No illusions in Labour regime

by Roger Protz
editor Socialist Worker

THE TORIES are out. Good.

The government that hamstrung working-class pay, living conditions and trade union rights for 36 years has been kicked out of office.

Labour is back. That's good, too.

We wanted a Labour victory because a vote for the Tories was a vote to carry on union-bashing, rent-rising, wage-freezing and profiteering.

Harold Wilson knows one thing as he prepares his government and his policies in Downing Street: the workers who voted Labour do not want a continuation of Tory policies under a Labour label.

But try at the defeat of the Tories to blind trade unionists to the fact that they will still have to fight to defend their pay and conditions under Wilson.

For Labour supports the capitalist system. It believes in minor reforms here and there but—just as it showed between 1964 and 1970—it will surrender to the demands of the employers at home and the moneylenders abroad.

REFORMS

Don't forget, the last Labour government—with a majority in parliament—froze your wages, boosted your rents, boosted prices and profits and attempted to bring in an anti-union law.

This time the economic crisis is worse. Labour will attempt to shore up the tottering system by once again turning on the organised labour movement.

And this time it will use the excuse of not having an overall majority in parliament.

Of course, there will be a honeymoon period. It will push through a few proposals that it knows the Liberals will support such as repeal of the Industrial Relations Act and the sanatoriumisation of the new round of rent increases due in April.

But that will be a thin smearing of sugar on a very bitter pill. As the economic crisis deepens this autumn, as the government bails out the system with enormous loans from the International Monetary Fund, it will be forced to turn the screw on the workers who voted it into office.

That means wage freeze, scrapping welfare reforms and public spending on schools and hospitals and perhaps even another attack at curtailing the rights of trade unionists.

What must the attitude of trade unionists be to the Wilson government?

We demand that the government implement its full programme, whatever the 'mini-Tories' of the Liberal Party say. If the Liberals bring down the government over such timid proposals, they will reap the whirlwind at the next election.

But we want more than just the election programme.

We want not just the repeal of the Industrial Relations Act but a pledge that no similar laws will be brought in.

We want not just the cancellation of the ten bob rent increases in April but the repeal of the Housing Finance Act, including previous rent increases.

We want no wage freeze or 'incomes policy' fraud that allows prices and profits to rip.

We want a return to free collective bargaining, the ability of organised workers to fight for better pay and conditions.

We want an immediate increase in old-age pensions to £16 for a married couple and £10 for a single person. This must not be put off, as ORGANISED it was in 1964, because those famous gnomes in Zurich snap their tiny fingers.

And we want the Shrewsbury building workers released from jail and the Conspiracy laws repealed.

Who can force such demands on the government? Not the union leaders. They will rush to prop up Wilson.

Unofficial strikes will be condemned as 'rocking the boat' and a 'social contract' that will amount to an incomes policy will be agreed.

No, only the rank and file, organised at the workplace and across industry, can bring the government to heel. That is why this month's rank and file conference is so vital—let it hammer out a policy to unite workers to beat back the attacks of employers and politicians.

Remember, it was the rank and file who stopped the CFA when Labour was last in office.

Remember, it was rank and file doctors and other workers who forced the Tories virtually to shelve the Industrial Relations Act after Pentonville.

And remember it was the miners who forced Heath to call an election—and lose.

So let there be no illusions, no honeymoon with Labour. Keep your guard up and prepare to fight.

Analysis and comment on election result: 2&3

Great response to call for rank and file meeting

'THE RESPONSE has been magnificent,' Roger Cox, organising secretary of this month's conference called by a number of rank and file union papers, told Socialist Worker this week.

The conference—to be held in Birmingham on 30 March—will attempt to hammer out a clear-cut policy of opposition to all attacks on workers' rights. And support is growing.

'It's not just that we now have more than 200 delegates with four weeks still to go,' added Roger Cox, a leading AUEW militant and editorial board member of The Carworker, 'but the delegates have come from the fighting areas of the working-class trade union movement.'

Miners

The delegates include: Twelve stewards from Danup engineering shop stewards' committee, Liverpool.

Middleton joint shop stewards' committee, Ford, Leamington.

Cannon Industries.

C A Parsons joint office committee.

Bursley AUEW district committee.

ICI combine shop stewards' committee.

Plus many trade union branchers, from the south to the north.

Problems

Says Roger Cox: 'This conference will bring together many of the best trade unionists in the country to discuss openly the problems facing us and the ways of solving them.'

'Labour may be in office, but everyone knows that working people everywhere will have to fight to defend their living standards and working conditions.'

'The organising committee calls on every trade unionist who is not yet a delegate to raise the question in his or her branch or shop stewards' committee and to fight to attend what may be one of the most crucial trade union conferences for a very long time.'

Reasons for delegates' credentials: form back page.
Clunk go all those lost deposits

FORTY FOUR Communist Party candidates contested the recent general election. 43 of them forfeited their deposits.

With the sole exception of Jimmy Reid’s candidacy in Dumbartonshire Central, the election was an unmitigated disaster for the Communists.

Excluding the Reid result, the average vote for party candidates was 62.4, an even worse result than the previous low result in 1970, when they managed to average 66.2 with 58 candidates.

Jimmy Reid managed with his 59.3% votes to bring the average up to 74 and his campaign, basing itself on his reputation as the former Clyde Shipbuilders and his frequent appearances on television, minimized his Communist Party membership.

He even managed to avoid having the label ‘Communist’ put on the ballot.

They failed. Ted Heath and his friends ran as the ‘moderate majority’, the shield and defender of the British people against union militants, reds under the beds and Harold Wilson who is, they told us, ‘fully in the hands of the enemy’.

The core of the Labour vote stood remarkably well against this union-bashing, red-baiting, attack on the unions, on living standards, on the right to picket, on the right to strike and, upon free speech, the social services and much else would have been whittled away had the attacks not been stopped in their tracks— for the time being.

But there is another side to the coin. The defeat of the Tories on the ‘Who governs Britain’ issue is a great advance. Had the Tories been defeated with a substantial majority then, without any doubt, attacks on the unions, on living standards, on the right to picket, on the right to strike and, upon free speech, the social services and much else would have been whittled away had the attacks not been stopped in their tracks— for the time being.

There can be no doubt about the fundamental cause of this disaster. Fewer and fewer workers believe that the Labour Party really stands for what one of its earlier election manifesto called ‘A New Social Order’.

The majority of working people still put their trust in the Labour man, that more and more it is an anti-Tory rather than a pro-Labour vote. So why not vote Liberal if the Liberal has the better chance of winning?

In the 1974 election the Labour leaders ran in the moderation stakes. Heath called for the support of all moderates against the extremists. Thorpe proclaimed that he was the most moderate of the moderates and Wilson claimed that none was more moderate than he. It was the Tories, he said repeatedly, who were ‘dividing the nation’.

What in fact does the politics of moderation, espoused by all these parties, really amount to? First, acceptance of the capitalist system. The difference between the parties on this issue amounts to disagreements about which class, in what quantity, should be applied to the ‘unacceptable face of capital’.

Secondly, acceptance that the growing crisis of the economy is unavoidable, is like what insurance companies call an Act of God, like lightning striking a tree, and not at all the inevitable consequences of the policies pursued to provide the private profits to which these parties will make the crisis worse, not better.

And so the right to picket, to strike and, upon free speech, the social services and much else would have been whittled away had the attacks not been stopped in their tracks— for the time being.

Socialists reject the philosophy of making capitalism work. They understand that the growing crisis is a direct consequence of the capitalist system and capitalist policies. They know that, as pointed out above, private profits will make the crisis worse, not better. And so the right to picket, to strike and, upon free speech, the social services and much else would have been whittled away had the attacks not been stopped in their tracks— for the time being.

At least, some of the Socialists will understand the Socialists are not going to be divided by the narrow political tactics of keeping the Tories in. We must get behind the Labour Party in the next election and only vote Socialists in the knowledge that we are voting for a fighting Socialism against the capitalist system.

The electoral success of the Labour Party is a welcome step forward. But without a fighting Socialist Party in the next election we will be in the same position as we were in 1931 when the Tories were voted out and the Nationalists voted in.

We must prepare ourselves to fight for a fighting Socialist Party in the next election.

The Labour Party is a welcome step forward. But without a fighting Socialist Party in the next election we will be in the same position as we were in 1931 when the Tories were voted out and the Nationalists voted in.
WHEN HAROLD WILSON first became prime minister in October 1964 he was staggered by the balance of payments deficit which had reached £112 million the previous month—an annual rate of £600 million. Two days before the election last week we learnt that in one month, January, the deficit on the balance of payments had leapt to £200 million or more in February and March. Thus, would Wilson react to a deficit of some £450 million a year?

Britain will need up to £10,000 million in international loans in the next few months. The government is to make a new appeal to the International Monetary Fund for aid. The sums for the terms that will be demanded by the IMF are very bad indeed. The new government will have to give its undertakings in a formal letter of intent to the Fund. As in the case of the Pounds,以此:

What will be the undertakings the government would have to give in its letter of intent to the IMF?

First, a large reduction in the public sector’s credit demands—and this must largely span a firebreak on the money market.

Secondly, the financial Times argued on Sunday that the government will have to act to prevent an excessive rise in wages. Wage controls will have to be maintained until a new policy is agreed, either by producing a new pact or by substituting a temporary freeze.

RESIGN

The news from Italy’s loan from the IMF seem not too cheerful for Britain. Italian exports have been cut, Italy is borrowing 1 billion dollars—only a third of what Britain wants immediately. Conditions of the loan in which the Italian government will act as a model government, in which the Finance Minister was forced to pass away part of the rest of the government followed (see FT, Page 2). To add to the bleak prospects, we must remember that a general economic recession is now threatening world capitalism in the not too distant future. The Sunday Times of 3 March put it: ‘A recession could well be on the cards and Britain could be partly to a downturn in world trade.’

Under Ted Heath, the leaders of the 10 Downing Street now is facing a series of developments which, as the Sunday Times of 3 March puts it: ‘A recession could well be on the cards and Britain could be partly to a downturn in world trade.’

Now with Wilson in Downing Street the inclination of the union leaders to collaborate with the government and employer will be strengthened.

The first test will be the miners’ wage claim. As in the case of Wilson came to power, the Guardian reported that members of the executive of the NUM were putting forward collective action beyond the original wage claim submitted at the start of the strike.

In response to a question that both Mr Mullings, the President of the NMF, and Mr Lawrence Dwyer, the union’s general secretary, would demand that any deal be backdated to 1 November Mr Clarke said that as far as he was concerned, miners would have to receive extra money for the time they had been on strike.

Let’s bet that now Wilson is heading the government, MacGhee, Daly and Clarke will forget the above demands.

Again and again Denis Healey, the new Chancellor, argued during the election campaign that the Labour party stands for a ‘voluntary incomes policy’, and he made it abundantly clear that there could be no return to the ‘free bargaining’ the Tories favoured during their first two years in office.

Voluntary incomes policy was tried by Wilson in the years 1964-66, and it has proved to be extra employment. Part of the bargain between the trade unions and the government, the then general secretary of the Transport Workers Union, Frank Cousins, was brought into the government.

But, this took place under conditions of 3-4 per cent price rises a year. Even then the policy collapsed. Frank Cousins resigned from the government. And in July 1966 a complete freeze was imposed by the government.

Under the Wilson government the trade union leaders will have a much tougher task to carry out such a policy when prices are still over 5 per cent annually. But no doubt the trade union leaders will do their best.

And the fact that the Labour government is a minority government will serve them as an excellent alibi to avoid struggle in the interest of their members. The class of capitalism—national unity—will be built by Wilson, Sanction and Jones will not hold for long. Workers’ pressure is bound to break through.

The Labour Left in parliament will take the same line as Jones and Sanction. It was during the 1964-66 Labour government, when the majority was only four, that the Tribune MPs were most clogging before Wilson.

It was then that Frank Allam described the Labour government as the ‘greatest socialist leader since Keir Hardie.’ It was then that Michael Foot wrote a scathing flaying biography of Wilson. The story is too good to be repeated.

No doubt the Left will make a song and dance of the reforms Wilson will introduce. The abolition of the Industrial Relations Act is of course forward.

At present the main impact of the Act is that it is being used by union leaders as an alibi for not fighting for the members. Jack Jones instructs his lobby to drive the normal amount of all into the power stations for fear the TGWU is fined by the NTC.

A ‘voluntary’ incomes policy will achieve basically the same.

The miners managed to force Ted Heath to call a general election that he lost. The power of the miners showed itself even in the quite small strike they led.

There were no mass pickets, no flying pickets, petrol lorries were not stopped from driving to the power stations. Still the power of the miners, only starting to flex their muscles, was enormous. One can imagine how much more it would have been if the strike had been an active one, involving not only miners but also other sections of the working class.

CREATED

The fact that the strike was so passive shows one fundamental weakness of the working class at present—the lack of rank and file leadership able to mobilise hundreds and thousands of workers.

In the face of the bankruptcy of the trade union leadership that will be accentuated even further with councillors and employers and government under Wilson, a new leadership, a rank and file leadership, has to be created. The hands of workers have to be clasped across industry.

The struggle to defend our living standards, to oppose any form of incomes policy, whether statutory or ‘voluntary’, must be directed not only against the individual employer, but, and above all, against the government.

Workers’ struggle must be a political struggle. To lead to a successful conclusion, workers have to build, urgently, a strong revolutionary socialist workers party.
Ramshackle state on precipice's edge

by Nigel Harris

FOUR candidates in the recent Dacca council elections were beheaded in a backstreet. Six days later, two candidates were hacked to pieces and three students injured in a bomb explosion.

Then the Prime Minister's eldest son was shot while helping the police to patrol against bomb attacks on Russian-owned buildings. The following day, two others were shot dead, and two others beaten to death near the airport.

These are no more than the random fragments of news that get out of Bangladesh. There is little idea of the terrorism striking the streets. Gangsterism rules the world's eighth largest country.

Over 11 million people Bangladesh is the biggest country in the world. The condition of Bangladesh is even more tragic because it is the direct result of the left in Bengal, Pakistan and India. When Bangladesh was united, the left gave critical support to the military regime because it was in alliance with China. In West Pakistan, the left failed to mobilize in opposition to the military action in Bangladesh—so ensuring its own defeat and the massive military damage in Bangladesh.

In West Pakistan, the left supported the attack of Indian troops on East Bengal, and even, as usual, corrupt government was installed there—and that the Indian left in West Bengal would be beaten.

So the military remained in power in West Pakistan, with Bhutto as a civilian figurehead. Mrs Gandhi's position in India was immensely strengthened, and the most corrupt groups in Bangladesh were brought to power.

The military junta in Chile that overthrew the Popular Unity government of President Allende is torturing and murdering not only left-wing militants but anyone who opposed the coup, including doctors and rank-and-file soldiers.

A statement issued recently by the Chilean MIR, the Movement of the Revolutionary Left, tells of people being shot and beaten to death simply for being members of left-wing organisations. It appeals for international solidarity and protest to stop the shootings.

It reads in part:

"On 13 December, our comrades Bautista Van Schouwen, member of our central committee, fell into the hands of the barbarians who rule Chile. Like all the militantes and leaders of the MIR, he had not sought refuge abroad, but was carrying on his work in Chile.

"After being brutally beaten and savagely tortured by the military forces, he was taken to a military hospital, where he is still held.

"The comrade who was arrested with him, Patricio Monisz, was subjected to torture for more than 15 days, and finally shot on 31 December. Two other people who were arrested with them were tortured and are being held prisoner in another place.

"Another comrade of ours, 17 year old, was arrested in the Vicuna Mackenaz industrial area, was detained during January. He was tortured for 10 days by the air force intelligence, who broke both his legs and an arm, but his body all over, castrated him and then let him bleed to death. His only offence was being a militant of the MIR. This comrade did not say a word to his torturers.

CONDEMNED

"Another member of our central committee, Osvaldo Rousseau, a student in a small town called Los Andes, was detained in November. After prolonged torture, he has been condemned to death and may be shot at any time.

"Among those detained in the public jail by the leaders of the armed forces are a number of air force officers: General Benitez (recovering from a heart attack), General Palacios, Commander Galvez, Colonels Miranda and Oramis, and Captains Vazquez and Carvacho. Not content with torturing Captain Carvacho, they detained his wife and tortured her too.

"In the same jail are 350 members of the ranks and non-commissioned officers. Another 350 policemen and soldiers. The only accusation against them is that, being members of the armed forces, they did not participate in the coup which overthrew the Popular Unity government.

"Twenty left-wing doctors have also been denounced by the president of the medical school. Among them was the elderly Dr Gustavo Molina, a semi-invalid from chronic asthma.

"The renewal of the torture and eventual shooting of Comrade Van Schouwen is imminent. International solidarity has been of enormous help so far, but it is necessary to redouble the effort and demand: stop the shooting of Van Schouwen and Rousseau.

"The tortures, crimes and murders of the barbaric dictatorship in Chile, watchdogs of national and international capital, will not be forgotten."

THE CLEAR WAY

by Ian Birchall

PARTY LIFE, official journal of the Russian Communist Party, has published a sharp attack on the Spanish Communist Party. Relations between the two have been bad for some time, in particular since the Russian invasion of Chechoslovakia six years ago. This is an attempt to rectify the situation at a new level.

The present attack is an article by a leading Spanish Communist who called for a radical socialist Europe independent of Russian and Eastern Europe.

After the Kholodnianski case and with the growth of opposition inside the party, there is a great deal of talk about criticism.

They are also worried that other Communist Parties in Western Europe, particularly those trying to work towards joining coalition governments, as in France and Italy, may follow the Spanish example of proclaiming their independence of Russian policy.

The Spanish Communists seem to have realized something that the link with Russia was not helping them win support inside Spain. If the events in Chechoslovakia were an embarrassment, even more so was the importing of Polish coal during miners' strike in 1970.

At the same time the Russian accusation that the Spanish Communists are giving in to nationalism has some truth to it. The Spanish Party is aiming, not to become the genuinely revolutionary force that Spain needs, but towards co-operation with more right-wing political forces. Indeed, a few years back the Party leader, Santiago Carrillo, criticized France for not being nationalist enough.
Workers’ bathtime

I had a conversation last week with a man, who is a director of ELI Industries, which runs a small metal plating factory at Ashton, Kent.

I asked: ‘Mr Birkin, I heard a report in the Daily Telegraph last year about an accident in which your firm was involved. I wonder if I could find out a few more facts about it?’

Mr Birkin: ‘I’ve heard some talk about that, but I don’t know if I can tell you anything useful. I can only say that many people do not use plating solutions properly. Could you tell me what happened to the man and what was his name?’

I said: ‘Why should I answer your question? Because I could then get the facts right about the accident. I hope you get the facts wrong.’

‘Why is that, Mr Birkin?’

‘Because then you can deal with you.’

‘What do you mean, deal with me?’

‘I mean, deal with you, that’s what.’

‘I see. Well, I can find out how many people you employ at ELI?’

‘No, I wouldn’t answer any of your questions. What good would that do me?’

‘Well, thank you very much for being so helpful.’

I had to go elsewhere to discover the following facts. The case in question concerned John Ferris, a metalworker at Brookfield Road, Ashford, who was using ELI for a damaged tank containing a caustic solution heated to 180 degrees F. He was using both hands to repair the tank. He lost balance and fell in.

He splashed around in the tank for one or two seconds, and when he was pulled out, most of the skin on his legs had been burnt. He spent two months in hospital and another two months off work.

His journey to the hospital was impeded by the fact that the nearest exit was locked from the inside in such a way as to make it impossible to get out.

The management at ELI didn’t think it necessary to tell the Factory Inspectorate about the incident, but the inspectors heard about it in due course and the firm was charged with four offences: two of not guarding their machinery properly and so exposing their workers to dangerous situations, one of not reporting an accident and one for the locked exit.

Mr Birkin and his colleagues pleaded guilty to the first two charges on the interesting grounds that John Ferris need not have stood on the edge of the tank. He could have turned the tank over with his foot, he said.

John Ferris and other workers, however, said in evidence that the tank was so filled with the usual practice. Gordon Cross, the foreman in the chrome plating shop, told the court: ‘I’ve had the tank on the side of the tank, and so did the others. Quite a few people have fallen into a tank in the factory—I have fallen in myself.’

When Mr Birkin went into the white box, he admitted that one other worker had fallen into a tank of hydrochloric acid. He did not say whether his colleagues agreed that unfortunate workers.

The firm was found guilty on all four counts, fined £115 each on the first two, £25 for failing to report the accident and £50 for the locked door. The factory was also ordered to pay £25 costs.

I hope I’ve got nothing wrong because it’s only fair to deal with’ by Mr Birkin, I’ve read too much about acid baths.

I COUN’T help comparing the fines imposed on ELI with the treatment meted out to Barry Payne, of Brookman’s Road, Stuck, near Chelmsford, who appealed last week to the Crown Court against a decision of the town’s magistrate. He had been charged with defaulting the Social Security authorities by refusing to work after being interviewed for 39 separate jobs. Barry’s defence was that all the jobs offered to him were at less than £20 a week. He and his family could make more from the subsistence payments of the Social Security if he stayed at home and did no work at all.

This argument did not impress the magistrates. They found him guilty and immediately imposed a six months suspended sentence, previously given him for a burglary offence.

They imposed a FURTHER THREE MONTHS SENTENCE for the social security offence.

Barry’s appeal to the Crown Court was dismissed, so he is now serving nine months in prison because he neglected his right not to work for “on” Department of Social Security terms—a starvation wage.

The following books are now in stock.


Years of change—auto-biography of a hackney shemeaker, Norwich, 35p.

The British General Strike, Margaret Morris, 30p.

War and an Irish town, Eamon McCann, 45p.

Revolutionary suicide, Harry Newton, £1.40.

Fascism and big business, Guerin, £1.10.

Communism and the British trade unions, 23p.

Labour of love: the history of the national minority movement, Martin, £2.75.

Please add 7p per book and 4p per pamphlet to cover postal and packing.

Distortion special

There is no newspaper in the country which can keep up to date with the News, The Times, and the Evening News. The attempt to keep the Tory handmaiden moving has failed. After it had ground to a halt published the Evening News into even greater acts of distortion than those performed by its staedemates in Associated Newspapers, the Daily Telegraph.

Both were assisted throughout by the National Opinion Poll, which democratically gave the Tories substantial leads when they did not exist.

The most astonishing performance came on polling day itself. The ‘night special’ edition of the Evening News—on the booklets soon after midday—carried the following good news for Tories

The story retailed the ‘findings’ of the National Opinion Poll which gave the Tories a 12.4 per cent lead in the South East.

The basic facts were not enough for the News. Their ‘closing prices’ edition had a new headline, which purported to ‘explain’ the figures.

The story below was exactly the same. The interpretation—that the ‘swing’ was due to commuters’ rage against the Labour government—is the same as that in the evening edition. But the swing in the London and the South East, as it turned out, was just under two per cent—the opposite.

The margin of error in opinion polls is understood, at maximum three per cent. Tory polls in newspaper papers are allowed a margin of error of anything up to 15 per cent, provided the ‘error’ puts the Tories in the lead it seems.

Socialist Worker 9 March 1974
It should have been a lark, not for Labour

Lies, damned lies, and relatvities boards...

THE ATTEMPTS to make capital out of the 'mistake' in the figures used by the opposition earnings position obscured the real issue. That the relatvities hearings were totally phoney.

As employees of Incomes Data we have always been aware of what the Pay Board claims, but evidently so have the unions.

Earnings figures in general, and the Department of Employment earnings league table in particular, are notoriously unreliable and no-one can be more aware of that than Derek Robinson, deputy chairman of the Pay Board, who prior to his appointment to the Board was a director of Incomes Data. Whoever produced the evidence first, the fact is that Robinson should, and probably did, know of the distortion to the miners' earnings figures that took place before the issue became headline news. Especially as a result of Rob Cooper's Trade Union Research Unit produced these figures two years ago.

What is more worrying is that the totally discredited practice of comparing earnings figures, which formed the basis of the Pay Board's relatvities hearings, is becoming the standard method of arguing wage claims, fully endorsed by trade union research departments. While this also tends to make the figures floating around to support relatvities arguments, will give no indication of how much overtime is required to reach the alleged earnings levels.

In the arguments about 'relative earnings' a wage claim becomes totally divorced from the men on the shop floor. We 'experts' go on arguing about this or that figure rank and file trade unionists will be excluded from getting what is really needed: the achievement of basic rates high enough to allow men to work less than 55 hours to take home a decent wage packet - B. GUNNELL, D. SHONFELD, London N17.

We're still fighting - help us!

The CON-MECH dispute is now in its fifth month. We desperately need support both financially and in the picket line.

The strike started in support of two basic principles that every worker has the right to belong to a trade union and that no representative of the workers shall be victimised.

The workers at Cost-Mech asked for union recognition and the two shop stewards who put forward the request were immediately sacked.

We recently started to develop its organisation. Further it will be the loss of jobs for all those on strike.

What can you do?

The employer has alleged the strike to be a Communist plot, in an attempt to stop solidarity action by other trade unions. Tell union members the facts, that the strike has no sinister origin or desire by workers in a factory to continue to bargain collectively, as they may no longer have to work 65 hours in a week, with no heating, no ventilation, unhygienic dirty old sheds, simply to earn enough to feed and house their wives and children.

Pass resolutions of support in your local branches, trade councils calling for the implementation of the 1972 and 1973 strikes so that employers, be it the Board or other employers, appreciate the strength of a united working class.

Hold collections in factories and branches. Organise delegations to be sent to the 1973 strike, and support the Cost-Mech picket line to show your solidarity and find out first hand what is happening here.

Organise factory meetings and public meetings where the strikers' case can be put and collections made. Circulate the names of those companies dealing with Cost-Mech. The slogan of the AEUE is UNITY IS STRENGTH and we must work to create that unity, we must use that strength. L. GREGG, Secretary, Co-op-Mech Strike Committee.

All donations, queries and messages of support to: Co-op-Mech, Cobden Centre, Cobden, Surrey Tel: 03208 8920.

We've discussed the implications of more of the Shrewsbury defen- dants being sent down. The failure of the union leadership shows that only rank and file organization can win.

So we fully back the Rank and File Conference at the end of March in Birmingham. All readers should support it, and remember the old slogan 'An injury to one is an injury to all'.

ROGER KLINE, York International Socialists Building Workers Branch.

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

10p plus 5p postage (10 or more copies post free) from: IS BOOKS, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

Wigg dispels all our illusions

We can't provide a complete analysis of the social realities. As a result there is a growing disillusionment in the trade unions. We have to provide a clear analysis of the social realities. We have to provide a clear analysis of the social realities.

THANKS - please accept this small contribution to your fund - I only wish I could do more. However, I am a working class member of the working class. I am a working class member of the working class. I am a working class member of the working class.

COMMUNITY PRESS - Community Press (formerly Birmingham Socialist Press) has run into financial difficulties.

The Press does not intend to collapse tonight, and yes, just a little extra effort and luck the press can survive. It needs another £1000 to pay rent, insurance, etc., and pay its staff. Without this the Press will have to pay rent, insurance, etc., and pay its staff. Without this the Press will have to close.

Membership is not cheap. Costs are not cheap, and it takes £6 a month to keep the Press going.

GEORGE WADE, Community Press, 364 Stafford Road, Birmingham 11.

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Interview by
Judith Condon

SATNUM SINGH is one of the 8 workers who have been on official strike for three months at Coventry Art Castings, Nuneaton, in the A L Dunne group.

Early on in the strike he had his finger broken when a scab lorry driver slammed his door on Satnum's hand. Last week Satnum was arrested along with Gurmail Singh and Major Singh and charged with breach of the peace and using threatening behaviour. These three were also charged under the 1875 Conspiracy Act for following lorries.

The strike has resulted in 13 arrests at the time of writing.

Satnum Singh explained to Socialist Worker what has been going on.

"Management point out people to the police and the police daily bring in people by making arrests. The six leaders of the pickets have all been arrested, the leaders being the ones who have been up the front talking to drivers.

"There is always a van load of policemen on the corner with about eight or ten inside. As soon as we stop any lorry they come out with the big numbers in three or four vans and cars.

"The company is still trying to smash us up and they are using every dirty trick to frighten people.

"There have been 13 arrests up to now. The police always go inside and drink tea with the managers."

Lies

"When I first came here six years ago there was no union at all. We brought it in the union in 1969. There was a lot of trouble. One time they sacked a lorry on nights when the rest walked out they sacked the whole shift. They took a week's strike to get them back.

"The present strike started when they sacked the man who was the steward on that night shift at the time of the week's strike. You have already written in Socialist Worker about the terrible conditions here, about the lack of ventilation and the accidents."

I've written some poems in Punjabi about what it's like to work here. And I'm going to send them to Changari, the socialist Punjabi paper.

"We know that the scab workers are not getting out much production. But they're being paid the full rate. Every one of the Iranians is white except for one charge hand. The management advertised in the local paper for scabs. They said you could get up to £60—£70 a week.

"The reason I came here in the first place was because it was a semi-skilled job. I used to work in Jaguar-Heumper as a labourer, but I wasn't a labourer. It was always turned down by the foreman, though I knew I could do the job. There aren't many black operators in the car factories.

"But they didn't give me any training here. You go straight on to the job and the other blockes have to show you what to do. There's no training school or anything like that. They give you four weeks to prove that you can keep up to the rate—then if you can't they sack you.

"Most of the Asian workers are knuckless out, furnace men and labourers. The white workers are on assembly inspection or in the core chop and there's a lot more money on these jobs.

"But we don't think this is the key issue. The union officials shouldn't say 83 Asians are on strike but 83 trade unionists. The convenor and two stewards and four or five other men are out with us and they are white."

Support

"The race element is a thing used by the boss to split us. But we don't fall for that.

"Support could be coming through a lot quicker. The Transport and General Workers Union officials and the convenors in the car factories have been very slow in getting Dunne's products blacked.

"There are eight factories in the Dunne group and we need to get support in all of them. But we've had to push the officials every inch of the way.

"If they had given a really strong lead, we could have shut down this factory very quickly. We've had to do everything ourselves. But we're standing firm together. For instance the management taunted every striker with an individual letter saying if we wanted to restart then we should come and apply to the personnel officer. No one went.

"We have said we'll only go back together. Also my wife is not working because we have an 18-month-old daughter. But we live on a joint family system. If my brother is working then he will help me.

"The pickets here have given a few pounds to the Shrewsbury fighting fund. We've been lucky because we can't support them at the moment. We have no money as it can only be a small collection for them at this stage.

"We need help ourselves. We need help to win and to go back with the union strong."

Please send donations and messages of support to Satnum Singh, 72 Churchill Avenue, Foleshill, Coventry.

1S BOOKS,
265 Seven Sisters Road
London N4

Cover price: 20p each. 1S Books: 10 for 10p each + 12p postage. Over 10 copies 10p each post free.
Bribery storm as coalition collapses

Backhanders by oil bosses

THE ITALIAN government has collapsed in the midst of a oil price dispute, a political scandal and mass working-class protest.

The coalition split over the terms of a loan which the Republican treasury minister La Malfa negotiated with the International Monetary Fund.

The IMF demanded a complete freeze on public spending and increased taxation on top of the already severe economic measures the government has taken. Two days before the government broke up, 13 million workers took part in a one-day general strike in opposition to the attacks on working-class living standards.

Private

The fraudulent arguments used by the government to justify these measures have been exposed by the scandal, which concerns relations between the political parties and the state-owned petrol and electricity boards.

Leading members of the Unione Petroliera, the private oil companies association, are to be charged with regularly bribing the political parties of successive coalition governments in order to win government decrees favourable to them, including subsidies and tax rebates.

According to the secretary of the former President of the UP, the petrol companies gave out £5 million in bribes divided between the political parties in proportion to their power, and reap through government decrees over the years up to £100 million.

They are also accused of lying about the volume of their oil reserves in order to jack up the price of petrol and oil products.

In the name of the energy crisis the government has twice raised the price of petrol and oil products--while the oil companies were stockpiling supplies of petrol, kerosene and oil.

The third accusation relates to their successful bid to bribe leading politicians and government administrators so that the State Electricity Board could build thermal power stations --to the enormous benefit of the petrol companies.

Also accused of receiving and giving bribes are the administrators of the state boards who are nominated from the parties in the coalition government. The State Oil Company, ENI, is also alleged regularly to have bribed the government parties in order to advance its interests.

De Mita, the present Minister of Industry, is said to have received a regular salary from ENI.

Special report by MIKE BALFOUR

The Malfa group is a class itself. One of them, Vincenzo Cazzani, is a member of the UP, said it was being arrested and was the new leader of the UP.

The cost has been massive in terms of lost jobs and the mass of workers families. The strike has been supported by the workers and the oil crisis is being used to suppress any challenging attempts to improve living standards.

Last Thursday, 80,000 workers struck in the country, and the Italian workers' movement is waiting for the outcome of the crisis.
Why fat sheep safely graze...

"GIVEN five fat sheep and 95 thin, how to induce the 95 to resign to the five the richest pasture and the shadiest corners?"

The socialist writer who asked this, 40-odd years ago, gave his answer. By convincing them, obviously, that if they do not, they will die of rot, be eaten by wolves and be deprived in the meantime of such pastures as they have...

"Measures to the argument runs—which have as their object the diminution of inequality, have as their effect the accumulation of capital and the discouragement of enterprise and this in turn leads to lower wages and increased unemployment. Thus the wealth of the few is the indispensable safeguard of the modest comfort of the many..."

This argument is still heard. But today many of the thin sheep are rather less gullible and so we also have a new argument: a new diversion for lean sheep.

It is called 'relativities'. All thin sheep are skinny, but some are skinnier than others. If they can be induced to cast envious eyes on one another's meager fodder, then the fat sheep can continue to graze undisturbed in the lush pastures.

It is a variant of the age-old rule-class technique of divide and rule. It has had a considerable measure of success.

Miners are persuaded to compare themselves with car workers, not capitalists. Locomotivemen are persuaded to compare themselves with engineers, not landlords.

The permutations of the relativities debate are endless. What weighting for skill, for scarcity, for social importance, for danger and disease? The more complex and the more heated the arguments, the better the fat sheep are pleased.

So let us drop for the moment the relativities debate, as defined by the Pay Board and the establishment and look at a more important relativity—the allocation of the pasture.

In a useful little book 'Wealth, Income and Inequality', published by Penguin last year, we find the following facts:

The top 1 per cent of the population owns 43 per cent of the privately owned wealth in Britain, the top 5 per cent owns 68 per cent and the top 10 per cent owns 79 per cent.

Unequal

It follows that the other 99 per cent owns nearly 21 per cent of the wealth. Wealth is broadly defined.

It includes the market value of the house or flat that most middle-class and many working-class families buy or are compelled to buy, by borrowing at crippling rates of interest from mortgage banks—misleadingly called 'building societies' though they build nothing.

If we take the most important single kind of income generating wealth, shares in companies of all kinds, we find a still more unequal distribution. The top 1 per cent own 81 per cent, the top 5 per cent own 96 per cent and the top 10 per cent own 98 per cent.

It is worth noting that the economists who produced this date, if F. Lydall and D G Tipping, believe 'that the existing sources of data on personal wealth in Britain are quite inadequate for a serious study of the problem.'

Why? Because they may overestimate the importance of the rich.

Not at all. The opposite is true. The basis of the problem is essentially on the payment of death duties as reported by the Inland Revenue.

And death duties are notorious. They are levied legally by the very rich by means of gifts, trusts and other devices. Indeed, a whole profession of tax experts or tax evasion experts has grown up to service the fat sheep.

These facts are fairly well known. But most people are not too impressed by statistics. They prefer particular facts and since statistics are easily manipulated this may be a healthy preference. So let us look at one or two particular facts:

A Rolls-Royce car, basic model without trimmings, costs about £17,000. But you just can't walk into your local dealer with the £17,000 you have saved from your wages and drive away your Silver Ghost or whatever the current model is called.

Accused

There is a long waiting list. Too many people, in this time of economic belt-tightening, are chasing too few Rolls. How many of them are putting their case before the Relativities Board or the Pay Board?

Or take the following advertisement which appeared in last week's Sunday Times: 'Under the 1 S and P plan an investment of £35,000 would give you a tax free income of £550 per annum or could in 15 years grow to £152,526 to give a tax free income of £15,506 per annum.' Or again 'View Today, St Johns Wood. Easy to manage family home . . . Leasehold £180,000.'

People who point to such inconvenient facts are often accused by Tory, Liberal and sometimes even Labour Party spokesmen of appealing to envy, jealousy and class hatred. It is an accusation that does not come well from those who defend our economic system that makes accumulation of private profit the aim of 'capital' instead of its wealth being shared among all classes.

The question is: does acceptance of the ideology of 'relativities', 'fairness', 'moderation' and the acceptance of 'income policy' lead to a socialist direction?

It does not. It leads in the opposite direction. It leads to arguments about the redistribution of income within the working-class.

It takes for granted that what the economists have quoted is the 'exceptionally unequal distribution of wealth' remains basically unchanged.

To return to the purblind of the fat sheep and the thin sheep, a relationship which is concerned to ensure that the thin sheep share out more 'fairly' the inferior pastures.

Duncan Dallas

What's happening to your wages?

Here's a vital pamphlet for ALL readers of Socialist Worker. It is essential to read, re-read and keep handy every time there is a new money claim. It is required reading for every worker and housewife who wonders why their money is being drained away.

The pamphlet contains recent and highly-prized facts and figures. It was compiled by Chris Hill and Duncan Dallas who are editors of Socialist Worker. It is packed with pages of facts. For YOUR work-place now.

Send to:

IS Books, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4
THE DEVELOPMENT of the Minority Movement in the 1920s was a militant rank and file organisation operating within the trade unions and the workshops and factories was connected with three vital factors.

First, the economic difficulties of British capitalism after the post-1918 replacement boom.

Second, the failure of the official trade-union machine to defend, let alone extend, workers' pay and conditions through a united front of organised workers, regardless of trade, industry or trade union organisation.

Third, the existence of a Communist Party with political and industrial militants schooled in the previous struggles for trade union reform and socialisation from below.

The impetus for the Minority Movement came from Communists who grouped around the much wider circle of militants sharing in the most struggles and experience.

There was also a fourth factor, one that came to be of decisive importance in the eventual failure of the Communist Party and the Minority Movement—the Russian influence exerted through the Communist International.

The Communist International formed in 1919 was founded on the idea that international socialist democracy—represented in Britain by the Labour Party—had gone over to the camp of capitalism. It argued that revolution was on the order of the day in the developed countries.

Fighting

To make the revolution succeed, Communist Parties, entirely independent of the old socialist parties, should be formed, working within existing workers' organisations but fighting as communists with revolutionary socialist objectives. Britain as a leading capitalist power was the subject of much attention from the CI. The Communist Party Second of two articles by Jim Higgins

was weak in member but there existed mass trade unions with traditions of rank and file organisation, industrial unionism and direct action.

The problem was to connect the communist forces and politics to this rank and file to build the bridge from trade union militancy to revolutionary politics. The Minority Movement was to be that bridge.

The founding conference of the Minority Movement was held in 1924. Already the movement had a strong hold in major industries including mining, engineering and transport.

But at the same time a significant change had taken place within the Russian party and the CI. Lenin had died, the German revolution had failed and Stalin came to the fore as the prophet of 'socialism in one country'. Diplomacy and negotiation with non-communist forces would have to replace the development of the revolutionary movement.

In 1924 a number of prominent right-wing trade union leaders had been given ministerial office in Ramsay MacDonald's first minority Labour government, leaving vacancies on the General Council of the TUC which were taken by left-wingers.

An Anglo-Russian Committee was formed of members of the TUC and the Russian unions. The British contingent contained a number of 'left' members of the TUC—Purcell, Hicks, Williams and Brunskill.

The effect of this Anglo-Russian understanding was to make the official trade unions the leaders of the movement.

The communists within the Minority Movement operated as if they represented the TUC on the General Council of the TUC and that the General Council was the 'general' of the working class army.

The TUC did not see things at all in those terms. After the defeat of the Labour government in another 'reds under the bed's election, the right wing returned to the General Council. The TUC 'left' contended themselves with radical speeches and resolutions.

The big testing came with the 1926 General Strike.

The Minority Movement played a useful part, although they did more than the TUC 'lefts', who disappeared without trace. The Communist Party, whose leaders had been jailed the previous year, was ill-prepared.

They argued 'All power to the General Council' when the General Council took the power and sold out.

The death of the General Strike saw the defeat of the trade unions as a whole. The Minority Movement continued but it was broken. No militant movement, let alone one with revolutionary pretensions, can succeed with the workers in full retreat.

What are the lessons for today?

The essential conditions for the re-birth of a national rank and file movement exist.

Capitalism is in greater crisis than at any time since the war. It is unable to govern in the old way.

The reluctance of the left wing of the General Council to come out openly and fight the right wing on everything on the line. For there could be no doubt that the right wing leaders, as represented by Meares, Thomas, Cynn and Cramp, had very effectively manoeuvred and were organised to take up the battle wherever an opportunity presented itself...

Top: Harry Politt (in waistcoat), secretary of the Minority Movement with other demonstrators. Above: A.J. Cook, one of the movement's most active members.

Increased attacks on living standards and trade union organisation are inevitable. The trade union leadership, from right to left, is uniformly incapable of developing the class-wide strategy that can win even modest trade union demands.

In the last period, whole sections of workers have entered direct strike actions and greater and greater numbers of workers have struck in defence of their conditions.

There exists a wide circle of militants and shop stewards, disillusioned with the 'left' trade union leaders and finding no answer in the Communist-dominated Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions. The Communist Party and the Liaison Committee see their task as persuading the Labour Party and the left of the trade union leadership by token stoppages and rally style conferences that have no local organisation or rank and file control.

The revolutionary movement is stronger than it has been for 50 years. In particular, the International Socialists have begun to build an important base in the unions and the factories.

The conference to be held in Birmingham on 30 March is the initiative of a number of rank and file papers, most of them born out of strikes and struggles within their own unions.

They see the need to go beyond their own unions and to develop a structure that will unite all workers in their common fight for control over their own union and for a militant policy of advance.

Revolutionaries will and must be active in that movement, but they cannot turn it into a simple recruiting ground of a front. The rank and file movement is a substitute for a revolutionary party, for there are no substitutes.

30 March is the first step for workers to discuss the construction of a movement that will avoid the errors of the past and build on the incomparably stronger potential of the working class in 1974.
How to get equal pay, divorced and out of jail...

The arrested development of Barlow's bobbies

By Roger Protz

The copper, particularly those in the patrol cars, were shown as men with their own human frailties who stemmed from the same background as the working-class people they were dealing with.

"Z-Cars" was an enormous popular success and the series' decline can be traced back to its success, as it ran for nine years.

The "Cops" were described as the "real" criminals, whereas the police were shown as the good guys.

The show was a major success, and it ran for nine years, becoming a cult classic.

The series was renewed for a tenth year, and it ran for one more season.

The show was praised for its realistic portrayal of police work and for its focus on the lives of the police officers themselves.

The show was cancelled after its tenth season, and it remains a beloved classic of British television.
EVERYONE claims to recognise the miners as a 'special case'. Politicians, both Tory and Labour, have always been ready to throw the money around to win the miners' vote. The violence of the miners' job is well known. The pit disasters, the dust, the heat and the filth—all this makes over the union's claim for face-workers of £45 look much too low.

But the politicians who claim that the miners are a special case do so for a ‘special’ reason. They don't claim they are special to help workers have hard, dirty and unhealthy jobs. That is just society would reward much better.

Take the farm-workers, for instance. They can’t quit their jobs and there is a high risk of injuries from accidents and disease. Their Phase Three deal, which Heath says is ‘fair’, gives them a basic pay of £22.50 for the women and £47.70 for the men.

To be able to live you have to work overtime. Last year they averaged 49 hours a week for £31.55. Nearly half the 250,000 people who produce our food get an average of £23.80 before shift pages. One in three got less than £20.

This is pretty lousy money. But you won’t think it’s so bad if you work like that. After the latest price increases, the ‘ordinary’ workers in our household gets around £22, with a ‘guarantee’ of £25.80 for men. In 1973 a fifth of hospital workers had less than £16. The average was £18.90 and £23.80 for nurses. One in three men got less than £25—a five-year average of £45.

But it’s not very special, it is, and the sick, cooking meals and occasionally having to wait on private patients who pay £100 a week. Half our nurses have to work five weeks to earn £100. Even caring the sick is well-paid compared to working in a laundry.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

We believe in independent workers’ action for the abolition of capitalism and its replacement by a classless society with production for use not profit.

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

Capitalist international. The giant firms have investments throughout the world and owe allegiance only to themselves and the economic system they maintain. In Europe, the Common Market has been formed for the sole purpose of increasing the wealth of the owners of these multi-national firms.

The international power of capitalism can only be overcome by international action by the working class. A revolutionary socialist can’t wait indefinitely to see if workers of other countries actively come to its aid by extending the socialist revolution. In addition to building a revolutionary socialist organisation in this country we also believe in the necessity of forming a world revolutionary socialist international independent of either Washington or Moscow. To this end we have founded the International Socialist Federation, a world socialist organisation of all socialists throughout the world.

We believe in the necessity to unite socialist theory with the day-to-day struggle of the working people and therefore support all genuine demands that tend to improve the position and self-confidence of the working class.

We are:

Against war and all its forms.

For rank and file control of the trade Unions and the regular election of all full-time officials.

Against secret negotiations. We believe that all settlements should be agreed on or rejected by the rank and file.

We demand a 100 per cent trade unionism and the defence of shop stewards.

We demand a wage union with any strike on the right to strike, whether the strikers are ‘official’ or ‘unofficial’.

For equal pay and a better deal for young workers.

Against ‘bargaining’ and for militant trade union unity and joint shop stewards committees in both the plants and on a countrywide basis.

For a minimum wage of at least £25 a week.

Against unemployment, redundancy and lay offs. We support the demand for a working week of no more than 45 hours.

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

Against racism and police victimisation of black workers.

Against immigration restriction.

Against the right of coloured people and all oppressed groups to organise in their own defence.

For real social, economic and political equality for women.

Against all nuclear weapons and military alliances such as NATO and the Western Alliance.

Against secret diplomacy.

Against all forms of imperialism. We unreservedly support action to end and solidarity with all genuine liberation movements.

For the rationalisation of the land, banks and major industries without compensation for workers control.

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

The struggle for socialism is the central struggle of our time. Workers’ power and not the state must be the instrument of the people. The struggle to survive in the first place, above all, the abolition of the power of man over man, is certainly worth fighting for.

It is so easy just to talk about it. More than a century ago Karl Marx wrote: ‘The philosophers have merely interpreted the world. The point is to change it’.

FOR THE ADDRESS OF YOUR LOCAL BRANCH OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS WRITE TO THE NATIONAL SECRETARY 8 COTTONS GARDENS, LONDON, E2 8DN.

Pay Fight hits the town halls

MEMBERS of the National and Local Government Officers’ Association (NALGO) in London have kicked off their first round of industrial action in support of a Phase Three-busting £400-a-year London weighting claim last week.

The strike includes overtime bans by staff employed in six London boroughs, in all the Electricity Boards covering the city, in the Electricity Council and the London Boroughs Joint Computer branch in Greenwich.

Local government’s industrial action also includes a refusal to work with agency staff employed as local workers at rates much higher than directly employed union members. In the first few days of the battle at least three London boroughs—Islington, Camden and Harrow—agreed to stop using agency workers while others are waiting to see if they are directly employed workers.

On Tuesday the union intends to step up its official action. All-out strikes are to be launched in Greenwich computer branch and by three sections of Camden Council staff.

Then on 25 March there is to be a strike by all NALGO members in Islington and Tower Hamlets and in three sections of Kensington and Chelsea including traffic control and public health inspectors and their office staff. In all cases emergency cover will still be provided.

The dispute is a historic one for NALGO, a union which has no tradition of official strikes. Indeed this battle, with 15,000 workers in the firing line is the first to involve more than one branch of the union on the same issue.

Resentment

The union’s claim for a £400 increase on top of the existing £156.14 weighting was lodged last June. It naturally fell foul of the Tories’ Phase Three, which insisted on strict control of London weighting claims.

It adopted the previous Labour government’s Prices and Incomes Board method of calculating the maximum and came up with £246.40.

This has caused intense resentment among London NALGO members. They see their London weighting claim as a short-term method of redefining some of the fall in their living standards aside from the national wage claim.

But there are problems with the battle, as can be seen in the strike action.

The Pay Board is to issue a report on London weightings in June. And if more London NALGO members are not brought into the firing line and the struggle brought to a head quickly, it could peter out. A settlement on the Pay Board’s terms in June would be a disaster.

NALGO Action is also trying to link the London fight to the concerns of all NALGO members in campaigning for a national pay claim for all local government workers. The union executive has now adopted this principle.

But the union’s claim for its members in electricity is not part of the London weighting claim in Phase Three. The local government claim is constructed on the basis of only local government workers’ pay relating to manual workers and civil servants. This could indicate that the union let the Pay Board’s Relativities experts and their slide rules decide the outcome of the claim.
The Hazards of Work: How to Fight Them.

400 pages. 0p. plus 7p postage
From IBS Books, 267 Seven Sisters Road, London N1. (London 3 7BN)

The CRISIS in Fleet Street was one of the subject for discussion at a packed Socialist Worker meeting in Fleet Street branch of IS last week. More than 100 people crowded into the meeting, and the most violently Tory paper in Fleet Street, to vote in support of their pay demands.

Bill Freeman, veteran Fleet Street journalist, told the meeting that he was a member of the Communist Party, and was glad to be speaking at an IS meeting or any other meeting where people were prepared to fight the system.

He spoke of the responsibility of print workers and other workers in Fleet Street to take notice of the lies and tricks that were being asked to print. Bill has been prominent in the movement among trade unionists in Fleet Street to organize a united front of print workers against the advertisers and advertisers' objections to them.

One of the main problems for the advertisers and advertisers was the caution of their approach. This was said, "I will not stand to be dictated to by the advertisers unless I am sure of what I am doing."

Petersen ended on a resounding note: "Archie Borner had once said miners should fight back. We should not ask for that. I will settle for a living wage," said Peter.

Pinch

Paul Foot, Socialist, said IS speakers were always glad to join Communist Party members in defending workers from attack.

The increase in the price of paper and the cuts in advertising revenue that the Fleet Street system was feeling the pinch of system, together with the loss of some of their innumerable accumulated profits and the public's response, they would try to make the workers pay. The attacks on the journalists' wages were traditionally the weak link. They would not stand to be dictated to.

KILMACRO: Monday, 18 March, 6.30 p.m., 1st Floor, Chairman, IS lodge convenor, John Farrell. (Socialist Worker reporter)

GLASGOW

Wednesday 20 March, 8 p.m., 7th Floor, 1st Floor, President, John McTear, I.S. (Socialist Worker reporter)

The hazards of work...
It's a dog's life for the Hickays

by Mary Phillips

DEIDRE and BRENDAN Hickay, whose four children are living under a 28-day possession order issued by the City of London Corporation, their landlords for the past 14 years.

A tenants' association was started last June on the Avondale Square estate in New Cross Road, South London, and Deidre and Dan have been the secretary since then.

In September the Hickays got notice to quit—for possessing a dog. They told the corporation it belonged to Deidre's brother.

The housing manager replied: 'I am sure you will appreciate that it is in the undertaking which the corporation requires, that you will not permit an animal to be brought to your house or on to the estate by one of your visitors.' This rule is not on the rent card.

Strength

Many other tenants on the estate have dogs and pets. Deidre's brother's dog has been there for about four years.

Other dog owners have been given notice to quit but they have fought their cases to court. But then they’ve not been successful.

The corporation took Brendan to court and that was over the strength of Regulation No 8—which allows the corporation to take the rules when they wish—saying that

The Hickay family eviction threat for joining a tenants' group

their letter constituted a special new rule applying only to the Hickays.

Although no neighbours have complained about the dog, the corporation insisted at the first hearing that there had been complaints about the dog fouling the grassed areas on the estate, re- served for toddlers and organised games.

This surprised the tenants present, many of whose descendents have been chased off the grass by corporation officials for having so much as a beach ball.

And as for organised games, such a thing has never been heard of, not even on the so-called football pitch.

The present housing manager, Kenneth Comstith, appeared for the corporation, saying somewhat mawkishly that they did not want to put the family on the street.

A fortnight later, when the case had been adjourned for the Hickays to show their tenants since the notice to quit, the corporation admitted that they had received no evidence of the presence of a dog and it could be disputed.

They just wanted a possession order for 14 days.

The judge made it 28 days and Deidre and Dan have to pay £30 for the privilege.

Many tenants cannot believe it has happened. Some of them have got up a petition which reads:

'We, the undersigned tenants of Avondale Square estate and others protest against the victimisation of the Hickays and their seven children. The City Corporation have been given possession of their flat without giving any reason in court.

'We further protest that this is a glaring example of public tenants’ lack of protection against eviction by their landlords who need give no reason for getting a tenant out.'

Terry Norman, aged 14, was so incensed he rang Capital Radio's phone-in programme at five in the morning to tell them about Deidre's case.

But at least Brendan still has a job to go to. He has been in the same job for the past 18 years—earning £3 a week as a dustman. His boss? The City Corporation.

Confidence

Their original claim demanded £10 across the board from rent levels to reduce the rate of rent increases.

Advantages

As it became clear there would be a Phase Three tenant pension at last, there was a scramble by different sections to sign up as many tenants as possible. Two weeks ago a demonstration at a shop stewards' committee meeting by some 100 men from the general workshop demanded 7 per cent on their basic rate, with the shop stewards' board and the legislative section.

There have been repeated demands for the skilled sections to break away from the rest of the union.

The responsibility for this breakdown is the lack of a leadership line firmly on the shoulders of the full-time officials. They have fallen over each other in their rush to accept Phase Three while at the same time building up hopes that the airport workers could win through.

Unions back strikers

THE STRIKE by AMSTRD post-graduate University College continues. The strike is over the raising of teaching rates and the recognition of AMSTRS for negotiating the rates with the university authorities.

Support from the local trade union movement is excellent. Picket lines have stopped all deliveries to the college, and independent trade union commission has been set up to investigate the dispute. This is headed by Tony Wall, the general of the South Wales Miners.

It is unfortunate that such support did not come from the National Union of Students. At its meeting on Sunday the Communist Party-dominated executive refused to give any support to the recognition fight.

The two UK members of the executive are almost certainly those that are the National Union of Students should support the AMSTRS members.

The executive's decision is most surprising. For the Welsh region of NUS last week pledged full support with the promise of solidarity action by students and workers.

The tragedy is that the refusal of NUS to co-operate with AMSTRS can only weaken the position of the postgraduate students and strengthen the hand of the university authorities.

15 members in the colleges, particularly postgraduate students, have urged their students' union to support the AMSTRS, while 150 postgraduates who teach and demonstrate at the University College of the AMSTRS as the relevant trade union.
Nine-week strike by 800 at GEC plant

BILSTON, Staffs.-The strike by 800 Amalgamated Engineering Employees at GEC plants here has now entered its ninth week. The company says the GEC empire and the dispute began over job grading. At a mass meeting last Friday an offer put to the workers was rejected as unfair and it was decided to meet again in a fortnight's time.

A meeting of the Bilston sectional union convened on the behaviour of management. A difficulty in forming the sectional management had seemed willing to talk about in principle but had held them behind the Tory Phase Three limits he said.

A letter distributed to the strikers last Friday by Cannon management threatened if the strike continued the company would have to declare redundancies, and the managements in the part of management has been used before, in a previous letter management traced to railhead to a settlement.

Standstill

The letter said: The government may call in and cancel stage three and this could result in a complete standstill on wages-the management's letter urged workers to accept the offer.

During the past nine weeks the solidarity and fighting spirit of the strikers has been magnificent. In the face of management threats, three days working and the general election the strikers have stood firm and managed regular pickets. This dispute deserves the support of all trade unionists.

Dudley and messages of support to: Jack Collingwood, 3 Foster Avenue, Corley, near Bilston, Staffs.

Protest at police search

HARLOW, Essex.—Protests are growing at the harassment and illegal police search of the home of Harlow International Socialists' secretary Sue Lambert and her husband, Ted. The police offered an apology to Mrs. Lambert and the Harlow sectional district committee of the AUEW have written to the chief constable complaining at police repression and demanding an apology. The AUEW has also passed a resolution condemning police harassment of trade unionists and offering any help necessary to the Harlow group.

Stu Newsom, the newly-elected Labour MP for Harlow, has said he will raise the issue with the new Home Secretary. He added the need for the Government to provide police coverage in order to keep the lives of unionists and their families safe. However, any move to end police harassment of the Harlow group is being met with resistance by the Met Police.

Protest at police search

NUNEATON.—The strike at Coventry Art Caravans is now in its third week, and there is still a very active picket. The company is said to be making a profit. A letter from the Carravans is shown in this week's issue of the Socialist Worker. The company is said to be making a profit. A letter from the Carravans is shown in this week's issue of the Socialist Worker.

More walk out to join Art Castings

The strike at Coventry Art Castings is in its third week and there is an active picket. The company is said to be making a profit. A letter from the Carravans is shown in this week's issue of the Socialist Worker.
DANGER IN FLEET STREET DEALS

LONDON—After a week involving industrial action on the Daily Telegraph and the threat of it on other papers, the Newspaper Proprietors Association has agreed to allow separate wage increases up to the Phase Three maximum on national newspapers. This decision only gave formal recognition to what was already happening.

First IPC, owners of the Daily Mirror, left the NPA to bargain with its journalists. Then Rupert Murdoch and the Sun management, while deciding to stay in the NPA for the time being, were telling the journalists that they would pay—and a deal has not been agreed.

On Tuesday the Telegraph journalists started negotiations. It is expected that this too will be on offer in reply to their claim for a Phase Three wage increase. But Daily Express management got an unprecedented agreement from their journalists, who did a deal which ties the payment of their men’s pay claim to negotiations obtaining a price rise for the paper.

CHECKED

This is a dangerous development since it introduces another bridge to ward off workers and the threat of down-market action. It insists that any wage agreements will be subject to union accountings, as checked by the union, show it can pay.

The Daily Mirror’s editors were immediately seized upon by the NPA at the meeting with NUJ negotiators on Friday the NPA agreed that separate agreements could go ahead if the 'ability to pay' condition was built into the bargain. The NUJ could not get NUJ just as at the Express it has already got a foothold.

NUJ negotiators have been striving to keep a national agreement so that weaker groups of journalists are not isolated and abandoned.

This is the main danger in the whole drift of NUJ policy in Fleet Street with the newspaper industry priced hard by reductions in advertising and increased newspaper costs. There is no news this week. Newspapers, for example, to axe the Daily Mail. Jobs are being threatened.

THE FALL OF TED HEATH AND THE TORIES AND THE RETURN OF LABOUR TO POWER IS A DIRECT RESULT OF THE MINERS’ STRIKE ACTION.

Labour’s position as a minority government must not be allowed to deny the miners the just reward of their position and struggle demands. Every pressure will be brought to bear to keep the settlement going. Political loyalty to Labour, national economic crisis, the Relativities Report, beer and butties in 10 Downing Street will all be called in.

The first hurdle will be the Relativities Report. Insured leaders suggest it will call for a much wider gap between underground and surface workers. An extra £5 for underground workers—on top of the Phase Three offer—has been mentioned, with nothing for the men at the pit top.

Miners, unlike higher civil servants, company directors, asset-strippers, commodity speculators and other overpaid rataff, can earn most while they are young. Increasing age, industrial injuries and ill health caused by the job condemn the miner to lower-paid work on the surface. The overwhelming majority of surface workers are men unable to continue with work underground.

Anything on the suggested lines of the Relativities Report would be a complete denial of the policy of successive NUM conferences and a betrayal of tens of thousands of underpaid disabled and older miners.

The NUM conference at Inverness last year called for backdating of the claim to November. Lawrence Daly has recently reasserted this decision.

MODESTY

In 1972 the NUM agreed to alter the date on miners’ contracts from November to March. The idea was to ensure that miners taking industrial action would be doing so at a time when coal was in least demand.

A return to November will ensure that the next round starts in November this year, not at all too soon considering the modesty of the existing claim and the rate of inflation. It will also give miners back the tactical advantage—which will be needed even if Labour is still in government then.

Every report from the coalfields indicates that miners are willing to settle for nothing less than the full claim across-the-board.

The miners will have no truck with a shoddy compromise but the union leaders’ failure to involve the members in the fight for the claim, the restriction of pickets to the point of no pickets at all, and the slackness about oil deliveries and coal depots raise doubts about the leadership.

The wheeling and dealing of Joe Grimsey and the NUM right wing, coal, with the failure of the left to take the initiative and develop solidarity within and outside the ranks of the NUM do not give grounds for confidence.

All the conditions are ripe for a breakthrough. Only the miners’ leaders can snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

Television Unions Turn Tail After NIRC Move

Both unions involved in the continuing dispute at the BBC have turned tail after last Friday’s National Industrial Relations Court decision to issue an injunction against a strike.

The injunction was issued last Friday just 73 hours before 90 members of the Association of Cinematograph and Television Technicians and the Association of Broadcasting Staff were due to strike over a grading claim.

The BBC went to the NIRC last Thursday claiming that the strike notice had not been given and in addition that the production claim breached Phase Three of the Tory incomes policy.

Sir John Donaldson, a National Industrial Relations Court judge, accepted the argument and granted the injunction.

The striking technicians and broadcasting staffs are expected to appeal against the decision.