

Socialist Worker

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**A GENERAL STRIKE CAN
KILL
THE
TORY
BILL**



Sean Thompson/R. Cast

WE HAVE THE POWER TO WIN!

After the Commune...

PROSPER LISSAGARAY was one of thousands who had to flee the terror unleashed to put down the Paris Commune. He came to London to starve and prepare a true record of what the people of Paris had brought into the world.

Lissagaray wrote his book, underlining that any writer who does out revolutionary legends is as useless as a map maker who gives seamen faked charts. Many of us are still afflicted with such faulty information, a lack of any serious political analysis. As a result each defeat tends to be the forerunner of the next, with nothing learnt except the taste of sorrow.

The boundless heroism of the Paris masses has been the source for a great deal of such faking. In the main there are two kinds of streetguides to avoid on the Commune.

One celebrates the fantastic creative abilities of the masses at the expense of any examination of why we did not quite succeed that time.

It ignores the presence of weak and strong elements, and so provides no way of building the slogans and the organisations that can tie the weak to the strong and forge a single, united path to freedom.

The other views the Commune — 'such a bloody mess, those poor people' — as the cry of simple workers for good government. This sort of stuff needs to be just as firmly shoved aside. For neither approach enriches us for the struggles ahead.

By contrast, the most prominent revolutionary thinker and man of action of the last century was busy condensing the fruits of the Commune. Within a week of the last defeats, he had produced a study of its meaning for the world working-class movement.

Karl Marx seized on the completely novel contribution to politics the Commune announced. The masses had devised a mechanism through which they could govern their own lives.

Marx had always insisted — and organised workers had generally found — that the state, the whole apparatus of army, police, bureaucrats and related parasites, was organised as a war-machine to repel their demands for democracy, freedom and the right to life.

Indeed, the state machine was only perfected in the struggle between the working class and its masters. The struggle for socialism cannot therefore rely on parliamentary manoeuvres.

Socialism will not be achieved just by laying hold of the plant and equipment that has been specifically designed to combat opposition and stifle life. This equipment has to be smashed to pieces and replaced by the organised power of the people.

18 March 1871 saw power in the hands of the central committee of the National Guard — a council elected directly by the armed workers and their associates in other sections of society.

Its programmes led speedily to the abolition of the standing army and the police, the two most immediate examples of the merciless power of the state.

A direct and immediate democracy, this form of power allowed for delegates to be hired and fired and paid the average wage. It was the exact opposite of the secrecy and crookery that characterises our own lives.

Ignore

Karl Marx drew all these aspects out of the Paris Commune. He even altered the Communist Manifesto to get the lessons across.

But the ruling ideas in society proved so powerful that all kinds of socialists contrived to ignore the conclusions of both life and Marx.

His life-long collaborator, Engels, was even used by certain socialists to 'prove' that no revolution could succeed due to the armed might of the state.

And with the turn of the century, Europe began the slide to war. Socialists in name waxed enthusiastic to abandon their ideas in a rush for government posts or the comfort of being recognised as patriots. In fact most of them had few ideas to change, so superficial was their politics.

The vision of a new world was slowly replaced and shifted off the stage in favour of a more orderly version of the old, where — just like Britain in more recent times — the dead wood would be swept out of the boardrooms, the higher paid workers would pull in their belts for the lower, and law and order would reign.

At least that's how the dream went. But the whole perspective saw no further than the swelling belly of the nation state.

German and British 'comrades' gave up the fight for socialism and used whatever credentials they had picked up along the way to power in order to help fight an imperialist war. More barbarism and countless working class dead was the result.

Brutal

Once again the state machine had been reorganised in the wake of the Paris Commune. In France, the same arms manufacturers who had swung crooked deals with Bonaparte perfected links with those who held the reins of power.

In every European country, the war machine had moved to the centre of the arena. The Wickers, the Cressens, the Krupps had their head as each nation strove to expand its boundaries and markets at the expense of others.

Trade union officials and labour leaders were given badges and knighthoods. They in turn told the worker

Lessons of Paris 1871 aids Russian victory in 1917

'Every serious uprising is met only with ruthlessness... Communards massacred in 1871 when the exiled government's forces crushed the workers' rebellion.'



LENIN: he fought to restore the heart of revolutionary socialism

that now he held some sway. The worker silently agreed, temporarily. War was to be a quick and brutal teacher.

But other Karl Marxs were at work. In obscurity, Russian exiles were thinking the downfall of their particular tyranny. And even before the blood-letting broke out on the wide screen, the Russian masses had shown that the methods of the Paris Commune were right.

In the revolution of 1905, they threw up 'soviets', direct organs of popular power based on factories.

They too were beaten back. But they had further improved the secret of the Commune.

And those followers of Marx opened up the books again and rethought their many courageous deeds. They saw too that the failure of the Commune was as important as its success.

They grasped new truths about their French comrades of some 40 years before. The immediate democracy of the National Guard Central Committee had been the strong to the weak.

The Commune's fantastic variety of political ideas had never been brought into one stream. There had been no key point to drive the revolution as to full victory.

An organisation had to be built that welded the strength and creative ener-

gies of the masses to day-to-day strategy. For every serious uprising is met only with ruthlessness from the ancient and corrupt elements of society.

Never did they argue that the party could conjure crisis out of its own head. But it does intervene actively in events.

It explores at every instant the masses' state of mind. It probes the enemy's forces and seeks out the moment for decisive action.

Smash

That was one of Lenin's key contributions. But even as this very train of events unfolded in Russia in the middle of the 1914-18 war, Lenin turned again to the Commune.

He sought to restore the heart that had been cut out of revolutionary socialism by the war-time 'patriots'.

Lenin insisted that the truth of social revolution lay precisely in smashing the swollen and diseased state machines that were wasting our very lives in a dance of death.

For Lenin and for the future of the human race, there could be no compromise. Paths of dogma that accepted moral over to those who were later to follow the path Lenin had laid down, proved to be of the highest importance.

In talking once again between the

two revolutions that unfolded in Russia through 1917, Lenin wrote his restatement of the Paris Commune and its lessons for his time (and ours). With patience, his State and Revolution is an easy and rewarding book.

Ruthlessly and thoroughly, he exposed the postures of the men who would bury you for the good of the national economy. Their grandchildren are only too readily identifiable today.

Beaten

Lenin's version was put to the test. And briefly — and in the most difficult circumstances — his version flowered. Once again a new day dawned.

The masses were on the move everywhere, seized with the practical idea that they alone could shape their own destinies, put an end to war, famine and scarcity.

They scented they were indeed the agents of all humanity's future. For one reason or another they were beaten back. That is another story but reasons

there were.

Even in defeat one fighter of the Paris Commune wrote a poem to float the flag of human freedom higher and prouder still:

'Rise up the curs'd of every nation
In all your hunger-jails arise!
The lava-roar of liberation
Erupts at last to storm the skies.'

But even songs like the Internationale are not enough. Laurels and symbols may be nice to rest on but they will not change the world. They might even be a hindrance.

What is needed most of all is a tool that bonds together the initiative of the masses — both past, present and future, which looks on itself and the world with the strictest criticism.

Since the Commune, the stifling state machines have been reorganised in blood. Now they are competing monstrosities.

Nevertheless, the tasks are essentially the same as those of the Commune, to overturn the system and grab more than a brief breath of fresh air.

...what happened in Russia — important reading for socialists

TONY CLIFF
Russia—a marxist analysis £1.05

CHRIS HARMAN
How the revolution was lost 9p

Add 5p for post and packing

IS BOOKS 6 Cottons Gardens E2

Shadow of the 30s: unemployment is a declaration of class war...

A dreadful symbol of the 1930s:
a worker without a job and
without hope.

by DAVE PEERS



IN THE 1930s the employers had a very effective incomes policy — one and a half million unemployed. From 1926 to 1940 the workers' share of the national cake declined by some 10 per cent and the share of the profiteers increased by the same amount.

In spite of full employment since the war, the working class still has not made up the ground lost after the General Strike. This astonishing fact — that our share of total national income is smaller than it was before 1926 — gives the lie to the mounting chorus from the Tory press for more and more restrictions on the so-called monopoly power of the trade unions.

But Ted Heath is not a man to be bothered by the facts once he has made up his mind. The Tories intend to make the organised working class the whipping boy for inflation and unemployment is as important as the Industrial Relations Bill in their strategy.

Nor is this fondness for throwing workers on the dole something peculiar to the Tories. After all it was Harold Wilson who started the policy of 'shaking out' — remember these words of his in 1966?

'What is needed is a shake-out which will release the nation's manpower, skilled and unskilled, and lead to a more purposive use of labour for the sake of increasing exports and

giving effect to other national priorities.'

The results of the Wilson government's policy was the creation of a permanent pool of half a million unemployed, concentrated largely in the older industrial areas like Scotland, North East England and South Wales. Before 1966 unemployment had been a seasonal problem, of importance to the construction industry in the winter months, but not a matter of much concern for the labour movement as a whole. The 'shake-out' changed that.

Copper handshake

Under Labour, unemployment was a by-product of their overall policy of re-organising industry and their obsession with defending the pound. Overriding all else was their concern with the balance of payments: taxation was increased in six years by £9000m (or £500 per household) and production squeezed to reduce imports. Economic resources were switched from declining industries to those with some exporting future.

Hundreds of thousands of miners, railwaymen, shipyard workers and allied trades were made redundant or prematurely retired, and the protests were muted by the copper handshake of redundancy payments and wage-related unemployment benefits.

For men over 50 in the development areas

the chances of working again were remote. These older men, especially if they are unskilled, are the hard-core unemployed — the 33 per cent of the total who have been on the dole six months and more.

Unemployment under Labour became a major problem but with the Tories it is assuming crisis proportions. It is estimated that 400,000 workers lost their jobs last year, and the number qualifying for redundancy payments was 50 per cent up on 1969.

Nor is this new 'shake-out' confined to the traditional industries or the development areas. The Midlands are now experiencing their highest levels of unemployment since the 1930s and if the Rolls-Royce RB211 engine is scrapped, some districts there will become industrial disaster areas. Even if the aero-engine contract goes ahead, employers expect to reduce their labour force by more than 50,000 in the first three months of this year.

As for immediate prospects, one ominous sign is that new orders for the machine tool industry are down nearly a half on 1970, which was a bad enough year. Investment in new plant and machinery is being cut to the bone and major projects like Shell's vast £225m petrochemical complex on Merseyside have been suspended or abandoned.

Lame ducks are raining out of the sky. In the financial press the only debating point is whether unemployment will top the million

mark this year or next.

In a world where millions starve, the lunacy of the capitalist system and the criminal irresponsibility of the men who run it is fully revealed in the recession we are about to suffer. For this slump is being deliberately engineered to intimidate workers to reduce their wage demands and to threaten firms with bankruptcy if they increase wages.

Profits rise

An article of faith among the economic advisers in the Treasury is the 'Philips Curve', and this lies behind the government's policy for wages. Philips was an economist who constructed a graph which showed that, when unemployment rose, the rate of increase of wages fell.

It wasn't the most original idea in the world, but what his figures indicated was that when unemployment rose to 5½ per cent, wages stopped rising altogether. The Tory strategy is to combine the effect of higher unemployment with direct intervention in facing out strikes and the legal threat of the Industrial Relations Bill.

If wages can be held back while prices rise, wealth will be transferred to profits and investment, and our standard of living will fall.

Stripped of the economic jargon this is a declaration of class war.

When the future government met in Hyde Park

How a future labour historian might look back on a day in February...

21 FEBRUARY 1971 was a Sunday and on that day the future government of England met in Hyde Park. The 200,000 members crowded into a field behind Speakers' Corner.

Not many thought of themselves as possible members of a government, because they knew themselves as individuals to be of little importance. Individuals known as MPs had comprised all previous governments.

Few of the members of the future government cared much for MPs or had hopes of becoming MPs themselves. Only 630 were elected for the entire government of Great Britain and of these less than 20 were actually called upon at any one time to exercise executive powers.

The MPs, especially the governing ones, knew this field full of folk to be a rival but nobody CALLED it the alternative government. The trade unionists, as they were known, thought of themselves as being non-political.

They left the politics to an elite of



On the way to Trafalgar Square someone shouted: 'Organise a workers' state'

their 'own MPs who had a shot at governing every few years but who never asked them to participate.

Though they didn't think so bold that Sunday, they asserted their right to rule another way. They ranged themselves, too, according to their regions and found all areas were represented. For all manner of men and women were there:

Fishermen from Yarmouth marched with weavers from Bradford, typists from Sunderland and miners from

Wales.

Ranks of engineers, draughtsmen and builders were followed by the men who made the cars, trains and ships and the men who drove and sailed them. Rank upon rank, they asserted their right to rule as representative of all the working classes.

The perceptive observer might have noticed that, unlike the handful of MPs they would soon replace, their strength lay in this — that they all were workers without whose co-oper-

ation the MPs' rule could not go on.

For few MPs were masters of any art except share shuffling and interpreting the laws they themselves made. Those who had worked at a useful trade abandoned it on becoming MPs, but most had no experience of work.

The field of folk knew all about work. The difference I might explain like this: if it were thought necessary to build a great bridge or tunnel, the field of folk could have accomplished

the task from their own resources, even fashioning the tools for the job.

The MPs could only have ordered others to do it.

The field of folk represented everyone who then earned wages. They even had wage workers who had come to England from the former slaveworlds — and of course none of them were MPs.

In short, so perfectly did they represent the workers of the land that it surprises me now that no one thought then what an excellent government they would make.

On the march to Trafalgar Square that sunny Sunday someone shouted 'Organise a workers' state'. At the time none of us knew what it meant.

We thought of the Russian MPs' government as such and were confused. But as that year went on it became clear that one side, the MPs or the trade unionists, must win the great struggle between them and so the possibility of us, the workers, taking over and abolishing their system was born.

We called it 'Killing the Bill'.

Poverty, bad housing, attacks on black workers: this is the real face of Britain today

Tory welfare cuts mean more hardship for the poor

SINCE 1966 the number of people in poverty in Britain has risen by one million. This is the estimate of one of the leading experts on the welfare state, Professor Peter Townsend. Writing in The Times last week, Townsend concludes that the numbers of people with incomes lower than the supplementary benefit minimum now totals 3½ million people — an increase of one million over the past five years.

There has been no increase in the old age pension, the widower's pension, or sickness or unemployment benefit for the last 18 months, yet during this period the purchasing power of money has dropped faster than at any other time in this century. The miserable £5 a week paid to the single old age pensioner is now worth about 18s less than in the autumn of 1969. The same applies to the other social security benefits.

The Tory government is viewing the situation with monumental indifference. Their spokesmen continue to insist that National Insurance benefits should only be increased every second year, no matter what the rate of inflation. They are refusing to reconsider this timetable which allows for no increase in pensions and benefits

by JIM KINCAID

before the autumn of this year.

Family allowances have not been raised since 1968, and relative to average earnings, are now at a lower level than in 1946.

There is to be no increase in family allowances this year. Instead families with low incomes and one or more children are being invited to apply to the Ministry of Social Security for a new type of benefit.

This is the Family Income Supplement which will be available from August onwards.

Applicants will be means-tested by officers of the Supplementary Benefits Commission and an extra 200 officials are to be employed at a total cost of £600,000 a year to help with investigations. The scheme is not notable for its generosity.

Sir Keith Joseph, the Tory minister who claims new dental charges will improve people's teeth



Take the case of a family with two children. If the total income is above £17 a week (including family allowance) then the family is too 'well off' to qualify for the new scheme.

Those with a lower income will get a supplement — which will be half of the difference between family income and £17 a week. The government reckon that the average applicant who qualifies under the scheme will get about 27p (5s 5d) per child per week.

Miss out

The authorities are assuming that one in six of the families who would qualify will not realise they are entitled or won't be willing to apply. In fact, in this kind of means-tested scheme, the numbers of people who miss out on their rights is generally closer to 50 per cent.

However, the Claimants' and Unemployed Workers' Unions that are springing up in many parts of the country are planning a campaign to make people aware of their entitlement under the new scheme. These unions have a fighting programme of demands for a welfare state that gives people the right to a decent standard of living — not means-tested subsistence hand-outs.

Meanwhile, for the millions of people in poverty, or not far off it, April will bring a further twist of the screw. In two weeks' time the whole range of new social service cuts will come into effect.

Charges for dental service are being increased to half the cost of treatment. As at present, old age pensioners are not exempt from these charges and the government is threatening to cut the exemption age for young people from 21 years down to 18.

The British Dental Association, which represents Britain's 10,000 dentists, has protested bitterly against these charges which, it points out, will seriously lower the standard of dental care.

Abolished

In April the present 6d a pint subsidy for milk for children under school age is being abolished. The abolition of school milk for all children over the age of 7 is also due.

April will also bring an increase in the price of school meals — which are to go up from the present 9p (1s9d) per dinner to 12p (2s5d).

Further increases are promised for the future since the government has decided that 'the aim is that the charge should eventually cover the running costs of the service. This means that the school meals service will cease to be part of the welfare state.'

The charges are to be increased

sharply for spectacles. You will still get the eye-test free, but will pay virtually the whole cost of the spectacles.

Finally there is to be a steep jump in the prescription charge from 12½p to 20p per item. As the Socialist Medical Association has pointed out, the effect will be that doctors will have increasingly to consider not what drugs the patient needs but what treatment he can afford.

For all of these increased charges there is to be an exemption system for lower income groups. Any family with less than £20 a week and two or more children should be able to get free prescriptions, ophthalmic and dental services.

Even if the income is a bit above £20 it is well worth making enquiries, especially if you have more than two children.

Applause

But the result will be that many people will end up paying the new charges although in theory they are entitled to exemption.

The new charges, plus the forthcoming increases in food prices resulting from the change in agricultural subsidies, are going to add more than £1 a week to the cost of living of the average family with £18-26 a week.

The Chancellor, Mr Barber, has won grateful applause from his supporters for saving around £100 million a year by the April welfare cuts. But neither he nor any bodies who support this attack on the welfare state have tried to calculate the economic or social costs that will arise from the resulting deterioration in the standards of working class nutrition and health.

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



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

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.

THERE ARE 15 BRANCHES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

SCOTLAND
Aberdeen/Clydebank/Dundee/Edinburgh/Glasgow N/Glasgow S/Stirling/Fife

NORTH EAST
Durham/Newcastle upon Tyne/Tees-side (Middlesbrough and Redcar)

NORTH
Barnsley/Bradford/Derby/Doncaster/Huddersfield/Hull/Leeds/York/Selby/Sheffield

NORTH WEST
Lancaster/Manchester/Oldham/

Bolton//Merseyside/St Helens/Wigan/Potteries

MIDLANDS
Birmingham/Coventry/Northampton/Leicester/Oxford/Nottingham

WALES AND SOUTH WEST
Bath/Bristol/Cardiff/Exeter/Swansea/Plymouth

SOUTH
Ashford/Brighton/Crawley/Folkestone/Portsmouth/Southampton

EAST
Cambridge/Harlow/Ipswich/Lowestoft/Norwich/Colchester

GREATER LONDON and HOME COUNTIES

Acton/Angel/Bletchley/Camden/Chertsey/Croydon/Dagenham/Enfield/Erith/Fulham/Greenford/Harrow/Hemel Hempstead/Hornsey/Ilford/Kilburn/Kingston/Lambeth/Lewisham/Merton/Newham/Reading/Richmond/Stoke Newington/Slough/South Ealing/Tottenham/Walthamstow/Wandsworth/Watford/Victoria

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Name _____
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RACE BILL:



Black workers under attack

THE IMMIGRATION through parliament in a series of bills to keep black workers out of the country. Since 1962 we have introduced accompanied by about the problem of immigrants.

In reality the official sponsorship has been used as a policy. LIE No. ONE: Britain cannot absorb the facts are that the net outflow of migration was two between 1948-1950 of most black workers. This was a faced massive in black workers in the fish industry. Against black workers and

AGNES is 51 her husband three children above a but Toxteth, Live

Five rooms reasonable number it is difficult room to live in rotten from to two rooms are

They have heating, as the has two fridges seeps through They have no

The kitchen said Agnes. 'It damp, with the from bad dra pipes, and the a 'belly' in it and now there

Soot fa

'So I cook do the potato second, and the time that's done

'The only hot is the Scout times it's all runs falls down.

'By the time ing on this fire I haven't got any

Her husband as a cinema of son Sam gives

Misery of the slums...



Infested, freezing hovels for thousands

She lives with George and her son in a house in a butcher's shop in Liverpool.

It would seem to be a miracle in a city where it is not enough to get one's feet warm but this house is cold to the bottom. Only a few inches habitable.

Central freezing' not in a butcher's shop, and the cold seeps through the floorboards. The water is cold.

'I can't be used'. The house was so cold that continuous wetting was a danger and leaking pipes in the kitchen ceiling had finally burst, leaving a gaping hole.

falls down

At the fire. I have to get out first, the veg is the meat last. By the time the rest is cold, the fire has died. The stew that does stay is a stew. And sometimes when the soot falls down...

'I've finished cooking. I'm fed up with it. I'm past it.' She earns £10 a week as a housewife. Her husband earns £4 a week, her

The Glasgow Evening Citizen, three weeks ago, had two articles on the Francis Report on Rents. One was a criticism of the Racist landlords who charge exorbitant rents for such places as I have described in this report. Just beneath the article was a report from Washington: 'Astronaut Allan Shepherd said yesterday that the Apollo 14 moon-flight was worth every penny of the £167 million it cost the US taxpayer ... he hinted that perhaps too much money was being spent on public welfare and not enough on space exploration.'

daughter Avril £2.50 and her son Derek, 13, is still at school.

This is just one case out of 78,000. This is the number of unfit houses in Liverpool, almost half the total number of houses.

In Glasgow, 41 per cent of the city's 326,000 houses are unfit. The dull grey uniformity of living in the tenements, some two storey, some three or four, stands out as a reminder of the uninspired rush-building during the massive growth of Glasgow from 1870 onwards.

The Gorbals, the worst slum in Western Europe, is slowly being pulled down, and the new gleaming tenements are going up.

Much of the Gorbals is rubble, but the odd grey tenements standing bleakly against a barren landscape, where dogs and children play among the debris, are still

lived in, even if they can't be classified as 'habitable'.

Andrew and Sheila have nine children. They have lived in the Gorbals for 10 years. Their eldest child is 21 and the youngest three.

They pay £68 rates a year, and £7.40 a quarter rent. For this they have three rooms and a tiny kitchen, no bath and no hot water.

'For the toilet, the wife and the children go to the neighbours during the day, and I go to the mens' toilet in the Gorbals. At night we have a pail and we empty it on the midden,' said Andrew.

'I bring in £13 a week at the moment,' he said. 'I was working in the gasworks and then the docks but I had an accident and I am down as an epileptic, so I am out of work.'

'We need all the cats we can get because the rats are running all over,' said Sheila. 'I've actually stood on rats getting the bairns to school in the morning.'

Snow comes in

'It gets very cold, we have one fire, and we use coal and sticks. In winter the snow comes in.'

'With all the new building going on around, the building shakes, and one day the ceiling in the main room just fell in. When it gets really bad, we put the bairns early to bed.'

'We cook on the fire. For Christmas we had a bowl of soup and a chicken. No veg or anything.'

'The gas has been off for more

Cooking on the fire in Toxteth... a gaping ceiling in Glasgow

than a year. We couldn't pay the bills because I was in hospital, and then my wife went in too,' said Andrew. 'All the children went into homes, and when we came out of hospital, everything had been taken, even the pipes from the walls.'

The Gorbals is disappearing, but Glasgow has slums just as bad. One area being Maryhill.

There, one family of six live in two rooms. Three of the girls sleep in a room that is two inches under water at one end.

The mother is tired and lethargic because of the strain of living in these conditions, but they can go nowhere else and their income is only £12 a week.

There are thousands of cases like these, some even more tragic, where death has occurred as a direct result of the appalling living conditions.

What is being done by the government? Under Labour, house building slumped to a post-war low but Peter Walker, Minister for the Environment, said last year that he hoped Conservative councils would resist the temptation to go on building houses for 'seemingly good reasons'.

Is not poverty, illness, and starvation reason enough?

GINNY WEST



MOVE TO SPLIT SOLIDARITY OF THE WORKERS

IN Bill now passing is the latest instalment of measures designed to get more people out of Britain. Tory and Labour similar legislation, familiar arguments are caused by black

arguments are policies that have cover for racialist in overcrowded any more people. from 1901-1961 population through million. The period saw the arrival into Britain. when industry shortages and recruited by Britain. Approximately 800,000 their families came

to Britain.

At the same time more than 600,000 people left Britain, causing a net inflow of 200,000, which compared to the total population is extremely small.

The controls introduced in 1962 drastically reduced the number of black workers allowed to enter. Last year it was down to 4000.

INCREASED

But the number of European workers allowed to enter has increased, due no doubt to their white faces. In 1967, for instance, 49,000 European workers were given work permits, while only 4978 black workers came in.

The situation today is that Britain loses more people through emigration than she gains through immigration. In 1966 the net outflow was 83,000 in 1967 79,000.

Even black workers leave in greater numbers today than enter Britain as a result of racialism and intimidation caused by the rantings of racialist Tories.

The arguments about overcrowding are a myth, successfully used by politicians to blind white workers to the real problems in our society.

LIE No. TWO: Immigrants are responsible for the housing shortage. The housing problem in Britain has been caused as a direct result of government policies. The number of dwellings built by local councils has fallen dramatically in the last 20 years as a result of high interest rate policies pursued in the interests of City bankers and financiers.

In 1952 239,000 council dwellings were built. By 1964 the number had fallen to 118,000 and since then there has been no significant increase.

If you could not get a council house the chances of becoming an

owner-occupier were not bright either. Between 1958-64 house prices rose by 51 per cent, and in the last five years they have risen a further 33 per cent.

Property speculators and bankers have had a field day while workers have been faced with ever-increasing difficulties.

LESS HOUSES

The other fact that the Tories and their racialist friends never admit is that a large part of the labour force in the building industry consists of black and Irish workers. Look at any building site to see the truth.

If it was not for black workers there would be less houses, not more. LIE No. THREE: Immigrants take our jobs.

Black workers are discriminated against and forced to take the worst jobs at the lowest rates of pay. Today

we are faced with a problem of growing unemployment.

The reason is that both Labour and Tory governments have deliberately created unemployment in an attempt to keep down wages and allow employers to make high profits.

They have also used wage freeze, incomes policy, and productivity deals to cut the standard of living of all workers.

LIE No. FOUR: Immigrants are a strain on the social services.

Black workers perform some of the most vital jobs in the social services. Because immigrants are usually young, they have fewer old age pensioners and physically disabled and take less in the form of social benefits than the rest of the community, while making an equal contribution.

It is estimated that black workers take only 80 per cent out of the total amount they contribute. The National

Institute Economic Review showed that the combined cost of health, welfare services, education, child care, national insurance and assistance in 1966 was £62.40 per head of the population as a whole, but only £48.70 for black immigrants.

Even in the fields of health and welfare, usually of more concern to black workers, because of the age group they fall into, the comparative figures were £18.50 and £17.80.

The appalling social conditions that exist today are the fault of the capitalist system. The Tories who administer it are using the blacks as a scapegoat, just as in the past they used the Jews and the Irish.

Their tactic is to divide and rule. We must make sure that they do not succeed.

MIKE CAFFOOR

JOHN PALMER on the prospect of a Labour government at a time of union unrest

'BEHIND THESE STRIKES lies a political threat, not just to this government but to our democratic system. Some, at least, of those advocating strikes really do not want to influence government thinking on the Industrial Relations Bill but to force the government out of office.' So said a Conservative junior minister on *The World at One* last week.

It would be foolish not to recognise the important element of truth behind the hysteria. The government's determination to shackle the trade unions comes at a time when the cost of living threatens to overwhelm all but the largest wage settlements and has set off a wave of anti-Tory anger among working people.

It is also true that a growing minority see through the sham opposition of the TUC leaders.

The demand that the TUC should call a General Strike against the anti-union laws has been seen on banners and slogans on all the big trade union demonstrations in recent weeks. It is a 'political' demand as much as a trade union demand. Not only the government but the Labour opposition and the TUC as well realise this.

They understand that behind the call for a General Strike lies a threat to the whole cosy idea that workers left 'politics' to their betters in parliament or Congress House.

It was an arrangement designed to prevent workers realising their own strength and power to refashion society from top to bottom.

It is true that a General Strike that was the result of mass pressure from rank and file trade unionists would pose an even bigger threat to the Tories and the capitalist system even than in 1926.

At that time the working class placed almost total faith in their TUC leaders.

That is much less true today. For all these reasons the Tories and the right wing press see in the call for a General Strike a movement that could get out of control.

A General Strike is not itself a social revolution. But the ruling class know that in the wake of such a mass movement the key question of political power appears at the top of the agenda of the workers' movement.

It is impossible to predict with certainty what the outcome of the pressure for militant industrial opposition to the Bill will be. It is possible that a majority will be found at Croydon for a series of limited but national stoppages.

Growing revolt

What is certain is that with every retreat under pressure by Vic Feather and the right wing, their ability to keep the growing revolt under control will weaken.

Whatever the outcome, socialists in the trade union movement have to understand what could happen and to prepare their intervention to have the maximum impact.

Socialists must start by understanding the realities of the present situation. This means rejecting all wishful thinking.

The sad fact is that the revolutionary left at the moment has neither the size nor the influence among the mass of workers and their families to be able to make a bid for political power.

If the Tory government falls, or more likely, if it loses a general election, the Labour Party will appear to the mass of workers as the only credible alternative.

Whether we like it or not, the most likely outcome of any agitation leading up to the defeat of the Tories will be a Labour government headed, no doubt, by Wilson, Healey, Castle and co.

It is on this assumption that socialists must base their strategy.

What next if the Tories are beaten?

A Labour government that comes to power on a wave of widespread industrial unrest and against the background of continuing economic crisis will be quite unlike previous Labour governments since the war.

Such a government would be heavily dependent on trade union support. In this situation it would be far more difficult for the Labour leaders to disguise their real policies. The scene would be set for the sharpest challenge from the left.

For all these reasons it is important that socialists frame a programme of political demands for the trade unions to impose on an incoming Labour government.

Confront Labour

This must be a programme that corresponds to what growing numbers of trade unionists think is the minimum to be expected from a Labour government.

It must confront Labour with the choice of challenging the whole struc-



are beaten?



WILSON: waiting in the wings

ture of capitalist power in Britain or standing exposed as traitors

Some on the left imagine that it is more radical to pose the demand 'For a Labour government with socialist policies'. But such a demand offers no practical focus for working class pressure and mobilisation.

A realistic programme is a logical extension of what trade unionists are already fighting for in the streets and in strike action.

Such a programme should include:

1. Unqualified repeal of the Industrial Relations Bill and all anti-union laws.
2. No incomes policy under capitalism.
3. Restoration of all welfare cuts. No welfare charges.

4. Work or full pay at trade union rates for the unemployed.
5. Re-nationalisation without compensation of all sectors of nationalised industry returned to private hands.

Positive sanctions

This programme would have to be fought for by militants inside the trade unions and through Councils of Action against the Bill and similar rank and file bodies.

Such a policy could only be carried in the unions against the opposition of the right wing.

But it is also important for militants to demand positive sanctions if the Labour leaders refuse to carry out such demands.

Those trade union leaders who claim to be on the left should be called on to commit themselves to support no Labour candidates who oppose this programme.

And if the Labour leaders reject the programme, the union leaders

Since the strike of 8 December more and more demonstrations and rallies have raised the demand that the TUC must be forced to call a General Strike to kill the anti-union Bill.

must be compelled to call a conference of all unions and socialist organisations that support the programme to consider their next step.

The real danger in the coming months is that the trade union 'lefts' will pay lip service to these and similar demands but evade any commitment to fight to impose them on the Labour leaders.

It is true that such a campaign in the unions around a minimal programme is only possible if the socialist left develops as a more influential political force.

That is why we see this campaign as part of the struggle to build the International Socialists and to develop a revolutionary socialist party.

The period ahead will be of fundamental importance in the creation of a serious socialist alternative.

In a world where the super powers continue to arm themselves to their nuclear teeth, the years ahead may offer the last opportunity for the socialist movement to save the world from barbarism.

Why 'prod deals' must be resisted

NEXT TO 'No' and 'We can't afford it', productivity is the bosses' favourite word.

More and more productivity deals have been signed since the election of the Labour government in 1964. According to an official report published in 1969, more than 6½ million workers are covered by this kind of agreement.

Since then the number has grown. The

employers are trying to spread these agreements into every workplace and industry.

Professor Alan Flanders, a member of the Commission on Industrial Relations, has explained the reasons as follows:

'More and more managements seem to me to be becoming aware that the labour situation has drifted dangerously far and that they are faced with the need to re-establish control over their workers.'

'And since in the modern world they can't re-establish control unilaterally, the plant productivity bargain seems to them a logical first step towards a modern, viable system of management control over pay and effort.'

Strict control

In other words, the purpose of a productivity deal is to give more power to management, weaken the strength of the shop stewards and impose stricter control over pay and conditions.

The facts prove the truth of these remarks. In the motor industry, for example, British Leyland is currently trying to abolish piecework and replace it by Measured Day Work.

This system has existed for several years at Ford and is the main reason why wages are much lower in that company than in Leyland factories. British Leyland want to copy the Ford success and know that if they can scrap piecework they will be able to hold down earnings.

The secret report issued in 1969 by the Coventry Employers' Federation said: 'The complete elimination of bargaining about

money or payments between the operator and rate fixer ... means that higher management is in a much better position to control its labour costs than at present.'

Elsewhere, productivity deals have also held down wages. The first important agreement of this kind was negotiated in 1960 at the Esso Oil Refinery at Fawley, near Southampton.

Initially the management conceded increases of up to 40 per cent in order to persuade its workers to accept the agreement. But by 1967 the refinery workers' wages had slumped from being among the highest in the country to nearly bottom of the Southampton area's wages league.

Productivity deals have also led to redundancies and increased unemployment. In the power industry the labour force was reduced by 26,231 men in three short years and on the railways massive redundancies have occurred through the negotiation of productivity deals.

As well as attacking pay and job security, these agreements also lead to the speeding up of production and worsening conditions and an increase in discipline. The main beneficiaries of these deals are, of course, the employers.

Part of the evidence to the Royal Commission on Trade Unions (the Donovan Commission) says: 'Joseph Lucas gave an interesting example of reorganised arrangements at CAV Ltd for work testing and adjustments of pumps under which the workers engaged on testing pumps also carried out certain adjustments to faulty pumps.'

'This bargain was very satisfactory to the company. It reduced the labour force by 17 per cent; one fifth of the savings secured as a result were paid out in the form of extra wages.'

There are many other similar examples. In the mining industry a productivity deal known as the Power Loading Agreement was signed in June 1966. Between then and June 1969 the output of coal per man rose by 20 per cent while real wages actually declined.

In the Post Office engineering section a productivity deal saved £89 million for management but gave only £18 million to be shared among the workers.

The present Tory offensive against the trade unions is closely connected to productivity deals.

The government hopes that rising unemployment and the threat of the Industrial Relations Bill will compel workers to accept and obey productivity deals.

Such agreements are an important management weapon. It is vital that they should be resisted and fought.

An important move in this direction was made two weeks ago by the Midlands district of the Transport Workers' Union. It is putting a complete ban on all future productivity agreements in a bid to cut down on the rising toll of unemployment.

Trade unionists should campaign to get their organisations to follow this lead.

Roger Rosewell

The best-seller that The Times called 'a handbook for militants'

Employers' Offensive

Productivity deals and how to fight them by TONY CLIFF

30p plus 5p post

PLUTO PRESS 6 Cottons Gardens London E2

NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN!



BOOK TRADE

THE 'Big Book Bang' is about to take place. The brainchild of Mervyn Goff, 'whizz kid' director of the National Book League, the Bang is an expensive attempt to stimulate the ailing book trade.

Goff plans to turn London's Bedford Square into a circus of publishers' tents and booksellers' stalls with background entertainment from pop groups and light shows. Two days of fun, books and profits.

Unfortunately for Goff, many British publishers are worried about the venture.

Publishers and booksellers like to think of themselves as 'gentlemen' involved in business. Books to their minds are not goods like packets of tea or motor cars, but literary objects to be treated with respect.

Every publisher produces at least one 'quality' book and publishers like Oxford and Longmans produce only educational books and it is books of this sort that determine the image. Or so the publishers tell us.

Mervyn Goff wants to change all this, to destroy the old images and to prove booksellers go-ahead and dynamic.

Cheapness

Whether or not Goff's plan to change the image succeeds, one thing is certain: for thousands of men and women working as assistants in book shops or in publishers' offices, things are going to remain much the same.

The profitability of books is based on two factors. The first is the infamous 'net book' agreement which determines the publisher's right to fix the price of a book below which it cannot be sold. This retail price maintenance allows publishers to price their books at ridiculously high prices and maintains profits at a high level.

The second factor is the cheapness of labour. A young girl assistant working in a London bookshop will earn £18 at 21 if she is very lucky.

Few bookshops however employ girls over the age of 20. An average shop will have assistants aged between 15 and 19 and pay wages between £9 and £13.

In the provinces it is much worse and a 15 year old will start at about £4 or £5 rising to £10 at 20.

Victimised

With such a large turnover of staff and because of the 'genteel' image of the trade, union organisation is frowned upon and attempts to organise are usually met with victimisations. As a result wages are not only appallingly low but conditions and hours are such to give most organised workers the shudders.

The need for strong union organisation is obvious. In union shops, conditions and wages are much better.

The long strike at Foyles, London's biggest bookshop, in 1967 won major concessions for the staff.

The shop workers' union USDAW seems totally unable to give a lead. But the task is far from hopeless. Rank and file organisations have been set up in the past in Leeds and London.

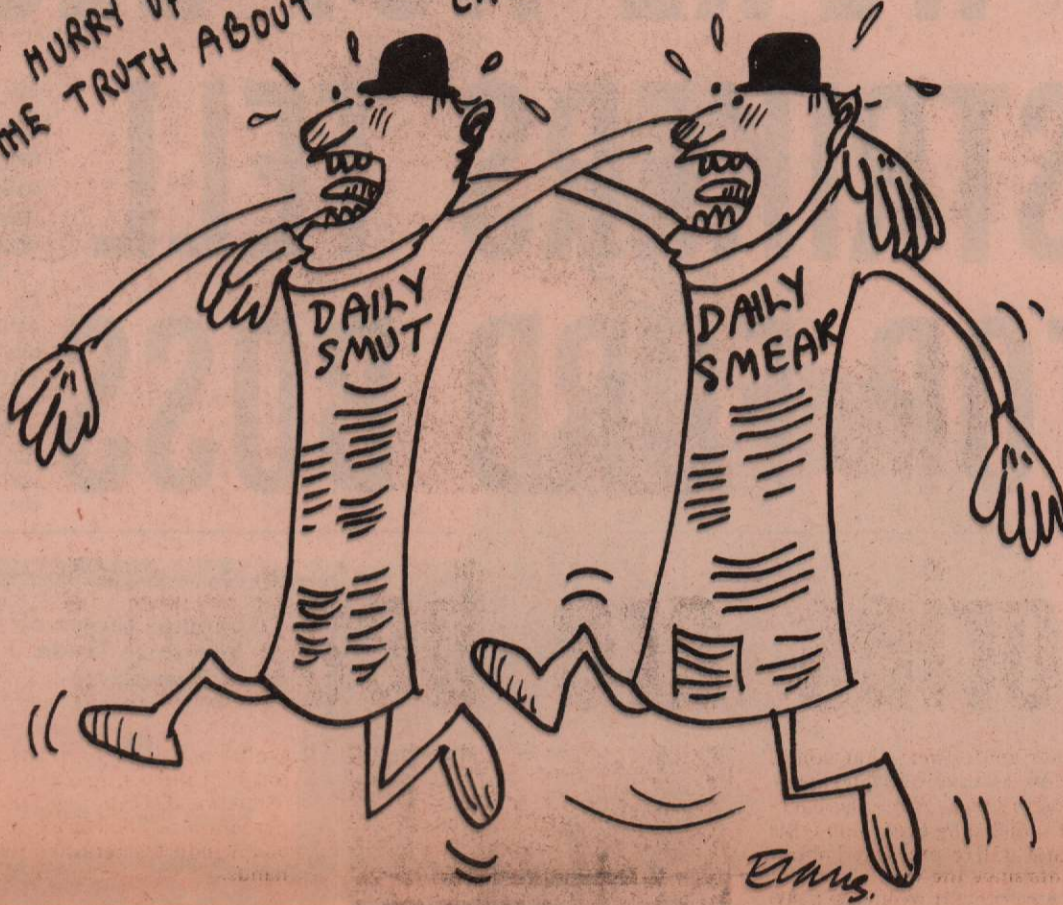
These committees have won fights with several large employers including Foyles and W H Smith.

Committees of this sort must be spread over the country if the book trade is to be forced into paying living wages and USDAW members must wage a determined campaign in their branches to organise unorganised shops.

Mervyn Goff won't change the image of the trade to the benefit of shop workers. They must do that themselves.

Barry Hugill

HURRY UP SMEAR -
OR THE TRUTH ABOUT FORDS MAY
CATCH UP WITH US...



COTTONS COLUMN

TELEVISION and the press broke their usual silence on giving adequate coverage of demonstrations by detailing at length the jamboree organised in Bristol last Saturday by assorted reactionaries and religious fanatics.

500 of them marched against 'permissiveness', for the closing of the town's new Sex Supermarket, the prosecution of traders selling blue books and the banning of sex education classes for school children.

A 100-strong counter demonstration demanded 'Mrs Grundy Out' and IS members noticed with interest that some of the slogans on the main march were distinctly political and anti-union: 'Be content with your wages' and 'industry is in a mess'.

To prove their impartiality, the police allowed the main march to hold a meeting and use a loudspeaker and arrested two socialists when the counter-march attempted to follow suit.

MR JONATHAN GUINNESS, wealthy member of the stout family and supporter of the extreme right-wing Monday Club, told Monday's Daily Mirror that he wants the complete abolition of the welfare state because 'handouts' stop the 'lower levels' making an effort.

'My beliefs are patriotic,' he added. 'I look back to the England of Kipling and Orwell'.

But George Orwell was a revolutionary socialist! Either Jonathan has been bashing the family beverage a bit hard, or the Monday Club has a cuckoo in its nest.

Advance warning: don't drink Guinness in 1984.



CROSSMAN: take the steam out

BACK in the early 1960s, Richard Crossman became known as Tricky Dicky because of his not inconsiderable skill at saying one thing and meaning just the opposite.

A decade has passed and Crossman continues to weave his devious path, still with a misplaced reputation for being something of a left-winger. In between representing a Coventry constituency (£3,250 a year) he also edits the influential weekly New Statesman (at least another £3000 a year)

Shortly before Christmas, Crossman noticed the growing anger and revolt of workers at inflation, union laws and Tory policies in general. It was time, opined the Sage of Great Turnstile, for the Labour Party to pay some attention to this burgeoning movement.

To help the workers win, to boost sagging wages and declining work conditions? No. Crossman's motives are simpler and more cynical than that.

He wants votes. He wants to take the steam out of the anti-Tory campaign by channelling trade unionists back into the parliamentary rut.

The current New Statesman lays into the trade union movement on the front page with a lengthy piece called 'The Mindless Militants'. Admitting that the Tories are pursuing policies of class war, Crossman declares that such a war cannot be won by brawn alone and that by refusing to accept the Ford pay offer the unions had played straight into Heath's hands.

The 'brains' in Crossman's scheme are provided by the Labour Party: they and the TUC must agree a 'socialist' policy for economic growth. This is a siren song that will swell in volume as election time draws near.

Crossman has just announced that he will retire at the next election. Now that is a fitting gesture. The labour movement needs a political 'brain' all right - a real socialist party that will bring early retirement to the current bunch of humbugs and cheats personified by the editor of the New Statesman.

MIND YOU, there are worse creatures around than the above mentioned trickster. Take, for example, Mr Reginald Thomas Paget, QC, Labour MP for Northampton.

Paget is a hard-line supporter of the Smith regime in Rhodesia and a firm 'bash-the-unions' man. He is also Master of Hounds for his local foxhunt.

Our readers will be sad to hear that Reggie Paget will not be fighting the class struggle on their behalf for some time. Out fox-hunting last week, he was thrown by his horse and is out of action. Well done, that horse.



WHEN BBC television's news department next advertises for an industrial correspondent, the blurb could run: 'Wanted: a middle-class cynic who oozes contempt for the trade union movement, enjoys bullying officials, follows unswervingly the line of Tory Central Office and is subservient and grovelling to management.'

The chosen candidates would feel immediately at home with the BBC's current duo, Messrs Ian Ross and Reg Abbis. Ross reports on industrial affairs with a knowing smirk and a limited choice of adjectives: all wage claims are 'inflationary', all strikes 'damaging'.

His sidekick, Abbis, has a similarly restricted vocabulary, carefully refined and sieved to bolster middle-class reaction against the struggle of trade unionists. They are aided by skilful cutting and editing that can reduce even the most articulate and persuasive of union spokesmen to apparent stuttering incomprehension.

Ballots

Last Thursday was a case in point. Abbis had been sent to York to cover the meeting of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions where the AUEW announced its intention to take strike action against the Bill the following week. The 7pm Newsdesk programme on Radio 4 carried a long introduction from Abbis, followed by a substantial interview with Hugh Scanlon in which he carefully dealt with the reasons for taking strike action and challenged the attitude that no strike should be called until a ballot is taken of the entire union membership.

Parliament and local councils, he said, are not expected to hold a ballot or referendum of the electorate every time they enact some new piece of legislation. If people don't like their legislation, they can throw them out at the next elections. Similarly, trade union officials are elected and expected to give a lead and can be replaced if the members don't like that lead.

Thoughtful

Whether or not you agree with his approach, it was a challenging and thoughtful reply to the 'aren't you holding the country to ransom' implications of Abbis's questions.

But the television version of the interview on the main 9am news was startlingly different. We were treated to the same boring introduction from Abbis, full of those heavy adjectives - the strike would 'cripple' industry, the AUEW was determined to 'bulldoze' its view through against the advice of the 'constructive' TUC - but the interview with Scanlon was reduced to one question and an answer that was cut off in mid-sentence. Scanlon's careful exposition of his union's position and his attitude to ballots were left on the cutting-room floor.

Action needs to be taken to remedy this state of affairs. The Association of Cinematograph and Television Technicians is concerned at television bias. They and other trade unions should be encouraged to draw up a set of rules and procedures governing the coverage of industry on television that would ensure a fairer interpretation and a refusal to have filmed interviews mangled and distorted.

The telly bosses would scream 'censorship' but that is what we have now. Trade union action on this issue would achieve wider and more stimulating discussion and would expose the opponents of such a move as the real enemies of free speech.

David East

Socialist Worker

50 ENGINEERS STRIKE AGAINST ANTI-UNION AMERICAN COMBINE

FIFTY engineering workers in the AUEW have been on strike for 16 weeks at the Harlow (Essex) works of Pitney-Bowes. It is an official dispute over union recognition.

Pitney-Bowes, a giant, American-owned company, makes postal franking machines in Britain. It refuses to recognise any trade unions.

It prefers its own 'Council for Personnel Relations' - a company-sponsored protection organisation that discuss-

es only items put forward by the management.

The AUEW national executive is backing the strike and has declared 'black' all goods from the company and all supplies to it - action that would be illegal if the Tory anti-union Bill becomes law.

The strikers have fought magnificently so far, maintaining a 24-hour picket. But to succeed they need nationwide support by:

1. Blacking all goods to and from Pitney-Bowes and
 2. Financial support.
- Messages of support and donations should be sent to Bro R Murray, 10 Collins Meadow, Harlow, Essex.
- A flourishing Action Committee to fight the Industrial Relations Bill has been set up in Harlow, supported by the local branches of the AUEW, SOGAT 'A', ASTMS, UPW, Harlow Trades Council and Labour and Co-op parties.

Rail unions must act in unison

by John Field NUR

MANY railwaymen are becoming worried at the lack of direction their unions are showing in the present pay claim. The claim is for a rise of up to 15 per cent on the basic rates, but the trade unions concerned (NUR, ASLEF and TSSA) have not co-ordinated their demands. The locomen are demanding 15 per cent as is the Salaried Staffs Association, while the NUR is asking for 25 per cent.

The management's reply has been an insulting 8 per cent, raised last week to 9 per cent. This would mean less than £1.50 to many railwaymen, who have a basic of £15.20. No wonder that ASLEF has been forced into considering militant action.

It is important for militants, even at this late stage, to insist that the unions should act in unison. The present chaotic situation, where the unions involved are placing varying demands and threatening separate industrial action, can only serve to weaken the solidarity of the rank and file.

Directly affected by the railwaymen's demand are the craftsmen employed by British Rail Engineering. In the past, the 48,000 workshop staff have relied on the militancy of mainline workers to gain wage omcreases.

Support action

This is because the two sectors, mainline and workshops, have separate negotiating structures. But, with the government still flushed after the defeat of the postmen, the union negotiators must declare that they will support any action taken by mainline workers to win their claim.

It is urgent that branches make their feelings known about their determination to get the whole increase. Railwaymen should also be wary about attempts to sell productivity concessions. Railway shopmen in particular face attempts to introduce shift systems into the workshops. BR would like to keep the workshops open for 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The dispute is crucial. It is the first attempt by workers in the public sector to raise wages since the postmen were sold down the river.

Tyne workers raise cash

A DELEGATION from the strike committee of Fine Tubes, Plymouth, where the workers have been on strike for 39 weeks, met with a warm and generous response from the labour movement in the North East. When they returned home on Saturday they took with them more than £450 in donations (plus another £150 or so in the pipeline) and the good wishes of the many friends they have made up here.

This is the best response the Fine Tubes workers have had from any area they have visited so far, and it is a tribute both to their own determination and courage and to the traditional solidarity of the trade unionists of the Tyne and Tees.

Send further donations to: the Treasurer, Fine Tubes Strike Committee, 48 Stuart Road, Pennycomequick, Plymouth, Devon.

'WE'RE NOT BLUFFING' STRIKERS TELL TOP FORD BOSS

by Colin Beadle, Dagenham Body Plant, TGWU

LAST SUNDAY's mass meeting of Ford workers at Dagenham was the most decisive and militant yet in the seven-weeks-old strike for 'parity' - equal pay rates - with Midlands' car workers.

There was no sign of any wish to return to work on the terms so far offered. The management's 'final offer' to the unions' demand for £14-£16 a week more has been a derisory £3.20. Less than 50 out of the 10,000 at the Dagenham meeting voted against a motion of confidence in the national negotiators.

Management were watching the meeting closely in the hope of detecting some sign of weakness. There will have been no joy for labour boss Bob Ramsey in the result.

The only shouts were for 'parity'. The only jeers were for the handful who wanted to go back to work.

Many present commented on the difference between the meeting and a similar one held during last year's strike when the convenors were shouted down and pelted with snowballs. Those days are over.

Sunday's meeting follows a series held last week at Langley, Daventry, Halewood, Woolwich and Swansea where there were overwhelming majorities in favour of staying out. Further meetings are being held this week at Basildon and Aveyley.

The strike now enters a crucial stage. Ford's propaganda machine has failed.

Company letters to all their workers that speak of the 'final offer' have convinced few. Many workers have promptly returned the letters to Ford with suitable comments added.

THREATENED

International boss Henry Ford II said in Britain over the weekend that he wasn't bluffing when he threatened to cut back on investment in Britain.

Perhaps 'our Henry' will realise now, after Sunday's meeting, that Ford workers are not bluffing either and intend to stay out as long as necessary to win their demands.

■ Vauxhall car workers were offered a 14 per cent pay rise on Monday. This is as much as Ford have now offered after seven weeks of strike and months of negotiations. Even so, the Vauxhall offer is likely to be rejected by union officials on Monday. Their members are also demanding parity with top Midlands rates.

Apartheid ship banned

THE CAMPAIGN launched by Bristol Trades Council to stop a supply of South African coal from being unloaded at Avonmouth Docks ended with the ship being turned away last week. Railway workers refused to handle the coal after an appeal from South Wales and Somerset miners.

March against Immigration Bill

Sunday 21 March, starting 1pm Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square via Home Office. Organised by the Indian Workers' Association.

LEICESTER IS Public Meeting: Roger Protz, editor of Socialist Worker, on The Struggle for Socialism. Upstairs lounge, Globe Inn, Silver Street, 7.30pm, Friday 19 March.

KILL THE BILL - build a Council of Action. Speakers: Bernadette Devlin, MP, Dave Percival, UPW, Roger Rosewell, NUJ, chairman Doug Blow AUEW convenor, Victor Engineering, Wednesday 24 March, Cauliflower Hotel, Ilford.

GLASGOW IS Day School. Community House, Clyde St, Saturday 20 March, 11am Rank and file trade unionism, 2.30pm TUC recall congress, 4pm Next steps to kill the Bill. Speaker Jim Higgins POEU.

EDINBURGH IS: Rank and File Against the Bill: Sunday 21 March, Trades Council Club, Albany Street. Speaker Jim Higgins, POEU: 2pm, The Minority Movement, 4pm TUC recall Congress.

SWANSEA IS: Public Meeting: Amos Mouis speaks on 'The Labour History of Swansea from the late thirties till the Present' 7.30pm Old Red Cow, High St, Swansea, 25 March.

STOKE NEWINGTON IS: Public Meeting: UPW spokesman on The Lessons of the Postal Workers' Struggle, 8pm Monday 22 March, Rose & Crown Pub, cnr Albion Rd/Church St., N16. Bus: 73.

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Kill the Bill march demands

SEVERAL hundred trade unionists marched through Edmonton, N London, on Sunday against the Tory Industrial Relations Bill. Organised by the AUEW, it was supported by furniture workers, draughtsmen and other local unions. The marchers joined an 800-strong meeting to hear John Cousins, TGWU, Audrey Wise, US-DAW, Reg Birch, AUEW and Norman Atkinson, MP. The meeting voted to set up a local joint trade union committee to organise further action against the Bill.

ULSTER DEATHS USED TO MASK REAL ISSUES

by Sean Treacy

THE OUTCRY about the deaths of the three British soldiers in Northern Ireland was predictable. It has enabled the government here and in the Six Counties to throw out a cloud of confusion to detract attention from what is really happening there.

The incident is already being exploited by the Northern Ireland government to increase the use of repressive army raids in republican areas to prepare the ground for the opening of internment camps. It is by no means certain yet who was responsible for the killings. It might well have been the work of extreme right wing elements such as those who launched a campaign of sabotage at power plants last year.

The IRA was blamed then until there was an accident at one power station and the body of a prominent member of the semi-fascist Ulster Volunteer Force was found.

But the men really responsible for bringing tragedy into the homes and the families of the dead soldiers are to be found in the Tory cabinet. It is they who

March against Race Bill

MORE THAN 1000 people took part in a demonstration in Leicester last Saturday in protest against the Immigration Bill. Major contingents came from the Indian Workers Association, immigrant community groups, black power groups and local socialist organisations. The march was an impressive show of anger at the proposed racist legislation.

have increased the British army of occupation in Northern Ireland and laid young workingclass boys open to death and injury.

The British army has no right in Ireland and can play no part in bringing peace. Peace will only be won when the Irish working class, Protestant and Catholic, take the power from the bigots and the exploiters into their own hands.

Union blacking for striking technicians

TEN MEMBERS of DATA, the technical and supervisory section of the Engineering Union (AUEW) have been on strike since 8 March at Enfield Rolling Mills, North London, over a pay dispute. The Rolling Mills is part of the giant Delta group that includes the Birmid Qualcast foundries in the Midlands.

Negotiations dragged on for nine months and the union finally lodged strike notices with the management. On 5 March, the management asked the DATA divisional organiser to suspend the strike notices for one week 'to allow the new company chairman to settle in'. The union reply was unprintable.

DATA has a representative on the plant's shop stewards' committee and has full support from the other unions - Transport, Engineers and Electricians.

Post Office, Shell-BP and British Oxygen workers and lorry drivers are all blacking supplies to the works.

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