

The Week

A NEWS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIALISTS
Vol. 8 No 25 December 20th 1967

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**FOOD
PRICES
UP AND
UP**

Wilson's christmas box

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UP
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Vol. 8 No. 22 December 22, 1937

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MR. WILSON'S CHRISTMAS BOX

The argument about cuts must still be going on in the Cabinet. But there is no doubt from Mr. Wilson's speech in the House of Commons on Monday that we are to face massive cuts in Government expenditure and the slashing of the social services. The reaction of MPs in rejecting the idea of any cuts in social services at all is very good. It shows that they have not confused by the argument over arms for South Africa. However, we strongly suspect that the Christmas recess will be used for high-powered canvassing by the Cabinet.

Every socialist will be pleased that the arms embargo on South Africa is to remain in force but there are strong grounds for believing that the press and others misrepresented this whole affair to reduce opposition to cuts in social services. After featuring the great battle that was going on in the Cabinet, the newspapers and some Tory M.P.s began to speak of a choice that was facing Labour. This choice being either arms for South Africa or cuts in social services. We think it can be clearly demonstrated that this choice is completely false; that the real choice is socialist policies or savage cuts in the living standards (including loss of social services) of the British people. This is the argument that must be used to answer the Cabinet as they pile the pressure on.

It seems that the Government, because it has rejected the socialist option, is being driven into policies that will bring it more and more into conflict with the unions and rank and file Labour Party members. Even people like Mr. Woodcock and certain right-wing members of the executive of the AEU realise that the rank and file will not accept what Mr. Wilson is trying to force on the unions. Thus conditions are very favourable for a fight against the present leadership of the Government and Labour Party. It is up to the left in the trade unions and Labour Party to seek to mobilise for a fight: if they don't all the fine motions in the House of Commons and declarations will amount to nothing. The left should use the Christmas period to organise itself for this fight and this mobilisation.

DECEMBER THE TWELFTH

Considerations of space and time prevented us from commenting upon this lobby in last week's issue. However, it would be entirely wrong if we did not go on record as saying that we disappointed with the lobby. Indications are that the decision by the CSEU to instruct the Tyneside CSEU to withdraw sponsorship did more harm than would have thought. It was regrettable, in our opinion, that some trades councils decided to withdraw support. A fight against unemployment needs mass and militant lobbies and other demonstrations. Formalities can be overcome if there is a will. We hope that this mistake will not be repeated on the next demonstration against unemployment called by the Midlands' Federation of Trades Councils.

FOUR MILLION WOMEN "USED AS SLAVE LABOUR"

from Barbara Wilson

This was the heading of an article in the Observer of 10/12/67, which was concerned not with women in some Middle East sheikdom but with the women of Britain. The article was based upon some preliminary information from a Government-sponsored report to be published early next year. More than half Britain's eight million working women earn less than five shillings an hour, and only about 4 per cent. can expect to earn as much as 10 shillings an hour. The report is said to show that women are treated "like coloured labour at the height of the Empire," and should provide useful statistics for all those who are fighting to end women's status as second-class citizens.

ALGERIAN TRADE UNIONS CALL FOR DEMOCRACY based upon a Reuters report

Algeria's Labour Confederation urged on December 19th that the Government of Premier Boumediene should bring about "authentic democracy" into the country's political machine. It said that this was the only way to avoid serious conflict in the country. The call came in a comment by the 250,000 strong General Union of Algerian Workers on last week's short-lived rebellion by a section of the army led by the former Chief of Staff, Col. Tahar Zbiri. The confederation said ceaseless, frank and honest discussions were needed among all sections of the community.

Political institutions should be created to "bring life back to normal" and create an authentic democratisation of the political structure. The confederation complained that it was not consulted enough by the Government on matters related to the "building of socialism" in the countryside.

GOVERNMENT SPIES ON GERMAN STUDENTS from B.W.

The Federal Ministry of the Interior of West Germany has sanctioned its security services spying on the leaders of the S.D.S. (German Socialist Students' Federation). They have stated that gathering information from secret informants is permissible where "the defence of the constitutional order is involved." The SDS has been the motive force behind recent demonstrations in the major cities of Germany against the Vietnam War and the visit of the Shah of Persia. They are also the inspiring force behind the campaign for more student power in the Free University of Berlin.

STRIKE AT TRANSPORT HOUSE JUST AVERTED from S.B.

An official strike threat by Labour Party press officers was averted "at the last moment" when the party's staff board belatedly agreed to pay union rates to Miss Jean Denham, a Transport House departmental official. Under a compromise agreement with the National Union of Journalists, it is proposed to pay Miss Denham 80% of the £1,345 house agreement minimum for one year; 90% for a second year and then place her on the agreed scale rising to £1,600 a year. The percentage rates are those for staff with less than three years' experience. Previously, Miss Denham, although a designated Labour Party press officer and an NUJ member for some years, had been paid as a clerk.

Among those who have come out on strike because of this particular piece of meanness is Mr. Gerald Kaufman, Harold Wilson's press secretary at Downing Street. There are many anomalies in pay and conditions at Transport House and readers should not be surprised if a strike takes place.

Mr. Woodcock, general secretary of the Trades Union Congress, was cryptic after his discussion at 10 Downing Street on Monday, December 18th. He did say, however, that the unions could hardly be expected to support a new wages freeze. According to Stephen Fay, Labour correspondent of the Sunday Times Business News, in an article in the 17th December issue of that paper (that is, the day before Woodcock saw Wilson):

"The Government will tomorrow ask the trade union movement to freeze all general wage increases until the middle of 1969. Economic Ministers are to tell the Trades Union Congress that normal wage bargaining should not even begin until the end of 1968, when they expect the balance of payments to move into surplus. The policy, which reflects Mr. Roy Jenkins' tough Treasury line, is harsher than the TUC expected. And unless the Government can bring even more persuasive arguments to bear than it has done so far, it will be rejected by the trade union leaders. The TUC is willing to co-operate, as long as its conditions are met, but not for as long as 12 months. If the Government sticks stubbornly to its new policy, it could precipitate a serious and damaging split with the trade unions.

"When the Economic Committee of the TUC meets the triumvirate of economic ministers - Mr. Wilson, Mr. Jenkins and Mr. Shore - tomorrow it will inform them bluntly that a norm of $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 per cent. for general wage increases should be adopted from the middle of 1968. It has not altered its economic strategy, just latered its timing by 6 months. Even then, the TUC will only co-operate if the Government can ensure that price increases attributable to devaluation rise gradually in the next six months. If the Confederation of British Industry's belief that consolidated price increases should be allowed early next year is accepted, the TUC will be disinclined to hold the pass until next July. The Government's difficulties are further exaggerated by two factors:

- (1) Private estimates made in Congress House of devaluation's effect on prices at home cast doubt on the Government's contention that they will rise by only 3 per cent.; it is thought that increases of $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 per cent. are more realistic.
- (2) The TUC cannot ignore the Conference of Trade Union Executives which meets late in February to debate economic policy. If the general council's policy is to be adopted it must recognise the groundswell of discontent in the movement over continuing wage restraint.

"Indeed, the focus of attention is likely to shift away from the TUC to individual wage claims. These are dominated by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions' claim for "a substantial wage increase." The president of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, Hugh Scanlon, does not intend to be diverted either by the Government's policy, the TUC's voluntary incomes policy, or the forthcoming report of the Prices and Incomes Board on engineering wages. And there are significant signs now that the predominantly right-wing executive of the AEU is lining up behind left-wing Scanlon in the fight for a general wage rise."

It would appear that there is a substantial amount of truth in this report. Rank and file trade unionists must keep up the pressure to ensure that the TUC does not go in with the Government in its plans to impose a really big cut in the living standards of the British people. The unions were created by the workers to protect their interests not cut their wages.

GOVERNMENT PLEDGES MACHINE TOOL MANUFACTURES TO TUNE OF £2.5M. by J.C.

The Government is to assume liability of up to £2.5million on any losses incurred by manufacturers of machine tools under a new scheme announced by Anthony Wedgwood Benn, Minister of Technology, on December 14th. Under the scheme, the industry will be able to build up to £5m. worth of equipment for stock, knowing that the Government will assume liability on losses incurred when the equipment is eventually sold. Mr. Haviland, chairman of Stavely Industries, put an idea of this kind before the Minister of Technology in June, 1965, in the hope that it would help the industry defeat the cyclical demand problem which has dogged it for years. When the economy runs down, machine tool makers find themselves with a shortage of orders. Sometimes they have to lay off skilled men, and when the pace of activity quickens again they cannot win these workers back from other industries.

This means that they cannot cope with the flood of orders, they normally face. Consequently, delivery dates lengthen, and many buyers turn to overseas suppliers, with the result that imports soar. In addition, many medium-sized concerns simply cannot afford to build for stock, or will not accept the risks involved. Mr. Haviland suggested that the Government should back an insurance scheme designed to lessen the risk. This is precisely the system which Mr. Anthony Wedgwood Benn has announced. He said that stockbuilding programmes would be agreed between individual firms and his department. The scheme would be introduced immediately, on an experimental basis.

"The Government is prepared to assume a maximum contingent liability of £2.5m," he said, in a speech on December 14th, which will enable £5m-worth of machines to be built for stock. The extent of the contingent liability will be kept under review in the light of the response from industry. My department will charge a premium of 1 per cent. on the estimated cost of the stock, and will accept 50 per cent. of any net loss arising from the sale of the total stock in hand or in course of production at December 31, 1968, he added.

The Government seems to be prepared to do anything rather than face the obvious answer to problems like these: nationalisation under workers control. Then we could have a national plan to help to overcome the cyclical affects of world trade and other aspects of capitalist instability. This would be far better than giving money to big business.

SOME STUDENTS PAY £7 A ROOM IN LONDON from a student reader

The shortage of housing in London places an almost intolerable burden on those sections of the community least able to afford high rents. The logic of the housing situation in London means that those most in need are forced into bad housing with little or no amenities. From a survey conducted by the Welfare Committee of the new Paddington Technical College indicates that some students get the worst of both worlds: they pay high rents for very poor accomodation. The survey shows that 15 per cent. of students living in single rooms who answered a questionnaire are paying rents of over £7 per week. One girl from Jamaica shares a single room with three others in Ladbrooke Grove at a rent of £13.10 a week. The landlord does not provide a rent book. 72% of those answering were without a rent book, as is required by law. The average rent paid where there is no rent book is £5 19s, but the average where one is provided is over £1 less at £4.7s.

BRIGHTON AND HOVE TRADES COUNCIL ON CBR SETTLEMENT from a Brighton reader

The following official statement was issued by the Brighton, Hove and District Trades Council on December 10th:

"When the CBR dispute and lock-out commenced in April of this year, the Brighton Trades Council was asked for help by the men concerned. Having heard the facts we then resolved to give all possible support. The union concerned (National Union of Hosiery and Kindred Workers) declared this an official dispute and from that time our Trades Council was in the position of giving assistance to a TUC union which had requested local help.

"It is not our function to comment upon the internal affairs of any union, but it is necessary for us to state that we have been disappointed at the way in which the union concerned has tackled those measures which were necessary. We must make it perfectly clear that the agreement now reached was made without the slightest consultation at local level, either with the local union members or with the Trades Council. We are quite aware that every union has an absolute right to conduct its own affairs but in the absence of NUHKW local machinery and full time officials on the spot, it is this Trades Council which had to shoulder the burden and act as the rallying agent for support. In these circumstances, and considering the sympathy aroused in all quarters over a dispute with serious implications for workers everywhere, we do not consider that the NUHKW leadership should have stood on narrow legal and technical grounds, but could reasonably have accepted that we had a moral right to be consulted before such a vital decision was taken.

"Not only have we not been consulted, we were not even officially informed of the decision. In the past week, disturbing rumours reached us of the NUHKW's possible intentions. We can now reveal that on Wednesday morning we sent a telegram stating our concern, appealing to them to consider the wider implications and requesting a meeting with their officials before a final decision was reached. This telegram has been ignored. On Friday morning we left a letter for the NUHKW officials at the their proposed meeting place in Brighton. In this letter we again asked them to meet us and Trades Council officers stood by for the entire afternoon. This approach also was ignored.

"Whatever token agreements are signed, we regard the test of CBR's sincerity to be the ending of the 72-hour week, the payment of normal rates and provisions of tolerable conditions and the guarantee that any employee may openly belong to a union of his choice. This to include the reinstatement of those in dispute who wish to return, since our information is that the factory is not fully manned.

"The Trades Council is convinced that local trade unionists will continue to regard CBR as "black" until such time as trade unionism and decent conditions exist inside the factory.

"To achieve these ends Council may wish to continue a picket line in order to enrol the present and future employees and help them towards decent wages and conditions."

Contributions to the Lock-out Fund are more important than ever, they should go to: CBR Appeal Fund, 21, Vale Avenue, Patcham, Brighton, Sussex.

It was in the Peloponnesus that I felt most conscious of the Greek military regime this summer. Every few hundred yards along the roads one was met by large hoardings proclaiming 'Long live the King! Long live the Army! Long live the Revolution of 21st April!' By law every cafe and taverna in Greece must carry propaganda posters displaying a complex chart with communism at one end and the Revolution of 21st April at the other. The number of people detained in Greek prisons for political reasons is probably close to that claimed by the Junta - around 3 000. But this is a floating population; it seems accurate to estimate that some 50 000 people have been arrested for political reasons since April. (see an excellent article by Mervyn Jones, New Statesman October 20th). And the censorship is not only oppressive, it is in many ways ludicrous: books, records, as well as newspapers are censored - last month a young man in Salonika was sentenced to four years prison for selling a record of Theodorakis. The cinema has been crippled - I had little choice in Athens other than seeing bad westerns. And the Greek classical theatre festivals at Athens and Epidavros were impoverished by the banning of plays dealing with democracy and those of Aristophanes, because they mock governments and politicians. More serious is the problem of Greek schools, where children are segregated according to the 'reliability' of their parents. The children of parents with any left-wing views are segregated into schools where the emphasis is on health, bodily vigour, and the glories of Greek history and where they are deliberately turned against their parents.

The point of this long introduction is to suggest just how insecure the Junta feels. Their censorship and restrictions would often be comical, if they were not in a tragic context. And it is not surprising that they feel insecure, for the political and social base of the Junta is perilously narrow. There is support for the regime; when Pattakos entered the theatre at Epidavros at a performance which I attended some 15% of the audience was applauding enthusiastically. But who are these people? Greece is a polarised society; the native bourgeoisie is more a financial and business than an industrial one, and is therefore far more isolated from the working class and peasantry. There are growing signs that the Greek middle classes are not happy with the regime: the economic state of the country gives them little cause for pleasure and hostile foreign opinion does them little good. A key moment in the Junta's career came in August when the two leading figures in the Bank of Greece resigned from office - an action which both reflected and encouraged a widespread absence of confidence in the regime on the part of the bourgeoisie. The main civilian support seems to come from petty-bourgeois elements, especially shopkeepers and clerks, sick of corruption and politics, and articulating their malaise in a Poujadist type reaction. The regime, indeed, is an utterly negative one; Papadopoulos may have some ideas, but the Junta is dominated by backward looking men like Pattakos.

This base, narrow and insecure, cannot be a permanent one. The petty-bourgeoisie relies too much on a now declining tourist trade for a regime unpopular abroad to remain in favour with them. It is on the army, socially as well as in terms of power, that the Junta rests.

In asking where hope lies for change, one important factor must be kept in mind - the general fear among the mass of Greek people, even on Crete, of another civil war. I believe that there would be at the present no mass following for a call to arms, and while the army remains solid such a call would be sure to fail. Hope for change must lie in a number of directions. Firstly, in the army itself. It is rare for an army dictatorship to maintain its unity with the pressures of politics and ambition ready to divide it. And there are signs that splits in the army are developing. Elements in the north were clearly willing to support Constantine last week. More important is the emergence of a group based on the younger officers, to the right of the Junta; this new element wants no civilian politics at all - permanent military rule, whereas the Junta still seems to want a return to civilian politics, with strict military control. The Averoff trial was clear evidence of this division. And the return of troops, some 12,000 of them from the comforts of Cyprus, will not help army stability.

The second crucial factor is the economic situation. The period of the Junta's rule has been marked by falls in industrial output, building, and in domestic and foreign investment. The Junta's indication of increased bank balances is only a reflection of a decline in capital investment. And the price fall, claimed as a success by the Junta, is of a kind associated with a depression. Last year's overall deficit on external accounts was £1m; this year it will be about £80m. These problems are not all of the Junta's making; the decline started at the end of 1966. But the Centre Union policy of George Papandreu met such problems by stimulating purchasing power by encouraging wage increases and giving farmers generous support prices. The Junta, predictably, is pursuing a policy of ruthless retrenchment, cutting spending and freezing wages. This is a policy which, in the context of Greek society, is likely to alienate both the working class and bourgeois sympathisers, and confirm the will to resist.

It is here that the resistance movements that have formed are of importance. At present they do not see themselves as leading an armed revolt, but of spreading propaganda, of encouraging sabotage, and of being ready to lead an armed rising to give the final push to a weakened regime. In a country afraid, above all, of another civil war, the strategy seems a correct one. There are at present two main resistance groups in Greece, the EDA (United Democratic Left), generally seen as the legal version of the banned Communist Party. But because it has an identifiable membership, EDA has been hard hit by arrests. More widespread is the Democratic Defence movement, which developed during the summer. Its members are drawn chiefly from supporters of the Centre Union party, the principal left party in Greece; supporters and not members, because in Greek politics, apart from the EDA, the parties have no memberships other than the politicians, and most Centre Union politicians are at present unwilling to consider non-political means. DD is spreading information through its widely circulated bulletin, developing local cadres to form the basis of future democratic action, and leading and encouraging the various forms of sabotage. As an exiled Centre Union MP said on television last week, if Constantine was really a democrat it is to these sorts of groups that he would have appealed for support. But of course Constantine is no friend of democracy; his relationship with Papandreu in 1965 made that quite clear.

It is here then, in divisions within the army, in an economic decline, and in the growth of the popular movements, that hope for the overthrow of the Junta must lie. At present the Greek people are not ready for a civil war - and who would wish it upon them with the odds that they would have to face at present? The Junta will weaken - diplomatic isolation, in which Britain could play a key part, would help this enormously. It is then, through the popular resistance movements, that the people will intervene, if there are to be hopes of success. All that we can do is to press our government to cut off relations with the regime, and do all we can to spread the criticisms of the Junta, to which they seem extraordinarily sensitive.

SCANLON'S VIEWS ON MILITANCY

by Mike Martin

The new issue of New Left Review (No 46) contains an important interview with Hugh Scanlon on 'The role of militancy'. The significance of the views expressed lies in the fact that Hugh Scanlon was recently elected to the Presidency of the A.E.U., having fought a bitter campaign against the right wing supporters of Lord Carron and John Boyd. His campaign drew support from a wide cross section of left wing opinion in the union and, as is made clear in the interview, was fought on a platform of opposition to the Government's Incomes Policy and of greater democracy within the union, including the right of the national committee to be the policy making body, and of the right of members to elect all officials - a refreshing contrast to 'Carron's Law'.

When asked how opposition to the incomes policy can be made more effective, Scanlon refers to the A.E.U.'s current wages application which seeks a substantial pay rise without productivity deals; this is a significant advance on the view widely held in the T.U. movement that productivity deals are good for everybody and that unions should argue mainly about the price of concessions. In Scanlon's view the next step in the development of opposition could come if such an agreement was blocked by the government. Although he does not specify what he or his union would do, he does speak of the 'development of resistance to the prices and incomes act in accordance with our own and TUC policy'.

Also welcome is his view that national negotiations should centre on minimum wage levels and holidays, etc, whilst wage demands in general should be the province of the shops stewards. Such a development runs counter to the attempts of the right wing to weaken shop stewards and would make government intervention in wages bargaining much less easy, thus striking a blow against wage restraint.

On the question of workers' control, Scanlon feels that this will 'come out of the wider political and industrial struggle, rather than just from a narrow fight for improved wages on the shop floor, although the latter is an integral part of the struggle.' He sees struggle on the shop floor over victimisation etc, having a bearing on workers' control but goes on to give the fight for public ownership primacy over that for workers' control in the private sector, and does not seem to view the two as an integrated struggle.

This issue of New Left Review also contains articles by E. H. Carr on the Collectivisation of agriculture in Russia, one on the Australian Left and many others..... Available 5s post free from N.L.R., 7 Carlisle Street, London, W.1.

FOOD PRICES JUMP - WILL GO UP ANOTHER FIVE TO TEN PER CENT BY EASTER -

by Dave Windsor

Speaking on December 14th, Mr. Len Reeves-Smith, secretary of the National Grocers Federation, predicted that the family grocery bill will rise by 5 to 10 per cent before Easter.

He gave this personal estimate after meeting the Minister of Agriculture Mr. Fred Peart, along with about 20 other representatives of the wholesale and retail grocery trades at the Ministry. "This rise will be due entirely to devaluation," said Mr. Reeves-Smith yesterday. "Price increases will filter through, but it is too early yet to say what the final result will be," said Mr. Dennis Ellam, secretary of the National Federation of Wholesale Grocers.

The price rises predicted by Mr. Reeves-Smith will be in addition to those which have already taken place in the last month or so. According to Sheila Black, the Financial Times women's correspondent, in the December 14th. issue: "The rise is exceptional for the time of year, for the biggest increases tend to show up during the summer when fruit and vegetable prices fluctuate between extremes. The culprits are, predictably, meat and dairy produce. Both categories were hard hit because the dock strike ran almost coincidentally with the foot and mouth epidemic" (although no-one has noticed prices going down now that the strike is over! Dave Windsor) "Most sensitive to higher prices was beef, which was generally 2s a pound dearer on the expensive cuts at 15s and upwards, and pork. Lamb was edging up, though rather less than either pork or beef, since demand was rather lower. Eggs were rather dearer than last year at between 4s 6d and 5s a dozen (in 1966, they were from 3d to 6d less). Milk, in the case of two shoppers, was not available in the 10d-a-pint quality, and they both had to take "gold-top" at 1ld a pint. In past years, the December index has been only slightly above that of November, with the biggest increases showing up in dairy produce, while meat has tended to cost less. This year, there has also been somewhat unseasonal stability in canned and packaged goods, which usually cost a little more around Christmas because of a dearth of bargain and special offers. This year, there has been almost a rush on canned goods, and retailers have commented that it looks as if customers are laying up stocks against steep price increases. Sheila Black explains that "So far, the cost of our basic shopping basket has not been affected by devaluation. As far as imported goods are concerned, food firms in manufacturing, wholesaling and retail sectors buy well in advance and higher import costs will take time to filter through to the consumer. Furthermore, a backlog of unperishable produce, recently released from the docks, has bolstered raw materials supplies to a substantial degree."

The outlook is even gloomier than Mr. Reeves-Smith predicted, according to Sheila Black: "Mr Fred Peart, Minister of Agriculture, forecasts a rise in the near future in food prices of anything from 1s to 3s in the £1. . . . Overall, there may have to rather bigger increases than those prompted only by devaluation and the loss of SET rebated. The adjusting of margins to more economic levels and the higher costs of packaging, owing to imported wood-pulp and other ingredients for card and paper, will also have to be taken into account."

40 DIRECTORS OWN £400 MILLION IN SHARES - from a London reader

Under the 1967 Companies Act it is now possible to investigate not only directors' salaries but also their capital assets. The Times Business News has carried out an inquiry into 45 leading British companies and come out with some striking figures about the control of British industry. Perhaps the most startling fact is that as many as ten of Britain's largest factories come under the effective control of a single family group. The best way to illustrate this is to list the directors, the firms, the directors' holdings and percentage of equity shares held.

DIRECTOR	COMPANY	VALUE OF EQUITY HOLDING	% OF EQUITY
Lord Cole and Dr. Woodroffe)	Unilever	£83,000,000	18
Sir Isaac Wolfson	Great Universal Stores	£34,000,000	48½
D. Phelps	Pilkington Bros.	£30,000,000	29
Sir Harry Pilkington	Pilkington Bros.	£24,000,000	24
Lord Thompson	Thompson Organisation	£23,000,000	78
David Lewis	G.E.C.	£22,000,000	9
Sir Jules Thorn	Thorn	£20,000,000	13
Kenneth Bond	G.E.C.	£19,000,000	8
A. Pilkington	Pilkington Bros.	£15,000,000	14
Lord Cozens-Hardy	Pilkington Bros.	£13,000,000	13
Sir Harold Samuel	Land Securities	£11,000,000	16
Ivo Forde	Kleinwort	£ 9,200,000	25
Bruce Goodman	Marks & Spencer	£ 8,100,000	2
Lord Rank	Ranks Hovis	£ 7,500,000	8
Lord Sieff, Joseph Sieff,) Marcus Sieff & Michael Sieff)	Marks & Spencer	£ 6,900,000	1
L.H. Pilkington	Pilkington Bros.	£ 6,700,000	7
Leonard Sainer	Sears	£ 6,500,000	64
Michael Sacher	Marks & Spencer	£ 5,900,000	1
Robert Maxwell	Pergamon	£ 5,500,000	34
Charles Clore	City Centre	£ 5,000,000	12
Ernest Kleinwort	Kleinwort	£ 5,000,000	15
Arnold Weinstock	G.E.C.	£ 4,700,000	2
Sir Isaac Wolfson	Drage's	£ 4,300,000	24
Alec Lerner	Marks & Spencer	£ 3,600,000	Under 1
Cyril Kleinwort	Kleinwort	£ 3,400,000	9
Charles Forte	Forte's	£ 2,900,000	38
Gabriel Sacher	Marks & Spencer	£ 2,900,000	Under 1
Sir William Butlin	Butlin's	£ 2,700,000	9
W. Shapland	Bernard Sunley	£ 2,100,000	28
Joe Hyman	Viyella	£1,800,000	9
Sir S. Warburg	Mercury Sec.	£ 1,700,000	6
Louis Freedman	Land Securities	£ 1,700,000	2
Leonard Sainer	Hill, Samuel	£ 1,600,000	8
Trevor Watts	Butlin's	£ 1,500,000	5
Julian Hodge	Hodge Group	£ 1,400,000	32
Lord Bearsted	Hill, Samuel	£ 1,100,000	4
Peter Samuel	Shell	£ 1,000,000	Under 1

GOVERNMENT PUTS UP COST OF JOURNAL BY 33 1/3 PER CENT by G. Tufnell

The Government should, in theory, set an example for the application of the thesis that price rises should be avoided at all cost if Britain is to get the "benefit from devaluation." However, when faced by increasing costs it reacts just like anyone else: it puts up prices. The latest example being that the weekly Board of Trade Journal is to raise its price from 1s 6d to 2s. from January 1 "because of higher production costs." A Board of Trade spokesman said that there was no need to refer the 33 1/3 per cent increase to the Prices and Incomes Board because the "early warning" system applied only to national Sunday and daily newspapers.

Apparently the Government considers that only workers should not put up prices (i.e. wages) when faced with rising costs. This small but indicative action is the latest example of the double morality operated by Mr. Wilson and his colleagues.

MORE POWER FOR THE TGWU AND AEU IN THE TUC? by an industrial correspondent

TUC leaders decided on December 18 to increase the membership of their General Council from 35 to 40. Two of the additional seats may go to the largest unions, the Transport and General Workers' Union and the Amalgamated Engineering Union. The decision, taken at a meeting of the TUC's inner executive, its Finance and General Purposes Committee, will be re-examined by the General Council. The plan is to create a new TUC group for technical and scientific workers, who would have one representative on the General Council (possibly Mr. George Doughty, General Secretary of the Draughtsmen's and Allied Technicians' Association).

Four of the existing groups would each have an additional representative. The fact that two of these are for workers in engineering and transport (other than railways) provides the opening for the TGWU and AEU. These two unions (each of which has three representatives on the General Council at present) have 2.5million members between them, while all the other 167 unions affiliated to the TUC have a combined membership of 6.3 million. The other two groups of workers which are to be given an extra seat on the General Council are the "professional, clerical and entertainment" group and the "Public employees". The men most likely to take these seats are Mr. Henry Chapman, of the Clerical and Administrative Workers' Union, and Mr. A.R. Akers, General Secretary of Confederation of Health Service Employees.

The membership of the General Council should be drastically altered if it is to reflect the actual strength of affiliated unions. Such unions as the National Union of Mineworkers and the National Union of Railwaymen are relatively over-represented because of the decline in their membership over the years. On the other hand, white collar workers, who were only very partially unionised when the present composition of the General Council was fixed, are under-represented.

RIGHT WING TAKE DRUBBING IN GLASGOW SHOP STEWARDS ELECTIONS

In the recent elections for shop stewards' representatives to the Glasgow District Committee of the A.E.U., the left candidates were all re-elected and at least four right-wing supported candidates beaten in their attempt to get back.

GOVERNMENT'S KURIA MURIA CLAIM DEMOLISHED

from a Nottingham reader

When the new Government of Southern Yemen (the National Liberation Front of what was formerly the Southern Arabian Federation) protested against the handing over of the Kuria Muria Islands to the British puppet regime of Oman, Mr. Brown justified the transfer by saying that the islands had originally belonged to that country. This claim has been completely demolished in a letter to The Times, published on December 14th, from Mrs. C.S. Nicholls of St. Anthony's College, Oxford. In fact it turns out that the transfer of the islands to Britain was a piece of old-fashioned imperialism motivated by pure commercial greed. Mrs. Nicholls' letter reads:

"With reference to Mr. N. McLeod Innes (December 8), it is true that the Kuria Muria islands were freely transferred by the Sultan of Muscat and Oman to Great Britain, but he was able to be so liberal with his gift because the islands did not belong to him. The cession was a political manoeuvre on his part (at various times he also claimed Aden, Socatra, the Hadramaut coast, the Somali coast, the whole East African Coast and the islands off Madagascar). His cession of the islands did not prevent the expulsion of the first Englishman by the local inhabitants.

"A subsequent British inquiry into the ownership of the islands revealed that the islands, if they could be said to belong to anyone, were the property of the Mahrah tribe, inhabiting the mainland opposite. In fact, among the Arabs, the islands were called Jezair Beni Khulfan, or the islands of the family of Khulfan (a section of the Mahrah tribe). In 1857 there was a great deal of discussion about the ownership of the islands as a reference to The Times correspondence columns of the year will show. The British eventually enforced their possession with warships because in 1856 Peruvian guano had gone up £1 a ton and the Kuria Muria Islands were thought to be an important alternative source of this commodity."

In view of these facts the Government ought to annul the decision to give the islands to Oman and return them to the new republic.

WAGE CONTROL ENDS IN HOLLAND

from a special correspondent

In face of the rising militancy of Dutch workers in the last few years, the Government of Holland has recognised reality and restored (or almost completely restored) free trade union negotiation. It should not be thought that this is a piece of political generosity. The right wing Government of Holland has merely taken stock of the fact that the old system has failed to achieve its objective of keeping wage rates down. This change has taken place after 22 years of centrally guided wages policy. The abolition of the old system, which had been almost unanimously decided upon by both sides of industry, was officially approved by the Dutch Government on December 13th.

However, the Government have retained certain powers. The Labour Minister can invalidate agreements "if they endanger the national economic situation". According to the Government this terrible crime could be committed if "the agreed wage increase is too drastic" or because "it applies to a large number of workers." The Council of Mediators, which used to exercise a central testing function has now been relegated to the purely administrative task of drawing the Minister's attention to concluded agreements which "might disturb the economy."