embodied. With the Industrial Relations Act virtually inoperable, the employers and the Tories hoped to prosecute effective picketing out of existence with

criminal charges.

And all the speakers underlined the shameful decision of the two big building unions—UCATT and the Transport Workers—to refuse the 26 assistance because they faced criminal charges. This, it was stated, would in no way affect the rank and file campaign to defend the men and the organisations of the working class.

Shrewsbury 26 defence committee: send donations and inquiries for speakers to R Williams, 1 Ford Pentre, Ocean View, Carmel, Holliswell, Flintshire.

# Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

'ONLY the accident of a boardroom row has enabled the public to see just a corner of the Tory free-for-all jungle... What of the rest of the jungle? How many cases are there of exorbitant fees as a part-time sideline for busy businessmen. How many cases of £130,000 compensation for giving up a job?'

That is Harold Wilson talking about Lonrho and making some very good points, just as he used to make good points about Tory grousemoors and the 'old boy network' before he became Prime Minister himself.

The Lonrho case exposes yet again the swindle of 'incomes policy' under capitalism. The lavish fees for the 'right' people, the tax evasion, the free houses, free holidays and free cars are typical, not exceptional. 'Incomes policy' does not apply to people like Duncan Sandys, 'Tiny' Rowland (personal fortune about £8 million) or any of the rich profiteers who finance the Tory Party and provide suitable boardroom sinecures for ex-cabinet ministers at extravagant salaries. That is capitalism in action. 'Incomes policy' is for you and me, not for them.

Even the published figures for the official salaries of company chairmen and directors give a glimpse of the 'rest of the jungle'. Take the case of Sir Kenneth Keith, chairman of Hill, Samuel. He gets 'only' £50,000 a year—£10,000 a year less than men like Sir Eric Drake of British Petroleum (£60,949) or Mr W Emmett of Automotive Products (£60,261). So to help out with the housekeeping, Sir Keith, according to Labour Research, also 'has 15 directorships, including the Beecham Group, Times Newspapers, United Drapery Stores, Eagle Star Insurance and British European Airways, of which he is deputy chairman.'

We are not told what 'exorbitant fees' Sir Keith gets from his 15 'part-time sidelines' but no doubt they keep the wolf from the door.

## Same swindle

What other perks by way of company houses, company planes, company cars, 'entertainment' allowances, compensation and special tax and pension arrangements these people and their like get is something that only comes out in the rare cases when the thieves fall out and take one another to court. But is it right to call this a 'Tory free-for-all'? What is specifically Tory about it?

Didn't exactly the same system exist when the Labour Party was in power? Aren't the people Wilson is now denouncing the same people he previously told us were 'serving the nation well'? And for all his denunciations of Heath's 'incomes policy' fraud, is it not true that the Wilson government introduced exactly the same kind of swindle?

It would be pleasant to believe that Wilson has seen the light and became a socialist and that the Labour Party has recently changed. It would also be pleasant if silk purses could be made from sows' ears—it is just as probable. At any rate, international big business and its government is not too worried about our Labour leaders.

Looking for a good man to run the International Monetary Fund, that is to enforce the principles of capitalist 'sound finance' on any government that might be tempted to 'waste' money on 'extravagant' welfare schemes, they are reported to have approached Mr Roy Jenkins and then, when he turned it down, Mr James Callaghan.

Not having a private line to the IMF-World Bank circles, we are unable to confirm the truth of these rumours. We are able, however, to testify to the eminent suitability of either candidate. It is not necessary to comment on Jenkins. Jim Callaghan was the man who operated Wilson's 'squeeze and freeze' policy in the interests of British capitalism. No doubt he is eager to do the same thing in the interests of world capitalism.

If 'dismal Jim' does get the job he will be paid £12,000 a year (about £230 a week). He will not have to worry about tax havens in the Cayman Islands either. The salary is tax free. The perks have not been revealed but they will be up to the usual standard.

And if Callaghan doesn't land this plum job he needn't despair. When Wilson becomes Prime Minister again he will need an experienced 'squeeze and freeze' man to run his next 'incomes policy'.



by Mike Balfour  
ONE PERSON was killed and more than 40 injured in Milan when a hand grenade was thrown into a dense crowd attending a memorial service for a police inspector assassinated a year ago.

A young man arrested immediately claimed he was a member of an anarchist group, and that his act was to avenge a fellow-anarchist who died in 1969 while being interrogated by the police inspector, Calabresi.

But evidence which has emerged since the arrest points to fascist involvement in the hand grenade attack.

According to reports, the arrested man had lived in Israel for the past two years and the hand grenade was one of those used by the Israeli army. On the night before the attack he had dinner at the house of a well-known fascist, and in his luggage the police found a book published by another fascist who is now in prison for his part in the 1969 bomb explosion which sparked off this whole series of events.

The 1969 explosion, in a Milan bank, killed 16 people, and was the signal for a massive counter-offensive by the police and employers against

# ITALIAN FASCISTS STAGE FRAME UP BID



the left. It came at the end of the 'hot autumn' of 1969, when millions of workers went on strike and won important concessions from the employers. Among those rounded up by the police then were two anarchists, Giuseppe Pinelli and Pietro Valpreda.

Forty-eight hours after his arrest, Pinelli 'fell' from a window of the police headquarters and was killed. The police claimed he threw himself out of the window, but evidence

suppressed by the police clearly indicated that he had been murdered during interrogation under the direction of Calabresi, and his body was thrown out of the window.

## CONVICTED

Valpreda, in prison for almost three years while his trial was delayed, was finally released pending the outcome.

Meanwhile, after mass pressure by the left, some fascists were arrested

and convicted of conspiring to cause the bank explosion.

Calabresi himself was assassinated in mysterious circumstances—it was rumoured that he had been disposed of because he knew too much. As in 1969, the accusing finger was pointed at the anarchists.

Since 1969, however, the fascists have carried out a series of bombings and beatings-up which they have tried to disguise as 'left-wing violence', and have enjoyed police

protection and the financial support of many employers.

Last month a well-known fascist was injured while trying to place explosives on the Turin-Milan express railway line.

His confession in court revealed the fascists' strategy: 'I only wanted to increase tension,' he said... 'to make people afraid... through this fear to get a strong state in which communists and socialists would have no say.'

## Black South African workers keep up strike movement

by W Enda

STRIKES by African workers in South Africa for higher wages are far from over.

1250 workers have struck at a Johannesburg rope factory, an associate of British Ropes, which made profits of £1.3 million last year from the sweated labour of black workers, many of whom are on starvation wages of £6 a week. The men are demanding a rise of 1½p an hour, and have ignored threats of dismissal if they do not return to work immediately. At least 40 police are constantly around the factory.

Mr Anthony Barber, Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer, is a former director of British Rope.

The South African government is terrified that a victory for these strikers might set off a further wave of strikes in the enormous Johannesburg industrial complex, similar to that which swept Natal province two months ago.

At Vereeniging, 50 miles south of Johannesburg, four militant African busmen have been sacked after attempting to negotiate higher wages as members of the Transport and Allied Workers' Union. African unions with negotiating rights are illegal.

The bus company management ordered the four militants to be 'interviewed' by the local security police. Alfred Mthwetwa, the organiser of the union in the garage, was threatened with loss of the pass

that gives him the right to work in the area if he persisted—this means, for a black worker in South Africa, deportation to a Bantustan or reserve.

Another of the four was beaten up and threatened with the same fate as the Indian militant Ahmed Timol, who was thrown out of a police station window a year ago. The bus company concerned is a subsidiary of British Electric Traction.

Back in Britain, the parliamentary select committee investigating African working conditions in British-run firms in South Africa has been hearing the feeble attempts of the big companies to whitewash the scandalously low wages they pay black workers.

## Slavery

Lord Stokes of British Leyland, trying to excuse the £40-a-month starvation wages conceded to African and Coloured workers during the Natal strikes, said it was usual for big business enterprises to abide by the customs and practices of the countries where they operate. When asked whether British Leyland would have accepted the custom and practice of slavery in the southern states of America, had the company happened to own a cotton business there a century or two ago, Stokes lost his cool and snapped back:

Financial Mail March 26

**LABOUR**

for industry is plentiful in progressive Pietermaritzburg... just one of the many advantages that the capital of Natal, the fastest growing Province in the Republic, offers you. There is a strong case for locating a factory in Pietermaritzburg. Have your secretary write for our brochure.

Cheap labour: An advertisement from South Africa's Financial Mail

'I think it is an unfair and unwarranted suggestion and quite out of context. We have come here in a co-operative spirit.' He then launched into a justification worthy of any 19th-century imperialist looter.

'We are proud of what we have done in South Africa,' he said. 'If you look at our conditions out there and the modern social facilities we provide, they are very comparable

with many in this country, let alone the rest of South Africa. We are making a big contribution to the welfare of the work-people of South Africa.'

Come off it, Stokes. It's the £1.4 million profit you've made this year alone out of the exploitation of black workers, who are forbidden even trade union rights, that you're really proud of.

## Campaign increases to legalise abortion

by Richard Kirkwood

IN THE past week a major campaign has developed in France against the reactionary abortion and contraception laws. Big demonstrations have been held in most cities.

The most important was in Grenoble, where Dr Annie Ferret-Martin is to be tried for performing an abortion. Dr Ferret-Martin is one of a number of doctors in Grenoble who have publicly declared they have carried out abortions and will go on doing so.

The same is happening all over France. In Bordeaux campaigners have built up a panel of doctors who will carry out abortions.

## Victims

France's laws on abortion and contraception make virtually all abortions illegal. Although contraception is allowed, contraceptive propaganda, advertising or information is illegal.

These laws were passed in 1920 when the military authorities were keen to build up the population after the First World War. Naturally the main victims are working-class women—the well-off can get their contraceptive information and travel to Britain or Switzerland if they need an abortion.

The campaign is a clearly political one. The Movement for Freedom of Abortion and Contraception, which was formed last month, fights for free abortion on demand and for contraception at state expense.

It is supported by family planning and health groups as well as by the Socialist Party, the CFDT, France's second largest trade-union federation, the PSU left socialists, Lutte Ouvriere (Workers' Struggle) and other revolutionary groups.

## Discontent

The Communist Party and the biggest union, the CGT—which it controls—have been less clear on where they stand and are not part of the movement so far.

This movement is another sign of the widespread discontent which has been apparent in France in the past two months. Although the government succeeded in cooling the high-school revolt and although the unions have stopped the strikes in Renault and elsewhere from building up to a full-scale challenge to employers and the government, it is clear that many French people are deeply dissatisfied on a wide range of issues.

The strike at Peugeot in St Etienne is still going on after nearly two months and labour unrest continues in many other large factories.

In the technical schools there are still rumblings of revolt. In all these the government has been forced to make concessions. The movement around abortion and contraception could see another victory.

## BRIEFING

BLACK PANTHER leader Bobby Seale has lost the election for Mayor of Oakland, California's fifth largest city. His election programme, though it gave some attention to housing and social welfare, included heavy stress on 'public and senior citizens' safety' (in other words law and order) and the building of an international trade and cultural centre in Oakland. It fully accep-

ted 'revenue sharing'—Nixon's scheme to rationalise the federal budget at the expense of black and poor people—and contained no strategy at all for linking the struggles of black people to those of workers, black and white, fighting inflation and Nixon's incomes policy.

Seale ran as a candidate for the Democratic Party, which—besides being a party of big business with quite as much corruption in its dealings as Nixon's Republicans—has never broken with white racialism. Far from being disillusioned by his electoral defeat, Seale has declared his intention to stay in the Democratic Party and try again for office.

AS THE new round of Vietnam peace talks began in Paris last week, the Saigon government brought in new measures to complete its suppression of all opposition in those parts of South Vietnam it still controls.

The police and administration have been given discretionary powers to arrest anyone who 'disturbs public order'. This applies not only to supporters of the

Provisional Revolutionary Government, but to all who show any sign of opposition to Thieu's dictatorship. The police have been ordered not to say in the charge whether the person arrested is accused of being a communist or not, but simply 'disturber of public order'.

No fewer than 26 political parties have now been dissolved by Thieu's regime. The three which remain are the ruling Dan Chu Party, a Catholic liberal party, and the 'Democratic Socialist Alliance', which is close to the ruling party. There is talk of founding a new 'Democratic Socialist Buddhist Party', but it has not yet materialised.

REACTION to America's Watergate scandal in the Eastern European press has been mild. The Russian press mentioned it for the first time last week in a short article in the weekly Moscow Literary Gazette. A Polish editor explained the low-key coverage by saying: 'From our standpoint, Richard Nixon is the best possible American president in the current circumstances, and we don't want to see him embarrassed.'

The unofficial view circulating in Eastern European capitals is that the whole affair is a plot against the president by powerful interests opposed to Nixon's friendly relations with Russia. Russian leader Brezhnev, at present trying to fix his visit to the US in mid-scandal, seems confident Nixon will survive.

ANTWERP dockers, in their six-week strike for improved pay and conditions, have had several clashes with police outside the offices of the docks union. The union leaders oppose the strike, saying the dockers' demands are excessive and that the union is bound by previous agreements with the bosses.

Water cannon have been used by the police against pickets trying to invade the union offices, and on one occasion a policeman fired shots in the air. In another clash, several people were injured when the police attacked dockers' wives who had joined the pickets. The police version was that they were trying to defend the union offices from the dockers' wives, who were armed with umbrellas.

**A REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST MANIFESTO** by Kuron and Modzelewski. The famous open letter to the Polish Worker's Party, written in 1964. A vitriolic analysis of the Eastern European regimes and a call for social revolution. 29p postage included, from PLUTO PRESS Unit 10, Spencer Court, 7 Chalcot Road London NW1.





# Giggling lordship and the white man's burden...

LABOUR peer Henry David Leonard George, first Baron Walston of Newton, is worried about the situation in Rhodesia. So worried is he, that he has formed an organisation called Justice for Rhodesia which is a society for rich men with a conscience about racism.

For some time Lord Walston has been preparing a 'high-level' deputation to Sir Alec Douglas-Home to call for justice in Rhodesia.

Lord Walston astonished a meeting of Justice for Rhodesia earlier this month by announcing that the man he wanted most to go with him on the deputation was Lord Goodman, the solicitor.

Lord Goodman it was who in 1971 prepared the proposals for selling Rhodesia to Ian Smith and his white minority in perpetuity—proposals which were enthusiastically accepted by Mr Smith, but which were judged to be unacceptable to the black majority by the Pearce Commission which reported last year.

## Vickers slicker

MR J RICHARDSON, personnel officer at Vickers in Barrow-in-Furness, has written a personal letter to council tenants in the town asking if they can help get Vickers out of a jam. It seems that the shipyard's order book is bulging, and that there is plenty of work on hand. So much, in fact, that Vickers are having to import skilled workers, notably from the Clyde.

The trouble is that there is nowhere for these workers to live. So, writes Mr Richardson: 'The thought has crossed our minds that there may be homes in Barrow which could take in a paying guest—even two—without causing upset.'

Vickers have managed to persuade the local Labour council to shelve their rule which demands that no council tenant can sub-let their council house.

But they can't do anything about the rule which insists that any extra income from 'paying guests' rent will have to be taken off any supplementary allowance received by pensioners.

PS. Barrow town council have implemented the Housing Finance Act. In 1971-72, the council built 107 houses. In 1972-73, they built 78.

Lord Walston was proposing, therefore, that he should go to the Foreign Office with the architect of the proposals rejected by Pearce to persuade the Foreign Office to accept the logic of the Pearce report.

Lord Goodman refused to go on the mission, pointing out that his presence might be 'unsuitable'. So Lord Walston had to make do with Lady Butler, wife of the former Tory No 2, Rab Butler, Lord Byers, a director of Rio-Tinto Zinc, a mining company with vast interests in Southern Africa, Sir Ronald Prain, chairman of the Roan Selection Trust, a mining company with vast interests in Southern Africa, Lord James of Rusholme, vice-chancellor of York University, and the Rev Elliott Kendall of the World Council of Churches, who was, apparently, sickened by the whole affair.

### Commitment

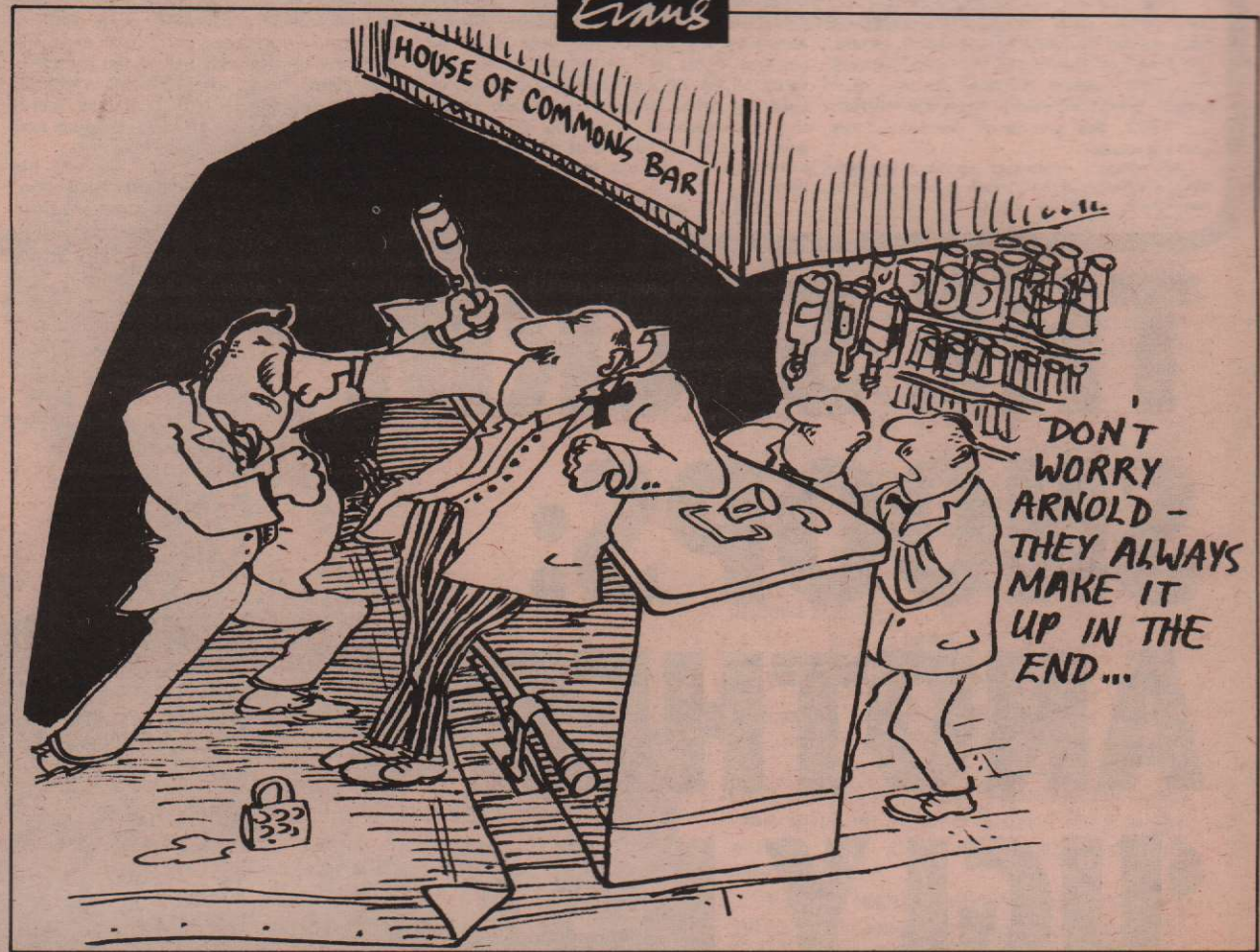
At a press conference after the meeting with Douglas-Home, Lord Walston doubted whether the two African Nationalist leaders, Joshua Nkomo and Ndabaningi Sithole, should be invited to any constitutional conference.

After all, giggled the febrile peer, 'they've been inside for such a long time they could hardly be called representative.'

Lord Walston's commitment to multi-racism in Southern Africa has a long history. In July 1967 he was parliamentary under secretary at the Board of Trade in the Labour government. On 24th of that month he attended a sumptuous lunch given by the UK-South Africa Trade Association, the exclusive club for investors in apartheid.

He told the guzzling businessmen that, thanks to Labour government policies, UK investment in South Africa had increased in the first half of 1967 by 33 per cent to £144 million. 'We aim to boost trade with South Africa still further,' he said (Times 25 July, 1967).

## Oxford and the money bags



# GOOD GENTLEMEN OF DEMONA

I AM interested in any information which can lead to the identity and life-style of the two gentlemen in the above picture, photographed here by Peter Harrap of Report on the demonstration on 12 May organised by the Stoke Newington Five Solidarity Committee.

Photographs were taken of every single marcher, and the gentleman with his back to us took recordings of a lot of what was said. Neither man would say a word to anyone about their origins or their purpose.

Secret film-making, however, is not the speciality of unidentifiable gentlemen on left-wing demos. On 16 May, Judge Ranking, in the High Court, dismissed a claim of Mrs Francesca Fox, 50, for damages from her former employers, Clarks Bread Company of Hove, Sussex.

Mrs Fox claimed she had suffered permanent injury in her leg after falling down a rickety staircase in the factory.

Resisting her claim, Clarks Bread produced a film of Mrs Fox walking down a local street, which, the judge said, convinced him that Mrs Fox wasn't



really badly hurt at all. The firm admitted taking the film of Mrs Fox in secret. The judge concluded that Mrs Fox's

fall was caused 'by her placing her foot awkwardly on the stairs'. The employers, he said, 'were in no way to blame.'

'SCULPTURES DAMAGED AT OXFORD' said a Daily Telegraph headline on 14 May on a report that told of a nasty little story about vandalism in an Oxford college quadrangle.

Hertford College, Oxford, is sponsoring an exhibition of the work of Cornish sculptor John Milne. The exhibition, the first of its kind in an Oxford college, has been displayed in the main Hertford 'quad'.

At about 1am on the morning of 11 May, a crowd of drunken blades from an aristocratic Oxford party tumbled into the quad, picked up two of the best sculptures, carried them across a small bridge, and dropped them.

John Milne tells me that the damage to his sculpture is about £470 to £500.

Mr Milne said he had had an apology from the college, and from one of the students. The students, apparently, have agreed to pay for the damage.

The matter rests there, Mr Geoffrey Warnock, the principal of Hertford, has explained: 'Paying the bill will be penalty enough.'

None of the newspapers that published short reports of this incident mentioned the names of the students involved. The ringleaders, I can reveal, were David Gilmour, from Balliol College, a former chairman of the Oxford University Conservative Association, and his younger brother, who is an undergraduate at Hertford. The brothers Gilmour will have no

trouble paying for the damage since their father, Ian Gilmour, is one of the richest men in the country. He is also Conservative MP for Central Norfolk and Minister of State for Defence, where he handles contracts for equipment, such as the recent £250 million contract with the government of Saudi Arabia. Mr Gilmour, who inherited about £500,000 when his father died, is a former editor of The Spectator.

The impartiality of Oxford justice can be assessed by comparing the case of the Gilmour hooligans with that of Simon Jell and Alex Callinicos, who were 'convicted' in June 1971 of writing in whitewash on some walls in Balliol College a few unfriendly remarks about the Prime Minister, Edward Hea.

Not only did the two students have to pay for the damage, which was assessed, rather highly, at £200, but they were also 'sent down' for a year by the proctors.

Neither Simon Jell nor Alex Callinicos was related to a Conservative Minister.

# GRAHAM'S ORANGE SQUASH



REMEMBER this picture which I printed last December of talented young Glasgow Rangers inside forward Graham Fyfe. Fyfe was having a hard run of things at Rangers, despite his popularity with the fans.

The treatment of Fyfe coincided remarkably with his engagement to a Catholic girl. Rangers persist in their refusal to field a Catholic player, and although Fyfe himself is a Protestant, his engagement to a Catholic girl was regarded by Rangers as an intolerable betrayal.

So Rangers suggested a transfer. But Fyfe did not want a transfer. He wanted to play for Rangers. Fyfe was promptly dropped from the Rangers first team, and has not played since November 22. On May 9, Fyfe's resistance finally broke. Rangers Orange team manager Jock Wallace told the press: 'Graham wants regular first team football and he felt that to get this he would have to leave Ibrox.' So Graham Fyfe is on the transfer list.



# Rebellious noises on Rupert's Sunny ranch

WHEN RUPERT MURDOCH recently paid a visit to his native Australia, he stunned the staff of one of his newspapers with the words: 'What goes here? Am I the only socialist on this paper?'

The silence was so long that Murdoch didn't wait for the answer, but whizz-kidded it back to England to throw a £16,000 shindig for Sun newspaper executives and friends at his country estate near Epping.

The pigs on his 200-acre farm may be satisfied with their daily trough but back at the Bouverie Street ranch, where the News of the World and Sun workers have just helped Murdoch knock up a group profit of more than £9 million for 1972, the grunts of discontent are getting louder.

Murdoch's response to any reasonable demand is to plead poverty. This particular comedy routine started last

Another important aspect about the forecast of Bowater is the way it highlights the need for the merged company to buy up UK profit. Only £4.7 millions is expected to be available out of a pre-tax profit of £13.2 millions and while this includes an un-known amount for minority interests, the ruling UK tax rate is 40 per cent.

So expect an important UK acquisition before the end of this year. No one is giving any clues as to what sectors and company will diversify into, but it is expected that the Sun will be the main focus of attention. Finally, the document gives the evidence of a merger of the two companies. The chairman of the merged company is expected to be one of the businessmen. Among the names mentioned are:

had to present two sets of consolidated accounts. This last year the consolidated net profits were £727 millions for the French and only £227 millions for the British.

This arises because of a different treatment of certain items. French directors, for instance, are usually entitled to a proportion of the dividend attributable to shareholders. In certain cases, the off-ages profit is paid to directors' remuneration but is included in the profit and loss account. In fact, public companies do not in fact pay these appropriations. American directors are not entitled to such a share of the profit. The profit is spread across several items which are accounted for differently in the two countries.

year, when the Sun journalists, having patiently waited for the new paper to get firmly on its feet before attempting to catch up with salaries and allowances paid by other popular nationals, taxed the management with the £5 million profit made in 1971 and suggested that a few more peanuts might come their way.

'Profit?' asked George Viles, until

recently Murdoch's number one henchman. 'Five million isn't profit—merely a reasonable return on capital invested.'

Mr Viles has just been removed from the negotiating table because, it was felt, he had lost too many battles against the unions across at the Newspaper Proprietors Association building.

## Borrowing

Murdoch, like most big businessmen, is always short of immediate capital. He tried to overcome this problem at one stage by 'borrowing' from the News of the World pension fund to give his directors mortgages at 3 per cent interest. When he was persuaded that this was illegal, he reverted to other practices, such as selling off City Magazines, thereby abandoning many long-standing and loyal staff to certain redundancy.

This was done to help pay for his stake in London Weekend Television, which he is treating as his own private

company when advertising his newspapers in programmes like the Sun TV Awards.

When it comes to straightforward pay increases, Murdoch's employees accept the little fellow's poverty pleas and his 'you-should-be-grateful-to-me-for-giving-you-a-job' anthem as all part of the capitalist game called negotiation.

But when they have to stand by and watch men having their hands mangled by printing machinery because Murdoch is too mean to pay for normal safety precautions, the old tunes of negotiation begin to sound stale.

Every month, nearly 200 print workers have accidents at the Sun and News of the World. One man's fingers were so badly crushed in an accident last month that three of them had to be amputated.

In addition to this, asbestos building is going on all over Bouverie Street, including the canteen, with no protection provided for builders or for other workers around. Murdoch has totally

ignored the recent government warning that protection must be provided in view of the terrible damage even a speck of asbestos dust can do to human lungs.

For over a year, the print workers have been asking the management to employ a qualified safety officer. For over a year, Murdoch has said no.

At a furious meeting last week management let the cat out of the bag. The unions were told that a safety officer would demand such extensive rebuilding, structural alterations and new machinery that before poor Rupert could turn round, he would be presented with a bill for half a million pounds.

If the unions had any spunk, they would teach poor Rupert that half a million is nothing to what he would lose if they refused to print his papers until the necessary safety measures were taken.

Leonard Hill

# THE SECRET SNOOPS: ANOTHER 'UGLY FACE'



'Course, the boss may persuade some poor damn fool, To go to your meeting and act like a stool, But you can always tell a stool, boys, that's a fact, He's got a yellow streak a-running down his back . . .'

Talking Union, American Folk Song, 1940

ONE of the more ugly faces of capitalism is becoming more and more visible. While America is rocked by the Watergate scandal, in Britain and Ireland we are beginning to see more and more evidence of espionage and corruption that goes under the guise of 'law and order'.

In Belfast a deserter has been blackmailed by the army into being

a double agent and consequently shot. In Dublin the Littlejohn case is revealing British government espionage and provocation in the South.

Dossiers compiled on militant building workers by the building trades employers have been used in the Shrewsbury 'conspiracy trial' and against the Birmingham anti-lump demonstrators.

The Midland Cold Store (Vestey) Company employed spies during last year's dock dispute. Within a week of the victimisation of the deputy engineers' convenor at the Chrysler Stoke plant in Coventry, the company had produced a dossier of evidence against his going back over five years of alleged 'disruptions'.

In addition to employers' activi-

ties, the Special Branch build files on members of socialist organisations. Socialist Worker has documented a large number of cases where Irish militants in Britain and Ireland have had their homes raided for information.

Black militants have received the same treatment. Evidence given in the Stoke Newington Eight trial showed something of the extent of Special Branch investigation and framing of left-wing militants.

This kind of secret police information is used by the Home Office for immediate political purposes. In Harold Wilson's personal record of the last Labour government he proudly boasted that during the seamen's strike in 1966 he had extensive secret information on the militants, or what he called 'the tightly-knit, politically-motivated men' who were running the dispute.

## ESPIONAGE

Wilson wrote: 'From various sources we began to receive undeniable evidence of what was going on, even to the point where we could predict the exact line the group would take at the next meeting.' Wilson used this information on the militants to brief Bill Hogarth, the seamen's leader, so that the right wing in the union could organise to defeat the strike.

A more recent example of industrial espionage that came to light was provided when the Warwick University students went through their vice-chancellor's files when they occupied his registry in January 1970. They found a document showing that Mr Gilbert Hunt, then Managing Director of Rootes Motors (now Chrysler UK) had sent Mr N P Catchpole, his Director of Legal Affairs, to a meeting of Coventry Labour Party.

With Mr Catchpole went ex-Police Superintendent Norton, Chief Security Officer at the company's Stoke (Coventry) plant, together with his shorthand writer.

At the time, Bill Lapworth, Coventry District Secretary of the Transport Union, commented that management were now using concealed tape

recorders to eavesdrop on workers' meetings.

The current expose of corruption in the USA is only the tip of an iceberg which conceals a long history of espionage and ruling-class repression of the labour movement through the use of Pinkertons, private detectives, police and troops to smash workers' organisations.

In the 1930s the La Follette Civil Liberties Committee heard testimony which showed that 80,000,000 dollars a year was being spent by employers' organisations for the services of detective agencies. During a period of militant labour unrest between January 1934 and July 1936, General Motors spent 994,855 dollars which included 419,850 dollars to Pinkertons alone. Chrysler and Ford were similarly involved.

In a recent case, this year, the Guardian reported the extensive use of detective agencies in Britain today which compile information on individuals at the request of businesses and large firms. Numerous reports indicate a vast increase in phone tapping.

A few years ago Fenner Brockway, MP, gave evidence in parliament that Securicor Ltd was 'presuming to regard itself as an industrial MI5.' He stated that a subsidiary of Securicor provided services which included 'the supply of undercover agents and men planted among employees to provide a complete appraisal of any unauthorised happenings' . . . and 'reporting on anyone who might be suspected of causing dissension or inciting employees to defection, and the screening of prospective employees and searches into their antecedents and background.'

The scale on which the ruling class has resorted to espionage has risen and fallen with the militancy of the labour movement. After the high point during the Chartist years of the last century, spying reared its ugly head again during the socialist revival and the new unionism of the 1880s, and on a larger scale in the revolutionary years from 1910-1926.

During the First World War and the years immediately after, Home

Office records show that the state used large numbers of informers and spies, particularly in the engineering industry.

A Daily Herald correspondent from Sheffield wrote of 'a vast system of espionage' in the workshops, 'paralleled only by the spying at the time of the Chartist troubles.' It is certainly no accident that the prominent shop stewards of the First World War became the unemployed leaders of the 1920s.

## CONSPIRACY

Many of the police agents at this time were men who had criminal records, which the police used against them to force them to continue their work. In 1917 a spy called Alex Gordon tried to implicate socialists in a conspiracy to assassinate the Prime Minister.

Gordon later confessed that 'government agents had a hold over me which made it absolutely impossible for me to break away from them.'

In the 1920s and 1930s police spies were sent in to investigate the Unemployed Workers Movement and Communist Party members were frequently arrested and harassed.

The current trends towards increased use of detective and police agencies, plus the use of vague conspiracy charges and the formation of special 'picket breaking' police units reveal how far the ruling class, organised in the government and as employers are prepared to go to defend their system.

Such freedoms that workers have gained in the long struggle since the Combination Acts have only been gained by mass action.

The tremendous display of solidarity that forced the government to release the Pentonville Five is the response we must fight for to defend working class interests.

The lesson we must draw is that only the collective strength and solidarity of workers in struggle will make the snoopers and spies of little use to the ruling class when it has its back to the wall.

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Special article by Alastair Hatchett



# They're reshuffling the board of USSR Ltd...

MR LEONID BREZHNEV visited West Germany last week on his first sales trip as chairman of the new corporation USSR Ltd, which was formed in Moscow this spring. It was the first time a senior Russian executive has visited Bonn since the war, and next month, if all goes well, Mr Brezhnev will follow it up by a trip to the United States.

USSR Ltd has made it clear in recent months that nothing must stand in the way of the vast trading and investment deals which it hopes to negotiate with its former rivals in the West.

There is no doubt that the policy switch in Moscow is one of the most important that has been made since the war. The days are gone of Nikita Khrushchev, who argued that by itself Russia would outstrip the United States economically within a matter of years.

Russia has now decided that its plans to share with Washington the joint policing of the world can best be cemented by mutual and interlocking economic deals.

## Strategy

Russia has huge oil, natural gas, and copper deposits in Siberia which it is prepared to let American, West European, and Japanese firms exploit. In exchange it wants to buy advanced technology and consumer goods, and have ready access to American grain and Common Market butter when Russian supplies run short—which is becoming almost an annual affair.

Moscow may also want to import agricultural machinery from the West to achieve the kind of capital to labour ratios which have brought high rates of food production in the United States at the cost of sending millions of peasant farmers over the decades into the urban squalor and unemployment of the American industrial north.



BREZHNEV: top boss of a corporate management

Mr Brezhnev's new strategy of business at all costs with the West has produced some interesting changes at the top in Moscow. Although as party general secretary, he has now clearly won the personal primacy over his colleagues for which he has skilfully been striving for years (the recent Politburo resolution paid tribute to his 'great personal contribution'), he has widened his policy-making group to

include the Defence Minister Andrei Grechko, the Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko and the head of the KGB, Yuri Andropov.

The newly enlarged Politburo which Brezhnev has now created is a kind of 'corporate management', with all the major government departments in the country's top policy-making body.

Brezhnev has sacked two of his critics.

One, Gennadi Voronov, is an old Khrushchev appointee. The other, a far more dangerous man, is Pyotr Shelest, the former party secretary of the Ukraine.

He is known to have opposed the whole Brezhnev doctrine of joint deals with the West. It is quite possible that some of the other Politburo members, in particular Marshal Grechko, may also have some doubts about it.

What is not absolutely clear is their reasoning. But it seems probable that they criticised Brezhnev from what might be called 'primitive conservative' grounds. They were afraid that too much contact with the West might lead to some sort of 'contamination' of their closed and repressed regime.

## Unlikely

Russian citizens might wonder why it was necessary to have such tight censorship and a virtual ban on contacts with the West when Western businessmen were running about all over Russia. They might wonder why the defence establishment need be so vast.

It seems highly unlikely that Brezhnev's critics would have taken up a 'left' position. Why pawn Russian raw materials and hence the Russian economy even more to the vagaries of the western-controlled world market than it has been already?

Why let the tentacles of the multinational corporations spread even further into Russia, and take advantage of its low-wage economy? Why let the United States, still reeling from defeat in Vietnam, re-group and find new pastures for investment in Eastern Europe and Russia?

It is too long since a debate of this kind took place in the Russian Politburo to expect it to be going on now.

Peter Hitchcock

# ...and the workers pay the price

THE BACKGROUND to the changes in the Russian leadership and to Brezhnev's series of trips to the West lies in the failures of the Russian economy in recent years.

Last year Russia's economic growth was the slowest for 10 years and the official figure of 4 per cent less than that of most of the advanced western countries. There was a serious shortfall in the agricultural harvest, leading to the buying of massive amounts of grain in the West at the enormous cost of 2000 million dollars.

But there was also important failings in industry. When the present five-year plan was drawn up in 1970, it was claimed, for the first time since Stalin took full power in the 1920s, that goods used to increase living standards would get priority over goods used to build up industry still further.

This, said the Russian leaders, would be the test for the plan. But last year the rate of increase of consumer goods grew a third less than planned, and this year's targets were changed to give heavy industry priority over consumer goods.

That means that Russian workers, already suffering from food shortages, will not get the increased living standards they were expecting. Yet their present living standards are by no means high. It has been estimated that they are about half those of workers in Western Europe and a third of American workers.

The Russian leaders periodically promise

by Chris Harman

massive improvements in living standards to the population—and then just as regularly fail to deliver. The reason is that although they claim that the Russian economy is 'planned', in reality they are just as incapable of acting in the interests of the mass of workers as are the capitalists of the West.

They regard their chief priority as being one of building up armaments in competition with the Americans and the Chinese. In order to have the industrial basis for arms production, they sacrifice the manufacture of consumer goods to the manufacture of means of production.

## Luxury lives

Just as the Ford Motor Company tells its workers, year in year out, that they cannot have a reasonable wage increase because of the need to stay competitive as against General Motors, so the Russian leaders tell workers that increases in living standards must wait.

Of course, the Russian leaders themselves do not suffer: they earn up to a hundred times more than the workers, live in luxury flats, have country villas and patronise special shops where they can buy high quality luxury goods that most workers have never even seen.

But the chickens are beginning to come home to roost for the Russian rulers. The low living standards of the mass of the population are beginning to have a detrimental affect on production.

Because wages are so low, workers show little interest in their work. They are not allowed, officially, to go on strike, but they can express their frustrations in other ways by just refusing to take care over what they turn out.

Reports in the government paper *Isvestia* say that wastage due to poor quality production of parts is as high as 30 per cent in the Russian motor vehicle industry. And *Pravda*, the party paper, has complained that all too often, when a vehicle is sent into a garage for repair, mechanics merely change all the components for which they have spare parts, rather than try and find out what is wrong.

The overall result is that the level of productivity in Russia is far below that in the West. The Russian leaders might be able to come to terms with this problem in the long term if they raised living standards. But they cannot afford to because of the arms race with America and China.

Their only alternative is to try to increase productivity by still bigger investments in industry. But if the arms bill is not going to be cut (and the Russian leaders refuse to consider this seriously), that means holding down wages. That is what seems to be happening at present.

But the men in the Kremlin cannot be too happy about this state of affairs. They know that when Polish workers were pushed too far at the end of 1970 there were general strikes in key industrial centres and street fighting.

Force had to be used to smash up demonstrations in Lithuania, part of the USSR itself, last year, and there have been reports of riots in the Ukraine.

The removal of Shelest may also indicate that the regional barons who rule over the different component nations of the USSR are beginning to get restive—perhaps because they each want a bigger share of the investment cake.

Brezhnev hopes that increased trade with the US will provide an answer to these problems. He may also hope that arms agreements will enable him to maintain his grip over Eastern Europe and continue to threaten the Chinese without the arms bill rising too much.

But it is doubtful if he can deal with the fundamental problems of the Russian economy. These arise because a small and privileged group rules Russia and competes with ruling classes elsewhere in the world by exploiting the workers to build up ever larger accumulations of capital.

Only when the Russian workers overthrow this ruling class and begin to use the wealth of the country for their own needs will the problems of the economy begin to be removed.



## LONRHO THE REAL FACE OF CAPITALISM

# The takeover bid for Africa...

DURING the Lonrho court case, the eight directors who sought to remove their chief executive, Mr Roland 'Tiny' Rowland, made it clear that they had never doubted Mr Rowland's 'speculative ability'.

It is a key phrase. For in all the talk about the dramatic rise of Lonrho under Mr Rowland's management during the 1960s—from a small-time ranching company worth a quarter of a million to a massive multi-national with assets worth more than £200 million—not much attention has been paid to the secret which more than anything else won for Mr Rowland his enormous fortune.

Mr Rowland was among the first to understand that the age of political independence for black African states, the age of the 'wind of change', was a time for men with 'speculative ability' every bit as much as the days of old-fashioned imperialism.

Rowland was quick to distinguish between political and economic independence. He noticed that the new African nationalist regimes, for all their anti-colonial talk, were willing if not anxious to 'co-operate' with capitalists.

### Wealth

He watched in wonder as the old imperialist capitalists, terrified by the rising tide of nationalism, lost confidence in their ability to run their enterprises and put them on the market cheap.

It is true that Rowland started in Rhodesia. That the name Lonrho is made up of the first three letters in London and Rhodesia. That Lonrho has 32 subsidiaries in Rhodesia. And that a huge bulk of Rowland's personal wealth, not to mention that of his business partner, Angus Ogilvy, has been shipped out of Rhodesia into the Bahamas.

It is also true that Lonrho has substantial interests in South Africa, including platinum and

copper mines, one of which led to the arrest and trial for fraud of five Lonrho directors in 1971 and 1972. (So great was the 'influence' of Lonrho in South Africa that the trial fizzled out.)

But the real basis for the company's enormous wealth is in black Africa.

As independence swept Africa, Mr Rowland concentrated on buying cheap the enterprises of the old imperialists, on negotiating cheap franchises for agricultural and mining interests and on obtaining cheap licences for the distribution of new consumer durables, notably motor cars.

His game was not to contribute to the wealth of the continent but to buy up the enterprises or the mineral wealth that already existed. It was crude plunder but it was not described as such.

Everywhere Rowland relied on minimum publicity and wherever possible he bought up the

### Report by Paul Foot

press. The recent support for Rowland in Zambia, for instance, is not unconnected with Lonrho's ownership of the Times of Zambia.

Everywhere, too, Rowland made sensitive 'political' appointments to industrial jobs. In Kenya, the grandson-in-law of President Kenyatta is a Lonrho manager.

In the Ivory Coast, the managing director of a Lonrho subsidiary is a nephew of President Houphouet-Boigny, and one of the black directors of Lonrho, Mr Gil Olympio, is the son of the late President of Togo.

In another case, Lonrho was assisted by the Royal Family. In September 1969, Princess Alexandra and her husband, Angus Ogilvy, a Lonrho director, visited Swaziland to represent the Royal Family at the first anniversary of Swazi independence.

It is most unusual for a member of a Royal Family to attend the first anniversary of an independence day, especially in so small a country. Soon after the visit, Lonrho won important concessions for mining asbestos in the Havelock area of Swaziland.

### Moved

All mineral rights in Swaziland are vested in the King, Sobhuza II, with whom Princess Alexandra and her consort stayed during their colourful state visit.

Further north, Lonrho moved into the big time. In the latter half of the 1960s, Lonrho absorbed a massive hunk of business in black Africa's most populated country—Nigeria.

The Lonrho big wigs from the top: Duncan Sandys, Sir Basil Smallpeice, Tiny Rowland, Angus Ogilvy, a former director, and his wife, Princes Alexandra

The highly profitable Liverpool-based shipping and trading combine, John Holt, was bought for a mere £8 million. Other Lonrho purchases included the West Africa Drug company, David Whiteheads, a textile firm, the Tweefontein United Collieries and Witbank Consolidated Gold mines.

Ready cash was always available from Malawi, one of the first countries penetrated by Lonrho.

Lonrho owns all the railways in Malawi, and made a lot of money by selling Malawi's biggest railway bridge to the Mozambique government—an action which was greeted with universal displeasure by several Malawi civil servants, on the grounds that the ownership of the

bridge was crucial development.

The protests were promptly Malawi's President is now convinced

If Banda is Go forth the fruits to Lonrho, who investors in his 50 subsidiaries into every area of life.

### Dec

The same is where President slow to move a companies on t

## International Socialism 58

Labour Party/Gaullism and after/Steel in crisis/The CP and the left May 1973 15p Lenin and the revolutionary party



The May issue of International Socialism features an important and controversial article by Tony Cliff Lenin on the Revolutionary Party.

This is an article that will be quoted and argued about for a long time.

Other features include:

Crisis in Steel: Rob Clay and Nick Howard

The Communist Party and the Left: Steve Jefferys

Gaullism and After: Ian Birchall

Memoirs of a Revolutionary Part V:

Reg Groves

Reforming the Labour Party?

Duncan Hallas

Plus Notes of the Month and Reviews.

International Socialism Journal  
6 Cottons Gardens London E2 8DN  
Annual subscription £2.10

## Keeping Sudan

DUNCAN SANDYS stayed on the Ashanti board, and before long he and Tiny Rowland had become close colleagues. In 1971, the two men were to combine to effect what was perhaps the greatest business coup in Lonrho's history.

It involved the making of a counter-revolution in the Sudan.

For some months before the summer of 1971, Rowland and other Lonrho directors had been casting greedy eyes on the Sudan, and its new government led by President Numeiry.

Numeiry had boasted when taking power of his socialist friends and socialist ideas. But in the course of his sweeping nationalisation proposals he had not touched the many enterprises of Mr Khalil Osman, who was financial adviser to Numeiry and Lonrho's man in the Sudan.

Osman based his huge fortune on

partnership with a former Finance Minister in Kuwait, and was one of the first businessmen in Africa to see the potential in Africa for feudal oil money from the Persia Gulf. (Osman's firm is called Gulf International.)

In June, 1971, a team from Lonrho, including Rowland, flew to the Sudan to negotiate a massive £10 million trade deal whereby Lonrho (and Osman) would become the sole purchasing agents for the Sudan in Britain, and the Sudanese government would hand Lonrho a big sugar concession into the bargain.

### Jeopardy

On 10 July, a team from the Sudanese government, including the Defence Minister, flew to London to finalise the deal with the Foreign Office. At the talks, Lonrho was represented by Mr Duncan Sandys.

The deal was signed and the Sudanese team left on 18 July for a short business trip in Belgrade. On

that day, however enterprise was put left-wing revolution by ministers in cabinet.

At once, Khalil executive jet plane to Belgrade, where Numeiry's Defence senior officers.

These were in Cairo, and from a high-level meeting the Egyptian, Sudanese Chiefs of Staff, their advisers plan Sudan for Numeiry.

One awkward remained. Two of revolution in the London—Lt Col Farouk Hamad.

The two men bound for Khartoum welcome awaited was intercepted Libya and ordered





**Lonrho bought up existing firms... it was crude plunder**

government, was greeted by the 7000 miners at Obuasi with deep suspicion.

Their suspicions were fanned into flame when Lonrho announced, with the full support of the government, that there would be no payment to the miners to compensate for the loss of fringe benefits promised by the previous owners.

The Obuasi miners in vain protested that the miners in the nationalised state Ghana mines had been paid severance pay.

A total and violent strike broke out. When the local mine-workers' union official came to mediate, he was chased away. The Lonrho offices and the police station were ransacked.

## Killed

Mr R S Amegashie, the Ghanaian Commissioner of Mines, who behaved throughout as though he were an employee of Lonrho, warned the miners 'not to make unjustifiable demands.'

On 3 March 1969, he ordered in the army, who fired recklessly into a demonstrating crowd. Two miners were killed and scores of others injured.

The strike continued for a further fortnight, when the company was finally forced to make three months 'goodwill' payment. The miners went back to work, confident that their original analysis of Lonrho had been confirmed.

The Ghana affair, however, cemented another important relationship for Lonrho. The Ashanti takeover had brought into the organisation Mr Duncan Sandys, former Conservative Commonwealth Secretary of State from 1960 to 1964.

to the country's

g civil servants sacked by Banda, who that he is God. he has brought of his goodness are the biggest country, with which penetrate Malawi's social

tree

ue in Uganda, Amin has been against Lonrho's grounds that

they are intrinsically African.

In Zaire (formerly the Congo), Lonrho's companies were nationalised along with several other major combines by government decree last year. Suddenly, however, the Zaire government announced that it was handing back every Lonrho enterprise it had nationalised.

No explanation was given for this change of course, nor any reason why Lonrho should have been singled out for such special favours.

Possibly Lonrho's single most profitable economic coup during the 1960s was the purchase of the Ashanti Goldfields Co in Ghana in 1969.

The Lonrho takeover, which had the enthusiastic support of General Ankrah's conservative

## safe for profits

the whole Lonrho in jeopardy by a n in the Sudan, led Numeiry's original

Osman flew in an laid on by Lonrho re he picked up Minister and two

hen flown on to ere to Libya, where g was held between anese and Libyan he three men and ned to re-take the

little problem re- the leaders of the Sudan were in Al-Noor and Major

boarded a VC10 m, where a heroes' them. The plane while flying over to land in Benina,

Libya. The pilot refused to do so, but only agreed when ORDERED TO DO SO FROM LONDON. As soon as the plane landed, the two leaders were rushed away by the Libyan authorities, deported to the Sudan, and shot by the victorious counter-revolutionary forces of Numeiry.

Both the Foreign Office, Mr Sandys and Lonrho were handsomely rewarded for their parts in this affair.

### Agents

On 23 July, the Egyptian government agreed to pay £2 million in compensation for British property nationalised after the Suez invasion in 1956.

On 15 August it was announced that Britain would lend the Sudan £10 million to buy goods in Britain. The purchasing agents, who would pocket 2 per cent of everything bought, were Lonrho.

# FEATHER HAND IN APEX ATTACK ON LEFT

AT THE CONFERENCE of the Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical and Computer Staff last week, the executive council succeeded in getting its decision to 'proscribe'—ban—the International Socialists endorsed.

The union's general secretary, Roy Grantham, rose to the very heights of his analytical and oratorical powers when he made the keynote speech urging delegates to support the ban.

'IS is led by an actor, an actress and consisted of a bunch of students and a few lawyers,' he said. That was the analysis. 'They work from outside the unions and they participate in democracy without any of the responsibility that goes hand in hand with it.' That was the oratory.

But in developing his theme, Grantham started to make a few mistakes. 'I didn't know much about the International Socialists,' he blandly admitted. 'So I asked Vic Feather what sort of organisation they were.'

'Vic Feather replied that he was aware of the activities of this organisation in various unions and he would support any action the APEX executive took to expose the way they operate.'

Now Mr Grantham, being a democrat and a great man for the rules, really ought to have informed the APEX delegates in what capacity Vic Feather was speaking.



Vic Feather is the general secretary of the Trades Union Congress and he is authorised to make such statements only if the General Council of the TUC has formally discussed the alleged activities of the International Socialists and pronounced upon them.

In point of fact this matter has never been raised on the General Council. Vic Feather, another well-known democrat, has no authority to make such statements. And Grantham has no authority to quote them.

Since the statements are not authoritative, their value is dubious, except in so far as they impress the easily led. This is precisely the purpose of Roy Grantham and others who have moved against the International Socialists for the most dubious of reasons, just as they did with the Communist Party 15 years ago at the height of the Cold War.

These moves and these statements result from fear, fear of debate and fear of democracy. APEX's rule book comes up for revision next year. What Grantham and others are concerned about is that their hold over it is about to be challenged by those in the factories and offices up and down the country who want more democracy and more militancy.



The signal for Grantham's activity was the formation of a group called APEX Action which operates quite openly in the organised pursuit of militant policies and rank and file control of the union. And so at the first sniff of organised opposition Grantham went running to the most anti-democratic rules in the book and to the general secretary of the TUC.

Vic Feather is an acknowledged master in this field. For it was Feather who masterminded the operations against the Communist Party after the last war.

Feather wrote one book and several pamphlets on the subject though you will find them in few libraries, not even the TUC library—presumably because it was too shameful an episode to have it



FEATHER: acknowledged master

known.

Feather published his book in the aftermath of the infamous Black Circular which ordered Communist Party members to be excluded from trades councils.

This led to the disbanding of several important trades councils because they insisted that militants—Communist Party and otherwise—were all an essential part of the movement and had the right to be delegates.

These bans were finally removed only at last year's TUC. Feather spoke in favour saying, 'Communists were no longer the threat they were thought to be.'

Feather's 1953 offering, How Communists Work, starts with some platitudes about how communism was a grand ideal, but had been perverted. It continues with a study of how militant organisation against the tyrannies of Ernie Bevin in the Transport Union and other tyrants elsewhere worked and concludes with a moving chapter on how to fight these evils.

'Democracy is strongly rooted

in Britain,' wrote Victor. 'But oak trees can be blasted. They can be poisoned at the roots. They can survive in a stunted form... When liberty is dead, democracy is dead.'

He did not make similar statements when the five dockers were in jail. He said nothing when the engineering union's funds were raided. Perhaps he saved such moving pleas for his secret talks with Heath and Co at Chequers and Downing Street.

But frightened men in positions of power are dangerous men. While the activities of militants up and down the country are not discussed formally and minuted on the General Council, they do take place. Conclusions are drawn and tactics decided upon behind the scenes.



Another recent decision of the APEX executive proves that this is so. Following their deliberations, an internal memorandum was sent out concerning the newspaper 'GEC Rank and File'.

It reads: 'Our members may not support the newspaper either financially or in any other way and should be advised accordingly. Branches are not authorised to purchase and circulate copies of this newspaper to their branch members.'

Would that it was the Daily Express or some other rag that was being referred to. But it is not. It is a rank and file paper produced by and for GEC workers.

Laurie Flynn

## 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.

Price: £1 plus 15p postage.

PLUTO PRESS, Unit 10, Spencer Court, 7 Chalcot Road, London NW1 8LH.



# How union generals become NCOs for the bosses

NOTHING could better illustrate the need to build a revolutionary workers' party than the reaction of the generals of the trade union movement confronted with phase two of the Tory wage freeze.

Their response did not even match that of the grand old Duke of York. They remained safely at the bottom of the hill or climbed half way up while informing their troops that it was up to them whether or not they climbed to the top.

Nor were the union leaders able to hide behind the alleged apathy of the rank and file, their traditional excuse, particularly of the 'left' leaders. At the height of the opposition to phase two, close on a million workers, most of them low paid and without militant traditions, were prepared to do battle with the government.

The union leaders had a unique chance to harness the tremendous energies unleashed in those struggles to the task of building a united movement that could have smashed the wage freeze and brought down the Tories. Instead, they allowed each section to do battle on its own. Where groups of workers were already fighting, the leaders went through the motions of leadership only to 'down tools' at the first opportunity.

Clearly, the union leaders, whether of the right, centre or 'left', become increasingly divorced from the rank and file as they rise up the union hierarchy.

Union leaders have, under capitalism, reached positions of special privilege, a privilege based on their control of the unions.

As they rise up the union ladder, they acquire a bureaucratic mentality which values above all else the organisational and financial viability of the union machine. Since this machine is their power base, protecting it becomes more important than building up the fighting strength of the rank and file.

## Sabotage

Naturally, there are differences between union leaders.

Right-wing leaders such as Frank Chapple write scurrilous articles in the Sunday Express denouncing hysterically the 'red wreckers'. For them, the union is but a rung on the ladder leading to the House of Lords and a directorship of the Bank of England.

'Centre' leaders such as Vic Feather voice token opposition to state control of the trade union movement, but will only support the struggles of their members when absolutely forced, and then only to sabotage them.

As for the 'left' leaders such as Hugh Scanlon and Jack Jones, they are not happy about being reduced to mere messenger boys of the capitalist state. The kind of privileges they wish to preserve for themselves do not flow from membership of the House of Lords. They don't like growing state regulations of wages since it reduces their own power as

**MEMO**

Now is the time for all good men *and women* to come to the aid of the party...

A series by Sabby Sagall

well as that of the militants. But as union bureaucrats, the 'left' leaders see themselves as acting on behalf of their members rather than mobilising them to act for themselves. They have a basic lack of faith in the rank and file which is rooted, at a deeper level, in a fear of their members' hidden strength. This strength, once allowed to develop, could blossom into a full movement for grassroots control of the unions. Like the 'centre' leaders, the 'lefts' prefer the soft furniture of Downing Street and Chequers to the cold winds of Trafalgar Square or the factory gate. They may support or even call for certain strikes, but only if the members would otherwise threaten to get out of control.

The 'left' leaders, like their equivalents on the left-wing of the parliamentary Labour Party, occasionally indulge in socialist phrasemongering. But what they mean by 'socialism' is quite different from what marxists have always meant.

Their idea is of a nationalised economy run on behalf of working people by enlightened bureaucrats who have come to control the existing state machine as the result of a parliamentary victory.

This is far removed from the marxist vision of socialism as the democratic control of society by the producers achieved through a revolution carried out by the vast majority.

## Long-term

Reformist leaders can therefore never be relied on to develop a consistent struggle against capitalism, since they continually demobilise their troops. The union leaders, in particular, fail because they see the struggle as only against the effects of capitalism and not, at the same time, against the system as a whole.

But in a period of intensifying crisis, the only effective defence is to link the immediate struggle to the long-term goal of workers' power. In practice, this means having the fullest battles, and seeing these as a school in which they train themselves to carry out the socialist transformation of society.

In these struggles, only such revolutionary leadership can give workers the confidence they need to win. As Rosa Luxemburg, the great Polish-German revolutionary, wrote in 1906: 'Consistent, resolute tactics on the part of Social-Democracy [for which read: the revolutionary party] produce in the masses a feeling of security, self-confidence and desire for struggle. Vacillating, weak tactics, based on an underestimation of the working class, have a crippling and confusing effect.'

The alternative lead necessary to defeat the state-employer offensive and launch a counter-attack leading to workers' power will not be given unless socialist militants throughout industry unite to build a revolutionary party.

## BOOKS

# REVIEW

## The world of the no chance people

COMMUNITY DECAY, by John Rowland, Penguin, 40p.

THE PEOPLE of the North Islington district of London could be forgiven for not recognising their home territory as portrayed in this new Penguin Special. Somewhere in the mass of confused and confusing graphs and amid the trendy illustrations lies the district between Hornsey Rise and the Archway Road—the 'tragedy of the dispossessed.'

The surveys and case studies overwhelm the reader with a mass of statistical information, but if you can manage to plough through it, a picture of human agony is revealed.

Certainly no one who has spent any time in the area could dispute the more obvious points John Rowland has rediscovered. It is true that the area has been stripped of many basic human needs—decent housing, good schools for all ages, jobs worth doing and space and places to enjoy after work.

It is true too that the cards are stacked against anyone born and bred in such an area—in the words of one local headmaster, these are 'no chance' people'. It has long been recognised that if you come from such an area the hopes of getting a more interesting job or decent accommodation are only slightly better than nil.

It is hardly surprising then that what are described as 'middle-class aspirations' die an early death.

The confused presentation of this book is followed up by some equally confused conclusions concerning the solution to the problem of 'social deprivation'. John Rowland advocates the development of neighbourhood councils and the 'folk moot' or community meeting place, where local problems could be discussed and solutions found.

Certainly any answer to the problem must begin with grassroots organisation, but it is difficult to imagine these self-help groups confronting the bureaucratic stranglehold of the Greater London Council, or the profiteering of private landlords, with any degree of success.

Where life is based on production for profit, rather than the satisfaction of human need, then we can expect housing shortages, social 'maladjustment' and all the associated problems. Within this context, control lies with the landlord, the speculator and the money-lender, and action by tenants and residents is necessarily limited.

Solutions may be found to particular cases by this kind of activity, but the general problem can be resolved only with a change in the whole. This means more than the establishment of neighbourhood councils. It involves the community control of all of the wealth of the area, for the benefit of its residents.

JANET DRUKER

## Socialists lit the fuse



MARXISM AND THE ORIGINS OF BRITISH SOCIALISM, by Stanley Pearson, Cornell University Press, £2.50.

THIS book traces briefly some of the influences on the early socialists at the end of the 19th century, Carlyle and Ruskin and their moral criticism of capitalism and the secularists' attack on religion.

It mentions Henry George, the American advocate of land nationalisation who had such an important effect on many radicals—but the utopian socialism of some of the supporters of the First International, and the European revolutionary traditions transmitted by the exiled emigres living in Soho are neglected.

The author goes on to outline some of the ideas of socialists with widely different views: the Fabians, William Morris and Robert Blatchford, the author of Merrie England, an extremely popular piece of propaganda. Lesser-known figures appear too, Carolyn Martyn, who died of pneumonia and exhaustion organising Dundee women jute workers, Edward Carpenter, who combined opposition to exploitation with a longing for freer personal relationships and argued for the liberation of women and homosexuals in his book Love's Coming of Age, and Tom Maguire, organiser of the Leeds gas and clothing workers, whom one old West Riding feminist and socialist still remembers as 'A lovely man'.

Sometimes he touches on the unorthodox diversity which contributed

WILLIAM MORRIS:

towards the making of radical working-class culture. When Margaret McMillan, who struggled with her sister Rachel to secure nursery education, says she and Rachel had friends 'in the Whitmanites at Bolton, in the Secularists in Leicester and also in the spiritualist groups in various towns and villages', she is describing a culture that we are only beginning to rediscover.

Stanley Pearson has a wonderful subject to write about and his book is handy for anyone who wants to find out about the late 19th century socialist movement.

But there is something very flat and dry about the way he writes. He is very distant from the men and women who inhabit his pages.

Tom Maguire remarked sadly that 'some people call themselves socialists' but are really 'just ordinary people with socialist opinions hung round. They haven't got it inside them.' The remark could be extended to some historians of socialism. Stanley Pearson's subject is not inside him.

Anyone who wants to find out about this period should dig out Edward Thompson's book William Morris Romantic to Revolutionary, and read his Homage to Tom Maguire in the Essays on Labour History edited by Asa Briggs. These cover much the same material and they are by a historian who has his socialist opinions inside him.

SHEILA TURNER.

## BOOKWORM'S EYE VIEW

IS BOOKS has acquired 20 copies of the paperback version of BEYOND A BOUNDARY, by C L R James, the distinguished West Indian marxist historian. The book, now out of print, is a fascinating and beautifully written analysis of the dynamic role of cricket in the West Indies as one expression of the people's struggle for independence through their gradual monopoly of the 'white man's game' and the breakdown of rigid class and colour barriers within the sport.

There are many brilliant pen portraits of famous cricketers, including Learie Constantine and Frank Worrell. Its index must be one of the few containing both Leon Trotsky AND Len Hutton.

IS Books is offering this limited collection at 30p a copy (plus 10p post and packing). If you send money but are not one of the lucky 20, IS Books will send you a book list to make an alternative choice.

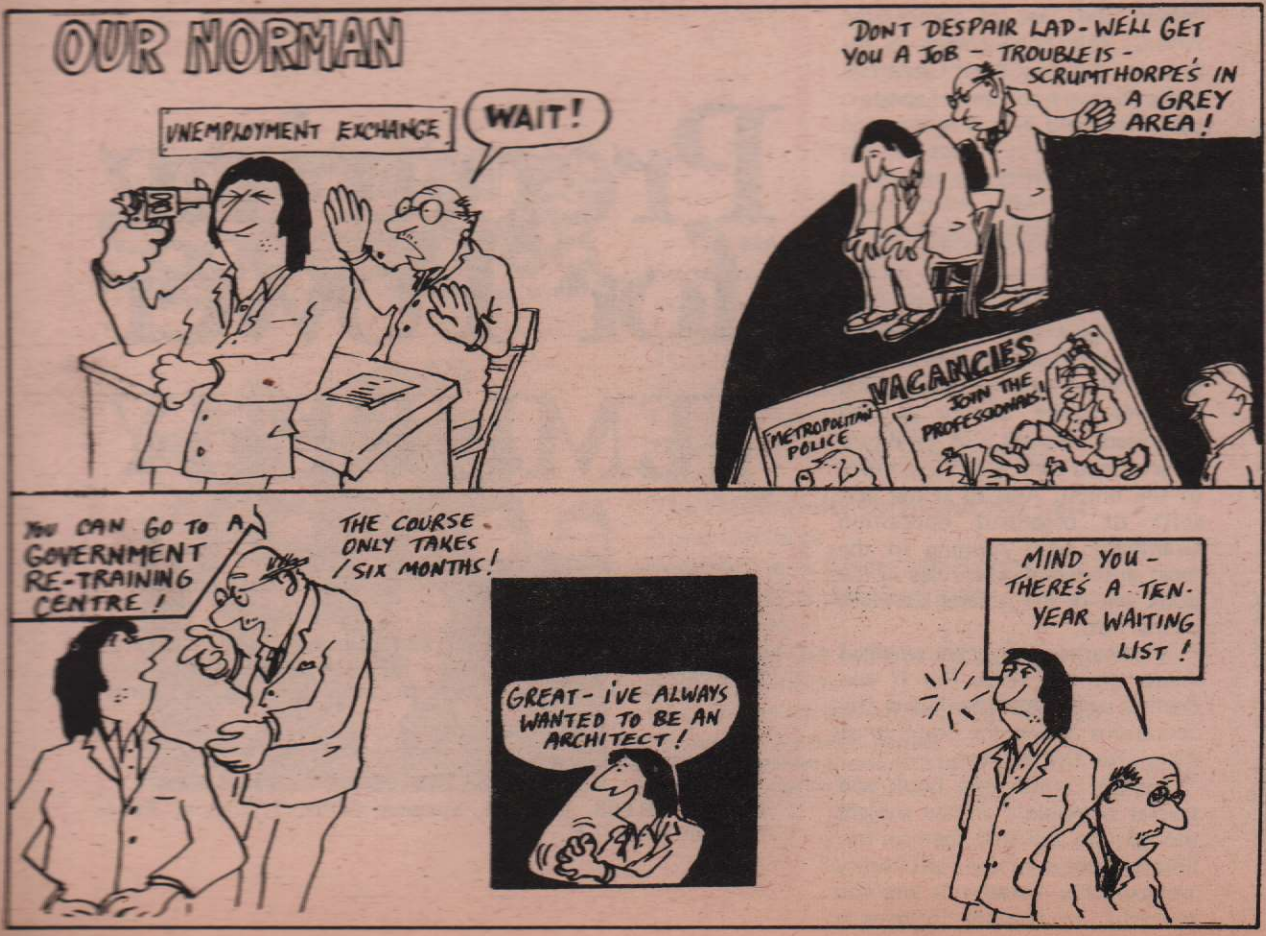
Piers Paul Read's novel THE PROFESSOR'S DAUGHTER (Panther,

40p) is about an American liberal who starts his political life digging dirt for a friend to use as a smear against a trade unionist opponent for Congress. He ends it as Professor of Political Theory at Harvard involved in a plot to assassinate a possible Democratic candidate for the presidency.

This novel promises little—the opening scene is clearly designed to capture the sex market—but delivers a lot. The cynical hypocrisy of American liberalism is revealed in a few telling scenes, and so are those twin dead ends of the left, the drop-out and the individual terrorist.

The daughter in the title is the weakness of the book. Though it is her collapse that opens the professor's eyes, her sex and drug scenes seem too often included simply to justify a lurid cover.

But the politics isn't there just to appeal to the 'violence' market. The thinking that leads young Americans to follow Che Guevara comes across well—and the author takes a good line against individual terrorism.





## Songs sung red

MIKE ROSEN is writing a book, or rather he wants you to write it for him. It is a book of socialist songs and will be published by Pluto Press.

'It'll have old songs in it of course, but also songs which have come out of contemporary struggles,' said Mike. 'In fact I don't mind if people write the songs themselves, provided they can be sung to recognisable tunes.'

So if you have any 19th century songs of pitworkers or your own commentary on the class struggle to the tune of 'Release Me', send them to Mike Rosen, Pluto Press, Unit 10, Spencer Court, 7 Chalcot Road, London NW1.

ONE fact arising from your recent spate of letters was that you expect me to watch television as well as write about it.

I'd better confess that this aspect of the job hadn't struck me when I took on this column. I don't mean I don't watch television, but I only watch what I think I'm going to like and I don't seem to think I'm going to like very much.

You not only expect me to watch it but you'd like me to give you a marxist criticism of it too. On that score I wouldn't presume, but here goes. I've had my eye on Coronation Street.

We started off with bright green toothpaste. If you use it you get picked up in a laundrette. Next a sexy girl in a floaty sort of dress wafted across the terrace of a country mansion—which is what you get if you pour salad cream on your hair and spray this stuff on the lettuce to keep it curly—or the other way round.

Are you still with me?

Billy Walker gets home at 7am with a wallet-load of notes which he leaves on the table so his mum can spot the lolly and we're off. We know Billy's in trouble be-

## A Street named Coronation



cause he hasn't shaved for a week and he won't look mum in the eye. Mrs Walker's the Mayoress so naturally she's worried.

Ena Sharples has visitors from America—this episode is all about what the Street thinks about the Yanks and vice versa—and then we get a bit more about Mrs Walker and Billy—the Mayor turns up to take mum to a civic function and Billy's looking

guilty—Mrs Walker's a good actress and knows how to send the character up gently, so we love her in spite of her snobbishness—then back to Ena for the Big Dramatic Moment before the break. The American visitors are Ena's Great-Nephew and Mrs Great-Nephew and they break the sad news that Grandad—Ena's brother—has passed on.

Next we get washing up in lemon juice, which seems a waste of fruit, but I read in the paper that they did a survey and found that housewives associate lemons with sunny clean happy things so they put it in everything you have to use to get rid of dirty greasy boring things.

Cheese is better than meat. Which made me think about dear old benevolent UNICEF giving powdered skim milk surplus to US hog-fattening requirements to the kids in North East Brazil, who happened to be starving at the time. The kids went blind because of Vitamin A

deficiency.

Sorry, that was a sour note, quite out of place, because Ena's taking her brother's death so bravely that it's her old friend who's sobbing, while Ena's only worry is finding the bit of paper with her lines written on it.

However, she gets it all out, with the old friend saying some of the lines for her and Ena repeating them and we're back on the tramlines with Ena recalling her past in t'mill and how she could've gone to America only her dad put his foot down and although she'd have had a more comfortable life over there—the Americans are all rich, not like us lot in the Street—comfort isn't everything.

Now we're in school and the teacher, —a bloke we've seen before fixing up a coach trip to a stately home for the benefit of Ena's visitors and the rest of the Street—it looks like a future episode with the Duke of Bedford, attendances must be falling off at Woburn... where was I?

The teacher, yes, he's telling the kids about the Indians at Wounded Knee and how they made the government give in to their demands—did they?—without getting violent and killing anyone. The class doesn't seem to go for this so he tells them the history of the original battle of Wounded Knee and how the Indians got themselves massacred by shooting at the white men.



Which seems to indicate that massacring Indians is good for them because it teaches them to ask politely for what they want and not get violent and kill people.

There's a bit more about Ena, and we're into the cliff-hanger with Mrs Walker in her chains of office being given a bad time by the Bank Manager. Billy—would you believe it!—has not only had his hand in the till at the Rover's but he's flown a kite on her.

And that's that.

So what does it all add up to? It looks real but it isn't. It looks and sounds real because the idiom in which it's written is familiar. That's how we speak and even think... well, sometimes we do, or we know people who do.

But it isn't real because that isn't how we behave. There's nothing in Coronation Street which isn't a dramatic con. Nobody gets tired unless it's to provoke another character into expressing brow-furrowed concern, nobody gets bored unless boredom's our Problem of the Week, nobody's lonely unless something's going to be done about it or someone's got to worry about it.



Finally, as lots of critics have pointed out, it all happened years and years ago in the 1930s and it's got sod-all to do with people wearing themselves out working late shifts to make enough bread so Pompidou can flog subsidised butter to the Russians, or people dying alone in dirty rooms, or standing in queues at the dole.

So what? So what is that the values we get insinuated into our homes are the ones I hope you've read into my interpretation of the episode. It's nice to be a Mayor and visit Woburn Abbey in a coach, though we've missed the bus in not turning out like the Yanks, all wall-to-wall and free-ways (but we've still got our clog-dancing). We can all learn from those nice well-behaved Indians at Wounded Knee, and, finally, the real nitty-gritty nub of the whole sermon, it's important to have money, money, money, money, money. Oooh, it's such a worry! Lovely!

Tom Clarke

# Incitement to put the boot in

## John Willman on pulp fiction

YOU may not have heard of Joe Hawkins. Most people under 18 have. Ex-skinhead, ex-suedehead, convict, Joe Hawkins has murdered a policeman, beaten up innumerable 'Pakkis', 'Hippies' and Chelsea supporters, and is a veteran of several gang-bangs and rapes.

He is also a best-seller. Each episode of his life is a sell-out, largely to teenagers. He appeals particularly to young girls, who write a lot of fan-mail, requesting photos, addresses and dates.

He makes a lot of money for New English Library, an offshoot of the American Times Mirror Company, who publish him.

In 1969, NEL commissioned one of their house writers, Richard Allen, to write a novel about the skinhead craze which was then sweeping Britain and causing hysteria in the media. The book was titled *Skinhead* and went to ten reprints (half a million copies at least). The sequel, *Suedehead*, also carefully timed, sold five editions. Since then Joe Hawkins' exploits have been chronicled in *Bootboy*, *Skinhead Girls* and many others.

The author sticks close to the successful formula. Each book has 125 pages, containing three aggroes, three screws and a couple of crimes. Joe always gets his come-uppance, yet manages to reappear for the next volume.

## Anti-union

This has become harder to engineer, since the author is forced to mete out larger prison sentences at the end of each book. The latest episode *Trouble for Skinhead*, is set wholly inside Dartmoor, and to keep the balance of sex right, is forced to have Joe waste pages remembering sexual fun from his past.

Richard Allen is only a pseudonym. The author wishes to preserve his anonymity, and was not available for interview. NEL admits he is not a young man and his introductions are always addressed from Gloucestershire or Devon, which may well account for the third ingredient in the novels. For in addition to the sex and violence, there is a clear line of politics, similar in many ways to that of the National Front.

Through the mouths of various characters, and the commentary, the author produces a whole spectrum of

racist and anti-working class abuse. Although mildly anti-Big Business, he is pro-capitalist and virulently anti-union.

A friend is remembered for helping Joe get away from his native Plaistow 'from under the degenerate spell of a Labourite witchdoctoring that said no man shall succeed unless he's a union shop steward or a commie organiser.' The natives of Plaistow are made out to be a horde of plundering dockers, led by Jack Dash, whose rapacious pilfering is largely responsible for rising prices.

The National Interest is threatened by unions, communists and of course demonstrating students who use social security funds to pursue the practices of Charles Manson. In a book about student protest called *Demo*, Allen portrays every incident since 1968 as fomented by a single Russian agent, commuting from London to Paris to San Francisco.

## Pro-empire

There is more than an element of 'Dog eats dog' when Joe and his gang beat up a commune of hippies.

Underlying all the books is an old-fashioned pro-empire racism. The halcyon days when Britain civilised the natives are cherished, while the best blacks are those who understand that they owe everything to benevolent imperialism.

Although much of the more virulent abuse comes from Joe's mouth, he is the hero of the books (NEL's director likened him to Guy Fawkes as a villain who is hero-worshipped).

The stories themselves deal quite happily in prejudices as if they were facts. Irishmen are all IRA Papists, the Indians are cowardly, and live three families to a flat, the Africans are feckless and ungrateful. As for the passages about Jews, they would bring a glow to Goebbels' heart:

'Hymie Goldschmidt was a Jew. His father... preferring always to sponsor the Israeli cause and plough his gains into bonds for a foreign country... In all his business dealings, Solly Goldschmidt acted on the belief that an Englishman was a sucker and that the Jew-boy was supreme when it came to making money.'

The result of this set of attitudes is that the author's world is full of people he doesn't like and is rapidly degenerating. There are grotesque scenes of violence and sex, each of which becomes more horrific in order to keep up the impression that only a



The savage story of Britain's newest teenage cult of violence. By Richard Allen

*Skinhead*, published by NEL

'Final Solution' can work. The latest book contains an attack on a Pakistani household, in which the men are beaten unconscious, the children locked away, and the women raped.

The gang enjoy themselves so much that Joe 'had been compelled to batter the Pakki men into second unconsciousness to let the bastards finish off...'

Richard Allen lays the blame firmly at the individual's feet. Skinheads are people who were born bad, and there is nothing that can be done except lock them away. Luckily for us, there are also a few good guys, usually soldiers or policemen who will stand up for law and order.

A doctor remarks: 'Seriously though, I'd like to see what a dictator could do in this country. Slums wiped out, harsh measures to curb the grab-all boys, savage sentences for injury to persons, hanging for child-rapists and cop-killers, the birch for young offenders like these skinheads.'

But by and large people are bad and greedy. Allen suggests that Plaistow is grotty because of the people who live there, and that the kids there like squalor. At one time, the East End was presumably like Mayfair, only the tenants spoiled it!

Allen Sillitoe, in *The Loneliness*

of the Long-distance Runner, looked at the background of a borstal boy to see how he had fallen foul of a corrupt society. The book showed how he had learned to fight back, to reject the pressures to make him a 'good sportsman'. Richard Allen is a great believer in sportsmanship, a sportmanship more commonly known as fascism.

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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.

## THERE ARE 15 BRANCHES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

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<p><b>NORTH EAST</b> Bishop Auckland Durham Hartlepool Newcastle upon Tyne South Shields Spennymoor Sunderland Teesside E Teesside W</p>	<p><b>NORTH</b> Barnsley Bradford Dewsbury Doncaster Grimsby Halifax Huddersfield Hull Leeds Pontefract/ Knottingley Scarborough Selby Sheffield York</p>	<p><b>EAST</b> Basildon Beccles Cambridge Chelmsford Colchester Harlow Ipswich Leiston Lowestoft Norwich Peterborough</p>
<p><b>MIDLANDS</b> Birmingham NE Birmingham S Coventry Derby Dudley Leamington and Warwick Leicester Loughborough Mid-Derbyshire Milton Keynes Northampton Nottingham Oxford Rugby Warley Wolverhampton</p>	<p><b>SOUTH</b> Brighton Canterbury Crawley Eastbourne Guildford Portsmouth Southampton</p>	<p><b>GREATER LONDON and HOME COUNTIES</b> Bexley Camden Chertsey Croydon Ealing East London Enfield Fulham and Hammersmith Hackney and Islington Harlesden Harrow Hemel Hempstead High Wycombe Hornsey Houslow Ilford Kilburn Kingston Lambeth Lewisham Merton North Herts Paddington Reading St Albans Slough Tottenham Walthamstow Wandsworth Watford Woolwich</p>

# THE UNIONS

## Engineers ban the Birch in rush into Europe

MEMBERS of the engineering section of the AUEW fork out £38,000 of their funds every year in affiliation fees to the International Metalworkers Federation.

Given that the title is the International Federation you wouldn't think it would be too necessary for the union also to be affiliated to a body called the European Metalworkers Federation.

And when you discovered that the Europe which is being referred to in this title is that part of Europe which is in the Common Market, you would think that the whole business was rather strange.

Nonetheless it was with considerable publicity that the AUEW engineering section announced last week that it intended to spend another fairly hefty, but undisclosed, slice of its members' funds in affiliating to the EMF.

This decision was taken in the face of prior warnings as to the almost totally redundant nature of the EMF. Reg Birch was sent out to Brussels on what is termed a 'fact finding mission'.

He returned and lodged his report. In it he argued, apparently with an abundance of evidence, that the body was almost exclusively

devoted to furthering the careers of its officers.

They spend most of their time cuddling up to the bureaucrats of the European Economic Community where they hope sooner rather than later to gain even more lucrative employment.

Birch's recommendations were set aside by the engineering section executive. President Hugh Scanlon presumably believes that funding these gentlemen in their climb up the EEC ladder furthers the cause of international working class solidarity.

# BID TO PUSH POST MEN TO RIGHT

by Tom Dredge

IT HAS not taken the establishment press long to build up Tom Jackson and the Union of Post Office Workers as Frank Chapple's foremost allies in the fight to commit the trade union movement to open collaboration with the Tories.

To militants inside the union, this is nothing new. We have seen it too many times before. The UPW was among the first of the unions to accept the government pay norm. The executive's pathetic cry of 'We accept under protest' was the sickest joke of the year to many members.

In the latest issue of The Post, the union's journal, Jackson says that two years ago we tried strike action and failed—now we're following the procedures laid down. The UPW is going to the Pay Board to get justice for the members he says.

The propositions the executive have put up for this week's annual conference bear evidence yet again of the rightward swing of the union.

## PROTECTED

At present the union rules are revised every three years. At this year's conference the union executive proposed that this be altered to once every five years. The executive is also proposing that most of the union's money be vested in a protected fund so that 'they will not become available for financing strikes, lock-outs or other industrial action.'

And in a report to the conference on 'facilities for trade union representatives' it is clear that the intention is to continue the process of centralising union organisation to the detriment of rank and file activity.

Branches have little or no authority in the UPW. But in some of the bigger branches, activists have carved out for the membership some freedom and rank and file participation.

This report is intended to put a stop to this situation. It is designed to concentrate what authority is left to branches in the hands of the branch secretary. Credentials are to be introduced for the first time. And the nasty twist is that they have to be signed by the local Post Office Manager.

## UNCRITICAL

There is little doubt that most of these proposals will be carried. Anyone who has been to the UPW conference is struck by the ages of the delegates. The majority are middle-aged or older and, having spent most of their lives in 'The Civil Service', are well conditioned to accept without question most of what goes on.

They have a strange sense of uncritical loyalty to the union

executive, although at times they may question the way they operate. Yet it is interesting to note that among the membership the blind obedience is dying. Despite strict instructions not to strike on May Day, several large branches called their members out.

It is also alleged, but difficult to prove because of the rule which forbids exchanges of information between branches, that few, if any, delegates who go to conference are mandated by their branches or even seek the approval of their members for the motions or amendments they submit. Indeed there are cases where branches only hold one meeting of their members per year.

There is also a special report to conference on the wages question and the decision to go to the Pay Board. It is known that some branches submitted highly critical amendments to this report but none has been put on the agenda.

The common tactic for militants

in the UPW is to criticise Tom Jackson. It is debatable whether Jackson has the powers ascribed to him. His position depends more on his ability to read which way the opinion makers in the union—national and branch officers—are blowing. He is then quick to speak and act in this manner.

He realised the unwillingness of the TUC to lead a fight against the Tories and played quite a part in making sure that the TUC stayed that way. It must be remembered that he once tabled a motion seeking to increase the authority of the TUC. Jackson, another Harold Wilson, is a supreme opportunist who follows trends and abandons principles rather than use his undoubted influence to give a lead.

A lead is urgently needed in the UPW, a union which is still licking its wounds from the 1971 strike. The few pockets of militancy that do exist need closer links with one another—a task which the rank and file group found the paper Post Office Worker is attempting to carry out.

## For the People, democracy is an empty room...

THE SUNDAY PEOPLE carried a moving tale two weeks ago on the subject of the enemies of democracy in the Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications and Plumbing Trades Union.

Bill Seaman is full-time secretary of the union's West London branch. He is appointed by the executive. When the branch meets, Mr Seaman sits and gazes at empty seats for an hour and then goes home. Outside, members of the branch picket the meeting in protest at Mr Seaman's appointment.

The West London branch was created by the amalgamation of several other branches. The amalgamation was pushed through by the executive to achieve two key aims: the appointment of a full-time secretary who can be sacked by the executive and one delegate and one resolution to the union conference. Previously branches had working, part-time secretaries and sent resolutions and delegates to conference based upon the size of the branches.

You could say that the appointment of Bill Seaman was part of a concerted attack

on democracy. That is how the branch members see the situation and that is why they are picketing the meetings.

But the People thinks differently. It calls on the members to call off their picket and attend meetings in the name of 'democracy'. Reporter Alan Smith comments: 'While Mr Seaman gazes at empty space, the only people who can benefit are those who gleefully claim that trade unions are bloody-minded, intractable and ruled by minority groups.'

Mr Smith is presumably a trade unionist himself and should conduct himself according to the tough rules laid down by the Code of Professional Conduct drawn up by the National Union of Journalists. But Mr Smith's eyes seem blinded by his own prejudices or by those of his employer. His own article contains a mass of evidence to show which side in the dispute carries the flag of decent, democratic trade unionism.

But Mr Smith and his paper are not prepared to break the long Fleet Street tradition of giving uncritical support to the Frank Chapple leadership of the union which came to power via the High Court.



## NEED FOR YOUTH MOVEMENT

YOUR REPORT on the conference of the National Union of School Students (12 May) quite rightly points out the limitations of the NUSS and the need to make it into an effective political organisation for school students. But it failed to point out the need to build Rebel groups to fight for not only a militant struggle in schools, but also, more importantly, a revolutionary socialist youth movement which can unite school students with young workers, apprentices, and unemployed young people.

Rebel nationally has only a small number of active

groups at the moment and it is vital that we get the support of all socialists and most importantly that of militant trade unionists in our efforts to build a strong fighting movement.

It is also important that Socialist Worker gives more coverage to the struggles of young people and encourages support from its readers for the activities of the various local Rebel groups.—ANDY MAKIN, AMANDA FOAKES, MIKE BROWN, TIM QUEMINET, York Rebel Group.

# TUC FIDDLES AS WAGES BURN

THE STORY of Nero fiddling while Rome was burning is never without a contemporary setting. Instead of Nero we have the TUC. Instead of fiddling we have talking with the Tories and burning Rome is our wage packets going up in the smoke of rising prices.

The TUC talks with the Tories are an act of open class collaboration. The Tories want to avoid open confrontation with rank and file trade unionists by getting the TUC to foist some form of incomes policy on the membership.

The TUC wants some sort of concessions from the Tories and CBI to avoid open confrontation with the employing class.

But this government's strategy, as was Labour's, is to cut real wages and boost productivity to increase profits and investments. And the present economic expansion doesn't look as though it can last long.

So the trade union leaders are unlikely to return from the 'corridors of power' even with full begging bowls—as if that would be enough.

In the meantime we are meant to sit and dutifully watch the ensuing drama of Downing Street meetings on television during the summer and autumn months as our living standards decline even further.

Instead the TUC ought to go where the real power is. It ought to be organising a militant campaign among rank and file trade unionists to increase wages, to smash the freeze and force the Tories from office.

As a first step we must campaign in our union branches against TUC collaboration with the Tories and demand: No talks with the Tories.—JULES TOWNSEND, Southampton.

# LETTERS



Let's hear from you. Socialist Worker wants to hear from readers—your likes and dislikes with the paper, your disagreements with IS policy, plus thoughts and comments on the multitude of problems affecting working people. Letters must arrive first post Monday. Handwritten letters must be legible and with names in capitals to avoid confusion.

ideas and discussions which are coming out of the contemporary women's movement.

These seem to me perfectly reasonable grounds of criticism—though it was a pity they made them after Christopher Hill's paper on 'sex and sects', because this diverted discussion from his description of the position of women in the civil war sects, a subject with a certain contemporary relevance.—SHEILA ROWBOTHAM, London E8.

## Smear

A TOWN COUNCIL colleague of mine recently drew my attention to an article headed Emergency in the Labour Ward (21 April). I cannot see why you should claim that 'my political attitudes were not suitable.'

## Only rank and file can defeat the Lump

YOUR article on the lump in the building industry (12 May) was a first-rate piece of journalism.

I naturally hope that Eric Heffer is successful with his Private Member's Bill which seeks to ban this infamous system of working.

But no building worker should be under any illusions. While parliamentary action is welcomed, legislation in itself will not stop labour-only subcontracting.

I will give you an example. After the strike in the building industry last year, I was successful with a notice of motion calling on Edinburgh Corporation to ban the 'grip'

(Scottish workers' terminology for the 'lump') from all its future contracts.

This was a step forward, but in my view it has just meant that the labour-only subcontractors have gone 'underground', with the building companies denying that they now use this system.

Clearly, then, the answer must be based on the need to build strong and vigilant rank and file organisations to defend workers' interests and to fight the bosses and their Tory government.—RON BROWN, Edinburgh.

I have carried out every decision of the city Labour Group acting on the policy of the city party on which the election was fought. Indeed in regard to the rents campaign, I actually seconded the town council motion that we should not implement it.

Under the rules of Edinburgh City Labour Party, retiring councillors speak at what should be a properly convened meeting of the ward party at which members vote for or against the retiring councillor. One member came in well through my address and according to a statement issued to the press by a ward official voted against me and I lost 4-3.

After 21 years' service I considered this totally unfair and instead of waiting for the second nomination meeting which must, by rule, be held I appealed, as is my right, to the city party. They investigated the position, found from their own representatives that irregularities had occurred and in the absence of ward officials themselves called another meeting. I had nothing to do with the matter other than being called to another meeting at which I was accepted by six votes to four.

It is untrue to say that I supplied news material to the Evening News during their strike and a smear to print it in the way that you did. When the strike began I was on holiday in Majorca. When I was entering my office on the first Monday of the strike I met the Father of the Evening News Chapel who said he was coming to see me to ask me whether I intended supplying any copy to the News.

I answered at once 'No, of course not' and at no time did I send a line of copy to the Evening News despite the renewed requests of those producing a paper. This fact could have been easily verified.

I learnt from the girl who works part-time for me that on the previous Saturday while I was in Majorca, the Evening News had telephoned and asked whether she could arrange for a report to be provided. This girl used to work, on a part-time basis for the NUJ staff branch a few years ago and very wisely she telephoned an official of the Edinburgh Freelance Branch to which I belong and asked for guidance.

She was told by him that the strike was unofficial, that the Freelance Branch had not even been informed about it and that in accordance with the accepted practice, she could arrange for this to be done if she wanted.

A man who has undertaken football jobs for me since the end of the war was going to the game and she asked him to provide the News with a short report. He is not a full-time journalist but one of quite a few of those employed by newspapers to cover sports work on Saturday afternoons. He works for other papers at times as well as me and he sent the paper a report.

Had I been myself in the office I would not of course have arranged for coverage of the game but I fully support the action of my assistant who asked for guidance from the union official and acted upon it.

The other smear paragraph about paying the subscriptions of Labour Party members is equally untrue.—MAGNUS WILLIAMSON, Edinburgh.

## Cayman Islands all year round for these bosses

TWO STRIKES on at the moment illustrate graphically the hypocrisy of British business's claim that it can't pay wages above the Tories' freeze levels.

At the Nu-Swift factory in Huddersfield, 75 women office workers are on strike for an increase in their derisory £13 a week, which is £8 below the wage other firms pay. Such a generous wages policy on behalf of the management has ensured a prosperous time for Nu-Swift over the years.

Workers lucky enough to buy shares in Nu-Swift Industries back in 1960, when they were sold to a select few in the City for around the equivalent of 11p each, will have seen their investment more than treble in value and will have received well over 11p a share in dividends over the years. It is understood they haven't worked quite so hard for this money as the workers of Nu-Swift.

In 1963 Nu-Swift was making pre-tax profits of £289,319. In 1972, it made pre-tax profits of £736,413. The profit per worker in 1963 was £525, in 1972 £1132.

Of these profits the workers received £100,449 as a special bonus in 1972. It is specially itemised in the report and accounts as a charge against profits—just so the shareholders can see how much they are sacrificing.

This £100,000 shared between 650 workers compares with the £112,872 of directors' fees to be divided between 10 directors during that year. The directors voted themselves a rise during that year: an average of £1700 each, or £34 a week. It is not known whether these rises were paid in to a bank in the Cayman Islands.

### Bonus

But in looking after themselves and their workers so generously the directors did not forget their shareholders. In October the shareholder normally would have received a dividend.

In 1972 it was to be 1.87p a share. But the directors discovered that if the dividend was paid in January they could 'materially reduce the company's tax liability' and so, apologising for this slight inconvenience, they gave their shareholders a bonus of an extra £75,000 by way of compensation.

This was particularly good for the directors who own shares worth more than £1 million in the company.

The George Cohen 600 Group, a large engineering combine, owns Beaton & Sons, of Park Royal, West London, where 250 workers have been on strike for three weeks. The directors of George Cohen paid themselves £138,000 in salaries last year. That's around £250 a week, compared to the average wage throughout the group of £30 week for the employees.

In 1971 these 9400 workers, employed throughout the world, produced a pretax profit of £4.355 million. If the £1.5 million of de-

preciation is added back, that means they made an average profit per worker of nearly £630.

Unfortunately 1972 was a bad year: profits fell to the derisory low level of £2.114 million. So did the UK labour force—from 9076 to 8425.

The redundancies, which cost the company £375,000 made it a bit easier to sell off some surplus property for a profit of £1.592 million, which, as the chairman so intelligently remarked, 'cushioned' the fall in profits on the trading side.

But don't fear: 1973 (their accounting year ended on 31 March), should be better: in November last year the chairman was expecting a substantial improvement in profits.

In 1963 the George Cohen Group was making profits of just over £1 million. By 1971 these had quadrupled.

During the last 10 years more than £10 million of dividends have been paid out to the shareholders, who have also seen the value of the shares rise from a low of 17p in 1962 to 88p now.

This sort of performance is not an exception. There are hundreds of similar examples. The closure of factories and sackings, to make millions on the increased value of property is not unusual.

But the people who make these profits, who make the money to buy the factories in the first place, and who then lose their jobs are the workers, who now are being refused a decent wage as the directors try to manage on £250 a week.

T H Rogmorton



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# WOMEN FIGHT BACK



# Rent strike tenants vote to defy court

by Tony Boyle

KIRKBY:-A mass meeting of tenants on rent strike voted to ignore letters from the council warning of court proceedings. They all decided to refuse to attend the county court later this week.

The tenants, on Tower Hill estate, received letters warning that the rent strike was no offence in a county court and that the council planned to push for recovery of all rent arrears.

At the meeting the tenants argued that the fight against the Housing Finance Act would be won on the housing estates and not in the court.

The next step the court can take is to pass earnings attachment orders, giving the state the right to deduct rent arrears from their wage packets.

During the London rent strike in 1969 tenant leaders made the mistake of taking the fight into the court and were defeated. Tower Hill action group will not make the same mistake.

# TIMEX: UNION SURRENDERS

COUNTY DURHAM:-The six-week strike at the Timex factory in Washington has ended. The engineering union district committee has accepted the company's demand that the victimised works convenor, Albert Ogle, is barred from being a steward.

Only 42 of the original 120 strikers stayed out until the end. The dispute started as a claim for parity with the Timex plant at Dundee, where wages are £10 a week higher. The company's offer had been rejected before the strike, but it now looks as if the parity claim may be

forgotten.

The dispute has been an education for the men involved. Timex, an American firm, used underhand means to break the strike. They skilfully engineered a split in the union ranks, turning the women workers against the strikers. They laid on buses for the women to protest against the strike at the AUEW offices in Newcastle, getting local TV coverage. They issued tales to the press about violence. They claimed women were in tears at the thought of facing the picket.

But, as one of the strikers put it: 'The people to be blamed are the poor union leadership, not the people who stayed at work. There was no blacking of strikers' work. The top leaders are too busy getting round the table with the Tory party.'

Correspondence from the strike committee was not put before the district committee, say the men, but was dealt with individually by the right-wing district secretary. Now there is to be a union investigation. We may hear more from Timex.

# Left turn for angry civil servants

by Gordon Blair

FOLKESTONE:-This year's conference of the Society of Civil Servants was dominated by unprecedented anger over the government's pay policy.

The society, representing 62,000 management grade civil servants, has taken its first steps towards becoming a real trade union. After years of tame co-operation with the employers the members have at last realised that militancy is the only way to protect their interests.

In February the society took its first tentative national industrial action culminating in a one-day strike in protest against government interference with scheduled pay increases. The move towards a militant policy has already led to 6000 new members being recruited.

It has also obviously produced a big change in the leadership of many branches. At long last conference voted to affiliate to the TUC by 3347 votes to 2315.

Typically, it took a poaching attempt by ASTMS to convince the executive of the value of TUC membership, but the emotional response of delegates emphasised the desire to join the wider movement.

With speech after speech on the coming pay fight delegates rejected the executive's timid proposal for a voluntary action fund. Conference insisted on a large increase in subscriptions to provide the muscle for a renewed campaign.

General secretary John Dryden assured the delegates that the government would be faced with action if the pay board refused to allow a large 'catching-up' rise.

There is still a long way to go, however. A full debate was needed on the strategy to achieve success, but surprise, surprise, the only resolution to be debated on the pay campaign was the executive's own back-patting endorsement of the action already taken.

The old guard of higher-paid managers who have dominated the society for so long must be worried. They were amazingly subdued, and their one big effort, which was to enforce a ballot before any industrial action, was easily defeated.

Society treasurer Tom Higgs reported that the union's investment in South African 'slave labour' firms had been sold. He received a standing ovation when he declared that no matter how hard up we were, we would not profit from 'blood-money'.

The inexperienced trade unionists will have to learn quickly if they are to turn the organisation into a real trade union but at least a start has been made.

The civil servants have learnt the hard way that no matter what fine sounding pay schemes are drawn up, militancy is still the only way to get the money.

# WHAT'S ON

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

## IS MEETINGS

**BARNET IS public meeting:** Fight the Freeze, Stop the Retreat. Speaker Tony Cliff. Wednesday 6 June, 8pm, Bull and Butcher, Whetstone (near Totteridge and Whetstone tube).

**WOOD GREEN IS public meeting:** South Africa. Speaker George Peake. Tuesday 29 May, 7.30pm, Victoria Stakes pub, junction of Priory Road and Muswell Hill, London N8 (buses W2, W3, W7). ALL WELCOME.

**COLINDALE IS public meeting:** The Struggle in the Unions. Speaker Tony Cliff. Thursday 31 May, 8pm, The Bald-faced Stag, Burnt Oak Broadway.

**ILFORD AND DAGENHAM IS public meeting:** Women—the Fight for Equal Pay. Speaker Margaret Renn. Thursday 31 May, 8pm, The Labour Hall, Green Lane, Becontree, Dagenham (buses 25, 130, 23, 87).

**STRETFORD IS public meeting:** How can we fight rising prices? Speaker Duncan Hallas. Friday 1 June, 8pm, Dog and Partridge, Chester Road.

**IS SCOTTISH CONFERENCE:** Saturday 2 June, 1.30-6pm, Sunday 3 June, 10.30am-5pm. Speakers Jim Higgins and Andreas Nagliati. Credentials from IS branch secretaries. Further details, accommodation, crèche, etc, from IS Books, 64 Queen St, Glasgow C1. Phone 041-221 3426.

**IS IRISH FORUM**  
The National Question and Permanent Revolution  
Speaker Tony Cliff  
Friday 25 May, 7.30pm  
The Plough, Museum St, London WC1 (nearest tube station Holborn)  
ALL WELCOME

**LONDON REGION IS SOCIAL**  
Saturday 26 May, 8pm  
New Merlin's Cave, Margery St, WC1 (nearest tube: Kings Cross)  
New play by CAST  
Rock to the SPLINTER  
Bar extension—admission 50p

**HIGH PEAK/HYDE public meeting**  
THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM  
Speaker Bob Light, TGMU shop steward  
London Royal Group Docks  
Sunday 27 May, 8pm  
Glossop Labour Club, Chapel Street (near Town Hall)

**MERSEYSIDE IS public meeting**  
Paul Foot on WHY THE SYSTEM STINKS  
Wednesday 6 June, 8pm  
Strand Hotel, Brunswick Street, Liverpool (near Pier Head)

**MID-HERTS IS public meeting**  
FIGHT THE TORIES!  
Speaker Roger Protz (editor, Socialist Worker)  
Thursday 31 May, 8pm  
The Beehive, Watsons Row, London Rd St Albans (¼ mile from city centre)

**GLASGOW IS public meeting**  
THE U.S. LABOUR MOVEMENT  
Speaker Sam Farber (member of US International Socialists)  
Thursday 31 May, 7.30pm  
IS Books, 64 Queen Street, C1

**GLASGOW IS public meeting**  
WOMEN IN THE UNIONS  
Speaker Sandra Peers (member of IS Women's Subcommittee, and Newcastle Trades Council)  
Thursday 7 June, 7.30pm  
Iona House, Clyde Street, C1

**LONDON REGION IS AGGREGATE**  
Saturday 26 May, 10am-5pm  
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1  
Sessions include  
Tony Cliff on Current Political Tasks  
Industrial Work, etc  
IS members only

**BRADFORD IS public meeting**  
WATERGATE, LONRHO, POULSON WHY THE SYSTEM STINKS  
Speaker Paul Foot (Journalist of the Year)  
Thursday 7 June  
Afro-West Indian Club, 55 Godwin St

**BRADFORD IS SOCIAL**  
featuring Roy Bailey  
Thursday 31 May, 8pm onwards  
Afro-West Indian Club, 55 Godwin St  
Late licence/buffet/disco  
Admission 20p

**WANDSWORTH IS public meeting**  
THE FIGHT FOR EQUAL PAY  
Thursday 31 May, 8pm  
The Spreading Eagle, Wandsworth High St London SW18

## OTHER MEETINGS

**HOSPITAL WORKER newspaper supporters conference:** Sunday 27 May, 2pm, Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham. Credentials from 86 Mountgrove Road, London N5.

**CONFERENCE ON TRADE UNIONS AND RACIALISM** called by the Mansfield Hosiery Mills Strike Committee. Sat 2 June, 11am-6pm, Digbeth Hall, Birmingham. Details from B Bunsee, 20:03 Victoria Centre, Nottingham. Phone Nottingham 46307.

**INTERNATIONAL WORKERS FESTIVAL**  
sponsored by TGMU international workers branch  
Saturday 26 May  
Porchester Hall, Porchester Road  
Queensway, London W2  
1pm - 3pm

**CONFERENCE: IMMIGRANTS AND THE TRADE UNIONS**  
3.30 - 4.30 Film  
5 - 8pm Folk Concert  
8.30 - 11pm Dancing  
Tickets 50p each from  
TGMU International Workers Branch  
21 Theobalds Road, London WC1

**CONFERENCE for socialist teachers in the ATTI**, sponsored by local Rank and File Technical Teacher groups. Saturday 16 June, Room 3, Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham. ATTI members only. Details from Liz Peretz, 81 Lansdowne Road, London W11.

**ALMOST FREE THEATRE**  
9 Rupert Street, London W1  
C.P. Taylor's political satire on political satire  
**THE GRAND ADULTERY CONVENTION**  
8.15pm, nightly  
phone 485 6224 (membs)

**24-HOUR VIGIL** outside South Africa House, Trafalgar Square, London, calling for the release of the Pretoria Six, organised by Anti-Apartheid Movement. Sunday 27 May, beginning 4.30pm. On the vigil will be members of the families of two of the six, who are at present on trial. Please join the vigil or come along at lunchtime on Monday 28 May.

**SOUTHERN AFRICA—Apartheid Society public meeting:** No Neutral Ground. Spkrs: Joel Carlson, Abdul Minty, Michael Foot MP and John Ennals (chairman). Thursday 31 May, 7.30pm, Central Collegiate Theatre, 15 Gordon Street, London WC1.

**PUBLIC MEETING POLITICAL PRISONERS IN BRITAIN**  
Speaker Eamonn Smullen  
Strand Hotel, Brunswick Street, Liverpool (near Pier Head)  
Saturday 26 May, 7.30pm

**NAMIBIA DAY:** Demonstration Friday 1 June, 12.30-2pm, Rio-Tinto Zinc offices, St James Square, London SW1. Protest against RTZ exploitation and in support of Namibia's fight for freedom from South Africa.

## NOTICES

**WANTED**  
One room in friendly quiet house in North London, suitable for studying, for IS woman  
Phone 01-458 6828 mornings, or write to 39 Basing Hill, London NW11

**IS BOOKS** telephone number has changed to 01-739 6273.

**STOKE NEWINGTON 5 Welfare Committee**, which involves parents and friends of the five, urgently needs funds to buy them books, rugs, cassette tapes, etc. Any donation will be used to benefit the five and not to pay committee administration costs. Please send to 54 Harcombe Road, London N16—and ask any groups you know that might help.

**GAY MARXIST—new revolutionary paper** from the Gay Liberation Movement. Price 10p, including postage (3 for 25p, 5 for 40p, 10 for 80p, 12 for £1). Send orders and money (cheques and postal orders made payable to Lancaster GLF) to Lancaster GLF, 19 Vincent St, Lancaster.

**REVOLUTIONARY FESTIVAL IN FRANCE:** weekend 9, 10, 11 June. Lutte Ouvriere Fete, near Paris, entertainment and politics. Last year 20,000 attended. IS stall will be present again. 1. WANTED: examples of bulletins, posters, etc, from local IS work; 2. Anyone interested in attending the festival write for details. For both, contact Dept F, International sub-committee, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

**LEICESTER: Comrades moving to Leicester** this year should write to Accommodations, 11 Edward Road, Leicester, for details of accommodation, branch work, etc.

**COMRADE WANTED** to share flat in Islington: own room: £7.50. Phone Celia, 583 7848, 10am-5pm.

**WORKERS WANTED**  
**SW (Litho) PRINTERS** requires an apprentice printer  
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**SOCIALIST WORKER** requires assistant business manager  
Typing an advantage. Date of commencement can be negotiated

**IS BOOKS** requires a bookshop manager to deal with developing mail order, bulk and retail sales.

**INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS** head office requires van driver capable of driving 2½-ton Austin. No HGV required.

For all the above jobs, contact Jim Nichol, 6 Cotton Gardens, London E2, phone 01-739 1870

**SOCIALIST WORKER** requires part-time typist on Mondays and Tuesdays to take down telephoned copy as well as general typing jobs.  
Fast, accurate typing essential, with experience of taking copy by phone an advantage.  
Contact the editor, phone 01-739 9043

# Jobless fears on union agenda

MANCHESTER:-The ATTI conference this weekend comes only a month after the 'reluctant acceptance' by union members of the executive-negotiated salary claim under phase two.

Three months ago many London colleges were involved in militant action against the wage freeze. The executive's failure in the crucial period to mobilise or lead a campaign, as requested by the special salaries conference last December, turned much of this militancy into frustration with union leaders.

The issue of salary policy will probably dominate the conference. The battle is to ensure that conference itself, rather than an executive standing committee, resolves the details of the claim—flat rate, single scale and reduction of differentials.

Another key question is how to fight the redundancies caused through proposed reductions of staff/student ratios. This is raised in the first motion on the order paper.

The Rank and File Technical Teachers movement had considerable success at the last conference. Now the executive is proposing rule changes which, in many cases, aim to undermine the powers of ordinary members.

The proportion of Rank and File delegates to conference this year is much greater than before and the resolutions for hard salary policies and for democracy in colleges, are on the order paper. This is the result of the work and credibility of these members at divisional level.

# Week-long textile strike succeeds

STOCKPORT:-At the Alligator rainwear factory a week-long strike of machinists and cutters ended last Friday when an agreement giving a job security guarantee for all workers and reinstating a sacked machinist was accepted by 59 votes to 45.

Despite the successes achieved by the militant action of the workers, some confusion was caused when union officials revealed that the sacked worker was on a high rate compared with fellow workers. The situation was not helped by the refusal of the garment workers' union to make the strike official and its failure to keep in touch with the workers.

The officials had signed the agreement before putting it to the workers and the vote was taken in the works canteen with

the entire board of directors looking on.

Throughout the dispute management made great efforts to break the strike. Work was moved out to other factories at Wigan, Leeds and Manchester, aided by the transport union's refusal to back up sympathetic lorry drivers who respected the picket lines.

Other efforts were not as successful. The cutting room manager, for instance, sliced the end of his finger off trying to operate a badly guarded machine.

The importance of this dispute is that it indicates that workers in the sweat shops of the Lancashire textile and garment mills are at last fighting back against exploitation, despite often indifferent unions. The Alligator management was left in no doubt that further attacks on workers would be met at once with militant action.

# Union shatters own base

PADIHAM, Lancashire:-Workers at the Mullards glass factory have seen their hard-won union organisation shattered—by their union.

The stewards for the 500 glassworkers had been pushing for improved conditions and for a convenor to represent their interests. At present they are supposed to be represented by a right-wing convenor elected mainly by the larger CRT section of the plant, which faces quiet different problems to those of the glass factory.

The response of the General and Municipal Union officials was to suspend four of the eight glass factory stewards and to start an 'inquiry' against them based on trumped-up charges.

The result is that the union organisation, built by the dedication of the workers, has almost been wiped out. Only a handful of the 500 glassworkers have remained in the union. The others, some out of anger and disgust, others out of sheer demoralisation, have torn up their cards or let their dues lapse.

But a group of militants have seen the need for a union and are fighting to replace the officials who oppose the workers' interests. They have started to organise a fight for a real, democratic union. They need to demand their own convenor, to build links with the workers in the Mullards CRT section and to salvage what the union officials have wrecked.



## Jackson 'red scare' to keep the militants muzzled

DOUGLAS, Isle of Man: A vicious attack on militants in the Post Office union was launched by general secretary Tom Jackson last Friday.

Jackson, clearly rattled by the growing strength of critics of the UPW leadership, alleged that members of the Communist Party, the International Socialists and the Socialist Labour League were trying to 'subvert' the union.

He was speaking at the rules revision conference which preceded the normal annual conference. His attack, which astonished delegates, came during a debate on an amendment to union rules that sought to give delegates the right to reply to debates instead of the executive.

This small extension of democracy was too much for the executive and Jackson jumped in

with a tirade of abuse and distortion on the role of the three political organisations named. 'These groups have got nothing for this union,' he said. 'We, the normal, ordinary members of this union, if we are not careful, will have our union subverted and used for political purposes.'

Tom Jackson went on to claim that members of the Communist Party had held a 'secret meeting' to discuss the conference and that members of IS and the SLL were working together secretly in the UPW. The amendment to rules, he said, would help the three organisations to extend their grip on the union.

Instead of a 'sane and sensible' platform reply to conference debates, Jackson claimed, delegates would be open to persuasion by rep-

resentatives' of the Party, IS and the SLL. The implication in this remark is that executive spokesmen are incapable of persuading anyone.

One delegate angrily interrupted Jackson's speech to protest at 'these allegations and smears against the delegates' and several other delegates condemned his remarks.

Jackson was able to whip up enough confusion to ensure the defeat of the amendment by 9285 votes to 5675.

But his red scare tactics fell flat and shortly afterwards the conference carried two similar amendments to rule which extended delegates rights of reply and restricted the platform's power.

● Conference background: page 12

## Student grants stay low

THE government agreed last week to increase student grants by an extra £20 a year, but this will still leave most students with a total grant of only £485—less than £9.50 a week.

The rise will hardly keep pace with present inflation and will do nothing about the severe financial plight of students.

Even worse, the government has done nothing to change the grants system for non-university students, many of who are denied grants to which they are entitled by mean local authorities. Nor has the government made any real improvement in the situation of married women students, who have to manage on as little as £5 a week.

If students are to force the government to improve its offer, then the militant tactics of the past year have to be continued and extended.

Unfortunately many members of the National Union of Students, executive now want to drop the rent strikes that have taken place in many colleges, and substitute more moderate 'pressure group' tactics.

The pressure group politics of the NUS leaders has not worked in the past. There is little reason to believe it will now. There is an emergency conference of the NUS on 8 June. Delegates must press for an extension of the rent strikes and the building of real links with trade unionists fighting the freeze.

## Clash over rent strike

READING: In the wake of the government's paltry offer on grants, students at Reading University clashed head on with the authorities last week.

Students still withholding last term's rent have already been threatened and harassed. When term began the strikers were told they would not be given their grants by the university until their local authority had been informed of the strike. An angry group of students held the vice-chancellor in a room for two hours while trying to persuade him to hand over the grants.

In reply the university instructed its solicitors to write to all the rent strikers telling them that they would be taken to court for the money. The students' union responded promptly by holding a meeting which called a sit-in in the administration block.

The sit-in was broken up by a group of professors who fought their way into the building and tried to eject the students by force. They failed but, rather than have another battle, students voted to leave the building.

The vice-chancellor says he intends to expel the militants. The students' union says it will boycott any disciplinary hearings. This term's rent strike is still holding firm. The immediate need is to get pledges of solidarity action from other colleges.

## Sit-in at university

NOTTINGHAM: 250 students occupied the administration building of Nottingham University on Monday as part of a campaign against rent increases and in protest at the threats by the authorities to fine students taking part in the rents campaign.

## 'STOP THE TALKS' CALL

SOUTHPORT: The annual Conference of Trades Councils called last weekend for an end to talks between the government and TUC leaders and for a determined campaign to replace the Tory government by a Labour government committed to socialist policies. Other motions called for a 'real fight' on the Housing Finance Act, including rent strikes.



## 600 join 'Kill the lump' march

BIRMINGHAM: Many of the city centre building sites were closed on Friday as 600 building workers joined a 'kill the lump' demonstration through the city centre.

After the march a meeting was addressed by Ken Barlow, UCATT official, who stressed that either building workers kill the lump or the employer will use the lump

to kill their organisations on the sites. Pete Carter, chairman of the local shop stewards committee, said that building workers were still among the lowest-paid workers, and that every working day a building worker is killed. He said that the National Exhibition Centre site in the city would be organised and if the lump was used there would be a policy of confrontation.

## Rank and file miners' militancy strong as ever

A CLOSER look refuted suggestions that the miners had lost their militancy, Tony Cliff, of the IS executive, told the second annual conference of The Collier, the miners' rank and file paper, in Doncaster last weekend.

Cliff said the union leaders, both right and left, bore a heavy responsibility. They had agreed to change the timing of the mining agreement from November to February, had failed to call mass meetings and had indicated that they would settle for an extra week's holiday. Under such conditions, he argued, a 37 per cent vote for industrial action was proof of fantastic militancy.

After phase three the Tories would push for more productivity deals, he said. The Mineworkers' executive was already working on the introduction of 24-hour production. Another threat would be pit closures. To achieve this the NCB needed

active NUM help. So the building of a strong rank and file organisation was the top priority.

Several speakers felt that Cliff was too hard on some of the left leaders, arguing that men like Daly were hamstrung by the right-wing majority on the executive. Trevor Brown, of Houghton, and others argued that the failure of the left to mount any fighting campaign over this year's wage claim proved Cliff's point.

The conference accepted a proposal to fight for a wages structure of £43/£45/£50 and discussed at length the question of overtime. John Owen, also of Houghton, argued that The Collier should fight for an overtime ban to try to reduce the stockpiles ready for the next wages claim. Paddy Handley, of Ollerton, pointed out that there had been a ban on coal production in overtime in the Nottinghamshire area since 1971. Gwyn Reed, of Hickleton, argued instead for a national limitation of overtime.

Davison Brennan, of Usworth, said his pit was potentially another Lofthouse, where seven men were killed recently. It was important to demand rank and file safety officers, but he emphasised that 'every miner should be his own safety inspector'.

Several new demands were made, including the demand for payment for anti-social shifts. The final session, introduced by John Charlton, was on The Collier itself. The first year had been successful, paid circulation was at its highest and more miners were writing and selling the paper. But there was still a need for the paper to take up more local pit issues.

# 'GET BACK' CALL SHOCKS STRIKERS

by SW Reporter

NOTTINGHAM: 35 Pakistani and Indian workers on strike for three weeks at the lace firm of E Jaffe were told by Transport Union official Reg Harris on Monday to get back to work.

The strikers were demanding the reinstatement of victimised machine operator Mohammed Sarwar and full union recognition at the firm.

Mr Harris told them that if they returned to work he would take the victimisation question to arbitration in two weeks' time.

## Diesel combine workers call for unity

PETERBOROUGH: After seven weeks of a work-to-rule at Perkins Diesel there are signs that the 5700 engineering workers seeking parity with Massey-Ferguson, Coventry, will step up the fight.

At an unofficial meeting of 200 workers Ron Squires, a Coventry assembly line worker, compared piecework conditions at Massey-Ferguson, Coventry, with measured day work conditions at Perkins, and called for combine link-ups within the Massey-Ferguson group in Coventry, Peterborough, Knowsley and Kilmarnock.

The call was supported from the floor and many speakers emphasised unity as an important weapon in the fight against the bosses.

He refused to make the strike official because the workers had not given a week's notice to management. The strikers pointed out that as there was no fixed procedure in the firm it was not necessary to give notice of strike action. If management wanted such notice then they would have to recognise the union and reach a proper agreement.

Mr Harris then astonished the strikers by claiming that Jaffe does recognise the union because the management 'speaks' to shop stewards.

On Sunday 200 workers attended a meeting in support of the Jaffe strikers. They came from Jones Stroud, British Celanese, Mansfield Hosiery and Harwood Cash (Mansfield). £60 was collected for the strike fund and all the speakers attacked the role of the TGWU.

## Walk-out over sacking

HULL: Members of TASS, the technical and supervisory section of the engineering union, are on official strike at Humber Electric and Humber Heating over the sacking of TASS member Terry McCoid. Another, John Butterick, was sacked when he joined the strike and management now says all 10 are sacked 'to teach them a lesson'.

In the two years TASS has been organising in the works the men have won substantial increases. The men see the management move as a direct attack on the union.



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# Socialist Worker



## 400 march in support of the Belfast 10

FOUR HUNDRED people, many of them from London branches of the International Socialists, marched from Clapham Common to Brixton Prison last Sunday to protest against the imprisonment and treatment of the 'Belfast 10', who were arrested on the evening of the bomb explosions at the Old Bailey and elsewhere in London.

The marchers gathered outside the prison and shouted encouragement to the prisoners, some of whom waved articles of clothing from the prison windows.

Among the speakers was Paul Foot (IS). He compared press reaction to the imprisonment of Peter Niesewand in Rhodesia with the silence over the treatment of the Belfast 10 and hundreds of detainees in the north and south of Ireland. He said that socialists and trade unionists in Britain must continue to declare unconditional solidarity with people fighting repression in Ireland and to fight against anti-Irish prejudice in the British labour movement.

PICTURE: Christopher Davies (Report)

## British Steel make straight the way of the lord

by Paul Elliott, AUEW shop steward Lackenby steelworks

TEESSIDE:—For months the British Steel Corporation has been refusing to meet union demands and clean up the filthy conditions in its new Basic Oxygen steel plant at Lackenby. Management, forced to the negotiating table by a series of industrial actions, then broke all the promises it made about dirty money and the right of shop stewards to negotiate at shop floor level.

But as soon as the news arrived that BSC chairman and chief hatchet man Lord Melchett was to visit the plant, management ordered an elaborate clean-up. This emergency measure was to ensure that Melchett's shirt cuffs were not dirtied by the filth that daily destroys steelworkers' health.

In the past two years the craft unions, the engineers, electricians and boiler-

makers, have been beset by internal feuding. As a result management treated them and their claims with contempt, defeating five strikes.

But over the claim for £1.50 a week plus the right to negotiate at shop floor level for dirty money, the men and their stewards finally learned their lesson. United lightning actions, including sit-ins at the discretion of the stewards, forced management to negotiate. They conceded after three sit-ins and made a compromise offer. This they withdrew the following day, to the fury of the men.

To greet Melchett when he visited the plant last week the men staged a two-hour stoppage, sat down in front of his car and refused to let him leave until he heard their case.

It was an admirable tactic for embarrassing the BSC in the local press and on TV. But none of the stewards or their members have any illusions in Melchett, a man who promises the earth with one hand, and then stabs you in the back with the other.

The sit-ins continue and are being supported by the riggers and their mates (all members of BISAFTA, the big steel union). Bricklayers too are now backing the dispute and the signs are that the whole of the Lackenby complex will soon be involved in the battle unless the BSC gives way.

# ORANGEMEN MOVE IN ON YARD LOCK-OUT

BELFAST:—Leaders of the Boilermakers Society have been trying to settle the dispute at the Harland and Wolff shipyard that has led to the sacking of 2300 steelworkers.

Last week representatives from Belfast met the union's executive on Tyneside, but major disagreements

still persisted.

The men have been locked out for several weeks after banning overtime since February. They were protesting at the non-payment of a £3 bonus promised in return for massive increases in productivity.

But Dan McGarvey, union president, has been suggesting that the men should accept the management's

offer of £1 plus 4 per cent on basic rates and return to work to negotiate a bonus scheme.

Sandy Scott, senior shop steward, argues that there can be no return to work before a negotiated settlement. Such a settlement must include agreement on the payment of bonuses.

Last Wednesday, as McGarvey and a negotiating team, including four Belfast stewards, was again meeting management, the Loyalist Association of Workers brought out the deep-seated sectarian tensions in this dispute for the first time.

They organised a march from the yards to Stormont to 'protest against the Whitelaw administration's discrimination against Loyalist workers—refusing to bring shipyard wages up to parity with England while building factories all over republican areas.'

The truth is that the government's

£35 million grant for developing the yards is being doled out to private contractors.

Certainly, Catholic workers, who are virtually excluded from the yards and face twice-average unemployment levels, have not benefitted any more than the yard workers.

The Belfast executive of the Boilermakers Society refused to comment on the Loyalist march.

This week extreme right-wing Vanguard leader Bill Craig admitted that LAW had always been 'the political wing of Vanguard on the factory floor.' As a government minister, Craig was well known for his anti-union actions.

So long as shipyard workers look to men like Craig and the leaders of LAW for support they will never overcome their poor economic position.

## McGarvey stays silent over oil-rig job dispute

TEESSIDE:—John Laing, the building firm, has provoked a dispute to break shop-floor resistance in the expanding oil rig industry.

Two hundred welders at Laing's new offshore pipeline company at Greythorpe are in the seventh week of an unofficial strike which has laid off the firm's 700 workers and stopped all work on the first oil rig to be built in Britain for BP.

The welders have been trying to negotiate conditions and proficiency payments since September. They have told Laing that if extra payment for wearing special visors is granted, they will return to work. Their offer has been rejected.

A member of the strike committee told Socialist Worker that the Boilermakers' Society has given no help. Two letters to president Dan McGarvey have not been answered.

The welders remember that in a similar dispute last year, union officials ordered them back after four days. This time, say the strike committee, they will not be so easily bullied.

The welders have been harassed by Social Security officials who obtained evidence of wages and rebates direct from Laing. Now the Social Security is sending the welders to Laing for the documents. Laing is refusing to provide them

## Rank and file attack union's soft line on pay talks

SCARBOROUGH:—The General and Municipal Workers Union conference came to life on Tuesday when delegates challenged the executive's soft attitude to the Tory government.

David Basnett, Lord Cooper's successor as general secretary, introduced a motion on anti-inflation policy, calling for statutory control over key prices and measures to 'increase social justice and promote economic expansion.'

He attacked government policy as being unfair and ineffective. Proposing his alternative of a 'social contract' between labour and capital, he stressed that the TUC had to negotiate with the government 'on behalf of the needy'.

Basnett also attacked the Industrial Relations Act, but said: 'There must be a restoration of free collective bargaining backed by an Industrial Relations Act which is sensible and will strengthen not weaken the situation.'

The policy of any talks with the Tory government and any Industrial Relations Act at all was vigorously attacked by delegates speaking in favour of a resolution urging that 'the TUC should cease meeting and discussing with this government on

matters pertaining to Tory financial policy and wage restraint.'

Introducing the motion, J Cope pointed out that under the Tory government there has been a fantastic redistribution of wealth from the poor to the rich. Mentioning specifically the cutting of welfare benefits and the Housing Finance Act, which he described as 'a tax on council housing,' he said: 'This has been going on against a background of legislation designed to draw the teeth of the trade union movement.'

### Criticise

Attacking the TUC for talking with the Tories, he said: 'As soon as we got involved in talks we were set up like ripe pheasants. Whatever came out of the talks, we could not win.'

Supporting the motion, Stan Gibbs, of Edgware branch, said: 'We don't have to go to Downing Street to tell Heath of our problems—he created them.' He went on to criticise the TUC for its 'soft shoe shuffle' on May Day and suggested that Vic Feather should be told to 'give over'.

S J Kelly, of Liverpool, fired what he called a 'warning shot' across the bows of the executive when he said that there could

be no toleration of any Industrial Relations Act.

R Robinson, of Hull engineering branch, said: 'The people at the top whether they be trade union officials or members of the government are a little remote from the shop floor. They are talking in a different language from the lads on the shop floor. We go to Downing Street as trade unionists to do a deal—we have to sell something. This is not what we should be going there for.'

When it came to the voting however the executive managed to get its motion carried overwhelmingly. Nonetheless the Perivale motion was only defeated by a majority of three to one.

This is the first time in the union's recent history that any effective challenge to the leadership has been mounted at conference.

Full report next week.

### CORRECTION

Our apologies to Tower Hill tenants readers' group in Kirkby, Lancashire, for not including their £6.50 contribution to the printshop fund last week.

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