Defend the unions
Victory to the miners

KICK OUT THE TORIES

VOTE LABOUR

Five pages on the election, miners pages 15 and 16
'WE UTERLY REJECT the philosophy of compulsory wage control.' That was what the Tory election manifesto said in 1970.

'Labour's Prices and Incomes Policy has been a failure. We shall not repeat it.' That was also what the Tory manifesto said in 1970. Such a policy was: 'Not only impracticable but, undesirable and an unjustifiable infringement on the freedom of the individual.' So said Ted Heath at Carshalton in July 1967.

Now we have had more than a year of compulsory wage control.

And what of their promises on prices? 'These measures [proposed tax changes] will cut prices in the future.' That was what the Tories said in their 1970 election campaign.

'The need for control inflation will come first.' That was what the Tory manifesto said in 1970. Between 1964 and 1970 prices rose on average 4½% per year. Food prices rose by 4 per cent a year. That was bad enough but look at the record since 1970!

In 1973 alone, all prices rose on average by 10½% per cent, according to the government's own sources. Food prices rose by 25% per cent, according to the Guardian's calculation of the cost of an average shopping basket.

The Tories blame 'greedy' workers, militant trade unionists, and socially aware shopkeepers. But throughout 1973, the year of all-time record inflation, Tory incomes policy, now rechristened the 'Counter Inflation Policy', was rigidly and effectively enforced on the working class.

The Tories complain about the increase of imported foodstuffs. But they have done nothing about controlling homegrown food.

Farm profits increased by 40 per cent last year and we paid every penny of it.

Inflation is still raging. The current rate is in excess of 15% per cent per year and is still accelerating. Inflation of 20% per cent is predicted. Someone will have to pay the price and it will not be Ted Heath and his friends.

Tory incomes policy may have been a sick joke as far as prices are concerned, but that does not mean it has been a failure from the bosses' point of view.

In 1972 company profits were £2,873 million. In 1972 they rose by 12 per cent to £3,218 million. Figures are not available for 1973, but modest estimates are of a 25 per cent rise in profits, bringing the total to something in excess of £4,000 million.

EMP's first half-year profits in 1973 were increased by 43 per cent. The Thomson Organisation reported an increase of 67 per cent for profit levels.

Redland, Lord Beeching's company, reported an increase of profits from £1.2 million to £20 million.

The steel industry is 72% in the black. The NCB is 2½% in the black. The people who will pay even more in the future.

Milking school kids' health

THE RECORD of the Tories and their Labour successors from man, Sir Keith Joseph, is a prime example of their mean-minded vindictiveness.

Cheap welfare milk for children was abolished. The 17 million gallons of half-price milk sold to expectant mothers and children under five has been abolished.

School meals have increased in price. Pensioner's charges are now 26p for each item. The maximum charge for a day's meals is £1.50 to £2.00.

The Tories claim to have increased pensions annually since they took office. Family allowances, however, have not been increased since 1966. Despite the yearly increases the old age pension has increased by £7.70, and the family pension by £4.75 for a dependant wife. It is grossly inadequate. It represents only 20 per cent of a recent low wage.

Little wonder that 29 per cent of the eight million old age pensioners are forced to apply for supplementary benefit.

The IRON FIST in the velvet glove: that's the best description of the Conservative election manifesto.

The glove is soaked in the treacle of Conservative Central Office talk about extremism dividing and destroying the nation and guiding the nation safely through the difficult period ahead.

Then there are the standard promises which are made in order to be broken: like the promise to keep the benefits rising to spend more money on primary schools and to 'provide more houses for renting in areas of housing need'.

The fist appears in the sections about the working-class movement. Social security payments to the families of strikers will be hit pocket money of the unions have paid strike pay.

Profit

By this device, the Tories hope to 'save' the Exchequer—on the basis of the average of the last three years—total of £5 million a year rather than Lord Carrington, who thought up the idea, will make in clear profits by selling off some of the nationalized industries.

There are other warnings too: a document will be published on 'picketing laws'. All attempts will be made to enforce the existing law.

Another proposal is for a new law to lay down rules about trade union elections. Not content with rewriting trade unionist rules in the Industrial Relations Act, they now propose to draw up trade unionist's election procedures.

Every phrase about the trade unions in the manifesto indicates tougher action against them.

By their nature, manifestos never reveal the main intentions. Read this police drift, it is difficult to imagine the holocaust which the Tories are planning in the working-class communities.

Only careful study of the sections on trade unionism and militancy gives you a clue.
HOME LABOUR, STAND UP FIGHT

Price hikes continue, but they are not all bad news. Some prices are going down. The combined effect of rising house prices and the increase in the cost of living means that the government and the public are faced with the prospect of a housing shortage. The government has announced that it will introduce a new system of housing benefit which will help to make up for the shortage of housing. The new system will be introduced in the next financial year and will be available to all tenants on low incomes. The government has also announced that it will provide additional funding to help to meet the increased demand for housing. The government has also announced that it will provide additional funding to help to meet the increased demand for housing.
SOARING PRICES
FUEL CIVIL WAR

Prime Minister Bhutto of Pakistan still boasts that he can find a solution to the crisis of his country. But the storm breaking about him is beyond the capacity of any man.

Near civil war rages in one of Pakistan's four provinces, is threatened in a second, and could break out in a third. The country's neighbors—India, Afghanistan, and Russia—all have an interest in exploiting the internal divisions to weaken the country.

The economy is failing. Inflation robs the pockets of the mass of the population. Private business will not invest, so jobs grow scarce. The massive increase in oil prices makes any serious economic progress impossible.

Yet Bhutto survives. He survives, despite the threatened collapse of the country, because there is no serious opposition capable of overthrowing him.

FUTURE

The shattered fragment of the old Pakistan that emerged after the 1971 war with India seems to have little future. More than a million of its people now live in Bangladesh, where the export-driven jute industry was gutted.

But the new Pakistan survived. With a massive deviation of the expenses by 131 per cent, exports were forced up, and food output pushed up by a substantial increase in agricultural prices.

But by 1973, the account had to be settled. Higher food prices fueled world inflation. Business was still terrible. However, the prospects of a recovery are now better.

The government is now running some exports, foodstuffs and textiles, and subsidizing some food imports. Food traders resisted, so Bhutto nationalized the vegetable oil and rice trade. The food sellers are now in a position to influence government policy.

August 6 million acres were devastating by flood. On top of that, demand for Pakistan's exports—oil and rice—was increasing. Oil prices, which in 1970 cost $14 million, in 1973 $373 million, and this year it is expected to cost $113 million. Yet the exports cannot be found at home to be sold.

REVOIL

To pay for oil, food imports must be cut. With less oil, there is less fertilizer, less kerosene, less fuel for transportation, and less industrial capacity. The government has to make some drastic cuts in the import trade and reduce production.

At the moment, the revolt against the regime is strongest in the small outlying provinces. There is an open rebellion in Baluchistan, and a number of tracts of the Pakistan army are tied down fighting it. There is a threatened revolt in the North-West Frontier Province, and a movement for greater independence in Sindh.

But the economic crisis threatens Bhutto in the heartlands of Pakistan. The working class is angry in many cities at the rising price of survival, and the villages can only be further impoverished by events. Afghanistan is caught in the same position as the Soviet Union—pressure from the United States, and threats from the United Kingdom. The British are now threatening to invade Pakistan to support the revolt against the regime. The British are also giving money to the rebels in order to undermine the Bhutto regime.

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Afford

The Tories said they could afford to reduce the budget to 10 per cent of the cost of living. They said this was possible because of the growing demand for their services. They were right. The demand for their services is growing, and the Tories are making more money than ever before.

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Two million vote to strike

Two million West German public employees have begun nationwide campaigns of selective strikes in support of their 15 per cent wage claim. They have included Transport and Hospital workers, postmen, dustmen, and local government officials.

Unofficial local strikes and demonstrations, partial stoppages and meetings during working hours started a few days ago. The national strike ballot held last week by the five big public sector unions resulted in 74 per cent of the members voting in favor of official strike action and the rejection of the government's increased offer of 9 per cent, despite last-minute government offers to negotiate.

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But the government has now closed down the works of the workers in the public sector, and the workers have responded by organizing a nationwide strike with the aim of winning higher wages and better conditions.
Continuing our series on...

THE wealthy men who run the Pay Board have always tried to tell us that their attitudes to pay increases is absolutely impartial. They wouldn’t dream, they tell us, of being touched on the shoulder by the rich. In fact, however, the Pay Board behaves like any other agency of government to protect the incomes of the rich and restricts the incomes of the poor. For the sake of the电站 the three directors of Tectonic Electronics, a firm which manufactures electronic equipment in Wokingham, Berkshire. Last May, to celebrate a profitable year’s trading, the company gave pay cases to three directors.

The raises were normal—for directors. One got £1000 a year (£20 a week) extra. Another got £500 a year (£10 a week) and the junior, apparently, a mere £350 (£7 a week).

The Tectonic directors are law-abiding citizens, so they laid the pathetic informed the Pay Board of the increase before they were paid. That was in May 1973. The normal procedures of the Pay Board when receiving information about pay increases above the government’s norm is to slap an immediate warning notice on the company, followed, within a fortnight, by an order forbidding pay increases. Each of the three Tectonic increases was plainly in breach of the Phase Two counter-inflation code, which banned any price rise for any individual of more than £350 a year.

The Pay Board issued its warning notice on 30 November, and its order forbidding payment of the increases on 21 January, eight months after the increases were first paid. As a result of this delay, the directors have been paid increases of £5,730, £5,500 and £4,540 a week above the pay limits for eight months without any interference from the Pay Board. All money paid will not be reclaimed.

Compare this behaviour with the reactions of the Pay Board at about the same time to last year’s pay agreement on behalf of 100,000 oburers.

The power workers’ unions had signed an agreement with the em- ployers for a pay rise which was paid on 23 March 1973. The rise, naturally, was within Phase Two, but Phase Two didn't start until 1 April—two weeks after the money was payable. In those two weeks, the Phase One applied—a complete freeze.

In the strict letter of the law, the power workers’ rise for the two weeks was against the freeze.

Involved

The Pay Board reacted instantly. On 26 March, it received a letter from one D C Bell, managing director of Tectonic, informing them that 3 Mulberry Walk, Chelsea... a delightful situation for the town house of the Minister for Social Services, Sir Keith Joseph. Sir Keith’s father was joint founder for the building company, Bovis, the fifth largest in the country. Sir Keith and his family still admit to 135,000 shares in Bovis, but they have many, many more in the names of nominees and in trusts.

Bovis blossomed into national fame and fortune during the early 1960s when the Tory government got its blissful to high-rise system—built blocks of flats and prefabricated building for schools and hospitals.

Bovis were quick to exploit this market and used the services of one T D Smith, leader of Newsoms Corporation, to sell their expertise in the development of town centres and housing contracts all over Britain. Dan Smith himself had declared an interest in a building firm called Coulson’s, which had won contracts for building high blocks of flats in Satin Tents, High Hatch and Montague Estates.

The Newsoms Corporation demanded an inquiry into this, but the Minister of Housing refused an inquiry. The Minister of Housing was Sir Keith Joseph, who, by a coincidence of fate, was born in the North of England, Sir Keith is naturally an undertaking in Liverpool, the secret of insurance societies, and makes many huge fortunes on the savings of the working class.

In 1968, Sir Keith’s Lords, by some oddity, insured the Distillers company against any damage caused by the spending of the distillers. Distillers are still trying to get the sys, and have spent millions on the courts which have now agreed to put up £50,000 against the cost of the court.

Those unfamiliar with City jargon this means that Bovis would buy shares in companies, lend them money so they could expand through buying and selling property.

Among the properties Spry Westmoreland owned was the Brightstone, one of the biggest speculative ventures of its kind under- taken in recent years. The company also owned office suites throughout the country, hotels and factories.

All this, of course, had nothing to do with Lord Chalfont, who was only a director of a company which provided the money and owned 35 per cent of the shares.

T H Rogomtor

Shop your mates — £1000

The management of Frigoscandia, a firm in Kirkby, near Liverpool, which deals in frozen foods, has posted a notice on its notice board offering £1000 to anyone or persons jointly who can give information that will lead to the arrest and subsequent conviction of any party or parties involved in these crimes.

The 'crimes' in question are described as 'theft' leading to 'product losses from this store' which have now reached mammoth proportions.

The notice has been greeted with some merit from the stawards at Frigoscandia, who see it as another attempt by the management to cover its own incompetence.

P.S.

D C Bell, managing director of Tectonic, would not tell me who the three lucky directors are. It’s not of any interest to anyone, he said. This is one of the three, “I’m not saying”, he replied. “I don’t see that there is any relevancy.”

“This is a matter between us and the Pay Board. It’s one of those things which is made public because unfortunately people get their orders. Then there are people like us who have to do it. I’m sorry to be so negative, but I’m afraid I can’t help you with the names.”

Get up and walk grinding and you’ll stay alive

I am grateful to the Kent Messenger [1 February] for this sensitive solution to the problem of old people who die from the cold.
Miners: We'll stick with them all the way

Prisons: Even worse than you said!

I hope that Socialist Worker in the weeklies, with the exception of the general election, will pull all the stops out in its effort to get a vote for the anti-Tory and pro-Labour candidate.

There is no friend of the Labour Party, I left in the middle 1960s and other issues that their policies in power were essentially those of the Tories. However, the Tories have been able to get things in power in this country that any incompetence they suffer from the miners' strike is due to the miners and not to them.

The miners have stumbled into something. They must not succeed with the overwhelming majority.

The way that people can show that they are not succeeding is to vote them out and vote against the Tories on 28 February and kick them out of power, in the absence of alternatives this means voting Labour.

A returned Tory government will be taken to mean not only that the people regard the miners smashed, but that they approve of a decreasing standard of living for the miners, mass increases in profits for speculators and the Extension Act, the Housing Act, the oppression in Ireland, etc.

Roger Kline's CAN SOCIALISM COME THROUGH PARLIAMENT? draws the lessons from the antics of the Labour Party, in government and in opposition, of the miners of capitalism, and argues what we can do to bring socialism.

10p plus 3p postage (10 or more copies post free) from 15 BOOKS, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4.
WHO DOES RUN THE COUNTRY?

ON THE MORNING after the announcement of the general election, Mr James Prior, who is deputy chairman of the Tory Party and a fat, rich, farmer from Suffolk, spoke on the Today radio programme about his party's aims in the election.

"The 'problem,'" he explained, "is whether we can go on being pushed around by powerful groups in our society."

Prior was right. That is the problem.

But Mr Prior and his millionaire colleagues will be spending the next two weeks desperately trying to disguise the identity of these powerful groups. They will pretend that the people who are "pushing us around" are "reds" in the trade union, most of whom are elected by their members to defend them against their employers.

But the most powerful, most undemocratic and most irresponsible groups in society are the employers.

In Britain today 100 boardrooms—consisting at most of about 1500 men and (very few) women—employ half the workers in Britain and more than two-thirds of the industrial turnover.

Priorities

If things go on as they are, in 1975 300 boardrooms, consisting of about 5000 people, will control more than 75 per cent of all the capital assets of America, Canada, Britain and Western Europe—population 500 million.

The building of factories, the investment in new machinery, the hiring and firing of millions of workers, all the priorities of society are decided by these small groups of men.

What cereal all of us eat for breakfast every morning is decided in the boardroom of one company—Kellogg's. The flow and price of oil is decided by two companies—Shell and BP (with help from Esso and Mobil). The type and the manufacture of fibres in the clothes we wear is determined by executives ofICI or Courtaulds.

Cars, computers, chemicals, houses, insurance, almost everything we use, eat, listen to, live in, wear or travel on is subject, somewhere along the line, to a decision of one or other of the monopolies.

The men who own the monopolies are the men who run the country. They are unimaginably rich. The value of shares held in Unilever by Lord Cole and Dr Woodroffe (chairman and managing director) is £5.5 million. Of Sir Isaac Wolfson in Great Universal Stores—£34 million. Of Lord Thomson in the Thomson Organisation—£23 million. Of Sir Jules Thom in the Thorn group—£20 million.


The richest 50 company directors in this country declare shares worth about £200 million: that's rather more than the Coal Board spent last year on 270,000 miners.

All these "powerful groups" are completely undemocratic. None of them is elected by anyone except a handful of shareholders. Last year, 81 per cent of the shares were held by 1 per cent of the population.

The best argument for appointing anyone to any of these boards is a public school education. Less than 0.01 per cent of the school population goes to the "best" public school, Eton (where the fees are almost as high as the national average wage). A recent study showed:

30.9 per cent of the directors of the top eight insurance companies went to Eton.

32.7 per cent of the directors of the top 14 merchant banks and discount houses went to Eton.

29.6 per cent of directors of the Big Five banks went to Eton (and 71 per cent went to the "top six" public schools).

The three best qualifications for getting onto a big business board are the same for getting into high office in the army, the press, the civil service and the law: 90 per cent of the national daily newspapers read in Britain are controlled by six men, each at the head of a vast corporation with interests elsewhere. No one elects the newspaper proprietors, nobody elects the editors or news editors. They are all chosen by the same tightly-knit group of politically-motivated men.

Similarly, 76 per cent of High Court judges and 83 per cent of senior army officers (generals, lieutenant-generals and field marshals) went to public school. No one elects any of them.

Why parliament is rubber stamp for the rich

FELIX"
The power of the men who run the big corporations—and of their friends and cousins in the army, the press, the civil service and the law courts—is much greater than the power of the elected government in parliament.

Every corporation spends a lot of time and money on "lobbying" to ensure that parliament does what they want. These "lobbyists" work overtime during the Labour government of 1964 to 1970. When the Labour government threatened to put a Medicines Act to control the abuses of the drug companies, those companies organised a powerful lobbying campaign to ensure that the Act left them alone. It did.

When the Labour government threatened a Gaming Act to control the big gambling clubs and betting companies, the companies organised to make the Act impotent. They succeeded.

When the Labour government tried a Transport Act to integrate the private road haulage companies with rail and public transport services, the haulage companies and the private firms making goods for the railways made sure that they were left alone.

When the Labour government threatened to end "the jump" in the building industry, the big building contractors, through their numerous "contacts" in the Labour Party, quickly scotched the idea.

Control

The easiest and most effective way of bringing the Labour government to heel was by switching money out of the country. All foreign companies engaged in systematic gambling on the international money markets, and control enormous financial resources.

When the Labour government came to office in October 1964 and threatened a policy of expansion and equalisation, the corporations began to fear for their position.

The best witness is Harold Wilson, then Labour Prime Minister.

On Tuesday 24 November 1964, the Governor of the Bank of England, Lord Crozier, offered Wilson in Downing Street and told him that money was flying out of the country.

The balance of payments deficit was widening. The country was in peril.

All would be saved if Wilson reversed all his election pledges, "deflated" the economy and cut down on the public services—hospitals, schools, housing.

Policies

Wilson wrote in his autobiography: "I said that we had now reached a situation where a new type of government was required—an economic government which was not only to defend the country but to ensure that the policies on which we had fought the election could not be implemented. I also said that the government was to be forced into the adoption of Tory policies in which the Labour Party was fundamentally opposed. The government had accepted that this was, in fact, the case."

I asked him if this meant that it was impossible for any government, whatever its party label, whatever its political programme on which it had fought an election, to continue, unless it immediately reversed its policies and introduced those policies which it would have introduced had it won the election?

On that occasion, Wilson did a deal with Capital. He agreed to implement Capital's programme, and he rose to power with a huge majority.

The whole situation implies that Labour government with a huge majority was only a curtain for a government with a huge majority. Labour government in power was only a curtain for a government with a huge majority. Labour government in power was only a curtain for a government in power.
I asked the Governor of the Bank of England if it was impossible for any government, whatever its manifesto on which it fought an election, to continue, unless it immediately reverted to full-scale Tory policies.

He had to admit that was what his argument meant, because of the sheer compulsion of the economic determination of those who exercise decisive economic power.


The latest issue of International Socialism provides essential, in-depth analysis of many of the issues facing readers of Socialist Worker.

In an important article, Andrea Negligenti discusses the need for a rank and file movement and the difficulties facing attempts to build one. The article is particularly relevant in view of the conference called by a number of rank and file papers for the end of March.

Frank Roberts provides a fascinating account of the effort of the Uruguayan Tupararcas to change society using urban guerrilla methods. He draws the conclusion that they could not succeed because such methods rely upon the heroism of a few individuals, not the organization and initiative of the working class itself.

Last Angel Fernandez Hernandez describes how such organization and initiative developed spontaneously in the industrial areas in Chile before the coup, despite the efforts of the main working-class parties to discourage it. And Duncan Hallas begins an important new series of articles on the revolutionary ideas of the Communist International in its early years.

Finally, Notes of the Month analyze the pressures that have been driving the government towards confrontations with the miners, its fear of losing such a confrontation, and the way in which the TUC General Council has tried to help it out of a tight spot.

20p per copy (including postage)
£2.10 for a year (12 issues).
ON a rainy day in August, 1831, a young Welshman, Richard Lewis of Morthber Tyffil, stood on a scaffold in St Mary's Street, Cardiff.

In the moment they fixed the rope around his neck, he called to the sky: 'O Argwll, dymun amddiffynwch' which, being translated, means, 'O Lord, what an impiety'.

Earlier, he had written from the prison a letter to his sister, who had raised him.

'I intend you to come without fail to fetch my body, as there is no likelihood of anything else at the present. Go to Philip Lewis and ask him to come down somewhere tonight with a cart and as many men as he can.'

'I believe the Lord has forgiven me my sins and transgressions. I am not guilty and for this I have reason to be thankful.'

After the hanging his body was taken by his trade union comrades for burial in consecrated ground, but it was turned away by preachers of many denominations.

Alleged

Eventually it was decently buried at St Mary's churchyard at Aberdare, although the authorities disallowed a burial service since this was supposed to be the body of a criminal. The grave can be visited today.

And the charge upon which Richard Lewis—alias Dic Penderyn—was accused. It was alleged that during the infamous 'Bread or Death' strike, he had been responsible, Glamorgan, in June 1831, he stabbed John Black of the 9th Highlanders in the thigh with a bayonet.

It was during these riots, the history of which I tell in my recent book, The Fire People (Pan 45p), that the workers protested about their conditions of labour and wages paid by ironmasters of the calibre of Guest and Crawshay: for Penderyn in his Bont branch, the people held a town successfully against invasion of the military.

Legend in Wales has always held that Dic Penderyn was innocent. My book conclusively proves this true, that he was nowhere near Private Black during the wounding. Even Black couldn't recognise the man who wounded him.

But Lord Melbourne, then the Home Secretary, was thirsting for action against the threat of the new trade unions, at the historians Cole and the Webb relate. Even Peel, at the end of his tenseness in government, was trying to ferment union reaction in the North which would allow the force or destroy unionism before it took a hold on the workers.

In the event the Highlanders panicked during the riots in the town and about 40 people were shot dead, many unarmed, and hundreds were wounded. Indeed, since many men were secretly buried by their families for fear of reprisals, the total number killed will never be known.

It was a massacre about which the same historians of the Establishment's press were content to keep quiet: instead history has been written on the comparatively innocuous Peterloo Massacre (where a couple of workers only died) as what they consider their major crime against the working class of this country.

Dic Penderyn, the name by which he is better known, is now legendary in Welsh history, and during my research it became astonishing to see how much folk lore about the hero was daily proving so accurate.

But one unknown fact emerged from the research—Dic Penderyn was a union man. He might not have been a unionist of the calibre of many of the later Chartists, who eight years after his execution were fighting for the famous six point charter of decency, five of which we enjoy today, but he was a unionist, and undoubtedly a leader.

It becomes obvious why Melbourne hanged him.

And the new documents concerning his life and times, which I have discovered (with Home Office help) in their records, some of which had been lost for a century and a half, and some make it clear that Penderyn was innocent of any kind of crime.

Because, in 1874, 43 years after Dic's execution, the Reverend Evan Evans, travelling in Pennsylvania, was called to the death-bed of a dying Welshman, one Lewis Parker, a native of Cwmfelin.

This man confessed: 'I was 1 who wounded the soldier that Dic Penderyn was hanged for. I got away to America as soon as I could Peregrine, not a man, as he used to escape from the memory of it.'

The Official wrote to the firm, pointing out its members' wishes.

Eventually the local T&GU branch got on the area official and pointed out that there were several card-holding members of the union at Automotive Installations and they had expressed a desire for a union shop.

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The Official wrote to the firm, pointing out its members' wishes.
When the chain snaps and women fight back

THE FILM I’m writing about isn’t on circuit release—and don’t be on circuit release. But it will soon be available on television. It is a feature film about a local union that the International Socialist branch could like it. Further it is hoped that a showing of the film by the International Socialists will be an important part of their work in the coming year.

The film is Blow for Blow (Coup pour Coup), and it is a subject on which the film about the struggle today. Made in 1973, it is 90 minutes of unrestrained and authentic political message.

The setting is a textile sweatshop somewhere in France, where the women workers are being driven into the ground by the ever-growing speed of the production line, patrolled by snarling, mouthed, militaristic supervisors and betrayed by smooth-talking caraculists of the French Communist Party dominated CGT (the country’s largest union group). We are shown scenes of a woman having to face the power lines in order to gain a moment’s respite from the mindless tedium of their never-ending workload. They feel themselves condemned never to see the sun, never to enjoy that little bit of air, never to get anywhere other than to work the following morning. Then, suddenly, the chain snaps, the women born to organise and start to fight back. The management watches helplessly as its shopfloor authority is challenged. Their fear turns to spite as they attempt to take back two of the girls. It is at this point that the mood of the women takes on new dimensions. They cast aside their ever-continuon union officials. Unified, they occupy their factory and by doing so they step themselves into the front line of the battle for socialism.

I have always found it difficult to accept sub-titled foreign films but I completely forget myself in Blow for Blow as the self-confidence of the workers grows into a festival of human dignity. They sing together, work together, fight together, look after their children together, fight the police together, capture and teach the boss a lesson he will never forget together. At the end, momentarily victorious, they plan their future tactics together.

What I found so great about the film was that it crossed so many boundaries. A woman’s film. The setting could be Fishet-Bendoni. The information for the film was taken from the collective experience of several different occupations. Its greatest achievement is that it shows, unpretentiously, the political potential of the emerging consciousness of working class women. The film is a must, great acting, quality track and professional music.

For further information contact
Pan Engel, The Other Cinema, 121/3 Little Newport Street, London WC2H 7JL. 01 734-5508

ROLAND MULDOON

ROLAND MULDOON

Happiness and bars. A scene from Blow for Blow

Steering radios as Auntie tackles the crisis...

BBC RADIO NEWS goes around the world in 82 languages everywhere except the North Pole.

It is spoken in a special voice, BBC English, a form of expression used by no one North of Regent’s Park and very few South of it—to ensure impartiality.

All the measured, fair tones express the same message. The infinite decency and wisdom of the British ruling class.

The Corporation’s 'independence' due to its financial dependence. The Church's demand that the radio should become a vehicle for 'official' propaganda against the state's new weapon.

The reputation for nearly bent truth was maintained by the BBC.

The Nightingale announcers on Radio 1 have often talked to much about how 'it couldn't get much worse' at the end of their ration of newscast disaster. The tone of voice has been increasingly pompous and condescending, as The Two Sides Fail To Come Together. Yet again. Last Minute Initiatives flounder and people Fail To See Reason.

What the newscaster's worried tone reflects is the inability of the BBC's own ideology to hold together. Radio news has to operate as if its audience is the whole nation, a national family in which there is no conflict. Thanks to our institutions. The maintenance of society's institutions, should seem like our prime concern.

In times of global crisis, people seek to be the slightest sign of a moral order. Although it is the BBC's meeting the world are the BBC's worst enemy. Some members of the working class (who we will describe as 'confused with the BBC', or for that matter 'The Lower Paid') are using their Mass-Media-Poverty-Industry. In -industry -To -Hold -The -National-Transactionists argue, are the newscasters reformdisprove of Mick McCaighey so violently they pronounce his name wrong.

Newscasters do not concern themselves with matters such as money or comfort. Instead, as they sort out their moral order, they are revealing the value of the 'About the economy' and the 'Better for the Community' that is the heart of the BBC. They are revealing the moral order of a coalition government of Robin Day, William Harrison and Robert Dougall.

The radio, the women they are reading is horrific. In the night the young women solders were !=in a prison island was reopened in a refugee. The news is that the island was reopened in Greece by the new Junta. 30 trade unionists were arrested in Madrid. A mother and child were burned to death in a kitchen fire in Bristol. A report was published saying that most of the school leavers in London don't expect to get a decent job—and a psychiatrists says that unemployment can improve mental health.

I was once told that the only way you could trust about the Daily Mirror the Minestrone was that it's changed. But there is one thing you can trust absolutely on the radio. It comes on late at night and it is the Exchange Telegraph—the Stock Market closing prices. If you start from there and work backwards through the day's news, it makes a lot more sense.

David Widgerly on BBC growing hysteria

PREVIEW

THE TELEVISION schedules are one again—don't argue—once you may have noticed. Election times are the one time in other years which are supposed to be interminably in politics. This means our rulers want to get their message across to voters, which for years, has been a problem. The government, is set for its annual £10,000 a year as cabinet ministers and the backbenchers are mainly on the phone. To cover the TV schedules will be extended back to the golden days when you could go off to the pub, but every one-a-round of drinks for only £1.50 and still be home in time to catch the Epiphagy. This means that the staffing of programmes and subjects are liable to rapid changes. This Monday, for instance, Pearson was due to present 'A Day in the Life of a Drug Dealer,' but new announcements say that instead, the life of a drug dealer will be shown on the Sunday "Sun".

FRIDAY: ITV, 7.35pm, WITHIN THESE WALLS: the series since so justifiably attacked by Jenny Cole (25 January) is written by Tony Garnett, who has also written series such as "Doomed," "The Laramie," and "The Blood." This time, he is turning his attention to the police. As police stalls on the streets, the police are being joined by a group of young people, who are being trained to become police officers.

SUNDAY: BBC2, 7.35pm. The only interesting thing about THE BROTHELS, the terrible series about granity big business is that the company which made it, is now being facing legal proceedings. Perhaps they’ll be able to merge it with WITHIN THESE WALLS...

The Play of the Month is Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest." Set in Victorian England it is a funny and sometimes biting play. On BBC2 THE BOOK PROGRAMME* the work of the American 1960s "Beat Generation" novelist Jack Kerouac, who wrote On The Road is examined by Clive James. Kerouac can be seen as the inspiration of much of the 1960s music, writing and poetry—particularly people like Bob Dylan.

MONDAY: BBC2, THE WALTONS* a new American series of "warm sentimental stories" about an American family living in a little blue ridge mountains during the depression*. Here the BBC Sounds like the "Stars of Pacey Place." Wonder why TV is so interested in depression these days...

WEDNESDAY: BBC1, THE MIGHTY BUCK, a new series by Brian Clough, the most successful manager. This series shows a series of matches, including the mighty battle between Aston Villa and the mighty Buck. The series is due to the good old days. Since it is written by Peter Green and John Gentleman and is "Devil Do Or Devil Do Right" Speight, there is some concern...
'I'm in IS' aids Post Office man's election

DON FAILES, branch secretary of the London District of the Post Office Workers' Branch, has been elected to the London District Council which is responsible for 40,000 uniformed post office workers.

The committee members were elected for Don's area. The ballot was held following a series of short brief biographies of the candidates. One candidate withdrew, with the result that Don was unopposed in the election, but was wary that he was in a minority of the International Socialists.

Branch officials pointed out that the union had to take a lead on political matters. Don's campaign was more of a personal one and he wanted him to take a more active role. He was expected to lead the union in the next election, which is due to be held in the next three years.

TIME TO CHANGE AUEW RULES

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Victory to the Miners - Kick Out the Tories

FOR the miners, against the Tories

by Dave Peers
IS national secretary

The national committee has set up a national action committee of four members, two of whom support the miners' strike, to try to get co-operation from branches at least once a week. Our aim is to establish the branches' possible solidarity with the miners on the picket lines. IS members should concentrate on getting workplace delegations to the picket lines, and delegations from residents' unions. We shall ensure a picket line is co-ordinated through the local committee.

On all occasions, the permission of the local miners' pickets' committee should be sought before anyone joins the pickets. The picketing list of those who must not be questioned.

A long discussion on the election and the national committee concluded that co-ordinating the IS action before 25 February.

Trade union members should try to organise a meeting for a few nomination votes on 25 February. The workers' strike committee, which will discuss the mass meetings in the workplaces to discuss the election and to mobilise votes for Labour decisions and members should support a Communist Party candidate.

The election is a second reformist party and has no future in a period where the Labour government is a direct blow to the main trade unions.

These issues must be raised centrally to the election campaign, and it is the task of the national committee. The national committee has set up an action committee.

In the British election system, unlike the French or German, a vote for one means a vote for the whole alliance, and unless pressure on union leaders to vote for Labour, the vote would win only be won by a minority unseat the Tories in this would be very small indeed. The cost would be impossibly high.

Defence

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40,000 STUDENTS ISSUE CHALLENGE

FORTY THOUSAND students marched through London on Friday in support of their campaign for higher and fairer grants. The massive demonstration can leave no one—especially the Tories and the executive of the National Union of Students—in any doubt about the students’ determination to fight.

From the start the TUS executive has tried to turn the campaign into the blind alley of protest politics aimed at convicting MPs, vice-chancellors and education authorities of the "status of our case."

Student members of the International Socialists have always made clear that it is not the justification of the claim that will win higher grants but the willingness of students to fight alongside the labour movement against a Tory government hell-bent on attacking the living standards of workers and students.

The students’ strike shows that students are now realising this. All over the country students are organizing in support of the march. A London Student Miners Support Committee has been elected to co-ordinate the activities of students who want to aid the miners’ fight against Phase Three.

The committee, in liaison with the miners’ union, is seeking to provide pickets with accommodation, food and, where needed, physical support. It is also starting a drive to raise money for the NUM Strike Fund. In colleges where these things are not already happening, students could consider setting up similar support committees and for the need for solidarity with the miners.

A victory for the miners will make students’ chances of winning grants much brighter, and a resistant fight by students will aid the miners by making the Tories that much weaker.

The slogans chanted on Friday’s march were calling all students: Torsies out! Phase Three out! Victory to the miners! (Report: Ken Mutter (London School of Economics) Pictures: Peter Harpaj (Report))

The Hyde Park rally at the end of the march which cheered miners’ leaders. (Picture: Peter Harpaj (Report))

NHALGO BID TO EVADE THE FIGHT

LONDON—Last week’s special national conference of the local government section of the National and Local Government Officers Association (NALGO) showed that despite increasing rank and file militancy the leadership is backing away from any commitment to take action against Phase Three.

The National Local Government Committee proposed a report urging for a more than 20 per cent wage hike and industrial action to win it. The policies of the NALGO leadership seem to come down to: ‘Tell us you’re not militant, otherwise we’ll kill it for you’.

As Will Fawcett of Lewisham pointed out: ‘The militancy is there, just give it to the leadership’. There would be big support for a strike—given massive publicity, effective leadership.

A 15 Strike calling for an immediate ban on official election work was lost following the General Secretary claim that it would be difficult to organise. He said that action in the pre-election period would be played into Heath’s hands.

A Change amendment to the official calling for an immediate ban on election work and coordination one day strike, to be followed by selective action was forced to a caucusal vote. After the platform’s repudiation of the rank and file defeated by 166,830 to 29,462.

So now the national negotiators have a free hand to ignore their own report, ask for the 20 per cent—and, if the turnout settles within reasonable, the rank and file will have to fight against this.

150 strike against ‘spy’

NORTHEAST, Ken—150 drivers, all members of the Transport Union at the massive Associated Portland Cement works struck last week after the management had seen a company spy on their working practices.

The dispute started two weeks ago when drivers were told by foremen that driving in the power crisis Wednesday working was not to be cut out. The men did not see this as an official notification through the firm’s negotiating committee, and insisted on half the team working, as usual.

When they turned up for work they were checked at the docks and their movements were watched during the morning. The driver in charge, Derek Coates, said the men felt management wanted to get its own back. For previous militant action by the drivers, he said they would stay out until the ‘spy’ was removed.

The factory is being picketed 24 hours a day and support is being sought from the railwaymen and train drivers’ unions. The majority of the plant’s output goes out by train.

Drivers at the firm’s nearby Swancombe works have come out in sympathy.
ASLEF's bow to Tories: fury grows

THE executive of the train drivers' union, ASLEF, has called off all industrial action for the time being, and unleashed a wave of fury from militants all over the country.

They are no longer taking the lid off: "as far as we're concerned, we've got a right to express our anger. It's our job to fight for the rights of the working man, not to sit back and do nothing," said one militant.

Marchers, who had been waiting in the cold for hours, were angry to see the march postponed for a second time. "We've been here for hours and we're still waiting," said one.

ASLEF's decision was taken in spite of a flood of telegrams from the biggest railway companies and unions in the country, calling for industrial action.

The march was called off after a meeting of the union's executive, which decided to suspend all industrial action until further notice."This is a time of national crisis," said the union's general secretary. "We cannot afford to waste energy on petty squabbles."
DOCKERS STOP COAL

Socialist Worker reporter at Amgtham in Lincolnshire has rushed to give the miners effective support. Last Saturday, as the strike was due to start, men at work on the Italian ship Felice walked off, leaving 5000 tons of Polish coal unloaded.

The dockers numbered 1500 on the British Transport Union's 10964 branch, which covers both the Grimsby and Immingham docks, took their decision last Wednesday. Their union had called on them to cross miners' picket lines.

But they said the dockers acted in protest against the prison sentences meted out to dockers in the previous strike.

Mike Stanley, one of the dockers concerned, explained: 'We are not anti-socialists, but the dockers were bricked.'

Their stand was proved to be doubly justified this week when the British Transport Dock Police announced that miners' pickets would not be allowed to be dock property.

Immingham is the largest single coal-importing port in Britain with a contract to unload 800,000 tons of imported Polish coal over the next few weeks.

The dockers feel that the ships may be re-routed to one of the other wharves on the Trent. But there are signs that if anything happens then they would do some mass picketing.

Dockers at Leith and Grangemouth in Scotland have also taken a firm stand in favour of blocking coal ships.

Two ships, also carrying Polish coal, were turned away from Grangemouth on Monday, and when they have given the miners assurances that if any ships are diverted to sea ports, then they will not picket.

At a mass meeting in London this week, Dockers have been invited in favour of a 25p per head levy on the dockers for the dockers. The Blacklist is automatic and pickets are likely to be offered.

Miners news: page 15

Your paper needs you

Did last week's Socialist Worker ask all miners to become members of the NCB? Of course it did. And when the NCB has been taken to the point where the miners are in a pit it is the miners who suffer.

Everyone is talking about politics. The country is full of discussions about the miners' strike. And when they get these discussions together the Socialists, the Express, or from Socialist Workers they should ask the miners who work with you to read it and pursue them to buy a regular copy. Do the issue on your paper and see what a mine meeting's association in the pick, the men that work, the whistles the miners are called up the pick, the pick.

The miners who bring you Socialist Worker are more than willing to write directly to all: Socialist Worker, 214 Roundwood Road, London E2 8DD.