

# Socialist Worker

FOR WORKERS' CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM 201 2 JANUARY 1971 6d (2½p)



## Polish workers' vital battles

The heroic uprising of Polish workers last month was one of the most important events of 1970. The rulers of 'socialist' Poland used tanks and armed soldiers and

police against militant protests over savage price and rent increases and wage cuts. The picture shows demonstrators raiding shops in Gdansk. Full analysis: PAGE 2

## Burgos sentences show Franco's real face

DEATH SENTENCES against six of the accused in the Burgos trials show that Franco's regime in Spain remains as dictatorial and barbaric as ever.

Against the growing opposition of workers and students, it knows only one weapon — imprisonment, secret trial and now judicial murder.

A regime that has been sustained by American aid, feted by diplomats from east as well as from the west, apologised for by hack journalists in the British press, has proved once again that it can only survive by bloody repression.

Yet the Burgos trial has revealed the weaknesses, not the strength of Franco's power. In recent years the Spanish dictator has attempted to show himself as a sort of benevolent despot.

The aim has been to produce a government not so obviously based on old-style fascism and therefore more able to integrate into a Europe of 'normal' capitalist governments. As part of this process, Franco introduced a large number of businessmen and 'technocrats' into his

cabinet and demoted openly fascist elements.

Upsurges of workers over the last year have shattered this liberal facade. Despite arrests and intimidation, anti-strike laws have been ignored and demonstrators have taken to the streets.

So the dictator has been forced to call back onto the streets the very forces he was trying to push into the wings of history only a few months ago. Mass fascist rallies and military courts have been recalled to prop up Franco's tottering throne.

The ruling class is divided and bewildered. Its schemes for integration into the Common Market are in jeopardy because of the revulsion against its meth-

ods by workers throughout Europe.

It has not known what to do in Burgos. To execute the Basques would rouse opposition in Spain and internationally.

But not to execute would be to admit that the regime is not all powerful, and that a little more agitation might remove it.

In the coming days and weeks, demonstrations and protests are necessary to show our abhorrence at the grisly charade in Burgos and to assert our solidarity with its victims.

We will also be showing our support for those working class forces who could bring Franco's 34 year reign to an end in the near future.

# TORIES PLAN TO PLUNDER HEALTH SERVICE

TED HEATH'S New Year resolution is a simple one: go on bashing the workers — make them pay for the chaos of the capitalist system.

The latest card up the Tories' sleeve is an all-out attack on the National Health Service. The NHS, brought in by the post-war Labour government, is perhaps the most important reform ever to benefit working people. It removed the fear of sickness from millions of poor people.

Three plans are under discussion in government circles. All are designed to make people pay for the NHS in order to pour millions more into the government's coffers, private insurance companies and the private drug firms.

The first plan is to abandon the NHS completely and to charge for health and hospital services at 'the point of consumption' — that is, when you go to the doctor or to hospital.

The second plan is a 'disguised tax' system. The NHS would remain but the government would bring in a compulsory comprehensive health insurance scheme, similar to the national insurance stamp.

The third plan, believed to be most popular among Cabinet ministers, is to retain 'free' services for only the most destitute sections of the community, who would be rigorously means-tested.

For the rest, medical services would be provided on a profit-making system similar to the United States. The Tories are keen on this system because it would open the door for their friends in the private insurance companies to make a fortune out of sickness.

## Determined to smash

The insurance companies would offer attractive terms to the young and fit. The not-so-young and not-so-fit would have to pay heavy premiums to be covered.

There is no logic to the Tory plans. More intelligent capitalists are aware of the advantages of a medically well-cared-for workforce. Even right-wing medical opinion in America is coming out in favour of a national health service.

But the Tories are determined to sweep away reforms that in any way improve the lives and health of working people. The end result may be a mixture of all three plans and fixed payments for doctors' visits and hospital beds are likely to be announced soon.

For workers, the end product will be a greater reluctance to visit the doctor and to go on working even when they are quite ill. The toll of industrial injuries — already rising steeply as a result of dangerous working conditions brought about by productivity deals — will jump even more sharply.

It is a grim prospect. A nationwide campaign must be launched against the plans. It further underlines the urgent necessity of building a socialist workers' movement that will end the Tories and their system for once and for all.

The paper that fights anti-union laws

# Socialist Worker

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## Lessons of 1970, way forward for 1971

1970 WAS THE YEAR in which hundreds of thousands more workers learnt the value of militancy. Teachers, car workers, dockers, council workers — all took on the employers and were successful. Even the miners, defeated not so much by the employers as by the failure of the 'left' union officials to give a clear lead, nevertheless won a pay increase that was large by the standards of previous years.

The results are clear to see. According to official statistics, wages rose by 14 per cent in 1970, while prices rose by only 7½ per cent. Of course these figures understate the factors that have cut into workers' living standards. They also fail to show that groups not strong enough to threaten strike action — the old, the sick and the increasing number of unemployed — have all become worse off.

But the fact remains that many sections of workers have found that direct industrial action can improve living conditions and wages.

The British employing class certainly understands such facts. It cannot solve its own economic problems. It has not been able to make the economy grow at more than about a third of the French, German and Italian rates and a sixth of the Japanese rate. Now as growing numbers fight back to recover what they lost in the years of incomes policy and wage freeze, the ruling class fears that its precarious gain from past policies — a small balance of payments surplus — will rapidly disappear.

And so big business seeks desperately for some means to regain the upper hand. The Tory laws against the unions, the attempts to defeat key groups of workers like the power men, the medical and school meals charges, the rising level of unemployment, are the weapons being used.

### Sustained attack

If 1970 saw the highest level of struggle by workers to improve their conditions for decades, it also saw the beginning of the first sustained attack by the employing class as a whole against the right of workers to organise in their places of work.

What is involved is not just Tory nastiness. There is plenty of that. But the Tories ruled for 13 years in the 1950s without attacking the basis of trade union organisation in the factories and without dismantling the welfare state.

They have started doing so now because big business sees no other way of solving its problems.

It is important to be neither over-pessimistic or over-complacent in the face of this offensive. The Tories are on the attack because of the new-found strength of workers. If this strength is used to the full, Heath and his cronies can be defeated. The danger is that the Tories will not be met with a unified, militant response from organised workers and will be able to pick them off section by section.

What happened to the power workers shows the dangers. Here was a group of workers with enough strength to win. Instead they were forced to abandon their work-to-rule by a carefully orchestrated press witchhunt. The massive propaganda in the factories needed to counter this witchhunt was not forthcoming from any of the traditional working class organisations.

What is happening to the welfare services reveals the same dangers. Unless there is militant action to stop the government, these vital services will deteriorate and come under the domination of private medical profiteers.

The gains some workers have made in the last year can only be turned into long-term gains for all workers by developing a movement that is political as well as industrial, that seeks to turn the particular struggles of individual sections of workers into a united stand of the whole working class against the employers' offensive and the system that has produced it.

## BARBAROUS SENTENCES IN LENINGRAD

EVERY SOCIALIST must oppose in the strongest manner the sentences imposed at the recent Leningrad trial. Condemning people to death for allegedly preparing to hijack a plane is only the most barbarous expression of the increasing repression against dissidents in Russia in recent years.

At the same time, however, it is necessary to denounce the hypocrisy of many of those who have raised their voices to protest. Supporters of the Israeli government who made no protest when an unarmed Arab hijacker was shot dead by an Israeli agent can hardly complain if the Russian government takes similar action.

Again, those who refuse to permit a million or more Palestinians to return to their country of birth can hardly complain if the Russian government refuses to permit Jews to go to this same country.

But the issue at stake is not, as both the Russian and Israeli governments try to pretend, whether Russian Jews should be allowed to migrate to Israel. The real issue is the repression against national minorities (groups like the Crimean Tartars as well as the Jews), intellectuals, and above all workers, that characterises the so-called Communist regimes. The barbarous verdict in Leningrad is inseparable from the bloody murder of striking workers on the streets of Gdansk and Stettin.

For the millions who suffer under such regimes, emigration, least of all emigration to a land where they can only survive by oppressing the indigenous population, is no solution. That is why the hypocritical support of Zionist circles for the Russian Jews is no support. The Zionists maintain a remarkable silence on the suffering of the millions of Russian Jews who show no desire at all to go to Israel.

Only the revolutionary overthrow of the Russian bureaucracy will end such suffering. Until then the duty of socialists everywhere is to oppose the repressive measures by which Stalin's heirs try to maintain their rule.

## East and West, wages are held down so bosses can compete

by CHRIS HARMAN,  
editor of International Socialism

THE BIGGEST ARMED CLASHES between groups of workers and governmental forces to be seen in Europe for more than a decade took place in the cities of Gdansk and Stettin in December. The Polish police of the so-called socialist regime fired on workers who had demonstrated on the streets and sung the Internationale.

In Russia and the so-called Communist countries of Eastern Europe, their policy has always had one aim: economic and military competition with the west. Brezhnev made this clear when (as reported in Pravda, 24 April 1970) he spoke of 'economic competition between two world systems ... (which) ... takes different forms'.

The rulers of these countries aim to produce as much as possible, to develop industry in order to produce even more. Just as workers in the west see their wages and living conditions held down so that their bosses can compete with one another, workers in Eastern Europe suffer in the same way.

Between 1950 and 1955 industrial production in Poland doubled according to official statistics. But workers' real wages fell by more than 5 per cent.

Workers' discontent with the system boiled over in 1956. In Poznan strikes turned into an uprising.

In the months which followed, the state apparatus virtually collapsed. The government could only survive by conceding large wage increases. At the same time it tried to increase its popularity by giving key posts to Communist politicians like Gomulka who had recently been in prison and by making an alliance with the leaders of the Catholic Church.

But concessions to workers did not last long. The workers' councils, which had been promised control of the factories in 1956, were dissolved a year later.

Police were used to break up workers' strikes and student demonstrations. The journal of the left wing intellectuals, *Po Prostu*, was closed down for allegedly raising the slogan: 'All power to the workers' councils'.

### ILLUSTRATE

The government could once again aim at using the economy to accumulate capital, disregarding the needs of workers. Between 1963 and 1968, the proportion of the national income devoted to satisfying consumers' needs fell from 66.0 per cent to 62.2 per cent. But the proportion spent on capital formation rose from 17.2 per cent to 19.5 per cent.

Other figures illustrate the same point. Steel and cement production both rose by 25 per cent, sulphuric acid and passenger car production by 50 per cent.

But production of the kind of goods ordinary workers could buy rose much less — cotton fabrics by only 6 per cent, meat and potato production hardly at all.

Again, while defence expenditure rose by 5.8 billion zlotys, social welfare expenditure fell by 3bn zlotys. And unemployment increased.

Workers' resentment against the regime grew under such conditions. The response of the authorities was to become more repressive.

After students and young workers demonstrated in 1968, 'liberal' administrators and intellectuals were thrown out of their posts. Left-wing socialists, like Kuron and Modzelewski, were imprisoned.

A government inspired wave of anti-semitism forced most of Poland's remaining Jews into exile. The influence of right wing, extreme authoritarian and anti-semitic elements like General Moczar increased.

The increasing grip of the police could not deal with the growing economic problems the country faced.

For years the average rate of economic growth has been falling. And the maintenance of even the present relatively low growth rate has required the use of more and more resources.

### INROADS

The five year plan due to end in 1970 required 60bn zlotys more of investment than had been foreseen. These could only be obtained by further inroads in workers' living standards. Despite this, many projects were not completed.

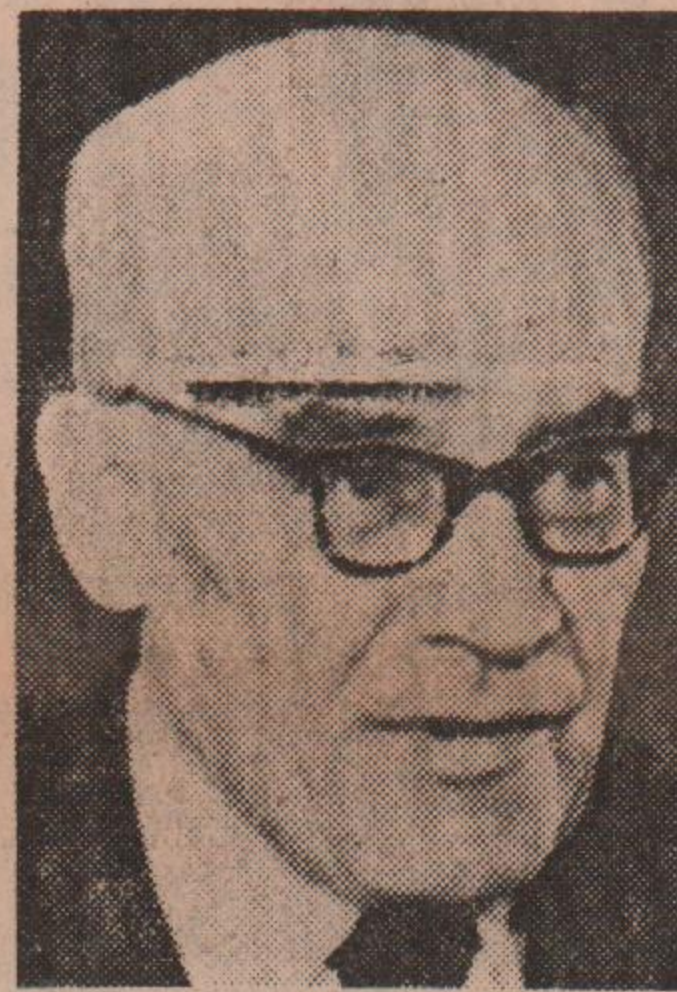
Again, expansion of industry is increasingly dependent on the buying of advanced equipment from the west. The money to buy these was supposed to come from increased sales of engineering products to the west. But Poland's rulers were unable to sell such products because of their low quality.

Increased quantities of farm produce had to be sold to the west instead. Prices were pushed up to stop workers buying foodstuffs that could be exported.

The immediate effect of the strikes and street fighting has been to cause a complete change in the government. Some western commentators have even seen this as a 'victory for Polish rioters' (Victor Zorza in *The Guardian*, 21 December).

But, in spite of criticism of the old administration, the new government has not abandoned the price increases. It has merely promised that there will be no further increases for two years.

## Why the workers fought in 'people's Poland'



GOMULKA: chopped



GIEREK: no concessions

Poland's new leader, Gierek, hopes to quell the workers' discontent by fine talk, as Gomulka did in 1956. But no real concessions have been made. Still less have the workers been given any real power.

The men now ruling Poland are as ready as Gomulka was to use tanks and police to beat workers into submission when necessary. Gierek was an active participant in the anti-semitic campaign of two years ago. And the initiator of that campaign, Moczar, has increased his power.

Above all, the new government will not be able to deal with the economic problems that produced the present crisis.

The economic difficulties have two origins, both a result of years of bureaucratic control.

The first lies in the inefficient organisation of the economy. Various schemes for 'economic reform' aim to overcome this.

The trouble with such schemes is that their full implementation requires the weakening of the power of thousands of bureaucrats who are in a strong position to resist such moves. But when the power of such bureaucrats has been weakened — as in Czechoslovakia in 1968 — the whole machine of repression has stopped working.

This is one thing which Poland's rulers do not want to happen at a time when workers are taking action on the streets.

In any case, it is by no means clear that schemes for reform can work. The record of the Czech economy in 1968 was not good.

Hungary, often lauded by western writers for its economic reform, has a growth rate not much better than Poland's. East Germany, with a different scheme of reform, has also been encountering economic difficulties recently.

There is a second, more basic, cause of the economic failings. Workers who have no control over production and do not benefit from it, refuse to commit themselves to the work process.

Productivity is low, and the quality of

output poor. This problem could only be overcome, even temporarily, by massive improvements in living standards. But a regime dedicated to competition internationally will never allow such improvements.

There is only one way these problems can be dealt with for good. A social revolution is needed.

The working class has to take political and economic power from the ruling bureaucracy. Workers' democracy has to replace bureaucratic control from on high. Production for the needs of the population has to replace production for international competition.

Short of such a revolution, the present problems in Poland can only be expected to worsen. Industry will stagnate. Workers' conditions will hardly improve. In-fighting within the ruling bureaucracy will reflect its inability to take society forward.

### PREVENTED

The Hungarian revolution of 1956, the Czech events of 1968-9, as well as the recent Polish strikes and demonstrations, show that the forces capable of making working class revolution are developing throughout Eastern Europe.

So far the most important factor preventing sustained successes for revolutionary forces has been the ability of the Russian army to intervene. This was certainly a factor preventing even more massive action by Polish workers.

But the ferment at work in Eastern Europe is also present in Russia itself. The Russian economy faces the same economic problems as Poland's, although not yet with the same urgency.

We can expect the massive Russian working class to copy the Poles by intervening in politics through strikes, demonstrations and armed insurrection in the next few years.

And when this happens, the Russian generals will no longer find that their army is all-powerful.

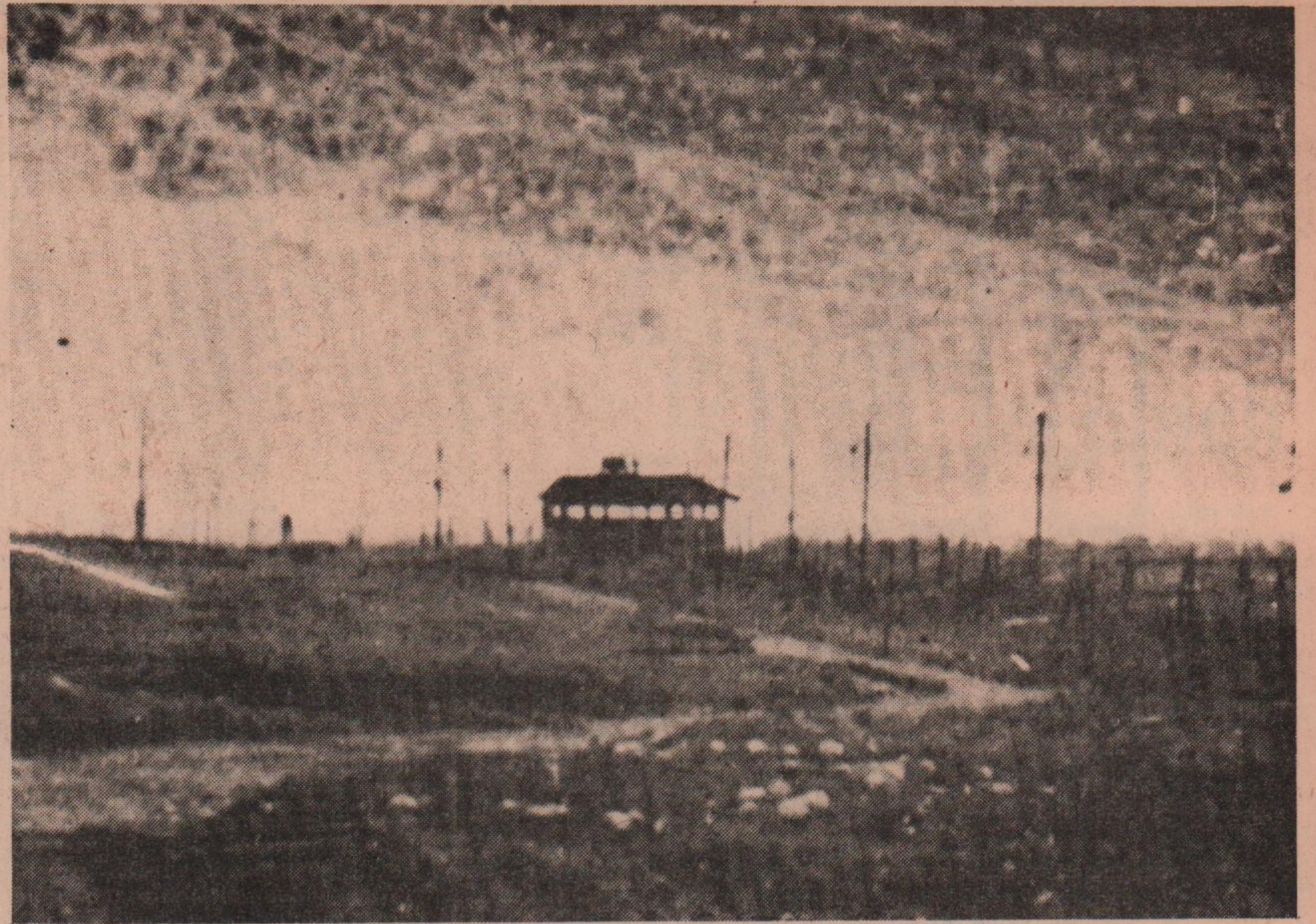
## Revolutionary socialist manifesto from a Polish prison

by Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski

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# LYNCH LAW

Irish premier to hold socialists in concentration camps like this...



The Curragh — Ireland's notorious concentration camp, taken from a safe distance

FRIDAY 4 DECEMBER was a landmark in the history of reaction. On the same night as dictator Franco introduced a three-month state of emergency against Basque freedom fighters, Irish prime minister Jack Lynch outlined his plans to introduce powers of internment without trial.

Lynch has the necessary laws waiting on the books and nothing but the united action of the Irish workers can stop internment from being introduced as soon as the prime minister gives the word.

## Call in the night

Internment is arrest without trial. A call in the night and the victim is dragged away to a police station and made to account for his movements.

If the interrogators are not 'satisfied' — and no reasons for 'dissatisfaction' need be given — the arrested man can be jailed for two months.

At the end of that period he is thrown into the terrifying Curragh concentration camp. After six months the case is reviewed by a military tribunal and then the prisoner can be left to rot indefinitely, without ever having seen a jury.

## From DALE FOX in Dublin



LYNCH: after the militants

Lynch means business. The Curragh has been opened in preparation for its first prisoners.

The camp consists of about 30 huts, lacking in sanitation and furnished with plank and trestle beds—two blankets to a bed and two buckets to a hut. Each hut is designed to hold 20 but has often held 30.

Before an embarrassed Irish government closed down the Curragh following an international outcry in the late 1950s against its inhuman conditions, prisoners were beaten and tortured and there were outbreaks of dysentery. No post mortem is given on any inmate who dies, either from dysentery or beatings.

Lynch has refused to explain his action to the Irish people. He has hinted at a national conspiracy of kidnapping and bank robbery but has refused to produce evidence for the Dail (parliament).

## Orders from Heath?

His right wing supporters are hinting that members of the left-wing group Saor Eire (free Ireland) are plotting to destroy the state. Saor Eire has fewer than 30 members!

There is speculation in Dublin that Lynch got his orders from fellow reactionary Ted Heath. The introduction of such powers of internment in the South, it is argued, would give 'respectability' to the use of similar repression in the North.

This threat is aimed at the Irish workers. After a sluggish post-war

period, the Irish economy has picked up in recent years as the Green Tories offered foreign capital the attractions of cheap labour.

Social services were cut to the bone to give foreign capitalists the maximum tax-free profits.

But the workers have been fighting back. Last year, Ireland had the best strike record in Europe. 60 per cent of the strikes were unofficial.

Lynch wants to break the strength of the militant workers and their political allies. First to disappear into the camps will be the armed groups, then the revolutionary socialists and anti-Common Market leaders, followed by militant trade unionists.

Lynch law aims to beat the workers into submission and then force an incomes policy down their throats.

But the Irish people have not been intimidated. Last month 2000 workers and students demonstrated outside the Prime Minister's home.

Fighting speeches were made by left republicans and socialists from the Northern barricades — from People's Democracy, Bernadette Devlin, MP, and Eamonn McCann of Derry Labour Party.

Four Labour MPs have been thrown out of the Dail for attempting to force a debate on internment. A left MP, Dr Noel Browne, has called for a General Strike against Lynch's measures.

But the official Labour Party is split down the middle over the issue.

Some of its leaders want to form a coalition government against Lynch with the right-wing opposition party, Fine Gael.

Outside parliament, a united front opposition has been formed that includes the League for a Workers' Republic, the Young Socialists, the Trade Unions' Rights Committee, Sinn Fein, Communist Party and student representatives.

Students at Trinity College demonstrated their solidarity with the workers by staging a one-day strike and teach-in last month.

But as Young Socialists leader Carol Coulter says: 'Protest politics are not enough. Internment will only be beaten by workers' action on the shop floor.'

## Growing repression

In Canada, Spain and Ireland 1970 was the year of Special Powers. Lynch's attack on Irish workers is part of the growing repression of a worried international capitalist class.

People said 'It can't happen here'. But it is happening — and it could so easily be followed in that other bulwark of 'liberal democracy' — Britain.

British workers can demonstrate their solidarity with their Irish brothers by leading and joining demonstrations against internment and fighting Toryism where it really hurts — on the factory floor.

## Sack your scriptwriter, Vic

'STICKS AND STONES may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.' This rhyme, known to every five year old, contains a lesson not yet learnt by the leaders of the TUC.

The gentlemen of the General council intend to struggle against the government's proposed industrial legislation with words ... and words ... and still more words.

Doubtless the TUC will fight to the last vibration of its larynx. But it will be to no avail.

The ruling class would not budge from its resolve even if the union leaders had William Shakespeare to write their speeches for them.

The Bill can only be defeated in one way — by industrial action. Capitalists have to be hit where it hurts.

By using this method, trade unionists would merely be copying the employers, who are never reluctant to use their economic power for political purposes.

They have always been prepared to withdraw their capital whenever they wanted to stymie things that were in the least progressive.

For example, even such a moderate Labour government as that of Clem Attlee in 1945 felt the stranglehold of capital. A balance of payments crisis precipitated its downfall in 1951.

by  
Raymond Challinor

This was largely caused by a rush of private capital from this country. As an official Labour pamphlet, 'Challenge to Britain', subsequently stated: 'Some £350 million was "hot money" quitting Britain because its owners disliked the Labour government's policy.'

A similar tactic was used against Wilson's administration in 1964. At the general election of that year, Labour had pledged itself to raise old age pensions immediately it obtained office.

Financiers, however, made it clear to the government that they would bring pressure on the pound, removing their sterling balances from London and placing them abroad, if the government continued with its proposals.

Faced with this threat, Harold Wilson surrendered on the question of old age pensions and many other issues.

Members of the TUC General Council, the opponents of industrial action, must be placed on the spot. They must be required to answer this question: Why is it legitimate for employers to withdraw their capital when they want to influence political

decisions but not for workers to withdraw their labour?

The fact is that the traditional methods of the right wing, both in the trade unions and the Labour Party, are shown to be increasingly inadequate. Such methods make it impossible for them to mount a serious campaign against the Tory government.

In a sense, recent history proves this point. From 1951 to 1964, the Conservatives were in power. Harold Wilson referred to this period as 'thirteen wasted years'.

Implied by this remark — although Wilson would not accept it — is also criticism of the feebleness of the Labour opposition that permitted the Tories to get away with things

This time we cannot afford to allow the Tories to rule for another 13 years. For the Edward Heaths of today are not the Harold Macmillans of yesterday.

Conservatism now is a savage beast red in tooth and claw. The growing plight of the British economy, the need to improve competitiveness by cutting labour costs, makes it ready and eager to disembowel the trade union movement.

There would be little left of workers' organisations if such an onslaught were permitted to continue for 13 years.

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by TONY CLIFF

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# what we stand for



THE International Socialists is a democratic organisation whose membership is open to all who accept its main principles and who are willing to pay contributions and to work in one of its organisations. We believe in independent working-class action, that we must overthrow capitalism and not tinker with reforms to patch it up. We work in the mass organisations of the working class and are firmly committed to a policy of internationalism. Capitalism is international. The giant firms have investments throughout the world and owe no allegiances except to themselves and the economic system they maintain. In Europe the Common Market has been formed for the sole purpose of increasing the trade and profits of these multi-national firms. The international power of capitalism can only be overcome by international action by the working class. A single socialist state cannot indefinitely survive unless workers of other countries actively come to its aid by extending the socialist revolution. In addition to building a revolutionary socialist organisation in this country we also believe in the necessity of forming a world revolutionary socialist international independent of either Washington or Moscow. To this end we have close relationships with a number of other socialist organisations throughout the world. We believe in rank and file control of the trade unions and the

regular election of all full-time officials. We are firmly opposed to secret negotiations and believe that all settlements should be agreed or rejected by mass meetings. We are for 100 per cent trade unionism and the defence of shop stewards. We are against anti-trade union laws and any curbs on the right to strike, whether the strikes are 'official' or 'unofficial'. We are against productivity deals and job evaluation and are for militant trade union unity and joint shop stewards committees both in the plant and on a combine basis. We support all demands for equal pay and for a better deal for young workers. We believe that there should be a minimum wage of at least £25 per week. We are opposed to unemployment, redundancy and lay offs and support the demand of five days' work or five days' pay. We support all workers in struggle and seek to build militant groups within industry. We are opposed to racialism and police victimisation of black workers.

We are opposed to any immigration restrictions and fully support the right of black people to self-defence. We are opposed to all nuclear weapons and military alliances such as NATO and the Warsaw Pact. We are opposed to secret diplomacy. Neither Washington nor Moscow but international socialism. We are opposed to all forms of imperialism and unconditionally give support to and solidarity with all genuine national liberation movements. We are for the nationalisation of the land, banks and major industries without compensation and under workers' control. We are for the introduction of a democratic planned economy in which resources can be devoted to social need. We are opposed to all ruling class policies and organisations. We work to build a revolutionary workers' party in Britain and to this end support the unity of all revolutionary groups. The struggle for socialism is the central struggle of our time. Workers' power and a world based on human solidarity, on the increasing of men's power over nature, with the abolition of the power of man over man, is certainly worth fighting for. It is no use just talking about it. Over a century ago Karl Marx wrote: 'The philosophers have merely interpreted the world. The point is to change it'. If you want to help us change the world and build socialism, join us

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## by ROGER PROTZ

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RECENT ACTIVITIES of the national newspapers — the crude witchhunting of the power workers, red scaremongering in connection with the 8 December strike, detailed coverage of every lunatic outburst by Lord Robens — has forced many people to reconsider their attitude to the idea of a 'free and unbiased press'.

What kind of freedom is it that allows a handful of powerful millionaire newspaper proprietors to manipulate public opinion against groups of workers with justifiable grievances? What kind of freedom is it that refuses workers under attack the right to answer back?

Real freedom demands that every person, regardless of rank or income, must have an equal right to communicate his or her ideas without fear or favour. Socialists go further: we believe that society should be collectively owned and planned for the common good, not for profit, and such a society demands newspapers, magazines, radio and television channels that reflect and advance the aspirations of all working people.

By that definition, we do not have a free press in Britain. The great majority of people are totally divorced from the newspaper industry and are merely dumb receivers of the press barons' ideas.

The British press is a mirror of the way in which the whole of capitalist society is dominated and controlled by a tiny handful of people who own nearly all the wealth and the means of production.

Ninety per cent of the British press is owned by seven powerful combines: Thomson (Times and Sunday Times), Beaverbrook (Express, Sunday Express), Rothermere (Mail, Sketch), International Publishing Corporation (Mirror, People), Berry (Telegraph, Sunday Telegraph), Murdoch (Sun, News of the World) and Pearson (Financial Times).

Their ownership is not confined to Fleet Street. Under various names, they control most of the local and regional newspapers as well. For example, whether you read the Newcastle Sunday Sun, or the Reading Evening Post or the Tottenham Weekly Herald, you will be reading a Thomson paper.

At the last count, Lord Thomson's organisation owned 44 provincial newspapers and the Mail group was a close runner-up with 42. But the

### Middle, upper and working class:

The Daily Sketch is likely to be killed. The result will be a profitable saving on office space and plant for the bosses and a heavy loss of jobs for printworkers and journalists.

The newspaper giants have a virtual stranglehold on the communications industry and, through it, on people's

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The Daily M in Scotland) is s ingly successful century. With a circulation and ing 15 million, it

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## THE IM

MOST would-be journalists have to be trained. At the demand of the National Union of Journalists, and with some co-operation by newspaper employers, the National Council for the Training of Journalists was set up to organise centres for journalistic education.

The time when the ruthlessly ambitious copy boy made it to the editor's chair is slipping into history. Now, in most cases, you become a journalist either by having A levels or a degree plus training, or through the back door for people with 'connections'.

On the training scheme, which I joined for a year, are a mass of would-be journalists, most of them keen and ambitious, and experienced journalists who lecture.

Most of the students are sponsored either by the NCTJ or a

newspaper. Th usually come sixth form if year course, a be moulded orters.

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### UNFAVOURABLE

The group has big financial stakes in the Purfleet Deep Wharfage and Storage Co on the Thames, Blox Motor Services, a major transport firm, the London General Cab Co and Southern Television. It is reasonable to suggest that the Mail's interest in docks, transport and taxis would tend to make it less than favourable in its newspapers to any struggles for higher wages by dockers, lorry drivers or taxi drivers.

The Thomson Organisation made £3,321,000 profits last year, a figure that allows for an admitted £1 million a year loss on The Times.

Thomson's interests include Yellow Pages, the business section of the telephone directories, Thomson's SkyTours, packaged foreign holidays for the less affluent middle class, Britannia Airways and Scottish Television, which Thomson declared frankly to be 'a licence to print money'.

Pearson's, owners of the business-man's paper the Financial Times, made £3,429,353 profits last year. It has interests in Lazard's Bank, a powerful city bankers, Whitehall Investment Trust, the Midhurst Oil Corporation and the Societe Generale Hellenique — a Greek holding company that made £296,400 profit last year. The Financial Times may well consider that the Greek colonels' vicious little dictatorship does have some merit.

Far and away the most powerful and rich of the newspaper giants is IPC, the Mirror group. Its profits last year were £8.9 million. As well as the money-spinning Mirror, IPC owns Fleetway Publications, the biggest magazine house in the world.

### TAKEN OVER

IPC has substantial holdings in Africa, including a 57 per cent interest in the Daily Times of Nigeria. As the IPC annual report blandly declared: 'Despite the civil war in Nigeria, these activities have maintained their profitability.'

Last year IPC was 'taken over' — in truth merged — with the Reed Group, the vast combine that supplies most of the newsprint in Britain. Its 1969 profits were £10.2 million and the merger produced a super-giant with near-monopoly powers.

Least profitable of the groups for whom figures are available (the Telegraph is a private family firm and produces no figures) is the Beaverbrook concern. Its profits last year were a mere £915,000.

But secret talks between Beaverbrook and Rothermere have been going on for some years now with a view to a link-up. This would result in the merging of the Express and the Mail and their London evening papers, the Standard and News.

# When the shoe starts to pinch

DID YOU FIGHT your way down London's Oxford Street during the Christmas rush? If you had made the turn into Bond Street, you would have found yourself in a different world.

It is a quiet and peaceful place. Most of the shops are closed all day or half the day.

Why? Well, the rich have five full days, every week, to do their shopping. It is quite a contrast to the rushed lunch hours and marathon Saturdays we have to endure when shopping at Christmas or in the sales.

I work in Bond Street away from the battleground of the multiple stores. My line is selling expensive shoes — and it is Christmas all the year round for our customers.

Shoes for the hunt ball, or perhaps the Queen's garden party, premieres, charity concerts and trips around the world.

## Moans and groans

We sit before them from 9 till 5.30, listening to their likes, dislikes, moans and groans and hysterics. They flash 100 guinea coats, suits and dresses in our faces while we charge about, up and down ladders, up and down stairs, 30 or more times a day, matching their extravagant creations to perfection.

The majority of the customers are patronising, which seems to be a disease of the rich, particularly in their attitude towards sales staff. When they pay high prices they expect subservient service — I have actually been referred to as a 'servant'.

You either swallow your pride or end up on the dole.

We do earn a commission on our sales and although it is enough to cause dissent between the staff, it leaves little impression on the company's profits at 4d in the pound.

The crunch comes on pay day. I might have just finished selling a customer two pairs of shoes, usually for about £30. I give her her receipt, goods and a dutiful goodbye and then find the large sum of £16 in my small brown wage packet.

It jars and stings — the customers usually spend as much or more on one pair of shoes than I earn in a week.

## Afraid to join

The company has a high turnover of staff. This, coupled with the fact that the majority of the staff are women, including foreigners needing work permits, makes any attempt to unionise impossible.

Most of the women know nothing about unions and have never heard of USDAW, the shopworkers' union. They are afraid to organise because of the threat of management reprisals through dismissals and pay cuts.

So, if you go window shopping down Bond Street and see the glittering shoe shops with knee-deep carpets and posh furniture, don't think it is easy working there.

Like every other job where you slave all day to make someone else a millionaire, it's lousy.

**Yvonne Robinson**



## The press mirrors and deepens the social divisions in society

The Express and Mail

the 'popular' papers in

information about world — and in particular the face of industry — is serious' press, read by middle classes.

and trivia are the 'popular' papers in

and Mirror groups. class and the workers tried to take a deep look at the problems of society. The Mirror brings out the extra bold headlines and the scathing condemnation.

RENCES

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WEST: HOW JOURNALISTS ARE TRAINED

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The Mirror is forced to make some concessions to its readers. On occasion, space is found between pictures of gorgeous dummies and stories concerning cheeky vicars to expose a scandal about the homeless, the jobless or the poverty-stricken.

But the conclusion is always the same: leave it to us, or leave it to the Labour Party — when they get back into office, things will be different. It is when groups of workers do make some effort to change things themselves that the Mirror brings out the extra bold headlines and the scathing condemnation.

The recent vilification of the power workers was kids' stuff compared to the Mirror's attitude when the power men last took industrial action and shop steward Charlie Doyle was headlined: The Most Hated Man in Britain.

The press exists to make money for its proprietors. If millions can be made from pandering to the most backward attitudes in society and by presenting the least important people as worthy of mass adulation, why bother to champion causes, expose scandals, lead campaigns for change and reform? There's no money in that, as Lord Thomson would be quick to admit.

Such an attitude leaves the press wide open to the grip of the advertisers. That grip is so powerful today that no national paper would make money without advertising — only the Mirror would just about break even.

Happy prisoners of the advertisers, the press moulds itself to suit the men who foot the bill. There can be no campaigns against price fixing, monopolies, the fraud of 'competition' between identical brands of washing powder and margarine for fear that the manufacturers will withdraw their favours.

Armies of sociologists and other

over-paid quacks are hired by advertising agencies to identify a paper's readers and direct both advertising and editorial content to suit those readers' 'tastes'. Men in tight suits and kipper ties who preach the religion of the classless society have actually divided up society into special class groups — A, B, C and D — to suit the advertisers.



ROTHERMERE: Merge with Express?

So the 'serious' press boasts of having the most A and B readers and acquires advertising for £100,000 houses, Mercedes-Benz motor cars and luxury yachts. The Telegraph, Mail and Express belt have the lower B and Cs and advertising that caters for white-collar jobs, electric lawn mowers and plastic garden gnomes. The Mirror and Sun are left with the lower Cs and Ds and wax fat on the revenue from detergents, fags and beer.

Clearly there is little competition for readers between the Mirror and The Times, but there is a fierce battle between papers within each social group. Advertisers give their goodies to the papers with the biggest readership.

If a paper's circulation drops and advertising revenue begins to dry up, it falls back on more and more sensationalism and scaremongering to win back the readers and the loot.

Until they merge, the Express and

Mail will fight tooth and claw for the biggest slice of lower middle class readers. Below them, Rupert Murdoch has boosted the sales of the once-setting Sun with the first lucrative sallies into the world of the naked breast. He has knocked the Mirror to such an extent that even Hugh Cudlipp has been forced to show a nipple or two.

The 'free press' is a kept press, the money-spinning plaything of the proprietors, the giant monopolies and their advertising.

Workers who challenge through strike action the right of the monopolies to dominate their lives are quickly shot down in flames by the press barons, while the middle-class yooks of Cublington and Wing who speak of 'armed resistance' to a new airport but present no actual threat to those monopolies are treated as cheerful, bucolic heroes by the press.

## UNDEMOCRATIC

The 'free press' is a monstrous fraud — vast power held by a few millionaire proprietors and their tame editors, none of whom is ever subjected to any democratic process. 'Who elected you?' they scream at shop stewards and unofficial strikers. 'And who elected you?' it might be pertinent to inquire of Lords Thomson and Rothermere, Lady Pamela Berry and Sir Max Aitken.

But exciting changes are taking place. Printworkers have challenged the 'right' of a cartoonist to witchhunt strikers. Some journalists are in revolt against arrogant management and an indolent, conservative union leadership.

But in general the great majority of journalists remain obedient cogs in the press barons' machine, cuddling up to the proprietors for fear of damaging

their 'professional status' through contact with the printing unions, a toffee-nosed attitude that has dropped them — deservedly — well down the wages ladder.

Even worse, journalists with trade union cards and a Code of Conduct, cheerfully set about writing ignorant distortions and abuse of other groups of workers in struggle. At even the most basic level, journalists accept the priorities of their masters: 'it is feared that a strike may spread ... it is hoped that the strike will end' they write without pausing to think that, where the workers themselves are concerned, the verbs 'feared' and 'hoped' could be interchangeable.

The answer? Not the 'trendy' demand for 'journalists' control' of papers which, even if obtainable within capitalism, would still sustain a system where papers are produced by the few for the many.

The real answer is, as always, the toughest one: the struggle to build a socialist press free from the domination of the market that with a genuine socialist movement will fight to transform people's ideas and society itself.

Out of a new, democratic system it will be possible to produce a press, owned and controlled by all working people, that will keep society forging ahead and will reflect their million-and-one interests, from politics to pigeon-fancying.

'With 26 soldiers of lead, we will conquer the world,' said Lenin who all his life was aware of the vital and dynamic role of socialist papers in building the workers' movement.

The world is still unconquered by working people. The task remains: only the technology has changed. With the aid of an IBM composing unit, we intend to finish the job.

newsworthy, and certain things were not.

We were given the task of writing about a car accident in which a man had been killed. Also in the car, and uninjured, was Edward Heath.

We had to include the name of the prime minister in the first paragraph along with the dead man. The fact that Ted Heath, though uninjured, was in the accident, was of equal importance as far as news value was concerned to a man's death.

When 10 men die in a train crash in England, that's news. If the Archbishop of Canterbury was travelling on that train then he, along with the dead men must be in the first paragraph. The headline on that story would be: 'Archbishop in "death train" crash'.

Deaths were given priority acc-

ording to area. For example, it takes hundreds of thousands to die in Pakistan under extraordinary circumstances, such as a typhoon, to make headline news in England. But vast numbers of Indians and Pakistanis die every year from starvation and that is not considered 'news value'.

If the Queen had dropped dead of a heart attack the night the typhoon in Pakistan was raging, there is no need to say what the headline news would have been next day.

This harping on great figures has the effect of reinforcing people's feelings of insignificance in their everyday lives.

The miles of material on the wealthy, the titled and the famous conjures up a world of fantasy into which people try and escape from the frustrations of their

lives.

We were also taught to know our readers. As far as the popular press was concerned, most of the lecturers had the same view as my former news editor: 'Imagine you are writing for 14 year olds'.

## SELECT

It was believed that it was possible to be objective in news reporting. The idea that anything written in a paper, the size of the story, its place on the page and its style makes some comment, is alien to the stereo-typed lecturers. Yet at the same time they taught us to comment by selecting what was newsworthy.

What newspaper proprietors need are unquestioning journalists, submissive people who go along with the system and are aloof from

the people they are writing about.

This is why we were taught to be objective, without ever being able to be objective. It was a justification for all the damaging, hurtful and sometimes inhuman stories that we were told we would have to write.

Newspapers in a capitalist society are not only an expression of the oppressiveness of that system; but also help to reinforce the system.

The freedom of the press is only the freedom of the ruling class to use that press.

Journalists do not share in that freedom enjoyed by the very few. They are cogs in the wheels that keep the system rolling on.

When journalists begin to challenge their role, they will be in a key position to throw a spanner in the lie machine.

# 1950s: the stewards force the pace...



1958: the bus strike. Frank Cousins addressing a strikers' rally

The experience of the labour movement underwent significant changes in the post-war period. In the 1950s especially, the capitalist system expanded at a rate that was unprecedented in the whole of its history.

Although the share of the working class in the national wealth remained roughly the same as it had been in 1870—42 per cent—real wages doubled in the 25 years after the end of the war. This is true even though huge pockets of poverty remained.

In this period of relatively rising prosperity, the profits of the capitalist class shot up enormously. Between 1948 and 1950, profits rose by 13 per cent to reach a total of £2,147 million. By 1960, annual profits had risen to £3,608 million.

Since the beginning of the Second World War, the type of chronic unemployment that was so familiar in the 1920s and especially the 1930s disappeared.

Exceptions to this were the backward regions such as Northern Ireland and the North East. But on the whole, in the 1940s and 1950s, labour became a scarce commodity.

## Rise of giants

Employers were anxious to retain their workers and to avoid the kind of turnover of labour that became so expensive with the introduction of increasingly sophisticated machinery.

It is only recently, with the growing crisis of British capitalism, that permanent unemployment has reached the post-war peak of more than 600,000.

A crucial feature of the post-war economy has been the rise of the giant corporation through an accelerating spate of mergers and takeovers.

In 1963, 180 large-scale firms, employing one-third of the manufacturing labour force, accounted for one half of capital expenditure. 200 firms produced half of Britain's manufacturing exports, and a dozen produced as much as one fifth.

Parallel to this has been the increasing concentration of wealth at the top. By 1961, 1 per cent of the adult population had come to own 81 per cent of privately owned com-

## Part Four of a series

by

SABBY SAGALL

pany shares, and nearly all the rest was owned by the top 10 per cent.

Against this background of relatively full employment, economic growth and the unceasing concentration of capital in mammoth firms, workers were able to achieve rising standards through local struggles at the level of the plant.

Without competition for jobs, and with rising company profits, workers came to rely less on parliament and the state for benefits and reforms and more on their own local strength.

The shop floor became in the 1950s the main focus of working-class activity as workers sought to raise their wage levels above the rates negotiated nationally between the official trade unions and the employers' organisations.

In 1964, the official nationally-negotiated rate for an engineering fitter was £10 11s 8d, but actual average earnings for fitters on time rate (excluding overtime) was £16.

Since 1948, the official standard wage fell as a proportion of actual average earnings in most industries. In manufacturing, supplementary bonus payments negotiated locally rose as a proportion of actual earnings from about 19 per cent in 1948 to about 26 per cent in 1959.

The struggles of the 1920s were massive, drawn-out battles involving whole sections of the working class—railwaymen, engineers, miners, culminating in the General Strike. By contrast, the characteristic struggle of the post war period was the short, sharp strike involving a relatively small number of workers under unofficial leadership.

The 1950s were years in which there were more individual strikes than in the 1920s. And in the five-year period 1956-1961, the number of workers participating in strikes

was comparable to the number involved in the great strikes from 1921 up to and including the General Strike of 1926.

The growing militancy of the working class between the 1930s and the 1950s is also revealed in the rise in the number of man-days lost through disputes. From the years 1930/38 to 1956/64, man-days lost in the docks rose from 39,800 to 169,100 and in engineering from 88,000 to 1,290,300.

In addition, the 1950s saw an increase in the numerical strength of the unions. By the end of the decade, TUC affiliations had risen from 7,827,000 to 8,300,000.

Central to any analysis of the rise of local trade union militancy in this period is the revival and consolidation of shop stewards' organisations. For it is the shop steward who leads the shop floor struggle for higher pay sick benefits and pensions, and for improved working conditions.

It is primarily against the shop steward that the Tories' anti-union legislation is directed in an effort to destroy his capacity to lead militant unofficial strikes.

## Wiped out

The shop stewards who led the militant strikes of the First World War, had created a national movement. It was virtually wiped out after 1920 with the onset of the slump and the employers' offensive.

In engineering, it was only with the revival of trade in the late 1930s that the number of shop stewards began to grow again. From 1947 to 1955, the number of AEU stewards in federated establishments rose by 39 per cent. According to the TUC report of 1960, there were 200,000 shop stewards in British industry.

It is in the large firms especially that shop stewards feature prominently. About half of Britain's trade union members are represented on the factory floor by shop stewards. It is this half which is the best organised and most militant section of the trade union movement.

The revival of shop stewards' organisations went hand in hand with the increasing remoteness of the trade union bureaucracy. The union leadership in this period increasingly became willing and anxious to collaborate with the capitalist state.

Because of this, it is clear that the real initiative for the struggle against anti-union legislation will have to come from the rank and file. The experience of the post-war years suggests that the rank and file have developed stronger muscles than ever before.

## THE MEANING OF MARXISM

A weekly column by Duncan Hallas



ON THURSDAY 24 October 1929, 'Black Thursday', the American stock market collapsed. It was the signal for the greatest economic crisis in the history of capitalism so far. After the great (Wall Street) crash came the great depression. In 1933, the US gross national product (total production of the economy) was nearly a third less than in 1929. Not until 1937 did the physical volume of production recover to the levels of 1929, and then it promptly slipped back again.

Until 1941 the dollar value of production remained below 1929. Between 1930 and 1940 only once, in 1937, did the average number unemployed during the year drop below eight million. In 1933 nearly 13 million were out of work, or about one in every four of the labour force. In 1938 one person in five was still out of work.

In Britain, in Germany, in every developed monopoly capitalist country the situation was similar. Marx's prediction that capitalist crises would become more and more severe seemed to have been proved in practice.

The 'revisionist' and liberal arguments that 'organised' ie monopoly capitalism would eliminate crises were shattered. The result could have been socialist revolutions in the developed capitalist countries.

In fact, due mainly to the tragic degeneration of the Communist Parties, at that time the only possible source of revolutionary leadership, it was defeat and demoralisation for the working classes, fascism and finally another world war.

Most marxists believed that, after that war, a post war boom would be followed by an even bigger and more terrible slump. It has not yet happened.

Instead there has been a tremendous expansion of capitalist production, checked only by one or two mild recessions. True, this has gone hand in hand with the continuing and perhaps growing impoverishment of the 'Third World'.

## Stabilised

The fact remains that in the areas of working class concentration, the advanced capitalist countries, the system was stabilised. That this stabilisation was temporary and is now beginning to crumble away is the crux of marxist analysis of contemporary capitalism. To understand why we have to grasp the real causes of the 'long boom'.

Several supposed causes can be disposed of quickly. First, the argument that the tremendous destruction of the Second World War and the need to rebuild the productive forces are mainly responsible.

It seems incredible that anyone should believe this in 1970 but some, apparently, still do. Now the war has been over for 25 years.

Actually there was a post-war boom, due mainly to this cause, between 1945 and 1949. Then a recession began, most clearly marked in the USA. It was short-lived.

In 1950 the Korean war began and with it a new boom. And it is the years since 1950 that have seen the really sensational economic growth.

## Fundamental

The extent of the growth is often underestimated. It was, in fact, unprecedented. The system has never grown so fast for so long as since the war—twice as fast between 1950 and 1964 as between 1913 and 1950 and nearly half as fast again as during the generation before that.

A popular idea is that it is new inventions, technological progress that cause this economic expansion. The rate of technological change is now greater than at any time in the whole course of human history.

So naturally growth is faster and slumps virtually disappear. This argument misses the fundamental point that under capitalism production is not for use but for profit.

Capital is invested if there is a good expectation of profit and not otherwise, no matter how useful a new product might be to people. There was, after all, no lack of useful inventions awaiting development in 1930.

Television is a good example. As the scientist J D Bernal pointed out, 'the development of television was

## Arms: key to postwar recovery

slow not because its principles were not grasped at an early date (Campbell Swinton's proposals on essentially the same lines as are now used were made in 1911) and not because of the technical difficulties... It lagged essentially because the key electrical firms... were too intent on immediate profits to indulge in expensive development.

In fact the connection between the boom and technological progress is the opposite of that usually supposed. It is the existence of the boom that makes it profitable to invest in new products and not the other way round.

Another popular misconception is that the state planning and management that are a feature of every modern capitalist economy are the explanation. This is, of course, the reformist view.

Now state intervention in the economy is important, state expenditure is enormously important but planning and management only work so long as they go with the grain of the system.

## New Deal

There have been many other examples of the same kind. Perhaps the most important was the American 'New Deal' of the 1930s. This was state intervention on a really massive scale. It had a number of effects but one effect it did not have was the one it was intended to achieve. It did not end the slump.

What did end the slump, in Europe as well as in the USA was armament production. There can be absolutely no doubt about this. The seven years from 1930 to 1937 included (1931-32) two of extreme depression and five of recovery. But that recovery ended in the first half of 1937.

In the autumn of that year a new slump occurred. Unemployment rose by three-quarters of a million in Britain. In America it rose by four million in nine months.

All the indices show that the new slump was not merely as severe as, but much more severe than, the great slump of 1929... The slump was stopped in mid-career... Nor was there the slightest doubt... as to the cause of this unprecedented event... It was the direct consequence of the fact that the British government was spending £700 million a year on armaments. And similarly, a little later, in the USA.

It is state expenditure then, and not planning as such that overcomes crisis. And, as will be shown, not just any expenditure but, crucially, armament expenditure.

The importance of this 'Department Three' output is the key. It is this that has sustained the long boom. The reasons why it cannot go on doing so indefinitely can now be examined.

Don't miss this important pamphlet  
How to fight the Tories  
by PAUL FOOT

8d including post from IS BOOKS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN

NEXT WEEK:  
lessons for today

## LETTERS

IT ANNOYED us here very much in our 19th century, underprivileged hospital to hear the fully-equipped hospitals like Guys and St Thomas', with their vast private endowments, complain of the 'irresponsibility' of electricity power workers in causing danger to life by power cuts.

Our hospital had not cuts because it has its own generators and we say it is irresponsible of hospital authorities not to have provision made so that lives can be endangered by power cuts - which can come at any time.

We all know it was the bosses and not the workers who decided where and when the cuts came.

During the power dispute, an excellent illustration of who causes inflation was given to me in Woolworth's, Brentwood. The candles had gone up from 5s to 7s a dozen in one day.

I queried this with the assistant who maintained that the candles were slightly longer than the ones previously on sale. I challenged this and a supervisor and then the manager were called.

By this time a crowd of about 30 or 40 people had gathered. One man slapped me on the back and said 'good for you, lady' and some of the women backed me up, saying that they were the same candles that had been 5s the previous day.

The manager returned with an apology that the candles were in fact 5s and not 7s and a mistake had been made. When I asked him what he was going to do with all the excess profit, he said the people could have their money back.

I pointed out that the people would not know this and the shoppers agreed that the money should be donated to charity.

Then I went home after a most enjoyable afternoon's shopping. - MAGGIE MOLONEY, SRN, Confederation of Health Service Employees, Brentwood, Essex.

FURTHER to your comments about Jack de Manio's performance during the recent electricity workers' dispute, I wrote to the BBC to complain of the hardly disguised bias against the workers and unions. I received the following brief but interesting reply from the Head of Programme Correspondence: 'We accept your point and it has been taken up with Mr de Manio.' - JOHN M COWIN, Walthamstow London E17

UP UNTIL the last issue (11 December, Socialist Worker was putting forward a serious plan to oppose the Tories' anti-union laws. You called for local Councils of Action to link rank and file organisations to fight the laws, union leaders to pledge non-co-operation with the laws and support for the strikes on 8 December and 12 January.

But on 19 December Socialist Worker decided to jump on another bandwagon. The headline of the lead article was 'General Strike'.

The question we should be trying to answer is, how can socialists and militant trade unionists who read Socialist Worker best fight against the anti-union laws? Demanding that the TUC should call a General Strike is an easy way out.

Without risk or inconvenience, we demonstrate our socialist virtue by showing that we do not shrink from the most militant action. When the TUC fails, we can expose them as traitors to the working class. Meanwhile... the laws are enforced.

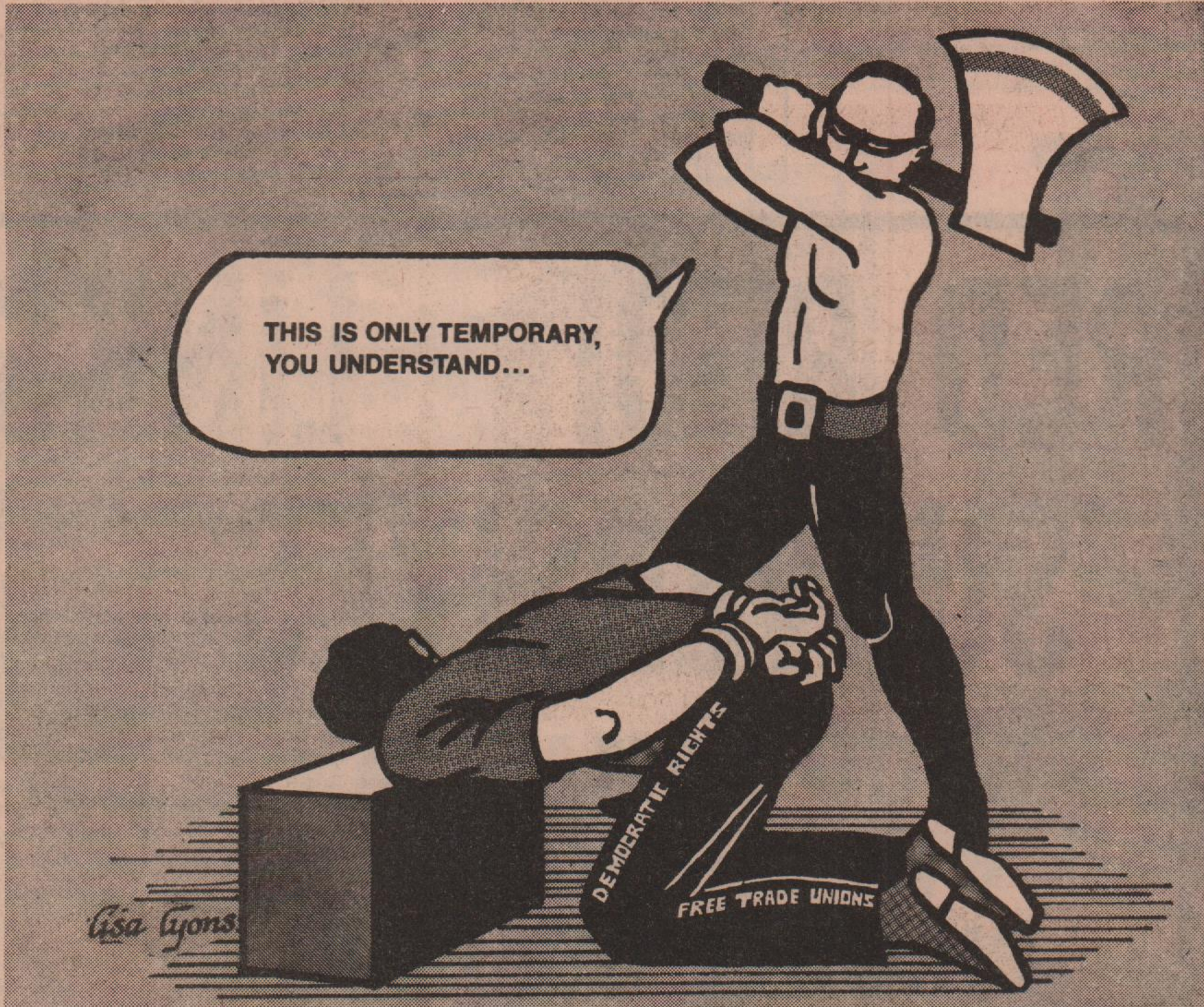
The headline calls for 'action to force the TUC to call a General Strike'. What action? The only answer the article gives is that we should demand a General Strike in meetings on and before 12 January.

On 8 December about 5 per cent of Britain's trade unionists could be brought out for a token strike. Are we to believe that a few militants making speeches in favour of a General Strike can transform this situation into one where the whole trade union movement will come out on an indefinite stoppage?

The crowning absurdity of the article is that it demands that the TUC should both call a General Strike and commit itself to disobeying the anti-union laws. If the laws are going to be stopped by a General Strike, then there's no need to disobey them. If we're going to take no notice of them anyway, what point is there in a General Strike to stop them?

In fact, the call for a General Strike lets the union leaders off the hook. They can quite accurately reply that if they did call a General Strike, then it would be a disastrous failure. They can make no such reply to a demand for non-co-operation with the laws.

The Tories can and will be fought. But they will be fought by militants taking account of the real relation of forces and building a rank and file movement that can act to force the union leaders to fight - not be opportunist phrasemongering that sounds super-militant but in fact means no effective activity. - MARTIN THOMAS, Withington, Manchester 20.



A cartoon by Lisa Lyons from Workers' Power, paper of the American International Socialists

## COTTONS COLUMN

THE ASSEMBLED band of crooks, swindlers and feudal relics who are known as the Tory government make a great deal of noise about the need for competition in industry. A return to the old freebooting capitalism of 60 years ago is apparently what the country needs to drag it from the economic mire.

Big business must have a quiet chortle at this nonsense. There is as much competition in British industry as in a world heavyweight fight between Mohammed Ali and Wee Georgie Wood.

As the years roll by, more and more mergers take place that result in bigger and bigger monopolies dominating our lives and fixing prices. The magazine Trade and Industry reported last month that, between July and September 1970, 200 companies were taken over for a total payment of just over £300 millions.

In the first half of the year some £400m was paid out in mergers. The total value of mergers in the first nine months of the year was £1089m almost as much as the total for the whole of 1969.

About 30 of the acquisitions involved an expenditure of more than £1m. The largest was the acquisition of Wiggins Teape by British American Tobacco (£60m), of Alloys Unlimited Inc by Plessey (£55m) and of Berni Inns and Mecca by Grand Metropolitan Hotels (£15m and £31m respectively).

Further evidences comes from that famous white elephant, the Monopolies Commission. In a recent survey it shows that the number of British companies with assets of more than £500,000 declined from 2024 at the end of 1957 to 1253 in December 1968. Biggest reductions were in textiles, drink, non-electrical engineering, retail distribution and food.

### Move along

THE TORY PARTY's ideological pacesetter, Mr Enoch Powell, has momentarily turned his attention from black immigrants to a



POWELL: no to nomads

small defenceless group - gipsies. Powell is enraged by the free movement of people from one nation to another. He is also quite apoplectic at the thought of gipsies moving around the country and parking their caravans on 'free' land.

Last month he called for the repeal of the Act that requires local authorities to provide gipsies with camp sites. He told Tories in Wolverhampton that the Conservatives were not responsible for 'this piece of bad legislation'.

Powell is not content with wanting to hound gipsies from one camp to another. He has more sinister plans for them.

'If a man or a family choose to hire a nomadic existence, I have no complaint against their choice. Should we consider that some of them ought not to have been admitted to this country in the first place, that is an entirely different question and one to be dealt with through the laws of nationality and immigration.'

Stand by for an announcement from Ted Heath any day now that he intends to tighten up on the laws relating to gipsies.

STORIES we didn't bother to read: 'Did Jesus die aged 106 in Japan?' - headline in Monday's Times.

### Dig that!

DEPARTMENT of utter absurdity: Coal Board chairman Lord Robens has spent a great deal of time and energy in the last 10 years in shutting down 'unprofitable' pits and throwing thousands of miners out of work.

Now he has ordered an intensive search for new coalfields in Yorkshire and the East Midlands - because of the acute coal shortage. And the coal Board says the pits are chronically understaffed - by some 8000 miners.

That's 'planning' for you. Still, searching for pits makes a change for looking for 'reds' for Baron Alf.

### Thorny one

PAUL ROSE, the fervent Zionist Labour MP, told startled readers of the Jewish Chronicle last month that he had unearthed yet another world-wide conspiracy to undermine poor little peace-loving Israel.

The latest friends of El Fatah, he said, were the lunatic subversives of the Irish-Arab Solidarity Campaign who were engaged in activity to further their campaigns in Ulster and the Middle East.

Rose's disclosure caused much puzzlement, not least amongst members of the Irish Solidarity Campaign and supporters of the Middle East guerrillas. Do not adjust your newspaper - there is a fault in Paul Rose.

### Sounds fishy

THE PENTAGON confirmed this week that it has sent a number of porpoises to Vietnam to perform 'certain secret war duties'. The purpose of the porpoise unit is for 'evaluating a surveillance and detection system'.

Half a dozen porpoises are being trained in California. porpoises can be trained to retrieve lost missiles, guide frogmen back to their base and distinguish between metals. And it is thought that they will one day be trained to penetrate enemy harbours.

The Pentagon refused to comment on the rumour that Bob Hope will give a special concert for porpoises off the Saigon coast next Christmas. We don't see why not. At least they might not have heard his jokes before - unless they write them, that is.

AN all-white jury in Oklahoma City has sentenced a Negro to 1500 years in jail for raping a white woman.



CHRISTMAS telly viewing is like searching for a few tanners in a very stale Christmas pudding. Hour after hour of 'holiday spectaculars' spread like arctic wastes before the unwary watcher.

The shortage of genuinely funny comedians always brings home to me at a time like this just how much we miss the real talent of Tony Hancock and how grim the winter months will be now that Monty Python's Flying Circus has finished its current series. What a tragedy that the Circus has only been seen in selected BBC regions due to the fact that the more censorious regional bosses have refused to show this outrageously funny programme.

It has broken nearly all the boundaries of accepted humour and 'good taste'. Monty Python is, of course, closely related to the old Goon Show, but the Goons never successfully translated from radio to television, while much of the humour of Monty Python is purely visual.

Given the usual BBC policy, there is a strong chance that the last series will be repeated during 1971. Watch out for it.

### Memories

My favourite memories are the long John Silver Impersonators' Football Team, the Richard III ward in the Hospital for Overacting and the World Forum quiz programme in which such brains as Karl Marx, Lenin, Mao and Che Guevara had great difficulty in coping with questions like 'Who won the Cup Final in 1962?'

The BBC's Play of the Month on Christmas Eve was Peter Shaffer's Five Finger Exercise, a stagey version of a rather overwritten but interesting drama about a rich, upper middle-class family. Shaffer's main theme is that the 'family unit' makes impossible demands of people's affections and that money and security do not ensure happiness.

The family - parents, a son at university and a young teenage daughter - is riven by petty jealousies and pent-up frustrations. The mother is an impossible snob who believes that she has married beneath her. Her husband, who has made a small fortune from shoddy furniture, is an ex-grammar school boy who hates his wife's pretensions and feels that she is turning the son into a 'pansy'

### Scapegoat

The son, who has been forced to pour all his love on to his mother, finds the clash between family and university almost too much to stand and is on the verge of a breakdown.

A young German, employed as a tutor for the daughter, is used as a scapegoat for the neuroses of mother, father and son. In a melodramatic ending, he finds himself accused by the son of making love to the mother, by the mother of 'upsetting' the daughter and by the father of a 'strange' relationship with the son. Not surprisingly he attempts to commit suicide.

Overblown and rather overacted, the play nevertheless had some pertinent comments to make about the much-vaunted middle-class family being the bulwark of capitalist society.

As usual, the standout comedy performance on Christmas Day was The Queen, who read her prepared homily on the Commonwealth with all the zeal of a tired ventriloquist's dummy. It sounded like a nice schoolgirl's routine essay: 'And then we went further north, where we met the Esquimaux, a warm and friendly people'. Six out of 10 dear, but do try and put more feeling in it.

David East

# Socialist Worker

## Back-peddalling on 12 January

IF PLANS for 12 January in Scotland are a useful guide, then it would seem that the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions is playing down the importance of an all-out national strike on that day.

The West of Scotland Liaison Committee is calling for a 'Day of Action' on 12 January that will:

1. Implement the TUC proposals for factory meetings at lunch time
2. Extend these meetings into working hours. Even TUC secretary Vic Feather has said that this is likely to

happen.

3. Stop for the rest of the day and attend a demonstration in Glasgow.

It seems likely that the Communist Party-backed Liaison Committees which see the fight against the Tory laws as a protest rather than an all-out fight between workers and government, do not wish to appear too far to the left of 'left-wing' members of the TUC.

It is vitally important that 12 January gets an even bigger response than 8 December. Half-day strikes will not force the Tories to think again.

Militants should fight for mass meetings in all work places to discuss 12 January and the Tory laws. Strong factories should call for a total strike on that day and should elect delegations to travel to London to demonstrate there and lobby the TUC's protest rally in the Albert Hall.

Above all, the hesitation of the Liaison Committees underlines the urgent necessity of building genuine Councils of Action in every area made up of rank and file delegates from places of work.

## Firemen fight Tories over pay and hours

by a Fireman

THE LATEST VICTIMS of the Tories' attacks on workers' living standards have been local authority firemen.

On the eve of a pay deal expected to give firemen a 40 hour week and earnings comparable to skilled workers in industry, the employers on the Fire Brigades National Joint Council were summoned to the Home Office. Home Secretary Maudling spelled out clearly that, whatever the merit of the firemen's claim, the employers would not offer more than 5 per cent.

The firemen have a good case. A government report on the fire service recommends that firemen's pay should be on a par with earnings of skilled craftsmen.

The earnings of airport firemen have been quoted in comparison by the Fire Brigades Union in pursuing the claim. The airport men earn £37 for a 53 hour week—a three hour shorter working week for £10 more than local authority firemen.

The union is also pressing for a commitment to a 40-hour week. At the moment firemen work a basic 46 hour week, with a majority working an additional 10 hours a week overtime. A basic 44 hour week from 1 April 1971 was agreed in the last interim pay award.

The offer the employers finally made was 5 per cent in cash. But they claimed it would amount to a 10 per cent award because of the further two hours' reduction from 1 April.

The union reacted quickly and banned everything except 'emergency calls'. The promptness with which this was done is creditable, but firemen must realise that while the fires are being put out the government is not going to worry too much. The fire authorities are relying on the traditional reluctance of firemen to do anything to take away fire cover.

The union members will be looking for a lead from their national executive. If this lead is not forthcoming then militant brigades up and down the country may take firmer action themselves.

## Yorks Communist split

SOUTH YORKSHIRE Communist Party is divided over a recent settlement of a strike at Batchelor's Foods in Sheffield. The strike was caused by the dismissal of AEF convenor Terry Devey, who has now resigned from the party.

Part of the settlement recommended to the workers by AEF district secretary George Caborn — also a Communist Party member — was that Mr Devey should resign and accept a 'resettlement grant' of £3000.

The party district committee has strongly condemned these terms for a return to work and has criticised the conduct of Mr Caborn. The committee argues that the settlement accepts in principle one of the clauses in the government's industrial relations Bill in which workers wrongfully dismissed would not be entitled to reinstatement but could claim up to £4000 in compensation.

# RED RUDI — LINKS WITH 'SUBVERSIVES' 'GOOD SAMARITAN' IN BIG FOOD CHARITY SCANDAL

from SAUL FOOT

JERICHO:- Sir Peter Rawlinson, chief public prosecutor of the district of Jericho urged a disciplinary tribunal of the Roman authorities yesterday to expel 'a certain man', who was unnamed but is believed to be the controversial immigrant from Jerusalem known as 'Red Rudi'.

Giving warning that in the best traditions of Roman justice he intended to call all his witnesses and produce all his evidence behind closed doors, Sir Peter outlined to the tribunal (whose chairman is Mr P Pilate) how Mr Rudi had hit the headlines during the recent unrest in Jerusalem by urging strikes and demonstrations against the Roman authorities.

On a journey to fulfil a speaking engagement in Jericho, he had fallen among thieves who quite understandably had beaten him almost to death, stripped him of his clothing and left him bleeding in the road.

## PASSED BY

Sir Peter went on: 'While he was lying there, Sir James X (names were excluded from the hearing) my learned friend and colleague at the Bar, one of the most distinguished jurists in the Levite community, drove past, and recognised Mr Rudi. He decided at once to pass by on the other side. My government has nothing but praise for this sensible and pragmatic reaction to what was for so eminent a lawyer a grave crisis of conscience'.

Sir Peter also complimented the behaviour of a well-known liberal priest who was also travelling along the road where Rudi lay. 'The holy man,' said Sir Peter, 'having discovered the identity of the worthless subversive, steadfastly refused to assist him.'

'As ill-luck would have it,' said Sir Peter, 'the next man to come down the road was a Samaritan, a dark-skinned fanatic who, through a misfortune of inheritance, had amassed a considerable fortune.' Sir Peter promised that he would demonstrate to the tribunal that the Samaritan was a member of an extremist organisation which preached and practised violence all over the Empire, and even beyond it.

There was clear proof, he said, that the organisation had links with the Persians. 'Whatever we think of the Persian government,' he said, 'we and they are at one in our total abhorrence of the preposterous principles expounded by the Samaritan and his organisation.'

Sir Peter described the behaviour of the Samaritan towards the dying Rudi as 'utterly disgraceful'. He had immediately stopped the bleeding. Not content with that, he had then transported Rudi to Jericho and put him up for several weeks until he was fully recovered.

The court was shocked into silence when Sir Peter, drawing breath to give emphasis to what he plainly regarded as his most poignant passage, said: 'I can then prove that money passed hands'. The Samaritan, he alleged, had opened a credit account at a grocer's store to enable the convalescent Rudi to get food and drink.

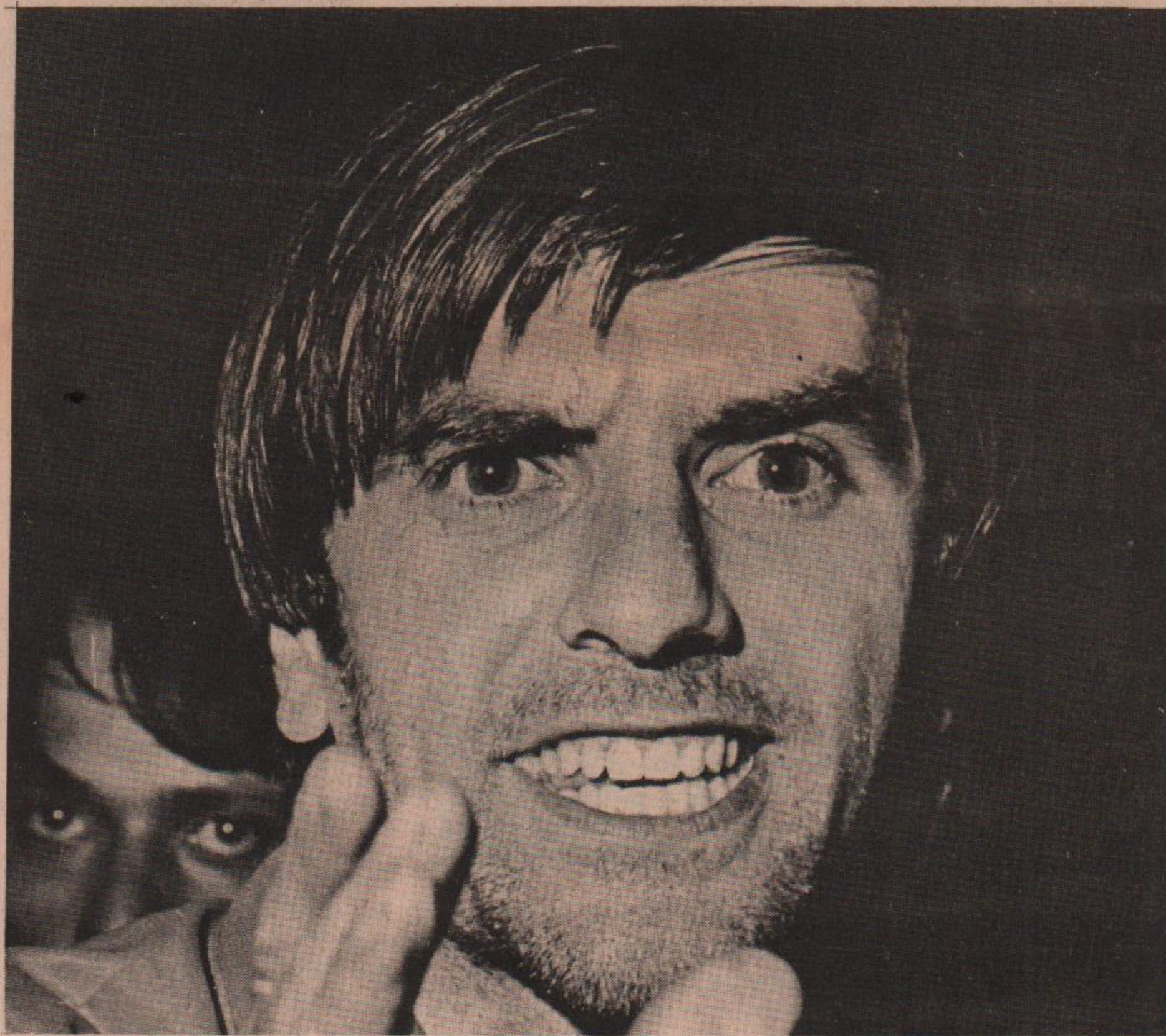
'All the evidence points one way,' Sir Peter concluded. 'Acting surreptitiously, the Samaritan saved the rascal's life. He then found a place for him to live.'

'We can further show that on one occasion the Samaritan arranged for Rudi to go on holiday on the sea of Galilee at a time when the fishermen of that area, whipped up by the well-known fanatic, 'Red' Jesus Christ, were complaining about the new tax system.'

'This rogue now seeks asylum in Jericho, despite his admitted connection with well-known subversives and malcontents. Pathetically, he pleads that he is a sick man and wants no more part of politics.'

'I say this sickness is nothing but a cover for an attempt to spread his poisonous doctrine, in league no doubt with the Samaritan, throughout the city of Jericho.'

The tribunal are expected to announce their decision in the Rudi case within a few days. Mr Rudi, however, is certain to be deported and arrangements have already been made for Sir Peter Rawlinson to accompany him to the city gates, and, in accordance with the old Roman custom, to whip him for the first hundred yards into the desert.



Red Rudi: sinister connection with fishermen's leader

## NOTICES

DAGENHAM IS: Bernadette Devlin on the Struggle for Socialism. Monday 4 January, 7.30pm Leys Hall, Ballards Lane. Tuesday 5 January, 1pm, she will speak outside Ford's Body Plant (near The Chequers).

WALTHAM FOREST Council of Action: Bernadette Devlin speaks in Walthamstow on 20 January. Details next week.

## Pay battle looms at Scots Chrysler

by Steve Jefferys, AEF shop steward

THE PRESSURE is on at Chrysler's Linwood car factory in Scotland. A productivity deal signed in 1968 expired on 31 December and from Thursday there will be no agreed working conditions, grades or rates of pay inside the factory.

Chrysler has told the men at Linwood that they are broke and cannot afford to pay them the same rates as at Coventry—a difference of 5s8d an hour. And they insist on renewing Measured Day Work in the factory, with all the loopholes in the old agreement plugged up.

Chrysler's offer is a 2s3d per hour rise conditional on 15 'pages of strings' being added to the '100 deal. An example of what they mean is an agreement that only members of the Institute of Work Study Practitioners can challenge the time and motion man's definition of 'normal effort'.

The shop stewards have replied that they do not accept that Linwood workers must continue to be the poor relations. They insist that when they talk about conditions of work, it is about improvements, not about the opposite.

Last week the management seemed

ready to shut the factory if the stewards did not agree that press dies could be taken from Linwood to GKN-Sankey. Chrysler wanted the dies used in making body panels for the Avenger car to be taken from Linwood before the New Year, when a major dispute could take place.

Shop stewards representing 6500 manual workers made it clear that they were not going to be a party to cutting their own throats. Despite the danger of losing Christmas and New Year paid holidays they decided there could be no further retreat. The dies would stay blacked.

Chrysler backed down. But the shadow boxing can not go on much longer. The fight will be on in earnest within the next few days.

One thing is certain: if the workers can stay united and win the support of Ford and Vauxhall workers — who shortly will be entering the same struggle for parity — then they will win.

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