

WORKERS PRESS

INCORPORATING THE NEWSLETTER ● FRIDAY MAY 12, 1972 ● No. 763 ● 4p

DAILY ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

TORY BID TO SPLIT RAILMEN

BY ALEX MITCHELL

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It was the same formula which the three rail executives rejected on Wednesday night.

It proposes payment of the £20-a-week minimum from May 1, but to withhold the consequential increases from the higher paid workers until June 5. The unions are insisting that all workers should receive a settlement from May 1.

The statement, designed to split the unions, was so clumsily read out that even Reg Prentice, Labour's spokesman on industrial questions, said it was 'a non-statement'.

Political capital

The government, he said, 'appear to be only concerned to get the maximum political capital out of the hardships of the travelling public'.

Macmillan is specifically hoping to hive off the white-collar rail union, the Transport and Salaried Staffs Association led by Percy Coldrick.

Significantly it was Coldrick, who was first to comment:

'My executive found the offer unacceptable last night, but we are willing to have another look at it on Saturday.'

The right-wing union has been the least militant and in his Commons statement Macmillan specifically offered the olive branch to the TSSA leadership when he said: 'I am trying to help the lower paid without upsetting the differentials.'

'In any case I have a statutory obligation to consult the TSSA and the board and I would want to consult the other unions concerned.'

At midnight last night the unions' work-to-rule went into effect. It will immediately bring chaos to commuter and freight traffic.

The Cabinet went into emergency session yesterday to final-

ize plans for the Tory offensive.

Additional ministers present were Solicitor General Sir Geoffrey Howe, legal expert on the Act, and Transport Minister John Peyton, who will be responsible for co-ordinating special transport services in the event of a state of emergency.

Secret talks

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The whole Labour movement must rally to the defence of the rail unions as they face this Tory provocation.

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THIEU'S TEENAGE ARMY

SAIGON CALL-UP FOR 18 YEAR OLDS

BY JOHN SPENCER

SAIGON sent out call-up orders to all 18-year-olds as panic martial law measures went into force in South Vietnam yesterday.

President Thieu's crisis regime also announced plans to conscript 17-year-olds.

Saigon's mayor ordered residents to dig trenches and prepare for artillery attacks against the capital.

A government spokesman said martial law would mean that 'all kinds of liberties must be restricted'.

The decree, outlawing strikes, demonstrations, seditious literature and unlicensed weapons, is clear evidence that Thieu fears uprisings in the cities following the reverse suffered by South Vietnamese forces at the battle-fronts.

The government's military position is deteriorating rapidly on all three fronts.

AT AN LOC, the besieged provincial capital north of Saigon, there was fierce hand-to-hand fighting inside the town as the liberation forces mounted a new attack.

FURTHER NORTH, in the Central Highlands, a senior US adviser predicted a devastating attack on Kontum within a week. He said Kontum City would be heavily damaged by a massive assault from two North Vietnamese divisions in the next week.

South Vietnamese forces in the town are heavily outnumbered and have already been defeated in battles west of the town.

MEANWHILE, in the far North around Hue, the South Vietnamese are still anticipating a major onslaught on the city by liberation forces currently mopping up the town's outlying defences.



SPECIAL FEATURES TODAY



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ABOUT 50 demonstrators watched by almost as many police picketed the American Embassy in London's Grosvenor Square yesterday (see below) protesting against Nixon's blockade of North Vietnamese ports.

Organized by students from the London School of Economics the protesters, mainly American, carried placards and shouted slogans telling US forces to 'Go Home'.

One demonstrator, Nick Garner, was arrested for refusing to move from the pavement opposite the embassy.

The ad hoc committee of Americans Against the War and LSE students plan a further demonstration to the embassy at 3 p.m. today.



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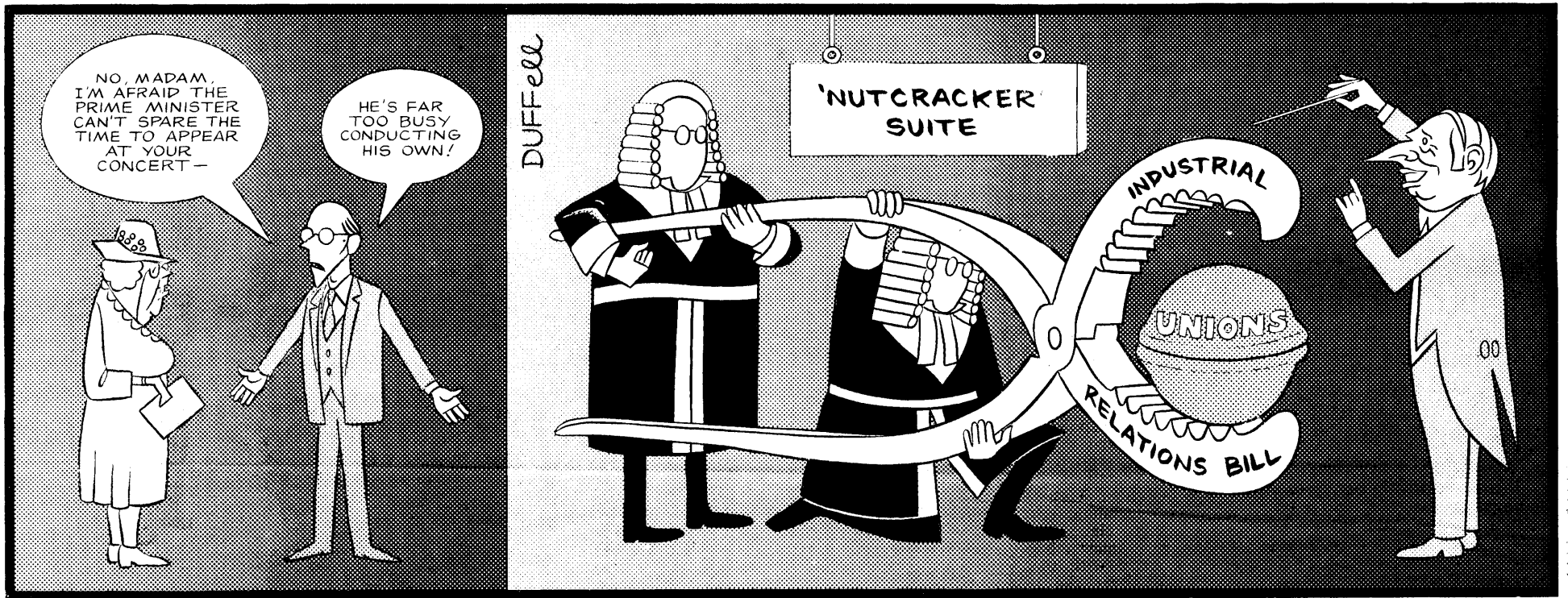


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Moscow whispers protest

AS THE deadline passed for activation of US mines outside the North Vietnam ports, the Soviet Union issued a muted protest demanding that the blockade be lifted immediately.

It described the US war moves as 'fraught with serious consequences for international peace and security', but did not mention President Nixon's forthcoming visit to Moscow for summit talks.

The mines were set to operate from dusk yesterday (noon GMT). American bombers in unprecedented strength have been attacking rail and road links, industrial and harbour installations and the main towns of North Vietnam.

North Vietnam said yesterday it would sweep the mines out of Haiphong harbour and sink warships blockading its ports. It also promised to shoot down US planes over North Vietnam and fight on until final victory.

The Hanoi army newspaper 'Quan Doi Nhan Dan' said that when the US 'sends its warships against our people, we will set them ablaze and sink them. When it has recourse to mines to block our harbours, we will sweep them all away... Our people have sufficient determination and strength to persevere in their just and certainly victorious struggle, if necessary for five or ten years or more...'

By contrast with this fighting declaration, Moscow's reaction has been singularly muted. 'Pravda' simply stated that Nixon's decision to mine the harbour 'reaffirms the undisguised aggressive acts signifying an aggravation of US interference in Vietnam and a violation of the norms of international law'.

The Soviet press and radio noted the demonstrations and protests against Nixon's move

almost without comment. Discussions in preparation for Nixon's visit to Moscow continued in a 'straightforward and serious' atmosphere in Washington, according to US sources.

And there were reports from the Gulf of Tonkin that at least one Soviet ship had already turned back from the approach to Haiphong rather than run the US blockade.

The Soviet Stalinist leaders are backing down without a fight in the face of Nixon's provocation. Their capitulation can only encourage the most bigoted 'hawks' of the Pentagon to further action aimed at crushing the Vietnamese revolution.

By appeasing the Americans and continuing their detente with the leader of US imperialism, the Soviet leaders isolate the people of North Vietnam and increase the dangers of World War III.

At the talks with Nixon they hope for agreement on nuclear arms limitation. But such a deal with imperialism can only serve to camouflage the war-mongering activities of the American ruling class and hide the real dangers from the workers and peasants of the world.

The mining of Haiphong and the blockade against North Vietnam indicate that imperialism cannot be persuaded peacefully to abandon its drive to crush revolution throughout the world. The Moscow leaders, following their Stalinist strategy of 'peaceful co-existence', only open the road for new provocations and aggression in Vietnam and throughout the world.

Troops massed to raid occupied town

BY A FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

THE QUEBEC town of Sept Iles (population 18,000) was in the hands of the workers yesterday morning after a night of fighting in which the local police were overpowered.



The three jailed leaders: Yvon Charbonneau (l) Louis Laberge and Marcel Pepin at a recent meeting in the Quebec province.

The Canadian workers erected barricades at all the access roads to the town and occupied the local radio station. They broadcast denunciations of Wednesday's court decision to jail three trade union leaders for defying an order to end a strike.

Stores and schools in Sept Iles were closed as police reinforcements were flown into the town in Canadian Air Force transporters. The reinforcements were a 75-man 'emergency unit' of provincial police.

The town was taken over after more than 1,000 demonstrators had clashed with about 100 anti-riot police in the centre of the community. During the clashes at least one worker was fatally injured.

Thousands of other workers walked off their jobs throughout Quebec as the three trade union leaders began their one-year jail terms. The three, Marcel Pepin, president of the Confederation of National Trade Unions, Louis Laberge, president of the Quebec Federation of Labour, and Yvon Charbonneau, president of the Quebec Teachers' Group, were found guilty of contempt of court.

They were said to have incited trade unionists to disobey injunctions ordering the maintenance of 'essential services' during an 11-day strike last month by 200,000 provincial public servants.

The strike was finally ended by a court order under Canada's anti-union laws.

The Canadian employers have set out to crush the militancy of the Quebec working class by depriving trade unions of the right to strike. Their action in imprisoning the three labour leaders has sparked a virtual General Strike throughout the province.

In St Jerome, just north of Montreal, workers seized another radio station to broadcast against the government's action.

The station was occupied for six hours before police stormed into it and ended the occupation.

A union spokesman said about 60,000 of 80,000 Quebec building workers had already walked off their jobs and the rest were expected to follow suit today.

Ceylon coalition expels Stalinists

THREE Communist Party MPs who voted against the Ceylon government on its Criminal Justice Commissions Bill last month have been expelled from the coalition.

A fourth member, Dr S. A. Wickremasinghe, who abstained, would be 'dealt with' when his explanation was received by the parliamentary chief whip, sources said.

Dr Wickremasinghe, currently visiting Rumania and the Soviet Union, has said he will explain

his conduct on his return to Ceylon.

Of the six Communist Party MPs in the government, only Junior Education Minister B. Y. Tudawe voted for the Bill. Housing Minister Pieter Kueneman was in Singapore when the vote was taken.

The Bill established special tribunals to hear the cases of young insurgents captured after the JVP rebellion last year.

It has aroused great hostility in the Ceylon working class. The tribunals can hand down sentences of life imprisonment which are not subject to appeal.

The normal rules of evidence do not apply and prosecution witnesses cannot be cross-examined by the defence.

The Communist Party has supported the 'rebel' MPs, though general secretary Kueneman is believed to want to stay in the United Front coalition. The other coalition parties, the renegade revisionist Lanka Sama Samaja Party and Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party, both voted for the Bill.

Charged for walking in street

MRS Winnie Mandela, wife of a former leader of the banned African National Congress, is to appear in court today charged with walking in a Johannesburg street.

A banning order under South Africa's Suppression of Communism Act, allows her no visitors at her home except a doctor. She was arrested in a Johannesburg street on Wednesday

with her brother-in-law, Peter Magubane. Their lawyer paid £50 for their release.

Last month, Mrs Mandela, whose husband Nelson is serving a life-sentence in the notorious Robben Island prison, won an appeal against conviction on two counts of breaking her banning orders by receiving visitors at her home. One of the visitors was Mr Magubane.

Mrs Mandela was first put under a banning order eight years ago after her husband's trial. She was arrested in 1969 and brought to trial the following year.

The charges were withdrawn, but she was rearrested as she left the court and spent another 17 months in prison before the case was dismissed. She has been 'banned person' ever since.

Pupils call all-London strike for next Wednesday

FROM SARAH HANNIGAN

SCHOOLCHILDREN from North and West London gathered near Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park, yesterday to plan the next moves in their campaign against caning and school uniforms.

Schools Action Union leader Steven Wilson, who was detained by police during the march last Monday, read out a leaflet calling on pupils throughout London to strike on Wednesday, May 17.

He said: 'Not only does the Inner London Education Authority think it can get away with ignoring our just demands, but it is also waging a reactionary "counter-revolution".'

This was shown by ILEA threats to send letters to over 3,000 parents, hoping to organize them against their children.

'It is also shown by the suspension and other victimizations carried out by the dictatorship of the head,' he said.

Children at the meeting said that many pupils who had taken part in marches in the last week

are now facing expulsion threats.

Three 14-year-old girls from Sarah Siddons school, West London, were detained by police after a march on Wednesday.

MILITANT grammar school boys in Lancashire claimed yesterday that their headmaster had broken an 'agreement' with their sixth-form union over the length of pupils' hair.

Many of the 300 fifth and sixth-formers at King Edward VII Grammar School, Lytham St. Anne's, have pledged to disobey orders to get their hair cut.

They are threatening to 'work-to-rule'—by sitting-in after morning assembly and boycotting their sports day and a charity walk for school funds—if any boy is suspended.

One boy said 20 pupils had been threatened with suspension if they did not have haircuts.



'No snags' to Clydebank sackings

BY IAN YEATS

THE DEAL about to be signed between Communist Party shop stewards and the US Marathon Manufacturing Co., at Glasgow's Clydebank shipyard is a total betrayal.

- It deprives the workforce of their basic right to strike over a period of four years.

- It includes no guarantee against redundancies and concedes there will have to be a considerable changeover in the existing labour force to provide the skills Marathon will need.

- It agrees to the bulldozing of Clydebank's east yard taking the Stalinists back on their promise to maintain the yard as a ship-building unit.

On Wednesday Stalinist shop stewards were 'very happy' after a day of talks with Marathon. Clydebank convenor James Reid told the press:

'We have established a frame-

Stalinist stewards sign away right to strike

work for negotiations and there are no snags.'

Trouble had been expected by outside observers over the Texas oil-rig firm's insistence on a legally-binding, four-year, no-strike agreement.

But Marathon's senior vice-president Eldon Nuss said yesterday:

'It is our understanding there are no legal and binding agreements in the United Kingdom. We think that our labour agreement will be such that it will be honoured by the unions and it will be written in such a manner that they absolutely will honour it and we will have four years of continuous work.'

The shop stewards have told Nuss that there will be no strikes in the yard unless dispute procedure has been fully exhausted—thus giving Marathon the guarantee they have looked for since first entering the venture.

The Stalinists are pinning their

faith on escalation and comparability clauses in the long-term contract which they have obviously given Marathon very good reason to assume they will honour.

Nuss said after Wednesday's talks: 'It has been a very good day. There has not been a grave area of dispute and I do not see any obstacle to arriving at a mutually satisfactory agreement.'

But he made it clear that the deal the Stalinists are about to sign includes no firm promise on redundancies.

All the agreement committed Marathon to 'was to try to employ as many as possible of the 2,200 workers still at the yard'.

'We are going to make every effort we can to retain as many people as we can. We have always said we will have at least 2,000', said Nuss.

Not only are the Stalinists about to sign away the basic right of labour to strike, they are also about to concede the inevitability of hundreds more redundancies on top of the 900 jobs already lost in the ten months since the 'work-in' fraud began.

A private report circulated by the stewards at Clydebank confirms the view that Marathon intends to sack the entire labour force and then pick and choose who it re-hires.

The report says that when Marathon finally goes into business on July 24, the company will employ only 1,000 men, taking on a further 1,000 over a period of eight months.

There can only be one point of this hiring-and-firing procedure. It must be to allow Marathon to take on men with skills other than those of workers presently employed.

In other words the Stalinists are giving their blessing not just to 200 or 300 redundancies surplus to the 2,000 Marathon say they need, but also to massive sackings among the existing workforce.

Hundreds will be permanently consigned to the dole and many of those re-hired could spend between six and eight months unemployed.

Significantly, point 12 of the shop stewards' report on the subjects for negotiation with Marathon is—redundancy pay.

As for the Stalinists' other major promise to maintain all four yards intact and as a ship-building unit, the report admits that Clydebank's east yard is to be razed to the ground and only the west yard modernized for oil-rig production.



Above: A 13-year-old supporter of the Schools Action Union speaking to pupils (Top right) at London's Speakers Corner, Hyde Park, yesterday. The speaker was a leader of the delegation to London education headquarters at County Hall last Tuesday. He walked out of the meeting protesting that the discussions were 'getting them nowhere'.

Seaforth about turn: Little gained

BY AN INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

IN AN astonishing about-turn, docks shop stewards at Liverpool have lifted the black on the giant Seaforth container terminal. The first ship into the £50m berth was the Ellerman Line's 'Tagus', carrying fruit and wine from Portugal.

Within an hour it was unloaded. Mr George Brimyard, managing director of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company, met the 1,578-ton ship to stage an unofficial opening.

Wednesday's official opening was postponed because of militant action taken by a mass meeting of dockers last Sunday.

On the recommendation of the shop stewards' committee, the men decided to handle no ships at Seaforth pending an agreement on wages and conditions.

These included a 35-hour working week, an increase in the basic wage, increases in both pensions and sick pay and assurances on stuffing and stripping of containers.

In announcing the blacking decision, joint chairman of the shop stewards' committee Jimmy Symes, said:

'The port employers are trying to get us into Seaforth without an agreement. Our claim was placed before them last January

and nothing has been done about it. We now want to make them realize they have an obligation to us.

'If the employers come out with the right announcement, everything will be all right.'

Three days of talks then commenced. But from the brief statement issued on Wednesday, there is little justification for saying it is the 'right announcement'.

Of the six demands made last Sunday only one was met... and that is pretty half-hearted.

'Discussions' will take place 'immediately' with a view to the introduction of a 35-hour working week for implementation in the last quarter of this year!

It was on the basis of this 'concession', that the Seaforth black was lifted by Symes and company.

The capitalist press was rubbing its hands with glee yesterday. Writing in 'The Guardian', Geoffrey Whiteley said:

'The dockers' leaders, however, have not emerged with any dramatic gains from the conflict. The dispute has produced no immediate improvement in pay packets and the promises are little more than those which might have been expected from

normal negotiation over the next few months.'

Lew Lloyd, Transport and General Workers' Union docks district secretary, said that although the ban on the terminal was lifted, the blacking of the three haulage firms still remains in force.

The firms—Heatons Transport (St Helens) Limited, Bishop's Wharf of Warrington and Craddock Brothers of Wolverhampton—have taken the union to the National Industrial Relations Court.

'Our priority is the right to work and the protection of jobs,' Lloyd added.

MEANWHILE in London, Southern Stevedores has announced that—despite parliamentary protests—their docks will close next month.

At a private meeting between docks officials and management on Wednesday, terminal payments of £300 for each man were negotiated.

When the docks close on June 3, as many as 1,250 dockers and tally clerks face dismissal.

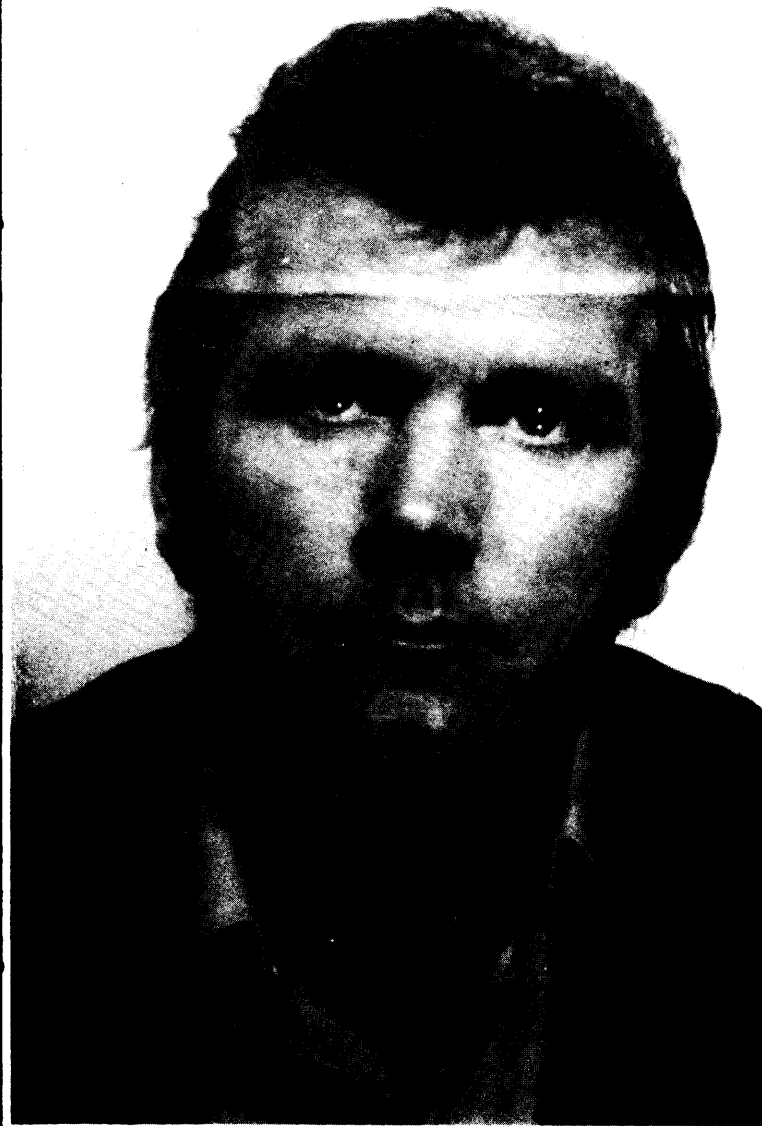
As in Liverpool, the leadership in the sell-out at the Royal docks has been Communist Party members.

BUILDING THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Have you read the Draft Manifesto adopted by the All Trades Unions Alliance at the national conference at Birmingham last November? Have you expressed your views on the document in a letter to the Workers Press?

The Manifesto calls for the transformation of the Socialist Labour League into a revolutionary party. This historic and vital task must be fully discussed and understood throughout the workers' movement: trade unionists, their families, students, the unemployed and people in the professions are invited to express their views on the Manifesto.

If you want a copy of the Draft Manifesto write to the Workers Press or contact your local ATUA branch. Today we present further correspondence in the Manifesto discussion.



GEORGE LUBY

A 36-year-old postman, Leeds No 1 branch UPW.

The Charter of Basic Rights should be read and understood by the entire working class, understood for what they are—the basic rights of the working class, not to be begged for, but theirs by right.

Now that the Industrial Relations Act is being implemented, every right that has been won by years of bitter struggle is now in jeopardy.

We must get this message across to every working-class person in the land. The capitalist radio and television and the Fleet St press barons won't do it and the reformist TUC definitely will not. So the burden is squarely on our shoulders.

The bureaucrats in the TUC really welcomed the Act. It gave them the opportunity to smash any rank-and-file militancy. These same leaders are heading off the revolutionary situations that are developing at an ever-increasing rate.

Capitalism has totally failed and is now in its death throes. But the TUC—instead of confronting the Tories—are openly collaborating with the very evil that is seeking to smash the unions and thus the entire working class. Capitalism's only chance of survival is to smash the working class and make them pay for its bankruptcy.

This Tory government is a new breed—the most viciously anti-working class this country has ever seen. Any Labourite who voted with the Tories on the Common Market, when they had a golden opportunity to get rid of the Tories, should be thrown out of the Labour Party.

The Jenkinsites should join the anti-working-class party, where they belong. We can't allow this class-collaboration, and these so-called Labourites shall one day have to answer for their betrayal.

The reformist TUC, by their defeatist attitude over the Act, are causing widespread confusion and frustration among many trade unionists who are asking

themselves: 'What's the use of unions if courts controlled by the Tories are to determine our wage claims?'

This question is now being asked by UPW members. Jackson accepted on our behalf, with no authority from the membership, an 8 per cent increase inside the government norm. In fact, under an agreement signed last year, new recruits to the Post Office work at £1 below full rate for a year, and postmen promoted to Postman Higher Grade do a full year on the lower rate before getting on to the promoted rate.

In other words, some sections of Post Office staff are paying back part of the wage increase already.

Trade unionists are experiencing betrayal after betrayal. This must be checked by a united confrontation of the unions against the Tories, to get rid of them and their Industrial Relations Act.

Don't let's have any clap-trap about the Labour Party repealing it. Weren't they the very people who instigated it? The only way to get rid of it is to force the TUC to call a General Strike. I fear if this is not done, frustrated trade unionists will be resigning in large numbers, thus resulting in a further weakening of the unions and the working class.

What right have a gang of monopolists and bankers to take us into the Common Market against the wishes of the majority of the people? The conspiracy of the EEC monopolists can only work against the interests of the working class, leading to mass redundancies. Whole industries will close down or move into places where labour is cheap, like Portugal.

Feather and his reformists had it in their power to kill the Act stone dead. They now move from 'not recognizing' it to instructing unions to attend its courts!

Isn't this a betrayal of the trade union movement and the entire working class? The TUC must get off the defensive and onto the offensive. The Tories are playing their usual game of divide and rule by stating that the public wants the Industrial Relations Act. Are we 10 million trade unionists not members of the public?

The only organization leading the fight against this illegal government is the Socialist Labour League. Its daily paper Workers Press exposes all the reformists in the Labour Party and the treacherous Stalinists in the trade union hierarchy, who time and time again mislead the working class.

The Draft Manifesto should be adopted by all trade unionists. The All Trades Unions Alliance will fight in every struggle. The only way forward for the working class is to build the revolutionary party under the principled Marxist leadership of the Socialist Labour League.



KEVIN DEAN

A 24-year-old AUEW member, he is taking part in the occupation of the Hoe-Crabtree factory in Leeds. In this article he discusses the Draft Manifesto for transforming the Socialist Labour League into a revolutionary party.

We started a work-to-rule on Monday, April 17. Then six fitters were suspended because they demanded a slinger with a crane, so we all downed tools to get them reinstated. The management suspended the entire work force, though they later claimed that they hadn't suspended us and that we'd gone on strike.

Every worker has received a letter saying that his job is still open, and it implies that the suspended fitters will be reinstated as well, but now we're staying out for a settlement on the wages. We've received no offer from the management and we've imposed a 24-hour occupation of the factory.

The Charter of Basic Rights is correct, these are the basic rights we've got to defend.

You make the point about not being opposed to technological advances as such, but having to defend jobs. But under this system technological advance is leading to mass unemployment.

I can see us being back in the Roman days, with mass spectacles being put on to keep the people occupied. We need to protect men—like the Liverpool dockers are doing.

The Tories attack strikers as 'anarchists', slapping on a fine because men are struggling for their human conditions.

A General Strike is necessary to bring down the Tory government. If we stay passive, some unions can lose their entire assets. Every strike could lead to the law courts and we're caught in a cycle. We've got to break through this cycle.

What can we expect from the NIRC? There's no impartiality there.

Then there's the council house rents. Ours is going up 50p in October and then another £1 next year. Rents will be over £6 a week for a three-bedroomed house. So we are falling further behind.

Until about three years ago we used to get an annual rise at Crabtree's of about 25s on the

Engineers occupy their factory in Manchester and 'sit-in' in support of their wage claim

basic rate and we got 19s knocked off the bonus—a net rise of 6s a week!

Then we struck for three weeks and that year we got the full rise on the basic and only 5s off the bonus. Since then we've had the full 25s. But that's not enough now. It barely keeps up with the cost of living. I'm worse off in real wages than I was three years ago—and I've got two children now. There's no doubt in my mind the engineers have got to win this claim.

'Basic right' number four—the right to a higher standard of living—is important. We are tired of struggling to stay where we are. A man goes to work to improve his standard of living, not to stand still.

You are calling for a Labour government with socialist policies and that would be fine. But there's a lot of doubt around about a Labour government because of its policies last time.

When the Labour government tried to bring in anti-union legislation, it disillusioned a lot of workers. The leaders were heading in the same direction as the Industrial Relations Act.

But where did the Labour Party come from? From the unions. The Labour leaders were slapping in the face the very people who built the Labour Party.

There's no doubt that everyone at our place wants to get rid of the Tories. But it's not enough to trust the Labour leaders. Ever since I've been interested in politics, they've never kept their promises any more than the Tories have. The working class will have to force socialist policies on them.

Jenkins and his friends saved the Tory government and now that government is using the law against the dockers and the railwaymen. A strong line should have been taken against Jenkins—but Wilson didn't do this, he seemed to be condoning their action.

They've certainly lost sight of the people who put them where they are.

Finally, I'd like to pledge my support to the Socialist Labour League and to the revolutionary party that's going to be launched this year.

CHRIS RIGG

Miner, Bentley Colliery, Yorks.

Capitalism is now in its death agony. To prolong its existence, it must set on a course of destroying trade unionism and driving the working class to conditions of starvation and dictatorship.

The Tory government has set sail on this course and the weapons it has chosen to destroy the working class are the Industrial Relations Act and the present leadership of the TUC—in other words, reformism.

The trade union leaders have so far refused to put up any fight against this Tory government.

The working class is beginning to break from this reformist trade union leadership. The dockers have refused to lift their blacking of container lorries despite orders from the T&GWU. This could mark a turning point in the thinking of the working class.

There can be no compromise in a time of crisis. We must build up the revolutionary party and not be distracted from this important task.

It is a clear-cut issue facing the working class: either go forward to socialism or back to fascism and the eventual third world war.



BRITISH TRADE BOOST IN BULGARIA

A delegation of British businessmen arrives in Sofia this week with a view to expanding trade with the 'People's Republic' of Bulgaria.

Bulgarian officials will be waiting for them with a list of business propositions to set their pocket-books aglow, all political considerations apart.

With nothing spared on the bureaucracy's expense accounts, some mutually-profitable deals are expected, with the full blessing of the Department of Trade and Industry. Trade will have to be fitted to the needs of the current Five-Year Plan, but no doubt a little stretching will be

done if expediency demands.

Like other East European countries which have been building up their industries, Bulgaria needs to sell abroad a larger volume of manufactured goods than in the past. This means that on the world market they come into direct competition with the capitalist countries in terms of price and quality.

The Bulgarians and the other East European countries are thus turning in all directions to do barter deals — with Franco Spain, the colonels' Greece, Brazil, the political regime does not matter. Greater interest is being taken in the Common Market because it is seen as a possible field for increased trade.

Bulgarian leaders, old and new. Centre poster shows the late Georgi Dimitrov. On the right is Zhivkov, present CP chief

If the British businessmen want to increase their sales in Bulgaria, they will have to be ready to buy the manufactured goods which the Bulgarians are anxious to sell. These include machinery and machine tools, electrical equipment and agricultural machinery.

The need to export makes the Bulgarians, like the Russians, turn to the Common Market more readily than in the past. Otherwise the executives in Sofia will turn to the other capitalist countries which have been more ready to do business than the British.

STEEL CUTS IN FRANCE

Wendel-Sidelor, the giant French steel combine, may be forced to make drastic alterations in its plans for a new factory on the Mediterranean near Marseilles.

Shortage of cash resulting from heavy losses in the last year is the reason for the proposed cut-backs, announced last week by Wendel's managing director Jean Gandois.

In preparation for building the new seaside factory Wendel-Sidelor has already condemned most of its existing steel capacity in the Lorraine area close to the German border.

CLOSURES

The closures in Lorraine are likely to make it the most depressed area in France. It

has already been badly hit by a series of pit closures.

The Mediterranean factory — situated at Fos-sur-Mer which is intended to become the centre of a new industrial complex — was planned before the full depth of the international economic recession hit the European steel industry.

The latest financial returns for 1971, however, show that the Wendel group — which includes the Sollac, Sacilor and Richemont companies — made no profits at all. In fact the group was forced to dip into its reserves to the tune of 200m francs.

By contrast, in 1971, the company made a gross profit of 90m francs. According to Gandois, 1972 could be just as bad as 1971, in view of the 'bad state of selling prices at the beginning of the year'.

This gives Wendel-Sidelor a slim chance of finding the necessary cash for its share of the cost of Fos-sur-Mer. The first stage of the complex is

due to cost 7,000m francs — borne equally by Wendel-Sidelor, by loans from the government, and by a syndicate of French and foreign banks.

CUT-BACK

The company has to find at least 1,000m francs over the next two years and with its present profit levels the group will be unable to pay this sum without cutting back its current plans to modernize its remaining factories in the Lorraine.

This makes nonsense of French government plans to modernize the steel industry in order to compete on a firmer footing within the Common Market. It will also come as a shock to the Kremlin, for Wendel-Sidelor has placed very large orders in the Soviet Union for the Fos plant.

CHILE POET SILENT ON SOLZHENITSYN

Pablo Neruda, veteran Chilean Stalinist, Chilean ambassador in Paris, and international poet, is well known for the odes to Stalin he composed during the purges of the Bolshevik leadership by his hero in the 1930s.

In 1971 Neruda was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, with the full backing of Moscow and the world Soviet Press. When the persecuted novelist Solzhenitsyn was awarded a Nobel Prize, the same prize suddenly became a deadly weapon of imperialism. Solzhenitsyn deplored the attacks on the Nobel Prize, adding that 'those attacks could damage the figure of Pablo Neruda'.

True to Stalinist form, Neruda has refused to speak up in defence of Solzhenitsyn. At the end of a recent visit to the United States he made the following statement about the Russian novelist's remarks:

'I have no intention of becoming an instrument of anti-Soviet propaganda. All this controversy has become very boring and we must allow some time to pass before we pass judgements; it is always better to analyse facts with a certain perspective.'

During his visit to the USA — his first for six years — Neruda devoted a fair amount of time to his favourite hobbies: collecting rare stamps with marine subjects and visiting bookshops.

Author Solzhenitsyn: Neruda refuses to speak for his defence



JAPAN SHIP SLUMP

Japan's new tonnage.

The decision to cut dividends reflects the recession which is hitting world shipbuilding.

IHI cut their dividend by 2 per cent to 10 per cent per annum and NKK announced a similar cut of 2 per cent to 8 per cent per annum.

IHI said the cut was brought about by three main factors — an unexpectedly heavy loss due to revaluation of the yen last December, and the subsequent steady rise in the value of the yen; the likelihood of another yen revaluation, perhaps by the end of this year; and the lag in recovery of demand for non-marine machinery.

The company said that they would be 'substantially in the red' in the latest reporting period, and that their foreign exchange losses would reach 80,000m yen if dollar revenues were converted into yen at the rate of 201 to a dollar.

Two of Japan's largest shipbuilders have cut their dividends to shareholders in preliminary financial reports just released.

The firms are Ishikawa-Harima Heavy Industries (IHI) and Nippon Kokan (NKK), who between them produce a large percentage of

On September 21, 1945, an extraordinary meeting of the board of directors of the Ford Motor Company was held in Detroit. Three members of the Ford family were present—the founder, Henry Ford, who was in his dotage, his daughter and his grandson, 28-year-old Henry Ford II. It was a tense meeting. One of the directors had a short-barrelled .38 concealed under his coat. The old man read out his resignation and Henry II was elected president to fill his place. As the decision was taken two directors stormed out—and pulled pistols on each other in an adjoining room. However, their tempers cooled and nobody was shot. Meanwhile, the new president got on with the job of cleaning out some of the 'dead wood' among his executives. Ford went down to one department, found the door locked, grabbed a crowbar and smashed it open. The production manager was then fired. The incident established a style which has characterized Ford's running of his world-wide car monopoly.

THE FORD CUTBACKS IN BRITAIN

BY ALEX MITCHELL



Just over a year ago Henry Ford II (right) arrived on a tour of inspection of his British outpost. Within hours of his arrival he told the press he didn't like what he found.

'Labour problems', he said, were becoming 'increasingly difficult'.

And he went on: 'I wasn't bluffing either when I said Ford's would re-invest elsewhere. We can't recommend any more capital investment in a country constantly dogged with labour problems.'

When he confronted his British directors in the board room 'he blew up like a bull with a sore head', someone reported.

On his return to America he authorized that no fresh investment be made in Britain until 1976. This decision was designed deliberately to run the British operation into the ground.

To carry out this ruthless policy, Ford needs further ammunition. And he will receive this in a few days' time with the publication of the British subsidiary's annual report.

The report will reveal that the Ford company made staggering losses of £30m last year. The announcement will hasten Ford's plans to 'rationalize' his whole European operation—to the detriment of the British sector.

For Ford workers, the future is one of huge redundancies, tougher productivity and the closing down of parts of the network in this country in favour of cheaper production facilities in other parts of the world.

A team of five executives from the Ford headquarters at Dearborn, Detroit, are now in Britain drawing up the plans. They have spent the past six weeks touring each plant taking stock of the company structure and labour relations.

One of their particular hobbies is to study shop-floor militancy. Four weeks ago they

carefully watched the walk-out at Dagenham when two men were ordered off the line in the body shop.

The management's surprise decision to attack manning caused a sharp backlash from the production workers. Within hours several thousand men were laid off in the dispute which lasted almost a week. The moves in this microcosmic row were studied in detail by the visiting Americans.

The reaction of the men will be taken into account when the wage negotiations begin in a couple of months' time—six months before the two-year agreement expires.

The annual accounts will set out to blame last year's big strike for the disastrous losses. The strike, however, tells only one side of the story. It has now become a scapegoat for a myriad of management moves which have been costly to the company's operations.

Marketing has been particularly poor. Before the strike, Ford's held 28 per cent of the market, but their share is now only 24 per cent. Although only 4 per cent is involved, this means millions of pounds in terms of sales. (The Granada model is doing much better than expected, but the sales came too late to affect last year's figures.)

Another department which has conspicuously failed to assist the company's embattled finances is the purchasing group.

This department's job is to buy components from the big suppliers at the best possible price; bonuses are paid to executives who achieve the neat deals.



It is a little-recognized fact that the Ford company only makes 25 per cent of its vehicles—the body, the engine and the transmission.

The other parts—wheels, brakes, seats, windscreens, batteries, etc.—are bought from outside firms.

These suppliers, like Pilkington's, Lucas's, Girling's and GKN, wield a strong influence over the fortunes of the Ford group.



Ford's is unable to place orders elsewhere in sufficient quantities. In that sense they are dependent on the profits-drive of the local firms.

The cornerstone of Ford's policy today remains, however, to build up capacity in West Germany at the expense of Britain. This can be seen in the quiet removal of substantial plant from Halewood to Saarlouis, on the Franco-German border.

The build-up in the production of transmissions at Saarlouis thus becomes a threat to the whole 11,000 workforce at Halewood. As one company 'insider' told Workers Press: 'We want the situation where we have absolute flexibility—if Halewood goes on strike we can simply step up production in Saarlouis.'

'And if they go on strike too long, we can cut our losses and close the whole bloody thing.'

The reason for locating the main operation in West Germany is based primarily on the greater capitalization which Ford's has undertaken in that country.

It means that production per unit is cheaper than in Britain. Added to this, profit incentive is the extraordinary status of car unions in West Germany. Since 1968 the company has reached a uniformity in production to allow for this rapid de-escalation of British production and the strengthening of the West German subsidiary.

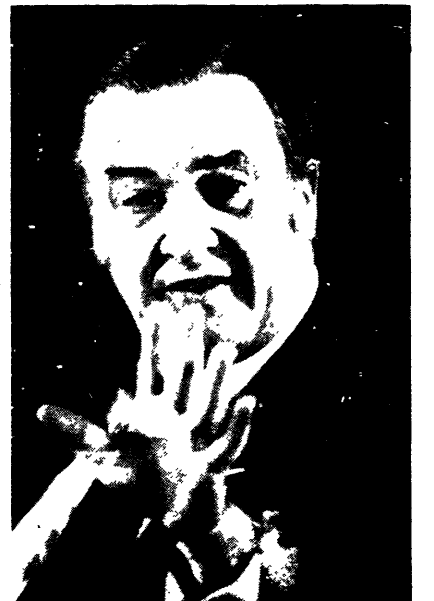
There has been, for instance, a complete standardization in the production of the last four

main models—Escort, Capri, Cortina and Granada.



The fact that Ford's is a big backer of Britain's entry into the Common Market isn't surprising. It will legalize a monopoly position which they have been busily creating in West Europe for some years.

The fate of tens of thousands of British car workers will be known when the five wise men return to Dearborn in Ohio. If Henry Ford II is still feeling the way he did 12 months ago, the decisions he will make are a foregone conclusion.



Pages from Railway History 1839-1972 by Ian Yeats. Part two

THE 19TH CENTURY: PERSUASION AND PERMEATION

Skilled railway workers first became unionized grade by grade in 1865-1866 as a defence against the low pay and excessive hours typical of the early years of unfettered capitalist exploitation and particularly severe in years of slump.

In 1839 a parliamentary select committee had found that railway owners commanded obedience from their servants by dismissing them for three misdemeanours and committing them to the treadmill for withdrawing their labour.

The engine drivers and firemen set up a friendly society in the same year, but little was heard of unions during the railway boom of the 1840s and until after the Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace in 1850.

The setting up of three unions for railway clerks, guards, signalmen and switchmen and engine drivers in 1865-1866 coincided with years of severe slump resulting in savage staff cut-backs, low pay and longer hours being imposed by the railway companies.

The companies easily defeated these sectionalized unions by taking on one grade at a time.

Five years later, groups of railwaymen 200 strong met in People's Halls and the smoke-filled back rooms of public houses in towns from Leeds to London to discuss how to strengthen their hand against the companies.

They decided to band together in the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, finally registered on March 2, 1872.

The railwaymen's claim that they were overworked if not that they were underpaid fell on sympathetic liberal ears alarmed by the high level of accidents which, of course, endangered passengers as well as staff.

M. T. Bass, the brewer, argued for shorter hours, and the society's first president, Canon Jenkins, was said to have a naive faith in the identity of interests of masters and men'. His successor in 1877, P. S. MacLIVER was actually a wealthy railway shareholder — although, of course, with his heart in the right place.

All this 'liberal' support was soon to evaporate when at the peak of the Great Depression, men were worked over 100 hours a week with no extra pay for overtime and as a result were forced to consider extreme measures.

In 1876, when the railway companies were hellbent on trying to grab back concessions given in the boom years of 1872 the ASRS was at first powerless to resist because of its persuasion of strikes — a

decision greatly favoured by its middle-class supporters.

Eight hundred goods guards, who struck on May 18, 1876, because the Midland Rail Co. had ended overtime pay for Sunday work, were forced back after two days because the union refused to give strike pay—there was little consolation in the fact that the ASRS executive committee passed a resolution condemning the company's attitude.

1879 was a decisive year for the ASRS. MacLIVER and other so-called middle-class friends of the union forcefully 'deprecated' the move to set up a strike fund. Engineers and firemen, fed up with the union's grovelling and so far disastrous milk-and-water policy, broke away to set up a new union—the Amalgamated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (now ASLEF).

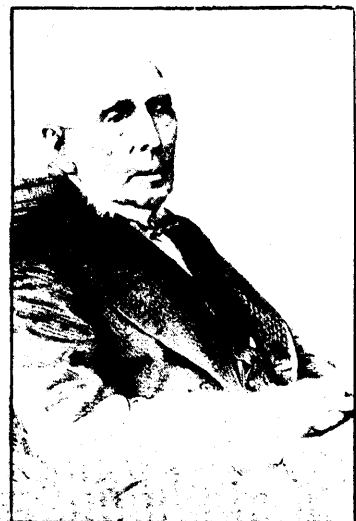
The strike fund was set up in 1880, but the 'persuasion and permeation' policies which had dominated the ASRS for over two decades were not to be broken easily and the nine-hour day campaign of 1882 consisted once again of no more ferocious an act than sending memos to the employers.

It was an even worse failure than anything previous and general secretary Fred Evans talked of shutting the union down altogether. Membership had slumped from 17,247 in 1872 to 6,000 a decade later.

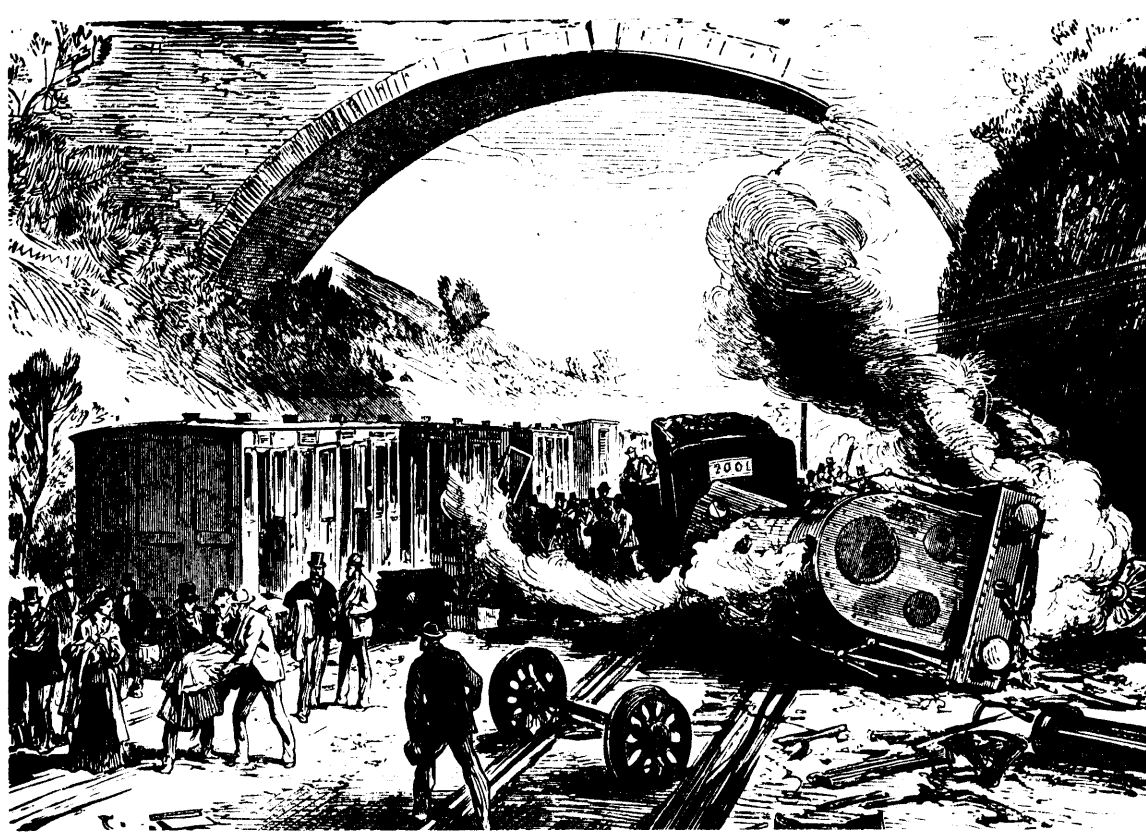
The upsurge of general unionism, particularly among dockers in 1889, boosted ASRS membership back up to 26,360.

But the lesson of the dockers, gasworkers and matchgirls was learnt primarily by the unskilled railway workers who promptly organized themselves into the General Railwayworkers' Union with 10,000 members in under a year.

Its inaugural resolution sharply differentiated the GRWU from the friendly society approach of the ASRS. The resolution said that 'the union shall remain a fighting one and shall not be encum-



Michael Bass, brewer, millionaire and MP: argued for shorter hours



Top: the Winchester Arms, Southwark, where the first meetings of the ASRS were held. Above: the derailment of 'Flying Dutchman' 1876—the campaign for shorter hours and improved working conditions to prevent accidents led to the founding of the ASRS

bered by any sick or accident fund'.

The GRWU was as good as its word. The number of strikes leapt from four in 1889 to 17 in 1890 and the union fought on a nationwide all-grades programme.

The GRWU's militancy coupled with the employers' offensive of 1896, spurred the ASRS rank and file to demand an all-grades campaign of their own aimed at a pay rise and shorter hours.

The railway companies dug in. More than that, they sacked any man who said he would back the union if it called a strike. Successive electoral law reforms had given the vote to the working class specifically to avoid the disruptive confrontations the railway companies were promoting.

The government and the press had no difficulty in siding with the ASRS and Board of Trade President, C. T. Ritchie, persuaded the companies to reinstate 85 sacked men in return for a promise from the union that 'no strike was intended'. But the companies made no offer on pay or hours and what had begun as a campaign to improve both of these ended as a desperate rearguard action to halt a tide of discrimination.

When in 1897 'a wave of prosperity' hit British business the railway companies granted minimum concessions on pay and hours.

They were sufficient to convince the ASRS leaders that nothing would be gained by militancy.

When an unofficial strike broke out at Newcastle on the North East railway on February 24, 1897, general secretary Edward Harford caught the last train up there to fix a settlement. He feared 'public opinion would be alienated' and 'the national programmes jeopardized'.

Not surprisingly the government was opposed to strikes and calling one officially would have almost certainly invoked action in the courts.

When the ASRS looked like threatening militancy in December 1897 the government was prompt to point out that strike would conflict with their rights under the Hours of Labour Act of 1893.

The government had everything to gain from leaning on the railway companies to recognize the union — which they had still not done—as a means of getting industrial relations on a cosy family basis. But when it came to strikes it drew a firm and indelible line!

And the ASRS had no intention of crossing it. The union's historian, Philip S. Bagwell, notes: 'At the end of 1879 the companies could congratulate themselves that they had enjoyed a large measure of success in meeting the challenge of the all grades programme'.

Bagwell is a master of understatement. After 30 years of trade union activity, in 1897 the ASRS had still to win even one single concession when the rail companies put up even token resistance.

Yet on the eve of the new century in 1899, acting general secretary Richard Bell—to be virtually drummed out of the union ten years later for excessive government sympathy—told the annual general meeting at Leeds that there was a great improvement in the union's position.

He could only have meant in terms of hard cash. If the number of claims on the ASRS protection fund had fallen from 85 in the first nine months of 1898 to 29 in October 1899 this was more a measure of the dramatic decline in militancy and disillusionment with the leadership than a tribute to the union's victories.

CONTINUED TOMORROW



A LOW BUDGET HIT

BY GUEST REVIEWER, TIM HORROCKS

You probably haven't heard anything about this film. Nor are you likely to if, as is usual, the capitalist press follows the practice of ignoring all supporting features, regardless of quality.

So if what is said here persuades you that 'My Old Man's Place' may be worth seeing, you'll have to keep an eye on the posters to find out when it is coming to your area.

The American B feature has regularly thrown up work which is years ahead of its time aesthetically and much more honest and straightforwardly expressive in its content than the well-publicized main features.

Many directors came from apprenticeships in this part of the industry (among them Don Siegel, director of 'Dirty Harry') and learnt through struggle how to express complex ideas simply and how to distinguish between the essential and inessential aspects of a story.

Because of this need to find ways of getting round the problems of a tight budget, a short shooting schedule, mediocre scripting and acting, and so on, film-makers developed distinctive styles which, when they later moved on to making bigger films, stood them in good stead.

It was B features such as 'They Live By Night' (Nicholas Ray) and 'Baby Face Nelson' (Siegel) which paved the way for the more realistic thrillers and gangster films which were to characterize the 1960s.

Also their elliptical way of handling narrative created a kind of poetry which was to surface in main features only then in the French cinema of the 'New Wave' (the first films

of such directors as Jean-Luc Godard and Francois Truffaut).

'They Live By Night' remains a superior blueprint for 'Bonnie and Clyde', and 'Build My Gallows High' (Jacques Tourneur) the negation of much that is good in such romantic French films as 'Pierrot Le Fou' and 'Jules And Jim', with their obsession with the femme fatale.

This is not to say that B features were producing a greater percentage of outstanding films than main features—the point is that the best of them were pointing the way to new developments in cinema and creating a kind of textbook of stylistic experimentation. The modern 'underground' cinema has failed so far to match the adventurousness of this cheap Hollywood cinema.

'My Old Man's Place' has enough content for three films—so much so that I found myself longing, at times, for a bit of light relief. The story is of three soldiers who return from the Vietnam war, spend a day in San Francisco trying unsuccessfully to pick up girls, then go north to a farm owned by the father of one of them.

There they go through a series of extraordinary experiences in which brutality, rape and other degenerations fight with the desire to escape the war and 'build something beautiful'.

These scenes represent the most moving and thought-provoking comment on the Vietnam war yet to come out of the American feature industry.

The ideology of the film is rather hard to pin down. It certainly isn't liberal—the young girl student who 'represents' liberal protest ends the film helplessly weeping in the middle of a thunderstorm, her idealism completely undermined by events.

Top: a scene from 'My Old Man's Place'

It could perhaps be called nihilistic, except that the rather backward worker (one of the soldiers) emerges from the film with a good deal more credit than any of the others, and is one of those left alive at the end to (perhaps) try to tackle the problem in a different way.

In a film such as this, which, more profoundly than anything else I have seen lately, fulfils to the letter Trotsky's dictum that 'art is a form of cognition of the world not as a series of laws, but as a series of images', it would be difficult to single out a scene for special attention.

From the deceptive casualness of San Francisco scenes with the girls, through the beautiful car journey to the farm (as expressive of a physical and psychological movement from city to country and from claustrophobia to openness as the movement in the opposite direction in Murnau's classic, 'Sunrise') to the frightening contradiction of violence among idyllic surroundings which characterizes the last half of the film, we see a gradual crescendo of power in the images which, by the time the last reel is under way, has us hanging on every word and movement of the characters, and every element of the film's imagery.

The film is not faultless, precisely because there is too much content for the film's small-scale form to adequately cope with. Nevertheless director Edwin Sherin (has anybody heard of him?) has concentrated into 85 short minutes more genuine feeling, more vital complexity, and more formal beauty than many films manage in three hours.

His film deserves the highest praise and the widest possible audience.

WORKERS NOTEBOOK

Moscow cash

Not for the first time, the Soviet Union's plan to spend money in capitalist countries is proving to be very controversial.

Take the plans to create a massive new property development in Sydney, Australia. Last week New South Wales

nearby and some of the earliest solid buildings are threatened by the property speculators.

Many of the residents are working-class people who will be carted off to cheap new housing on the city's perimeter, miles from their jobs.

They have formed action committees to stop the project going ahead, Moscow Narodny is believed to be keeping its association with the scheme as quiet as possible.

ITT peas

More romantically - inclined workers passing through rural Lincolnshire from Midlands towns on their way to the seaside at Skegness, Mablethorpe and Cleethorpes for their annual respite from wage-labour might easily draw the conclusion that at least this 'agricultural backwater' is spared from the strangling tentacles of international monopoly capitalism. (see 'ITT: Tough job for the PR men' Workers Press, May 6, 1972.)

Far from it! In 1969, North-ray, originally the largest of the farmer-owned companies in the frozen food business was taken over by International Telephone and Telegraph (USA). They, together with other food-processing companies, such as Bird's Eye and Ross (a subsidiary of the giant Imperial Tobacco food, fags, etc. empire), control pea growing throughout Lincolnshire, under contracts with farmers which stipulate to the minute when each acre is to be vined.

In years when there's a good harvest, such as the last couple of years, thousands of acres of peas have been ploughed back in order to prevent 'surplus production' and a price-cutting war between the monopolies.

So next time peas are on the menu in 'bracing Skeggy' or you're fishing in the deep-market, spare a thought for freeze at your local super-ITT's PR problems!



New South Wales Tory premier, Sir Robert Askin, who went to Moscow for money to finance a redevelopment scheme

premier Sir Robert Askin, a Tory, went to Moscow to arrange finance for the scheme.

The London-based Moscow Narodny Bank is a member of the consortium which has drawn up plans to launch a £190m redevelopment in the Sydney suburb of Woolloomooloo.

The scheme is being bitterly opposed by residents in the area.

Woolloomooloo is the heart of Sydney's dockland. It is also of great historic importance; ships bearing the first convicts to the colony landed

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Fighting the Tories' Rent Bill

Mixed response by the reformists

THE LABOUR-controlled Hammersmith Council, London, has decided to implement the Tories' 'fair-rents' Bill.

Only two London boroughs—Camden and Waltham Forest—are refusing to introduce the measure which will double many council rents.

Councillor Tony Powell led the rebellion at Hammersmith. He told a stormy meeting two nights

ago: 'We were not elected to carry out Tory policy.'

But housing committee chairman, Councillor Ian Gray, said it would not be 'in the interests of tenants of Hammersmith to go on a collision course with the government'.

In Manchester the Labour council is examining 'loopholes' in the Bill to try and soften the £1-a-week rise in October.

The Labourites are hoping to follow in the footsteps of the

decision by Birmingham to apply to the government to have the increase cut to an average of 35p.

Labour leader in Manchester, Sir Robert Thomas, said yesterday: 'Rents in Birmingham are generally higher than here. We might not be able to reduce the increase to 35p, but if we manage to get it down to 50p it would be far better than £1.'

The mood of the local tenants' associations in Manchester is at

total disagreement with Sir Robert. They are completely opposed to any increase.

In Salford, where Labour now has a two-to-one majority, the party leader, Councillor Leslie Hough, said: 'We are examining the situation as quickly as possible. We have only been in office a few days.'

The fact that the newly-elected Labourites have no definite strategy to fight the Bill is ominous.

READER'S LETTER

Leyland MDW should have been fought on combine-wide basis

SINCE last August negotiations have been going on at Triumph, Liverpool, over Measured-Day Work.

The strategy used by the negotiating panel was wrong from start to finish, in my opinion. After calm reflection, I believe that the whole of the workers should have taken the offensive against British-Leyland.

The leaders of all Leyland factories should have got together and gone for a common wage claim, common conditions, etc. We must say to ourselves, this MDW is becoming very popular, but with whom?

It is certainly not with the workers because where ever it goes, there is an increase in production and a decrease in men, and so on.

The tools of management that go with MDW, job-evaluation and time-study over in Operation [department] supply management with priceless information so 12 months hence, when you come to put in for a rise, you have got to make bricks out of straw to get over the first hurdle.

Your feet will be out of breath, you will be working 14 to the dozen.

You, brothers and sisters, will probably have cauliflower ears listening to the argument for and against.

If you think people exaggerate to illustrate a point you're dead right. No exaggeration in the world can justify MDW. The negotiating panel have never really fought the MDW system.

The workers in Triumph have been extremely tolerant. The speeches some members of the panel have given from time to time at joint meetings would have got them the Duke of Edinburgh award. This is not a character assassination, that was self-inflicted.

The offensive is now on, so let us knit ourselves together and take up the gauntlet. MDW is not manna from heaven, but used as a stick to beat the workers with.

Paint shop steward
Peter Doherty.

'Show of strength' at Birmingham

NINETY MEN employed by the Birmingham machine tool firm, Charles Taylor Limited, are planning a 'show of strength' today in a bid to force the hand of management over a wage claim.

The men have been on strike for three weeks in defence of a demand for a £4 rise. They claim the management's only response has been to tell them to reduce their standard of living!

They are planning a mass picket by all the strikers at the factory gates this morning followed by a lunchtime mass meeting. The strike has been endorsed by the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers to which most of the men belong. But no strike pay has yet been paid.

The company has been badly hit by the recession in the machine-tool trade and cut out all overtime a year ago.

tool plant

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

For the past six months the men have been on a four-day week, meaning that unskilled men have been taking home as little as £8 a week.

As one picket said: 'We are captive labour in there. Seventy-five per cent of the men are over 50 years of age and if they were to leave there would be no chance of another job. It's either work here or go on the dole.'

After three weeks of continuous picketing the management 'has not even acknowledged we are out here', said shop steward George Lancaster.

There were rumours that the directors were working on the shop floor. 'This must be the only factory in the country with a £5,000-a-year labourer,' said a picket.

Meeting called for River Don action

A MASS meeting of workers from River Don steelworks, Sheffield, will be asked to reverse a decision taken by stewards to abandon any action to prevent machines being dismantled and taken from River Don to Firth Brown.

The meeting will be held at Sheffield City Hall on Sunday morning.

At last Monday night's meeting, staff stewards and stewards from the 'hot shops' voted against a resolution calling for 'human cordons' to be thrown around equipment to prevent its removal.

The management had threatened to close the plant if the men went ahead with this plan. The plan to take equipment to privately-owned Firth Brown forms part of the Tory government's 'hive-off' policy within the British Steel Corporation.

To date the drop forge has been sold off to Firth Brown.

The enlarged company has now won £2.4m worth of orders previously allocated to BSC. Firth Brown will also get their hands on the slag reduction unit.

Rumours are circulating that the company will also receive a file containing years of research work on techniques and processes developed by BSC.

Go-slow success at Decca

A RECENT go-slow of Radar inspectors at Decca's Battersea factory has been successful in achieving the up-grading of one of their members.

The inspectress involved was not being paid the rate for her grade of work, which she had been doing for several weeks. This was seen as part of an attempt by management to enforce flexibility working, as they are doing throughout the factory on the assembly lines.

Job-evaluation is being introduced throughout the Decca group despite unanimous opposition from the Battersea factory and the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers on the combine convenors' committee.

Management is being helped by the clerical workers' union (APEX) which accepts job evaluation and by the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs (ASTMS) which is rumoured to be about to accept.

Tyre lay-offs

THE GOODYEAR tyre factory in Wolverhampton has laid off 4,000 workers because of a strike by 500 engineers. The engineers are fighting for the national claim. They began a work-to-rule on May 3 and then gave seven days' strike notice. A company offer was rejected.

Newark strikers won't meet for a week

ENGINEERING workers at Worthing Simpson, Newark, Notts, have rejected a management pay offer of £2.50 and will continue with their five-week-old strike.

After a mass meeting on Wednesday, George Davis, Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers' district secretary said the men were more determined than ever to win their claim for a substantial wage increase, shorter hours and longer holidays.

He said the 24 hour picket was receiving full co-operation from lorry drivers.

'It has been the most effective picketing I have ever seen,' he said.

The claim, involving four unions, is part of the campaign by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions for better pay, a 35-hour week and improved working conditions.

This was abandoned at national level last August and is now being fought out on a plant-by-plant basis.

Production at Worthington Simpson, who make compressors and pumps, is at a standstill because of the dispute.

Mr Davis said that labour relations at the plant began to deteriorate five years ago after

the firm was taken over by Worthington Studebaker of America.

In October last year 400 men were put on short-time and at Christmas 100 redundancies were announced.

Said Mr Davies: 'The strike will now continue until our meeting in a week's time. We are canvassing other firms in the area for the financial support of the strike by distributing leaflets.'

SLL LECTURES

Cliff Slaughter, Central Committee member of the Socialist Labour League, will give a series of lectures on Marxism and the Socialist Revolution in Britain on the following dates in Sheffield.

Monday, May 15, at 7.30 p.m.—Economics
Monday, May 22, at 7.30 p.m.—History
Monday, June 5, at 7.30 p.m.—Philosophy

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German vote put off

THE CRUCIAL vote in the West German Bundestag on Chancellor Willy Brandt's treaties with the Soviet Union and Poland will now take place next Wednesday.

It was postponed for a week on Wednesday night after the Christian Democrat opposition had made it clear they would vote against the treaties if the debate was not postponed.

It seems opposition leader Rainer Barzel is having difficulty persuading hard-line right-wingers from his own party to vote with the government over the treaties.

In joint talks earlier this week with the Soviet ambassador, the parliamentary leaders won concessions from the Kremlin on the form of the treaties.

Trade in the red

FOR THE third consecutive month, Britain's balance of trade is in the red—to the tune of £53m.

Imports were up a total of 8 per cent compared with the previous three months,

big increases occurring in beverages and tobacco, motor vehicles and coal. Exports in the three months were 1 per cent down.

The Department of Trade and Industry said that over

the three months February to April, visible trade was in deficit at a monthly rate of £55m. The deficit in the first quarter totals £113m compared with a debit of £21m in the same period last year.

Record Boots

BOOTS, the big pharmaceutical retailers, have announced record profits. Pre-tax earnings were £34.2m—£9m up on the previous year.

The Boots dividend to shareholders is 22 per cent, as forecast.

A director of Boots is Mr John Arkell, currently sitting on the National Industrial Relations Court alongside Sir John Donaldson passing judgement on unions.

Area wide lock-out in North East?

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

ENGINEERING employers in the north east are preparing a mass lock-out to counter the work to rule by the area's 50,000 engineers.

The area-wide action by the engineers is due to start on Monday. The final go-ahead for action in support of the national pay claim was given at a meeting of 200 shop stewards in Newcastle on Wednesday night.

The employers have reacted sharply by issuing battle orders to 84 local federated firms.

Mr Robert Parkins, the regional official of the Engineer-

ing Employers' Association, said companies may not accept these sanctions.

Production would be severely disrupted and bearing in mind what happened in Manchester they may think it better to close their gates.

Companies may decide these sanctions are 'just not on' and the Federation will stand firm behind employers who will not give in.

Cromwell's 'violence' revived

THE SCOTTISH Tory Party got off to a flying start yesterday—with a unanimously passed resolution expressing concern over the increasing use of violence for criminal, industrial and political ends.

Gavin Dunnett of South Aberdeen, who moved the resolution, said there had been very little violence in Britain's history. We probably needed to go back to Oliver Cromwell to find the last serious attempt at disrupting our democracy.

Recently, however, there had been a change. Violence was increasing, not only in criminal spheres but in political areas. Industrial violence was a very recent onset.

Dunnett said there had been opposition to the Industrial Relations Act, and wails were still being heard from the unions, who suddenly found themselves having to keep to the law instead of flouting it.

'There are factions in the unions who would like to take strong, violent action against this Act,' Dunnett said.

'We must say that, if they try this, it will be opposed to the last breath.'

Sabry's property grabbed by Egyptian court

BY A FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

AN EGYPTIAN sequestration court yesterday ordered that the properties of former vice-President Aly Sabry and four other former leaders should be impounded by the state.

Sabry and a group of other former ministers and civil servants were jailed last October for allegedly plotting to overthrow president Anwar Sadat.

Sadat regarded the Sabry group

as too left wing. Their trial followed the anti-communist blood purge in the Sudan, which Sadat supported.

Yesterday's sequestration applies to three former ministers—General Mohammed Fawzy (War), Sharaay Gomaa (Interior) and Mohammed Fayek (Information)—and to the former secretary general of the Arab Socialist Union, Abdel Mohsen Abul Nour.

ALL TRADES UNIONS ALLIANCE MEETINGS

GLASGOW: Tuesday May 16, 7.30 p.m. Woodside Hall, St George's Cross, Glasgow. The Industrial Relations Act.

Recall the TUC
Expel the traitors
Make the Tories resign

WILLESDEN: Monday May 15, 8 p.m. Trades and Labour Hall, Willesden High Rd, NW10.

TODAY'S

BBC 1

9.20 Andy Pandy. 9.38 Schools. 12.55 Canu'r Bobol. 1.30 Mary, Mungo and Midge. 1.45 News, weather. 2.05 Schools. 2.25 International Lawn Tennis. 4.15 Play School. 4.40 Jackanory. 4.55 Screen Test. 5.20 Hope and Keen's Crazy Bus. 5.44 Hector's House. 5.50 News, weather.

6.00 LONDON THIS WEEK.

6.20 GEORGIE BEST.

6.30 THE VIRGINIAN. Train of Darkness.

7.40 THE LIVER BIRDS.

8.10 THE BROTHERS. 10: Full Circle.

9.00 NEWS, Weather.

9.20 THE MAN OUTSIDE. (New Series). Rupert Davies as Baker who looks in on a world of mystery and suspense.

10.10 UK BALLROOM DANCE CHAMPIONSHIPS 1972.

10.45 24 HOURS.

11.15 THE MARX BROTHERS. 'A DAY AT THE RACES'.

TV

ITV

11.00, 1.40 Schools. 1.10 Remember. 2.30 Good afternoon. 2.55 Racing. 3.45 Drive-in. 4.15 Clapperboard. 4.40 Zingalong. 4.55 Land of Giants. 5.50 News.

6.30 F TROOP.

7.00 THE SKY'S THE LIMIT.

7.30 HIS AND HERS.

8.00 THE FBI. Vendetta.

9.00 BUDGIE. The Jump Up Boys.

10.00 NEWS.

10.30 POLICE FIVE.

10.40 FILM: 'SECONDS'. Rock Hudson, Salome Jens, Will Geer. Science fiction. Arthur Hamilton, an elderly banker, receives a phone call from a man he believed to be dead.

12.35 ONE POINT OF VIEW.

Family — the book about Charles Manson; Ed Sanders—author of 'The Family'.

10.10 BEYOND A JOKE.

10.40 NEWS, Weather.

10.45 INTERNATIONAL LAWN TENNIS.

11.15 LATE NIGHT LINE UP.

BBC 2

11.00 Play School. 6.05 Open University. 6.35 Crime and the Criminal. 7.05 Open University.

7.30 NEWSROOM, Weather.

8.00 MONEY PROGRAMME.

9.00 GARDENERS' WORLD. Percy Thrower.

9.20 REVIEW. Royal Dreams—castles in the air that actually got built; The



The Marx Brothers (l to r) Chico, Groucho, Harpo and Zeppo spend 'A Day at the Races' tonight on BBC 1.

REGIONAL TV

SOUTHERN: 2.30 London. 3.45 Cartoon. 3.55 Weekend. 4.00 Houseparty. 4.15 Paulus. 4.30 Crossroads. 4.55 Voyage. 5.50 News. 6.00 Day to day. 6.40 Out of town. 7.00 Sky's the limit. 7.30 Jason King. 8.30 His and hers. 9.00 London. 10.30 Weekend. 10.35 Film: 'My Gun Is Quick'. 12.20 News. 12.30 Weather. Matter of life and

WESTWARD: 11.00 Schools. 2.30 Racing. 3.55 Gus Honeybun. 4.05 Zingalong. 4.18 News. 4.20 Dick Van Dyke. 4.50 Flintstones. 5.20 Primus. 5.50 News. 6.00 Diary. 6.25 Sports desk. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.00 Sky's the limit. 7.30 I spy. 8.30 His and hers. 9.00 London. 10.32 News, weather. 10.36 Film: 'The Criminal'. 12.15 Faith for life.

HTV: 11.00 Schools. 2.30 Racing. 3.20 Grasshopper island. 3.35 Enchanted house. 3.50 Women. 4.15 Tinkertainment. 4.30 Crossroads. 4.55 Voyage. 5.50 News. 6.01 Report West. 6.18 Report Wales. 6.35 Bonanza. 7.30 Film: 'Interpol'. 9.00 Jason King. 10.00 London. 11.00 His and hers. 11.30 Budgie. 12.30 Weather.

HTV Wales and HTV Cymru/Wales as above except: 4.15 Cantamil. 6.01 Y Dydd. 10.30 Outlook.

HTV West as above except: 6.01-6.35 Report West.

ANGLIA: 2.30 London. 3.45 Yoga. 4.10 News. 4.15 Cartoons. 4.25 Romper room. 4.50 Voyage. 5.50 News. 6.00 About Anglia. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.00 Sky's the limit. 7.30 His and hers. 8.00 Combat. 9.00 London. 10.30 Probe. 11.05 Film: 'The Quare Fellow'. 12.40 Living word.

ATV MIDLANDS: 2.30 London. 3.35 Horoscope. 3.45 Women. 4.10 Julia. 4.40 Zingalong. 4.55 Lost in space. 5.50 News. 6.00 Today. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.00 His and hers. 7.30 Saint. 8.30 Shirley. 9.00 London. 10.35 Film: 'Witchcraft'.

YORKSHIRE: 11.00 Schools. 12.40 Horse show. 1.40 Schools. 2.32 Good afternoon. 2.55 Racing. 3.40 Jimmy Stewart. 4.10 News. 4.15 Crossroads. 4.40 Zingalong. 4.55 Flaxton boys. 5.20 Flintstones. 5.50 News. 6.00 Calendar, weather. 6.30 Partners. 7.00 Sky's the limit. 7.30 His and hers. 8.00 Hawaii five-o. 9.00 London. 10.30 Film: 'The Singer Not the Song'. 1.00 Weather.

TYNE TEES: 11.00 Schools. 12.40 Horse show. 2.30 Yoga. 2.55 Racing. 3.40 Jimmy Stewart. 4.10 News. 4.15 Crossroads. 4.40 Make a wish. 4.55 Flaxton boys. 5.20 Flintstones. 5.50 News. 6.00 Today. 6.30 Partners. 7.00 Sky's the limit. 7.30 His and hers. 8.00 Calling Dr Simon Gannon. 9.00 London. 10.30 Film: 'The Long, the Short and the Tall'. 12.35 News. 12.50 Epilogue.

SCOTTISH: 11.00, 1.40 Schools. 2.30 Racing. 3.30 Kiri. 3.45 Crossroads. 4.10 Dateline. 4.55 Skippy. 5.20 Cartoons. 5.50 News. 6.00 Dateline. 6.20 Cartoon. 6.30 His and Hers. 7.00 Sky's the limit. 7.30 Andy. 8.00 Hawaii five-o. 9.00 London. 10.30 Conservative party conference. 11.00 Late call. 11.05 Film: 'Bramble Bush'.

GRAMPIAN: 11.00 Schools. 2.55 Racing. 3.38 News. 3.45 Women. 4.10 Smith family. 4.40 Zingalong. 4.55 Rainbow country. 5.20 Ivanhoe. 5.50 News. 6.00 News, weather. 6.05 Mr and Mrs. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.00 Sky's the limit. 7.35 It takes a thief. 8.25 Melody inn. 9.00 London. 10.30 Conference report. 11.00 Film: 'Dracula'. Road Report. 12.20 Epilogue.

Containers: First steward named by Court for blacking

BY STEPHEN JOHNS

THE TRANSPORT and General Workers' Union faced a new crisis yesterday when the National Industrial Relations Court ordered one of its leading docks shop stewards to stop encouraging the blacking of a haulage firm.

If the order is ignored, Mr Walter Cunningham, chairman of Hull docks shop stewards' committee, and possibly the union, could face penalties for contempt when a full hearing of the case is heard on Monday.

Today the court will make a key ruling on whether the union can be held responsible for shop stewards who carry out blacking against court and union instructions.

In yesterday's case Panalpina (Northern) Limited of Bradford asked for an interim order banning the blacking of its lorries on Hull docks.

They applied for injunctions against the union and Mr Cunningham who was not represented or present in court.

He became the first shop steward to be named in a complaint submitted to the court.

Court president Sir John Donaldson ruled that a prima facie case against the union and Mr Cunningham had been established under Section 96 of the Industrial Relations Act. This makes the inducement of workers to break contracts an unfair industrial practice.

The order also applies to the union, but Sir John allowed a stay of its application until this morning to give time for an appeal.

He disagreed with counsel for the union, Professor K. Wedderburn, that there was no case to answer under Section 96.

He said there was no doubt that the dockers were aware of the consequences of blacking Panalpina.

'There are two possible contracts here—one of possible carriage and the other, the dockers own contract of employment,' he said. 'There would be a breach of both contracts in stopping lorries going onto the docks.'

As far as the union was concerned, he said the real issue was whether it could be held responsible for the actions of the shop stewards' committee, which was unofficial and acted against union advice.

'This is a highly arguable issue and will be argued,' Donaldson said.

CHAIRMAN of Hull dock shop stewards, Walter Cunningham has said the blacking will be kept up.

Mr Cunningham, the first shop steward to be taken to the National Industrial Relations Court, said on Wednesday: 'No matter how much pressure is applied, it will not in any way affect the blacking. We will still keep it on until it is lifted by the national shop stewards' committee.'

The issue, in fact, is likely to be settled today when the T&GWU hear the 'verdict' on the blacking of haulage firms on Liverpool docks.

The union has argued that shop stewards who act against advice and union policy are no longer 'agents' and therefore the union cannot be held legally responsible for their actions.

If the Court finds that they are responsible, the union will face an extreme crisis. It will presumably be held responsible for the actions of its 'rebel' members in Liverpool and on Hull docks.

If they are not held responsible, the shop stewards will be wide open to charges of contempt of the Court.

Yesterday was the first time any union has fought a case over an unfair industrial practice in the Court.

Wedderburn's failure to halt a court order against the union is a blow to those who argue that the Court can be used in the interests of trade unions.

● **Workers Press learnt yesterday that an unofficial committee of 'blue' and 'white' dockers have blacked four containers for a Ben Line steamer loading for the Far East at No 7 shed, Royal Albert dock, London.**

SEAMEN yesterday rejected a suggestion that they should amalgamate with the Transport and General Workers Union. Voting at the National Union of Seamen conference at Folkestone was 65-9 against, with five abstentions.

NATKE stays deregistered

WORKERS in the entertainments industry yesterday voted in favour of continued de-registration under the Industrial Relations Act.

Delegates at the National Association of Theatrical, Tele-

vision and Kine Employees conference carried resolutions endorsing their executive's action in de-registering, and pledging continued support for TUC policy on the Act. There were a number of abstentions.

Steel workers strike on

A MASS meeting of 260 British Steel Corporation workers from the Toll Cross works outside Glasgow yesterday decided to continue their two-week-old strike for the national engineering claim.

The meeting heard messages of support from Craigneuk and

Hallside BSC factories, where mass meetings are planned to support Toll Cross.

Before their strike began the Toll Cross workers were on a three-day week and one of their demands is for an end to short-time working.

● See BSC hive-off. p.10.



One of yesterday's typical well-heeled lobbyists

TRADE UNION leaders and a sprinkling of housewives and unemployed joined Teesside civic dignitaries, industrialists, managers, clergy and professional people at a jobs lobby in London yesterday.

About 450 people from the Teesside towns of Middlesbrough, Stockton, Hartlepool, Redcar and Thorsby marched through London to the House of Commons to lobby Tory MPs.

Earlier 90 people had split up into deputations and visited the offices of the major banks, government departments, international corporations, like ICI, and the TUC to ask them to take urgent steps to reduce Teesside's one in ten jobless rate.

Clergymen, businessmen and trade union leaders explained they hoped the government would consider a major public works programme, moving government departments to the area and setting up a new university.

Among a six strong group of unemployed youth on the lobby at Westminster, Josh Nunn (17), told me: 'I'm from Eaglescliffe Youth Club. I came because I

was asked, but it would be better to kick the Tories out than stand here lobbying them. This country will go communist before long.'

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MOST places will be cloudy with rain at times, however northern Scotland will probably remain dry and drier weather is expected to spread slowly southwards during the day to most districts except East Anglia and South-East England.

There will be strong easterly winds in many places but in southern England strong westerly winds at first. It will be rather cold generally and near the east coast it will be cold.

Outlook for Saturday and Sunday: Mostly dry with sunny periods especially in the west but rather cloudy with some showers at first in the south-east. Rather cold temperatures in the east but normal temperatures in the west.

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.

Industrial Relations Court was sitting at 8.30 p.m. last night to consider government application for ballot of union members over rail dispute. Aimed at stopping industrial action—the midnight work-to-rule.