Raise collections, organise meetings to back strikers—their fight is every worker's fight...

The Post Office Workers must win their strike. It is a dispute that vitally affects every trade unionist in the country.

The workers' determination to fight for E3 a week more is magnificent. More than 220,000 postmen, telephonists and counter-clerks have been out for nearly two weeks.

But solidarity action from other sections of the trade union movement is essential as the Post Office management steps up its lies and distortions about 'a drift back to work' and the millionaire press attempts to whip up public feeling with stories of hardship to old age pensioners.

If there is any hardship caused by the strike, the blame rests squarely on the shoulders of the government and Post Office bosses.

Every trade union branch, works committee, shop steward's committee and political organisation should rally to the postmen's side. Collections should be made and taken to local strike headquarters—remember, the postal workers have no strike pay.

PUBLICISE

And meetings and lectures should be organised in every town to help publicise the strikers' case.

The strike is a fight for a decent standard of living. Many post office workers have great difficulty in making ends meet on present rates.

Last year the cost of living rose by more than 10 per cent. If the strikers were to accept the Post Office's test and their offer of an 8 per cent rise it would mean accepting a wage cut.

The Tory government is determined to prevent postal workers from winning their strike. It was they who incited the Post Office bosses to suggest a pay cut and then accused the workers of 'unreasonable behaviour' when they rejected it.

The Tories want to defeat the strikers to make sure none of them in the hope that other workers will be scared to fight for higher wages in case they are beaten too. This policy is being carried out in the whole of the public sector.

It began last autumn when the

RAT-A-TAT-TAT ON THE WAGES DOOR: REPORTS AND INTERVIEWS Page3

by SW

Industrial Reporter

Postmen turned down a pay claim from the lower paid council workers. After a long strike they were compelled to grant a 12 per cent rise.

Since then they have given 12 per cent to the miners and offered only 10 per cent to the electricity supply workers.

If the Postmen are successful in defeating strikers and holding down wages in the public sector groups such as the radio armam and the teachers will suffer. And strong pressure will be put on private employers to do the same.

The outcome of the postmen's strike will influence millions of workers.

The Postmen are and their branches in the Post Office keep calling on the union to go to arbitration. The union has quite rightly refused to agree. Courts of Inquiry are always loaded against the workers.

Trade unions should follow the TUC's lead to raise cash for the postmen. They should give them huge donations and pledge their full support in blacking pirate mail services and railway parcel services.

ALLIANCE

Within the nationalised industries an Industrial Alliance must be formed. The united strength of the TUC and the employers should be matched with an alliance of all the trade unions under attack.

Unless the Postmen are defeated, millions of working people will suffer pay cuts at the same time as prices continue to rise. Savage anti-unions will attempt to smash shop-floor organisation.

If the Postmen are defeated, millions of workers will suffer pay cuts at the same time as prices continue to rise. Savage anti-unions will attempt to smash shop-floor organisation.

LOW PAY LEADS TO LACK OF STAFF

Our Claim is Fair—Our Pockets Are Bare

STRIKE PICKETS outside Electric House, the Post Office Cable and Wireless HQ.

Support the Postmen

 Speakers:

BERNADETTE DEVLIN MP
JIM HIGGINS PORU Executive

(in his personal capacity)
Thursday 4 February 8pm
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1

IMPORTANT: all IS branch secretaries must phone the National Secretary, 01-739 1878 by Friday evening.

NEW THREAT BY ULSTER RIGHT WING

by Sean Treacy

THE DECISION of the right wing of the Ulster Unionist Party to have another try at forcing the resignation of the Chichester-Clark government marks a further stage in the political crisis in Northern Ireland.

The new move comes at a time of open and violent conflict between the British army of occupation and Stormont forces on the one hand, and some of the regime's former violent supporters in the Shankill Road area of Belfast.

The writing is on the wall for Stormont, it is a matter of speculation how long the Unionist regime can maintain itself before Westminster is forced to intervene and impose direct rule.

The right wing's demands are not all acceptable to Westminster. If Craig and Weir, leaders of the Ulster Unionist Party right wing were to have their way, Stormont would abandon completely even the paper progress towards civil rights that has been made and would launch a vicious repression against the Republican and Nationalist opposition.

Westminster is quite content to see the British government and left wing locked up inside the party, and if it were to accept Stormont's demands it would mean the end of the line for the civil rights movement.

The failure of the Shankill Road are in the history of the developing collapse of the northern regime. On the one hand, the young Shankill fighters continue to express their frustration in sectarian and Catholic terms.

On the other hand, the Shankill workers are being forced into violent conflict with the very state which in the past they had looked to for protection and patronage. More and more Protestant workers, especially those faced with Northern Ireland's rising unemployment, feel betrayed and this is leading them to question the whole basis of their misplaced faith in Orangeism and Unionism.

The task of socialists in Northern Ireland is building a united movement of Catholic and Protestant workers in not easy. But the events of the past few months have increased the viability of such a vital unity of all Irish workers on one stage door.

CS Troops and CS Trial

Public Meeting with Brian Egan and Eamonn McCann
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1
Friday 5 February 7.30pm
Organised by ISC

Rally in Support at Frank Rice
assistance Ludden Tower Hall
Sunday 7 February 2pm

Pickets on CS Detainers. Day of strike from Monday 8 February 1.30am

Build Action Councils to kill the Bill.
Why the wages must go on

ACCORDING to the Department of Employment and Productivity Gazette, the rise in the cost of living between December 1969 and December 1970 was 10.6 per cent or about 8 per cent. The cost of living is misleading. The index of retail prices does not, for instance, take into account any rises in taxation and consequently the figure of 8 per cent is inaccurate.

The real rise in the cost of living has certainly been more than 10 per cent and it is now so clear that it is true for wages and the purchasing power of the pound has been increased. Any figure less than this will represent an actual wage cut.

At the present time the Tories and the employers are launching an all-out attack on the wages settlement. The President of the Employers Court of Inquiry, Sir Donald MacDougall, ($10,400 last year and £15,000 this year), has made a number of demand to the Treasury, apparently on the ground that the government’s aim was to force wages down to a rate of 7 per cent and below by the end of the year.

The government’s policy of trying to actually cut wages is receiving vigorous support from the employers. Speaking in Bristol, Mr Campbell Adamson, the Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry, said that all employers should ‘stand firm’ to wages demands and that the fight to do so was comparable to the Battle of Britain. Remembering the pursuit of this goal might be construed to paraphrase Churchill’s famous words: ‘Never before has so much been taken by so few from so many’.

Force down wages

The present postman’s dispute is crucial to the outcome of the wages struggle. The government is seeking to force down wages in the public sector in its efforts to encourage private employers to do the same. They began by reluctantly giving 15 per cent to the lower paid council workers and followed up by offering 10 per cent to the supply workers and now only 8 per cent to the postmen.

As well as weapons in their fight to hold wages down, the Tories have deployed the tactic of dismissing the number of unemployed and are currently trying to pass savage anti-trade union legislation.

The wages issue is essentially political. The government is leading the world in trying to cut wages and in order to achieve this it is using a political response, the working class will be forced to fight with one arm tied behind its back. They will not be able to strike on an independent, militant counter-offensive by the working class can achieve this. Central to such a fighting policy should be

1. The demand for a minimum wage of £25 a week and no retreat on wage claims.
2. Support to all workers in struggle. This means that an industrial alliance of all the relevant public sector trade unions should be formed in order to face the government with a united front.
3. A campaign against the misery of unemployment with the demand of work or full pay for those suffering from the inability of the system to provide them with a job.
4. Mass action to defeat the Industrial Relations Bill and a declaration by the TUC that they will not register or abide by any of the Tory laws if they are passed.

POVERTY: THE GRIM TRUTH OBSCURED

SOCIALISTS are often accused of exaggerating the degree of poverty and hardship that exist in Britain today. Our accusers should pay careful attention to a report published this week by the Child Poverty Action Group.

The report estimates that poverty has doubled in the past four years while personal wealth has increased two or three times. It says that more than 2 million children were living on or below the poverty line at the end of 1970. As the ‘poverty line’ is drawn up by the government — never generous in its estimate of what working people can live on — it is clear that several million more children are suffering from disease, overcrowding.

The statistics is the appalling human problems bred by the callous indifference of the system to the children of the working poor. The facts produced by the CPG explode the comfortable myths of a society moving towards greater equality of wealth, where poverty and class differences are things of the past. On the contrary: since the end of the Second World War more wealth has been concentrated into fewer hands and growing numbers of people are unable to keep pace with the soaring cost of living.

The report states with brutal clarity that government policies in recent years have done nothing to help the poor and have in fact made their plight worse. The two Budgets in 1970 returned £550 millions to taxpayers who were already relatively well off. And it was the rich who did best out of Barber’s 6d off income tax last year.

As is government — the present Tony one and its Labour predecessor — that is mainly to blame for the plight of the poor, the peer seems a wish on with the CPG to ask them to tackle the problem of setting up a Royal Commission on Inequality and to argue to make a greater provision for the poor in future budgets.

The essential effective way to fight to relieve the hardship of the poor is by the trade union movement taking action to force the government’s arm. The £25 a week minimum wage referred to above ought to be fought for. The TUC’s pitiful call for £16 10s shows how out of touch the Knights of the General Council are with the working class — many workers earning that are earned out of the socially designated poor.

Violent repression by Israel in Gaza Strip

THE MYTH of ‘liberal occupation’, cultivated during the three years by the Israeli leaders and by Zionist propagandists, has now been smashed to smithereens.

The violent repression by the Israeli occupation forces in the Gaza Strip has totally exposed that propagandist myth.

For the first time since the June War of 1967, this is being admitted even by the conquering-hungry and expansionist Israeli leaders. None other than the Minister of Defence, Moshe Dayan, has explicitly admitted that ‘in some cases the Israeli soldiers are ordered to shoot’ at crowds.

Special Unit

He said that some Israeli soldiers feel unable to do this and there have been cases of refusal by Israeli soldiers to carry out such orders, as at Ma’arrat on 7 January.

The Gaza Strip is now under the charge of the Border Guards. This is a special unit which the Israeli press called the ‘terror unit’.

It was the Green Berets who carried out the massacre in the Israeli Arab village of Kafr Qasim on 27 October, 1956, the day of the attack on Egypt at the start of the Suez War planned and waged by Israel, France and Britain.

The atrocities of the Israeli occupation forces in the Gaza Strip have now been revealed with new heights. There are mass arrests without trial, continuous curfew for weeks, blowing up of homes, cutting off of water supplies to entire districts, mass beatings by police troops and whips and knives on living on inhabitants.

Almost every day there are official statements about inhabitants of the Strip being killed or wounded while ‘trying to escape’.

An official announcement says that a new detention camp is being opened in the Sinai Desert to cope with the large number of detainees from the Strip which the ordinary citizen can no longer accommodate.

The hundreds of wounded and dozens of killed — including old people, women and small children who even a madman could not associate with armed resistance — make it the duty of all people of decent feeling to mobilise in struggle against the occupation and oppression to which the masses of Palestinian Arab people are subject.

We direct this appeal especially to revolutionary socialists — organisations and individuals — all round the world, to stand with the Jews of the Holy Land - to join the Jewish Socialists Organisation (Mezerot).
Rat-a-tat-tat on the wages door

Post Office spokesmen and the press have deliberately distorted the truth about the workers' strike. Socialist Worker spoke to BRIAN TOAL, a counter clerk at Mount Fields and a committee member of the City of London UPW branch. He speaks in his personal capacity.

WHAT are the reasons for the strike?

Firstly the long incremental pay scales. A person who joins the Post Office at 16 must wait until 30 before reaching the basic scale. The second reason is the wage levels.

What is the rate for a Counter Clerk?

In London aged 25 it is £105, outside London £910. That is after nine years' service.

LAUDABLE

What is the response to the strike call?

In my grade it has got 95 per cent support. The response is 97 per cent for the Post Office as a whole.

How do you feel the UPW executive has conducted the strike so far?

Their handling of the strike so far has been laudable. It reflects fairly accurately the feeling of the membership.

But the rank and file are rather afraid that the executive will take too much notice of the deliberately misleading and misconstrued reports in the press.

For the first time, the UPW is now involved in the wages struggle, something that the Post Office has sheltered them from up until now. It is encouraging to see such strong response from workers unaccustomed in the fight that many other workers have every day over wages.

Why do you think the Post Office has decided to take a stand now?

Because of the government's dictated policy reflected in the summary dismissal of Post Office chairman Lord Hall. He was dismissed because he would have argued that public service workers should be paid wages comparable to those in the private sector.

Most of the strikers realise that this is a political fight and are quite prepared to fight it as such. This is particularly true of the white-collar grades who have had it possibly thinned on them that they are workers like the postmen in uniform.

What do you think of the Post Office's strike-breaking tactics such as their decision to open the London Chief Office, staffing it with blacking labour?

The rank and file counter clerks have responded to this by deciding not to open any office on the voluntary basis that existed last week. The management has made a crude attempt to invent a crack in their solidarity.

VOLUNTEERS

Every counter clerk knows that the Post Office is making no effort to pay pensions, family allowances or supplementary benefits by providing cash, even though a large number of volunteers have been available. They hope to turn public opinion against the strikers.

Will the Post Office ever be the same again?

Whatever settlement is reached, postmen will have had the experience of a totally committed struggle for their living labour.

They are now firmly in the mainstream of the working class struggle, a task they have proved ready to shoulder.

ROUND UP

Strike help out pensioners

YORKSHIRE postal workers are enthusiastically backing the strike. In the Doncaster, Retford and Scunthorpe area, there is 100 per cent support from postmen and 90-95 per cent from all other UPW members.

The workers have made a special effort to make sure there is no hard ship to pensioners. Strikers, at their own expense, have been delivering pensions to outlying districts up to 30 miles away from Doncaster.

Strikers had to use their own transport. The Post Office refused to supply vehicles for use in hardship cases.

Post Office spokesmen mislead the public with their claim that postmen are getting an average £23 5s a week. A management spokesman claimed that postmen could earn £23 with an average of 7½ hours a time a week. But provincial postmen who worked 7½ hours overtime would only get £21.

And overtime opportunities in many post offices are rare. In small towns like Retford or rural areas like Sprotbrough, there is a non-existent ex cept in cases of sickness.

Every day in this area are on the basic of £18 10s for a 43 hour week, with little or no opportunity for overtime.

Head's distortions

CREWE, Cheshire - 570 of 690 postal workers attended a mass meeting on Monday night to discuss a resolution to go without pay and to continue striking for 15 per cent. They said 8 per cent was totally unacceptable.

The strike here is 100 per cent. It is opposed only by the Head Post Master who has given greatly distorted figures to the press and radio about postmen's pay and the amount of mail affected.

I also refused a request from the UPW executive to allow workers to get their outstanding wages. The Telephone Manager has allowed telephonists to have their outstanding wages.

March through city

LIVERPOOL - A mass meeting of the strikers at the Pier Head on Monday night to discuss a resolution in support of the union claim of 15 per cent. The committee said the strike had been 99.4 per cent from the start.

The only serious opposition comes from the Head Post Master.

The strikers have received support from dockers and Fod workers at brilliant. After the mass meeting, the postal workers demonstrated through the town and gave leaflets to shoppers and office workers.

Determined to win

COLCHESTER saw its first march by trade unionists for many years when 400 post office workers marched through the town on Monday. This followed an address at their union meeting by Maurice Styles, chairman of the UPW executive.

The response to the strike here is almost 100 per cent. The men and women are determined to win. Only 30 of our 120 telephonists have braved the strong picket.

The young telephonists have given great support in their first ever strike. Public response has been good.

Contributions to a hardship fund have started coming in, and the Colchester International Socialists have so far collected £30 for the post office workers and have issued leaf leis to factories in the town calling on them to support the strike.

Hang on to your Herts Trings...

by Steve Mann

BECOMING a postman seems easy enough. Every day you see costly advertisements crying out for recruits.

But wait, you think, and within a couple of days you will be whisking your way round the streets with the early morning birds, delivering letters.

But when I signed up, I quickly found out the lengths the Post Office goes to discourage prospective postmen.

After nine weeks of tests, forms, interviews, medicals and waiting around, I started my first day of training at the London Postal School.

I joined 100 new entrant postmen at a lecture by the head of the school who introduced us to the Post Office.

"Put your cigarettes out," we were told before being given the run-down on what the Post Office expected of us: Duty, discipline, punctuality were some of the words thrown around.

Then question time.

"Can I apply for promotion to such-and-such a job?" a woman asked.

"No, only permanent staff or non-Post Office workers can apply for that job," she was told.

"I thought I was permanent!"

"No, Only men are permanent. If we had enough men we would get rid of the women... Right, ladies and gentlemen, off to dinner and then your instructors will introduce you to the 48 box frame in the main hall."

In the next two weeks we 'sorted' a series of cards representing letters. We were tested every couple of days.

Anyone who 'failed' was interviewed by the head to see what was wrong. We were told we must pass our final test.

We dreamed of the cards for two weeks. We monks juggled to remember where town was. Tring was the string of my Herts' for example.

At the start of the course there were nine in my class. By the first Wednesday Bill stopped turning up and on Friday old Enis shook hands in the tea break. He had been told he wasn't quick enough.

Another one went the same way on Monday. And soon after a second old chap was called into the office and was never seen again.

By the final day when we had our goodbye lecture, I estimated that our numbers had dwindled to half.

"The mail said we had done well and we were to hand in what he told the people who had the interviews at the Post Office."

"And don't you think you've seen the last of the cards, gents. You'll have another three days on them back at your offices."

As I groaned my way home that Friday evening, I began to see why the Post Office puts all those ads in the papers...
BUND JUST
Frame-up a
repression
hit US Left

THE IMAGE of the United States' socialist movement in the American yel/ foreign counterparts is a bomb-happy, violent and degenerate one. It would ite its fate at the hands of Edgar Hoover and his FBI guards of law and liberty.

The image is a crude distortion. Like socialists everywhere, American revolutionaries are an army of making people to cause in order to bring about the complete society. Acts of individual terror play no part in such a struggle and the handful of the youngsters who take part in bomb escapades unconsiously do a grave service to the us

The real and massive violence is performed by the American state, both at home and abroad. The u201cpeaceful" war in Vietnam is only the most obvious example. American capitalism's brutality, Millions of Americans, blacks in particular, face lives of grinding poverty and persecution.

And now the American Left faces one of its periodic witch-hunts by the state. As the socialist movement grows and begins to win a hearing from greater numbers of people, the FBI, the police and the courts set out to physically destroy it.

Bound and gagged

The trial is an attempted frame-up. The prosecution's flimsy case rests upon the claim that Miss Davis was the owner of guns used in the same court last summer when Jonathan Jackson brought weapons into court in an attempt to free prisoners on trial.

Jackson and two of the prisoners were killed in an ensuing gun battle that also accounted for the judge and wounded the prosecutor and a juror.

Miss Davis was nowhere near the court at the time. When she appeared at San Rafael last month she declared her innocence and said: I am a black communist. The corrupt government of this country could not accept such a com

The reported centre tried to refuse inducting officers had for attempted to

There was, during the trial, interrupted and anti-strike

Breath could better.

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 allegiance except to themselves and the economic system they maintain.

In Europe the Common Market has been formed for the sole purpose of including the trade and profits of the United States. The international power of capitalism can only be overcome by international action for 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 the 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 all full-time officials.

We are firmly opposed to secret organisations and believe that all meetings should be open to public 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 multi-union action and joint shop stewards committees both in the plant and on a central basis.

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

We believe that there should be a statutory minimum wage of at least £2.5 per week.

We are opposed to unemploy- ment, redundancies and lay offs and support the demand of five days work or five days pay.

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

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

JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

Name

Address

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

Special report by EDWARD CRAW

Bund/ HOVER: socialists are 'criminals'

San Rafael, California. She is charged with murder, kidnapping and conspiracy.

The trial is an attempted frame-up.

The prosecution's flimsy case rests upon the claim that Miss Davis was the owner of guns used in the same court last summer when Jonathan Jackson brought weapons into court in an attempt to free prisoners on trial.

Jackson and two of the prisoners were killed in an ensuing gun battle that also accounted for the judge and wounded the prosecutor and a juror.

Miss Davis was nowhere near the court at the time. When she appeared at San Rafael last month she declared her innocence and said: I am a black communist. The corrupt government of this country could not accept such a com
Mopping up on the night cleaning front...

The struggle of the cleaning women has been widely reported in the press. In the last few days there have been stories in the newspapers and on television about the women's strike. The women are demanding better pay, better conditions, and an end to the use of casual labour.

The women have been fighting for their rights for many years, but it seems that they are finally winning. The women are very determined and are not willing to give up their fight for justice.

The women have been supported by many people in the local community. They have received a lot of publicity and this has helped to bring attention to their cause.

The women are not just fighting for themselves, but for all workers. They are fighting for a better future for all.

Night cleaners at Companies House are on strike for the third time this year.

Some of the women have been on strike for over a month, and they are determined to keep fighting until they get the rights they deserve.

The women are not just striking for better pay and conditions, but also for better working conditions. They are trying to improve the environment in which they work.

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THE LAW is the fox, poor men are the hares, which the law, and its enforcers, feed upon. So spoke Gerard Winstanley, the Diggers leader, more than 350 years ago. He was protesting against the enforced movement, the vast transfer of land from the common people to the mighty landlords. Many of the poor, deprived of their land, either starved to death or joined the Digger rebellions.

Meanwhile the rich used their newly acquired wealth for luxury and food producing, because fortunese could easily be made from eating food. The wealth of a few came from the legal robbery of the many.

In a similar fashion today, industrialists and their politicians know that they can get away with robbing the many to enrich the few. They use the same argument that the previous argument of the fox to justify their actions. They say that it is the economic system that creates the inequalities. The rich are just the result of the system.

The meaning of Marx

The meaning of Marx is the struggle of the many against the few who control the means of production. The few control the means of production and use them to enrich themselves at the expense of the many.

The country can afford it. It can be done more cheaply than by using the system that has been used in the past. Marx would probably admit that what they mean is that the “people living in these islands are not entitled to work.” But that many of the same people who live in the same islands are entitled to work. The trick is to give the impression that there is something called the country which is somehow different from the actual people who live in it.

Words like “economy,” “sterling,” and “public interest” are used in the same way. The intention is to throw the people in the eyes. The word “public” means that what they say is the same as what the people say. The word “public” is used in this way to prevent the people from seeing this obvious fact. The “people” have in mind, he will explain, are the people who control the means of production, not the people who work and people who work and people who work.

The job of the mass media, and of much of education, is to keep the workers from seeing the obvious facts. In the words of the English revolutionary poet Shelley: “Around your face a web of lies is woven.” There are limits to the power of the mass media. It is quite easy for them to persuade most of the people of the nonsense that this world is not a real world. But when the workers themselves start to think for themselves, the system will fall.

In the next election, why not ask your candidates if they believe in a world where the workers are the masters of their own destiny? If they say yes, they are in favour of a world where the workers control the means of production. If they say no, they are in favour of a world where the workers do not control the means of production.

The outcome of this election will be decided by you, the workers. The workers control the means of production, not the politicians. The politicians control the means of production, not the workers.

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Pay rise for the men of property

IN SPITE OF the volumes of space devoted in the Tory newspapers to the government’s ‘battle’ to hold down the wages of workers, little attention was given to the announcement that solicitors’ ‘remuneration’ for transferring property is to go up by some 20 per cent.

The decision, which comes into effect on 15 February, is in breach of two Prices and Incomes Board reports that said fees should be cut.

The first report, in February 1968, found that 5.6 per cent of solicitors’ income comes from conveyancing fees. People buying houses worth £5,000 a week faced with fees of more than £100.

Far in excess

The fees, the Board reported, were far in excess of the costs. Conveyancing accounted for only 40.8 per cent of solicitors’ expenses.

The Board also discovered that the average income per solicitor in 1966 was £4850 (nearly £100 a week). The income had increased by 92 per cent in 10 years, a healthy annual average of 8.5 per cent, come boom, come recession.

The income compared interestingly with an average of £4102 for architects and £3500 for dentists.

The Board developed a package deal whereby fees for conveyancing houses valued at less than £2000, should be raised to that where the houses were valued at between £4000 and £10,000, and for those above £10,000.

On 24 July 1967, the Labour Lord Chancellor, Lord Gardiner, announced that the government had accepted the report. A great howl of fury went up from the solicitors’ ‘closed shop’ trade union, The Law Society.

Government collapsed

A policy of non-co-operation over conveyancing fees was vigorously pursued and eventually, in typical Tory style, the government collapsed.

In 1969, the matter was referred once again to the PIB which, in November, came up with exactly the same recommendations as the Board, which the Law Society managed to forestall any action and the government dithered around until it was defeated at the polls.

The new Tory orders increase the charges on £2000 houses from £37.10 to £54.25 per cent, and draw the rest of the same year. The Law Society, incidentally, is strongly in favour of the government’s Industrial Relations Bill and its fight against inflation.

Paul Foot

NOTICES

SOUTH LONDON is branches: Lionel House, 93-94 Lower Norwood Lane, SE23. Tel. 454545. By arrangement. Open 9.30-1.30, 2-5.30pm, Monday to Saturday.

LONDON REGION is branches: 2nd Floor, 125 Tottenham Court Road, London W1. Tel. 6211511.

LONDON Students & sub-committee meetings are held in the Union, 1st floor 144 Tottenham Court Road, London W1, 7B1. LSE.

THE SEPARATE PARTS that go to make up Braden’s Week on BBC 1 on Saturday nights are not very happy about being sandwiched between comedy ‘spots’, rather than between interludes of classical music and exotic songs from rather odd singers.

But the end result is usually a pleasing toning down. The choice of Bernard Braden and his team have a good deal to do with this since, in an environment of bureaucratic nonsense that afflicts the lives of ordinary people, Braden exposes the back alley into which the main road goes and he tells the story of the white eye to the shady going on by the booking office.

Any little duck with a few ill-gotten pounds in his pocket can form a company, advertise goods in the press, receive money from potential customers, send them nothing in return and then conveniently go to the Continent to register their small company. True in the respectable areas of gas and electricity, malpractice abounds. Peculiarly, Braden recommends private contractors to install costly central heating. Jobs are offered bound to be offered, or the systems left unworkable — but the jobs and light companies wash their hands of it and claim no responsibility, even when they are the ones who recommended going out of business.

 Bite the hand

These disgraceful affairs are ignored of course by the simple reason that they make large sums of money from the advertising received from ‘decent’ firms and the gas and electricity boards.

So to declare the tainting and fires could not be a clear case of biting the hand that feeds you. So more power to Braden’s methods.

TWO Tory MPs, Julian Critchley, the former Tory critic of The Times and Harold Sorel, the former Labour MP for Ormskirk and Pietermaritzburg, are being corresponded to by Harold Sorel. To attempt to grapple with this kind of argument is to enter a strange battle ground of switching conspirators and red herring by trying to portray anyone left of Edward Heath as a dastardly enemy.

In general, of course, they are talking nonsense: the growing bias and hysteria of news broadcasts against strikes, the distortions and misleading and the main outlets of the media dominated by the landlords who reflect the concern of the landlords and the growing militancy of large numbers of workers.

But it is true to say that some programmes like BBC 2’s Man About Town show a clear bias towards the left. The simple reason that if you are concerned about the causes and effects of the growing unrest, the main targets are not as likely to be necessary as you are likely to be an enthusiastic follower of the left.

So when punks like Critchley are complaining about the Labour Party they are really condemning themselves. They are really talking nonsense and they are really condemning themselves.

Hold on tight

NEXT WEEK Victor Borgia and Edward Crankshaw on the great Swiss mystery — was it the autobiogaphy of Trotsky really written by Ernst Bloch and the Special Branch? Did Agatha Christie write What Is To Be Done? Order your copies now...

David East

REMINDER: the storm last year when the Tory government handed over some of the nationalised airlines’ most profitable routes to private enterprise.

One of the happy-firms on the gift receiving end was British United Airways, a company largely owned, by Cedeno Investments, whose chairman, Sir Nicholas Kayser, must be one of the biggest men in Britain with 71 directorships.

Cedeno in turn owns British and Commonwealth, a shipping firm which — believe it or not — is now getting geared up for the disembarkation of the health service.

So confident are they of the profits in the health game that they are building a 966-bedroom private clinic overlooking Lord’s cricket ground in London. Cost: £53 million.

We are used to looking after people. There exist in an extension of our present services — with the added incentive that hospitals are never empty.” a spokesman for the firm gloated.

Charges are expected to be about £150 a week. Book now.

One of Britain’s engineering’s more remarkable feats came to light in Dundee last week. Under a £16.5 million contract, Mitchell Construction is building two 21-storey blocks for the corporation.

Mitcheill is nearly two years late in handing them over, according to one councillor. This has cost the city nearly £12000 in lost rents.

Main reason for the delay, it seems, is that the window frames do not fit the window spaces. Another complication is that 70 toilets had to be moved because there was inadequate leg room and it was impossible to sit down.

Know thy enemy

WHAT THE SYSTEM DOES TO PEOPLE -Former US army private Paul Medio, giving evidence in the My Lai trial of Lieutenant Calley in Georgia, testified that he shot babies in the arms of their mothers in South Vietnam because he considered them to be enemies.

He said he was afraid the babies would be booby-traps which the mothers would throw at him. He was therefore prepared to shoot and kill all Vietnamese, no matter what their ages.

Shattered

ACCORDING to Pilkingtons, they have just discovered a way of treating glass fibres so they are not destroyed by the alkali in cement. This means that glass instead of steel can be used to reinforce cement in construction work, an important advance.

The press reports suggested that members of the force were responsible for the development of glass reinforcement. But the discovery was made in 1967, more than three years ago, by a public body, the Building Research Station.

Pilkingtons weren’t interested in the invention when it was first canvassed among the big corporations. But when they did get interested, the glass monopoly really started to do some research.

They looked at 300-400 other forms of glass to see if a competitor could get the same end result with a different formulation. They wasted the time and ingenuity of dozens of their scientists to make sure their patent was exclusive and no one could get in on the act.

So an idea because private property and its secret history was never known to the hardworking journalists of the free press who helped Pilkingtons grab all the credit as well as all the profits.

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STRIKE-BOUND BOSSES
THREATEN TO CLOSE PLANT
by Vinnie Hall

LEEDS - Bosses at the strike-bound Wellworth Plastics manufacturing factory have threatened to close the plant unless the workers return to work on a modified 40-hour week - a 12% week with increases on productivity rising.
Wellworth is part of the powerful Allied English Industries (AEIU) and Midland workers up to £18 a week. The strike comes after 30,000 workers earned £15 to £18 a week, well below even the Leeds rate.

The TORIES have dropped a proposal to protect workers' health and safety, leaving them at risk of injury from exposure to hazardous substances.

Another local strike to result in a further roll-back of workers' rights is being planned at the Luton factory. The management has already struck down the workers' demand for a 10% increase in wages.

POLICE arrest pickets at plastics firm

Police arrested 13 workers on picket duty at the Luton factory. They were charged with obstructing the highway and the police. Another Luton striker who went on strike to protect the workers' health and safety was also arrested on the same charges, although he was not on the picket line at the time.

The management has been organised for a year and the strike is now. The workers have been reduced to their barest minimums and have yet to be advertised for any fresh staff. When the war is over, the strike is going to continue.

3500 walk out at oil site

BAGLAN RAY - 3500 workers at BP's giant construction site have been on strike for the past two weeks. The workers announced the decision to strike in temperatures in the 90s.

The strike was called by the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers. The workers were demanding a 10% increase in wages and a 10-hour week.

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