

WORKERS PRESS

INCORPORATING THE NEWSLETTER ● THURSDAY FEBRUARY 22, 1973 ● No 1004 ● 4p

DAILY ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

RISING GOLD PRICE HERALDS RECESSION

BY FOREIGN EDITOR JOHN SPENCER

TRADE RECESSION leading to mass unemployment, factory closures and commercial collapses is engulfing the capitalist world in the wake of the dollar devaluation.

This is the significance of the extremely rapid rise in the price of gold, the universal standard value under capitalism.

The gold price has risen almost \$12 an ounce since the beginning of this month. In London yesterday morning it was fixed at \$78.50 and rapidly rose to \$79.80 an ounce, a clear \$2 an ounce above Tuesday's closing price.

Every day the price reaches a new record level. It is now more than double the pre-1971 'official' price and over \$36 above the current 'official' rate set by the US Treasury.

This means that the value of all paper money is declining at great speed and the basis for international trade is being completely eroded.

Not only is the tie between gold and paper money disrupted, but the relationship between the various capitalist currencies has lost all semblance of stability.

Almost half the world's major trading currencies—including the pound sterling, the yen, the Canadian dollar and the Italian lira—are 'floating' against the currencies of other countries.

This signifies that the era of 'fixed but adjustable parities', which was one of the cornerstones of the post-war Bretton Woods agreement, has gone for good.

In its place the way is now clear for what a 'Financial Times' commentator describes as 'the onset of exchange rates warfare of the kind in which no holds would be barred'.

Already the South African and Australian governments are reported to be having second thoughts

about the levels at which they fixed their currencies last week.

Furthermore US officials have made it plain that they are far from satisfied with the outcome of the last currency crisis and there are well-founded fears in Europe and Japan that another dollar devaluation is on the way.

Gold supplies only one-third of the liquidity needed for international trade.

The rest is supplied by various forms of paper—dollars, other currencies and special drawing rights.

Now that these paper 'assets' are being stripped of their inflated value and no longer have any stable relationship, the basis for international trade disappears.

The pattern has been set by the dollar devaluation.

It is the first of what must become a series of competitive devaluations as countries jockey for advantage in the trade war.

At the same time each country will erect tariff barriers against its rivals' goods and subsidize as far as it can its own export industry.

In response to this crisis, the capitalist class, in Britain above all, must move towards the imposition of the most brutal fascist dictatorship over the working class.

The only way to defeat this strategy is the building of the revolutionary party to lead the working class to take state power and destroy the capitalist system.



Thousands of students march for grants

STUDENTS throughout England, Scotland and Wales went on the march yesterday to demand higher government grants.

In London (pictured above) about 10,000 students from universities, colleges and polytechnics marched from Malet Street to the Department of Education and Science where they chanted anti-Tory slogans.

Among the speakers to address the NUS-sponsored rally was Roy Hattersley, the Labour Shadow

Cabinet Minister who voted with the Tories for Common Market entry.

THOUSANDS of north-east students marched through the main streets of Newcastle demanding a £95 increase in grants.

Speakers included a National Union of Mineworkers' representative and a NUPE official organizing the coming hospital workers' industrial action.

The NUS wants the means test on grants abolished and a minimum

£550 grant each year.

MORE than 5,000 students from all over the north-west demonstrated in Manchester.

Andy Smith from Chorley Technical College told Workers Press: 'I'm doing electronics and I get £24 a year grant. My mum has to pay for me, which I know is very difficult. And I know there is no real chance of a spare time job.'

'We've got to get these Tories out. See if they can live on this grant.'



13th August 1966

Thank you for your letter concerning the effects of the Government's incomes freeze on the pay of the professional and technical classes of the Civil Service.

The powers which the Government has taken which would enable it to break agreements already made, over-rule arbitration and Wages Council decisions, and impose an arbitrary control over all wages and prices, are unprecedented and inexcusable. As I have made clear in the House of Commons, we are utterly opposed to the Government's action.

The power to break agreements already made is particularly objectionable, and is in sharp contrast to the policies followed by the Conservative Government in the past. The deferment of retrospective awards made as a result of prolonged survey and negotiation can, of course, result in very serious injustice between different groups of people.

I am grateful to you for writing to me, and for your support in our strong opposition to the Government's action.

William Armstrong
Sir Keith Joseph

There's letters... and letters

THE Tory government has taken the unprecedented step of writing directly to civil servants and hospital workers asking them not to engage in industrial action.

It will be included in their pay packets this week.

Civil service chief Sir William Armstrong and Secretary for Health and Social Security Sir Keith Joseph have written the letters.

The Tories' intervention has caused an uproar in trade union circles and is bound to cause a hardening in the ranks of the unions involved.

Meanwhile the Civil and Public Service Association has circularized the facsimile of a letter written by Edward Heath when he was Opposition leader in 1966 (above).

The letter is a scathing attack on the Labour plan to control prices and incomes.

WORKERS PRESS

INCORPORATING THE NEWSLETTER • THURSDAY FEBRUARY 22, 1973 • No 1004 • 4p

DAILY ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

RISING GOLD PRICE HERALDS RECESSION

BY FOREIGN EDITOR JOHN SPENCER

TRADE RECESSION leading to mass unemployment, factory closures and commercial collapses is engulfing the capitalist world in the wake of the dollar devaluation.

This is the significance of the extremely rapid rise in the price of gold, the universal standard value under capitalism.

The gold price has risen almost \$12 an ounce since the beginning of this month. In London yesterday morning it was fixed at \$78.50 and rapidly rose to \$79.80 an ounce, a clear \$2 an ounce above Tuesday's closing price.

Every day the price reaches a new record level. It is now more than double the pre-1971 'official' price and over \$36 above the current 'official' rate set by the US Treasury.

This means that the value of all paper money is declining at great speed and the basis for international trade is being completely eroded.

Not only is the tie between gold and paper money disrupted, but the relationship between the various capitalist currencies has lost all semblance of stability.

Almost half the world's major trading currencies—including the pound sterling, the yen, the Canadian dollar and the Italian lira—are 'floating' against the currencies of other countries.

This signifies that the era of 'fixed but adjustable parities', which was one of the cornerstones of the post-war Bretton Woods agreement, has gone for good.

In its place the way is now clear for what a 'Financial Times' commentator describes as 'the onset of exchange rates warfare of the kind in which no holds would be barred'.

Already the South African and Australian governments are reported to be having second thoughts

about the levels at which they fixed their currencies last week.

Furthermore US officials have made it plain that they are far from satisfied with the outcome of the last currency crisis and there are well-founded fears in Europe and Japan that another dollar devaluation is on the way.

Gold supplies only one-third of the liquidity needed for international trade.

The rest is supplied by various forms of paper—dollars, other currencies and special drawing rights.

Now that these paper 'assets' are being stripped of their inflated value and no longer have any stable relationship, the basis for international trade disappears.

The pattern has been set by the dollar devaluation.

It is the first of what must become a series of competitive devaluations as countries jockey for advantage in the trade war.

At the same time each country will erect tariff barriers against its rivals' goods and subsidize as far as it can its own export industry.

In response to this crisis, the capitalist class, in Britain above all, must move towards the imposition of the most brutal fascist dictatorship over the working class.

The only way to defeat this strategy is the building of the revolutionary party to lead the working class to take state power and destroy the capitalist system.



12th August 1966

John H. Bentley

Thank you for your letter concerning the effects of the Government's income freeze on the pay of the professional and technical classes of the Civil Service.

The freeze which the Government has imposed which would enable it to break agreements already made over public expenditure and wages Council decisions, and impose an arbitrary control over all wages and salaries, is unprecedented and iniquitous. It is a clear sign in the House of Commons, we are utterly opposed to the Government's action.

The move to break agreements already made is particularly objectionable, and in sharp contrast to the policies followed by the Conservative Government in the past. The deferral of retrospective awards made as a result of prolonged unemployment negotiations can, of course, result in very serious injustice between different groups of people.

I am grateful to you for writing to me, and for your support in my strong opposition to the Government's action.

John H. Bentley
Edward Heath

There's letters... and letters

THE Tory government has taken the unprecedented step of writing directly to civil servants and hospital workers asking them not to engage in industrial action.

It will be included in their pay packets this week.

Civil service chief Sir William Armstrong and Secretary for Health and Social Security Sir Keith Joseph have written the letters.

The Tories' intervention has caused an uproar in trade union circles and is bound to cause a hardening in the ranks of the unions involved.

Meanwhile the Civil and Public Service Association has circularized the facsimile of a letter written by Edward Heath when he was Opposition leader in 1966 (above).

The letter is a scathing attack on the Labour plan to control prices and incomes.



Thousands of students march for grants

STUDENTS throughout England, Scotland and Wales went on the march yesterday to demand higher government grants.

In London (pictured above) about 10,000 students from universities, colleges and polytechnics marched from Malet Street to the Department of Education and Science where they chanted anti-Tory slogans.

Among the speakers to address the NUS-sponsored rally was Roy Hattersley, the Labour Shadow

Cabinet Minister who voted with the Tories for Common Market entry.

THOUSANDS of north-east students marched through the main streets of Newcastle demanding a £95 increase in grants.

Speakers included a National Union of Mineworkers' representative and a NUPE official organizing the coming hospital workers' industrial action.

The NUS wants the means test on grants abolished and a minimum

£550 grant each year.

MORE than 5,000 students from all over the north-west demonstrated in Manchester.

Andy Smith from Chorley Technical College told Workers Press: 'I'm doing electronics and I get £24 a year grant. My mum has to pay for me, which I know is very difficult. And I know there is no real chance of a spare time job.'

'We've got to get these Tories out. See if they can live on this grant.'

LICKING THE TORIES' BOOTS

The Tory government was saved from defeat in the Commons Standing Committee on its state wage control Bill on Tuesday by a Labour MP.

Committee chairman Carol Johnson, Labour MP for South Lewisham, gave his casting vote to preserve the Bill in its existing form after the committee had split 18-18 on an amendment to prevent local authorities from altering the rates once they were fixed.

Johnson is a right-wing Labourite who consistently voted with the Tories throughout the Common Market legislation. The Parliamentary Labour Party is now openly collaborating with the Tories in imposing state control of wages on the working class.

The government was defeated in committee yesterday on a 'Tory rebel' amendment and it suffered two similar defeats last week. But Heath knows he can rely on the Wilson gang to support him to the hilt.

Wilson this week offered his assistance to the Tory premier to use the state pay laws against the gasworkers before they are even passed through parliament. He advised Heath to set up a nucleus of the Tory state Pay Board as a Royal Commission to deal with the gas dispute, in

What we think

advance of legislation, 'in relation to a Phase Three settlement'.

If the Pay Board was set up as a Royal Commission, Wilson said, it could 'start on the job now' without waiting for parliament to pass the Tory laws. The 'job', according to Wilson, is to conduct a government inquiry into the gasmen's claim.

Under Tory plans, now endorsed by the Labour leaders, such an inquiry would submit its conclusions to the Tory Board, which would impose its own findings on the gasmen with the force of law.

The Labour leadership, far from fighting such corporatist measures, is seeking to speed them up by enabling the Tories to by-pass parliament.

This amounts to disenfranchising the working class. It is coalition politics.

As the international trade war intensifies and capitalist confidence in world currencies crumbles, the ruling class everywhere is forced to turn savagely against the workers to force down wages and living standards.

And the Labour leaders stand foursquare with the Tories in imposing state measures against the working

class to take away its basic right to fight for decent wages.

Wilson collaborates to the full with Heath in putting all workers who seek to defend themselves against the soaring cost of living in the position of state criminals.

But the working class is not defeated. A revolutionary confrontation with the Tory government is rapidly drawing closer. As it does so, Harold Wilson lines up with the capitalist class just as Ramsay MacDonald did in 1931.

He is assisted by the treachery of the TUC leaders and the Stalinists who consciously seek to divide and weaken the working class by permitting isolated, sectional struggles on wages and calling for sham one-day strikes which cannot move the Tories one inch.

The state Pay Board, whether under its own name or in the guise of a Royal Commission, is corporatism in action. But the TUC has merely 'advised' that trade unionists should not serve on the Board. It has refused to instruct unions not to collaborate with it in any way and it

has refused to take action against union leaders like Tom Jackson of the Post Office Workers who openly call for such collaboration.

Last week the TUC General Council trooped obediently into Downing Street yet again in answer to a summons from Heath. They were told that the government had no intention of giving way on wages. Yet Victor Feather announced after that meeting that neither side was seeking a confrontation!

These reformists will back the employers in any revolutionary confrontation with their own members. They will prepare for this by doing all they can to co-operate with the Pay Board, initially under the guise of pleading for 'special cases'. They will accept state pay control just as they accepted the Industrial Relations Act and its courts, the rent Act and the Common Market.

There is only one way forward for the working class—a General Strike to create the industrial and political conditions for making the Tories resign.

Workers must force their union leaders to have nothing to do with the Tory Boards and courts and to organize such a strike. The Socialist Labour League has called for a mass lobby of the special TUC on March 5 to press these demands.

Laos 'peace' —by wire

A CEASEFIRE agreement has been signed between the Laotian government and the Pathet Lao after a 20-years conflict.

It will leave the Pathet Lao in control of about two-thirds of the country although Prince Souvanna Phouma's government still holds the most-populated areas. All foreign troops are to be withdrawn, although no dateline was fixed.

A coalition government is to be set up within 30 days to comprise the Pathet Lao, neutralists, rightists and members of the Laotian royal family.

The Pathet Lao forces have been backed up by North Vietnamese regular troops while the government has been supported by US air power and Thai irregulars.

Initiative for the ceasefire came from Pathet Lao leader Prince Souphanouvong in a telegram to his half brother Prince Souvanna Phouma, Prime Minister of the Royal Laotian government.

FIGHTING continues around the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh as North Vietnamese and communist forces launch fresh attacks. Cambodia is now the only part of Indo-China without a ceasefire.

IN SOUTH VIETNAM heavy fighting continues around Sa Huynh, a district town which straddles the main north-south road, Highway One.

ITALIAN Communist Party secretary Enrico Berlinguer acted as go-between for Pope Paul and North Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh in 1966.

This was revealed in the Party's Rome evening paper, 'Paese Sera'.

Christian Democrat and Communist Party politicians had been involved in previous transactions.

'Paese Sera' recalled that the Vatican had offered to be host to Vietnam peace talks. Hanoi accepted, but the Italian government opposed the proposition.

Kissinger lays groundwork for counter-revolution

Mao ready for deal with Nixon

A dramatic breakthrough in the improvement of relations between Mao's China and American imperialism has taken place as a result of Dr Henry Kissinger's visit to Peking last week.

After hearing Kissinger's report, President Nixon summoned Congressional leaders to the White House to inform them of the results so far. An important public announcement is expected to follow.

After denouncing US imperialism for many years, the Maoist regime is now making the most diabolical deal with Nixon, cemented, as it is, with the blood of the Vietnamese workers and peasants. North Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government were forced to make the ceasefire agreement by the Chinese as well as the Soviet bureaucracies.

In return for a few concessions from Washington, notably on support for Chiang Kai-shek and the supply of hitherto prohibited 'strategic goods', Peking is ready to renounce any support for revolutionary and national liberation movements and open the doors wide for US trade.

The thaw in US relations with China really began with President Nixon's visit to Peking a year ago. But the cordiality with which Dr Kissinger was received far exceeded the welcome given to the President on that occasion.

Speaking on the anniversary of the start of that visit, Marshall Green, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, said that it broke a log jam between the two countries after years of distrust.

'If China and the United States can continue to make progress toward a normal relationship,' he said 'and through that relationship contribute to a lasting peace in Asia, tension in the area will indeed significantly lessen and the prospects markedly improve for the development of a system of normal relationships among all the countries of the area.'

The diplomatic language conceals the counter-revolutionary programme of US imperialism for the continued domination of the area after their defeat in Vietnam.

It was demonstrated in

the support given for Pakistan against Bangla Desh as well as in Vietnam.

One of the first fruits of the Kissinger visit is expected to be the setting up of a US trade office in Peking as a prelude to the establishment of diplomatic relations. It will be a case of the flag following the dollar.

No doubt Nixon hopes to play off China against Japan as well as the Soviet Union, while for Peking, the Soviet Union has now become the main enemy.



Kissinger (right) with Le Duc Tho of North Vietnam after the so-called 'peace' was signed.

Thyssen bid to create steel giant

AUGUST-THYSSEN, the largest German steel company, has put in a takeover bid for another big steel firm, Rhein Stahl of Essen.

The offer has already been approved by the latter's supervisory board.

If accepted by a majority of the shareholders, it will create Europe's largest steel corporation.

Combined annual sales will total over £2,000m.

Rhein Stahl not only produces steel, but also makes machinery and has shipbuilding interests.

The new group would have a steel-making capacity in excess of 13 million tons a year.

With a combined workforce of 150,000, it would be West Germany's second largest company, behind Volkswagen but ahead of Seimens and Hoescht.

Two of the largest banks, the Deutsche and the Dresdner, are handling the deal.

Thyssen was among the notorious group of steel barons who financed the rise of Adolf Hitler and profited mightily from the 12 years of the Nazi Reich.

His empire was restored after the war and the Thyssen name once again dominates German industry.

The huge increase in monopoly power which will result from this merger is aimed directly against German and EEC workers.

Israelis drive deep into Lebanon

ISRAELI commandos attacked refugee camps near the northern Lebanon city of Tripoli yesterday in their deepest-ever use of ground troops in Arab territory.

The raid, which was completely unprovoked, killed and injured 15 Palestinians, including five commandos of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

The raid came after a lull of four months in the Israeli terror attacks against Palestinians in Lebanon.

It coincides with new American peace moves in the Middle East.

President Nixon recently received King Hussein of Jordan, who is one of the leading protagonists of a separate peace with Israel.

Egypt's Anwar Sadat has meanwhile won approval of his military chiefs for talks in Washington.

The last series of Israeli raids in Lebanon were aimed at frightening the government into imposing restrictions on the Palestinian guerrillas.

No doubt the present cowardly attack is intended to serve the same purpose.

Rent rebels to pay fine?

CLYDEBANK councillors are near certain to vote to pay the £5,000 fine imposed on them for contempt of court when they meet tonight.

Chief opposition leader Mrs Betty Brown told me yesterday they had explored every possible loophole in the law to avoid payment, but she said: 'It looks as though we'll have to pay.'

The 13 rebel members on the 21-member council have spun out their disobedience of the law to the last possible moment.

Mrs Brown disclosed that a resolution deferring a decision on the fine passed at a full meeting of the council last Thursday was not so much a calculated act of defiance as a desperate bid to get more time to consider every alternative.

What has changed even the rebels' minds so dramatically is the unexpected application of the law to their campaign against implementing the Tory rent Act.

Mrs Brown said that she and other councillors had the 'deepest respect for the law' and that there never was any

intention of putting themselves in contempt.

Labour group leader Jack McAllister put it even more clearly: 'Every councillor is aware of the iniquities of the Act. No one wants to implement it in the council. But when we decided not to implement we did not know that we were heading for a confrontation with the Secretary of State for Scotland. Once the government chose to bring us into the courts that is another matter.'

The rebel councillors have taken the advice of Mr C. K. Davidson, QC, who told them that the chances of avoiding paying the fine or of appealing against it were slim—so slim that he could not put his name to an appeal.

Much of the time between last Thursday's and tonight's council meeting has, in fact, been taken up with discussing ways of paying the fine without posing an unacceptably stiff burden on the town's ratepayers.

Last week's vote, even on whether to continue opposition to implementing the Act, registered a reduced majority in favour of the rebels.

Communist councillor Mr James Reid and one other were away through illness and two others walked out before a vote was taken.



Betty Brown . . . We respect the law.

Even if opposition to the Act goes on opening the door to the Secretary of State for Scotland Mr Gordon Campbell to order town officials to implement, there is next to no chance of a further refusal to pay the fine.

If town officials refuse to co-operate with Campbell, they face the sack. Mrs Brown told me that if Campbell intervenes, many councillors hoped tenants themselves would take up the fight by mounting a rent strike against any increases.

Co-op fund case for open court

A HEARING has been set down for next week in the case where the London Co-operative Society is being sued for an alleged 'breach of trust' in the management workers' pension fund.

An LCS employee, Mr Robert Evans, a Transport and General Workers Union shop steward, claims in a High Court summons that the Society has lent itself money from the workers' pension fund at low interest rates.

BY PHILIP WADE

Evans contends that the Co-op's management of the pension fund has deprived employees of higher rates of superannuation.

He is seeking a declaration from the court that the LCS should have paid a better rate of interest over the years and he is asking that the Society makes good the extra interest.

The case—which now comes into open court for the first time—is thought to have some considerable importance by legal circles.

appeal to a High Court judge against that decision.

A president and 15 directors run the £100m LCS business on a day-to-day basis.

Four of these directors, together with one staff representative, constitute the pension fund's trustees.

LCS's board of directors is unofficially controlled by an electoral faction known as the '1960 Committee'.

This is made up of Communist Party members, 'left' Labourites and has included members of USDAW, the shopworkers' union.

President of the LCS is David Ainley, a CP member.

Before his recent retirement, he was secretary of the People's Press Printing Society which owns the 'Morning Star', the Stalinists' newspaper.

Of the 15 members of the board of directors, it is believed that up to 13 are supporters of the '1960 Committee' faction.

Effective control by 'committee' members was achieved in 1964 when right-wing Labourite John Stonehouse MP was ousted in a bitter campaign.

This resulted in the election of CP member Harry Clayden.

When Clayden retired as president in 1971, Ainley, a long-standing board member, took control.

It is believed that the four directors who are pension fund trustees are all members of the '1960 Committee'.



Ainley . . . LCS president.

The sums of money run into millions of pounds.

There has been criticism in the past from the Registrar of Friendly Societies that Co-ops in general had placed too much reliance on pension funds for their capital requirements.

For over a year, counsel for Evans and the LCS have been involved in internal wrangling about the case.

Last December an appeal by the LCS to a judge in chambers to have the case thrown out was dismissed.

And next Wednesday morning the Society will

'End collective-bargaining for good'

Call by EEF president

BY DAVID MAUDE LABOUR CORRESPONDENT

PERMANENT state control of wages at factory level was called for yesterday by the leader of Britain's engineering employers, Thomas Carlile.

In a bid to stiffen employers' resistance to the mounting pressure from workers for increases, he urged determined and total support for the Heath government's present wage-control plans.

He insisted that there must be no return to the old pattern of collective bargaining, even when these plans end.

Carlile, managing director of Babcock and Wilcox, is president of the Engineering Employers' Federation.

His call for an unbroken hard line by the employers came at the annual meeting of the EEF's General Council in London yesterday.

Past experience of prices and incomes policies had shown that only one significant breach of the policy was sufficient to 'destroy its

credibility' and 'open the floodgates to a spate of inflationary claims', he said.

'As employers in the country's key industry, it is in our interest to help make the government's measures work.'

These remarks were addressed particularly to a number of employers—including powerful and leading EEF members.

Some have recently concluded under-the-counter secret deals with union officials which are in excess of the Tory ceiling for increases.

During previous attempts at state wage control the EEF has tended to shrug its shoulders at such deals. Carlile's speech is evidence of a dramatic change of mood.

The EEF president went on to warn, ominously, that failure of the Tory policy

'could well have serious implications for the future of our society'.

The employers are reviewing all the structures and techniques of so-called parliamentary democratic rule in Britain, and asking whether they meet their current needs.

In the case of the engineering employers they are particularly worried by the complete failure of the old weapon of rising unemployment to act as a damper on wage militancy.

A survey carried out by the EEF research department last year revealed that although 370,000 workers had lost their jobs in the 18 months to July, wages were still being forced up steadily.

Carlile told Federation chiefs yesterday:

'Looking ahead, beyond Phase Two, we need to

question whether the traditional pattern of collective bargaining at plant level should continue to have a place in our modern industrial society.

'It is plant bargaining in the form in which we have seen it develop in recent years that is essentially at the root of the disease of wage inflation.'

'Between October 1971 and October of last year, average earnings in the engineering industry increased by 15 per cent.'

Claims on the pattern of £5 and £10 a week, such as had become common just before the pay laws, could no longer be justified by any criterion, the employers' leader went on.

There could be no return to this kind of free-for-all.

If the union leaders would not agree to hold down their members' wages in future, 'there would seem to be a strong case for a government-imposed limitation on the level of domestic settlements'.



Film director Ken Loach (second from left) listens to discussion on a rehearsal.

Film director visits Pageant rehearsal

KEN LOACH, director of the much-acclaimed films 'Kes' and 'Family Life', visited the rehearsal of the north-east Pageant at Jarrow this week.

He is one of the many people in the film entertainment industry who are backing the

anti-Tory rally at Empire Pool, Wembley, on March 11.

Despite cramped rehearsal conditions, the Jarrow campaign has taken big strides forward. The workers taking part have now got a firm political feeling of the issue involved in

building the first miners' union in the north-east.

Tuesday's rehearsal dealt with the confrontation between miners who had just attacked their pit to stop the employment of black-legs, and the 'viewer', or mine manager.

As always, after the rehearsal the scene was discussed.

Those taking part thought the major lesson was that in this scene the miners saw for the first time the vast difference in the way they and their employers lived.

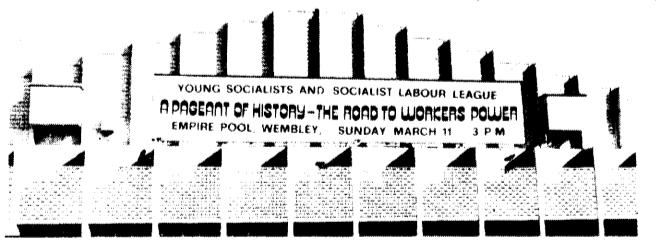
BOOK YOUR TICKET FOR EMPIRE POOL NOW

DEFEND ALL DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

Defend trade unionism and basic living standards

Unite in action to make this Tory government resign

The road to power is through the building of the revolutionary party



SUNDAY MARCH 11th 3pm

PAGEANT • RALLY • CONCERT

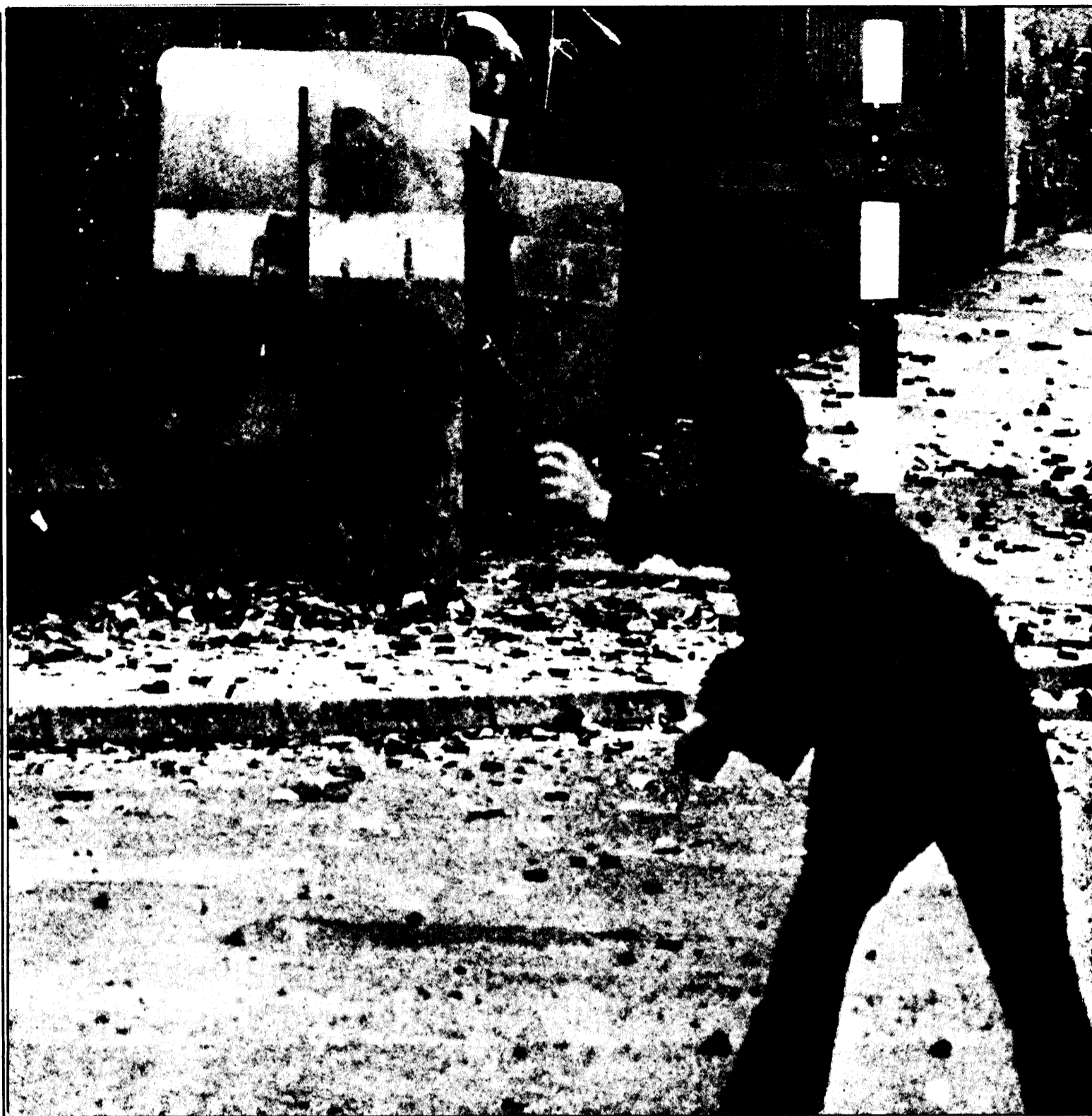
I would like to take part in the Pageant/come to Empire Pool. Please send me further details.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

No. of tickets required Amount enclosed (£1 each £.....)

Complete form and return to:
Pageant Office, 34 Hamilton Gardens, London, NW8



Left: rock-throwing on the streets of Ulster—only part of a wider pattern . . . of urban guerrilla warfare.

Central Office is concerned that the modern British soldier is ill-equipped to meet this challenge which it clearly sees spreading from the Bogside to Birmingham in the not-too-distant future.

The pamphlet says: 'Our modern electronic equipment can be highly-sophisticated, but when it comes to dealing with a crowd of rock-throwing hooligans on the edge of the Bogside the equipment that the soldier carries makes him look like a Roman soldier confronting a Sicilian mob in the first century AD.'

'Britain needs more effective non-lethal deterrents and if one-tenth of the resources that went into the development of strategic weapons were diverted to this field we all might get better value for money.'

In other words the enemy within is infinitely more important than the enemy without.

The pamphlet goes on: 'We must constantly remind ourselves that a study of the techniques of terrorism must now be an integral part of every front-line soldier's career.'

Among the 'best' authors to be studied? Brigadier Frank Kitson, Sir Robert Thompson, Brian Crozier and Robert Moss.

There is no time to lose the Tories claim. 'Britain is lagging behind other countries in making counter-terrorist activities an important part of normal training.'

That the Tories accept the permanent prospect of civil unrest is made plain a sentence later when they conclude that such studies must 'involve the armed forces in a closer study of current politics'.

The politicians too, they say, must educate themselves and they note pointedly: 'The outburst on the socialist benches of the House of Commons that greeted the publication of Frank Kitson's "Low-Intensity Operations" was a classic example of Opposition short-sightedness.'

'We must pay more attention to our intelligence services. It would not be an exaggeration to say that our Special Branches have been in a depressed state at the beginning of every major counter-terrorist campaign that we have fought. Our armed forces have not been able to operate effectively until these weaknesses were cleared up.'

The statement concludes: 'Urban terrorism is a serious threat. We must treat it seriously.'

TORIES PREPARE THEIR ARMY

British army officers are taken to task in the Conservative Party's latest policy statement on defence for not paying enough attention to internal security.

The Party said: 'A great many British officers look upon anti-terrorist campaigns as a disagreeable interference with

the serious business of training for conventional war.'

And it added: 'Indeed, in the last two years the situation seems to have deteriorated.'

Tory headquarters was concerned that the army's experience in Ulster had 'blunted rather than sharpened many conventional military skills'.

The problem, it said, was that the situation in Ulster required soldiers to act as

policemen.

'In Malaya, in Kenya, in Cyprus and, above all, in Borneo, it could be argued that the soldiers engaged in guerrilla operations were sharpening their military skills.'

All of these were brutal colonial wars. What the Tories are really saying is that it is about time the army was given a free reign in Ulster.

And they are saying more.

The statement, 'In Defence of Peace', goes on, '. . . Ulster, alas, is only part of a wider pattern'.

'Rural terrorism' is being replaced rapidly with urban 'guerrilla warfare'.

The Tory pamphlet warns: 'The complexity of modern industrial life means that our cities contain many more inviting targets than the countryside.'

FORTY HOURS WORK FOR £2

Each day this week Bill X, a young disabled worker living in the Home Counties, will clock on at 8.30 a.m., clock out at 4.45 p.m. and in between these times pack as many cartons of powdered soup and dried vegetables as a watchful management can send his way.

On Friday he will get his pay-packet for 40 hours' work. In it will be the same amount he has been receiving for the last 12 months . . . just £2!

To this amazing sum must be added a total of £8.60 from the Department of Health and Social Security. But since Bill's board and accommodation cost him £7 a week, he is left by Saturday morning

with exactly £3.60 for food, clothes, transport and entertainment for the rest of the week.

Bill is just one of several hundred workers at a series of small factories dotted round the country whose reward for a full week's labour is between £2 and £4.50.

Most of them are what psychiatrists call 'mentally handicapped' or 'mentally sub-normal'. But these catch-all, unscientific generalizations do not mean they eat less, or that they like living under poverty-stricken conditions. Neither does it protect them from the overall Tory attack on workers' living standards.

If Bill and many of his workmates could get out of the Industrial Therapy Organizations, which is what their factories are called, they would. But they are not allowed that choice.

When Workers Press was

told Bill's story it was the first we had heard of ITOs.

So we checked with the Department of Health and Social Security in London, where a spokesman assured us unhesitatingly:

'I can imagine no circumstances in this country where any disabled or otherwise handicapped person would be asked to work 40 hours without getting the rate for the job.'

In fact there are eight or nine ITOs, including the one at which Bill works. London, Bristol, Reading and Epsom are just some of the locations. And at all these official-sounding establishments the almost incredible conditions Bill described to us apply.

Supporters of the ITOs admit that their aim is not to teach any specific skill. They say they are there to 're-establish a normal work pattern' among people who may have been out of industry for some time.

But in the course of this the factories undertake a considerable amount of sub-contract work for local industry, and one ITO manager we talked to was forced to admit that a number of the firms in his area had come to rely on his factory to complete part of their

normal production schedule.

In other words someone, somewhere is making part of his profits out of £2-a-week labour.

The ITOs, which were originally grubstaked by groups of businessmen in the areas where they operate, tend to be somewhat sensitive about this.

'We are voluntary organizations started by local industrialists who put their hands in their pockets to get us going,' explained the manager we contacted.

'We are both a limited company and a registered charity, which means that any surplus we make must be ploughed back into the organization.'

'Very little of the sub-contract work we do comes from the firms who put up the money in the first place. We have to be very cautious about this. Otherwise people might think we are exploiting cheap labour.'

In one sense the ITOs have it three ways.

Besides being limited companies and registered charities, they also have the status of 'sheltered workshops' under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act. And this means that they qualify for 75 per cent government grants

on both buildings and machinery.

Individual factories are run by boards of local businessmen and medicos, who will occasionally decide that a particular worker has had 'a normal work-pattern' sufficiently ingrained to fit him for making profit directly for some firm in the area.

Only then can he or she start earning a normal wage.

But while they are in the ITOs, these unfortunate people are rigidly restricted to what they are getting from either the DHSS or the Department of Employment.

For someone like Bill X, who has to rely on supplementary benefit, the maximum is £2. A worker who is eligible for unemployment benefit or sick benefit might be able to draw up to £4.50.

Bill summed up a common feeling among the ITO workers: 'It's ridiculous, working 40 hours for such a miserable wage. A lot of the people there—"trainees" they call us, although we get no training—feel the same way.'

'But there's no organization. At the moment we've no means of fighting back. So they say "What's the alternative?"'

'I think people should know about what's going on, though.'

SNOW DEFENDS STALIN AND THE PURGES

Novelist C. P. Snow has been stung into some self-revealing statements in the course of reviewing David Cate's 'The Fellow Travellers' for the 'Financial Times.'

'Many people, including myself,' he writes, 'were despairingly affected by the Stalin purges, because they threatened, by weakening the Soviet army, to endanger our own skins. Fortunately for us, the damage was rectified within what still seems to be an unbelievably short time, between June 1941 and the Battle of Kursk in 1943.'



Above: novelist C. P. Snow, who has a declared preference for the bureaucracy.

This follows from Snow's position that in the 1930s the only choice was for or against Nazi Germany. The Nazis could only be defeated with the help of the Soviet army; consequently the Stalin purges were to be deplored in so far as they weakened it. Presumably Snow accepted, and accepts, that purges which did not affect the Red army and only cut down the revolutionaries were necessary.

POISON PEN

Tacit support for Stalin the mass murderer was necessary as long as the Red army, by defeating the Wehrmacht, made the world safe for bourgeois democracy.

Snow naturally takes out his poison pen to hit at Trotsky. He accuses Cate of holding up Trotsky as 'the shining politician for all practitioners of non-politics', whatever that may mean.

And he adds, with an attempt at irony which reveals his venom, 'one of the most gifted men of the century, certainly the most gifted man who ever made all the mistakes in both strategy and tactics that a politician could have made'.

HATRED

In this way, Snow expresses his hatred for the working class and revolution. His declared preference for the bureaucracy is obvious and this review is a shamefaced apology for supporting Stalinism.

Incidentally, C. P. Snow was created a life peer by the Labour government in 1964 when he served as Minister of Technology at the start of the Wilson 'technological revolution' that never was.

Ian Smith, the Rhodesian racist premier, is embarked on what promises to be a protracted struggle to maintain white supremacy south of the Zambesi.

The spectacular failure of his efforts to blockade neighbouring Zambia has revealed the weakness of the Rhodesian position in the face of mounting hostility from the black population at home.

Those Africans who pinned their faith in the British government, and gave such a sweeping display of unanimity against the Smith-Home settlement terms last year are clearly turning away from hopes of rescue by Westminster.

For the first time, the Smith government has had to admit that Africans in the north-east, the rugged border area close to the Portuguese colony of Mozambique and to Zambia, have given support to 'terrorists'.

This is the name given by the Rhodesian, South African and Portuguese authorities to the increasing number of trained armed Africans slipping across the border to sabotage and wage guerrilla warfare against them.

The South Africans estimate there are at least 50,000 such fighters in Zambia at more than 80 camps. The threat they pose is compounded by the eruptions of important class actions by the black workers, particularly in South and South West Africa.

To combat the danger of 'terrorists' winning local support, the Smith government has given punitive powers to local tribal chiefs.

These men, almost all government stooges, are the most accessible target for guerrilla actions and a number have been killed by the guerrillas.

The new laws allow the imposition of unlimited fines on communities suspected of harbouring or sympathizing with 'terrorists'. The technique is one of collective guilt, as perfected by the Nazis during the war.

The laws are only the culmination of a mass of discriminatory legislation aimed at making Rhodesia into a hermetically-sealed apartheid state.

Until recently, Smith had restrained the more rabid right wingers in his own party who are eager to go over directly to blanket racist laws.

ZAMBIA: MOUNTING HATRED FOR SMITH'S REGIME



Above: 'terrorists' win local support and instruct on the use of arms.

The leader had no principled or doctrinal objection to such laws being passed, but feared that it would finally end any prospect of doing a deal with the British government.

Such a deal would be economically beneficial to the Smith regime's economy: the boycott, while only partially effective, has made life difficult for Rhodesian businessmen and affected their profits.

However, since the Rhodesian Front congress, held in secret in September, a succession of Bills has been presented to the Salisbury parliament which indicates a firm desire to strengthen the white domination.

The Regional Authorities Bill is a long-awaited implementation of the so-called policy of 'provincialization', embodied in the 1969 constitution.

The Bill provided for the establishment of two regional authorities for the Tribal Trust

Lands — one for Matabeleland and one for Mashonaland.

These will be under the control of the stooge chiefs and will be presented as a channel for African political advancement. In fact the scheme is modelled on the South African 'bantustans' and the provincial authorities will be carefully manipulated from Salisbury.

Lance Smith, the Minister of Internal Affairs, told parliament he was not ashamed of the scheme being called separatist as separatism was inevitable in Rhodesia.

The African (Registration and Identification) Bill introduces full-scale pass laws into Rhodesia. Applying only to Africans, the Bill makes it an offence to be caught without a pass and all Africans entering and leaving Rhodesia are required to carry valid identity documents.

This Bill is aimed at controlling the population of the

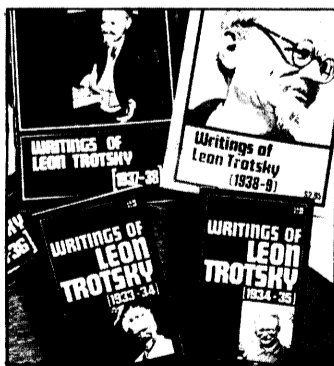
cities, and giving the security forces tighter control over the African population.

Under the Vagrancy Amendment Act, it is now possible for the authorities to bar any person found in an urban area without a permit for up to two years. A breach of an order under the Bill is punishable by a year's jail.

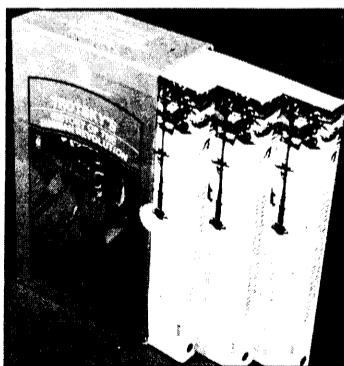
Other measures on the way include segregation of swimming pools, maternity homes; control of meetings in African areas; restrictions on missionaries (according to the Rhodesian Front 'outright subversion is frequently hidden under the cloak of religion').

These attacks show clearly the character of the Rhodesian racist regime and its desperation in the face of the mounting hatred of the African majority.

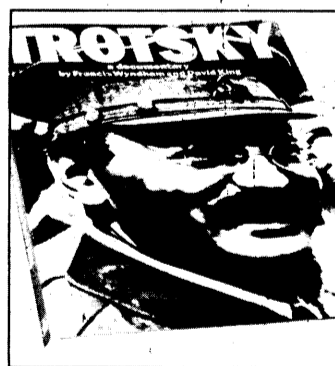
ANNOUNCING...



Six volumes of Trotsky's writings during the years 1933-1940
£8.00 including postage



History of Russian Revolution —special gift pack of three volumes
£1.70 including postage



Trotsky!—a documentary by Francis Wyndham and David King
£1.65 including postage

Please tick those you require. Amount enclosed £.....

Name

Address

Complete form and post to:

New Park Publications, 186a Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UG

A New Park Publications Booklist is available, free, on request.

JAPAN WINS THE CAR TRADE

Chrysler is to stop export to the United States of the British-made Cricket car and replace it with a similar car built in Japan. The Colt, made by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, has been selling well under the Dodge label while sales of the Cricket plunged 50 per cent last year.

Chrysler has already switched to the Japanese-made car to supply the Canadian market. It has failed to have any success with small cars made by its foreign subsidiaries in the US market. The Ford Capri and the GM Opel, both made in Germany, have been selling well.

British-made Fords and GM cars have flopped in the US owing to unreliability of supply of parts and poor performance. While Japanese car imports have soared, those from Britain have slumped and with the three big American manufacturers cutting down on British-made exports, very few British cars will be sold in North America.

For some time after 1945, British cars held a dominant position among imports into the US, but they have now been swept out of the market by European and laterly Japanese competition.

PRICES: THE FUTURE OF FOOD

BY STEPHEN JOHNS

Tory leaders always hide reality behind abstractions. Hence Heath and his ministers talk about defending the interests of the 'consumer' against trade unionists who demand higher wages.

The consumers the Tories refer to are not the people who shop at Harrod's and buy food from Fortnum and Mason's. To these people money is no object and a 1½p increase in the price of bread means nothing at all.

The consumer is the wage-earner, the trade unionist and his wife, trapped in the state pay laws and suffering a declining standard of living because of Tory policy.

In other words the Heath government says it is 'defending' the majority of the population while in fact it is forcing them into penury by controlling their wages—a paradox the Tories always hide with talk of 'consumers'.

They play a similar trick over inflation. They attempt to confuse the working class, and especially the middle class, by saying rising wages cause higher prices. But the first few months of the freeze demonstrated that prices rose faster than ever, despite a total ban on wage increases.

Wages add to costs—but they only appear as higher prices when the monopolist passes the burden on to the shopper. The aim of this transfer is to protect profit. The Tories do not object to this. Businessmen can stoke-up inflation, but workers' wages must be controlled by law.

A favourite argument Tories use to justify this policy is that prices simply cannot be controlled because of 'market forces'. They add that business would slump badly if the margins were squeezed.

But in these articles we have seen that a) prices are not propelled by mysterious 'market forces' b) that the monopolies and the multiple chains do have power over prices c) that food margins, far from being slender are huge and d) that because of its monopolistic structure, the industry fails to pass on the benefits of large scale production to the shopper involving itself instead in enormous waste through advertising etc.

This leads to one inescapable conclusion—the cost of living and prices cannot be brought down and controlled without a fundamental change in the nature of the food industry.

Rising prices and waste are a direct result of private ownership which develops inevitably towards monopoly. Now the system of monopoly capital is in an advanced stage of decay. In the food industry this is represented by the total absence of price competition,

the massive parasitic expenditures on advertising, the decline in quality and the standardization in food commodities.

In short the industry is rotten ripe for nationalization under workers' control, without compensation (the working class would not 'owe' the food monopolies anything if they took over the value they themselves create).

Under nationalization all the benefits from improved farming, manufacturing, wholesaling and retailing techniques would be passed on to the shoppers in the form of lower prices or improved quality. There would be only enough advertising to inform people of a product and its uses.

Competitive advertising between one brand and another identical brand—which accounts for most expenditure today—would be abolished and market research would be confined to judging people's desires and wants, not exploiting any fears or phobias in order to sell products.

The question of margins would also be examined closely.

The 6 per cent profit margin

In 1970 the Prices and Incomes Board report into the food distribution industry found that the gross margin, or mark-up, at the wholesale level averaged 7.5 per cent of the manufacturing price. In other words wholesalers put 7.5 per cent on average on every grocery commodity they sold to the retail. The shops themselves added on average between 19.2 to 14 per cent to prices.

Some of this is a 'necessary' addition. Part of the money collected from the 'mark-up' goes to pay wages and costs in the wholesale and retail trades. But on average 6 per cent of the margin was sheer profit. In other words it was a confiscation of value from the workers who produced the goods.

Obviously under socialism and nationalization this 'pure profit' element would go. Any surplus kept back in the industry would be used entirely to improve it and provide a better commodity and service in the future.

But there is another important reform to be considered. In its journey from farm to shop food sometimes passes through many 'middle-men'. They all take their cut, and it is not entirely clear if their activity and margin is really economically necessary. There would be a case for the complete overhaul and streamlining of wholesaling.

There is also the issue of the Co-operative Society. This organization could be an enormous source of production and distribution of food for the benefit of the majority. The Co-operative Wholesale So-



ciety, for example, has a £400m food division, is one of the big four in baking and still has the largest retail trade in Britain.

But the Co-operative movement finds itself in a trap. Originally it made its mark by offering the working class cheap, good quality foods and other goods. But as the monopolies spread their tentacles its expenditure on advertising doubled as private chains began to open on the high street. Because of this it was forced to imitate many of the worst features of capitalism in food in order to survive.

The famous 'divi' has been abandoned for the money-wasting gimmick of 'stamps', the emphasis has shifted from price to promotion and the Co-op in general is run very much as another capitalist enterprise, while still retaining some links with the labour movement.

But under socialism, the Co-op, especially the CWS, could obviously become the focus for a massive reorganization of the industry. This is the only real future for co-

operation.

As it is the Co-op, though a pioneer in bulk-buying and selling—methods the private chains imitated—is now a victim of the very process it started.

How can this revolution in food be achieved? Clearly there can be no repeat of the performance of the last Labour government.

Labour's Prices and Incomes Board was a miserable reformist failure. It produced reports, but nothing was done to curb prices or challenge the power of the big monopolies.

The battle over detergents mentioned in yesterday's article is a case in point. Here the PIB clearly exposed the massive waste involved in Proctor and Gamble, the two firms which monopolize the market. Douglas Jay at the Board of Trade went so far as to 'suggest' that a cut in promotion expenditure might result in lower prices.

But Labour's attack went no further than this feeble suggestion. Eventually the working class was fobbed off with a miserable compromise. The

two giants agreed to bring in one cut-price detergent (Square Deal Surf) as a sop to the housewife. But since the massive propaganda campaign on all the other brands continued, the new lines were destined to fail. They did, and the challenge was forgotten.

Labour waved its fist once more in early 1970 when it introduced the 28-day 'early-warning' system on prices. This required manufacturers to inform the government on price increases to allow investigation by the PIB. On May 12, 1970 Cledwyn Hughes, Minister of Agriculture, complained of rapidly rising prices and two days later the Food Manufacturers' Federation declared they would ignore the early-warning system.

Labour swallows the capitalist reasoning

The policy had proved totally ineffectual anyway. In January 1970 Unilever put up prices on its range of margarines by 2d and 6d (old pence). The PIB investigated

and
suppl
price
as a
that
an in
price
in 19
Wh
such
main
shoul
creas
so hi
'Th
fits.
are s
price
incre
fall.
Th
swall
reaso
lowe
went
opera
La
and
lesso
It
tamp
the fo
has t
try
publi



ROYAL ARSENAL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD

GROCERIES

PROVISIONS

BUTCHERY

serve

Look for the CO-OP LABEL

88 FROZEN FOODS

PEAS
PEAS
FISH FINGERS
BEEFBURGERS
BEEFBURGERS

CO-OP SLICED CLING PEACHES

BIRDS EYE PEAS

BOVRIL 20

MARMITE 15

CO-OP CREAMED MILK RICE PUDDING 5 1/2

CO-OP CUTS THE COST OF LIVING

CO-OP VITAMIN C BLENDED AMT HEALTHY DRINK 11 1/2

KLEENEX KITCHEN TOWELS 16

BATCHLORS SOUPS 10

OMOMO 2 1/2 OFF 2 1/2 OFF

OMOMO 2 1/2 OFF 2 1/2 OFF

OMOMO 2 1/2 OFF 2 1/2 OFF

CO-OP AMERICAN LARD 4

FAIRY SNOW 2 OFF 2 OFF

FAIRY SNOW 2 OFF 2 OFF

FAIRY SNOW 2 OFF 2 OFF

FAIRY SNOW 2 OFF 2 OFF



g in
square
the
mas-
on
ued,
d to
chal-
once
t in-
arly-
This
in-
price
tiga-
12,
in-
ined
and
an-
ared
arly-

and found that edible oil supplies had fallen and the price of supplies had increased as a result. But they also found that profit on margarine was an incredible 26.3 per cent of price in 1968 and 23 per cent in 1969.

Without questioning why such large margins should be maintained or why the shopper should suffer yet another increase in prices to keep them so high, the Board concluded: 'These are clearly high profits. They are also profits that are sensitive to changes in oil prices . . . if prices were not increased margins would fall . . .'

The Labour government swallowed whole this capitalist reasoning. Unilever was allowed the price increase and went on to make a £165m operating profit that year.

Labour's last policy on food and prices failed and the lessons must be drawn.

It is not enough just to tamper with the interests of the food monopolies—the nettle has to be grasped—the industry must be placed under public ownership. Only then

can it be run for the benefit of the wage-earners, be they dockers, carworkers or professional people, like teachers and civil servants.

But there is an immediate need to mobilize the working class and the middle class in a campaign against the Tory policy of increasing the cost of living.

Price committees must be set up in every centre to take the initiative. These could consist of housewives, trade unionists and everyone under attack by the Tory government. The job of these committees will be to keep track of price increases, expose the Tory fraud and organize demonstrations and protests in the main shopping centres.

Such struggles should obviously be linked directly to the fight in the unions against the state pay laws. Here the struggle for Councils of Action becomes decisive. These would serve to unite all the sections of the population fighting the Tories. And lead the political fight in any area. The price committees would become an integral part

of the Councils of Action.

There is a vital need for a socialist programme on the costs of living.

The foundation of such a policy involves the nationalization of the food manufacturing industry, without compensation under workers' control.

Shortages could be abolished for ever

In agriculture the small farmers would be formed into co-operatives to mechanize production and the huge tracts of land owned or controlled by big business, nationalized. A system could eventually be evolved that abolished shortages and the need for rationing.

On an international scale, Britain would pull out of the Common Market and leave behind the dear food policy that membership involves. It would offer free and fair trading relationships with the rest of the world—and open up trade with Soviet Union, China and East Europe, who have a lot

to offer in the field of food.

This would be the basis for a truly socialist system of production to benefit all.

Obviously such changes involve the elimination of the capitalist system. This cannot possibly be achieved without revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the working class.

The first step towards this end must be the removal of the Tory government by the industrial and political mobilization of the working class on a programme of demands. The programme outlined above would be a very important part of this mobilization. The aim would be to create the political and industrial conditions for forcing the Tory government to resign.

If the mass movement was capable of dealing with the Tories, it would go on to demand that a new Labour government carry out such a socialist programme.

Under these conditions of workers' strength, the Labour Party leadership, which would clearly refuse to do this could be removed. This struggle

The Co-op pioneered bulk-buying and selling-methods which were copied by private chains. But now the Co-op is caught up in expensive advertising and gimmicks like stamps.

would clear the way for a socialist alternative to emerge and lead the working class in a revolutionary struggle for power.

It is the Socialist Labour League, the All Trades Unions Alliance and the Young Socialist, together who are preparing for this alternative leadership by building the revolutionary party in Britain.

This is the most crucial and immediate perspective before the working class today.

The economic conditions for a slump far worse than the 1930s have already emerged. The Tories have already begun their drive to make people eat less by controlling wages and pushing up prices.

Poverty, malnutrition and even starvation are not exceptions under capitalism, but rather the rule. Such times will return once more if the entire working class is not mobilized in revolutionary struggle.



EBBW VALE

SENTENCED TO DEATH BY THE TORIES

The Tory plans to 'rationalize' the steel industry in line with the Common Market steel community are going to cost an estimated 30,000 jobs.

Of these some 18,000 are in Wales—at the East Moors works, Cardiff, Shotton in Flintshire and Ebbw Vale in Monmouthshire.

Wales is already one of the most devastated parts of Britain in terms of unemployment. A 'Financial Times' survey said recently: 'Rationalization of older industries and adaptation to the new has become a painful part of the way of life in Wales, which more than any other region of the UK has depended on coal and steel for employment. In the 27 years since the war, 145 collieries have closed and the coal labour force has dropped from 120,000 to 35,000, 60,000 of these jobs disappeared in the 1960s alone.'

'The last two years have seen particularly heavy re-

dundancies, affecting both traditional industries and some technological industries. In both years, redundancies announced totalled more than 20,000—over twice the average rate for the last 1960s.'

The fight against the new round of savage redundancies has got off to a nervous start. Shotton action committee secretary Ken Monti has announced his men may oppose the loss of 6,500 jobs with an occupation and work-in.

Plans for the work-in will be discussed at a national conference of steelworkers and union officials from doomed plants in England, Scotland and Wales next month.

But at the East Moors works in Cardiff, there hasn't even been a mass meeting of workers called to discuss the closure which will axe 4,100 jobs.

A group of trade unionists wrote to the action committee chairman, Mr Peter Davies, this week saying: 'We are reluctant to criticize

fellow unionists and workers in public, but the case is as urgent as any likely to face workers in the city. The action committee has not so far responded to the situation with enough urgency and militancy. There has been a lack of energy and fight. No clear strategy has been worked out that can harness workers' efforts, both within and outside the works. Nearly two months after the closure news, there has still been no mass meeting at the works on the issue.'

In Ebbw Vale there has been a similar drift by the works leadership. A meeting has been called today to hear a reply to the committee's 28-day 'ultimatum' to the Secretary for Trade and Industry, Mr Peter Walker, the ex-financier and millionaire at 40.

Nobody needs to be a clairvoyant to know Walker's reply. He has told the committee to take a running jump!

His junior hatchet man, Mr Christopher Chataway, made the position perfectly clear in the steel debate in the Com-



Michael Foot—proposes a one-day protest. Above: Ebbw Vale works.

mons when he stated: 'It has to be faced that any conceivable strategy [for steel] must mean a large reduction in BSC's employment. There is no other way.' (His emphasis.)

Yet in the face of this Tory arrogance, the works' committee, backed up by Michael Foot, MP, is only proposing to hold a one-day protest

strike and lobby of parliament on March 14.

We've already witnessed one of these protests. On January 25, 3,000 Shotton men travelled to London to see their MPs. Workers Press reporter Ian Yeats, who was at the Commons lobby, wrote afterwards:

'After fighting their way—literally—to the mother of

parliaments to exercise their democratic rights the 3,000 Shotton steelworkers were let down with a bang. The fire of their anger, which had catapulted them across two police barriers and into the committee rooms of the House, was abruptly dissipated in the honeyed words of a group of mild-mannered men surrounded by millions of pounds worth of oil paintings and chandeliers.

One-day protests and lobbies of parliament cannot defend the right to work. Defence of these basic democratic rights of the working class today requires a united political and industrial struggle against the Tory government.

Militancy on its own can solve nothing. On the contrary, it strengthens the hand of the right-wingers in the labour movement who point and say: 'Look, we took a day off, we took industrial action, but where did it get us?'

It also lets off the hook the reformists like Michael Foot who fear more than anything else the power of the masses to force the Tory government to resign.

Indeed, it was Foot himself who said during the steel debate: 'We want to see a major modernization of the industry. We believe that major modernization must eventually follow the lines laid down by the BSC.'

What difference is there between what Foot says and what Chataway says?

More than at any time in its history, the working class now must fight to build a revolutionary, socialist leadership which will lead it against Toryism and onto state power.

That is why we have built a Pageant committee in Merthyr Tydfil to help prepare an episode of working-class history for the Pageant, 'The Road to Workers' Power', at the Empire Pool, Wembley, on Sunday, March 11.

The episode being recreated is the Taff Vale Railway incident which was a significant milestone in working-class history. After the fines on the railway union the trade unions went forward to found the Labour Party.

Just as workers recognized at the turn of the century that they needed to build a Labour Party to defend their trade union rights, so today, when the Tory government is attacking all the rights of the working class, the urgent necessity arises to construct a revolutionary party.

'WE'RE NOT GOING TO TAKE THIS LYING DOWN'

The following article is reprinted from WORKERS PRESS, 6th February 1973.

BY IAN YEATS

In the crisp dawn of October 30, 1937 'A' furnace at Ebbw Vale steelworks, South Wales, was blown in for the first time since 1929.

Earlier, in January 1936, lorries, excavators, dumpers, cranes and bulldozers tore down the obsolete 19th century furnaces to make way for what was to be the most modern strip mill in Europe.

When it opened on September 30, 1938, as the first shift went to work, the bells at Christ Church tolled and retolled in endless peals as a token of the community's thankfulness that work had once again returned to the valley.

The long years of slump and closure in which grass and weeds covered the steelworks and rabbits multiplied where bars and rails were once rolled appeared to be over.

Today men who never dreamed that they or their sons would ever return to the hunger and rags of the 1930s are faced with the dole once again.

The British Steel Corporation's statement that steel-making will be ended at Ebbw Vale by 1975 is the third time workers' livelihoods have been seriously threatened within living memory.

The furnaces were blown out in 1911, 1929 and now finally, and irrevocably, in 1975.

Ebbw Vale had been an iron-making centre since 1789. With the transition to steel in the 1860s the town was in the vanguard of the new developments.

But by 1911 the disadvantages of the Welsh hill plants as centres of steelmaking were already apparent.

In 1911 Ebbw Vale was turning out steel bars for £4 12s 6d a ton, but Belgian steel could be bought at South Wales ports for £4 9s.

A large factor in the expense of the top town's steel was their distance from ore supplies which had to be imported, landed at the coast, and transported by rail up the valleys.

The 1911 closure affected not only the steelmen, but Newport, Monmouthshire, dockers, miners, coke oven workers, limestone quarry men, builders and engineers.

Newport Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with the works committee, argued that the works could be restarted profitably if a tinplate works was built to feed sheet steel into the expanding home motor industry.

The plant and the Bessemer furnaces were opened in March and April 1912 and continued at full blast throughout World War I and the reconstruction which followed up to 1920.

Throughout the 1920s the phenomenon first seen at the turn of the century of high-cost British steel manufactured in myriad small and expensively located sites—losing out to US and German companies—again reared its head.

This time the crisis was compounded by the worldwide crisis of capitalism which escalated throughout the 1920s to the ultimate financial and economic collapse of 1929.

By the mid-1930s Ebbw Vale's owners had learned the lesson of their high-cost location and Sir John Beynon showed little enthusiasm for reopening the works which was now the lone survivor of South Wales's famous top-town iron works.

Anticipating that the slump would end sometime and with Hitler and Mussolini already on the rampage in Europe, the Welsh tinplate makers were looking for a cheap site, close to ore supplies, for a new integrated works.

Sir William Firth, chairman of the Richard Thomas Company, the largest of the Welsh tinplate makers, announced he would build such a works—not in Wales but at Redbourne, Scunthorpe, a town chosen by the Tories for current expansion.

Against all market logic, Firth gave in to the Welsh tinplate lobby and a political campaign led by Aneurin Bevan to site his new works at the bitterly distressed Ebbw Vale.

Thirty-four years later the very same factors which led the owners of 1911 and 1929 to question the future of steel-making at Ebbw Vale have once again emerged to ring its death knell.

For over 100 years the almost wholly working-class community of Ebbw Vale has

been held at the mercy of the ebbs and flows of market conditions.

Each time the steelworks has closed, hunger, poverty and even death have appeared in the town.

In 1911 and 1929 when world recession hit steel, some of the town's then 45,000 population could find work at the pits.

In 1973 only 700 of the town's 13,000 working population work in coal. Of the rest, 9,000 are directly connected with steel, plus at least 1,000 others in associated trades.

The loss of even the planned 4,500 jobs is serious enough. The closure of the entire plant would be an unimaginable disaster.

Work in extractive and heavy manufacturing industry has been leaving the valleys of the South Wales coalfield for more than a decade.

Unemployment in the area, which includes Ebbw Vale, Brynmawr, Tredegar and Abergillery, is 5.3 per cent, or over 1,000. There are about 40 vacancies.

Ebbw Vale, in conjunction with Tredegar, has opened a new industrial estate at Tavar-narbach. So far the only taker is the government, which is planning an advance factory.

There is no sign of any industrialists wanting to move in.

Not all steelmen come from Ebbw Vale. 70 per cent live in the town, 20 per cent travel from Tredegar and about 8 per cent from Brynmawr—an isolated hamlet 1,200 feet above sea level on the edge of the Brecon Beacons and barely visible under dense low cloud.

With the ruin of not just one but four communities imminent, the determination of the steelmen to fight is understandable.

Action Committee leader Colin Hudson told me at his Ebbw Vale home: 'Unless we get guarantees of alternative employment, we'll stop the plant. A lot of the lads are pushing for a strike and they couldn't afford to ignore us at this point of time.'

Labour council chairman Mr Harry Evans is also a steelman. He says: 'We're not going to take this lying down. We as a council will move heaven and earth to prevent the government and the BSC killing Ebbw Vale.'

As at Shotton in north Wales, the men at Ebbw Vale are unaccustomed to industrial action and there has been no major strike since the war.

More than that, the town is steeped, almost smothered, in the reformist traditions of the Labour Party begun by Tom Richards and carried on by Evan Davies, Aneurin Bevan and now Michael Foot.

It is this which lies behind Harry Evans' remark: 'The council have said they'd do their utmost to bring this Tory government down, but really we've done very little because the only real indicator of mass dissatisfaction is at the ballot box.'

Mr Hudson almost symbolizes the confusion inevitable in the process of a group of workers being torn brutally from everything it has ever known.

He told me: 'We don't want a strike here. But we're not lacking in guts. If it goes to that, we'll take them on.'

'If the government and BSC force Ebbw Vale to a confrontation, I would expect the general secretaries of the steel unions, Davies, Scanlon, Jones, Chapple and Smith to back us with a national strike.'

'We can't do any more. We've had first-class labour relations and we've co-operated with them on productivity and no strikes. We've done whatever we've been asked and now we're being ignored.'

'We couldn't move from Ebbw Vale if we wanted to with a million on the dole. But why should a community that's been in the steel industry for 35 years move?'

WORKERS NOTEBOOK

PARSON'S JUSTICE

Readers will have noticed the item which appeared in the Pageant Diary last week about the vicar on Tyneside. He objected to our Pageant campaign in that area because, he said, it 'glorified a murderer', namely Will Jobling.

We've now had a note from Middleton in Lancashire about the role of the church in the great Chartist struggle.

Two of the most important Manchester magistrates in 1819 were Reverend Hay and Reverend Ethelston. Once Ethelston commented:

'Some of the Reformers ought to be hanged, and some of you are sure to be hanged—the rope is already round your necks.'

Both were involved in and gave the orders for the cavalry charge on a peaceful crowd on August 16, 1819, in St Peter's Field, Manchester.

These gentlemen of the cloth would also rub shoulders with Joe Nadin, nicknamed 'Nady Joe', who was deputy constable of Manchester.

Nady Joe was a 'renowned' thief catcher, but what is more likely the truth is that he would catch a few thieves who had stolen from the really well off and the rest he would 'catch' on a minor offence and turn it into a felony.

The reward for a successful felonious charge was 40s plus a Tyburn ticket. A Tyburn ticket exempted the holder from any public office in the town of residence.

A Tyburn ticket would also exempt the holder from being called up to join the army.

'Between 1816 and 1819 the selling price among the public-

spirited citizens of Manchester was 350s to 400s,' Joyce Watson tells us in her book 'The Peterloo Massacre'.

Nady Joe also had a rake-off coming in from all the brothels in Manchester. So it can be imagined what an honest soul he was.

The Radicals hated him because 'he treated them like he'd treat pickpockets and murderers'.

One Radical song went: 'With Hunt* we'll go, we'll go

We'll bear the flag of Liberty

In spite of Nady Joe.'

* 'Orator' Hunt was one of the leading Radical speakers; he was speaking at the ill-fated St Peter's Field meeting and it was on the pretext of arresting him that the magistrates ordered the cavalry to charge into the meeting.

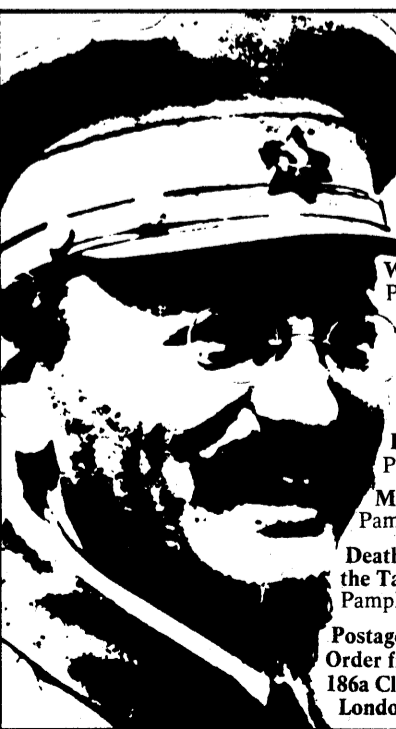
Remembering that at that time no civil police force existed as today, it should be said that the magistrates' worked in close unison with Manchester deputy Constable.

The justice of God's representative on earth showed itself at Peterloo. Framing and provocation were common in 19th-century England.

The other magistrates were all High Church and Tory. At Peterloo the toll of death was 15 and there were numerous men, women and children injured. Three of the dead were women.

So, we can see that 'Parson's Justice' has a double meaning when it comes to workers extending their rights and defending them.





BOOKS BY TROTSKY

Where is Britain Going? Paperback 37½p

Problems of the British Revolution Paperback 35p

Lessons of October Paperback 60p

In Defence of the October Revolution Pamphlet 15p

Marxism and the Trade Unions Pamphlet 25p

Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International Pamphlet 10p

Postage: 10p per book, 5p per pamphlet.
Order from: NEW PARK PUBLICATIONS
186a Clapham High Street,
London SW4 7UG

Steelmen near jobs strike as White Paper goes through

Ebbw Vale's 9,000 steelworkers meet today to decide their next move after the expiry of their 28-day ultimatum to the Tory government.

Action Committee chairman Mr Colin Hudson told me that the government's reply to their plea for a reprieve for 4,500 jobs in the steel-making section of the works was 'completely unsatisfactory'.

He revealed that the committee was near certain to recommend a 'short stoppage', probably of one day, in a last-ditch bid to persuade the Tories to postpone the shut-down.

Yesterday the Ebbw Vale men were due to receive a 'factual memorandum' from the Department of Trade and Industry repeating the reasons for ending steel-making at the Welsh hill site.

Meanwhile leaders of about 100 Cardiff steelworkers in London on Tuesday to lobby MPs over the closure of East Moors works threatened a national steel strike.

Mr Bill Tobutt, secretary of the works' branch of the T&GWU, said: 'We are setting a time limit of six months to get answers to our arguments. If we do not get them, we shall be calling for a national stoppage

BY IAN YEATS

throughout the Corporation'.

In the House of Commons on Tuesday night a Labour Party attempt to censure the government's steel policy was defeated by 295 to 257—a Tory majority of 38.

The Tory White Paper on the industry was approved by 295 votes to 260—a Tory majority of 35. One or two Tory steel MPs felt unable to vote with the government.

Labour Party speakers in the debate were handicapped by the fact that it was Harold Wilson's administration which gave the British Steel Corporation the go-ahead to draw up modernization plans in the first place.

Many Labour steel MPs are on record approving changes in the industry.

It was plain from the debate that behind the fevered emotions and high phrases, Labour's only real objection was the timing of the closures.

So-called 'left' Labour MP Mr Michael Foot, from Ebbw Vale, said the dates proposed for ending steel-making there and at Shotton and East Moors were 'intolerable and impossible'.

To have more than 1,000 new jobs created in Ebbw Vale by 1975 and another 1,500 jobs by 1976 was an impossibility.

Foot considerably understated the full measure of the problem. Up to 4,000 jobs are to go at the steelworks, plus hundreds of

others in haulage and contracting.

He claimed that a future Labour government would withdraw present closure dates and take over responsibility for BSC's shut-down timetable.

He added: 'This will allow the position of the industry to be surveyed afresh.'

Foot condemned the White Paper, which he said was 'totally inadequate as a description of whether in fact the BSC had made the right decisions and whether the government was right to approve them in exactly the form in which the steel corporation presented them'.

He said: 'When the next Labour government comes into office it will halt the closures pending a review of the position in the industry and in the light of what new jobs have been made available.'

Labour's hitherto much-publicized plan to stem the tide of closures by upping output targets was firmly torpedoed by Tory Trade and Industry Secretary Mr Peter Walker.

He told the Commons bluntly that if the industry went quickly to a high production figure and the assessment of world and domestic demand for steel proved wrong, the result would be that substantial numbers of plants earmarked for closure by the end of the decade would shut sooner.

Referring obliquely to the

record £600m shipping orders placed with Harland & Wolff and Swan Hunter recently by the Israeli Marine Fruit Carriers, Walker said: 'Orders in the shipyards are at an all-time high'.

The government clearly expect these orders—based on speculation that the 'mini-boom' created by movements of oil to the US and grain to Russia, China and India will continue—will push up steel demand significantly.

The reference illustrates the kind of straws at which the steel and shipbuilding industries are being forced to grasp. The fact that only this week 'The Times' hinted that the 'boom' was over casts a long shadow over Walker's optimism.

Walker welcomed the setting up of the joint government, TUC, BSC consultative committee to consider ways of meeting the problem of redundancies. The committee would meet for the first time next week he said.

● A THOUSAND women dressed in mourning black will march with Shotton steelworkers during a mass demonstration in Deeside on April 28.

Mrs Rosa Rosedale, vice-chairman of the Shotton Women's Steel Campaign Action Committee, says they are bitter that their husbands and sons are to lose their jobs at the Shotton steelworks.

It was likely that all shops in Deeside areas and parts of north Wales would close for the demonstration.

'We are aiming at a complete stoppage in Deeside,' she said.

Doctors caused anxiety in patients— inquiry

THE WORK of a team of doctors and nurses in Napsbury mental hospital, Herts, caused 'intense unhappiness and anxiety' in some patients, according to a government inquiry published yesterday.

The methods employed by consultant psychiatrist Dr Robert D. Scott since the late 1960s involved withdrawal of privileges, including food and visits from relatives, from patients who were unable to make their own beds, wash their own crockery, serve their own meals and clean their own wards.

Under Dr Scott's policy several male patients were officially discharged from the hospital, but were either rejected by their relatives or had nowhere to go. They made their own way back to the hospital and lived rough in the grounds.

And some nurses spoke of the 'heart-breaking' experience of having to withhold help from patients to whom it was formerly given freely.

But the inquiry, set up by Secretary of Social Services Sir Keith Joseph last October, concluded that there was nothing to suggest deliberate ill-treatment or cruelty to any patient.

A patient in one of Dr Scott's wards died in January, 1972, of extensive injuries. However, the inquiry found that the fact that her injuries had remained undetected was not due to professional negligence.

Sludgemen and sparks carry on struggle

TWO GROUPS of workers on strike in south London are fighting on—despite the lack of official support from union leaders.

Outside County Hall, headquarters of the powerful, Tory-controlled Greater London Council, sludgemen locked out for seven weeks still refuse to accept the notorious Merchant Shipping Act.

'We decided unanimously to carry on the struggle', Tony Murphy, Transport and General Workers' Union shop steward told Workers Press yesterday.

Employed by the GLC, the men are insisting that their work—taking sewage just outside the Thames Estuary to be dumped—does not mean they have to be sub-

PHILIP WADE

jected to the penal clauses of the Act which finally came into force in January.

At present the GLC is dumping the sewage in lagoons on the Thames, polluting the river at the same time.

'The T&GWU won't make it official and don't seem to be doing a lot about it,' said Mr Murphy. 'Many of the men have lost faith in the union leaders.'

Of the 80 men who were originally locked out, some 75 per cent are in the T&GWU and the rest are in the National Union of Public Employees.

ABOUT 100 yards away from the sludgemen's picket line, contracting electricians outside St Thomas's Hospital

are entering their third week of strike action.

Over 100 men came out on February 1 in support of a £1-an-hour pay claim and against the Tory government's order halting wage increases of between £2.80 and £3.20 which should have been paid to 70,000 electricians from January 3.

Frank Chapple, general secretary of the Electrical and Plumbing Trades Union, has written to each of the strikers telling them to go back to work. Dated February 12, part of it says:

'By your action you are arming your enemies. You give the government the means to frustrate our case. By your strike you make it less likely that ALL contracting members will enjoy the increase [for 1974] the union has negotiated.'



St. Thomas's Hospital sparks on picket yesterday.

Socialist Labour League Public Meetings UNITE IN ACTION TO DEFEND BASIC RIGHTS

CASTLEFORD
SUNDAY FEBRUARY 25,
6.30 p.m.

Castleford Civic Hall
Ferry Bridge Road
Speaker: C. SLAUGHTER
(SLL Central Committee)

BIRMINGHAM
SUNDAY FEBRUARY 25, 7pm
Digbeth, Civic Hall
Digbeth, Birmingham
speaker: MIKE BANDA
(SLL Central Cttee)

SOUTHAMPTON
MONDAY FEBRUARY 26, 8 p.m.
Marlands Hall
Havelock Road
opp. Civic Centre
Speaker: ALAN THORNETT
(Deputy Senior Steward Morris
Motors in a personal capacity)

OXFORD
TUESDAY FEBRUARY 27
8 p.m.
Clarendon Institute

Walton
Speaker: G. HEALY
(SLL National Secretary)

MEDWAY
TUESDAY FEBRUARY 27, 8pm
Aurora Hotel
Brompton Road
Gillingham
speaker: MIKE BANDA
(SLL Central Cttee)

SLOUGH
WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 28
8pm
Britwell Community Centre
Long Furlong Drive
Britwell Estate
speaker: G HEALY
(SLL National Sec)

DAGENHAM
THURSDAY MARCH 1, 8pm
Manor Park Library
Romford Rd/Rabbitts Road
opp Rabbitts Pub
speaker: G HEALY
(SLL National Sec)

HULL
THURSDAY MARCH 1, 8 p.m.
'Windmill Hotel'
Witham
Speaker: CLIFF SLAUGHTER
(SLL Central Cttee)

WEST LONDON
THURSDAY MARCH 1, 8 p.m.
Lyndhurst Hall
Grafton Road, NW3
Speaker: M. BANDA
(SLL Central Committee)

LUTON
FRIDAY MARCH 2, 8 p.m.
Assembly Hall
Town Hall
Speaker: M. BANDA
(SLL Central Committee)

TOTTENHAM
TUESDAY MARCH 6, 8 p.m.
Lord Morrison Hall
Chesnut Grove
Speaker: G. HEALY
(SLL National Secretary)

Contracting electricians demanding pay parity

OVER 30 contracting electricians working for Crown House Ltd on a £7m extension to ICI's Huddersfield plant are now in the second week of a parity strike.

The men claim that fitters, welders, riggers, pipefitters and plumbers receive between £1.10 and £1.40 an hour. Teamen get 90p an hour, while the sparks are only on 59½p an hour.

Strikers say they have been fighting for parity for up to

seven months, going through all the official channels.

The Electrical and Plumbing Trades Union has referred the case to the Joint Industry Board.

Crown House has sent each of the 32 electricians a letter threatening the sack unless they return to work.

The strikers are now seeking support from maintenance electricians employed by ICI inside its plant, asking for solidarity action.

BRS drivers fear a split

TRANSPORT union officials in the Midlands have been asked to stop members employed by private hauliers carrying out work normally done by British Road Services drivers.

The drivers are demanding a £2.50 bonus payment for holding heavy-goods vehicle licences, which they are now compelled to carry by law.

They have handed them to the Transport and General Workers' Union until the company pays up.

But now many of them complain that private firms are being allowed to weaken their bargaining power by carrying out vital runs between car factories.

Drivers' leaders warn that determined attempts are now being made to split their ranks.



Gasmen lobby MPs

ABOUT 400 gasworkers lobbied parliament yesterday (left) and later went to a private meeting with the Opposition leader Harold Wilson.

There is considerable apprehension in the gas unions about Wilson's call for a Royal Commission into the gasmen's pay claim.

One union spokesman said it was like 'a Pay Board before the Pay Board'. The fact that the proposal came from the Labour Party leader 'could prove very embarrassing to us', he added.

FEBRUARY FUND STANDS AT £834.35—ONLY 7 DAYS LEFT

IT IS still much too slow. We need £915.65 in seven days time to complete our £1,750 target. Let's put every ounce of energy to turning the situation completely.

We know it can be done and we are sure that however tough it might appear, you, dear readers, will not let us down.

Part of the difficulty of raising the Fund this month is the very high cost of living we all have to face. But the more prices and rents go up, and the more the Tories lash out, so the more determined we must become to fight back and defeat them. We will not hesi-

tate nor run from this struggle like the reformist and Stalinist union leaders.

Workers Press stands out alone. We must fight all the way, with the working class and force this Tory government to resign.

Let's therefore make up for lost time. Extra amounts are needed. Take collections, try and give something more yourself. Keep our paper fighting out in front. Rush all donations immediately to:

**WORKERS PRESS
FEBRUARY APPEAL FUND,
186a Clapham High Street,
London, SW4 7UG.**

The Aldwych shootings

COMMENT BY ALEX MITCHELL

AT 9.43 A.M. on Tuesday, armed police shot and killed two young Asians inside the Indian High Commission at Aldwych.

The demonstrators had not inflicted any harm on anybody in the Embassy. They were waving toy plastic pistols and a sword. Mr Matthew Bertrand, an official messenger in the building, saw the youths in the foyer:

'I went down in the lift and saw a short man wearing a mask carrying a gun standing by the passport section. I walked up to him and asked: "What is this all about?" He answered in English: "We have nothing for you".'

At this point another demonstrator came into the lobby. Mr Bertrand turned to him and said: 'What's this trouble all about?' The second man replied: 'I want all those Indian murderers to come out, to kill them.'

Mr Bertrand said: 'But if you kill them, what will happen?' The man answered: 'I don't care. It's not your business. So leave me alone.' Mr Bertrand decided to do precisely that. He walked away to phone the police.

The Special Patrol Group behaved quite differently from Mr Bertrand. From all eye-witness accounts it is certain that they opened fire immediately, forcing

the three men to take cover.

Pc Stanley Conley who fired some of the fatal shots said: 'I don't think my hand was shaking too much. It couldn't have been, could it? My shot went where it was aimed. I caught him straight through the heart.'

'When he fell I thought nothing but relief. It wasn't until five seconds later I realized his gun wasn't real. I went up and took it off him. That's when I knew. He was still wearing his mask and he was still alive. He didn't say anything, but he looked at me and he looked surprised. Even then all I could feel was happy that I was alive.'

One SPG member involved in the shooting came out of the High Commission supported by two colleagues. They helped him to a wall. He leaned against it looking pale. Then he was sick.

The scene switched to the House of Commons. Robert Carr, the Home Secretary, former director of Securicor, Britain's largest private police force, said:

'I believe prompt action by the police, demonstrating that anybody who attempts this sort of thing at Embassies or High Commissions in London, is caught and dealt with, is perhaps the best deterrent and the best way to allay people's fears.'

Following Carr's statement it was the turn of the Labour Party. Mr John Fraser, MP for Norwood, a front-bench spokesman on Home Affairs, described the police action as 'outstanding'. He expressed 'admiration for the courage and gallantry of the officers'.

But what are the lessons of these brutal murders?

● The era of the 'unarmed bobby' is over. The Tory government has set up a squad of marksmen who are roving around London day and night equipped with modern, automatic weapons.

● The January issue of 'Police', the magazine of the Police Fe-

deration carried an article condemning the use of toy guns as it could lead to unforeseen deaths.

● The London 'Evening News' said on Tuesday that the police were 'expecting' the demonstration at the High Commission and were 'standing by' from 9 a.m. This was dropped from later newspaper reports.

● Police said the SPG was on 'Embassy patrol' at Hyde Park Corner when the alarm was given. Yet at his Press conference Pc Conley said he was 'on patrol in Vauxhall'. Workers Press has not been able to discover any Embassies in Vauxhall, south London!

● In the killing of a bank raider in December and the shooting of two Asians on Tuesday, the police—and the government—have firmly established the 'principle' of policemen using weapons in 'shoot-to-kill' operations.

● This forms part of an intensive drive by the government to get the Metropolitan Police Force on a war-footing for the class battles in front. At present they are being rearmed and retrained; the Special Branch, the bomb squad and the CI department (political and governmental branch) are all being strengthened.

● The Labourites' wretched statements and the bleatings of the liberals show very clearly that these people can't defend the working class against the violent attacks of the ruling class and its 'bodies of armed men'.

This requires revolutionary political leadership of the kind which we are building in the Socialist Labour League.

That is why we are staging our biggest-ever campaign at the Empire Pool, Wembley, on Sunday, March 11, on the issue of the defence of the basic democratic rights of the working class.



Hotel builders walk out

BUILDING workers at the multi-million pound McAlpine hotel site in the Aldwych, London, have gone on strike against the use of 'lump' labour.

Of the 150 men on the site, under one-third are estimated to be in a union. The rest work for sub-contractors and are said to pay no tax or insurance stamps.

But when the direct men walked out yesterday morning, these indirect workers joined them—leaving the site empty.

Three tower cranes have also been occupied on the project, which is being developed by the Capital and Counties Property Company.

Tony Crilly, Transport and General Workers' Union member and federation steward, told a Press conference yesterday.

'The response has been good. But we have to see lump labour as part of the attack on the trade unions as a whole.'

'We will certainly go all out to win. But this is not outside the offensive of the employers and the government against the unions. We'll mobilize our workers to fight the lump.'

'But we'll also have to demand that the recalled TUC Congress declares a General Strike to get the Tories out as the only real way to win.'

BRIEFLY ● BRIEFLY ● BRIEFLY

FURTHER legal moves against Briant Colour printworkers who have been working-in at their Old Kent Road factory for eight months are being delayed pending a deal with a buyer. A spokesman for the liquidator Mr P. Granville White, said yesterday: 'If we are as near to a deal as we appear to be, I don't want to go to the added expense of getting an order for eviction.' Last week in the Chancery Division of the High Court the liquidator obtained judgement against the five man work-in committee after they failed to answer a summons telling them to quit the premises.

Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. Published by Workers Press, 186a Clapham High Street, London, SW4 7UG. Printed by Plough Press Ltd. (TU), 180b Clapham High Street, London, SW4 7UG. Newsdesk: 01-720 2000. Circulation: 01-622 7029.

DUDLEY, Worcs. tenants' association will tonight finalize plans for fielding its own candidates in forthcoming local elections. The local council's opposition to the rent Act has collapsed. The association co-ordinates 33 local tenants' committees in a 20 square-mile area. An estimated 17,000 out of 28,000 council tenants are withholding rent increases. ● **SEE comments tomorrow.**

ELEVEN Labour councillors at Clay Cross, Derbys. have decided to appeal to the High Court against the £6,985 surcharge imposed on them for defying the Tory rent Act.

CAMBRIDGE
SUNDAY FEBRUARY 25
Mawson Hall
Mawson Rd
SPECIAL SHOWING OF
'RIGHT TO WORK' FILM
RALLY, 3 p.m.
Speaker: Maureen Bambrick
(YS Nat. Cttee)

Unite in action to defend basic rights

SLL

PUBLIC

MEETINGS

BRADFORD

THURSDAY
FEBRUARY 22
7.30 p.m.

Central Library
Top of Hall Ings
Speaker: CLIFF SLAUGHTER
(SLL Central Committee)

MERTHYR

THURSDAY
FEBRUARY 22
7.30 p.m.

AUEW Hall
Swan Street
Speaker: G. HEALY
(SLL National Secretary)

WANDSWORTH

THURSDAY
FEBRUARY 22
8 p.m.

Wandsworth Town Hall
Wandsworth High Street
Speaker: MIKE BANDA
(SLL Central Committee)