CLOSE ON ONE MILLION WORKERS are now in revolt against the Tory wage freeze. Most of them are lower paid, even by the government’s own penny-pinching definition. Many of them are below the poverty line, on £15 to £17 a week, so the gas men, with basic pay for a 40 hour week of £19 for labourers and £22.87 for skilled men. Unless they get considerably more than the £2.25 allowed by the gas men, they will find themselves worse off than they were at the beginning of last year.

In the forefront of the revolt are the gas men, who, according to the SW Political Correspondent, are demanding a 30% increase in wages. They have been joined in strike action by teachers, who have won significant increases in the last two years.

The SW Political Correspondent reports that the strike is spreading, with gas workers in Blackpool and London joining the nationwide protest. The government’s attempts to suppress the strike have failed, and the SW is calling for solidarity with the workers.

The General and Municipal Workers’ Union (G&MU) is also involved in the strike, and the SW is encouraging its members to support the gas workers.

Meanwhile, the National Picket is calling for support for the gas workers, and is calling on all workers to join the strike.

The KNIFE EDGE is calling for support for the gas workers, and is calling on all workers to join the strike.

The factories are swelling the IS fund, and the SW is calling on all workers to support the gas workers.

Plese note: All gas workers stop their strike, and overtime bans against the freeze will continue. The SW is calling for support for the gas workers, and is calling on all workers to join the strike.
There's a hole where the roof should be...

by Mike Miller: Belfast

AFTER WILLIAM CRAIG'S latest speech on independence for Northern Ireland at a fascist-style rally in Belfast last week, the Social Democratic and Labour Party suggested talks with the United Loyalist Council, of which Craig is a member.

The idea was to work out a common strategy for opposing the British government's forthcoming White Paper on the future of Northern Ireland.

Craig welcomed the idea, but some of his colleagues in the SDLP and the Irish party were sceptical about the feasibility of such talks.

They are obviously not ready to talk to anyone. Last weekend three more Catholics were assassinated in Belfast while many more assassination attempts failed.

As the crunch period of the White Paper draws nearer the extreme right of the Ulster Loyalist Council is desperately searching for ways of maintaining its power in the Six Counties. Craig believes this can be achieved only through negotiated independence from Britain or failing that through a Unilateral Declaration of Independence.

In his search for support Craig was prepared to form an opportunistic alliance with the Catholic middle class as represented by the SDLP. The Irish party is not interested in such talks.

The SDLP leaders, Craig, Harding-Smith (UDA) and Billy Halij (Loyalist Association of Workers) are anxious to push the Catholic middle class in Northern Ireland. Similarly the SDLP fears a collision with the Catholic workers, but rather a clash that is desperately looking for ways of bringing those workers back into the mainstream of middle-class politics and of getting them off the streets and away from dangerous and revolutionary ideas.

The pretence that talks with the Catholic middle class is the essential for the Zukunft of the United Ireland is a lie. The SDLP, by the way, is neither for nor against a United Ireland.

PROTEST VOTE SAY SOCIALISTS

DUBLIN: Members of the Socialists Workers Movement have been holding meetings and distributing leaflets pointing out to workers that their bosses' general election is a fraud. They say that Prime Minister Lynch is running in before the White Paper on the North, before prices go up even more and further jobs are lost. He hopes to crack down on everyone who opposes him.

In a leaflet point out, the opposition coalition would be just as bad as Fianna Fail, the present ruling party. Labour has tied itself to the right-wing Fine Gael party so cannot put forward the interests of the workers.

"Anyhow it is hard to see how the real changes could come through Dail Eireann (parliament). The real power lies with the bosses, the seven per cent of the people who own 70 per cent of the wealth. The Dail dances to their tune."

The only way forward for workers is outside parliament. "Rating prices can be bitten by trade union action. Tenants can prevent rent increases. Strikes can smash the national wage agreement."

Workers take-over can beat redundancies. National strikes can free political prisoners. The working class must control its own destiny. These struggles must continue and must be coordinated and co-ordinated.

"Meanwhile, the SWM is arguing that the only value to workers of their vote in this election is a protest vote. That to that end they should vote for those few socialist and republican candidates who stand for working class interests.

If sectarianism is ever to end these men will have to be smashed. The SDLP won't do that by talking to them. The task of dealing with them falls to the SDLP and the Irish party over the last few weeks have shown signs of disillusionment in the right-wing gangsters.

Similarly, Catholic workers must not allow the SDLP to sell them out. It cannot solve sectarianism because it cannot create a united Ireland, which is the cause and strengthen it—the uncompromising support, the repressing conditions and the housing for which Northern Ireland is notorious.

When socialists within the Catholic community begin seriously to fight on these issues then only then will there be the possibility of overcoming sectarianism. Only then will the SDLP and ULF be swept aside and genuine working-class unity created.

"The SDLP and the Irish party must see that the White Paper is a sham and that the Catholic middle class is a threat to the working class. The SDLP and the Irish party must see that the White Paper is a sham and that the Catholic middle class is a threat to the working class."

By Andy Arnold

DUNDEE: The result of next Thursday's by-election in Dundee East is crucial as far as the Labour Party is concerned.

Labour's majority at the general election was only 2,600. The successful candidate then was George Thomson who has vacated his seat in order to go and work for the Tories as a Common Market Commissioner.

In the by-election running George Machin, a Sheffield Labour candidate, is of the engineering workers union and a complete unknown to the people of Dundee.

The city has always had strong Labour constituencies in Dundee East and West. It has a long history of trade union militancy. Unemployment now is more than 8 per cent with more large scale redundancies threatened in the near future.

During the present Tory attacks on working-class organisation and living standards, a defeat for Labour in such a city as Dundee would be a clear indication of Labour's complete lack of credibility.

And yet with the weak, enthusiastic campaigning of the local Labour group and the significant inroads being made by the Scottish Nationalist and the Liberal-Labour, the result is quite possible.

And it is no coincidence that the Labour Party announced its intention last week to nationalise Scottish North Sea oil when in government since this is the Scottish Nationalist Party's major campaign issue.

Dundee is also an area where the Communist Party has a strong influence. A large number of full-time trade union officials here are party members. And the Communist Party has decided to run a candidate in the by-election.

But just a few days before announcing that Ashton would stand with his campaign just starting he was withdrawn. This caused much annoyance and confusion among party members, some of whom were distributing Ashton election leaflets on the same day the nomination was withdrawn.

The Communist Party officials (some of whom helped Machin win the Labour nomination) decided that with the insecure position of the Labour Party in the election fight, it would be far too risky for their party to run a candidate.

Whether or not Labour can retain this seat with the assistance of the Communist Party and top Labour leadership and a chain of Labour MPs who are currently visiting the city, remains to be seen.

By Andy Arnold

Dundee:

THE RAIN comes through the roof and Pauline Smith (16) catches the drips in a bucket. But that's the least of the Smith family's problems. For the condemned house at Dunne Terrace, Nottingham, is plagued with rats. Mrs Betty Smith has seven children and lives in fear of the rats attacking her three-month-old baby, Mark, during the night. And her husband, Gordon, an unemployed engineer, has developed a disproval ulcer through worrying about their living conditions.

Mrs Smith's daily routine includes putting out buckets to catch the rain and putting food out of reach of the rats. Paper is peeping from the damp walls and electric switches hang dangerously from their fittings. The rats have eaten away the skirting boards.

The Smiths are an urgent case for official attention. But the council can offer them little hope. The city's housing department says the family will have to wait until May 1974 for rehousing when the condemned house is pulled down. The council may be bound to the detriment of the rat keep up their efforts.

DAVID CLARK
AS the political and industrial crisis gathers pace the working-class movement faces one of its greatest challenges. The decisions taken in the next few weeks are crucial not just for the current battles between unions and government, victory or defeat now could have a decisive effect on the development of the trade union movement for years.

On the credit side we have the unprecedented height of important sections—gas men, Ford workers, health workers, civil servants, Luiso men, teachers—already engaged in industrial action or preparing for it. The government's ability to divide the movement by pinpointing one group in struggle and launching a press witch-hunt against it is seriously weakened by the growing opposition to its policies.

A united movement of all those fighting the freeze, low-paid and better-paid presenting a common strategy to the common enemy, could smash the policy and the government behind it.

Twisted

On the debit side we have the glaring weaknesses of the official trade union leadership. The Tory government, denounced from conference platforms for two and a half years by the union leaders, remains in power. A majority of those self-same leaders. The movement ushered last year into action in defence of the miners and the dockers could have brought the Tories down. Instead the TUC general council has twisted and turned in a desperate attempt to avoid a head-on industrial confrontation with the Tories.

The result is the wage freeze and all the sinister new legislation being pushed in to attack such basic liberties as the right to strike. Unless the freeze is defeated, it will be accepted government policy, whether Labour or Tory, for the state to legislate to hold down pay and chip away at the hard won rights of working people.

In spite of the sudden talk of ‘popular elections’ and ‘general strikes’ from some union leaders, the basic aim of these new serious challenges to the government remains the same. Joe Gormley, right-wing leader of the miners, speaks of the choice being collaboration with the Tories or a general strike, deliberately choosing two evils to divert attention and necessity to build on the present front. The government means organising the voting to victory the present forces fighting the government.

Malcolm Evans, the chief union negotiator at Ford, tells of the need for unity against the freeze but cautions the Ford workers against ‘going it alone’. But real unity is never forged by the powerful sections waiting for the weaker ones. Their task is to lead the fight and by their example draw other sections into the struggle. The decision by the Ford shop stewards to ignore the shilly-shally tactics of their officials, to take strike action from 1 March and explicitly to fight in union with health workers and civil servants, is a major step forward.

An open-ended general strike could defeat the government. It could compel the Tories to abandon their pay freeze laws and tear them down. It is essential to mobilise for all-out action for the 5 March ‘to plan’ action against the government. But we can expect little there except tap thumping from the ‘lefts’ and calls for total surrender from the right. The most the conference is likely to decide is a one-day general strike.

Let them be no illusions. The TUC would call for such limited action only as a gesture of defiance to the government on the one hand and to allow trade union members to keep off steam on the other. The TUC will certainly not plan and agitate for all-out action that might seriously threaten the government and its policies.

The refusal of the TUC to give a real lead means that rank and file militants must act now, without waiting for it. Certainly, there is a need for resolutions demanding that the TUC call a general strike. But even more important is the organisation of immediate solidarity with those already in struggle.

That means here and now redoubling efforts at grass-roots level to weld the different sections together. It means mass meetings in every area of teachers, gas men, miners, civil servants, Ford workers, health workers, to plan united action. It means building solidarity-based local committees that cut across sectional boundaries and create a real unity of purpose.

Paralyse

It means growing pressure, including the threat of ‘unofficial’ strikes, to force the union leaders to plan united action from the top down those sections in the firing line, backed by official support from the rest of the trade union movement in the form of blacking, picketing, and collections. Again, the experience of the miners and the dockers last year shows how such action can paralyse the government and its big business supporters.

The responsibility falls on the rank and file to organise now and not wait for the TUC. As the teachers and civil servants in London have shown, it is necessary to move ‘unofficially’ if there is to be any chance of official action.

That is why shop stewards and representatives of all those sections currently fighting the freeze should plan joint meetings to co-ordinate strike action, picketing, mass meetings and demonstrations and begin to lay the basis for effective councils of action in every part of the country.

The question then we can agree to the government and its press puppets: the unions ARE involved in political action. Picketing is not something reserved for the five-yearly Westminster merry-go-round.

The TUC, in the interests of the small but powerful minority run by and controls the country, is engaged in a massive political onslaught against working people, involving wages, rents, social services and the basic right to organise for the workers.

Defends

We should not shrink the issue. Faced by a society in crisis, with its state machine growing daily more repressive against its minorities (including ten million trade unionists—one minority that) and with real power exercised not in parliament but in the hands of a tiny, unrepresented, unrepresentative group of industrialists and financiers, the unions should and must organise to fight back.

The ‘law and order’ we allegedly threaten is now being defeated in the interests of the majority, of the 25 million working people in this country. It defends the interests of the minority who tell us to sacrifice our wages in the ‘national interest’ while profits and profits soar, while 17 new property millionaires choose each year. Any attack on the law and order their policies bolsters the role of those who screech about strike pickets and rebel councillors breaking the law while every legal loophole is found to increase the wealth of the rich during the freeze.

Yes, it is a political fight. But the politics must be of our making. Not the politics of complacency and surrender practised by Labour and its union pals. It must be the politics of real socialism, stating the case for union action not just to defeat the freeze or even the government but the whole narrowing of capitalism itself.

The working class is showing yet again that this is the only path. Real opportunity exists for revolutionary socialists in the thick of the present struggle to help turn that potential into a mass movement challenging for workers’ power.

HELP MAKE

It’s the best paper around for workers’ struggles

by Margaret Renn

Circulation Manager

IN THE LAST YEAR, all over the country, Socialist Worker sales on council estates have been built up, and the coverage in the paper on the issues facing tenants has made it invaluable reading.

David Skinner, who writes on page 6 this week for our Clay Cross councillor, a member of the group which is still standing firm against the government’s housing increases, in his opinion, Socialist Worker is the best newspaper around for tenants. He says it always highlights the working class struggles up and down the country.

Building up sales on the estates is very important at the moment. A conference of International Socialists branch told him how they had started. When planning campaigns against the April and October rent increases the best way to start will be with the new 15 tenants pamphlet. Otherwise use handbills or leaflets saying what Socialist Worker stands for, distribute them on certain streets, then follow up with the paper. One useful tip is to try to get the back kitchen rather than at the front door.

‘The key to a successful round is to try to organise yourself enough time to talk to people about the paper. Even if people who buy the paper once a week distribute it regularly and you have time to talk, a round can stay solid, even after setbacks.

Encouraging

‘On the estate in York with the biggest sales (60 paper) six of us worked: Saturdays on Sundays at 11, at 1 in the morning. We go round the up, and then, afterwards, meet in the pub. But we hope that in time much of the round will be taken over by the regular readers, who will sell on their own streets.’

‘The most encouraging thing is that although the rent strike collapsed in November we have built up a hard core of the estates of more than 100 Socialist Worker readers,巧果 across the country. Several branches have sent me copies of leaflets about Socialist Worker. You can see from them that we have had some printed. Any branch that might want to spread the word should order them from me—cost £1 a thousand, money with orders.

Our Sales Soar

The Meaning of Marxism

by Duncan Hallas


If you have any other suggestions about organising sales on the estates please send them to us. For our latest appeals for funds, how we are up and reaching our 30,000 target are welcome. Please ring us on 01-229 2638.
BRIEFLY

A LARGE number of French revolutionary organisations and newspapers, including Libération, Monde and Le Nouvel Observateur, have launched a protest against the recent elections. The left-wing parties have mounted a campaign to boycott the ballot, arguing that the electoral process is rigged in favor of the incumbent government.

The government has not responded to these calls, and the elections are set to proceed as planned. The opposition's tactics are aimed at raising awareness about the issues they believe are important, such as social justice and political freedom.

RHOADESIA has launched a big counter-attack on the freedom fighters. Martial law has been declared over the whole of the Chirwa Reserve, a 200,000 acre area north of Salisbury. All whites have been asked to leave and the security forces have been given orders to use guerillas.

The Minister for Law and Order, Ludendorf-Burke, has stated that the guerillas might be peasants during the day and guerillas at night. As it became increasingly clear that the peasants supported and were serving the guerillas, collective farms were disbanded in all the villages. The mandatory sentence for cooperation with the guerillas has been increased from three years imprisonment to 20.

The guerillas' present offensive began in the middle of 1972 when military groups of both the Zimbabwe African People's Union and the Zimbabwe African National Union began operations in the west and east of the country, respectively, to drive the peasants to join them in these areas. The Rhodesian and South African military forces were concentrated in the west.

In August the first white soldiers were killed by a mine near Siena, only 30 miles from Salisbury. Then a good track was cleared near the Wallace coal mining area.

In December the struggle took a more serious turn for Smith's régime, when ZANU guerillas began to hit at the local police for months. The caboons have been overthrown as army posts.

The resistance has continued, with the loss of 15 soldiers and two civilians. The next day, Whistledirt Farm was attacked and 25 soldiers were killed. A second column of the Rhodesian forces was ambushed on the truck on the same day, killing 30 soldiers.

Despite the actions of its Socialists and trade unions in the Left Union, the French Communist Party has remained silent, although it was the victim of a similar attack on the bank in Venice for its annual festival last summer.

The government-appointed Paris Prefect has also released Lutete Ouvrière the use of an open space to put up a marquee for the rally. Lutete Ouvrière has written to all the states controlled by the left in the Paris area asking for the use of a large hall, and have declared that if this fails they will hold the rally on Monday as planned, outside the Sports Palace.

In the Paris factory where the Communist-dominated CGT union expelled Guy Mourey for declaring he was a Lutete Ouvrière candidate, 60 workers signed a protest petition in the first hour it was circulated. The union bureaucrats and the Communist Party faction which runs the union will not get away without a fight.

A PROTEST movement has gone on in Denmark in the past few weeks against the huge rise in food prices, caused by the guerillas' guerilla war. The guerillas, which are fighting for a more equitable distribution of wealth, are demanding an end to the costly war on their people.

A country wide guerilla movement has started a national protest against the regime and is being handled by a populist daily newspaper, which thrives on this type of thing. The movement has spread to other countries, and a boycott of milk products has led to a drop in sales of about 20 per cent, 10,000 people demonstrated outside parliament.

TEN THOUSAND people demonstrated in Milan last Thursday, and there was a 10-hour strike of printers throughout Italy, in protest at the shooting of two printers by a neo-fascist employer.

The printers were lacing Amstron Grintor's printworks. He published a magazine called Hunting and Fishing — because he thought it 'produced' his 20 employees to join the neo-fascist trade union. He also took the pickets in the face with a hunting rifle.

IN ITS 14 years of existence the European Community has never moved against the guerillas, and the countries involved have always tried to keep the prices down.

The European Commission has now published a report on the reasons for these actions. It states that the 5,000 cases of the 1970 prices show that they are 40 per cent above the average cost of production in food prices. It shows that the main cause of these higher prices is in policies of manufacturers and that there are prices for the guerillas' guerilla war. Indeed, in some cases, for example, coffee, the profits are not unusually different from the final shop prices.

The report concludes that agriculture, that there is a little to be done, and that prices are the result of deliberate decisions. The Commission likes to quote the Common Market as long as it is involved in marketing policies of manufacturers.
MINERS' LEADERS DON'T WANT A DUST-UP

WHAT IS the National Union of Mineworkers doing about pneumoconiosis? The Times of 12 February announced: 'Unions Ready for Legal Battle Over Miners' Dust 'Disease'.

The article talked of an attempt by the union to raise £500,000 for a special fund to fight the Coal Board in the courts for compensation for miners suffering from the lung disease.

At about the same time, some miners might think. It was February 1969—more than three years ago—when Stanley Pickles, a former miner from Rhyton, Co Durham, got £7500 damages for pneumoconiosis from the Coal Board in an out-of-court settlement. Mr Pickles, however, was not a member of the NUM. He was a maintenance man, and so belonged to the AUEW, which fought his case for him.

The Pickles case had immediate results. In December 1970, 10000 Welsh miners applied for writs against the Coal Board. G C Davies, the compensation secretary of the South Wales NUM, told the Manchester Evening News: We have never had a penny in damages before... and that is why the action being taken is so important.

Nothing, however, has been heard about these cases, or about 37 similar cases from Durham. In January 1971 the Lancashire Evening Post reported that 1100 miners in the North West had joined together in a mass action to sue the NCB for pneumoconiosis damages.

Again, there was silence. In the following year the NUM held its annual conference at Morecambe, none of the reports mentioned cases of coal actions on lung disease.

It is perhaps strange that if all members of the NUM who suffer from pneumoconiosis were as successful as Mr Pickles, the Coal Board would have to pay out millions of pounds. Some there are at least 40000 pneumoconiosis sufferers, putting the region to regions to regions £300000 000.

The prospect of all that Coal Board money going into the pockets of their workers is not a pleasant one, pleasing for those NUM officials who have figured in the scandalised Coal Board for more government control of the industry, and for the writing off of the NCB's debt. The sum which was written off as a result of the joint campaign against the NUM boycott is about the same as the sum which NUM members might win in compensation for pneumoconiosis.

So the Times report goes on: 'Secret moves are being planned to prevent the industry's private grief from being dragged through the courts.'

A special conference was arranged to discuss the Coal Board's ideas for a 'state-financed compensation scheme'. The Prime Minister said: 'It is almost certain that the NUM... would respond to the compensation plan.'

It seems that the NUM, having fought the case in the courts, and after being shown up by the AUEW's Pickles case, is still trying to avoid a 'confrontation'.

Ship-shape

THE ROYAL YACHT Britannia is undergoing another refit. No names has been applied to rising costs in this department, as the figures for the past three years show:

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PARLIAMENTARY PUFFS

DINING ROOM "C" at the House of Commons lived up to its reputation last Thursday with a sumptuous luncheon. The speaker was Mr John Thomas, the Rt Hon Sir Harold Wilson, Alistair Maclean, the Rt Hon Sir John Duff Cooper, the Right Hon Sir Anthony Eden, Sir Douglas Jay, Dr Raymond (Fletcher, Labour, Ilkeston; secretary: Bernard Braine, Tory), Tony Benn.

The following day, the parliamentary Animal Welfare Group met to discuss the slaughter of animals for export. Among those invited were representatives of the RSPCA and the News of the World. The hosts were Mr Anthony Wedgewood Benn, Labour, and Fred Burden (Gillingham, Tory).

In case you think MPs are happy to announce that a parliamentary jazz group is being formed by Ray Carter and Arthur Davidson (Labour MPs) and Reg Bennett and Phil Goodhart (Tory MPs).

The Department of Health has arranged for cards to be distributed in the toilets for MPs who want to donate their kidneys for transplant. Rumours that Mr Ken Lomas has sold his at the highest price have been discounted.

It is, however, definitely the case that Eddie Griffiths, Labour MP for Bradford, was a little embarrassed recently by the size of his bills for entertaining in the dining rooms.
THOUSANDS OF WORDS have been written about the Clay Cross struggles during the last few months so far: it is important to know why we acted as we have.

Was it a desire to rebel, achieve notoriety, kick the establishment? No, it was none of those things. It was a natural development by councillors who had carried socialism into practice on many other issues throughout the last decade.

For years my brother, Dennis and his colleagues (some of whom are still on the council) put their preaching into practice.

For ten years the Darby and Joan Association wanted a club in Clay Cross to replace the tin hut that they had to use. So, in 1962, the newly-elected Labour Council built three (one on each housing estate).

Between 1964 and 1972, council houses were built at a rate which was three times the national average. Private property was gobbling up as soon as it came on the market at what seems, nowadays, like knock-down prices. Rents were kept down, rebate schemes thrown out, and Labour Housing Ministers visited in regular intervals and told that a low-rent, massive influx clearance would be good for Labour and the nation.

Against this background, I was elected, 1962. The walking pace was continued. Concessionary fares for the old, a quarter of a million pound swimming baths for the young, and free school milk for the children.

That was our first real challenge—how to feed the children and defeat the government. Needless to say, we won that battle fairly comprehensively, and not a single day was lost. Indeed, when the money looked like running out the other week, we increased the council's allowance by £3,000 to buy milk to the end of the financial year.

Then there was the postman's strike, with not a single council meeting held for seven weeks on the principle that any—repeat any—letters could not be distributed and was tantamount to scabbing.

So it came as no surprise to most Clay Cross people when we took a quick glance at the Fair Deal for Housing White Paper and prepared ourselves for the biggest battle of all.

A lead was taken from the Labour leadership. It came all right, in three different varieties. Implementation, non-implementation, and Cortland confusion.

The parliamentary Labour Party, in between cocktail parties and luncheons, fought for six long months, but when the disillusioning Bill became law, with deep and solemn solemnity declared, almost to a man, the law is the law is the law. Unless, of course, it is discussed in the context of company returns and tax evasion.

The TUC met and carried a resolution. A month later, the Labour party conference was held and another resolution was passed. What unity, what purpose?

Sir Ron littering, Alderman Selfon, Councillor Yapp and Millie Miller, with a few feinting jabs, shadow boxed for a while. Meanwhile, we informed the Minister of our desire for him to collect the extra £1 rent.

He refused, so on the basis that we couldn't break our election pledges, took the honourable view that a stiff upper lip, in the best British tradition, was called for. Stand firm, chaps, weather the storm, and somehow forward play, what?

Now we have a total rent strike. £30,000 has been withheld from the Public Works Loan Board, and rent collectors have been deployed in retaliation to the special treatment that the government has imposed upon the Clay Cross people by the withdrawing of Housing Subsidies.

We didn't seek to fight alone, we seek no martyrdom, we just refused to compromise. So to all those in the movement who say, give up the fight, nobody will notice you've given in, I have to tell them they fail to understand why we stood for election in the first place.

We wanted to challenge, break new boundaries, and put our brand of socialism into practice. A simple formula that can only succeed when compromise has been thrown out of the window.
police attacks in a Black Bromley ghetto

arbitrary brutality and harassment by police and courts. The searches resulted in one defendant suffering a broken nose, a dog bite and kick marks. One man was picked up twenty yards from his home, nearly a mile from the party. Eye-witness reports that two of the defendants’ wives were also assaulted and arrested. They were taken to Thornhill Road Police Station and were beaten again before they were released without charges. The 16-year-old boy, who was released on £10 bail the morning after the arrests, found his bail raised to the same staggering figure as the other defendants when he appeared in court on 4 January: £150 on their own recognizance: £100 surety and the third previously unheard of condition of bail—the surrender of their passports.

Organise

The daily experience of discrimination at work is reinforced by the constant harassment of the police in the community, and the increased powers of search for identification that the police have under the recent Immigration Act which came into force on 1 January. This makes worse an already tense situation and gives racialists the force more freedom to act.

As one young unemployed West Indian told Socialist Worker: 'The raid on the Villa Cross pub has driven many people out of their local through fear of wrongful arrest. To fight this black people must form organise and assert their own identity. And white militants must support them.'

by Dick Pratt

How racism broke the union

RACIST MANAGEMENT and union officials’ inefficacy sum up the story of the struggle of Asian workers at the small backstreet engineering works of Sleeman Shotblasting at Perry Bar, Birmingham.

The struggle began eight months ago, when Mohammed Rafiq was sacked from the firm and immediately unemploy the plant which employs 40 production workers. Previously the management had enjoyed a co-operation of the workers. This to some extent had been secured by the company’s local Indian foreman, who maintained his hold over the men by making his relatives. He gave them the clean jobs and only employed other workers who could afford to pay the back-rent.

It is not a common practice in Birmingham when immigrants are working jobs due to their widespread inexperience of trade unionism. The result is that black workers often labour in dangerous and unhealthy conditions. Their pay is so low that they are forced to make up their wages with extra earnings. Or else by ‘hanging’ the foreman an allowance to be able to work permanently into the night shift.

The language barriers and racist attitudes in the trade union movement discourage union officials from grasping the nettles firmly and unionising the small plants.

Thus when the Asian workers come forward there is a chance of lifting the lid off the stinking bin. But as the case of Sleeman showed, even when this happens, union officials—who in this case Jack Rogers, district official of the Transport Workers—are more reluctant to fight the black worker than when white workers are involved.

Trade union officials will as a rule go only as far as they are pushed, but black workers often do not have the experience to do the pushing. Like foundry work, shotblasting is extremely dirty and dangerous to health. At Sleeman Shotblasting management have a cavalier disregard for safety. They believe that Pakistanis are expendable resources to be sacrificed on the altar of profit.

A middle-aged worker, Mr Akbar, was off work for three weeks when his piece of machinery nearly split his foot in two. Although he received National Health benefit of £10 a week for himself and his family, the company denied all liability and he was refused compensation.

Another old Sikh, who would not give his name, working as a labourer at 40p an hour, accidentally dropped his ill-fitting false teeth into the unguarded machine he was operating. Again the management refused to reimburse him. Such miscarriage of the age of Dickens.

Safety goggles and masks are unheard of at Sleeman. The minimum working week is 50 hours. White workers rarely stay longer than these weeks, so they provide a convenient sub-labour force whenever there is a dispute. Allocation of jobs and overtime is the sole right of the foreman. On 12 December the management, seeing steward Mohammed Rashid a threat to their regime, sacked him on the pretext of 'bad time keeping'. 23 Indian and Pakistani workers drowned tools at once.

Rashid called in the union district official who took a day to arrive and then recommended a return to work. A week later, after negotiations with the management, the official notified Rashid that he had been unable to secure his reinstatement.

Many of the Asians tore up their union cards in disgust and many others, old and young alike, left the factory to find work elsewhere. The foreman appointed another shop steward who subsequently left.

The cause of this disorganized defeat for trade unionism was the official’s failure to back up the shop steward. Meanwhile workers at Dreyfus Engineering, a plant owned by the same company as Sleeman, have been laid off. Management claimed that no orders were coming in.

In fact the work has been transferred to Sleeman which has lower wage rates and, after the recent events, no effective union.
OLD AND COLD -- IGNORED UNTIL THERE’S A STRIKE...

ONCE a year the government and the press discover that cold can kill thousands of people. For a few days there is a public hullabaloo about the matter. Then it is quietly forgotten for another year.

By some strange coincidence it is only when miners, power workers or gas men are taking strike action that the danger to the very young and very old and of low room temperatures is mentioned. At other times, however cold the weather, the subject is taboo.

Yet every winter thousands of old people die needlessly because of the cold. One estimate, in the Practitioner magazine nine years ago, suggested that 20,000 deaths a year were due to this cause.

Another estimate was that in February, March and April 1965, 9000 people were admitted to hospital with body temperatures well below normal. Many others died alone in their homes, without their condition being diagnosed.

A report in the British Medical Journal last month produced striking evidence of the causes that bring about so many deaths through cold.

A survey of 1000 old people, selected at random from all parts of Britain, showed that even during last year’s mild winter three-quarters of them were living in rooms below the minimum of 65 degrees Fahrenheit recommended by the Ministry of Housing.

Difficult to cope

More than half were below the 61 degree minimum which the law enforces on shops and offices. Clearly, these old people are in constant danger of cold.

Not surprisingly, it was found that one in ten had a dangerously low body temperature. And, the survey indicated that the general living conditions of old people made it difficult for them to cope with the effects of the cold.

A tenth of the total were housebound and a quarter lacked basic amenities like hot water or an inside toilet.

But the survey’s most important conclusion concerns the reason why old people live in cold conditions.

The root of all evil is undoubtedly the major worry for old people. 375 replied “yes” to the question “Would you like to have more heat in the house?” Ninety-one per cent of these gave “too expensive” as the reason for not having more heat.

Those who suffered most were those on supplementary pensions.

Although social security officials are able to provide an extra fuel allowance for old people, only one in 20 of them were receiving it.

Hoary old argument

Clearly, government members who scream about the plight of the poor are themselves not aware enough of the rest of the time to make their ministries give the old their due. They are quite happy to let a situation continue in which, as the report notes: “Low income is associated with low body temperature.”

There is one hoary old argument which is used against giving old people more money as a means of keeping them warm. It is said that they don’t know what temperature they do want.

This is not true. A small survey conducted in 1962 of old people living in local authority flats. In some of these flats the heating was paid for on a flat-rate system. They paid the same whether they used a lot of heat or none at all.

The people in these flats adjusted the temperature to suit themselves. The contrast with the recent survey is remarkable. Only one in 10 had room temperatures below 65 degrees F. Half had temperatures above 69 degrees.

In other words, given free use of heat, old people will not allow their rooms to get cold.

By not putting such a measure into effect generally, the government is killing off old people as surely as if it lined a few thousand up against a wall every winter and shot them.

Of course, not all sections of old people suffer in this way. One in 10 do live above the Ministry of Health’s own recommended minimum temperature of 70 degrees. A few do live in luxury, centrally-heated flats with all the modern amenities.

‘Government is killing off old people as surely as if it lined them up against a wall’

Whether David Barlow or Vic Feather also look for that sort of comfort.

But life is very different for the many old people, who in their time were workers, the power workers, the miners, the press and politicians.

Convenient cudgele

During their working lives they were denied the right to earn more than the living wage, let alone for the future. In retirement their plight is ignored, even as a cudgele to bludgeon generations of gas workers and miners.

No doubt that is the sort of retirement that awaits Mr Heath, the head of the Confederation of British Industry, the editor of the Daily Mirror and the various other well-to-do worthies who have been condemning the gas workers in recent days.
'FELLOW WAGE SLAVES!' shouted Will Thorne, 'I am more than pleased to see such a big crowd of workers and friends come to the Beckton Gas Works.

'I know that many of you have been working 16 hours under very hot and difficult circumstances and that many of you must be dead tired... This sort of thing has gone on for a long time. We have suffered, but time after time we have been served at, ignored and have been asked to return.

'Let me tell you that you will never get any alteration in Sunday work, no alteration in any of your conditions or wages until you get together and form a strong trade union...'

'I pledge my word that if you stand firm and don't waver, within six months we will claim and win the eight-hour day, a strike, and the abolition of the present slave-driving methods in one of the over the country. Now, will you do that?'

**Failure**

A mighty shout 'We will!' broke the calm of a lovely spring morning in London East End. It was 31 March 1889, and the gas workers had gathered on a patch of open ground in Canning Town, East London, to hear Will Thorne's speech.

The situation in Beckton at the time was deteriorating fast as the gas companies tried to keep up demand by justifying their failure to invest in new machinery by forcing the strikers to work harder in worse and worse conditions.

Will Thorne was a socialist and agitator, but he had read the works of Marx and Engels, of Bellamy and Hyndman. While in a gasworks in Birmingham he had urged the men to go on strike at the end of the Sunday work. Sunday work was a fourteen-hour shift.

In the following months he had been urging the Beckton workers to form a union. His chance came when the management suddenly ordered men to do three extra shifts on a Sunday, which meant another eight-hour work without food.

**Petition**

The Canning Town meeting was the result. The following morning, 1000 men enrolled in the union. Over the weekend, Will Thorne and Ben Tillett, the dockers' leader, toured the gasworks looking for new members.

The next day a resolution had 4000 members and Will Thorne was elected its general secretary. A petition was organised among unions calling for increased day work, and millions of signatures, and so great was the power of the petition that the gas companies collapsed without a fight. The eight-hour day was conceded.

But the employers were merely waiting for concessions.

As winter closed in, the gas companies prepared for a counter-attack. George Livsey, master of the West Metropolitan Gas Company, broke off talks with the union about double pay for Sunday work, and introduced his own 'best meal' strike-breaking scheme. This included a statement of what was needed for a strike or agitation for a strike would immediately lose all the money due to them from the profit-sharing scheme.

In response, the union called a strike, which started on 5 December. Blacklegs were brought in. They were given five meals and given excellent sleeping accommodation in the factories where they were closely guarded by the police.

The union did not risk open confrontation. It sought to shame the bosses into surrender with denouncements and speeches. The tactic failed. Gas pressure stayed high as the blacklegs worked harder. Almost all the strikers in the South West gas companies were victimised and bribed with liberal supplies of beer and tobacco. Before long, the strikers were broken, and, once again, none of the men who had promoted the strike in any way taken on again.

Will Thorne brooded deeply over these two successful attempts to break up the union organisation. He determined to be prepared for the next employers' offensive.

It was not long in coming. Early in 1892, the Leeds Gas Committee issued an ultimatum to its workers that they must re-engage for a period of four months and must undertake not to strike in that period.

It also announced that workers would be expected to do 20 per cent more work during their eight-hour shift.

This was a declaration of war.

The workers at the Wootton Gas Works were leading the fight in Leeds, and had already called a series of mass meetings in the city, at which Thorne spoke. The cry was taken up throughout the city: 'The blacklegs must not pass.'

**Witch-hunts**

Four days later the employers gave in completely. The remaining blacklegs were paid off. All the workers were reinstated on their original terms. All the provocative notices were withdrawn. As a result, all summaries against workers for assaults on the police.

The General and Municipal Workers' Union to which the gasmen belonged today is the same union which was formed by the agitation and struggle of men like Will Thorne, and was preserved by open battles in the streets despite the constant cautions and witch-hunts of 'moderate' in the press.

Unfortunately for the gasmen, the fire which had formed the union was soon doused. Thorne himself, with his friend Ben Tillett, became a member of parliament and wrote with wonder about his meetings with 'great men' and even monarchs. The leadership of the union, with the consent of the workers, passed into the hands of men like John Clynes, the arch-continental Labour Home Secretary in 1929, who joined the Trades Union Congress in 1931. The men who control the union today stand four square in the tradition of John Clynes and the few revolutionaries who succeeded him. The measure of their achievement for gasmen is that now, more than 80 years later, the gasworkers are still working eight hours a day for six days a week—the hours which Will Thorne achieved in 1892.

Years of exploitation are having their effect, and now there are hundreds of men in gasworks who are fighting with the spirit of 1889.

When the union 'moderates' tell them to be good boys and lie down, they should remember the words of Will Thorne and his comrades had lain down in 1889; there would never have been a union to be 'moderate' in.
FAILURE OF A REVOLUTION, by Sebastian Haffner, Andre Deutsch, £2.50

IN THIS BOOK Sebastian Haffner describes the events which led up to the bloody and tragic defeat of the workers' uprising in Germany after the First World War. Old democracies and Boundaries were disintegrating and new ways of production gave birth to new forms of working-class resistance.

But Haffner's book shows how in Germany their relationship to the small revolutionary groups was tentative and uneasy and how the revolutionaries themselves were outside the new forms of working-class organisation at a time when the traditional parties of the left, the social democrats, had abandoned even an academic battle against capitalism.

The failure was not just a German failure. In Scotland, Sheffield, Zurich, Helsinki, Budapest, the possibility of a new form of working-class power was being eroded away and was lost. The consequences were great: the isolation of the working class and its serious limits in the revolutionary movement which death and betrayal made too deep to heal, and the defeat of working-class organisation.

Contact between revolutionary socialists during the First World War was difficult. News travelled in a muddled way. Ideas sprawled up in different contexts.

Translations were hard to come by.

During the war Bonsa Duszczyk brought to Hungary news of the Zimmerwald conference, held by revolutionary socialists against the war in Switzerland. A small group of Hungarian socialists who were also against the war produced a leaflet and organised underground with help from a Russian emigre called Jansz. In 1917 there were scattered strikes in the Hungarian manufacturing plants.

But they were nothing compared with the strikes which were to follow in January 1918. On the 14th workers in Vienna Neustadt, near the Austrian border, came out in protest against a reduction in their bread ration. By the 16th the workers' organisation had spread to the whole of Austria and the Viennese workers, who were electing their own councils.

BARRACKS

But the old regime kept military control. The Austrian and Hungarian workers could not rely on the loyalty of the workers. There were stormy arguments within the party, the radicals were defeated, and the party pressed for moderate peace demands and called off the strikes.

The anti-war revolutions in Hungary were rounded up as soon as the strike was moved Budapest, through Duszczyk managed to get propaganda into the barracks. On the 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, they were followed by strikes marched through the streets of Budapest before the move to Workers' Councils and Greeting to Socialists.

The social democrats tried to make the best of a bad job. The leaders of the party called a meeting to discuss this strike, though the workers' slogans and actions continued to go beyond the party's own programme. Again they persuaded the workers to return to work, though the Hungarians, especially in munitions, were reluctant to obey and resisted fiercely.

The next great wave of rebellion was in autumn 1918 and spring 1919, in Germany, sailors mutinied in Kiel because their officers were determined to keep on fighting. The sailors wanted peace and they acted on behalf of the legitimate authority of the government. The dockers came in support. Again they formed councils. But again they accepted a social democrats' view that the war was over.

In Munich the workers were joined by priests and intellectuals. Haffner quotes a description of a meeting in a beerhouse written by the poet Rainer Maria Rilke. A young worker there sprang to his feet: '... if we could get hold of a radio station and speak for common people to the common people over there, peace would come at once.'

But, like the workers who relied on the social democrats to represent them in their councils, he lacked confidence in his own capacity. He turned to Max Weber, the sociologist, who was also on the platform, and said: 'Here, these professor chairs, they can speak French, they'll help us to say it properly as we mean it. Because the councils sprang out of immediate and practical situations, concerted and sustained action was hard to maintain. Haffner describes the councils of Berlin, the creation of the German Communist Party and the murder of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. He is concerned to show that Luxemburg and Liebknecht did not reach this goal, but he describes the revolution, indeed Rosa Luxemburg continued to urge caution.

But they were both trapped by the speed of events. So was Eugene Levine in Munich, who first urged caution when the Bavarian Republic of councils was set up but as civil war broke around him organised separately in the isolated and starving city.

When Noske took Munich, every one suspected of being revolutionary was shot. Merely being working class was enough to make you suspect. Levine told the court which arraigned him: 'We Communists are all dead men on leave. It is up to you to decide whether my past is to be extended since or whether I will be drafted to join Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg.

Two hours later he was shot dead, shouting: 'Long Live World Revolution'.

But the German revolution was a long way off. The French Republic collapsed, the Hungarian Republic of Councils survived only 123 days and ended with terrible vengeance from the right.

Haffner's book is useful because it contains information difficult to find elsewhere. But he remains very much outside the revolutionary movement he describes.

His approach to history is still concerned with the political surface of things. He does not ask of the councils: Which councils made what decisions? Who spoke? Who was represented? What power did they assume? How did the workers who created them see their role? Did the councils speak to the workers? Haffner's description is helpful in that it presents a generalising about the workers' council as a universally similar institution. The way working class political consciousness has manifested itself through the workers' councils has not been explained and is not accounted for according to different historical situations.

Through the long years of defeat and bloodshed, when many socialists saw the main problem to be the creation of a disciplined party which could prevent pointless adventures, the young Munich worker's voice, with his dignity, hesitation and restlessness, penetrates. How revolutionaries have been able to maintain the tension between the making of a movement in which that stiffened voice can find its fullest expression, and the concentrated direction necessary to control the manifold powers of the capitalist state.

SHEILA TURNER

WE COMMUNISTS ARE ALL DEAD MEN ON LEAVE

EUGENE LEVINE, 1891, LEADER OF THE UPRISING IN MUNICH

REFLECTIONS ON THE CAUSES OF HUMAN MISERY AND ON CERTAIN PROPOSALS TO ELIMINATE THEM, by Barrington Moore. Allen Lane £3.50.

ALLEN LANE are making quite a thing of publishing radical books in a pleasing format, and they certainly make you pay for the privilege.

Sometimes it's worth the pounding to read. Barrington Moore's new book is one you can safely leave to the academicians with an Access card. Moore began his set of essays as a set of combined satisfaction and self-discipline, doubting whether the result would require or deserve publication.

This should be warning enough: our author has been castigated in previous books on Russia and on The Social Transformation of Democracy (a useful book in some respects, but essentially accepted by many on the left). He is taking advantage of the gap between intellectual protestations and discursive stunts around world problems, with material drawn freely from assorted moments in world history.

Moore's chosen role is that of detached observer of human affairs. It would be foolish not to concede that he has noticed a little more than most men in our universities who are paid to carry out this 'neutral' function, but his initiating sophistication is little improvement on the deal hand of most fact-grabbing social scientists.

For four chapters he maintains a neat balance between a detached vision of things and a critical distance from them. But occasionally he seems to be speaking to客户提供信息，但不解释其中的细节。例如，他提到“capitalism is the most lethal form of capitalist exploitation.”
LOCAL RADIO AWAITS THE COMMERCIAL CARVE-UP

Another sacrifice to the god Profit

Don't let the burglars grind you down!

TOWARDS FREEDOM

VULTURES

in local commercial radio parliance. It means: How can we make it pay?

Rosa

Luxemburg
Press union's somersault to stop militant takeover

ONE major contradiction in the otherwise tightly-controlled top-level structure of the National Union of Journalists is that the union's conference has the right to elect and remove the members of the union's executive, as well as the editor of the union journal. Up until 1972 this was done on an annual basis. After that, the union introduced a system of getting a small fee for his part-time job. In 1974, a new editor was elected and the union journal was unprepared to support him. The union, however, has raised many questions about the finality of money wasted on the union's apparatus with organised collection. How they protested at the appointment of a new executive for an extra 10p for 'the police platform' has been reported on a number of occasions. It seems that most of the money paid to the union court, which the police platform has shared in with the other socialists, is directly accountable to the union's conference. He concluded that the police platform should be abolished.

AT THE Union of Post Office Workers special conference last week, there was an atmosphere in which it quite clearly that they are prepared to accept the Tory government's demands under Phase Two of the Counter Inflation Act.

Secretary Tom Jackson said: "If we have to accept +1 per cent we will do so with bad grace. The government can have to accept the offer on the table." He went on an alliance with other public service unions because "they all had different wage claims and this would be easy to split and divide." The rules of the UWPe were used repeatedly by the union's leaders, but there was no division of opinion and by deft use of the rule book, the executive prevented any real discussion of the most important subjects before the conference—the wage freeze and the Industrial Relations Act.

Jackson put out the position that the union membership would be adopting in considerable detail. "A deal must be struck with the government," he said. "It would have to involve statutory control of prices, properly negotiated between the TUC, the CBI and the government and there would have to be amend-
ments to the Industrial Relations Act. And the significance of Jackson's speech is that he is a member of the TUC general council of trade unions. A meeting with the TUC is shared with many so-called leaders on that body.

REAL LINKS

The danger is that militants in the UWPe may become disillusioned by the outcome of the conference. In fact it has never been more urgent for militant post office workers to make genuine, active links with other groups of workers who are fighting the Tories, their wage freezes and their battery of anti-working class laws.

At the same time UWPe militants must prepare for the union’s annual conference in May and try to use it to make a more democratic and responsive to the genuine aspirations of the rank and file.

Teachere hammer out policy

by Chanie Rosenberg

Secretary Housing (NE)

MORE THAN 300 teachers packed a Rank and File Teachers' conference in London last weekend.

The main discussions were on salaries policy and democracy in schools.

The local education authorities, against the wishes of the National Union of Teachers, introduced seven separate scales of pay for teachers a year ago. Now they are trying to reduce the number of these scales even more.

Rank and File's policy has always been a single salary scale for all teachers. This would be achieved by a sharing of the extra responsibilities which work in schools entails, which could be diversified among the teachers for various jobs required.

The main opening viewpoint proposed a flat-rate increase on all scales. This would have the effect of freezing the differentials forever, and was entirely defeated.

The 'democracy' issue, central for a rank and file body, took up a large part of the conference. The majority were for building staff associations in the schools as the rank and file base from which to fight to erode the domination of the head and gain more and more control in the governing bodies of schools, together with pupils, parents and ancillary workers.

The opposing view considered this participation in 'state institutions' to be reactionary and teachers should opt out of all such bodies and work independently.

They were roundly defeated by the mass of the conference who have experienced participation in 'state institutions' to be reactionary and teachers should opt out of all such bodies and work independently.

The press strikes in London were seen as an essential fight if teachers were to prevent the government from using national negotiations. The offer of £52 million against the teachers' £170 million, was the 'reasonable' basis for the present proposals in the conferen

One method suggested of pushing through the freeze was by large town fighting for their own allowances above the national minimum as London teachers. The unity and joint action of teachers with public service and other workers against the freeze was seen as crucial to success, and reports were given of action in different areas along similar lines.
**Plight of Irish Prisoners**

There are more than a dozen Irish political prisoners at present serving sentences of five years or longer.

One of these, Eamon Smillie, will be released on Friday 23 February, after serving a five-year sentence as a Category A prisoner in Greenham Common Detention Centre.

Eamon was charged with attempting to purchase firearms in November 1969, though he was in possession of no money, no arms existed and the police used an agent provocateur. Eamon has been for many years a great advocate of trade unionism, he has been a shop steward for the last 15 years and his imprisonment in Portlaoise in the Yorks has brought him long period of solitary confinement, he has also been the victim of the duping and working-class activist.

The Army was yet another political views, which were used against him at the trial, his case actually got very little coverage except in the Irish press.

On Thursday 1 March, Eamon will speak at a public meeting with Bernadette Devlin on the situation for political prisoners in Northern Ireland and in Ireland. The meeting will start at 8pm at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1, and we would be grateful if you would let us know if you intend coming so we can arrange the necessary accommodation.

**Exploit**

I have to reply to Tony Harron’s letter to Socialism Today official (10 February). My own experience, as well as that of many others, has led to claim social security benefit. This doesn’t show that officials, with a few exceptions, take advantage of their position to increase the already large number of complaints.

Moreover, it seems that ‘the system’ is to blame, when in receipt of benefits means the difference between living or dying. I should add that in my case, anyone who knowingly wrongs death is usually only a Tory or a traitor.

MAUREEN TOTTOK, Manchester.

**Letters for Socialist Worker must arrive first post Monday. They should be typed with dates and names on the back, and may be cut for space reasons.**

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**Gas men and Tory blackmail**

The disabled, employed by Remply in factories, are another group of low-paid workers.

The basic pay, including merit and proficiency, is £15/4s an hour or £17/4s a week which is added a bonus system.

My own pay packet works out as follows: basic pay £17/4s, bonus £3.70, equal gross pay £21/10s, less £3.50 PAYE, 88p national insurance, and 32p Remply pension. This works out as £16.31 taken home pay.

The company says it works at a loss and is granted money from the Treasury for this high productivity here, that does not add up. The value is nothing in profit and this must be reversed back into the Treasury.

Our new pay agreement will be discussed this February. I have written to my union demanding that they do not settle this pay rise on the basis of basic rate. This remains to be seen as they must be paid last year for £1.40.

I fully back the gas men, hospital workers, construction workers, shipyard workers and Ford workers in their struggles. If any trouble breaks out at the beginning of this year I will be back to the full. G. W. JENNINGS, Deputy STEPHEN [?], Broadwater, Britain. Remply, London SW2.

**Tragedy**

I feel sympathy for Thedorkin (10 February). That he has lost faith in the class that could bring freedom to himself is understandable.

It is sad, but I often feel doubtful about the next generation. But obviously remembering something as beautiful as us. From their attitude to their ability, to each according to his need all doubt is dispelled—for a while.

Why is this so? Plain and simply the lack of working class solidarity.

All around us are capitalist injustice and inequality. They are engaged in capitalist economics where man makes things called a factor production along with land and capital (immature things).

Capitalism is used up by some as those of us who ‘see clear’ to show people that capitalism is not working. We must not lose faith like Thedorkin but rather extend what we believe to other people—PHILIP MCGUHER, Accrington, Lancashire.

**Help us through the wood**

The average daily provincial journal economist is seven weeks and likes to think of himself as a useful tool. This is the line of business to a solicitor or an accountant. Industrial workers who earn more are respected, particularly the militant printers, who are more often the notoriety contemptuous of the tame journalists who mean less but accept their lot without a fight.

Since journalists in the provinces—the same true until recently of those in national newspapers—so completely knuckled under to the meanness of their managers. These workers who back in related earnings tables since the pay rise increase their horrow towards those workers who do fight and win.

Tough

Without a tradition of militancy to fall back on, one has to be built for provincial journalists. The trade union is like the only voice of people being aware of things. It is a struggle plus the hard-hitting kind of journalism that need to be described. We should also think about ‘the national interest’.

Right now the Hull motion could just as easily have come from Teeside. Now, at the same convention the Shell site and since he is of the most militant in the NUJ, there are other problems. The executive is the body of a financial crisis. The Hull News is suddenly disinterested, its periodical effort to find the real story. If the Hull journalists would only allign the Hull journal without increasing their understanding.

There need be shown that all workers must unite to go forward, not divide to drag other workers into the struggle. We must always take a radical role as propagandists for a hostile class. There are many who as much as others has to be passionately and repeatedly argued with them. This is being done within the union but socialists everywhere must play their part. It is equally as important to be a minority and simply to despair at the reporter who turns up for a strike, largely believing that life can be divorced from the class struggle. We need to be described to him. Workers should also think about his own militant role, and what they should throw ideas at him.

RON KNOWLES

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**Complacent**

Mike Caffo’s statement (17 February) that ‘Kevin Whitton is wrong about his facts. Wage increases have kept above the rise in the cost of living, not only contradicts articles in Socialist Worker but is a complete reaction to the latest offensive against working-class living standards.’

Compare this with Colin Barker’s statement (27 January): ‘You need 24 per cent, and get richer, remember, but just to stand still.’

The 11.8 per cent rise in earnings that Caffo talks about this year could be a new low. The basic wage, a fall in the standard of living for the working class.

In the same way, Laurie Flynn points out correctly: ‘It is a measure of the deepening attacks on working-class living standards throughout the country that the value of British capitalism that the value to which the worker class has won in 1971 has almost entirely disappeared thanks to the changes in the 1971 fiscal package.’

The situation has not improved but instead deteriorated. The food price index published by The Times this year—it took on a year ago and this gives some indication of the real rise in the cost of living—has produced a rise in taxation and other deductions that taken together cut the per cent wage increase reported by the government by 90 per cent. This is a significant drop in the real wage.

But in spite of all this, the government still claims voting support for the low wage. The government has declared that it is the working man who is responsible for anything that happens. The government has declared that it is the working man who should bear the brunt of the cuts. The government has declared that it is the working man who should be responsible for anything that happens. The government has declared that it is the working man who should bear the brunt of the cuts.

In the Hull Daily Mail, for example, the local daily paper is the Hull Daily Mail, part of the Associated Newspapers chain of the Robert Maxwell, which also controls the Daily Mail. Like the Mail, this runs headlines on the gas dispute such as THIS STRIKE CAN KILL, the Associated provincial papers pursue a solidarity line against the Hull workers.

Editors who appeal to the simplistic line of ‘holding the country to ransom’ not only persuade many readers that strikes are inherently wrong but also have their effect on the journalist who works on the papers. Their effect is to reduce the speed of work; they call it ‘excessive wage demands’.

Managements are usually treated with all the respect and accuracy given all the time they require to come forward with a prepared statement. Union officials are usually peppered with questions which are reflected back into a defensive posture, which is reflected back into a defensive posture.

Rank and file members are seldom given an opportunity to speak unless they are the odd one or two members who speak out against the management.

All this happens because the ordinary provincial journalists are actively plotting to distort every strike and bring the trade union movement to its knees. It is a product of society’s values as a whole and journalism’s values in particular.

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**We’re now paid, too!**

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DAVID YAFFE, London NW3.

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Students to boycott Stirling 'prove trial'

STIRLING: Students at Stirling University have voted for a complete boycott of the disciplinary court which is proceeding with charges against eight elected student representatives following the demonstration during the visit to the university last term.

The vote came in reaction to the four-month suspension of union presi
dent Linda Lincoln, after she was found guilty of 'outrageous' actions in taking part in the demonstra
tion which disrupted class work.

That the university is still proceeding against leading students is seen as an attempt to smash left-wing militants on the campus. Student organisation plans will not be al
terred to discuss any action against stu
dents who may be charged. The majority of students see it as a move to silence the union.

A letter to staff of the university has been sent pointing out that their opinions count for nothing. They voted as individuals, and also看不出a discussion of any disciplinary action against elected represen
tatives, but in deference to outside business interests the university is ignoring their demands.

The labour movement in Scotland has shown sympathy for the students' national militant action and wants to see the students united in action to put an end to the left-wing, backed by the majority, carried a vote to continue it until Monday.

Sackings provoke 'show trial'

NORTH LONDON: 25 workers from Greenwich Processing Laboratories, in Walworth, have been on strike for a month. They were made redundant after the company decided to move out of London and the sackings were at the end of the strike period.

During the strike the workers asked for a 6% pay rise, a 25% reduction in working hours, and brought in a new shop steward who was sacked. They were also employed in the strike and the production is continuing.

The strikers have succeeded in getting their demands met and the production is continuing.

Protest takes over university buildings

CAMBRIDGE: Students occupied two university buildings last Wednesday after a meeting of 500 students voted to protest against university rejection of their demands for reform of the system of government of the university faculty. They were also protesting at a report by Lord Deben which was seeking to use the university to extricate itself from the controversy of the previous London strike.

During the strike the leaders of the students held a secret vote of the militant action and voted to end the strike in two days, but the left-wing, backed by the majority, carried a vote to continue it until Monday.

HORSEY IS SMASH THE FREEZE FREEZER- Frozen food trade union strike

THAMESCO METHODIST CHURCH, Horizon Road, London N14 (near Finsbury Park)

OTHER MEETINGS

SOUTH EAST LONDON - THE ORIGINS OF THE BRITISH TRADE UNION MOVEMENTS - Michael Trebilcock Sunday 25 January, 2pm

MIDDLESEX: TEMPORARY WORKERS: 400 workers in National School cleaning service have been sacked in Middlesex Town Hall. The cleaners have been asked to work in secondary schools instead of primary schools. Their wages have been cut by 30% and the cleaners are demanding a 50% increase in wages.

WATERLOO

HACKNEY AND ILFORDTON - public meeting

SOUTHAMPTON - public meeting

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JUMP SALE - 2.30pm Saturday 24 Feb, Regent Street, London W1, tel: 01-629 3613, needs to be brought in to the Hall.

THE READER - 1ST MAY 1980

FEMALE COMRADE - 25 year-old teacher sees own room in mixed flat or house in Wandsworth, W2. Write: Mrs J. Taylor, 45, 117 Wandsworth Bridge Road, London SW11.

UNIQUE GIFTS to friends (or just you!) from the Floor of the House TUESDAY 16 TH. Write: M.S.A. (Unesco), 117 Wandsworth Bridge Road, London SW11.

INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP - 1st May Lectures "The International and the Soviet Union" - 5.15pm - 7.30pm, 116 Southwark Street, London SE1. Cost: £1.50 (including refreshments) - Write: 51 Southwark Street, London SE1 1LU


FINE TUNES Nation wide appeal - Monday 30 April - Reading, 7pm, 10th May - Oxford, 8pm, 11th May - Cambridge, 8pm - Write: Gerry WinSON, 110 Great George Street, London SW1.

PLUTO PRESS urgently needs deals for manuscripts; works at all levels. Please contact Pluto Press, 50 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3BP.

FACTORY BRANCHES: For the background to the debate, read Communist newspaper "The New International" with a new introduction by Tony Cliff. Write: Factory Branch, 308 South Rd, London, E10 or more copies post free.

TRUST THE NON-TRADITIONAL SOCIAL JOURNAL: The following reports are still available: "The Union of the Left in the UK", "Political Alternatives in Britain" and "The Internationale in the 21st Century". Write: 99 Doughty Street, London WC1, or tel: 01-637 9208, or tel: 01-637 9208.

IMMEDIATELY: The charges against them are serious. They include conspiracy (planning the picket), demanding money with menaces (making the picket), and intimidation (on blacklisting building workers).

They are not charged under the Industrial Relations Act [a matter for the civil courts] but under the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act of 1875. So they face criminal charges. The purpose of the trial is to isolate the men from their union, since the union will not normally give legal aid to men convicted of criminal offences.

The men are being called to appear before a magistrates court on Thursday 15 March. They are calling for an all-out stoppage in the building trades that day. All trade unions must support this call. Against the united power of the working class, the bosses are desperate. But if they can get away with this attack, there will be no end to the isolated trade unionists.
Drivers’ big strike goes on

MIDLANDS—1,000 heavy lorry drivers working for BRS (Midlands) are now in the second week of their strike. What started as a claim for £2.50 as payment for holding a Heavy Goods Vehicle inspection while on the job has now taken on major importance.

The strike is threatening to close six of the 21 BRS depots in the Midlands. The employers are said to have lost £100,000 since the strike began. Talks last Friday broke down when the management offered increases of between 7½p and 8.4p based on a three-year scale.

Transport union official Alan Law pointed out that the total increase offered by management could be equally shared to give each man a 3p raise. If the management insisted they could not make an offer beyond the limit laid down by the unions. During the disputes, British Leyland plants have been hit hard, with 13,000 workers laid off at 11 factories.

A report says most of the BRS drivers who transport our Ford bodies from Pressed Steel in Birmingham and the Swindon and Oxford depots wanted to negotiate separately with BRS. Alan Law said that management had threatened to fire any driver who did not vote for the union views at those plants had refused to break with the main group of workers.

Packaging sit-in in third week

ST HELENS—300 workers at the Jefferson Packaging joint workshop at Aintree have been in occupation for three weeks.

The printers, who are in the NUPE printworkers’ chapel, decided that workers should demand an improvement in their pay and working conditions, as part of their campaign for a pay increase for all the workers in the print industry. Management then ordered workers to change to a piecework system, to break the strike by trying to sell off the shopfloor.

The printers then struck and refused to remove printing dies from the works so that the owners could sell the plant and goods. Since then the whole plant has been occupied and the printworkers and drivers are not made part of the occupation.

Walk-out after 54 suspended

PETERBOROUGH—1,500 workers at the BRS depot walked out on Monday. The walk-out was called by the BRS Union and the picketers were suspended after they took industrial action as the result of a dispute.

The pickets sit down over a long-standing bonus dispute, and the company has threatened to sack them if they do not return to work.

At a previous mass meeting a motion calling for a stop to the payment of the bonus was approved. The management has a threat to sack them if they do not return to work.

Social workers b ack militant

NORTH LONDON—More than 100 Islington social workers and other local authority workers expressed their support for last Friday for social worker Myra Garrett, who is standing for the seat, for the council election in Islington. The charge is clearly political and is not a precedent that could be used against other militant social workers.

The local authority has been disturbed that a number of its workers have been using their rank and file movement to unite with the striking National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) at the depot. NUPE is said to be taking up the case of the striking workers and the following day and the workers are due to meet later in the week.

ATTACK ON SHOP STeward succeeds

BURY—The management at GEC Machines has won the first round of its bid to get militant engineering union shop steward Steve Evans out of the factory. From its closure of the shop, a tough strike by the shop stewards the press shop, so losing his steward’s condition.

100 workers at the factory struck last week after management insisted on Evans’ transfer, but they returned to work last Tuesday after the agreement that the transfer would be carried out as a works conference the following day.

At the meeting with full-time union officials, management refused to lift the suspension and the shop stewards were given notice after a break the meeting had been resumed.

The union made clear that they did not expect any widespread action to challenge this. The union had to negotiate to lift the suspension and the men did not continue to challenge the management.
FORD TO STRIKE ON 1 MARS

Unity against freeze

by Sibby Segall
FOUR HUNDRED Ford shop stewards voted unanimously in Coventry on Sunday in favour of a call for an all-out strike from 1 March if the company fails to make an acceptable new offer.

In line with the government’s freeze, a paltry £2.40 has been offered in response to the union’s demand for a £10 increase.

The company has also taken by the Ford national stewards’ committee in inviting to the negotiations representatives from all sections of workers currently fighting the freeze. In stark contrast to the recent official conference of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers, Coventry conference ended with a call to action.

A six-point resolution was unanimously passed which included the demand that the TUC, at its special conference on 5 March, should call an all-day general strike in protest at the government’s wages policy.

A conference from Rolls-Royce spoke of the failure of the company and national committees linking militants throughout the car industry.

A Vauxhall convener described how Vauxhall workers had been extremely dependent on negotiations at Ford. But he added that they were now becoming more self-sufficient.

THE DUTY

Alun Thomas, deputy convener at Coventry’s Berek Ford, said there was a strong possibility that Coventry workers would be out at the same time as Ford. They had been offered a mere £1.60 increase.

Bro Thomas, a hospital worker from Swansea, described how everyone in the hall would at some time in their lives require hospital treatment. But that of every trade unionist should be to support their hospital workmates.

Bill Freeman, from Bristol Collier Primary School, who spoke on behalf of teachers on about being there. But we are being magnified out of all proportion. The action represents the trade union leaders who are sitting on the fence.

In addition to demanding that the TUC call a one-day general strike, the delegates also rejected full support to be given by the whole movement to every section of the freeze, that trade union representatives should sit on the government’s Pay Board, that the conference called by the Locomotive Engineers’ National Union on 31 March should be supported and that May they should be a day of national action and demonstrations against Tory policy.

Richard Muller, convener of the Ford Dagenham shop stewards, said that many shop stewards would, on the basis of today’s solidarity, feel that they are going to be placed in a very serious position by the time that the Ford workers are ready to put up a decisive fight.

LANCASHIRE timber and distribution workers are out on foot and in plants workers at Warrington, Liverpool, Preston and Parrington (Manchester) are on a non-co-operation and overtime ban.

Sprints are high and the determination to win is overwhelming. Pickets are enthusiastic and thorough. In Warrington, staff workers are being fined 10p entrance and 10p as an exit fee. (Fords go to Musical Drafting.)

A real sense of unity has developed among gas workers. Strikers are resolved to maintain this unity after the strike ends. They have already planned to have regular monthly meetings of stewards from the North Lancashire depots in the future.

And they have decided that redundancy must be resisted at all costs and that they will, if necessary, out the outside contractors rather than see more locks thrown on to the dole queue.

In Wigan, where official strike action was preceded by three weeks unofficial strike action, militant are angry that the union is restricting official backing for strike action to two weeks. They are determined to carry on as long as it takes to win the claim.

Strikers are horrified at the press campaign being waged against them. Despite their offers to maintain emergency services and even repair faults in hardships cases, gas board officials continue to try to discredit strikers as potential murderers.

Strikers sent six volunteers to man emergency services in Wigan. The gas board turned them away, saying that the number was too great and that they only wanted two volunteers. As a result there is no emergency service in Bolton.

In Wigan gas workers received strongly worded letters from the gas board criticizing them for not meeting emergency services. The strikers have been running emergency service ever since they first took strike action over three weeks ago.

STOCKPORT: Gas workers at the local depot are out on strike and are determined to stay out until they claim a rent. One of them told Socialist Worker: ‘They want us to go, but they haven’t been too much learning it in this industry and it’s going to stop. We are letting them looking for the exploitation when it’s not our fault. The one at Macclesfield was caused by the shoddy gear used by the employers.’

Walter Jordan, the activist, said: ‘Our members are trying to get the cancellation of the Whitlams’ clause. We are being held up on the dole queue.’

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They were the plant to persuade the men not to walk out or flake off the gas instead of putting it through the mains.

The feeling among the men at Tipton was strong and they have accepted the situation on condition that GMAM gas officials should order more cuts to be made on industry. McGinniss has really done a top job of a balancing act in view of the frustration of his members who want more hard hitting action.

Today’s meeting will provide the opportunity for gas workers to outline their action in the West Midlands to affect industry more widely in the area, as present only a few of the factories in the West Midlands area have been hit by the work to rule.

Let us build a small general strike and make sure that the action in the West Midlands affects industry more widely in the area, as present only a few of the factories in the West Midlands area have been hit by the work to rule.

LETCHWORTH, Herts: 36 members of the DMU2000 struck officially for one week at the Natural Gas Conversion Centre on Monday. Pickets will be out today at TGWU union’s request that the TGWU drivers will join the strike.

David Caw, shop steward, said: ‘The TGWU struck, they couldn’t do it, they only could say that the TGWU drivers will join the strike.

NUMSTILL2: Gas workers in the West Midlands are meeting today (Saturday) to discuss plans for stronger action to curb gas supplies to industry. Many gas workers are already meeting for such action. At Tipton last weekend manual workers threatened to shut down part of the plant.

Bill McGinniss, regional organiser of the General and Municipal Workers Union, went to the picket line and persuaded the men not to walk out or flake off the gas instead of putting it through the mains.

NUM DITHERS ON CLAIM

Bill Message

MINERS’ leaders have again put off a decision to take any action in pursuit of their freeze claim for an extra £5.50 to £7.00. A proposal to call a special conference, which the left is confident would win for strike action, was narrowly defeated by 16 votes to 12 on the NUM executive body last week.

The latest offer from the Coal Board increased the original offer of £5.29 to a package of £5.50, although a few other concessions have been made. These include a doubling of the pensions from £15.00 to £3.00, an increase in the worker’s fuel allowance and an extra week’s holiday at Easter.

The executive rejected the offer of £5.29 but it gave the go-ahead for further discussion with its negotiating team and the Coal Board. This would appear to be a fruitless exercise since NCB chairman Derek Ezra has made it perfectly clear that he has no intention of moving beyond the limits imposed by Phase Two of the Tory freeze.

Militants are aware that the narrow right-wing majority on the executive will impose a ballot, emphasizing the benefits offered by the board which will be needed in terms of ‘Do you support three measures’?

The NUM executive meeting NUM President Joe Beenham made an ambiguous statement of support for the NUM action at the book. He looked towards the TUC recall congress on April 27 for the miners. He expressed all-out in support of a general strike.

We believe that the NUM leaders calling a general strike is slim. We believe that the NUM leaders calling the NUM to assume its responsibilities of leading the struggle is, in fact, a mischievous attempt by Gower to claw out of the left wing and push it into the miners’ movement, which had already voted to come out in support of the NUM. If the NUM organises for an immediate stoppage and some eight delegates supported his position.

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Three measures’?