

Socialist Worker

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Car workers and post strikers lead counter offensive

GREAT FIGHT BACK



Dagenham: Body Plant workers march out on Monday to start their vital strike for parity with Midlands car rates. Another picture: page 8

KEY SECTIONS of workers are staging a magnificent fight back as the Tories openly challenge their right to a decent wage. Section after section are being forced to strike as the only way to defend and improve living standards.

The postal workers are in the third week of their dispute. 44,000 Ford workers have just started their battle for parity. Railwaymen and power workers may be in the fight in the next few weeks.

Claims for better wages are being turned down throughout the whole of the public sector. If the postmen had accepted the Post Office's 8 per cent offer they would have suffered a pay cut because the increase in the cost of living in 1970 was more than 10 per cent.

Ford workers are the worst paid in the entire motor industry. Their wages are between £10 and £17 a week less than those earned by Midlands car workers.

Fords can afford to pay huge pay rises. For years they have made tremendous profits.

DETERMINED

In both 1968 and 1969 they made more than £1,000 profit per worker. In simple language this means about £20 profit a week from every member of their labour force.

The government is determined to hold down wages. They say this is because they want to stop inflation. Nothing can be further from the truth.

The employers want to increase their profits. The Tories are their parliamentary representatives.

Together they want to boost profits at the expense of working people.

An example of this is the selling off of the profitable parts of the nationalised industries. This is not being done because of 'principle'.

It is being done to swell the pockets of the wealthy. It is the Tories' way of thanking Big Business for giving money to their election funds. It is the big pay-off at the public's expense.

The government is determined to defeat both the post office workers and the Ford workers. They want to

by SW Industrial Correspondent

frighten workers into not asking for pay increases and to publicly demonstrate that they and the employers are stronger than the working class.

This offensive is underlined by the introduction of anti-trade union laws. If passed, those laws would have made the Ford strike 'unfair' and given the management the right to claim huge damages in the Tories special National Industrial Relations Court.

If the Tories are successful in holding down wages and defeating the current strikes, millions of working people will pay the penalty. The fate of power workers, railwaymen, teachers, clothing workers and many others will be determined by the present strikes.

The Ford strike is particularly crucial. For years the millionaire press has complained about 'highly paid' and militant car workers.

MAGNIFICENT

Car workers have been in the front line of the wages battle for many years. The pay increases they won have encouraged hundreds of claims from other groups of workers.

Several years ago, Ford workers struck in support of low-paid nurses. It was a magnificent gesture

Today they are again in the front line. The standard of living of millions will either be improved or cut depending on the outcome of their struggle. They are the crack troops of the working class.

We must not allow them to stand alone.

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- POST STRIKE: page 8

Oil: the forgotten people

ONE MATTER that has not been discussed in the abortive talks between the oil producing nations and the western petroleum monopolies is the plight of the poverty-stricken masses of the Middle East.

But their situation is a burning indictment of a robber-baron system that exploits the wealthy resources of the oil areas and leaves the people in abject squalor.

Only 12 per cent of the proceeds from each barrel of crude oil goes to

the producing country. The rest is carved up by the oil firms and the wealthy western powers in profits and taxes.

The love affair between the west and the Shah of Iran is likely to cool as he leads the campaign for the Middle East despots to grab a bigger slice of the cake. The Shah and the assorted sheiks who live in luxury while their people starve and their militant leaders are jailed and flogged deserve no support from anti-imperialists in the west.

But we must maintain our chief condemnation for the real villains: the giant oil monopolies and their government backers who have supported the reactionary regimes in the Middle East in order to bleed those countries of the product that could bring decent living standards to the Arab masses.

Shining through the hypocrisy of the oil talks is the urgent need for a joint struggle of the people of the west and the Middle East to smash imperialism and its puppets.

Boy 'beaten by police' died IT IS HAPPENING HERE: Centre pages

21 February – next step in union fight

EVERY MILITANT must prepare in the next two weeks to make the protest demonstration called by the TUC for 21 February a success. A massive display of opposition to the government's anti-union laws is necessary.

But a single demonstration – deliberately arranged by the TUC leaders on a Sunday to avoid inconveniencing employers – is not an adequate response to the government's measures. If the one-day strikes on 8 December and 12 January did not make the Tories change their minds, a mass rally in Trafalgar Square will not do so either. The most that such a rally can do is to assert the unity and solidarity of workers as they prepare to fight the legislation.

The urgent need now is preparation for a real fight, involving prolonged industrial action, to defeat the legislation. Only strike action can defeat the Tory laws and the task now is to explain its necessity to the mass of ordinary workers.

Established TUC leaders have no intention of making such a case. Men like Feather and Cooper fear militant action as much as they fear the government's measures. Some were even arguing that the 21 February demonstration should be cancelled in case it escaped from their control. They see the rally as the end of their campaign against the Bill. Although the 'left' union leaders have been making louder noises, they have still to come out with a clear and decisive policy to smash the Bill.

All this makes it imperative for rank and file activists to organise now to ensure that the struggle goes on. Trade union executives must be pressurised continually to fight and to prepare their members for large scale industrial action. At the local level, Councils of Action based upon genuine delegates from as many industries as possible must be built. They should explain to the rank and file the need for industrial action against the Bill and for solidarity with groups like postmen and Ford workers, even when entrenched bureaucrats refuse to give the go-ahead.

Simultaneously, it has to be made clear that even the formal enactment of the legislation will not be the end of the struggle. No laws can stop the organised working class from defending its conditions. Experience from abroad shows that when strong sections of workers defy such governmental enactments in a determined way the government itself is forced to give in.

But the Tories hope to frighten workers with the law, without it ever being really put to the test. They are rather like the criminal who goes into a bank pointing an empty gun, on the usually justified assumption that no one will risk finding out if it's loaded.

There is no doubt that many workers, weak and isolated, without traditions of militancy, will be frightened. The law will force their conditions to deteriorate. It will be easier for the 8 per cent of the population who own 80 per cent of the wealth to improve their profits. Unless, that is, the strongly organised unions take action now to show how hollow the law really is.

If a single large union were to make it clear that it will deliberately go out of the way to ignore the provisions of the Tory law – that it would refuse to register under the law, would refuse to have anything to do with compulsory ballots and would order its members to respect picket lines and black goods – then the government's pretence would be exposed.

The Tories would be faced with a choice. They would either have to prepare to imprison the leaders of such a union and face massive industrial action from their members, or ignore the act of defiance, thus admitting that the law could not be enforced. In either case, their policy would suffer decisive defeat.

If trade union leaders can be forced to boycott the Tory law, that law can be made inoperable. Rank and file militants have to exert continual pressure inside the trade unions for such a policy of defiance to be adopted.

INDO-CHINA: THE ALMOST FORGOTTEN WAR

THE WAR in Indo-China rarely makes the news now. Yet day after day, the US airforce continues to pound villages to the ground, to burn their inhabitants with napalm, and to destroy their crops with defoliants. The war goes on, even if the misery of the Vietnamese peasants is less newsworthy than the marital plights of film stars, and American bombing missions less spectacular than moon missions.

The intrusion of US aircraft and South Vietnamese troops into Laos means that more people will be drawn into the pool of suffering. As with the invasion of Cambodia last summer and the bombing of the north before Christmas, the US prefers to extend the war rather than admit defeat.

But the US is not winning the war, despite its ability to murder and terrorise. For two years now Nixon has been forced to withdraw, although at a snail's pace, troops from the country, because of economic pressures at home. These arose because the US government found that it could not afford the enormous cost of subduing the Vietnamese people – a clear tribute to the fighting heroism and determination of that people.

Nixon's dilemma is that as he tries to withdraw troops, the ability of the stooge government of South Vietnam to survive is undermined. If it were to collapse, the complete defeat of the largest power in human history by relatively small and ill-equipped NLF forces would be clear for all to see. Opponents of the American ruling class everywhere would not be slow to learn the lessons. And so Nixon tries desperately to avoid this outcome, with further bombings and further devastation.

Only the complete withdrawal of the US troops and bases out of Indo-China will end the horrific result of such actions. That is why support for the NLF and North Vietnamese forces is obligatory for socialists and trade unionists in the west.

CZECHS TO TRY SOCIALISTS FOR 'CONSPIRACY'

IT IS NOW two and a half years since Russian troops intervened in Czechoslovakia to bring to an end the Czech 'spring' of 1968. But the use of police to prevent opposition to the rule of the nominees of the Russian government continues.

In Prague next Monday 26 young people, who have been detained in prison for 14 months, will face trial for their political convictions and activities. They are accused of an 'anti-state Trotskyist conspiracy'.

In January last year the Czech Communist Party newspaper Rude Pravo, claimed to expose a 'Trotskyist organisation opposed to the state whose aim was to disturb the normalisation process and to create political crisis'. It described this organisation as 'created under the name of the Czech Revolutionary Socialist Party and allegedly having its origins in the so-called revolutionary youth movement'. Rude Pravo said the party's aim was to overthrow the 'socialist' regime not only of Czechoslovakia but of the Soviet Union and the other East European countries as well.

Rude Pravo went on to say that the organisation was a grouping of students and young workers, and that its activities manifested themselves particularly in the engineering and printing unions.

In fact, the programme of the Revolutionary Socialist Party, published in the left-wing press in western Europe 18 months ago, shows that the organisation is opposed equally to the capitalist regimes that exist in the west and to the Stalinist regimes of the so-called Communist countries. It stands for real workers' power, based on workers' councils.

Before the trial takes place, socialist and trade union organisations in this country should make their protests known to the Czech authorities. Resolutions should be handed in or phoned through to the Czechoslovak embassy (25 Kensington Palace Gardens, London W8. Phone 01-229 1255).

CHRIS HARMAN

US-Russian pressure for new Middle East carve-up

by Stephen Marks

ISRAEL and Egypt are squaring up for another confrontation as the ceasefire on the Suez Canal is due to end this week. But behind the scenes the pressure from America and Russia continues for a carve-up 'peace' that would leave the Palestinians without a country and keep the area safe for imperialism and the oil monopolies.

Civil defence exercises and air raid blackouts in Cairo, with the conscription age raised from 30 to 35, are meant to make Israeli 'hawks' think twice before resuming attacks. And Israeli 'optimism' about the outcome of peace talks through UN mediator Jarring are also moves in the propaganda war so that the Arabs will be blamed for any resumed fighting.

Setback

But basically the situation is determined by the setback the Palestinians suffered in Amman last September. As we pointed out at the time, imperialism's stooge King Hussein of Jordan had to eliminate the Palestine guerrillas as an independent force in the way of the 'peace' moves then being hatched.

The guerrillas could only succeed in their aim of doing away with the racist Zionist state that stole their country if they also attacked imperialism and the oil companies, Israel's backers. This made the Arab governments afraid of them too. They had to be got out of the way so the Arab regimes could do a deal with Israel.

Since the September defeat, Amman has been purged of guerrillas and attacks on Israel from Jordanian soil have been banned. The left-wing guerrilla groups are banned, and the paper of El Fatah has been shut down.

Disowned

This has led to splits in Fatah, the largest guerrilla group, whose claim that the Palestinian struggle is separate from the struggle against Arab reaction plays into the hands of the Arab regimes. Fatah spokesmen in Damascus and Beirut calling for the overthrow of Hussein have been disowned in Amman.

And Fatah leader Arafat, in a recent TV interview on Panorama, refused to answer questions on the proposal for a Palestinian state on the West Bank of Jordan, now Israeli occupied. This scheme would be part of any 'peace' carve-up, and Arafat's silence shows he may support this puppet-state solution.

With the guerrillas temporarily stunned by September, America and Russia can go ahead with their plans.



Palestinian guerrillas: their setback last year has aided imperialism's new Middle East push

The stumbling block may be Israel's insistence that the Arabs not only recognise her boundaries but open themselves to Israeli economic penetration.

Israeli foreign minister Eban has said long ago that what he means by 'peaceful coexistence' with the Arabs

is the kind of relation the USA has with Latin America. The Arab governments and ruling classes of colonies, merchants and sheiks can offer no real alternative to this prospect.

Only when the workers and peasants take over the oil wells and divide the big estates will that happen.

LETTER

Is Braden a 'social sponge'?

POWER to Braden's elbow (TV, 30 January)? Braden, like Frost and all the other TV smoothies who pass for the private detectives we'd all like to be, plays the perfect role required in today's complex and intense society.

There is in most of us hostility to the profit-seeking zombies responsible for the chaos of this world – it's part of the anti-boss culture the majority of us share. The problem for the bosses today is to contain opposition. Braden and his kind are one type of jam-jar.

We know there's corruption a-plenty (TV and the press profit from its glorification) as long as we know also that there's someone 'independent' of those doing the

corrupting who can be counted on to warn us in time, then we're safe – we're safe from those 'freak' cases that Braden so miraculously, yet so regularly, uncovers, and, most important, we're safe from ourselves and our anger, from our own independent action.

'Leave it to Braden' is no different from that other opium – 'leave it to them what knows, in parliament'.

When we should be encouraging the working class to organise themselves to look after their own interests, there could be nothing less revolutionary than 'More power to Braden – the social sponge'.

STEVE EVANS, Colchester, Essex.

Is this the shape of things to come if Carr's anti-union Bill goes through?

THE MAFIA GO TO HOSPITAL

THERE IS a new strain of cancer loose in London. Even before a new hospital has been completed on the city's riverside opposite the Houses of Parliament, there is a disease at work on the building site which no doctor and no operating theatre can cure.

The disease is a novel form of gangsterism, connecting ignorant men who want to be rich with some of the most wealthy and powerful individuals in the country. It is a business arrangement.

Workers on the new £13 million St Thomas' Hospital site are being given secret payments to keep them from being active trade unionists and from fighting for a quite ordinary bonus scheme. They are being bribed.

Whelan and Grant, the firm which has the £½ million sub-contract for doing the formwork — the joinery that is put up to give support and shape to the concrete as it is being poured — pays its men quite regularly every Thursday. The packets — given out by Securicor — contain net pay in cash plus a pay slip declaring their 'gross' pay and deductions.

But on Friday, Whelan and Grant's project director arrives on site, bringing extra money in the form of cheques payable to selected workers.

This corrupt system also includes straight cash hand-outs, subsistence and travel allowances for imaginary journeys and accommodation, paid, according to the paper Construction News, 'as sweeteners to keep the carpenter gangs working quickly and to stop union attempts to organise proper bonus targets'. (21 January)

No tax deductions are made on these payments and the secret and illegal cheques either do not have the payee's name on them or they have only the surname so they can be changed in public houses where the taxman never cometh.

One public house off London's Harrow Road did £11,000 worth of bribe-cheque changing in the week before Christmas, indicating that the system operates on several other major building sites in London.

This form of gangsterism is specifically designed to thwart any unity among the workers on the site.

Directors of John Laing — main contractor on the hospital — conspired with the right-wing leadership of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers to bring the Whelan and Grant outfit on to the site. The aim was to replace directly employed Laing workers who at the time were beginning to get the job decently organised.

COOKED UP

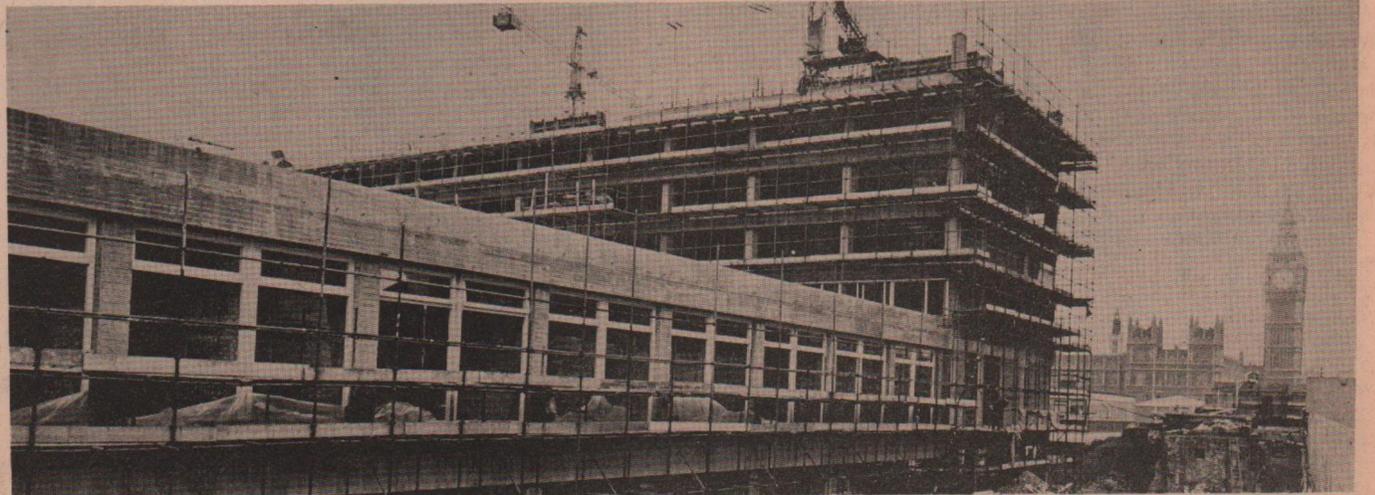
We have the word of E U Broadbent and L J Holliday, both Laing directors, that this scheme was cooked up with the co-operation of the ASW leadership to smash so called 'disruptives' — in other words militant job organisation, all too rare in the predominantly casual construction industry.

This is how the two Laing directors explained the hiring of the sub-contractor: 'This was a device to defeat the militant leadership. This was achieved as a result of the combination of the contractor and the top union leadership. For the first time something active has been done against these elements instead of the usual stone-walling.' (Construction News 12 March)

It took nearly a year for it to come out that their accomplices, Whelan and Grant, resorted to corrupt and illegal methods of wage payment to ensure that, while ASW membership was a condition of employment, the replacement carpenters would never actually do anything to improve their wages and working conditions.

The story unfolds as follows: Building work on St Thomas' was scheduled to last for five years. For the lads on site that meant job stability, a chance to build up good union organisation and drive wages and conditions well above the pittance that is their lot under national negotiations.

For Laing this prospect meant another Barbican or Horseferry Road, both scenes



St Thomas' Hospital site: real-life mafia on site but little press publicity

Secret cheque payments by union busters

Investigation by ARTHUR MALONE

of bitter disputes in 1967, seemingly over bonus schemes though in fact provoked by employers whose contract prices were too low.

Even before any building worker walked on to St Thomas' site, Laing started negotiating a special site agreement which even covered the quality of lino on the canteen floor and the number of times a day the lavatories would be washed out. 'Management was determined to close off avenues for agitation,' said Construction News.

A bonus scheme was agreed which would give skilled carpenters a gross wage of around £30 per week, with one third of this earned on an output related basis.

The targets proved so tight that the men on site quickly tried to force their alteration by orthodox work-to-rule tactics. At the first sniff of resistance, Laing started looking around for a sub-contractor to replace the so-called wreckers.

They wanted a tried and trusted workforce — with no bonus scheme in operation if possible so the new chippies would not have the ready bargaining strength this affords.

By the first week in January last year, Laing had selected Whelan and Grant of Purley, Surrey, for the job of doing the dirty work. This organisation — with a nominal capital of £1000 and only two £1 shares actually taken up by Mr Whelan and Mr Grant — was awarded the £400,000 formwork sub-contract.

On 16 January 1970, notice of intent to dismiss the Laing chippies was given and Whelan and Grant moved on to the site in mid-February.

A strike was called on the grounds that Whelan and Grant were 'lumpers', that is employed non-union labour who paid no tax or insurance. To the astonishment of the men involved, the strike got official backing from the ASW executive. But the

astonished men could not have known that they were in the middle of a crude conspiracy.

For a respectable front was being shaped for Whelan and Grant. Laing started to claim that the sub contractor was bona fide on the basis of its membership of the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives and stated the ASW executive had been misinformed.

In the third week of the dispute, while Whelan and Grant were consolidating themselves on the job, the ASW executive announced that they had indeed been misinformed, disciplined two full time officials and called off the strike.

Whelan and Grant had been accepted as authentic by the ASW executive on the basis of their membership of the employers' federation. Two weeks later Construction News disclosed that Whelan and Grant were not in fact members at the time.

DEFEATED

They had applied for membership only three days before Laing gave notice of intent to sack its own carpenters. And membership was only granted one full month after the strike was settled.

What mattered to the employers was that the challenge to their wealth and power had been defeated. To do this they were prepared to use any means. 21 ASW members were flung off the job for nothing.

Two main motives inspired the union leadership. These were fear of the unofficial leadership that had emerged on the big London sites and the pursuit of company wide agreements with Laing which would give the check-off system of union dues collection, with membership a condition of employment.

The conclusion that the whole affair was set up in advance is unavoidable. This means that the strike was made official by the union executive to give the militants full rein in striking against the lump knowing they would be caught in the trap when Whelan and Grant were shown to be 'legitimate'.

So Whelan and Grant were established on the job, with their chippies taking out union membership as a condition of employment. The ASW executive agreed there should be no bonus scheme on the job until the work was repetitive. One block is nearly finished now as far as the chippies are concerned and there is still no negotiated bonus scheme.



The Barbican 1967: massive publicity and press attacks. Strikers denounced as 'industrial mafia' followed by public inquiry.

But how did Whelan and Grant keep their men happy and working for only £39 for a 60 hour week when some of them used to earn £80 for 60 hours on the 'lump'?

The answer is that the firm was operating a secret labour-only system on the side of 'regular' wage packets. The ASW were not misinformed last March but it took until 21 January this year to prove it.

Cheques of around £20-30 were given to the firm's regulars every week, ensuring that the work was done speedily and the site was 'trouble free'. If only the site had been genuinely organised all the carpenters could have been earning £70 per week quite legitimately.

Naturally Whelan and Grant found it cheaper to bribe and corrupt some of its workers rather than tolerate job organisation.

Peter Storey has described how he left the site mainly because of the system of backhanders. 'We had fortnightly union meetings, but whenever one of us tried to send a committee to the management to organise a proper bonus scheme we were outvoted,' he says.

Other men have vividly described how anyone who complained about the lack of bonus or breaches of the safety regulations was bribed at first. Anyone who persisted,

however, would be shoved on to the worst jobs as an inducement to pack in.

And what are the implications of these sort of techniques under anti-union legislation? Here is a ready-made method for any employer to get a voting majority for his own point of view, provided only that workers are divided and intimidated enough.

WITCHHUNT

But the moral of this tale lies in more than the particular need to defeat the corrupt leadership of the ASW and to take back the union as the property of the members.

It lies in the whole tactics of the newspapers and the MPs who time without end witchhunt so-called wreckers and disrupters and screech and scream about 'the industrial mafia'.

For right under their very noses, a large company — which provides key members of the employing class from presidents of employers' federations to friends of Conservative prime ministers — engaged the real, live version of the mafia to smash the militants who fought for higher pay and better conditions.

And they did so with the full backing of 'responsible' trade unionism.



IT IS HAPPENING HERE...

what we stand for



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

We believe in independent working-class action, that we must overthrow capitalism and not tinker with reforms to patch it up.

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

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

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

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

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

In addition to building a revolutionary socialist organisation in this country we also believe in the necessity of forming a world revolutionary socialist international independent of either Washington or Moscow.

To this end we have close relationships with a number of other socialist organisations throughout the world.

We believe in rank and file control of the trade unions and the

regular election of full-time officials.

We are firmly opposed to secret negotiations and believe that all settlements should be agreed or rejected by mass meetings.

We are for 100 per cent trade unionism and the defence of shop stewards.

We are against anti-trade union laws and any curbs on the right to strike, whether the strikes are 'official' or 'unofficial'.

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

We support all demands for equal pay and for a better deal for young workers.

We believe that there should be a minimum wage of at least £25 per week.

We are opposed to unemployment, redundancy and lay offs and support the demand of five days' work or five days' pay.

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

We are opposed to racialism and police victimisation of black workers.

We are opposed to any immigration restrictions and fully support the right of black people to self-defence.

We are opposed to all nuclear weapons and military alliances such as NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

We are opposed to secret diplomacy. Neither Washington nor Moscow but international socialism.

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

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

We are for the introduction of a democratic planned economy in which resources can be devoted to social need.

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

The struggle for socialism is the central struggle of our time.

Workers' power and a world based on human solidarity, on the increasing of men's power over nature, with the abolition of the power of man over man, is certainly worth fighting for.

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

THERE ARE IS BRANCHES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

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

NORTH EAST
Durham/Newcastle upon Tyne/Teesside (Middlesbrough and Redcar)

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

NORTH WEST
Lancaster/Manchester/Oldham/

Bolton//Merseyside/St Helens/Wigan/Potteries

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

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

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

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

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

JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

Name

Address

Send to: IS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN

THIS is not a napalm victim in South Vietnam. This is Carty Renford of Forest London. With 20 other black people, he received multiple burns to his head, face and chest when four petrol bombs were thrown into a house where a party was being held in January. Two youths have been charged by the police —with malicious damage to PROPERTY. The Black Unity and Freedom Party claims that Mosleyite fascists are responsible for the outrage. When 20 members of the BUFP went to visit their friend in hospital they were arrested by the police. The growing climate of hysteria and encouraging fascists and police to increase their attacks on black people.

Repression is on the increase. You may not be aware of it...yet

Report by GINNY WEST

REPRESSION is on the increase in Britain. You may not be aware of it — yet. But a growing number of people — trade unionists, black militants, students, Irish republicans and 'foreign' socialists — have felt the tightening of the screw.

Anti-union laws are only the most obvious example of the capitalist class reacting to a growing militancy that threatens their right to make profits at the expense of the great majority.

Aided by screaming headlines and hysteria in the press about kangaroo courts, red plots and Black Power threats, the employing class is setting out to attempt to divide and demoralise the working class movement by placing the blame for industrial chaos, strikes and unemployment on the shoulders of carefully chosen scapegoats.

And these groups are singled out for special treatment by the police and security forces. Case after case in recent months has shown that the police will resort to outright lying and falsification

of evidence, allied with brutal beatings, when dealing with people who will already have been tried and found guilty in the press for endangering the 'national interest', 'national security' or 'law and order'.

It is not just police repression that we must attack, for it is a mistake to see the police as separate from the ruling class and their property, particularly the factories that form the basis of their power and wealth.

CHANGED

At Pilkingtons in St Helens last spring, many workers who had never come into contact with the police before in any struggle soon changed their opinions about the boys in blue.

Previously they had believed that the police were doing a good job in suppressing disorderly behaviour among sections of the society such as students.

The first time most of them had ever come out on strike in support of a wage claim was a brutal and educational experience. After the strike, many commented on the role of the police in

repressing strike

lines. This hard experience to link the police to the factory.

Many other, less obvious, examples of police brutality have occurred. One such case was where hippies were arrested by police last February.

One of them, a Peter Wesley, was months imprisoned and obscene language by making a call to a police station being harassed by assaulting two police officers.

A doctor gave effect that it was assaulted.

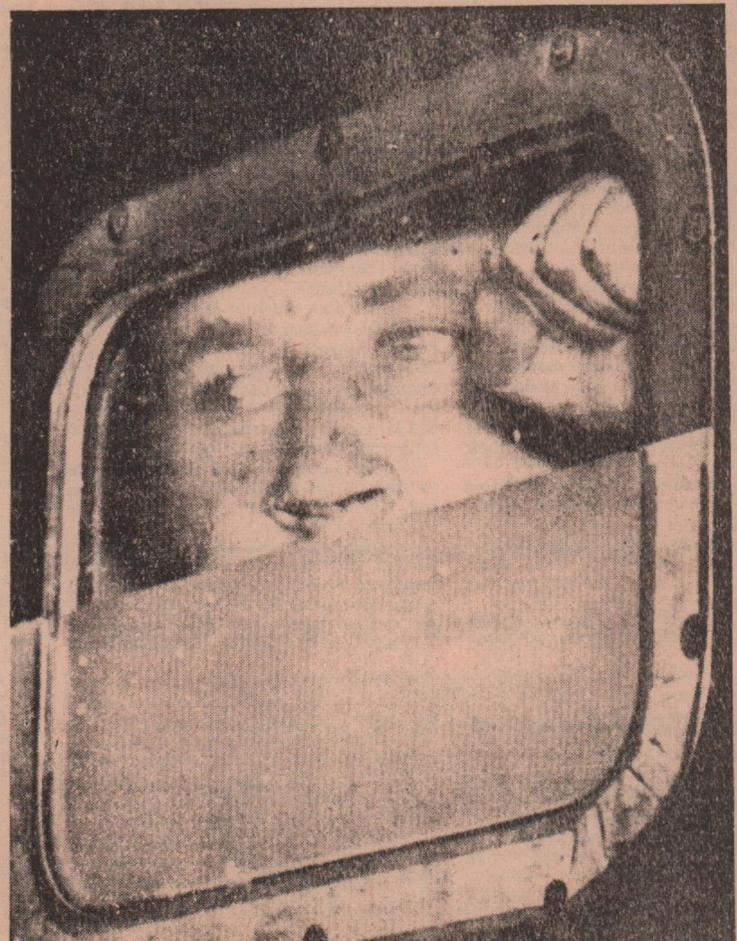
The police fix a blatant manner. In students protesting against a regime, went to Hotel where a 'Gre' arranged. Many of them were arrested by police.

At Hertford a student seen identifying a pointing them out to the court. One in after the defendant moved places and changed places'.

A similar affair in the London Magistrate's court last month when

WRONG MEN IN THE DOCK

On trial — for bringing



Frank Roche leaving Bow Street court in a police van last year after a preliminary hearing of his case

Next Monday trial of Frank Roche starts at Bow Street court. Two Irishmen are charged with the crime of using CS Gas in North London. The proceedings will be a landmark in the use of CS gas in Britain's recent history. A member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament background.

ON 13 and 14 the Royal Ulster Constabulary attacked the side with CS gas. At this time this 'harsh control' agent was used on the islands. Between 31 October and 31 October police used 10,410 and mainly in Belfast. This, at least, is the official figure.

On 23 July a riot came: Frank Roche threw a gas canister into the Hotel.

The unequal situation of CS gas, and other weapons used by repressing their power over the population.

It has been used by rioters but also by communities. An Irish man with advanced such weaponry carried bricks, petrol

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ings were being held against seven black people arrested on charges of incitement, assault and attempted murder. The witnesses' accounts of what happened varied considerably, and one policeman was seen pointing out the identity of defendants to police witnesses who otherwise they would not have been able to recognise.

ATTACKED

A particularly dreadful case concerns Mr Joshua Francis. Last November, Mr Francis was in bed at 2.30am when he heard the shouts of a man who was being attacked by four white men in his backyard. Mr Francis was suffering at the time from broken bones and double vision as a result of an accident while driving a bus.

He went to see what was happening and the men turned on him and beat

him up. Police then arrived saying they were looking for the original victim. Mr Francis was thrown into a police van, taken to Brixton Station in South London and charged with assaulting the police.

He was later taken to Kings College Hospital where he was treated for shock and given stitches in his forehead, legs and groin.

In Swansea, in November 1969, after the anti-Springbok demonstration, 236 independent complaints were made by eye-witnesses of police brutality. An 'independent' inquiry was set up ... by the police!

It announced in September last year that not one of the complaints was justified and a report was not to be published.

One account of police brutality on that day came from Mr C G T Williamson, a lecturer at Swansea, who stated in a letter to James Callaghan that he

witnessed 'an incident both singularly unpleasant and unprecedented' in his experience.

Mr Williamson said he saw the Deputy Chief Constable of the South Wales Constabulary, Mr G T Morris, 'brutally punch a girl in the face'. The Constable was reported as saying: 'If she doesn't want to get punched, she shouldn't have come on the demonstration.'

RAIDED

The special powers allotted to police were increased under the Labour government in its Criminal Justice Act. Under this Act the police powers of search have been stepped up considerably.

In the recent Marylebone Court case against black people, evidence was accepted as follows: Police raided the house of a black person and found several posters with such slogans as: 'Down with police brutality' and a

book on 'black power'. The literature found on the man's own premises was accepted as evidence for incitement.

Just think what this could mean. If and when the anti-trade union legislation becomes law, the police could raid anyone they think might have literature or posters in support of a particular strike considered by a court as unlawful. The literature might be used as evidence against the raided person.

The expulsion of Rudi Dutschke has torn aside the myth of a 'liberal democracy'. He was framed by government spies, phone tapping and a vile press smear campaign.

The ruling class speaks of threats to 'freedom'. The cry goes up: 'The freedom of this society for which we have fought in two world wars is being challenged by these aliens and strikers.'

By providing scapegoats, the ruling class hopes to undermine the solidarity of the working class so that the lack of

freedom in the form of poor wages, bad housing, rotten working conditions are not campaigned against.

The atmosphere of witchhunt and suspicion drummed up by the mass media encourages the racist and fascist organisations to step up their hate campaigns, to disrupt socialist meetings, to bomb and burn black people.

It is happening here. Growing illiberalism is not something confined to those favourite caricatures of the right-wing press - 'hot-headed' continentals or 'uncouth' American cousins.

We must not exaggerate this growth. But we would ignore it at our peril.

Liberal cries of anguish will not stop the menace. Only the struggle to build a mass socialist movement fighting for a genuine freedom and democracy for all working people that spans races and nations in a common cause can rid us of hate, fear and brutality.

Bringing a whiff of Derry to parliament

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dated guns with which to face the power of the imperialist system.

CS was developed in the Porton Down 'Chemical Defence Establishment' on the orders of the British War Office, which thought that a more effective riot control agent was necessary. This was in 1956, when the Middle East, Eastern Africa, and the Far East were presenting problems for British imperialism.

CS gas belongs in the history of imperialism and to a particular aspect of it in which Britain has played a leading part.

Porton Down was established in 1916, after the Germans had made the first use of gas warfare at Ypres. Nerve gases and other means of CBW (Chemical and Biological Warfare) have been developed there.

EXPORTED

More recently, Britain has signed a four-part agreement with the United States, Canada, and Australia, according to which all research and development are shared.

CS gas, which has had its most intensive use in Vietnam, was manufactured in the USA under British licence. It is exported from Britain to about 60 countries, including, recently, the 26 Counties of Ireland.

But Britain has also given a lead in another direction: it drew up the Geneva Protocol (1925), according to which the 'use in war of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases, and of all analogous liquids, materials or devices' is prohibited.

This was, of course, an agreement between powerful nations which only formalised their fear of retaliation in kind. They have never hesitated to use such agents in colonial oppression.

The formulations of the Protocol have always left a loophole: they refer to USE IN WAR and to this day

Britain has not declared war on Northern Ireland.

Yet the situation in the Six Counties was obviously the reason for the Labour government's decision to re-interpret the Protocol. One year ago, on 2 February 1970, Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart stated:

'Modern technology has developed CS smoke, which unlike the tear gases available in 1930, is considered to be not significantly harmful to man in other than wholly exceptional circumstances, and we regard CS and other such gases as accordingly being outside the Geneva Protocol. CS is, in fact, less toxic than the screening smokes which the 1930 statement specifically excluded.'

'Wholly exceptional circumstances' might, for instance, be narrow streets and tiny rooms in a Belfast slum, and these have been precisely the circumstances in which CS gas has been used in Northern Ireland.

With only a couple of exceptions, CS has been used exclusively in the densely populated inner city areas of Derry and Belfast.

It has been used to drive people off the streets and has been continued to be thrown after they have dispersed. In many cases, it has been thrown directly into houses. Strange use for a 'screening smoke'.

It has been said that CS is 'indiscriminate', and people have opposed it on these grounds. But CS affects not only those actively engaged in 'riots'. It positively discriminates against those who cannot be active.

It affects most seriously those who stay inside - the old, the young, and the ill. It discriminates more particularly against asthmatics and bronchitics, and those suffering from pulmonary diseases, of whom there is an exceptionally high proportion in the poor, polluted areas of Belfast and Derry.

20 per cent of the men in the

Waterside district of Derry are reported to be chronic bronchitics. Young, healthy people, especially if they are strongly motivated to fight on, build up a resistance to it.

But even previously healthy men have been off work for weeks as a result of CS entering the house. Children have been in and out of hospital regularly for periods of six months after exposure to it.

The deaths of at least two young children were in part, at least, caused by CS. People are still suffering from nervous and mental disorder many months after the use of CS in their area. Its longer-term effects may be more serious still, including damage to the liver and kidney.

There was enough disquiet about the use of CS in 1969 for the British government to appoint the Himsworth Committee to investigate the medical effects in Derry after its first use by the RUC.

SURVEY

The first part of the report clearly aims to play down the effects. An independent team researched the same area soon afterwards and found significantly more serious, and more generalised, effects.

They investigated the effect of the gas on the whole community, conducting a house-to-house survey, also taking psychological aspects into account, while Himsworth relied on information from clinics and doctors.

Many people had good reason at that time to be afraid to report to doctors. The doctors themselves had not known how to treat those affected by the gas.

Yet while Himsworth admits that much more needs to be known about medical and toxicological aspects (whether CS can cause cancer, whether it is processed to cyanide in the body,

whether damage to the lungs is lasting), War Minister Denis Healey permitted the army to use CS in October 1969, and regularly since then.

Himsworth had accepted responsibility for circulating advice to the population on dealing with CS gas. This has not been done.

As far as the army and the security forces in general were concerned, the medical considerations weighed little against the strategic.

The circumstances in which the army was posted to Northern Ireland were such as to make the use of guns very difficult. A shoot-out so near to home would probably have roused too great an outcry.

It might have provoked a far stronger and more general response in Ireland itself. The army's role was presented as that of 'peace-keeper' between warring sections of the community.

British imperialism has had a permanent interest in maintaining rivalry, but without allowing the conflict to be open and violent. This containment was especially necessary in Northern Ireland where one section of the population wanted to break the link with Britain.

Presenting the conflict as a primitive, tribal, racial, or religious war, the British army steps in to save the day. In this context, CS gas was very useful.

In Northern Ireland, CS has been used in conjunction with a whole repressive apparatus, including powers of detention and with batons and guns.

The emphasis is given lately in the 'official' version of the continuing disorder as 'sinister men' who are not only disturbing the peace of the British army but also the peace which their own people desire. The situation has now been created, the ideology has been modified, to permit more selective, and murderous, repression.

CS has been an integral part of the

arsenal of the forces of occupation and oppression in Northern Ireland. The army may well stop using CS gas - not on humanitarian grounds, but because it does not suit present strategic purposes.

In line with this shift in emphasis, Major-General Farrar-Hockley said of the recent Ballymurphy disturbances that he hoped it would not be necessary to use CS gas as it was 'indiscriminate' and 'there are many innocent people in the area.'

For 18 months these innocent people have suffered choking, vomiting, diarrhoea, streaming eyes, difficulty with breathing, rashes and burns on the skin, aggravation of bronchitis and asthma.

While this continued, and to this day, the single most effective gesture of solidarity with the Irish people was made by Frank Roche, 'the only man to enter the House of Commons with honest intentions.'

He threw the gas in the absolutely certain knowledge that he would be arrested. We should show our solidarity with him by stepping up the opposition to the presence of British troops in Ireland, whatever weapons they use.

BRIAN TRENCH

CS Troops and CS Trial
Public Meeting with Bowes Egan and Eamonn McCann
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1.
Friday 5 February 7.30pm
Organised by ISC

Rally in Support of Frank Roche
assemble Lambeth Town Hall
Sunday 7 February 2pm

Pickets on Old Bailey each day of trial from Monday 8 February 11am.

How the TUC came in from the cold...

First of two articles by MIKE CAFFOOR

THE HOSTILE RECEPTION given to Vic Feather, General Secretary of the TUC, at the Albert Hall rally on 12 January, is an indication of the growing disillusion felt by many trade unionists at the lack of leadership shown by the TUC leaders in the fight against the Tory Industrial Relations Bill.

The TUC General Council claim to be the leadership of the trade union movement. Yet they have done little to defeat the Bill.

Trade unionists and socialists need to understand the role of the TUC leaders. Are they capable of defeating the Bill? Will they call a General Strike? What demands should we make of them?

All these questions are of crucial concern in the coming weeks and months. They can perhaps best be answered by examining the past record of the TUC.

Ever since the defeat of the General Strike in 1926, the General Council has spoken openly of the need to collaborate with the employers in 'the national interest'. During the Second World War the government sought the co-operation of union leaders to help the war effort.

With the election of a Labour gov-

ernment in 1945, the TUC leaders' taste for collaboration increased and major steps were taken towards their gradual integration in the state. The government persuaded the TUC that it intended to pursue a policy of full employment and the TUC leaders in turn agreed to support other aspects of Labour policy.

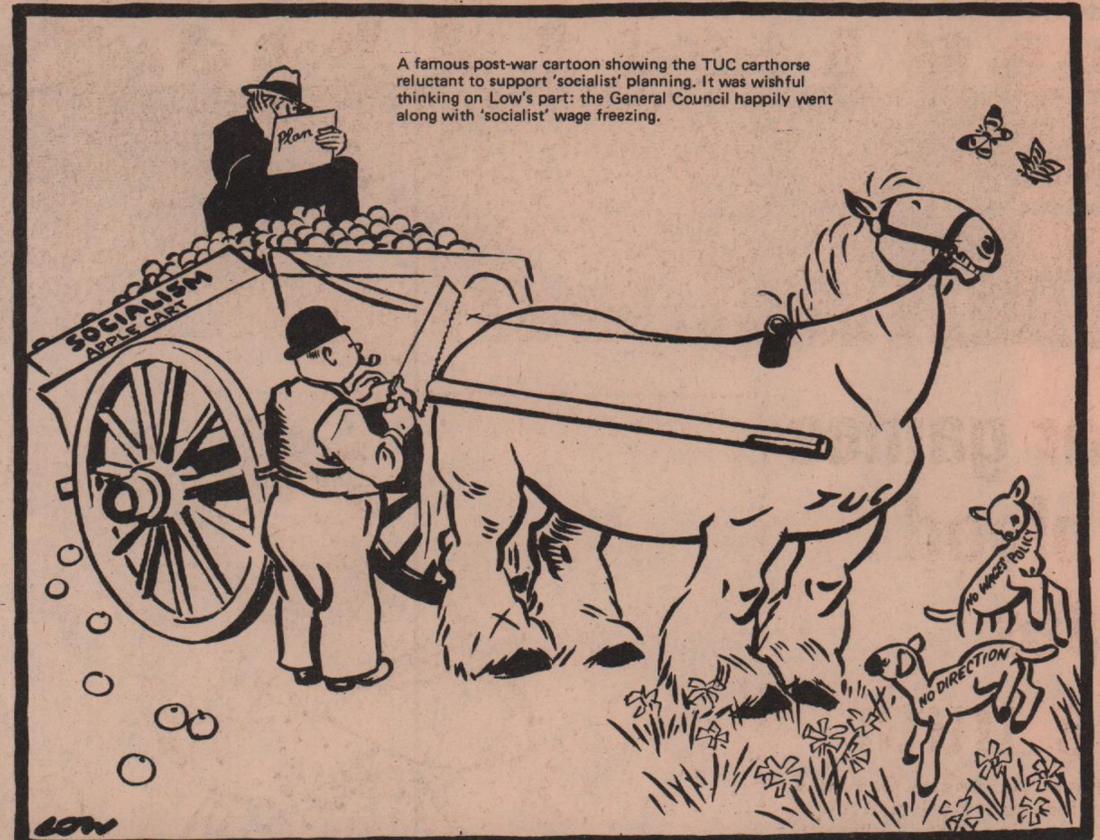
In March 1948, a conference of trade union executives, under the direction of the General Council, supported the wage restraint policy.

In spite of the devaluation of 1949 that cut the living standards of millions of trade unionists, the General Council still firmly maintained that it was necessary 'to urge unions to exercise even greater restraint on wage demands in the future than they had exercised in the past'.

'WORK AMICABLY'

The election of a Tory government in 1951 did not deter the TUC leaders from their policy of collaboration. As the General Council stated in the TUC report of 1952:

'It is our long-standing practice to seek to work amicably with whatever government is in power and, through consultation with ministers and with the other side of industry, to find practical solutions to the social and economic problems facing the country. There



A famous post-war cartoon showing the TUC carthorse reluctant to support 'socialist' planning. It was wishful thinking on Low's part: the General Council happily went along with 'socialist' wage freezing.

THE OLD HORSE DOESN'T LIKE BEING FENCED IN

need be no doubt therefore of the attitude of the TUC towards the new government.'

And for those misguided trade unionists who saw the Tories as their class enemy and who wanted to fight the class struggle, there was this considered reprimand:

'At the same time, with industry playing such an important part in the economic position of the country and in the determination of the standard of living of our people, the General Council resolutely turned down suggestions that political opposition to the government should be reinforced by industrial action'.

In the years following the TUC leaders followed exactly the same strategy. The intensification of international competition, the growth of giant multinational monopolies, combined with the rapid advance of technology creating conditions of risky investment—all these changing factors created a situation within the British economy where-

by national economic planning became imperative.

And for planning to be successful, it needed the fullest co-operation and collaboration of the General Council, for workers were the main unpredictable factor over which the employers and state had no control.

Sure enough, the leaders agreed. The TUC, always ready to confuse planning under capitalism with socialism, hailed it as a victory for their policies.

INFLUENCE

As a TUC publication stated: 'So much so that by the 1964 election, 13 years later, the Conservative government had introduced special measures to influence the economic development of the regions and established the National Economic Development Council.'

The Tories invited the General Council to be represented on the NEDC. Any conscious trade unionist or

socialist would have realised that the Tories had no intention of helping the trade unions. But not the General Council, as the TUC report of 1962 showed:

'Nevertheless the General Council eventually decided that they should put to a practical test the question whether participation would give them a genuine opportunity of influencing the government's policies in ways which would help trade unions.'

So the TUC joined NEDC and various other government bodies. It is an interesting fact that in 1931 the TUC were represented on only one government committee. By 1954 this had grown to 81.

The numbers increased and in 1963 George Woodcock, then General Secretary, proudly proclaimed: 'We have moved from Trafalgar Square to the committee rooms of government.'

But their role in those committee rooms was essentially that of messenger boy for the employers.

THE MEANING OF MARXISM

A weekly column by Duncan Hallas



German 'junior partners' aided isolation of Russia

ON 4 AUGUST 1914 the long predicted war between the imperialist powers broke out. It was a war for colonies, for 'spheres of influence', for markets, in short for profits. That war shattered the international socialist movement. The leaders of the big social democratic parties forgot about marxism and internationalism and capitulated to 'their own' governments.

Four years earlier, at the International Socialist Congress in Copenhagen, they had reaffirmed a resolution which said that it was the duty of socialists to prevent the outbreak of war by all possible means but 'should war nevertheless break out, their duty is to intervene to bring it promptly to an end, and with all their energies to use the political and economic crisis created by the war to rouse the populace from its slumbers, and to hasten the fall of capitalist domination.' Instead they entered coalition governments to 'help the war effort'.

In fact the betrayal was not as sudden as it seemed. For a good many years the social democratic leaderships had been adapting themselves to imperialism and parliamentary politics. They continued to talk about the class war at May Day rallies but their day-to-day political practice was purely reformist. The possibility of peaceful, constitutional roads to socialism seemed to open up. They led to the unprecedented slaughter of 1914-18.

In every country the movement split between the renegades and the internationalists and, as the war dragged on, revolutionary opposition began to grow. It was in Russia that the break came. In February 1917 mass strikes and demonstrations by the workers of

Petrograd overthrew the Tsar. Eight months later a revolutionary working class party was able to brush aside the pro-war 'Provisional government' and seize power.

The Russian revolution was the most important event in the history of the workers' movement. Everything that has happened since has been influenced by it, often decisively. No one can understand the world today without an understanding of that revolution and its outcome.

Russia at the time of the revolution was a backward country, a country with a weak industrial base and a relatively small working class—some five million workers out of a population of 160 million in 1914.

Terrible cost

The material basis for socialism—a well developed industry and a high productivity of labour—did not then exist in Russia. Still less did it exist after the years of war, civil war, blockade and foreign intervention. The armies of 14 capitalist countries—including Britain—fought alongside the western armed and financed Tsarist generals to overthrow the revolution. They were defeated. The revolution won but at a terrible cost.

The already weak industry of the country was practically destroyed and the working class dispersed. By 1921 the number of industrial workers in Russia had fallen to 1½ million. Petrograd had lost 57.5 per cent of its total population.

The production of all manufactured goods had fallen to 13 per cent of the already miserable 1913 level. The country was ruined, starving, held together only by the party and state machines developed during the civil war.

The communist leaders had never supposed

that it was possible to build socialism in an isolated Russia. Lenin said in 1918: 'The complete victory of socialism in one country alone is inconceivable and demands the most active co-operation of at least several advanced countries, which do not include Russia.' The Russian revolution was seen as part of an international revolutionary movement that would establish working-class rule in some, at least, of the advanced countries.

There was such a movement. Revolutionary Soviet regimes were actually established in Hungary, in Bavaria, in Finland and in Latvia. The German Kaiser, the Austrian Emperor were all overthrown.

Germany was the key centre. In November 1918 the 'bodies of armed men' which as Engels had pointed out are the essential core of a state machine, began to turn on their masters. 'By 4 November revolutionary feeling in Kiel was at fever heat,' wrote the historian of the German revolution. 'The High Command and the officers of the navy surrendered, while some, on the battleship *Koenig* and other vessels were killed. The sailors had become masters of the situation and the army units in the area joined them.'

'In Kiel there was only one authority—the Council of workers, sailors and soldiers deputies... From Kiel the rebellion spread to Hamburg and on the night of 8 November it was learned in Berlin that it had triumphed, with little or no resistance, in Hanover, Magdeburg, Cologne, Munich, Stuttgart, Frankfurt-am-Main, Brunswick, Oldenburg, Wittenburg and other cities... At eight o'clock on the morning of 9 November the general strike broke out in Berlin itself.' The Kaiser fled. The German workers, through their councils of deputies, found themselves in power.

The task now was to consolidate a revolutionary, democratic, workers' republic. This the right wing social democrats, who controlled the largest block of delegates in the workers' councils, were determined to prevent at all costs. They had become the junior partners of the German ruling class during the war. They now showed their true colours.

They set out deliberately to save German capitalism. Ebert, the future social democratic President of the Weimar Republic even opposed the abolition of the monarchy! Every ounce of influence the party could exert was used to persuade the workers to accept a 'democratic' capitalist regime.

Left cover

It could hardly have succeeded but for the confusion, weakness and cowardice of the left wing 'independent' social democrats who had split from the party in 1916. Though in a minority in the country as a whole, the independents had three out of the six men in the Provisional government and a decisive influence over the workers of Berlin.

The independents allowed themselves to be pulled along by the right. They protested but they gave the right wing the indispensable 'left' cover that made it possible to dismantle the workers' power that actually existed and to set up a parliamentary Republic.

Only the small Spartakus League defended the Soviets. They were first isolated, then provoked into a premature armed rising and finally crushed by a newly-created right wing military force directed by the social democrat Naske.

This defeat isolated the Russian Soviet Republic. The long term consequences of that isolation had tremendous effect



War games — blood hides the truth

ONE of the ways in which the cinema plays an important ideological role in society is by picturing and interpreting recent history on the screen.

Billed as 'the most spectacular film ever made', *Tora! Tora! Tora!* attempts to show the battle of Pearl Harbour from both the American and Japanese points of view.

It is a welcome exception to the usual run of war films that deal with the Japanese. Normally, they are portrayed as wicked, evil and cruel yellow devils and the war takes on an openly racist tone.

In exactly the same way, some people defend the use of the atom bomb at Hiroshima on the grounds of the basic cruelty and illogicality of the Japanese mind.

Subtle myth

Tora! Tora! Tora! does manage to avoid this crude characterisation of the Japanese but it seeks to perpetuate another, more subtle myth. It attempts to show that freedom-loving America was unprepared for Pearl Harbour because she was a democracy and not geared for war-making like the Japanese militarists.

The small element of truth in this view is dwarfed by the fact that sheer stupidity and lack of foresight played a much larger part than is admitted here. Equally, Stalin's allegedly either 'socialist' or 'totalitarian' Russia proved to be just as unprepared for Hitler's attack despite having been warned by numerous sources, including its own intelligence agents.

Moreover, the film fails completely to highlight the actual conflicts that lay behind the American-Japanese war. We are simply shown a series of diplomatic manoeuvres which are just like games.

There is nothing about Japanese fascism or the role of the military in Japanese society. Neither is there any mention of Japan's war in China or of the basic struggle for the markets of South-East Asia between American and Japanese capitalism.

Numb with apathy

The film becomes an excuse for masses of blood and killing. The battle scenes take up more than an hour of the film.

I became immune in the end: the bodies seem unreal and you wait quite happily for the end of this inevitable carnage. It is simply a Western on a grand scale.

It left me numb, but with apathy, almost boredom, not shock. This war, which culminated in the dropping of the atom bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is safely dismissed as a kind of adventure writ large. The baddies had a headstart but as usual the goodies won in the end.

Tora! Tora! Tora! tells us nothing about the real causes of this war, adds nothing to our knowledge of war in general and is simply an excuse for lots of gratuitous violence.

Martin Tomkinson

If you have difficulty in obtaining *Socialist Worker* regularly ask your local bookshop to stock it.



COTTONS COLUMN

A HERO of these Tory times: leading businessmen in Romford, Essex, are to invite a tramp to be their special guest at the next meeting of the town's Chamber of Commerce.

The tramp, Mr Peter Blundell, makes a living as a pavement artist and lives in a sand bin by the side of the Southend highway. The Chamber of Commerce's magazine admires him as a man 'who has had the courage to discipline himself to help his own existence without becoming a parasite on society'. They mean he doesn't draw unemployment benefit or social security.

Described as 'a shining example of private enterprise', Mr Blundell will be taken to the Chamber's meeting so that the assembled business brass can shake him by the hand. And get him to do a few quick sketches on the town hall lino?

LAST FRIDAY and Tuesday, the Daily Mirror devoted its front page to happy, smiling pictures of Princess Margaret and Lord Snowdon enjoying their Cooks' cut-price holiday in the Barbados sun. Friday's headline, as the royal dumpling greeted her husband, was 'TONY! the big hello that answers the gossip'. The picture, drooled the paper, showed them together again and, with 'one embrace they silenced all the gossiping tongues' about the impending break-up of their marriage.

And whose was the gossiping tongue that started all the nasty rumours? Why, none other than the Daily Mirror's. Truth is the first casualty in the Fleet Street circulation war.



Les Cannon: the final salvo

Cannon's fodder

BBC Radio 4 interviewed electricians' union president Les Cannon shortly before his death at the end of 1970. The interview was printed in last week's *Listener*.

Years after the defeat of the old ETU Communist leadership in the High Court, Cannon was still obsessed by the 'red menace'. He worried at it like a terrier with a bone. The interview is shot through with his morbid fear of Communist and Trotskyist 'conspiracies'.

But when questioned on the Communist technique for getting left-wingers nominated for office, the 'conspiracy' tends to diminish somewhat.

'In a particular branch of a union, which is 500 strong, which gets 20 or 30 in attendance at a meeting, you have two or three fairly skilled Communist debaters at the meeting place who have discussed beforehand what kind of resolution they want passed or what kind of wages demand they want the executive to make or

who should be nominated for the executive council elections.

'Nobody else has got any firm line and so one of these chaps gets up and says: "I move Brother So-and-So as a national officer because he is a good chap, he's got a fantastic record." And another Communist gets up and says: "I was working on the contracting side and he was a great fellow," and that's it — he's nominated.'

So the wicked reds had their way because nobody else had a 'firm line'. Who was it you were indicting, Les...

SCENE: The Bristol postmen's march on Monday. Enter a newshound to ask elderly marcher how much hardship money he is getting. Postman: £5, son. Horrified newshound: How on earth do you manage on that? Postman: Manage? It's good training. I retire next month.

Bovis boys

BOVIS, the large construction firm, made its millions by cultivating particular companies with large building requirements. All Marks and Spencers shops are built by Bovis, as are all Players cigarette factories and offices.

Bernard Heaphy, Bovis' managing director, was quoted in *Construction News* last week to the effect that the Ministry of Health could benefit from a nice, friendly relationship with Bovis on all those big, expensive hospitals it will be building. Could well happen that Bovis gets in on these lucrative contracts. Sir Keith Joseph — currently Minister of Health — is a former chairman of the firm.



THE WORLD of big business has a dreadful fascination for the telly planners. While the real-life dramas of working people are reserved for the occasional documentary or the plastic nonsense of Coronation Street, the romanticised derring-do of the captains of industry and high finance pour relentlessly from the screen.

Latest in the long line that stretches back to *The Planemakers* and *The Power Game* is *Hadleigh*, Yorkshire Television's networked Friday night series. The hero of this mini-epic is a rich landed gentryman who dabbles in business almost as a past-time.

The trouble with *Hadleigh* — or at least the last three episodes I have seen — is that his adventures are monumentally boring and work up none of the back-stabbing steam that made Sir John Wilder's *Power Game* escapades so viewable. Even so, we still get a glimpse of the two-faced morality of the ruling class that condemns the 'violence' and 'piracy' of strikers but condones the most barefaced crookery and dubious methods of the Men of Property.

Last Friday's offering had *Hadleigh* fighting to buy a local Yorkshire brewery in order to save it from the murky hands of a powerful London combine.

When a flighty lady accountant stands in his way of raising a loan, *Hadleigh's* mother's advice is crisp and to the point: 'Bed her, James, bed her!'

In a tizzy

But James stays firmly zipped, his manly exploits confined to whipping out his cheque book when confronted by a member of the opposite sex. He raises the cash in the nick of time and is the proud owner of the brewery, although trouble looms with the prospect of a strike. Meanwhile, back at the family mansion, Lady Jane is in a tizzy because her maid has walked out and she doesn't know how to plug in the Hoover.

It is all mindless rubbish, but, as they say up North, 'where there's muck there's brass'.

BBC2's series *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* (now re-running on BBC1 on Sunday evenings) has been widely praised and deservedly so.

Keith Michell's development from gay young prince to obese, gout-ridden, belching king is an astonishing performance. Last Sunday's play dealt with Ann of Cleves and the production brilliantly caught the intrigue and back-biting of the rival court factions and the religious smoke-screen that scarcely veiled the political ambitions of Protestants and Catholics in Europe.

BBC2, with considerable rolling on the drums, is presenting a trilogy of plays on Wednesdays called *Long Voyage Out of War* by Ian Curteis. A two-page blurb in *Radio Times* had the cast in raptures over the 'depth and significance' of the scripts about the problems of the individual in our war-torn world and the breakdown of communication between the old and the young generations.

Alas, it was a build-up for a big let-down.

The first play was set on the Romney Marsh at the outbreak of the last war and had a set of fairly stock characters marooned in a bombed-out church. The generation gap, personified by an elderly disciplinarian country squire figure and a young army deserter, was about as subtle as a copper on picket duty. There was much shouting, inarticulate speeches, falling about on floors and heavy allegories such as approaching floods and the sudden totally incongruous appearance of a black soldier.

It took the author two years to write. A long voyage indeed.

David East

Socialist Worker

POST Strikers firm as Chataway puts on the 9d 'frighteners'

by Dave Percival, UPW

THE POSTAL WORKERS' strike — now entering its third week — is totally solid. Although there is no strike benefit for the 220,000 UPW members, strikers everywhere are determined to win a £3 minimum wage increase.

Last Sunday's meeting at the Department of Employment was useless. It was called by Robert Carr but nothing extra was offered. It was held to raise hopes of a settlement and then to dash them.

The press is using every trick to try and demoralise us. They constantly tell tales of postal workers returning to work.

They publicise the growth of the get-rich-quick private postal services. Although these 'services' are charging up to 7s and more for a single letter the Tories make no complaint.

They don't mind their friends making exorbitant profits out of our struggle for a decent living wage. That is the morality of 'private enterprise'.

Future at stake

The local Social Security Offices are also helping the government. They are trying to avoid paying us our full entitlements.

Many postal workers can't understand this. After all they have been paying social insurance for years.

And post minister Christopher Chataway is putting the frighteners on with threats of a 9d post rate.

This is the first real strike the UPW has had for 90 years. The whole future of the union is now at stake.

The Post Office has plans to reduce the number of sorting offices from thousands to only 120. If we are beaten in this strike, we will suffer more than just an actual pay cut. We will also be unable to prevent the heavy redundancies that will result from the Post Office's plans.

If this happens, the postal service will continue to decline and letters will take much longer to be delivered.

Many trade unionists in other industries are helping us. The railwaymen, for example, are 'blacking' parcels normally sent by post. This would be illegal if the Tory anti-trade union laws were passed.

We are also receiving considerable financial help but the list of hardship cases is growing. We desperately need money to



Chataway: redundancy threats

help us keep the strike going.

The Post Office doesn't mind losing money. It is wasting the public's money in order to try to defeat us.

Trade unionists in every area should organise collections for the strikers.

The government is trying to attack the public sector workers. We need an Industrial Alliance of all the nationalised industry trade unions to be formed as an immediate priority.

A united front is vitally necessary to beat back the government's attack.

Lockout threat

NEWCASTLE:- Swan Hunter Shipbuilders have threatened to lock out 8000 workers from their five Tyneside shipyards on Monday if 3800 Boilermakers go ahead with their planned strike.

The Boilermakers are striking for parity of wage rates with the Clyde shipyards and to reduce wage grades from four to two to raise the wages of the lower paid.

Power workers on brink

THE REPORT of the Wilberforce Court of Inquiry into the power workers' pay claim was due to be published this week. The report will be written by three men.

Two are leading, hand-picked Tories and the third is an ex-trade union official who was, until recently, a member of the Prices and Incomes Board.

The latest issue of the rank and file power workers' paper Advance has just been published and contains a hard-hitting attack on the Court of Inquiry. It warns power workers that

the Wilberforce report is unlikely to give them the pay increase they deserve.

If the Court does reject the power workers' claim then a resumption of the pre-Christmas work-to-rule is almost certain. The power workers could have won already if it had not been for the miserable retreat of their union leaders, who accepted a public inquiry that they now admit is biased against them.

If the work-to-rule does restart, every trade unionist should come to the power workers' aid. Last time they were the victims of vicious press

attacks.

Next time rank and file trade unionists must spring to the power workers' side. Their case must be argued to the public through leaflets and public meetings. The responsibility for cuts and blackouts must be placed firmly on the management's shoulders.

Copies of Advance can be obtained price 1s (5p) post free from 68 Fountains Road, Stretford, Manchester or IS Book Service, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2.

FORD: 'NO MORE CARS UNTIL WE GET PAY PARITY'



Dagenham foundry workers at their open-air mass meeting that voted for strike action

by Colin Beadle, Dagenham Body Plant, TGWU

THE MULTI-MILLION Ford empire ground to a halt on Monday. Mass meetings at all the main plants voted to strike in response to the insulting wage offer of £2 more a week. The battle for parity with Midlands car rates is now really on. The unions had put in a claim for £16 a week more to bring Ford into line with the rates at Chrysler's Coventry plants.

Under Measured Day Work, Ford workers have seen their wages fall further and further behind national rates. They are at the bottom of the car pay league.

Claims by Ford's labour boss Bert Ramsey this week that earnings average £35 a week are nonsense. He has included white-collar and management rates to make up this ludicrous figure.

At Dagenham, rates average out at £18 a week on days and £22 on nights without overtime.

The angry response of the workers shook the management. It was clear to most workers that the Tory government was standing behind Fords, demanding that they toe the line at 8 per cent. Last week both Robert Carr and the Confederation of British Industry had secret talks with the Ford management.

Ramsey and company were expecting a repeat of last year's poor response by the rank and file to the parity campaign. They were disappointed. Spurred on by the Chrysler Linwood £5 increase last month, the men are determined to fight all-out for parity.

A united fight by all the key plants — Dagenham, Halewood, Swansea and Southampton — can win. It is now or never.

The strike at the moment is unofficial and it would be illegal if the Tories' Industrial Relations Bill goes through. Strike leaders would be open to prosecution.

There must be no retreat by the union leaders. The strikers must demand that all unions declare the strike official and that all decisions concerning the running of the strike and future negotiations must be taken by mass meetings.

SWANSEA 100%

SWANSEA:- Ford's key components plant is at a standstill. There was unanimous support for a walk-out when the 1950 workers heard the management's reply to their parity claims.

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'FIGHT THIS INJUSTICE'

HALEWOOD:- Ford's Merseyside workers are solidly behind the strike. So firm is their determination to win that no further meetings have been arranged by the three sections this week.

The slogan at the mass meetings that voted for strike action was: 'Ford won't build another car until we get parity.'

Les Moore, Halewood convenor, in a special message to the strikers, said: 'This government has taken the line to greater freedom by proposing laws against workers and unions. They will no doubt try to influence the result of our settlement not only to our disadvantage but to show the rest of industry their pattern for 1971.'

'Our attitude must be: parity is a long-overdue injustice which will be righted. We don't believe the cure for the country's ills is lower living standards for workers and we will fight to maintain the right of free collective bargaining.'

Billy Maguire, convenor in the Paint, Trim and Assembly plant, said: 'You won't get parity just because we can prove that other car workers get more than we do.'

'You will get what you're worth in terms of organisation, solidarity and determination — determination to see it through no matter how long we strike ... for on the issue of parity this is the only language the Ford Motor Company understands.'

VITAL CAR CONFERENCE MEETS THIS WEEKEND

Major battles are taking place throughout the car industry. The Tory government is threatening savage anti-trade union legislation and motor workers are in the forefront of the Tories' offensive to weaken militant shop floor organisation.

A national car workers' conference will be held on this Sunday 7 February, at the Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham. It will start at 11am and there will be sessions on parity, Measured Day Work and the general situation.

Be sure to get your credentials by ringing The Organiser, 01-237 6869.

NOTICES

SOUTH LONDON IS public meeting, William Morris Hall, Wimbledon 8pm Sun 14 February. Michael Kidron on the Common Market.

WANDSWORTH IS public meeting at The Spotted Dog, 72 Garrett Lane (nr Wandsworth Town Hall) at 8pm, Thursday 11 February. Pete Latache on Wages and Inflation.

NORTH WEST IS regional school: Sunday

7 February in Manchester. Starts at 10.30 am in Chorlton Town hall, All Saints, Oxford Road. Introduced by Tony Cliff. All IS members and supporters in North West invited.

STOKE NEWINGTON IS public meeting: The Postal Workers' Struggle — UPW spkr Monday 8 February 8pm Rose & Crown pub (upstairs room) cnr Church St/Albion Rd N16. Bus: 73.

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