PRICES are rising faster now than ever before in Britain. The government's own figures show a 3.9 per cent rise in the single month of March.

April's figures are likely to be even worse as the budget and increased faces, power and phone charges take effect.

The Tories and the press have one simple explanation for these figures. They blame wages. They keep repeating that wages are rising far faster than prices.

But when the effect of increased tax and national insurance contributions are taken into account, even the best-off workers have only just been keeping ahead of prices until now. As the new price rises take effect, even they will begin to fall behind unless they fight for more pay.

Wages are not responsible for the tax rises and the rent rises announced by the government. Workers are not to blame for meat prices being kept artificially high by the Common Market. Workers have not caused the massive rises in interest charges.

Workers are not benefitting from the soaring share prices this week.

It is not only the Tories who are blaming wages. On Monday Harold Wilson joined in the chorus. He said that 'the big battalions' must not hog the 'national cake'.

Blame

But workers are not responsible for the crisis. For the fact that the cake is getting smaller, our wages were squeezed in the vics of Phase One and Two of the Tory wage freeze when the symptoms of crisis first developed.

Even Jack Jones of the Transport Workers Union, seems to accept that high wages are to blame for the crisis. He is talking about a new form of incomes policy which would peg everyone's pay, just as the Tory 'E' plus 4 per cent limit did two years ago. But such a scheme could only mean increased profits for the employers, who would be under no compulsion whatsoever to use those profits for any useful purpose.

If the wages at, say, GKN are frozen, the directors and shareholders of GKN benefit, not other workers, old age pensioners or the unemployed.

What is most absurd about plans for wage restraint is that they cannot deal with the crisis. They cannot impose order on those who run the economy—the small minority who own and control the commanding heights. So they cannot end the sequence of boom and slump that has led us into crisis.

In the past trade unionists have been pressured by the press into accepting such arguments. So we had a 'pay pause' in 1961, a Statement of Intent in 1964, a wage freeze in 1966, an 'all in' in 1970, a Phase One in 1972, Phases Two and Three in 1973.

None of these measures stopped the rising trend in prices, nor the demand of the Tory press for still further attacks on wages. Only one thing could do that—a workers' onslaught on the present system, to take economic power from the ruling minority and to reorganise the economy on a rational basis.

Until we reach that point, there is only one answer to rising prices—to step up the fight for higher wages, against the cut-backs in government spending and against redundancies, and against the Labour government that depends increasingly on the Tories to protect it from its own supporters.

INSIDE

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TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND!

Come to Saturday's labour conference

THE House of Commons has renewed the Prevention of Terrorism Act, by which more than 100 Irish workers in this country have been held by the police without charge for two years. Half of these workers have already been deported without trial. Only two Labour MPs had the guts to vote against the Act.

Come to Saturday's labour conference

The Act's renewal underlines the importance of the Labour Movement Conference on Ireland this Saturday, which will campaign to get the troops out of Ireland to stop the Act of Terrorism for Ireland.

This week five members of the strike committee of Glasgow Corporation Electricians, which has just led a victorious 14-week strike for pay parity with electricians working for contractors, issued the following appeal to their fellow trade unionists in Britain:

"We are prepared if need be to break official strikes by any one of the unions. This has been shown recently when they moved in troops against the Glasgow Corporation HGV drivers and electricians.

"By the use of the Army in this manner many of our members were able to relate more clearly to the role of the British Army in Ireland. The troops in Ireland are there purely to protect the interests of British big business and there can never be a solution to the problem while they are present."

It was once said: 'No nation which oppresses another, can itself be free.' This is the position which the British working class will continue to find itself in so long as we do nothing or little to alter it.

The undersigned members of our committee fully support the conference on Ireland on 24 May and recognise the right of the whole Irish people to national self-determination. The delegates we send will be calling for the withdrawal of troops now. We urge all trade unions, councils, shop committees, etc., to send delegates, as this conference must be the springboard for the Labour movement's campaign for Irish national self-determination."
WHAT WE THINK

A MIGHTY press campaign is being waged to reverse the decision of the AUEW National Committee that voting for officials should take place in the branch—or not by post.

A postal ballot for AUEW union officials must be supported, claim the leaders of our newspapers, in the interests of union democracy and ‘fairness’.

Needless to say, press devotion to these principles is sudden—and hypocritical.

The same leader writers are the first to campaign against the regular election of trade union officials. They are the first to support those unions, like the General and Municipal Workers Union or the steelworkers’ union, which have no regular election at all.

Their sudden obsession with democracy in the unions does not extend to democracy in the boardroom, where far greater economic power is wielded than in union offices.


Destroy

The truth is that the newspapers are interested in union democracy in order to destroy it. They prefer no union elections.

Where there are elections, as in the country’s most democratic union, the AUEW, they want the elections to be carried out in the most democratic way possible.

They want the postal ballot because it is more undemocratic than the vote in the branch—even though more people vote by post than in the branch.

Why is this so?

Because the postal vote isolates workers from one another when taking their decisions.

The only public discussion on the issues facing them in the election is likely to be in the press or on television—which are owned and controlled by the employers. All the propaganda in press and television works against strong, militant trade unions. It’s no use writing to individuals in their homes, the press and TV have a free run on the discussion.

Discussions and debates in the branch or shop floor meeting, or union conference, leads to decisions taken by trade unionists as trade unionists. It provides a different form of discussion to running in the press and television.

After discussion in the branch, the names on the ballot paper are connected with known faces, known policies. Election addresses can be read out and openly discussed. If the ballot comes by post, there is nothing but a name.

Encourages

The same newspapers which howl for a postal ballot are not in favour of proper election addresses being circulated. They can’t be afforded’, they say.

A postal ballot encourages voters for a candidate who lives in the same place as the voter.

A postal ballot gives full reign to the Winrow Wyatts and the Robert Maxwell employers who have the money to finance right-wing union campaigns. The man with the most money can make the most propaganda.

The postal ballot kills branch life. What’s the point of going to the branch if you can’t choose who makes the decisions there? So the number of people who play a part in the union goes down and down. More and more power is handed over to a handful of irresponsible officials.

The decision of the AUEW National Committee to go back to the branch vote was right. But the way the decision was taken—the dubious disqualification of right-wing delegates to the committee—was bureaucratic picking of the worst kind.

This sort of manoeuvre plays into the hands of the press and the right wing. They argue that voting in the branch will be used by the Left to establish minority control, with small meetings whose style is deliberately set to ‘freeze out’ the union leadership and file. The rotten manoeuvre at Blackpool gives all this talk credibility.

So does the argument in the Broad Left of the AUEW against the postal ballot—that the union ‘can’t afford it’.

Why do you decide to demonstrate?

Well, it was all over the Coventry Telegram that women would be demonstrating to get the men back to work. We thought we should show the men that not all women want them back at work and that we pay claim and wanted to back the men up.

How did you get organised?

After I read the headlines in the paper about the ‘back to work’ women I was so angry that I thought straight away something had to be done. I remember when women from Covent hit the headlines. The press had a field day and tried to break the strike. I thought it was about time those in support of the men had a say too.

I went to see some of my mates, the ones who had been out on strike. There were only a few of them left then and then to go and show these other women they had some opposition.

We made a few placards to take along, and we wrote the letter to Eddie McCracken, the secretary of the joint shop stewards’ committee. He was overjoyed to see our support. And that was all we really did get in touch with.

What happened at the picket line?

When we arrived with the kids the place was mobbed with reporters and TV crews. But I don’t think they expected to see us turning out. To my mind they were hoping for another Cowley wire field day. They were amazed to see any opposition.

At first they were falling over themselves to take pictures of the kids. The poor kids didn’t know what was happening but that didn’t stop the press. They were more interested in dramatic pictures than what we had to say.

They couldn’t believe we had done it on our own and they were concerned our husbands had put us up to it! I ask you! We don’t need our husbands to tell us the price of food.

Harden

We decided to go for a confrontation with Mrs Willis and Co. Strikes cause hardship all round, and they are worried that Chrysler will pull out and leave us as do the dale.

But if management are talking about an offer on the 23rd and workers’ participation, to me they look like a firm that’s ready to pull out. The bill can’t wait till the management think it’s best to pay us out. The men in Detroit earn twice as much as Chrysler workers here. They would be mad to pull out when they can get away with the slave wages.

What we want is a fair wage for everyone, that will bring us back to the standard of living we’ve lost.

What effect do you think your action has had?

Well, we showed Mrs Willis and Company and the press that we won’t stand aside and watch our standard of living cut. It was great to see the number of wives who turned up at the mass meeting on Thursday to support us. We will stick by our husbands until they get a decent settlement.

Well, where do you go from here?

We have now got the basis of a Chrysler Wives Support Committee. We will make it our business to demonstrate our support of the claim at all the mass meetings. We will have to stick together to help each other through the strike.

Also we want to tell other Chrysler wives why we demonstrated and why they should join us. Most women only know what they read in the papers about the dispute. Well, we’ve just found out you can’t expect a fair hearing in the press. The press have also got to tell their own wives about what’s happening in work. If they did there would be many more of us.

Why do you stand beside your husbands in this strike—by Chrysler wives

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This is a placeholder for the image.
DISTRICT CALLS FACTORY 'NO' MEETINGS

WITH two weeks to go to the referendum, the big business pro-Market machine is really rolling. Every major daily paper is pumping out propaganda for a Yes vote. Barclays Bank has sent a letter to everyone who holds an account there urging them to vote Yes.

The Economist reports that most major employers are producing special issue pamphlets in support of the referendum.urge their workers to vote Yes. In most cases they are so afraid of losing the vote to Labour that they would consider a Labour government as better than the pro-Market coalition.

For the first time, television is in on the act. Many people are beginning to take to heart the significance of the referendum.

Last week the front pages were covered with pictures of the Common Market 'coalition' of North Jenkins and Thorpe and by hints that all three would consider a Labour government as better than a pro-Market coalition.

It is this which makes the campaign for the No vote so important to the future of the Labour movement.

LAOBUR ministers who oppose the Common Market have been arguing all week that the Market is responsible for higher unemployment in Britain. They claim that since Britain entered the Market, imports have risen sharply, leading to a loss of jobs in some industries.

They also point out that direct investment by British firms in the other Common Market countries rose by £300 million in the first year of Market membership, compared to a rise of only £70 million in investment by other Common Market countries.

The argument is that if the Market were removed, there would be more investment in Britain and less unemployment.

However much we may sympathise with their people in their desire to draw up the No vote, we have to say that the argument, the way they put it, is wrong.

Unemployment is a result of the international capitalist crisis, not the Common Market. The capitalist world has had a vast expansion of its market outside the Common Market.

The real fault with the Market is not that it is a conspiracy—foreigners' against British people, rich and poor alike. It is that the British capitalist and foreign capitalists do not deal with the problem of unemployment in the Common Market countries, in Britain, anywhere else in Europe.

That is why there are 1,500,000 unemployed in West Germany, 1,000,000 in France, another 1,500,000 in Italy, as well as the 800,000 unemployed here.

One aim of the Common Market is to allow the employers to move their investments from country to country. When they find profits too low in one part of the Market, they can move to another part of the Market and make more profit. They hope that such a movement of capital will increase unemployment in the country to which they are moving, and that workers will accept lower wages, unless they get them by a strike.

But the way the fight is not by talking about protecting 'British jobs' against 'foreigners'—not by nationalistic flag-waving—but by forming links with workers in the Common Market countries in other countries.

We are against the Common Market because it strengthens the link between the workers of this country and those of other countries, and that increases their ability to make workers pay for the workers of the world. That is why we are for a No vote. But the alternative is not to get out of the Market and have everything else; it is, but to build international links between workers and to fight for a socialist Britain as part of a socialist Europe.

SOCIALIST WORKER meetings against the Common Market

ALL LONDON

Tuesday 3 June
7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1 (Holborn tube). Speakers: Tony Cliff, members of European revolutionary organisations.

NORTH LONDON: Wednesday 28 May, 8pm, Lord Marks Hotel, 102 Chester House, Chester St, N17.

NORTH: Wednesday 28 May, 8pm, The Cock pub, King Street. Speaker: Nigel Harris.

DOUGLAS: Thursday 29 May, 8pm, Smiling Man pub, Hal Street. Speaker: Local trade unionist.

KINGSTON: Thursday 29 May, 8am, Kingston Library meeting room, Great Western Road. Speaker: John Palmer.

NORTH WEST: Thursday 29 May, 8am twin rooms, Ashton Hall, Ashton Rd, NW2. Speakers: Chris Heron and Michael Donnellan.

LEEDS: Thursday 29 May, 8pm, The Peacock, Bail Out, City Centre.

LEICESTER: Wednesday 28 May, 7.30pm, The City Hall. Speaker: Chris Heron (political editor, Socialist Worker.

SOUTHAMPTON: Thursday 29 May, 8pm, University of Hampshire. Speaker: Paul Hollow.

SOUTH WEST: Thursday 29 May, 8am, Teignmouth, Tregonwell Hotel. Speakers: Douglas Stroud, and Owen Flanders.

BARNSLEY: Monday 29 June, 8pm, Huddersfield, Shetland Street, Local speakers.

VOTE NO! POSTER available from Ellie Daniels, 839 Gardeners Avenue, London E2. Phone 01-739 1878.

VOTE NO! leaflets available from Sue Garlick, 97 Orsett Gardens. London E2. Phone 01-739 8580. 10p per 100.

EAST LONDON: Vote No! leaflets available from Sue Garlick, 97 Orsett Gardens. London E2. Phone 01-739 8580. 10p per 100.

YOUNG EUROPEAN SCABS

Young Europeans scabs.

YOUNG EUROPEAN SCABS

AMONG the organisations campaigning for a Yes vote, and financed by the European Movement, is a body called the Young Europeans' Left, and its affiliate the Young European Socialists.

The YelSs claims that it stands for a political policy by which 'democratic socialists' in Britain, in collaboration with their socialist comrades on the Continent, can fight for a socialist society throughout Europe.

To this end it has produced many posters which it hopes will put up particularly in colleges and universities, saying that a Yes vote will give the guts of Europe to the working class.

We need WORKERS' links, not bosses', to fight unemployment

by Mick Brightman

AEWU North London District Committee in personal capacity.

IN keeping with AEWU policy, the union’s North London District Committee is promoting the NO campaign by arranging a series of factfind meetings to be called by workers, committees in leading engineering factories in the area.

The first after-work meeting has been called by the Acton Works LTE factory and jointly sponsored by the EalingGet Britain Out Committee. It is being held at Acton Town Hall, Acton, at 5.15pm on Thursday 22 May.

Speakers include Bill McLaughlin, AUEW divisional organiser; Ray Buckton, general secretary of the engine drivers’ union ASLEF; a Labour Minister (at yet unnamed); and Sue MacTaggart.

Congratulations to North London District Committee for arranging these meetings—but this meeting will be hopelessly marred by having MacTaggart as a speaker.

SPECLULATOR

MacTaggart is a slab landlord and property speculator. He is a former chairman of the Society for Individual Freedom, a front for extreme right-wing politics, and has given money to the Monday Club.

It is only to be hoped that the next meeting organised by the district committee in North London, which is expected to be at Friernham (General Motors) in Hendon, will not have such a speaker on the platform.

The working class is being deceived enough by the right-wing Keep Britain in campaign. Don’t let’s confuse the NO campaign even more by sharing platforms with extreme right-wing slum landlords.
Labour and the £

1931: Class treachery

in the 'national interest'

Unemployment was rising rapidly. In December 1930, it reached 2,500,000. By July 1931, it had reached 3,800,000. Only a far-reaching change could overcome a massive slump.

The Labour programme had called for an increase in unemployment benefit to £1 a week for a man plus 50 shillings for a dependent wife and five shillings for children. The first proposals put forward by Jimmy Thomas, the Labour Party's right-wing Minister in charge of unemployment, failed to meet even those most basic demands. The male unemployment benefit was cut at a huge £7 a week and the rate for a dependent wife was reduced from seven to nine shillings.

Even these minimal reforms were too much for big business. While unemployment continued to rise, the pound sank on the foreign exchange markets and the government moved swiftly against its own supporters. To solve the financial crisis, an 'impartial' commission was set up under Sir George May of the Prudential Assurance Company, and containing four Tories, Liberals and two Labour representatives, recommended a cut in government spending.

The rejection of the report only made the financial situation even worse and the government went on to make even more cuts, including a ten per cent cut in unemployment benefit.

Coalition

These cuts proved too much for the bulk of the Labour Party and the government was forced to look to the Liberals and Tories for support. The Tory and Liberal leaders were keen to coalition.

One told the King: 'In view of the fact that the present government would prove most unsatisfactory to the working classes, it would be in the general interest if they could be improved by a Labour government.'

Pailing the consent of the Labour Party, MacDonald was quite happy to serve the 'general interest' behind a coalition government.

The National Government which came out of this trekery continued to pursue broadly anti-Labour policies, cutting unemployment benefit and pay in the public sector.

Lesson

When MacDonald, Thomas and the rest had served their purpose, they were soon ditched in favour of open government.

The lesson of 1931 is plain. A government in the 'national interest' is a government pledged to capitalist policies and can only attack the working class.

The situation today is different. Although there are those in the Labour Party who want to follow in the footsteps of MacDonald and Thomas, the working class today is far stronger than it was then.

Then the trade unions were still staggering under the defeat of the miners and the other strikes of the 1930s. It is not surprising to see them in such a weak position.

Then the situation was a real alternative. It was possible to build a fighting working-class party which could lead the fight against capitalist policies.

COH MIN

1966: Wage freeze and witch-hunt

THE LEADERS of the Labour government of 1964-66 did not, like Ramsay MacDonald, go into a formal coalition with the Tories. But they were just as much subject to blackmail from big business, and responded to it by turning on their own working class supporters.

Almost as soon as Harold Wilson's government was formed in 1964, there was a continual massing of employers by the giant corporations and the big banks, again, the government ignored the direct action of the employers' class and instead blamed its own supporters for the crisis.

The third week of May, the National Union of Seamen began a strike for a wage of £20 a week. At a meeting of the Labour cabinet, Ministers were agreed that they had to resist 'to the death' this challenge. If, at any point in the weeks that followed, they were tempted to give in to this pressure from the seamen, their resolve was strengthened by pressure from big business, as money continued to move out of the country.

James Callaghan, for instance, bitterly attacked the seamen in a speech on 26 May: 'The seamen,' he declared, 'areไป impressing the government's policy on full employment.'

Harold Wilson appeared on television. He attacked a 'small group of politically motivated men'. He meant the seamen's leaders, not the business interests forcing the government's hands.

The TUC backed Wilson to the hilt, telling the seamen that it would not support them if they refused to accept the employers' terms.

The seamen were forced back to work, but that was not the end of the matter. On 22 July, in a final, desperate attempt to placate those who held real economic power, Wilson did something the Tories, until then, had never dared to do: he introduced a wage freeze.

Protest

Only one Labour Member made an open protest in this drift in Labour policy. On 4 July, Frank Cousins resigned from the Labour Cabinet over incomes policy.

His place was taken, without a grace, by a young, ambitious, junior minister with fewer working class links—Anthony Wedgewood Benn.

Unlike the crisis of 1931, the crisis of 1964 and 1966 did not lead to the Labour leadership going over to the Tories. Partly this was because the crisis was not as great as in the Thirties, partly because working class organization was still very strong.

Indeed, some sections of the employers saw a Labour government that obeyed their will better than the Tories because it could move more easily to make trade union support for anti-working class policies.

In real terms, today's crisis is much more severe than that of 1964 and 1966. That is why much of the press and much of the Labour right wing would like a formal coalition.

But the working class movement is even stronger than in 1964-66. And so big business and the TUC themselves doubt if a formal coalition would work.

The trade union leaders must face the fact that any Tory move would be in the service of a puppet Labour government.
BY PAT KINNERSLY
Author of The Hazards of Work

IN Birmingham one Saturday evening last year 20 people died as explosions ripped through the bars in which they were drinking.

The law of the land left no room for doubt that this was murder, yet with Justice Secretary the Home Secretary had rushed through a new law giving the state unprecedented powers against anyone it suspected.

In the parish of Flixborough one Saturday almost exactly a year ago, as people in nearby houses made their tea and watched the end of the Youth International football match on television, a huge cloud of escalating vapour exploded above the Nypro chemical plant. Twenty-eight workers died as the blast flattened the whole site.

The law of the land had nothing to say about the killing of the 28.

The House of Commons did not tax the energies of its members with late sitting to push through new laws to ban any employer who might possibly pose the slightest threat to workers' lives.

Lives

That inquiry has now reported its conclusions on 70 days of eye-witness and technical evidence. It had to choose between two explanations put before it. Both agreed that the collapse of Nypro's block pipe caused the final explosion. But they differed fundamentally on what caused the pipe to collapse.

The Inquiry Inspectorate and the court's advisers stated that internal pressure caused it to jack-knife—the one remaining explanation.

Although the report admits that failure of the pipe's internal pressure wasn't very probable, even theoretically, it does not discard more than a page to its reasons for thinking that what happened, failure of the pipe, concentrated its energies—and 12 of its 38 pages—to an attack on the alternative theory put forward by a highly qualified chemical engineer—

The two engineers challenged the explanation that the explosion was caused by a gas pipeline disaster by suggesting that there was a small explosion before the main one. They pointed to 154 bolts on a flange and, right next to it, a burst in a permanent pipe. The burst was caused by a high temperature flame and they thought the flame might have come from a leak in the flange.

Two bangs

Their theory fitted eye-witness accounts of events before the big bang. It fitted with in-house pressure at the time that the University was showing two blasts. And it left the reason why scientists couldn't get their replicas of Nypro's boiled pipe to collapse anything like near normal operating pressures.

That theory had its technical difficulties. But the stumbling block was political and one of the key issues of the inquiry was the unseated duty of this one was to reassure—convince the public that the chemical emperor was wearing a fine suit of safety clothes and that this was just an embarrassing little tear which would soon be stitched up.

The one-bang theory enabled them to conclude that "The disaster was caused wholly by the coincidence of a number of unlikely errors in design and installation of a modification." To accept the two-bang theory central as it was on an unmodified part of the works, would have meant admitting that these plants were much more dangerous. It was therefore much more important to prove than an ordinary pipe couldn't have failed than that a hodge-podge did.

Having got that out of the way, the court was able to get on with the big whitewash:

Nypro was to blame (the company had already admitted as much so this was a foregone conclusion.)

It was just that the desire to get the plant back in production led them to overlook the hazards of not doing a proper design or carrying out any safety checks. Try that one on the police if you're caught driving in a car without MOT. 'So sorry, officer, I was so keen to get to work I overlooked it. Pity about all those dead people in the big explosion.'

Nypro was very safety conscious.

The court had heard that the company returned a cracked reactor and bridged the gap without finding out why the reactor cracked or if the other five were damaged.

It established more than a quarter of a million gallons of inflammable substances on site which hadn't been licensed by the local authority.

Court

The plant as originally designed and constructed didn't create any unacceptable risks.

The court itself gives the lie to this one when it says that no one concerned in ... design or construction ... envisaged the possibility of a major disaster happening instantaneously. When the plant was being built there were already many examples of explosion in the technical literature. Were the reports not read or were they ignored?

In fact the inquiry revealed many possible routes to disaster which the industry was taking no steps to block off.

The urgency of these discoveries is not covered by the inquiry's report. None of its recommendations force any immediate action on the industry. Instead problems are passed on for consideration by other parts of the bureaucracy.

In reality it is the industry which is given a second chance after what should have been its Roman Point. It will not be ordered to take any of the following urgent actions:

1. Fit automatic isolation valves in systems like the one at Flixborough where hundreds of tons of hot pressurised liquid were free to escape in one of the part of the system was breached.

2. Install dump tanks.

3. Get rid of all galvanised parts in contact with stainless steel pressure components. It was shown that this combination could produce almost instantaneous ruptures in a fire.

4. Install fire detectors and deluge systems that really work.

5. Protect thin pressure elements, like stainless steel expansion bellows, from fire. They too could fail in minutes in a major fire, producing a Flixborough-scale vapour cloud.

The Flixborough whitewash

The Flixborough TUYU shop stewards' committee is one of the sponsors of this pamphlet which points out the faults and dangers in the Health and Safety at Work Act—and suggests some remedies.

NYPRO

6. Fit steam or water jet vapour curtains around all potential vapour cloud areas.

7. Hose control room and other workers in blast-proof structures.

8. Employ safety engineers qualified in chemical and mechanical engineering and allow no work on pressure systems without their approval.

Workers should not be surprised that the court discharged its responsibility to warn workers and to impose costly limitations on the freedom of the chemical horrors. It made much play with the idea of 'acceptable risk' but it's real job was to see that the current high level of risk remained acceptable.

Flixborough is inevitable.

Risk

Only workers have the power to force the industry to divert its massive profits into new standards of safety engineering.

And of chemical workers in the US showed the way with their three-month health and safety strike against Dupont. In this country workers at Shulton are now forging the essential rank and file links with all other areas in the area, with national links with other Shell plants.

The Sterling Organic strike on Tyne-side has shown that we are ready for the fight on hazards. Military and organisation can manage to conceal health and safety contracts but we shouldn't delude ourselves that this is more than a small step towards ridding ourselves of the underlying hazards of a system which looks up pickets while companies that kill go unpunished.

Nypro didn't even have to pay for the cost of the inquiry. The court decided that the government should pay. You and me, Congratulations, brothers and sisters, you've just bought a bucket of whitewash.
BIG MONEY

BRITAIN IN EUROPE

The campaign to keep Britain in the European Common Market is under threat from a new development called Britain in Europe. The campaign operates from Park Lane, and through the European Movement, from 1a Whitehall Place, London, SW1.

Recently the BIE and the European Movement have been opened by unexplained attacks of their offices spending on advertising.

THE Independence' of Young European Left

HE European Movement operates from 1a Whitehall Place, but the offices are an annex of the National Liberal Club, traditional home of the Liberal Party leadership and friends. The offices of the Movement are doubtless gratified to have been able to move to the premises to 'moderate' tastes, with which they have so many political sympathies.

But what about the Labour Campaign for Britain in Europe? Is its youthful counterpart the Young European Left? Where do they live?

Is keeping with their position on the Labour Party they operate from Attlee House. Where's that?

It is at 1a Whitehall Place, London.

A walk around is an introduction to the Young European Left. On one floor, the European Movement with its posters, Liberal stickers, Tony stickers, and Labour stickers. Then go along the corridor, down a short flight of stairs, and there is the Labour Campaign for Britain in Europe, in a room with its own posters. On the walls are also Labour County Party, Tory, Liberal and Labour pro-Market groups around the country. So where exactly is Attlee House?

This is Attlee House. A basement suite.

Didn't the YEL feel rather uneasy about moving so far down the political ladder?

Well it was rather bizarre. But then it was between the RCW and the Social Democrats. It isn't at all clear how the name was arrived at, or what Attlee's line on Europe was. I think his opposition to Europe was not publicly known.

You should ask Dickson Mabon or Shirley Williams.

It is striking stuff. It is also part of the longest, most heavily plighted, well-financed campaign which our rulers, who have had plenty of experience, have pulled on us.

why should answer these questions, particularly hostile ones over Parliament and the Civil Service, and the YEL's proper journalistic way, I don't want to answer these questions.

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US shows its claws are still sharp

A FORTNIGHT AGO Henry Kissinger was making statements about "atrocitys" in Cambodia in which he claimed "thousands of people" were being killed. He could provide no evidence for these claims.

Last week there were atrocities—organised by Kissinger's US government—over the case of the freighter Mayaguez. This was a natural continuation of its previous actions in relation to Cambodia—actions which killed or maimed a tenth of the country's population in less than five years.

The US claimed that its action had only one aim, to release the crew of a ship which had been seized by an "act of piracy". But the facts of the case point to a different conclusion. Firstly, the Mayaguez was not an act of piracy; it was sailing within sight of Cambodian territory and was carrying supplies destined for US military forces in Thailand. Secondly, these forces had been aiding the bombing of Cambodia only a few weeks earlier, so that the Cambodians were not willing to let the ship proceed unhindered.

Secondly, the actions taken by the US were not by any stretch of the imagination designed merely to release the ship's crew. US war planes strafed every fishing boat in the vicinity. We know this because a fishing boat, which had been hit by US air force, contained the Mayaguez' crew, was subject to rocket and machine-gun fire, and to gas attacks which burned the skin and caused blindness.

US bombers continued to hammer the southern coast of Cambodia in an attempt to dislodge the Vietnamese. They were, of course, acting in the US Navy's interests.

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But this was not a rescue operation, but a wanton murder. The aim of the murder was simple enough—to prove that the US war machine is still powerful enough, despite its defeat in Indochina, to inflict terrible carnage on any country in the world where people dare defy US orders.

Socialists arrested -for speaking on May Day

from U Chen in Hong Kong

MEMBERS of the Labour government often speak on May Day platforms in Britain. But the colonial administration in Hong Kong used the police to prevent a May Day demonstration here. Before the crowd had time to gather, a number of speakers and leafleters were arrested.

The rally was organised by the Revolutionary Marxist Union and the Young Socialists in a factory district, in protest at two projected labour laws. One of these gives the Labour Department power to impose a 30-40 day 'cooking off' period in any industrial dispute. In practical terms that means taking from workers the only weapon they have to fight against low pay, which leaves most workers with about £12 for a 50-hour week in a city with a higher cost of living than London.

The other is supposed to help those declared redundant in a city which already has 100,000 unemployed. But it gives no severance pay at all to those made redundant after working for less than a year and a maximum of 50 days' pay to those made redundant after five years in the same factory.

Protests

The union bureaucrats later blamed the demonstrations on "more radical than the legitimate anger of workers'...

In fact the protests started spontaneously. But the first organised group to strike in the field was a 500-strong contingent from the Rank and File Coalition, a recently formed group of rank and file bodies in different unions, which is supported by the American International Socialists. It was joined by small groups of dockers, drivers, steel workers and teachers. One group held a demonstration in Chicago, Detroit, Wisconsin, and Indianapolis, as well as the East Coast.

The Rank and File Coalition held an unusual meeting after the rally, attended by several thousand workers, including many who had not had contact with bolsheviks.

Speakers emphasised the need for solidarity. George Brown, of the United Black Workers, told the crowd that his local union's leadership was passing the divide idea of "Bolshevik".

Stalinist thuggery against Irish socialists

REVOLUTIONARY socialists in Ireland are under attack not merely from the state forces north and south of the border, but also from the Stalinist leadership of the Official IRA.

The Socialist Workers Movement—the fraternal organisation of the International Socialist Union in Ireland—issued the following press statement on May 8, after a machine gun attack on Seamus Costello, of the recently organised Irish Socialist Republican Party, was driving.

The Waterloo Branch of the Socialist Workers Movement today stated that some of its members had helped in organising the meeting in Waterloo last night, after which an assassination attempt was made on Seamus Costello. Members were in the car which was shot at.

At the press conference to report the meeting, making clear, however, confusion as to their involvement. At that meeting it was stated that we had agreed to help in organising the meeting making clear, however, our political independence from the Official IRA. We have held joint meetings with other left-wing organisations before this; we have been consistently in favour of socialists and republicans co-operating in the fight against repression.

Right

The present feud between the Republican and the ISP organisation has been defended by both parties. We have defended the ISP's right to exist and will continue to do so, whatever our criticisms of particular positions they may take.

It is claimed that the Official IRA has a right to exist and that its actions are justified. This is not true. The Official IRA is a fascist organisation that has been responsible for many atrocities in Ireland. It is a criminal organisation that should be dismantled.

The ISP is a socialist organisation that is fighting for a world without exploitation and oppression. It is a movement of workers and peasants that is committed to the establishment of a new society based on the principles of equality, freedom, and justice.

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Further physical threats have been made against the ISP by the Official IRA. These threats are aimed at intimidating the ISP into silence and submission. The ISP will not be intimidated and will continue to fight for a better world.

Ability

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Stonehouse

BY
PAUL
FOOT

$500,000 question

The police won’t ask

THIS WEEK John Stonehouse, the strong swimmer and former Labour
Minister, announced plans to return to
Britain. He would face 21 forgery
and fraud charges.

Many people in this country who have
dealt with Stonehouse in recent years,
including a large number of Bengalis,
think the charges don’t go any thing like
far enough—and that Stonehouse is being
protected from high up.

The Bengalis complain about Stone-
house’s involvement in money-raising
activities when Bangladesh was fighting
for independence in 1971. In January 1971,
the Awami League, which stood for independen-
tce, won 169 seats in the National Assembly.
In late March, the military dictatorship in
West Pakistan responded with a brutal
invasion.

In the first week, a quarter of a milli-
on Bengalis were killed. The bloodshed and
famines attracted large numbers of world
charities, notably War on Want, which
takes its name from a book written by
Harold Wilson in the 1950s.

Its chairman at the time was Donald
Cherwell, a Labour Party lickwit, like
Stonehouse; he had been active in the
National Association of Labour Students
at the London School of Economics, in
the International Union of Socialist
Youth, and in East Africa.

Cherwell is now in Mauritius, where
he is the government’s adviser on labour
matters, and where John Stonehouse was
hoping to stay, no end to the fund-

Vast

In April 1971, Stonehouse, who was
getting a consultancy fee of £4000 from
International Computers on top of his
MP’s salary, was taken on at £3500 a
year as a consultant to War on Want on
matters relating to Bangladesh. During
1971, Stonehouse made as least two visits
to the stricken areas.

A year after the collapse of the
Bangladesh government, President
Bangladesh, a Pakistani occupation,
many Bengalis were prepared to give
money to help their countrymen, but were
concerned about handing over vast sums of money to
to or other of the warring politicians
and business factions among the Bengalis in
Britain.

The arrival in Britain of a senior East
Pakistan judge, Abu Sayed Chowdhury,
seemed to solve the problem. He agreed
to become trustee of a relief fund. So did
John Stonehouse and Donald Cherwell.

The formation of this respectable trio
of trustees was quickly broadcast across
the Bengali community. Official receipt
books were distributed. Collecting com-
mittees were set up. Collected were
the houses and factories. Mass
meetings were held to collect money. At
every emotional meeting in Birmingham
£25000 was collected.

Each Bengali worker was expected to
give a minimum of £10 to save his
country. Many gave much more.

Paid more

Hafiz Ali, a garment worker in
East London paid £50 out of his savings
into the fund, and £1 a week for 11 weeks
after that.

Mohammed Abdul Rahim, a London
underground train driver, paid the same
sum. Mohammed Abdul Hyo, a worker at
Standard Telephone Cables in Colindale,
North London, paid £25. Workers were
expected to pay a minimum of £10, and a
weekly pittance after that. Most paid more.

Soon things began to look wrong. Hafiz Ali,
Hafiz Rahman told me. It looked to us
as though the money was not being used
in the proper way. We had no accounts.
So we stopped supporting the fund.

IN SEPTEMBER 1972, the trustees
finally published their accounts. They
were audited by a chartered
accountant called Quazi Muzib
Rahman, who has since left the
country.

The accounts are, by any standards, a
disgrace. The most blatant error concerns
missing 'receipt' books. A summary at the end of the accounts states that 153
receipt books were lost.

The accountants and auditors
symbolically buried the receipt books
in the garden of the accountants' house. The
accountants and auditors are no
longer in the garden.
John Stonehouse and lawyer: only 21 charges—and he’s still smiling

The bank’s main object was to attract the savings of Bengali workers in Britain. Stonehouse had obtained a licence to collect about £600,000 from various companies—GKN, Pinney, De La Rue, Trust House Forte—not to mention £500,000 from the government-owned shipyard in London.

He hoped to ‘top this up’ with Bengali workers’ money. He told the Sunday Times on 19 November 1972 that his bank had the ‘wholesale approval’ of 85 per cent of the Bangladesh community in Britain.

Mass meetings were arranged of Bengali workers all over Britain to explain the virtues of the bank.

Fortunately for the workers, the Sunday Times article exposed the bank as a fraud. As a result, Stonehouse got only £15,000 from Bangladesh’s workers in this country—when he hoped for over £1 million.

Despite constant complaints about these matters, it appears that he had been given to understand that with any of them. In November 1974, after Stonehouse ‘disappeared’ in Miami, Scotland Yard started an inquiry into the fund.

If Stonehouse is being protected in high places, it is not the first time. From as early as 1954, the Labour Party was keeping a ‘secret file’ on Stonehouse as a result of ‘lack of respect’ about accounts of a Labour students hostel in London.

Ever since, leading members of the Party and the governing Labour Party have suspected Stonehouse of unaccountable financial dealings. None of this was made public.

Far from being baulked of, however, is the story of the £25,000 overdraft which Stonehouse got from the National and Grindlays Bank in 1971 when he was first hearing of his Bangladesh bank.

The overdraft, according to the Sunday Times, ’would normally have been turned down. But Mr Stonehouse got the loan thanks to the backing of a political colleague’. The Sunday Times was told that this ‘political colleague’ was, in fact, a member of the Tory Cabinet. No names were given.

Why should a member of the Tory Cabinet sanction an overdraft from a bank with a manager? Lord Aldington is a former Tory MP to a former Labour Minister? Why should Stonehouse climb to the top of the Labour tree, though his Party knew he was unworthy of it?

Why should the police inquiries into the Bangladesh Fund and the stamp scheme have been dropped? Why did not charges against Stonehouse?

How embarrassing it would be for the authorities if it were to emerge that the £100 John Stonehouse had been for many years a minor agent for British intelligence. Such a revelation, of course, would be most unlikely if the charges against him are limited to the odd passport forgery and false overdraft claim.

Gangsters

All Bengali workers who gave up their money must now start to ask questions of their local collection committees, of their MPs, of their trade unions and councils. Socialists are happy to publish to those who do not have more evidence about this fund.

In two months last year, 150,000 people in Bangladesh died from starvation. The new independent government of that country has turned into a bunch of gangsters.

Bengali workers in Britain are among the poorest and worst-housed in Europe. They work hideously long hours, often in non-unionised sweat shops.

Any fudging of money from these workers by their collective committees, by their starving and brutalised countrymen in the poorest country in the world must rank as one of the most loutish and shameless operations of recent years.

It must be exposed and rooted out. Bengali workers—if they act decisively—can do both.
What we stand for

THE International Socialists are a revolutionary socialist group open to all who accept our programme and are willing to work to achieve it.

Our principles are: 

- Independence: we can only achieve our aims by the independent action of the working class.
- Revolution: we believe in attacking the capitalist state, not patching it up or gradually changing it. We therefore support all struggles of working people and class struggle to break the hold of capitalist and landlord class.

The smashing of the capitalist state is the main goal of the revolution.

The revolution is a class war for power. The working class must take power and establish a socialist society.

Socialism can only come about when workers have control of the means of production and are able to plan the economy rationally and democratically.

The state must be abolished and a new society based on democracy and freedom established.

The abolition of the state will mark the end of the class struggle and the beginning of the superstructure of freedom and equality.

We believe that the working class must take power and establish a socialist society.

We support all struggles of working people and class struggle to break the hold of the capitalist class and landlords.

The smashing of the capitalist state is the main goal of the revolution.
So this is progress...

On the march in Blackburn: 'progress' means demolishing working-class homes

WHO SAYS we can't fight big business attacks on working-class communities? Three weeks ago, plans were announced to spend £50 million on a motorway through Blackburn.

Lower Audley, a working-class district with many immigrant families, would be demolished if the central route is chosen.

Local politicians staged a protest meeting, attended by white and Asian families from the surrounding streets, which agreed to start a campaign called SOS, Save Our Streets.

An anti-motorway petition in England and Urdu brought in 300 signatures and was presented to a Department of Environment official after a protest march through the town a week last Saturday.

Some white families blame the rundown state of the area on the immigrants but successive local councils—formerly Labour and now a Liberal-Tory alliance—are ready to listen. They deliberately neglected Lower Audley for years, knowing the motorway would eventually knock our homes down.

Mrs Catterall, who is 72 and fought for shorter working hours for the weavers back in 1923, put the next stage in the campaign. 'We need a residents' action group,' she said. 'If making life harder for ordinary people is progress, we want none of it."

Other residents' groups are springing up to fight the motorway. To be successful, they must involve as many people as possible and elect street representatives. All the groups must get together to fight a united campaign. Transport union members are also taking up the issue.

At a time when public transport and other social services are being slashed to pieces, the priorities of the system which is willing to spend £50 million on a motorway for big business, with the noise and pollution and health risks in other cities already suffering, must be challenged.

PENNY PARRIE, Lower Audley SOS, Campaign Secretary.

THE REPORT (10 May) of the shopworkers' union conference declared that the rank and file in USDAW has been increasingly important.

The encouraging signs must not be forgotten. They must be stimulated in readiness for next year's conference.

We say we can do even better next year. It is not the fault of the organised and progressive rank and file movement within our union.

There are several factors why this is so. The most important is the importance of a national rank and file meeting of shop workers every quarter to exchange ideas and plan strategy to bring down the right wing 'leadership' and build a movement which will fight for real socialist policies.

Any USDAW member willing to contribute to this movement should contact us at 64 Queen Street, Glasgow (041 221 3426), MALCOLM GULL and WILLIE SOLAM, Glasgow.

THE CUTS in the social services and house spending implemented by our Labour government and councils clearly shows the priorities that Wilson and Co give, when big business is threatened, to the working people who elected them.

In Greenwich, our Labour council has increased the charges for old people's lunches, old people's and physically handicapped people's holidays, and hostel accommodation for working lads.

We are told the solution is to employ more social workers. This is nonsense. Most social workers come from middle class back-grounds and have no real understanding of working people's problems.

How much effort does our Labour council give to employing working class people on the states to act as social workers for their community?

The structure of local authority social work more and more reduces social workers to the role of glorified clerks, spending 70 per cent of their time fighting their own bureaucracy and filling in forms.

The only alternative is for rank and file social workers to link up with people to fight not only their local authorities, but the political system. There must be a joint fight against the cuts, which can best be achieved by local authority union shop stewards' committees being set up and, with the support of local tenants' groups, leading the fight back.

In the end, however, only political change brought about by workers themselves, led by a revolutionary party, will allow us to tackle our social problems, and allow social workers to help and not hinder their clients.

The CASE CON conference for radical social workers, in Bristol on 30 May to 1 June, should be of invaluable assistance. Contact Harry Fletcher 01 555 0542, NEIL WILLIAMS, Social Worker, Case Coordination Collective.

THE AUWE AND THE POSTAL BALLOT

WHAT better cure for a hangover than a campaign that in future the Engineering Union and other unions will be elected by votes at local branch meetings by postal ballot?

Already the papers are talking about a 'powerful backslash' by the 'union moderate' pressure groups.

We may soon see the logical extension of this—diary votes at all elections by postal ballot. At least in elections for MPs, which are held every three years—which leaves plenty of time for any government instrument, the Sunday Express.

The Sunday Express had a particularly nasty little cartoon on its front page—showing Communist Party members jumping up and down with joy, saying 'Brothers! The greatest news since we put down the Hungarian rioting'—saying the postal vote will help us strengthen the AUWE because Labour MPs will not be defeated in elections where there are healthy, well-attended union branches, then win in branches which are not much more than a sub collection point.

Worst of all, is the ballot by post. These state elections, in the name of democracy, attack one of the most important institutions of society's ability to discuss, debate and decide.

PETER ROBINSON, Manchester.

IN YOUR eilitorial Vietnamese Victory for Solidarity... you nowhere defined the right of the people of Vietnam and Cambodia to purge the parasitical administr- ators of the old regime... this re- inforces the illusions of the peaceful road to socialism... the true revolu- tionary position is to defend uncompro- misingly the right of the oppressed to shout their old masters... MIKE WOODS, Stafford, London.

A NUMBER of young people give up a lot of time to help in charity work. They feel something must be done to help the victims of the capitalist economy. Everyone would agree that something should be done to help... Socialism is the answer to this. It would be a society that would produce for social need, and not private need, for the few. We should work for socialism and change, not for charities, which are... BRENDAN, Salisbury.

HAROLD WILSON recently became the longest serving, and by implication, best Prime Minister. Labour has ever had. He has another record: he is the last leader to have survived from the Labour Party and from cabinet in general—39 YEARS, Newcastle.

THE ARMED Forces Movement is moving 'in a paranoid fashion'... if they have bourgeois elections they should honour them. If they take a revolutionary line... they should honour the revolutionary process by setting up their own apparatus... if the AIF is a truly socialist revolu- tionary force it will not accept the working class to defend it—JOHN BIRK, Hillingdon.

AN ACQUAINTANCE has just returned from Hungary... before take cover there, get a suit made up for £8, sell it to Barbara's for £125.01, and Burton's then sell it for £40... Witterby, the parties, have just closed a factory in Britain to move production to Hungary, where Roman- tics can guarantee a firmer Social Credit... They were here—J.J.L., BRISTOL, South West.

What the Healey cuts mean to me

SINCE Denis Healey hit us with his budget, he's said that workers who win pay rises to reduce its cutaway would be taking the blame, while other workers were going to bear the changes.

Healey also threatened that if workers permitted in defending themselves, they would have to pay the company and the state and the budget there will be un- employment and cuts in the social services.

In the cuts to the social services have already been worked out. Plans to help handicapped by spina bifida are being scrapped in September for the want of £6000 of government money. How can any government throw out such vast sums onto handi- capped children?

Spina bifida is a malformation of the spine that mostly working class babies suffer from. At least, it is an embarrassment, at worst a crippling disability that causes pain and mobility problems.

My own wife had spina bifida slightly, until the day of kidney failure, aged 17. In her last few weeks I saw her suffer the pain that spina bifida causes.

I wouldn't want to be a child suffering from spina bifida cut off from the services we need. We can't afford to be cut off. We can't afford to suffer, to be cut off from the services our children need.

Send your letters to LETTERS, Socialist Worker, Coronation Works, Park Bridge, Birmingham B9 4XG. Envelopes should not carry your name and address, but specify if you want replies. All other correspondence should try to keep letters to not more than 300 words.

USDAW: Help us to organise

POSTAL POINTS
THE DEMAND ‘Open the Books!’ has a long history in the trade union movement. In disputes, and particularly when redundancies are threatened, many stewards call for the books to be handed over — such was the case when Jessie James drew his gun. But, in a number of recent redundancy disputes, the demand has often directly contributed to disaster.

The time of booming profits, workers confidently expect management plans of poverty to be lies or the result of incompetence or crooked dealings.

To expose your boss as a rogue or a cretin doesn’t raise very deep questions about the capitalist system.

But in a period of economic crisis, many companies are in trouble. A lot of managers are happy to let workers see this for themselves, in the hope that we will be ‘more reasonable’ once we know the facts.

Even now, though, most manage- ments obviously prefer not to have us prying into their secrets if they can help it. So what can happen when redundancies are announced and the workers demand to see the books?

Workers at Penguin Books took this demand a long way, and something can be learned from their experience.

Last December, management announced that they wanted 54 redundancies from 1975.

The stewards’ committee called a meeting, which totally opposed the book to be handed over to the workers, and called on the government to investi- gate the financial dealings of Pearson Longman, the parent company of Lord Cowdrey and the parent com- pany of Penguin Books.

Control

The stewards also organised a publicity campaign around the loss of jobs and the possibility of the state towards the cultural life of the company — an attempt to confront thisth roughout non-commercial values.

Inside Penguin, a big debate began on every aspect of the company’s activities, including editorial policy and the general competence of the management.

 Quite rapidly, and to a certain extent without the stewards intend- ing this, the argument turned into an overall question of control: ‘Who runs the company, the management or the union?’

The stewards weren’t able to develop this argument in a positive direction. Detailed ideas and criticism tended to provoke disagreement, among each other and with themselves. And the management, while retreating rapidly after the shock of this attack, still refused to hand over the current accounts and the 1975 corporate plan.

Meanwhile, the stewards were feeling acutely in need of expert advice and the information they already had. They found an accountant prepared to set for them, and demanded that management allow him complete access.

This was refused and another mass meeting was called to discuss the question of the accountant and the books demanded in the discussion.

Action

It soon became clear that many workers were alarmed at the way the dispute had developed into a battle for control. And they were, anyway, unions; an accountant was needed.

The meeting voted to take the issue to the company’s Council and Arbitration Service, and only if the management refused to do this would there be industrial action.

The move was disastrous. It was agreed that, apart from the unions’ accountant, there was to be no other expert to ‘tread over’ the accounts of CAS. The accountants were to be paid by the workers and not the company, and they were to report to both sides, as ‘independent’ arbiters.

This meant that the workers lost all control over the investigation. Worst of all, the accountant’s brief was to decide whether the manage- ment’s plans ‘were real or the financial stilt of the company’. They took a month to reach their verdict, not that there was really any doubt as to what it would be. During this time, there were bitter arguments between the accountants and some of the workers about how to interpret the financial data.

The accountants shrugged these comments off, saying they were ‘politics’ and nothing to do with them. And meanwhile, all momen- tum was lost. A mood of defeatism set in, and they were about to be forced out of the business.

The stewards wrote a letter to the union demanding that the book be handed over to the workers. Again, this was not primarily because the demand was thought to be irrelevant. The demand to open the books is a long and management does not want to be a direct blow against the books’ control.

And in the absence of the strength and determination to push this through to the hard fought for nationalisation under workers’ control, destroying management’s control would only leave a frightening void.

Many other firms are in trouble. To challenge redundancies in this situation is to raise the question of private ownership and nationalisation. To demand that the books be handed over to the workers is to raise the question of workers’ control.

For workers to turn a gloomy balance sheet to their advantage, they must be in a position of strength (probably already occupying) and they must be able to call on expert advice without handing the initiative over to a capitalist accountant.

Even then, there will be no easy answers. This is only to say that the battle for socialism will not be easy — but it can and must be won.
THE UNIONS
HERE TAKE IT!

A vital AUEW election—and a Broad Left candidate hands it to the right wing on a plate

By Willie Lee, senior AUEW shop steward, Chrysler Linwood

BERNARD PANTER, Broad Left candidate for the post of AUEW National Organiser, leading member of the Communist Party, has been offered a position as a full-time organisar in the Electric Power Engineers' Association.

Since the EPEA bans Communist Party members from holding positions, Panter gave up his membership in the party, rejecting him, the EPEA has now changed its mind and turned him down. Panter's withdrawal from the AUEW election which he must have foreseen months ago, has come too late for another Left candidate to be found. The Right has been given the election.

The affair comes as no surprise. It shows the real weakness of the Broad Left inside the AUEW. Like many other members of the union who have continually supported the Broad Left, the Right, I think it is time to take stock of what is going on. In Linwood, the shop stewards committee gave full support to the Broad Left candidate in the second ballot, and circulated a list to all AUEW members in the plant giving the names of the Left candidates, including that of Bernard Panter.

False effective lead

We encouraged members to vote for Panter and other Broad Left candidates because they were 'more progressive' than right-wing alternatives. Even though these Broad Left candidates have consistently failed to get any real over national wage claims and the defence of jobs, they at least stood for the election of full-time officials.

But Panter's application for an appointed job in a visibly anti-communist union marked a new, and that looked sick. He was paraded as the ideal image of what the Broad Left stood for. At the CP controlled Liaison Committee on the Defence of Trade Unions conference in March, Panter was the key platform speaker to lead the attack on the National Rank and File Movement and what he called the 'sociocratic splitters' who divided the movement.

He had already applied for the security of this appointed position in the EPEA when he made that speech. He'd already resigned from the Communist Party.

It is an ironic justice that after all the fuss in this press, the EPEA have now changed their mind and turned him down.

Needs

These manoeuvres left the position of AUEW National Organiser uncontested by the left. At the same time when the Broad Left is getting electrically hammered by the right wing, this gives the right a further point on its plate.

But it also raises the question: is the Broad Left in any state to fight the right?

It's not enough to denounce Panter personally, although he deserves at least that. His manoeuvres and his party's attack on the Communist Party and Broad Left's pre-occupation with capturing union positions without backing up this capture with development of an active rank and file movement around a series of fighting policies.

These policies would relate to the needs of the rank and file, including the need for meaningful national wage claims, defence of jobs, control of officials, increased rank and file control of internal AUEW policies and much more.

A movement would control the Panter of this world and provide the basis of keeping the right wing at bay.

Bernard Panter, the man who attacked 'splitters' and 'wreckers' and then destroyed the work of many militants

The Broad Left notion of continued appeals for voting for the 'good progressive' leads without the development of a rank and file movement has proved disastrous. These leading figures within the Broad Left have consistently attacked the policies outlined here.

All principled AUEW members must now seriously question the past advice of these 'left leaders'.

How we beat a victimisation

By NICK RILEY, EETPU shop steward at Rotary Electrical, Sheffield, writes about the attempt to victimise him for helping to organise the union in his workplace, and about the lessons for other trade unionists:

The trouble started in January when a handful of militants began to re-establish trade unionism into the firm. The response was fantastic.

The militant group was and is surrounded by management and supervision, saw the union as a means of getting together to fight them. Before long, the membership in our department was nearly 100 per cent.

Action

Things remained relatively quiet until 6 May. Then management tried to victimise myself and a workmate were called into the management office to be told we were to be made redundant.

The reason they gave was a shortage of work and yet, that same day, half the shop were on overtime. I called a union meeting and explained what had happened. We decided a delegation, one man from each shop, should confront management that afternoon.

It was an exhausting 15 hours. It was a clear case of victimisation. Yet another meeting was held that night at a pub. A committee was formed and plans drawn up for strike action. As one of the committee members, Ken Hinchcliffe, said: 'If we let them get away with this, we are lost.'

By Thursday morning, the manning director was worried. He contacted the union's full-time official, who turned up at 4pm and went to a conference with Walker, another director and the other steward.

I literally had to fight my way into the room.

Once there, I agreed that the workers were not prepared to pay for the mistakes of the management and unless these notices were withdrawn they would have a strike and they did. After a while, the directors left the room.

Once they were out, the official told me he agreed with what I had said but there was a way to say it and a way not to say it. Management came back and announced that they had withdrawn the notices unconditionally.

Solidarity

This victory goes to show that you can talk till the cows come home but it is rank and file action that gets results. The solidarity of the men and women in our works was fantastic, that's what won us the victory without the help of union officials.

We are not kidding ourselves with the management and we must make this as long as the struggle for jobs and redundancies and for wages has not found no reflection inside the AUEW.
Stable lads send out flying pickets

NORTH LONDON: Despite appalling weather conditions 150 workers gathered at London Rubber for a four-hour mass picket last Friday.

Workers from MK Electro, Thorn, STC, Whipples, Cross Hatch, and TGWU, AESW, CPSA, CORSE, NUT, ACTSS and NUJ branches and from Waltham Forest Trade Council brought messages of solidarity to the strike.

A speaker from STC summed up the picketers' feelings: 'We know that this is a strike to defend our union from a really vicious management attack. So we know that it's a struggle which concerns us all. As the bosses' crisis gets worse they will set up more and more attacks with less and less unionism. We must all be prepared to give support. Otherwise we'll find ourselves without our unions and without our jobs.'

Pressure has been building up on management, with oil and latex supplies running low. In the week the strikers had suffered a blow when London Rubber had trained the police in their use of rubber truncheons. Picketers refused to move from the path of a pirate janket, but management eventually cleared the pickets and eventually escorted the oil through.

Police have also been regularly visiting the picket line to 'check', and to call in for tea with the pickets.

The guards have been playing tricks, such as setting up an equal pay sign, aligning a camera team filling the picket line and paying special attention to all those who come to stand in solidarity with the strikers.

Indefinitely

The strike may move nearer resolution this Wednesday when the case goes to the Conciliation and Arbitration Board. But unless management is willing to restore facilities for picket line workers, it seems likely that the strike will continue.

London Rubber, as the strikers have renamed it, has shown they are willing to use any tactic. The strikers need more of the support local workers have provided.

More than £1900 has been collected for picket funds and union branches should send their contributions to: "The Outside the London Rubber Factory, The North Circular Road, Park Avenue, London, E3.

A 24-hour picket is being maintained.

Electrolux: Women want £8, 'no strings'

LITON: The two-week strike by 2000 workers at Electrolux is still going. The main demand is for an 80p an hour pay increase without strings for the 600 women direct workers, to bring them up to equal pay.

The 'no-strings' demand is crucial, as the company has made its 8E-a-week offer on condition that the union's AEUD and GWMT—sign what is officially a new job grading scheme. So-called skilled jobs have never been graded before in the factory, so the company is trying to use the usual trick of getting equal pay that way.

Management has no doubt document to the house of all women workers saying the pay rise being paid their rate of pay rise from June 1 1976 on rates which are 84 per cent of what they are getting now.

This is a factory-wide issue and the women's committee could not possibly agree to such wage cuts.

The senior picket leader, the Electrolux Women's Social Worker who said there was a danger of women being reduced to 84 per cent of the present rate of earnings. With this offer, there is no way women can get anything but 84 per cent—and that is reason enough to drop it off to the deal. The deal would make it possible for the company to recruit men after 1 January 1976 on rates which are 84 per cent of what they are getting now.

This is a factory-wide issue and the senior picket leader could not possibly agree to such wage cuts. The women's committee could not possibly agree to such wage cuts.

Close to the picket line, the National Women's Social Worker who said there was a danger of women being reduced to 84 per cent of the present rate of earnings. With this offer, there is no way women can get anything but 84 per cent—and that is reason enough to drop it off to the deal. The deal would make it possible for the company to recruit men after 1 January 1976 on rates which are 84 per cent of what they are getting now.

This is a factory-wide issue and the women's committee could not possibly agree to such wage cuts. The women's committee could not possibly agree to such wage cuts.
**IN BRIEF**

**CROSFISS LONDON OCCUPATION OVER...**
As reported last week the two-month North Foreland occupation by the POST Office Engineers is over. Seven of the strikers were sacked for misbehaviour and the remaining seven were moved to new posts without any guarantee of re-employment.

**COALISHE LARNES**
They’ve been locked out for six weeks and now seven families of TGWU union members in Grangemouth fighting to keep their jobs have an ultimatum: they must either agree to work under new management or face permanent closure. The TGWU members are determined to keep the batteries running at the plant—and they’ve already had a warning that the company will be looking for new creditors if they don’t agree to work under new management. The company has offered to pay their severance package in exchange for the sale of their business to a new owner. If they don’t agree, the company will start selling off their assets to recoup some of the money lost.

**SOUTH LONDON DUSTMEN**
The Southwark dustman strike continues. The men, supported by the Labour Party, have been on strike for two weeks and have not yet been able to negotiate a new contract. The current contract is due to expire in a few weeks, and the men have been told that they will be offered a new contract with lower pay and fewer benefits. The men have been without pay for two weeks and are demanding a fair contract.

**HEM Designer**
34-year-old designer, who was one of the original designers of the Hem Designer, has been sacked. He was a key figure in the early days of the company and was responsible for many of its most iconic designs. The company has said that it was unable to afford to pay him any more and was forced to make the difficult decision.

**NEWCASTLE SCAFFOLDERS STILL OUT AFTER SIX MONTHS**

McAlpine’s have taken a hard-line stance on negotiations, insisting that they will not return to work until they have a fair deal. The scissor manufacturers have refused to negotiate with the strike leaders and have threatened to call in the police if the workers do not return to work. The scissor manufacturers have been accused of using the strike to drive down wages and conditions for all workers in the industry.

**AUSTIN’S NEW PHONE SCAM:**
A new phone scam is targeting vulnerable people, especially pensioners. The scammers claim to be from the government or a utility company and ask for personal information, such as bank details or credit card numbers. They then use this information to make unauthorized transactions.

**STEWART PLASTICS:**
"We have proof that you are cheating the discount and claiming a benefit into the company's books without paying for it," said a spokesperson from Stewart Plastics' chairman, Charles Stewart. A man who was caught trying to cheat by Jacky Franck, aged 37, was fined £4,000 for fraud. The company has also taken legal action against the man and has recovered the lost money.

**FORD STRIKERS TO PICKET JACOB PENCES**

Dagenham Dock—Dozens of Ford workers held a protest outside the Dagenham Dock plant today. The workers are angry about the company's decision to cut 1,000 jobs and are demanding better pay and conditions. The protest was peaceful, but the workers were determined to make their voices heard.
WHO ARE THE WRECKERS NOW?

By SW reporter

WORKERS occupying Massey Ferguson’s Coventry complex have been preparing for a dispute for 13 months. The information contained in a captured memorandum from Massey Ferguson production director H J Hebdon and dated 2 April 1974, has astounded many of the workers.

Like all of us, they have been assaulted by years of Plant Street propaganda about military-wrecking industry and causing strikes. So they find it almost incredible that those militaries are, in fact, the employers.

The secret memo was first disclosed at the workers’ mass meeting last week. Then, on Tuesday, management sent out a letter to all hourly-paid employees heading: ‘The dispute at Coventry. It makes a pathetic attempt to explain away the document and says: ‘At your mass meeting, reference was made to a company document from which it was alleged that the company had tricked this dispute. That document refers to a theoretical study carried out nine months ago and has been quoted out of context.’

The explanation has boomeranged. Workers who were sceptical about the authenticity of the document simply do not swallow the theoretical study. In any event, as far as they are concerned, all Massey Ferguson’s explanation has done is to admit that the captured document is genuine.

The latest salvo in a four-week strike has boomeranged, too. The workers have adopted new tactics, occupying the plant, stopping all operations and sending out flying, surprise visits to factories where the displaced management have had to repair.

But why should one of the most profitable firms in Britain plan for a four-week strike and then claim it took place by offering a pitiful six per cent wage rise out of their £164 million profit? There appear to be two years ago, after a bitter struggle, Massey Ferguson was forced to concede parity with Coventry at the Perkins plant in Peterborough.

Starve

But it appears they resolved to give Peterborough plant and Coventry’s expense, by holding wages down and playing hard-to-get.

Furthermore, shop-floor organisation in Coventry is extremely powerful, with the assembly workers in particular resisting layoffs to the hilt. Neither the union leaders nor the workers are keen to do what they can to weaken this resistance.

In two weeks management’s plans have been turned around. They are prepared to strive for the strike for another month, but not at the cost of disruption to sales. They are reported to be deeply worried about further tactics being decreed, in particular the suggestions of restoring the tracks and selling tractors and spares for strike funds.

The workers, backed by the NUCU Committees of all three unions, can be sent messages of support by: Socialist Shops, Socialist Commentary Committee, Massey Ferguson, Banana Lane, Coventry.

About this overmanning, Sir Monty Finished...

PART OF the large delegation of steelworkers from Scotland and Wales who marched through London last Monday in defence of their jobs. The steelworkers gave a black eye to Sir Monty Plantain’s plans for 20,000 instant redundancies—but the small print in the ‘agreement between the British Steel Corporation and the steel union leaders needs reading carefully. It could mean almost as many sackings—agreed over a longer period.

Picture: Andrew Ward (Report)

Secret memo exposes firm’s plan to force a strike

Two of the idlers who sit on Massey’s board—and the memo that exposed their plot. Left, the eighth Duke of Wellington and, right, Lord Cranborne.

How you can help the Two

WE’VE HAD a number of letters since our story last week that Shrewsbury piker Des Warren is in solitary confinement.

One letter from the Prisoners Welfare & Families Association asks to be put in touch with Mr Warren because they want to organise a picket of the Home Office. ‘A prisoner is a human being,’ says the letter, ‘and should be treated as such.’

The Rank and File Organising Committee’s Department of Politics reported a steady trickle of money over the last week—and they’ve now had more than £500. But this is nothing like enough.

The wives and children of the two jailed pikeris are in great distress and need support. They can and must be helped by the trade union movement. Send money and organise collections now.

ALL CONTRIBUTIONS TO RANK AND FILE DEPENDANTS FUND, 214 Renfield Road, Liverpool 3.

Affiliation:

Cheep ‘N Nasty rock band, disco, bar extension till midnight. Tickets 50p on the door or from IS secretaries.

GRAND NATIONAL IS SOCIAL Saturday 31 May, 7.30pm

St Pancras Assembly Rooms, Kentish Town

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