Polish workers' vital battles

The heroic uprising of Polish workers last month was one of the most important events of 1970. The rulers of 'socialist' Poland used tanks and armed soldiers and police against militant protests over savage price and rent increases and wage cuts. The picture shows demonstrators raiding shops in Gdansk. Full analysis: PAGE 2

DEATH SENTENCES against six of the accused in the Burgos trials show that Franco's regime in Spain remains as dictatorial and barbaric as ever. Against the growing opposition of workers and students, it knows only one weapon - imprisonment, secret trial and now judicial murder.

A regime that has been sustained by American aid, fed by diplomats from East as well as from the West, apologised for by back journalists in the British press, has proved once again that it can only survive by bloody repression.

Yet the Burgos trial has revealed the weaknesses, not the strength of Franco's power. In recent years the Spanish dictator has attempted to show himself as a sort of benevolent despot.

The aim has been to produce a government not so obviously based on old-style fascists and therefore more able to integrate into a Europe of 'normal' capitalist governments. As part of this process, Franco introduced a large number of businessmen and 'technocrats' into his cabinet and demoted openly fascist elements.

Uprisings of workers over the last year have shattered this liberal facade. Despite arrests and intimidation, anti-strike laws have been ignored and demonstrations taken to the streets.

So the dictator has been forced to call back onto the streets the very forces he was trying to push into the wings of history only a few months ago. Mass fascist rallies and military courts have been re-established to prop up Franco's tottering throne.

The ruling class is divided and bewildered. Its schemes for integration into the Common Market are in jeopardy because of the revolution against its methods by workers throughout Europe. It has not known what to do in Burgos.

To execute the Baquers would show opposition in Spain and internationally. But not to execute would be to admit that the regime is not all powerful, and that a little more agitation might remove it.

In the coming days and weeks, demonstrations and protests are necessary to show our disaffection at the grisly chess game in Burgos and to assert our solidarity with its victims.

There will also be showing our support for those working class forces who could bring Franco's 34 year reign to an end in the near future.

Determined to smash

The insurance companies would offer attractive terms to the young and fit. The not-so-young and not-so-fit would have to pay heavy premiums to be covered.

There is no logic to the Tory plans. More intelligent capitalists are aware of the advantages of a medically well-cared-for workforce. Even right-wing medical opinion in America is coming out in favour of a national health service.

But the Tories are determined to sweep away reforms that in any way improve the lives and health of working people. The end result may be a mixture of all three plans and fixed payments for doctors' visits and hospital beds are likely to be announced soon.

For workers, the end product will be a greater reluctance to visit the doctor and to go on working even when they are quite ill. The toll of industrial injuries - already rising steeply - as a result of dangerous working conditions brought about by productivity drills - will jump even more sharply.

It is a grim prospect. A nationwide campaign must be launched against the plans. It further underlines the urgent necessity of building a socialist workers' movement that will end the Tories and their system once and for all.
Socialist Worker

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Lessons of 1970...way forward for 1971

1970 WAS THE YEAR in which hundreds of thousands more workers were laid off, bashed, dockers, council workers — all took on the employers and were successful. Even the miners, defeated not so much by the employers themselves, but by the Labour Government officials to give a clear lead, nevertheless won a pay increase that was large by the standards of previous years.

The following year the government’s defences were not as good and its basically right-wing forces, its industrial relations policy, did a remarkable job of getting a clear lead, and the miners, and the increasing number of unemployed — have all become worse off.

But the fact remains that many sections of workers have found that direct industrial action can improve living conditions and wages.

The British economy is now in a far better position, and despite the minor fluctuations and the current slump in the dollar, the basic programme of recovery is continuing. It cannot solve its own economic problems. It has not been able to make the economy grow at more than about a third of the French, German and Italian rates and a sixth of the Japanese rate. Now as growing numbers fight back to recover what they lost in the years of incomes policy and wage freeze, the ruling class fears that its precarious gain from policy of reparation is now to disappear.

And so big business seeks desperately for some means to regroup the upper layers, and to sharpen the attack on the major key groups of workers like the power men, the medical and school medical charges, the rising level of unemployment, are the weapons being used.

Sustained attack...

If 1970 saw the highest level of struggle by workers to improve their conditions for decades, it also saw the beginning of the first sustained attack on the trade unions — both by the employers and a whole against the right of workers to organise in their places of work.

What is involved is not just Tory nastiness. There is plenty of that. But the trade union leaders are playing their part with a vengeance in supporting trade union organisation in the factories and without dismantling the major obstacles which confront them.

They have started doing so now because big business sees no other way of solving its problems. It is not going to be over-, pessimistic or over-compliant in the face of this offensive. The Trade Unions are on the attack because of the new-found strength of workers. If this strength is used to the full, Heath and his cronies can be defeated. The danger is that the Trade Unions will not be united, militant response from organised workers and will be able to use this.

What happened to the power workers shows the danger. Here was a group of workers with enough strength to win. Instead they were forced to accept a defeat at the hands of management and the trade union leaders.

The massive propaganda in the factories needed to counter this witch-hunt and this defeat is coming from any of the traditional trade union organisations.

What is happening to the welfare services reveals the same dangers. Unless the practice of the trade unions in the welfare services will deteriorate and come under the domination of private medical profiteers.

These are some workers who have made in the last year can only be turned into long-term gains for all workers by developing a movement that is politics which is conscious it must support in particular the struggles of individual sections of workers into a united stand of the whole working class against the employers’ offensive and the system that has produced it.

BARBAROUS SENTENCES IN LENINGRAD

EVERY SOCIALIZT must oppose in the strongest manner the sentences imposed at the recent Leningrad trial. Condemning people to death for allegedly pretending to be a hijacker is a clear expression of the increasing repression against dissidents in Russia in recent years.

At the same time, however, it is necessary to denounce the hypocrisy of many of those who have raised their voices to protest. Supporters of the Israeli government who made no protest when an unarmed Arab hijacker was shot dead by an Israeli agent can hardly complain if the Russian government takes similar action.

Again, those who refuse to permit a million or more Palestinians to return to their country of birth, can hardly complain if the Russian government refuses to permit Jews to go to this same country.

But the issue at stake is not, as both the Russian and Israeli governments try to pretend, whether Russian Jews should be allowed to migrate to the USSR. The issue is the support given to the impotent minority of homeless Jews (groups like the Crimean Tatars as well as the Jews of the Bessarabian and above all workers, that characterises the so-called Communist regime. The barbarism demonstrated by the bloody murder of striking workers on the streets of Gdansk and Stettin.

For the millions who suffer under such regimes, emigration, and even all emigration, is the only road to survival. By opposing the indigenous population, is no solution. That is why the hypocritical support of Zapatistas by the British trade unions is inexcusable.

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East and West, wages are held down so bosses can compete

by CHRIS HARRMAN, editor of International Socialist

THE BIGGEST ARMED CLASHES between groups of workers and governmental forces to be seen in Brazil since 1964, when a military coup overthrew President Joao Goulart, were reported in Perth on February 24. 1970. They were a new chapter in the country’s recent history, and the result of the workers’ determination to defend their basic rights...

The real question was whether the workers could successfully defend their rights in the face of the anti-workers' offensive...
FRIDAY 4 DECEMBER was a landmark in the history of reaction. On the same night as dictator Franco introduced a three-month state of emergency against Basque freedom fighters, Irish prime minister Jack Lynch outlined his plans to introduce powers of internment without trial.

Lynch has the necessary laws waiting on the books and nothing but the absence of action on the Irish workers can stop internment from being introduced as soon as the prime minister gives the word.

Call in the night

Internment is arrest without trial. A call in the night and the victim is dragged away to a police station made to account for his movements.

If the interrogations are not 'satisfactory' - and no reasons for 'disatisfaction' need be given - the arrested man can be jailed for two months.

At the end of that period he is thrown into the terrifying Curragh concentration camp. After six months the case is reviewed by a military tribunal in the North, the man is left to rot indefinitely, without ever having seen a jury.

From DALE FOX in Dublin

Before an embarrassed Irish government closed down the Curragh following an international outcry, the late 1950s against its inhuman treatment of prisoners, there were outbreaks of dysentery. No post mortem is given on those who die, either from dysentery or beatings.

Lynch has refused to explain his action to the Irish people. He has hinted at a national conspiracy of kidnapping and bank robbery but has refused to produce evidence for the Dail (parliament).

Orders from Heath?

His right wing supporters are hinting that members of the left-wing group Saor Eire (free Ireland) are plotting to destroy the state. Saor Eire has fewer than 30 members.

There is speculation in Dublin that Lynch put his orders from fellow reactionary Ted Heath. The introduction of such powers of internment in the South, it is argued, would give 'respectability' to the use of similar repression in the North.

This threat is aimed at the Irish workers. After a sluggish post-war period, the Irish economy has picked up in recent years as the Green Tories offered foreign capital the attractions of cheap labour.

Social services were cut to the bone to give foreign capitalists the maximum tax-free profits. But the workers have been fighting back. Last year, Ireland had the best strike record in Europe, 60 per cent of the strikers were unofficial.

Lynch wants to break the strength of the militant workers and their political allies. First to disappear into the camps will be the armed groups, then the revolutionary socialists and anti-Communist Market leaders, followed by militant trade unions.

Lynch law aims to force the workers into submission and then force an incomes policy down their throats.

But the Irish people have not been intimidated. Last month 2000 workers and students demonstrated outside the Prime Minister's house.

Fighting speeches were made by left republicans and socialists from the Northern barricades from People's Democracy, Bernadette Devlin, MP, and Eamon McCann of the Derry Labour Party.

Four Labour MPs have been thrown out of the Dail for attempting to force a debate on internment, Acland MP Denis Browne, has called for a General Strike against Lynch's measures.

But the official Labour Party is split down the middle over the issue.

Sack your scriptwriter, Vic

by Raymond Challinor

This was largely caused by a rush of private capital from this country. As an official Labour pamphlet, 'Challenge to Britain', subsequently stated: Some £350 million was "hot money" gaiting Britain because its owners disliked the Labour government's policy.

A similar tactic was used against Wilson's administration in 1964. At the general election of that year, Labour had pledged itself to raise old age pensions immediately if it obtained power.

Financiers, however, made it clear to the government that they would bring pressure on the pound, removing their sterling balances from London and placing them abroad, if the government continued with its proposals.

Faced with this threat, Harold Wilson surrendered on the question of old age pensions and many other issues.

Members of the TUC General Council, the opponents of industrial action, must be placed on the spot. They must be required to answer this question: Why is it legitimate for employers to withdraw their capital when they want to influence political decisions but not for workers to withdraw their labour?

The fact is that the traditional methods of the right wing, both in the trade unions and the Labour Party, are shown to be increasingly inadequate. Such methods make it impossible for them to mount a serious campaign against the Tory government.

In a sense, recent history proves this point. From 1951 to 1964, the Conservatives were in power, Harold Wilson referred to this period in "thirteen wasted years".

The result was clear - although Wilson would not accept it - is also criticism of the foolishness of the Labour opposition who did not try to get away with things.

This time, the last Olympics afford to allow the Tories to rule for another 13 years. For the Edward Heath of today are not the Harold Macmillans of yesterday.

Conscription now is a savage beast red in tooth and claw. The growing plight of the British economy, the need to improve competitiveness by cutting labour costs, makes it, ready and eager to disembowel the trade union movement.

There would be little left of workers' organisations if such an onslaught were permitted to continue for 13 years.

Some of its leaders want to form a coalition government against Lynch with the right-wing opposition party, Fine Gael.

Outside parliament, a united front against opposition has been formed that includes the League for a Workers' Republic, the Young Socialists, the Trade Unions' Rights Committee, Sinn Fein, Communist Party and student representatives.

Students at Trinity College demonstrated their solidarity with the workers by staging a one-day strike and teach-in last month.

But as Young Socialists leader Carol Coulter says: "Protest policies are not enough. Internment will only be beaten by workers' action on the shop floor."

Growing repression

In Canada, Spain and Ireland 1970 was the year of Special Powers. Lynch's attack on Irish workers is part of the growing repression of a worried international capitalist class.

People said 'It can't happen here'. But it is happening and it could so easily be followed in other areas of British life - "liberal democracy".

British workers can demonstrate their solidarity with their Irish brothers by leading and joining demonstrations against internment and fighting Toryism where it really hurts - on the factory floor.

VITAL READING FOR ALL MILITANTS

The Employers' Offensive

Productivity deals and how to fight them by TONY CLIFF

7s including post

The Struggle for Socialism

The case for revolutionary politics

1s 4d including post

PLUTO PRESS 6 Cottons Gardens E2 8DN
THE International Socialists is a democratic organization whose membership is open to all who accept its democratic principles and who are willing to pay contributions and to work in one of its organizations.

We believe in independent working-class struggle. We are against capitalism and it is not in our program.

We work in the mass organizations of the working class. Our ultimate aim is to build a cooperative society based on the principles of democracy and freedom.

We believe in the power of the working class. We work for the social betterment of all workers, whatever their race, color, creed, or sex.

We believe in the power of the people. We work for a world in which all people have equal rights and opportunities.

We believe in the power of socialism. We work for a world in which all people have equal rights and opportunities.

We believe in the power of the state. We work for a world in which all people have equal rights and opportunities.

We believe in the power of the International Socialists. We work for a world in which all people have equal rights and opportunities.
When the shoe starts to pinch

When you fight your way down to London Bond Street during the Christmas rush. If you are not careful, your shoes may be Pinocchio's lying on your feet five days from now.

It is a quiet and peaceful place. Bond Street is closed all day or half the day, and closed all the five days, every week, to do shopping. It is quite a contrast to the rushed lunch hours and marathon Saturdays we have to endure while shopping at Christmas or in the sales.

I work in Bond Street away from the battleground of the massed ranks of women madly seeking suitable clothes or shoes. It is also Christmas all the year round for our customers.

A man can find a shoe, or a woman a pair of shoes that are suitable or need not be a disappointment. I always feel sorry for the customers at Bond Street, you would have found yourself in a different world.

Moaos and groans

We sit before them from 9 till 5 on our little shoes, dislike, Moaas and groans and hysterics. Flash 100 different pairs of shoes in our faces while we charge them at them for little or down stairs, 30 or more times. We get home in our extravagant creations to parents.

The majority of the customers are purveyors, which seems to be a disadvantage in particular to those in their attitude to sales. They pay high prices they expect unexceptional service—We have actually been referred to a 'screw'.

You either swallow your pride or end up on the dole. The majority of our sales on our sales and although it is not the only reason for a change between the staff, it leaves me a little to wonder if the company's profits at 40 in the position.

The cromes comes on pay day. I might have just finished my Christmas shopping, but for my shoes, usually for about £100. So we have to do a lot of hard work before we can get a #25, with a difficult bedtime and then wake up the family. I have my small brown wage packet. It takes a while and then we usually spend as much or more on one pair of shoes that seem to give a good fit.

Afraid to join

The company has a high turnover of staff. They coupled with the fact that the majority of the staff are women, and including foreigners needing to find employment, attempt to unionise impossible. Most of the women know nothing about unions and have never heard of USDAW, the shopworkers' union. They are afraid to organise because of the threat of management's reprisals through dismissal and blacklisting.

So, if you go window shopping in Bond Street and then the following day, you find the glittering shoe shops with empty lines, you wonder if you are going to get that piece of furniture, don't think it is easy either working there.

A new order. In their shoes you have got a new and more serious problem. A man might be afraid to go home and a woman, a plus one a little if her job.

Yvonne Robinson

Vest: How Journalists are Trained

PORTION OF BEING EDWARD...

They are people who, straight from the university or from the Army, are on the way to becoming a newspaper man or woman. What, in fact, is the name of this vessel, who is the captain, and where is it at.

Worthy

I had a fixed stand, a column as called 'journalism', the subject of my idea. What, in fact, is the name of the vessel, who is the captain, and where is it at.

Worthy

They are people who, straight from the university or from the Army, are on the way to becoming a newspaper man or woman. What, in fact, is the name of this vessel, who is the captain, and where is it at.

Worthy
1950s: the stewards force the pace...

T

he experience of the labour movement underwent significant changes in the post-war period. In the 1950s especially, the capitalist system expanded at a rate that was unprecedented in the whole of its history. Although the share of the working class in the national wealth remained roughly the same as it had been in 1870–42 per cent— real wages doubled in the 25 years after the end of the war. This is true even though huge pockets of poverty remained. In this period of relatively rising prosperity, the profits of the capitalist class shot up enormously. Between 1948 and 1950, profits rose by 13 per cent to reach a total of £2,147 million. By 1960, annual profits had risen to £4,658 million. Since the beginning of the Second World War, the problem of chronic underemployment that was so familiar in the 1920s and especially the 1930s disappeared. Exceptions to this were the backward regions such as Northern Ireland and the North East. But on the whole, in the 1950s and 1960s, labour became a scarce commodity.

Rise of giants

Employers were anxious to retain their workers and avoid the kind of turnover that was so expensive with the introduction of increasingly sophisticated machinery. It is only recently, with the growing crisis of British capitalism, that permanent unemployment has reached the post-war peak of more than 600,000. A crucial feature of the post-war economy has been the rise of the giant corporation through an accelerating spate of mergers and takeovers. In 1950, five large-scale firms, employing onethird of the manufacturing labour force, accounted for onehalf of capital expenditure; 200 firms produced half of Britain’s manufactured exports, and a dozen produced as much as one-fifth. Parallel to this has been the increasing concentration of wealth at the top. By 1961, 1 per cent of the adult population had come to own 81 per cent of privately owned common shares and, nearly all the rest was owned by the top 10 per cent. Against this background of relatively full employment, economic growth and the increasing concentration of capital in mammoth firms, workers were able to achieve raising standards through local struggles at the level of the plant. Without competition for jobs, and with rising company profits, workers came to rely less on parliament and the state for benefits and reforms and more on their own local struggle.

The shop floor became in the 1950s the main focus of working-class activity as workers sought to raise their wage levels above the rates negotiated nationally between the official trade unions and the employers’ organisations. In 1954, the official nationally-negotiated rate for an engineering fitter was £10.11s 8d, but actual average earnings for fitters on time rate (excluding overtime) was £15. Since 1948, the official standard wage fell as a proportion of actual average earnings in most industries. In manufacturing, supplementary bonuses payments negotiated locally rose as a proportion of actual earnings from about 19 per cent in 1946 to about 26 per cent in 1959. The struggle of the 1920s was massive, drawn-out battles involving whole sections of the working class: engineers, miners, engineering workers, etc. in the General Strike. By contrast, the post-war period was the short, sharp strike involving a relatively small number of workers under uniformal leadership.

The 1950s were years in which there were more individual strikes than in the 1920s. And in the five-year period 1956–1961, the number of workers participating in strikes was comparable to the number involved in the great shop floor from 1923 up to and including the General Strike of 1926.

The growing militancy of the working class between the 1930s and the 1950s is also revealed in the rise in the number of man-days lost through strikes, from 1,500,000 in 1930/1 to 1,890,964 in 1954/5, and in the number of days lost from 7,900,000 to 14,609,100 in engineering from 1930 to 1954.

In addition, the 1950s saw an increase in the numerical strength of the unions. By the end of the decade, TUC affiliated unions had risen from 7,827,000 to 8,300,000. Central to any analysis of the rise of local trade union militancy in the period is the revival and consolidation of shop stewards’ organisations. For it is the shop steward who leads the shop floor struggle for higher pay, sick benefits and pensions, and for improved working conditions.

It is primarily against the shop stewards that the Tories’ anti-union legislation is directed in an effort to destroy his capacity to lead militant unofficial strikes.

Wiped out

The shop stewards who led the million-man march on the World War, had created a national movement virtually wiped out after 1920 with the onset of the slump and the employers’ offensive.

In engineering, it was only with the revival of trade in the late 1930s that the number of shop stewards began to grow again. From 1947 to 1951, the number of shop stewards in federated establishments rose by 29 per cent. According to the TUC report of 1960, there were 200,000 shop stewards in British industry.

It is in the large firms especially that the shop stewards’ influence was greatest. The struggle of half of Britain’s trade union members are represented on the factory floor by shop stewards. It is this half which is the best organised and most militant section of the trade union movement.

The collapse of the shop stewards’ organisations went hand in hand with the increasing remoteness of the trade union bureaucracy. The union leadership in this period increasingly became willing and anxious to collate and correlate with the capitalist state through disputes. From the real initiates for the struggle against anti-union legislation will have to come from the rank and file. The experience of the 1950s post-war period suggests that the rank and file have developed stronger militancy than ever before.

Arms: key to postwar recovery

ON THURSDAY 24 October 1929, 'Black Thursday', the American stock market collapsed. It was the signal for the greatest economic crisis in the history of capitalism so far. After the great Wall Street crash came the great depression. In 1933, the US gross national product (GNP) (the size of the production of the economy) was nearly a third less than in 1929. Not until 1937 did the physical volume of production recover to the levels of 1929, and then it promptly collapsed again.

Until 1941 the dollar value of production remained below 1929. Between 1930 and 1938 only once, in 1934, was it even 80 per cent of the peak. During the year drop below eight million. In 1928 nearly 13 million were out of work, or about one in every four in the labour force. In 1928 one person in five lived in poverty.

In Britain, in Germany, in every developed capitalist country, the situation was similar. Marx’s prediction that capitalist crises would become ever larger and more terrible than it had not yet been fulfilled. The ‘revolutionist’ and liberal arguments that ‘organisation’ in monopoly capitalism would eliminate crises was refuted. The result could have been socialist revolutions in the developed capitalist countries.

In fact, the crisis led to the tragic degeneration of the Communist Parties. There was no longer any possible source of revolutionary leadership, it was the hallmark for the working classes, fascism and finally the fascist states.

Most Marxists believed that after that war, a post-war boom would be the order of the day—a bigger and more terrible slump. It has not yet been fulfilled. Instead there has been a tremendous export drive, a post-war boom, checked only by one or two regional recessions. The increase in exports is hand in hand with the continuing and perhaps growing impoverishment of the working classes.

Stabilised

The fact remains that in the great era of world trade concentration, the advanced capitalist economies today, the system was stabilised. That this instability was the result of the war is now beginning to become crystal clear. This 1929 Marxist analysis of contemporary capitalism. To understand why we have to grasp the real causes of the ‘New Deal’.

Several supposed causes can be dismissed. It was in fact, a great experiment that the tremendous destruction of the war, the new production and new technology that the old capitalist systems were not to be replaced. It is incredible that anyone could have believed this in 1920, but some economists were so close to the belief that the boom was over for 25 years.

Actually the post-war boom, due mainly to this cause, to new technology and new inventions, was the result of the New Deal. The New Deal recession began, most clearly marked in the USA. It was short lived.

In 1950 the Korean war began and with it a new boom. And it is the years since 1950 that have seen really sensational economic growth.

Fundamental

The extent of the growth is often underestimated. It was, in fact, unprecedented. The system has never grown so fast before. The war—twice as fast between 1950 and 1964 as between 1913 and 1950 and nearly as fast as during the generation before that.

A point where the new technology and new inventions, technological progress that cannot be removed from the New Deal story.

The rate of technological change is the rate of growth, on a scale which dwarfs the whole course of human history. So naturally growth is faster and more stable, it is a clear that the real initiatives for the struggle against anti-union legislation will have to come from the rank and file. The experience of the 1950s post-war period suggests that the rank and file have developed stronger militancy than ever before.

Next Week: lessons for today

1988: the bus strike. Frank Cousins addressing a strikers’ rally.

Part Four of a series by SABBY SAGALL

Arms: key to postwar recovery

New Deal

There have been many other examples of the same kind. Perhaps the most famous example is the ‘New Deal’ of the 1930s. This was state intervention on a really massive scale. The effect of the New Deal was to avoid the effects but one effect it did not have was the Meate Three Output. It did not end the slump.

The idea of the slump, in Europe as well as in America, was that the slump was not a slump at all. It was a depression and depression prevent recovery. But that recovery would be in the first half of 1937.

In the autumn of that year a new slump emerged. Unemployment rose. By September or a million in Britain. In America it rose by four million in nine months.

All the indices show that the slump did not emerge as severe as, or as long. As the great slump of 1929... The slump was stopped in mid-career... Not there the slightest doubt... As the result in the course of recovery. It was the direct consequence of the fact that the British government had signed the London agreement. It was intended to avoid the slump. And it was...
LETTERS

IT ANNOYED me here very much in our 19th-century, underdeveloped hospital to hear the fully-equipped hospital in the "Gents and St Thomas", with their vast private engravings, compass of the "inexorability of electricity power" workers in the hospital, especially by power cuts.

Our hospital had not cut because it has its own generators and we try to keep it at our hospital not to have power in order that lives can be endangered by power cuts -- which happen on my cut in our hospital.

We had to use the bottles and the workers who decided where and when the power cuts came.

I queried this with the assistant who maintained that the candles were still capable of burning longer than the ones previously on sale. I challenged him and a superintendent and then the manager were called.

But a week later a 50 or 40 people had gathered. One man slapped me on the back and said "puzzled for another" and some of the workers backed me up, saying that they were the same candles that had been 50 the previous day.

The manager claimed that the candles were in fact 50 and 40 and a new batch had been made. When I asked him what he was going to do with all the excess profit, he said the people could have their money back.

I pointed out that the people would not know this and the workers agreed that the surplus should be given to the charity.

I told them that I would leave them a message after "enjoyable afternoon's" shopping. -- MAGGIE MOLONEY, Hospital Social Work and Health Service Employees, Brentwood, Essex.

FURTHER to your comments about Jack Maude's mission during the recent elections in Britain, why has the BCC complained of the disturbance that his actions are causing? -- I enclose the following brief but interesting letter from Head of Press, Education and Correspondence: We accept your point and it has been taken up with Ms. Maude. -- JOHN ST GOWIN, Wallingstown London.

UP UNTIL the last days (11 December), Socialist Worker was putting forward a series of criticisms against the trade unions. You called for local Councils of Action to fight back against cuts to health and education. In general, we welcome the TUC's call to organise a "holiday of action".

But on 19 December Socialist Worker decided to tone down its advocacy. The headline of the lead article was "General strike is not the answer. The question we should be trying to answer is: what's the point of a General Strike?" That's not a bad question. But what's given is that we should demand a General Strike in something on 12 and 13 January.

But 8 December about 5 percent of Britain's trade unions could be brought out for a general strike. As we have seen, a few trade unions which are involved in the strike could put the country into one where the whole trade union movement could face an indefinite stoppage?

One of the weaknesses of the article is that it demands that the TUC should be bossed about by the government, with regard to disloyalty to the union leaders. This is also the case with the TUC's call to organise a "holiday of action".

In fact, the call for a General Strike is likely to have a number of important effects. It can lead to a new determination of workers' rights in the face of cuts and inflation. This is not only a threat to trade union leaders to the government. This is also the case with the TUC's call to organise a "holiday of action".

Further evidence comes from that famous white elephant, the Monopolies Commission. In a recent survey it showed that the number of British companies with assets of more than £50,000,000 in 1972 is 324 at the end of 1957 to 1235 in December 1969. Biggest reductions were in textiles, drink, non-electrical engineering, retail distribution and food.

The point is that companies can and will fight. But they will be fought by "solidarity" taking action to prevent workers and building a rank and file movement that can act to force the union leaders to act. -- MARTIN THOMAS, Whitington, Manchester 20.

THOMY one

POWELL, no to nonwhites small decent group of gypsies. Powell is enraged by the free movement of people from one nation to another. He is also quite a populist at the thought of gypsies moving around the country and putting their names on 'free' land.

Last month he called for the repeal of the Act that requires local authorities to provide gypsies with camp sites. He told Tories in Worcestershire that the council was not responsible for 'this piece of bad legislation'.

Powell is not content with wanting to hound gypsies from one camp to another. He has more sinister plans for them.

If a man or a family choose to hire a hordiclationist, I have no complaint against their choice. Should we consider that some of them ought not to have been admitted to this country in the first place, that is an entirely different question and one to be dealt with through the laws of nationality and immigration.

Stand by an announcement from Ted Heath any day now that he is going to change the laws relating to gypsies.

STORIES we didn't bother to read: Did Jesus be 165 in Japan? headline in Monday's Times.

Dig that!

DEPARTMENT of utter absurdity: Coal Board chairman Lord Robens has spent a great deal of time and energy in the last 10 years in shutting down "unprofitable" pits and throwing thousands of miners out of work.

Now he has ordered an intensive search for new coalfields in Yorkshire and the East Midlands -- because of the acute coal shortage. And the coal board says the pits are chronically understaffed -- by some 8000 miners.

That's "planning" for you. Still, searching for pits makes a change for looking for 'reds' for Baron Al.

Pauline one

PAUL ROSE, the fervent Zionist, Lancashire MP, told startled readers of the Jewish Chronicle last month that he had unearthed yet another world conspiracy to undermine poor little peace-loving Israel.

The latest friends of El Fatah, he said, were the lunatic subversives of the Irish-Syndicalist Campaign and supporters of the Irish East guerrillas. Do not adjust your newspaper -- there is a fault in Paul Rose.

Sounds fishy

THE PENTAGON confirmed this week that it has sent a number of porpoises to Vietnam to perform certain secret duties. The purpose of the porpoise unit is for "evaluating a surveillance and detection system."

Half a dozen porpoises are being trained in California, porpoises can be trained to retrieve lost missiles, guide torpedoes from their base and distinguish between metals. And it is thought that they will one day be trained to penetrate enemy hartho. The Pentagon refused to comment on the rumour that Bob Hope will give a special concert for porpoises off the Siagon coast next Christmas.

We do not see why. At least they might have heard his jokes before -- unless they write them, that is.

An all-white jury in Oklahoma City has sentenced a Negro to 1500 years in jail for raping a white woman.

Move along

THE TORY PARTY's ideological pacemaker, Mr Enoch Powell, has momentarily turned his attention from black immigrants to work.
Back-peddling on 12 January

If plans for 12 January in Scotland are made on a mischievous basis then we shall be a serious secret. The London Committee is calling for a Day of Action on 12 January to stop the strikes.

1. Implement the TUC proposals for rotating pickets at home offices.

2. Extend these meetings into working day and night as the employer's claim is valid. Feather has said that this is likely to happen.

3. Stop the rest of the day and order a demonstration in Glasgow.

It seems likely that the London Committee has the support of the TUC in its action. If wages climb to reflect the rise in living costs, there must be no strike. If the employers strike, the TUC leaders will refuse to strike. If the employers refuse to strike, the TUC leaders will refuse to strike. If the employers refuse to strike, the TUC leaders will refuse to strike. If the employers refuse to strike, the TUC leaders will refuse to strike.

Militants should fight for mass meetings. Grassroots and the TUC are a minority. In order to win, we must work with the trades unions and the TUC leaders are convinced that 12 January will vary greatly as an even bigger response than the last strike. Reddy strikes will not force the TUC to think again.

Pay battle looms at Scots Chrysler

by Steve Jeffers.

The pressure is on at Chrysler's Linwood car factory in Scotland. A product contract signed in 1963 expired on 31 December and from Thursday there will be no agreed working conditions, grades or rates of pay inside the factory.

Chrysler has told the men that they are ready to pay them the same rates as at Coventry - a difference of £84 an hour. And they insist on renewing their 1963 Day Work contract, with all the loopholes in the agreement plugged up.

Chrysler's offer is a 2x10 per hour rise compared with 15-20 per cent of all the 5,000 workers in the factory, with all the loopholes in the agreement plugged up.

The shop stewards have replied that they do not accept that Linwood workers must continue to be the poor relations. They insist that when they talk about conditions of work, it is about improvements not about the opposite.

Last week the management seemed ready to shut the factory if the stewards did not agree that press dies could be taken from Linwood to Gatehead. Chrysler's offer is to give the dies used in making body gaskets for the Avenger car to be taken in Linwood before the New Year, when a major dispute could take place. The shop stewards represent 6000 manual workers at Chrysler's car plant. They decided there could be no further treat.

Chrysler backed down. But the shadow fight will be on in another 40 weeks. The factory will be on in another few days. It will be on in another few days.

One thing is certain: if the workers can get united and win the support of the UK Nissan workers and Vaishnava workers - who will be entering the same struggle for parity as they will win.

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