

Socialist Worker

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

Political trials are threat to our liberties

CALL THIS JUSTICE?

Socialist Worker Political Correspondent

AS THE COMMISSION on Industrial Relations was busy finishing its count of the government-ordered ballot on further industrial action on the railways, the first of Britain's show trials kicked off at the Old Bailey this week.

Eight young people—the 'Stoke Newington 8'—began an encounter with the full majesty of the law which is expected to last for three months. They are charged with conspiring to cause explosions at the homes of members of the Tory government, explosions 'likely to endanger life or damage property.'

The charges and the sentences they face are enormously serious. Jake Prescott got 15 years in jail last year for allegedly addressing a handful of envelopes containing the press statements of the Angry Brigade.

Next week 13 men—miners and their supporters—will go on trial for 'mobbing and rioting' at the Longannet power station in Scotland while picketing in the course of the miners' battle with the Tory government.

The struggle in Ireland too will be before the British courts in the coming weeks. Three people face committal to the High Court for 'conspiring to organise a riot' in Whitehall the week after the forces of law and order staged their Bloody Sunday massacre in Derry.

Other men will stand trial for the Aldershot explosion and for possessing explosives destined for the Irish Republican Army.

BAYING

The Tory government is well aware of what these trials are for. They are designed to get the shop-keeping and small business sections of society baying for law and order, a law and order designed not just to stamp on the political underground but through them on the rights and fighting ability of the organised working class.

The treatment that has already been meted out to the railwaymen is in many ways similar to what has happened to the so-called subversives of the Angry Brigade.

The Stoke Newington 8 defendants have been deprived of their legal rights. No Queen's Counsel could be found to defend most of them.

The rules of caution and the right of access to lawyers when first taken by the police were abandoned early on. And whatever judge and jury decides, their fate will have been well prepared by a marathon press campaign designed to convince the world of the threat they present to polite society.

The railwaymen's fight for better pay has also been presented as a threat to the survival of British society. Their

What you can do ...

MONDAY 5 JUNE: Picket the Old Bailey in support of the Stoke Newington 8 from 9.45am.

SATURDAY 3 JUNE: Stoke Newington 8 defence committee teach in on 'Repression on the left', Old Theatre, London School of Economics, 2pm.

battle has been hauled before a court with unprecedented powers to fine, imprison and harass trade unionists and their organisations.

Three railwaymen in Ilford have been visited by the police, told to work their rest days, defy their union and comply with the instructions of railway management and the new court.

The Tories' attack is remorseless. They will gladly alter any law and tell any lie to have their way. And they thrust aside the odd bleat of protest from the so-called parliamentary opposition as if they were straws in the wind.

Whoever bombed Robert Carr's house was someone deeply anguished by the hypocrisy and lies of a society based on violence and robbery and which puts property above life. They will be tried by the values of that system, which also tries railwaymen's and dockers' rights to defend their standard of living.

The working-class movement faces an attack at every level. In such a situation it is our duty to expose and organise against political show trials.

But that is not all. We have urgently to build a movement capable of settling with the Tories and their system.

The politics of that movement will not be concerned with gestures of defiant despair, like letting off the occasional bomb, but with drawing together the fighting abilities of the organised working class to win power and run society in the interests of people, not property.



Wembley
sit-in
strikers
fight on

'THEY'RE not moving!'—that's the defiant attitude of sit-in workers at Stanmore Engineering in Wembley with their feet firmly planted on a case of Zenith carburettors. The strikers, nearly all black men and women, started the sit-in in a bid to enforce the national engineering union's claim for £6 on the basic rate, a week's extra holiday and a 35-hour week.

Inset picture shows convenor Eric Bogle. Donations and messages of support should be sent to him c/o AUEW District Committee, 1 Woodlands Road, Southall, Middlesex.

ALL OUT SUNDAY 4 JUNE
Victory to the NLF!
Defeat Nixon's blockade!

Assemble Trafalgar Square 2.30pm—
march to US Embassy Grosvenor Square
The march is supported by the International Socialists

Vital battle in the docks

AN OFFICIAL STRIKE by 44,000 dockers was in the balance as we went to press. Thursday's deadline could be extended another 14 days or a settlement might be reached.

Dockers are fighting, first and foremost, for the right to load and unload cargo containers, whether at the dockside or inland. The port bosses have used new techniques like containers to attack the dock labour force and run down the industry.

The employers deliberately containerise cargo and syphon it off from the traditional ports to inland depots where they employ fewer men, at wages and conditions way below those dockers have won.

Take for example Hays Wharf, once the biggest single employer on London's riverside. In 1969 it closed, putting 700 dockers out of a job. Yet all the cargo traditionally handled at Hays Wharf was transferred to the inland container depot at Dagenham, where fewer than 100 men work longer hours for less money.

Slashed

The port of Hull is surrounded by 31 inland depots and the result is that the Hull labour force has been slashed from 4800 in 1967 to just 2400 today. Nationally, the dock labour force has been knifed from 65,000 to 44,000 in just five years.

But now dockers are saying: no more. And that will be the signal for the press to unleash a barrage of abuse and lies. They will say we are 'lazy' and 'overpaid', not to mention 'standing in the way of progress'. No thinking trade unionists should give these slanders a second thought.

Dockers have improved their productivity by 25 per cent in five years. The wages and conditions we enjoy today have been won only by years of organisation, militancy and sacrifice.

And dockers are not trying to hold up progress: they are merely saying 'progress for who?' Progress for the port employers raking in record profits, but not progress for the man out of a job. Dockers are asking the question, 'Why shouldn't technology be used to benefit the docker, not to destroy him?'

Cheap labour

The press is also trying to distort the issues of this strike to one of dockers taking on other transport workers. Dockers are not trying to steal another man's work. All they are demanding is the right to handle the cargo that has traditionally passed through the docks.

There is no dispute with lorry drivers. But the men who man the inland depots, who are also in the TGWU, have been used as a form of cheap labour.

There can be no truck with the Industrial Relations Act, or with 'National Emergencies' or 'Cooling-off Periods'. Most militants are aware that the strike has only been called so that the TGWU officials can re-assert their control in the face of the National Port Shop Stewards' Committee that has been leading the fight.

This is a battle for survival. Every docker in the country faces the threat of the dole queue. It is against that situation that any settlement must be judged. Any compromise that does not stop the run down in the industry will be a face saver and nothing more.

Whether it comes now or in the future, a showdown is inevitable. If the dockers are given the support they deserve, then they will inflict a serious defeat on the government and its law that will be in the interest of every worker in Britain.

BOB LIGHT

TGWU, London Royal Docks

LONGANNET 13: PAGE 11

The 'soviet' facade cracks a little

WHILE Russian leader Brezhnev has been wining and dining Nixon, he has had the problem of mass unrest on his own doorstep to worry about. Two weeks ago bitter fighting broke out in the Lithuanian city of Kaunas between angry demonstrators and police. The popular discontent seen in countries of Eastern Europe in recent years has now spread to the 'Soviet Union' itself.

The slogans of the demonstrators are reported to have been mainly nationalistic. This

is hardly surprising considering the history of Lithuania, ruled by the Russian Tsarist empire for 120 years until it fell under German domination during the First World War.

After Germany's defeat, the country succeeded in gaining a precarious independence. The Stalin-Hitler pact in 1939 brought it to an end. Stalin agreed to the Nazis taking over Western Poland while he moved into Eastern Poland and the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

There was little resistance to the initial

Russian occupation. The local Lithuanian population had not experienced much democracy during independence and had been ruled for most of the time by a military dictatorship.

But attitudes started to change once the Russian takeover was complete. The country was absorbed into the USSR in spite of promises that this would not happen. Political terror was used to wipe out opposition. The Lithuanian Communists were some of the main victims. Half the party's members were purged in 1940.

At the same time, living standards were cut to subordinate the country to the needs of Russia's rulers. The result was to give great popular support to Lithuania's former rulers. When the first opportunity came with the outbreak of war between Germany and Russia in 1941, the people staged a popular rising that seized the main towns in two days at a cost of 2000 dead.

But the new government lasted just six weeks. The Nazis moved in and treated the country in a similar way to the Russians.

The Russians returned in 1944 and this time were greeted with armed opposition. Fighting continued until as late as 1952. But the resistance was doomed to defeat. It placed its faith in support from the western powers but they had already agreed at Potsdam and Yalta to divide the world with the Russians.

The Russians finally stabilised their rule. Secret police chief Beria sent in his deputy, Kruglov, who started a reign of terror.

Stalin copied many of the Tsars' old policies in order to tighten his grip. The Lithuanian language and culture were discouraged as they were ways in which the people could express dissent in a manner not easily understood by a Russian-speaking policeman.

In the early years of Stalin's rule, roughly half the people in positions of power came from other areas of the USSR. But there were attempts in the mid-fifties to make the regime more acceptable to the local population.

Neglected

Local people were given more power in the bureaucracy of party and state. But these reforms were stopped in the early sixties.

Russian policy had led to a massive development in Lithuania which before the war had most of its population in the country. Today half lives in the towns.

But living standards are still poor and the growth of industry has brought new problems. Lithuanians complain that heavy industry serves Russian needs while local consumer industries have been neglected.

They claim, too, that Russian leaders are deliberately building industrial plants in Lithuania rather than neighbouring Russian-speaking areas in an attempt to force non-Lithuanian people in search of jobs to move there. This creates a growing Russian-speaking section of the population, move friendly to Moscow rule and more easily policed.

Against such a background, it is not surprising that the main slogans of the demonstrators were those demanding national rights. But that does not mean the implications of the street fighting can be confined to that area alone.

More than half the USSR population is made up of non-Russian national minorities, many of whom have suffered in the same way as the Lithuanians.

What Brezhnev fears most is a chain reaction into the heart of Russia itself, to the workers of Moscow and Leningrad. When they move against his regime, no power on earth will stop them.

Chris Harman

Vietnam: riches versus poverty

by Ian Birchall

VIETNAM today sums up in a nutshell the contradictions facing human civilisation.

On the one side, the array of America's advanced technology shows a potential which, if put to the right use, could transform the human condition. On the other hand, the poverty, starvation and terror which imperialism hands out to the world's population in the underdeveloped countries.

In a very real sense the struggle being fought in Vietnam is one that involves us all.

The latest addition to the US armoury is the use of bombs guided by laser beams. The existence of these has been reported by Business Week and not denied by the Pentagon. They are said to be capable of reaching a degree of accuracy hitherto unknown with a range of error of only a few yards.

Bombed

Yet with this degree of accuracy at its command, the US continues to bomb hospitals, schools and leper-colonies. It is no longer possible to take seriously the claim that such incidents are mistakes. They are part of a systematic campaign to demoralise the people of North Vietnam.

Over the past couple of weeks the bombing has also been stepped up to include industrial targets. A major electric power station, chemical, steel and cement factories have been bombed in an effort to break the North Vietnamese economy.

The long-term effects of the US aggression are also still with the North Vietnamese. Research by a North Vietnamese surgeon has shown that over the past few years cancer of the liver has increased by 500 per cent as a result of defoliants used by US bombers.

Yet all the evidence is that the US bombing is failing to get the results it is seeking. The Hanoi correspondent of the Paris paper Le Monde reports that the North Vietnamese have planned for all events that may happen.

When bridges are bombed they can be replaced by floating bridges within hours. Stocks of rails and sleepers are hidden beside railways so that they can be repaired almost immediately.



South Vietnamese soldiers flee through the deserted Quang Tri on bicycles

In a still largely agricultural country it has been easy to organise evacuation. Within four days of the renewal of bombing on Hanoi two-thirds of the students in the city had been dispersed to the villages.

In short, the Americans will not get an easy victory. But nor are they doomed to immediate defeat. It is one thing to admire the heroism and perseverance of the Vietnamese people, but it is a dangerous illusion to overestimate what can be achieved by military means alone.

Vietnam will not be liberated by force of arms alone. It should be remembered that, for example, the Algerian National Liberation Front was nearer to purely military victory in 1957 than it was in any of the five years of the war that followed. It was the political crisis inside France that finally got Algeria its freedom.

And it is on political factors that the future of Vietnam hinges.

The first of these is the crisis in the divided and demoralised South Vietnamese ruling class. As President Thieu's political credibility declines, his careerist political rivals are once again crawling out of the woodwork—men like General Duong Van Minh ('Big Minh'), a vicious anti-communist member of the short-lived military junta that replaced Diem in 1963.

Secondly there is the problem whether the National Liberation forces can win sufficient support in the South. In the

villages they are setting up elected councils, clinics and political education. But there is still little sign of positive support in the big towns.

Thirdly there are developments inside the US itself. For the moment it seems as if the non-involvement of US land troops has bought off some of the opposition to the war. But a vigorous anti-war movement in the US—backed up in other countries in the Western bloc—still has a role to play.

Scorn

Fourthly there is the role of the Russians. Brezhnev's obscene anxiety to please Nixon was shown by the incident at the Bolshoi Ballet last week. A Russian woman, in a gesture a Western Communist would think normal, shouted: 'Freedom to Vietnam' at Nixon. She was immediately removed from her seat by police.

The North Vietnamese paper Nhan Dan has made clear its scorn for Russian tactics, writing: 'Any signs of weakness or softness would encourage the aggression of the pirates. Our people has only one path: to persist in its war of resistance to regain total independence and freedom.'

The Vietnamese will learn to their cost the danger of relying on the so-called socialist countries—it is the working people of the world who must ensure that Vietnam does not fight alone.

BIG FETE DRAWS 15,000

BETWEEN 15 and 20,000 people attended this year's Lutte Ouvriere fete just outside Paris.

For three days they could choose between listening to a wide variety of artists, pop, folk, political cabaret, revolutionary films, discussions on subjects including Vietnam, Spain and the class struggle in Britain, or the many sideshows ranging from the security policeman who replaced traditional coconut shy to the one which invited you to try your hand at facing speed-up or the competition run by the women's stall for the best male housewife. All this washed down with a wide variety of food and drink.

IS was represented by about 20 people and a stall showing aspects of its work and of the British and Irish struggles as well as selling literature.

With one or two exceptions almost all the groups on the French revolutionary left had stalls so the fete was crowded with groups discussing every subject under the sun.

BRIEFING

NEWS FROM VIETNAM has largely overshadowed the events in Cambodia. Over the past month the forces of the right-wing Lon Nol government have suffered heavy defeats at the hands of the revolutionary guerrillas. For the first time guerrillas have actually launched an attack into the capital Phnom-Penh itself.

To bolster his crumbling prestige, Lon Nol held a referendum at the end of April, in which he gained a large majority. The referendum was, of course, confined to the territory still held by the government. It was also shamefully rigged.

Since there were no electoral lists it was easy for government supporters, soldiers and civil servants to vote twice or even more.

The ballot papers were coloured white

for a 'yes' vote, green for a 'no' vote. Since the envelopes in which the ballots were placed were virtually transparent, many people were naturally intimidated from voting no.

But the regime has not prevented the development of a militant opposition movement among the students of Phnom-Penh. The students' attacks on the regime have become increasingly sharp, and they have won support from the Buddhists and other sections of the population.

THE British press continues to sing praises to 'liberalisation' in Portugal. In the meantime, 'liberal' President Caetano has gagged the Portuguese press even further to stifle criticism of the wars in Africa.

Liberalisation has brought a respite only to the respectable middle-class opposition. Socialists continue to be persecuted

The lot of workers has not improved either. Because of unemployment and low wages, 170,000 people leave Portugal every year. In France alone, there are more than 600,000 Portuguese workers, drawing miserable wages and often compelled to live in slums.

More than one in ten of the Portuguese have had to emigrate to find a job. Many are young workers who would otherwise be conscripted to fight in Portugal's colonial wars in Africa.

AFTER the Israeli Black Panthers, Women's Liberation has now arrived in

Israel. A 40-strong cell has been formed in Haifa and a second group is planned in Tel Aviv.

RECENT FIGURES from the Common Market Statistical Office show that manual workers are tending to work shorter hours. In 1969, the latest year for which complete figures are available, average hours per year were 2000 for France and Luxembourg, 1900 for Holland, 1870 for Belgium, 1860 in Germany and 1800 in Italy.

Over the three previous years the fall had been biggest in Italy (4.5 per cent), Holland (3.9 per cent) and France (3.4 per cent). In France and Italy, at least, the reductions must be seen as part of the gains of the struggles of 1968 and 1969.

Gramsci

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FROM: IS Books
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Safer world -for super powers

THE NIXON-BREZHNEV agreement on cooling the missile race between the two super powers will probably be seen by most of our readers as progress of a sort. Certainly, no one in his right mind wants to see the steady piling up of weapons of mass destruction.

Unfortunately the deal to freeze the number of Inter-continental Ballistic Missiles and of Anti-Ballistic Missiles (with adjustments) by each side is not likely to make the world a safer place. First of all it is the number of rockets which is frozen, not the number of war-heads.

At the present time the US, with fewer rockets, has a considerable number of multiple war heads—'Multiple, Independently Targeted Re-entry Vehicles' or MIRVs. The US will carry on its 'Mirving' programme and the USSR, at present without them, will try to catch up.

And both sides will continue the shift from land-based, and potentially vulnerable, missiles to submarine-based ones. They will also work hard at improving the accuracy and 'quality'—in other words destructiveness—of their missiles. The US, now engaged in replacing the submarine-based Polaris with the much more destructive MIRVed Poseidon, has already announced that this in turn will be replaced by the even more deadly Trident.

Serious problems

The reasons for the agreement are both political and economic. Each of the giants faces serious discontent in its homeland and increasing difficulty in controlling its satellites. Each wants to be able to count on the 'tolerance', if not the active support of the other. The agreement is a step in this direction.

At the same time both the US and the USSR face serious economic problems. One factor worsening them is the arms race. If the present uncontrolled arms competition is replaced by 'controlled' competition, the rulers on each side calculate, their difficulties will be eased.

It is an illusion. The creeping economic crisis that affects East and West alike, although in different ways, is deeply rooted in the structure of modern capitalism. It will not be solved by signing pacts.

The political side of the agreement is of more value to Nixon and Brezhnev. Each represents a ruling group that is deeply interested in maintaining the status-quo in the world. But there, too, any success will be temporary. The forces making for change in the world are too strong for even the strongest conservative powers to resist for very long.

Common enemy, common action

ONE SWALLOW doesn't make a summer and one act of international working-class action on a bread and butter issue is not going to cause a crisis in Wall Street or the City.

All the same, the joint agreement of Dunlop-Pirelli shop stewards in Liverpool and Milan to call a one day strike on 9 June is important. Fifteen British and fourteen Italian plants belonging to the international giant will be called out in protest against the sackings, closures and short time that the workers have suffered since the merger in 1970.

8500 jobs have been lost and further closures are in prospect. A token strike will not stop them but it could mark an important stage in the redevelopment of real international links among groups of workers.

Another move in the same direction is the proposal for joint international negotiations with the Ford Motor Company by unions in Britain, Germany, France, Holland and Belgium. What will come of this remains to be seen but one thing is sure:

Big business is international. The multi-national firms shift production and resources from country to country in search of the highest profits—and that means the lowest costs, notably wage costs. Effective defence of working-class interests requires international action. The more links that can be developed the better.



CONTINENTAL WARS

The puke on Windsor

THE lies and hypocrisy of press and Establishment were in full view this week with the death of the Duke of Windsor, who retired on a fat pension at the comparatively early age of 42. As Edward the Eighth, he was kicked off the throne in 1936 and cold-shouldered by the ruling class for the rest of his life.

Now that he is dead, the official glad-hand can be extended to his corpse. It will lie in state in England and will be buried at Windsor. The Duchess, the infamous 'divorced woman' who was at the centre of the abdication crisis, will be allowed to stay at the royal doss house.

The press, with the Mirror and the Express leading the baying pack, have dredged the Fleet sewer to produce bucketsful of sludge about the 'greatest love story of the century' and the mental torture of the brave young prince who gave up throne and country for the woman he loved.

It is all a monstrous cover-up, an attempt to conceal the real politics behind the constitutional crisis of 1936. But then the press is used to covering-up for the Duke. Early in his reign, he summoned the great press barons of the day, fearless defenders of the 'free press' like Beaverbrook and Rothermere, and asked them to blackout any publicity over the divorce proceedings of his lover, Mrs Wallis Simpson. They readily obliged.

There is no doubt that the King's determination to marry the woman of his choice, instead of some chinless royal frump thrust on him by the court circle, deeply offended and horrified the government and ruling class, hidebound by their reactionary conception of the monarchy.

But the marriage was only the tip of the iceberg. The real reason for their distrust of the King was his alleged 'radical' approach to his



Knotty problem for ruling class

duties. He saw, through his much-publicised tours of the depressed areas, that if the monarchy was to survive as an essential prop of the capitalist system and help stave off any mass unrest from the working class, then he had to descend from his ivory tower and attempt some closer contact with 'his' people, to convince them that he cared for their plight and would attempt, if only verbally, to do something about it. The King's real crime was to be intelligent, a break from the tradition of half-wits produced by generations of royal in-breeding. He read, travelled and understood something of the realities of the 1930s and the cause of the mass upheavals throughout Europe. But his ambition to turn away from the remote-stuffed-dummy tradition of English royalty was too much for the arch-reactionaries of church and government and the wish to marry a twice-divorced American was the final straw.

But just how radical was Windsor? The true nature of his politics is still not discussed by the weeping press but it was quite clear to both his sup-

porters and enemies in 1936. He was an admirer of Hitler and Mussolini and it is alleged that he was a subscriber to English-language versions of Nazi publications.

According to Colin Cross, in his book *The Fascists in Britain*, 'Fascist writers hailed Edward's accession with enthusiasm... When the news broke of the King's wish to marry Mrs Simpson [Sir Oswald] Mosley coined the slogan 'Stand by the King!' and seemed seriously to consider the possibility of being called to form a pro-King government.' Mosley enthusiastically hailed him as 'the perfect fascist King'.

In 1938 the deposed King was welcomed by Hitler on a secret visit to Germany. Windsor maintained a close friendship with Mosley, a neighbour in France in the post-war years.

But it would be unnecessarily churlish to ignore the real contribution which Windsor made to the world. While most of his predecessors have left only a legacy for stupidity, cruelty, drunkenness and an ability to run through vast amounts of taxpayers' money, Windsor did produce something of lasting value for the human race.

During the last war he invented a new tie knot, called the Windsor knot, which was popular in the 1940s and 1950s. The invention was the result of the brilliant scientific device of using two loops instead of one when fastening the tie.

It can be said with some justification, therefore, that His Grace will be mourned especially by two important sections of the population—ageing fascists and rich haberdashers.

Country gazumping...



OUR picture helps underline Jim Kincaid's centre page article on the housing racket. Taken from an estate agent's publicity handout, the property is described as a 'unique country cottage' in St Albans.

Unique is the word, all right. It is situated bang in the centre of the town and its connection with the country is as close as Switzerland's to the sea. It is not a cottage at all but one of the two-up, two-down dolls houses thought to be good enough for workers' families at the turn of the century.

Downstairs consists of an 'excellent' living room—20 feet by 18—and an 11 by 9 kitchen. A bathroom has been squeezed in upstairs, reducing the bedrooms to 12½ feet by 10 and 11 by 10. Small, thin families interested in buying the property are advised that the price is 'in the region of' £10,250. Don't get hurt in the rush...



WHY WILLY WALKS THE GERMAN TIGHTROPE

THE WEST GERMAN government, in signing the Eastern Treaties with Russia and East Germany, has brought itself to the edge of the political precipice. Its majority in the West German parliament, the Bundestag, has sunk to nothing and it has barely survived a 'no confidence' vote which could have brought the opposition to power.

At first sight this seems ludicrous. After all, the treaties only recognise what has been a fact of life for 25 years: the division of Germany into two states and the annexation by Poland of large areas which used to belong to Germany.

Yet on the treaties rest the whole European policy of the Russian and West German governments—and to a lesser extent that of the other NATO powers.

The peace treaties with Russia and Poland were signed in 1970. Since then the former Allied Powers of World War Two have signed the Four-Power Berlin Agreement, which finally regulates the position of West Berlin. The details of future visiting between the West and East of the city have been laid down in an agreement between the two city authorities. Travel between the two German states is regulated in a treaty between the governments of Bonn and East Berlin and a Russian-West German trade treaty has also been signed.

But the Russian and East German governments refused to ratify any of these treaties until the West German government had finally ratified the two main peace treaties, which meant getting them through the Bundestag.

The Russians want 'peace' in Europe because they cannot afford an unlimited arms race with America while trying to threaten China with a massive military build-up on the eastern frontier.

Through increased trade with West Germany they hope to gain the goods and technological know-how that their economy needs to compete in the great power rat race.

RECONQUEST

'Peace' in Europe also suits the Western powers nicely, because they too would like to concentrate their forces elsewhere.

Above all for the West Germans the treaties mean access to new markets when increased competition is making life tough for them in the rest of the world, and there is the added bonus of possible future investments in the Eastern block to use all that beautiful cheap labour.

SO why all the trouble?

Since the end of World War Two the long-term aim of West German capitalism has been the reconquest of lost lands—now East Germany and parts of Poland.

In the 1950s Adenauer exchanged German re-armament and membership of NATO for American support for these aims.

The treaties mean that this is all formally given up... but this is not really the problem. Since the mid-1960s it has been clear that simple roll-back was impossible, and that the interests of West German capitalism lie in an agreement with the East to exploit the chances for trade.

The Christian Democrat opposition is therefore in a trap. As the main party of big business it should support the treaties, but much of its support comes from people who took the anti-communist hysteria most seriously, the lower middle class and the millions of refugees, for whom any agreement with the East is a sell-out to the 'Communist tyrants'.

If the opposition stops the treaties it hurts its big business backers, if it accepts them it loses its electoral credibility.

The Social Democratic Party (SPD) came to power in 1969 on a programme of peace and reforms.

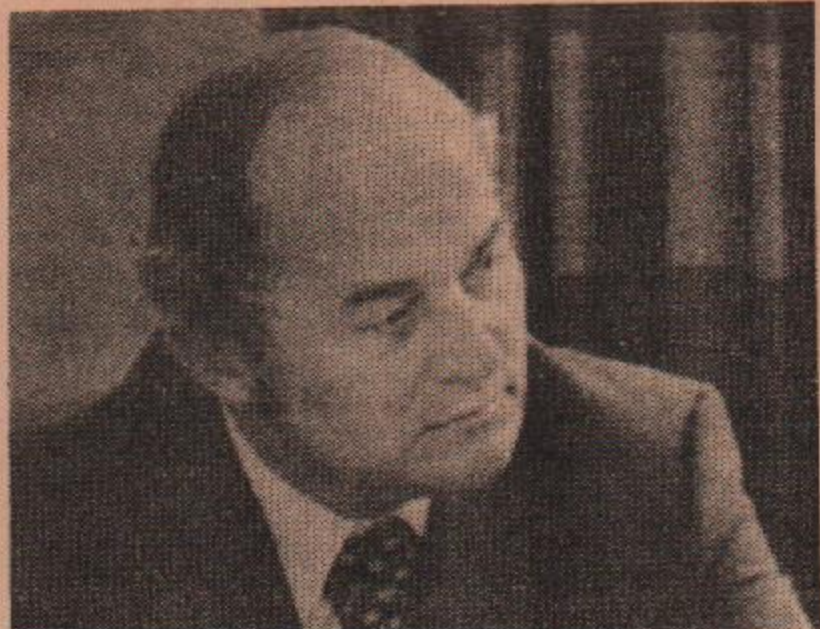
Now, with the end of the boom there is no money for reforms, and the working

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT IN FRANKFURT

class is becoming more militant in support of its wage demands. So the SPD has more and more stressed the peace part of its programme—the treaties.

Yet this is of course not the aim of the whole exercise. What worries West German capitalism is that the SPD, for its own electoral interests, is creating expectations of genuine peace (for example a cut of arms expenditure) which cannot be fulfilled and that the whole anti-communist ideology on which the state is built up is now being destroyed. The danger of 'red hordes' in the East looks rather silly when you make peace treaties with them!

What the capitalists would rather have is the same results, but achieved with rather less fanfare.



Opposition leader Barzel

Since the beginning of the year the opposition has been campaigning to bring the government down on the issue of the treaties. Several members of the ruling coalition (the SPD rules with the small FDP Liberal Party) have deserted to the opposition, helped by various financial incentives.

Thus strengthened, the opposition tried to vote itself into power last month. The constitution makes it impossible for the government to call a general election without being defeated in parliament, but if the opposition can win a 'constructive vote of no confidence' in parliament it can vote itself into power without elections.

But the plan went wrong. The day before the vote there were many strikes in many cities. They were not as spontaneous as they seemed: local politicians, above all in the trade unions, played a crucial role in organising them, but they also undoubtedly had the support of the majority of the working class.

For the workers it was not a question of defending a popular government, but rather of defending the lesser evil. Also the way the opposition was behaving might have been in accordance with the formal constitution, but awoke nasty memories: one favourite slogan claimed that the opposition leaders were 'practising for

Willy Brandt: 'peace' policies a cover for missing reforms

another 1933'.

For the trade union officials it was a question of defending their government. What they didn't grasp was that the SPD exists (in the eyes of the capitalists and also of its own leaders) to stop the working class mobilising for its own interests.

So to defend the SPD government by extra-parliamentary action is to destroy the whole usefulness of the party. It was not surprising that, despite its threatened position in parliament, the government appealed for law and order, and surprise, surprise, no more strikes.

LUDICROUS

But the strikes did make a difference. They showed the opposition that to defeat the government could mean a mobilisation of the working class which the SPD might not be able to control.

Hence the ludicrous situation that the opposition lost its vote of no confidence because although some of the government members voted against the government, some of the opposition voted with the government.

Since then both parties seem to have agreed that the important aim is to lower the political temperature.

The treaties accordingly became law after the opposition abstained on the crucial vote. If it had not done so it would have been able to defeat the government, which has now no majority, but this would have had the embarrassing result of wrecking the treaties and causing a general election on the issue.

Not only would the SPD probably have won such an election, but it would have led to a political involvement of the working class that neither side is prepared to risk.

The crisis is not over. The government has been unable to get the budget through or to get the opposition to agree to a date and method for new elections. But these will probably be eventually held in the autumn, since the alternative—a change of government without elections—would be even more risky.

For the crucial fact of last month's events is that the German working class has once again actively entered the political arena.



When you're in the know, £57,000 profit is a cinch IN THE CITY

READERS may remember a story of mine about the housebuilding company Galliford Estates which made a 50 per cent profit on its developments and was supported by the Co-operative Wholesale Society, through their finance subsidiary F C Finance. The following story shows that the Galliford Estates directors are as good at making money for themselves as for their shareholders.

On 22 October 1971 the quotation of Galliford Estates' shares was suspended while they published details of a substantial acquisition. At the time the share price was 168p. When the shares were requested in February 1972 they quickly went to 420p.

Now deals such as this do not happen overnight. They are generally the result of weeks, or even months, of negotiations. It is therefore possible, though not definite that Mr M A Macario, one of Galliford's directors, knew of these proposed acquisitions between 29 April and 6 August 1971. Even if he didn't know of these particular acquisitions, the odds are that he knew of Galliford's policy of making acquisitions.

Anyway, between those dates he bought £13,500 nominal of the company's Convertible Loan Stock. This is a security that gives holders the right to convert it into ordinary shares at specified dates in the future, so its price on the Stock Exchange is related to the price of the ordinary shares.

Mr Macario paid prices between 150p and 240p for his stock.

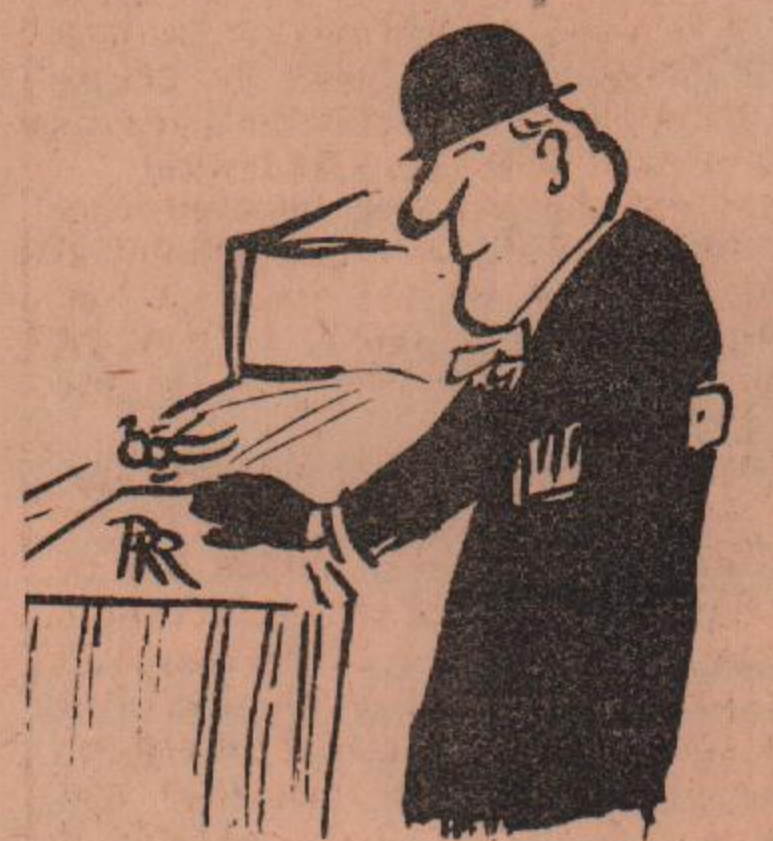
He sold this stock between 25 February and 8 March 1972 at prices between 830p and 862p. According to my calculations that means that he made a profit of at least £57,000. Well done Mr Macario.

* * *

NOW let's look at the case of Dennis Motors.

On 27 March 1972 a company called Hestair made an agreed bid for Dennis Motors, valuing each Dennis share at 170½p. The Dennis shares had risen from 90p at the beginning of November 1971, 108p at the beginning of January 1972 and 140p at the beginning of February.

As this was an agreed bid we know that it must have been preceded by weeks of talks while the board of Hestair tried to persuade the board of Dennis to accept whatever terms they were willing



with T.H. Rogmorton

to offer. Look at the following diary: 26 October 1971: Sunday Telegraph says a bidder is building up a shareholding in Dennis.

28 October 1971: Daily Telegraph forecasts a struggle for control of Dennis.

14 January 1972: Daily Telegraph talks of the company's property development potential and takeover potential.

27 March 1972, Morning: Daily Telegraph again talks of the company's property development potential and takeover potential.

Afternoon: Bid announced. The shareholding of the chairman of Dennis Motors increased in value between the first and last Telegraph story by £160,000. It seems almost certain that he was talking to Hestair in January 1972 and positive he was talking to them on 25 March.

Far be it from me to suggest, as they say, that Mr King, the chairman, has a friend on the Daily Telegraph or that he was using any such friend to strengthen his position at the negotiating table.

In the meantime, while the City was playing these games, the workers of Dennis continued to make five-engines, for which they were paid considerably less than £160,000.



Brandt with Kosygin: where are the 'red hordes' in the East? then?

MINING GIANT'S QUEST FOR PROFIT THREATENS OUR LIVES AND OUR ENVIRONMENT



'Home' for an African labourer: RTZ shores up the South African apartheid system

GREED: THE ABC OF RTZ...

COMPANY REPORTS are normally skilful exercises in propaganda, designed to convince shareholders and the public at large that firms operate not just to make profits but to safeguard and increase the prosperity of their employees and the countries in which they operate.

This pernicious but widely accepted nonsense is exploded in the first publication of a group called Counter Information Services. It has produced an 'anti-report' on Rio Tinto-Zinc, the British-based, world-wide mining company.

The report says that the basis of RTZ's actions is 'profit maximisation or, in ordinary terms, greed'. It charges the company with exploiting the world's resources, without regard for future generations, for the short-term benefit of a tiny minority of the population in the developed countries.

One of the key roles of giants like RTZ is to prop up the reactionary and racist regimes in southern Africa, whose prosperity depends on private investment from Britain and America and the crude and ruthless exploitation of cheap African labour.

BOOSTED

In South Africa, mineral mines are a cornerstone of the apartheid regime. As The Times newspaper has pointed out: 'Without mining, South Africa would not exist as a rich, powerful industrial state... only the wealth from its mines makes it self-sufficient.'

The country's copper mining industry underwent an astonishing boom in the late 1960s. Output soared from 67 million tons in 1965 to 140 million by 1968. This increase was due almost solely to the work of a new mining company called Palabora, inspired by RTZ.

RTZ holds 39 per cent of the equity capital in Palabora and its officials run the whole show, one of the biggest open-cast mines in the world—and one of the most profitable. Its total net profits for the years 1966-71 were £96 million and the impact on RTZ in Britain can be seen from the fact that although in 1970 only 7.7 per cent of its assets were located in South Africa 42 per cent of its profits came from that country.

These profits are boosted by the atrocious wages which RTZ pays its African workers. It boasts that the average African wage is £33.9 a month—but even the South African Institute of Race Relations admits that the bare minimum required for an African family of five to exist is £44.1 a month with at least a 6 per cent cost of living rise a year.

And the firm maintains the government's strict apartheid system. Its 2272 African workers are herded into a Bantu residential area five miles from the town where its 846 European employees live. That town is the ancient African traditional home of Phalaborwa—now taken over by the whites, with the Africans denied the right even to use the parks.

Perhaps RTZ's most scandalous

Copies of the RTZ Anti-Report are available, 10p each, from CIS, 52 Shaftesbury Avenue, London W1.

by DAVID EAST

adventure in southern Africa is its underpinning of the Rhodesian economy since Smith and his racist thugs declared UDI in 1965 in order to maintain the domination of five million Africans by 200,000 whites.

As the Financial Times reports: 'One of the saviours of the Rhodesian economy since UDI was declared has been the country's mining industry, which has scarcely been affected by sanctions... This analysis presupposes that metals produced in Rhodesia have been regularly exported despite sanctions and there is every reason to believe this is so. Both Anglo-American and RTZ opened nickel mines during the UDI period.'

'Since 1965 total mining output has risen close on 50 per cent in value to £57 millions sterling and more than 30 per cent by volume.' The new RTZ nickel mine, Empress, 'should mean a £3½ million boost to Rhodesian export earnings.'

The London office of RTZ claims to know nothing about its Rhodesian subsidiary's sanctions busting—an unlikely claim since the London office controls the raising of capital, planning and dividend policies of all subsidiaries.

Profits after tax for Rio Tinto Rhodesia rose from £871,000 in 1969 to £1,592,000 in 1971. Much of this expansion and increased profitability comes from the starvation wages paid to its African labourers in line with the policy of the Rhodesian government.

SCANDAL

Also in line with government policy, RTR uses as much migrant labour as possible which removes the responsibility of paying wages that could feed the miner's family back in the area of origin.

Miners are housed in compounds with no unemployment or sickness benefits and are given rations by the company—a practice outlawed in Britain since the last century. The miners have no control over the food they can buy.

But it is not just in Africa that RTZ affects the lives and conditions of many thousands of workers. One of the great scandals of recent times has been the operation of the Avonmouth Lead and Zinc Smelter in the West Country by the Imperial Smelting Corporation—owned by RTZ.

The government was forced to step in and close down the smelter for at least two months earlier this year when the dire results of its pollution became widely known. In 1969 the Factories Inspectors examined a sample of Avonmouth workers and found that more than half had levels of lead in their blood that were either excessive or dangerous.

Nothing was done until January this year when the TUC's chief medical investigator said that conditions in the factory were the worst he had found in

25 years and that there was 'just no excuse at all for the pollution and the very real danger to workers in the factory.'

The TUC's medical man said that the smelter was 'leaking lead at every pore'. In the last 18 months there have been 20 cases of serious lead poisoning in workers' blood but the smelter's doctor told the TUC man that his warnings to the firm had gone unheeded.

Further investigations found that lead was polluting the countryside for miles around. Fish and whelks in the Bristol Channel and Severn Estuary were so full of lead that if eaten regularly could lead to a disease that causes softening of the bones. Plant life was also heavily impregnated with lead poisoning.

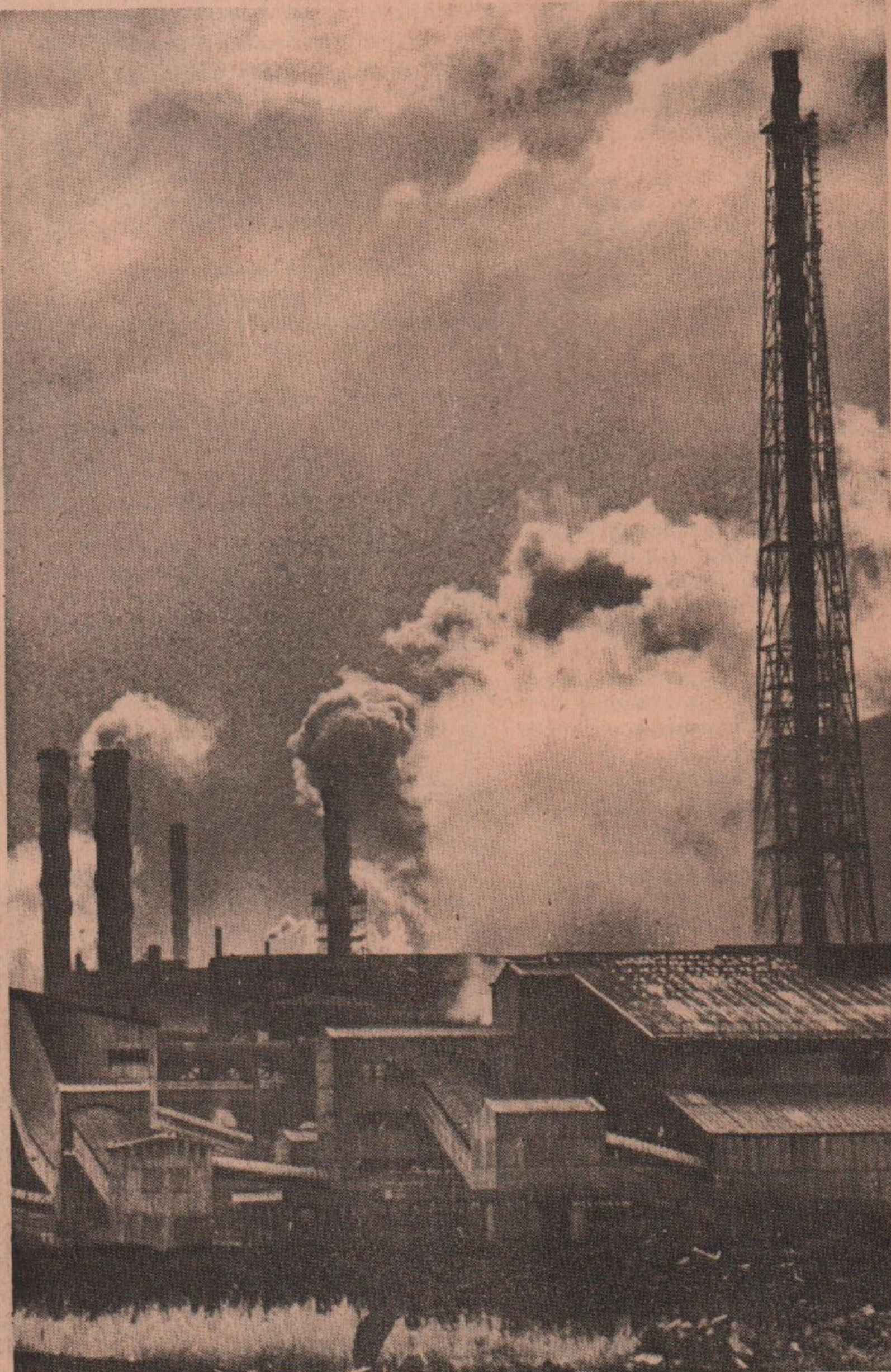
Faced by these appalling facts, Duncan Dewdney, chief executive of

RTZ in Britain, admitted that the plant's initial construction was skimped, that corners were cut and that it should have cost at least two million pounds more to make safe.

But Mr Dewdney can sleep well at nights, his breathing untroubled by lead fumes. The government of the day, its priorities carefully mapped out, will not prosecute big businessmen whose greed and arrogance help impoverish the black masses of Africa and threaten to kill and maim workers in Britain.

Only organisations that have the temerity to defend workers against the gangsters of the business world are fined and bullied by the Tory courts.

The first CIS report—and may there be many more—is not just a hard-hitting analysis of one firm. It is an indictment of an entire social system and a clarion call to its victims to organise to end it.



Avonmouth: pumping lead poison into the West Country air

HO

THE RACKET in house and land prices is one of the great scandals of our time. Vast fortunes are made by speculators and money-lenders while millions of working people are condemned either to live in old slum housing because they cannot afford a mortgage or to face ever-escalating council rents.

Since the start of the year, house prices have risen twice as much as any other basic necessity of life.

And in 1971 the rate of increase was not much less. In that year, there was a 20 per cent jump in the price at which houses changed hands. In most areas a house which cost £4000 at the end of 1969 cannot be bought now for much less than £6000.

In the south of England queues to buy new houses are now an everyday feature. And it is not unusual for a house to go up in price by a thousand or two in the time it takes to get from the back of the queue to the front.

In London it is expected that within a few years it will be impossible to buy a house for less than £10,000. Even now in working-class areas, two-up, two-down houses built 70 or 80 years ago without indoor lavatories and advertised as 'delightful bijou residences' are going for £9000.

Bleak

Young couples saving up to buy a house face two equally bleak alternatives:

Either the amount they need for a down payment has outpaced their savings so that the prospect of being able to buy becomes steadily more remote.

Or if they do manage to raise a mortgage, the amount that has to be borrowed is liable to leave their finances in deep trouble for years to come.

THERE HAS been much speculation in Tory newspapers about the causes of what journalists call the 'boom' in house prices. But the reasons are not hard to find.

As long as housing continues to be in desperately short supply the housing market will be wide open to the crudest kinds of racketeering.

For example in recent years there have been fatter profits to be made by hanging on to land scheduled for house building than by actually buying up the houses.

The government allows building firms up to three years before they even start to build. The increases in the value of the land during this delay can be added to

the final price of the contract profits severely.

The often-quoted fact that land is completely controlled by local authorities has as much to do with immediately building.

But much of the country is dominated by prosperous occupiers who 'tone' of their council estates.

In London a great deal of land is owned by such as British Electricity Industries which operate as private companies according to the principles of competition.

Nationalised industries are only selling industrial land three times as fast as for house land unused and be crammed with COMPETITORS.

has been a series of policies of parties. When in 1964 the 500,000 new houses failed to meet the election in 1970 houses being built at the lowest for 20 years. The housing authorities are being run down as the interest rate on building mortgages rises.

'Fair Re for ter

HOMES RACKETEER



...of the house—and
...or can multiply his
...times over.
...mentioned shortage
...in many areas
...artificial. In London,
...ties are reckoned to
...ch as 17,000 acres
...available for house

by JIM
KINCAID

Council rents rose by 70 per cent while Wilson was Prime Minister. Each year a higher and higher proportion of the rent has been used not to finance new building but is paid over to the moneylenders.



JULIAN AMERY:
Tory Minister of Housing who believes that housing is a 'business' not a basic necessity. His policies are a boon for the racketeers

Nearly as much as two-thirds of all rent taken from council tenants goes to pay interest charges on the money local authorities have been forced to borrow.

The slow up in council house building plus rent increases that far outstrip the general rise in the cost of living forces growing

numbers of people into buying their own house.

Over the past few months the pressure to try to buy a house has been dramatically sharpened by the new Tory Housing Bill—the 'Fair Rents' Act. The government hopes to push through the doubling of council rents over the next three years.

While they preach against the limited subsidies paid for council housing, the Tories have taken care to preserve the much larger subsidies given to owner occupiers in the form of tax relief.

The new housing legislation sets up a vicious circle for council tenants and house owners alike. Council rents are to be set at commercial rates to allow for a profit and will correspond to the price at which similar private houses are changing hands on the market.

Action

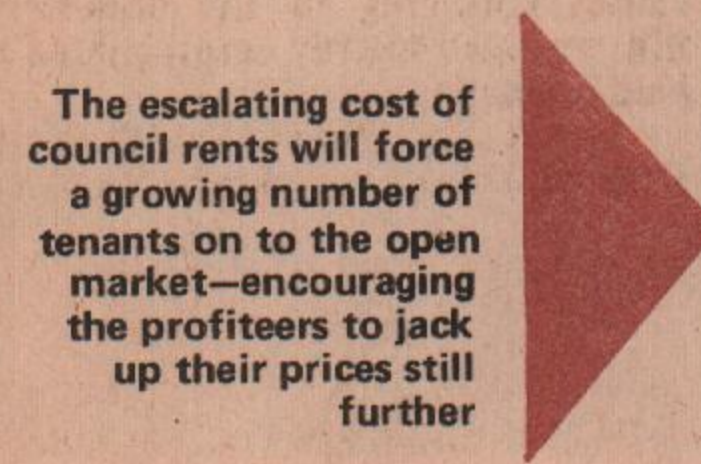
Increasing council rents will compel more people to buy. This will raise house prices higher still and in turn council rents will be put up correspondingly.

Wilson and his colleagues proclaim their opposition to Tory rent policies but Labour can offer no alternative solution to the housing problem unless and until they are prepared to challenge the powerful commercial interests who are growing rich out of the housing shortage.

The grip of moneylenders will never be broken until pious promises are replaced by action to take land under public control and to nationalise the banks, insurance companies, and other



The escalating cost of private housing means that even homes built up to 100 years ago are being sold for £6-7000—putting home ownership out of court for a growing number of working people



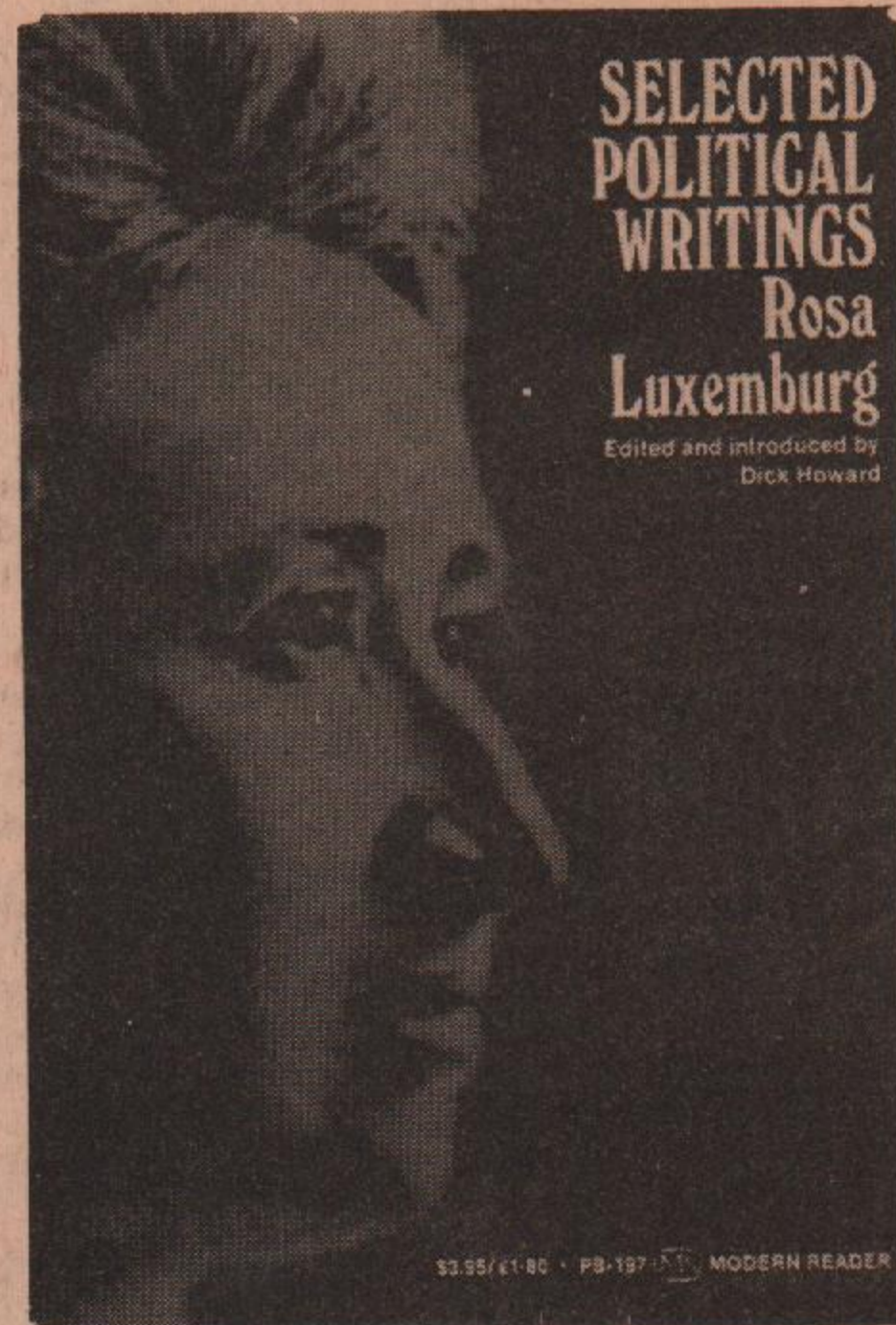
The escalating cost of council rents will force a growing number of tenants on to the open market—encouraging the profiteers to jack up their prices still further

leeches that cripple local authorities with extortionate interest charges.

Will Labour tackle the problem? Their past record says no—but the task of socialists is not to speculate but to build a movement to make sure that if Labour falls down on the job there will be others willing and able to take it on.

**NEXT WEEK:
HOW HOUSING
GRANTS AID
THE SLUMLORDS**

rents Act—vicious circle tenant and house owner'



Rosa Luxemburg, revolutionary genius, fighter and thinker, murdered in her native Germany in 1919. This selection of her writings includes essays on Woman's suffrage and the class struggle, Social Reform or Revolution and The Beginnings of the German Revolution. Edited by Dick Howard. Price £1.80 plus 5p postage.

Also
ROSA LUXEMBURG: A STUDY by Tony Cliff
An analysis of her teachings, with a short biographical sketch. Price 25p plus 3p postage.

FROM: IS BOOKS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

BOSSES COUNTER-ATTACK BUT THE NEW UNIONS MARCH ON

IN the late 1880s a series of dramatic struggles—most notably the London Dock Strike of 1889—brought into trade unions several hundred thousand lower-skilled workers who had before been unorganised.

The new unions were for the most part led by committed socialists, followed a militant policy, and their activities were concerned with the interests of the whole working class.

Understandably, many marxists saw this movement as the first stage in the emergence of a revolutionary working-class consciousness.

These hopes were soon disappointed. The upsurge of organisation has been made easier by an expansion in trade and industry after the long years of the 'Great Depression'. But after 1890 conditions worsened, and unemployment increased sharply.

SURVIVAL

At the same time many employers, taken by surprise at the sudden upsurge of unionism among their workers, took the opportunity to counter-attack.

The new unions were badly placed to resist: in two years they lost half their members, and the decline continued more slowly thereafter.

At the same time there were significant shifts in policy. In the adverse economic climate, union survival seemed to depend on reaching some accommodation with employers—so the original militancy gave way increasingly to a restrained and even passive stance. Those groups of workers who managed to keep their organisations together often became inward-looking, concerned more with their own sectional interests than with broader class questions.

Most new unions began to adopt, to attract members, the friendly benefits they had once scorned. So in many ways the new unions began to parallel the old unions they had once bitterly opposed.

UNREST

In 1910 came a revival. The years before the outbreak of war were a period of 'labour unrest', with the number of strikes rising to record levels. The doctrines of revolutionary syndicalism were widely propagated, and the possibility of a general strike was seriously discussed.

Not surprisingly, these years caused something akin to terror in the hearts of many members of the



A mass demonstration during the big transport strike of 1912

The struggle for Britain's unions

PART THREE—BY BERNARD ROSS

propertied classes. The unrest involved many traditionally passive sections of the working class, and the pioneering efforts of new unionism were renewed.

Membership in the general unions, as they were now known, had fallen to fewer than 100,000 in 1910, but this rose to nearly half a million by 1914, and by the end of the decade numbers were approaching a million and a half. With the mass unemployment of the 1920s

some of these gains were lost, though the decline was less severe than after 1890, and organisation was consolidated by a series of amalgamations which created the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) and General and Municipal Workers' Union (GMWU).

Today these are the first and third largest British unions, with two and a half million members between them.

Though both general unions have

developed from the same historical origins, there are of course important differences.

The GMWU is notorious for its undemocratic structure. The national officials and the full-time regional secretaries form an all-powerful ruling group. All 10 sit on the 24-man general council, and five of them on the 10-man executive.

A curious feature of the union is its nepotism. Lord Jack Cooper, the present general secretary, is the

nephew of an earlier secretary. Tom Williamson, his predecessor, was nephew of a regional secretary. David Basnett, the national official involved in the betrayal of the Pilkington strikers, is son of a regional secretary. Such officials have spent their whole working lives as union bureaucrats, without any background as rank-and-file members.

Not surprisingly, the GMWU has long been one of the most right-wing unions, with a special reputation for disciplining rank-and-file militants. And while rank-and-file pressure has forced the union to make some changes in its traditional policy (agreeing to make a number of recent strikes official and coming off the government's register of trade unions), its leaders are also trying to reinforce their own control.

POWER

Since 1964 many GMWU branches have had their elected secretaries replaced by full-time branch administrative officers, appointed from above, and it seems likely that this bureaucratic system will be further extended.

The TGWU is notable for its system of 11 trade groups, each with some autonomy over industrial policy, and some scope for rank-and-file control. Because of the trade group structure, the regional secretaries in the TGWU are less powerful than in the GMWU.

By contrast, the national trade group officials wield considerable power.

All members of the TGWU executive come, nominally at least, from the rank and file, with representatives from each region and trade group. Though the executive is normally strongly influenced by the views of the general secretary, there is some scope for militants to intervene: in the 1940s between a third and a quarter of executive members were in the Communist Party.

With a less uniform bureaucracy than the GMWU, and a structure allowing more scope for rank-and-file involvement, the TGWU has had in its last two general secretaries—Frank Cousins and Jack Jones—leaders who have tried to cultivate a militant image, and have adopted a 'left' stance on several political issues.

This does not, of course, stop such leaders from at times suppressing rank-and-file militancy as ruthlessly as the most openly right-wing officials.

Next week:
The Bevin years



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TRIBUTE TO A STRIKE By Laurie Flynn

CONRAD ATKINSON is a young painter who comes from Cleator Moor in West Cumberland. It is a little town wedged into the routine of sadness and deprivation of a region for whose problems a thousand plans have been produced and nothing done.

Underneath the stillborn rhetoric of development councils, Cleator Moor has been the scene of one genuine piece of progress. That is the one-year-old strike by the women and men of Brannan's thermometer factory on the town's industrial estate.

For a year now the town has seen the struggle between ordinary working-class people and a tyrannical if respectable exploiter who believes that firm management and the Industrial Relations Act will give the worker back some of the freedom he or she

has recently lost thanks to agitators and disruptives.

The Brannan notion of freedom does of course include some fringe benefits—like putting seven times the permissible amount of mercury into the air so that the employees are free to contract mercury poisoning, which in turn offers the choice of swollen gums, loss of teeth, tremors or abnormal shyness.

The strike is a tremendous tribute to the people who have waged it, to their drive not merely to hold principles but to make their lives abide by them. So it is not surprising that a socialist painter who comes from the town where it is taking place should become deeply involved.

He has chosen to involve his art as well.

The exhibition now open at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London is a collection of letters and documents relating to the factory, the strike, the town and West Cumberland as a whole. It includes video tapes of the strikers, women talking and telling the tale of their lives.

The exhibition relies heavily on the women talking, for they give the show its humanity and its meaning. Otherwise it tends to be a jumble of letters, press cuttings and photographs of the town and the people involved.

Not that a jumble is necessarily a bad thing. Far from it, for the spirit behind the exhibition is a fine thing, born of a working-class commitment to the struggle for emancipation.

But it is not just the artist's job to chronicle things—but to get at their real human meaning. The Brannan's show fails to do this.

It fails to select the aspects of the strike which point up the real human struggle that is being fought. It ends up as a show about one strike, rather than teasing out what this one strike has to say about all strikes.

Conrad Atkinson, his wife and his team have the will and the skills to do more than hold up the mirror. What the working-class movement requires from people like them is something different—a map or a guide to areas we know well but with suggestions for new pathways and new possibilities.

● The Brannan's Strike, the Institute of Contemporary Arts, The Mall, London SW1. 25 May to 25 June.

THE COBRA THAT RULED EGYPT

EVERY DAY at the British Museum huge queues form to view the Tutankhamun Exhibition. The magnificence of treasures is one thing, but what was the society that produced them? Mike McGrath takes a closer look at a civilisation that had crumbled before the birth of Christ.

'THE terror inherent in Pharonic despotism is symbolised by the poisonous Uraeus (cobra) snake, which lies coiled on the ruler's forehead and threatens his enemies with destruction.' Karl Wittfogel's description of the royal insignia is not one we usually see when reading about Ancient Egypt.

Tutankhamun's death mask is described as 'serene', 'impassive', 'vital', 'alive', but the description that fits most closely is Herr Wittfogel's. For what most people don't realise is that Tutankhamun ruled a society which was not surpassed in its totalitarianism until Stalin's Russia.

For socialists there is more to Ancient Egypt than beautiful objects and descriptions of how the rich lived and died. What made it

tick? What was the relationship between ruler and ruled? Who owned what and in whose interest did they act? How did it last so long—more than 3000 years of almost continuous rule?

Herodotus called Egypt 'the gift of the Nile' and he was right. But the gift was a two-edged sword. While it promised security and prosperity in the shape of two or three crops a year, it was only for the price of hard, unremitting work, and moreover, work that had to be highly organised.

CONTROL

The Egyptians' greatest achievements were not their temples, not even the pyramids, but the thousands of miles of dykes, locks and irrigation channels they constructed and maintained for millenia. Such works were essential for the production of food in this totally rainless valley.

Because only the state could undertake such vast construction projects and society only existed within the irrigation areas, the state had an unprecedented control over its people.

The ruling class of this system consisted of several interlocking and overlapping social groups.

Firstly the scribes, whose power was based on their ability—jealously guarded—to keep taxation records. More importantly, they were able to make astronomical observations and so predict the time of a high Nile and a low Nile.

They also probably controlled the overall organisation of the irrigation

system in conjunction with the priests, who officiated at all religious ceremonies and who also administered the temple lands. They acted as mystifiers, casting a veil across the workings of the productive process that they controlled.

The power of the system was total and based on a method well established 3500 years ago—terror. King Horemheb (1330 BC) reigned after Tutankhamun and introduced an edict designed to curtail the most common forms of corruption and rapacity. It prevented the army from looting cattle hides from villages and the punishment for breaking it was '100 blows causing five open wounds'.

But this was enacted not out of a sense of benevolence towards the peasantry, but because taxes were levied on cattle and the looting disrupted this.

PRIESTS

Another part of the decree punishes 'interference with the delivery of dues for the Harem' by cutting off the offender's nose and ears and sending him to Sile—the Egyptian equivalent of being sent to Siberia.

The priests sat in the courts to implement these decrees.

The King's power thus rested on the triple plank of the scribal bureaucrats, the armed forces and the great temples.

Another decree, this time of Seti I (1310 BC) highlights the immense power of this centralised bureaucracy. The decree concerns one

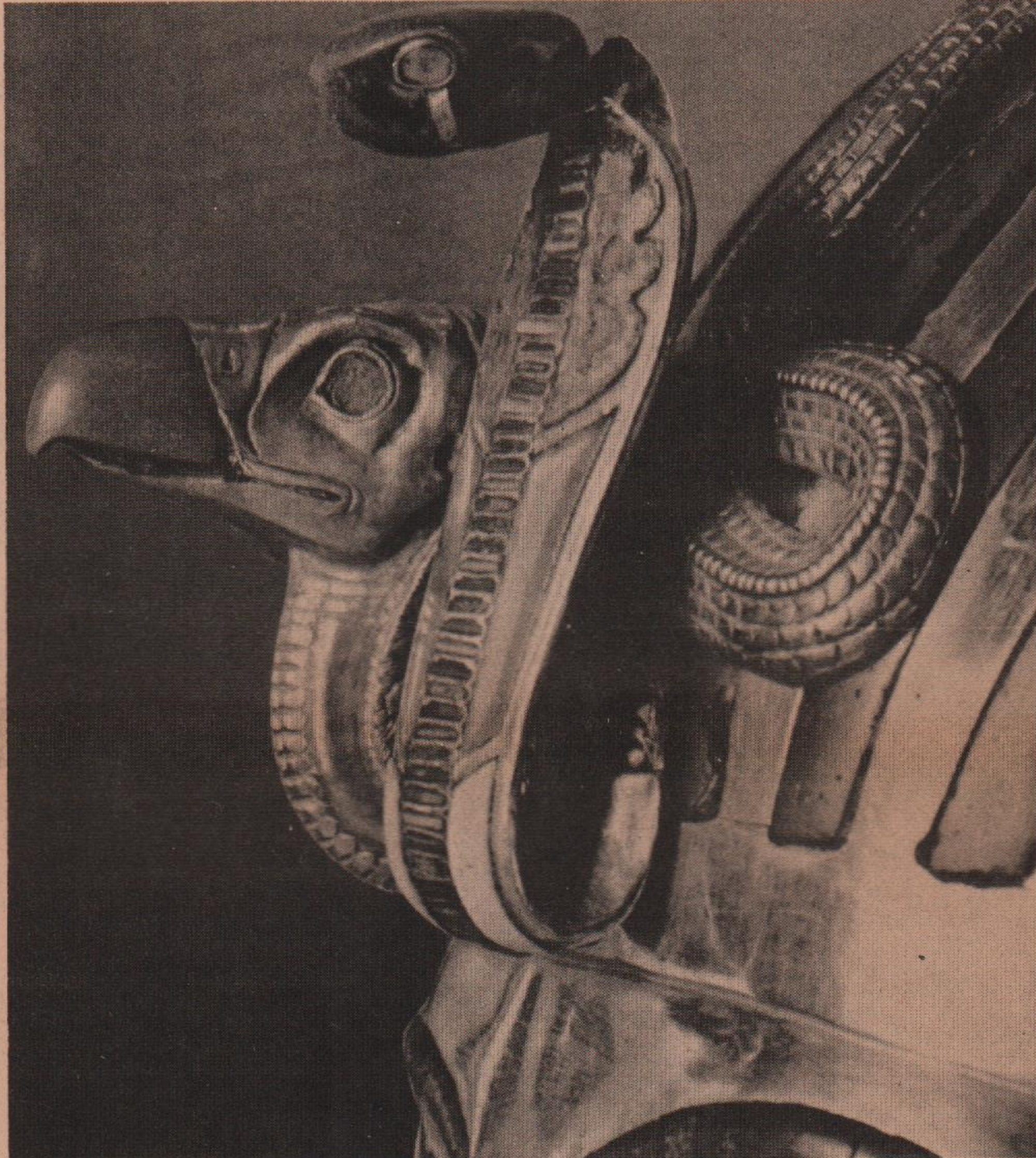
temple, protecting it from the deprivations of the king's men.

It decrees that anyone taking a temple worker for forced labour would get 200 blows and five open wounds.

Anyone moving the boundaries of the temple would have their ears cut off. A temple herdsman selling his cattle received the ultimate penalty—death by impaling.

Because this decree covers only one temple and no others have ever been found, the direct implication is that temples as a matter of course can have their workers carried off for forced labour, cattle taken, boundaries redrawn, their boats held up and robbed.

The power wielded by the ruling class can be seen clearly in much of their art: the massive pyramids, the dwarfing mortuary temples, the wealth expressed in just 50 objects in the Tutankhamun exhibition—the actual number found in his tomb



The symbols of the Egypt ruled by Tutankhamun—the venomous cobra and the predatory vulture—rear their heads on the solid gold face mask discovered on his mummified body

was more than 1700.

And he was a relatively minor king. What must the tombs of the Ramesses have been like?

Unfortunately we will never know, as all other royal tombs were looted in ancient times.

In fact the survival of Tutankhamun's tomb and so the removal from circulation of at least 300lb of gold and countless precious stones must have dealt a severe blow to the later period.

What conclusion can we draw from this brief sketch? The property relations of Ancient Egyptian society were extremely complex and the surviving records somewhat ambiguous, but it can reasonably be said that the dominant property owner was the state. Private property did exist but always and everywhere it was subordinate, existing only in the form of a few merchants and some private land plots.

'ANARCHY!'

In short we have a class which ruled collectively and which, as a class, owned the means of production—echoes of Russia.

In case it be thought that the Egyptian peasant lived under an uninterrupted oppressive regime for 3000 years, the admonitions of Ipuwer make encouraging reading. He is reminding the king of the anarchy that once prevailed.

'The washerman refused to carry his load.

'Noblemen are in distress, while the poor man if full of joy. Every town says: 'Let us suppress the powerful among us'.

'The laws of the council chamber are thrown out, indeed men walk on them in the public places and poor men break them up in the streets.

'Noble ladies are now on rafts and magnates are in the labour establishment, while he who could not even sleep on walls is now the possessor of a bed.

'The king's warehouse is the common property of everyone.'

Even the peasants of Ancient Egypt rose up against their masters and took control of their own lives, however temporarily.

Reproduction Line

by d.r. brown

they shut us in our little homes and keep us from each other they tell us to race mr jones and never call him brother and amidst the soiled nappies above the babies whine the women toil endlessly on the reproduction line



A gold and jewelled brooch found in the king's tomb

WHAT WE STAND FOR

The International Socialists is a democratic organisation whose membership is open to all who accept its main principles and who are willing to pay contributions and to work in one of its organisations

We believe in independent working-class action for the abolition of capitalism and its replacement by a classless society with production for use and not for profit.

We work in the mass organisations of the working class and are firmly committed to a policy of internationalism.

Capitalism is international. The giant firms have investments throughout the world and owe no allegiances except to themselves and the economic system they maintain.

In Europe, the Common Market has been formed for the sole purpose of increasing the trade and profits of these multi-national firms.

The international power of capitalism can only be overcome by international action by the working class.

A single socialist state cannot indefinitely survive unless workers of other countries actively come to its aid by extending the socialist revolution.

In addition to building a revolutionary socialist organisation in this country we also believe in the necessity of forming a world revolutionary socialist international independent of either Washington or Moscow. To this end we have close relationships with a number of other socialist organisations throughout the world.

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

We fight:

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

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

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

Against anti-trade union laws and any

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

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

For equal pay and a better deal for young workers.

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

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

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

Against racialism and police victimisation of black workers.

Against immigration restriction.

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

For real social, economic and political equality for women.

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

Against secret diplomacy.

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

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

We are opposed to all ruling class policies and organisations. We work to build a revolutionary workers' party in Britain and to this end support the unity of all revolutionary groups.

The struggle for socialism is the central struggle of our time. Workers' power and a world based on human solidarity, on the increasing of man's power over nature, with the abolition of the power of man over man, is certainly worth fighting for.

It is no use just talking about it. More than a century ago Karl Marx wrote: 'The philosophers have merely interpreted the world. The point is to change it.' If you want to help us change the world and build socialism, join us.

Electricians' leaders play the power game

THE much delayed presidential election in the Electricians and Plumbers' Union is being held during May and June.

The vacancy caused by the death of Les Cannon in December 1970 left a power vacuum in the union. Cannon had ruled with a rod of iron, and in doing so had invested the role of general president with a tremendous amount of power. Also, by union rules, as general president, he had to be responsible to the executive for all negotiations by or on behalf of the union, and attend (except where he may think it expedient to make other arrangements) each conference held with the employers and prepare and present the case for the union. He had to submit a report on all negotiations to the executive council. (Rule 12 clauses c and d, 1965 Rules).

Frank Chapple, then general secretary and the obvious heir to Cannon's mantle, saw the possibility of an elected general president using this power advantage to overshadow him. Using the grounds that the 1971 rules revision conference would have to decide whether a full-time official could apply for the presidential post, Chapple persuaded the executive to postpone the election.

Smashed

He then proceeded to act as chief negotiator for the union, a position outside his orbit as general secretary, which is normally an organisation post in the union. This caused dissension among the executive and full-timers, and in fact Mark Young, a national officer and one-time leading light in the Reform Group that smashed the old executive, took legal action in an attempt to have the election held before the rules revision conference.

But the High Court decided in May that the executive was within its rights in deferring the election, and Young had to find £1500 costs.

Before the rules revision conference there was speculation among union members about what rule changes Chapple would propose to keep his power intact. There was a suggestion that he would propose the creation of extra secretaries under him, while doing away with the position of general president altogether.

But when the new rules were presented



Fred Gore: rank and file candidate

to conference only clause 7(d) of rule 12 had been omitted, still leaving the general president with the responsibility for top level negotiations on the union's behalf.

But all the bitter in-fighting in the executive over the past months had left its scars, and there was no hope of unanimity on a suitable right-wing candidate for the vacant post.

In this situation Chapple carried out an earlier threat—that if the executive could not agree on a candidate he would stand himself. This meant that the line-up for the long delayed election was: Chapple, Young, Eric Hammond, an executive councillor, and Fred Gore, a senior steward at London Airport and the only rank-and-

file candidate.

But dissension was not confined to the executive. The left, having supported Fred Gore in the previous election for general secretary, expected the same pattern to be followed as there seemed no other rank-and-file candidate of his stature in the field.

So consternation reigned when it became known through the grapevine that certain sections of the Communist Party were supporting Hammond. Certainly Hammond had been elected on a left-wing ticket, but since then his line has been largely pro-executive, and he has been a consistent supporter of the Joint Industry Board agreement, the organisation that fined Bootle Inland Revenue steward John Byrne £100 because he led a strike for higher wages.

But the Communist Party at the moment seems more concerned with their nationwide policy in union elections of 'splitting the right', with little regard for political principles. Fortunately a large percentage of the left, including the 'Flashlight' group, are dedicated to supporting the rank-and-file candidate Fred Gore. It is hoped that many sparks and plumbers will follow their lead.

Certainly Electricians and Plumbers Union members should realise that a vote for any of the full-timers who are running will do little to change the attitude of the union leadership. Only when they vote for and elect a rank-and-file candidate pledged to fight for radical changes in the union structure can the move to a more democratic union begin.

Immigrant workers fight exploitation

THE PORTUGUESE Workers' Branch of the Transport Workers Union was founded last week. The branch has 50 members, most of them employed in hotels or catering, and some in hospitals.

It is hoped that more of the 30,000 Portuguese workers in Britain will be members by the end of the year. The branch will be open to Spanish workers as well, until it is possible to set up a separate Spanish branch.

The lot of immigrant workers from Southern Europe is particularly bad. For centuries foreign companies—and in particular British big business—have drained the wealth from their countries, leaving heavy unemployment behind.

When the immigrants arrive in Britain they meet not only prejudice but unscrupulous employers. Their ignorance of the English language and the fact that they need a work permit in order to stay are used to compel them to accept wages and conditions that British workers would not tolerate.

Examples of this super-exploitation were brought up by workers at the founding meeting. In one hotel, a young man had been employed for £14 on a 44-hour week.

In another, kitchen staff had no right to rest days during the week and overtime

was compulsory. There was no extra payment above the normal hourly rate for overtime and weekend working.

Hospital workers had their work load almost doubled because of cut-backs in staffing. They received only a measly bonus in return and it was suspected that even then the full bonus was not being paid.

A member of the newly elected steering committee told Socialist Worker: 'Better wages and conditions are not only a right, but also a necessity for us. We have to overcome the prejudices against immigrants that exist among many British workers.'

'If we win the improvements we need, we can get rid of the idea that we are not as good as British workers, that we take other people's jobs, or that we keep wages down. Employers will no longer be able to use us as an excuse to divide workers against one another.'

'The key to victory is unity in our workplaces, and also with our fellow workers in the trade union movement. This is why we have joined the TGWU, and also why we had the largest branch delegation on the TUC's May Day march.'

Readers who are or who know Portuguese or Spanish workers should contact: TGWU Portuguese Workers' Branch (No. 1647), c/o Jack Lucas, TGWU Regional Organiser, 218 Green Lanes, Finsbury Park, London N4.

The Power Game

by Colin Barker

The truth about the power industry, the workers' pay claim and the grim record of productivity dealing. 25p plus 3p post from ADVANCE, 68 Fountains Road, Stretford, Lancs.

THERE ARE 15 BRANCHES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

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Kirkcaldy
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Glasgow S
Greenock
Stirling
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Durham
Hartlepool
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
South Shields
Spennymoor
Sunderland
Teesside E
Teesside W

NORTH
Barnsley
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Grimsby
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Barrow
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Crewe
Kirkby
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Warwick
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WHAT'S ON

Copy for What's On must arrive first post Monday or phoned Monday morning. Notices are charged at 5p per line. Semi-display 10p per line. Cash with copy. No insertions without payment—invoices cannot be sent.

MEETINGS

SWANSEA IS: Socialism or the 30s—which way are we going? Public meeting led off by Tony Goodchild, South Wales IS organiser. 7.30pm, Thurs 6 June, AEU House, Orchard St, Swansea.

CAMDEN IS Social: Saturday 3 June, 7.30pm, North Western Poly bar area, Prince of Wales Rd, London NW5. Easy buses and tube. Buffet food, music and dancing. Entrance 25p.

SOCIALIST MEDICAL ASSOCIATION: Private Practice—who wins? Speaker: Mrs Renee Short MP. Sat 10 June, 2.30pm, Central Hall, Westminster.

BRISTOL IS public meeting: Support the Fine Tubes Strike. Speaker: shop steward Fine Tubes strike committee. Sun 4 June, 8pm, Crown and Dove pub (opposite fire station), Bridewell St, Bristol 1.

WANDSWORTH IS public meeting: History and all that jazz—Roger Protz gives an illustrated talk on modern jazz. Thursday 8 June, 8pm, The Spotted Dog, 72 Garrett Lane (nr Wandsworth Town Hall), SW18.

KILBURN AND HARLESDEN IS public meeting THE NEED FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY Speaker: Paul Foot Tuesday 6 June, 8pm, Anson Hall, Chichele Road, Cricklewood, NW2.

IS POST OFFICE WORKERS national fraction meeting to be held in London on Sunday 11 June. Details from BOX 265A, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

Wandsworth and Lambeth IS FOLK NIGHT
Prager and Rye
Jugular Vein
Unbelievable Bum Band
The Nags Head, junction Plough Road and York Rd (nr Clapham Junction)
Sat 10 June, 7.30pm. Entrance 30p

LONDON REGION INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS public meeting
NIGEL HARRIS, recently returned from a visit to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, speaks on SUB-CONTINENT IN TURMOIL
Tues 13 June, 7.30pm
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square
Admission 10p

EDINBURGH IS public meeting The Engineers' Claim and how to win it
Speakers: Mike Smith (Convener of the occupied Ferranti Hollinwood factory, Manchester)
Glyn Carver (International Socialists NW England regional organiser)
Wednesday 7 June, 7.30pm
Trades Council Club, 11 Albany Street, Edinburgh.

NOTICES

FEMALE COMRADE seeks own room in flat/house in West London. Phone Ann at 01-229-4259 after 5pm.

LEICESTER-NOTTINGHAM-DERBY: Comrades moving to these towns should contact branch secretaries for details of accommodation etc.

JOBS for socialist economists and statisticians with noses for facts and the grindstone. Ring 01-435 5633 evenings for interview with Kidron.

WANTED: Assistant business manager for Socialist Worker. Clerical experience essential, typing an advantage. IS members only. Apply Jim Nichol, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2. Tel: 01-739 1870.

POST OFFICE WORKER paper for the rank and file in Post Office trade unions
Latest issue now out
price 3p, from
Tom Dredge, 3 Godric Crescent,
New Addington, Croydon, Surrey.



THE RENTS BATTLE

Labour calls for a retreat

WHILE opposition to the Tory Rent Bill continues to grow throughout the country, Labour Party leaders have been doing their utmost to persuade local councils to abandon outright opposition to it.

A meeting of the leaders of the 26 largest Labour councils was held at Transport House last weekend where they were urged to collaborate with the Bill.

The Labour leaders' arguments were put forward in a memorandum from MP Reg Freeson, who argued that there is a loophole in the Bill which means that councils will not have to raise rents immediately by as much as was previously thought.

He admits that rents will still have to go up, but says that Labour councils can implement it so that instead of 40 per cent of their tenants being forced to undergo the indignity of means tests, 'only' a quarter will have to do so.

Clearly Freeson's concern is not with the welfare of the tenants, otherwise he would urge the councils to refuse to impose any rent increases at all. He wants to persuade Labour councils to reject militant policies and to continue in amicable co-operation with the Tory government.

If councils impose fairly low rent increases in October, the government can then use rent assessment committees to force rents up further later in the year. Rents will still rise massively, but not all at the same time, and the councils might be able to avoid facing united opposition from all their estates simultaneously.

The manoeuvres of the national Labour leaders make it all the more imperative that tenants organise at local level and press for a national conference of all tenants' organisations.

Local Labour councillors must be forced to explain to mass tenants' meetings where they stand. Are they prepared to act as errand boys for the government, or will they boycott the Bill and work with tenants?

CAMDEN: A meeting called by Camden Labour councillors set up an action committee of Labour councillors to oppose the implementation of the Bill. 40 delegates from four London boroughs and other smaller councils took part.

LAMBETH: Delegates from trade unions, tenants associations and political organisations met to discuss opposition to the rent rises. They called on Lambeth Labour Council to refuse to implement the Bill.

REDDITCH: A militant meeting of 300 tenants hammered the local development corporation which controls the town. An action committee has been formed and plans to organise a partial rent strike.

GREENWICH: The tenants' movement is organising a mass march for 3 June to demonstrate their opposition to the Bill and make sure that Greenwich Council doesn't implement the rent rises.

LONDON: A rally against the Bill is being organised for 9 July in Trafalgar Square by the Association of London Housing Estates.

MANCHESTER: More than 1000 Labour Party Young Socialist members marched in opposition to the Bill and rent rises last weekend.

SCOTLAND: A joint action committee to fight the rent rises in the West of Scotland was set up at a meeting in Glasgow. It was called by Rolls-Royce shop stewards, and more than 100 delegates from tenants' associations, shop stewards' committees, trade union branches, and trades councils. The committee will begin a campaign on the factory floor and on the estates to stress the common interests of tenants and workers in fighting rent rises.

CREDITON, Devon: Council tenants have formed an action committee with support from the local Labour Party. The committee is considering the possibility of rent strikes and is organising a petition

Lung disease: NCB ready to fight miners

THE National Coal Board is preparing to use every trick in the book to defeat miners' legal actions for compensation for pneumoconiosis, the lung disease caused by excess dust levels in the pits.

Lawyers for nine miners and ex-miners whose actions are being fought as joint test cases by the National Union of Miners and the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers have now received copies of the NCB defence.

The statements generously admit that the men were indeed employed in the pits and do have pneumoconiosis. But the Board denies all responsibility for their condition.

And it does not just leave the matter there. The defence states that the Board

has no responsibility for anything that happened before nationalisation.

What the Board is saying is that it bought out the total assets and liabilities of the rotting private enterprise mining industry except one—responsibility for miners' lungs damaged in the pursuit of profit.

Separated

A later paragraph in the statement of defence also denies that the private pit owners were ever negligent—an exceedingly strange statement to make if, as the Board claims, it has no legal responsibility for what went on under private ownership.

The Board is also doing its damndest to make sure that the nine cases and flood of others which are certain to follow in

their wake are all tried separately.

Each case should be heard by a different judge because, says the NCB, any judge trying more than one case could be biased by what he heard in a previous case.

Obviously the Board fears that the judge might actually be forced to generalise about working conditions and negligence in the mining industry. If this happened, the result would be a foregone conclusion. Also, the nominally individual actions for dust compensation might turn into an indictment of a whole industry and the society of which it is a part.

Present estimates indicate that the bill for lung compensation could well top £400 million, which is of course why the NCB and the government are taking the first nine actions so seriously.

After many years of actively

discouraging its members from suing the Board for damages the National Union of Mineworkers has been forced to take some action at least along the compensation front.

But the NUM still has no strategy for conducting the prosecution of its members' claims or of the NCB. Area officials who not so long ago stamped on any efforts by members to bring actions are now vying with one another to get the 'glory' of being the first area into court.

Tough

This would be very much to the NCB's liking as the actions would be unco-ordinated and handled by sloppy lawyers who have no interest in the cases other than a speedy conclusion and collection of their fees.

The massive size of the potential liability bill means that the NCB and the government are unlikely to stop at pre-trial manoeuvring to avoid payment. With the whole legal framework coming ever more directly under government control, miners and their lawyers face a very tough battle indeed just to get some compensation.

Final court of appeal (for the miners and the NCB) is of course the House of Lords, where a certain Robens is a man of no mean influence, and where the law lords are under the supervision of the Lord Chancellor, the direct political appointee of the government.

Present occupant of this post is Lord Hailsham, who believes that problems of society as a whole and the mining industry is the violence and anarchy of the picket lines. The fact that there are at least 38,000 miners and ex-miners suffering from pneumoconiosis could be said to contradict this view.

STRIKE PICKETS FACE TRIAL

Socialist Worker Reporter
DUNFERMLINE:—13 men arrested during the miners' strike will stand trial in the local sheriff's court on Tuesday charged with mobbing and rioting, incitement to riot and assaulting six police officers.

On Monday 14 February, at the height of the strike the 13 men were singled out and arrested from thousands of pickets at Longannet power station near Dunfermline.

The charges originally concerned four policemen—two fresh names have been found since February.

The issue at stake is clear, despite the red herring of the official charges. It is a question of whether or not trade unionists have a right to a decent standard of living and whether, in order to stop them getting it, the government, the police and the courts can arrest, fine and jail them.

The arrests came at a crucial point in the strike. Power cuts were hitting profits with a vengeance. Working-class sympathy was with the miners and a state of emergency had been declared.

Longannet power station was a vital battlefield for the Tories. It is one of the biggest power stations in Scotland and is also the biggest coal dump in Britain.

REFUSAL

The Tories also knew that they would need to use troops to get the coal out. The miners knew it too. They laid on special trains to bring thousands of miners up from England to swell the ranks of the Scottish miners already picketing Longannet.

The reinforcements were due to arrive on Tuesday 15 February. The police were tipped off and a special briefing was given to all ranks that the pickets had to be broken by any means necessary on Monday 14 February. A few policemen, to their credit, refused to go on duty.

On the morning of the 14th the battle lines were drawn by the police. They lined the approach road on either side with the intention of forming the miners up behind them and leaving the road clear. The strike committee had anticipated this and had planned to mount a moving picket on the road. This would have confused the police and closed the power station.

Unfortunately a local Communist Party member called Archie Macmillan arrived with a loudhailer and told the men to line up behind the police ranks. This might not have mattered as the pickets vastly outnumbered the police and found it easy to break the lines and block the road. But each time they did so, the loudhailer told them to return to the pavement and 'picket peacefully' from there.

MISTAKE

The men were in no mood for this and the police knew it. They started making arrests and the Longannet 13 were born.

The 13 spent three nights in jail, refused bail by Sheriff Mowat. This turned out to be a political mistake, as was the handcuffing of the 13 'evil disposed persons' as the charge sheet described them. The executive of the Scottish miners immediately declared that the Scots pits would stay idle until the men were released.

The Tories were so terrified in case the Scots situation jeopardised the deal to end the strike. They had to get off the hook.

Norman Wylie, QC MP, Lord Advocate for Scotland, flew to Edinburgh from London to sort out the mess. No-one knows what was said to the over eager Procurator Fiscal James Douglas but the effect of Wylie's lecture on ruling-class



OFF TO THE NICK: a picket is lifted by the police during the miners' strike. The miners' determination to shut down the power stations forced the Tories to use the full might of the police in a desperate effort to break the strikers' ranks.

tactics was that the men were released pending the trial. Such action is unprecedented in Scottish legal history and shows just how frightened the Tories were.

There are various ways the Tories can handle the trial. Three options are open to the jury under Scottish law: guilty, not guilty and not proven.

If a guilty verdict is brought in, the courts could be in real trouble. Everything depends on the actions of rank and file miners and other workers. If there are large demonstrations and pickets outside the court, the sheriff will have to consider the possibility of another riot if any of the pickets are jailed.

If the Tories feel strong enough, however, they may try to get the pickets jailed. Or they may try to single out the two non-miners in the dock as 'trouble makers' and 'subversives'.

Neither must be allowed to happen. Whatever the tactics the state adopts, the best chance the 13 have of being freed is for workers to mount a massive demonstration outside the court to intimidate the state, in the same way the state is trying to intimidate the miners.

Sit-in fights strike-breaking machinery

'WE'LL keep this up until we get our money!' That was the message of 50 Warwick strikers to the TV camera-men who had come to cover their sit-in demonstration at Leamington Social Security office last Friday.

The strikers from Benford Concrete Machinery had occupied the office until 6pm the previous evening in protest against the refusal of officials to make emergency payments to unmarried strikers. Several single strikers were facing immediate hardship including possible eviction from their lodgings.

The callous attitude of the Social Security manager and staff provoked angry reactions from single and married men alike. 'It's obvious that this set-up is designed to break strikes', said one young striker. 'It's really opened my eyes', said another. 'I've never been politically minded before this—but now...'

Engineering union convenor John Duffy said the men would keep returning in force until they got satisfaction.

Later, at a mass meeting outside the Benford works, the men reaffirmed their determination to stay out on strike until their claim for £6 across the board and a revised piecework system was met. The 350 workers downed tools three weeks ago after exhausting all negotiating procedure.

Benford's directors paid out £369,600 in dividends alone last year.

Donations and messages of support to: E Cowling, 22 St Christopher's Close, Warwick.

No sweet talk

YORK: The fitters' strike at Rowntree's sweet factory is moving into its fifth week. Management's latest offer—£3 from 1 July and a further £1.40 from next January—has been rejected. The fitters, members of the engineering union want equal rates with Mackintosh fitters in Halifax, where take-home pay is up to £4 a week more.

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YORK IS public meeting
TONY CLIFF
author of Productivity Deals and How to fight them speaks on **THE EMPLOYERS' OFFENSIVE**
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Speakers: Tony Cliff and Bob Light
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Sunday 4 June, 8pm
Cowley Community Centre, Oxford



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Socialist Worker

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

N. IRELAND: PEACE AT WHAT PRICE?

THE DECISION by the official IRA to end offensive actions against British troops occupying Northern Ireland follows a week in which the middle-class Catholic establishment has launched increasingly bitter attacks on the republican movement. Politicians and leaders of the Catholic Church have taken their cue from Southern Tory Prime Minister Jack Lynch when he claimed that 'disruptive forces, fronting for an alien ideology' were trying to 'arouse sectarian passions and provoke civil war'.

The refrain was taken up by a leading priest, Father O'Neill, in Derry, who spoke of the IRA as part of a 'world communist conspiracy'. This was the message being put across at church services throughout the Six Counties on Sunday.

The aim of the campaign is to divide and confuse the mass of working-class Catholics who have so far supported the IRA as the only force that protects them from attacks by the British Army or Protestant thugs.

Catholic politicians, like the leaders of the Social Democratic and Labour Party, are only too eager to get some of the spoils of political power for themselves. They are prepared to go back on all their previous promises and work with the administration of the British Tory minister in charge of the Six Counties, William Whitelaw, even while imprisonment without trial remains.

Meanwhile in the South, Lynch is preparing to give Whitelaw a hand by setting up special courts without juries to try republican prisoners.

But the support that the demand for 'peace' enjoys among a substantial section of the Catholic population is not only to be explained by the crude tub-thumping of priests and politicians. Those involved in the peace meetings and delegations from the Bogside have included working-class people with bitter memories of what the British troops have done in the past.

BITTER

Their desire for peace does not spring, like that of the priests and politicians, from any liking for Tory rule. It expresses a genuine feeling that the killing and the fighting has gone on long enough and that its continuance is not going to lead to any real change for the better.

Another factor pushing people to pray for peace at almost any price is the growing threat of a bitter religious sectarian blood bath in Belfast, which would involve hundreds of dead. The most publicised expressions of the threat have been the massive demonstrations by Protestants lined up in military formation.

Less publicised have been the almost daily killings in which armed groups of extreme Protestants murder unarmed Catholics, to which Catholics respond with similar actions.

The fear that this cycle of terror and counter-terror will escalate into a full scale civil war, with Catholic and Protestant workers murdering one another wholesale, exerts a growing pressure on people for an end to any kind of struggle. Rather than face a civil war, they prefer to opt for an end of the violence, an end to the bombing

by Chris Harman

and a return to 'normal life'.

Yet 'normal life' for the population of Northern Ireland will mean that most of the problems that have driven them to rebel for the past four years will go unchanged.

Unemployment will remain well above the British level. Slums will persist. Wages will stay lower than in Britain. Hundreds of men will continue to rot in jail, even if many of the internees are released.

And nothing that Whitelaw does will stop the sectarianism that continues to flourish in such conditions.

Members of both wings of the republican movement understand this situation, however confusedly, and want to go on struggling.

BOMBING

The difficulty they face in standing up to the barrage of denunciation is that they have no clear strategy for leading the struggle to victory. This is most clearly the case with the Provisionals who continue to believe that British imperialism can be defeated by bombing odd bits of industrial real estate.

But the Tories are not going to abandon all they hold just because small parts of their property are destroyed. The indiscriminate bombings serve further to tie Protestant workers to sectarian politicians like William Craig and increase the craving for peace among many Catholics.

The Officials have quite correctly criticised the bombing campaign of the Provisionals. The danger is that their own ceasefire will not be a prelude to the consolidation of the resistance in the North but rather the first retreat in what could develop into a rout.

So far the Officials, despite their talk of the need for united working-class action, have been unable to show workers the real links between the fight to throw out the British troops and the struggle over immediate bread and butter issues.

If Whitelaw's attempts to stabilise Tory rule in Ireland are to be foiled, then a genuine working-class based revolutionary organisation has to be built now. Otherwise there is the very real danger that the Tories will succeed in smashing the gains of four years of bitter and heroic struggle.

Building protester heads for the top



THOUSANDS of London building workers struck for the day on Wednesday and came to demonstrate their solidarity with Peter Cavanagh, a steelfixer who has been occupying a tower crane on Lovell's Guilford Street for the past week.

Cavanagh took his action to prevent the crane being used by lump labour after directly-employed workers had been sacked off the site for having insurance cards.

The building claim for a £30 basic for a 35-hour week has now reached deadlock and official strikes are scheduled for 26 June.

On Tuesday three building workers at the Priory Ringway site in Birmingham started a crane sit-in over a victimised militant.

Postmen snub union leaders

BLACKPOOL: Post Office union delegates gave their leaders a decisive snub last week in a dramatic policy change that rejected local productivity bargaining.

In another powerful move in defence of their jobs, they turned down proposals for mechanisation of the postal service and modernisation of dialling equipment at telephone exchanges. The victories were a heartening step forward for militants who have been arguing the dangers of 'modernisation' on the bosses' terms.

The heavy votes against the union executive line came in spite of strong pleading from general secretary Tom Jackson. But the leadership did succeed in winning him a substantial pay increase of nearly £2000 a year, on top of his present £4500—a rather bigger percentage increase than the eight per cent he settled for his members last year.

BREAKTHROUGH AS PARTS FACTORY IS OCCUPIED

SUNDERLAND: A sit-in began last Friday at the factory of Hepworth and Grandage, which supplies piston-rings to the car industry. It is the first sit-in in the North East and a breakthrough for the Sunderland area, where 10 per cent unemployment has dampened down the fight for wages and conditions.

The sit-in was proposed from the shop floor at a mass meeting held after management had laid off 450 workers. The men had been working to rule and banning overtime in support of their pay claim, which is part of the national engineering battle.

SUSSEX: Strikes inspired by the London schools walk-out have been held in several parts of the county, particularly in Brighton. Whitehawk Secondary Modern School, originally scheduled to be rebuilt in 1953, has been the most militant.

About 50 fourth-year girls walked out in protest over school conditions—school dinners, disgusting toilet facilities and overcrowded classes. The strike, the following day, was virtually solid; only 30 pupils remained in the school.

Attempts to get other schools out were foiled by the police, guard-dogs and head teachers. Some pupils have been expelled, others have been threatened with being sent to children's homes, some have received letters warning them they face a £50 fine if absent from school again.

TOM DRIVER, general secretary of the college teachers' union, ATTI, told the annual conference in Sheffield last weekend that the members were to blame for accepting a recent 7½ per cent pay rise

Sit-ins — the sting in the tail

by Glyn Carver

THE Manchester engineers are proving to the bosses that they have a sting in their tail. Despite the rash of settlements reported last week, more than half a dozen engineering firms are still in dispute with members of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, and upwards of a dozen factories are still occupied.

Ferranti workers sitting in at five factories in the Manchester and Oldham areas have now received an improved offer on time rates and a promise of more money in January. They are meeting this week to discuss the position.

In the Stockport area last week the two biggest plants, Hawker Siddeley and Mirreles, rejected the latest overtures from the management by an overwhelming majority.

In Warrington, following the lead given by Metal Box, workers at Ruston Paxman kicked out the management from their occupied factory.

This action is particularly significant in the Manchester situation not only because it is an escalation of the present struggle but also because their factory is part of the GEC combine which has been making all the running as far as the bosses are concerned.

The sell-out at GEC/AEI Trafford Park was therefore a severe blow to the Manchester district movement. The increased determination of another GEC plant can only improve the situation and strengthen those workers still occupying in defiance of the bosses' attempt to force mediocre settlements.

The decision of the Manchester district committee of the union confederation to drop the claim for the 35-hour week and the criminal lack of real local and national support for the occupations makes it all the more difficult for the workers to win any concessions on hours.

But what those factories still fighting can demonstrate is that further improvements on the wages and holidays front can be won by continuing the fight.

Already Ferranti workers have sent out a delegation to the Ferranti plants in Scotland to raise support. But much more needs to be done if the Manchester workers are to avoid being starved into submission.

PICKET LINES

while the main teachers' unions had settled for 9½ per cent.

Driver, 30 years a Communist Party member, did not point out that his executive had recommended the miserly increase to the members.

The growing strength of the left in the union was shown by well-supported demands for greater democracy in colleges and an end to pay grades.

The conference passed a motion on the Industrial Relations Act calling for support for any unions threatened by the law. It also demanded the expulsion from the TUC of any unions that refuse to toe official Congress policy.

COVENTRY: Workers at the D and E Plastics factory at Canley are now in the seventh week of their strike for 75p an hour for night workers and 52½p an hour for day workers. At the moment both day and night workers earn 50p while women earn only 50p.

The workers joined the Transport and General Workers Union just before the strike started and so do not receive strike pay.

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