

# Socialist Worker

FOR WORKERS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

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## WAGES - THE BIG LIE



Part of the 300-strong IS contingent on Sunday's Vietnam march. Picture: Jeff Pick

### Stop Wilson's trip, marchers demand

NEARLY 1500 people marched in London last Sunday against the Vietnam war and in protest against Harold Wilson's visit to President Nixon later this month. The demonstration was organised by the Young Socialists and Socialist Labour League and was supported by a 300-strong contingent of International Socialists. The

Vietnam Solidarity Campaign and the International Marxist Group also backed the march.

The lively and colourful procession made its way from Hyde Park to Downing Street, where Young Socialists' secretary Sheila Torrance handed in a letter demanding the prime minister cancel his visit to Washington

by Lionel Sims

'IF THE GOVERNMENT is looking for a strike to bust while there is still time to discourage all the others, the teachers' strike fits the bill admirably.'

That is how the editorial bullies of The Economist, a journal for Britain's bosses, advise Harold Wilson. Whether or not the government takes this advice immediately depends on how they rate their chances in the coming general election.

But the election year of 1970 will be nothing like 1966. Then the Labour government went to the polls to increase a slender majority of five to a majority of 97. Between 1964 and 1966 the British working class had been treated to one of the biggest public relations acts of all time, so that in 1966 Harold Wilson's TV speech of October 1964 could still be read without a blink of the eyelids:

'If things are going to be tough, we as a national family must show that we care, that we care for the old, the sick and those in great need. That lies at the heart of all we want to do to make this country strong.'

But since then the Labour government has become schooled in the elementary principles of big business politics. The world's financiers taught Harold how to toe the line. They taught him that it is the workers who must pay to make the economy more efficient.

By 1968, almost one half (40 per cent) of all men who were manual workers were taking home only £16 a week after all deductions. At the same time boardroom telephones relayed messages of further price increases. Such is the number and rate of price increases that the real value of all wages is now decreasing for the first time since the second world war.

### SMALLER

The hysteria in the bosses' press about a 'wages avalanche' is part of the big lie technique. The workers' small slice of the national cake is getting smaller. Every wage claim must be forced through with militant action.

There is a different law for the captains of industry. They must have an incentive to create these conditions. Out of all of Britain's executives, those receiving less than £21,000 a year decreased from 22 per cent in 1967 to 11 per cent in 1968, while those receiving above £4000 rose from 25 per cent in 1967 to 35 per cent in 1968.

On top of these enormous salary increases, there has been a staggering growth in the annual profits made by all companies. In 1964 they were grouping £6981 million, but by 1968 total company profits had risen to a record £8546 million.

Harold Wilson's daydream in 1964 was that profits and wages could rise together, that we would be one big 'national family'. Instead, his period of government has shown in one great miserable experiment how wages must fall if profits and private property are safeguarded. If 'planning' and 'modernisation' are not to hit profits reforms such as welfare and pensions must be discarded.

In the last five years a slowly shrinking labour force has afforded a 48 per cent increase in production, while the speed-up at work has meant an increase in the total number of industrial accidents from 296,610 in 1966 to 312,430 in 1968.

### LESSON

In this coming election the rules of the game are clearer. Instead of talk of a national family, the party that's got 'soul' must give the teachers a lesson in strike busting. Instead of 'care for the old, the sick and those in great need', they can be left to die. 90,000 are expected to die this winter.

The teachers have been singled out by the employers. The government has made clear whose side it is on with its bleatings about the wage demands and statements that 'one man's wage increase is another man's price increase'. Because the battle for better wages and a better quality of life is being fought by different sections of workers at different times, the government tries to foist the losses of one section on to the small gains of another.

But when it comes to an attack on the teachers, the government will use every resource it has got. It will be in a strong position. It does not rely on the teachers for the export drive, but mothers rely on teachers so that they can go to work while the children are at school.

The teachers have the government as their employer and a defeat for them will help all Britain's bosses to resist wage increases. Government, press, television and employers—all will be united in a campaign against the working class, so that wage gains are thought of as a 'special treat' and productivity strings part of the natural order of things. The government will fight dirty, and it will fight as part of a class—the ruling class.

To fight back, the base for future struggles is already being laid as workers throughout Western Europe are mobilising and giving cause for concern in the drawing rooms of the rich. In the meantime, the lessons of every strike must be learnt and discussed by the rank and file, in local strike committees for the teachers and combine committees for workers employed in the massive corporations.

Trade unionism must be strengthened by the rise of the rank and file and by socialist politics in opposition to the government, whether Labour or Tory.

## Oil shares shoot up as Biafra is crushed

by Wenda Clenaghen

BIAFRA has surrendered. Ojukwu and 30 of his closest followers have fled the country.

Biafra's decimated population, last week slaughtered by British made and financed guns, is this week given promises of aid by the self-same government.

The new power game is to be the 'relief race', an attempt to save faces in Britain, America and Russia after a war blatantly backed by them for their own economic self-interest. The Americans, always ready to help in 'humanitarian work' are sending plane loads of wheat which they had scheduled for dumping in the ocean. The British contribution of a Hercules bomber, last week loaded with ammunition, this week with medical supplies, is being sent with the compliments of Harold Wilson and his hypocritical government.

The war was becoming costly for the interested imperialist powers. On the Federal side, their backers, frustrated at the length of time their oil wells remained idle when they could be producing a tenth of the world production, had given gigantic amounts of equipment and ammunition to the inefficient Nigerian army.

### RAT-BAG OF THE WEEK

MR HUGH FRANCIS, QC, council for the Greater London Council, who said in the High Court on Tuesday: 'Most tenants are heavily subsidised by the ratepayer and the taxpayer. They have a very privileged position and they have very good premises at very low rents. Everybody knows it.' FULL STORY BACK PAGE.



OJUKWU: no rationing of supplies

The final military straw was the moving in of enormous ex-Russian guns to bombard Owerri, the Biafran provisional capital, and the Uli airstrip. The Russians had also stepped up the supply of MiG bombers manned by mercenaries.

### No relief

The sheer weight of arms finally finished the Biafrans' weakening resistance. Starvation, the popularly stated cause of their capitulation had been with the Biafran people almost constantly since the outbreak of their struggle for national self-determination. The primitive agriculture practised in the East could not survive interrupted planting and harvesting.

Ojukwu never attempted to relieve the population's suffering by introducing rationing. Food went to the highest bidder. Even rats were more likely to reach the stomachs of the better off, since they commanded a high value in the markets.

The mercy flights had catered for the 'top people' in Biafra first, the government and its many bureaucrats, then the fighting men and finally the population. When the flights ceased the elite began shipping out their families in case they began to sprout with sores as well.

Ojukwu was hardly expected to shed a few pounds of his ample weight by retreating into the bush to lead a guerrilla fight. Instead he took the easy way out with 30 of his followers and fled the country.

Ojukwu, one of the members of the small Nigerian commercial class, will probably be able to draw on a few of the millions his land speculator father had made in the old united Nigeria.

The soldiers closer to the civilian population were beginning to starve. Weapons were becoming increasingly hard to get. All around them the pot bellies of their fellow villagers gave them a grim portent of what would happen to them if they continued the fight for independence.

Meanwhile in London the news of the surrender caused shares in the Nigerian market to soar. The liberation of 'rebel' occupied oil wells moved BP-Shell shares up.

Moscow has ensured itself a new market and sphere of influence. The Russians have missed out since Nkrumah left the West African stage.

What is so sick is the sight of the 'great powers' smugly congratulating themselves for putting down the Biafran breakaway and seeing themselves as the ultimate saviours of the Biafran peoples by doling out the bread to the remaining starving millions. The oil wells will be pumping healthily long before the people are back on their feet.

IS London Region Meeting  
**Which way for the unions?**  
Bert Ramelson (CP industrial organiser) and Tony Cliff  
Sunday 18 January 7.30pm  
AFRICA CENTRE  
38 King Street WC2



# Ford: vital struggle for 'parity'

**Ford shop stewards meet in Coventry this weekend to plan action to win equal wage rates with Midlands car workers**

by Sabby Sagall

IT IS CLEAR from the press that Britain's bosses and the Labour government are becoming increasingly worried about the enormous potential for militancy contained in the car workers' demand for 'parity'—equal rates with the Midlands.

As the Guardian put it on 9 January: 'The reported pay settlement at Bathgate and Ford's offer at Dagenham arrive at the christening of a voluntary incomes policy like the curse of a wicked step-mother... If comparability claims are going to be fashionable ploy, then productivity bargaining is threatened... If (these particular settlements) are allowed to stand unchallenged as precedents for militants in other industries... (they) will do damage to the whole economy.'

The reference to Ford followed the rumour that the Ford management are to offer their 46,000 hourly-paid manual workers wage increases of between £3 and £4 a week at the next national joint negotiating committee meeting on 23 January, such an offer would fall way below the £10-12 rise demanded by the trade union side of the NJNC three months ago.

## Lag behind

Even the demand for a £10 rise, equivalent to a 5s increase in the hourly rate, falls short by 2s of parity with earnings in the Midlands plant chosen by the trade unions as the model to be followed—Rootes' Ryton plant, where the hourly rate for production workers is 17s 5d. The table shows the extent to which Ford production workers lag behind others in the car industry.

Ford extract more profit from their workers than any other car firm producing in Britain. In 1968 the proportion of wages in the cost of vehicles at Ford was 19 per cent, compared with 23 per cent at Vauxhall and 26 per cent at British Leyland. In recent years, Ford have used their massive profits for large-scale capital investment on the continent—£24½ million at the tractor plant at Antwerp alone. And British Ford workers are paid less than Ford workers in Belgium and Germany.

The new militancy at Dagenham, first expressed in the women machinists' strike in June 1968, has been highly encouraging. Those militants who remained at Dagenham after the savage defeat of 1962 when 17 stewards were victimised, faced the gigantic task of reconstructing job organisation.



**Halewood workers queuing for pay on the eve of last year's strike**

Years of relative apathy and demoralisation resulted from one of the heaviest post-war working-class defeats.

The strike of February-March 1969 marked a significant revival of shop-floor militancy and forced the company to water down the penalty clauses originally proposed. But the weakness of many sections of production workers, who refused to come out unofficially, resulted in the principle of penalty clauses being conceded by union leaders Scanlon and Jones. One lesson of the 1969 strike was the need to build up the confidence of these sections in order to break them from their dependence on the union leaders. The danger of reliance on the 'left' leaders was re-emphasised recently when the AEF executive accepted an offer of 10d an hour extra on behalf of their members at Vauxhall instead of the 3s they had originally demanded.

The level of organisation throughout the 23 Ford plants is uneven. Halewood once again seems to be setting the pace, with regular mass meetings and consistent propaganda from the stewards. At Dagenham, although there has been one mass meeting, it was almost completely dominated by union officials, with very little time for rank-and-file questions and no time for discussion from the floor. And only three leaflets have been issued by the Dagenham Shop Stewards' Committee since last March.

Another aspect of the struggle which appears to have been dropped is the demand for **mutuality**, that is, no work standards without prior consent by the workers. Manning, speed-up, work-loads, etc should be decided only by the mutual agreement of management shop stewards. This is particularly crucial in the case of Ford, since Ford workers have the highest rate of exploitation in the car industry.

Following the defeat of 1962, the company increased production by a third without taking on more labour. Since then, they have been gradually squeezing more production out of fewer workers: in 1965, 64,000 workers produced 630,000 cars, in 1968 61,000 workers made 712,000 cars. A straightforward wage increase cannot be

## WAGE RATES FOR CAR ASSEMBLY WORKERS IN 1969 (40 hour week)

	average per hour
Daimler (piecework)	19s
Alvis (piecework)	21s
Massey-Ferguson, Coventry (piecework)	17s 5d
Rootes, Ryton (hourly rate all assembly workers)	17s 5d
Pressed Steel Fisher, Coventry	17s
BLMC (piecework)	17s
Rootes, Stoke, (hourly rate, semi-skilled)	16s 4d
Austin, Longbridge, BLMC (piecework)	16s
Jaguar, BLMC (piecework)	16s
Morris, Oxford, BLMC (piecework)	16s
Maudsley Motors, Alcester, BLMC (piecework)	15s 6d
Rover, Solihull, BLMC (piecework)	13s 3d-14s
Pressed Steel Fisher, Castle Bromwich, BLMC (piecework)	12s 6d-15s
Ford (hourly rate after 4 years' service)	10s 6½d

Note: all piecework rates are liable to continuous increases. The figure for Jaguar is anticipated to rise within a year to 18s an hour.

regarded as a sufficient victory in itself. Of still greater importance is the extent to which the struggle results in the strengthening of factory organisation. Increased wages will be eaten away by inflation, whereas increasing control by the workers of their own working conditions build them up for future battles.

It seems, in addition, as though the question of the penalty clauses has been shelved. Moss Evans, national official of the TGWU gave a pledge at the last national Ford shop stewards' conference in November, that the union officials on the NJNC would seek the elimination of the clauses from the next pay agreement. But they have not been mentioned since. The longer the penalty clauses remain unchallenged, the more they will tend to be accepted by the shop floor and it will become more possible for the company to intensify them in the future.

The sections and plants at Dagenham that have concentrated on building the will and energy of the rank and file rather than gathering them together in order to persuade them of the good intentions of Scanlon and Jones are distinctly few. It is vital for Ford militants to realise that unless they develop a serious struggle for parity with the Midlands now, they are unlikely to be able to win it in the foreseeable future. Their struggle is taking place in the midst of a general offensive of car employers against car workers.

Ramsey, Ford's new labour relations director, spent some time at the last NJNC meeting describing the intensification of

international competition in the car trade in recent years. Since 1962 foreign manufacturers have increased their share of the domestic market from 5 per cent to 10 per cent. And from 1964 to 1968, the British car industry has failed to increase its share of the European market as compared, say, with the Italian car firms who increased their share by as much as the total British share—5.8 per cent.

Against this background of tougher competition, car bosses, especially Rootes and British Leyland, are prepared to concede significant wage increases in the short term as the price for eliminating the piecework system of payment and substituting Measured Day Work. MDW imposes a fixed hourly rate for the job and abolishes the sectional bargaining on wage rates which over the years enabled the workers in particular plants and shops to push up their wages well above the nationally-negotiated minimum.

## Serious danger

The advantage to the bosses of MDW is a long-term slowing down of the rate at which their labour costs rise. But with British Leyland committed to a long-term struggle for the elimination of the piece-rate system, they may be willing to grant large increases to their high-wage factories in the Midlands such as Jaguar, Austin, Longbridge, Morris, Oxford, or Pressed Steel Fisher, Birmingham. This means that production workers at Austin, Longbridge or Jaguar, at present earning 16s an hour, may well be earning 21s or 22s in two or three years. There will be a serious danger that Ford earnings will then fall even further behind those of Midlands car workers.

From another angle, the coming struggle for parity at Ford is crucial to the other backward sectors in the motor industry. What happens at Ford will significantly affect the possibility of workers at Rootes, Linwood, Leylands, Lancs, the new South Wales plants and Vauxhall developing similar struggles for parity in the coming years. If Ford workers are defeated in the coming battle for parity it will mean an intensification in the rate of exploitation throughout the motor industry, but especially in the low-paid sectors and those on MDW.

Ford militants must demand:

1. Immediate all-round increases to raise the level of earnings to that at Rootes', Ryton.
2. Mutuality on all aspects of working conditions.
3. Abolition of penalty clauses.
4. No reduction in the size of the labour force.
5. Every rise in production to be accompanied by the right to re-negotiate existing job rates.
6. Five days' work or five days' pay.

# Socialist Worker

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CAPITALISM has nothing to offer mankind but exploitation, crises and war. The ruling classes of the world—a tiny minority—subordinate the needs of the vast majority to the blind accumulation of capital in the interests of competitive survival.

Imperialism condemns two-thirds of mankind to famine and calls forth movements of national liberation which shake the system and expose its essential barbarism. The constant and mounting preparations for war and the development of weapons of mass destruction place the survival of humanity itself in the balance.

The increasing intensity of international competition between ever-larger units drives the ruling classes to new attacks on workers' living standards and conditions of work, to anti-trade union and anti-strike laws. All of these show capitalism in deepening crises from which it can only hope to escape at the cost of the working class and by the destruction of all its independent organisations.

The only alternative is workers' power—the democratic collective control of the working class over industry and society through a

# WHERE WE STAND

state of workers' councils and workers' control of production.

Only thus can the transition be ensured to a communist society in which the unprecedented productive forces thrown up by capitalism can be used to assure an economy of abundance. Only the working class, itself the product of capitalism, has the ability to transform society in this way, and has shown its ability to do so in a series of revolutionary struggles unprecedented in the history of all previous exploited classes.

The working class gains the experience necessary to revolutionise society by constant struggle against the

ruling class through the mass organisations thrown up in the course of that struggle.

To overcome the unevenness with which this experience is gained, to draw and preserve the lessons of past struggles and transmit them for the future, to fight against the pressure of bourgeois ideas in the working class, and to bond the fragmentary struggles against capitalism, into a conscious and coherent offensive, a revolutionary Marxist party of socialist militants is required, embracing the vanguard of the working class.

The struggle to build such a party is only part of the wider struggle to create a World Revolutionary Socialist International, independent of all oppressors and exploiters of the working class, whether bureaucratic or bourgeois.

International Socialists therefore fight for:

**Opposition to all ruling-class policies and organisations.**

**Workers' control over production and a workers' state.**

**Opposition to imperialism and support for all movements of national liberation.**

**Uncompromising opposition to all forms of racialism and to all migration controls.**

## Letter

# Falsifying Marx

IT IS REMARKABLE how many 'marxists' will glibly use Marx as a justification for their actions, when they are patently falsifying his works and philosophy.

To say, as Edmund S Grant does (8 January) that Marx was 'opposed to all censorship', is an absurdity. Marx, to begin with, would never have made such a statement, without first qualifying it. The way in which he did this was to say:

YES, we are opposed to all censorship when the working class is the only class in society, ie when the bourgeoisie has been vanquished. But NO, in the period of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' the abolition of all censorship cannot be tolerated.

What would E S Grant suggest? Presumably that all the bourgeois elements that would still exist within the newly-victorious working class be given a platform by which they could strike back, by which they could wrest the initiative from that class. Is this what Marx envisaged? Lenin, discussing Marx and Engels' attitude towards the creation of the workers' state and its task of consolidating the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' in State and Revolution writes,

'It is still (ie after a workers' revolution) necessary to suppress the bourgeoisie and crush their resistance.' The working class does not conduct a dialogue with them! Marx clearly was no supporter of the abolition of all censorship.

As to our attitude to fascists today, has the SPGB forgotten the experiences of the Russian workers in 1917 with Kornilov and his attempted rightist putsch, or the German working class in the 1930s with the Nazis, or the Spanish workers in 1936-8 with Franco and the Falangists?

It is quite clear that if the working class is to be sure of avoiding the most dangerous counter-revolutionary threats it must vigorously destroy as effectively as is possible all forms of fascism at their outset. To 'conduct dialogues' is to forget our historical experiences and to court disaster. To use Marx as a justification for this is blatant falsification. - R C W RICHARDS (Clerical Workers' Union), Ilford, Essex.

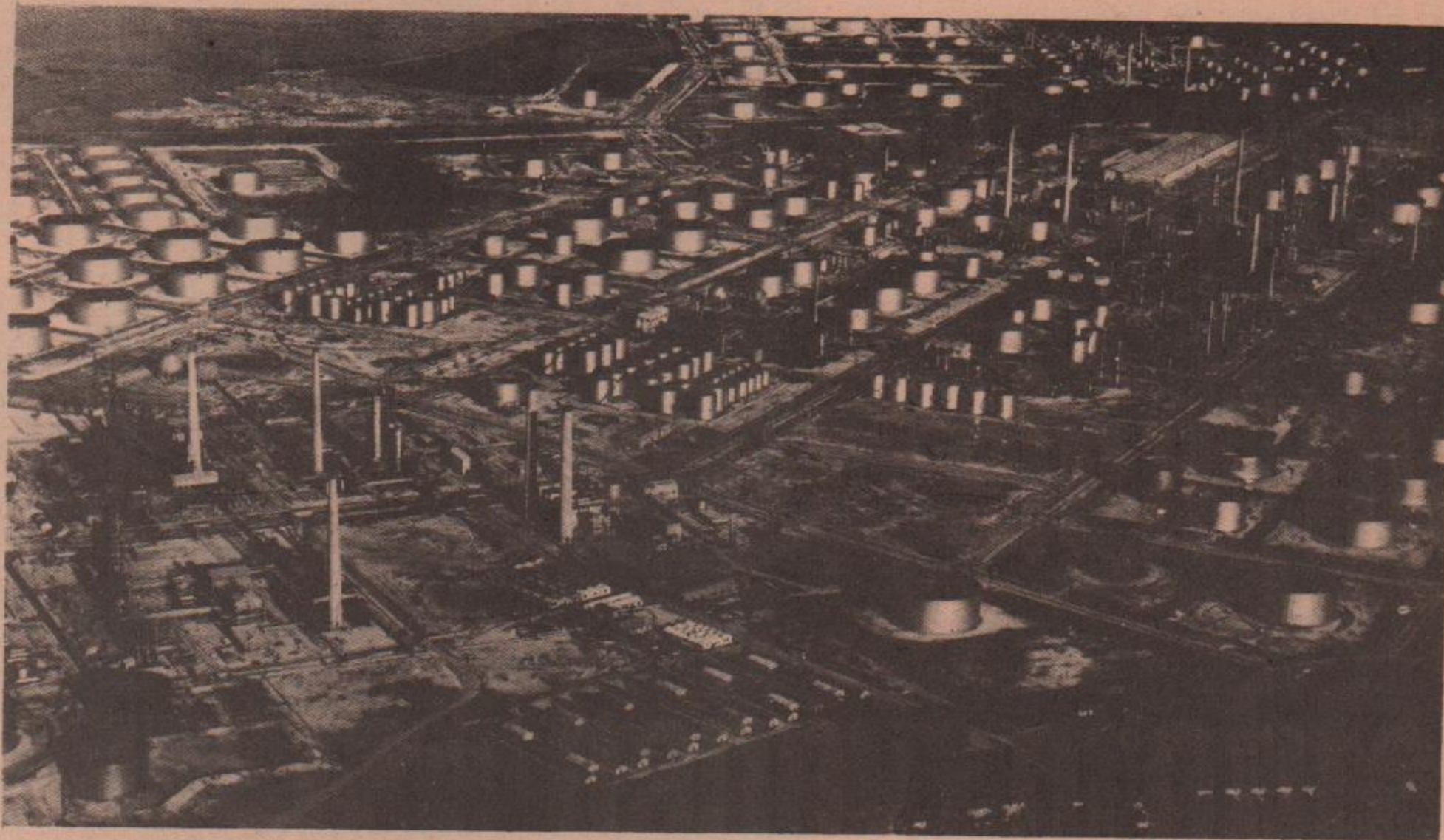
## Another letter page 5

Letters to the Editor must arrive by first post on Monday.



The pioneer productivity deal that increased exploitation and reduced wages

# Fawley: where the sign means happy profiteering



An aerial view of the Esso refinery near Southampton

by Roger Protz

EVER SINCE the Labour government came to power, the trade union movement has been bamboozled by a flood of propaganda about productivity bargaining. All the problems facing the British economy can be solved, the government and employers have suggested, if workers spit into their hands and get stuck into their jobs with greater enthusiasm and a willingness to produce more.

The pill of harder work has been sugared by offers of apparently large wage increases. Six million men and women in British industry are now working under productivity agreements. It is clear that, with the support of the official trade union machine, more and more workers are swallowing the pill.

Whether that pill proves, in the long run, to be indigestible depends to a great extent on the ability of socialists in the trade unions to ram home the implications of productivity bargaining. The very acceptance of such agreements shows that socialists face an uphill task, for along with the pill, workers have swallowed also the myths about 'the national interest', 'all pulling together' and 'the Dunkirk spirit', as if Britain was a society in which power and wealth were distributed equally.

## Squeeze

Whatever the champions of productivity bargaining may say, their real aim is to strengthen the power of the employers, to reduce the size of the labour force and to squeeze more profits from those left with jobs.

British big business is faced by cut-throat competition from the United States, western Europe and Japan. If our home-grown bosses are to stay in the race, they will have to invest more in new equipment and new methods. Productivity bargaining is the method used to switch the cost of such modernisation squarely onto the workers.

It is nearly 10 years since the pioneer productivity agreement was signed at the Esso Petroleum Company's refinery at Fawley, near Southampton, in July 1960. The Fawley agreement was supposed to herald a new era in labour relations. Wages would be high



Maintenance workers: productivity up 50 per cent

and go on climbing in return for certain relaxations in 'out of date' restrictions on flexibility and employment of craftsmen's mates.

The introduction of the agreement was painted in glowing colours by the management. Their aims, it seemed, were quite divorced from the overall interests of the company and its shareholders. Their only motivation was to bring better wages and conditions for their workers.

Like most of the subtle propaganda of the employers and their press, there was no truth at all in those claims. Behind the rosy picture lay the harsh reality of tough, profit-seeking bosses who intended to solve their problems at the expense of their workers.

Esso is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Standard Oil Company of America. In 1956 Standard's profits were falling due to economic recession and fierce competition. The company decided to launch a campaign to cut down on labour costs through greater efficiency in the use of manpower. Even small reductions in this area could give the company an advantage in a tight market situation.

The British end of the company decided to start a similar cost-cutting campaign. Fawley was the ideal place to start. Labour costs were higher there than in other Esso plants. It was also a new plant (introduced in 1952) employing 2000 wage-earners in an area with little trade union militancy.

Allan Flanders, the official historian of the Fawley agreement and now a member of the 'trouble-shooting' Commission on Industrial Relations, along with ex-communist Will Paynter—has explained bluntly that the real aim of the agreement was to recapture 'managerial initiative' from the shop stewards.

Flanders writes: 'They (the inner managerial group at Fawley) all cared, or came to care, about what they regarded as an abdication of responsibility on the part of management in labour relations. This had taken the form of allowing things to drift so that, by default, the initiative had passed increasingly into the hands of the shop stewards.'

An American management consultant drew up a detailed memorandum to the Fawley management in 1958 in which he recommended a 'low overtime, high wage' policy. This policy would be achieved, he said, by drastic intensification of the work rate. He expected the following benefits from such a policy:

- Establishment of a smaller maintenance and construction work force.
- Elaborate alteration of the composition of the work force.
- A new compulsion on the staff

Background: The Fawley Productivity Agreements, by Allan Flanders, Faber, 50s; Package deals in British collective bargaining, by Tony Topham in International Socialist Journal, no 5-8.

to plan and schedule their work with a much higher degree of accuracy.

■ Absenteeism and tardiness rates will decrease.

■ Esso management will be in a better position than at present to discharge men who are either unwilling or unable to perform their work properly.

■ Esso management will be in a better position to select the men of their choice even during periods of full employment.

■ The men will be more apt to follow the Esso management than the union full-time officials and shop stewards.

## Power

The aim of cutting down on high overtime payments was central to the agreement. It is here that the shop stewards exercised almost sovereign power, which contributed to their control of the job and distribution of earnings. The workers insisted that overtime should be equally divided amongst them and the sharing consequently became a stewards' function.

Removal of this power would not only decrease 'wage drift' (the tendency for local bargaining to boost wages above nationally negotiated levels) but would break the power of the rank and file's elected representatives.

The Fawley management, like their counterparts throughout British industry, were anxious to transfer power from the stewards to the far more reliable and pliant full-time union officials. Flanders records: 'The full-time officials had no say in determining this (over-

time's) substantial part of the workers' pay packet: their role was confined to the negotiation of rates. Moreover, here was a procedural aspect of industrial relations, the administration of overtime distribution, which was largely excluded from their control.'

The package deal offered the men large increases in rates of pay—as much as 40 per cent—in return for concessions in working practices that 'hampered a more efficient use of labour'. The changes included some relaxation of job demarcation (that is, switching men from one job to another regardless of skill), the withdrawal of craftsmen's mates and their redeployment on other jobs, additional temporary and permanent shift-working and greater freedom for management supervision. Tea-breaks, washing and changing time were also withdrawn.

Overtime, which by 1959 made up 18 per cent of total hours worked, was to be drastically reduced over two years to a stated target, for maintenance workers, of 2 per cent. Wage increases were to be given in five instalments over the same two-year period to make up for dwindling overtime.

Contrary to the ideas peddled by the millionaire press, power in Britain is not equally divided between capital and labour. The ownership of the 'means of production'—the factories and the machines—resides in the hands of a tiny minority of the population. 75 per cent of the country's wealth, for example, is owned by less than 5 per cent of the population. The working class, who produce this wealth, have no say in its distribution or in the organisation of production.

Because the workers are always the first to pay for any economic problems through sackings, they have built up over the years many intricate methods of maintaining maximum employment. The methods are described by the press as 'restrictive practices'. To militant workers, they are defensive methods.

They include important restrictions of management's rights to switch men from job to job regardless of their skill and the employment of mates for skilled men. Along with tea breaks and washing and changing time during work hours, these defensive practices are important areas of workers' control within the capitalist system.

Understandably, the Fawley agreement, like all later productivity deals, attempted to smash this vital area of workers' control in order to regain the initiative for the management. It is a sad reflection on the general level of political understanding of the relative strengths of management and workers that the eight unions at

Fawley swallowed almost the entire deal hook, line and sinker.

It is an even sadder reflection on the attitude of members of the Communist Party towards productivity bargaining that they were singled out for particular praise by Flanders in his history of the Fawley agreement. He says:

'The Electrical Trades Union's attitude... was particularly interesting. Not only did this union have a communist leadership nationally at the time, but the delegate and the senior steward were also avowed and long-standing members of the Communist Party. Anyone naive enough to conclude that the union must therefore be hostile to such union-management co-operation as the Blue Book (the agreement) implied would be mistaken.'

'Throughout the negotiations the ETU delegate, who was chairman of the Craft Union Committee, adopted a very constructive attitude and in this was strongly supported by his senior steward, with whom he had close personal contact.'

## Worse

And what has been the outcome of this 'new era in labour relations'? Quite simply, greater productivity—that is, exploitation of the workers—in return for worse conditions, falling wages and the weakening of shop-floor representatives.

The figures speak for themselves! Productivity rose in the first two years by 50 per cent in the maintenance and construction department and by 45 per cent in the process department. But wages rose very slowly after 1960. In September 1962, wages of skilled workers rose by 4½d an hour and in March 1963 by a further 3d. Then, for the next four years, wages stood absolutely still and Fawley workers found themselves falling further and further behind other workers in the Southampton area.

In its evidence to the Donovan Commission on the unions, the Esso management had to admit: 'We did a recent survey in the Southampton area in the oil industry, chemicals, shipbuilding, heavy electrical, light engineering, a nationalised industry and a contracting industry. We found in these eight industries, on hours worked in the week, it (Fawley) was lowest; and on total weekly earnings it came sixth out of the eight.'

Future articles will give detailed advice to trade union militants on how to fight productivity agreements. And fight them they must, for their aim is to deliver the workers, bound hand and foot, for sacrifice on the altar of big business.

## How to play 'Productopoly'

**Rule 1**— Any number of people can play and are divided up into Trade Unions, Employers, Stock and/or Share Holders, Press and Prices and Incomes Board (PIB). Trade unions play as an independent group but the rest play as a team.

**Rule 2**— Play is commenced by throwing dice which are loaded in favour of the PIB.

**Rule 3**— Trade unions must make the first move by applying for an increase in wages and/or salaries. All claims must contain an offer to increase productivity by working harder, working longer hours or abolishing protective practices.

**Note:** Claims based on higher rents, rates, mortgages, fares, food, clothing or the increased cost of producing the next generation of workers are forbidden and players will be disqualified.

**Rule 4**— Any offer by the unions to really increase productivity by having a say in what amount of goods or services shall be produced by representation on the board of directors is not allowed as too

much might be produced and the selling price would go down.

**Note:** Persistent offenders will be stamped on until they resume their rightful position as workers—on hands and knees.

**Rule 5**— The PIB retains the right to change the rules at any time, eg disallowing past savings to employers by increased productivity on the part of the workers.

**Rule 6**— The press must condemn any claim and/or action in support of a claim as greedy and irresponsible on the grounds that the 'country' (employers) can't afford it or that the 'public' (other trade unionists) will be alienated.

**Rule 7**— Any attempt to further a claim by action or talk of action will result in trade unions going to jail or being fined.

**Rule 8**— Stock and/or shareholders must support all demands for increased productivity by shouting 'Hear, hear!' or displaying 'I'm backing Britain' badges and flags etc.

**Note:** In the event of the trade unions asking the stock and/or

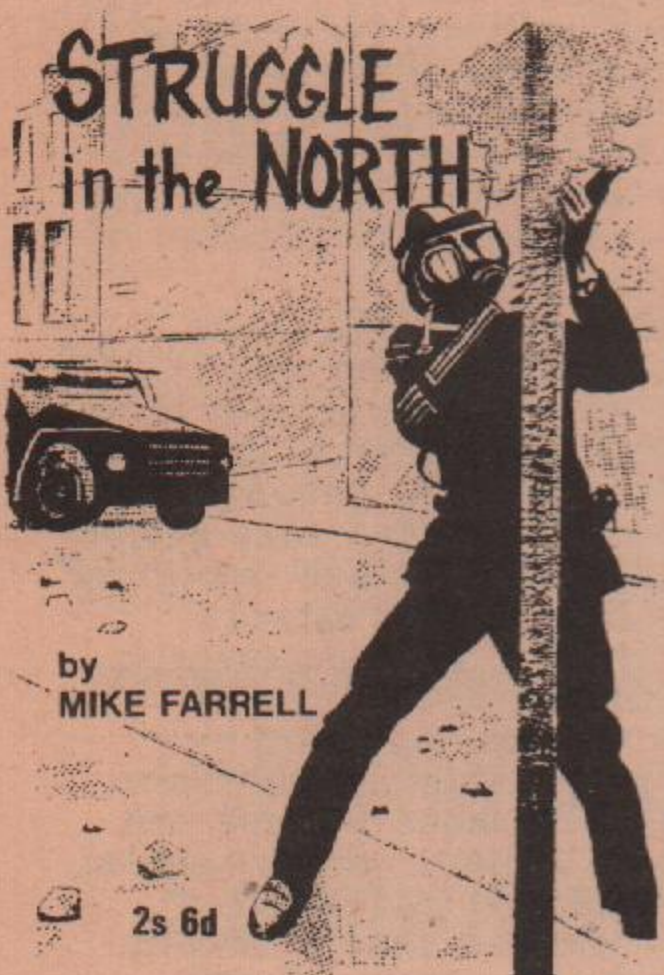
shareholders how they are increasing productivity there will be a deadly silence and the press will not report it.

**Rule 9**— The winner must always be the employers, and the PIB, press and shareholders will be awarded joint second place for their loyal support. Acquiescent trade unions will be declared losers and return to square one.

**Rule 10**— Any trade unions that refuse to back down or to be intimidated— and win— will not be declared the winners because they did not play the game fairly according to the rules and the press will report the event as Un-British a Red Plot, Anarchistic, or Blackmail, as the mood suits them.

In any event, the PIB etc. are bad losers.

(Reprinted from PLAFAYRE, the magazine of the PLA Branch of the National Association of Local Government Officers.



An analysis by a founding member of the militant People's Democracy movement in Northern Ireland of the country divided and dominated by British imperialism and controlled, north and south, by reactionary, anti-working class regimes. The author vividly describes the struggle for civil rights in the Six Counties.

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Recent issues of Socialist Worker have included a number of letters on the attitude which socialists should adopt towards organisations of the extreme right that peddle racist propaganda. Members of such groups as the Independent Labour Party and the Socialist Party of Great Britain have suggested that debates with the far right are valuable methods of countering their ideas. This week, a writer analyses the growth of the National Front and argues that debates with its members give this fascist organisation the respectability it craves for...



A K Chesterton, NF leader, is an old Mosley man. He is seen here in 1937 on a fascist march, on the extreme left, next to moustached man facing camera.

# The threat from the far right

by Don Milligan

MANY SOCIALISTS have reacted to the extreme right-wing National Front with smugness and complacency. Of course the National Front does not warrant panic or hysteria.

When set against the strength of the working class and socialist movement, it is puny. But it represents a potential threat that should not be ignored.

The antics of Hitler-lover Colin Jordan are not for the National Front. The Flag, the Queen and the White Dominions form the cornerstones of NF policy. We must not look for jackboots or stage-managed rallies.

The National Front is a 'British' product and its leaders are busily trying to forget their past associations with Mosley and Nazism. It is because of this that we can expect the NF to appeal to many middle-class people and even to sections of the working class. It will not be enough for us to 'smear' them by recalling the political past of the National Front's leaders.

It is imperative that we present a positive alternative to fascism wherever the NF is active. We must consistently argue against its programme, demonstrate its inconsistencies and above all expose its dependence upon the employing class for both money and ideas.

The National Front is not the only fascist party in Britain but it is the only significant one. It was launched on 7 October 1967 at a rally in the Caxton Hall, London, attended by 200 delegates. This first annual general meeting of the National Front was the culmination of a long series of negotiations

between leaders of the League of Empire Loyalists and the British National Party that had gone on throughout 1966 and 1967.

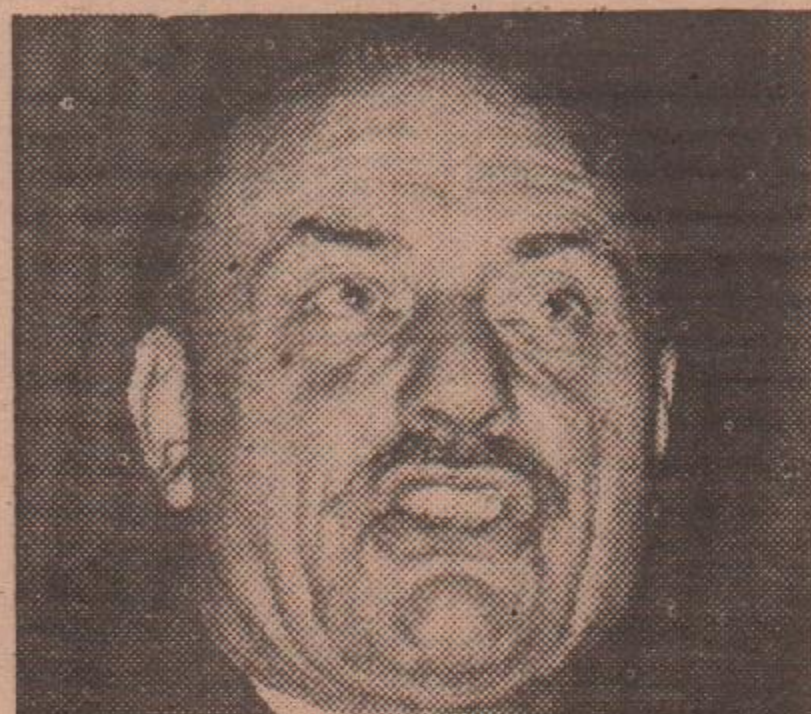
The Greater Britain Movement also merged with the National Front during 1967. The NF claimed to have 10,000 members after its first year in April 1968 and there seems to be every indication that it is growing. It also has 32 branches which have been increasingly active in the last year (Spearhead no. 23, 1969).

The political history of many of its leaders and members puts National Front politics into perspective. John Tyndall, who edits Spearhead, the NF monthly journal, was the national organiser of Colin Jordan's Nazi party — the National Socialists Movement — until he formed his own outfit, grandiosely named the Greater Britain Movement, in 1964.

## Old Mosleyites

A K Chesterton the 'leader' of the National Front was a founder member of the British Union of Fascists and editor of Mosley's newspaper Action until 1937. Chesterton has a number of old Mosleyites to keep him company, like Admiral Sir Barry Domville, the leader of the pro-Nazi Link organisation, who was held in preventive detention in 1940 and is now an ageing national council member of the NF.

John Bean, a former Mosleyite, is also a prominent NF member. In the late 1950s Bean worked with Colin Jordan to merge the White Defence League and the National Labour Party into the British National Party. Denis Pirie is another leading NF member who worked closely with Colin Jordan. Pirie, who is a liaison officer for NF, was a 'section leader' of the National Socialist Movement in



POWELL: sneered at by the National Front

1962 when its slogan was 'Hitler was Right'.

The National Front, with Chesterton at its head, has survived a very difficult first two years. It has maintained and strengthened its internal unity and its achievements are unparalleled in the post-war history of British fascism. It is the most important development in the fascist movement since the formation in the 1930s of the British Union of Fascists.

The National Front is not merely racist. Its policy is comprehensive. On issues ranging from hanging to homosexuality, the National Front has led local campaigns and produced considerable amounts of propaganda material. A selection of major NF slogans include: 'Common Market Means Common Slavery', 'Union of the White Dominions Now', 'Support British Agriculture', 'Get Tough with Criminal Thugs', 'Incentives in Industry will Halt Brain Drain', 'NF Will Make British Youth Proud of Itself', 'Get International Finance out of Britain', 'Encourage Home Ownership' and 'Defence: Let British Know-How Make Us

Strong Again' (Britain First no 4, 1969).

It is the comprehensive nature of the National Front programme that distinguishes it from other small right-wing organisations that simply feed on racialism and hang on to Enoch Powell's coat tails. The NF is robust enough to attack Powell and the inconsistencies of his position. It has sneered at Powell's comparative 'lateness' in attacking black immigration by pointing out that he was 'A member of the government during the years of the largest coloured inflow'. A K Chesterton is 'absolutely certain' that to 'look to the Rt. Hon. Enoch Powell, MP, MBE, for the leadership which could rescue our unhappy country from the Black and Brown floods would be... 'fatuous', (Candour no 488, 1969).

It is clear, however, that the National Front cannot advance unless it can gain massive sponsorship from sections of the capitalist class. For example A K Chesterton, in warning against vulgar racialism, says that the crude racist 'can undo by a single brawl the work of the top leadership during months of delicate negotiations to secure the financial future of the movement' (Spearhead no 17, 1967). The National Front leadership sees itself as being intimately linked to the employing class and the maintenance of capitalism.

To quote Chesterton again 'If you hear any more whining about 'workers', tell the whiners to get the hell out of the National Front and join the Communist Party where they belong' (Spearhead no 17, 1967). Despite this, Chesterton has been unable to rid himself of fascists who work in what they think are the interests of the working class. This can be seen from the slogan 'Workers Want More Say in British Industry' (Britain First no 4, 1969).

## Private chats

This is the dilemma that inevitably faces fascist movements. On the one hand they attract middle-class and working-class people because of their verbal attacks on monopoly and international finance and their demands for increased involvement of workers in decision makings. While on the other hand they are dependent upon employers for their funds.

He who pays the piper calls the tune. The National Front leadership has no intention of upsetting those who have money to finance its activities. They do not depend on membership subscriptions and the careful management of resources that socialist and working-class organisations do. Private chats produce fat cheques for the NF from small businessmen and employers.

The National Front is not the only extreme right-wing organisation in the field and so far others are more successful in securing financial support from big employers. The Monday Club, the Society for Individual Freedom and many others are supported by big businessmen who would perhaps regard financing a fascist organisation like the National Front as a bit distasteful and unnecessary at the moment.

The NF leaders understand that they must demonstrate firstly that fascism is the only way out of the current crisis and, secondly, that the National Front is an effective political instrument. At the moment, the NF leaders can do neither. Consequently, they are concentrating upon consolidating their organisation, improving the scope of the NF programme and developing the political abilities of their

membership. The widespread distribution of leaflets and other propaganda material, the holding of small demonstrations, public meetings and debates is of crucial importance for the future development of the NF.

The principal aim of National Front policy at the present time is to establish its respectability. It is characterised by extreme conservatism. They are not so much aiming at the 'New Britain' as the reincarnation of the old Britain — the Britain of Imperial Glory. They are opposed to liberalism but they believe in the maintenance of 'parliamentary democracy'. A further aid to the National Front's respectability is its claim that the monarchy is 'of the utmost value to us' and must be 'preserved at any cost' (Candour no 494, 1969).

## No debates

Socialists must ensure that their meetings, demonstrations and debates do not go unchallenged. Under no circumstances should NF public activities be allowed to take on a 'normal' or 'respectable' appearance. We should never participate in debates with them and must endeavour to destroy any attempt by the National Front to present themselves as a responsible political movement, concerned only with the best interests of the 'British People'.

What has been most alarming in recent years has been the attitude of some sections of the socialist movement towards fascism. Both the Independent Labour Party and the Socialist Party of Great Britain have publicly debated with the fascists of the National Front — conferring on them the appearance of normality that the NF most desires. The Communist Party, to its credit, has not done this, but it has displayed a similar lack of awareness. For example, in Leeds during July 1969 there were two nights of limited but serious racial disturbances. In response to this, the CP area secretary's only immediate action was to telephone the Chief Constable to inform him that, in the opinion of the party, there might be further trouble due to fascist activity! So while one section debates with the NF and demands that freedom of speech should apply equally to fascists, another section — the Communist Party — places its confidence in the police force.

We must reject both these approaches in dealing with the NF. Firstly, we must never treat them as a legitimate political tendency to be debated with. Secondly, we must when necessary, take action to defend ourselves and immigrant workers from fascist attacks.

And thirdly, we must clearly distinguish between ordinary workers who are attracted by fascist propaganda and members of the NF. We must discuss and argue with workers who are racistist or impressed by fascist policies. But we should have no truck with the convinced and organised fascists of the National Front.

## On the scrapheap at 58...

The following letter, from R T Scott of Hebburn, Co Durham, first appeared in the Newcastle Evening Chronicle. It graphically describes the plight of low-paid workers who find themselves thrown onto the scrapheap in their late fifties.

AT 58 it seems I am not so much unemployed as unemployable. Furthermore, I am given to understand I am in my 59th year and next year will be in my sixtieth. I feel robbed of the last two years of my 50's.

What happened to my middle age? Can I sue someone? All at once, from being young and irresponsible, one is old and equally irresponsible.

All the jobs I ever had were the ones for which there was no rush and now I have apparently scraped that barrel dry. And I am still too young for those jobs seductively advertised as suitable for old-age pensioners.

Here we come to the part played by Government policy. The aim appears to be directed at abolishing low-paid workers by not making it worth while to employ them.

With SET and insurance, as much as a third more has to be added to a small wage before the earner can get that amount.

The insidious implication is that if you cannot command a decent wage you should be content to stay out of work. But that takes no account of the individual. Even a very lowly job would provide me

with two or even three more pounds than I receive at present in unemployment pay and supplementary allowance.

I am fully appreciative of the work of the trades unions and I have no wish to undercut anyone, but I object to being classed as a to allly uneconomic reject.

I am not inarticulate and illiteracy is not the cause of my being out of work, though my education was of a singularly useless nature as regards earning my living in any particular way. It did contribute to my adaptability, though.

## SCARED

Single low-paid workers, in work or out, are no one's concern. They have no dependents to enhance their plight. They also have no one to share expenses with.

They are completely expendable and are even scared of hospitals, feeling they come at the end of any queue for available treatment. How and where they live is nobody's business.

Trying to dispose sensibly of limited means is a hopeless task. Rent is, of course, the main reeling blow. That accounts for over a third for minimal accommodation. However, it is not resented.

It means you can spend 12 to 15 hours in bed daily and more at the weekend, when you can suspend the face of looking for work, thus conserving energy on a restricted diet.

I know all about required numbers

of calories, a balanced intake of carbohydrates with proteins and requisite vitamins. But I could be completely ignorant in this respect because I still end up living on cups of tea and bread and margarine.

Poverty produces the apparent paradox of extravagance. You cannot afford a meal; you eat it too quickly. Tired of walking round, you drop into a cheap snack-bar and sit over a cup of tea for as long as you dare, just for the warmth and the illusion of still belonging to the community of your fellow beings.

Social workers often sigh over the unresponsiveness and sullen resistance they meet from those they try to help. It surprises me they are surprised.

The hopeless know all the answers. They just don't want them rubbed in any more. They are completely aware of the abysmal idiocy of their way of living.

The difficulty in expressing oneself at all is that one is bound to embarrass everyone. Poverty is resented by people who feel they pay enough in taxes to alleviate it.

To avoid so much as the inference of a whining mendicancy you have to maintain silence and cut communications. As thanks, you are labelled hard and indifferent, uncaring and content to be left alone.

But though we all think our problems are unique, there are always others in a similar position, and there should be an impersonal media in which we can be made aware of it.



# General Electric workers in three-month battle over pay

from George Wilson

'IF IT'S WAR you want, then we'll give you war,' was the response of a strike leader in Schenectady, New York, to police intervention on a picket line on the first day of a nation-wide strike against General Electric. In Lynn, Massachusetts, local police battled with pickets to keep open a gate to another GE plant.

These incidents and other like them are not conclusive proof that the US is entering another period of militant labour battles. But an official of the International Union of Electrical Workers in New York indicated that the union bureaucracies are feeling the pressure of a militant and angry rank and file.

The official went on to say that he expected a long strike, probably of at least a two-month duration, because of both GE's intransigence and the workers' militancy.

This is the second time that the electrical workers' unions have used the coalition bargaining method. The first instance, in 1966, was found to be moderately successful, although hindered by poor communication between the bargaining commission and the union branches. Before 1966 the unions bargained separately and this made it impossible to make gains equal to those made in other industries.

GE and other electrical manufacturers have been able to maintain the upper hand

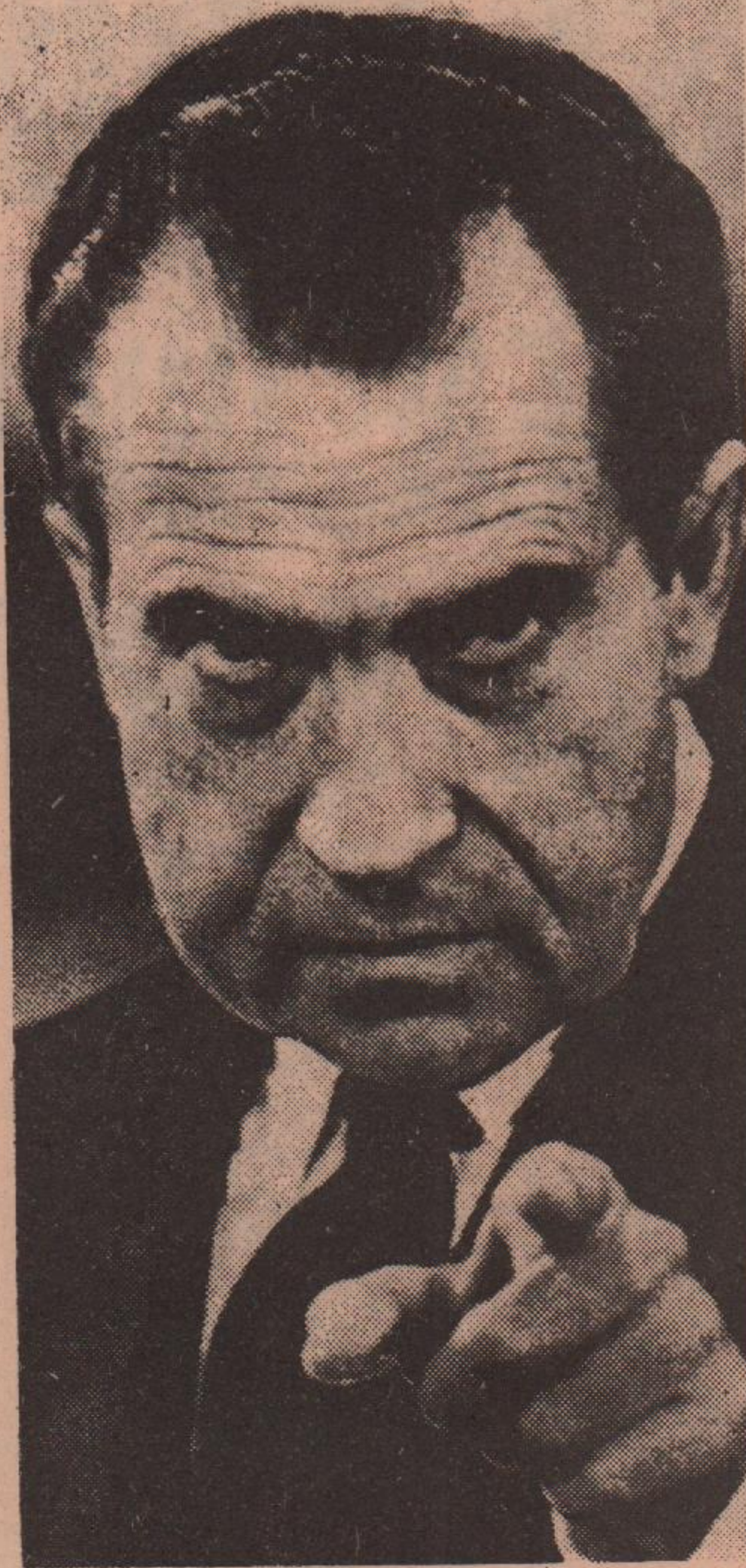
in negotiations for the past 20 years with a tactic known as 'Boulwarism'. At the outset of pre-strike negotiations they would make a 'fair and firm' offer and refuse to negotiate further. While on a national level they refused to talk, they would go behind the unions' national bargaining committees and negotiate on the local level, playing one union off against another until the unions were forced to settle for more or less the original company offer.

Now, in conjunction with attacking Boulwarism through coalition bargaining, the unions are also challenging the legality of the practice. Recently the US Court of Appeals found GE's 'take it or leave it' bargaining approach to be contrary to the National Labor Relations Act, in a case stemming from the 1960 negotiations. The unions have hailed this as the 'death of Boulwarism', but the ambiguity of the decision will have to be clarified before its impact on collective bargaining can be assessed.

## Real test

The IUE is the largest union in the coalition, with approximately 88,000 members on strike out of a total of 147,000 striking GE workers. GE has a total 310,000 employees nationwide. The United Electrical Workers is the other major electrical union involved in the coalition, accounting for 12,000 strikers. The remaining 50,000 strikers are represented by eleven separate unions, including the United Steel Workers, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the Auto Workers and the Teamsters.

Because the 1966 contract was negotiated



NIXON: threat to intervene

without resorting to a strike, this strike is the first real test of the ability of the coalition to hold together under pressure. No one, including union officials, can predict whether the employers will be able to break the coalition by negotiating with individual branches or the small unions.

The strikers also face the threat of a Taft-Hartley injunction in the future. Twenty per cent of GE's production is for national defence, and Nixon has already stated that, if the strike begins to seriously affect that production, the Federal government would intervene. Since that statement, government spokesmen have vehemently denied any intention of intervention except the offer of Federal mediators; however, union officials expect it. The coalition's bargaining centres around three major demands:

First, an increase of 3s an hour in the first year, 2s 6d in the second, and 2s in the last six months, plus a cost of living escalator of one cent for every .4 per cent rise in the

Consumer Price Index.

Secondly, the right to force binding arbitration of grievances. At present matters may be submitted to arbitration only at the instigation of GE.

And thirdly, a union shop. GE has rebutted with a proposal for 2s to 4s now and negotiations for the second and third years, in the hope that a slack in inflation in the next two years will enable them to settle for less later. This offer was made in the negotiations last October and GE has not moved from that position since.

The electrical industry has consistently been one of the lowest paying of all major industries nationally. Two of the basic reasons for this are the diversity of unions representing electrical workers, and the high percentage of women workers in the field.

It is estimated that, during the 1966 contract, the average electrical worker has suffered an inflationary real wage cut of nearly 2s 6d an hour. Add to that a general increase of 5 per cent in GE's productivity over the past three years, and the average worker finds himself nearly 4s an hour behind his 1966 earnings. GE's offer of an average increase of nearly 2s still leaves the worker shortchanged by 1s 10d an hour. The unions' demand of 3s now and then 2s 6d itself only leaves the workers shortchanged by 1s for the first year and if there is a real wage increase of 1s 6d in the second year, (that is, given that there is neither a rise in inflation nor an increase in GE's productivity before 1972).

## Impact

The GE strike may well have an important impact on the labour movement as a whole in the future. The strike raises the question of whether this new form of coalition bargaining can revitalise the labour movement and open the possibilities of new and important gains for US workers within the traditional labour movement. How much will a resurgence of labour militancy be contained within present union forms, and how much of it will be moved toward more political struggle?

The GE strike is just the first of a number of major nationwide conflicts likely in the next year. There is a strike probable at Westinghouse which looks like a duplicate of the GE struggle. Westinghouse has followed GE's lead in setting a 'fair and firm' offer equivalent to GE's, and the same coalition of unions is presenting the same demands.

In 1968 the IUE passed a strike fund levy of \$1 a month per member which to date has netted approximately \$2million; however, at the rate of £4 18s a week in strike pay for each striking GE worker, this fund is depleted by almost \$1million per week. The trade union establishment has pledged its full support to the GE strike, but what that will mean in terms of financial backing is not known, and an insufficient strike fund can be devastating to any strike.

Reprinted from IS, the paper of the American International Socialists.

## Letter

# Importance of mass action

I AM HAPPY, for the New Year, to have elicited from Jim Higgins (1 January) an admission that the Communist Party's policy opposes productivity bargaining. Grudging and qualified though it be, your readers will be able to see that it is more than he conceded in his reports of our congress.

It is, however, lamentable that he should see the government's dropping of the proposed penal clauses in its Industrial Relations Bill simply as 'manoeuvring between the TUC and the government on the question of legislative or voluntary incomes policy,' ignoring the militant mass action including strikes that were responsible for wilson backing down. It was the mobilisation of large numbers of workers in such struggles that the Communist Party Congress saw as being of the highest importance, both actually and potentially.

At the same time, it warned in its resolution on the Defence of the Trade Unions that 'the undertaking of the TUC to intervene in 'unconstitutional' strikes in certain circumstances, with powers to instruct unions to use punitive measures against "unconstitutional" strikers who ignore their directives lessens the extent of the victory that could have been achieved and gives credibility to the idea that strikes are harmful to the economy', opening the way to 'outside interference in collective bargaining which cannot be genuine without the unfettered right to strike.'

Hence, it went on to demand 'rejection of Incomes Policy whether administered by the government or the TUC's voluntary vetting system; strengthening of the shop stewards' movement; repeal of the Prices and Incomes

Act; an extension of trade union democracy by greater participation at all levels of the rank and file in determining policy and strategy and election of trade union officials.'

The problem of how individual communists should act who are elected to positions on leading trade union committees where the majority of their colleagues do not share their party's views is one whose extreme complexity Jim blandly chooses to ignore. It is not one, I dare say, with which the IS group is likely to be acutely troubled in view of the insignificant number of seasoned industrial militants in its ranks and of its leftist impatience with regard to the prolonged and painstaking work that Lenin stressed Communists needed to undertake to influence and transform from within even the most reactionary trade unions.

Socialist Worker readers who are prepared to study the British Road to Socialism for themselves will see that its whole strategy is predicated on the development of mass-working-class struggle, both industrial and political, which will ultimately reach a level where the working class takes power into its own hands and carries through the socialist revolution. These points were reiterated at the congress by John Gollan in his speech and in the resolution that he was moving, the full texts of which appeared in Comment from which I quoted in my last letter.

I am interested to hear that the IS group is in the process of formulating a programme. I would however express my strongest doubts as to whether it will ever see the light of day. Will IS's various factions ever be capable of agreeing on a comprehensive long-term programme? We shall see! It is in general much easier to stick to criticising ours on all counts imaginable— including such reproaches as that made of it by Tony Cliff in a debate I had with him in Hackney last year that it says nothing about China!

Although the Communist Party is still far and away the largest and most influential marxist organisation in Britain, 30 times as large as the IS group, if I am not mistaken, though the latter do not publish their membership figures as we do, its decline by 6 per cent over the past two years is disturbing and certainly needs to be analysed. This must of course include a critical examination of our own past, as well as of the character of the Soviet Union and the reasons for the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Jim would be wrong to imagine that discussion on these issues is not taking place in the Communist Party and YCL. He should follow, in particular, Marxism Today and Cogito. The next issue of the latter will be devoted entirely to Czechoslovakia and will consider some of the questions that he raises. - MONTY JOHNSTONE, London SE3.

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# Socialist Worker

## BATHGATE MEN DIVIDED —FAIL TO WIN PARITY

SW Reporter

**BY A MAJORITY of 16 out of 2500, workers at the British Leyland factory at Bathgate last week accepted a wage settlement after four months' hard fighting.**

The claim had originally been for parity with the highest British Leyland wages in the Midlands.

The management's first reply was hilarious, just right for the pantomime season: a three year contract, a minimum rise of £1 a week and no more increases for the next two years. Any national award would be credited to the Bathgate basic rate and debited from bonus payments.

Bathgate works a Measured Day Work system with a small bonus incentive on top. When the men rejected the offer, it was raised to 30s. Later, 15s a year for the two following years was also included by the generous British Leyland bosses.

The men's answer was still the same: more money and no three year deal.

In December 1969, failing a better offer, the Bathgate men put a ban on overtime. The company's answer when the ban became effective, was to shut down the whole factory.

The workers refused to lift the ban to allow a return to work, despite the

instructions of local trade union officials. Both management and full-time officials then agreed on a date for resumption of work.

The date was given wide publicity in national and local press but the Bathgate shop stewards rejected this collusion and picketed the factory in defiance of their union officials. Not one man crossed the picket line.

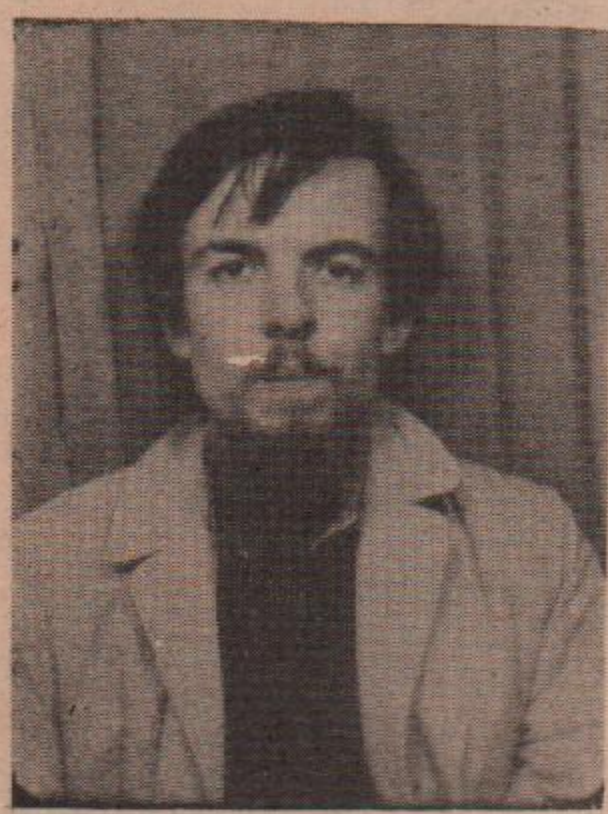
Some days later, the men did go back to work as a united and tactical decision. The overtime ban remained and a mass meeting threatened to strike from 9 January unless a better offer was made.

### DIVISIONS

On 7 January the company offered a minimum £2 10s rise plus small further increases in bonus payments if productivity was stepped up. The stewards recommended rejection, but the divisions among the men, encouraged by the union officials, finally secured acceptance.

Some sections at Bathgate are still maintaining the overtime ban. The stewards will have to reestablish the unity of their earlier struggle to overcome this setback.

The aim must still be parity with the Midlands. It will only be achieved by the activity of the men themselves



### Socialist on bomb charge seeks witnesses

**IAN PURDIE was arrested on 17 August 1969 during a civil rights march to the Ulster Office in London. He was charged with throwing a petrol bomb and with intent to cause grievous bodily harm.**

**He needs urgently to contact any people on the demonstration who saw the incidents from which the charges arose. He can be contacted during the morning at 01-727 6352.**

## R-R stewards move to stop sackings

SW Reporter

**AT MASS MEETINGS last week in all four Scottish Rolls-Royce factories, support was given to a four point plan drawn up by the combine shop stewards to fight 1100 redundancies:**

1. An immediate ban on overtime.
2. Blacking of all sub-contract work.
3. Notify management of

### Jenkins blows the gaff

**CHANCELLOR of the Exchequer Roy Jenkins said in America this week that the impact of strikes on the British economy might have assumed exaggerated proportions abroad because the government had highlighted the problem deliberately in an effort to improve labour relations. This policy, he added, had met with significant success.**

## NOTICES

**SWANSEA IS:** discussion on early British revolutionary movements. Red Cow 7.30pm Friday 16 Jan.

**FULHAM IS:** John Palmer on Towards Socialism, Sunday 18 Jan, 8pm. Wetherby Arms, 500 Kings Rd, SW10. Buses 11, 22, tube Fulham Bdway.

**LSE IS:** Joe Kenyon, ex-NCLC organiser, on workers' education. Tues 20 Jan, 7.30pm Houghton St, WC2.

**MARXIST STUDIES winter issue:** GEC-EE Merseyside. Theory of state capitalism, Ken Tarbuck. Industrialisation of backward countries, Ernest Germain, Bukharin and socialist realism, B Biro. British Trotskyist movement — some notes, John Walters. New printed format, 52 pps. 3s 4d pp. BMS Publications 16a Holmdale Rd, London NW6.

**AFTER PINKVILLE?** Tariq Ali and Felix Greene, Mon 19 Jan 7.30pm Minchenden Lower School annexe, Fox Lane, Palmers Green, N13. Enfield Council for Peace in Vietnam.

**TONY CLIFF in Dundee Socialist weekend school 23/24 Jan from 2.30pm Sat. Students Union, Univ. of Dundee, Middle East, Eastern Europe, debate on Ireland, Productivity deals, Transport and details from IS branches in Glasgow (339 1075), Aberdeen (41592) and Edinburgh (667 4326).**

intention to take strike action if any redundancies are announced.

4. To start a campaign for support throughout the labour movement.

The first step forward in the fight is that both manual and staff stewards are meeting together. Unfortunately, news from the Midlands is both scarce and disappointing and there seems no intention of fighting in that area. This situation shows the need for a national combine committee.

The bosses already work and plan nationally. Two management troubleshooters, Mathias and Head, have come up from the south to plan the next move with the managing director of the aero engine division in Cove on the Firth of Clyde.

## Engineering: where the bosses are judge and jury

by John Setters (AEF)

**THE DECISION of the leaders of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions to adjourn for three months their talks with the Engineering Employers on a new procedure agreement will not resolve the central problems nor strengthen the unions' position. It can only have the effect of preparing the way for a compromise solution.**

The present national procedure agreement for manual workers in the engineering industry was forced onto the trade unions by the employers in 1922 after a national lock-out.

It provides for discussions when grievances are raised, at the workplace and if that is not satisfactory, at a works conference, and then a local conference. If there has still not been a solution, the dispute goes to a central conference at York.

The estimated time for a normal claim to progress through this process is 13 weeks. This lengthy procedure is often deliberately used by the employers to delay claims and obstruct the trade unions.

The procedure agreement also provides for 'employers conciliation'. This means that at a local conference level, not only do the trade union representatives meet the employers with whom they are directly negotiating, but a panel of employers is also present.

This panel is the equivalent of a fixed jury and sits in judgment of a trade union's claim and the employers' reply. Naturally the 'panel' tends to overwhelmingly support the employers.

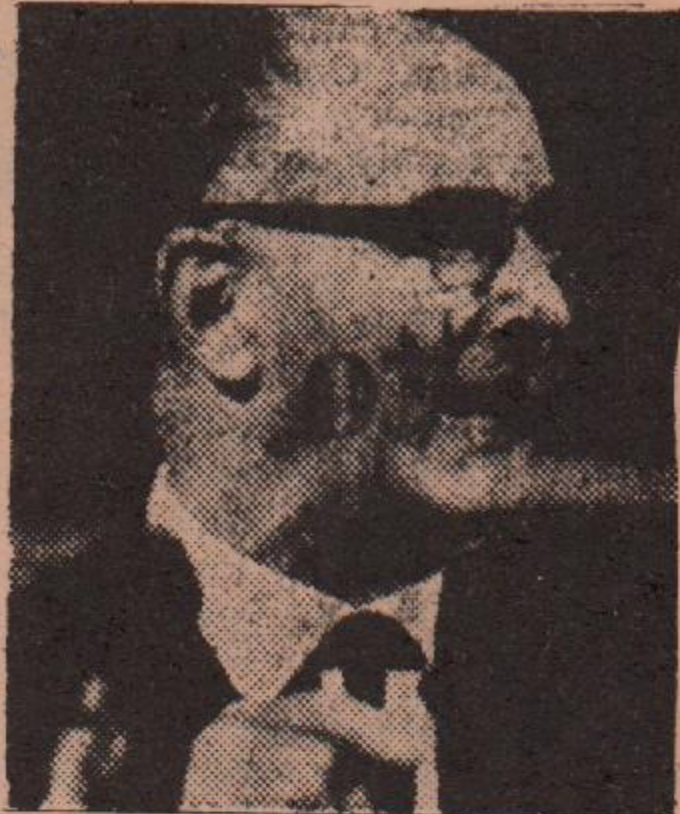
### 'Right'

The procedure agreement begins: 'The employers have the right to manage their establishments... The insistence on managerial power together with the length of time that it takes to go through the 'fixed jury' procedure means that the employers have obvious built-in advantages in the agreement.

The unions have demanded a number of changes. The most important of these has been for a 'status quo' clause which would prevent the employers from taking any action with which the trade unions disagreed until procedure had been exhausted.

The engineering employers are reported to have firmly rejected this demand. The president of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, Hugh Scanlon, has warned that unless the employers agree, his union will withdraw from the procedure agreement altogether.

All engineering workers should demand that unless the 'status quo' clause is conceded together with other improvements, then the trade unions should scrap the procedure agreement. No retreat or compromise should be allowed on this vital issue.



SCANLON: withdraw threat

## Petition for jailed editor

**THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS have launched a petition to demand the release of Francesco Tolin, Italian socialist, who was jailed for 17 months in December.**

Tolin is the editor of *Potere Operaio* (Workers' Power) a militant left-wing paper. It supported the struggles during the autumn and winter to win new contracts that would substantially improve workers' wages and conditions.

In October, the paper carried a leading article on the wave of violence that accompanied strikes in Italy.

Tolin was arrested and jailed for 17 months for 'condoning crimes' and 'inciting workers to rebel against the state'. He was charged under a legal statute introduced by the Mussolini fascist regime and not yet repealed.

The jailing of Tolin is a serious threat to press liberty and is an attempt to gag the developing revolutionary movement in Italy. Readers are encouraged to write to Socialist Worker, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2, for petition forms and seek signatures from trade unionists, socialists, MPs and intellectuals.

Completed forms should be returned to the same address for transmission to the Italian authorities.

## ROOTES WALK-OUT CAUSED BY COLD

**THE FIRST SHOT in the battle for the guaranteed week at Rootes' factories was fired at Linwood last Wednesday.**

The entire factory struck for the principle that men unable to work because of extreme cold in the Press Shop should be paid. The Press Shop itself remained on strike until Monday morning when, under pressure from AEF stewards who were to recommend an indefinite stoppage to all their members, the

company backed down.

It agreed to pay the Press Shop men for all the time they had waited for the temperature to rise. The return to work is accompanied by an overtime ban to force Rootes to also pay the men who were sent home.

A full guaranteed week is a must for all car workers. The Linwood workers have hinted at what will happen later in the year if they don't get it...

## Tenant loses appeal

**MILITANT tenants in London saw the 'impartiality' of the legal system at close hand on Tuesday when the High Court decided that a rent increase imposed by the Greater London Council was valid.**

The court threw out a test case appeal brought by an East London tenant, Mr Terence Connolly, who contended that the increase of rent for his flat in Bow, from £4 14s 6d a week to £5 5s 4d, was invalid.

The victory for the GLC paves the way for the giant Tory authority to evict Mr Connolly and the thousands of other tenants who have refused to pay increases imposed in October 1968. But the United Tenants' Action

Committee has pledged of strike action from many trade union organisations should any evictions take place.

During the court hearing, the GLC's council, Mr Hugh Francis, QC, described tenants as 'privileged people' and 'heavily subsidised'. Not to be outdone by the vicious slander, the Master of the Rolls, Lord Denning, stated: 'In these days when wages rise and money changes in value, there should be power to increase a rent so long as it is reasonable and approved by the Minister.'

The court refused Mr Connolly leave to appeal to the House of Lords.

## VIETNAM

### Protest against Wilson's US visit

**Torchlight March to 10 Downing Street**

**Sunday 25 January**

**Assemble Charing X Embankment 6pm**

**Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, 13 Whites Row E1 (BIS 9845)**

## Growing strength of Left teachers' paper

by Duncan Hallas  
President, Wandsworth Teachers Association, NUT.

**ONE HUNDRED militant teachers attended the first national meeting of supporters of the left-wing paper Rank and File last Saturday.**

First produced at Easter 1968 by a small group of NUT militants in London, the paper now prints 4500 copies an issue and is establishing a national circulation, as reports from the supporters' groups showed. These reports— from London, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Newcastle, Leeds, Bradford and York— pinpointed a number of practical difficulties encountered in the course of the work as well as some important successes.

There is no doubt that some of the ideas the paper has been advocating— a militant trade union approach, strike action, concentration on the basic salary scale as

opposed to the divisive differentials, and refusal to participate in the fake arbitration procedure of the Remuneration of Teachers' Act— have gained massive support in the union.

Other equally important policies— the fight for democratisation of education and of the union, which is still dominated by the foreman element, the headteachers— are still minority positions.

### PROBLEMS

Much of the discussion centred on the problems of work in the different localities. It was unanimously agreed that a bulletin to exchange experiences and advice on tactics must be started immediately to supplement the work of Rank and File. A co-ordinating committee was set up and a new editorial board, containing some fresh faces, was elected.

There was general agreement that it was essential to fight hard in the union for the

indefinite continuation of local and area strikes to win the present claim of £135 a year for all teachers, against both the right wing on the executive who are looking for ways to halt the action and also against well-meaning but uninformed members who argue for an unlimited national strike.

As one speaker pointed out, an unlimited strike is a sure way of putting teachers' heads on the chopping block, given the extremely limited union resources available to support it and the ability of the employers to hold out.

It was agreed that all possible weight should be put behind the campaign for NUT affiliation to the TUC and against the phoney 'professionalist' policies of the executive majority. The conference was an encouraging sign of the growing influence and maturity of the left in the NUT. There are big possibilities of further advances in the present very favourable situation.