

# Socialist Worker

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WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

# £2 NO PAY FREEZE!

**Tell TUC  
no talks  
with the  
Tories...**

**STOP TALKING AND START FIGHTING**—that's the demand every trade unionist should raise after the latest round of talks between the TUC, the Tory government and the bosses' organisation, the CBI.

After Monday's 'fruitful' discussions there is a strong possibility that the union leaders will agree to a policy of severe pay restraint in line with

by **ROGER ROSEWELL**  
Socialist Worker Industrial Correspondent

Heath's £2 plan when they meet again for final talks on Thursday.

The Tories are anxious to do a deal with the TUC following the savage defeats for government

policy handed out by miners, dockers and railmen. And the union chiefs are just as frightened of the rising militancy of the workers as Heath and co.

Instead of using the massive strength of the rank and file to improve wages, cut unemployment and smash the Industrial Relations Act, they are willing to reach a shabby agreement to hold down pay in order to avoid a confrontation with the Tories and the bosses.

## Commando raids on rents



Manchester tenants 'commando squad' in action in Hulme with an effigy of Ted Heath

**COMMANDO SQUADS** of tenants from the Manchester Tenants Action Group, uniting more than 20 local tenants' associations, are touring the unorganised areas of Manchester in cars and vans with loudhailers and leaflets every Sunday to win maximum support for the campaign against the Tory Fair Rents Act.

The commandos arrive on an estate on

**SW Reporter**

Sunday morning and split into groups for leafletting and speaking through loudhailers to advertise a meeting which is held that afternoon either on a piece of waste ground or in a local school. After one or two commando speakers, who describe what is happening on their own estates, local

people are encouraged to speak and ask questions, and a committee of local tenants is then formed to organise the fight.

Some of the strongest associations in the struggle against the Rent Act in the Manchester district have been formed in this way in Beswick, Bradford, Ardwick, Clayton and Miles Platting which are all now on partial rent strike. Burnage and Blackely are being 'raided' this week.

The Action Group has been the most important force in linking up the struggle. It has written to all shop stewards' committees and trade union branches and has received declared support from local dustmen, gasmen and bakers unions and the rent collectors union, NUPE.

The Action Group issues 'No Rent Increase Here' stickers and a regular news letter 'Rents Struggle' which goes out to the town hall or for commando raids. Rent collectors have been shadowed on estates by local tenants backed up by the commando squads, which will also be called out if there is any threat of eviction.

More rents news: pages 10 and 11.

The extent of the TUC's surrender to the Tories can be seen from the fact that only two members of the General Council voted to break off the talks. They were opposed by the right-wing of Lord Cooper and Sir Sidney Greene and the leading 'lefts', Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon, who attended Monday's talks.

Despite all their militant speeches, Jones and Scanlon are now partners to accepting a deal with the government that flouts the September TUC policy of no wage restraint.

Incomes policy is a fraud. It will not help the low paid. A confidential report prepared for the government by the National Economic Development Council says that a £20 minimum wage would be 'inflationary'.

Incomes policy attacks wages alone. Profits are not held in check and even if dividends were frozen the rich would get the gravy later in the form of capital gains.

### THE AIM

Company profits rose by 18 per cent last year. The top 50 firms made average profits of £61 millions. Any attempt to hold down wages will only increase those profits—and that is the aim of the Tory scheme which the TUC leaders are willing to accept.

Vic Feather, TUC general secretary, says that the main obstacle to reaching a deal with Heath is how to hold prices in check. The answer, as he should know, is that they can't.

In a book on the Labour government's incomes policy, Joan Mitchell, a former member of the Prices and Incomes Board, admits that 'It was impossible to record every price change, let alone examine it. There are several million changes a year.'

And she adds that prices should not be restrained because 'High profits are the main incentive to invest'.

Prices continue to rocket. The Tories are attempting to force 50p to £1 increases on five million council tenants. The new Value Added Tax, due to start in February, will take a further slice from workers' pay packets.

The TUC's miserable retreat must be stopped NOW through action from the rank and file.

● Stop the talks. Demand that your union instructs the TUC to break off the discussions.

● Full support, including industrial solidarity action, for all workers and unions that defy any wage-freeze deal and fight for substantial increases.

● Organise for a massive campaign for a £25 minimum wage, equal pay for women and a £16 pension.

**Fine Tubes must win**

FOR THIRTY TWO long months the men and women of Fine Tubes in Plymouth have waged a heroic struggle against their ruthless and reactionary employers to win the most fundamental of democratic rights, the right to organise in independent trade unions.

Their aim is to win that struggle and gain a firm foothold for trade unionism in the desperately low-paid West Country.

They have sent delegation after delegation round the country to raise funds and impose solidarity blacking in those firms still supplying or buying from Fine Tubes. They have had to rely exclusively on their own efforts and those of other rank and file trade unionists because the two giant unions involved—Transport Workers and Engineers—have refused to organise a real fight on their behalf.

At the Digbeth Civic Hall in Birmingham next Saturday, 28 October, the Fine Tubes strike committee is holding a conference to discuss their strike and to plan ways of winning it. Support has flowed in from dozens of shop stewards committees and union branches, from miners and journalists, to draughtsmen and car workers. Many are sending delegations to discuss the struggle which has much to say about the current state of British trade unionism.

### Skeleton

It is vital that representation at the conference is wider still. Here are the views of just three of the many trade unionists who will be attending.

'Workers in Coventry must support Fine Tubes because if they lose then there will be a vast area of unorganised cheap labour in the South West undercutting the rates and conditions we have established.'—**George Anderson, TGWU convenor, Coventry Radiators.**

'The Fine Tubes struggle has become the skeleton in the cupboard of our movement. It points to great weaknesses within our ranks. If Vic Feather had given half the time and energy he is now devoting to Tory Ted's two pound twist to the real problem of solidarity that the lack of official backing for Fine Tubes has shown up, then the whole movement would be in better fettle for the coming fight.'—**Brian Bennett, chairman of the joint shop stewards' committee, Rubery Owen, Darlaston.**

'Our movement is capable of crushing operations like Fine Tubes which are blatantly ignoring us. The unions involved should most certainly call for a national strike and give it maximum publicity with a view to putting pressure on the employers associations throughout the country.'—**John Worth, deputy AUEW convenor, Chrysler, Stoke.**

● The National Committee of the International Socialists last weekend voted its full support to the Fine Tubes Conference and called on all IS trade unionists to make a maximum effort to obtain credentials.

### FINE TUBES CONFERENCE

Saturday 28 October  
Digbeth Civic Hall,  
Birmingham  
11am—5pm

Please send credentials to:

Name.....  
Address.....  
Union.....

Send to: Fine Tubes Strike Committee  
c/o 65 Breton Side, Exeter Street,  
Plymouth. Phone 0752 65459/65667.

# 16

NEXT WEEK Socialist Worker expands to 16 pages. That means more news, more pictures, more facts, more politics to arm you in the fight against the Tories and their system.

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# WORLD NEWS

## BRIEFING

## Army court jails bomb militants

A SPECIAL Military court in Athens has imposed savage sentences on four Greek militants for their activities against the ruling military junta.

The four—three students and a plumber—accepted responsibility for bomb explosions in Athens against American and government targets and admitted being members of the 'Movement of 20th October' group.

Defending themselves in court, they stuck by their group's manifesto which proclaims that they are fighting 'for the overthrow of the military junta, against capitalism and imperialism, for a non-bureaucratic socialist workers' republic in Greece'.

The military judge retorted with sentences of six, 13, 16 and 17 years in prison.

The day the sentence was passed, the Greek High

by George Gionis

Court put out a circular to all judges instructing them in future to forbid defence lawyers and/or the accused to cause confusion by expounding historical or political theories or slandering the state, and to make them stick to the criminal issues in the trials.

The junta, faced with increasing activity by revolutionary socialists who are prepared to pose the issues in class terms—thus giving a lead to the increasing everyday struggles of Greek workers, peasants and students, is anxious to stop politics being talked even in the closed confines of its courts.

The junta is also keeping up a barrage about 'terrorists'

and hired kamikaze killers from abroad disturbing the peace of our prosperous nation', while the security police attack militants in the factories and the universities.

The junta's efforts to divert attention from this last trial were helped by the carefully timed publication in the Greek press of an interview with 'resistance leader' Mikis Theodorakis. Theodorakis, until recently a prominent member of the reformist Communist Party of Greece, split from the Party a few months ago, and has shifted further to the right.

In the interview he announces his intention of returning to Greece provided he is left in peace to compose his music.

This unhappy 'coincidence' is another indication of the growth of the revolutionary left in Greece and the decline of the reformist Communist Party.

## Israel is getting richer

A COMRADE recently returned from Israel reports:

The first change you notice is the economic situation. Because of military spending and the exploitation of Arab labour from the occupied territories, there is fantastic prosperity for the whole middle class. The working class has not done so well. This is because of the Histadut (a sort of state-controlled company union), and because of the availability of Arab labour.

Despite this many workers seem more prosperous, as more work is available, and they often do more than one job. With the level of rents and prices, you can't live on the average wage of £70 a month without a second job.

There are also increasing signs of prosperity in the Arab villages. The Arabs' land has been taken from them by legal robbery, such as compulsory purchase with little or no compensation, so they have been forced to become a working-class.

They often get lower wages than Jews, but there is plenty of work at present. Services such as electricity are used to get them to co-operate. If they vote the wrong way at elections—no electricity.

They are relatively prosperous, but if the economic bubble bursts they will be in trouble. The first victims will be the Arabs from the occupied territories, the second the Israeli Arabs, the third the oriental (black) Jews.

### Ashamed

Until a few years ago Israel was a highly political society—very patriotic, for example. Now a lot of this has been eroded among the middle class and replaced by materialism.

This can be seen most strikingly in the attitude to military service. Of course some people always did try to evade it, but they were terribly ashamed of doing so. Now some young people actually boast of failing the psychological tests.

At one time the young people on the kibbutzim all wanted to be officers, paratroopers, or fighter pilots—which meant longer service, more responsibility and more danger. Now they all want to be sergeants, with a few small privileges and not much responsibility.

This would not be surprising in other countries and it means Israel is getting more normal.

Among workers, especially oriental Jews, there is a very restive atmosphere and great cynicism. There is a public square in Tel Aviv called Dizengoff Circus, where there is a sort of political public meeting every night, with dozens of discussion groups, composed mainly of young oriental Jews. In general the attitude is very cynical.

I heard one say: 'I'm telling you, in five years, the army will be in Baghdad and we'll be standing in bread queues.'

In general, where Israel used to be a very distinctive sort of society, it's much less so now.



Armed police evict an African family from their home

## Black servants ordered back to the ghettos

by W Enda

A ROW has blown up over the South African government's decision to remove thousands of black domestic servants from the vicinity of the homes of their employers in the white suburbs of Johannesburg.

They are being sent to specially-built hostels in the African ghettos, part of an enormous plan which in the next few years will prevent at least 60,000 African workers making their homes in the areas where they work.

White housewives have complained that it was unfair to make their miserably-paid servants travel every day to the male or female hostels. This was not out of humanitarian feeling—they were worried about how to get up in the morning without having their tea in bed, their bath run, their clothes laid out and their breakfast cooked.

The servants have to put up with travelling and lose the privacy of having their own room (usually a cupboard). They do not gain freedom in return, for the hostels impose prison-like restrictions on them.

In the white areas illegal visits from a husband or lover could lead to a beating and jail for being in a forbidden area. Recently a white woman was fined heavily for allowing her servant's two children to stay with their mother for a couple of days.

But in the hostels—enormous concrete blocks designed to accommodate up to 3000 men or women—

such illegal acts as making love to one's wife or husband are completely out of the question. Inmates are crowded into eight-bed dormitories and each hostel is surrounded with heavy iron railings.

Provisions have been made to deal with the inevitable revolts of the inmates against their inhuman surroundings. Electronically-controlled steel doors have been installed to seal off any section of the building where trouble may flare up. Armed white police and CS gas will do the rest.

The hostels are really no more than a multi-storey version of the compound. In South Africa compounds house hundreds of thousands of African workers in mean huts containing concrete or wooden bunks. The compounds are surrounded by constantly-patrolled barbed-wire fences.

The compound system first arose at the diamond and gold mines in the last century. Africans were driven off their land by white farmers and forced to pay taxes. They had no crops to sell. The only way for them to get the necessary cash was—and still is—semi-slavery in the mines.

### Strikes

In the compounds the workers are continually policed. Warders can easily spot and root out militants. The workers are totally isolated from their fellow workers, let alone any trade-union or socialist influences.

Despite this there have been big struggles—the 1918 and 1946 African mineworkers' strikes, and more recently

last year's strikes of 1000 copperminers at Prieska and of 20,000 Ovambo workers, all of whom suffer under the compound system. The system is no guarantee against the African workers' will and ability to resist.

The compound system is widespread in South Africa. The main employers are the mines, railways, harbours, iron and steel industry, chemicals and local councils. These sectors are the bedrock of the economy which is totally dependent on cheap unorganised black labour.

Inmates of the compounds are classified as migrant labourers. They are forced to leave their wives and families behind to starve in the reserves and Bantustans for nine months of every year.

### Apartheid

The hostels are different in that they house workers in industries which up to now have not organised their labour force in compounds—mainly light manufacturing and services. Unlike the migrant workers they have lived in the industrial 'white areas' with their families all their lives.

In line with the apartheid ideal of making all Africans into citizens of the impoverished rural Bantustans, new and stricter laws are removing thousands of such families from their homes and dumping them in so-called 'homelands' which they have in fact never seen before.

The family breadwinner has to stay behind—classified as a 'single' migrant worker, to go on making super-profits for his white master while living in specially designed 'bachelor quarters'.

THE Australian general election is now set for 2 December. After 23 years of conservative government, a Labour victory seems likely. The ruling Liberal and Country Party coalition is split over currency revaluation, and the role played by foreign (especially American) business interests in the Australian economy. Moreover, it is saddled with William McMahon—known as 'Big Ears'.

The Australian Labour Party, for its part, has to cope with its significant socialist left faction, which reminds the party leaders about their obligations to the trade unions and the social protest movements. Another problem is the parliamentary campaign of draft resister Barry Johnston, who is evading the police and addressing meetings by tape-recorder.

Labour, campaigning under the slogan 'It's time', has immense appeal to millions of Australians who believe it is indeed time for social change. What's more, few of them have any clear memories of the scandalous strike-breaking record of the last Labour government in the late 1940s.

Socialists in Australia are supporting Labour as the mass party of the working class. But they are also warning that only a determined struggle can force it to make more than token reforms.

STIRRING words from Mao's man at the U.N. 'The total collapse of Portuguese colonial rule is not far off', proclaimed delegate Chang Yung-Kuan in a speech attacking the racist regimes of Angola, Mozambique, Guine-Bissau and, for good measure, South Africa and Rhodesia.

China has in the past year, made overtures to buy arms from South Africa and chrome from Rhodesia.

CHOU EN-LAI has been talking to the Wall Street Journal about how China would treat Taiwan if she took over the island. He said that the gradual integration of Taiwan into the mainland economy would follow the same pattern as the treatment of China's 'national capitalists' after the 1949 Revolution. They were kept in business for seven years, then their firms were taken over by the state, and they were given five per cent interest on their capital for ten years.

Chou concluded: 'Add this to what they made during the years of private ownership and it can be said they got their investment back. Some are still drawing salaries as employees of the enterprises.'

THE South African government hopes to prevent the students of the Coloured University of the Western Cape from ever again acting in solidarity with their black and Indian brothers. In May they struck in support of a call for action by the all-black South African Students Organisation (SASO).

SASO speakers have already been banned from the campus. Last week 73 other regulations were published by the government which among other things prohibit meetings, the distribution of student publications, the posting of notices and the giving of press interviews unless permission to do so is first received from the white University Principal.

THE ISRAELI League for Human and Civil Rights has issued a statement about conditions of prisoners in the Gaza prison. This lists the following facts:

1. The prisoners are beaten constantly by the guards. No complaints or requests to see the prison governor are allowed, for such requests are an offence in themselves.
2. The prisoners' only exercise is a 15-minute walk every two or three days.
3. Absolute silence is imposed on prisoners even in their cells, and any attempt by prisoners to talk to each other is severely punished.
4. Apart from beatings, the most common punishment is the 'punishment cell'. This is a cell about 6ft long and 4ft wide, where the floor is kept wet day and night so the prisoner cannot lie down in comfort even at night. Lying down or sleeping during the day is strictly forbidden.

Sometimes up to four people are packed into such cells. Sometimes one prisoner is put in one in solitary confinement. An additional punishment is for cold water to be poured over the prisoner's clothes and for him to be left like this all night.

5. During the rare visits of Red Cross officials, conditions are improved to some extent, but they get worse once the visit is over.

THE WEEKLY magazine Management Today reports that for the first time China is to send four delegates to the conference of the International Council for Scientific Management in Munich. On the agenda are modern management techniques, including Productivity and Personnel.

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## A taxing problem

**THERE** is a story that in the early 1930s the Russian government sent a representative to a disarmament conference sponsored by the League of Nations—yesterday's United Nations.

The conference had been in session for many months and the delegates of the various governments had professed their support for the principle of disarmament and had engaged in much weighty discussion on such matters as the maximum size of guns to be allowed on cruisers and proposed limits on the range of bombing aircraft.

The Russian, Maxim Litvinov, scandalised and disgusted the assembled diplomats by standing up and proposing, in mild and courteous language, that all the governments represented should forthwith pledge themselves to disarm by abolishing their armies, navies and air forces. The man was obviously a boomer, a rank outsider, quite unfitted to participate in such an important matter as a disarmament conference.

Yet perhaps Litvinov's approach may be helpful in the current discussion on incomes policy. Mr Heath tells us that we are all in the same boat, that we must all pull together and avoid these wasteful and destructive strikes about wages.

We suggest that this could best be achieved by paying everyone the same basic wage and abolishing all unearned income with certain agreed exceptions such as pensions, maternity benefits and so on.

## No special cases

Consider how simple, easily workable and eminently fair such a system would be. There would be no need to argue about dividend restrictions. There would be no dividends. There would be no difficulties about special cases. There would be no special cases.

Mr Heath would be relieved of the embarrassment, that we are sure he feels acutely, of having to urge wage restraint on workers earning £26 a week while he earns £226 a week. The problem of equal pay for women would be solved 'at a stroke' as somebody once said.

**All those immensely difficult problems that have caused so much concern in previous incomes policy discussions would disappear. It would no longer be necessary to assess the relative contribution to society, and so the appropriate financial reward, for dustmen as opposed to stockbrokers, agricultural workers as opposed to company chairmen or nurses as opposed to property speculators. Lord Vestey would receive the same reward for his contribution to polo as Bernie Steer would receive for his contribution to shifting cargo.**

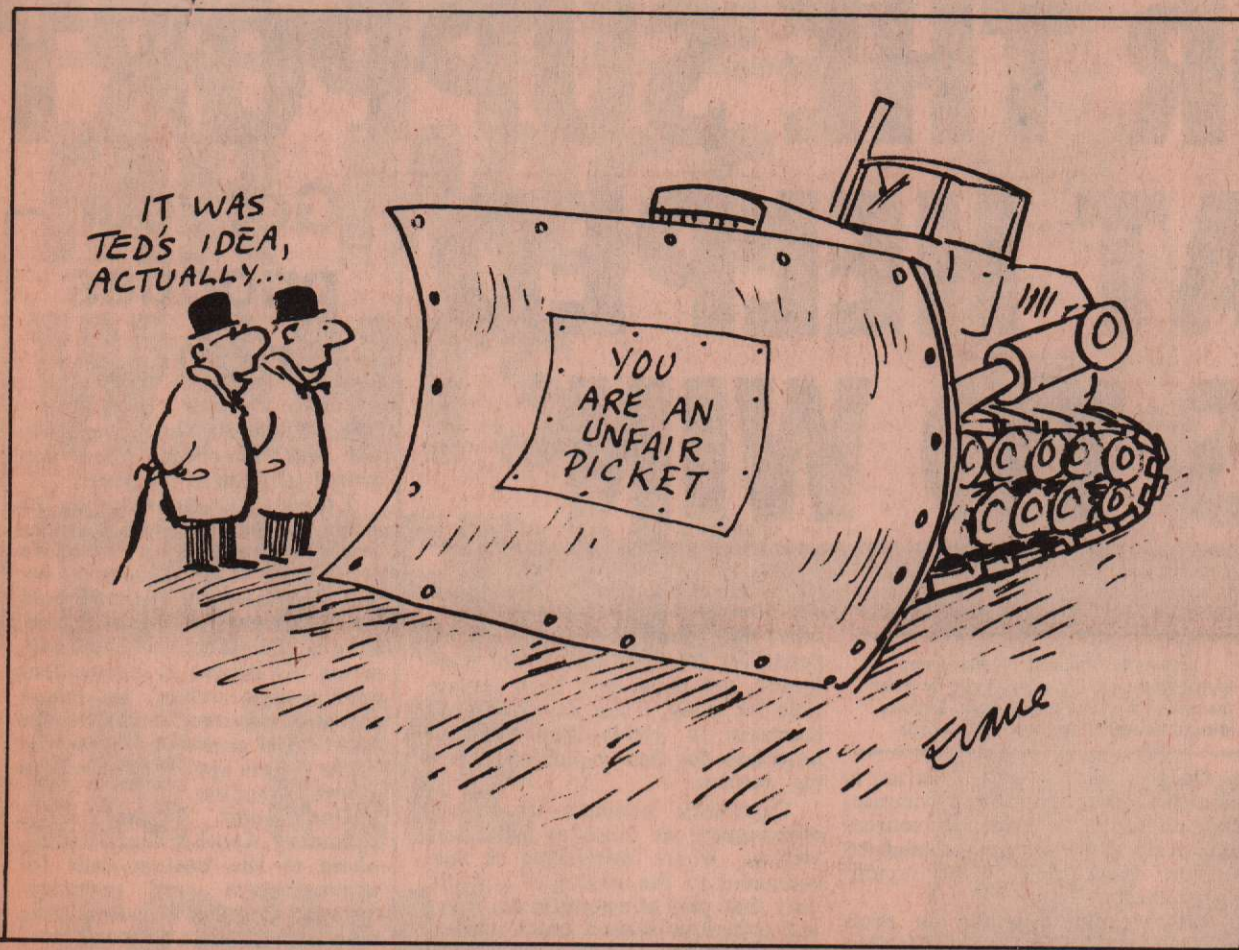
It may be argued, and indeed we concede that there is merit in the argument, that some of the jobs that are now most highly rewarded are actually useless or even harmful to the public good. But we are practical people. Half a loaf is better than no bread and, provided that the principle of equal rewards for all is accepted, we for our part would be prepared to agree not to scrutinise too closely the positive contributions of Harry Hyams, Elizabeth Windsor or Paul Getty. After all, we do not want to increase redundancies at this time of high unemployment if we can avoid them.

## Nothing to do

Naturally, our scheme is not without certain difficulties. These must be squarely faced. For example, there would be the problem of massive redundancies among our fellow trade unionists in the Inland Revenue. With the disappearance of the whole elaborate system of coding and graded deductions, differential tax on earned and unearned income, dependants allowances and 'educational trusts' for private schools there would be nothing for them to do.

Also many accountants, tax consultants, solicitors and others would find their trades going the way of the hand-loom weavers. Clearly, transitional arrangements would have to be made to avoid real hardship in such cases.

**For our part, we believe that the old principle of 'full work or full pay' should be adopted for those suffering from technological change, but we can hardly expect to get everything at one blow. If the present tripartite talks lead to an incomes policy based on equal wages for all, we can be satisfied that real progress has been achieved towards Mr Heath's ideal of 'One Nation'.**



# COTTONS YARNS

## Unpopular Front

THE Monday Club, which is increasingly infiltrated by the National Front and even more extremist organisations, has incurred the wrath of the Tory hierarchy. Heath and Co have issued instructions to the Tory press to do their worst to the Monday Club (hence the Sunday Telegraph expose on 8 October about a Club delegation to the Italian Fascist Party, the MSI), and has also decreed that no member of the government should speak to the Monday Club at an official meeting.

This boycott has had, apparently, no effect on Victor Feather, general secretary of the Trades Union Congress. On Monday, 6 November, Vic will address the Monday Club in a committee room of the House of Commons on 'Industrial Relations'.

The following week, the club will be addressed by Michael Ivens, director of the right-wing employers' front, Aims of Industry. On 12 January, Enoch Powell will address the club's annual dinner at the Savoy Hotel.

Mr Ivens can take comfort that if workers generally have dismissed his sycophantic Working Together propaganda for the nonsense it is, at least Vic Feather believes in the 'maxim dialogue' with racists and hysterics on the far Right.

## Change partners

A WONDERFUL gesture of industrial partnership is the government's plan for a new Industrial Development Advisory Board which will advise industry on how best to spend the hand-outs to private enterprise which the Heath government is dishing out in even larger quantities than did the Labour government. The nine members of the board were named on 11 October. They are: G W Richardson, chairman of Schroder Wagg merchant bank (Chairman), Sir Raymond Brookes, chairman of GKN, and life-long Tory, G A H Cadbury, deputy chairman and



FEATHER: black Monday

managing director of Cadbury-Schweppes, Sir Arnold Hall, chairman and managing director of Hawker Siddeley, R E B Lloyd, chief executive of Williams and Glyn's Bank, W E Parker, former senior partner in Price Waterhouse, stockbrokers, G Barlow, chairman and chief executive of Ransome, Hoffman, Pollard, K Bond, deputy managing director of GEC.

That's eight. The ninth (this is where the partnership comes in) is Harry Urwin, assistant general secretary of the Transport Workers Union.

*BOOK matches being supplied to members of the Engineering Union contain two pieces of advice: the cover says 'Join the AUEW', the reverse bears the message 'Close cover before striking'.*

## Warm red

THE Sunday Times has discovered a new breed of Communist—the soft, loveable, British variety.

Last Sunday's edition contained a long, rave close-up on Bert Ramelson, the industrial organiser of the Communist Party. Bert, 'a charming and erudite man', is an OK guy because he insists that rank and file action must never divorce itself from the union leadership.

But the main reason for his endearment to the industrial correspondents of the Sunday Times (convinced champions of the Industrial Relations Act) is his stony-faced opposition to a Russian-style revolution in Britain. Not for him the corny old clichés of Vladimir Lenin and co about 'smashing the ruling class'.

Says the Sunday Times: 'Ramelson has a unique answer. What he wants is a "British" revolution, based on British institutions and British traditions and non-violent.'

"Any total transformation of the state is a revolution," he argues. "Working-class judges and army officers replacing the present personnel is a smashing of the bourgeois state. A representative of the working class as a chief constable with his main colleagues coming from the same class, even if they occupy the original Scotland Yard building, is smashing of the state."

## Price right

RUGBY readers of the Coventry Evening Telegraph were startled last week to find that their headline-hungry MP, William Price, not only admitted to having 'cavorted' with a Bulgarian spy but had actually joined the ranks of a revolutionary organisation.

Answering press criticism over his admitted connection with the Bulgarian embassy in London, Price told the Coventry paper: 'As far as I am aware there is no law against talking to Communists, Americans, to Jews, to Arabs or anyone else. I am an international Socialist.'

Price is believed to keep his IS cap hanging next to those he has won for his sturdy support for various Tory policies in parliament, including the Common Market and his much-publicised red-baiting letter to Jack Jones calling for the expulsion from the TGWU of the dockers who lobbied docks delegates in Smith Square.

And far from being sympathetic to IS, Price was outraged to find that we are not officially banned from the Labour Party. 'They bloody well should be,' he declared.

## Final reel

AND SO we say farewell to Cottons Yarns... even columns in socialist papers aren't safe from takeover bids. Next week we are merged with a bigger and, hopefully, better gossip column of facts and cracks. Cottons was always at its best when readers flooded us with snippets from the local press about the antics of Labour MPs, Tories, town hall bureaucrats, and local bosses, at its worst when written cold on Monday mornings in Cottons Gardens. So keep the odds and sods coming, readers. We'll see you next week... under new management.



...are coming

# THANKS FOR THE SUPPORT

THE DRAX site shop stewards wish to thank the International Socialists most sincerely for the assistance and coverage in Socialist Worker you have given us in our recent struggle against the system. It is with help like yours that we will one day organise the working class.

The Drax shop stewards site committee wish to convey their thanks on behalf of the men they represent to the fellow trade unionists who supported their fight for a fair wage increase over the last 24 weeks. All three firms concerned—Babcock and Wilcox, Yarrows and the British Steel Corporation—have resumed work for a trial period of guaranteed bonus pending new bonus negotiations.

The response to their appeal was nationwide and came from a variety of jobs—miners, shipbuilders, plane-makers—and of course members working under the Outside Steelwork and Steam Generating Plant Erection Agreement.

It is to ALL these brother trade unionists that we say thanks once again for your support and generosity. —Yarrow, BSC, Babcock and Wilcox workers, Drax power station construction site, Goole, Yorks.

## Provos

MIKE MILLER writes in last week's paper that he does not blame the Provisional IRA for sectarianism and of course this is quite correct. Sectarianism has a long history in Northern Ireland and the working class was divided by it long before the Provos appeared on the scene.

But in one vital respect Miller completely misses the point: the Provos are a product of this tragic history, they are themselves a sectarian organisation that developed in the course of the conflict in Northern Ireland.

While they came into being as a response to Protestant attacks on Catholic areas, today they are primarily engaged in an offensive campaign against the Protestant community, a campaign that has succeeded in only further dividing the working class and which has brought the province to the point of civil war. For socialists to support them in this is a terrible mistake.

Miller excuses this on the grounds that the Provos are fighting British imperialism. By now however it must surely be clear to everyone that the only obstacle to a united Ireland is the Protestant community and that nothing would please the British government more than to be rid of the

# THAT HELPED US TO WIN

## LETTERS

whole problem.

There is no Machiavellian Tory plot to keep Ireland partitioned. They have no objection to a united Ireland, as such but recognise the fact that if the Protestants were to be abandoned and the army pulled out, the civil war that would inevitably follow would inconvenience British business interests much more than even the present troubles.

Miller uses 'imperialism' in a wholly emotive fashion rather than as an analytic category and consequently completely misunderstands the entire situation. The Protestant community considers itself to be British not because it is pro-imperialist but because of the historical development of Northern Ireland as an integral part of the British economy.

The enemy of the Protestant working class is not British imperialism but British capitalism. This is why they are not queuing up to join the Provos. This is why they are members of British trade unions. This is why Protestant engineers struck against the Industrial Relations Act.

The charge still stands then. Miller has put his support for a bigoted sectarian, anti-working-class, nationalist movement before the interests of working-class unity and this is unforgivable. —JOHN NEWSINGER, London E11.

## Population

A CLEAR and consistent line in relation to those who concern themselves with 'the environment' is emerging from the pages of Socialist Worker. At best they are presented as politically naive liberals. At worst as arms manufacturers to the forces of reaction.

Letters to Socialist Worker must arrive first post Monday. Type or write on one side of the paper only. Letters should be not more than 250 words

On the whole, scant attention is paid to their case and their evidence, and reference is made to sources selectively and only long enough to set up straw men to be rapidly demolished.

Peter Rankin's article on over-population (23 Sept) sets up Malthus as the straw man. The only tenable part of his theory is that population does have a tendency to outstrip food supplies, and that if present trends are maintained, we are in the near future going to be in a position where even our rational attempts at containing the situation will be to no avail.

It is most dubious to suggest that the US is entirely self-sufficient in foodstuffs. In most areas it may produce sufficient to supply the demand effective in the market but it is still a colossal importer of foodstuffs, raw materials for fertilisers, pesticides etc, at the direct expense of the subordinated, so-called underdeveloped countries.

To assert that British agriculture is in the same position is even less tenable.

Peter Rankin's explanations of these alleged facts is worse. Tractors and farm machinery do not improve yields (indeed, with few exceptions they are actually less efficient in this respect), they merely enhance the productivity of the worker on the land, with the usual loss of jobs.

And it is plant nutrients and fertilisers which have been unambiguously shown to do irreparable harm to the prospects of continuingly high yields, not to mention their

other serious and adverse side effects. Pesticides are significantly not mentioned, yet these have been responsible for many, if not most, dramatic increases in yields—they are also notorious for their rapidly diminishing returns.

Capitalism plunders its natural environment as much as its human victims. Where everything is subordinated to the making of a profit, only that part of scientific discovery and technique is used which furthers that end, the remainder is discarded.

In agriculture, it has done this with some apparent short-term success. It should not be relied upon for the future, dependent as it is upon the depletion of finite resources, and heavy libations of luck.

This is not to destroy Rankin's political message, that much, probably all, the existing poverty in the world is avoidable—but given present world population increase rates, ultimate inevitable poverty is no myth, no far away prospect, unless the problem is confronted by socialists now.

To replace this system, with its twisted priorities, is only a necessary pre-requisite to getting to grips with the real problems which exist. —J W FORD, Ramsbottom, Lancashire.

WHEN the printer's gremlin strikes, he strikes hard. Last week's issue contained two serious mistakes. In Tony Cliff's article on the Tory £2 pay fraud, the demand for a £10 pension should have read £16. And a missing line in Peter Martin's letter on China turned him unwittingly into a raving reactionary. Instead of 'Socialists will always find themselves on the side of the oppressors' (!) the passage should have read 'Socialists will always find themselves on the side of the oppressed against their oppressors'. Sincere apologies to messrs Cliff, Martin, pensioners and the oppressed.

Get your priorities right...

I READ Socialist Worker regularly and was interested when you invited criticism of the paper.

I think that anyone reading the paper for the first time might be seriously confused by 'What We Stand For'. It would seem to me that any statement of aims should include a sense of priorities and, although the statement begins well, saying 'We believe in independent working-class action' (is this a euphemism for revolution?) for the abolition of capitalism', after that all the points appear to have been chosen at random.

One point opposes secret diplomacy. Another—buried somewhere at the bottom—calls for nationalisation and workers' control. There is no attempt to show which points are considered most important.

Nor is there any attempt to explain the relationship between the various points. This need not involve long, complicated explanations—it could be done quite simply by putting the points in a logical order.

There should be two central points stated at the top:

1. Opposition to imperialism and support for national liberation movements.
2. Support for a nationalised economy under workers' control.

I also think it important to state that there can be no workers' control under capitalism and that socialists should take no responsibility for the administration of capitalism. Many workers have been disillusioned with the failure of nationalisation under capitalism.

The same disillusion could occur if workers are led to believe there can be workers' control before the revolution. If IS believes workers' control cannot exist under capitalism they should say so, loudly and clearly. —BRIAN J MARTIN, Doncaster, Yorks.

## Battle for Ideas

I THOUGHT that the recent letters supporting the 'progressive' role of the Chinese bureaucracy had reached unplumbable depths for a socialist paper but Bob Korreich's attack on my article on pornography makes him a veritable Jacques Cousteau of the marxist movement.

He says that the major problems of society are unemployment, bad housing, low pay, and so on, and indeed they are. But to suggest that we concentrate on them and 'ignore' (his word) the Longford Report is to say that socialists have no duty to attempt to challenge the wrong and reactionary ideas that are stuffed into working people's minds every day of their lives by the system and its all-powerful mass media.

A revolutionary organisation and newspaper that intervened only at the economic level by attempting to give a lead in struggles over pay conditions, housing, etc, cannot build a mass movement to challenge the entire system, because that system is based on a set of ideas that we must constantly fight against.

The Longford Report is concerned not just with smutty books but with dissent, the ability of people to argue for total change. That is madly abundantly clear in the section that Muggerridge wrote on television where the main concern is with programme that, however vaguely, challenge the 'Christian way of life'.

If the Longford demands are taken up by the ruling class we, the revolutionaries, are in greater danger than Playboy magazine or the dirty mac brigade. We 'ignore' such threats at our peril. —DAVID EAST, London E2.

# Burying Benn with abuse

# ignores the problem

IT WAS not so much what Wedgie said, but what he left unsaid, that brought the torrents of abuse on him from newspapers throughout the land. Although he hinted vaguely at some form of workers' sanctions to counter the lies and distortions of the press, he made no attempt to examine the problems of press freedom and its relationship with society, either as it is or as it should be.

Wedgwood Benn's statement was the tired, irritable maundering of a conference chairman who realised he had bungled his big chance. But the real victim of his blundering could be all hope of genuine public debate about the media and democracy.

The chorus of outrage from Fleet Street—not to mention the provincial press, which can be far more influential in certain matters—was a clear move to stamp out any such debate before it even got under way.

The tabloid dailies all displayed a rare unanimity in their treatment of a serious subject by leading their front pages with the story. PRESS FREEDOM: WILSON STEPS IN (Mirror); BENN GETS THE BRUSH-OFF (Sun); WILSON DISOWNS BENN (Mail).

Harold Wilson's old crony, Lord Goodman, who happens to be chairman of the Newspaper Publishers Association, the mafia of Fleet Street proprietors, had already been given acres of space in the Sundays to belittle Benn. Like all the rest of the criticism it was negative, concentrating on the simple job of demolishing his half-baked remarks.



## RON KNOWLES' EYE ON THE PRESS

Editorial bombast in the Sun, Mail and Express was predictably childish and evasive, but the most fooling article of all was written by Peter Fiddick in the Guardian, who dwelt for an entire column on Benn's non-existent liftman at Thomson House and his apparent confusion between the Times and the Sunday Times. Sanity overtook him finally, however, and he ended the column with an invitation to Wedgie to explain himself in 'this space this time next week'.

Readers of the Mirror, Mail, Sun and Express, with their daily digest of mingled fact and opinion, might have hoped for a little explanation of the fuss if the subject had not been over-simplified into a threat to press freedom. Naturally, when the case was presented in this way, they were on the side of the angels.

No one was going to bother to examine the nature of press freedom or the alternatives to the present crazy system... except, possibly, Wedgie, if he cared to take up Fiddick's challenge.

It was also noticeable that the papers ignored the rest of the media in their broadsides against Benn. No mention was made of the forthcoming local commercial radio stations, also greedily eyed by the newspaper proprietors.

The system of secret bids for commercial television franchises and the failure of the Independent Broadcasting Authority to fulfil its functions were other points conveniently overlooked. The whole system of government secrecy and the institutional barriers to public information, legitimate targets for the media to attack, were not considered worthy of passing comment.

There are many ways in which the press could be transformed into a truly democratic medium, free from the shackles of big business and advertising hang-ups, and every thoughtful newspaper worker has his own recipe.

Personally I would like to see a national press centre in London, allied to one in Manchester, in which newspapers would share their plant overheads, while maintaining individual craft and editorial staffs. Similar regional centres would cater for provincial papers.

The centres would be publicly funded and controlled. Newspaper publishers would apply to elected centre boards for

fixed-term contracts. The boards would determine the number and variety of newspapers, both nationally and locally, to ensure a competing socio-political choice for readers.

Boards would also fix prices and advertising rates, which would be uniform for a given area and displayed in all the papers for that area. All newspapers would be non-profit-making, operated under workers' control, with all income going to the boards.

Allied to cable rate concessions, free telephone systems, and duty exemptions on paper imports, this system would give us a flourishing, varied press, free from fear of big business and constrained only by the promises of its self-created programme.

None of these ideas, or any of the hundreds of other similar or conflicting alternatives, have been discussed by the Mirror, Mail, Sun and Express. Nor are they likely to be while they find it more important to bash Benn by raising the spurious spectre of a threat to the freedom of the press.

The first step has to be to ask the question 'Whose freedom?' and when readers begin to realise the answer they will start to work things out for themselves.

Unlike the leader-writers of Fleet Street, I do not assume that they will accept the answers I put to them. But at least in Socialist Worker we can get them discussed.

## Lincoln's Labour renegade

# MR MOGG WANTS TAVERNE IN THE TOWN...

THIS is a story with a happy ending. It is about the triumph of personal friendship and old school ties over political differences.

William Rees-Mogg was born in 1928, and went to Charterhouse school during the Second World War. There he met Dick Taverne, who had also been born in 1928. The two men became inseparable.

In 1948, Dick Taverne got a scholarship to Balliol. Both were interested in politics and had a strong social conscience, so they went down to the Oxford Union.

Bill became a left-wing Tory, and Dick became a right-wing Labour man, but no one could tell the difference.

Bill supported Dick for the Oxford Union presidency, but Dick never made it. Bill became president in 1951, and then they both went off to America with the Oxford Union debating team.

*The way they combined in debate, you'd never have suspected that they would end up in different political parties.*

Arriving home, both men started out at once on their political careers. Taverne went to the Bar, and Mogg went to the Financial Times. Mogg fought the Chester-le-Street by-election as a Tory in 1956, and again in the general election of 1959. Taverne became favourite on the Labour National Executive Committee constituency short lists for parliamentary candidates.

In March 1962, Dick was elected MP for Lincoln in a by-election. He was 'passionate' about law reform and civil liberties.

### DESTINED

In August 1963, for instance, he wrote an article in the Gaitskellite monthly, Socialist Commentary, on the need to reform the Lord Chancellor's office. 'Practice at the Bar,' he wrote, 'has a deeply conservative influence which few even of socialist barristers can resist'. In 1965, Dick Taverne became the country's youngest Queen's Counsel.

He was destined for higher things. In April 1966 he became parliamentary under secretary at the Home Office under his hero, Roy Jenkins. Unhappily, what with the reorganisation of the police force, he did not have much time to indulge his 'passion' for law reform.

He was responsible, for instance, for channelling the Dangerous Drugs Bill through parliament. On 23 October 1967, as Home Office spokesman, he begged the House of Commons to approve a House of Lords amendment to his own Bill. The amendment 'gave the police powers of search and detention if there were reasonable grounds to suspect that a person was in possession of drugs'.

'The police feel,' said Taverne, 'that . . . their powers are in no way adequate to deal with the problem with which they were faced.'

*So, on the direct advice of Dick Taverne, the police were given power to harass and bully anyone they didn't like the look of. For, as Taverne might have predicted, magistrates took the view that 'reasonable grounds of suspicion' were proved in any case where a policeman said he had reasonable grounds of suspicion.*

## Paul Foot reports

In 1968, Taverne left the Home Office, and, again with Jenkins, went to the Treasury, where he eventually became Financial Secretary.

He was the chief assistant architect of the April 1970 Budget which more than any other single fiscal measure in the past three years was responsible for the heavy unemployment of 1971 and 1972.

Out of office, Taverne continued along the road to the 'enlightened capitalism' in which he believed. In December 1970 he launched the Institute for Fiscal Studies, with a minimum annual income of £50,000, whose aim was 'to promote a deeper understanding of the economic and social implications of existing taxes and different fiscal systems.'

*'The Institute,' reported The Times on 17 December 1970, 'has powerful political, City, business and academic backing.'*

Taverne was also active in the European Movement and the Labour Committee for Europe, for which he wrote a pamphlet on Monetary Union in 1971.

### HYSTERICAL

Meanwhile, William Rees-Mogg was doing just as well in journalism as his friend was doing in politics. In 1960 he moved from the Financial Times to the Sunday Times, where he became deputy editor. In 1967 he became editor of The Times, where he started an almost hysterical campaign in favour of British entry into the Common Market.

Unlike Mogg, Taverne had to justify his 'moderate' policies and his constant hob-nobbing with big business to the Labour Party rank and file.

For a short time, he became 'gravely concerned' at the heavy unemployment which his 1970 Budget had created. Twice in two years he has moved adjournment motions in the House of Commons protesting against high unemployment in Lincoln.

But it was to no avail. His vote for the Tories in October 1971 was the last straw. The Lincoln Labour Party declared no confidence in Taverne



Taverne: need to combat 'danger from the left'

and his base was gone.

In times of trouble, people return to their friends, and Taverne turned to Rees-Mogg. Party differences were soon forgotten in the need to fight 'the danger from the Left'.

Mogg sponsored a few polls, duly printed in The Times, which showed a substantial section of the electorate in favour of a 'centre party'. He persuaded Taverne to forsake the Labour Party and stand as an independent, moderate and decent fellow in a by-election. After some hesitation, Taverne agreed, and all the resources of Thomson House were

put at his disposal.

The following facts should be borne in mind by the electors of Lincoln:

1. A Vote for Taverne is a Vote for Mogg.
2. Mogg is still a member of the Conservative Party.
3. Should Taverne lose in the election, he will not be unemployed.

*In the week he announced his decision to stand, the Equity and Law Life Assurance Society announced the appointment of Mr Richard Taverne as a director.*

## Jobs: ravaged by heavy sackings

LINCOLN is a heavy engineering town with a large agricultural hinterland. Of the 53,757 employed workers in the area, 14,500 work in engineering, vehicles and metal goods while 'other manufacturing industries' employ only 1300.

The unemployment rate is nearly twice the national average—at 5.5 per cent. The male unemployment rate is more than 7 per cent.

For more than a year Lincoln's engineering industry has been pulverised with redundancies.

Chiefly responsible is GEC, which took over the town's biggest industry, the Ruston Hornsby works, which make boilers, turbines and pressure vessels. More than 600 jobs had been 'saved' through natural wastage last June when GEC announced a further 390 redundancies, and further lay-offs are inevitable when the heavy engine business of Ruston is moved to Newton-le-Willows next year.

At Ruston Bucirus, which makes excavators, in which GEC owns 49 per cent of the shares, the workforce has been trimmed by half—from 1500 last year to 750. Similar redundancies have taken place at the Lees Malleable Casting Company, a subsidiary of a Derby-based firm.

### Way of life

Ruston Hornsby recently sold their boiler business to John Thomson, the large North East heavy engineering combine, which in turn sold out to its main rival, Clarke Chapman. Now Clarke Chapman are threatening to 'trim' the 3400 workforce.

In the past six months there have been 200 redundancies at Clayton Dewandere, a supplier of braking components to the car industry, 60 at AEI Semi-Conductors (also owned by GEC), 30 at Rose Bearings, part of the Baker Perkins group, 80 at Rothwell Engineering, makers of heavy fabricators and 50 at Smith Clayton Forge, a subsidiary of GKN.

Don Gossop, AUEW organiser for Lincoln told Socialist Worker: 'If something isn't done quickly, this will become a way of life for a whole generation.'

High unemployment has not deterred the property speculators. A plan for the destruction of large parts of the old city of Lincoln and its replacement with offices and car parks has been designed by the city's chief planner and architect, Percy Jackson, who learnt about cities in his job as deputy planning director at Newcastle in the balmy days of T Dan Smith.

'Unfortunately,' explained Jackson at a public meeting in Lincoln last March, 'Lincoln suffers from an embarrassment of archaeological and architectural riches and something will have to go. It's a matter of priorities and economics.'

Accordingly, Town and City Properties have been nominated as the developers of several acres around Sincil Street in the city area.

### No veto

If the Sincil Street development does go ahead, it will greatly benefit the shareholders of the Lincoln Corn Exchange and Market company which is part of the development consortium, and which owns much of the development land. The Corn Exchange chairman is Sir Francis Hill, a solicitor and a leading member of the Conservative group on Lincoln council which proposed the scheme in the first place.

The Labour group on Lincoln council, which won control last year, has not vetoed the Sincil Street plan. In spite of their firm treatment of Taverne, the Labour group still seems to believe that the problems of Lincoln can be dealt with by careful co-operation with the government and private enterprise.

Lincoln Labour's policy on unemployment is based on the demand for the classification of the city as an 'intermediate area', thus making industrialists who set up in the town eligible for better investment and building grants.

Worse still, the Lincoln Labour group, with only a few councillors abstaining, has agreed to administer the Fair Rents Act.

The real feeling of Lincoln workers may be more militant than Labour councillors imagine. On 12 October a mass meeting of Lincoln council tenants met to declare 'a council rent war in Lincoln'. A motion for a rent strike was approved by acclamation, and only a few desperate speeches from Labour councillors prevented the meeting from outright censure of the Labour council for administering the Act.

## International Socialism 53

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# How Godfather Vestey puts country democracy in cold storage

RONALD VESTEY, elderly Godfather of the millionaire family, which includes Lord Sam and Edmund of Midland Cold Storage fame, is up to some dirty work in a little corner of his vast territories in Mid-Anglia.

His sights are set on developing a beautiful tree-lined meadow in the heart of the village of Withersfield on the Suffolk-Cambridgeshire border. Through a family trust he has applied for permission to build six houses on the land, which, like every other plot in the area, is Vestey-owned.

The development would clearly be a violation of the village, which is beautiful even by Suffolk's high standards. But in the normal way of things Vestey, former High Sherriff and Deputy Lord Lieutenant of the county, would find no difficulty in achieving his purpose.

This time, however, the villagers of Withersfield are ready for him and his ghastly plans.

An alliance of middle-class residents and working-class tenants of council cottages has created an action group to fight for the preservation of the meadow against Vestey vandalism.

Their task is not an easy one. The local planning authority, Clare Rural Council, is often referred to as the Vestey Board of Guardians.

Chairman of the council for the past ten years or more is Keith Roberts, who farms the biggest Vestey farm in the area.

## Defeat

Chairman of the plans committee is Sir John Mowbray, old Etonian manager of the Vestey estate.

Vestey's son-in-law, Reg Clifton-Brown, who also runs a Vestey farm in the area, is also on the council.

So is Vic Horsley, another Vestey tenant farmer.

And so is John Rickett, who, in addition to being a Vestey farmer, is also the Withersfield representative on the council.

Rickett is still smarting over the defeat he and Vestey suffered over the old man's original plans for the meadow.

These involved the building of 11 houses, crowded in an unrelieved row along the main road of the village. They were prepared in great secrecy and in some hurry in a move to beat the April dead-

## Villagers prepare for battle with the vandals

line on unresolved outline planning applications.

The parish council in Withersfield did not alert the villagers about the scheme. Rickett is the chairman of the parish council. The villagers learned of the plans only a few days before they were due to be approved by the plans committee.

Led by wealthy advertising consultant Peter Masson they prepared a petition to the committee, a glossy memorandum of amenity and legal objections to the county council, and, most successful of all, a brief for a barrister specialising in planning law.

## Trumped

Roberts, Mowbray and Rickett told the villagers that the application was merely a holding operation. It would be deferred and amended to produce a much smarter lay-out on the basis of only nine houses.

While this was done the lawyer was busy at his books and he produced the ace card that trumped the entire Vestey pack. It was illegal to amend after the deadline any scheme put forward before the deadline.

Now Vestey is trying again, with a completely new scheme for the same site. And the villagers are preparing to do battle again.

At the plans committee recently Rickett, who is supposed to represent their views, said he had no strong feelings about the move. He has repeatedly refused to support the action group, which is by far the largest single organisation in the tiny village.

## Whispers

Now they have hit back and circulated their own newsletter. In it they say: 'Our council representative sat on the fence by saying he had no strong feeling one way or the other. If, however, he feels in the future he cannot represent the views expressed at the open village meeting because of a conflict with his landlord's interest, he should stand down from the hearing of the application.'

Talk in the village goes further than this and the more subversive residents whisper about 'elections' and other rarely-tried democratic devices in this part of the world.

It may be the only way to save a village that is threatened by a democracy deficiency known locally as Rickett.

R. K. Nelson

# Today's Lesson is obedience

## Education keeps you in the right class

FOR many working-class children education is a grim, tedious and disillusioning experience. By the time you're 15 your main concern is to get out as quickly as possible, to escape from an atmosphere you feel you can tolerate no more.

There were them, the teachers, and us. The class was divided into a few creeps, a few militants and the majority, who were cowards who would have liked to have been with the militants, but were scared.

Anyone who has been through a working-class school can recount numerous incidents like this where the situation almost degenerated to a continual battle between kids and teachers.

Yet there is no reason why school, why learning about the world in which we live, should be boring. With the right facilities and approach to teaching, it can be enjoyable.

### Wealth

Yet children who are happy at primary school are fed up and apathetic, if not completely against school and teachers, by the time they leave secondary school.

Why? Because education, like everything else, is subordinated to the needs of profit.

The basic single influence on education is the need of big business for labour of certain sorts. It needs workers educated to different levels to do different jobs. And this determines the sort of schooling that is handed out to different sorts of children.

Big business needs a mass of workers who labour to create the wealth. These get an education that provides them with the limited ability to read simple blueprints, fill in forms, make simple calculations, and receive their ideas from a reading of the mass press.

Meanwhile, education sees that the ruling class, who control the vast mass of the wealth, are provided with a high level of skills and cultured and confident mental attitudes.

### Rich

So workers get an average 10 years schooling, from the age of five to 15. Top people, by contrast, get 20 years—from three to 23. Their preparation for ruling-class jobs begins earlier, at playgroups and nursery schools.

Children from different class backgrounds have widely different sums of money spent on them.

The five per cent of children who are from the ruling class are mostly richly endowed, not only by their parents, but also by the



by Chanie Rosenberg

state. Fees for public and preparatory schools are subject to tax relief. So the exchequer hands out more than a third of the cost of the fees.

The schools themselves also get tax relief as they are usually registered as charities. They received £6¼ million from the government in this way in 1970. In addition, they are provided with massive gifts out of the profits made by big business.

Children at these schools are taught in classes of 10 to 15. Not for them the overcrowded classes, the makeshift facilities and the shortages of materials that plague many state schools.

The results of this privileged schooling are easy to see. Two-thirds of the men undergraduates at Oxford and Cambridge in the mid-1950s had been to public school or to direct grant schools (public schools funded directly by the government). Of all university entrants, three-quarters were from the professional and managerial groups and only a quarter came from manual working-class homes.

During the 1960s the number of working-class children dropped.

Even in the state system the better-off, middle-class children have a privileged position. In 1968/9 the amount of money spent on working-class children who left school at 15 was only 57 per cent of what was spent on those children, chiefly from the middle class, who stayed on into the sixth form.

Education is not only concerned with teaching skills. It also involves, in our society, passing on to children the 'right' attitudes for their allotted role in the system.

An important aspect of public school education is being taught to command other people. This is done both formally by the enormous stress on sport and drill and informally through a system by which the elder pupils terrorise the younger ones.

### Opposed

The attitudes schools try to pass on to working-class children are quite different. They are required to be passive and obedient, not to ask too many awkward questions and to accept their position at the bottom of the pile.

Teachers are themselves caught in this system in a way that ensures they perpetuate it. For most head teachers and education officials come from the middle classes, and any teacher under them who advocates ideas at all opposed to the status quo will quickly find him-

self or herself. Persistent opposition to a career as a teacher. Again, schools take for granted conformity, in which is run by nice middle-class people and in which no one rises.

Finally, the education system all the stress on individualism, assuming that only a few will rise to the top, and that they remain where they are. The system ensures that at all is given to

THIS SUMMER most of all school-leavers examination passes, thousands of them selves unemployed, more in dull, boring never have the real training.

The reason is not in convincing people failures and that the to improve their own any lack of jobs, be due to their own stupidity—and not the social system.

Our schools are a plague of rigorous streaming methods, strict and almost creative activity by of examination courses. Schools set out uniform and are ready to accept why good for them and why or how the de their lives are taken.

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**School students fight back**

by Mary Attenborough

President, National Union of School Students

# The school that tried to break out



by  
**Michael Duane**

Former head of Risinghill

RISINGHILL SCHOOL was opened in 1960 in the most tumbledown, decaying area of North London. Crime and delinquency were common.

Within a hundred yards of the school were grubby brothels, gambling and drinking clubs. Unemployment was high, and chronic poverty and illness were rife. A survey of literacy, carried out shortly before the school opened, showed that the rate of illiteracy was the highest in London.

Some officials of the London County Council had opposed opening the school on the grounds that it would be a shambles within a few months. They told us that it would be a 'normal' comprehensive, taking kids of all levels and from all social classes.

So we started with the 'normal' assumptions that kids should wear uniforms and take exams. More than 90 per cent of the kids were the children of manual workers, mostly unskilled, and we set out to make school as interesting and enjoyable for them as possible.

## Labels

We taught them maths in practical ways, especially in the engineering workshops. We visited their homes and got help from the social services. We persuaded the police on occasion to allow us to deal with a kid rather than have him charged.

At one time we had 30 kids who were supposed to be so stupid or disturbed that they were labelled 'educationally sub-normal'. Within two years, all but three had had the labels removed from them.

We showed films about sex education to the parents and discussed them before showing them to the kids. We started a series of meetings to explain what we were teaching, why and how, but that was stopped dead by the closure of the school in 1965.

Sometimes a kid teased a teacher too much and she clouted him in anger because he was making it impossible for her to interest the rest of the class. If he did not stop interfering with her, we would have him down to my room, ask the teacher to describe what had happened and then ask him if he agreed with her version.

If he agreed, I would simply say, 'George, teachers aren't saints. Were you really surprised she clouted you?'

Mostly the kids agreed, and that was that. When teachers were found to have made a genuine mistake, the good ones apologised at once. Once the fear of the cane had been removed, we found that kids were much more ready to tell the truth, especially in the presence of other kids. All we were trying to do was establish the right of children to put their case.

But not all the teachers were happy about this. Some bitterly

resented the fact that I did not simply accept their word against the child's without question. They had been brought up and trained to think this way—and their hostility increased when we set up a school council elected by pupils and staff.

But most staff saw it as a first priority that we should attend to the kids' basic needs for play, interest, enjoyment, that we should give them the feeling that the school was not hostile to them or their parents before we could expect them to pay much attention to academic work.

The person who was really upset by the decision to abolish the cane was the local LCC inspector. For him school meant passing exams, wearing uniform, being respectful to teachers.

He was backed up by a report produced at the instigation of the LCC's Chief Inspector. The first third was a sustained attack on myself. Had it been produced during our first year, I would not have been surprised.

But coming as it did, when the school was much more orderly, when results, even in exams, were improving, and when the drop in the number of kids on probation had taken us by surprise, was quite inexplicable. It indicated that certain people were worried by the fact that the staff were becoming united on policy and beginning to feel relaxed and confident in working out that policy more democratically.

I used the morning assemblies not to cram useless junk from the Bible down the kids' throats but about the real meaning of

the 'brotherhood of man'. That did it. An inspector from the Ministry of Education, a Catholic and a writer of sentimental religious poetry, began a campaign against the school.

He came to inspect us and was obviously out to get as much damaging evidence as he could. He condemned a book he found in certain rooms, an anthology of ballads and folk poems compiled by a lecturer whom, he alleged, was a man of loose morals, unfit to have anything to do with kids.

## Ruthless

The rumours did what they were intended to do. I was interviewed by the LCC Chief Inspector and told that because I had failed to establish the 'image' of the comprehensive school in the eyes of local parents, the school would have to be 'drastically re-organised'—a technical way of telling me that my own job would become vacant.

The Labour chairman of the LCC education committee was an old man, well liked but no match for the single-minded and ruthless bureaucrats at County Hall. For months they consulted closely with senior officials at the Ministry of Education to build up a watertight case.

When the recommendation to close the school came before the Minister, Anthony Crosland, it was clear that he would not risk offending the biggest education authority in the country.

Parents were angry, frustrated by their unfamiliarity with official procedure, convinced they were being led by the nose by their elected representatives. Delegations went to the Ministry, were received with cups of tea and charm and came away empty-handed.

And so the school and an exercise in real democracy were smashed. Risinghill, under a new name, re-opened to house a girls' school that would not represent any threat to the stranglehold of the ruling class over education.



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matters: collective effort in which differing individual contributions are equally valued.

## Bewildered

In this way the rat race is drummed into children. The child who has put his whole soul into an exercise, a painting, a project, becomes quite bewildered when he does not get a mark of merit. A couple of such experiences and he will be the apathetic fourth-former who can't wait to leave school.

Marking, grading, sifting, creaming, become the way of

The basic aim of the education system is to teach us to accept the capitalist system of exploitation. There is no mention of any alternative.

School students have no democratic rights, no right to freedom of speech or assembly, no democratic participation. We are punished by being physically beaten. We can be expelled or suspended for almost any reason.

There are many who would recognise the bad conditions and the anti-democracy of schools, but would question the need for 'children' to organise. One reason for the need for a school students' organisation is so that we can show we are capable of thinking and taking decisions, and that we are prepared to set out to change a situation we will no longer accept.

For a schools union to be successful, it needs to organise in such a way as to attract the majority of school students. The NUSS unites people of differing political opinions

life, causing many working class children to devalue themselves, to feel inadequate and inferior. This in turn turns them against the school, so that they are failures, unable to learn.

The ground is fertile for them to be instilled with submissive attitudes to authority and the belief that their inferiority is inborn.

*CHANIE ROSENBERG is secretary of the Hackney branch of the National Union of Teachers in East London, and a member of the executive of Rank and File Teacher.*

—but all of them are convinced of the need for change in schools.

The NUSS is receiving financial and organisational help from the National Union of Students. We are now active in 30 areas of the country and have thousands of members. Last May the first annual conference was attended by 200 people.

This conference finalised an extensive policy statement, demanding that schools be run by committees of students, teachers, parents and non-teaching staff

It calls for fully comprehensive education, with the ending of all forms of selection and streaming. It calls for the abolition of corporal punishment and generally for a better and democratic education for all.

Our union brings together a force that can begin to move forward to a time when school students will be treated as human beings and will no longer accept a second-rate education, doled out in a humiliating and degrading atmosphere of authoritarianism.

**THE BRITISH PRESS  
& NORTHERN IRELAND  
EAMONN MCGANN**

**18 IRA cross border  
to stir Belfast riots**

IRA behind riots  
in N. Ireland  
FIVE KIL  
BY ULSTER  
BOOBY TRAP  
IRA funeral parade  
BLAST RIPS PUB  
LANE AFTER IR

A brilliant  
demolition  
job on  
the 'free  
press'

15p post free from

IS BOOKS  
6 Cottons Gardens  
London E2 8DN

**MIKE MILLER REPORTS FROM BELFAST**

THE shooting dead of a British intelligence man in Belfast a fortnight ago has finally brought the activities of army undercover agents to the attention of the world.

For months past the Tory press has ignored the grim tales of their murderous sorties into working-class areas of Belfast, and it was not until their cover was broken by the Provisional IRA in a dramatic fashion that the full extent of their operations became known.

Since the shooting of 'laundry man' Stuart, the spy who used a bogus door to door cleaning service to collect information on his customers, further incidents suggest that the military machine is determined to carry on with this particular brand of repression.

Just before a massive car bomb exploded in Leeson Street last week soldiers took up positions on the roof of the nearby Royal Victoria Hospital, the alleged headquarters of the British Army's Special Air Service Regiment in Belfast.

The bomb was intended for the Republican Long Bar, but the car rolled down the street, exploding outside the People's Co-Op, killing a young woman. Local residents insist that this bomb was the work of the SAS, who were watching their evil work from a safe distance.

**Bombings**

A few days earlier two soldiers in plain clothes were attacked at an Ulster Defence Association checkpoint in East Belfast. The men were driving a civilian car which was equipped with two-way radios concealed in the ashtrays. They wore wigs and were carrying 'secret files'.

The UDA claim these men were also SAS.

It was after an incident involving plain-clothes soldiers in the Loyalist Shankill Road last May that the British Government first admitted the presence of undercover surveillance units. But before these units had been involved in attacks on unarmed civilians in Catholic areas.

Also in May, Paddy McVeigh was shot from a passing car at a vigilante road check in Andersontown. His family say that the police told them that the bullet that hit him was intended for a local Provisional leader.

**Squads**

Later the same month Adrian Barton was shot dead in the Springfield Road, and James Tier in the Whiterock Road. In June Patrick McCullough was shot dead on the Antrim Road. A few weeks ago Daniel Rooney was killed by plain-clothes soldiers as he stood talking to a friend in Beechmount.

It is the popular belief here, on both Loyalist and Republican sides, that the SAS is responsible for these and numerous other activities. The Republicans have accused the British Army of a number of incidents which they claim were designed to discredit them. The Abercorn Restaurant and Claudy town bombs are two of these.

On one occasion a plain-clothes soldier who was dragged from his 'spy' car identified himself as a member of the SAS. Another man who publicly claimed to be from the SAS, on a bombing mission to discredit the IRA, was found shot through the head in mysterious circumstances after defecting.

One of the leading lights of the



An Army checkpoint at an entrance to the Belfast Royal Victoria Hospital, which the Provisionals say is the SAS headquarters

**The army's killer spies**

British Army, Major General Frank Kitson, more or less spelt out the role of these secret units when he wrote in his recent book, *Low Intensity Operations*, about the need 'for the disposal of unwanted members of the public'.

Kitson was the man responsible for the methods employed in the torture chambers of Holywood Barracks.

He advocates the greater involvement of the army in dealing with 'subversion' in Britain too. Subversion, he says, involves strikes and political activity, and he regards it as legitimate to dispose of 'subversives' by killing them.

But why is the British Army involved in these sordid activities? They serve a dual purpose.

Firstly, they enable the army to kill off 'unwanted members of the public' without having to justify its actions. This enables them to continue to talk peace to the minority while still engaging in war against them. It also enables them to confuse the IRA, alleging that mysterious killings are the result of internal faction fights.

Secondly, the use of terror against the minority in this fashion can seriously undermine their will to resist. If the cost of continued defiance is to be daily slaughter and bombing of homes and recreational facilities, then the minority will be more willing to come to terms with the Tories.

If Loyalists are blamed, then the logical outcome, if these incidents continue, seems to be civil war, as the Provos begin to take retaliatory action.

Tory overlord William Whitelaw, who must condone these murder attacks, will hope that the Catholic community, having experienced civil war on a small scale, will finally reject the IRA in favour of the pro-imperialist Social Democratic and Labour Party, thus enabling imperialism to stabilise its rule in Ireland.

Popular thinking in Britain seems to be moving towards the demand for the removal of the British Army from Ireland. Although this demand is not being raised out of any feeling of solidarity with those who are struggling against the military presence here, it nevertheless indicates a rejection of the view that Britain has a right to be in Ireland in the first place.

**Rapid**

This is a healthy development. It is up to socialists in Britain to explain why the removal of British troops is in their own interests as workers, as opposed to 'Britishers'.

But genuine solidarity from British workers will be easier won when the struggle against imperialism is given a clear working-class socialist content.

The British Army is not in Ireland to maintain law and order, or to bring peace. The activities of its plain-clothes assassination squads is a clear indication of this.

Its task is rather to destroy systematically the popular will to resist the oppression and exploitation by the Unionist bosses. The methods it uses in so doing are themselves both terrorist and criminal. Until it is removed from Ireland, none of the problems here can be solved.

**The figures that prove the TUC is being taken for a ride**

THE retail price index—calculated each week by government statisticians—looks like becoming a major threat to living standards.

A 'threshold agreement' based on the price index is part of the package deal which Heath and the TUC are bargaining over. The government proposal is that if the price index rises by more than 6 per cent in a year, then all workers will get an extra 20p in their wage packet for every 1 per cent of higher prices above the 6 per cent threshold.

The TUC, and Vic Feather in particular, have become enthusiastic advocates of such threshold agreements. Yet this whole approach is based on foundations of sand. The retail price index is the only available measure of the movement of prices. And this index systematically underestimates increases in the cost of living of working-class families.

For a start, the retail price index does not measure the rise in the cost of living, although politicians and the popular press often talk as if it did. There are many items of expenditure which are not included in the index. Some of them may not be of great importance—such as fees paid to doctors or dentists, and subscriptions to trade unions or friendly societies. But other excluded items are major elements in the household budget.

**INCOME TAX:** This is an enormous omission. In recent years, and especially for workers earning less than £30 a week, the amount paid in income tax has risen far faster than earnings. This is because the size of the tax-free personal and children's allowances have not been raised by nearly enough to match inflation.

**The stamp**

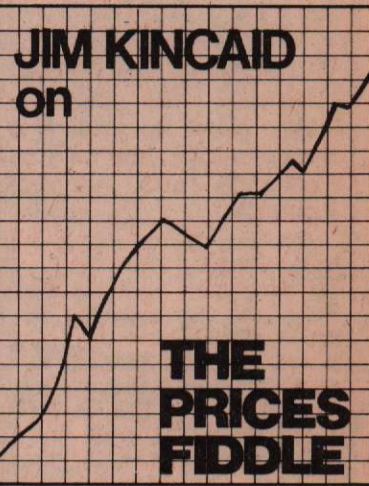
The result has been a steep drop in the tax threshold—the point of income above which a worker starts to pay income tax at about 30p in the £1. In 1966, a married man with two children and average wages paid 6 per cent of that wage in income tax. By 1970 the figure was 16 per cent.

**NATIONAL INSURANCE:** The cost of the workers' share in the national insurance stamp has been increased far more rapidly than the general rise of prices in recent years. Since 1962, while the price index has gone up by 60 per cent national insurance contributions have increased by more than 100 per cent. Especially for the lower paid, national insurance is one of the biggest items of expenditure—from this month, £1.43 out of a wage of £20.

**MORTGAGE PAYMENTS:** Unbelievable as it may seem, there is no allowance made in the price index for any increase in the mortgage payments of people buying their own house. Instead, the statisticians adopt the fiction that owner-occupiers are renting from themselves. The rent computed is based on rateable value and not on the market value of the house.

In most cases it is assumed that the rent an owner-occupier is charging himself will be less than £2 per week, whereas the actual mortgage repayment is likely to average £7-£8 a week. The effect is that the price index massively understates the real amount and the rate of increase in mortgage payments.

In recent years, all of the above items have risen faster than the average level of prices. Their exclusion from the price index means that each year the index falls further and further behind the actual amount by which the cost of living has increased. It is also the case that no account is taken of the loss of rent rebates, free school meals, rates rebates and other welfare benefits as wage inflation takes households above



the income limits which qualify. A further type of distortion exists because only one single price index is calculated for the entire country, whereas prices and spending patterns vary considerably in the different regions. In 1971, an expert committee produced a report on these regional variations. It was found for example that food prices in Scotland tended to be 4-5 per cent higher than in England.

Rents and house prices in the London area were massively higher than the national average. The average rateable value of houses varied from £45 in Wales to £105 in London. The average amount spent on travel to and from work varied from 95p a week in the north of England to £1.77 in the south east.

Such variations as these make nonsense of a single price index produced for the whole of Britain. If food prices nationally go up by 10 per cent the impact in Scotland is much greater than elsewhere, especially as wage rates north of the border are lower on average than in England. A similar rise in house prices or rents does particular damage to the household budgets of Londoners.

**Pressure**

The expert committee made a firm recommendation that in future a separate price index should be issued for each region. So far, the government has refused to comply. The reason is that the Confederation of British Industry want to stick to the present single national index. The employers argue that regional indexes would lead to pressure for higher wages in areas more exposed to price rises, or where wage rates are lower.

What is needed to construct a price index is not just an enormous list of the prices which have been increased in the previous month. It is also necessary to know for each item of expenditure just how important it is in the household budget. A 1000 per cent increase in the price of snuff would have no effect on the national price index since practically no one buys snuff. But a 10 per cent rise in rent or bus fares would be reflected in the index since these are important items for many families.

What is assumed in the retail price index is an average pattern of expenditure, and this is a major source of distortion. Currently, price increases are weighted in the index on the assumption that 25 per cent of the average budget goes on food, 12 per cent on housing costs, 6 per cent on electricity, gas and coal. Yet people on low incomes spend a far bigger proportion of their income on these basic necessities.

**Pensioners**

The government now issues a special index for pensioners and generally it rises somewhat faster than the main index used for the rest of the population. This is because food prices and the basic necessities on which pensioners spend most of their limited money tend to increase faster than less essential goods and services. In 1971, for example, prices as a whole rose by 9 per cent, but food went up by 13 per cent, and electricity, gas and coal by 11 per cent.

But there are many other groups whose spending pattern is more like that of pensioners—heavily weighted towards basic necessities. The unemployed, widows, low-paid workers, long-term invalids, families with many children and a limited income. For all of these, the national price index underestimates the real rise in the cost of living. The faster prices rise, the more serious this underestimation.

For all of these reasons the price index should not be used in wage negotiations without making generous allowance for its underestimation of the real rate of increase in the cost of living.

Any union leader who treats the price index as uncritically as Vic Feather does will certainly end up getting short measure for his members.





## REVIEW

Paul Foot reviews the new film,  
The Assassination of Trotsky

IN SPRING last year, the celebrated film director Joe Losey gave an interview to Humphrey Burton of London Weekend's arts programme, *Aquarius*.

Towards the end of the interview, Burton asked him: 'Films like *King and Country* or *Accident*, which are very much to do with upper middle class manners and mores, and *The Servant*, which is again obviously about class, and this latest film *The Go-Between*, all of them in a sense are about very narrow human relationships, and not about the big sweeping themes of marxism, and the things that you embraced as a young man. There's a paradox. Can you suggest some reasons why you find yourself in this area?'

Losey replied: 'Well, there are a lot of reasons. In the first place, it's very difficult to do what you want to do.'

'Nobody has ever come to me, nobody at any point in my life, has ever come to me and said: 'Within the limits of a million dollars, or within the limits of 50,000 dollars or anything, what would you like to do?' Nobody has ever said that, and I don't imagine that anybody will, because this has to do with contradictions in our society, and our contradictions in the film business...'

'The thing is getting better, may get progressively somewhat better, and I would like to find ways of returning to small and inexpensive films that do deal with more immediate subjects...'

## HACKS

As he talked, Losey must already have known that he was soon to embark on a film which dealt precisely with the 'big sweeping themes of marxism'—a film about the assassination of Leon Trotsky.

All the evidence points to the fact that Losey, in the preparations for this film, did have a free hand. He chose for his two main leads the two most notorious hacks in European cinema: Richard Burton as Trotsky and Alain Delon as the assassin.

His most curious choice of all was that of script-writer.

The story of Trotsky's assassination has been told in meticulously researched detail by Isaac Don Levine in his book *The Mind of the Assassin*, published in 1959. Levine bases his book on the obvious and necessary question: why was Trotsky murdered?

Some assassinations of politicians are carried out by cranks. Others are part of a political plan. Levine's book proved beyond all shadow of a doubt that Trotsky's assassination was the result of a carefully conceived and deliberate plan, organised over a period of years by Stalin's secret police.

Levine asks: Why was Stalin, the head of one of the most powerful states in the world, so obsessed with the activities of Trotsky, isolated in Mexico, barred from all public political activity in that country, and surrounded only by a handful of supporters?

## CYNICAL

Stalin, Levine answers, knew only too well how brittle was his own power base and that of the Western democracies. The collapse of capitalist society, which he envisaged sooner rather than later, would increase the level of argument among the workers of the world, and Stalin knew that at the level of political debate, Trotsky was a sure winner. So the murder of Trotsky was at the top of the GPU agenda.

The barrage of anti-Trotsky abuse from Moscow was, as Trotsky put it: 'the way people write who are preparing to change the pen for the machine gun.'

Levine's book proved that the murderer of Trotsky was Ramon Mercader, a Spanish Communist whose mother was one of the most senior GPU agents in Europe.

Mercader had been trained in Moscow for the specific purpose of infiltrating Trotsky's entourage, a task which he accomplished by the most cynical of methods, the wooing of the American Trotskyist, Sylvia Ageloff.

After the failure of a direct, armed attack by Mexican Communists on Trotsky's villa in the early summer of 1940, Mercader, with the help of his mother and her lover, the GPU agent

TROTSKY'S  
KILLER  
—OURS  
NOT TO  
REASON  
WHY?

Eitingon, plotted a murder attempt from inside the Trotsky household, which Ramon had already penetrated.

Ramon killed Trotsky, but did not escape. He served 20 years in a Mexican prison, but never admitted any association with Russia.

Levine's powerful book was handsomely vindicated the year after it was published when Mercader was released from prison and welcomed back behind the Iron Curtain as a hero of the Soviet Union and a holder of the Order of Lenin.

I do not know whether Mr Losey has read Mr Levine's book or even heard of it, for he chose as the base for his film another book on the assassination which came out this year and was written by the third Baron Ravensdale, of Lyminster House, Littlehampton, Sussex, better known as Nicholas Mosley, who fought bravely in the Rifle Brigade during the last war, and has written one or two third-rate novels about middle-class people and their problems.

Mosley wrote the screenplay for Losey's film, *Accident*, a delectable story of university lecturers and their mistresses, and seemed to Losey just the sort of chap to write about a Russian revolutionary.

PETER WEISS's play *Trotsky in Exile*, published in Germany in 1970, was not well received. The lives and ideas of the central figures of the Russian Revolution have been distorted not only in the Soviet Union but in the 'free West'.

Weiss's sympathetic play shows Trotsky's life interwoven with the historic events of his time, with the history that he made, from his exile in Siberia in 1898 to his assassination in Mexico in 1940.

His life is dramatic enough in itself: the Brussels conference of 1903—which resulted in the Bolshevik/Menshevik split, his trial after the 1905 Revolution, the October Revolution of 1917, the uprising at Kronstadt in 1921.

The play reflects Trotsky's evaluation

In Mosley's trashy book, as in Losey's trashy film, the key to the assassination is in the personality of the murderer. Nowhere does the film make it clear that the assassination was the work of the GPU.

Two 'agents' meet the murderer in secret in an unknown place and tell him to get on with the murder. The agents' names are 'Filipe' and 'Roberto', and they are, apart from that, anonymous. There is no mention of Eitingon, no mention of Mercader's mother's role as an agent, no statement that they were both waiting in cars outside the Trotsky villa on the day of the murder to spirit Ramon away to safety.

## HAMMED

The role of Stalin's agents is thus glossed over, and the real drama of Trotsky's last days—the drama of a man apparently hunted by the revolution he helped to unleash—has also been dismissed with. Trotsky in the film becomes a garrulous old man, fond of his rabbits and his wife, probably in that order, dictating into a dictaphone and waiting for the end.

TROTSKY IN EXILE by Peter Weiss, Methuen, hardback £1.45, paperback 70p.

of the significance of his life: 'I have never known personal tragedy. My life has been bound up insolubly with all the successive phases of the revolution.'

The play's greatest virtue is its treatment of ideas. Important political debates are presented simply and grippingly without distorting the ideas of the real historic characters—and remain as relevant as ever. Weiss also succeeds in present opposing ideas equally convincingly.

Where he fails is in his attempts to

Quotations from Trotsky, including some of the best, are slotted in above this caricature, hammed up by Richard Burton as though they were scripts for a RADA audition.

All the great events, personal tragedies and political inspiration which in fact make up the story of Trotsky's death are reduced to a psychological study of 'Jacson', the murderer. Alain Delon gives a characteristically ridiculous performance, ranting and raving among chiming church bells, screaming at a bull-fight (a long scene, this, whose only apparent purpose is to indulge Losey's fascination with blood), trying to look impassive at the right times, and even hinting, several times and without the slightest vestige of historical evidence that he had homosexual tendencies (quite the reverse was the case).

By forsaking the main political area of their political subject, Mosley and Losey have succeeded in creating a character precisely opposite to that of Ramon Mercader.

The report by Dr Quiro, a Mexican psychiatrist who examined Mercader in prison, stated: 'Mercader del Rio revealed himself as an automatised and

rigid personality'. Other tests found him 'completely rigid, dehumanised'.

Isaac Don Levine concludes: 'The decisive characteristic which sets Mercader apart from the old, familiar types of political assassin is that the individual in him is totally submerged in a vast organisation of colossal power, the Soviet State.'

'He is a product not of a hot-headed or visionary secret society of Utopians, but of Stalin's hard-boiled school of murder. . . . Beneath the mask of the prisoner in Mexico lurks the Kremlin's happy robot of the future.'

But for Losey and Mosley, after dealing for three decades with what Losey himself admitted in his TV interview, were 'small, narrow problems', have succeeded in turning one of the most important events in modern history into a 'small, narrow problem' and even a bore.

With a bit of luck they will both return to the comfortable trivia whence they came. The growing band of young socialist film directors, meanwhile, should know that a proper film treatment of the great events in the life and death of Leon Trotsky has not even been attempted, let alone accomplished.

create dramatic effect. He mixes speeches and events from different periods to illustrate the cruel ironies of history, and the triumphant congress on 1917 culminates in soldiers dressed in the style of the late 1920s arresting their leader of the previous decade—Trotsky. A 1929 scene on the suppression of the opposition switches to Kronstadt 1921, where Trotsky had been the suppressor.

The problem is that this doesn't illuminate, but distorts.

Should we conclude that Stalin's terror was the logical outcome of the Russian Revolution? That its failure was sealed in the very moment of its triumph? One can argue about these issues, but the play is inclined to view them as inevitable.

In this failing one begins to question just how marxist a dramatic method is

that takes people and sayings at face value and doesn't look at why they were said and at what was happening at the time.

Those great moments in world history were not made by Trotsky or Lenin alone—but by the mass of the people, and specifically by the Russian working class. Concentration on the roles of individuals is bound to exaggerate their historical importance.

This failing is continued to the end, where Trotsky is left making sloppy statements about students and the type of revolution in the third world, leaving out the central preoccupation of his life, the power of the workers to transform the world.

But it remains a good play.

Celia Deacon



Alain Delon as Trotsky's murderer: the film does not even hint at the masters on whose orders he acted

# 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 for the abolition of capitalism and its replacement by a classless society with production for use and not for profit.

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 the necessity to unite socialist theory with the day-to-day struggles of working people and therefore support all genuine demands that tend to improve the position and self-confidence of the working class.

We fight:

For rank and file control of the trade unions and the regular election of all full-time officials.

Against secret negotiations. We believe that all settlements should be agreed or rejected by mass meetings.

For 100 per cent trade unionism and the defence of shop stewards.

Against anti-trade union laws and any

curbs on the right to strike, whether the strikes are 'official' or 'unofficial'.

Against productivity deals and job evaluation and for militant trade union unity and joint shop stewards committees both in the plant and on a combine basis.

For equal pay and a better deal for young workers.

For a minimum wage of at least £25 a week.

Against unemployment, redundancy and lay offs. We support the demand: Five days' work or five days' pay.

For all workers in struggle. We seek to build militant groups within industry.

Against racialism and police victimisation of black workers.

Against immigration restriction.

For the right of coloured people and all oppressed groups to organise in their own defence.

For real social, economic and political equality for women.

Against all nuclear weapons and military alliances such as NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

Against secret diplomacy.

Against all forms of imperialism. We unconditionally give support to and solidarity with all genuine national liberation movements.

For the nationalisation of the land, banks and major industries without compensation and under workers' control.

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 man'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. More than 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.

## THERE ARE IS BRANCHES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

### SCOTLAND

Aberdeen  
Cumbernauld  
Dumfries  
Dundee  
Edinburgh  
Fife: Dunfermline/  
Cowdenbeath  
Glenrothes  
Kirkcaldy  
Glasgow N  
Glasgow S  
Greenock  
Stirling  
St Andrews

### NORTH EAST

Bishop Auckland  
Durham  
Hartlepool  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne  
South Shields  
Spennymoor  
Sunderland  
Teesside E  
Teesside W

### NORTH

Barnsley  
Bradford  
Doncaster  
Grimsby  
Halifax  
Huddersfield  
Hull  
Leeds  
Ossett  
Scarborough  
Selby  
Sheffield  
York

### NORTH WEST

Barrow  
Blackburn  
Bolton  
Crewe  
Kirkby  
Lancaster  
Manchester  
Merseyside  
Oldham  
The Potteries  
Preston  
Salford  
St Helens  
Stockport  
Wigan  
Wrexham

### MIDLANDS

Birmingham NE  
Birmingham S  
Coventry  
Dudley  
Leamington and  
Warwick  
Leicester  
Loughborough  
Mid-Derbyshire  
Milton Keynes  
Northampton  
Nottingham  
Oxford  
Redditch  
Rugby  
Telford  
Warley  
Wolverhampton

### GREATER LONDON and HOME COUNTIES

### EAST

Basilston  
Beccles  
Cambridge  
Chelmsford  
Colchester  
Harlow  
Ipswich  
Leiston  
Lowestoft  
Norwich  
Peterborough

### Acton

Bexley  
Camden  
Chertsey  
Croydon  
East London  
Enfield  
Fulham and  
Hammersmith  
Greenford  
Hackney and  
Islington  
Harrow  
Hemel Hempstead  
Hornsey  
Hounslow  
Ilford  
Kilburn  
Kingston  
Lambeth  
Lewisham  
Merton  
Paddington  
Reading  
St Albans  
Slough  
South Ealing  
Tottenham  
Walthamstow  
Wandsworth  
Watford  
Woolwich

### WALES and SOUTH WEST

Bath  
Bristol  
Cardiff  
Exeter  
Gloucester  
Llanelli  
Mid-Devon  
Neath  
Plymouth  
Swansea  
SOUTH  
Ashford  
Brighton  
Canterbury  
Crawley  
Eastbourne  
Folkestone  
Guildford  
Portsmouth  
Southampton

## THE RENTS BATTLE

# Flying pickets protect tenants

by Tony Boyle  
and Micky Keating

THE workers of Merseyside have fought many battles in the past few months. The building workers, the dockers, the car workers, the workers at Fisher Bendix and at CAV have all been struggling to defend wages, working conditions and jobs.

Now the lessons learnt from these industrial struggles are now being applied to fight against the 'Fair Rents' Act.

Nearly every estate in the area is now organised. Some are on total rent strike. The rest are refusing to pay the increases.

Support has been received from many trade unionists, and the campaign is being co-ordinated by the trades council tenants committee.

One estate on a total rent and rates strike is Tower Hill, in Kirkby New Town, where 85 per cent of the tenants have pledged support. The estate's tenants action group which was formed after a meeting called by Kirkby International Socialists back in June, now has regular weekly meetings of between 200 and 400 people.

### Escort

To guarantee continual contact with all tenants, the estate has been organised into 11 areas, each of which is divided into block and street committees. The street committees themselves hold regular meetings.

The main weekly activity of the action group is escorting the rent collector round the estate, to remind people not to pay. Each area organises to follow him round, with some members waiting for him on the estate, the others waiting at the council offices in case he changes his route.

The group has also plans for action to protect tenants against any threats of intimidation or victimisation. Every tenant has a list of 10 emergency telephone numbers to use if there are such threats.

In such an emergency, Tower Hill can also call on other action groups in Kirkby and Liverpool for support, in the same way as flying pickets prevented the sacking of workers at Bird's Eye who took part in the one-day strike against the rent increases. More than two hundred tenants were picketing the factory within two hours.

The action of the tenants is already worrying the Kirkby Council. It has spread rumours that the action committee is intimidating tenants, and has tried to give the impression the rent strike is not solid by using people who are on social security and so get their rents paid for them. This is particularly important in Kirkby, where one person in five is unemployed.

The council has also tried to conceal the rent rise by increasing the number of rent-paying weeks from 50 to 52.

Another estate on total rent strike is Over The Bridge, one of the oldest areas in Liverpool, which is bounded by two open sewers: the Leeds-Liverpool Canal and the River Mersey. It is a mixture of docks and industry with corporation houses, flats and maisonettes in poor condition due to lack of maintenance.

Unpleasant fumes from a galvaniser, animal food factories and the third largest incinerator in Europe greet the residents

as they step outside their front doors. For these 'amenities' tenants are being asked to pay an average increase of 93p to an average rent of £5.50.

The tenants' association, formed in 1967, is now one of the most militant in Liverpool. It has called a total rent strike because it feels that to withhold the increases alone would be merely to tickle the Tories. The association wants to hit them where it hurts the most—in the pocket.

### Contact

This policy has received 100 per cent support from all meetings, with an average attendance of 150 people.

The association has made every effort to keep in contact with the tenants so that no one feels isolated. It issues a weekly newsheet, and has plastered walls and windows with stickers and posters. Association meetings are weekly.

Flying pickets have been formed and are on call 24 hours a day. Most tenants in the area are dockers, and the docks shop stewards committee has pledged full support if there are threats of any evictions.

## ANOTHER LABOUR COUNCIL SURRENDERS

SALFORD:—The city council finally decided to abandon its opposition to the 'Fair Rents' Act at an emergency meeting called by a group of Labour councillors last week.

The meeting started with a prayer . . . and God was certainly needed to mend Labour's broken spirit. Salford Labour Party (and its MPs, Stan Orme and Frank Allaun) had for long seen itself as leading the crusade against the Act with fine speeches. Now many of its councillors were voting with the Tories against their own left wing to increase rents.

But there was opposition to this surrender. Councillor Loftus, a veteran Labour man, spoke of the 9000 out of 16000 council houses in Salford which

were below standards, and pointed out that if anything Salford tenants need a rent reduction.

None of the Labour councillors who spoke against the increases mentioned the tenants movement. But the real battle to be fought in Salford now cannot take place in City Hall. An AUEW shop steward who is a member of the Salford Tenants central committee, said that 'every association in Salford is pledged to a partial rent strike as soon as the £1 goes on in a month's time. If there are any victimisations, then it will become a total rent strike.'

The committee has written to all trade union branches and shop stewards committees in the area calling for pledges of industrial action in this happens.

# WHAT'S ON

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## MEETINGS

SWANSEA IS: Paul Foot, Mike Caffoor—FIGHT THE TORIES! Don't miss this important meeting. Thur 26 Oct, 7.30pm, AUEW House, Orchard St, Swansea.

SOCIALIST MEDICAL ASSOCIATION meeting: Dr M Miller MP on The Reorganisation of the NHS, Mon 23 Oct. The Cole Room, Fabian Offices, 11 Dartmouth St, London SW1 (near St James Park tube).

FINE TUBES CONFERENCE: 28 Oct, in Birmingham. Coach leaving London 7.15am from Pancras Rd, by Kings Cross station. Return fare £1.25. For further details contact Mike Caffoor at 01-739 1878 (day).

POST OFFICE WORKER GROUP meeting: Sunday 22 Oct, 2pm. Speakers on The Struggle against Productivity Dealing, and Why the Unions don't fight—the Struggle for Rank-and-File Control. Details from Tom Dredge, 3 Godric Crescent, New Addington, Croydon, Surrey.

NEATH IS: Fight the Tories public meeting, with Paul Foot, at Neath Town Hall, Wednesday 1 November, 7.30pm.

WATFORD public meeting: Roger Cox (IS) and Barney Davis (Communist Party) on WHICH WAY TO SOCIALISM? Thur 26 Oct, 8pm, Trade Union Hall (small room), Woodford Road, Watford.

ABERDEEN IS public meeting: Fight the Tories. Speakers: Jim Higgins and Steve Jefferys. Tue 24 Oct, 7.30pm, The Music Hall, Aberdeen.

CONFERENCE of Radical Scholars of Soviet and East European Studies: speakers include Jerzy Kolankiewicz on Poland, H H Ticktin on Russia, Jiri Pelikan on Czechoslovakia, Ernest Mandel on the transitional economy, Ralph Miliband on the soviet state, and Mary McAuley on political change since Stalin. Fri 20—Sun 22 Oct, at the Mechanical Engineering Building, Imperial College, Exhibition Rd, London SW7. Fees: £1, or 20p per session. Contact CRSSEES, 150 Elgin Avenue, London W9.

THE LAST of eight meetings by the Workers' Association for the Democratic Settlement of the National Conflict in Ireland. Fri 27 Oct, 8pm, The Laurel Tree, Bayham St, Camden Town, London: The Origin of the present conflict in Ireland.

EDINBURGH IS public meeting FIGHT THE TORIES BUILD THE SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE Speakers: Tony Cliff and Jim Higgins Monday 23 October, 7.30pm Freegardeners Hall, Picardy Place

WORLD'S END STRIKERS' SOCIAL Friday 27 October King's Head, Fulham (next to Fulham tube) Music, booze, 30p entry Extension applied for All proceeds to the strike fund

WANDSWORTH IS: Public meeting on The Fight Against Racism. Speaker: Basker Vashee. Thurs 26 Oct, 8pm. The Spread Eagle, West Hill, Wandsworth, SW18.

ST ALBANS PUBLIC DEBATE Which Road to Socialism? Speakers: Andreas Nagliatti (IS) and Tom May (Communist Party) Thursday 26 October, 8pm Beehive pub, Watson's Row, London Road, St Albans

ROCHDALE IS By-election public meeting FIGHT RACIALISM—FIGHT THE TORIES Speaker: John Palmer Wednesday 25 October, 8pm Rochdale College, Bury Road

KICK OUT THE TORIES CARDIFF IS PUBLIC MEETING SPEAKER PAUL FOOT Weds 25 Oct, 8.00pm Guildford Crescent Baths (off Churchill Way), Cardiff

LAMBETH IS public meeting THE FIGHT FOR EQUAL PAY Speaker: Margaret Renn (SOGAT) Tuesday 24 October, 8.15pm Room 121, Lambeth Town Hall

## NOTICES

NE LONDON: £10 room for two from 14 Oct. Share lounge (TV) kit bath garden garage phone etc with one comrade. 01-478 1736 evenings.

THE WORKER Newspaper of the Socialist Workers' Movement in Ireland October issue now out Special article on Republicanism 7p per copy including postage, £1 for 25, from Kevin O'Doherty, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

CARWORKER Rank and file motor workers' paper Issue no 10 now out Special feature on sit-ins Eight pages, 5p per copy, orders of 12 or more post free. Write to CARWORKER, 214 Roundwood Rd, London NW10.

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## Estates up in arms at increases

ROTHERHAM: Tenants are up in arms against the rent increases. The past month has seen a massive increase in activity by the established tenants' associations and the setting up of several new ones.

Tenants of Canklow, East Ward, Kimberworth Park, and Rockingham and Wingfield have all decided to strike and pledges not to pay the increase are being collected from house to house.

At Kiveton Park, just outside Rotherham, tenants were so angry at the increase that a strike was organised in just two weeks where previously there had been no tenants' organisation, and now there is almost total support throughout the estate.

Tenants meetings are held weekly in every estate and have been very successful. Last week at East Ward the community centre hall was packed to overflowing with tenants challenging some of the Labour councillors who had voted for the implementation of the Act.

Faced with a barrage of criticism, the councillors quickly retreated but they will not stand by the tenants in any way. They refuse to promise there will be no evictions and they deny that there is any intimidation, although there are reports from several areas that rent collectors are telling tenants they will have no repairs done unless the increase is paid.

A member of Liverpool Scotland Road tenants at a meeting

### Council promises: No evictions

THE Labour council at Greenwich have given a pledge that no tenants will be evicted for refusing to pay the increase. This has given a boost to the tenants who hope to spread the rent strike.

In Barking, however, the Labour council has so far refused to give this assurance. There were angry scenes last week when 250 tenants in the public gallery of the council chamber demanded it. The councillors left by the back door to avoid meeting their tenants.

The tenants then decided to step up the pickets at the rent offices to spread the strike.

In Warrington the council have said they will take court action against any tenant who is more than £10 in arrears. But local electricians' union shop stewards have called on the trades council to back the tenants and have pledged industrial action to support them.

## 'TRAITORS' SHOUTS

BARNESLEY: Rent strikes are under way in many estates in the area.

At Wombwell 200 tenants picketed the council meeting last week. The councillors, mainly Labour, called in the police rather than answer the questions being put to them. At the end of the meeting councillors had to run the gauntlet of jeers from angry tenants calling them 'traitors' and demanding their resignation.

One of the strongest movements is in Hoyland, where there is a total rent strike. Well over 300 people attended the last meeting.

The events of the past two weeks in Dodworth must give heart to every tenant not yet on rent strike. It seemed that the majority of tenants were just not bothered in building a fighting tenants' association. Even the militants on the estate were gloomy.

Yet, come the day of the rent increase,

about 100 tenants refused to pay. Many had never been to any tenants' meetings.

Last Sunday morning, in only one part of the estate, well over a 100 tenants were at an open-air meeting, three times larger than any previous meeting. The job of spreading and strengthening the strike is now seriously under way, with more tenants joining in daily.

The message from Dodworth must be clear—it is never too late to organise.

### Students refuse

Students at colleges and universities also face savage rent increases. At Surrey University students in college housing are on rent strike. Rents have been raised from £4 to £4.50 a week for one room.

Other rent strikes are going on at Exeter, Bristol, Liverpool and Loughborough.

# SIT-IN IS STRENGTH IN FIGHT FOR JOBS

LIVERPOOL:—1100 men and women are continuing their total occupation of the Lucas/CAV plant at Fazakerley to prevent its total closure.

It is the old story of a big company taking advantage of high government grants to establish a factory in an area of higher than average unemployment.

The factory produces the company's In-line injection pump for the heavy commercial vehicle industry. The Lucas take-over of Simms, in North London, a couple of years ago created an alternative plant producing In-line pumps.

With the production of the pump under CAV licence in Spain and the establishment of the new factory in Gillingham, the fate of the militant Fazakerley workers was sealed.

### BEATEN

CAV would like to move the machinery from the Liverpool factory south after having bought it cheap with taxpayers' money.

Lucas can be beaten, but it will call for greater solidarity from other plants in the combine. The leading stewards at the CAV Acton plant in London gave the Liverpool workers a cool reception last week.

It may be necessary for the Liverpool lads to picket CAV factories to appeal directly to the rank and file over the heads of weak factory leaders.

## 'Back to work' order, but electricians strike on

BIRMINGHAM:—Electricians in the Lucas factories voted on Monday to continue their strike for better pay, in defiance of an agreement signed by the national executive of their union the Friday before.

The dispute began in July when the electricians rejected a company offer of a £4.55 to £4.99 increase. The works engineering department rejected the same offer and were able to negotiate an extra £2 for some of their members.

A district official was called in to negotiate on behalf of the electricians. He pushed for an extra £1 and six weeks ago the men imposed an overtime ban and work-to-rule.

Three weeks ago negotiations were put in the hands of national electricians' union official Jack Ashfield, who told a steward that he could not do anything immediately—he was off to the Labour Party conference. The district official was also unobtainable.

When the steward told these facts to the men they put on their coats and walked out. They were soon joined by workers at other factories. Ashfield tried at a mass meeting to get them to go back, but they decided instead to call out all other Lucas electricians' union members in the area.

The executive committee of the union held an emergency meeting on Thursday of last week, declared the strike unofficial and decided to get the men back to work on terms they had already rejected. So much for union democracy.

The union's Midland branch voted unanimously to ignore the directive, and a mass meeting of the strikers endorsed this decision.

The management at Lucas has always relied on the lack of communication between the different groups of workers in their 11 factories. A meeting of workers from several factories on Sunday decided to try to overcome this by producing a regular bulletin.

They will hold another meeting next Sunday in The Wellington (corner of Brown Grove Street and Bristol Street) at 7.30pm, when the CAV occupation in Liverpool will also be discussed.

## Union delay stabs miners in the back

by Bill Message

WHEN miners' president Joe Gormley and the right-wing majority on the executive of the National Union of Mineworkers decided last week to postpone for a month the drafting of the new pay claim they achieved the remarkable feat of killing three birds with one stone.

Not only did they take the first step away from another confrontation with the Tories in the New Year, and give a nod to the TUC to continue its talks with the government about 'wage restraint', but they also gave the rank and file its biggest stab in the back for years.

The rank and file gave the executive a clear directive at the July NUM conference in Morecambe. They were told to go for increases of £4.50 to £7 on the weekly wage, a reduction of 7½ hours in the working week and special payments for anti-social shifts.

Once again the miners are in the position where they have to make a direct challenge to the government, and once again the executive is fumbling for a tame framework in which to disguise the confrontation.

### Shifts

Last time it was the 'special case' wrapping. This time it is proving much more difficult to find the disguise.

Yorkshire militants are up in arms over the proposed sell-out. Fred Hodgson, delegate of the Prince of Wales Colliery near Pontefract, said: 'Once again the national executive committee has let the rank and file down. The rank and file will have to show militancy and demand the executive carry out conference resolutions, and—if they don't—action must be taken to show them that the miners WILL get what they want.'

'If we don't get compensated for the anti-social shifts it won't be February when the strike starts. It will be January.'

Jimmy Miller, branch secretary at Kellingley Colliery, said: 'The policy of the executive is to return to the status quo.'

## STUDENT DEMO 'WAS DISTORTED'

by Neil Hutton

STIRLING: The university has begun a campaign against student leaders following demonstrations against the Queen's visit last week, by trying to mobilise the support of 'moderate' students for a witch hunt. An inquiry is to be held, disciplinary action is threatened and the flat of a students' union official was searched by the police at the weekend.

The press has reacted with its usual hysteria against any criticism of the ruling class, and tried to whip up the reaction by lies and misrepresentation. Demonstrating students were described as 'totally unrepresentative' by the Daily Mail and other papers, although a large general meeting had voted overwhelmingly to hold the demonstration.

The aims of the demonstration were distorted and an attempt made to present the students as a drunken rabble, despite the efforts of the students to make clear their serious political aim.

### Support

Most of the jostling and swearing of which the students have been accused was aimed at the police, who used violent tactics to harass demonstrators.

Meanwhile Stirling students are receiving messages of support from all over the country. All the Scottish universities except one and many other colleges, in Scotland and elsewhere, have expressed solidarity.

A worker in Portsmouth pointed out in a letter to the students that £1200 had just been spent in putting four colour television sets in the Royal Yacht Britannia and an old age pensioner wrote comparing the money spent on royal visits with the money spent on pensioners.

The press campaign, like that against miners and building workers, is designed to split opposition to the system. To defeat it Stirling students need the support of trade unionists and of students in other colleges.

## INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS FIGHT THE TORIES campaign

### IN SCOTLAND

#### GLENROTHES:

Saturday 21 October, 7.30pm  
CISWO Hall  
Speakers: Jim Higgins, George Kelly

#### DUNFERMLINE:

Sunday 22 October, 3pm  
Carnegie Baths  
Speakers: Jim Higgins, Peter Bain

#### EDINBURGH:

Monday 23 October, 7.30pm  
Free Gardeners Hall,  
Picardy Place, Leith Walk  
Speakers: Tony Cliff, Jim Higgins

#### ABERDEEN:

Tues 24 October, 7.30pm  
The Music Hall  
Speakers: Jim Higgins, Steve Jefferys

#### PAISLEY:

Thursday 26 October, 7.30pm  
Bakers Rooms,  
George Place, off George Street  
Speakers: Jim Higgins, George Kelly

#### GLASGOW:

Saturday 28 October, 3pm  
Typographical Halls, Clyde Street  
Speakers: Tony Cliff, Frank Campbell



I would like more information about the International Socialists

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# Socialist Worker

## DOCKERS' PICKETS DEFY UNION ORDERS

DESPITE a top-level move from officials of the Transport and General Workers Union, London's dockers have declined to remove the picket lines at Midland Cold Storage to allow negotiations to take place.

This drive to get the dockers to suspend their picketing is the latest in a series of opportunist manoeuvres by the union hierarchy to keep the TGWU out of the Industrial Relations Court and ensure the continued security of what the leadership sees as the lifeblood of trade unionism—bricks, mortar and funds.

After the House of Lords decision to reimpose the £55,000 fines on the TGWU the union told dockers that the Midland picket was unofficial. Over recent weeks this statement has been repeated several times, presumably for the benefit of the Vestys and Sir John Donaldson.

But the picketing is not unofficial. When the campaign to bring containers back within the control of docks trade unionism began last year, Midland was one of the targets officially chosen for blacking by the docks group, a decision backed by the union national executive.

Now the decision has simply been reversed undemocratically by those at the top of the union.

The more recent Vestey threats to return to the National Industrial Relations Court have also had their impact on the TGWU leadership.

Last week Eric Rechnitz, unofficial leader of the TGWU lorry drivers in London, was spirited away to the union's offices in Green Lanes, North London. After an intensive session with top officials, Rechnitz announced that the lorry drivers would break any dockers' picket lines outside the Midland depot and elsewhere.

The most nauseating aspect of the newspaper stories last week, wailing that the dockers were driving other workers out of work, is that another genuine part of the struggle for the right to work is going completely unsupported.

At Nelson's Wharf, another Vestey property on London's Riverside, 80 dockers have been given notice their jobs are to be axed. The work of the wharf is being transferred direct to the Midland Cold Storage depot.

### Refinery strikes

LLANDARCY, South Wales:—1000 workers at the BP oil refinery voted last week to come out on strike. This is the first strike in the 51 years the plant has been operating.

The strike is a direct confrontation with the government. The men's union, the Transport Workers, asked for a 'substantial wage increase'. The employers came back with a direct offer, £2 per week flat rate increase across all grades.

## 6000 walk out in protest against top Tory

WOLVERHAMPTON:—As Robin Chichester Clark, Minister at the Department of Employment, arrived to visit the Villiers motorcycle factory on Monday more than 6000 workers walked out in protest.

The men, members of the Engineering Union, were protesting against the Industrial Relations Act and the Tory policies on prices and incomes, rents and unemployment. The factory's Transport Union

shop stewards also called on their members to down tools as the minister toured the plant.

The Engineering Union shop stewards had met when they heard that Chichester Clark was to visit the factory. At the meeting there was strong feeling that though TUC

leaders might talk to Tory ministers, they would not—and they called for the stoppage.

This protest is a good sign of the strong opposition among rank-and-file trade unionists against the Tories and against any attempt by the TUC to do a deal.



Workers at the gates of CAV, at Fazackerly, Liverpool, which they have occupied in defence of 1100 jobs threatened by closure. FULL STORY: page 11

# £2 LOW PAID WORKERS IN REVOLT

GLASGOW:—4500 of Scotland's lowest-paid workers are fighting for rises of £5 and £6 a week.

A thousand bar staff employed by Tennent Caledonian Breweries and 3500 bakery workers are striking for the first time.

Despite the shortages of vital bread and beer supplies, public sympathy is

still largely behind the strikers.

The bar staff want recognition for their union, the Transport Workers, a cut in the working week from 50 to 40 hours, and a £6-a-week rise on their present miserable £15 to a basic wage of £21 a week.

Learning the lessons of the miners' and the dockers' struggles they have gone straight to picket the breweries. The convenors of the 15 lorry transport depots

of Tennent Caledonian agreed their men would not cross these pickets, even if this meant some being laid off.

The bakery workers are on constant shift work. Most have to work a 12-hour shift from 6pm on Friday night, and then start again at 6am on Sunday morning. The preparatory workers have to clock in four hours earlier.

The basic rate for 40 hours, including a shift allowance, is £21.71 for trademen and £17.45 for unskilled workers.

You might wonder why, with big profitable companies involved—Rank-McDougalls, the Scottish Co-op, Spillers, Lyons, Sunblest and Crawfords—the wages are so low. A big part of the reason is undoubtedly the role of the union, the Scottish Union of Bakery and Allied Workers.

This 13,000-member union was recently suspended from the TUC for registering under the Industrial Relations Act. Its officials do not agree with strikes and provoked the present unofficial action by settling two weeks ago for a miserable £2.50 on the basic rates.

Since the strike for a £5 rise began, Alex Mackie, the union's national organiser, has done nothing but attack the strikers in public, issuing press statements about 'old people suffering as a result of the stoppage'. The shop stewards and rank and file see this action as a last straw and are actively considering approaching the TGWU for membership.

Scottish trade unionists must immediately demand the expulsion of the Scottish Union of Bakers from the Scottish TUC for registering and for its attitude to its own members. The TGWU should be called upon to accept the bakery workers if they apply.

## Action in the NHS

by a Health Service worker

HEALTH SERVICE workers have had to put up with deteriorating conditions for years, as governments—both Labour and Tory—have cut expenditure to the bone.

Rising rents and prices have hit them more than most other workers because of their pitiful wages. Many men working in hospitals take home less than £16-a-week and the women's rates are even worse.

But the biggest threat is the government's demand for a £2 limit on pay rises. Next week union officials should start negotiations for a rise of at least £4 and a 35-hour week.

The feeling is spreading among rank and file hospital workers that the only way to gain a decent living wage is by grass roots struggle for £8 a week. A fortnight ago workers in the Bristol area spearheaded this fight by a totally unofficial strike that

got national publicity.

In Manchester, workers in the National Union of Public Employees have been on a one-day strike to prove that they are prepared for full-scale action if necessary. In London shop stewards are meeting regularly to organise similar token action to press union officials to support the demand for £8.

If we do take industrial action, we can expect the press to mount a hysterical campaign about 'murderers' and 'thugs'. But our fight is in fact a fight to improve the National Health Service.

The present appalling wages mean understaffing and long hours of overtime. Many workers are doing the equivalent of four jobs.

For the patients this can be the difference between life and death.

## Thousand steelmen claim £8 rise

by Rob Clay

A THOUSAND production workers at the British Steel Corporation plant at Lackenby have submitted a claim for parity with workers in South Wales who are earning £8 a week more.

For years steelworkers on the North East coast have known that their pay was well behind that of such plants as Llanwern and Port Talbot. Characteristically, the full-time officials of BISAKTA, the main steel union, have always done everything in their power to head off any attempts to bring Teesside wages up to parity.

Lay branch officials from the BISAKTA no 5 branch, who have submitted the claim, had to travel to Wales themselves to obtain information on the rates. Repeated written and verbal requests to full time officials produced nothing. The Divisional Office in Middlesbrough even refused to give a letter of introduction to the works representative.

To demand a rates revision of this kind in the steel industry is quite unprecedented. Members of the branch are well aware that they could face a long struggle with the Steel Corporation, backed by a TUC-approved wage freeze. It is expected that, as is traditional, the occupant of the BISAKTA Divisional Office will only appear on the scene as and when required by the management.

The parity claim could and should be taken up by every BISAKTA branch in the North East and, for that matter, beyond. Most areas are on similar pay to Teesside. Already a number of other branches in South Teesside steelworks are considering lodging a similar claim. One member of the no 5 branch committee told Socialist Worker: 'After years of submissiveness, there is a new mood in the area. If we win this claim, the BSC and the union will never be the same again.'

ALL IS MEMBERS TO GIVE MAXIMUM SUPPORT

## LEICESTER ANTI-RACIST MARCH

Saturday 21 October

Assemble Spinney Hill Park Merle Rd gates at 2pm for march through city centre  
London coaches leave Pancras Rd (near Kings Cross and St Pancras stations) at 9.30am

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