Labour backs down on top firms

RENTS FROZEN, basic food prices subsidized, pensions up, museum charges abolished, the Industrial Relations Act repealed. Labour MPs are hailing Harold Wilson as the toughest Labour Prime Minister ever.

But even while the Queen's Speech which contained all these proposals was being written the truth about the future was being spelt out for millions of working people. Wholesale prices took another record leap in February. The average price of goods made for sale in Britain rose by nearly 3 per cent—that's an annual rate of 36 per cent. All the experts agree that these increases will continue for the rest of the year.

The pension increases are nothing like enough to cope with price increases. The rent freezes will be quickly swamped in the tidal wave of price increases.

The government promises to establish fair prices of certain key foods. How? By passing out massive subsidies from taxpayers' money to the monopolies who make profits because others need to eat. Already Shirley Williams, Labour's prices minister, has been begging and bribing the big bakers not to raise the price of bread by half a penny. This will cost the taxpayer 3.5 million and all of it will go out of government control into the bottomless coffers of Rank Hovis McDougall and their fellow giants.

RHU's profits last year were up from £31.9 million to £57.9 million. They will be up again this year.

CONTROL

Yet the control of the bread market will be left to Ranks just as the control of every other market will be left to the boardrooms.

All those pledges at Labour Party conferences to nationalize banks, insurance companies, chemical and building companies and so on have been thrown overboard.

So who will bear the brunt of inflation under Labour? The workers will—and Phase Three is still law.

As the Queen's speech put it: 'My ministers will discuss urgently with the Trades Union Congress, the Confederation of British Industry and the others concerned, methods of securing the orderly growth of incomes on a voluntary basis.'

Wilson hopes to get the unions to agree to wage restraint in a period where wage increases of more than 20 per cent are necessary to keep pace with increased prices.

It is not on.

The Tories and the Liberals deserve nothing but contempt if they try to run Labour out of office by voting against price subsidies or legislation against property speculators.

But neither has Labour any claim on workers' loyalty if it leaves the profits in charge of industry and pleads at the same time for wage restraint.

The rank and file must tell the union leaders in the clearest possible terms:

NO WAGE RESTRAINT.
The ‘lucky’ miner who only lost his leg...

WILLIAM DAVIES was a miner, a facedworker at the Nantgarr Colliery, Trebanog, in Rhondda. On that day William Davies joined the 4000 miners who had the industry every year through injury, disease and death.

He was working in the 508 district of the colliery, clearing coal and fixing wooden supports, after the charge had been fired. Having run out of timbers, he had to go into the mud caving. He cleared spillage until new timber arrived.

At this point he heard an ominous click in the roof and rightly assumed a fall was imminent. He attempted vainly to get out of the way of a stone two feet wide. The force of it crushed his leg.

For the next 2½ years William Davies suffered 12 operations to reconstruct his foot. In June 1972 he had an amputation of his leg below the knee.

After this long chapter of suffering it seemed odd to describe William Davies as fortunate compared to the 140 miners killed or seriously injured each year in South Wales back on their feet. At the end of February five years after the injury he was awarded £24,000 damages by a Cardiff Court. Average damages, usually by out-court settlement, in South Wales are £2000.

Unsupported

The facts that came out at the 13-day hearing are a crushing indictment of the NCB. At the Nantgarr pit 101 men had been hurt on one face by roof falls in a period of 11 months. At another face 10 miners were injured by roof falls in only one month.

The NCB system of shot-firing at the pit is an easy method. But it involves leaving the roof unsupported and the damage is not only to the roof itself but also to its supports, which are often in the way.

As the NCB said: ‘Safety must be balanced against productivity’. For ‘practical’ read ‘cheat’.

Mr Justice Lailey, was unimpressed by the NCB’s argument and warned the coal industry to get on with its job and in the habit of accepting the dangers of work underground, management, officials and their employers must face the conditions which it was not necessary to tolerate.

After the case Mr Davies said: ‘I have two brothers who suffered accidents down the pit and one entered their heads that they may have a case against the Coal Board. It makes me wonder how many other miners have lost the chance of compensation.’

Precedent

A question remains: Why did the NCB attempt to fight a case where they were manifestly in the wrong? Why did they seek to reduce the costs of balancing costs against lives and limbs?

Informed legal opinion suggests that there is a great deal more risk to the NCB than the £24,000 awarded to William Davies. According to the friend of the NCB he hoped to establish the legal precedent that they have a ‘reasonable’ cost to look after the safety of working miners. This would be particularly valuable to the NCB whose entire big compensation cases are based on their legal claims.

FOOTNOTE: The NCB, who fought William Davies through the courts, later gained a compensation of £20,000 from his wife to cover subsistence for his dependants.

William Richardson of Glenshen, near Penmaenmawr, has told how in a drainage incident in the Pembroke Docks, part of his leg was broken.

Last October he had an accident at work which damaged the tendons in his hand. Eventually in February he had to go into hospital. On release he found that the company were planning to pay him wages for the week prior to his accident.

He complained to the Department of Employment whose investigation is now looking into the matter. For this ‘militant action’ Richardson was duly dismissed.

As a result he is not allowed to sign on as unemployed since he is officially ‘on sick’.

They are trying to finance the trade union movement from the proceeds of private profits. ‘Voluntary restraint’ means that the union leaders take over the job of the now discredited pay board.

‘Voluntary restraint’ means increased profits at the expense of the miners. ‘Voluntary restraint’ means that the main source of such concessions as increased pensions—our rulers for once actually worked one day—is effectively weakened.

This ‘restoration’ is offered in a society in which, as Socialist Worker pointed out last week, 1 per cent of the population owns 43 per cent of all wealth and 80 per cent of all property. In this society it is, in the words of the Financial Times, ‘if certain social measures are first taken by the government.’

The measures include the repeal of the Industrial Relations Act, increased pensions, halting council house rent rises and some token rate relief.

All these are certainty of benefit to working people, just as Social Security is better than begging or starvation. But they are offered, because, and only because, of the militant industrial actions of the last two years. Michael Foot is appointed to the Department of Employment, rather than Reg Prentice, for the obvious reason.

Remove the fear of working-class action and the concessions will soon be whittled away. Yet this is exactly what the TUC leadership propose to do. They say to the government, in effect, ‘You can increase your crumbs and we will do our best to stop our members going for the cake.’

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Air crash truth blows up lies

WHEN THE TURKISH Airlines DC 10 jumbo jet crashed two weeks ago killing all 347 passengers on board, the British press jumped in with two startling explanations for the worst aircraft disaster in history.

The first ‘theory’ they advanced was sabotage. There was a ‘definite possibility’ that Arab terrorists had put a time bomb aboard the plane. The terrorists would have been fewer people on board but for the government’s menace—striking Heathrow engineers.

But over the past week some ‘real case’ have been put forward by those who said responsible for the crash. As might be expected by anyone other than frenzied Fleet Street editors, it was the strikers of terrorists. It was the respectable trade unionists of McDonald Douglas manufacturers of the DC 10.

In June 1972, fully 21 months before this DC 10 got into serious trouble over Windsor Ontario, the rear cargo door blew off. The cargo hold depressurised, causing the cabin floor to crumble and jam the flying controls. Despite this the plane was landed safely.

The Paris disaster two weeks ago was basically caused by the French-Canadian Ontario affair. It is now virtually certain that once again a door was made faulty and again triggered a domino effect—perhaps more.

After the first incident the US Federal Aviation Authority recommended that the DC 10 be tested. In particular to the original door locks which look as if they are closed when in fact they are not.

The French (Douglas) Douglas state, have been made on all aircraft. The reasoning is that the situation is not so certain with regard to the foreign-owned jumbo.

This is superficially logical, because McDonald Douglas manufacturers state that no US Federal Aviation Authority would not issue an airworthiness certificate unless all door locks are tested.

An airworthiness certificate means that all airlines are notified through their governments.

But the plane makers feel this is bad for their sales. Once again safety came nowhere in the drive to make profits.
Irishmen jailed in arms hysteria trial

by Kevin Schirn

Savage sentences were passed on two Sinn Feiners convicted of possessing electric detonators and ammunition.

Michael Egan was jailed for four years at Leeds Crown Court and Robert Gallagher received six years. A woman, Nora McCarthy, who was also charged with them, received a suspended four-year sentence.

The trial was conducted from start to finish in an atmosphere of hysteria about the IRA. Without proof of arms, without even the semblance of it, the prosecution claimed that the defendants were key members and that Clann na h’Eireann—a group in Britain that gives political support to the official republicans in Ireland—was one and the same as the IRA.

And the headlines in the local press repeated these allegations.

The crucial day was the armed police on and the final day of the trial when the names and addresses of people entering the public gallery.

Verdict

The emotional atmosphere created around the trial was reflected in fact that the judge took only an hour and three-quarters to return a verdict of guilty.

The evidence against Gallagher was of flimsiest nature. It was convicted on the basis of a statement extracted by police from Michael Egan when he was in an exhausted condition—a statement which he later withdrew.

An old suitcase of Gallagher’s, which he had left at a Chemist’s, was found to contain documents placing several weeks before he was arrested, containing evidence of the ammunition police later found.

On the strength of an unreliable statement, and slight circumstantial evidence the judge described Gallagher as the “ring leader” of an operation aimed at furthering “mass murder in Britain and Ireland.

In the witness box Gallagher had claimed he was a member of the Provisional IRA which the prosecution had implied he was involved with.

Massive

Gallagher, an active trade unionist and leading militant in Bradford during the 1972 building workers’ strike, explained his commitment to building a 32 Counties Socialist Workers Organisation in Ireland.

In the same courtroom a man who had been set fire to at his ex-wife’s house was put on probation for that.

Across the corridor from the court where Gallagher and Egan stood for trial was the scene standing trial for his manoeuvres of his manipulative campaign.

Some time ago, John Tyrondale, the jobber, who had been a jobber for 12 months for possessing firearms.

Top firms named in poverty wage row

by Duncan Hallas

THE CBI, spokesman of British big business, likes to talk about how responsible and socially concerned its member firms are.

They would not dream of paying starvation wages, it claims, in Britain, no doubt. Union pressure sees to that.

But what sort of wages do they pay when unemployment is not an issue?

A House of Commons Select Committee reported last week on wages paid to African workers by British firms operating in South Africa.

Sixty-three out of 141 British companies from which it received returns were paying minimum wages below the subsistence level for an African family, a practice which it quotes one South African authority as describing as an ‘inhuman’ report The Guardian’s Adam Raphael, who campaigned against South African wage wages last year.

It is in the interests of the African that the minimum subsistence level is just enough for the worker and his family to keep a roof over.

Anything less means premature death by slow starvation.

Who are these firms which boost their profits by starving African workers? They are not small, back街 enterprises.

They include some of the biggest and best known pillars of the manufacturing and service industries.

Here are a few, named by the Select Committee:


Remember them and the African families they starve when next you hear the spokesmen of the CBI speaking of “responsibility” or “or want an “Aim of Industry” advertisement.

Three years for killing an Indian

JAG SINGH KENTH, a 30-year-old Indian died in a Leicester street of injuries sustained when he was beaten and kicked outside a discotheque.

Three years ago, John Loren and Robert Hall, were found not guilty of his murder at the judge’s direction but guilty of attempted grievous bodily harm. The sentence for Loren, from Blockley, three years, 18 months and Hall, four years.

Kenth, Loren and Hall were ejected from the discotheque after a dispute over a coat. A fight developed and Kenth was beaten up.

According to a witness, when Spencer and his wife started to move off, Blockley shouted after them. “None of you have any guts. What are you going to do for your black bastard friend now?” Then, the witness continued, he kicked the Indian as an act of defiance.

Edwin Blockley’s past is not without incident. Until the trial he was employed as a bouncer at Stoolys’ club, the discotheque in question. In his statement to the police he said: “I grant you I don’t like Indians but I never hit one.”

This is something of an understatement. Blockley, who is already served 18 months for mailing a “ferry cross” to the back door of the Imperial Hotel, has been taken over by the first Indian landlord in Leicester. A particular contribution to race relations, Blockley’s landlord claimed to be an expert in the Khi Khan, claiming it as a “political act”.

Mr Victor Paghot, the pathologist, gave evidence at the Kenth trial to the extent that he had treated injuries of this sort once before in a manager’s incident. A woman collapsed at the medical evidence.

Leicester students at a meeting during their occupation. Picture: JOHN STURROCK (Herald)

STUDENTS stage a “Week of Action” last week to back their protest over the present grants system.

They are demanding a grant that keeps pace with inflation and is the same regardless of academic course, parents’ income or the married or single status of students.

Some 20 colleges held sit-ins and many took part in lectures and welfare boycotts, demonstrations and occupations of local education authority offices.

A number of colleges not usually associated with militant action held sit-ins, providing a violent reaction from college authorities and some lecturers. At SANGRO College, the college’s lecturer attempted to spray students with ammonia to remove them from the telephone switchboard.

In Oxford hundreds of students including contingent from as far away as York, took part in a demonstration against victimisation. 12 students are facing university disciplinary pro-

edings and another 12 are facing criminal charges after an attempt to occupy a university building in protest against increases in half yearly and Maintenance Polytechnic where the police were called in after the director’s office was occupied as part of the Week of Action.

The action could be described as a victory or it could be described as a victory in the grants campaign.

Support for the grants campaign is beginning to fall off, especially in colleges that have been traditionally the most militant.

By containing student militancy into a supporting role to meaningless negotiations with the government, the majority of the NUS executive has softened and demonstrated many of its members.

by Simon Turner

Leicester students at a meeting during their occupation. Picture: JOHN STURROCK (Herald)

The university because of the recent sit-in which won the reinstatement of a victimised student.

Other colleges where direct action took place included Leicester University where 1500 students voted to occupy the administration building in protest against rises in half yearly and Maintenance Polytechnic where the police were called in after the director’s office was occupied as part of the Week of Action.

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GENERAL STRIKE WINS
75p A DAY PAY

by A Tagel

A GENERAL STRIKE and an army revolt have forced Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia to dismiss his government, promise constitutional reforms and grant workers a minimum wage of 75p a day.

Most of Ethiopia's 25 million people live hand-to-mouth by farming. Most are required by law to give three-quarters of what they produce to the landlords—and work for them too. There is one doctor for every 75,000 people and one police officer for 34,000 people. The men who die in infancy, 19 people out of 20 cannot read or write.

American companies control most of the mineral wealth and the newly-discovered wealth—and the US gave to Ethiopia more than half its total military aid to Africa.

In the industry the average wage for unskilled labourers is 15p a day. Strikes, peaceful demonstrations, and political parties are forbidden by law. So, the present grievances and demonstrations have all been put down with ferocity, claiming thousands of lives. Thousands of Ethiopians have been forced into exile. About 20,000 suffer under forced labour in the Emperor's private gold mines in Addi Ababa.

The regime of Haile Selassie has never had a peaceful year. Peasant unrest, insurgency, the growing militancy of the working class, armed independence struggles by oppressed nationalities, the political mortality of the student movement.

Living conditions are worsening day by day, with growing inflation, high prices, and unfair taxation. Hence the unprecedented wave of strikes, peasant unrest, student strikes and army mutinies that is shaking the Ethiopian empire at present.

The Ethiopian Confederation of Labour Unions which represents the workers' class, called its first nationwide strike last week demanding a minimum wage, price controls, job security, and freedom to form trade unions for all workers. It was joined by teachers, tax-drivers, and shopkeepers. The army, under the leadership of non-commissioned officers, has been in complete control of the country since the end of February. Besides wage claims they have demanded political reforms, and the formation of political parties, free press, education for all, freedom of speech, land reform and the release of all political prisoners.

The people have been demonized in support of the workers, and soldiers under the slogan 'to the wall', 'the formation of a government of workers and power to the people'.

The language of the regime that is ravaging the country—300,000 people have died of disease and malnutrition, the fighting is costing the country—200,000 people have died of malnutrition, the fighting is costing the country.

Attack on freedom
movement
304 held

by Roger Murray

SOUTH AFRICAN police have arrested 304 people in Namibia in a campaign of mass arrests against the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and its Youth League. They include SWAPO's chairman, David Merero, who was arrested with 153 others at a police roadblock for not carrying an identity card or travel pass.

The new wave of repression followed closely on a decision by the United Nations Security Council to end two years of talks with the South African government over Namibia, and the UN General Assembly's recognition of SWAPO as the 'authentic representative of the Namibian people'.

SWAPO then began a campaign of mass meetings and demonstrations throughout Namibia to force the South African government to quit the country, which it still holds despite such international decisions.

The police action is directed especially at the SWAPO Youth League, which held a series of mass rallies flying support of the flag of red, blue and green. Three of the speakers at one rally attended by 3000 people have been jailed for eight years for 'political incitement'.

The 136,000 workers, called its first nationwide strike last week demanding a minimum wage, price controls, job security, and freedom to form trade unions for all workers. It was joined by teachers, tax-drivers, and shopkeepers. The army, under the leadership of non-commissioned officers, has been in complete control of the country since the end of February. Besides wage claims they have demanded political reforms, and the formation of political parties, free press, education for all, freedom of speech, land reform and the release of all political prisoners.

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The language of the regime that is ravaging the country—300,000 people have died of disease and malnutrition, the fighting is costing the country.

A meeting of the bank strikers at the Credit Lyonnaise head office in Paris. The Credit is a nationalised bank and the biggest

by Richard Kirkwood

'9.30am in Central Paris ... a van draws up outside the main office of the Bank of France. Hands on revolvers, two guards leap from the armoured security van. One of them moves towards the main door. A strike picket bars his way.'

This paragraph from the French daily newspaper Le Monde highlights the more dramatic aspect of the office workers' strike which is paralysing the head offices of some of France's big banks. A few days after it was written the police moved in and threw out the strikers, causing the union to call out all Bank of France workers in Paris and the provinces for a full-scale strike.

One-day strikes over pay and conditions have been hitting the big French banks for the past month. Some have led to full stoppages. Some computer centres have been occupied.

The centre of the action is the nationalised Credit Lyonnaise, one of the biggest banks, where the struggle is being led by the revolutionary socialists of Lutte Ouvriere (Workers' Struggle).

Undated leader of the strike movement, a 54-year-old former bank clerk who is an official for Force Ouvriere, which is in Lutte Ouvriere. Assemble started work at the Credit Lyonnaise in 1965, and for the battle to save the company she moved here which brought the bank workers out on strike in May 1968.

She was shown out of the Communist Party-controlled CGT union in 1965 for her revolutionary views and was Lutte Ouvriere's main election candidate last year.

Largely due to the revolutionary socialists, the strikes at the Credit are being run by strike committees elected by all the workers, whether they are in trade unions or not. The CGT has opposed this, preferring a committee of union officials.

The strike committees, again opposed by the CGT, has spread the strike, and speeded it up from one-day stoppages to all-out action by the most militant sections.

Dirty

Frequent demonstrations have brought the strike home to Paris. As one demonstration approached, one bank manager locked the doors to protect non-strikers—locking in the customers. When management complained to the unions that cigarette ends were being dropped on the carpets by strikers, the demonstrators came up with the slogan: 'We're coming to dirty your carpets!'

The strike is still spreading. The Bank of France printers are in Lutte Ouvriere and 34,000 former bank clerk who is an official for Force Ouvriere, which is in Lutte Ouvriere. Assemble started work at the Credit Lyonnaise in 1965, and for the battle to save the company she moved here which brought the bank workers out on strike in May 1968.

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POCHINS, a subsidiary of McAlpine’s, is an up-and-coming building firm in Lancashire and Cheshire which has been going from strength to strength largely through the building work done by its own subsidiary, Pochins Contractors. Profits have risen from £200,000 in 1970 to more than £260,000 last year.

The best-known director of Pochins is Lord Greenwood of Rossendale, who was Minister of Housing in the Labour government from 1967 to 1970. Lord Greenwood joined Pochins in June 1971 and has since taken a number of other directorships. In January 1972 he became the pro-chancellor of Lancaster University. Taylor was duly appointed on 9 December 1972.

Chairman

Soon afterwards he recommended Tom Taylor OBE, who is the leader of the Labour group on Blackburn Corporation at deputy pro-chancellor.

Last year Tom Taylor was chairman of the education committee at Blackburn, which decided among other things to build an extension to the Dene Evelyns Fox special school for handicapped children. At a meeting in April 1973, the committee agreed to leave the tenders for the job to a special sub-committee consisting of the chairman, Tom Taylor, and the vice-chairman.

The sub-committee recommended that the contract should go to Pochins for £130,000, and the proposal was agreed.

When Tom Taylor is not engaged in local authority affairs, he works as personnel director of another up-and-coming company called Shorrock Security Systems, which deals with burglar alarms. Taylor is keen that Blackburn Corporation property should be safeguarded from theft and as chairman of the education committee, he is keen that all the schools should be fitted with new burglar alarm systems.

This was eventually rejected on grounds of expense, but tenders were requested from security firms for the existing systems up to date.

Three firms received contracts — among them Shorrock Security System, which was given the work at £490. As is proper, Councillor Taylor declared an interest and played no part in the decision.

I shall be returning to other interesting aspects of Blackburn Corporation’s Labour group.

Buy, buy.
Blackburn

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Bronco Buster

TORY MP Kenneth Lewis increased his majority at Rulland and Stamford in the general election. This may have been due to the section written by his wife Janet in the 'Vote Lewis' leaflet distributed to all electors in the area.

Mrs Lewis wrote: 'You will have heard of the toilet roll shortage. People are buying up too many at a time. My husband says that some of them go to football matches, which seems to me a funny place for toilet rolls.'

A Labour MP wants to ration them. He would, just as they wanted to ration the oil before it was necessary.

If we could get cooperation in industry, as any woman knows you need in the home (mind you, she's usually the one who does the cooperating) we could produce more of everything.

Then prices would come down and shortages would end, including the shortage of toilet rolls.

That is why we need firm but fair government.'

There's a poster on your wall last week about the living of the Evening News on polling day about the so-called 12.5% per cent lead for the Tories over Labour in South East and how that was all because of steaming train drivers.

All through the day after polling day, the 'radical' razor to Labour in London came through, the Evening News switchboard was swamped with angry and outraged Tories who had not bothered to read the Evening News predictions.

One wanted to know what was going on in Fleet Street, I suppose.

Morgan’s organ!

The Yorkshire Post article was written by Robin Morgan who has been the Editor of the General Command of Yorkshire Times. He is the press officer of the Barnsley Conservative Association, and a candidate in the Ashby ward of Barnsley in the 1972 council election. As a political correspondent, of course, he shows no political bias.

Police killers garrotted in Spanish jail

A SPANISH underground and a Pole, both accused of killing a police constable in Lugo, have been found hanged in their cells. The prisoners, both members of the Proindependence group, were taken from their cells at 9:30 this morning at the prison in Sentmenat.

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From the Leicester Mercury, 2 March.

Marles Wrong way

I REGRET to report that a promising new partnership in the construction industry is already showing signs of strain. Marles Ridgway, the contractors on the Loddon M4 Bridge, near Reading, which collapsed during construction in 1972 killing three men, and T Stansfield and Partners, consulting engineers on the Cambridge-Girg School where the roof collapsed last year miraculously killing nine men, have been working together on a new sports centre to be built in Buckinghamshire.

Price tag of this £11.5 million project involves a swimming pool and a gym, the new deals, will be put on tender by the local authority on Tuesday 26 February, Marles-Ridgway and its sub-contractors will be putting the finishing touches to the roof of the bowling alley.

According to reports in the trade press, to be a Civil Engineer and Construction News little or no temporary building support was provided while the final agreement between the roof and its supporting beams was being made.

New Civil Engineer: 'It is not even clear what bracing was used at all.'

Marles-Ridgway admitted at Bracknell Magistrates Court, while pleading guilty to breaching the Construction Safety Regulations, that the structure of Loddon Bridge was inefficiently stable at the time of the collapse.

More interesting is that on both the Loddon and Wycombe sites Marles was using 'the lump' and is not keen to admit it.

After Loddon, Marles tried to come up with the explanation that the lump was being used. After Wycombe, the firm is telling technical specialists that it had sub-contracted steelwork fabrication and erection to Higgs (Oxford) Ltd.

True enough, but Higgens will let the erection to a lump outfit.

A lot else was wrong with the Wycombe job. A painter was on the roof while it was being finished and the steel cladding for the roof was being carried out—both highly dangerous practices.

After the Loddon Bridge collapse killed three men, Marles were fined £600. The解釋 punishment obviously had the desired effect.

Figures

KATE FIGURES was the only first-year student at Bretton Hall to see a flat nearby near Ramsley out of 200 to be allotted a room on her own. Her father is Sir Fred Figures, chairman of the Pay Board.
We won, but what has it got to other workers?

Watch out! Wolfe in Nats' clothing

THE SCOTTISH NATIONALIST Party Chairman William Wolfe knows all about Tory exploitation—he's been doing it himself for years. In his Shovel and Engineering Works in Bremilford, Badgalgh, is what externally looks like a derelict building. But inside this medieval shell lies a very profitable business.

His father George Wolfe started the shovelling works mainly by the use of cheap, mentally retarded labour. They were easily replaceable and got little or no consideration or decent conditions. When I was apprenticed to the engineering side I was appalled by the dangerous, outmoded, un-guarded machinery. The roof was partially missing and the factory had a dirty floor, a wash trough with a hand pump which when it needed heating had a hot shovel from the forge immersed in the trough.

The machinery in the factory was built without guards. The workers, one of whom had lost three fingers because of this, was died—and frightened. They worked 80 hours a week. One of them, old Ronald, was 70 and still worked, for a reduced rate.

Some Wolfe shappers lived on a subsistence sideline. He sold claymores and shudders to America. Six years ago the claymores were £30 each, the shudders £17. Today they've been canned, offering only better and richer footmen. —IAN MACDON, Edinburgh.

A SIMPLIFIED MODE OF EXPRESSION

IF YOU CAN’T BE INNOVATIVE, union officials etc tell us more about the style and language in which they talk to people like us, old folk. Most people are in the dark. What’s been exploited or been totally ignored as we work and they’re in charge of the language, bad and clear—LYNNE, Doncaster.

REPEAT Y/EI (AND RIOJO!)... Conferences are for ideas, for a paper—its an invaluable aid, I used to be a teacher, I see that it is the students who are interested at that time. I have an idea, if the NUS could give a written paper to the student dominated and it is a good thing that it is the people who treat Socialist Worker sceptically now take the action and stay refreshed. Thanks to your paper and some of the other office don’t think that I am making a positive commitment to socialism in the first place they are a university, which people rely on for their economy, for their language, to think and act.”

FINDING A HOLD DOWN UNDER

I FIRST saw a copy of Socialist Worker a few months ago. As editor of my union’s journal I take an active interest in any paper that sets out to tell the workers’ side of any dispute. One of our members had sent us a copy and had told us that the workers were in a hold-up and the dispute was going badly.

I liked what I read and whilst in Britain recently I bought a copy of one of your sellers outside a Cardiff market. I have never been a member of a socialist organisation (I don’t count the Labour Party as Socialist) before, but feel it’s time to try and push the socialist cause further. I will try and write for the paper later on. However my union activities keep me busy most of the time.

On the whole I have been fighting low wage ships, also French nuclear testing in the Pacific—GERALD EYANS, Auckland Watermain Union, New Zealand.
ONE family in every five in Britain today has a weekly income of less than £30. And yet they are worse off than families in a similar income group before the last war. These are the shock conclusions of a report, drafted by the City Poverty Committee. The report was sent to the three major political parties during the election campaign— but its findings were largely ignored.

That is not such a bad thing. For now that we have a Labour government, the report's findings should be on the desk of every new minister— especially those who call themselves socialists. The report, written by George Clark, a tireless campaigner against social injustice, explodes the myth of the 'affluent society'.

There are 18,187,000 families in Britain. 3,819,000— 31 per cent— had a weekly income of less than £30 a week in 1972. 6,911,000— 25 per cent— were living on less than £40. These figures will scarcely have changed since then as galloping inflation has wiped out most wage increases.

The figures are, however, above the average weekly income of £62.85 in 1972. In compiling the figures, the report shows just how misleading are these government 'averages' which conceal hardship and poverty in many city areas.

**Discovered**

For example, a survey by the Greater London Council among 1,000 families in the Golborne Ward of North Kensington in 1972 discovered that the average family income was £232.22 a week, not compared with the Family Expenditure Survey average for the whole GLC area of £39.30 a week gross. This vast difference cannot be explained away just by net and gross pay. Some families in the Golborne Ward were as much as £25 a week worse off than similar families in the whole GLC area.

George Clark then compared the weekly expenditure of the 21 per cent with less than £50 with similar working-class families in 1937–38, at 1938 equivalent purchasing power. The 1938–39 is now worth 105p.

Today's families are spending more on housing. That is no surprise, considering the greedy scramble for land that has pushed up prices, interest rates, rents and mortgages.

The real shock comes in the revelation that today's poor families are spending 50 per cent of their income on food, less on clothing and about the same on fuel, including light and power.

Even today's under-50s families are only just holding their own in comparison with families in 1938.

As Mr Clark points out, the fact that poor families are now spending less on food is a frightening comment on the modern welfare state's failure to cope with real hard-core poverty.

Less food means less healthy children and parents— a separate table on education shows that in areas of desperate poverty schools suffer a higher level of absenteeism, lateness and time off through sickness.

George Clark's report, which must be required reading throughout the trade union movement, points a finger of scorn at all the empty breast-beating by politicians about affluence and 'you've never had it so good'.

Clearly, a fifth of all families have never had it so bad. It is a savage comment on a civilized society.

Only massive inroads into the power of the wealthy can begin to change this appalling situation.

**Over to you, Mr Wilson...**

**QUARTER OF ALL HOUSES ARE UNFIT**

**Slums: the twilight world...**

**FED HEATH,** evicted from 10 Downing Street, is not the only one with a housing problem. And at least he can go and live on his yacht if things get really difficult.

But for millions in Britain today, the housing situation is no joking matter.

According to George Clark's report, in the twilight areas of the major cities housing conditions are so bad that they make normal family life almost impossible.

In 1971 just over a quarter of all houses— 25.69 per cent— were derelict or unlivable. The situation has certainly got worse since then.

Few local authorities believe they can bring unfit houses up to the required level and keep pace with demands for new housing.

Three areas spotlight the terrible problem:

**WEST MIDLANDS:** an unpublished report by the Department of the Environment in March 1973 estimated that there would be about 100,000 fewer homes than families in per cent— namely 17 per cent— lived in by the turn of the century. The overall shortfall in the region would be about 130,000.

**Demand**

About 75,000 unfit houses will need to be cleared between 1981 and the end of the century— involving a net loss of about 50,000 homes.

The total demand for accommodation throughout the West Midlands area in the next 25 years is expected to involve more than ½ million households. Three out of 10 families at least will not have their needs satisfied.

**GREATER LONDON:** the GLC estimates that the demand for accommodation that cannot be satisfied in 1975 is likely to be about 345,000 families— and the number will probably rise rather than decrease.

**EDINBURGH:** More than a fifth of all families lack either a hot water supply or a fixed bath or an inside lavatory. But these figures compare favourably with Glasgow where the proportion is more than a third. In Edinburgh the total number of houses lacking these amenities is 25,000 or 15 per cent of the total stock.

The nature of the problem can be seen in the condition of 25 homeless families, including more than 100 children, who were housed in 1972 in a terrace of houses abandoned by the army 10 years before as 'unfit for habitation'...

**TWO MILLION JOBLESS BY END OF 70s?**

**JOBLESS figures as high as the 1930s and 1920s— you find that hard to believe?**

*The City Poverty report shows that it is the grim truth.*

Again, official government figures are highly misleading. But despite high unemployment. Looking at the 1972 census of population, George Clark has discovered unemployment rates of 22 per cent in the Charnwood Valley of Leicestershire and 17 per cent in Cumbria.

*The reason is the decline of manufacturing industry in particular parts of the country. This leaves behind pockets of high unemployment, surrounded and masked by areas where the problem hardly exists.*

In London, for example, although the jobless rate is comparatively low in areas such as Kensington, Wooton and the East End there are sharply rising unemployment levels.

**AVERAGE**

George Clark expects his findings, based on 1971 figures, to be confirmed by a report to be published this month by Community Development Projects.

*He estimates, using post-war levels of unemployment, that hardcore jobless figures could reach between 1½ and two million by the end of the 1970s.*

**Worst affected are young people between 15 and 19 years of age. The number of youngsters in this age group makes up about 9 per cent of the 'active population'...**

Whatever happened to the Welfare State? by George Clark, City Poverty Committee, 44 Soho Square, London WC2, 01-240 2640, Price 40p.

**400 pages, 90% plus 70 pages of pictures from 18 books, 250 Seven Siers Road, London N14.**

*The Hazards of Work: How to Fight Them.*

*Workers' Handbook No. 1.*

*Plato Press.*
"EVERYONE KNOWS that there is no solution to the problems of the Third World unless we increase production."

Pretty well any politician, Tory or Labour, could have said it and a great many did. The particular statement was made by Harold Wilson 12 years ago. And two years later, just before the 1964 election campaign, he added: "We have argued for high and efficient industry and knowing this, we must be able to increase production by a factor of at least 500 in the next 25 years."

The argument came to power. Increased production duty occurred. Between 1960 and 1970 industrial output increased by more than 30 per cent. We doubt whether this increase would have happened had the Tories stayed in power.

The problems of this country were evidently not solved. They have got worse.

The fantastic exponents of economic growth, as the key to the solution of all ills, say that the trouble is that British economic growth was too slow. 30 per cent growth in the 25 years would have been a kind of miracle, and that only other countries came anywhere near this rate. If increased output is the answer, Japan would be the promised land.

In Japan the highest rate of inflation of any major industrial nation has doubled the rate we had last year—and far exceeded the biggest slump this year.

And as for inflation, pollution problems, the worst public services, growing political inequality and all the evils we suffer from have been heightened.

But Japan and the other countries had in fact reached the Japanese rate of economic growth than in 1970, but at that same rate. The lesson is that the increase in output equals more for everyone and less conflict and less poverty is deeply ingrained.

All the means of forming opinion, television, newspapers, schools and colleges take it for granted. It is one of the most widespread myths of our time.

And it seems so plausible. After all, if the output increases and we are better off, we are better off, more and more money can be spent on free food in the hope of getting his daughter freed by kidnappers.

The result? Food riots. The distribution had to be stopped and well armed police brought in to restore order.

Now this might not be as surprising in Calcutta. But California? The USA is by far the richest country in the world as measured by total output divided by number of people.

California is easily the richest state in the USA by the same measure. And yet there are many people in California so poor that they will riot, rather than queue, for fear of being left out of a distribution of free food.

Some years ago an American economist pointed out that in the world's richest country million of families "continued to live in a prison of hunger and poverty, not surpassed in any country west of Turkey. Why does such poverty exist and grow—in the midst of plenty?"

Oddly enough Harold Wilson used to have some glimmering of an understanding of why. Speaking in parliament in 1965 he said: "In any period of economic expansion, the employment of women is a law of increasing returns to the rich, of an increased proportion of newly produced wealth going to the rich... property, whether in shares or in land.

Desire

This being so, and there is no doubt that it is so, why not tax the rich to free them of their ill-gotten gains and redistribute income to the poor by improved social services? Of course this is what reformist politicians are always promising to do.

In 1959 Wilson spoke of the "burning desire amongst Labour... Party members at all levels to end poverty and to advance... to a much more real equality. The theme of all the campaign speeches... has been... in... a desire for an end to the middle-class poverty, the poverty of the middle-class...". The answer is, quite simply, that nothing happens.

Somehow or other it didn't happen. From the time Wilson was in power the rich and the poor has got wider.

Social services, which could be afforded when output was much lower, are now too expensive. Free school meals are an example.

The reason is not hard to understand. Make increased output put your central aim and you must go for increased investment as top priority.

Reduced Investment, under capitalism, comes out of profits. Therefore increased profits must be the goal. But profits go to the rich and, if they are taxed too heavily, the rich will "lack incentives" to invest. So the well-intentioned schemes to reduce inequality and help the poor always have to take second place.

Attempting to reduce inequality by increasing output under capitalism is like trying to pour water on your thirst by drinking salt water. The way to do it is, quite simply, to take industry out of the hands of the rich and plan production for use instead of for profit.

But this is socialism and our "Labour" politicians flinch from it as the Devil is said to flee from holy water.

Workers Against Racism

Roger Rosewell's THE STRUGGLE FOR WORKERS' POWER is an outline of the policies of the International Socialists, the development and nature of the movement and an argument for the need for a workers' party to overthrow it.

Paul Foot's WORKERS AGAINST RACISM examines and demolishes all the racists' arguments. Today, more than ever, we need to be more prepared to combat the increasing racism that is riding on the Tories' tide of laws against immigrants, in an essential and enriching way.

$18 each, plus $3 postage (10 or more copies post free)

ROE 265 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4.
The bosses have to ask us if they want to get on the site

Dennis Pictures: Chris Davies
The strain and frustration of the engine drivers

**Does your son want to be an engine driver when he grows up?**

In the old days, romantic lads longed to be put in charge of an engine. Now the job offers nothing but strain, insult, bad conditions and low pay.

Tony West is 33. He started on the railways in 1955 as a fireman on steam engines.

That year, everyone on the railways was pessimistic. The huge switch of traffic, freight and passenger, to the roads, mastered by the oil and car companies, meant a rundown in the railways.

The railwaysmen and the unions accepted mass sackings in 1954 and 1955, with the introduction of dieselisation, another 10,000 railwaymen were sacked. 'Just accept it and wait,' was the advice, once again.

'There'll be a good job at the end of it all."

In the early 1960s came Dr Beeching, an industrialist from ICE, determined to cut down the railways still further in the interests of his friends in the British Road Federation.

**'Better things'**

30,000 more railwaymen were thrown out of work. The engine drivers suffered as badly as all the other grades.

In 1957, the Diesel and Electric Manning Agreement agreed single Manning in most circumstances on diesel engines, electric engines and multiple unit trains.

In 1965, the drivers agreed to be left on their own on long-distance trains and loosely-coupled trains.

In 1968, after much prompting by the Labour government, the drivers agreed to single Manning during night hours.

When Tony West joined the railways, there were 60,000 members of his union, the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen. Today, there are 28,000, less than half.

All my life they've told us to hang on and wait for better things. Now they tell us they need the railways.

But the 'better things' still aren't there for us. They still tell us, 'not enough money in the kitty'.

Tony is secretary of the ASLEF departmental committee at British Rail's Stratford depot, East London, where there are 650 footplate staff, more than in any other depot in the country. Every year, he says, there is more evidence of the increasing strain on drivers.

'We have to drive at faster speeds and keep better time. Almost all passenger trains go faster than 70 mph, and some go 90 or 100. The freight trains are much heavier now, too.'

'At Stratford, we've got 28 engine drivers on restricted duty because of heart trouble or other signs of strain which they didn't have when they joined the railways. Twelve of them are suffering from "colour-blindness"—a form of colour-blindness. That's probably the work of the new signal system.'

Tony has spent about 20 weeks of his life as an engine driver studying new forms of traction, and passing examinations that he has failed. He says, there are 16 different forms of traction.

The literature they give us about all these systems weighs 44 lbs, and we're meant to understand it all. If I fail to correct a fault in my engine and cause a delay to other trains, I can be charged with 'irregularity' and suspended with loss of pay.

The engine drivers have not received a penny extra for all these additional responsibilities. In June 1972, the union leaders accepted a small wage increase, solely on the understanding that the British drivers for extra responsibilities is £1.50 a week.

After tax and the loss of benefits (school meals, rent rebate and so on), this increase dwindles to a few pennies. ASLEF say it's nothing like enough.

The board also offered consolidation of all mileage allowance payments up to 200 miles into a basic increase of £2.45 a week for all drivers.

The drivers are delighted to see the end of the complicated and discriminatory allowance system over short distances, but they argue that the limit of 200 miles is too high. It involves big losses for the long-mileage men, and they want it reduced to 125 miles.

Above all, most drivers stress that this 'consolidation' will not bring an increase in their average pay. Some drivers will get a few pennies more, some a few pennies less. Overall, the increase in money paid out in mileage allowances by the board is a miserable 4½ per cent.

**Report by PAUL FOOT**

Railways Board would immediately discuss a new and fairer wage structure for footplate men.

Twenty months later, the board has made its final offer. The only straight increase offered to train drivers for extra responsibilities is £1.50 a week.

After tax and the loss of benefits (school meals, rent rebate and so on), this increase dwindles to a few pennies. ASLEF say it's nothing like enough.

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**Rejected**

The board wants the allowance paid after two years. The union want their 10 per cent right away.

Finally, the board offers a 'shift' allowance, which discriminates between drivers according to how 'flexible' they make themselves in the interests of British Rail.

If a man makes himself available for rotating shifts over 24 hours of any day, he gets 6 per cent extra on his basic pay. If he is available for 20 hours of any day, he gets 5 per cent. Other men get 4 per cent.

This has been firmly rejected by ASLEF, who complain that it hits hard at the men who are confined to shed for health reasons. They want a flat-rate 10 per cent 'shift allowance' increase for all drivers.

**Strength**

The ASLEF demands are progressive. They aim to help the less healthy and older drivers, and to cut out discrimination.

They are NOT intended to get more for drivers at the expense of other grades of railwaymen. The drivers argue—and their case is overwhelming—that the payments offered to the drivers are pitiful, and cannot be accepted.

If that means increasing the total offer for all grades, then that is what the board should do.

The train drivers have had enough waiting and enough promises. All his working life, Tony West and men like him have been told to tighten their belts and prepare for a new dawn.

Up to now, they have concealed enormous savings to the Railways Board in redundancies and increased productivity.

Now, like the miners, they are beginning to recognise their own strength and make a stand.

All other railwaymen, if they want to protect themselves from continued robbery and bullying, have to stand alongside the engine drivers, and demand the same.

**The Rail Board offer would mean a pay cut for some**
The Krays—Independent businessmen...

RONALD AND REGINALD KRAY were not a new phenomena. London's East End had a tradition of gangs and gang warfare. The novelty of their activity was, and the interest in John Pearson's book is, the unbounded ambition of the twins and their desire for the limelight and the company of the rich and famous. Organising a 'cutting' for a friend or travelling to Nigeria to discuss leadership were all part of the full life they sought after.

No doubt, they were too small for their attention, so long as it set well within their image of themselves as masters of crime. An image gained from their knowledge of American gangster films and trashy paperbacks.

An example: Jack the Hat, McVitie owed Ronnie Krays £100. According to the paper, the kidnapper had no intention of carrying out. He was lured to the street where he was beaten up, showing his acquaintance on the pretext of a booze up.

Stabbed

John Pearson tells what followed:

"Then it was Ronnie who grabbed him. "They're coming for me," he said, and Reggie who was holding Bender's car, "We should stab him," he said, "kill him," hissed his brothers. "Don't stop now!" Reggie pushed the knifed man towards the car. Reggie was butchering followed . . . Reggie stabbed his stomach and his chest and finished by impaling him through his throat on to the floor."

The Hat's corpse was disposed of and the Krays were on their merry way, un molested by the law. As John Pearson noted, it was several years earlier when Ronnie


Kray had walked into a Whitechapel pub and shot a member of a rival gang, George Cornell, dead. Ronnie frequently recalled the experience of killing Cornell for the edification of his cronies, he recited: 'the look of blank surprise on Cornell's face and how his head burst open as the bullet entered.'

According to Pearson half of Whitechapel knew the culprit. The police however were strangely uninterested in carrying out a murder warrant for whom. The Krays were on their way.

But murder was not the main business of the Krays, merely the gift on the gingerbread. The gingerbread itself was a licentious mixture of protection racket, gambling, large scale fraud, crooked share deals, blackmail and organised intimidation. At the time of their arrest they were negotiating a deal with the American Mafia to get into drugs and prostitution in a big way.

The Krays were very obvious criminals. Criminal eminence cannot be explained by reference to their brains. Working together they would have had difficulty in passing the entrance exam to a school for the educationally sub-normal. Ronnie Kray, in fact, had been certified insane. Both displayed all the classic symptoms of the psychopath.

How then did they manage to achieve success in their chosen field of endeavour?

The East London tradition is one based in poverty and neglect over 100 years of petty crime, gang warfare and neighbourhood violence. Poverty and deprivation in a prosperous community are the ingredients for crime of an elemental and brutal variety.

They explain the circumstances that made their enthusiastic leap into crime possible, even likely. It does not explain how they managed to carry out their many and conspicuous antics for 15 years.

It is impossible to read the career of the Krays, without coming to the conclusion that thousands of East Enders accept without question. The police work on the payroll. No other explanation can explain how the public, the courts, the government, the law, the entire system may have been so accommodating to the Krays.

The book is an expose of the police's inability to stop them. It will make these outlaws feel secure. It is the only book that has ever been written about the Krays. The book's success, however, comes at the cost of more crime. It has never been reviewed in the press.

NUTTY

The break only came Ronnie Kray, reaching a pinnacle of persecution mania, decided that one of his brother's contributions was the downfall and needed killing. Not uncharacteristically the brothers decided that he had better have the Krays put away before they put him away.

Ronnie was very fond of his brother's . . .

Ronnie ran all compiling lists of those who had wronged him, and after long consideration, he rallied forth on occasion to beat and maim. At one stage in his daydream of becoming a 'big' man on the American model, he offered his services to the port employers to deal with militant dockers. The tune-down blithely disappeared himself.

Ronnie's brother, Reggie, equally vicious—no less than insane, spent long periods weeping pitifully at his wife's grave. His wife committed suicide because she hated Reggie but could not avoid him. There is no pathos in this except for the unfortunate wife.

Their downfall came not for their crimes but from Ronnie's insanity, and their unabounded ambition to emulate the Hollywood hoodlums. A little less public violence, a bit less moral depravity, and they would be free and with us today. Their last day counterparts probably are.

JIM HIGGINS

GOING FOR A WALK EAST; THE TWELVE-TEN, HOGGE AND RONNIE KRAY

went for a walk... east; the twelve-ten, hogge and Ronnie Kray.

Germany in British war films. The 1970s are bad enough without going back to the 1950s. Frank Kafka was a Czech writer whose works give a horrifying and accurate picture of the life of bureaucrats, in arrests in the night and isolated terror. His novel THE CASTLE is dramatised on Omnibus at 10:15 and is at the same time the story of Kafka.

Richard Crossman talks to Jack London of 'The Telegraph on the UNISON and CRIMINALITY' on BBC-1. Charles Wood's DEATH OR GLORY BOY continues on ITV. On Radio 3 at 7.30pm is a play called THE LAST LADIES OF TRENCHARD about a woman who is very very well dressed.

MONDAY—BBC-2; 9, 10.15pm. The Second City Firsts play MATCH OF THE DAY about Chance O'Leary who meets Jean-Ann who has a repugnance of being a pot-smoker and Women's Libber as well as a keen Everton fan. He thinks his luck is in. The play is written, by, and stars, Neville Smith, who is bloody good at both trades and funny with it.

Clapperboard on ITV at 4.20pm is THE $100,000 MOVIE and is about the two pioneers of the American cinema, Cecil B de Mille and D W Griffith, features clips from the epic intolerance (1917).

WEDNESDAY—RADIOS. 2, 2.15pm. TROOPS IN IRELAND—THE CURRAGH MUTINY. In this week's show the Marketer argument that troops are agents of the state is discussed. Quite rightly. Quite rightly. The army is being cut.

THURSDAY—BBC-1, The Thorn Birds, series four, episode 1, starring Kenneth Welsh and on BBC-2, W. C Fields, magic man, a story about a boy growing up, broadcast at 9.30pm. TONIGHT AT 9.30BBC-1: THE SLEEPING BEAUTY, with Julian Bond. On BBC-1 at 9.15pm is THE DEEP BLUE SEA by Terence Rattigan. A boring play. It isn't what it seems. Appropriately enough it stars Virginia McKenna who won the 1950s saw RAF pilots off to bomb

Answer

Why do people need motor cars? Well, sensible answer is 'I need a car to drive to work, on holiday, to go shopping.'

Not quite the answer of Coller Dickenson and Poccer. But then, when last year's account to the advertising agency was worth 46,640 on the basic Capri alone (leaving out the Granada, Cortina, etc) who needs sensible answers?

Many years ago Henry Ford started employing people to make motor cars to make him money. People drove around in his cars to deserted beaches.

After 20 million other people and all the beach wasn't deserted anymore. So now his grandson hires people to make films and deserted beaches—so that we can think about the beach in his image of how we think about how if we had a Capri we wouldn't be in the jam. And we would be happy. And meet beautiful girls, go to deserted beaches with nothing but the seagulls and a camera crew for company.

Intelligent people bore themselves to death. They can get away from the making motor cars. They would rather do something else. Sometimes called 'alienation.' Henry Ford calls it 'experience on advertising.'

Still with the money Ford has to spend on it obviously should be able to pass the Ford pay claim. Shouldn't they?

NIGEL FOUNTAIN

Once in a lifetime

WIND BLOWS across the beach, the girl sits, silhouetted against the skyline, the clouds was across the sand. A car stops. "Do you speak English?" she asks hesitantly.

He halts smiles. 'I can English.'

She climbs in, on and on they drive, through the wind and the rain, across beaches, along those famous little roads of Northern France.

They find they have things in common, laughing, smiling, little beside cafe, he drives on. Down the long straight road. She won't forget him.

"So bloody right she won't forget him."

The money that Coller Dickenson and Poccer advertising agency has, that half of the Ford Motor Company will have many years ago.

In the middle of last week's News at Ten, at a time of 'Wilson speaks—Miners Move. Heath Moves and Miss World Quiz' came the 'Once in a lifetime car.' The Ford Capri II (with three doors). Just to give you an escape route.

To have booked the two and a half minutes for (the agency did) cost over £5000. 'That's in the
THE Pearson Commission was set up by the Tory government in the wake of the Thalidomide scandal. The Commission is looking into the general question of personal injury compensation, including compensation for industrial injury and disease. The commission is headed by Lord Pearson, a trusty Tory judge, who conducted the witch-hunting inquiry into the 1966 miners' strike. There is just one trade unionist on it—Watson Anderson, the right-wing former general secretary of NALGO.

The largest single group on the Commission is from the insurance companies and law firms who make a fair slice of their considerable profits from court action to get damages paid. There is the chief actuary of the Prudential, and there is a man from the Iron and Steel employers insurance company. That's impartiality for you.

THE top men and women of the trade union movement, general secretaries and union executive members, will be taking your life in their hands over the Pearson report. The Trades Union Congress has now sent them the draft of its evidence to the CBI to support the idea of a state-run scheme of automatic compensation for any accident.

At present, there is the state industrial injuries scheme which grants injured workers slight benefits after an accident, or pays them a small pension if they have a listed industrial disease.

This scheme is grotesquely mean both in payments and in the way it is run. It excludes workers who suffer unlisted industrial diseases, such as bronchitis among coalminers and foundry workers, ovirization diseases among power tool handlers, tractor and construction equipment drivers, etc.

There is also the common law. Workers injured at work have a right to claim damages from an employer. This right is heavily restricted by the need to prove negligence on the part of the employer, or at least to establish a good enough case to force the employer to go to trial.

The terrible injustice of this system was highlighted by the recent disappearance of the Hull trawler Gull. Hull fishermen who did not work without trace and with all hands on board.

But there were no survivors means the widows and orphaned children come in aid of workers 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 close relationships with a number of other socialist organisations throughout the world.

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

The real problem is that the working class has to fight for its demands, and has to be prepared to take action to defend its interests. This means building up a strong and determined socialist movement, capable of confronting the ruling class and its agents head-on.

The CBI draft evidence to the Pearson Commission was prepared by a working party of trade union legal officers. The members were: Alfred Blythman of the Transport Union, Jim Watts of the Agricultural Workers, S Evans of the Railmen, Mr Haywood of USDAW, W John of the Engineers, Ted Bridg of the Post Offices Engineers, Muriel Turner of ASTMS, Mr Holmes of the General and Municipal, and Mrs Lancaster of the Society of Civil Servants.

The CBI draft evidence, now in the hands of union general secretaries, is full of showing workers and their claims. But the position finally adopted is a show ofautomatic compensation for the different

Drastic

The POEU estimates that only 30% of all injured workers get any kind of compensation at all. That of every £100 the victim gets only £25, the rest going to lawyers, insurance companies, and the POEU wants automatic compensation for accidents, with proper benefits. This would be a dramatic improvement.

But the union strike away from injuries at the present replacement of the present system by the TUC could do away with the entire cost of this. It describes such a step as "a logical development".

Worst of all would be an automatic compensation scheme at or near the present pitiful level of benefits. Such a scheme, if it did not go hand in hand with tougher penalties against employers for creating and maintaining dangerous conditions, would even encourage employers to injury their workers since the state would be picking up the bill.

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POLICE in York and West London have been issuing juries that they should be on their guard against shoplifting.

In York, 13-year-old Hazelpicked was fined £1 for flyposting, and a woman was sentenced to six months in prison for the same offense. In West London, several men were fined for similar offenses.

Similar double standards are also in operation in Yorkshire, with the British Transport Police giving officers a free pass to flypost for goods that have been stolen.

In West London, charges against two members of Acton Action were dismissed when police offered no evidence against them. The chairman of the magistrates' court has decided to appeal against the decision.

At the first hearing, two pleaded guilty and the third, who did not have any previous convictions, pleaded not guilty. Defence solicitor John Wittenfeld submitted that there was no case to answer against the defendant, since the only evidence against him was that he had stolen a car. This was rejected on the grounds that the other two had admitted the stealing.

The solicitor then submitted that, according to the Metropolitan Police Act of 1839, under which the two were charged with afflicting a bill to a roadside bus, the case against him did not amount to a crime. He was therefore committed. He quoted two cases decided last year.

This threw the court into confusion and the police asked for clarification of the law to get legal advice. The charges were dismissed.

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TERRY FARRER, who works at Metal Box, Shipley, Yorkshire, writes of how an AWE worker tried to send him as a delegate to the conference.

I said how in our union you have no scarecrow, he hides behind the 'left' image and then, when it comes to the crunch, he backs down. We need a strong rank and file movement that will put pressure on the union leadership but is ready to organise independently.

I pointed out to the demands in the draft resolution calling for the regular election of all officials and that they get paid our average wage.

But it's not enough to organise just in the AUEW in this way. I mentioned how the hospital worker was left to fight alone and how nothing has been properly organised for the Shrewsbury lady's jail. There has been a response in a number of places, but it's less than what the union bureaucrats, nothing will get done. A national rank-and-file movement could co-ordinate the fight.

Some locals are sceptical that it might not be possible. I explained that there won't be any real discussion of the issues in the next Rank and File case at the Liaison Committee conference.

I said there has got to be discussion and a hammering-out of the issues facing us and the organisation to put decisions into practice.

We certainly need such a conference and I believe we can make a great step forward but at the very least I would say: 'Give it a try.'

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DANNY FLYNN, chairman of Westminster I/272 TGWU branch and of the conference, writes:

We have to use every means to defend our interests. You can't always control yourself to official action only when you fight incomes policies and anti-union laws. I think that big business should look for services like housing and public transport. At the moment, the only result of progress seems to be more profits—nothing at all for the people who do the work.

I'm glad to see that the conference will discuss union democracy. In the TGWU we are very strict about elections but from divisional officer upwards you don't have to be elected at all.

My branch has nominated me to stand for delegate to the union's Rules Revision Conference this year and I believe that all union officials should be put to the test of elections.

The Rank and File Conference can begin to link up the fragmented sections of the movement. We need a national week of action based on direct contact between trade unionists. This can make the branch more outward-looking, soap powder and towels shouldn't be the only things we campaign for.

The trouble with full-time officials is that they tend to dictate rather than lead. They don't go for what people want but what a union can get away with most easily. That is how we on the boxes accepted the Thane Three rite which will probably not even be paid in full.

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FIGHT RACISM AND THE IQ MYTH EDUCATION: Partly sponsored by the Campaign on Racism and IQ and the Class Socialist Workers, the conference will be held at the Central Hall, Wellington, London, 23rd January. For further details contact: Stuart Burns, 481 High St, London N.1.

SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain who are building a multi-racial movement in the trade union movement, based on common campaigning. Our Peshwas' new programme calls for links with each branch in anti-racist solidarity, with the new programme of the socialist literature to 'One which ever party is in government'.

SOCIALIST MEDICAL ASSOCIATION for developing a socialist health and social policy, with headquarters at 49-51 Roman Road, London E3, and for the first time London office 01-564 3167.

SOCIALISTS WORKING ON A RACE-EQUALITY PLAN, will make a presentation at the conference. They are interested in the problems of black people in the workplace, in the trade union movement and in the area of race relations. Our office number is 01-352 3813.

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Pressure the union leaders

KEN APPLEY, secretary of Keighley Trades Council, TASS, and member of District Council, has written to union leaders.

Keighley Trades Council delegates were impressed by the initiative taken by the sponsoring rank-and-file papers in calling this conference and readily agreed to send four delegates. In our monthly newsletter to local branches and shop stewards committees, we have drawn attention to the conference and to the seven unionist delegates also. The trades council will be organising transport from the area.

At this time of increasing attack on working class liberties, this is an excellent opportunity for the shabby attempts by employers to bolster their profits at our expense. A national grass-roots organisation with the will and ability to put up a real fight is essential. This conference is seen by us as the first step in building such an organisation.

It was felt there is a real danger that the Labour government might water down its policies in order to placate the press. One delegate remarked that it would be interesting to see if Labour would readily scrap the 1875 laws that were used to jail the Shrewsbury building workers.

A number of delegates felt whatever the result of the election, a national rank and file conference could only strengthen the position of workers at this time, which is why we are giving it our whole-hearted support.

Militants must link up

MIKE ATKINSON, chairman of Darlington Hospital NUPE branch and of Darlington Memorial Hospital shop stewards, writes:

Shop stewards at Darlington Memorial Hospital feel that there has to be closer liaison between rank and file hospital workers and with other militants.

At present only union officials know what goes on between one hospital and another one region and another, one part of the hospital and another. It's a great deal of the trade union, trade unionists here is to break down the barriers that have supported the miners' claim, but we think they were a special case because they had the muscle to make themselves do so. We think we too and many other workers should become special cases.

It breaks my heart to think that we settled down, not to 'Three' but to many more, other workers and I hope, a dead duck. It should never happen. It is up to the rank and file of the trade union movement to build an organisation that ensures we don't let it happen again.

First step

JOHN SMITH, shop steward at Ralsky Colour Television, Bradford, and president of Queen's AES branch, writes:

The aims of the rank and file conference are very practical for the AES member. Look what happened to our pay claim. It sounded great—£35 for wages like last year the leadership didn't organise a fight and our claim was gutted. This time the opportunity was there for unit action with the minimal. Workers in all unions need to develop the rank and file and we need to link up. This conference is the first step.
LIVERPOOL: Hospital porters at the Royal Liverpool Children's Hospital were stripped of their jobs last week after being on strike since 1 March over the victimisation of head porter Richard Wright.

After an appeal hearing held by the Liverpool Hospital Management Committee last Thursday, it was agreed that Mr Wright will be reinstated on 1 April. In the meantime he was to be paid as a general porter while Bobby Keating, NUPE spokes-

man, told me that the victimisation was a result of a practical joke between two porters. One of the porters involved labelled a blood specimen "Joe Bloggs" and signed it with his own name.

The other porter, realising what he was doing, went and said "D'you want me first?"

Another porter, realising what he was doing, went and said "D'you want me first?"

Overall, the management took place in Manchester and Newastle-upon-Tyne.

SMITH'S—Another report on Smith's is included in the text next to the photo.

MODERATION rules the roost at Smith's Industrial plant in Crockwode, North London—a major employer for the car industry. There are few communists or just plain troublemakers there.

The management has a "sweetheart agreement" with that well-known union, the General and Municipal.

The union's convenor there, Mrs. Emily Garvey, has held the position for 35 years and is a constant source of help to the management, who describe her as a "marvellous character."

It is why she is keen on the union's policy of "community." She believes in the principle that if you have a foreman, you have a job and he should be in charge of it.

And why she is allowed to sell eggs, for example, at the factory, just before Christmas. Her crime was that she wanted to work on an un-

safe machine.

In another section there was a clamping machine. And Smith's, instead of trying to work on it, sold the" workers some eggs."

Refuse

I was told to go and work on it. The safety inspector insisted it was safe. But I noticed that the brake on the machine was set for what it could slip, I refused and asked for another job.

I am told by an ex-union member that I had to do it, that they let me have another job then all the girls would refuse to work that machine. The foreman said: "We've used that machine for thirty years. I don't see why we should change it."

He went off to see the union. On his return he said to me, "Mr. Garvey agreed with him that I had put myself beyond the protection of the union by refusing to work the machine. He was then given my card and told to produce the thing.

"I went to see Charlie Woodard at the factory. He said that I should have worked the machine". The foreman for Smith's for 17 years and they were a fair company.

Smith's pay moderate wages too. But they can't give the workers too much because of the "sweetheart agreement on the firm's generous donations to the Tory Party."
MAKE LABOUR FREE THE JAILLED PICKETS

WITH THE LABOUR government pledged to repeal the Industrial Relations Act now is the time to press hard to ensure the release of the six jailed building workers’ pickets, convicted of various legal decisions against picketing and repeal the 1875 Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act.

John McKenzie, Jones, Eric Tomlinson and Des Warren were jailed on conspiracy, unlawful assembly and affray charges just before Christmas.

In February this year, Michael Pietz, Arthur Murray and Fran Williams followed the others into prison.

All the men have been charged and imprisoned for offences specifically selected to get individual picketers jailed without the prosecution having to prove that they were acting illegally.

The purpose of the operation was to make it appear that the pickets were the instigators of the affair, a claim which was then dismissed in the fourth of the Shrewsbury trials.

The conviction of Des Warren, 23, 57-year-old, was that of Shrewsbury Crown Court, three men, Terry Rodwell, Lennox Williams and John Seahe, are pleading not guilty to charges of affray and unlawful assembly.

The prosecution has been making much of an admission in John McKenzie’s case in which he threw a lump of dirt on one of the sins. The phrase has been used by the police under police pressure.

This conviction confirmed from an unusual source on Monday this week.

Mr. Williams, one of the prosecution witnesses who testify said he had thought the incident had been held for 40 hours by the police and subjected to 12 hours interrogation.

PRESSURE

He added that a police officer had told him that if he did not name some people as causing damage, then he himself would be charged with damage to property.

Any trade unionist could find himself were he to play the part of John Seahe, his co-defendants at Shrewsbury or indeed of any of the other picketers who have recently come under the hammer of the law.

Every trade unionist should be exercising the maximum pressure over the coming weeks, because of the Labour government’s refusal to repeal the Act and release the six.

The conference was sponsored by the Transport and Construction Union, London regions today (Saturday) at Friends House, Euston Road, London.

On Wednesday 20 March, there will be a demonstration from Tower Hill to lobby parliament for the release of the jailled men. Assemble 11:30 am.

MORE THAN 100 shop stewards who attempted to interrupt the meeting by Glasgow Trades Council decided to stop up the floor of the meeting when Shrewsbury building workers’ pickets were called on.

The conference gave full support to the lobby of parliament on Wednesday 20 March and 20 shop stewards that they would be on it too. The conference also decided to add a demonstration in Glasgow, on Saturday 25 March to mobilize further support.

A month’s pay for a reader

A READER in Edinburgh has sent us the following letter:

"Dear Sir, I have a month’s pay for the lighting fund (pay also with £1. If any reader of this can pass this down the line, I can use it to help the fund."

The cheque was for £2,000,44. Its payers are for bringing the March fund to £1,000.24. It is now up to £1,000,24.

The other letterer will pass the news. The miners have been leading the campaign and the miners are at risk. They are at risk now.

Now is the time to let right the abuses and dangers of pit life. Nobody, including the Labour government, will hand these things over as a gift. They must be argued for, prepared for and fought against.

ABUSES

All eyes are now directed to the next round of the £100 claim. Now it is the time to discuss closing the gap between surface and face workers’ pay. It that means increasing the claim above £20.20-50 what we do.

Now is the time to sort right the abuses and dangers of pit life. Nobody, including the Labour government, will hand these things over as a gift. They must be argued for, prepared for and fought against.

OFFICIAL INSTALLATION

OFFICIALS bury Castings strike

NUNEATON—The strike of 135 workers at Art Castings, part of the A. L. Dunne engineering group, has been called off by the workers. The strike started on 11 December.

The enthusiasm of the strikers was inspired—despite their bitter experiences with their union, the Transport Workers. Few others have come out of the battle with credit, apart from members of the Technical Section of the Engineering Union at Alco, TGWU stewards at Chrysler Stoke night shift, and Ford workers in London—who all blacked a £100-a-week. There were also members of the TGWU District Committee and Coventry Coventry for the blacking.

The strike was caused by the sack- ing of 33 men who dewarded to the support of a sacked fellow worker. It took two months to make the strike he be made official by the TGWU, the strikers had no strike pay.

In the meantime picketing was halted by workmen of police, and 11 pickets were arrested—many of whom have been charged. The TGWU’s failure meant that the state of affairs for the strikers worked on the company’s goods to stop supplies being cut off.