REVIEWS the Labour government's record for 1975 last week, Harold Wilson said: 'I think it is a year which historians will say was a year of great change, in which we had the most remarkable achievement of postwar years in the agreement between the government, the trade unions, industry — and I believe pretty well the whole British people — about the things that have to be done to overcome inflation.'

The social contract, the £6 wage freeze, social service cuts. These are Wilson's 'great achievements'. These are the policies which he promises to continue in 1976.

If he is allowed to get away with another year of these policies, this will be 1976:

Harder

"Unemployment in the United Kingdom rose by 42,563 to 1,211,466 between mid-November and mid-December. There is no sign of any slackening in the sharp upward trend. The wholly unemployed figure has jumped 37,800, or 5 per cent of the labour force. Vacancies fell a further 2,500."

Department of Employment, 23 December.

"Thirty top people from industry, commerce and the trade unions and the GMB have contributed to a report which forecasts 1,750,000 unemployed by next December."

Opinion Research Centre, 24 December.

Dearer

"Grocery prices recorded their biggest increase, according to the Financial Times grocer prices index. The 3.7 per cent rise means that prices measured by this indicator have doubled in less than five years. Nearly all fresh foods are expected to be dearer in the New Year."

Financial Times, 29 December.

"The cost of school meals for nearly six million children is to go up again. An announcement is expected early in the New Year raising the present cost of a school meal from 15p to 25p."

Daily Telegraph, 24 December.

Colder

"Electricity has gone up by 80 per cent in the past two years. Old people can't pay. At least six million of Britain's nine million old age pensioners will suffer from cold this winter. 20,000 will die from too much cold."

An Age Concern spokesman.

"In the four months ending 7 November, 212 more infants under 12 months died in England and Wales than last year. If this increase develops into a trend, the number of babies who die each winter because of cold — about 1,000 — could rise alarmingly. A decline in living standards is a well-known cause of increased infant mortality."

Radcliffe report by Margaret and Arthur Webb, published 31 December.

Support this march NOW!

The Right to Work March from Manchester to London next March, which was announced in last week's Socialist Worker, has already attracted the support of trade union bodies up and down the country. The march must mobilise the full force of the working class in all the places it passes through. This means that trade union branches, trades councils and shop stewards committees must start discussing NOW what they can do to build the march.

Every reader of Socialist Worker who wants to do something about unemployment must ensure that his or her organisation decides this month about the march.

A small fraction of 1% commits your branch, your trade council, your stewards committee — even yourself — to support the campaign. The Right to Work Committee wants to hear as soon as possible that minimum commitment has been made.

There are many things you can do to help the march:

- Sponsor a marcher for one day — or for a week, or for the whole march. It costs about £5 a day to keep a marcher on the road.
- Help with accommodation.
- Send delegations and speakers on the march for a day or two as the march moves through your area. Send delegations to the Albert Hall rally in London on 10 May.

GET MOVING NOW

The address of the Right to Work Campaign is 46 Prince George Road, London N1.
CIA: The biggest terrorists of all...

The assassination of the CIA’s chief of station in Greece, Mr. Richard Welch, has led to yet another torrent of press wisdom on the menace of terrorism.

Yet what’s most remarkable about this wisdom is its utter hypocrisy. Typical of the double standard were the comments of Prince Karim Aga Khan VI, Her Majesty the Queen and Her Princess, Richard Henderson, the British Ambassador to Greece. What they said is instructive.

British officials insisted that the present climate does not call for a thousand remittances paid to the board of an investment trust in the city. Sily fellow. The proposal was carried with one vote against.

SACRIFICE CORNER

ANGUS OGLIVY, husband of Princess Alexandra, proposed a generous Christmas present to himself and the other directors of British Industries and General Investment Trust, at the company’s annual general meeting on 18 December. Directors’ fees, he said, should go up from £2,000 a year to £15,000. Mr. Oglivy is a director of 63 companies.

The proposal was opposed by Mr. Godfrey Davis, who said that the directors duties were ‘terrifically arduous’, since many of them were also on the board of the firm’s advisers. Mr. Welch was double-tongued, continuing this filthy work under the shams of democracy that has replaced the colonies. Unlike Harold Wilson we shed no tears for his departure.

The CIA has also been involved in a host of other filthy operations, including the bloody coup in Chile, the emergence of vicious right wing dictatorships in other Latin American countries and in funding thugs and gangsters in Angola.

Managing

They have admitted to murdering the head of the Chilean army General Schreiber, in 1979. And what did the hypocrite Harold Wilson say about this? Precisely nothing.

His call for international action against terrorists will not affect the biggest terrorist operation of them all. In Greece, where the late Mr. Welch was operating, the CIA masterminded the coup that brought the Colonels and their Junta to power in 1967.

The CIA trained the killers and torturers who use force on trade unionists and students under their puppet regime.

Mr. Welch was double-tongued, continuing this filthy work under the shams of democracy that has replaced the colonies. Unlike Harold Wilson we shed no tears for his departure.

Three senior judges, led by the Master of the Rolls, Lord Denning, have charged Harold Wilson in secret with the theft of $500m. The stolen funds were used to purchase arms and other goods for the Exchequer.

Almost immediately they got a bill for $900m for arms, which the previous landlords hadn’t paid.

As good landlords who believe in law and order, they refused to pay it.

Paying

Leonard McCall went on paying money into his account, and went on paying his rent. In October when the bill still hadn’t been paid, the gas was cut off.

In March, for good measure, the landlords refused to pay the electricity or water bills either. So they were cut off.

For four months, Leonard McCall had to live in his room without heat, light or water.

He went back to the landlords in the county court. He asked for damages to compensate him for the misery during those four months.

The court awarded him £75.

Leonard McCall appealed to the High Court for more damages. Lord Justice Denning, Lord Justice Shaw and Lord Horner said unanimously that he should get nothing.

They said that cutting off the gas, electricity and water was a criminal offence under the Rent Act. But it afforded no rights of damages to the tenant.

They did not say why the property company had not been prosecuted.

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For decades, Portugal terrorised Angola. Thousands were slaughtered—but British politicians, press and TV said not a word. Now, suddenly, they are all obsessed by the menace of ‘foreign intervention’...

THE FOREIGN Secretary, James Callaghan, ‘depletes’ foreign intervention in Angola. His Tory opposite number, Reginald Maudeing, calls for an international conference to find ways of ending it. Press and TV are full of stories about Cuban soldiers and Russian guns and the alleged menace of a Russian takeover, the most contemptible hypocrisy.

Neither the media nor the Labour Party paid the slightest heed to foreign intervention in Angola when that intervention was run by their NATO ally Portugal under the dictatorships of Salazar and Guterres. A murderous colonial war was waged by Portuguese troops for years on end in support of a colonial and dangerous foreign rule. What had Callaghan and Co to say then? Nothing.

Nor had they anything to say about the United States’ involvement in Angola until it recently became so blatantly obvious that it has to be excused as a ‘response’ to Russian intervention.

The US, it is being put about, is only supporting the ‘non-Marxist’ forces to stop the Russian ‘getting control’.

This is a lie. Recent investigations into the CIA have shown that CIA involvement in Angola goes back at least ten years according to the Sunday Times.

And thereby hangs a tale.

The major US involvement until 1964 was, of course, military and economic support for the Portuguese dictatorship of Salazar that bought American guns and American money, the colonial war could not have been carried on for very long.

But the US government also ‘sought insurance’ against a possible Portuguese defeat.

At the same time that it was financing and arming and it also gave limited support to Holden Roberto to build up a fake ‘liberation’ movement, the FNLA. This was the long-standing CIA involvement. With the revolution in Portugal this was stepped up and extended to support for (not the creation of) another movement, UNITA.

All this pre-dates Russian and Cuban military support for the MPLA.

The major foreign intervener in Angola, apart from Portugal itself, was and is the USA.

The unholy coalition of white racist South Africa and the USA that sustained the ‘non-Marxists’ was made in Washington. Why? What are they really after? In a word: profits.

Angola is the second largest oil producer in Africa. Gulf Oil runs the show. The country contains huge, untapped mineral wealth which, under Portuguese rule was destined for US hands. The State Department means to keep it that way.

The MPLA stands for nationalisation, that is what it is a ‘menace’.

Of course Russian and Cuban support for the MPLA is not given out of pure altruism, any more than Russian arms were sent to Vietnam out of pure altruism.

But it is not Russia or Cuba that threaten Angola’s independence and territorial integrity. It is the US and South Africa, supported by China as part of its ‘anti-Russia at all costs’ policy.

British policy is clearly moving into support for the broad philosophy—‘a carve-up that will preserve the resources of the country for multinational big business.

The South Africans want this too, and the US may be moving towards it.

No one should be deceived by hypocritical pretences of British ‘impartiality’.

The Labour government is not neutral. It is against the MPLA, just as it was against the National Liberation Front in Vietnam.

Calls for a government of ‘all three movements’ are in fact calls for the CIA-run and South African backed outfits to take a predominant share in the government from the MPLA.

The war in Angola is a classic imperialist war, a war for booty, for profits and control of raw materials.

It is being waged, first and foremost, by Wall Street and the Pentagon.

There can be only one policy: anti-imperialist—support for the authentic Angolan national struggle.

And that means support for the MPLA.

The law of the land...

SINCE 1970, when the Act was introduced, the bosses have been expected to ‘move rapidly towards equal pay’.

But a special report last month revealed that...

In 1972, women earned 51.5p per cent of men’s wages.

In 1975, women earned 55.5 per cent of men’s wages.

The bosses have maintained the differences without breaking the Act by paying men long service payments, pay attendance bonuses, special shift premiums and so on.

Special women’s grades have had to go, but the bosses have simply shown women workers into a new grade.

The result is exactly the same and it’s all legal. For instance...

The bakers’ agreement, signed last year, abolished men’s and women’s rates, replacing them with a new series of grades. Within each grade there are two separate classifications, A and B.

Women dough makers earn 80 per cent of the male dough makers’ rate.

Suffer

The hourly wages of part-time agricultural workers have been fixed at a lower rate than the wage paid to full-time workers. The vast majority of part-time agricultural workers are women.

Even if the bosses are caught out by the Act they aren’t suffering the industrial sanction against employers found guilty: no profits, no fine, no nothing.

The Sex Discrimination Act does not cover two of the most flagrant areas of discrimination: pensions and social security.

Women who are discriminated against in industry have to take their cases to industrial tribunals, which can award compensation but cannot enforce reinstatement or promotion.

Otherwise, the women who complain of discrimination must take a case to a civil court.

The Equal Opportunities Commission, which will preside and mediate over allegations of discrimination, is an insult to women who have fought for women’s liberation.

The chairman is Betty Lockwood, women’s organiser of the Labour party in the years when the party was in opposition, and women into separate conferences.

Claims to fame

The vice-chairman is Lady Howe, whose main claim to fame is that she is the wife of Tony Eendgoven, speaker, Sir Geoffrey Howe.

This passion for ‘party balance’ runs through the whole Commission, which has one person under 35, and consists of the main career liberal MPs and pastured civil servants.

Neither the Equal Pay Act nor the Sex Discrimination Act will do anything to solve unemployment among women—up 2.5 per cent in the first nine months of this year, compared with 48 per cent for men.

It will do nothing to lighten the main burden of women. It will not provide a single extra nursery school to take some of the strain of working women.

CONCLUSION: Both these Acts are riddled with loopholes and exceptions.

Left to themselves, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the law courts will not bring equal pay or an end to sex discrimination.

In fact, left to themselves, the commissions and courts will make little difference.

But the Acts do change the atmosphere about discrimination. They make it easier for women to fight for their rights where they can win them—on the picket line and on the shop floor.

The Acts make those shop-floor battles all the more important. If 1975 was the year of the equal pay laws, we must 1976 be the year of the equal pay fight.

Tough fight

Moira Simpson, one of 21 strikers for equal pay at Newton, Derby, wrote in the last issue of Socialist Worker:

‘It seems that the company are trying to dodge the Equal Pay Act. We are already seeing the laws in this Act.

‘We are having a tough fight with the company, but all the members are determined to kick it out. They are a spirited bunch of girls... We are the union and we shall stand the fight to win.

‘That’s the sort of spirit which can turn the dream of equal pay into a reality.

The Rio Workers

The law of the land...
Holden to sell you any strong socialist body the

'TALKING ABOUT SOCIALISM
Duncan Hallas

working class will always be suppressed.'

"Of course, we need a strong socialist party which can unite the bulk of the working class into a militant bloc." (It was he who called them "socialists"")

"Certainly, the fragmentation of the left is a serious concern. But we need to work on how to overcome it in order to understand how to exit it. First of all, many of those who call themselves socialists do not agree at all with the aim of 'the smashing of the capitalist system'. This is very obviously the case among the leaders of the Labour Party. They can talk about socialism when it suits them (as they then are in opposition) but are in fact, as the reader-electively recognizes, thoroughly wedded to the preservation of capitalism.

On the other hand, it is obvious that, on the same thing internationally. All manner of parties and governments profess to be socialist. Mrs. Nehru's Congress government in India, President Sadat's in Egypt, Galt's in the Netherlands, and even in Sweden—not to mention Harold Wilson in Britain—will stand as examples.

Now in reality all these regimes are conserving the image of the party in order to try to make capitalism work; certainly they are trying to smash it, as are the regimes of the Russian type, but they are separate problems.

The point is that the socialist label is often used to deceive and, in fact, to prevent the development of strong united working people who so use it is not misguided comrades, they are comrades, we should call their right names is a sure sign of attempted fraud.

The claim of the Labour Party to be a socialist party is not only unsupported by any member, but a Party supported by large numbers of workers; it is not a party standing for no action, but for action (not necessarily, but far more) irrespective of the kind of action, and far more generally, far more directly, far more firmly, far more closely, far more critically, far more powerfully. It is the claim of the Labour Party to be a socialist party, it is not a Party standing for no action, the Party which stands for no action is the Party which stands..."
The trade unions collapse

ONe clear message came out of the meeting between Chrysler management, combine shop stewards and national and local full-time trade union officials before Christmas: that Chrysler had no intention of retreating on the number of sackings, while the full-time officials fell over themselves in their rush to accept the deal.

Indeed the meeting marked a new stage in the collapse of the official trade union movement's stand against unemployment. The resolution moved by Bob Wright, AUEW national executive member—the that Chrysler workers reject only the company's unwillingness to negotiate and not the deal itself—marked a new stage in the bankruptcy of the left trade union leadership.

But Wright wasn't content with stating his case. With others, he insisted that every full-time official had the right to vote on the jobs of Chrysler workers and that AUEW officials had no choice—they were instructed to vote for Bob Wright's resolution or face the consequences.

On paper and at conferences every trade union leader, including TUC general secretary Les Murray, is pledged to fight to reduce the numbers out of work and to halt the growth in unemployment. But when it comes to the reality of the confusions, half it is a completely different matter.

The overwhelming majority of full-time officials are not only willing to accept sackings and call them 'voluntary redundancies' they also want to bully workers into accepting the sack.

In simple terms that is what Bob Wright's resolution and the trade union officials' vote meant. The full-time officials are now clearly interested in fighting only for redundancies payments and for any deal that involves voluntary acceptance of the deal.

They think there is no possibility of a serious fight developing and will defend themselves by saying that they are trying to salvage the best possible voluntary redundancy, but any other attempts at action is the best possible voluntary redundancy. But voluntary redundancy is the best possible alternative to Chrysler's plans. The alternative is a serious campaign in the whole trade union movement against unemployment. The trust union officials and the trade union leadership in general have now made it clear that they do not want to be part of such a campaign and fight. That clears the way for us to build a serious rank and file fight that will save jobs and call for nationalisation of the whole car industry.

Report they're keeping secret

"HALF the production but ten times the stress," he admits. "How many workers are doing too little?" That is how the Sunday Telegraph described the report on the motor industry by the "Think Tank", the Cabinet's economic advisors.

Yet a secret British Leyland report shows exactly the opposite. After management at British Leyland's Cowley plant threatened to send its workers home 'because they weren't working hard enough', and the 'producing vehicles below the quality required last month, a joint union-management inquiry into the plant was set up.

In report was so critical of management that Leyland have tried to stop its publication. Far from the workers, not working hard enough, the report reveals amazing management incompetence.

For example, on the quality of the materials the workers were trying to use, the report says:

There were numerous examples of rejects being used which were of inferior quality and unsuitable for the job in hand, in both the materials and operators were of the same mind in producing them. In some cases they were completely frustrated at the apparent inability of those concerned to rectify their complaints. In some instances complaints were outstanding for long periods of time.

"The work has not ceased. The problems that had tried to get management to do something about them, without success. The report then continued: 'There were cases brought to notice where materials were rejected and had to be recycled due to shortages.'"

In 1973 the British Leyland management at Ryton, Coventry, forced workers to use panels that had been rejected as below standard. The management then attacked the workers for 'shoddy production'.

The Leyland report mentions dozens of cases where workers are fed up with the line up of drill holes, position of cage nuts, spot welds undies.

As a trade union report, the say the main problem was a 'continuous change in labour practice, workmethods, discipline changes, changes, changes' again management's responsibility—"not the workers!"

The management's attitude is that if the Sun, which continues to spread the story, continues to do it there is no point in the Sun, which continues to spread the story, continuing to do it in an effort to conceal the incompetence, greed and waste of management, obsessed with the need to make a profit.

CITRYSLE
This is no rescue plan!

The real face of the government's 'rescue plan' for Chrysler is clear from the details that were spelt out last week.

The plan calls for 3,800 redundancies and ou 1,500 if those remaining will accept a three-day week until the summer. That means 42

There would also be a three-week shut down after the three weeks holiday, redundancies to be taken at the end of the year by national negotiations and the so-called workers' participation scheme described by the Labour Research Department as the destruction of effective trade union organisation.

There would be new planning levels and work methods to maintain the 50 per cent increase in productivity. And none of the proposals are to be negotiated—the deal to be accepted as it stands.

Here is no rescue plan.

The government's plans are still based on the think tank of Britain, but over a slightly longer period. Those who see in the present proposals the end of the cuts, or even a prelude to future expansion, are quite mistaken. Acceptance of any redundancies, voluntary or otherwise, can only hasten the closing of the entire Chrysler UK operation.

Whatever the outcome, failure to fight now can only encourage more vicious attacks on jobs and working conditions in the future.

Even now this has not been fully understood. Workers in Coventry and Luton have now voted for militant action and occupation against redundancies. But sections of the combine leadership are anxious to use these threats simply as a negotiating ploy. Or worse, they see it as a way of shifting the sackings on to another section of the workforce.

We need to work now for united action and that means occupation by all Chrysler workers to stop all redundancies and to fight for the future of the whole of Chrysler without compensation.

Godfather Ricardo—make him an offer he can't refuse—nationalisation without a penny compensation.

‘Take it out on workers’—Think Tank

'Top manufacturers, with too many models, too many plants and too much capacity. That's the conclusion of the government's 'Think Tank' report on the car industry.

It says the British car industry can't compete with the foreign market unless drastic cuts and changes are made. The report says there is enough capacity in Europe to produce about 25 per cent more cars than there will be a demand for. This will mean 'intense competition, low profits and increased pressure on multinational to cut capacity in their least productive European plants.' Demand will not pick up until 1979 at least.

Severe weaknesses in the industry in Britain are low productivity and too much manpower, the report claims. One of the main causes of low productivity is overmanning—in some operations 50 to 80 per cent more than on the Continent.

There is nothing in the report about how the present crisis came about. For years factories and resources were turned over to producing motor cars. Breeching wrecked the railways and the rest of public transport was run down.

In Luton the Roots Company took workers off making panels for railway coaches and put them into assembling cars. They and British Leyland bailed profits away to the shareholders and directors, leaving the workers with antiquated, obsolete machinery. Not surprisingly, the British car industry now can't compete with Japan or West Germany.

The machinery in British plants is on average twice as old as that used in the rest of the world.

The Think Tank solutions for this mess made by the car manufacturers means making it take out on the workers. They want a much smaller workforce, working much harder, for the lowest wages in Europe. Other factors will be hit, the machinery left to rot, skilled workers left on the dole queues outside.

There is an alternative to this madness. The skills of the workers can be used to help build a western transport system. This means nationalisation of the whole industry. It means removing every ounce of control from Godfather Ricardo and his friends. And paying them what a penny in return.
INTERNATIONAL THEY STAND

For business purposes the boundaries that separate one nation from another are no more real than the equator.

But what does it mean to say, Quisling, speaking, and Jacques Massignon, both of IBM, one of the biggest multinationals in the business, should know.

But the unity of the employers internationally is often maintained by an anxious unity of those they exploit. Companies such as IBM depend on being able to play off the workers of one country against those in another to maintain their power.

That is why for socialism’s internationalisation is not a matter of conjecture, but is central to all our activities.

In support of such organisations as the International Socialists, the fight to build international links between workers is as important as the fight to build a revolutionary party in this country. Twenty years ago, or even ten years ago, the weight of the revolutionary left everywhere made it difficult to give real meaning to these links.

Even today, the job is only just beginning to be done. But over the past year considerable progress has been made. The 15 international secretaries of the January 1976

Thalidomide had the votes, the consultation and public support. Fraser had the bosses and the workers.

SOLDIERS’ CRIME TO PROTEST

THREE WEEKS ago the French government arrested nearly 4 000 working-class militiamen, including some local officials of the CFDT, the second biggest trade union federation.

Their ‘crime’ was attempting to recruit soldiers into a trade union.

But this is only the latest in a series of arrests of militiamen against the organisations of rank and file soldiers that have been growing during the past year.

Fifty-seven soldiers have been imprisoned or detained for their activities in setting up soldiers’ committees and regular papers, and demanding the right to form trade unions.

A special state security inquiry has been set up. Inspectors are going round the barracks searching ‘belligerent’ belongings for ‘undesirable’ literature and dragging soldiers in for questioning.

SOLDIERS’ CRIME TO PROTEST

Laughter

A soldier from a soldiers’ committee in the east of France described it: ‘To begin with we found it difficult to take it seriously. Lots of my mates were inclined to laugh at the government’s gross exaggerations about the affair and all the accusations thrown out by the press. Then we realised that, with or without these unfair lies, the real problem wasn’t in what they said about us, but how they had decided to let loose a big attack on us, and how they were really going to hit us hard.’

Or as another soldier from the Besancon soldiers’ committee said: ‘You think it’s disgusting to risk five or ten years of prison for speaking out about what many soldiers are already thinking.

But it isn’t only soldiers who are being attacked for being “anti-militarist”. The government is also clamping down on workers who show any solidarity with the soldiers’ movement. On 14 December two Ford workers were arrested for distributing leaflets in support of the Besancon soldiers’ committee. Two members of an anti-militarist solidarity committee were arrested near Nimes.

In other words, the government is using the whole weight of the army to attack workers, and as an excuse to carry out a very large clampdown.

On 15 December, the French revolutionary paper Rouge, Revolution, and of the left socialist party the PSU were searched, with the police seizing some of these organisations for seven times.

Protested

Unfortunately the main organisations of the French working class have not given the soldiers’ support they should. They have protested at the most outrageous acts of government repression, but they have not supported the demand for soldiers’ committees and regular papers.

For instance, George Seguy, leader of the Communist-led federation, the COT, has said that he does not give “unconditional support for the creation of an army union”, which people seem to have learned nothing from the experience of Chile — unless rank and file soldiers are organised independently of their upper-class officers, they can all too easily be used to smash the working-class movement.

In spite of these setbacks the soldiers’ and workers’ movement is pushing ahead with their claims. ‘What we have is a powerful movement of soldiers’ committees,’ says a statement by a soldiers’ committee, ‘is to find means of mobilisation which are big enough to group together the majority of the soldiers in a national, and possible on a regional or national level.’

Spirits

The spirit of the soldiers’ struggle is shown in the titles they have given their committees. At one barracks they call themselves the ‘African Vikings’ because soldiers are not allowed ails. In Lavelle, they are called ‘The Tank’. In the Dragoons they are called ‘Red Ferret’ and ‘Massacre’. In the Red Collar. Then there’s the ‘Rotes’ and the ‘Thunder of Brest and Lions Roaring’.

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US-backed junta makes dictator look lightweight

A FEW years ago many people would have been at a loss whether Ethiopia was in Asia or Africa. Some no doubt would have managed to associate it instinctively with the name of its autocratic ruler, Haile Selassie. But events of the past two years have driven greater attention on the country.

Yet, thanks to the capitalist press, one mythology has only been replaced by another. Then, it was the diminutive yet superhuman figure of the emperor. Now it is the 'creeping coup' and the revolutionary Derg (Military Council).

Beneath these mystifications lie the struggles of the Ethiopian working class and other genuine democratic forces. These are the real protagonists of the revolutionary movement that has been going on since—and before—February 1974.

The Ethiopian working class is small, numbering some half a million out of a population of about 26 million. But its strategic location—in the capital and other major towns, and in the modern sectors of the economy—has given it an importance far outweighing its numbers.

First

The first group of organised workers in Ethiopia were those of the Franco-Ethiopian Railway. This connects Addis Ababa and Jibuti and has been running since 1917. In 1947, the railway workers staged the first ever strike in the country's history. Others in the forefront of the working class struggle under the feudal rule of Haile Selassie have been workers of the Indo-Ethiopian Textiles Company, whose 1961 strike was bloody suppressed; workers of the General Ethiopian Transport, who run the bus service in the capital, and employees of the Wonji Sugar Estate Company, largely owned and managed by the Dutch.

The founding of the Confederation of Ethiopian Labour Unions (CELU) in 1963, after years of hard struggle and much sacrifice, was a landmark in the working-class movement. It provided a framework for coordinating the workers' struggle. But American imperialism through its agencies, such as the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions to which the CELU was affiliated—and the International Labour Organisation, managed to infiltrate and subvert the organisation.

In spite of this, workers were able to play a key role in the February 1974 popular movement by staging a four-day general strike in March 1974. Almost all the demands of the workers were conceded.

by William Brown

The deposing of the emperor in September 1974 was as much an outcome of the decades of heroic struggle by students, workers, revolutionary intellectuals, peasants, and oppressed nationalities, as it was of the great democratic upheaval of February. The later seizure of state power by a small group of military officers was in utter disregard of the calls by all progressive forces for a provisional popular government. The setting aside of all democratic rights—including the right to strike—set the new pattern of class struggle.

Junta

Four days after the formation of the so-called provisional military government, CELU concluded its annual congress with a resolution calling for the restoration of democratic rights, the constitution of a provisional popular government, and the declaration of a republic. The junta responded by arresting the president, secretary-general, and vice-president of CELU. These three are still in jail.

For the past 12 months, the junta has been trying to suppress the working-class movements by a combination of terror and naked force. First, in December 1974, the junta announced with a great deal of orientation that it had gone socialist. After the nationalisation of some foreign-owned firms, the junta's spokesmen began talking of 'the end of class struggle' and tried to undermine the organisational independence of the working class.

What the junta actually meant by nationalisation became even clearer last September when it justified the declaration of the state of emergency as follows: 'Strikes in any country where production and distribution industries are under the control of the government are for the benefit of the people, and are considered to be a blow against the government and the people.'

Puppet

Last May, the junta tried to appoint a puppet president of CELU. In face of determined opposition from the workers it backed down, and had to acquiesce in the election of a radical provisional executive committee.

The class struggle is sharpening. On 25 September, seven workers of the Ethiopian Airlines were killed and 29 others seriously wounded when they tried to prevent the arrest of one of their colleagues who was distributing copies of the CELU resolutions.

To avert a threatened general strike and to hunt down members and sympathisers of the EPRP, the junta declared a state of emergency on 30 September, giving draconian powers to its forces. Since then, hundreds of trade union leaders and activists have been arrested.

The Ethiopian working class, young and small, yet showing a high degree of commitment and combative spirit, is facing lassitude in response. Their struggle, as continuing to arm and finance a regime whose capacity for deception and brutality has made the last absolute monarch a lightweight figure.
THE first great workers' march against hunger and unemployment was the March of the Blanketeers in Manchester 160 years ago.

The Blanketeers, infuriated by the depression of a ruthless Tory government, intolerable food prices, starvation wages and massive unemployment, gathered in St Peter's Field, Manchester, for a march to London. They were called the Blanketeers because each carried a blanket. They couldn't afford coats.

The stated purpose of the march was to bring a petition to the government for more work and better wages. But the march organisers made it clear that they were not begging for charity. They warned the labouring masses and the anti-government masses in the north of England into a huge protest movement.

Long before the day of the march, the Blanketeers met and prepared for the march with spies. Many of the leaders had no wonder at the length of the journey. What could be more absurd?

The marchers planned to place the THING on the throne; the THING that gave aid for an evening in the shape of a march and a demonstration while their people were perishing; the THING that dined and laid aside the one who needed it; the THING that never did say nor think anything that was not utterly brutish and contemptible—when we think that the THING was on to the monarch's throne...

The Blanketeers shivering on Admiral's Rd, 60th street, who afterwards drilled on the Lancashire way, who worked in the cotton mills, who bought their law, or killed at Peterloo, are less hopeless than the workers who rioted and starved them, less ridiculous than the Crimean war and numberless dignified events in human history, the united achievements of the sovereigns and ministries of Europe.

The route of the three hundred and nine was towards Stockport; but when they reached the bridge they found it occupied by the Yeomanry and a troop of the Manchester City Guards. To attempt to forge a passage was impossible; but numbers three themselves into the river, and so crossed.

The soldiers then withdrew into Stockport town, and the bridge was left open to the mob. When they passed they struck the other side the soldiers and police dashed at them, and drove everybody whom they could catch.

A remnant only of the Blanketeers escaped from Stockport, and a smaller remnant got to Macclesfield. There there was no shelter for them, and many of them lay in the streets all night. When the morning dawned only twenty went on to Manchester, and these shortly afterwards separated, and wandered back to Stockport.

Conventional history books pour scorn on the Blanketeers. They point to the failure of the march to get out of Manchester, or to organise substantial numbers of workers to join the demonstration and strike for their demands.

Yet the Blanketeers started something which no government repression could stamp out: the idea that unemployment is not inevitable, that it can be fought and beaten—if enough people are prepared to stand up and organise against it.

When my father was a lad, unemployment was so bad. He spent the best part of his life on the dole. Straight from school to the labour exchange. Ragged clothes and holey shoes. Cutting pin-heads for a length of bag of coal.

And I'm standing at the door. At the same old bloody door. Waiting for the pay-out like my father did before.

Nowadays they've got a craze. To follow clever Keynesian ways. And computers measure economic growth. We've got experts making round making theories on the pound. Caring little whether we've got a job or not.

And I'm standing at the door. At the same old bloody door. Waiting for the pay-out like my father did before.

Sung by Alex Glasgow

THE REVELATION IN DEVERIER LANE

4

At nine o'clock in St Peter's Fields a kind of platform was erected from which an address was to be given. Thousands of men were present; some with coats; others without coats, others without clothes; but most of them with blankets, which they had rolled up like pumpkins.

The magistrates read the Riot Act, although there was no riot, nor the semblance of one, and forthwith surrounded the platform and carried off every one on it to prison. The crowd was then chased by the soldiers and special constables till all power of combination was at an end. About three hundred, however, were collected, and found their way to Arbuck Green.

Respectable Manchester was frightened when the Blanketeers met, and laughed at them when they were dispersed. What could be more absurd?

The marchers planned to place the THING on the throne; the THING that gave aid for an evening in the shape of a march and a demonstration while their people were perishing; the THING that dined and laid aside the one who needed it; the THING that never did say nor think anything that was not utterly brutish and contemptible—when we think that the THING was on to the monarch's throne...

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Socialist Worker Christmas Draw

The prize-winners are:

First prize, 25in colour television set, with licence; J Tombre, Benson, Tidewater (television number 43900).

Second prize, portable colour television set: M Gladwin, Chaddeen, Derby (40356).

Third prize, stereo unit: M P Gentry, Geddards, Buckinghamshire (12291).

Fourth prize, radio: J Lassiter, Burbuch Hill, Essex (60799).

The following 100 people won bottles of mineral water:


A number of prizes need to be claimed. Check your number against the list and if it is there write to Socialist Worker Supporters Fund, B Cotmans Gardens, London E2.
The fire and the clay

CLAYHANGER is a magnificent book. I have a suspicion, though, that the television series just starting on ITV is going to be very different from the book.

The first episode on New Year's Day is the first of 26. It is based on three books by Arnold Bennett, Clayhanger, Hilda Lessways, and These Twain. All are set against the background of the Five Towns—the potteries surrounding Stoke on Trent.

The various agencies which society has placed at the disposal of a parent had been at work on Edwin in one way or another for at least a decade, in order to equip him for just this day when he should step into the world.

Arnold Bennett in Clayhanger.

Clayhanger is one of the most compelling love stories ever screened on television.

ITV publicity handout.

The battle is what matters. It's the spark that pulls him away from just being anybody. His freedom from his father's oppressive house takes a different road, the only one open to so many women—marriage. But her victory contains its own defeat too.

Some may argue that Anna, knowing that she loved another man, ought not to have married Myron. But she did not reason thus; such a notion ever occurred to her. She had promised to marry Myron, and she married him.

Nothing else was possible. She who had always submitted and bowed the head, submitted and bowed her head then. She had asked in with her mother's milk the profound truth that a woman's life is always a renunciation, greater or less. Her chance was greater...

It's that which makes these two books worth reading. Arnold Bennett manages to describe, without making it seem grandiose, the battle between two fairly ordinary people and their own world. What matters is the spark of originality that turns them into something above it. It's the same spark that makes all of us socialists.

Remember it, when you watch the television series. I suspect that the flame will be extinguished in favour of a 'good love story'.

Margaret Renn

Books by Arnold Bennett available by post from IS Books, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London, N1 8AY. Clayhanger £1.50, Hilda Lessways 85p. These Twain 90p, Anna of the Five Towns 65p.

by PAUL O'FLINN

The Great Myth

ONE of the myths about the art of a society—in books, plays, films, music and so on—is that art is autonomous and for the most part independent of that society. Great Art, so the claim goes, captures unchanging essences like Truth and Beauty and is thus a centre of permanence in a mutable world.

Even Marxists are sometimes nervous of challenging this myth, partly because of the crudity with which the coupling of art and society has been made in the past. Partly, too, because it's certainly true that while the relationship between, say, capitalism and unemployment is fairly obvious, the links between capitalism and, say, the modern novel are much more complex and difficult to determine.

One means of chipping away at the myth and seeing the real relations of art and society is to ask ourselves how art becomes available in the first place. Every year thousands of songs, stories, and so on are written but only a fraction of them are actually publish-
ed. The rest disappear for ever.

What determines publication is, in the end, a publisher's estimate of whether or not a given work is likely to make him some money. Without that estimate your song remains a few notes in the back of your head, your story just a grubby notebook at the bottom of a drawer.

It's an estimate that can act as an immensely powerful cultural filter, cutting out at source not just the worthless but often the odd, the dissenting and the dangerous as well. Stone dead

The critics who stand between a work and the public are another sort of filter. They can and do kill a work stone dead before it finds a public at all.

Take a recent example of this process in action. David Edgar's play Death Story opened at the Theatre at New End in London, last month. It was a brilliant work that tried to come to sympathetic terms with the struggle for revolutionary change—making things better is a hard and bloody business, one of the characters remarked, and it was a business that the play lived on stage. Most critics hated it.

The man from the New Statesman warned his readers that the play's 'extravagance'—in other words its position to the left of the man from the New Statesmen—began to appeal and the dangerous and repellent me.

The Financial Times linked that the acting is uniformly rotten'. The Observer backed summarised the message and sneered: 'I trust that, you feel guilty.'

The result of this hammering was that audiences some nights were as low as half a dozen. The play limped off at the end of its run into an undeserved obscurity from which it'll take a brave and mad company to revive it.

So one more honest statement disappears and one more radical theatre group is pushed a little nearer bankruptcy.
COVENTRY: LET'S PUT UP A CANDIDATE

THE victims of Labour's racism

THE BY-ELECTION in Coventry caused by the death of Labour MP Maurice Macmillan will gain national TV and newspaper coverage on the state of the British motor industry and the unprecedented level of unemployment in the city.

It will be an excellent chance to expose the government's policy of 'fighting' inflation by using unemployment to discourage wage militancy.

It should stand a candidate in the election, preferably a worker from the industry, with the aim of building support for the Right to Work Campaign and hence the National Rank and File Movement, as a fight against the trade union movement to combat the collaboration of Jack Jones and Len Murray with the Labour government. Terry Connor.

Meetings should be held with workers such as Ricky Tomlinson, David Skinner, Dave Nuttall and Arthur Scargill to gain the maximum public impact for the fight against unemployment and sell-outs by the Labour government. MIKE CARVER, Walsworth.

AN ODE TO HEINZ

In the departments where I work
This cliche has become a joke
"If at first you don't succeed..."
For your jobs you must gripe.

The seek will be your only repayment.

Ode is allocated to the chosen few.

Who only with extra money have been able to have them

Not such as John. Peter or I.

But let's not talk in our section

You will be the only one who will see,

To be late is to be a Heinie strict law.

And just what has the law been set down for?

It should be for me, it should be for all.

Why do I not go to see John or Peter, and who

And a Heinie worker, N W London.

AS Workers Power paper organiser for the International Socialists (IS) in Bloomington, Indiana, I want to say that Socialist Worker is a real inspiration to us all. A solid additional paper is central to building the fighting workers' organisation that you've got in Britain and which we are building here.

The most impressive single characteristic of SWP is the real base of support we clearly have for the paper and which you got by making it an organisational tool for militant workers. We are continuously pushing Workers Power paper in this direction as fast as we can earn the income. Our experience between our paper today and yesterday shows the results.

Just flicking through the pages, with their old photographs and the details of the women's movement in the past alongside today's dates, it is perfectly clear that women have had to fight every inch of the way, even among our own ranks. That's what I like about the diary. The very past and the present coexist on one page. I'm not certain if these struggles are not just isolated incidents.

Bertris Dunn in Women's Voice

Big Red Diary, £1 post free from Pluto Press, with a special discount for bulk orders. Pluto Press, Union 103, Spence Court, 7 Chalcot Road, London NW1. Also available from all its bookshops.

COVENTRY: LET'S PUT UP A CANDIDATE

THE victims of Labour's racism

TWO WEEKS before Christmas Cypriots in Haringey, North London were once again subjected to the racist policies of the Labour Party.

Alex Lyon, Minister of State at the Home Office, stated that because of the partition of Cyprus, refugees would be expected to go home.

He and the Home Office have done nothing to help Cypriots, nor have the local Labour councillors.

The councillor for housing told a recent council meeting that it was untrue that Cypriots were jumping into the housing queue. He also boasted that because of a government system, no refugee could possibly be re-housed in Haringey.

This quietened the racist idiots who asked the question. Meanwhile, the Cypriots remain unhoused.

Alex Lyon, the Labour Party and Haringey's Labour council are guilty of encouraging racism.

They would rather appease the sense of guilt of all of Haringey's homeless. ANDREW STROUGHTON, LONDON, N10

Great Pyro is to create jobs in one of our local plants, so perhaps you are taking one of your children and employing them in the factory.

The only thing to ensure that workers in Nutshell and other workplaces will defend the unemployed is for the unemployed themselves to act directly. A demonstration outside my hospital would push the stormer to act in defence of the unemployed knocking on the door outside.

The pressure and plight of the unemployed must be left by those in employment. Only by uniting can we challenge the Labour government's Tory policies. —JIM BARLOW, Dundee.

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Narrow "back to work' vote at Alcoa

SOUTH WALES: The nine-week strike at the Alcoa site near Swansea has ended. The decision to go back was pushed through by a narrow margin (75-74) at a poorly-attended mass meeting. Many of the strikers were so sure the strike would be solid through Christmas that only 153 of the 500 strippers attended the meeting. There the Electricians' Union officials repeated the threats plastered over the front page of the local paper.

Jobs sit-in broken by police

MERRY CRISIS: Fight for the right to work! No redundancies at Chrysler! This Christmas message being sung by the headquarters of Penley Town Hall bellowed last Monday. Eleven unemployed workers from the Glasgow Right to Work Committee occupied the Town Hall for all an hour. They caught the attention of crowds of shoppers by singing messages. Others handed leaflets in the street supporting Chrysler workers.

Police broke down the door with boots and truncheons. The elevator were arrested and charged with breach of the peace. They were held overnight in jail and released bail. Mr. Higgs, a spectator, said: "The police ignored requests for mattresses and were so sure the strike would be solid through Christmas that only 153 of the 500 strikers attended the meeting. There the Electricians' Union officials repeated the threats plastered over the front page of the local paper."

The Electricians' Union officials repeatedly threatened with the possibility of "bosses" rounding up the workers and the workers not voting in parliament against NUM policy. A great fuss was made in parliament by Mr. Sinclair, the son of the House of Commons wanted to do 'him for contempt', let them try. The House of Commons shut down. Now bold Sidney Weighell followed in Scarr's footsteps.

But the day after Weighell's speech, the Tory benches exploded in rage. Sir John Langford Howe invited the Privileges Committee to investigate Weighell's speech. Weighell listened, then said: "We have no authority to admit to the House of Commons any person who has invaded the rights of the House of Commons and said that 'MPs are not free to act in the traditions of British democracy'.

The House of Commons closed. The matter was dropped. Sidney Weighell was a gentleman for the moment. He had a loud voice for his members at public meetings. Once back in the corridors of Westminster, he could be relied on to sell them a letter which he had had that morning from Weighell. Admitted Weighell that he had said that NUR MPs would be restricted in vote against the government—but then assured the Speaker that his instructions to the NUR would be for the benefit of the whole country. Weighell was a gentleman for the moment. He had a loud voice for his members at public meetings. Once back in the corridors of Westminster, he could be relied on to sell them a letter.

That Alcoa would pull out of the community if they were not satisfied was a widespread belief among the workers. In a strike like this, if you are a member of the Communist Party and a full-time official, there are two things you can do. Either you remain a full-time official, you ignore the wishes of the strikers, and resign from the Communist Party. Or you become a worker and resist the boilermakers' threat to your post as a full-time official.

The defeat is a disgrace to the whole trade union movement. The outcome is probably best summed up by Michael Donoherty, a member of the Alcoa workers' committee. In a strike like this, if you are a member of the Communist Party and a full-time official, there are two things you can do. Either you remain a full-time official, you ignore the wishes of the strikers, and resign from the Communist Party. Or you become a worker and resist the boilermakers' threat to your post as a full-time official.

Steel fight-back

SOUTH WALES: A steel industry right to work committee has been set up in Swansea to fight the proposed sackings and the ending of the pension plan. As an area conference will be held at the Newport Steel Co., a cross-section strategy for the dozen British Steel Corporation plants in the Swansea area.

And if you ask them what they act in this peculiar way, they shake their heads and answer: Grow food just to eat! It doesn't mean any thing. From wells beneath the sea they bring by pipes and tanks enormous quantities of oil, then give it to the bankers. They're also meant to pour it over snow and only manufacture enough Venice for others to make war. And if you ask the bankers why they are not making use of petrol and oil, they answer: It's not the time.
CHRYSLER:
The only way to save jobs OCCUPY!

CHRYSLER and their allies in the Labour government are now blackmailing the trade unions.

At Tuesday's meeting in Coventry between shop stewards, union officials and the Chrysler management, the company left the meeting to phone the government. The message they brought back was, accept the sackings by this Saturday or we close the whole of Chrysler UK.

This is what the so-called rescue plan is all about - sacking 800 workers. The few concessions made at the meeting amount to nothing at all.

At Stoke, Coventry, they are prepared to accept some short-time working instead of some sackings for the moment. At nearby Ryton there is no change.

The other concession is a sick joke. The company are prepared to relax the principle of 'last in, first out' on the sackings, and instead are prepared to accept plant by plant negotiation over who should go. But there is no real reduction in the number of jobs lost.

Save jobs

Some trade union officials are already acting as 'rescuers' to 'save the plan', rather than save the 800 threatened jobs. The company took advantage of this weakness by refusing any serious negotiations at all.

A fortnight ago at Whitley the company said their position was not negotiable. Despite their talk of 'flexibility', their position stands. They are happy with their £145 million pay-off for 850 sackings.

Calling the sackings voluntary instead of compulsory will not save jobs. Shifting the sackings from one part of the combine to another will not save jobs. Nor will trying to get the redundancy pay raised a bit. But income secretaries want to prevent the union's position as acts as if this was the problem.

The problem is not to save the 'rescue plan', or a few modifications. The problem is how to scrap completely this fake and fight to save all the jobs. The only solution was that spell out by some Linwood stewards. Occupy the plants and defend the jobs. The alternative is to have an end to the one after the second fry with the rest following within 18 months.

Occupation of the plants must be the first step in a campaign for full nationalisation of Chrysler, without a penny in compensation. To win this all the plants and the machinery must be taken under the control of the workforce.

The movement of all goods and machinery must be stopped. Pickets must be sent to all Chrysler depots and showrooms throughout Britain.

A national appeal for support from the whole trade union movement and blocking of all Chrysler goods must be launched.

This can only be done if we take up the argument in the trade union movement that it is not a fight to save the Chrysler company, but a fight to take over and run the factories.

This is part of the national fight for the right to work.

On Monday, Rolls-Royce added their name to the list of the job busters and announced plans to get rid of at least 500 and possibly 6000 workers in 1976.

All these attacks can only be resisted by a united national fight.

Occupy Chrysler

Fight for nationalisation of Chrysler without compensation

Fight for the Right to Work

Build a national Right to Work Campaign

Socialist Worker

Portugal: Republica closes and stock exchange opens

THE PRESS are happy. Portugal has at last, they claim, turned the corner to "freedom and democracy".

The Observer summed up their feelings by referring to Mario Soares, the leader of the right wing Socialists as the 'man of the year'.

But the New Year means rather grimmer things for Portugal's workers. The government has extended for another two months the pay freeze it introduced after the purging of the left wing in the army.

At the same time its austerity measures have meant huge and sudden price increases. For instance, the price of cigarettes has shot up 65 per cent, the cost of a cup of coffee has doubled.

In the armed forces, the new freedom means that more than 100 left-wing officers and soldiers remain behind bars, while there is talk of releasing on parole former fascist secret policemen.

In the press, it means that the state-owned papers are only being allowed to reopen after left wing journalists have been sacked.

So far the defenders of the "free press" have sacked 30 media workers, chiefly journalists, for their leading political opinions. The radio stations where the staff were mostly left-wing are still off the air, and Resistance to the government is being handed back to the reactionary bishops.

So far, the new repressive measures have merely left untouched the unions and the workers' committees. But there have been significant exceptions.

Some members of left-wing groups-especially the group KUS-have been arrested and a number of exiled foreign revolutionaries have been thrown out of the country.

Real meaning

And when it looked as if elections would replace Mario Soares' support from their control of the pharmaceutical union, police took over their headquarters.

For this movement, the worst blow has been the closure of the "paper Republica", after the resignation of the military officer who was its nominal director.

The real meaning of the new "freedom" was shown when it was announced that a stock exchange was to be reopened for the first time since the overthrow of fascism and that ten million of pounds were to be paid out to shareholders in the banks, which were nationalised last March.

But the workers' struggle is by no means over. The present ruling group in the government and the military council of the revolution is far from stable.

These are still run by 'moderate' military officers, who think they can solve capitalism's problems through moderation. The danger is that they are under increasing pressure from right wing officers in the armed forces, who would like a Chilean solution.

Fight back

But before the extreme right can cause their problems, they have to break the resistance of the workers. They are no doubt hoping that the 'moderates' will win the confidence of the workers.

But there are the first signs of a renewed fight back by workers. There have been many small strikes by small factories in the north. At Braga building workers hit the wage freeze occupied the labour exchange.

In both Lisbon and Oporto there have been strikes of bookstall employees. At the Applied Magnetic Plant, pickets are posted to stop the fulfillment of a court order for the movement of the goods. A illegal to closing the factory.

And the government has not been able to carry through the purge of the press without clashes with print workers.

The right wing may have won a temporary victory, but the struggle goes on. And so does the need for solidarity from workers in this country.

By a BBC news reporter

Socialist Worker

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