

# Socialist Worker

PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

## Labour backs down on top firms

# HOLD PRICES NOT PAY!

**'Our voice must be heard...'**

ERIC GOLDING is going to the conference called by rank and file trade union papers in Birmingham on 30 March.

He is a York bricklayer, a member of the Transport Union and an executive member of York and District Trades Council.

He has just gone back to his trade after nine months off work following an industrial accident that cost him one finger of his left hand.

'Being out of work for nine months has given me the chance to read and think about trade unions and working-class politics,' he said this week.

'The poverty of existing on Social Security with a wife and four children has made me more



Picture: John Sturrock (Report)

Eric Golding: links needed

determined that workers should fight for control of what they produce, a better way of life and an end to the scrapheap called pensions.

'The struggle of the working class has to be fought through the trade union movement.

'The fact that six trade unionists are still rotting in jail over the Shrewsbury trials fills me with disgust.

'This conference is important to build a link with all trade unionists and I urge everyone to support it.

'The rank and file must begin to make its voice heard and influence felt.'

300 delegates signed up: page 14.

RENTS FROZEN, basic food prices subsidised, pensions up, museum charges abolished, the Industrial Relations Act repealed. Labour MPs are hailing Harold Wilson as the toughest Labour Prime Minister ever.

But even while the Queen's Speech which contained all these proposals was being written the

SW Political Reporter

truth about the future was being spelt out for millions of working people.

Wholesale prices took another record leap in

February. The average price of goods made for sale in Britain rose by nearly 3 per cent—that's an annual rate of 36 per cent. All the experts agree that these increases will continue for the rest of the year.

The pension increases are nothing like enough to cope with price increases. The rents freeze will be quickly swamped in the tidal wave of price increases.

The government promises 'to establish fair prices of certain key foods'. How? By paying out massive subsidies from taxpayers' money to the monopolies who make profits because others need to eat.

Already Shirley Williams, Labour's prices minister, has been begging and bribing the big bakers not to raise the price of bread by half a penny. This will cost the taxpayers £38 million—and all of it will go out of government control into the bottomless coffers of Rank Hovis McDougall and their fellow giants.

RHM's profits last year were up from £23.9 million to £27.9 million. They will be up again this year.

### CONTROL

Yet the control of the bread market will be left to Ranks just as the control of every other market will be left to the boardrooms.

All those pledges at Labour Party conferences to nationalise banks, insurance companies, chemical and building companies and so on have been thrown overboard.

So who will bear the brunt of inflation under Labour? The workers will—and Phase Three is still law.

As the Queen's speech put it: 'My ministers will discuss urgently with the Trades Union Congress, the Confederation of British Industry and the others concerned, methods of securing the orderly growth of incomes on a voluntary basis.'

Wilson hopes to get the unions to agree to wage restraint in a period where wage increases of more than 20 per cent are necessary to keep pace with increased prices.

**It is not on.**

The Tories and the Liberals deserve nothing but contempt if they try to run Labour out of office by voting against price subsidies or legislation against property speculators.

But neither has Labour any claim on workers' loyalty if it leaves the profiteers in charge of industry and pleads at the same time for wage restraint.

The rank and file must tell the union leaders in the clearest possible terms:

**NO WAGE RESTRAINT.**



### Gates locked at sit-in plant

Workers at Strachan's factory in Eastleigh, Hampshire have locked the gates and occupied the works—it makes van bodies for Ford—against a threat of closure.

Story: centre pages.  
Picture: Chris Davies (Report).

END OF MINERS' STRIKE: BACK PAGE/POVERTY SHOCK: PAGE 7

# The 'lucky' miner who only lost his leg...

WILLIAM DAVIES was a miner, a faceworker at the Nantgarw Colliery, Treforest until 17 January 1969. On that day William Davies joined the 4000 miners who leave the industry every year through injury, disease and death.

He was working in the 508 district of the colliery, clearing coal and fixing wooden supports, after the charged had been fired. Having run out of timber he was set to work clearing spillage until new timber arrived.

At this point he heard an ominous click in the roof and rightly assumed a fall was imminent. He attempted vainly to get out of the way. A stone two feet wide and one foot thick crushed his leg.

For the next 3½ years William Davies suffered 12 operations to attempt to reconstruct his foot. In June 1973 the doctors gave up and amputated his leg below the knee.

After this long chapter of suffering it seems odd to describe William Davies as fortunate, but compared to the 140 miners killed or seriously injured each year in South Wales he is fortunate. At the end of February five years after the injury, he was awarded £24,000 damages by a Cardiff court. Average damages, usually by out of court settlement, in South Wales are £900.

## Unsupported

The facts that came out at the 13-day hearing are a crushing indictment of the NCB. At the Nantgarw pit 101 men had been hurt on one face by roof falls in a period of 12 months. At another face 10 miners were injured by roof falls in one month.

The NCB system of shot-firing at the pit is an easy method. But it involves leaving the roof unsupported for several hours. A system to avoid falls, involving a skin to cover the roof, is available but more expensive. As the NCB said: 'Safety must be balanced against practicality.' For 'practical' read 'cheap'.

Mr Justice Lately, was unimpressed by the NCB case. He said: 'In their wish to get on with the job and in their habit of accepting the dangers of work underground, management, officials and men tolerated conditions which it was not necessary to tolerate.'

After the case William Davies said: 'I have two brothers who suffered accidents down the pits and it never entered their heads that they may have a case against the Coal Board. It makes me wonder how many other miners have lost the chance of compensation.'

## Precedent

A question remains: Why did the NCB attempt to fight a case where they were manifestly in the wrong? Why did they put forward a defence balancing costs against lives and limbs?

Informed legal opinion suggests that there is a great deal more in this for the NCB than the £24,000 awarded to William Davies. According to this reasoning the NCB hoped to establish the legal precedent that they have a responsibility limited by 'reasonable cost' to look after the safety of working miners. This would be particularly valuable to the NCB when the very big compensation cases are heard on the pneumoconiosis claims.

FOOTNOTE: The NCB, who fought William Davies through the courts, has paid the owners of a stately home in North Wales £120,000 compensation for subsidence damages. That is the equation: one damaged stately home equals five legs and a life of pain for five miners.

# SOCIALIST WORKER

ONCE UPON a time we had something called the Poor Law. It became very unpopular and so promises were made to abolish it.

This was done and the Public Assistance came into being. It was commonly known as the Dole. This too became very unpopular. It was abolished and National Assistance was born. When this name, in turn, began to stink, Social Security was invented.

Different names, different methods to some extent, but the same end. To dole out to the destitute and the near-destitute just enough to prevent riots and crimes of desperation and to enable the well-to-do to sleep easily in their beds. Just enough and no more.

Of course, what was just enough has changed with time. Periods of working-class militancy and social unrest have always had a remarkable effect in increasing the 'charitable' inclinations of the rich.

It is the same story with the various schemes put forward by successive governments to restrict wage claims. The 'Declaration of Intent' gave way to the 'Prices and Incomes Policy', later rechristened 'Counter-Inflation Policy', and now to the 'Social Contract'.

Different names, different methods to some extent, but the same end. To prevent wages, in real terms, increasing at the expense of profits and, hopefully, to reduce wages relative to profits.

**Naturally it is never put in these terms. The aim is always given as something else: to increase output and exports, to prevent inflation and of course (especially when Labour is in office) to move towards a 'fairer society'.**

'The basis of the Social Contract, thrashed

# It's wages restraint by back door

out in a joint Labour Party-TUC committee over the past couple of years, is that unions and their members will voluntarily restrain wage claims and settlements,' notes the Financial Times, 'if certain social measures are first taken by the government.'

The measures include the repeal of the Industrial Relations Act, increased pensions, halting council house rent rises and some token food subsidies.

All these are certainly of benefit to working people, just as Social Security is better than begging or starvation. But they are offered, because, and only because, of the militant industrial actions of the last two years. Michael Foot is appointed to the Department of Employment, rather than Reg Prentice, for exactly the same reason.

Remove the fear of working-class action and the concessions will soon be whittled away. Yet this is exactly what the TUC leaders propose to do. They say to the government, in effect, give us some crumbs and we will do our best to stop our members going for the cake.

# WHAT WE THINK

They are trying to harness the trade union movement firmly to the chariot of private profits. 'Voluntary restraint' means that the union leaders will take over the job of the now discredited pay board.

'Voluntary restraint' means increased profits at the expense of wages. And 'voluntary restraint' means that the main source of such concessions as increased pensions—our rulers fear of the organised working class—is effectively weakened.

This 'restraint' is offered in a society in which, as Socialist Worker pointed out last week, 1 per cent of the population owns 43 per cent of all wealth and 81 per cent of company shares. It is offered in a society in which an equal distribution of income (not capital) would give the average family of four an income of £4000 a year.

Above all, it is being offered at a time when the average workers' earnings, in terms of what they will buy, are actually going down while profits top record levels.

The rate of inflation is moving up to 15 per cent a year. Allowing for the effect of tax and other stoppages (soon to be increased again) a money wage increase of less than about 20 per cent will mean a cut in real terms this year.

The Social Contract is a swindle. It is one more in the long series of measures and proposals to protect the interests of the few at the expense of the many. It must be energetically opposed inside the trade union movement.

**The 30 March Conference called by various rank and file papers could not have come at a better time. It should sound a clarion call against this latest attempt to turn the unions into agents of the state and the employers.**

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# CLAY X RENTS MAN TO GRAB £1

SW Reporter  
IN SPITE OF the rents freeze announced by the Labour government, Patrick Skillington, who was appointed Housing Commissioner in Clay Cross by the Tories, is determined to push rents in the town up by £1 a week.

By consistently defying the Tory government's Housing Finance Act, the Labour council at Clay Cross saved the council's 1600 tenants in the town from rent increases amounting to £1.50 a week.

After the Court of Appeal disqualified the 11 Labour councillors for not putting up the rents, the Tories imposed Mr Skillington on the town to do the dirty work.

He decreed an extra £1 a week for all Clay Cross tenants.

The defeat of the Tory government and the election of another Labour council on Clay Cross—committed to defy the Tory Rent Acts—on 2 March did not deter Mr Skillington from his purpose.

He has ordered two rent collectors in the town to collect the increased rents from last Monday.

The Labour council, in reply, is seeking an injunction in the High Court to stop Skillington from collecting the rents.

They argue that the former Labour councillors have already been surcharged for not imposing the rent increases and that therefore the increases cannot be collected from tenants.

If the injunction is not granted, the Labour councillors are planning to follow the rent collectors round the estates.

Whenever the rent collectors ask for the increased rents, the councillors will advise the tenants not to pay.



Flashback to Clay Cross councillors outside Law Courts

# SACKED—FOR GOING TO HOSPITAL

WILLIAM RICHARDSON of Glenrothes worked as a milk salesman for Edinburgh Dairies, part of the Unigate chain.

Last October he had an accident at work which damaged the tendons in his hand. Eventually in February he had to go into hospital. On release he found that the company were refusing

to pay him wages for the week prior to his admission.

He complained to the Department of Employment whose investigator is now looking into the matter. For this 'militant action' Richardson was sacked.

As a result he is not allowed to sign on as unemployed since he is

officially 'on sick'. This hardship is increased by the fact that the firm still owes him holiday pay, bonus and commission. Moreover, he is losing insurance stamps which may affect his future unemployment pay.

The company advertises regularly in the local press for staff. There seems to be a high turnover.

# Air crash truth blows up lies

WHEN THE TURKISH Airlines DC 10 jumbo jet crashed two weekends ago killing all 347 passengers on board, the British press jumped in with two startling explanations for the worst aircraft disaster in history.

The first 'theory' they advanced was sabotage. There was a 'definite possibility' that Arab terrorists had put a time bomb aboard the plane.

Alternatively, there would have been fewer people on board but for the home-grown menace—striking Heathrow engineers.

But over the past week some real facts have appeared which show who was responsible for the crash.

As might be expected by anyone other than frenzied Fleet Street editors, it was not strikers or terrorists. It was the respectable businessmen of McDonnell Douglas, manufacturers of the DC 10.

In June 1972, fully 21 months before the Paris crash, a DC 10 got into serious trouble over Windsor Ontario.

The rear cargo door blew off. The cargo hold depressurised, causing the cabin floor to crumple and jam the flying controls. Despite this the plane was landed safely.

The Paris disaster two weeks ago was virtually a re-run of the Windsor, Ontario affair. It is now virtually certain that once again a door was at fault and again triggered a decompression explosion.

After the first incident the US Federal Aviation Authority recommended modifications for DC 10s, in particular to the original door latches which look as if they are closed when in fact they are not.

These changes, McDonnell Douglas state, have been made on all American-owned DC 10s. But the situation is not so certain with regard to the foreign-owned jumbos.

The doubt arises because McDonnell Douglas manoeuvred so that the US Federal Aviation Authority would not issue an airworthiness certificate on their plane.

An airworthiness certificate means that all airlines are notified through their governments.

But the plane makers feel this is bad for their sales. Once again safety came nowhere in the drive to make profits.

# Top firms named

by Duncan Hallas

THE CBI, spokesman of British big business, likes to talk about how responsible and socially concerned its member firms are.

They would not dream of paying starvation wages. Not in Britain, no doubt. Union pressure sees to that.

But what sort of wages do they pay when unions are outlawed?

A House of Commons Select Committee reported last week on wages paid to African workers by British firms operating in South Africa.

'Sixty-three out of 141 British companies from which it received evidence were paying minimum wages below subsistence levels for an African family, a practice which it quotes one South African authority as describing as inhuman,' reported The Guardian's Adam Raphael, who campaigned against South African wages last year.

It is inhuman alright. The South African minimum subsistence level is just enough for the worker and his family to keep body and soul together.

Anything less means premature death by slow starvation.

Who are these firms which boost their profits by starving African workers? They are not backstreet, hole-in-the-corner enterprises.

They include some of the biggest and best known pillars of 'free enterprise'.

Here are a few, named by the Select Committee:

British Leyland, Unilever, Barclays Bank, GEC, Slater-Walker, Metal Box, GKN, Cadbury-Schweppes, British Oxygen, Dunlops, Rio Tinto-Zinc, Tate and Lyle, EMI, Consolidated Goldfields, Portland Cement, Thorn Electrical, Lonrho, Vickers and Great Universal Stores.

Remember them and the African families they starve when next you hear the spokesmen of the CBI speaking of 'responsibility' or read an 'Aims of Industry' advertisement.

## Three years for killing an Indian

JAG SINGH KENTH, a 30 years-old Indian died in a Leicester street of injuries sustained when he was beaten and kicked outside a discotheque.

Three men, Edwin Blockley, John Loren and Robert Hail, were found not guilty of his murder at the judge's direction but guilty of attempted grievous bodily harm. The sentences were: Blockley, three years, Loren, 18 months and Hail, four years.

Kenth, Loren and Hail were ejected from the discotheque after a dispute over a coat. A fight developed and Blockley joined in to beat a passer-by, Trevor Spencer, who came to the Indian's defence. It was for this that Blockley was given a three years' sentence.

According to a witness, when Spencer and his wife started to move off, Blockley shouted after them: 'None of you have any guts. What are you going to do for your black bastard friend now?' Then, the witness continued, he kicked the Indian as an act of defiance.

Edwin Blockley's past is not without interest. Until the trial he was employed as a bouncer at Sloopy's club, the discotheque in question. In his statement to the police he said: 'I grant you I don't like coloureds but I never hit one.'

This is something of an understatement. Blockley has already served 18 months for nailing a 'fiery cross' to the back door of the Imperial Hotel after it had been taken over by the first Indian landlord in Leicester. This particular contribution to race relations Blockley carried out as a member of the Ku Klux Klan, claiming it as a 'political act'.

Mr Victor Pugh, the pathologist, gave evidence at the Kenth trial to the effect that he had only seen injuries of this sort once before in a road accident. A juror collapsed at the medical evidence.

# in poverty wage row

## STUDENTS STEP UP GRANTS FIGHT



Leicester students at a meeting during their occupation. Picture: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

STUDENTS staged a 'Week of Action' last week to back their protest over the present grants system.

They are demanding a grant that keeps pace with inflation and is the same value regardless of academic courses, parents' income or the married or single status of students.

Some 20 colleges held sit-ins and many took part in lecture and catering boycotts, demonstrations and occupations of local education authority offices.

A number of colleges not usually associated with militant action held sit-ins, provoking a violent reaction from college authorities and some lecturers. At BANGOR university college one lecturer attempted to spray students with ammonia to remove them from a telephone switchboard.

In OXFORD hundreds of students including contingents from as far away as York, took part in a demonstration against victimisation. 19 students are facing university disciplinary pro-

ceedings and another 12 are facing criminal charges after an attempt to occupy a university building in the campaign for a central students' union in Oxford.

At ESSEX University, where 35 students are on disciplinary charges after last term's sit-in, 1000 students voted at a union meeting to continue the current picket of the university.

The authorities reacted by calling in the police on Thursday to force a lorry carrying computer equipment through the pickets. Militants now argue that the only way to victory is to close down the university completely.

At KENT University, where last week a catering boycott was being held in support of the grants campaign, the county education committee has postponed payment of its annual £45,000 grant to the university

by Simon Turner

because of the recent sit-in which won the reinstatement of a victimised student.

Other colleges where direct action took place included Leicester University where 1500 students voted to occupy the administration building in protest against increases in hall prices and Middlesex Polytechnic where the police were called in after the director's office was occupied as part of the Week of Action.

The action could have been trebled if the majority of the executive of the National Union of Students had called clearly for a week of protest action and given a vitally needed lead to the grants campaign.

Support for the grants campaign is beginning to fall off, especially in colleges that have been traditionally the most militant.

By channelling student militancy into a supporting role to meaningless negotiations with the government, the majority of the NUS executive has confused and demoralised many of its members.

# Irishmen jailed in arms hysteria trial

by Kevin Schirn

SAVAGE SENTENCES were passed on two Irish Republicans convicted of possessing electric detonators and ammunition.

Michael Egan was jailed for four years at Leeds Crown Court and Robert Gallagher received six years. A woman, Nora McCarthy, who was also charged with them, received a suspended four year sentence.

The trial was conducted from start to finish in an atmosphere of hysteria about the IRA. Without producing any evidence at all, the prosecution claimed that the defendants were IRA members and that Clann na h'Eireann—a group in Britain that gives political support to the official republicans in Ireland was one and the same as the IRA.

Banner headlines in the local press repeated these allegations.

The court was packed with armed police and on the final day of the trial police took the names and addresses of people entering the public gallery.

### Verdict

The emotional atmosphere created around the trial was reflected in the fact that after four days the jury took only an hour and three quarters to return a verdict of guilty.

The evidence against Gallagher was of the flimsiest nature. He was convicted on the basis of a statement extracted by police from Michael Egan when he was in an exhausted condition—a statement which he later withdrew.

An old suitcase of Gallagher's, which he had left in a Clann meeting place several weeks before he was arrested, contained some of the ammunition police later found.

On the strength of an unreliable statement and slight circumstantial evidence the judge described Gallagher as the 'ring leader' of an operation aimed at furthering 'mass murder' in Northern Ireland.

In the witness box Gallagher had clearly condemned the tactics of the Provisional IRA which the prosecution had implied he was involved with.

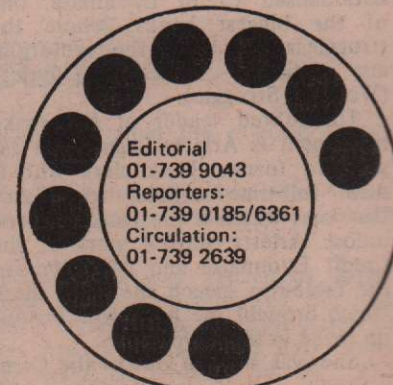
### Massive

Gallagher, an active trade unionist and leading militant in Bradford during the 1972 building workers' strike, explained his commitment to building a 32 Counties Socialist Workers Republic in Ireland.

In the same courtroom a man who tried to set fire to his ex-wife and burn down her house was put on probation for three years.

Across the corridor from the court where Gallagher and Egan stood for trial, John Poulson is standing trial for his massive network of corruption.

Some time ago, John Tyndall, leader of the National Front, received 12 months for possessing firearms.



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# GENERAL STRIKE WINS

## 75p A DAY PAY

by A Tagel  
A GENERAL STRIKE and an army revolt have forced Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia to dismiss his government, promise constitutional reforms and grant workers a minimum wage of 75p a day.

Most of Ethiopia's 25 million people live hand-to-mouth by farming. Most are required by law to give three-quarters of what they produce to the landlords—and work for them too. There is one doctor for every 75,000 people and one child in three dies in infancy. 19 people out of 20 cannot read or write.

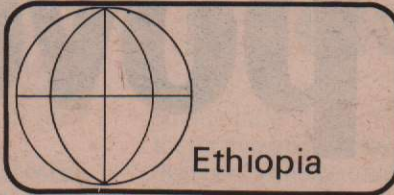
American companies control most of the mineral wealth and newly-discovered wealth—and the US gives to Ethiopia more than half its total

military aid to Africa.

In industry the average wage for unskilled labourers is 15p a day. Strikes, peaceful demonstrations, and political parties are forbidden by law.

Strikes, peasant uprisings and demonstrations have all been put down with ferocity, claiming thousands of lives. Thousands of Ethiopians have been forced into exile. About 20,000 suffer under forced labour in the Emperor's private gold mines in Adola.

The regime of Haile Selassie has



Ethiopia

never had a peaceful year: peasant unrest, insurrection, the growing militancy of the working class, armed independence struggles by oppressed nationalities, the political maturity of the student movement.

Living conditions are worsening day by day, with growing inflation, high prices, and unfair taxation. Hence the unprecedented wave of strikes, peasant unrest, student strikes and army mutinies that is shaking the Ethiopian empire at present.

The Ethiopian Confederation of Labour Unions which represents 136,000 workers, called its first nationwide strike last week demanding a minimum wage, price controls, job security, and freedom to form

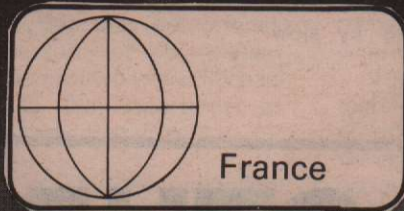
trade unions for all workers. It was joined by teachers, taxi-drivers, and shopkeepers. The army, under the leadership of non-commissioned officers, has been in complete control of the country since the end of February. Besides wage claims they have demanded political and economic reforms, the formation of political parties, free press, education for all, freedom of speech, land reform and the release of all political prisoners.

The students have been demonstrating in support of the workers, and soldiers under the slogan 'Land to the tiller', 'the formation of a democratic republic' and 'all power to the people'.

The famine that is ravaging the country—300,000 people have died of starvation already—is glaring proof of the criminality of the regime.



A meeting of the bank strikers at the Credit Lyonnais head office in Paris. The Credit is a nationalised bank and the biggest



France

## Attack on freedom movement —394 held

by Roger Murray

SOUTH AFRICAN police have arrested 394 people in Namibia in a campaign of mass arrests against the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) and its Youth League. They include SWAPO's chairman, David Merero, who was arrested with 155 others at a police roadblock for not carrying an identity card or travel pass.

The new wave of repression followed closely on a decision by the United Nations Security Council to end two years of talks with the South African government over Namibia, and the UN General Assembly's recognition of SWAPO as the 'authentic representative of the Namibian people'. SWAPO then began a campaign of mass meetings and demonstrations throughout Namibia to force the South African government to quit the country, which it still holds despite such international decisions.

The police action is directed especially at the SWAPO Youth League, which held a series of mass rallies flying the Namibian flag of red, blue and green. Three of the speakers at one rally attended by 3000 people have been jailed for eight years for 'political incitement'.

Despite the arrests, new leaders of SWAPO have been elected, and intend to campaign openly as before. Said the new chairman of the Youth League: 'The police will have to jail the whole of Namibia to break us'.

## Strikers paralyse banks

by Richard Kirkwood

'9.30am in Central Paris . . . a van draws up outside the main office of the Bank of France. Hands on revolvers, two guards leap from the armoured security van. One of them moves towards the main door. A strike picket bars his way.'

This paragraph from the French daily newspaper Le Monde highlights the more dramatic aspect of the office workers' strike which is paralysing the head offices of some of France's big banks. A few days after it was written the police moved in and threw out the strikers, causing the union to call out all Bank of France workers in Paris and the provinces for a full-scale strike.

One-day strikes over pay and conditions have been hitting the big French banks for the past month. Some have led to full stoppages. Some computer centres have been occupied.

The centre of the action is the nationalised Credit Lyonnais, one of the biggest banks, where the struggle is being led by the revolutionary socialists of Lutte Ouvriere (Workers' Struggle).

Undoubted leader of the strike movement is Arlette Laguiller, a 34-year-old former bank clerk who is now full-time official for Force Ouvriere, which is the bank workers' union. Arlette started work at the Credit Lyonnais and is known for the table-top speech she made there which brought the bank workers out on strike in May 1968.

She was thrown out of the Com-

munist Party-controlled CGT union in 1965 for her revolutionary views and was Lutte Ouvriere's main election candidate last year.

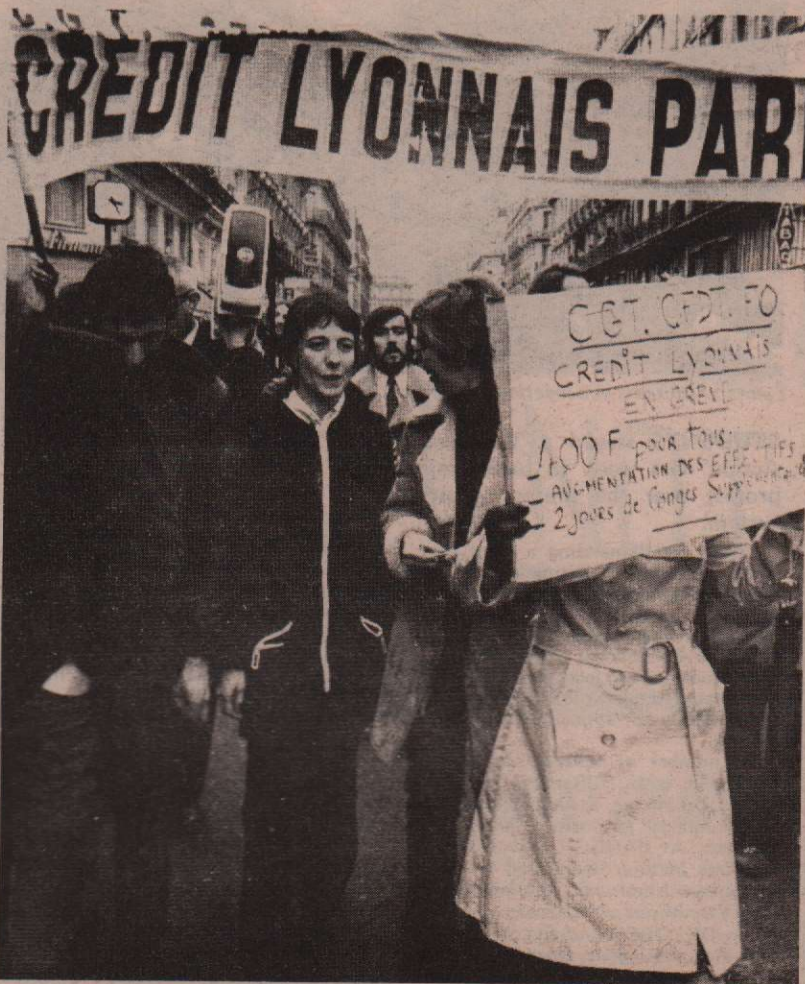
Largely due to the revolutionary socialists, the strikes at the Credit are being run by strike committees elected by all the workers, whether they are in trade unions or not. The CGT has opposed this, preferring a committee of union officials.

The strike committees, again opposed by the CGT, has spread the strike, and speeded it up from one-day stoppages to all-out action by the most militant sections.

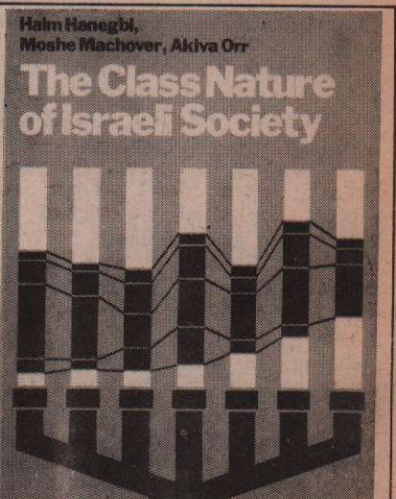
### Dirty

Frequent demonstrations have brought the strike home to the people of Paris. As one demonstration approached, one bank manager locked the doors 'to protect non-strikers'—locking in the customers. When management complained to the unions that cigarette ends were being dropped on their carpets by unruly strikers, the demonstrators came up with the slogan 'We're coming to dirty your carpets!'

The strike is still spreading. The Bank of France printers are refusing to print banknotes—at least that cuts inflation! Militancy is still increasing despite the CGT, and if management does not give in, then most of the big banks will soon be on full-scale strike with some occupations.

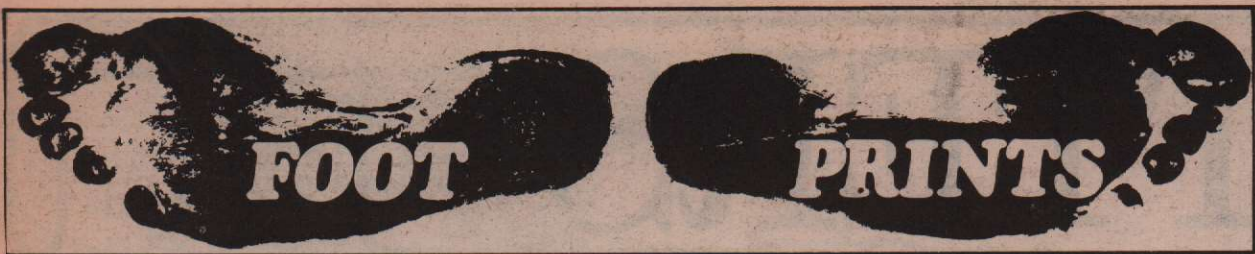


Revolutionary socialist Arlette Laguiller, leader of the strike movement, on a strikers' demonstration.



The Class Nature of Israeli Society by Hanegbi, Machover and Orr. Three Israeli socialists analyse Israeli society and argue that a rejection of its Zionist basis is the precondition for any breakthrough in the Middle East.

Published by Pluto Press/available from IS Books, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4, 10p plus 4p postage and packing (10 or more copies post free).



# Buy, buy Blackburn

POCHINS, a subsidiary of McAlpines, is an up-and-coming building firm in Lancashire and Cheshire which has been going from strength to strength largely through the building work done by its own subsidiary, Pochins Contractors. Profits have risen from £20,000 in 1970 to more than £200,000 last year.

The best-known director of Pochins is Lord Greenwood of Rossendale, who was Minister of Housing in the last Labour government from 1967 to 1970. Lord Greenwood joined Pochins in June 1971 and has since taken a number of other directorships. In January 1972 he became the pro-chancellor of Lancaster University. Taylor was duly appointed on 9 December 1972.

## Chairman

Soon afterwards he recommended Tom Taylor OBE, who is the leader of the Labour group on Blackburn Corporation as deputy pro-chancellor.

Last year Tom Taylor was chairman of the education committee at Blackburn, which decided among other things to build an extension to the Dame Evelyn Fox special school for handicapped children. At a meeting in April 1973, the committee agreed to leave the tenders for this job to a special sub-committee consisting of the chairman, Tom Taylor, and the vice-chairman.

The sub-committee recommended that the contract should go to Pochins for £130,000, and the proposal was agreed.

When Tom Taylor is not engaged in local authority affairs, he works as personnel director of another up-and-coming company called Shorrock Security Systems, which deals with burglar alarms. Taylor is keen that

Blackburn Corporation property should be safeguarded from theft and as chairman of the education committee was keen that all the schools should be fitted with new burglar alarm systems.

This was eventually rejected on grounds of expense, but tenders were requested from security firms for bringing the existing systems up to

date.

Three firms received contracts—among them Shorrock Security Systems, which was given work valued at £490. As is proper, Councillor Taylor declared an interest and played no part in the decision.

I shall be returning to other interesting aspects of Blackburn Corporation's Labour group.



## Police killers garrotted in Spanish jail

A SPANISH anarchist and a Pole, both accused of killing policemen, were executed by garrotting in Spain today, well-informed sources said in Madrid.

Salvador Puig Antich, a 26-year-old student allegedly belonging to the outlawed anarchist "Iberian Liberation Movement" was garrotted—slowly strangled—in Barcelona prison at 0950 this morning.

Polish citizen Henry Cis (25), was executed 40 minutes earlier in the same way at Tarragona jail to the south, the sources said.

The Spanish Chief of State, General Franco, did not use his prerogative to grant a reprieve.

It was the first time in 10 years that execution by garrotting had been carried out in Spain.

Puig Antich was found guilty by a military tribunal of shooting dead a policeman in Barcelona last September while being arrested in connection with a bank robbery there six months earlier.

Appeals from abroad and around Spain — notably from among leading lawyers — were sent to General Franco urging clemency.

**PROTESTS**

But the execution was carried out almost exactly 12 hours after Puig Antich was formally notified that his appeal against sentence had been quashed by the Supreme Council of Military Justice.

The sources said relatives and his lawyer were present at the execution.

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From the Leicester Mercury, 2 March.

# Marples Wrong way

I REGRET to report that a promising new partnership in the construction industry is already showing signs of strain.

Marples Ridgway, the contractors on the Loddon M4 Bridge, near Reading, which collapsed during construction in 1972 killing three men, and T Szamuely and Partners, consulting engineers on the Camden Girls School where the roof collapsed last year miraculously killing no-one, have been working together on a new sports centre project at Wycombe in Buckinghamshire.

Phase one of this £1.5 million project involves a swimming pool and a bowling alley. Just before lunch-time on Tuesday 26 February, Marples-Ridgway and its sub-contractors were putting the finishing touches to the roof of the bowling alley. It collapsed.

According to reports in the technical newspapers New Civil Engineer and Construction News little or no temporary bracing support was provided while the final alignment between the roof and its supporting columns was being made.

Said New Civil Engineer: 'It is not even clear that any bracing was used at all.'

Marples-Ridgway admitted at Bracknell Magistrates Court, while pleading guilty to breaching the Construction Safety regulations, that the structure of Loddon Bridge was insufficiently stable at the time of the collapse.

Even more interesting is that on both the Loddon and Wycombe sites Marples was using 'the lump' and is not keen to admit it.

After Loddon, Marples tried to cover up the fact that the lump was being used. After Wycombe, the firm is telling technical journalists that it had sub-contracted steelwork fabrication and erection to Hignell's (Oxford) Ltd.

True enough. But Hignell's sub-let the erection to a lump outfit.

A lot else was wrong with the Wycombe job. A painter was on the roof while it was being finished and the steel cladding for the roof was being carried out—both highly dangerous practices.

After the Loddon Bridge collapse killed three men, Marples were fined £150. This crippling punishment obviously had the desired effect.

## Figures

KATE FIGGURES was the only first-year student at Bretton Hall teachers' training college near Barnsley out of 200 to be allotted a room on her own. Kate's father is Sir Frank Figgures, chairman of the Pay Board.

HERE'S a postscript to my fury last week about the lying of the Evening News on polling day about the so-called 12.5 per cent lead for the Tories in London and the South-East and how that was all because of striking train drivers.

All through the day after polling day, as the news of a substantial swing to Labour in London came through, the Evening News switchboard was jammed with calls from outraged Tories who had not bothered to vote after reading the Evening News predictions.

There's some justice even in Fleet Street, I suppose.

## BRONCO BUSTER

TORY MP Kenneth Lewis increased his majority at Rutland and Stamford in the general election. This may have been due to the section written by his wife Jean in the 'Vote Lewis' leaflet distributed to all electors in the area.

Mrs Lewis wrote: 'You will have heard of the toilet roll shortage. People are buying up too many at a time. My husband says that some of them go to football matches, which seems to me a funny place for toilet rolls!'

'A Labour MP wants to ration them. He would, just as they wanted to ration the oil before it was necessary.'

'If we could get co-operation in industry, as any woman knows you need in the home (mind you, she is usually the one who does the co-operating!) we could produce more of everything.'

'Then prices would come down and shortages would end, including the shortage of toilet rolls.'

'That is why we need firm but fair government.'

# Morgan's organ!

OFFICE GIRLS SPAT AT BY MINERS! was the headline of a prominent front page headline in the Yorkshire Post which appeared by coincidence on the day before polling. It quoted 'a woman' (no names) saying that office workers at the Coal Board offices in Grimethorpe, Yorkshire, had been 'spat at' and 'kicked at' by pickets. It was, she said, 'absolutely disgusting.'

This was to my knowledge, the only concentrated effort to 'make something' out of the miners' pickets, and although several newspapers followed up the story, their correspondents were not a little upset at the 'evidence' which supported it. For instance, the distance between the pickets and the office girls was rather more

than 30ft—which is further than the existing world record for miner's spit.

As for the 'kicking', the correspondents also established that there are no miners in Grimethorpe with 30ft-long legs.

The Yorkshire Post article was written by Robin Morgan who happens to be a member of the high command of Yorkshire Tories. He is the press officer of Barnsley Conservative Association and was Tory candidate in the Ardsley ward of Barnsley in the 1972 council election. As an industrial correspondent, of course, he shows no political bias.



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# LETTERS



## We won, but what happens to other workers?

NOW THE STRIKE IS OVER we miners have to reflect on what we've won. We, the overall winners could be the losers.

Someone once wrote that, 'If a law was unacceptable to the majority of the people it should not be law.' But our executive in accepting the Tory version of the picketing laws have played right into the hands of the ruling class.

Gormley and Co have tried to prevent mass involvement in the strike. They tried to demoralise our membership by making this official NUM policy.

We won the 1972 strike with the flying pickets—and the rest of the trade union movement followed our example. But recently the movement has taken a grave retrograde step by accepting vicious anti-working class legislation.

We miners may have got away with it, but what about the smaller and weaker bodies of workers? If they can't picket effectively they are in for an uphill struggle.

We managed to get the Pentonville Five out of prison by mass industrial action, but why haven't we done the same for the Shrewsbury Three and Six—and God knows how many more? We have become too complacent.—**DICK HALL**, Warsop Main Colliery, Mansfield Woodhouse.

### No to Incomes Policy—under this system

I AM A member of the printworkers' union NATSOPA. Last week at a Socialist Worker meeting in Fleet Street I was a bit confused to hear one of the speakers say that the job of a socialist trade unionist is to always fight for more money, whether you are on £20 a week or £80.

Surely it should have been pointed out that the fight for more money on an individual trade union basis is the necessary trade union reaction to the anarchy of capitalism. It is not an end in itself.

Socialists are not opposed to an incomes policy. It is the capitalist incomes policy we are opposed to. A policy that attempts to limit workers' incomes for the benefit of the bosses and shareholders.

Under socialism it will be necessary to plan the overall distribution of the wealth created but this would be done democratically by the workers themselves.

Free collective bargaining is the labour leaders answer to an incomes policy under capitalism. Our answer should be different. We say that a planned economy and a workers' democracy would remove the need for periodic wage battles and the gross inequality of capitalism.

Until this is achieved of course we fight to maintain and improve our

### Watch out! Wolfe in Nats' clothing



The SNP's William Wolfe

THE SCOTTISH NATIONALIST Party Chairman William Wolfe knows all about Tory exploitation—he's been doing it himself for years. In his Shovel and Engineering Works in Burnside Road, Bathgate, is what externally looks like a derelict building. But inside this medieval shell lies a very profitable business.

His father George Wolfe started the shovel works mainly by the use of cheap, mentally retarded labour. They were easily replaceable and got little or no consideration or decent conditions. When I was apprenticed to the engineering side I was appalled with the dangerous, outmoded, unguarded machinery. The roof was partially missing, the factory had a dirt floor, a wash trough with a hand pump which when it needed heating had a hot shovel from the forge immersed in the trough.

The machinery in the factory was belt driven without guards. The workers, one of whom had lost three fingers because of this, were loyal—and frightened. They worked 80 hours a week. One of them, old Ronald, was 70 and still worked, for a reduced rate.

Miser Wolfe also had a profitable sideline. He sold claymores and shields to America. Six years ago the claymores were £30, the shields £17.

He certainly lives up to his name, preying on weaker and less fortunate people.—**IAN McADAM**, Edinburgh.

living standards on an individual trade union basis but at the same time we fight to unite our different claims, assist the weaker sections and point to the logic of a socialist system of the planning of workers' incomes.—**NORMAN BIDDLECOMBE**, London SW9.

### I voted for the Scots Nats—and you should be with us!

I AM A lifelong socialist and a building site worker, but I voted Scottish Nationalist in the election.

I take exception to Steve Jefferys' 'Tartan Tories' smear (2 March). It's a shock to find International Socialists siding with big brother against a Scottish, basically socialist minority.

Do you support General Franco against the Basque minority?

We are fed up with being governed by remote control from London by Tories—both of Heath's and Wilson's variety—even the Russian Soviet if it

### Sorry—perhaps he should join...

THE PRINTED version of my report on the Army in Hull (2 March) suggests that Dave Lewis, one of the eye-witnesses quoted, is a member of the International Socialists. In fact he is not, and I did not suggest this in the original report.—**MARTIN SHAW**, Hull.

had sat in Westminster wouldn't care a damn about Scotland.

When the SNP gets its parliament in Edinburgh it governs only until new parties are formed—when there will be a Scottish General Election.

What a chance for a fresh start! A Scottish Labour Party free of Wilson and his plastic socialists! Does anyone doubt that Scotland would return a left government?

At this election Labour polled more votes than the Tories in Scotland, in England less. All workers who want a socialist government should vote SNP. There is a trend of feeling for self-government and IS should seize the chance.—**NICKY GILL**, Isle of Arran.

### No differentials for miners

IN REPLY to M Widdop's letter (9 March) where he put the case for wage differentials underground.

He says 'Men who have done their share at the face—men above the age of 50 who only plod on at the face for the extra money will have lost the incentive so they will be content to sit back a bit'.

As socialists we should be putting the case for no differentials. One wage underground has become a realistic aim.

At a time when the number of jobs in the faces are becoming fewer and the dust is increasing no man should be asked to work at the face continuously for years. Older men who have spent 20 to 30 years in the pits should not have to plod on for the sake of face workers' wages.

One wage underground would mean the older disabled men would have the easier and dust free jobs without loss of pay. The most hazardous jobs could be rotated, this would create greater unity for the struggles ahead.—**K ANDERSON**, Dunfermline.

### Finding a hold down under

I FIRST saw a copy of Socialist Worker a few months ago. As editor of my union's journal I take an active interest in any paper that sets out to tell the workers' side of any dispute. One of our members found a copy of the paper in the hold of a British ship and handed it to me.

I liked what I read and whilst in Britain recently I bought a copy off one of your sellers outside Cardiff market. I have never been a member of a socialist organisation (I don't count the Labour Party as Socialist) before, but feel it's time to try and push the socialist cause further. I will try and write for the paper later on. However my union activities keep me busy most of the time.

Over here we have been fighting low wage ships, also French nuclear testing in the Pacific.—**GERALD EVANS**, Auckland Waterside Union, New Zealand.

A LONG ROAD THAT HAS NO BABY SITTER . . . There are still attitudes to be changed in our own camp if it is true that 'women members of IS could leave their children with husbands or friends for one day (but) it proved too difficult to stay overnight' (2 March). What socialist husband or lover would be faced with such a difficulty? 'Real social, political and economic equality for women'—to quote your paper again—has a long way to go!—**LINDA PLUMMER**, Beckenham.

DEBORAH MOORE (2 March) is annoyed that her school friends 'supposedly intelligent' . . . 'can be so blind as not to see social injustice in Britain today'. I was part of the working class minority at grammar school and surrounded by injustice—socialism came second nature to me. Most of my schoolmates were blinded by their relatively privileged backgrounds and education from seeing (let alone understanding) the true nature of the world around them . . . They are taught that someone who condemns capitalism as a whole because of its violence, poverty and hunger has an 'unbalanced' view, and may even have been 'brainwashed'.

If all teenagers went to the same kind of school, middle class children would be less likely to get a superior attitude . . . It would be harder to persuade working class kids that they are stupid and inferior. A more favourable arena would be created in which we could build that great crowd of teenagers who would form our socialist youth movement. But, let's hope that Deborah and her friends are going to make a start right now, and not wait till then.—**TONY WILD**, Gateshead.

A SIMPLIFIED MODE OF EXPRESSION . . . You should list cabinet ministers, union officials etc and tell us more about them and their jobs . . . More on the slums that people live in, and old folk . . . Most people realise that they are being exploited but are totally ignorant as to what they can do about it. Talk in simple language, loud and clear.—**LYNNE**, Doncaster.

REPENT YE! (AND REJOIN) . . . Congratulations on your excellent socialist paper—it's an invaluable aid. I used to be a member of IS, but left because I felt it was student dominated at that time . . . Times have changed! People I know who used to treat Socialist Worker sceptically now take it regularly and find it stimulating and refreshing . . . Thanks to your paper and the national progress of IS I feel ready to make a positive commitment to socialism again. Your paper can certainly help other people regain their confidence in socialism.—**DAVID HOW**, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester.

PC GIVES PAPER WARM RECEPTION! . . . While selling Socialist Worker I was told by a constable 'this is the strong arm of the law telling you to move, unless you want to be locked up in two minutes.' You can have 'freedom of speech' so long as you aren't being effective. If the paper's effectiveness can be measured in terms of harassment of paper sellers we are doing well.—**CHRIS PORSZ**, Sheffield.

IF IT'S PLUSH, IT BETTER BE PINK PLUSH . . . Recent Socialist Workers have been excellent . . . There is no doubt that if the Labour Party had concentrated on exposing the corrupt and crooked men at the head of the Tory (and Liberal) Party and had put socialist policies like IS and the paper have the Tories could have been massacred at the polls. As it is Jenkins, Healey and Prentice sitting in the plush seats of office don't inspire much confidence or enthusiasm. The only virtue is that the Tory gang was a bloody sight worse . . .—**COLIN WRIGHT**, Tunbridge Wells.

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Picture: Chris Davies (Report)

# Millions in poverty

ONE family in every five in Britain today has a weekly income of less than £30.

And they are worse off than families in a similar income group before the last war.

These are the shock conclusions of a report produced by the City Poverty Committee. The report was sent to the three major political parties during the election campaign—but its findings were largely ignored.

That is not such a bad thing. For now that we have a Labour government, the report's findings should be on the desk of every new minister—especially those who call themselves socialists.

The report, written by George Clark, a tireless campaigner against social injustice, explodes the myth of the 'affluent society'.

There are 18,187,000 families in Britain. 3,819,300—21 per cent—had a weekly income

of less than £30 a week in 1972. 6,911,000—38 per cent—earned less than £40. These figures will scarcely have changed since then as galloping inflation has wiped out most wage increases.

The figures are way below the 'average' weekly income of £42.85 in 1972. In compiling its figures, the report shows just how misleading are these government 'averages' which conceal hardline poverty in many city areas.

## Discovered

For example, a survey by the Greater London Council among 1000 families in the Golborne Ward of North Kensington in 1972 discovered that the average family income was £23.22 a week *net* compared with the Family Expenditure Survey average for the whole GLC area of £39.50 a week *gross*.

This vast difference cannot be explained

away just by net and gross pay. Some families in the Golborne Ward were as much as £25 a week worse off than similar families in the whole GLC area.

George Clark then compared the weekly expenditure of the 21 per cent with less than £30 with similar working-class families in 1937-38, at 1938 equivalent purchasing power. (The 1938 £1 is now worth 18½p.)

Today's families are spending more on housing. That is no surprise, considering the greedy scramble for land that has pushed up prices, interest rates, rents and mortgages.

The real shock comes in the revelation that today's poor families are spending *less* on food, *less* on clothing and about the *same* on fuel, including light and power.

Even today's under-£40 families are only just holding their own in comparison with families in 1938.

As Mr Clark points out, the fact that poor

families are now spending less on food is a frightening comment on the modern welfare state's failure to cope with real hard-core poverty.

Less food means less healthy children and parents—a separate table on education shows that in areas of desperate poverty schools suffer a higher level of absenteeism, lateness and time off through sickness.

George Clark's report, which must be required reading throughout the trade union movement, points a finger of scorn at all the empty breast-beating by politicians about affluence and 'you've never had it so good'.

Clearly, a fifth of all families have never had it so *bad*. It is a savage comment on a civilised society.

Only massive inroads into the power of the wealthy can begin to change this appalling situation.

Over to you, Mr Wilson...

## QUARTER OF ALL HOUSES ARE UNFIT

### Slums: the twilight world...



TED HEATH, evicted from 10 Downing Street, is not the only one with a housing problem.

And at least he can go and live on his yacht if things get really difficult.

But for millions in Britain today, the housing situation is no joking matter.

According to George Clark's report, 'In the twilight areas of the major cities housing conditions are so bad that they make normal family life almost impossible.'

In 1971 just over a quarter of all houses—25.69 per cent—were declared unfit. The situation has certainly got worse since then.

Few local authorities believe they can bring unfit houses up to the required level and keep pace with demands for new housing.

Three areas spotlight the terrible problem:

**WEST MIDLANDS:** an unpublished report by the Department of the Environment in March 1973 estimated that there would be about 100,000 fewer homes than families in Birmingham alone by the turn of the century. The overall shortage in the region would be about 130,000.

### Demand

About 75,000 unfit houses will need to be cleared between 1981 and the end of the century—involving a net loss of about 50,000 houses.

The total demand for accommodation throughout the West Midlands area in the next 25 years is expected to involve more than ¼ million households. Three out of 10 families at least will not have their needs satisfied.

**GREATER LONDON:** the GLC estimates that the demand for accommodation that cannot be satisfied in 1975 is likely to be about 365,000 families—and the number will probably rise rather than decrease.

**EDINBURGH:** More than a fifth of all families lack either a hot water supply or a fixed bath or an inside lavatory.

But these figures compare favourably with Glasgow where the proportion is more than a third. In Edinburgh the total number of houses lacking these amenities is 25,000 or 15 per cent of the total stock.

The nature of the problem can be seen in the condition of 25 homeless families, including more than 100 children, who were housed in 1972 in a terrace of houses abandoned by the army 10 years before as 'unfit for habitation'.

## TWO MILLION JOBLESS BY END OF 70s?

*JOBLESS figures as high as the 1920s and 1930s—you find that hard to believe?*

The City Poverty report shows that it is the grim truth.

Again, official government 'averages' conceal the pockets of high unemployment. Looking at the 1971 census figures, George Clark, has discovered unemployment rates of 22 per cent in Paisley, 17 per cent in the Vauxhall area of Liverpool and 14 per cent in Cumberland.

The reason is the decline of manufacturing industry in particular parts of the country. This leaves behind pockets of high unemployment, surrounded and masked by areas where the problem hardly exists.

In London, for example, although the jobless rate is comparatively low, areas such as Kensington, Woolwich and the East End have sharply rising unemployment levels.

### AVERAGE

George Clark expects his findings, based on 1971 figures, to be confirmed by a report to be published this month by Community Development Projects.

He estimates, using post-war levels of unemployment, that hard-core jobless figures could reach between 1½ and two million by the end of the 1970s.

Worst affected are young people between 15 and 19 years. The number of youngsters in this age group makes up about 9 per cent of the 'active population'.

But an average of 13 per cent were unemployed throughout Britain. In Scotland it was worse with 14 per cent while Merseyside had the

Whatever Happened to the Welfare State? by George Clark, City Poverty Committee, 44 Earham Street, London WC2, 01-240 2640. Price 40p.

incredible level of 17.5 per cent. Allowing for sickness and school leavers searching for work, the report estimates that 5 per cent of young people between 15 and 19 are permanently deprived of the right to work. As George Clark says: 'It is an outrage to all notions of social justice that our younger generation should be consigned to years of wastage in an advanced industrial society.'

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# WHY BIGGER MEANS WORSE...

'EVERYONE KNOWS that there is no solution to the problems of this country unless we increase production.'

Pretty well any politician, Tory or Labour, could have said it and a great many have.

This particular statement was made by Harold Wilson 12 years ago. And two years later, just before the 1964 election campaign, he added, 'The argument will be this: can the Conservatives or Labour best galvanise our sluggish and fitful economy into steady and purposive expansion?'

The Labour Party came to power. Increased production duly occurred. Between 1960 and 1970 industrial output increased by more than 30 per cent. No doubt a similar increase would have happened had the Tories stayed in power.

'The problems of this country were evidently not solved. They have got worse.'

The fanatical exponents of economic growth, as the key to the solution of all our ills, say that the trouble is that British economic growth was too slow. 30 per cent was not enough. If we had 50 per cent or 70 per cent, all would be well.



Japanese police on rampage: economic growth has sharpened conflict

All the means of forming opinion, television, newspapers, schools and colleges take it for granted. It is one of the most widespread myths of our time.

And it seems so plausible. After all, if the output of bread and beer and houses is very low, then many people will go short. True, but the opposite is not true.

A few weeks ago a Californian millionaire gave away parcels of free food in the hope of getting his daughter freed by kidnappers.

The result? Food riots. The distribution had to be stopped and well-armed police brought in to 'restore order'.

Now this might not have been so surprising in Calcutta. But California? The USA is by far the richest country in the world as measured by total output divided by number of people.

## Fear

California is easily the richest state in the USA by the same measure. And yet there are many people in California so poor that they will riot, rather than queue, for fear of being left out of a distribution of free food.

Some years ago an American economist pointed out that in the world's richest country millions of families 'continued to live in a primitive and anonymous squalor not surpassed in any country west

of Turkey.' Why does such poverty exist—and grow—in the midst of plenty?

Oddly enough Harold Wilson used to have some glimmering of an understanding of why. Speaking in parliament in 1960 he said: 'In any period of economic expansion, there is a law of increasing returns to the rich; of an increased proportion of newly produced wealth accruing to the owners of property, whether in shares or in land.'

## Desire

That being so, and there is no doubt at all that it is so, why not tax the rich to fleece them of their ill-gotten gains and redistribute income to the poor by improved social services? Of course this is what reformist politicians are always promising to do.

In 1959 Wilson spoke of 'the burning desire amongst Labour Party members at all levels to end poverty and to advance... to a much more real equality. The theme of all the campaign speeches... has been... fairer shares in expanding prosperity...'

'Given a Labour victory, the test will be this: will there be, 12 months from now, a narrowing of the gap between rich and poor... The answer is, quite simply, that there will.'

Somehow or other it didn't happen. The gap between the rich and the poor has got wider. Social services, which could be afforded when output was much lower, are now too expensive. Free school milk is an example.

The reason is not hard to understand. Make increased output your central aim and you must go for increased investment as top priority.

## Reduce

Investment, under capitalism, comes out of profits. Therefore increased profits must be the goal.

But profits go to the rich and, if they are taxed too heavily, the rich will 'lack incentives' to invest. So the well-intentioned schemes to reduce inequality and help the poor always have to take second place.

Attempting to reduce inequality by increasing output under capitalism is like trying to quench your thirst by drinking salt water.

The way to abolish poverty and inequality is, quite simply, to take industry out of the hands of the rich and plan production for use instead of for profit.

But that is socialism and our 'Labour' politicians flee from it as the Devil is said to flee from holy water.

## Slump

Would it? Look at the world-beater in the increased production stakes, Japan. The Japanese economy grew between 1960 and 1970 at the fantastic rate of more than 14 per cent each year.

No other country came anywhere near this rate. If increased output was the answer, Japan would be the promised land.

In fact Japan has the highest rate of inflation of any major industrial country—double the rate we had last year—and faces the biggest slump this year.

It has the worst pollution problems, the worst public services, great and growing social inequality and all the evils we suffer from but to a heightened degree.

If Britain and the other countries had in fact reached the Japanese rate of economic growth then inflation would have really gone through the roof and the world economy would have already collapsed into a big slump.

Working people would be worse off than they are now.

Many readers, no doubt, will find this hard to believe. The idea that more output equals more for everyone and less conflict and less poverty is deeply ingrained.

# Sit in

## 1½ hours notice

'WE WILL NOT be leaving until we get what we want. They have taken our self respect by taking our jobs away and we want it back,' said Mick Marshall, secretary of the works committee at Strachan's Engineering as he screwed in the new locks on the factory door at 4.30pm on Friday.

The previous week, management at Strachans of Eastleigh, near Southampton, had given the stewards 1½ hours' notice of the closure of the plant.

A 24-hour picket was immediately set up to keep all the plant and materials in the factory. The works committee who were in negotiations in the factory called the picket in through a fire door which they had left open. The plant was occupied.

The sit-in is supported by an overwhelming majority of the manual workers. The five unions involved are the TGWU, Sheet Metal Workers, AUEW, ASTMS and EPTU. They are all treating the dispute as a lock out.

Management claims that the closure was due to poor workmanship, union lack of co-operation and the three-day week. The facts tell a different story.

## Extensive

The factory produces van bodies for Ford. It is only a year old and production is still at the development stage. Four vans are completed daily. The management's target is 16-22 per day.

The works committee has compiled an extensive catalogue of managerial incompetence. The jigs and fixtures are too few and incorrectly modified and it's a similar story with most of the tools in the factory.

For instance the workers are supposed to work installing four fuel tanks simultaneously with only one jack. None of the unskilled workers has had any proper training.

But they were constantly being blamed for bad work and accused of being work-shy and incompetent.

## Total

At no stage have senior management shown any interest in ironing out production faults. Their attitude has been to get vehicles through the door at all costs.

It took the union representative months to obtain even a roof to the canteen or a satisfactory fire drill or first aid room.

Since the factory opened the unions have co-operated all along even to the extent of allowing almost total flexibility of labour.

Matters came to a head when, during the discussions on the guaranteed working week, management insisted that the factory would have to close if a national agreement was honoured.

Although the factory is still in the development stage the management is claiming a

closure

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lock the ga



Convener Pat Doyle

£50,000 loss per month. But Giltspur Investments, the parent company, has also closed the profitable Strachans Coach-building plant nearby at Hamble making 400 men redundant. Hamble workers are picketing the plant which has been making coaches for the past 30 years or more.

Only nine months ago Giltspur Investments were feeding shareholders' appetites with an enthusiastic build up of the new Eastleigh plant.

Some £1.5 million was being ploughed into the project and investors were left in little doubt about the benefits that would flow once the factory was in full operation.

## Shutdown

The first hint that all was not well as Eastleigh came in Giltspur's interim report in December. But the problem then was difficulty in obtaining labour.

When the shutdown came it was delivered with the ruthless-

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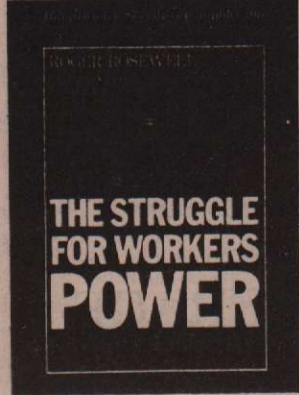
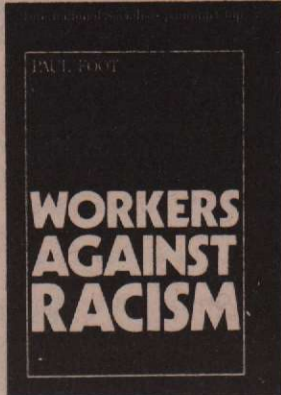
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Story: John



Roger Rosewell's THE STRUGGLE FOR WORKERS' POWER is an outline of the policies of the International Socialists, the development and nature of modern capitalism—and the urgent need for a workers' party to overthrow it.

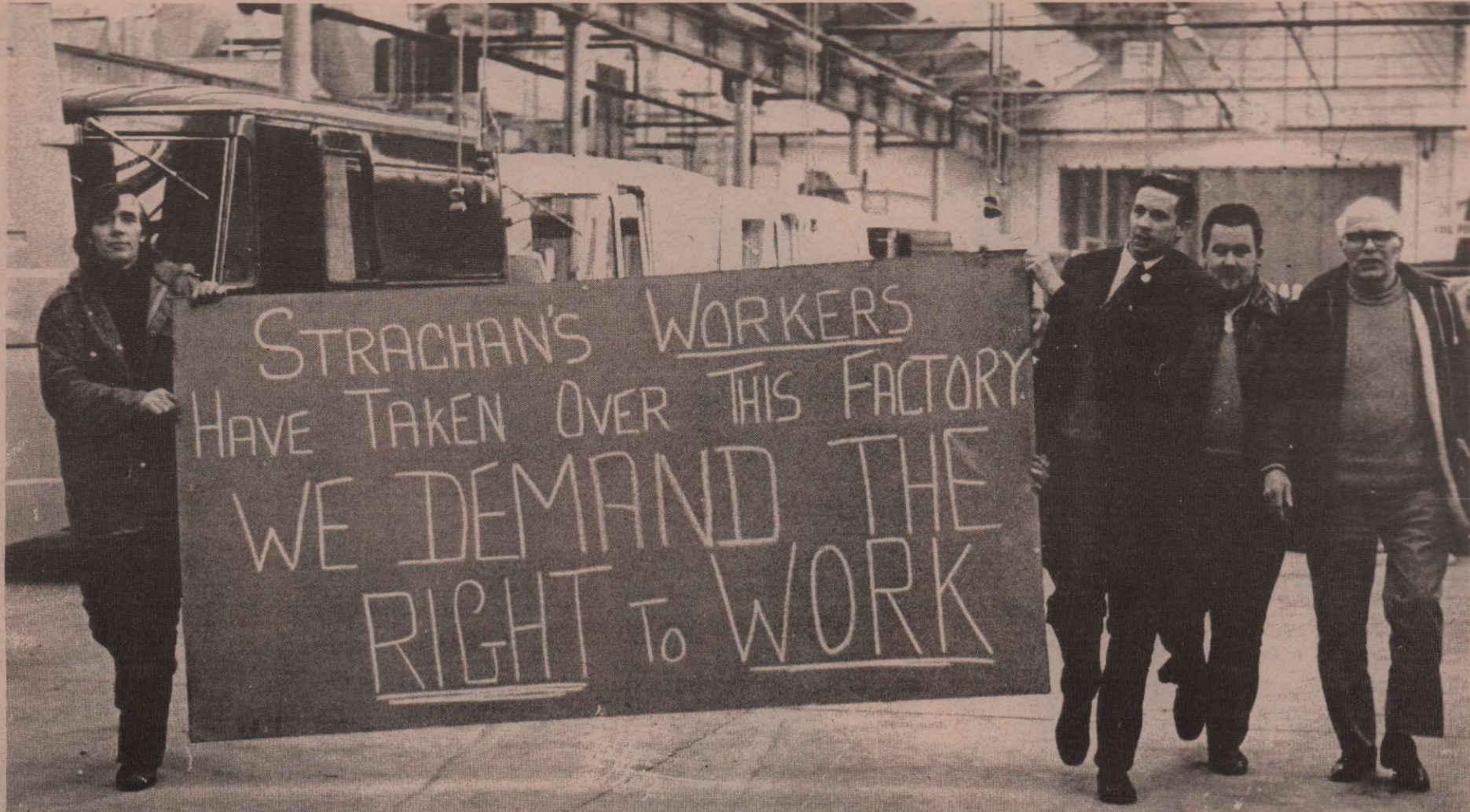
Paul Foot's WORKERS AGAINST RACISM examines and demolishes all the racists' arguments. Today, when socialists need to be ever more prepared to combat the increasing racism that is riding on the Tories' tide of laws against immigrants, it is essential reading for every socialist militant.

10p each, plus 3p postage (10 or more copies post free) from IS BOOKS, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

Duncan Hallas



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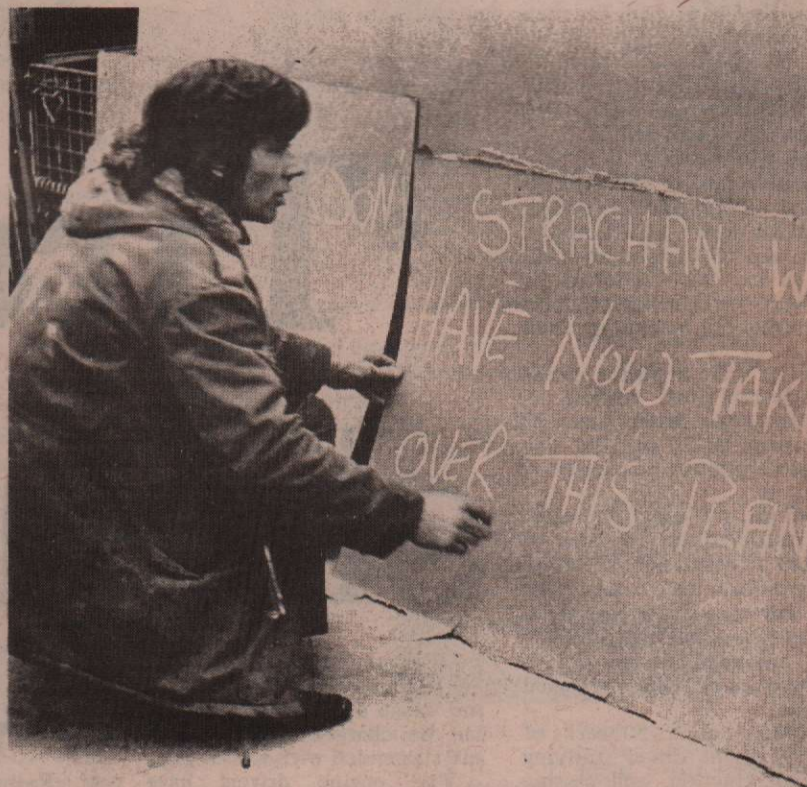
Plain as a pikestaff: Strachan's workers' determination is spelt out



Shop steward Mike Marshall



Joe Ninayadlo



Pat Doyle prepares new placards to ram home their case

typical of a firm Maxwell Joseph, richest men. a fast moving any that has got transport firms, property interests. flow of revenue with a stake in chain of betting

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concentration on rather than any act has served the well. Profits last from £1.8 million. This year they do even better. doubt about the workers' determination heard on Friday the management locks from the and barricading moved swiftly. racted this by own locks and side,' said works

**The bosses have to ask us if they want to get on the site**

convenor Pat Doyle, a member of the Transport Union. 'Management now have to come to us before they can get on the site.' Not a nut or bolt has been allowed to leave the factory by the workers. They are holding inside the plant around 60 vehicle chassis, 100 vans and something like three months' stock of steel.

Stewards at the Ford plant

at Southampton and Langley have already shown their solidarity with the Strachan's workers. Strachans were making bodies for a new Ford van. The Ford stewards have pledged that if bodies are delivered from an alternative supplier they will be blocked.

**Discussions**

While the management would like to settle the issue in discussions with union officials, they are faced with the determination of the rank and file workers.

'We are going to stick right to the end. No messing. We're right behind the stewards,' maintained Joe Ninayadlo, one of the occupiers.

Both jobs and trade union organisation are under attack at Eastleigh. As inflation rises to record levels, a growing number of company bosses are looking hard at their balance sheets.

If they can make more money by throwing up empty office

blocks in the big cities rather than running a factory they are unlikely to be sentimental about workers' livelihoods.

Weakened by the effect of the three day week and high interest rates, many companies are likely to react in exactly the same way as Giltspur Investments at Eastleigh and Hamble. Only if they are guaranteed huge profits are they prepared to continue employment.

**Fight**

For that reason the fight of the Strachans workers is a vital one for all workers in the struggles they will face in the months ahead.

The Tories have been beaten. But the attacks on workers' jobs and union organisation continues and is likely to intensify.

Messages of support to Pat Doyle, works committee convenor, Strachan's Engineering, Chickenhall Lane, Eastleigh, Hants.

New Updated Edition Available from IS BOOKS 265 Seven Sisters Road London N4 3p each, 6p inc. post 10 or more post free

**KNOW YOUR RIGHTS**

**Social Security for Strikers**



a Socialist Worker pamphlet

Dennis Pictures: Chris Davies

(Report)

# The strain and frustration of the engine drivers

DOES YOUR SON want to be an engine driver when he grows up?

In the old days, romantic lads longed to be put in charge of an engine. Now the job offers nothing but strain, insult, bad conditions and low pay.

Tony West is 33. He started on the railways in 1955 as a fireman on steam engines.

That year, everyone on the railways was pessimistic. The huge switch of traffic, freight and passenger, to the roads, masterminded by the oil and car companies, meant a rundown in the railways.

The railwaymen and the unions accepted mass sackings in 1954 and 1955. In 1957, with the introduction of dieselisation, another 10,000 railwaymen were sacked. 'Just accept it and wait,' was the advice, once again. 'There'll be a good job at the end of it all.'

In the early 1960s came Dr Beeching, an industrialist from ICI, determined to cut down the railways still further in the interests of his friends in the British Road Federation.

## 'Better things'

30,000 more railwaymen were thrown out of work. The engine drivers suffered as badly as all the other grades.

In 1957, The Diesel and Electric Manning Agreement agreed single manning in most circumstances on diesel engines, electric engines and multiple unit trains.

In 1965, the drivers agreed to be left on their own on long-distance trains and loosely-coupled trains.

In 1968, after much prompting by the Labour government, the drivers agreed to single manning during night hours.

When Tony West joined the railways, there were 60,000 members of his union, the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen. Today, there are 28,000, less than half.

'All my life they've told us to hang on and wait for better things. Now they tell us they need the railways. But the "better things" still aren't there for us. They still tell us, "not enough money in the kitty".'

Tony is secretary of the ASLEF departmental committee at British Rail's Stratford depot, East London, where there are 650 footplate staff, more than in any other depot in the country. Every year, he says, there is more evidence of the increasing strain on drivers.

'We have to drive at faster speeds and keep better time. Almost all passenger trains go faster than 70 mph, and some go 90 or 100. The freight trains are much heavier now, too.'

'At Stratford, we've got 28 engine drivers on restricted duty because of heart trouble or other signs of strain which they didn't have when they joined the railways. Twelve of them are suffering from "colour vision"—a form of colour-blindness. That's probably the work of the new-fangled signal system.'

Tony has spent about 20 weeks of his life as an engine driver studying new forms of traction, and passing examinations in them. In Stratford, he says, there are 16 different forms of traction.

'The literature they give us about all these systems weighs 44 lbs—and

we're meant to understand it all. If I fail to correct a fault in my engine and cause a delay to other trains, I can be charged with "irregularity" and suspended with loss of pay.'

The engine drivers have not received a penny extra for all these additional responsibilities. In June 1972, the union leaders accepted a small wage increase, solely on the understanding that the British

Railways Board would immediately discuss a new and fairer wage structure for footplatemen.

Twenty months later, the Board has made its final offer. The only straight increase offered to train

drivers for extra responsibilities is £1.50 a week.

After tax and the loss of benefits (school meals, rent rebates and so on), this increase dwindles to a few pennies. ASLEF say it is nothing like enough.

The board also offered consolidation of all mileage allowance payments up to 200 miles into a basic increase of £2.45 a week for all drivers.

The drivers are delighted to see the end of the complicated and discriminatory allowance system over short distances, but they argue that the limit of 200 miles is too high. It involves big losses for the long-mileage men, and they want it reduced to 125 miles.

Above all, most drivers stress that this 'consolidation' will not bring an increase in their average pay. Some drivers will get a few pennies more, some a few pennies less. Overall, the increase in money paid out in mileage allowances by the board is a miserable 4½ per cent.

## Rejected

The board wants the allowance paid after two years. The union want their 10 per cent right away.

Finally, the board offers a 'shift allowance, which discriminates between drivers according to how 'flexible' they make themselves in the interests of British Rail.

If a man makes himself available for rotating shifts over 24 hours of any day, he gets 6 per cent extra on his basic pay. If he is available for

20 hours of any day, he gets 5 per cent. Other men get 4 per cent.

This has been firmly rejected by ASLEF, who complain that it hits hard at the men who are confined to shed for health reasons. They want a flat-rate 10 per cent 'shift allowance' increase for all drivers.

## Strength

The ASLEF demands are progressive. They aim to help the less healthy and older drivers, and to cut out differentials.

They are NOT intended to get more for drivers at the expense of other grades of railwaymen. The drivers argue—and their case is overwhelming—that the payments offered to the drivers are pitiful, and cannot be accepted.

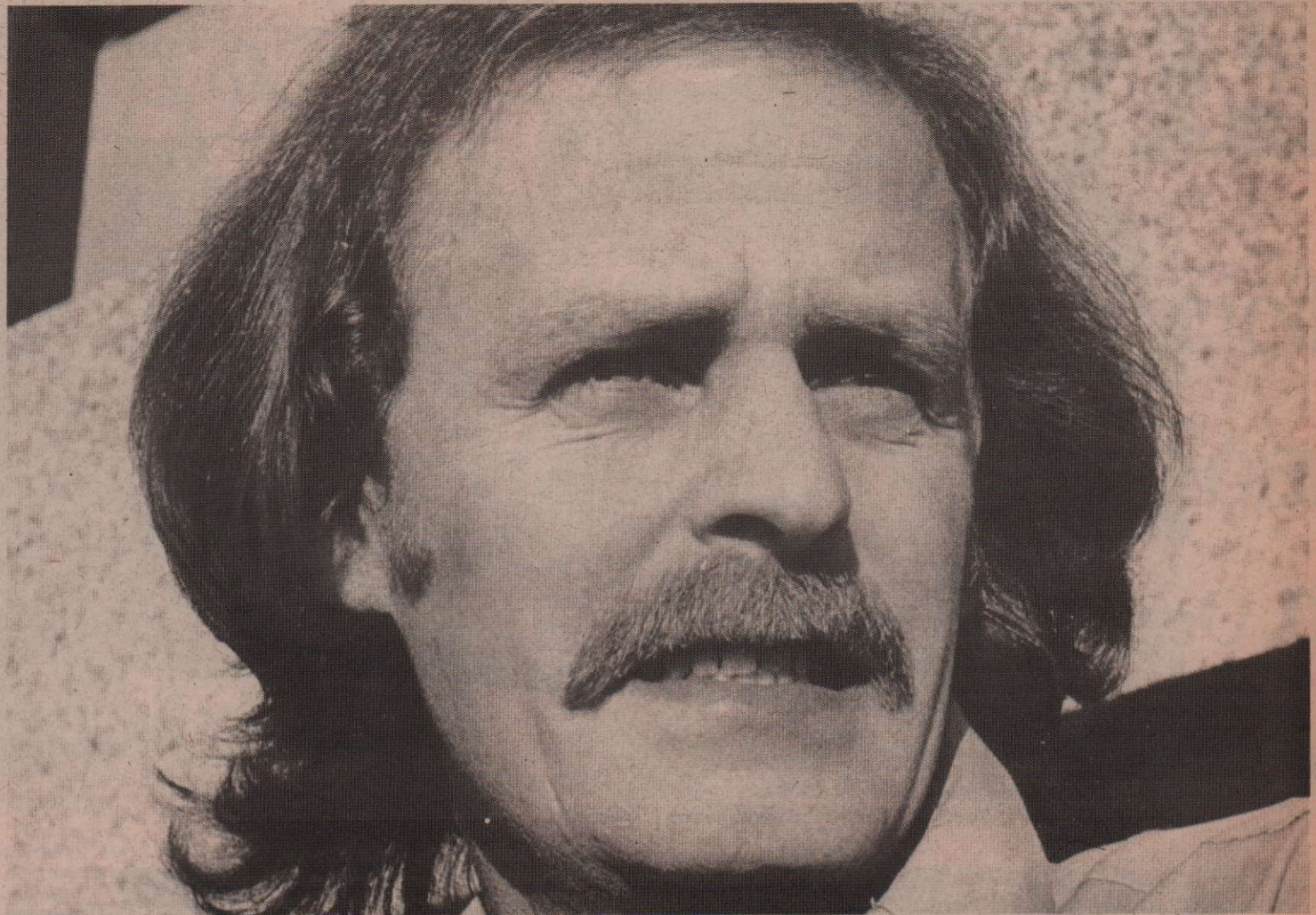
If that means increasing the total offer for all grades, then that is what the board should do.

The train drivers have had enough waiting and enough promises. All his working life, Tony West and men like him have been told to tighten their belts and prepare for a new dawn.

Up to now, they have conceded enormous savings to the Railways Board in redundancies and increased productivity.

Now, like the miners, they are beginning to recognise their own strength and make a stand.

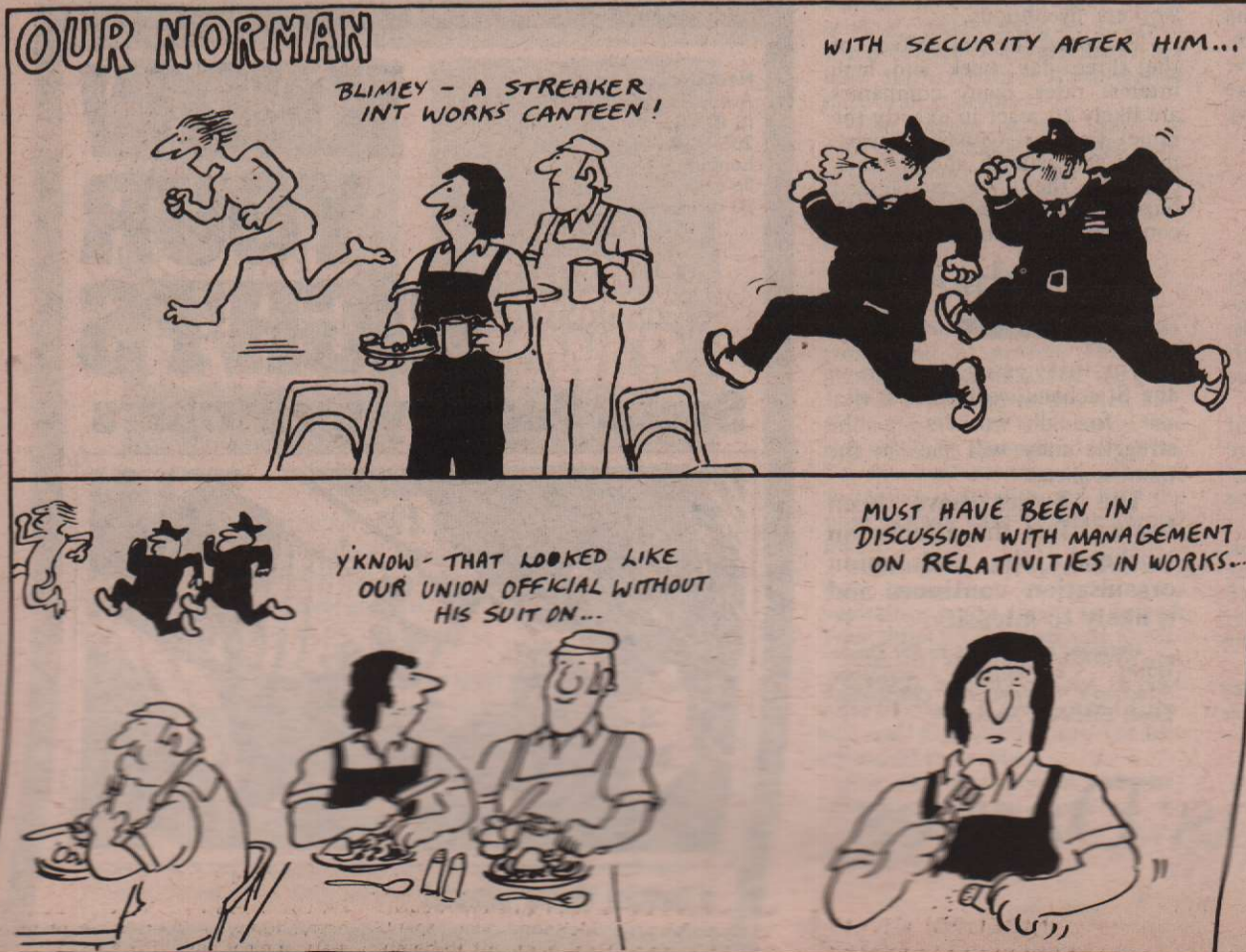
All other railwaymen, if they want to protect themselves from continued robbery and bullying, have to stand alongside the engine drivers, and demand the same.



Tony West: still waiting for 'better things'. Picture: Chris Davies (Report)

# 'Tired of being shunted around'

Report by  
**PAUL FOOT**



The Rail Board offer would mean a pay cut for some

# The Krays: Independent businessmen...

RONALD AND REGINALD KRAY were not a new phenomena. London's East End has a long history of gangs and gang warfare. The novelty of their activity, was and the interest in John Pearson's book is, the unbounded ambition of the twins and their desire for the limelight and the company of the 'great' and near great. Organising a 'cutting' for a friend or travelling to Nigeria to discuss leading a mercenary force were all part of the full life they sought after.

No task was too small for their attention, so long as it set well within their image of themselves as masters of crime. An image gathered from their knowledge of American gangster films and trashy paperbacks.

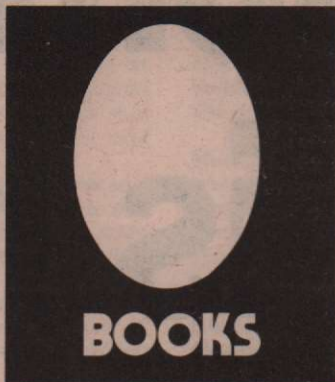
An example: Jack the Hat, McVitie owed Ronnie Kray £100 accepted in part payment for a killing he had no intention of carrying out. He was lured to the Stoke Newington flat of an acquaintance on the pretext of a booze up.

## Stabbed

John Pearson tells what followed: "Then it was Ronnie who grabbed him, locking his arms behind him, and Reggie who was holding Bender's carving knife . . . "Kill him Reg. Do him," hissed his brother, "Don't stop now!" . . . Reggie pushed the knife into his face below the eye. The butchering followed . . . Reggie stabbed his stomach and his chest and finished by impaling him through his throat on to the floor."

Jack the Hat's corpse was disposed of and the Krays went on their merry way, unmolested by the law. As unmolested as they had been several years earlier when Ronnie

*The Profession of Violence by John Pearson. Panther 50p.*



Kray had walked into a Whitechapel pub and shot a member of a rival gang, George Cornell, dead.

Ronnie frequently recalled the experience of killing Cornell for the edification of his cronies, he recounted: 'the look of blank surprise on Cornell's face and how his head burst open as the bullet entered.'

According to Pearson half of Whitechapel knew the culprit. The police however were strangely unsuccessful in bringing Ronnie Kray to book.

But murder was not the main business of the Krays, merely the gilt on the gingerbread. The gingerbread itself was a lucrative mixture of protection rackets, gambling, large scale fraud, crooked share deals, blackmail and organised intimidation. At the time of their arrest they were negotiating a deal with the American Mafia to get into drugs and prostitution in a big way.

The Kray brothers' rise to criminal eminence cannot be explained by reference to their brains. Working together they would have had difficulty in passing the entrance exam to a school for the educationally sub-normal. Ronnie Kray, in fact had been certified insane. Both display all the classic symptoms of the psychopath.

How then did they manage to achieve success in their chosen field of endeavour?

The East London tradition is one based in poverty and neglect over 100 years, of petty crime, gang warfare and neighbourhood violence. Poverty and deprivation in a prosperous commercial centre are the ingredients for crime of an elemental and brutal variety.

This may explain the circumstances that made their enthusiastic jump into crime possible, even likely. It does not explain how they managed to carry out their many and conspicuous antics for 15 years.

It is impossible to read the career of the Krays, without coming to the conclusion that thousands of East Enders accept without question. The police were on the payroll. No other explanation can explain how the public beatings, cuttings, stabbings, killings and other notorious mayhem could go undetected.

## Nutty

The break only came when Ronnie Kray, reaching a pinnacle of persecution mania, decided that one of his lieutenants was plotting his downfall and needed killing. Not unreasonably the henchman decided that he had better have the Krays put away before they put him away, six foot under. Even a nutty Napoleon of Shoreditch crime cannot keep all the police sweetened.

The Kray brothers were not grandiose masterminds of crime, nor were they pathetic victims of the system. They were more akin to the independent man of business, with this difference. They extracted their tribute and never paid their bills. Their lack of brains was replaced by a willingness to go to the limit without thought of the consequences or the pain to others.

Ronnie lived alone compiling death lists of those who had wronged him, in fact or in his imagination, he rallied forth on occasion to beat and maim. At one stage in his daydream of becoming a Czar of crime on the American model, he offered his



Going for a walk down East: the terrible twins, Reggie and Ronald Kray

services to the port employers to deal with militant dockers. The turn-down bitterly disappointed him.

His brother Reggie, equally vicious—if not quite as insane, spent long periods weeping copiously at his wife's grave. His wife committed suicide because she hated Reggie but could not avoid him. There is no pathos in this except for the

unfortunate wife.

Their downfall came not for their crimes but from Ronnie's insanity, and their unbounded ambition to emulate the Hollywood hoodlums. A little less public violence, a tiny bit more brain and they would be free and with us today. Their latter day counterparts probably are.

JIM HIGGINS

## PREVIEW

\* Transmission time unknown at time of going to press.

While being interviewed by Socialist Worker, Johnny Speight, writer of *Till Death Us Do Part* claimed that the BBC didn't censor his work—and that he knew of no examples of them doing so. He said that the field was open to anyone who could come out with a new idea in a comedy series.

Perhaps this is true. And perhaps it's true of ITV as well. In which case, God help us all. It would be comforting to know that there were some good comedy programmes being kept from us, because very few good series ever make it to the screen.

These bitter words were sparked by seeing a hand-out for a new Friday night ITV series from London Weekend—NOT ON YOUR NELLIE (the heroine is called Nellie—get it? Ho Ho) 8.30pm. Which may of course turn out to be a hilarious jape-packed half hour which has us all rolling in our front rooms. It features 'a buxom barmaid', 'the local window cleaner', 'Gilbert and George' gay owners of a local boutique and 'Ali, the friendly guard on the underground', and 'a smooth talking local property developer'. If there is any sign of the series getting past anti-women jokes about bosoms, anti-homosexual jokes, anti-black jokes into anti-property developer jokes then that will be progress of a kind . . .

SATURDAY: BBC-2. Second House is about THE ARTIST AND POLITICAL CENSORSHIP\*. If you live in the Midlands and get ATV then the late night movie at 10.30pm, is BLOW UP, made in 1967 and very good indeed. It was sold as part of 'Swinging London'—but don't be put off.

SUNDAY: The Bedtime Story on BBC-2 is THE SLEEPING BEAUTY\* by Julian Bond. On BBC-1 at 8.10pm is THE DEEP BLUE SEA by Terence Ratigan. A boring old 1950s play about an RAF pilot who isn't what he seems. Appropriately enough it stars Virginia McKenna who spent the 1950s seeing RAF pilots off to bomb

Germany in British war films. The 1970s are bad enough without going back to the 1950s. Franz Kafka was a Czech writer whose works give a horrifying and accurate picture of the rise of bureaucracies, arrests in the night and isolated terror. His novel THE CASTLE is dramatised on Omnibus at 10.15pm and is at the same time the story of Kafka.

Richard Crossman talks to Jack Jones of the Transport Union on CROSSTALK\* on BBC-1. Charles Wood's DEATH OR GLORY BOY continues on ITV\*. On RADIO-3 at 7.30pm is a play called THE LATTER DAYS OF LUCY TRENCHARD about a woman who is 'the embodiment of capitalism'—they say.

MONDAY: BBC-2, 10.15pm. The Second City Firsts play is MATCH OF THE DAY about Chance O'Leary who meets Jean-Ann 'who has a reputation of being a pot-smoker and Women's Libber as well as a keen Everton fan. He thinks his luck is in.' The play is written by, and stars, Neville Smith, who is bloody good at both trades and funny with it.

Clapperboard on ITV at 4.20pm is THE £10,000,000 MOVIE and is about the two pioneers of the American cinema, Cecil B De Mille and D W Griffiths. It features clips from the epic Intolerance (1917).

WEDNESDAY: RADIO-3, 2.15pm. TROOPS IN IRELAND—THE CURRAGH MUTINITY, 'is still used to illustrate the Marxist argument that troops are agents of the ruling class' says the hand-out. Quite rightly too. The Mutinity was over 60 British officers who chose dismissal rather than operating in Northern Ireland—and carrying out the Home Rule policy. The programme is done by a Tory. The issue is still very much alive.

THURSDAY: BBC-1. The Thursday Play is Penda's Fen, by a good writer, David Rudkin, about a boy growing up.

FRIDAY: BBC-2. W. C. Fields, mean, nasty, funny. A short series of his films starts tonight with IT'S A GIET\*.

## Once in a lifetime

WIND BLOWS across the beach, the girl stands, silhouetted against the skyline, the waves wash across the sand. A car stops. 'Do you speak English?' she asks hesitantly.

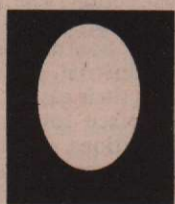
He half smiles, 'I am English.' She climbs in, on and on they drive, through the wind and the rain, across beaches, along those funny little roads of Northern France.

They find they have things in common, laugh, smoke a cigar. The car stops, they kiss, she smiles as she sits in the little wayside cafe, he drives on. Down the long straight road. She won't forget him . . .

Too bloody right she won't forget him. The money that Collet Dickenson and Pierce advertising agents, have spent on behalf of the Ford Motor Company will have made sure of that.

In the middle of last week's News at Ten, after a dose of 'Wilson speaks—Miners Move. Heath Moves and Miss World Quits' came the 'Once in a lifetime car'. The Ford Capri II (with three doors). Just to give you an escape route.

To have booked the two and a half minutes slot (as the agency did) cost over £5000. That's in the



London area. Nationally networked (as it was) the figure moves up to £30,000.

Which also leaves out the cost of making the film. 'Well, using a union crew, shooting on 35mm film, and taking the lot to France—I don't see how they could have done it for less than £75,000.' said a film maker who works in advertising 'between £75,000 and £150,000 I'd say . . .'

## Answer

Why do people need motor cars? Well the sensible answer is 'I need a car to drive to work, on holiday, to go shopping.'

Not quite the answer of Collet Dickenson and Pierce. But then, when last year's account to that advertising agency was worth

£46,660 on the basic Capri alone (leaving out the Granada, Cortina, etc) who needs sensible answers?

Many years ago Henry Ford started employing people to make motor cars to make him money. People drove around in his cars to deserted beaches.

After 20 million other people had been to the beach it wasn't deserted anymore. So now his grandson hires people to make films of people on deserted beaches—so that we can think about the beaches in the traffic jams. Or think about how if we had a Capri we wouldn't be in the jam. And we would be happy. And meet beautiful people on deserted beaches with nothing but the seagulls and a camera crew for company.

Intelligent people bore themselves rigid on production lines making motor cars. They would sooner be elsewhere. Karl Marx called this alienation. Henry Ford calls it 'expenditure on advertising.'

Still with the money Fords have to spend on it they obviously should be able to pay the full Ford pay claim easily. Shouldn't they?

NIGEL FOUNTAIN

THE Pearson Commission was set up by the Tory government in the wake of the Thalidomide scandal.

The Commission is looking into the general question of personal injury compensation, including compensation for industrial injuries and disease.

The commission is headed by Lord Pearson, a trusty Tory judge, who conducted the witchhunting inquiry into the 1966 seamen's strike.

There is just one trade unionist on it—Walter Anderson, the right-wing former general secretary of NALGO.

The largest single group on the Commission is from the giant insurance companies and law firms who make a fair slice of their considerable profits from court action to get damages. There is the chief actuary of the Prudential, and there is a man from the Iron and Steel employers insurance company. That's impartiality for you.

# THE UNIONS

## When someone is hurt

THE top men and women of the trade union movement, general secretaries and union executive members, will be taking your life in their hands over the next week.

The Trades Union Congress has now sent them the draft of its evidence to the Pearson Commission into personal injury compensation. By 25 March affiliated unions must submit their comments on the draft and then the TUC will submit the evidence proper.

The draft evidence itself is the result of tough dispute between members of the working party. The Post Office Engineering Union has been campaigning for the TUC to support the idea of a state-run scheme of automatic compensation for any accident.

At present, there is the state Industrial Injuries Scheme which grants injured workers slight benefits after an accident, or pays them a small pension if they have a listed industrial disease.

This scheme is grotesquely mean both in payments and in the way it is run. It excludes workers who suffer unlisted industrial diseases, such as bronchitis among coalminers and foundry workers, or vibration diseases among power tool handlers, tractor and construction equipment drivers.

There is also the common law. Workers injured at work have a right to claim damages from an employer. This right is heavily restricted by the need to prove negligence on the part of the employer, or at least establish a good enough case to force the employer to settle out of court.

The terrible injustice of this system was highlighted by the recent disappearance of the Hull trawler Gaul, which sank in Arctic waters without trace and with all hands on board.

That there were no survivors means the widows and orphaned children have no chance of winning a penny damages. They cannot prove negligence since there are no witnesses.

### Dramatic

The POEU estimates that only eight out of every 100 injured workers get anything through common law damages and that of every £100 the victim gets only £25, the rest going on service, administration, insurance expenses and legal fees.

The POEU wants automatic compensation for accidents, with proper benefits. This would be a dramatic improvement.

But the union shies away from insisting that employers should pay the entire cost of this. It describes such a demand as 'political dynamite'.

Worst of all would be an automatic compensations scheme at or near the present pitiful level of benefits. Such a scheme, if it did not go hand in hand with tougher penalties against employers for creating and maintaining unsafe working conditions, would even encourage employers to injure even more workers since the state would be picking up the bill.

It is unlikely that more and more Factory Inspectors will be appointed and that they will operate as policemen rather than wet nurses for the

### TUC HORSE-TRADING

THE TUC's draft evidence to the Pearson Commission was prepared by a working party of trade union legal officers. The members were: Alfred Blyghton of the Transport Union, Jim Watts of the Agricultural Workers, S Eves of the Railwaymen, Mr Heywood of USDAW, W John of the Engineers, Ted Brind of the Post Office Engineers, Muriel Turner of ASTMS, J Bell of the General and Municipal, and Mrs Lancaster of the Society of Civil Servants.

The TUC draft evidence, now in the hands of union general secretaries, is full of harrowing stories of injured workers and their claims. But the position finally adopted is a shoddy compromise between the different

factions on the working party.

Along the way good ideas are put forward: that employers should be forced to re-employ injured workers without loss of earnings, that employers' contributions to the industrial injuries fund and perhaps to social security in general should be related to the rate of injury and disease in their factories.

But the TUC evidence finally ends in horse-trading. In return for 'substantial improvements' in the level of benefits from the Industrial Injuries scheme, the TUC would be prepared to limit the level of damages that could be got in law. But the TUC would not support the abolition of legal claims altogether in favour of an automatic compensation scheme.

Union legal officer, outlines his reasons for opposing a move to automatic compensation:

'There are many unions... (the NUAAW being a classic example) that have been built on a tradition of service and upon the abolition of civil litigation would undoubtedly have a serious adverse effect, possibly to the extent ultimately of causing the union to disappear.'

Mr Watts' line used to be called 'coffin club' trade unionism. He appears opposed to progress on the grounds that the presentation of compensation cheques at branch meetings is good for recruitment. On this line of argument accidents too are useful since otherwise there would be no cheques to present.

### Interest

Watts' line is in part supported by the TGWU and ASTMS. Some of the big legal teams who deal with trade union compensation work have been flying their flag of self interest too. Common law gives them a large turnover.

This approach is entirely wrong. It is, after all, members' lives, arms, legs and chests that are under discussion.

Union branches should push through resolutions demanding the fullest discussion on the whole question of injury compensation and accident prevention. They should demand the right to see their union's reply to the TUC and insist that the vital question of safety is brought out into the open and a proper campaign mounted.



LORD PEARSON: He ran the seamen's strike witchhunt

employers.

There are advantages in the right to take legal action. The facts come out in open court and ensure that workers who contract some new variety of industrial disease have a chance to win their case.

The best place for winning safe working conditions is on the shop floor, as Pat Kinnerly shows in his book *The Hazards of Work and How to Fight Them* (Pluto Press, 90p).

But most of the time the TUC has been approaching things rather differently. In a confidential memorandum to the TUC working party, Jim Watts, the Agricultural Workers

## CBI: As long as it's cheap

ALL EVIDENCE submitted to the Pearson Commission on injury compensation is given in confidence. This is nice for the Confederation of British Industry, the main body giving evidence for the employers.

The CBI's evidence is a typical example of the real face of big business. It accepts that the Common Law system of claims for damages is unsatisfactory as far as injured workers are concerned and supports some sort of change towards automatic compensation—on one proviso. It must not cost employers any more than the present system.

As the CBI puts it in the conclusion to its draft evidence: 'The majority of CBI members consider that... the replacement of the present dual system by a single "no fault" system would have substantial advantage for employer-employee relations if one could be

devised which would not substantially increase the cost of compensation for industrial injuries to be borne by employers.'

At the CBI council meeting which considered the draft, the document was criticised for placing 'undue emphasis on the cost of compensation and too little on the need for the system to be socially just.'

So six words were added. It now reads: 'a "no fault" system would be socially more just and would have substantial benefits for employer-employee relations...'

The CBI is also keen that any new system should be operated by insurance companies, so they still get their cut. And it says that where a worker gets compensation for an accident for which he or she is judged to be wholly or partly to blame, money should be repaid.

## 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'.

For equal pay and a better deal for young workers.

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

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 racism 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.

FOR THE ADDRESS OF YOUR LOCAL BRANCH OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS, WRITE TO THE NATIONAL SECRETARY, 8 COTTONS GARDENS, LONDON E2 8DN.



# RANK & FILE LIST HITS 300

THREE HUNDRED delegates from trade union bodies have now applied for credentials for the conference of rank and file trade unionists to be held in Birmingham later this month.

Many are from Engineering and Transport Union branches, but more and more are coming from shop stewards committees and trades councils. Recent applications include Kingston, Haringey, Hounslow, Greenwich and High Wycombe Trades Councils, the BEA Joint Shop Stewards Committee at London Heathrow Airport, the SOGAT chapel at Jefferson Smurfitt, Wigan, and the shop stewards committee at Albany Jigs and Tools.

The conference has been called by a group of papers run by rank and file trade unionists, including hospital workers, steelworkers, miners, post office workers, teachers, electrical workers, bus drivers and civil servants.

Roger Cox, secretary of the conference organising committee and a member of the editorial board of *Carworker*, said this week:

'We've just got rid of the worst government any of us can remember, but if we are to make sure this Labour government is a government for the labour movement then there is a lot of work to be done.

A minority government is open to a lot of pressure from the CBI, the Bank of England and so on. But it is also open to a lot of pressure from the shop floor—we need to organise that pressure.

'The Labour government has promised to do a lot of things that we agree with but we're going to have to work to make sure it does. One thing I want to see the conference do is really campaign to get the Shrewsbury lads out of jail—we must force a Labour government to let them out.

'Any trade unionist who thinks our problems are over just because we've got rid of the Tories is dreaming. A price rise is a wage cut, whichever party is in government.'

The Conference is to be held in Birmingham on Saturday 30 March. The address of the organising committee is 214 Roundwood Road, London NW10.

I WONDER WHERE  
THEY'VE ALL  
GONE...



## Why we're going to conference

TERRY FARRER, who works at Metal Box, Shipley, Yorkshire, writes of how he got his AUEW branch to send him as a delegate to the conference:

I said how in our union you have someone like Scanlon, who hides behind his 'left' image and then, when it comes to the crunch, he backs down. What we need is a strong rank and file movement that will put pressure on the union leadership but is ready to organise independently.

I pointed out the demands in the draft resolution calling for the regular election of all officials and that they get paid our average wage.

But it's not enough to organise just in the AUEW in this way. I mentioned how the hospital workers

were left to fight alone and how nothing has been properly organised over the Shrewsbury lads' jailings. There has been a response in a number of areas but as long as it's left to the union bureaucrats, nothing will get done. A national rank-and-file movement could co-ordinate the fight.

Some lads are sceptical that it might just be a talking shop or that there won't be any real discussion of the issues, as was the case at the Liaison Committee conferences. I think there has got to be real discussion and a hammering-out of the issues facing us and the organisation to put decisions into practice.

We certainly need such a conference and I believe we can make a great step forward but at the very least I would say: 'Give it a try'.



DANNY FLYNN: 'We need direct contact between trade unionists'

DANNY FLYNN, chairman of Wandsworth 1/227 TGWU branch and a delegate to the conference, writes:

Workers have to use every means to defend their interests. You can't always confine yourself to official action only when you fight incomes policies and anti-union laws. I think that big business should fork out for services like housing and public transport. At the moment, the only result of progress seems to be more profits—nothing for the people who do the work.

I'm glad to see that the conference will discuss union democracy. In the TGWU we are very strict about elections but from divisional officer upwards you don't have to be elected at all!

My branch has nominated me to stand for delegate to the union's Rules Revision Conference this year and I believe that all union officials should be put to the test of elections.

The Rank and File Conference can begin to link up the fragmented sections of the movement. We need a wider range of shop floor experience based on direct contact between trade unionists. This can make the branch more outward-looking—soap powder and towels shouldn't be the limit of our interests.

The trouble with full-time officials is that they tend to dictate rather than lead. They don't go for what people want, but what they think they can get away with most easily. That is how we on the buses accepted a Phase Three rise which will probably not even be paid in full.

### Pressure the union leaders

KEN APPLEBY, secretary of Keighley Trades Council, TASS militant and member of Divisional Council, writes:

Keighley Trades Council delegates were impressed by the initiative taken by the sponsoring rank-and-file papers in calling this conference and readily agreed to send four delegates. In our monthly newsletter to local branches and shop stewards committees, we have drawn attention to the conference and called on them to send delegates also. The trades council will be organising transport from the area.

At this time of increasing attack on working-class organisations and the shabby attempts by employers to bolster their profits at our expense, a national grass-roots organisation with the will and ability to put up a real fight is essential. This conference is seen by us as the first step

in building such an organisation.

It was felt there is a real danger that a Labour government might water down its policies in order to stay in office. One delegate remarked that it will be interesting to see if Labour will readily scrap the 1875 laws that were used to jail the Shrewsbury building workers.

Delegates agreed that whatever the result of the election, a national rank and file conference could only strengthen the position of workers at this time, which is why we are giving it our whole-hearted support.

### Militants must link up

MIKE ATKINSON, chairman of Darlington Hospitals NUPE branch and of Darlington Memorial Hospital shop stewards, writes:

Shop stewards at Darlington Memorial Hospital feel that there has to be closer liaison between rank and file hospital workers and with other workers.

At present only union officials know what goes on between one hospital and another, one region and another, one part of the public sector and another. There is a traditional bureaucracy in public sector trade unionism and this has to be broken down.

We wholeheartedly supported the miners' claim, but we think they were a 'special case' because they had the muscle to make themselves so. We think we too and many other workers should become 'special cases'.

It breaks my heart to think that we settled within Stage Three only weeks ago, and that is now, I hope, a dead duck. It should never have happened. It is up to the rank and file of the trade union movement to build an organisation that ensures we don't let it happen again.

### First step

JOHN SMITH, shop steward at Bairds Colour Television, Bradford, and president of Queensbury AUEW branch, writes:

The aims of the rank and file conference appeal to me as an AUEW member. Look what happened to our pay claim. It sounded great—'£35 for 35 hours'—but like last year the leadership didn't organise a fight.

What makes it worse is that the opportunity was there for united action with the miners.

Workers in all unions need to develop the rank and file and we need to link up. This conference is the first step

### Classified

Copy for the Classified section must arrive by first post Monday morning. Adverts will not be accepted over the phone. Charges are 1p per word, semi-display 2p per word. CASH WITH COPY to Classified, Socialist Worker, Corbridge Crescent, London E2 9DS.

THE WORKER: This month's issue of the paper of the Socialist Workers Movement (Ireland). Articles include the National Wage Agreement, Chrysler Ireland, The Irish Left in the 1970s, the Provos, etc. Bulk orders 4p per copy through Irish Sub-committee, 8 Cottons Gardens, London E2. Debtors please pay.

FARMHOUSE HOLIDAYS in North Wales: within easy reach of the station, fishing, friendly pubs, pony trekking, frequent transport to the coast, bring your wellies... Six-berth self-contained caravan, all mod cons, £10 per week. Bed, breakfast, evening meal and packed lunch, £10.50 a week—reductions for children. Phone Chirk (069186) 2272.

POST OFFICE WORKER: latest issue now out. Articles on action in the UPW, POEU, CPSA and SCS. 3p per copy (plus 3p postage) from 1 North Place, Waltham Abbey, Essex.

SOCIALIST GAY GROUP has speakers throughout the country on the gay question and sexism. Inquiries from IS branches especially welcomed. Details from 18 Dickenson Road, London N8.

CARTOONS: From £1 for IS branches and rank and file papers. Send details to Phil Evans, 18 Windsor Road, St Andrews, Bristol. Phone 421956.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY aims at building a moneyless world community without frontiers based on common ownership—with production solely for use—not profit. It opposes all other political parties, all leadership, all racism, all war. Write for specimen socialist literature to 'One World (SW), The Socialist Party of Great Britain, 52 Clapham High Street, London, SW4.

FIGHT RACISM AND THE IQ MYTH IN EDUCATION! Public meeting by the Campaign on Racism, IQ and the Class Society. Speakers: Mike Cooley, Steven Rose, Altheia Jones; workshops, discussion. Saturday 23 March, Polytechnic of Central London, 115 New Cavendish Street, 10.30am-6.30pm. Details c/o BSSR, 9 Poland Street, London W1.

SOCIALIST MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (London and Home Counties) Day Seminar: Health and Safety at work. Sunday 24 March, 10am-5.30pm, The Assembly Hall, NUR headquarters, Euston Road, London NW1. Booking forms from T C Thomas, 54 Finchley Court, London N3 1NH. Phone 01-346 5867.

GROUP OF SOCIALISTS working with teenagers on large estate near Kings Cross, North London, urgently need extra help from committed socialists with experience of this kind of area and kids. Project linked to tenants association, and hopes to include local youth paper and legal work. Long-term aim: young tenants association. Possibility of part-time and full-time jobs. If interested, and preferably living in Islington area, phone 240 2714/5 for details.

LONDON N8 mixed house needs fifth person, female. £32 per month, incl. own room. Phone (not as given in previous issue) 278 2475 x 30 (10am-6pm).

GIRL, ex-student, needs room in flat/house with friendly comrades. Prefer Notting Hill Gate area or other area in central London. Phone 01-937 2020.

TWO COMRADES or couple to share room in mixed flat in Leytonstone. London E11. Rent £22 per month exclusive, plus £20 deposit. Ring evenings 01-556 6552.

TWO ROOMS AVAILABLE until end June in house, Wanstead. £25 per month each plus bills. 989 5601 after 6pm. Richard.

FISH OUT OF WATER—documents towards the development of a revolutionary movement. 18p (post paid) from Autonomous Revolution, Box no 253, 197 Kings Cross Road, London WC1.

BENEFIT PARTY for Shrewsbury 24: Friday 15 March, 8pm-midnight, Sols Arms (near Warren Street tube). Organised by NUJ.

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# It's no joke say hospital porters when man is sacked for leg pull

LIVERPOOL:—Hospital porters at the Royal Liverpool Children's Hospital returned to work last week after being on strike since 1 March over the victimisation of head porter Richard Wright.

by David Lee  
NUPE shop steward

man, told me that the victimisation was a result of a practical joke between two porters. One of the porters involved labelled a blood specimen 'Joe Bloggs' and signed it with his own name.

After an appeal hearing held by the United Liverpool Hospital Management Committee last Thursday, it was agreed that Mr Wright would be re-instated on 1 April. In the meantime he was to work as a general porter.

Bobby Keating, NUPE spokes-

examined. The porter told the technician on duty the joke but the technician reported the incident to the management who then informed the head porter to find the culprit.

## Ultimatum

But next day Bobby Keating was told that his head porter was being suspended and demoted for not disciplining his men enough.

Richard Wright walked out. After a hasty meeting the men issued an

ultimatum to the management stating that unless Mr Wright was re-instated they would walk out at noon the following day.

The solidarity between the men ensured victory on the day of the appeal. The re-instatement of Richard Wright was a victory for all hospital workers who daily fight the tough line attitude of hospital administrators.

One thing is certain: the United Liverpool Hospital management will think twice before they victimise any of our members again.

# Smith's gets out jobs axe

MODERATION rules the roost at Smith's Industrial plant in Cricklewood, North London—a major component firm for the car industry. There are few communists or just plain troublemakers there.

The management has a 'sweetheart agreement' with that well-known moderate union, the General and Municipal.

The union's convenor there, Mrs Emmy Garvey, has held the position for 35 years and is a constant source of help to the management who describe her as 'a marvellous character.'

This is why she is kept on despite the fact that she is well past retirement age. It is also why she arrives at work in a chauffeur-driven car. And why she is allowed to sell eggs and other produce round the plant.

Rachel McCracken used to work at Smith's. She was sacked just before Christmas. Her crime was that she refused to work on an unsafe machine.

'In the section there was a clamping machine. All the girls used to dread working on it' she told Socialist Worker. 'Someone was always getting a cut on it.'

## Refuse

'I was told to go and work on it. The safety inspector insisted it was safe. But I noticed that the brake on the machine was so worn that it could slip. I refused and asked for another job.'

'I was then told by chargehands and foremen that I had to do it, that if they let me have another job then all the girls would refuse to work that machine. The foreman said: "We've used that machine for thirty years. I don't see why we should stop now."

'He went off to see the convenor. On his return he remarked that Mrs Garvey agreed with him that I had put myself beyond the protection of the union by refusing to work the machine. I was then given my cards and told to leave.'

'I went to see Charlie Woodward at the union's regional office. He said that I should have worked the machine, that he had worked for Smith's for 17 years and they were a fair company.'

Smith's pay moderate wages too. But they can't give the workers too much cash—it would cut down on the firm's generous donations to the Tory Party.

Workers at Smith's Industrial plant in Watford have started industrial action in an attempt to halt redundancies at the plant. The management is attempting to axe 200 workers out of a workforce of 370 within the next three months.

A spokesman for the company claimed that the redundancies were a 'cost-saving' exercise. In their view all manufacturing processes will be halted at the Watford plant and the floor space used for warehousing purposes.

The workers have formed an action committee to fight the sackings and have received support from other Smith's factories at Cricklewood and Witney, who have agreed to black any machinery which is moved down from the Watford plant.

# Marchers back Price sisters

LONDON:—International Women's Day was greeted in London by a march to Hyde Park involving many Women's groups.

Among the marchers was a contingent demanding the return of the imprisoned Price Sisters to Northern Ireland and an end to forced feeding.

Other Women's Day marches took place in Manchester and Newcastle-upon-Tyne.



Picture: Chris Davies (Report)

# TOUGH TIME AT ITT SIT-IN

GLASGOW:—A glimmer of hope has emerged of a settlement at McLaren Controls where 300 striking workers are in the 14th week of occupation.

Their sit-in followed management attempts to ship machinery abroad and close down the works.

John Morrison, the AUEW shop steward convenor, is convinced that the factory can be saved. He is to have talks with the management at the end of this week.

He says that the management of ITT, the anti-union American giant that owns McLaren's, has offered to discuss the union's demands:

- The Phase Three pay claim that was rejected and led to a strike 19 weeks ago.

- Safeguarding of jobs.

- And severance pay for those whose jobs can't be saved.

The workers struggling on £6.25 a week strike pay are watching management's manoeuvres with growing anxiety as soaring food prices eat into their budgets, fuel bills gather dust, and the rent arrears bring the threat of eviction closer.

SW Reporter

Many of the McLaren workers are women. A large proportion of them are women who have been left on their own to bring up their children.

Women like Kathy Boyle, aged 31, who had to go to work to raise her three daughters aged, 11, nine and eight. They live in a room and kitchen flat in the city's dockland area for which Kathy pays £7 a month. She has just turned down the offer of a three apartment council house because she cannot afford the rent.

'It would have been £27 per month—I just couldn't afford that,' she said. 'My income, with strike pay, social security, and family allowance is just over £8 a week and

most of it goes on food.

'Fortunately the girls get their dinner at school but at night all I can give them is mince or cold meat and chips—we haven't seen steak for long enough. And now they are starting to need new shoes and clothes but I haven't been able to save for that kind of thing.'

Another mother on her own is Charlotte Webster, aged 27, who has one son of eight and has only her strike pay to keep them. She has just been awarded a rent rebate for her council flat and now pays £10 a month rent.

Before the strike, Charlotte was an assembly worker with a take-home wage of £25 for a 49-hour week including two evenings and a Saturday of overtime.

The claim the workers put in was for £5 a week. It was within the limits of Phase Three but that was too much for the multi-million dollar ITT whose offer for the unskilled workers was less than half the claim.

The women have remained cheerful through the 19 weeks of strike and 14 weeks of occupation.

But there is no doubt the women are feeling the pinch. One woman who was threatened with having her electricity cut off went along to the electricity board and offered to pay half the bill but they refused.

Inevitably some of the women will have to give in and abandon the struggle in order to find work elsewhere. But their determination has been an example to trade unionists all over the country.

Meanwhile John Morrison fights on for all those who want to stay on at McLaren's to get their jobs at a fair wage.

He said: 'That was the management's main motive in causing the strike in the first place—to break the union. It's the same all over.'

# Strike to save jobs

COVENTRY:—200 women at Ragland Street GEC are on strike to defend their jobs.

The company claims that a 20 per cent cut in Post Office expenditure is forcing them to redeploy women in the electronics production unit.

But in fact their jobs are not being scrapped but transferred to Treforest and the Coventry Helen Street and Stoke plants. The women believe that the real reason for the redundancies is management's opposition to the high wages won through militant trade unionism in the past.

# BREAD DRIVERS STRIKE

IN THE SAME WEEK that the major bread manufacturers demanded a further 1p rise in the price of bread, 900 Midland bakery drivers went on strike.

They have suffered a £4 drop in wages since the beginning of the year. This is due to the end of sale or return deliveries to the shops.

The bakery drivers are a group of trade unionists without any record of militant action. One driver said that for 26 years he had worked at Suttons Bakery and had never been in dispute.

Transport Union shop steward Dennis Fensome pointed out that three weeks before the strike started and while negotiations were going on Associated British Foods' chairman Garfield Weston announced record profits of £35 million—a vast increase over previous figures.

Naturally such facts have been

missing from the front pages of local Tory newspapers which have contrasted pictures of bread being destroyed with pictures of housewives in huge queues. If the strike is as long as the Glasgow bread delivery men's strike of a couple of years ago then things could get bitter.

What emerges from talking to the picket lines is the remarkable bonus system the men have. They have a sliding scale bonus system. This means that when the price of bread goes up so their percentage commission comes down as this is based on cash taken. So there is no connection between wages and bread prices.

The official TGWU pickets are on duty round the clock. Other trade unions will have to work overtime with their arguments if the local papers are not to convince housewives that it is the bread delivery men who are the cause of problems in bread supplies and prices.



I would like information/join the International Socialists

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# Socialist Worker

PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS



SQUATTERS occupied an empty block of luxury flats in London's West End this week in protest at the growing plight of the capital's homeless. The flats, in Dover Street near

Piccadilly Circus, have wall-to-wall carpeting, central heating and ultra-modern kitchens. The squatters have invited homeless families to join them. Picture: PETER HARRAP (Report)

## Make Labour free the jailed pickets

WITH THE LABOUR government pledged to repeal the Industrial Relations Act now is the time to press it hard to ensure the release of the six jailed building workers' pickets, overturn the various legal decisions against picketing and repeal the 1875 Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act.

John McKinsie Jones, Eric Tomlinson and Des Warren were jailed on conspiracy, unlawful assembly and affray charges just before Christmas.

In February this year, Michael Pierce, Arthur Murray and Brian Williams followed the others into prison.

All six men were charged with and imprisoned for offences specially selected to get individual pickets jailed without the prosecution having to prove that they committed any specific crimes.

The ruthless nature of the operation was illustrated again this week in the fourth of the Shrewsbury trials. In this trial, now in its third week at Shrewsbury Crown Court, three men, Terry Renshaw, Lennie Williams and John

Seaburg, are pleading not guilty to charges of affray and unlawful assembly.

This week the prosecution has been making much of an admission in John Seaburg's first statement to the police that he threw a lump of dirt on one of the sites. John insists that he made this statement under police pressure.

His evidence received confirmation from an unusual source on Monday this week.

Mike Williams, one of the prosecution witnesses who took part in the picketing in Shrewsbury, told the court that he had been held for 4½ hours by the police and subjected to ruthless interrogation.

### Pressure

He added that a police officer had told him that if he did not name some people as causing damage, then he himself would be charged with damage to property.

Any trade unionist could find him or herself in the place of John Seaburg, his co-defendants at Shrewsbury or indeed of any of the other pickets who have recently come under the hammer of the law.

Every trade unionist should be exerting the maximum pressure over the coming weeks, demanding the Labour government repeal the Act and release the six.

The conference on Shrewsbury sponsored by the Transport and Construction Unions' London regions is today (Saturday) at Friends House, Euston Road, 10am.

On Wednesday 20 March, there will be a demonstration from Tower Hill to lobby parliament for the release of the jailed men. Assemble 1.15pm.

MORE THAN 80 shop stewards who attended a conference organised by Glasgow Trades Council decided to step up the fight to free the jailed Shrewsbury building workers.

The conference gave full support to the lobby of parliament on Wednesday 20 March and 38 delegates indicated that they would be on it. The conference also decided to call a demonstration in Glasgow, on Saturday 23 March to mobilise further support.

# PRICE OF NUM LEADERS: £27m

THE NUM leadership voted 25-2 to accept the Coal Board's offer. Only Jack Collins and Arthur Scargill stood out against a settlement, which was £3 short of the claim for surface workers and £4 for underground workers not working at the coal face.

All the brave talk of 'the claim and nothing less' was abandoned in an effort to give Employment Minister Michael Foot and the Labour government a good launching.

The settlement is worth £103 million a year. The cost of the claim would have been £130 million. The difference between the two was well within the miners' grasp, for they had proved their right to the money and their ability to fight for it. The cost of NUM general secretary Joe Gormley and the right wing can now be accurately calculated: £27 million

by Jim Higgins

pounds a year in lost wages.

At least Gormley and company have been consistent. Their policy has been to hold back the struggle and to move only when pressure from below became irresistible. Every chance was taken to avoid the fight that would win the campaign—only Tory government stupidity and the miners' angry response made it impossible for Gormley and Co to settle without strike action.

### OVERALL

What of the left? According to the Tories and the millionaire press the Communist Party has been masterminding the miners' dispute as part of an overall plan to bring the system down. Would it were true.

Most Communist Party members on the NUM executive tailed behind

rank and file miners. Said Party member Dai Francis, South Wales NUM executive member: 'The overtime ban will win'. As this policy failed, the government was able to conserve coal stocks.

Then after the 81 per cent strike vote, Communist Party NUM leaders joined their right-wing brothers in frittering away the militancy. Pickets were restricted to six, then four and all too often no picket at all.

Only one Communist Party member on the executive voted against reducing the claim for the majority of miners. Five voted for this.

Only a few miners came out against the offer. In South Wales seven pit delegates were told by the men to oppose the settlement. Only the Cwm delegate did so, in the face of appeals for unity from executive members Emlyn Williams and Dai Francis, who a few days earlier had pledged to stand by the full claim.

In Yorkshire, Scotland, Derbyshire and other areas the pit-head meetings accepted the offer. Despite widespread unease at the widening differentials, only a handful voted against.

Arthur Davies, of Cwm Colliery and a supporter of the rank and file paper *The Collier*, said: 'The surface workers have been sold out. We will need to fight again next year and the best time is in the winter.'

The miners have been ill-served by their leaders, but they have not lost. They have proved their power, the power of the rank and file. But the lesson of the strike must be learned.

Miners must build their own rank and file leadership, connecting militants from every coalfield, fighting not just on the big claims but on the everyday issues, for union democracy, for control over the job, for control of safety and working conditions.

### ABUSES

All eyes are now directed to the next round of the £20 claim. Now is the time to discuss closing the gap between surface and face workers' pay. If that means increasing the claim above £20—so be it.

Now is the time to set right the abuses and dangers of pit life. Nobody, including the Labour government, will hand these things over as a gift. They must be argued for, prepared for and fought for.

## Officials bury Castings strike

NUNEATON:—The strike of 135 workers at Art Castings, part of the A L Dunne engineering group is over. The men are returning to work on different jobs. The strike started on 11 December.

The enthusiasm of the strikers was inspiring—despite their bitter experiences with their union, the Transport Workers. Few others have come out of the battle with credit, apart from members of the Technical Section of the Engineering Union at Alvis, TGWU storemen at Chrysler Stoke night shift, and Ford workers

in London—who all blacked A L Dunne products.

There were also members of the TGWU District Committee and throughout Coventry who fought for blacking.

The strike was caused by the sacking of 83 men who downed tools in support of a sacked fellow worker. It took two months for the strike to be made official by the TGWU, the strikers have had no strike pay.

In the meantime picketing was harassed by vanloads of police, and 13 pickets were arrested—many of

### A month's pay for the fund

A READER in Edinburgh has sent us the following letter:

'Dear comrade,  
I enclose one month's pay for the fighting fund (pay slip with it). If the miners can lose a month's pay to bring down the Tories, I can lose it to help bring down the system.'

The cheque was for £107.44.  
This week's total is £773.78, bringing the March fund to £1055.62.

The end of our Edinburgh reader's letter pinpoints the issue. The miners fought and won for all of us. It is now our job to carry on the good work. For this we need your help. Perhaps you cannot afford a full month's wage but what about part of it to help the campaign?

Donations collected by IS branches from readers, supporters and members this week include: Glasgow £106, Edinburgh £112, Wigan £34, South East London £5, Stockport £15, Tower Hamlets £20, Hounslow £25, Pontefract £8, Wandsworth £11.70, Central London Printers £45, Nottingham £20, Bolton £25, Lambeth £11, Loughborough £10, Watford £4, Colindale £30, Paddington £71, Wood Green £20, Cardiff £20, North East Manchester £7, Coventry £18, Brixton £70 and Newcastle £8.45.

Send your contributions to the National Treasurer, IS, 8 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

## For united trade union action Fight the employers' offensive!

National Rank and File Conference of delegates from trade union bodies to be held on 30 March at 11.30am at Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham.

This Conference is sponsored by the following rank and file papers: GEC Rank 'N' File, The Hospital Worker, The Carworker, The Steelworker, London Transport Platform, The Collier, NALGO Action News, Post Office Worker, Rank and File Teacher, Tech Teacher, Case Con, Redder Tape.

This advertisement has been paid for by the Organising Committee. For a letter of invitation to be brought to the attention of your trades union branch/shop stewards' committee/trades council/district committee, write to Roger Cox, Secretary, Organising Committee, 214 Roundwood Road, London NW10.

TU Body: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send an invitation to the conference. (Return this form to the Organising Committee Secretary at the above address)