

WORKERS PRESS

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DAILY ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE



TORIES OUT! GENERAL STRIKE was the constant chant of the 1,500 lobbyists outside yesterday's special TUC.

DAY PROTEST WON'T BUDGE TORIES

BY DAVID MAUDE OUR LABOUR CORRESPONDENT

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Yesterday's special congress proposed no action which is capable of defeating the Tory government and its corporatist state pay laws. The resolution for 'one day of national protest' carried by the Congress is too little, too late. It will not have the slightest impact on the Tory government.

It is nothing more than a 'left' cover for the acceptance of the right-wing Congress document moved by TUC general secretary Victor Feather. What are workers already engaged in strike against the government to do until this day of protest is held? Say prayers?

By that time the Phase Two laws and the Pay Boards will be in full swing; workers will have to accept the £1 plus 4 per cent or face fines and jail.

The TUC is cynically sacrificing these sections of workers to the Tory wolves just as they did the postmen two years ago.

By abolishing the right to free wage negotiations, the Tories have dealt a devastating blow at the basic democratic rights of the working class.

The TUC's capitulation is made at a time when the economic crisis is rampaging through the world capitalist countries.

This will provoke even more savage attacks on the basic democratic rights of the working class in the immediate months ahead.

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'General Strike! Tories out!'



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During the final stages of the debate on the protest strike, miners' leader Joe Gormley revealed that his union had submitted a stronger resolution, understood to call for all-out action, but 'didn't find a great deal of support' and so withdrew it.

'I was surprised to find,' Gormley said, 'that this Congress is not quite so forceful as it made itself out to be.'

● Full report of the Congress appears on page 12.

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TODAY GOLD

A special economics correspondent looks at the developments 'Behind the rise in the gold price'.

PAGE 10

CHARTISM

PAGES 5, 6, 7 and 8

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FORD

ON PAGE 11

Our Industrial Staff assess how the strike movement at Ford's was betrayed.

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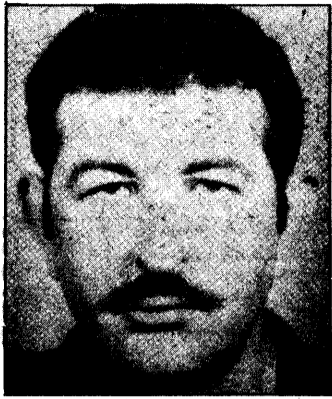
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FREE ABU DAUD



KING HUSSEIN of Jordan has confirmed death sentences against Abu Daud, a leader of the Al Fatah commandos, and other Palestinian resistance fighters. Abu Daud was captured early in February with other Fatah members while on his way to the Israeli-occupied territories to organize resistance against the Zionist invader. He was brought before a secret military court within 24 hours of his arrest and summarily sentenced on trumped-up charges of plotting against state security.

Abu Daud is one of the most prominent Palestinian resistance fighters. He was among the founders of Al Fatah and a member of the revolutionary council of the Palestinian liberation movement.

Hussein is the man who massacred the Palestinian guerrilla fighters in September 1970. To make a rotten peace with Israel he is bent on destroying every Palestinian who sets out to resist Zionism. At the same time his regime hypocritically protests against the killing in Khartoum of two US diplomats known to have played a part in the September 1970 massacre of Palestinians.

Abu Daud and his comrades are to be murdered by the Royal butcher of Jordan in order to cement his ties with Washington and Tel Aviv. The world labour movement cannot remain silent in the face of this new crime against the Arab revolution. The Socialist Labour League demands the immediate and unconditional release of Abu Daud and his comrades and an end to the reign of terror against Palestinians in Jordan.

Action is urgent to save the lives of these anti-imperialist fighters. Resolutions and letters of protest should be sent to the Jordanian Embassy, 6 Upper Phillimore Gardens, London W8.

Economic crisis defeats EEC Finance Ministers The money markets stay closed

BY JOHN SPENCER

FOREIGN exchange markets will be closed all this week as Finance Ministers of the capitalist countries hold a series of meetings in a desperate attempt to patch up what they all agree can only be a temporary and unstable solution to the monetary crisis.

The Common Market Finance Ministers had to admit defeat after seven hours of talks on Sunday. They could find no 'European solution' to the crisis.

And, as the 'Sunday Telegraph' put it on March 4: 'The really worrying thing about this crisis is that the currency experts appear to be running out of solutions.'

'Fixed rates have been tried, they worked in their time until their time was over. Then floating, in the teeth of violent opposition, became acceptable and even respectable. Two-tiers subsequently cropped up and were absorbed. Now, with everyone either floating or two-tiering, what next?'

The situation is now so uncertain that even the United States government is divided over what action it should support. Dr Arthur Burns, the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, favours a rapid return to fixed currency rates because he fears a joint European float would involve controls over the export of US capital which would be detrimental to US interests.

On the other hand, Treasury Secretary George Schultz sees no reason why the United States should not accept a Common Market float which he thinks would be a step towards a 'more flexible monetary system'.

This disagreement in Washington mirrors the panic and fear running through the international ruling class. The crisis of its system is now

completely out of control: Finance Ministers are paralysed by the enormity and scope of the crisis.

Plans for a joint European float against the dollar foundered on opposition from France and Italy: still facing the second round of its National Assembly election, the Gaullist government preferred to leave the issue in abeyance for this week.

The Italians, by contrast, made it clear they had no confidence in the idea of a joint float and instead put forward a plan for a leisurely progress towards a joint float by easy stages. They supported the conditions which Tory Chancellor Anthony Barber wanted as a condition for taking part in a joint float.

These included that each country be allowed to enter the arrangement at an acceptable exchange rate; that each should have the 'unimpaired right' to change its rate after consultations with the other members; that there must be financial support of 'the most far-reaching kind', all nine countries supporting their partners 'without limits of amount, without conditions and without obligation to repay'.

These demands are, of course, quite Utopian and reflect the extremely weak position of the Tory government in the face of its EEC 'partners'. The latter want sterling firmly tied to their own currencies precisely in order to put an end to the trading advantages the British employers gain by their creeping devaluation.

They will certainly not be prepared to bleed their own reserves white to support sterling, but will instead force the Tory government to adopt savagely deflationary policies, throwing the cost of the joint float onto the backs of the British working class.

This is the background to the measures Barber will announce today and

in a possible second budget. The British capitalists, having thrown in their lot with the Common Market employers to fight the European workers will have no option but to toe whatever line is laid down by West Germany and France.

The lack of any other way out for the employers internationally must speed up the on-going flight from paper money. The lesson is being driven into the skulls of capitalists everywhere that only gold has value. The metal they previously scorned has become the most sought-after of all commodities and with the foreign exchanges closed the gold price must rise.

The 'Financial Times' yesterday expressed the growing fear in capitalist circles of a collapse of world trade: 'Up to last week, the succession of monetary crises had by and large left world trade unaffected. Governments and central banks cobbled and mended in the hope that enough time could be gained to work out a new and lasting system.'

'They have consistently underestimated the magnitude of the forces involved and the speed at which events were likely to move. More important even than that, they have failed to appreciate that there is a limit to confidence. The latest crisis has demonstrated that we have come very close to this limit.' Particularly significant, the paper says, is the fact that not only is gold rising in price, but there is a 'scramble into commodities, reflecting at least the start of a flight out of money [which] does affect industry and the consumer directly'.

The threat to world trade, it says, has become a real one, and it calls on governments to 'ensure that when markets open officially again, the atmosphere of fear and hysteria is banished once and for all'.

This, as the EEC Finance Ministers' gathering demonstrated, is now beyond the powers of any government or group of governments.

The objective laws of capital have asserted themselves against all efforts to keep them in check. They are now driving the system inexorably over the brink of recession and slump through the collapse of the bulk of world trade.

● See why gold rose in price page 10.

MARCH FUND NOW STANDS AT £49.90

WE MUST not sit back on the success of last month's Fund. Let's press ahead, now with this month's fight—help us raise a record amount.

Thousands of trade unionists lobbied the TUC yesterday demanding they call a General Strike to force the Tory government to resign. Feeling is rapidly growing throughout the working class for an all-out fight against Tory policies.

The serious dollar crisis which has kept the money markets closed can only result in even greater attacks being launched against the working class.

The time to fight is now. Use Workers Press to mobilize thousands of workers and youth to come to our anti-Tory rally and Pageant at the Empire Pool next Sunday, March 11. Our paper must be the centre of this struggle to build this revolutionary party.

Never has there been such a political situation. So raise as much as you can for our monthly appeal fund. Start today. Post all donations immediately to:

Workers Press
March Appeal Fund
186a Clapham High Street,
London, SW4 7UG

First round to French left

THE RULING Gaullist Party in France faces a desperate struggle over the coming week to save its government majority after a sharp swing to the left in the first round of the election.

The Popular Front of Communist, Socialist and Left Radical Parties won 47 per cent of the poll compared with 38 per cent for the Gaullists and their allies. The rest went to various centre parties and revisionist groups.

Everything now hangs on the second ballot, due to be held next Sunday, March 11. For this ballot, all candidates who polled less than 10 per cent in the first round are eliminated.

This eliminates all the candidates of the three revisionist groups, the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste, Lutte Ouvrière and Ligue Communiste, none of whom achieved the necessary poll.

Under their electoral pact the surviving members of the Union of the Left will stand down in favour of whichever of their candidates gained the most votes in the first round.

This goes some way to overcoming the built-in disadvantage which heavily weights the Fifth Republic's voting system in favour of the Gaullists. But at present it is impossible to predict with certainty what will be the result of round two.

The powerful movement to the left in France is symptomatic of the extreme tension created by the economic crisis in Europe. It reflects not only the hatred of the working class for the Gaullist regime, but the loss of Gaullist

support among sections of the middle class.

Rapid increases in prices and attacks on living standards have spread hatred of the authoritarian Pompidou government far and wide.

This hatred has been fuelled by Pompidou's contempt for democratic rights, expressed in his declaration that under no circumstances would he tolerate a left cabinet under him.

This open threat to dissolve the National Assembly under presidential powers and rule by decree has created a situation of great conflict in France. Despite the treachery of its Stalinist and reformist leaders the working class is pressing forward strongly.

By its huge vote for the big working-class parties, it has demonstrated its contempt for Pompidou's threats. The French workers are openly challenging the Gaullist regime while their leaders continue to peddle constitutional illusions, proclaim their loyalty to the Fifth Republic and keep the rank and file in check.



EUD ADIV, a former Israeli paratrooper on trial in Haifa, Israel, charged with espionage, said the weapons and sabotage training he received in Syria were 'almost laughable—I could have taught them more'. In his defence speech yesterday he said he had gone to Syria to further the Middle East revolution.

He submitted in evidence a political testament written in prison in which he described himself as 'a communist with a Marxist-Leninist world outlook'.

US mutual funds in deep trouble

MUTUAL FUNDS, the American equivalent of British unit trusts, are in deep trouble as a result of the down-turn in Wall Street share prices and the fear of a stock market collapse.

Last year the funds paid out more to shareholders who wanted to redeem their holdings than they made from selling new shares to fresh customers.

The difference amounted to over \$1,700m. Only five years ago, at the height of the

mutual fund boom sales exceeded redemptions by \$3,000m.

One of the worst-hit funds, Enterprise, had its assets shrink from \$750m in 1968 to around \$423m at the end of 1972.

The fate of these funds in the United States foreshadows a similar future for British unit trusts.

Ceylon govt threat to Press freedom

THE CEYLONESE United Left Front government of Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike and her pro-Moscow Stalinists and ex-Pabloite Lanka Sama Samaja Party allies are seeking to abolish every last vestige of Press freedom on the island.

They are attempting to force through the National Assembly the Press Council Bill which was drawn up last summer.

If this Bill becomes law, no reporting of government debates, decisions or committee discussions will be allowed.

And no news at all could be printed until it was passed by a government-controlled council as being in no way critical of the government or contrary to the interests of those at present in power.

IRAN has announced a record budget of over 693,000 million rials (about £4,000m) for the coming year. The Shah's government plans to spend 28 per cent of the money on armaments, turning Iran into one of the strongest military powers.

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PAGEANT DIARY

The Road to Workers Power

Middleton

Making Pageant music

INTERVIEW BY STEPHEN JOHNS

Vic Brox, secretary of the Manchester musicians' co-operative 'Music Force', believes passionately that modern and pop music must play a vital role in the revolutionary struggle of the working class.

He also says that the left, the unions and even the Musicians' Union have failed utterly to realize the enormous contribution 'pop culture' can make to the fight for socialism.

Vic is not talking about the stereotyped sound mostly churned out by the record monopolies but the real expression—generally of revolt, dissatisfaction, defiance or of hope—most serious popular music-makers strive for.

After ten years as a professional band leader, singer, player and composer in Britain and abroad, Vic says the natural tendency is for pop and rock musicians to abhor the system.

Like actors, they suffer from super-exploitation. To live in the commercial world they often have to abandon any search for original expression and take up music jobs they hate.

Even the successful are swallowed by the record-entertainment machine and live eventually blighted despairing lives, when all they want to do is to play and communicate with the audience—the masses of youth who see in pop music something of their very own emotions and desires.

Because of these views, Vic and a dedicated band of north-west pop musicians have spurned the monopolies and are trying to build a sanctuary where talent and expression can be developed without the crippling effect of money and profit.

They already act as an agency for 14 or so bands and they hope soon to start their own company and record label.

Vic has thrown his weight behind the Pageant because he thinks he and his friends have something vital to add to the 'Road to Workers' Power'. His only regret is that he does not have time to provide more music and songs that the recreation of working-class history so obviously needs.

Vic told me why he was joining the Pageant campaign.

'We are a group of bands who have come together, elected a committee and formed an organization we hope can give us some freedom to develop and play the music we want.'

'We have started as an agency, but must get our own company and record label going. We have run music sessions at the Halsworth Hall, Manchester, that have been a great success. At Mr Smiths on Sunday, we have an evening devoted to progressive music.'

MISTAKE

'In the past the working-class movement has ignored the growth of rock music. This is a fantastic mistake because it has an enormous amount to offer.'

'Most of the people I know in pop and rock would be sympathetic to the working-class and left-wing politics. Many come from the working-class anyway—others come from the middle-class, but they all start really with a deep dissatisfaction of society as it is, though they might be completely non-political.'

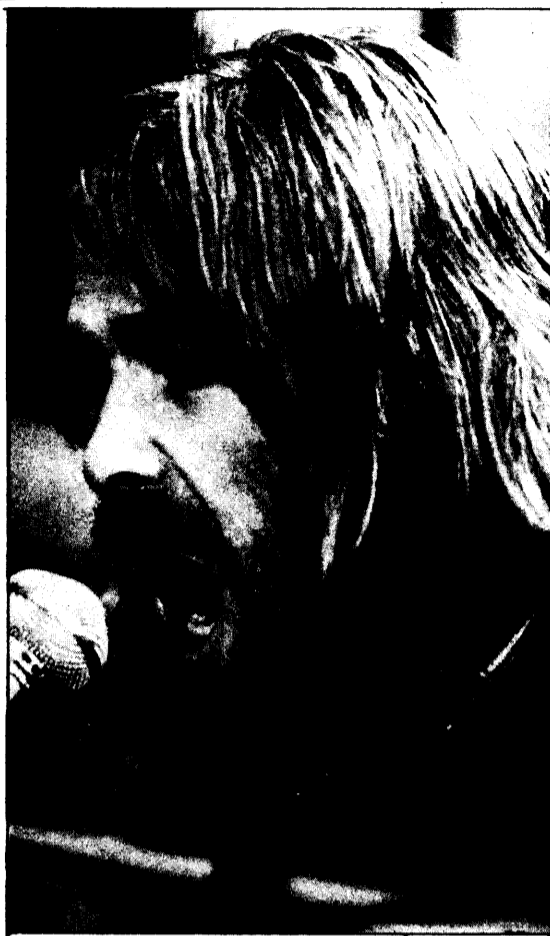
'I think many of the more conscious workers look down on the pop musician. He has long hair and he's very rich and flamboyant. But this is rubbish. The exploitation, or "rip off" as we call it in the trade, is just fantastic. When I was working flat out in the States I probably only pulled about £32 a week. That's nothing when you consider the expenses involved. Now I get about £10 a week and this is common. It's the rule not the exception.'

'The successful ones, too, end up in a hole. They are steam-rollered by the companies.'

'Their talent is crushed and squeezed into the package they want. The monopolies are all-powerful, they own the record companies, own radio franchises,

Pop can play a vital role in workers' struggles

Right: Vic Brox, secretary of 'Music Force' . . . the struggle for the Pageant and the musicians struggle for his own expression and freedom from exploitation naturally come together. Below: 'Music Force' in action during rehearsals.



theatres, discos and large chunks of TV. When the group or singer is no use, his decline starts.

'The successful ones, once they have got over the initial flush of fame, want to start to develop and express themselves, but this is generally not possible. Records work strictly to a formula. These people become blighted, frustrated, and when their popularity drops they become so bitter and angry their life is often wrecked. This is where the drugs come in. Because of the environment, drugs become part, a peculiar part, of pop culture.'

'At the other end you have the vast majority who get older, get married, like me, and are forced to take up jobs they really hate—in clubs or cabaret. But what can you do? You either do it, or you don't eat.'

'Yet it doesn't need to be like this. You can see the change that pop music had wrought among the young in society. In the hands of the big companies it is a controlled revolt, a safety valve and often quite reactionary.'

'But at basis, it is an expression of upheaval. It is time this opportunity to exploit pop and rock was grasped. It is a very powerful way to communicate. If you can call it an art form it is a very functional, art form,

because all art forms that come from the working class are functional. Most of the groups are working class. They must have that spark and excitement to get through to their audiences and public.'

'It appears to me that what you want more than anything else is to rip away the blindfold and show people the real nature of society. Pop and rock can play a great role in this. This, to me, is what the "Road to Workers' Power" is all about.'

RESPONSIVE

'Musicians could be very responsive elements in this process. They have to be responsive; it's part of their work. If one person in a group begins to play double tempo, the rest will follow on if they are good musicians for example.'

'The object of the music in the "Road to Workers' Power" is to highlight the drama, make it clearer, make it more expressive and attractive by songs and incidental music.'

'In the short space of time available I have written two songs. One is "The Chartist Marching Hymn"—this is where the Chartists sing joyously of their determination to stand and

fight for the Charter. The other song is the "Ballad of the Peterloo Martyrs".'

'This describes the scene as the people go from all the outlying towns to St. Peter's Fields, Manchester, to hear Hunt.'

'Now this is a ballad because I don't think anyone expected the massacre that occurred. It was really a great outing, working-class families with their children in their best going to listen to one of their heroes.'

'The last verse will commemorate their deaths and show that they did not die in vain, because Peterloo led to some enormous developments in the working-class movement.'

'I do some incidental music as well and a chant when the workers are coming out of the factories to hear the Chartists—a feature of this is the cry "Pull them out, pull them out". This refers to the workers at Stalybridge who pulled out the plugs on the iron furnaces to back the Chartists.'

'This is the kind of stuff I am doing. I hope I can do more later. I think—the kind of struggle put up in the "Road to Workers' Power" and the musician's struggle for his own expression and freedom from exploitation naturally come together.'

Collision due over docks pay

BY DAVID MAUDE
LABOUR CORRESPONDENT

A MAJORITY of London's 12,000 dockers will be asked tomorrow to accept a £2.60 pay offer—but to withdraw co-operation with flexible manning arrangements and mobility of labour.

This recommendation will be made at a mass meeting of the 8,000 men from London's enclosed dock. It has the support of their 18-man lay delegates' committee.

Port employers have said they will not pay the offered increase if co-operation is withdrawn, so after months of hesitation and delay the scene is apparently being set for a quayside confrontation.

PHASE TWO

On the recommendation of union officials, the 2,000 registered men on London's riverside wharves have accepted an offer of £2.22 plus 4 per cent on bonus rates.

The capital's 1,500 tally clerks are being asked to accept a £2.70 increase. And the enthusiasm with which the officials will support non-co-operation in these circumstances is open to question.

The employers say their enclosed docks offer—£2.60 plus 4 per cent on the differentials paid to ship workers, crane drivers and others—is the limit the Tories will allow them to pay under Phase Two of their pay-control laws.

At a meeting last week, union officials asked them to look again at the new rate at which they propose to pay sick benefit. But the officials' recommendation tomorrow will not be conditional on an employers' reply on this point.

DEVLIN

The action the dockers' leaders are proposing involves another Phase Two—Phase Two of the Devlin 'modernization' scheme for the docks.

It was under clause 12 of the Green Dock agreement resulting from Phase Two that the docks unions committed their members to flexible manning and mobility of labour.

If tomorrow's meeting does refuse to co-operate with clause 12, it could mean a big increase in gang strengths. Dockers would be able to insist on 12 men per gang for discharging and 13 for loading.

But the employers are already attempting to frighten the dockers with the threat that such steps could once again threaten the future of the South American and New Zealand meat trades in the port.

By refusing to lead a straight fight with the Tory pay laws, the officials and lay delegates may be preparing their own defeat.

A POLICY TO MEET THE CRISIS

THE TORY government is relentlessly pursuing its plan for a confrontation with the working class. Each day new sections of workers are forced to become criminals — under Tory law — to defend their standard of living against government-inspired soaring cost of living.

Large sections of these workers openly acknowledge that the only answer to their fight to maintain a decent standard of living is a General Strike. That is, the creation of the industrial and political conditions which will force the government to resign.

In its place must be elected a Labour government which is pledged by the mass action of the working class to implement socialist policies.

We say 'pledged to socialist policies' knowing that the present leaders of the Labour movement have no intention of introducing such policies. Indeed, in the last analysis some of them will be prepared to join a coalition government with the Tories to head off the working class.

But if the working class is strong enough to force the Tories out, it is strong enough to deal with the traitors in its own midst. This can only be achieved by exposing them in the fight for an alternative socialist policy.

The Central Committee of the Socialist Labour League calls upon the working class to support the following policies to unite the working class against the Tories and the present Wilson-Feather leadership of the labour movement:

Here is the policy which the next Labour government must be forced to carry out.

1) A Labour government must immediately repeal the Industrial Relations Act, Housing Finance Act, Immigration Acts, Fair Trading Act and all wage control. After the repeal of all Tory anti-working class measures, there must be legislation to implement the Charter of Basic Rights, along the following lines.

2) The right to work! Capitalism demands mass unemployment. The right to a job must

be guaranteed. This can only be done by breaking the grip of capitalist ownership on the economy. Employed and unemployed must unite to insist on a Labour government nationalizing the main industries and banks, under workers' control and without compensation.

The struggle must begin now. No closures, no sackings, must be the policy of the trade unions. Occupation of factories threatened with closure, as part of the fight to bring down the Tories.

3) The democratic right to strike and to organize in trade unions. Only the organized working class can lead mankind out of the historical crisis. Every right and every gain won by the working class, every democratic right in Britain, has been won because of the organized strength of the unions and the strike weapon.

A Labour government must immediately repeal the Industrial Relations Act. This fight must begin now by forcing the TUC to break off all relations with the government and mobilize the working class to destroy state control of wages.

4) The right to defend rights won in the past and change the system. All the changes in legal procedures made by the Tory government must be repealed. All secret police and MI5 organizations must be dis-

banded and fully exposed. The secrets of the Tory administration in this sphere must be published. All rights to assembly, free speech and the Press must be guaranteed.

5) The right to a higher standard of living. It is not the living standards of trade unionists, but the profit system, which causes the crisis. The first step must be to expropriate all the great fortunes of the rich, close down the Stock Exchange, place a state control over all movements of capital in and out of the country.

Nationalization of the basic industries and of all large companies, banks, building and insurance societies will provide the resources for a unified plan to improve the living standards of the whole people. Workers' control of these, as well as the present nationalized industries, will run them in the interests of the workers and consumers.

Again, the fight must begin now. State control of wages must be answered by the most widespread fight for wage increases to meet price rises and improve standards. This means a fight to remove the Tory government and change the union leadership.

6) The right to health and welfare benefits. Every Tory government cut in welfare benefits, in the health service and in all public spending must

be revoked. On the basis of nationalization, a crash programme of expansion of services to the unemployed, the low-paid, the sick and the aged must be undertaken as an absolute priority. The working class and the Labour government must take immediate and absolute responsibility for these victims of the capitalist system.

7) The right to decent housing. Decent housing is not a luxury; it is a necessity. People have the basic right to decent accommodation at rents they can afford. Nationalization of the handful of building monopolies and building societies will provide the basis for a massive programme of new house building. The disgraceful problem of the homeless in the cities must be immediately solved by census and taking-over of all unoccupied property.

8) The international responsibilities of the working class. The working class is international. We fight for the unrestricted right of any worker of any nationality to move freely through the world.

Withdraw the troops from Ireland. Unite the Irish and British working class to throw out the Lynch and Heath governments.

Unite in the struggle for the Socialist United States of Europe, the only alternative to

the Common Market plans for dictatorship.

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THE RISE OF THE CHARTISTS

BY JANE BROWN

Chartism began as a movement based on straightforward demands for political democracy. But every refusal by the government to grant such demands forced the working class to debate revolutionary issues, to develop the movement to a higher level or else accept defeat.

Friedrich Engels found the English working class in a ferment of political activity, groping its way forward with the aid of bitter experience.

'At the moment Chartism is in a state of flux,' he wrote in 1844. 'Chartism has shaken off those supporters who regarded it as a purely political movement. The result is that today the significant feature of Chartism lies in its social aims. And it is this aspect of Chartism which must inevitably develop in the future. It cannot be long before Chartism moves towards socialism.'

But such an immense political leap could not be accomplished overnight. There was nothing inevitable about it. Only the intervention of socialist theorists, such as Marx, and Engels himself, could launch a socialist party and direct the mass movement towards a successful socialist revolution.

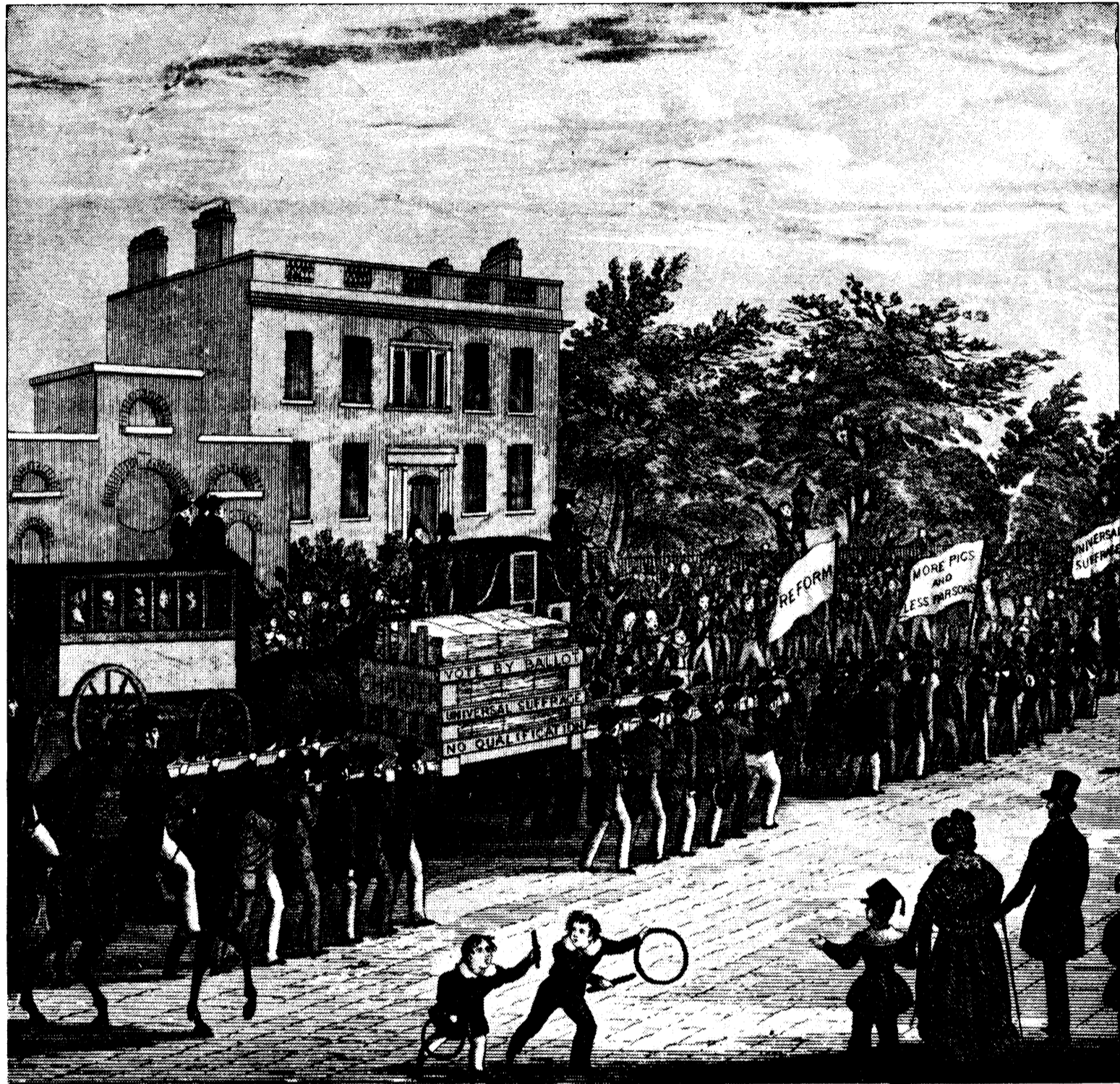
This intervention was not made until the late 1840s, when Chartism was no longer a mass movement. In the meantime, Chartism struggled painfully to overcome its internal contradictions and to find a way out of the blind alley of reformism.

By doing so, it prepared the way for the independent working-class party and socialist politics of the future. All the rich experience it handed on to succeeding generations is assimilated in the fight to build the revolutionary party today.

The Chartist epoch is immortal by reason of the fact that for the space of ten years it gave us in a compressed and diagrammatic form apparently the whole gamut of proletarian struggle—from petitions to armed insurrection.

'All the basic processes of the class movement of the proletariat . . . were not only crystallized in practice out of the Chartist movement, but also found in it their answers in principle. Theoretically the answers are far from being water-tight, ends are not always joined together . . . If one may resort to a risky comparison, and may say that the Chartist movement is like a prelude which gives in an undeveloped form the musical theme of the whole opera. In this sense the British proletariat may and must see in the Charter not only its past but also its future.' ('Where is Britain Going?' Leon Trotsky. New Park Publications.)

The People's Charter was drafted in May 1838, by a London cabinet maker named William Lovett. In the past ten years, Lovett had been involved in various political activities. As a democrat, he believed that every man has the right to vote, and he had helped put forward the case for Universal Suffrage during



The presentation to the House of Commons of the Chartists' Second National Petition in 1842.

the debate over parliamentary reform, 1831-1832.

The 1832 Reform Act fell a long way short of his hopes. It gave the vote only to sections of the middle class. But Lovett found other causes to turn to, such as campaigning against the Stamp Act (which made newspapers too expensive for workers to buy), and supporting Robert Owen's schemes for 'co-operative' production. If workers were to win political power, they must become self-reliant.

In 1836 Lovett got together with other skilled craftsmen to found the London Working Men's Association. Its aim was to educate workers so that they would become fit to take on political responsibilities, and would earn the respect of parliament.

Six point programme

The People's Charter set out the organization's political programme very simply. It consisted of six points, all of which the LWMA intended to win by peaceful, constitutional means. These were: universal manhood suffrage, vote by ballot, payment of MPs, annual parliaments, equal electoral districts and the abolition of

the property qualification for MPs.

The last five points were necessary if the first one was to give workers any say in parliament. Unless voting took place by ballot, poor men would be bribed when choosing MPs. Unless MPs were paid, no working man would be able to give up his job in order to stand for election. Unless parliaments were re-elected every year, they would soon get out of touch with the voters' wishes. Unless electoral districts were re-organized, so that each MP represented approximately the same number of voters, the interests of country gentlemen would continue to outweigh those of workers in densely populated towns. Unless the property qualification was abolished, only rich men would be entitled to stand for election.

All these arguments were logical, and not very original. Ever since the doctrine of the Rights of Man had been developed by 18th century philosophers and embodied in the French Revolution of 1789, middle class and educated working-class reformers had been arguing out the same questions.

Some middle-class Radicals had been scared off by the



William Lovett, a London cabinet maker who drafted 'The People's Charter' in May, 1838.

enormous response to their demands from industrial workers, during the economic depression of 1815-1820. But many others hoped to harness working-class strength in their own interests.

Although the LWMA was determined not to be dominated by middle-class leadership, it did not reject the assistance of Radical MPs. Indeed, the original plan was for six LWMA members to draft a political programme in consultation with six MPs, who would then win support for the programme in parliament. The joint committee did not work very well. Radical MPs

had more important interests than dabbling in working-class politics.

So in the end, Lovett took over the job of writing the People's Charter himself. As he jotted down the familiar demands for representative government, his imaginary audience consisted of the Radical MPs, and the 200 or so LWMA members. He certainly never foresaw that his Charter would become the manifesto of the first national working-class movement, and that, within a few months, it would have a following of millions.

Why was the Charter taken up by the working class, and transformed in a manner its author never intended? This can only be understood in terms of earlier history, and of the economic and social conditions in 1838.

As Lovett's career illustrates, workers had been involved in politics for many years before the need for an independent working-class political organization was realized. Very large numbers took part in Radical movements at the end of the French wars, culminating in the Peterloo Massacre of 1819.

At Peterloo, 11 workers died

The Chartists, continued on page 6.



Last weekend the teams of actors, workers and youth met for their first joint rehearsal. A scene from the Pageant rehearsal: A group of Chartists interrupt a church service and proceed to conduct their own

The Chartists, continued from page 5.

when soldiers charged into a peaceful Reform meeting. Banners carried by the reformers on this occasion bore what were later to become Chartist demands. But the government made sure that no militant new organization emerged in the years after Peterloo. Speakers at the meeting were imprisoned, and the notorious Six Acts were passed in an attempt to stamp out working-class radicalism altogether.

Middle-class reformers raised a chorus of protest against such measures. They had not the slightest intention of giving votes to Lancashire weavers. But they wanted their own industrial and commercial interests to be represented in parliament.

'They are fools enough,' wrote a Tory cabinet minister scornfully, 'to think that they can overturn the administration with the help of the [working-class] Radicals . . . The insane, however, can only play such a game and think of winning.'

The 1832 Reform Act was a great victory for the wealthy reformers, however. It extended representation to the north of England, and established a uniform, fairly high property qualification for vot-

ing. As Engels commented in 1844: 'The rule of property is expressly recognized in the Reform Bill through the establishment of property qualifications. It is, of course, the middle class that really rules.'

The working class had played an important part in forcing the Reform Bill through a reluctant parliament. Its mass demonstrations convinced MPs that it was too dangerous to delay reform any longer. But workers soon found they had gained nothing from the Act.

The New Poor Law of 1834

The new Radical MPs were too busy campaigning for free trade and cuts in public spending to bother about their former supporters. The Whig government of the 1830s was as firm in its support of the employers as any which had come before, and its harsh policies were resented as an act of betrayal.

None caused more suffering than the New Poor Law of 1834. This Act was intended to cut back expenditure on poor relief. In future, only families which entered the parish workhouse might receive

financial support. These 'Bastilles' (as they were soon nicknamed) were designed to be as unbearable to live in as possible, so that only the totally destitute would go there to escape starvation.

Workhouse food was meagre and inedible. No visitors were allowed, neither was drinking or smoking. Long hours of work went unpaid. Worst of all families were split up. The advantage of this particular punishment for poverty, as the Poor Law Commissioners saw it, was that it might check 'over-population' — the main cause of poverty, according to fashionable economists.

The New Poor Law hit hardest at the industrial workers of the north, who had relied heavily on relief under the old system, when periodic trade recessions threw them out of work. Even to the local authorities, it soon became obvious that enough 'Bastilles' couldn't be built to house all the unemployed. Workers rammied the point home, by attacking the houses and property of those who tried to implement the new law and by burning workhouses to the ground.

Another question which roused workers' passion was the need for factory laws to

regulate hours and conditions of work. 'Short-time' committees of factory workers sprang up in dozens of towns, to support the Tory MP Sadler's attempt to shorten the working day.

But the concessions in the 1833 Factory Act did not amount to much. Hours of labour were restricted to 48 a week for children under 13, and 69 a week for those aged 13-18. Four factory inspectors were appointed to make sure that these regulations were obeyed!

Immediately a campaign for a ten-hour day for adult workers was launched. Its fiercest opponents were Whig and Radical believers in the 'free', unregulated economy. These gentlemen were equally hostile to the trade union movement which developed after the repeal of the Combination Laws in 1825.

Trade societies had existed secretly for many years, but now large 'general' unions of builders, miners and spinners came into existence. Owen's Grand National Consolidated Trade Union was an attempt to unite all workers in one union, in order to revolutionize society from below.

Employers had the full support of the government when

they systematically broke the general unions, by refusing to employ workers who would not sign 'the document'—a pledge to never join a trade union.

In 1834 the government itself stepped in, to prosecute the 'Tolpuddle martyrs'—six Dorset farm labourers who had taken 'illegal oaths' in combining to form a union. Their fate—seven years' transportation—was a threat to every trade unionist. It demonstrated the futility of trying to change society 'from below', when political power lay in the hands of the employing class.

In 1838 economic conditions took a sharp turn for the worse. The following years of bad harvests and industrial depression produced the conditions which Engels describes in 'The Condition of the Working Class in England'.

The factory worker's life was one of perpetual insecurity. At one time he would be slaving for 16 hours a day. The next week he might have no work to go to. Wages were kept low by unemployment and the use of women and children to operate machines.

Cut-throat competition between manufacturers led to terrible safety hazards, such as unfenced machinery and

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Last weekend the teams of actors, workers and youth met for their first joint rehearsal. A scene from the Pageant rehearsal: A group of Chartists interrupt a church service and proceed to conduct their own meeting.



eed to conduct their own meeting

even the cleaning of machinery while in motion. If workers escaped mutilation, they were still condemned to ill-health by factory labour in conditions of heat, dust, and poor ventilation.



Fergus O'Connor, who took control of the Chartist Executive after Lovett's abandonment of politics in 1840.

Conditions outside the factory were equally unhealthy. As industrial cities doubled and trebled in population within a few decades, no house-building or sanitary regulations were enforced. New houses

were jerry-built, while old ones fell into decay. Overcrowding reached terrifying proportions, so that in some cases families rented a mere corner of a room shared with others.

In Manchester alone 21,000 families inhabited cellars below street level, and 7,000 more found shelter each night in the packed dormitories of common lodging houses. Others were turned away, even here.

Engels reported on living conditions in 'Little Ireland', one of the older areas of central Manchester: 'Here lie two groups of about 200 cottages, most of which are built on the back-to-back principle. Some 4,000 people, mostly Irish, inhabit this slum. The cottages are very small, old and dirty, while the streets are uneven, partly paved, not properly drained, and full of ruts. Heaps of refuse, offal and sickening filth are everywhere, interspersed with pools of stagnant liquid. The atmosphere is polluted by the thick smoke of a dozen factory chimneys . . .

'The inhabitants live in dilapidated cottages, the windows of which are broken and patched with oilskin. The doors and door posts are broken and rotten. The creatures who in-

habit these dwellings and even their dark wet cellars, and who live confined amidst all this filth and foul air—which cannot be dissipated because of the surrounding lofty buildings—must surely have sunk to the lowest level of humanity.'

But the horrifying conditions in cities such as Manchester had another side:

'The workers begin to feel themselves members of a homogenous social group. They realize that, although they are weak as individuals, they are strong if united . . . In this way the great cities are the birthplace of the working-class movement.'

William Lovett wrote the Charter. But it was the workers of the industrial cities who created the Chartist movement.

During the summer of 1838, great meetings were held in the Midlands and the north, to endorse the Charter and collect signatures for a petition to be presented to parliament demanding that the Six Points should become law.

Nothing less could save unemployed factory workers from the work-house, or poverty-stricken hand-loom weavers from slow starvation. Hunger drove workers to take up the central question of political power. Only a workers' government would pass laws to help the working class.

Over 100,000 people gathered on Kersal Moor, from Manchester and surrounding towns, to hear the Chartist, Stephens. He told them:

'This question of universal suffrage was a knife-and-fork question after all. This question was a bread-and-cheese question. . . And if any man asked him what he meant by universal suffrage, he would answer that every working man in the land had a right to have a good coat on his back, a comfortable abode in which to shelter himself and his family, a good dinner upon his table, and no more work than was necessary for keeping him in health, and as much wages for that work as would keep him in plenty . . .' (Tremendous cheers).

In 1839 the Chartists summoned a National Convention, to be attended by delegates from all parts of the country. The Convention was to meet in London at the same time as the Chartist petition was presented, and to decide what measures to take if the petition was rejected by parliament.

Even before the Convention met, it was obvious that there would be deep divisions within it. Moderate, fairly well-off workers such as William Lovett, saw the winning of the right to vote as a moral issue. Men must show that they deserved the vote, by using only constitutional means to obtain it, including co-operation with Radicals MPs.

In opposition to such 'moral force' men were the 'physical force' leaders of poorer workers, such as Stephens and Fergus O'Connor, owner of the 'Northern Star' newspaper. They knew the government would not yield to rational persuasion.

'Ulterior measures'

O'Connor thought they might give way and legislate the Charter if they could be frightened into believing that a revolution was the alternative. Other leaders, such as George Harney, wanted to go further than mere bluff. They wanted to make working-class revolution a reality.

At the 1839 Convention these basic differences were thrashed out. Everyone agreed that the single-issue protest politics of the 1830s had led nowhere. A national working-class political organization was needed. But what would its aims be, beyond the purely political programme of the Charter?

The debate became most

heated when it came to discussing 'ulterior measures' which should be adopted if the government rejected the petition. Quite a number of delegates supported the policy of a General Strike, and it was actually decided upon at one stage, only to be voted down a week later. Lovett managed to convince himself that a General Strike was not 'force'. But other moderates, such as Thomas Attwood of the Birmingham Political Union, withdrew from the Convention in disgust.

Opposition to the strike came also from left-wing Chartists, who saw that it would lead inevitably to an insurrection. It was necessary to get on with planning the revolution immediately—otherwise the Charter was a lost cause.

George Harney suggested that people should elect their own representatives at the next election and then march to London to force parliament to accept workers' candidates. 'Let there be no blinking the question. These are not the times to be nice about mere words: the fact is that there is but one mode of obtaining the Charter, and that is by insurrection.'

The Chartist petition, with its 1.25 million signatures, was rejected by 287 to 49 votes. The House of Commons voted against even debating its contents, let alone making them law. Confusion within the Convention became greater than ever. Some delegates wanted it to become a Provisional Government. Others felt it should be dissolved, so that the discussion of 'ulterior measures' could be taken back into the regions and a decision made later.

Workers on the move

But in the north and in South Wales, which had elected most of the 'physical force' delegates, workers were on the move. Roused by parliament's arrogant attitude, and by their desperate economic plight, thousands joined strikes and demonstrations. The leadership of the inflammatory 'Northern Star' rose to over 50,000—an astonishing figure, given its high price and the low level of literacy in the working class. In Monmouthshire, iron workers and coal miners collected weapons and began to plan what they hoped would be a national uprising to overthrow the government.

John Frost, the Newport delegate, returned to Wales to find these preparations already under way. He had little choice in taking over the leadership of the uprising, planned for November 3.

On the night of November 2, three bodies of men set out to march on Newport starting from Blackwood, Nantyglo and Pontypool. Some were armed with muskets, others with homemade pikes, pitchforks and staves. Anyone who resisted their progress was press-ganged into joining the ranks.

As the night wore on, the marchers became disorganized, partly due to the continuous, drenching rain, and partly to frequent 'rests' at public houses. Men refused to obey their 'officers', and eventually only two of the three columns reached Newport, at 8.30 a.m. in the morning, instead of under cover of darkness, as had been planned.

Meanwhile the authorities had had time to prepare. One detachment of soldiers guarded the work-house. Another group concealed themselves in the Westgate Hotel, at the centre of the town, where the mayor had also taken up his position.

The Chartists approached the hotel, demanding the release of some of their comrades who had been arrested. They found their way into the building and tried to smash down the door of the room

where the mayor and the soldiers were hiding. Then the order was given to fire on the crowd, both inside and outside the hotel. Within 15 minutes, the Chartists had been routed.

Walters, a Caerphilly Chartist, later described the scene: 'I was one of the young fellows that used the hatchets against the big door of the Westgate Hotel. We broke through and reached the passage beyond. The red-coats were firing through the passage at the wild throng in the road, and we were in the midst of fire, smoke and awful cries. How I and the daring ones escaped I do not know. In the fight in the passage I happened to look down, and saw my hand covered with blood and my finger gone. It had been carried away by the bullets of the soldiers when I was using the hatchet.'

Nine Chartists were shot dead. The three leaders of the uprising, Frost, Williams and Jones, were tried and sentenced to be hanged for high treason. Though these sentences were commuted to transport for life, the case roused strong feelings in the working-class movement.

The supporters of 'physical force' concluded that only a well-organized national uprising could succeed against the disciplined British army. Many 'moral force' Chartists were frightened right away from the movement they had founded. For the government, the Newport uprising, together with disturbances in Birmingham, provided a golden opportunity to arrest as many Chartists as it could lay hands on. Over 500 went to prison, including William Lovett and Fergus O'Connor.

The split between 'moral' and 'physical' force became final during the winter of 1839. In prison, Lovett wrote a book which was virtually an abandonment of politics in favour of working-class education and 'self-improvement'. After his release in 1841, he founded an educational association, and a year later took part in conferences of the middle-class Complete Suffrage Union, led by Joseph Sturge, a middle-class Quaker businessman. His days as a working-class leader were over.

O'Connor now took control of the Chartist executive. From his prison cell, he launched the National Charter Association in 1840. A year later, he was released to find himself the hero of the industrial working class. The 'Northern Star' published what was to become Chartism's most popular song:

*The lion of freedom
comes from his den,
We'll rally around him
again and again,
We'll crown him with
laurels our champion
to be,
O'Connor the patriot
of sweet liberty.*

O'Connor's triumphant tour through the Midlands and the north fanned his admirers to a white heat of enthusiasm. Hopes for the success of the Charter were once again high.

By the spring of 1842, another massive petition had been assembled, this time with three million signatures. A new Convention was summoned to try and resolve the difficulties and divisions which the last one had brought to light. If this petition failed, there could be no escaping the strength of feeling for 'ulterior measures' to force the Charter upon parliament.

The debate in the House of Commons on the 1842 petition showed that MPs were alarmed by the upsurge of Chartism. The Chartists warned: 'It is the worst species of legislation which leaves grievances of society to be remedied only by violence and revolution, both of which may be apprehended if complaints are unattended to . . .'

The Chartists, continued on page 8.

The Chartists, continued
from page 7.

But, contrary to O'Connor's expectations, threats of revolution produced a solid closing of ranks in the ruling class. Even the Radical MPs who voted to give the petition a hearing could scarcely disguise their hostility. Roebuck (one of the MPs who had encouraged Lovett to produce the Peoples' Charter four years earlier!) denounced O'Connor as a 'malicious and cowardly demagogue'.

'The surest way to prevent revolution was to listen to the complaints of the people', claimed Hume. This just about sums up the extent of positive support for the Chartists among the parliamentary 'left wing'.

From Whigs and Tories came a united onslaught against the petition. Macaulay claimed that universal suffrage was 'utterly incompatible with the very existence of civilization', since 'civilization rests upon the security of property'.

The Tory Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, saw the Charter as 'altogether an impeachment of the constitution of this country and of the whole frame of society'.

These comments went to the heart of the matter. Industrial workers demanded the vote, but they saw political power merely as a means to an end. For the ruling class, to legislate the Charter in 1842 would have been to legislate away the social and economic system from which their profits came. The Chartist petition was voted down by 287 votes to 49.

As the news spread amongst the workers, to whom O'Connor had promised so much, their fury became uncontrollable. The debates of the Chartists Convention were brushed aside. Spontaneous strikes broke out in the Midlands and the north. Strikers marched from one town to the next, calling out new forces, and then pulling the plugs from the great steam boilers so that the bosses would be without a source of power to restart production. In some towns there were pitched battles between strikers and troops. In others, the factory owners dared not resist the onrush of the General Strike.

The strikes began in early August. But it was not until August 16 that Chartist delegates met in Manchester to decide whether or not they approved of what was going on.

William Cooper, a Leicester Chartist, describes his journey to Manchester through the strife-torn cities of the Black Country. After winning support for the Charter at mass meetings of strikers in Birmingham, Stafford and Stoke, he took a train to Manchester from Crewe. In the same train he met John Campbell, Secretary of the National Charter Association. The two men could hardly believe their eyes as they approached Manchester and saw no smoke rising from factory chimneys.

'Campbell's face changed, and with an oath he said: "Not a single mill at work! Something must come of this, and something serious too!"'

Lancashire Chartists, such as Richard Pilling, had been at the forefront in organizing the General Strike. On August 12, a meeting of 358 factory delegates voted to make the Charter the main aim of their strike action, since only political change would put their economic aims in reach. On August 15, a similar meeting issued a call for a complete national stoppage.

When the Chartists assembled in Manchester the next day, it is not surprising that the majority voted to give the strikes their full support. As Cooper reports: 'There was nothing now but the physical force struggle to be looked for. The Chartists must get the people out to fight, and they would be irresistible, if they



10,000 people gathered on Kennington Common in 1848 to march with the Petition to Parliament. But when police disallowed the demonstration, O'Connor ensured that his supporters dispersed peacefully.

were united.'

Yet sections of the Chartist leadership hesitated, including some who had been leaders of the 'physical force' wing. A General Strike would mean fighting. The workers, for all their militancy, were no match for trained and properly armed troops.

O'Connor opposed Cooper's speech, on the grounds that the issue before the meeting was that of supporting strikes, not of making civil war. The 'Northern Star' came out strongly against the strikes. Hesitancy at this stage was fatal. Within a few days, the Chartist leaders were back in prison. The great strike movement was left to die down amidst isolated skirmishes with soldiers, and the demoralization of hunger and defeat.

During the next few years, trade improved considerably. There was less support for the politics of violence and desperation and a revival of trade unionism and of factory reform committees. As a mass movement, Chartism never recovered from the political retreats of 1842.

Third National Petition

O'Connor retained much of his popularity. He used it to promote a Utopian 'Land Plan', for settling factory workers on small farms, so that the pressure of over-population in the cities might be relieved. By 1847, over £80,000 had been subscribed, in tiny amounts, for the purchase of land. Several estates were actually set up, before the project collapsed in bankruptcy.

In 1848, the 'year of revolutions' on the continent of Europe, Chartism had a brief revival. A third National Petition was launched, and O'Connor bluffed his way into the leadership once again.

'I would rather die than give up one particle of the Charter,' he proclaimed. 'Our movement is a labour movement, originated in the first instance by the fustian jackets, the unshorn chins, and the blistered hands... I would not give a

fig for the Charter if we were not prepared with a solid social system to take the place of the artificial one which we mean to destroy; and it was good that we did not succeed earlier with the Charter, before we were ready with the new social system...'

But there was not a word on the methods to be used in the destruction of the old system. Nor was confidence in O'Connor's 'new system', the Land Scheme, widespread amongst other Chartist leaders. O'Connor merely responded, in his speeches, to what he felt his audience required. His demagoguery had become less convincing as the years went by.

On April 10, 1848, a huge demonstration was planned to march with the Petition to parliament. About 10,000 people gathered on Kennington Common. But O'Connor had no intention of defying police warnings that the demonstrators would not be allowed to cross the Thames bridges. He showed himself in his true colours by pleading with his supporters to disperse peacefully, and bundling the Petition off to parliament in a hired cab.

Later, when the Home Secretary warned that the force guarding Westminster Bridge would be maintained as long as necessary, O'Connor grovelingly replied: 'Not a man should be taken away. The government have been quite right. I told the [Chartist] Convention that if they had been the government they never would have allowed such a meeting.' Soon, the Third Petition was a favourite object of ridicule in ruling-class circles.

But Chartism, after all its great struggles, represented more than merely the reputation of Fergus O'Connor. The later years of the Chartist movement, from 1846 onwards, saw the emergence of new leaders and new ideas which out-lived O'Connor's disgrace, and were to be carried forward into the future of the British labour movement.

The transition towards socialism, which Engels had predicted in 1844, was under way. In opposition to O'Connor's

Land Plan, some Chartists proposed the nationalization of the land. The private ownership of property was being called increasingly into question.

'The people must see that their inalienable right to property prevails; the proceeds of the land should be public and used in the interests of the public... if the people cannot obtain that which they need in a law, they must get it without law.' (Article in the 'Northern Star', October 1847). This was a long way from William Lovett and his Six Points of 1838!

Chartism was also making theoretical advances on another front. In 1846, George Harney became involved in founding the Society of Fraternal Democrats, an internationalist body based in London.

Articles on workers' struggles and the development of socialism in other countries appeared with increasing frequency in the columns of the 'Northern Star' where Harney was now editor. As Harney's interest in the work of Marx and Engels developed, he found himself coming into conflict with O'Connor's anti-republicanism and lack of interest in the international labour movement. He founded a separate journal, 'The Red Republican', in which the first English translation of the Communist Manifesto was published in 1848.

Two years later, the breach with O'Connor became final. Resigning from the 'Northern Star', Harney worked with Ernest Jones on the Executive of the National Charter Association to bring about the adoption of a new, socialist programme. When he found himself out-voted, O'Connor boycotted the NCA Convention, and tried to set up a separate Chartist body.

The programme of the official Convention in 1850 is dismissed by bourgeois historians as mere whistling in the wind, since Chartism was no longer a mass movement with the power to overturn governments.

This is to ignore the political gains for the future repre-

sented in the programme. Its aims included nationalization of the land, repudiation of the National Debt, complete freedom of the Press, and the public maintenance of the unemployed. It was also decided that in future the Chartists should work to build close relationships with the trade unions, instead of regarding them as rivals.

Ernest Jones was the most outstanding of the Chartists who turned to socialism, under the influence of Marx and Engels. Throughout the 1850s he fought to expose the nature of capitalism and of capitalist politicians, whether Tory, Whig or Radical. He warned that prosperity would not last for ever, nor could it bring permanent gains to the working class, unless they built a political movement aimed at taking the power and achieving 'social emancipation'.

In 1853, he spoke to a mass meeting on Blackstone Edge about the importance of building a working class party:

'Why do we not wait until the crisis comes and the millions rally of their own accord? Because we want not a movement of excitement and danger, but one of calm and reason and moral strength. Therefore we bid you now re-organize—that you may rule the storm instead of being tossed by it.'

Trotsky concludes: 'Chartism was unsuccessful not because its methods were incorrect, but because it came too early.'

In the mid-19th century, when Britain became the workshop of the world, and British workers benefited from the exploitation of the colonies, the political lessons of Chartism could not be actualized in the building of an independent socialist party. But the First International was founded and the Labour Party was eventually launched on the foundations laid by Chartism.

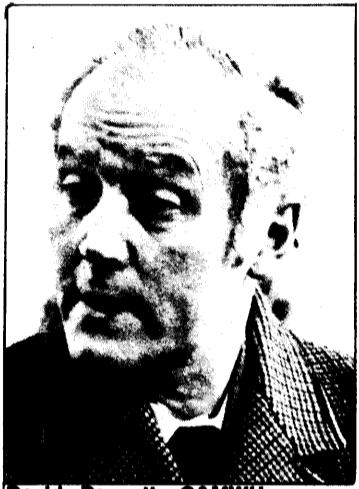
Britain's 'truly proletarian revolutionary tradition' could not be entirely smothered by the reformism of later labour bureaucrats. It lives on in the present struggle to transform the Socialist Labour League into the revolutionary party.

WORKERS NOTEBOOK

THE FIRST

Overheard during the small talk following the latest meeting of the TUC General Council were some remarks made by David Basnett.

The leader of the gasmen's union was reporting a sympathetic approach the National Union of Mineworkers had



David Basnett, G&MWU

made to him offering support the moment the General and Municipal Workers' Union needed it.

Basnett then added: 'This was the first actual offer of help I have had since the dispute began.'

So much for the famed line of the TUC 'lefts' that they will not let the gasmen go down in isolation to defeat.

NETWORK

Car industry members of the Transport and General Workers' Union fear their leaders may soon try to drag them into a sinister network of joint committees with the employers.

Their fears arise from a draft 'Policy for the Vehicle Building and Automotive Industry', circulated by the national committee of the T&GWU's car-industry trade group.

Countrywide reaction to the draft is to be assessed by the committee in a few weeks' time. But all the indications are that the policy is already dangerously close to adoption.

It appears to enjoy considerable support in the top leadership of the union, while a number of influential right-wing, fake 'left' and Communist Party figures in the industry have rushed more or less enthusiastically to its defence.

The present draft is largely a rewrite of a widely-condemned policy statement prepared last year by the National Union of Vehicle Builders, now merged with the T&GWU.

It hinges on the phoney, but dangerous concepts of 'joint control of the industry' and 'genuine equality between capital and labour by 1980'.

Where the NUVB statement insisted that 'the national executives of the unions and the company shall have final responsibility for agreeing the basis of payment and the main working conditions', the T&GWU automotive group's present formulation is somewhat more vague.

It says: 'Wages, benefits and major matters relating to wages and conditions [are] to be negotiated in every firm, plant or combine collectively by shop stewards and trade union officials, based on the standards contained in this programme.'

Opponents of the document point out, however, that this formula still embodies the principle to which they chiefly objected in the original draft—corporate bargaining.

The document is, therefore, unacceptable in its entirety.

But at least one T&GWU automotive district committee recently, it has been 'amended' rather than rejected on the grounds that 'a purely negative position would be dangerous'. The amenders sought simply to insert into the document suggestions incompatible with its main line.

This, of course, will allow the national committee simply to play off one set of amendments against another—leaving them with their original proposals. Whoever drafted the document couldn't have organized things better himself.

JAIL FOR THE MANAGERS WHO ALTER THE BOOKS

At a time when the Soviet economy is in a crisis, it is not surprising that falsification of accounts and production figures should be practised on a wide scale.

While the bureaucracy practices falsification for its own purposes in order to disguise its mismanagement of the economy, it is less ready to tolerate the presentation of falsified figures by unauthorized persons.

Indeed, plant managers are now being hauled before the courts for putting out figures purporting to show that plans had been fulfilled when targets had not been met.

In a recent case in the Sverdlov district court, Moscow, a former director of a non-ferrous metal-casting plant was in the dock together with his chief engineer and chief book keeper.

The trio had concocted accounts to show the plan for the enterprise fulfilled 100 per cent, when in fact production was 17 per cent below target. In this way these minor bureaucrats were able to draw funds for which the enterprise was not entitled.

Compared with the penalties for such crimes in Stalin's day, the defendants got off lightly. They each received one year's corrective labour and a 15-per-cent deduction from their earnings.

Undoubtedly for comparable crimes against state property, workers would have been punished much more severely. The bureaucracy is more lenient with its own delinquents and just tried to teach these three a lesson.

A decree of the Supreme Soviet passed in 1961 makes falsification of accounts and production plans punishable by three years' deprivation of freedom.

Methods of detection have been improved and it is claimed that few cases go undiscovered. Speaking on the subject recently, however,



Workers leaving a factory in Petrograd. Now plant managers who falsify their books are being hauled before the courts.

Vasily Kulikov, deputy chairman of the USSR Supreme Court, said that 'the struggle against falsification of accounts and other malpractices was not always conducted in a vigorous manner'.

Those guilty of such practices should, he said, be removed from their jobs and

expelled from the party. He instanced the lenient treatment of Lapshin, deputy director of the Rybinsk shipyard who had falsified the books for years and was given only a three years' suspended sentence.

He called on the courts to pass heavier sentences in such cases.

DESPERATE ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE RUSSIAN LAND PROBLEM

Much land in the Soviet Union which could be put to productive use is going to waste according to an article in the trade union newspaper, 'Trud'.

Its author, Boris Mozhayev, is an expert of Soviet rural life and its problems. He claims that 95 million acres of land in the area between Moscow

and Leningrad and further east have been neglected.

He claims that the establishment of large collective farms has resulted in much land which was once tilled being neglected and returning to nature. Small communities have been wound up, buildings have collapsed and the land is not even used for pasture.

Mozhayev visited over a dozen such forgotten villages

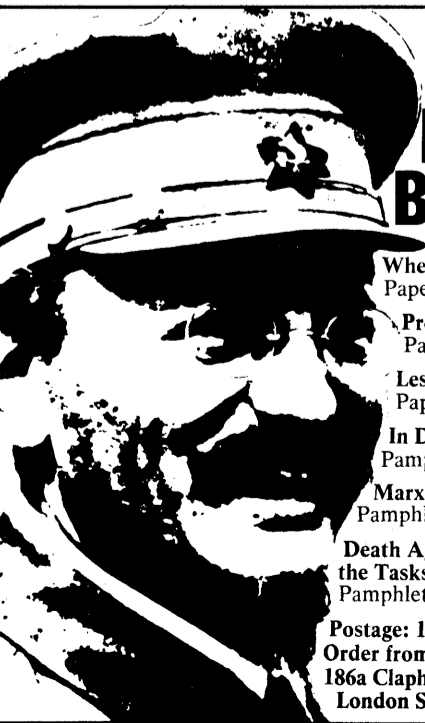
in the Ostashkovo district east of Moscow. He met a peasant still living with his family in one abandoned village who said that there had once been 100 farmsteads in the area and over 500 head of cattle.

Lack of roads and investment funds account for the decay of such areas, while huge resources had been thrown into the development of the virgin lands of Asia.

The land in the area which Mozhayev is talking about is much less fertile and has a harsher climate than the great black-earth belt to the south. Whether it would be worth bringing back into cultivation on a large scale is questionable and would require heavy outlays on farm buildings, housing, machinery and fertilizers.

What is certain is that the bureaucracy's attempts to solve the agrarian crisis inherited from the Stalin era have completely failed.

Perhaps the appearance of such an article in a widely-read paper is a sign that it is turning in desperation to some new experiment in farming the abandoned and marginal lands of north Russia, hitherto regarded as unsuitable for collective farming.



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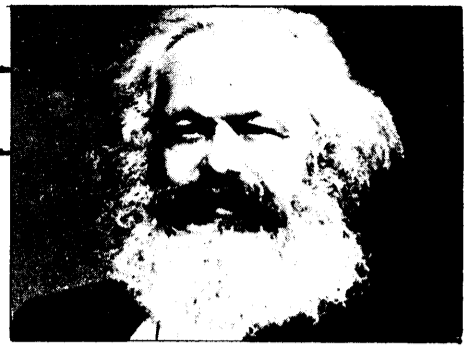
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Karl Marx was the first to understand the gold's real role in capitalist society



Behind the increase in the price of gold

BY ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT PETER JEFFRIES

NOTHING indicates more clearly the enormity of the world economic and financial crisis than the continual upward trend in the price of gold.

The last weeks have seen it rise to well over \$90 an ounce on the 'open' market as against its 'official' \$42 an ounce.

The financial commentators of the capitalist class, as well as the revisionists, cannot explain this trend. For them it is merely the result of 'speculation'.

It is of course nothing of the sort. As Marxists have always insisted, it reflects the operation of the law of value, the law which governs the most basic functioning of the capitalist system.

Once more gold is emerging as the only means by which big business will conduct its business. It is this development which heralds a collapse of world trade and upheavals in the lives of millions of workers.

Karl Marx was the first to understand gold's real role within the capitalist system. For all his contemporaries and predecessors it represented merely a convenient way in which goods could be exchanged.

Barter—the direct exchange of commodities—was extremely inconvenient. Gold was the most suitable way in which these inconveniences could be overcome.

SCORNFUL

In his book 'Capital', Marx pours scorn on such trite ideas, ideas to which the revisionists still cling.

For Marx, barter on a large scale was not merely inconvenient. It was absolutely impossible. It lacked a set of forces which could co-ordinate private production into a social system. Money was such a mechanism, and the only possible mechanism, which could fulfil this role.

Under capitalism it is the market which alone regulates all production and accumulation. There is not, and cannot be any conscious regulation of capitalism. This has always been the utopian dream of reformists and revisionists. The capitalist system, Marxists have always stressed, is a system based upon anarchy, that is one lacking any a priori regulation.

Capitalism involves the domination of commodity production. By a commodity Marx means an article of wealth (a 'use value') which is produced not for the needs of the producer, but for the needs of others.

When privately-owned and produced products are brought onto the market they have a value only to the extent that

they can be converted into money. The private labour which each commodity contains (the labour of the carworker, engineer, etc) is 'validated' as social labour only to the extent that the commodities concerned are sold for money.

Money represents social labour and its stamp of approval converts the products of private labour into the products of social labour. If, for example, labour is spent on making products for which it later turns out there is no demand, the products cannot be sold. They do not become commodities and the labour contained in them is socially unnecessary.

In the opening chapters of 'Capital', Marx shows that money and the role which it plays arise out of the very nature of the commodity.

A commodity is a unity of two opposites. It is, on the one hand, a specific use value; that is it meets a specific use for its potential buyer. Chairs are useful to sit on; cars useful as a means of transport, etc.

But at the same time, a commodity is also an exchange value. The value of a commodity only reveals itself in the course of exchange.

If we say that two commodities, A and B have 'equal value', we do not speak of the particular use to which the commodities might be put. We might say, for example, that the value of a pair of shoes equals the value of a watch.

Clearly we do not have in mind their particular, individual, use values. Nor do we have in mind the particular type of labour which was involved in their production (or what Marx calls concrete labour). When we speak of the equality of their exchange value we have in mind the abstract labour which they embody.

Marx shows that a commodity is a unity of contradictions. On the one hand it is a use value; on the other an exchange value.

On the one hand as a use value it is the product of concrete labour (a carpenter makes a desk, for instance); on the other, as an exchange value, it is the product of abstract labour.

Marx shows that this contradiction within the commodity is negated (that is, overcome, only to reappear on a higher level in a more intense form) through the separation of commodities into commodities on the one hand and the money commodity (gold) on the other.

'Ordinary' commodities and gold are united in that they are both commodities, that is objects of wealth which enter into the process of circulation.

But this unity is established only through the contradictory nature of the relationship between gold and commodities.

On the one side we have a commodity which is in reality a use value. Its exchange value has only an ideal existence in the form of its price. Nobody enters a shop and asks about the value of a pair of shoes; they ask to know the price.

RELATED

In other words, exchange value does not appear empirically within the capitalist system. The value of a commodity is revealed through its price and it is through its price that it is related to its opposite, the gold. This is the meaning of the equation such as one pair of shoes equals £2.

Let us now consider gold. When gold functions as money it does not itself possess use value.

It is the embodiment, in the most abstract form, of exchange value.

Its use value has only an ideal existence, represented by the infinite series of expressions of relative value in which it stands face to face with all other commodities.

It is the sum of all these other values which make up the various use values of gold.

But as with all 'opposites' we must not see the relationship between money and commodities in terms of a conflict of equal opposites.

For in the relationship gold always has the upper hand. This arises because it is the embodiment of exchange value itself.

As Marx puts it, money and commodities face each other as passionate lovers, each fickle and self-centred, but each dependent upon the other. But it is one partner, gold, which keeps the discipline of the love affair and must have the upper hand.

Gold must be more sought after than seeking. The relationship, therefore, is a profoundly antagonistic one. Marx applied to it the Shakespearian adage that 'the course of true love never did run smooth'.

The great power of this analysis in 'Capital'—a work which every clever and cynical revisionist has been able to declare 'out of date' over the last 25 years—is now there for all to see.

The headlong rush into gold is proving in practice its supreme power. In a crisis, nobody wants paper money or 'ordinary' commodities. As the hart pants for water, so every capitalist pants for gold, as Marx says.

Products can only become commodities through the good grace of money. A fundamental shock within the money system must therefore have the profoundest of shocks in the sphere of commodity circulation. The circulation of commodities and the circulation of money are locked together in antagonistic struggle, as we have seen.

It is only through the power of money that under capitalism the worker's labour is socialized, that is becomes part of the world economy.

Now where is the link more clear than in the case of Britain. For British capitalism during the last century dragged a world market into being. It is more closely tied to this world economy, by trade and finance, than any other capitalist country.

Its stability since 1945 has been assured only through the existence of a world money system created at Bretton Woods. But as every capitalist knows, this system is now in ruins. It cannot be either resurrected or even refurbished.

These developments have immediate implications for the class struggle in Britain. For the world money crisis bears directly, immediately, and with enormous power, on class relations in Britain.

EXCHANGE

For we must never forget that, as Marx showed in 'Capital', the social relations between people appear as the relations between things.

That is to say, in exchanging commodities men are exchanging their labour. The social relations of production appear, and can only appear, in the process of commodity and money exchange.

It is for this reason that the Socialist Labour League has continually pointed out to the working class that the financial crisis had directly revolutionary implications.

For the disruption of world money and finance is the form taken by the enormous disruption of social relations which the crisis now produces, more than anywhere else in Britain.

The fact that every revisionist could sneer at this analysis indicates more than anything the utter political bankruptcy of these gentlemen, as well as their total ignorance of the real nature of the capitalist system.

CONTINUED TOMORROW.

BBC 1

- 9.38 Schools. 12.30 Croeso'n ol.
- 12.55 News. 1.00 Pebble Mill at one. 1.30 Andy Pandy. 1.45 Ask the family. 2.05 Schools. 2.50 Sixteen plus. 3.15 The Budget 1973. 5.45 News. Weather.
- 6.00 NATIONWIDE. 7.00 TOM AND JERRY.
- 7.10 FILM: 'Mr Tea Per Cent'. Charlie Drake. British comedy.
- 8.30 WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE LIKELY LADS? Storm in a Tea Chest.
- 9.00 NEWS. Weather. 9.25 BUDGET.
- 9.35 DOCUMENTARY: 'THE TIMES'. Story of a newspaper.
- 10.40 FILM 73. 11.10 MIDWEEK. 11.55 NEWS. 12.00 Weather.

ITV

- 9.30 Schools. 10.30 This week (London only). 12.05 Mr. Trimble. 12.25 Pinky and Perky. 12.40 First report. 1.00 Lunchtime with Wogan. 1.30 Emmerdale farm. 2.00 Harriet's back in town. 2.30 Good afternoon. 3.00 About Britain. 3.30 Budget special. 5.30 Cartoon. 5.50 News.
- 6.00 TODAY. 6.40 CROSSROADS.
- 7.05 WHICKER'S SOUTH SEAS. The Only Compliment—

BBC 2

- 11.00-11.25 Play school. 4.00 Magic roundabout. 4.05 Play school. 4.30 Help! 4.50 John Craven's newsround. 5.00 Vision on. 5.25 Open University.
- 6.40 OFFICE. 7.05 OPEN UNIVERSITY.
- 7.30 NEWS. Weather. 7.35 COLLECTOR'S WORLD.
- 8.05 WATERLINE. Ocean Racing. First of three programmes about ships, boats and the sea.
- 9.00 POT BLACK. Fred Davis v John Pulman.
- 9.25 Theatre: 'My Father Hokusai'. By Seiji Hoshikawa. First of season of television drama from abroad.
- 10.40 LEAP IN THE DARK. 11.05 BUDGET.
- 11.15 NEWS. Weather.
- 11.45 THE OLD GREY WHISTLE TEST. Argent, Shawn Phillips.

- She's A Good Sport. New Zealand.
- 7.35 BANACEK. Project Phoenix. George Peppard.
- 9.00 PLAYHOUSE. Operation Magic Carpet.
- 10.00 NEWS. 10.30 BUDGET.
- 10.40 EDITH EVANS. I Caught Acting Like Measles. Bryan Forbes film about the great actress.
- 11.40 WRESTLING. 12.10 TIME TO SPEAK.

TODAY'S TV

REGIONAL TV

- CHANNEL: 9.30-11.52, 1.15 News. 1.30 London. 2.30 Women. 1.00 London. 4.00 Lottery. 4.05 London. 6.00 News. 6.10 Lookaround. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.00 Whicker. 7.30 Film: 'Vengeance'. 9.00 London. 12.10 News, weather.
- WESTWARD. As Channel except: 12.05 London. 12.20 Gus Honeybun. 12.40 London. 12.57 News. 1.00 London. 5.05 Diary. 12.07 News. 12.10 Epilogue.
- SOUTHERN: 9.30 London. 12.04 News. 12.05 London. 2.30 Houseparty. 3.00 London. 6.05 Day by day. 6.35 Junkin. 7.05 Doctor in charge. 7.35 Cool million. 9.00 London. 12.10 News. 12.20 Weather. Guideline.
- HARLECH: 9.30 London. 2.30 Houseparty. 3.00 London. 6.06 Report West. 6.21 Report Wales. 6.35 Try for ten. 7.05 Film: 'Riders of Vengeance'. 8.30 Whicker. 9.00 London. 12.10 Looking at. 12.40 Weather.
- HTV Cymru/Wales as above except: 6.06-6.21 Y dydd. 10.40-11.25 Ar waetha'r gelyn. 11.25-11.40 O'r wasg. 11.40 Wrestling. 12.10 World in action. 12.40 Weather.
- HTV West as above except: 6.21-6.35 Report West.
- ANGLIA: 9.30 London. 12.04 News. 12.05 London. 2.30 Women. 3.00 London. 6.05 About Anglia. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.00 Whicker. 7.30 Hec Ramsey. 9.00 London. 12.10 Reflection.

- ATV MIDLANDS: 9.30 London. 2.30 Women. 3.00 London. 6.05 Today. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.00 Whicker. 7.30 Cartoon. 7.35 Hec Ramsey. 9.00 London. 12.10 Sue Jay reports. Weather.
- ULSTER: 11.00 London. 1.32 News. 1.40 Schools. 2.40 Romper room. 3.00 London. 6.05 Reports. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.00 Cartoon. 7.10 Columbo. 8.30 Whicker. 9.00 London.
- YORKSHIRE: 9.30 London. 2.30 Houseparty. 3.00 London. 6.05 Calendar. Weather. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.00 Whicker. 7.30 Cartoon. 7.35 Banacek. 9.00 London. 12.10 Scotland Yard mysteries. 12.40 Weather.
- GRANADA: 9.30 London. 2.30 Collecting. 3.00 London. 6.00 News. Police file. 6.35 Smith family. 7.05 London. 7.35 Film: 'The Devil and Miss Sarah'. 9.00 London.
- TYNE TEES: 9.25 Just one word. 9.30 London. 2.30 News. 2.31 Kreskin. 3.00 London. 6.05 Today. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.00 Whicker. 7.30 Cartoon. 7.35 Banacek. 9.00 London. 12.10 News. 12.25 Lactern.
- SCOTTISH: 9.30 London. 2.30 Dateline. 3.00 London. 6.05 Today. 6.35 Adam Smith. 7.00 Whicker. 7.30 Columbo. 9.00 London. 12.10 Late call.
- GRAMPIAN: 10.58 London. 1.38 Schools. 2.35 Cartoon. 2.52 News. 3.00 London. 6.05 News. 6.10 Cartoon. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.00 Whicker. 7.30 Cartoon. 7.35 Banacek. 9.00 London. 12.10 Meditation.

SLL PUBLIC MEETINGS

- SHEFFIELD**
TUESDAY MARCH 6, 7.30 p.m.
Friends Meeting House
Hartshead
Speaker: CLIFF SLAUGHTER
(SLL Central Committee)
- TOTTENHAM**
TUESDAY MARCH 6, 8 p.m.
Lord Morrison Hall
Chesnut Grove
Speaker: G. HEALY
(SLL National Secretary)
- BASINGSTOKE**
WEDNESDAY MARCH 7,
8 p.m.
Public Library
Speaker: M. BANDA
(SLL Central Committee)
- SPECIAL ATUA MEETINGS**
BUILDING WORKERS
The crisis of capitalism and the future of the trade unions.
Tuesday March 6
7.30 p.m.
Norfolk Room
Caxton Hall
Caxton Street, SW1

OUR INDUSTRIAL STAFF ASSESS

Why the Ford strike collapsed

LAST WEEK Ford executives began taunting the men they normally fear—the shop stewards who lead the combine's 50,000 workers.

'There was going to be a strike, was there? For how long? One day, two days, three days?'

The bosses smiled and the stewards had to grind their teeth. Within the inner circle the news was out — what promised to be the fiercest industrial and political clash since the miners' dispute was off — the great Ford strike was just not going to happen.

By Wednesday it was public knowledge. Gasmen read the headlines with a sinking heart; the militant carworkers were hopelessly split, a token stoppage could be expected at the very most.

Only weeks earlier the government had been identifying an all-out strike at Ford as the test of the pay laws. Now the threat had evaporated. How had the collapse occurred?

The original claim had been prepared along traditional lines. National officials produced their detailed breakdown of company performance since the last big strike in 1971.

IRRELEVANT

Such arguments, however, were irrelevant. Whether Ford could pay was not the issue. The claim was clearly a violation of the state pay laws. The task was not to break Ford, but to break the Tory government.

At first a series of very militant-sounding challenges were flung out across the media by shop stewards and union spokesmen — they were asking Ford to break the government's pay laws, the company was powerful enough to defy the Tories, etc., etc.

The constant thread in these arguments was that the government was not seen as the main enemy. It was Ford who had to be persuaded.

This adaptation of reality was best expressed by Swansea convenor Hugh Wallace when he explained why the plant was taking three-day strike action and not an all-out stoppage. The government, he said, was hiding behind Ford, the multinational corporations could break the law and give increases beyond the pittance decreed under Phase Two.

These arguments were a massive evasion and the clearest sign that most of the stewards were not capable or prepared to fight a political struggle over the claim.

PAY-OFF

This was the real pay-off for militancy as a thing in itself. In 1971 the strike had been abruptly halted by the unprecedented intervention of the two leaders Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon. They drummed up a deal with Ford's European chiefs behind the backs of the stewards and the national officers concerned in the bitter dispute.

The Jones-Scanlon manoeuvre caused an explosion of anger, but no one was capable of leading a campaign against this betrayal because it meant removing a union leadership that most stewards, and particularly the Communist Party faction, were pledged to support.

This failure had left a residue of anger tinged with

despondency within the plants. Now, two years later, the stewards were approaching an even bigger political challenge. What hope of success was there? The action got off to a militant start. On February 1 Ford made the expected derisory offer exactly in line with the state pay norm. Workers at Halewood, Merseyside, walked out immediately and Swansea followed.

At this stage there was a move by some stewards to keep them out and immediately face the fight against the government. But they were overruled.

STRATEGY

The combine stewards' committee decided instead to wait until a special conference at Coventry already arranged for February 18. Here delegations from all plants (invitations were sent out also to hospital workers, miners and others) would thrash out a strategy.

The Coventry war council proved to be a paper tiger.

A decision to launch all-out strike action from March 1 was taken. It sounded militant enough, but beneath the angry words a great betrayal was being prepared.

A tell-tale sign was the platform's refusal to allow a resolution calling for a General Strike of all unions as the only way of winning the political struggle right ahead. Chairman was leading Ford Stalinist Sid Harraway.

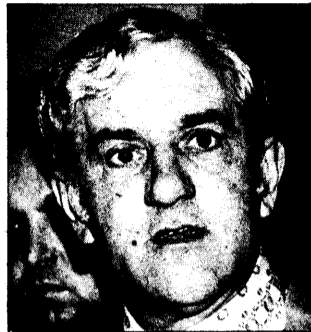
Debate on this issue obviously would have been the real test of whether stewards would go back to their plants and prepare the men for a showdown with the Tories.

As it was, in the crucial period between February 18 and March 1 no campaign whatever was launched to win support for the strike.

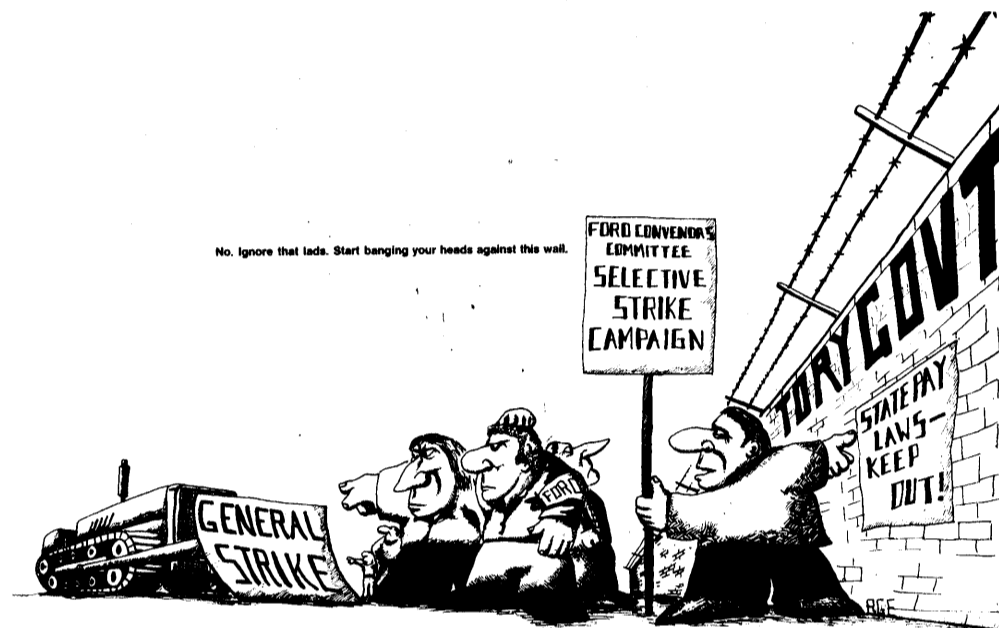
Fair warning that such a campaign was needed was given the same day as the



SID HARRAWAY, leading Dagenham Stalinist . . . Blocked General Strike motion.



HUGH WALLACE, Swansea convenor . . . Ford could break the law.



Coventry conference when a Dagenham engine-plant meeting voted against any form of action. But even in militant plants like Halewood there were no leaflets, no meetings, no preparation.

A whole group of stewards had clearly already decided to abandon the claim until the Tory pay laws just 'disappeared'.

By Wednesday, February 21, just three days after Coventry's near-unanimous vote for all-out action, Harraway was telling the 'Barking and Dagenham Advertiser' that 'the position will be reviewed'.

Ford workers would take 'some form of industrial action', he said. But he made clear that whatever it was it wouldn't be all-out strike. 'It might be sporadic strikes, like the teachers', Harraway hinted.

This was clear signalling of a retreat. And, remember, Harraway was here talking to a capitalist newspaper the day before his convenor's committee had met to assess the situation.

The convenors met on Thursday, February 22, and the works committees and union officials the following day.

Plant after plant reported that the March 1 pledge had not been honoured and that there would be no action. The collapse included Dagenham—only Halewood and Swansea were prepared to go.

RECRIMINATION

There were bitter recriminations. From Halewood Les Moore, engineers' senior steward, demanded that a decision at least for a token strike on the following Thursday should be taken in advance of last Monday's meeting with management.

He was backed by Swansea and a lone voice from the Basildon plant. But all the southern plants, including every steward from Dagenham, raised their hands against the suggestion.

Harraway's position as secretary of the group was one of evasion. It would, 'work itself out', he said.

This lethargy on the left of the committee was decisive. The right wingers clearly wanted to promote a collapse because they were incapable and afraid of taking on the government. But the 'left' and the Stalinists were equally afraid or incapable of exposing the faint-hearts and campaigning among the membership for action.

OWN ACTION

Militant Ford workers insist that with a campaign the men would have responded—as it was, unity between and within plants broke into a thousand pieces.

After the Monday meeting with management the combine committee was unable to work out any coherent policy and the plants were left to take their own forms of action.

The retreat at Ford's cannot be minimized. It is a significant victory for the Tory government.

The national officers, Moss Evans of the T&GWU and Reg Birch of the AUEW, do not advise strike action. They were against an indefinite strike at any plant from March 1. The talk is now of sporadic disruption and guerrilla action which will of course be useless.

Effects go immediately beyond the motor industry. The carworkers would have added an enormous strength to the campaign against the government and brought the movement a big step closer to a political and industrial conflict that would have forced Heath to resign.

Now the Tories have gained a significant tactical and propaganda advantage. This situation could still be reversed. Ford workers still want their £10. But they will need a new leadership to get it.



Halewood still has the will to fight

LES MOORE, convenor of the militant Halewood plant for the past seven years, now senior engineers' steward, talks about the Ford debacle.

'We have to be honest about this one. The Ford workers are disappointed with their leadership and they have a perfect right to be. You cannot expect workers to go into a fight which is half political and half industrial without an absolutely firm lead. But there has been no campaign or lead.'

The combine committee has let them down. They have done nothing but step back since the original decision to strike was taken. At Halewood there has been no meeting, no literature has been put out and there has been no real attempt to bring the rank-and-file together and give them a sense of unity of purpose.

I believe you can't just leave men on their own to enter a battle like this. Decisions should be taken then decisions should be worked for campaigned for like they were in 1971. Given this situation, you have to admit that the men at Halewood responded magnificently. They came out because they believe in this claim and hate the government.

Of course the real tragedy is not in Ford but in the working class in general. The Ford struggle would have captured the headlines and the media—we always get the big publicity. What an encouragement this would have been to others and the workers already on strike like the gasmen. We could have come out then gone to Vauxhall's and said: 'Right we are all in the same boat. Let's go.'

The lads at Halewood will still be going back with the will to fight. There will be action in the future. I can only hope that the rise in the cost of living will prompt action throughout the whole working-class.

CAV storemen control supplies

TWENTY-FIVE storekeepers at CAV Acton have won the right for their shop steward to control the issue of components following three and a half days of industrial action.

The entire machines factory assembly line was shut down.

The men refused to issue any work until the management agreed to their demands. The storekeepers complain that assembly line leaders were by-passing the stores and that component shortages 'made their life hell'.

The company gave in last Friday when there was a danger of all pro-

duction closing down. Work will now be carried out according to the conditions laid down by the stores steward and assembly men are barred from the stores, as are the majority of progress chasers.

● Production workers' overtime ended on Friday when works order control clerks decided to ban overtime. The men concerned collate information relating to output and the production workers' wages.

They are complaining that they had a raw deal as a result of last year's site agreement.

'Society decomposing' says Sir Fred

A FURTHER call for right-wing 'law and order' came at the weekend from Sir Frederick Catherwood.

He is former director-general of the National Economic Development Council and now chief executive of Laing's builders.

British society, said Sir Frederick, is in an 'advanced state of de-

composition', because everyone was 'looking after number one.'

'We weep crocodile tears about the old-age pension' he continued, 'but it never stops us putting in the next wage claim.'

John Laing's made a net profit of £4,914,000 in the 1972-1973 financial year—almost £2m up on the previous year.

TUC: Black Monday becomes a reality

JOE GORMLEY, the president of the miners' union, told the special congress of the TUC that alternatives facing the trade union movement were either 'change the policies of the government, or change the damned government'.

Gormley, the first speaker in the day-long Congress, was moving the reference back of the General Purposes Committee report which disallowed motions of amendments during the proceedings.

The unions could not pussyfoot around on these issues for ever, Gormley said. The NUM had two criticisms of the General Council report: it contained no specific points for action if it was ignored by the Tories and it could not be discussed point by point.

It was the unanimous decision of the union's executive that there must be some united action by the trade union movement as a whole if the government ignored the TUC's advice.

Gormley denied that there was anything of 'anarchy' in this decision. 'Every strike at the moment is not just against the employers, but against the government. We believe that if there are going to be political strikes, the action should be united,' he said.

It was clear that no wage claim today would be won by one-day strikes or protest marches.

A lot of people had sour memories of 1926, Gormley said, but the trade union movement today was a completely different animal. 'United we can stand and succeed, but divided we are guaranteed to fail.'

PARAGRAPH 116 of the General Council report 'condemned us to the situation of the past', said Clive Jenkins, general secretary of the white collar ASTMS, seconding Gormley.

This was a situation 'where those in difficulty can ask the General Council for support and it might or might not give it.' He proposed an action committee of unions involved in pay struggles.

REFERENCE back of the General Purposes Committee report was carried by 5,096,000 to 4,257,000 with the transport union, the engineers and the miners voting in favour together with the civil servants, the TV technicians, firemen, sheetmetalworkers, printing unions and other unions.

The general and municipal, electricians', teachers', local government officers' and builders'



An argument broke out in the UCATT (building union) delegation when the card-holder voted against reference back of the report.

delegations voted against. (A large number of UCATT delegates angrily protested that their vote against had been taken without a delegate meeting.)

AFTER an hour-long adjournment the General Council was forced to allow discussion of resolutions and amendments to their report. But in his lead-in into the debate, general secretary Victor Feather was able to announce 'unanimous' General Council backing for his 'all options open' policy.

Said Feather: 'To suggest that the unions are claiming the right to run the country is too silly for words.' The unions were not usurping anyone else's function, he said.

'We have to deal with governments and they have to deal with us . . . there is only one government at a time and we have always tried to maintain a working relationship with that government, whatever its political colour.'

Instead of joining the Pay Board, the unions would go on with their 'campaign for changes in policy', he said.

Feather made clear that the General Council's policy was only for very selective support for trade unions in the pay struggle.

It would 'look at' appeals for instructions not to cross picket lines, or even sympathetic in-

dustrial action, he said.

But, he added: 'It would be easy but ill-judged to commit ourselves at this stage to some specific form of industrial action . . . When I say that all options are open, I mean exactly that.'

'I am speaking on behalf of the General Council, a General Council which is unanimous even on this phrase: all options are open. This means that a situation may come which the General Council would be justified in calling for industrial action.'

But Feather refused to commit the trade union movement 'in advance to support any and every claim regardless of circumstances and merits'.

He described a vote for the report as giving 'both authority and latitude to the General Council'.

IN HIS first words from the rostrum Jack Jones, T&GWU general secretary, supported the General Council's report.

The T&GWU delegation would back the report but also wanted 'more positive action'.

Jones said that the report spells out non-co-operation with the Pay Board and the Prices Commission, 'the one a trap, the other a mockery'.

And he said that the union wanted paragraph 116 of the report to be active. 'But perhaps delegates are right in demanding

that this should be spelled out a little more firmly.'

The kind of support shown by the trade union movement to the miners last year would defeat the government's policies, he said.

'Our stand must be: Let's stick together. United we can defeat this unfair prices and wages policy. If we adopt the report and positive action this afternoon we can defeat the unfair policy of the government.'

GENERAL secretary of the Civil and Public Services Association, Bill Kendall, said a good deal of frustration and disillusionment in the trade unions were brought about partly by the TUC General Council.

The council 'appears to have become mesmerized by masterly inactivity'. He said the TUC document would, of itself, 'have as much impact as a wet sponge'.

He said that 'nobody seriously believes the government is going to take a blind bit of notice unless we punch home the message with some sort of industrial action'.

His remarks brought the loudest cheers of the morning session.

PRESIDENT of the engineers' union, Hugh Scanlon, called for 'united demonstrative action' to show that the whole trade union movement was behind the work-

ers in struggle with the Tories over pay.

The support should be given 'morally, financially and in every other term possible', he said.

Scanlon criticized union leaders who said the government's policy could be defeated by forcing the Tories to make exceptions to it.

The policy had to be 'blown sky high not by exceptions, but by unity of action of the whole trade union movement', he said.

Once the Phase Two of the pay policy became law there could be a strong feeling amongst union members to ask why should they pay union contributions if pay was going to be determined in Whitehall.

RAY BUCKTON, general secretary of the rail locomotives union ASLEF, said that the General Council's report needed 'some little injection of what they're hitting us with'.

A one-day strike would not achieve anything, he said.

BLACK MONDAY is here—it has become a reality. The lesson of this historic betrayal by the TUC is that an alternative revolutionary leadership must be built in the trade union movement.

The first step in this task is a massive turn-out at the anti-Tory rally at the Empire Pool, Wembley, this Sunday when our Pageant of working-class history 'The Road to Workers' Power' will be presented.

Mystery woman took Poulson holiday

But QC is cagey about naming names

THE BANKRUPT Yorkshire architect John Poulson treated a 'Miss X' to a holiday in the Middle East a Wakefield court heard yesterday.

But in contrast to the other eight hearings of the celebrated case, Mr Muir Hunter QC, counsel for the trustees, used no names.

He did reveal, however, that the mystery woman was the daughter of a 'close client' of Poulson's.

No names were used either when he referred once more to the 'Dorchester Hotel file'.

Many people, he said, had enjoyed holidays at the hotel, but no detailed examination of this would be undertaken at this stage.

In previous hearings names of Cabinet Ministers, including Reginald Maudling, ex-Home Secretary, Labour Shadow Minister Anthony Crosland, as well as Andrew Cunningham, the north-east union leader, have been mentioned in connection with Poulson. This has led to angry protests from Labour and Tory leaders and recriminations against Mr Muir Hunter.

Yesterday's allegations of more free holidays abroad came during an examination of Mr Poulson's business activities in the Middle East controlled by his office in Beirut, Lebanon.

Mr Muir Hunter read out

FROM STEPHEN JOHNS
IN WAKEFIELD

letters to and from Mr Poulson which mentioned a dollar account at the Chase Manhattan bank separate from his business account in Beirut.

Mr Poulson denied all knowledge of this account.

One letter from Mr Poulson dated May 1967 referred to a trip made by his secretary Miss McLeod and a 'Miss X'.

Poulson was alleged to have told the chief executive of his Beirut operation to make sure they had a good time and to pay for hotel bills and trips around the Middle East including one to Jerusalem.

Other letters dealt with payment into the account of cash and travellers' cheques. This 'other account' was one fed by surplus currency and travellers' cheques for private purposes in the Middle East, said Mr Muir Hunter.

Poulson—who maintained his



MUIR HUNTER, QC

find out,' said Mr Muir Hunter with a smile. 'Perhaps it would be better if we all went to the Lebanon?'

The court also heard more about Poulson's association with William Sales, the ex-chairman of the Yorkshire National Coal Board.

Referring to the 'carpet file', Mr Muir Hunter asked Poulson if he had authorized payment of £500 to Sinclair & Company of Scarborough for carpets, curtains and furniture covering in 'Sales' house, for which Poulson is alleged to have given £7,000 towards the purchase price.

Letters from Sinclair's to a Mr Booth, an executive of Poulson's firm, showed that £500 had been paid while Poulson was in West Africa in 1962.

Later, in June 1963, Poulson paid £300 to Mr Sales. This suggested Mr Muir Hunter, was the balance of the cost of the carpeting.

Mr Muir Hunter asked if Poulson was a 'carpeting architect'? Mr Poulson said interior decoration was undertaken by his firm and he denied any knowledge of the Sinclair transaction.

Mr Poulson opened with a statement on the Press publicity over the hearing. He referred to deplorable publicity over remarks about a 'parliamentary file'. There had been, he said, no mention of a 'parliamentary file' in the case.

The case has been adjourned until June 25. Mr Muir Hunter said that by then the 1,200 bundles of documents and files will have been indexed and fully examined.



JOHN POULSON

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