

SOCIALIST WORKER

FOR WORKERS' CONTROL & INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

BIG BUSINESS BOOMS AS MERGERS THREATEN JOBS

by BRIAN WHITE

CHANCELLOR ROY JENKINS' budget forecast of "two years of hard slog" must be arousing some ironical laughter in the crowded bars that surround London's stock market. Share prices are now jogging along at a record level, having made a meteoric rise in the first six months of this year. Even the nagging doubts on the success of devaluation have done little to dampen the speculators' enthusiasm.

For the government's claim that the incomes policy is fair can find little reflection in the bank balances of the big investors.

One of Barbara Castle's assistants, Mr. Harold Walker, admitted in parliament recently that in the last financial year, share prices have risen by 35 per cent. In the same period, he added, workers' earnings increased by only 8½ per cent.

The difference is even more remarkable in the first six months of this year. Basic wage rates have been held back to 3 per cent while shares have leapt in value by almost 34 per cent.

A look at the various industrial sectors shows the glaring contrast in the conditions of people who work in an industry and those who invest in it.

Take shipbuilding, for example, where a wave of take-overs and redundancies have sent thousands of workers in to the lengthening dole queues. Shipbuilding shares have been the second most dynamic sector on the stock market and £1,000 pounds invested in the industry at the end of 1967 would now be worth £1,442.

APPROVAL

Holders of engineering shares will, no doubt, be watching with approval the efforts of employers and government to fight off the workers' claim for a modest increase. For if a rise was granted to the unions, it would spoil the excellent progress that their investments have made this year. Aircraft company shares are showing a 22 per cent rise this year and non-electrical engineering an 18 per

SW to appear weekly from September

EVENTS IN BRITAIN AND FRANCE have stressed the urgent need for socialists to make an even greater impact on the working-class movement. The French strikes and demonstrations have shattered the "theory" that the workers are no longer a revolutionary force, but they have also underlined the need for a large socialist organisation to link up the factory struggles and raise the perspective of workers' power.

In Britain the growth of racist ideas among some sections of workers is a menacing challenge to all socialists to intensify their activity and speed the creation of a genuine revolutionary party. As we report in this issue, International Socialism has started talks with other socialist groups with a view to united action and discussions aimed at linking into one larger organisation.

International Socialism has also decided that, from September, Socialist Worker will appear as a weekly paper. The paper's circulation which has grown steadily for many months now, leaped up last

month when the name was changed from Labour Worker. The response to the paper shows the potential that exists in the working class but with major events piling on top of one another, that potential cannot be adequately tapped by a monthly paper.

A weekly paper will immediately answer the lies and distortions of the big business papers and hammer home at the same time the socialist alternative to capitalism, its crises and its growing attacks on working people. We plan to make our weekly paper lively and agitational, packed with news and facts, plus bright features, reviews and cartoons. It will sell for only 2d. but if the circulation is boosted towards the 20,000 level we will more than cover our costs. We urge all our readers and supporters to campaign now for bulk orders in factories and other sections of the labour movement.

The weekly paper is a tremendous step forward for IS. Make sure the paper is a success by planning your sales NOW. Further details will appear in our August issue.

FRANCE SHOWS THE WAY FOR WORKERS



IN BRITAIN

THE EXPLOSIVE CHALLENGE OF THE FRENCH WORKING CLASS to the Gaullist Government sounds both a warning to international capital and a challenge to socialists everywhere. In a month in which the might and the power of capitalist France was fundamentally shaken, the action of the French workers also struck a devastating blow at all those who had dismissed the revolutionary potential of working people in modern capitalist society. The struggle for generations of socialists for the idea of revolutionary socialism and working-class power has been dramatically vindicated.

The inspiration of the French working class challenge has already uplifted the whole political level of the debate in the labour movement in other countries, including Britain.

It is the Tory millionaire press which fearfully asks the question: "Can it happen here?" It is we who must help to provide the answer "yes."

For more than a decade we have been repeatedly told how the national barriers in Europe are crumbling before the advance of international monopoly capital. By courtesy of the monopolies and the cartels the working class of Europe has been drawn closer together, to face similar problems and simi-

PRINT SHOP FUND

THE PRINT SHOP FUND stands at well over £6000. The response to our appeal has been excellent and one supporter donated £250.

But we are still a long way from our £10,000 target and the plans for a weekly paper make it even more essential that we reach it as soon as possible. The entire production of the paper, from typesetting to printing, will be undertaken in the print shop by a full-time, trade-union staff of journalists and printers. Our overheads will be heavy and it is vital that most of the equipment should be paid for as quickly as possible.

Please make an extra effort to raise donations and rush them to us.

lar challenges. Their response must now be similar.

The problems facing French workers are similar to those confronting British workers. Wage freeze, cuts in the social services, erosion of civil and trade union rights, the threat from the extreme right—all these also face us here in Britain.

Action

What the French have shown is that the response of the working class need not be limited to the tweedledum—tweedledee, politics of the rival capitalist parties, or to opting out of activity through so-called apathy. Direct action based on the power of workers themselves in the factories has been shown to be a devastating alternative.

And the French have shown that battles can be won. Before the might of the workers occupying their factories, even the toughest wage freeze will melt. The French workers have spotlighted beyond any question of doubt what role the appointed leaders of the class (communist

and social-democratic alike) will play when the capitalist system is challenged.

We in Britain must bring to the factories and the docks, the universities and the street corners the lessons of the French May days.

One is that the workers can reduce their enemies to their true significance by acting for themselves; secondly that the workers cannot trust the politics of those who talk of "limiting the demands to purely economic ones"; finally that socialist workers must develop independent politics of their own.

Links

A common revolutionary socialist organisation linking the factories and places of work, with the students and the youth at large is needed in France if the French workers are not only to win the battle but also win the war.

British workers will be able to avoid many of the betrayals inflicted on the French during this last month if we take steps to build such an organisation now.

Riot charge on militant

TOM HILLIER, well-known engineering militant in the North London area, was charged with assaulting a police officer during a demonstration outside the French Embassy in May in support of workers and students in France.

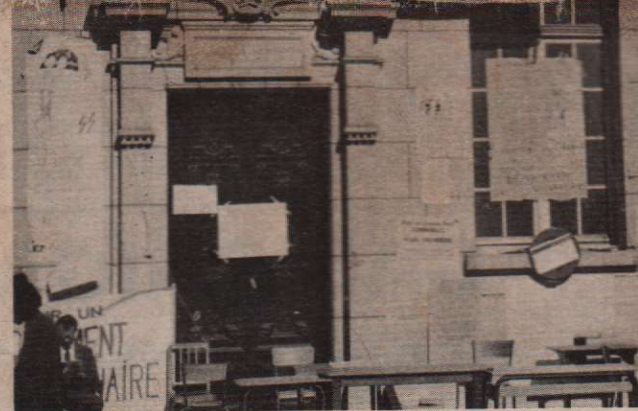
He was not arrested on the demonstration but was visited a week later by police officers who detained him overnight in the cells. His case was held over until June 21 but he was informed before he appeared that "other charges" were being

considered.

When Hillier appeared in court he was further charged with inciting a riot under a section of the Race Relations Act which superseded certain provisions of the 1936 Public Order Act. Both Acts were ostensibly introduced to combat racialists and fascists.

The case was again held over to allow witnesses and representation to be arranged. Hillier is due to appear in court on July 5.

If you took part in the de-



VO's Sorbonne stall in June

French left is banned and 30 are jailed

IN THE WAKE of the collapse of the French strikes last month came savage reprisals against the socialist left.

The Gaullist regime, frightened by the revolutionary potential of the workers and the growing influence of the marxist and anarchist forces, banned several groups that had played a leading role in the attempt to turn the campaign for higher wages into a struggle for power.

Among those banned were Socialist Worker's comrades of the Voix Ouvriere (Workers' Voice) group, and two other Trotskyist organisations, PCI

and OCI and their youth groups. The student March 22 movement was also driven underground by the government.

Several revolutionaries have been jailed. Exact numbers are hard to discover but Socialist Worker understands that 30 were arrested of whom 12 were released without trial. Still detained are Pierre Frank of the PCI and comrades Schoedt (VO), Verlizier (JCR), Fleisch and Schulman (22 Mars) and Chusseray (FER).

The French Communist Party condemned the socialist groups as "splitters" and "agents of the right." It is strange that such sinister organisations should be banned by the very regime which they secretly support while the "party of the working class" goes free.

But in spite of de Gaulle's election gimmickry of using the CP as a "red bogey" to frighten middle-class voters, the French ruling class is only too thankfully aware of the openly counter-revolutionary role of the party during the recent upheaval. The establishment is also aware of the strength and potential of the real marxist forces, particularly as Voix Ouvrière was engaged in unity

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●Readers will appreciate that as the case is technically "sub judice," Socialist Worker is unable to comment on its implications at this stage.

But the soaring prices of shares has not been justified solely by increasing profits and dividend payouts. The general scepticism with paper money (by those who have sufficient paper money to worry about it) and the need to avoid the inflation which has successfully eroded workers pay packets, has sent the rich scurrying to put their wealth into more tangible assets.

Nevertheless, there are signs that after three years of being damped down with deflation, things are now beginning to stir profitably in industry. Gross trading profits last year climbed 8 per cent to £4,658 millions.

With the government's much vaunted "dividend restraint" in force, companies started fattening out with cash. In spite of borrowing £280 millions less last year, companies ended up with an increase of £420 millions in liquid funds. So much for the bosses' protestations about not being able to afford wage rises.

But the most significant feature which is emerging from industry is a big up-swing in productivity. The bosses' planning organisation, the National Economic Development Council, reported a substantial break-through in productivity last year which may well develop into an "unprecedented productivity boom."

FUTURE

Total output per worker last year rose by 2.6 per cent compared with a rise of only 1.3 per cent in 1966. But even this pales into insignificance when compared with what the capitalist planners have in mind for the future.

The unprecedented boom in mergers is rapidly leading to the spread of more ruthless methods of exploitation throughout the economy. Massive redundancies, accompanied by a brutal speed-up in production for those who remain, are now commonplace.

"Some enthusiastic members of the NEDC," reported The Guardian, "are now talking of a rise in productivity of 10 per cent and more when the expected rise in output gets under way."

A breakdown of productivity performance by industry shows that the most spectacular increases in output per man have been in coal mining and textiles. Productivity, it now seems, is the cornerstone of the government's policy, and productivity and redundancy go hand in hand.

Socialist Worker

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The trial of a giant drug firm gets under way — but is there any need to prove it guilty?

IN MAY THIS YEAR the trial of seven men involved in the manufacture of the drug thalidomide opened in Germany. It is likely to go on for 10 years, while the victims of the drug wait patiently. Already the atmosphere is one of a legal cricket match where prosecution and defence "tactics" are vital and the question of guilt or innocence seems relatively unimportant.

Should the victims of thalidomide wait, while the young ones live out their childhood without the extra help they need, and the old ones die off one by one?

A Sunday Times special investigation (19 May) unearthed the following story:—

In 1960 and 1961 there was a sudden increase in "monster births." Children were born without arms without legs, without ears. Most of them were deformed so badly that they died.

What had once been a rare occurrence suddenly became so commonplace that a single hospital could have two such births within a month. In Germany alone 5000 deformed children were born and the proportion of these children increased at least a hundred times.

Two doctors, one in Australia and one in Germany, quite independently set themselves the task of finding the culprit. They reached the conclusion that the cause of the tragedies was a sedative which has now become notorious—thalidomide. As a result of their investigation the drug was finally withdrawn late in 1961.

HAPPY

In the four years preceding the tragic births, most doctors were studiously drinking in the advertising copy—"sure to work, and completely non-poisonous"—and happily prescribing the drug. To the patients it was just another pill, bound to be safe because you could even buy it over the counter.

Yet there was one place that could have known what terrible consequences the drug might have, one place where complaints had been arriving as far back as 1958. Above all, it was a place that had the power to do something about it before the tragedies multiplied.

That place was the Chemie Grunenthal, where the drug was manufactured. They had enough evidence in their files to prove to any unbiased observer that all was not well.

Thalidomide had been so successful that Grunenthal was well on the way to being a one-product company. The drug accounted for 50 per cent of their sales. Their chief research

Thalidomide and the profits of death

by EWA WIDOWSON



had such side effects reported to them. This was not true; these effects were reported in the clinical trials.

Four more complaints arrived by October 1959. They reported involuntary trembling of hands, excessive coldness in hands and feet, sickness, giddiness and damage to nerve endings. The last complaint was to become the most important. It resulted in numbness of hands and feet from which most people did not recover when they stopped taking the drug.

To the last of the four doctors who complained, Grunenthal replied: "Happily we can tell you that such disadvantageous effects have not been brought to our notice."

When the doctor persisted and three months later brought to their notice three more nerve damage cases they promised to look into the matter in the course of "further clinical studies." In fact no such studies were ever planned or carried out.

STUDIES

The doctor made his own studies and published them. Discontent was spreading through the medical world.

In April 1960 the Grunenthal sales department wrote: "Unfortunately we are now receiving increasingly strong reports on the side effects of this preparation, as well as letters from doctors and chemists who want to put it on prescription. From our side everything must be done to

advertising know-how of Grunenthal was directed at making thalidomide "safe." Desperately they wrote to doctors asking for favourable reports.

A favourable article appeared in *Medizinsche Welt*, a medical paper, when an unfavourable one had originally been planned.

By the start of 1961 the link between damage to nerve ends and thalidomide was so universally recognised that Grunenthal gave in. In the interests of "customer relations" (not in the interests of the patients) they decided to place the drug on a prescription-only basis. In Germany alone at least 1000 adults became permanently affected.

But the main storm, the news that thalidomide affected unborn babies, had not yet broken. When it did Chemie Grunenthal reacted in characteristic fashion.

At first they were unconcerned and treated the matter lightly. When they were convinced that it was serious they met Lenz, the German doctor who had investigated the mystery and solved it.

Lenz himself wrote: "I had the impression that the Grunenthal representatives showed no interest in the facts, or the arguments, that pointed to thalidomide being the root cause of the deformities. Quite the reverse, they showed the most lively interest in every detail which showed up the quality of my research in an unfavourable light."

they were given an ultimatum by the Ministry. Either they would withdraw the drug or the Ministry would ban it.

On the circular announcing withdrawal they put "Publicity has removed the basis for scientific discussion."

Seven years later the court sits to judge whether a crime has been committed. Part of the reason for the enormous length of the trial is due to the number of cases which feature in the evidence. But extra length is added by considering the question of whether the defendants acted negligently or maliciously, whether all men were equally guilty and to what extent.

UNIQUE

The victims of thalidomide were the victims of human greed—the greed for profits. Typical of our society and certainly not unique in the extent of the damage done. Does it matter whether the damage was done deliberately or whether the bosses at Chemie Grunenthal just did not care what happened so long as their £600 a week was rolling in?

The facts should convince a jury that it was not a matter of unavoidable scientific error. Certainly within a year enough relevant evidence could be presented. Much of the concern of the defence is not so much with proving their clients innocent as with delaying the process (and therefore

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Stevenage: Michael Downing, 57 Trumper Road, Trotts Hill, Stevenage, Herts.
Swansea: Pete Branston, 33a Uplands Crescent.
Tottenham: Fergus Nicol, 65 Palace Gates Road, N22.
Watford: Paul Russell, 61 Carpenters Avenue, Carpenters Park, Watford.
Wigan: Ray Challinor, 34 Whiteside Avenue, Hindley, Wigan, Lancs.
York: Bob Looker, 22, Hobgate.

drug accounted for 50 per cent of their sales. Their chief research chemist, whose salary was geared to the sales of the drug, was getting £600 a week.
 The first complaint in 1958 was that the drug had caused giddiness and disturbance of balance in the elderly. Grunenthal replied that they had not

to put it on prescription. From our side everything must be done to avoid putting it on prescription since already a substantial amount of our turnover comes from over-the-counter sales."
 Human tragedy and loss of profit once more lay in the balance. As usual the profit motive won. All the

quality of my research in an unfavourable light."
 They also threatened him with legal action for "an unjustified attack."
 They met Lenz and health authority officers again several times. With their backs to the wall, in the face of undisputable evidence they refused to take the drug off the market. Finally

the victims should get their compensation immediately. That done, anyone still interested can pick over the rotten carcass to their heart's content.

CAMPAIGN FOR UNITED LEFT

THE APPEAL BY International Socialism for a regroupment of the revolutionary left in Britain—both to meet the threat of Powell and the challenge of France—has been modestly encouraging. The best response, as we expected, has been from formerly uncommitted socialists and trade union militants who have long waited such a development. The response from the socialist groups has, predictably, been less than overwhelming.
 The appeal for a united socialist organisation was sent by IS to, among others, the International Marxist Group, the May Day Manifesto, Solidarity, the Independent Labour Party, Socialist Labour League, Socialist Current and Workers Fight. Only

two of these groups, the IMG and the Manifesto group, have so far sought discussions about a possible basis for unity. Others have welcomed the prospect of "working together on particular issues" but shunned the prospect of unity as unprincipled or utopian. The SLL has not replied.
 A series of discussions have been held with the IMG, with whom we already work in such fields as the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign. In response to our four point unity programme (workers control, anti-racism, anti-imperialism, and anti-incomes policy) the IMG have added a further seven detailed points of policy. These include a commitment to the building of a revolutionary party as

well as support for the campaigns for black power and student power.
 It is the opinion of the comrades from IS who have held these discussions that the suggested policy programme need provide no obstacle to unity after a period of joint activity over a broader field of work. Both organisations will further discuss this together with a possible timetable for unity.
 Necessarily discussions with the Manifesto comrades have assumed a different approach. It has been felt that there is the basis for much closer liaison in areas where we both have members (this already takes place in some areas) with everything to be said for joint membership in the

meantime.
 It is the view of IS that the united socialist organisation would have room for a broad range of views on the left on many issues; that indeed the internal political development and life of the organisation could only benefit by this. Concretely, international Socialism hope that their plans to turn Socialist Worker into a weekly paper will be welcomed by many on the left who will feel able to write for it, promote it, and help determine its policies.
 The new political situation we find ourselves in offers both great dangers—from a development of the extreme right—and great opportunities. In the student field alone many thousands of young people can be won to a libertarian revolutionary socialism, provided we are seen to be relevant and more concerned with their struggles than with peddling our own organisational identities. On a smaller scale—but even more important—the same applies to hundreds of trade unionists who are seeking a way out of the Labour Party/Communist Party cul-de-sacs in which many militants have become ensnared.
 International Socialism would like to hear from any section of the left interested in unity organisationally or in action. We hope that the debate about a united response to the new political challenge will be echoed in every corner of the organised working-class movement.

WHERE WE STAND

SOCIALIST WORKER is the paper of International Socialism, a movement of revolutionary socialists who believe that the present form of society, with its blatant inequalities, its periodic crises, wars and racist hysteria must be replaced by one based on a planned economy under full workers' control; those who produce the wealth should own and control the means of production.
 International Socialism is opposed to any incomes policy that seeks to restrict the wages of the workers in order to boost the profits of the employers. We unconditionally support all shop stewards and rank and file trade union members in their struggles for better wages and conditions and oppose all reactionary laws that threaten the liberties of the labour movement. We support all strikes in defence of workers' interests with the demand of no victimisation of trade unionists. Redundancy should be opposed with the demand: five days work or five days pay. Shop stewards' organisations should strengthen and extend their influence by linking up on an industrial and ultimately a national basis.
 We are opposed to racial discrimination, a weapon used by the ruling class to divide the labour movement. Immigration control must be ended, ensuring the free movement of peoples regardless of race and colour. Black and white workers must unite and form their own defence organisations to fight fascism and racialism. The labour movement must demand the immediate recall of British troops from abroad as the first step towards ending colonial exploitation.
 The task of revolutionary socialists is to join workers in their struggles, to enrich those struggles with socialist ideas that will link up the various sections of the labour movement and help create a force that will lead on to workers' power.
 If you would like to join IS or would like further details of our activities, fill in the form below:

Please send further details of the meetings and activities of International Socialism to:

Name

Address

Send to 39 Gondar Gardens, London, NW6.

**BULLETIN OF
 MARXIST STUDIES**

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The growth of the NPD is a sinister trend – but the unholy alliance of the Grand Coalition still poses the main problem



NPD leader Von Thadden: picked up protest votes

Nazi 'menace' obscures real threat to German workers

by VOLKHART MOSLER

IN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT elections in Bad-Wurtemberg in April, the Social Democratic Party of Germany (the SPD) lost 8.3 per cent of their voters, while the neo-fascist New Democrats (NPD) won some 10 per cent of the votes cast.

The SPD leadership put the blame for their poor showing on the students, but the decline of the SPD began not with the mass demonstrations at Easter against the Springer newspaper group but on the day the SPD formed the "Grand Coalition" with the conservative Christian Democrats (CDU). Since then the SPD has lost votes in all the local elections.

It is true that the growth of the NPD started in 1965, but it was promoted by the Grand Coalition.

Public opinion, deeply shocked by the election results, interpreted the climb of the NPD as the successful return of the Nazis. But in Western Germany today there is no danger of a fascist *coup d'état*. The NPD is an embarrassment to the ruling class which knows that the coalition

Hitler's Nazi Party was the political spearhead of a fascist movement whose strength was not drawn just from electoral votes. A majority of the NSDAP voters were already organised in para-military youth, women's and combat units, whose task was to intimidate the left through systematic terrorisation.

The bourgeois state machine in the Weimar Republic had been so weakened and limited in its scope by war, inflation and deep entanglement with the Social Democratic Party that the fascist combat units had to take over the task of fighting the left and altering the balance of power of the classes so that finally a "legal" *coup d'état* became possible in January 1933.

CONTRAST

in small towns with a stifling middle-class environment. A new phenomenon is the number of refugees who belong to the NPD.

But peasants, refugees and the threatened middle class are only part of the reservoir drawn on by the NPD. Recently the NPD has moved into the large towns and those working-class districts where the SPD has lost votes. Investigations show that the NPD's support comes from "protest votes," reflecting above all dissatisfaction with the coalition parties.

Thus 24 per cent of the NPD voters, but only 20 per cent of CDU voters think that the student demonstrations are partly or completely justified. The call for "more drastic measures" against the students was more frequent among CDU voters (55 per cent) than among NPD voters (52 per cent). The attitudes of many NPD voters are no different from the majority of voters.

It is true that the official cadres and the membership of the NPD are recruited from old and young Nazis,

Paul Foot

Business as usual on the Barbican: workers versus management

ON THE MASS DEMONSTRATION last November called to declare solidarity with the pickets at Mytons site on the Barbican in the City of London after a strike of more than a year, Lou Lewis, the federation steward on the site, declared: "This strike will not soon be forgotten in the building industry, and it will, I hope, give confidence to building workers everywhere."

Lewis's hopes have been fulfilled more than he could have imagined. For now, only eight months later, the workers on the Mytons site have come out on strike again.

The employers and the union officials hoped to use the defeat of the workers last year as a permanent weapon against their future labour force. They have been confounded not merely by their own arrogance but also by the continuing refusal of the workers to be used as profit-fodder.

Last November, after the pickets were withdrawn, the employers black-listed all the militants formerly employed there. Some of the workers who had worked on the site before the dispute were encouraged back by letters which vilified Lou Lewis and his colleagues.

The 15 scabs, who had been brought up from Mytons site at Brighton under heavy Securicor guard and had passed the pickets in police vans, formed the nucleus of the new labour force which was built up to its full complement of 200 men last Christmas. These workers were not allowed to elect their own shop stewards. Instead, the Brighton scabs (or "royalists" as they are known on the site) were appointed to all the shop stewards positions.

Allowance

From the onset the employers made their position plain. The scabs were "loyal" workers, and would be paid accordingly. They were given a £5 a week travel allowance to bring them up from Brighton, and a further



Lou Lewis
'Confidence'

scabs. Peter Treacy, the federation steward, for instance, reckons that he will lose a few quid by the new scheme. "But at least we'd be solid when we advance again," he told me.

The demand was rejected outright by the management who realised that the new scheme would vitiate their "divide and rule" tactics. Accordingly, on Monday June 16, all the 90 carpenters except the six Brighton scabs walked out on strike. They were still out, angry and militant, when I spoke to them on June 20.

On that day, each striker received a familiar letter from the management informing them that their action was contrary to the site procedure agreement and to the Working Rule

an embarrassment to the ruling class, which knows that the coalition is endangered by the SPD's loss of votes and the NPD's victory and the important role of the SPD in the present government as a disciplinary weapon against the unions is jeopardised.

CENTRE

Those who call for all "democratic forces" to unite against the menace of fascism overlook the substantial differences between the NPD and the NSDAP (Hitler's party). The real danger at the moment comes from the centre, from the present government.

But neither the political nor the economic circumstances exist today which then forced the ruling class to rely on the support of a fascist movement. In contrast to the NSDAP, the NPD is a typical voters' party. It can win 10 or even 15 per cent of the votes, but, apart from a few peasant demonstrations, it is not yet a mass movement. The relationship between electorate and party is just as loose in the NPD as in the other parties.

Many causes have contributed to the NPD's success. It is strong where the Nazis were strong, in certain rural areas where peasants are threatened just as badly by the agricultural crisis today as they were before 1933, and

but in contrast to the NSDAP, the NPD still takes considerable trouble to appear merely conservative in order not to offend the protest voters. The NPD does indeed promise to maintain peace and order more effectively than the other parties in the government, but it does not come out publicly against parliamentary democracy.

INSTRUMENT

The use of fascist, para-military organisations by the ruling class in the struggle against the left is neither possible nor necessary. A state incomes policy through **integration** of the trade unions, the threat of emergency laws and the "legal" use of the state against small groups outside the parliamentary system are still an adequate instrument of domination today. At the moment the NPD cannot take over either the structure or the function of the NSDAP.

The latest election results show that the Left opposition has not been able to win support from disillusioned workers. The Communist Party and other sections of the left have drawn the conclusion from this that the protest vote should be provided with a left alternative. But the elections in Bad-Wurtemberg themselves showed how wrong this calculation is.

The "Democratic Left"—an electoral alliance between Communists and left liberals—could only win 2.3 per cent of the votes. The worker who did not vote or switched to the NPD in protest saw no reason to put more trust in the promises of the Communists than the NPD. This defeat of the Democratic Left must be a warning to all socialists that a Socialist Party cannot grow from electoral battles, but only in real class struggles.

DANGER

It is not the fight against the apparent threat of fascism and the need to maintain bourgeois democracy but the fight to maintain the political and economic rights of the working class that can check the imminent danger of an authoritarian state.

The real threat comes from the ODU/SPD coalition government which is now pushing through reactionary emergency laws. This anti-strike law and the reactionary social policy of the coalition are the real dangers for the German working class.

Up to now the NPD has been only the symptom of a misdirected protest which reflects the weakness of the left. The fight for this reason must be directed primarily against the coalition and must be carried out so that the workers can recognise their own interests in the activities of the growing opposition outside parliament.

them up from Brighton, and a further unearned "bonus" of 25 hours paid work to compensate for the "long journey." In addition the Brighton scabs were given the jobs with the best bonus rates, and lowest targets.

The bonus rate in the early months was fixed at a standard 4s. per hour for craftsmen, 3s. for labourers. In February, the unions and employers, acting outside the Working Rule Agreement and without even consulting the workers, agreed a bonus scheme which operated on a gang basis. Different gangs got different bonuses and different targets.

No sooner had the agreement been reached than the employers made it clear how they were going to operate it. The gang containing the Brighton scabs got all the good jobs and the low targets. The other gangs were given targets which made it almost impossible for any of them to make more than the "fall-back" rate of 4s. Bill Jones, the Brighton "Federation steward" appointed by the management, admitted to a meeting of the workers that if he lived in the area he couldn't afford to work at the new rates.

Not surprisingly, the workers soon slung out the Brighton scabs and elected their own stewards.

The management replied by threatening to withdraw the "fall-back" bonus, thus rendering most of the workers worse off after the agreement than before. The new, elected stewards threatened the management with a riot if the fall-back rate was withdrawn, and the fall-back rate stayed.

Failure

The gross favouritism shown to the Brighton scabs, and the continued failure of the management to lower targets or pay more bonus irritated the workers more and more. They pointed out that many of the carpenters' gangs were working at targets of 15ft. super, while the Brighton scabs were working at 8 ft. super. In Turribs and many other building sites, the standard target is 8 ft. super, and the stewards argued, quite rightly, that the management were using the Brighton scabs shamelessly to exploit the majority of the workers.

Throughout April and May the stewards were constantly arguing with the management over bonus pay. After several weeks, the various demands in different parts of the site hardened into one: that the bonus rate should be the same for all gangs.

This demand did not mean that the management would pay out more money. In fact, on present bonus levels, less money would probably be paid out than under the present scheme. But the "all-in" bonus rate would iron out the arguments between gangs, and enable all the carpenters to argue for rises in a united front, without any chance of being diverted into arguments against the Brighton

was contrary to the site procedure agreement, and to the Working Rule Agreement. . . . Therefore any of these men who fail to resume normal working will be liable to disciplinary action."

It seems that very little has changed on the Barbican pickets from last year. There was the same arrogant management, the same militant workforce, utterly undivided by racial differences (more than half the strikers are West Indian or Indian). Even if, as seems likely, they return to work following the Local Disputes Commission, I do not imagine that the management will be able to push these workers around for much longer.

Hallo to The Hustler

WHAT WITH ALL THE FUSS about Black Dwarf, very few people seem to have noticed The Hustler, produced in Notting Hill, which is very much better and more valuable. It's the first paper produced in the main by coloured people which is militant, unself-conscious and informative. It costs 1s. a copy and is available from 194 Westbourne Park Road, London, W.11.

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PARIS DIARY

AS THE PLANE came down below cloud cover we saw a large marshalling yard with nothing moving, but it was not until we reached the centre of Paris that we saw signs of the huge students' and workers' upheaval that had shaken France for nearly a month.

We passed factories flying red flags and covered with slogans proclaiming "unlimited strike of occupation." The streets were covered with political posters, handwritten and printed, revolutionary and reformist. Passers-by were reading them and discussing with one another.

We could feel that the atmosphere was still charged in early June, even though it had declined from its revolutionary peak of a week earlier after de Gaulle's speech.

At seven in the evening we reached the Sorbonne, the Faculty of Letters of the University of Paris, now transformed into the headquarters of the student and revolutionary movement.

The courtyard is a great quadrangle with high buildings on all four sides. Around the edges were dozens of stalls selling literature and advertising different political groups. On the walls were a thick covering of posters appealing to workers and students from every tendency on the left.

The most prominent were the Trotskyist groups Voix Ouvriere (Workers' Voice) the Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionnaire and the Maoist groups l'Union des Jeunes Communistes (Marxiste-Leniniste) and the Parti Communiste Marxiste-Leniniste de France. There was a sparsely manned Communist Party stall with few customers; their posters were the only ones to be defaced by rude political comments.

Suddenly over the loudspeakers came an appeal. Someone called: "Comrades, comrades!" and explained that Occident, the student fascist

The action committees sprang up in districts, factories, schools and faculties, uniting many different tendencies in common activity. During the climax of the strikes many of the committees took on the functions of feeding the strikers and attempting to link up the militants—though in most cases the factory strike committees were controlled by the CGT, and were not elected.

On Friday June 7, the CRS, the riot police, attacked and expelled the occupying strikers from the Renault factory at Flins, 50 km from Paris. The CP and CGT did nothing. The student and revolutionary organisations called a demonstration at the Gare St. Lazare, where they hoped to take trains en masse to Flins with the help of railwaymen.

But we didn't get to Flins. The French railways refused to carry the demonstrators, and the CGT backed them up, instructing their members to double up their engine-drivers for fear of "intimidation by disruptive elements."

Our job was to hold as many CRS in Paris as possible. We were split up as we attempted to get down to the other Renault factory at Billancourt. The march broke into several smaller columns in order to escape from and outflank the CRS.

At one stage we were running down an empty street with CRS behind us and blocking the side exits. The only fighting on that occasion was a victorious encounter with a few thugs from Occident.

We managed to break off down a side-street and reached Billancourt by Metro. In the dark outside the factory gates, closed by the CGT, masses of demonstrators talked with strikers. Later tear-gas was used by the CRS to prevent strikers and demonstrators commandeering buses from the nearby bus-depot to go to Flins.

VITAL LINK OF REVOLUTIONARY PARTY STILL NEEDED

THE FRENCH CRISIS is beginning, not ending, but it is now possible to attempt a preliminary estimate of the first phase of the struggle.

It is clear that although the particular form and timing of the French events took the revolutionary left by surprise as much as anyone else, in its essential features the general strike has confirmed the perspective that this paper has put forward over recent years.

Firstly, France has shown, more clearly even than Hungary or the Belgian general strike, that the working class of the advanced countries has not been bribed or integrated into complacency, but retains enormous revolutionary potential—even though France has the most sophisticated form of planned Western capitalism. The exceptional militancy of workers in the most modern sectors of industry, including motors and electronics, has shown that such militancy is in no way a hangover from the past, but a crucial portent for the future.

Secondly, the crisis has clearly indicated the role of such social groups as students. The French students played a central part, acting, as it were, as "detonator" for the social explosion—but they themselves were not able to act as the agents of social change, but merely to set the stage for the working class. Nor were the students able to hold out on their own after the workers returned to their jobs.

Thirdly, the position of the Communist Party in a direct confrontation with the bosses and their state machine has been shown to be, not merely insufficiently radical and militant, but completely counter-revolutionary.

But when all this has been said, the real problem remains. Why was the French working class unable to carry its initial victory through to the establishment of workers' councils and a workers' government?

Setback

The acceptance of elections is quite clearly a setback. In many situations the possession of democratic liberties and a representative assembly are positive assets for the working class, worth struggling for and defending.

So near and yet so far...

by IAN BIRCHALL



"Comrades, comrades!" and explained that Occident, the student fascist group, had attacked the Faculty of Law where the more conservative committee of occupation had allowed them to set up a stall, but now called for help to throw them out because of their threats of violence.

The Sorbonne "service d'ordre" marched off to the law faculty at the head of 700 students, and we went along, expecting the worst. The fascists only numbered about 30 but were all heavily armed and effective fighters. They were no match for the service d'ordre, who soon disarmed them and allowed them to leave unhurt, marching singly between rows of jeering students.

That evening we attended a Voix Ouvriere meeting in the Sorbonne. It was a regular reunion of their militants from all over Paris, some 250 strong. Comrade A. gave a quick situation report and analysis: the unions were trying to get the workers back to work, but many sectors were resisting their pressure. Another commented on the possible political reasons for the Kennedy assassination.

One of us made a short speech about reactions in Britain to the French events, and then we heard business-like reports from the factories of the day's events. The meeting ended with the distribution of tasks for the following day to everyone—leafleting, picket reinforcement, and participation in Comites d'Action.

VO's analysis was that the strikes were led by a militant minority of workers, overwhelmingly young, who had rejected the reformism and stalinism of the Communist-led CGT (Central Trade Union). It was still necessary to win the majority of workers to a revolutionary position. The CP had an immense hold on the working class, and only a mass revolutionary movement or party could offer a real alternative.

VO and the JCR had formed a joint co-ordinating committee and were working closely together, but both saw complete unity as a lengthy process. But even if not completely unified, the revolutionary movement hoped to be in a position to act effectively and decisively when the next working-class upsurge occurred.

The next day we took part in a demonstration organised by the comite d'action in the 14th district. About 500 marched through the working-class areas, shouting such slogans as "Power to the workers" and singing the Internationale. The march stopped and held discussions with pickets outside factories which were still on strike.

Perhaps a majority of the demonstrators were students, but there were many young workers and a few older ones. Most were unattached to any group; the most influential group in that comite d'action was the pro-Chinese UJCML, who are very active on the streets without much political direction.

com-manderring buses from the working class, worth struggling for and defending. But when real power, the means of the production of wealth, is in the hands of the workers, it is nothing short of a defeat to trade this for the right of "misrepresentation" in an elected body within the capitalist framework.

As a result, the victory of the Gaullist forces in the election comes as no surprise. If the left has shown itself incapable in struggle of establishing a régime based on workers' power, there seems little point in inviting it to manage a capitalist economy.

It is not possible to present the results of the French struggle in terms of a simple profit and loss account. One cannot measure concrete economic gains against experience and demoralisation. The dynamic of a social movement is such that, if it does not go forward, it will start to go back.

At the end of May, the French workers, had made unprecedented economic gains and the only thing that remained for them to go forward to was a revolutionary seizure of state power. For various reasons, they did not do this and from this point on it was possible for the bourgeoisie to regroup.

De Gaulle, whom even his most fervent supporters were ready to desert, was able to win them back to a

massive demonstration; the army and police, whose loyalty was in severe doubt, enthusiastically rallied to the "restoration of order." Many of the most vicious acts of repressive brutality occurred, not when the workers and students were on the offensive, but when the return to work had already started.

Those leaders and advisers of the working class who counselled that further militancy would be a provocation and led the way to an illusory reconciliation have the blood of their comrades on their hands.

The danger is that this turn of the tide may continue, and allow a regroupment of extreme right wing forces. The return of Georges Bidault and the release of General Salan have indicated such a danger. We should not be hysterical about this prospect: the men who brought de Gaulle to power in 1958, were betrayed by him over the Algerian issue, and have spent the last seven years trying to kill him, will not easily be reunited with him.

Nor is there any mass base for fascism at the moment. The pro-Gaullist demonstrators, while they might well be sympathetic to some brand of fascism, had few members in the right age-bracket for street-fighting. Bidault showed a keen sense of

political realism by refusing to expose himself to defeat and isolation by standing for election at this stage.

But in the long term—and not so long as all that—there is a huge political vacuum, and if the socialist forces do not fill it, the fascists will. Those who dream of a return to the status quo, however well-intentioned they may be, will only help to prepare the way for fascism.

In order to evaluate the nature of the general strike it is necessary to recognise the very complex interweaving of economic and political demands. It is an oversimplification of the situation either to reduce it entirely to a movement for higher wages and improved conditions, or to condemn as betrayal any raising of political or economic demands as opposed to "pure" revolutionary demands.

In different sectors, different industries, different regions, there was a wide range of demands—some quite simply for higher wages and longer holidays, some for purely political changes like the sacking of Pompidou or de Gaulle, many, perhaps predominantly, for control or participation in some form.

To understand the nature of such demands for control it is necessary to remember that corporatist ideology,

SCIENCE



By STEVE BOLCHOVER

THE DECISION TO OPEN Britain's largest research establishment into chemical and biological warfare to the press seems to be a standard reaction to any large wave of adverse publicity. The last time Porton Down, near Salisbury, opened was in 1962 when a scientist, Geoffrey Bacon, died of plague.

Presumably the Ministry of Defence hopes that, as in 1962, journalists will be shown rows of spotless test tubes, a few bottles with long names on the labels, filters through which all waste, including air, must pass in order to prevent the escape of even the tiniest germ, and that the press will carry stories suggesting that Porton isn't so bad really, and at least it's clean.

What sort of research is done at Porton? There are several fields which must be studied in order to develop chemical and biological weapons. They include the development of new weapons, mass production and storage of such weapons, methods of

BRITAIN'S HORRO

dispersal, and defence against the weapons.

There are a large number of potential weapons in the form of poisonous compounds and disease organisms. They are not necessarily primarily directed against people—in Vietnam, for example wide use is made of the plant hormones 2,4-D, and 2,4-T which cause plants to drop their leaves. They are used to destroy crops in the "restriction of food supply" programme and are estimated to destroy 60-90 per cent of the crop in the areas sprayed.

Tear gases are important weapons. They are generally used in riot control or to flush enemies out of bunkers. The gas CS was developed at Porton, and is the main constituent of MACE, the gas used by the police during the French strikes and marches. It is also used in Vietnam, where it was proved to be lethal when an Australian, Captain Bowtell, entered a civilian home where the gas had been used and was overcome by the fumes and died, although it had had two hours to disperse and he was wearing a gas mask.

Most of the gases used in the 1914-18 war are now obsolete. They have been replaced by the nerve gases, the newest, most effective and most likely to be used of all chemical agents. They are complex organic phosphates.

which may be liquid or gas, entering the body via the lungs or through the skin. They operate by blocking the action of an enzyme that breaks down acetylcholine, a substance that transmits impulses from nerves to muscles. They are extremely poisonous—a few inhalations can absorb enough of the gas to kill in one to two minutes.

Closely related to the nerve gases in its mode of action is botulinus toxin, the most poisonous substance known. It is produced by the bacteria which cause botulism, a form of food poisoning. Given perfect distribution only 8½ oz. would be enough to kill everybody on earth. It decays in air in about 12 hours, so troops could be used to follow up an attack in 24 hours.

A chemical weapon with completely different effects is LSD-25. This is one of the so-called psychochemicals, which effects human behaviour without the victims realising it.

Among the disease organisms most suitable as weapons are those causing anthrax, cholera, plague, salmonella food poisoning, typhoid, hepatitis, mumps, smallpox, polio, influenza, yellow fever and typhus. To be suitable for military use they must satisfy certain requirements:

1. They must be lethal or incapacitating, and should be capable of being produced economically in adequate

**Sean Dunne
Ted Crawford**

REVOLUTION IN FRANCE



Workers and students on the march

the identification of all classes' interests with that of the ruling class, has made much greater headway in France than in Britain. France has a highly developed system of economic planning with representation for employers and trade unionists.

The problems of "participation" and "democratic planning" are constantly on the lips of economists and bureaucrats. When de Gaulle spoke of the need for greater participation in the national economy and the partnership of capital and labour, he was not making any dramatic new adaptation to the events, but repeating the kind of speech he has been making since the Liberation.

Of course de Gaulle's corporatism—scarcely distinguishable from that hawked by Mendès-France and the former Catholic CFDT trade union—is fraudulent. But it has a dual effect. On the one hand, when workers constantly hear talk of participation in

shadow of a doubt spontaneous—even a paranoid could hardly read it as a "communist plot," and none of the revolutionary groupings had the resources to initiate it. But spontaneity is inevitably irregular and uneven. And if all revolutions of history have begun spontaneously, none has ever ended so.

If France, May 1968 has much in common with Russia, February 1917, there are two crucial differences—this time there are very few real soviets (as distinct from strike committees) and no party able to take on the mantle of the Bolsheviks.

As a result, it has been possible for the counter-revolutionary forces to exploit the contradictions and unevenness of the movement. This must be seen in terms of two specific aspects of the French situation—the political orientation of the trade unions and the rôle of the Communist Party.

The French trade-union movement,

In this context the rôle of the CFDT is of particular interest. Originally a Catholic union, it broke its formal religious ties in 1964, and has developed its position as a "non-political" union ever since. Although its industrial base does not compare with that of the CGT, it has made significant inroads into the technological industries such as electronics.

In the present crisis it has at almost every point outflanked the CGT on the left, and in fact forced the CGT to support many actions to which it was originally opposed. In a recent statement, Ségué, secretary-general of the CGT, gave as one of his main reasons for not pursuing unity with the CFDT the latter's excessive sympathy for the "ultra-left" groupings.

This is not to deny the essentially bureaucratic and reformist nature of the CFDT. It is rather to point out the extremely complex relation of political and economic demands; a situation in which concrete economic demands may be more revolutionary than an abstract political line imposed from outside. Even the enormous social explosion of the last months has only begun to fracture the deep-rooted structure of reformism.

This of course brings us to the most crucial factor in the whole situation—the rôle of the French Communist Party. For all too long the revolutionary left has thought that it was sufficient to expose Stalinism—to reveal its zig-zags, its opportunism and its betrayals.

What is required is a much more profound analysis of the sources of the enormous strength and resilience of the Communist Party. To do this requires a recognition that Stalinism has a coherent logic. Whatever may be the motives of the leadership, the rank and file militants who have beaten up leftists and turned students away from the factories do so out of the sincere acceptance of a political position.

Policy

In 1936 and 1945 the strategy of the Communist Party was largely directed from Moscow. Today, though Moscow still has a general interest in "stability," nuclear weapons have replaced the international communist movement as its main instrument of foreign policy. The Communist Party must be understood more and more in terms of the traditional social democratic parties, with a growing gulf between leaders and rank and file.

In view of the fact that it has been universally recognised that the CP



and not on the basis of personal knowledge of and contact with the representative, as in the British shop stewards' movement. As the strongest trade union body, the CGT has kept a firm grip on shop-floor organisation, a grip which continued through the recent strike.

In more general terms, the CP has all the plausibility of the accomplished fact. In the minds of most workers it is identified with the left and is the only left they know. In these circumstances a general movement to the left will benefit the CP. The Party may now be finished among the students, but its disintegration among the workers has hardly begun.

It is not through exposure that the CP will be defeated among the workers, but through the breakdown of reformism through the experience of revolutionary activity. Therefore the exposure of the Communist line must always be accompanied with the united front with rank and file CP member in all concrete struggles.*

Experience

The French struggle will not be resolved quickly. What happens will depend on the emergence of alternative forces to the left. The call for a "new leadership" is not an élitist demand; it is a simple recognition of the need for a leadership capable of

Gaulle himself in dissolving these organisations. (They were, incidentally, dissolved under a law drawn up to liquidate fascist groups. Advocates of legal action against fascists please note).

Meanwhile the CP enjoyed full radio and TV facilities in the election campaign. The Trotskyist groupings Voix Ouvrière and the Jeunesses Communistes Révolutionnaires played a valuable rôle, and the permanent liaison committee established between them is an important step forward to regrouping on the left. But, inasmuch as they abandoned sectarian attitudes and adapted to the real conditions, maoist and anarchist groups played a useful part, too.

Penetrate

It is not for us to suggest to the French comrades how to respond to the legal dissolution. But revolutionary ideas are like nails—the harder you knock them, the deeper they penetrate. The long haul ahead will depend on profiting, by patient propaganda and discussion, from the disillusion with the CP, especially among the most militant sectors and those slowest to return to work. This will be the work of years rather than months.

French workers are returning to work with substantial gains, not only on economic terms, but in experience. At the same time there is inevitably a feeling of retreat from the total victory that seemed promised in May. What happens next will be a crucial test of tactics and militancy. Many, though not all, of the gains of the Popular Front of 1936 were rapidly lost through devaluation and rising prices. The consequent demoralisation made possible the capitulation to fascism in 1940.

In the short term the French ruling class is willing to make concessions, rather than lose everything. Cuts will be made in other sectors—already there has been talk of cutting back on the independent nuclear striking force (a vindication of the old slogan "A blow against the boss is a blow against the bomb").

But in the long term severe attacks will be made on the French workers' gains. This is especially true in the context of international competition, and in a situation where much employment depends on the siting of US subsidiaries in Europe.

If French wages are higher and management rights limited, US firms will shift production elsewhere. So now a European strategy for the working class becomes a reality as

stantly hear talk of participation in control, they begin to ask for it in real earnest. On the other hand, it may lead to serious confusion and deception in a period of crisis and concession.

Control

In countless cases over the last few weeks workers have been faced with the real issues of control of economic life. In some places workers committees have established links with the discontented peasantry to continue food supplies. Print workers and radio personnel have been faced with important decisions in controlling the crucial dissemination of information.

Reports from the CSF electronics factory at Brest tell of workers establishing a committee to completely reform the management structure of the factory. Doubtless many more similar examples will be uncovered when the full history of the strike is written.

The strike has involved a "cultural revolution" in the best sense of the term. This has centred on the students of the Sorbonne, but has been manifested by the spread of the strike even to groups like footballers and Folies Bergères dancers. The vast creative potential of non-alienated man has again, as at other crisis points of history, been glimpsed.

The French crisis was beyond a

French trade-union movement, growing up at a time when parliamentary democracy was blatantly corrupt and ineffective, never shared the parliamentary illusions of its British counterpart. On the contrary, syndicalist ideas were very strong in it.

Occupation of the factories is not a new phenomenon in France—it was the most notable feature of the general strike of June 1936 at the time of the Popular Front government. Such occupations, of course, pose the question of control much more clearly than ordinary strikes, and are much more beneficial to the strikers' morale.

Secondly, the French trade-union movement has been divided since 1948 into three political tendencies. As a result, the unions have been used to fight out the political disagreements between the major parties, rather than for straightforward defence of trade-union interests. This kind of "politicisation" of the unions did not, of course, benefit the workers, as can be seen by the sharp fall in union membership in France from seven million at the end of the war to just over two million today.

The political strike—of the one-day stoppage variety—has been widely used by the CGT, both during the Algerian war and against the Gaullist economic policy. It has served mainly as a safety valve to divert and weary the workers of conventional politics.

universally recognised that the CP has not led the present struggle but acted as a brake on it, it may at first seem surprising to learn that the party has gained in strength and support during recent weeks. But this is in accordance with the party's historical development.

Its two greatest periods of growth have been in the Popular Front of 1936 and the Liberation of 1945; both were occasions when it held back a working-class thrust towards taking power and diverted it into safe parliamentary channels.

The great resilience of the French CP was shown at the time of the Hungarian Revolution. Certainly the rank and file did not support the Russian action—the leaders of the CGT were unable to get their members to endorse the Russian action, and had to leave it as an open question. But the party lost few members or votes over the question, because there was no plausible, alternative working-class party in view.

Despite a long-term tendency for its working-class base to decline, the CP has built itself deep roots in the factory organisations. French factories do not have the same system of shop stewards as in Britain; delegates are elected to factory committees to negotiate with the management, but nomination to these elections is confined to the official union bodies,

and it is a simple recognition of the need for a body to communicate and develop experience in struggle, and prepare for the transference of the state to the hands of the working class.

Doubtless there will be a number of contenders for this rôle, for it is no longer difficult to stand to the left of the CP. Among others, Mendès-France (who resigned from de Gaulle's government in 1945 because of its refusal to impose a total wage freeze) is grooming himself for the rôle. But the only organisations worthy and able to fulfil the rôle are the "grouplets" so despised by the Communist Party.

No one section of the revolutionary left need be singled out. The roll of honour has been drawn up by de

***This is of course doubly true in the British situation, where a small Communist Party in opposition to a ruling Labour Party does not have the same pressures towards the right that are felt by a mass party like the French. The line that makes the British CP turn its back on the VSC and rent strikes is the same logic that counsels a return to work in France, but while there are many lessons to be drawn for British party members in the French events, this should not disrupt the united front at grassroots level.**

now a European strategy for the working class becomes a reality as never before. Other Western European workers must decide whether to cut French workers' throats, or seek to extend the French gains throughout Europe. The basis of a European-wide movement has already been laid among the students; perhaps more significant was the refusal of Belgian print-workers to print ballot papers for de Gaulle's phoney referendum when he could not get them printed in France.

Prepare

The lesson for Britain is therefore not merely to substitute Knightsbridge for Grosvenor Square in the demonstrators' weekend round, but to prepare a revolutionary movement in Britain.

The initial success of the French uprising was of enormous value in inspiring British militants to develop their struggle; but the evidence of the continuing stranglehold of Stalinist reformism must caution against undue optimism and telescoping of the perspective.

On the one hand, France has shown the falseness of the purely economicist—bread-and-butter—trade union perspective. A revolutionary movement does not grow naturally out of a mere accumulation of partial economic struggles. In France it was only after a direct political confrontation that we saw the unleashing of a vast movement of economic demands.

But on the other hand, France should not give the cue for a voluntaristic strategy. Turning over a few cars in Grosvenor Square will no more automatically lead to a general strike than a Guevara going into the hills will automatically lead to a new Vietnam.

Crucial

The dramatic events of the Paris barricades had to be paralleled by a long patient campaign of contact with workers and political education. In this students have a crucial rôle to play, providing they recognise that they have no interests and no independent rôle outside of the general strategy of the working class.

The only middle term between economism and voluntarism is the creation of a revolutionary organisation. This can bring together students and workers; it can combine an overall political perspective with deep roots in the actual fragmentary struggles of the workers.

In France the creation of such an organisation is now on the order of the day; in Britain it is not so far removed.

R FACTORY AT PORTON DOWN

quantities from available materials.

2. They must maintain their virulence and infectivity during production, storage, and transportation.

3. They must be easily and effectively disseminated.

2. There must be no widespread natural or acquired immunity to the agent.

5. Some form of protection must be available to the user.

Most of the research into biological agents is probably centred on the breeding of more virulent strains of organisms, the problem of storing living material for any length of time (this has been solved, in some cases, by freeze drying) and in avoiding immune reactions.

The body's main internal defence against disease organisms is a group of blood proteins known as antibodies. They are produced after an infection, and act by neutralising the disease organisms. The basis of immunisation using vaccines is that injection of a few dead or inactive organisms will stimulate the production of the antibodies needed for defence against the real thing.

However the antibodies are very specific—they protect you against one type of germ only. A new type of smallpox for example, with a coat of slightly different chemical composition, would not be recognised by the

antibodies and would be free to breed.

Dispersal of the agents to produce the maximum effect can be achieved by any of three methods—introduction into food or water supplies, by means of vectors, or in a cloud of tiny airborne droplets or particles. Vector transmission can only be used with biological agents; it depends on the fact that a disease organism can be carried by animals which infect people with the disease. In suitable circumstances it can be extremely effective; it was rats which carried the Black Death through Europe in the Middle Ages.

It is generally agreed however that the most effective method of dispersing any agent is by means of an aerosol spray and considerable research has been done into various aspects of spraying at Porton. It was found, for example, that the size of the particles was very important—they must be small enough to get into the farthest parts of the lungs, but not so small that they are breathed out again.

The area that can be covered with an aerosol is very large—a B-52 bomber that could carry an H-bomb with an area of destruction approaching 75-100 sq. miles could also carry enough aerosol spray of a biological weapon to kill 25-75 per cent of the

people in an area of 34,000 sq. miles.

The Ministry of Defence claims that the work done at Porton is purely defensive. For once, when they say this, they are not using the usual jargon which transforms every word into its opposite ("defence" in this newspeak means aggressive attack) but they are trying to give the impression that the public spirited men at Porton are doing all they can to protect the population against attack by an enemy.

This is an important claim. If it is true, they can justify all the research in terms of finding out what the enemy could be doing, and discovering the best way to counter it.

The question of the motives of the Ministry of Defence cannot be determined in terms of the kind of research that is done—the research would be identical both for defence and aggressive attack—but only in terms of what is done after all the research has been completed. If an aggressive attack is being planned then one would expect to find facilities for mass production of chemical and biological agents. And such are found—at Nancekuke in Cornwall there is a large establishment engaged in process research (that is, mass production).

The fact that Porton supplies disease organisms and botulinus

toxin for ordinary medical and biological research as a commercial sideline suggests that they are engaged in mass production of these, as well. On the other hand, if civil defence was the aim of the research one would expect everyone in the country to be provided with at least a gas mask, and detailed instructions on its use.

Some kind of early warning system would also be necessary as it is difficult to detect an attack until its effects are felt, by which time it is too late to put on gas masks. And there would need to be phenomenal emergency health services to cope with a high casualty rate, and to provide mass immunisation.

None of these things has been provided and in the absence of further evidence we must conclude that the government is in fact contemplating at least the threat of an aggressive or retaliatory attack with chemical and biological weapons.

●The Home Office admitted last month that the riot gas CS had been used on two occasions by British police when tackling "dangerous men" and would be used again in "similar circumstances." 36 of the 80 police forces in England and Wales have supplies of the gas.

Mortimer the militant decamps to the PIB..

by TERRY ROGERS (DATA)

IN THE LAST TEN YEARS, DATA, the draughtsmen's union, has established a reputation for militant trade unionism in support of its conference policies. During this period Jim Mortimer, the former editor of DATA Journal, has played an outstanding part in the development of progressive policies and his exceptional abilities as a spokesman and writer have been a source of inspiration to numerous activists in the union.

The union has consistently rejected the incomes policy as totally irrelevant to Britain's economic problems, pointing out the failure of the policy to maintain growth, provide full employment, restrict prices or profits, improve the standard of living of workers or redistribute wealth in favour of the working class.

The acceptance by Jim Mortimer last month of a position on the Prices and Incomes Board has shocked many members, at all levels in the union and people outside. What is the explanation?

Strategy

The present crisis in the British labour movement due to the bankruptcy of social democracy is causing many socialists to reject the Labour Party and the parliamentary road to socialism. The necessity to develop revolutionary tactics and strategy and to build a revolutionary party is becoming increasingly obvious.

With his background as a consistent supporter of the Soviet Union, an admirer of the Swedish pattern of industrial relations, and an avowed supporter of the Communist Party policy document the British Road to Socialism, Jim Mortimer has been out of sympathy with this general leftward trend. His attitude is typified by his criticism of activity which goes outside the bounds of peaceful picketing such as the Grosvenor Square demonstration.

His political position was crystallised in his March editorial when he seized on the apparent difference between the government and the TUC as suggested by the TUC Economic Review. The argument was whether we were to enjoy an economic growth rate of 3 per cent as suggested by the

Jim Mortimer supported 6 per cent and in doing so rejected his previous arguments in support of trade union militancy. Without economic expansion militancy did not bring about a redistribution of wealth or a general rise in living standards, he argued. This could only be done by taxation and increased social security benefits and the TUC had shown the way forward!

Carrying the fantasy still further, Jim Mortimer projected the TUC as a progressive body developing a strategy for the whole of the movement, within which problems of equal pay for women, a national minimum wage, etc., could be solved. It all depended on achieving the 6 per cent growth rate. This was the crucial point. The slogan was not a call for the replacement of capitalism and the establishment of workers' power but a demand for economic growth.

It is significant that Jim Mortimer made two well remembered contributions at the DATA annual conference in May. In one he attempted to whitewash George Woodcock and in the second he spoke in favour of the Labour Party document on industrial democracy and against a demand for workers' control.

Reports that he believes he can make a contribution to working class struggle by sitting on the PIB, vetting price increases are ludicrous. He knows the score.

In the February issue of the Journal he wrote: "There is no point in beating about the bush when describing the government's intentions in relation to the living standards of the people in 1968. It is that living standards shall be cut . . . The forecast could not be more explicit. Living standards are to be cut. Prices will rise but as far as possible the government intends to hold down wages."

Jim Mortimer is an example of a socialist not prepared to face up to the challenge of the period. Unable to support the development of a revolutionary party based on workers' power he preferred to cut himself off from that class and has accepted a job within the establishment.

As one who over the last four years has enjoyed a friendly dialogue on policy with Jim Mortimer, it is sad to



Bonanza for steel shareholders, redundancy for workers

by PETER INGHAM

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE state-owned steel industry show how futile it is to expect that workers will benefit from nationalisation while private bankers and capitalists control both the industry and the economy.

The publication of the accounts of the British Steel Corporation from July 1967 to March 1968 show that £252m. was used in this period but of this amount only £3m. was spent on the actual business of making steel. The rest, £249m., was spent on paying dividend interest and loan repayments to the former shareholders. The corporation starts its nationalised life in a disastrously weak financial position.

The chairman, Lord Melchett, and his financial advisers can no doubt claim that in the last year of private ownership profits were seriously down due to the cut-back in production and the cost of maintaining idle plant. But in anticipation of nationalisation, the owners paid themselves £72m., even though this dividend was not covered by earnings. They paid the dividends out of a total value of assets which they estimated at £140m.

Milked

The state has now found that the assets were worth only £100m. and it is clear that the industry was milked financially before nationalisation. The owners of the Park Gate steel

inland plant, such as that at Sheffield and Corby, and the removal of one third of steel workers from the payroll. They hope that by 1980 steel output from new plant constructed on the North East coast will produce 50 per cent more steel with only two out of three of the present labour force. **The main savings will come from the reduced labour force and wages with increased productivity. Meanwhile, the share-owning private capitalists will continue to receive interest on their compensation stock of £50m. a year.**

Just how steel workers can be persuaded to accept such a giant fraud in the name of nationalisation is best explained by the structure of the unions in the industry.

Before nationalisation, the TUC and the main steel unions agreed that all employees of BSC should belong to one of the six recognised unions or one of the additional eight recognised on the National Craftsmen's Co-ordinating Committee.

This meant that large numbers of clerical and administrative workers who were previously not in any union or in the management-dominated staff associations, were required to join the BISAKTA (British Iron, Steel and Kindred Trades Association).

Many steel workers know that the strength of local BISAKTA branches depends more on their own efforts, than on those of full-time officials.

Most white-collar workers with any respect for trade unionism realise that separate recognition is fundamental if representation is to be at all effective for men and women not involved in direct production and who have weaker bargaining power.

Where white-collar workers in areas like Scunthorpe have been recruited into BISAKTA their position has been so weak that they have broken away to join the clerical workers (CAWU) or the supervisors (ASTMS, formerly ASSET).

Both CAWU and ASTMS are now engaged in strikes to win recognition, with a large measure of support from the rank and file of BISAKTA, whose leaders have instructed their members to do the work of clerks and technicians during stoppages to keep production going.

Bleak

If this is to be the pattern of representation by the official unions in the BSC then the future prospects for steel workers and staff are bleak.

Like the workers at another famous nationalised firm, Renault Motors in France, steel workers in Britain must learn that firm action from the organised rank and file of the union is the

we were to enjoy an economic growth rate of 3 per cent as suggested by the government or the TUC's 6 per cent.

...and Jenkins studies the footprints

by JAMES ROBESON

THE DAY THAT JIM MORTIMER was appointed to the Prices and Incomes Board, one of those journalists whose job it is to hear the news half a day before anyone else announced it to his office.

"Guess who has just been appointed to the PIB," he said. "The most unlikely person you can think of."

"Clive Jenkins?"

"No, the next most unlikely person."

As it turned out, Jenkins' role in the piece was to give support to his friend on the front page of the following week's Tribune. "Jim Mortimer," he wrote, "could not have declined the invitation to become a member of the National Board for Prices and Incomes."

The Prices and Incomes Board, said Mr. Jenkins, General Secretary of ASTMS, the supervisors' union, deserved some credit, and Jim Mortimer as a representative of the "left" could do a good job there.

Unfortunately for Jenkins, the London district council of his own union did not agree. The day after Tribune appeared, they passed a resolution which long-time friends and political allies of both Jenkins and Mortimer supported. Nobody voted against it.

It condemned the article and questioned whether Jenkins' attitude might not mean some change in the union's attitude of outright opposition to the incomes policy and the work of the PIB.

The two men know each other well, and have worked together on books covering trade union affairs. They are both articulate advocates of left reformism, who are able to advance attractive policies for far-reaching improvements without actually leaving a reformist position.

Aubrey Jones of the Prices and Incomes Board must be very pleased with his catch.

Where Clive Jenkins is concerned, the left has tended to assume that he covered up his more deeprooted political commitment in order to juggle with day-to-day-events to public acclaim, and thus achieving quick results for his members. Such a view overestimates Jenkins' readiness to play such games, while underestimat-

ing his readiness to quickly adapt to new situations. Gains for his members and the growth of the union under his leadership are in themselves Jenkins' political objectives.

In his Tribune article, he seeks to differentiate the PIB from government policy, on the grounds that the Board is an agency, not an originator of policy. This attempt to make the Board more palatable would seem to make Mortimer's voice in the key institutions a squeaky one at best.

Since the Board is an agency, Jenkins says, we should not blame it for some of the references which have been made to it. Rather, it offers a permanent force of management consultants for the nation. It will gather together the facts of business and industry which will allow the government to make better decisions and trade union leaders to put forward prettier arguments.

Jenkins fails to mention that such a role as national management consultancy serves only to strengthen the very economic structures and institutions which socialists seek to overthrow. Jenkins is saying that he accepts the argument for the modernisation and reorganisation of British industry.

His judgement of the Donovan Report on the unions is that it is progressive because of the invitation to the unions to organise practically everyone, and because of the call for reforms on such issues as union recognition and dismissals.

Apparently, the aim is no longer workers' power. It is a question of having voices of inquiry and dissent in the right places—men like Mortimer, who have "... the intellectual capacity (and character) to make a unique contribution to some of the restructuring necessary in Britain!"

But Jenkins need not concern himself much with pressures from his rank and file at the present time. Gains are being made, and he is leading a struggle against the government's Steel Board for the recognition of white-collar unions. Learned counsel has already been briefed by him ready for the fray—none other than that old revolutionary leader, Quintin Hogg, Q.C.

financially before nationalisation. The owners of the Park Gate Steel Company and the GKN plants alone received £50m. in lump compensation.

With such goings-on at the top, the money for the much-vaunted modernisation will have to come solely from the wealth created by the steelworkers—wealth which they do not receive back in wages.

And workers who built up the existing plants will face sackings. Management plans envisage the closure of all

BISAKTA (British Iron, Steel and Kindred Trades Association) branch of the Iron and Steel Trade Confederation:

Many white collar workers and technicians feared that they would be deprived of proper representation in a predominantly manual workers' union which at national and divisional level has had a history of failure to fight management decisions on such major issues as manning and redundancy.

learn that firm action from the organised rank and file of the union is the only effective technique in securing safeguards for employment, good pay and decent conditions.

As the highly-paid whizz-kinds of the BSC prepare their strategy for the 1970s, based on the philosophy of sack and squeeze, steel workers must prepare a socialist strategy which will remove the parasitic rights of shareholders and which will organise the steel industry under workers' control.

Railmen fight for pay — but jobs battle still to come

by DAVE PERCIVAL (NUR)



Sidney Greene 'Unreal demands'

THE OVERTIME BAN and work to rule called last month by the two rail unions, NUR and ASLEF, in support of an all-round wage increase was in direct contradiction to the policy that the leaders of both organisations have pursued in recent years.

Both unions have been involved in talks with management since 1965 to cut staff by making workers "versatile," which is the latest way of saying that one man should do the work of two or more. From the start of these talks, militants in the industry have demanded withdrawal from a scheme for selling jobs and called instead for a straight pay increase for all members.

This demand has recently received greater support among the rank and file and open meetings of members in various parts of the country have called for a national strike in support of an increase. This trend has been particularly clear since the speed-up plans of the management were released, against the wishes of the union leaders.

Ignores

NUR general secretary Sidney Greene has attacked the demand for an all-round increase as "unreal" and he has told branches that the "versatility offer" would represent a higher increase than has ever been achieved before in the history of railway pay negotiations. He ignores the fact that thousands of jobs would be lost.

The only direct pay offer the railways board has made without attaching vicious conditions is tiny and is only offered to a minority of railwaymen. The executives of the unions were faced with the choice of accept-

orthodox structure of the unions—district councils, annual meetings, executives, bodies which have not been strong enough to fight the influence of the government and the union bureaucracies around the general secretaries.

To break this dreary routine, work must start at once to link up militants, to give them a unified basis for activity and to expose at every point the stupidity of continuing to support a Labour Party that is the prime mover in all the attempts to cut back on railway workers jobs, wages and conditions.

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Derby— despair saps militancy as pit closures mount

by CLIVE

BURNETT (NUM)

SOON ALL THAT will be left of the Derbyshire pits will be the tips and the writings of D. H. Lawrence. Throughout the regions collieries are rapidly being closed.

Around Ripley five years ago there were eight pits. Now there is only one and its future is uncertain.

The Coal Board gives two main reasons for closures: some pits run out of coal reserves; others are uneconomic to run. Both methods are open to manipulation by the NCB.

The board can force a pit to close by delegating seams to adjacent collieries. At Coppice colliery, for example, a seam that held plenty of coal was delegated to nearby Ormonde colliery by the NCB. It was considered more economic to run it from that side.

The viability of a pit is determined by its output per man-shift, plus the price for the type of coal. The two important factors are output and manpower. If output decreases or manpower increases, the pit becomes less economic.

The NCB can make use of both these factors when it wants to destroy a pit. With other surrounding collieries closed there is a pool of labour that can be employed at the pit under the hammer. It is flooded with additional workers and the output-manpower balance is disturbed.

Some miners suspect deliberate mismanagement as yet another way of closing an unwanted pit. The use of wrong machinery for certain types of

COAL
a special inquiry



coal, antagonising the men into low production and letting a face develop a bend that makes conditions more difficult are all possible ways of destroying a pit's life.

Like any other industry, it is hard to fight a closure from inside. Closures develop a pool of unemployment, which splits and demoralises the men and destroys any attempt at solidarity between the men at work and those without. Many older miners think that new men are endangering the security of their jobs.

All these factors add up to a situation in which a pit can be designated a "long life" one with a span of 15 to 20 years and yet it can be condemned as uneconomic within six months.

Betrayed

And now there is the added difficulty of political expression. The miners have been betrayed by the Labour government.

They cannot turn to the Tories or Liberals, for they have never understood the miners or had influence in the pits. The Communist Party offers no alternative nor any action save for feeble protests to the House of Commons.

The only way pit closures can be fought is by forging links with the miners in other pits that do not face the immediate danger of shut-down. And miners must go beyond the narrow confines of the industry and build links with workers in other industries in every region.

But in the pits despair and defeat are sapping militancy. Miners committed to socialism must attempt to win support for the demand of workers' control of condemned pits in an effort to keep them producing, not for profit and compensation for former shareholders but to provide cheap fuel for family use. If the campaign for workers' control can be spread to strong pits and to other industries then the miners could force the Coal Board and the government to rethink their fuel policy.

Only a party dedicated to socialism and workers' control can lead the miners out of their despair. The struggle to build that party, to expand it and give it power at rank and file level must be the chief task for all militant miners.

When that is done, the miners will once again take their place in the leadership of the working class. Until it is done, the outlook for miners in Derbyshire and throughout the industry is grim indeed.



TUC centenary — happy birthday to who?

NOTHING MORE CLEARLY reveals the relationship between the state and organised labour than the postage stamp of the Queen and the TUC. Today, the knights of the General Council belong to the Establishment.

They are necessary for the smooth-running of the system. They act as a transmission belt, bringing capitalist ideology into the working class movement.

Unpalatable proposals, ones that would be quite unacceptable had they simply come from the bosses, are agreed to because of them.

They occasionally voice workers' discontents, but these would gain expression anyway. Far better, for the ruling class, that the spokesmen should be trade union leaders, speaking in moderate tones, than rank-and-file agitators. Protests are channelled into harmless, institutionalised forms. By helping to preserve the stability of society, union leaders are, to use Daniel De Leon's apt phrase "the labour lieutenants of capitalism."

But has this always been so? Last month saw the centenary of the formation of the TUC. A lot of claptrap was spoken. Speeches idolised the pioneers of the movement.

Most contributors came from the Webb'sian School of Falsification. For instance, when they spoke of Applegarth, Allan & Co., a group of highly influential union leaders, they called them "the Junta" the term first

owner of that name.

Macdonald represented an important trend among union leaders. As Dr. Royden Harrison points out, in his book *Before the Socialists* (p. 38): "Special relationships grew up between particular employer-politicians and trade union politicians. For example such relationships existed between A. J. Mundella and Robert Applegarth; Lord Elcho and Alexander MacDonal; Samuel Morley and George Howell; Crawshaw, the ironmaster, and John Kane."

Therefore, in the celebrations of the TUC centenary, we should be quite clear what the Establishment is happy about. Harold Wilson, opposed to working-class unity today, is not rejoicing because the TUC's formation represented an addition to working-class strength a hundred years ago. No, the significance of the creation of the TUC was that it marked an important stage in the integration of the union bureaucracy within the capitalist system.

FAILURE

From this standpoint, as a judgement on a hundred years of industrial activity conducted in the overwhelming majority of instances by leaders who fervently believed in class collaboration, the balance-sheet of the past 100 years needs drawing up. The failure to increase the share of the

Linwood strike sparked by productivity deal

THE DISPUTE AT Rootes Scottish car plant at Linwood gave an insight into the working of the government's incomes policy and the bosses' determination to force through rationalisation plans.

Rootes, taken over by the Chrysler company in 1967, had lost £4m in the previous year and the American firm had to pump in an extra £20m to save the firm. The government's Industrial Reorganisation Corporation, which had sponsored the take-over, weighed in with £3m as well.

A five-year expansion programme was drawn up which planned an increase in the labour force from 5700 to 9000. A crucial feature of the "face-lift" was the scrapping of the existing payment by results scheme and its replacement by one based on measured day work (MDW).

Double- and three-shift workings were also introduced and job conditions in general were attacked by new work rules and demands for greater flexibility and interchangeability. Some shops suffered a reduction in their personal time allowance from 55 to 35 minutes a day.

To get workers to accept this extensive speed-up, Rootes offered an average increase of £6 a week, rising by stages over a three-year period, providing targets were met.

Rejected

The Transport and Vehicle Builders unions accepted the deal. For them it was "as good as they could get," giving their members 13s. 2d. an hour by 1970. (Coventry car workers get 16s. now.) The Amalgamated Engineering and Foundryworkers and other smaller craft unions rejected the scheme and continued to press existing claims through the normal procedure.

In May, AEF members in the Press Shop refused to work the new agreements and they were locked out by the management. Maintenance men followed when a car body delivery conveyor broke down and they refused to repair it without their mates. (Abolition of craftsmen's mates was one of the terms of the new agreement.)

The management claimed they went on strike and all the men who were later laid off were refused unemployment benefit. This was later resolved on the basis that TGWU and NUVB members got unemployment pay, but all 1700 AEF members—not just the 550 directly involved in the dispute—were refused.

A mass meeting of 3000 workers the start of the dispute pledged support for the 550 locked out and a factory collection of £1 a head was organised. The Paisley district committee of the AEF supported the Rootes workers but their Scottish executive member John Boyd denounced

From our Scottish correspondent

the men as "rebels without a cause."

The management dug their heels in. They later admitted that if the productivity deal was not accepted it would mean an extra £2½m on the expansion programme. They started to lay off the rest of workers at the end of the first week of the dispute.

Within two weeks the works were shut and 1000 men at the Bathgate works were laid off because of the shortage of spare parts. But Bathgate shop stewards sent a message of support to Linwood.

On May 24, Barbara Castle ordered a court of inquiry into the dispute, which was boycotted by the AEF. By the first of June the management were clearly concerned at losing £600,000 a week in sales and announced a possible solution, which was put to a meeting of national and local union officers in London.

This arrived at a settlement which substantially conceded the point made by the AEF workers that any new proposals must be agreed before they are put into operation. The eight mates were to remain, and the Press Shop would return at their old rates without a bonus, which had never added

a great deal to the workers' earnings. Work standards to be applied were those appropriate to a May 1966 agreement. These were 95 per cent of the standards set under the new agreement.

As shop stewards' convenor Ian McAngus told the Glasgow Trades Council, the dispute was as much political as industrial. The management's productivity proposals are what the incomes policy and the PIB require. Traditional incentive schemes have permitted workers a greater control over job conditions than management are now prepared to tolerate and MDW is the order of the day.

A similar productivity deal has been put to the Rootes factories in Coventry, but there the workers have been offered £33 a week immediately while Linwood will reach a maximum of £26 only after three years. It seems certain that Rootes are planning to largely abandon England and transfer a substantial part of their work to Linwood. That is why it is important for them to push the new deal through now, to ensure lower wages in their key plant.

The Linwood workers are in a strong position and a fight for parity of wages with England and a rejection of authoritarian management control could force a major victory.

Letters

Miners— what they really get

YOUR CORRESPONDENT on the problems of miners in the North East (June) has got his facts quite wrong when he refers to the Redundancy Payments Scheme.

The Fuel Policy White Paper published last November said that the incomes of redundant mineworkers aged 55 and over would be made up for three years to 90 per cent (not 80) of previous take-home pay. In the draft order for this scheme, now before parliament, a married man with no dependant children whose pre-redundancy earnings were £13 a week would have his income supplemented to £9 16s. (not £8 16s.).

You suggest that most men in this position would get more from the Ministry of Social Security, presumably as what used to be called National Assistance. A married man with no dependant children would get his income made up to £7 1s. plus rent. But to get this he must submit to a means test and from this figure will be deducted, among other things, any earnings of his wife over £2 a week,

any disablement pension over £2 a week. Occupational pensions and income from savings are also taken into account.

Under this scheme our man gets his income made up to £9 16s. irrespective of what his wife earns or what disablement pensions he might have. In addition, if as a result of ceasing to be an NCB employee his rent goes up he can also get from the scheme a weekly sum of up to £1 a week.

—W. Paynter, Secretary, National Union of Mineworkers, Euston Road, London, N.W.1.

Irish police states

MALACHY McKENNA was correct to point out to your readers (June) the fact that Northern Ireland is a police state in Britain's backyard.

However he should also have informed them that there are two British supported police states in Ireland. All of the draconic provisions of the Northern Special Powers Act can be found in the Southern Offences Against the State Acts. That is why Irish revolutionary socialists raise the demand: Tories out—North and South.—Gery Lawless, Duncan Terrace, London, N.1.

past 100 years needs drawing up. failure to increase the share of the national income going to the working class; the failure to gain, through official channels, greater working-class power at the point of production; the failure to secure appreciable reduction in working hours—all these are an indictment of a certain methodology. With historical continuity, the line stretches from the MacDonalds to the General Council men, both right and left, of today.

They did not mention that, to many workers in the 1860s, they were better known as "the dirty pack." A discreet silence is preserved about the cavortings of these union leaders in high society, their sedulous cultivation of bourgeois respectability, and how they frequently sold their members down the river.

Most closely-guarded secret of all, the fact that gives revolutionary socialists the right to rejoice, is that we can celebrate the centenary of the unofficial strike. Workers, in defiance of their employers and union leaders, resorted to self-activity to defend their interests.

COMMISSION

In 1868, the Lancashire miners struck against a 15 per cent wage reduction. After failing to get the men to return to work, the union leaders journeyed to London where Alexander MacDonald testified before a Royal Commission on Trade Unions (yes, they had them too a 100 years ago) that when he found every delegate had come to the meeting with a written order from his pit to strike, he persuaded them to reconsider.

But at a second meeting—against his advice—the miners reaffirmed their decision. "It was not the leaders of the union they consulted," he told the Royal Commission.

Subsequently, MacDonald made it clear he favoured industrial harmony: "I look upon strikes as the barbaric relic of a period of unfortunate relations between labour and capital."

He confessed, on another occasion, that he was glad, he averted an industrial dispute although he conceded that, had the men gone on strike, "they might have commanded a higher rate than they now have."

MacDonald, later to become one of the first working class MPs, had a high regard for Parliament. He told the Royal Commission: "I think that there is not a body of 600 men in which more kind-hearted men are to be found in the House of Commons." While he favoured workers gaining their ends through legislative, not class, action, he nevertheless opposed a clause that would have given teeth to the Mines Regulation Act (1872).

This meant, as Engels explained, "MacDonald betrayed the workers . . . he sanctioned an amendment which was so grossly in the interests of the capitalists that even the government had not dared include it in the draft." (Marx-Engels on Britain, p.469).

MacDonald was widely known as "Lord Elcho Limited," the implication being quite clear that he had been bought by, and was part of the property of, the large Scottish coal-

failure to increase the share of the national income going to the working class; the failure to gain, through official channels, greater working-class power at the point of production; the failure to secure appreciable reduction in working hours—all these are an indictment of a certain methodology. With historical continuity, the line stretches from the MacDonalds to the General Council men, both right and left, of today.

Of course, there are differences. Whereas British capitalism of 1860 had not reached the height of its power, now it is in decline. Weakened, it is less able to withstand attacks from the shop-floor. A dockers' or seamen's strike severely strains the country's balance of payments. The complexity of the economy, the mutual interdependence of its various parts, means that a stoppage in one industry has damaging repercussions elsewhere.

Consequently, the state, as the guardian of capitalist interests, cannot afford to allow large-scale disputes to develop. So any big strike becomes, automatically, a contest between the workers and the government, a struggle in which the workers must either capitulate or smash the state.

As the leaders are not revolutionary socialists, have no vision that stretches beyond bourgeois democracy, they display the white rather than red flag.

For this reason, it is vital that the rank-and-file, with no vested interests in the present system, throw up their own leadership. Only through self-activity of the most thorough-going kind can the working class finally banish exploitation.

In this struggle we can perhaps learn from the spate of unofficial strikes that occurred in the 1860s and 1870s. They were fought with a vigour and a violence that alarmed the authorities. Sometimes employers granted concessions to quieten things so that customary relations could be re-established with the moderate union leaders.

But more often the unofficial strikes ended in defeat. And the reason—one that is still with us—is that they were partial strikes, limited to one factory or area.

Employers, isolating the men, could thereby defeat them. The need, therefore, is the widest possible links at rank-and-file level, coupled with a determination to overthrow the ruling class.

Then there might be something entirely different to celebrate a hundred years from now.

Raymond Challinor

FORD WOMEN RETURN - BUT EQUAL PAY IS BACK ON THE AGENDA

by **SABBY SAGALL**

(Who wrote this before the decision to call off the strike)

ON JUNE 7, after many months of protracted and fruitless negotiations at all levels within Ford's grading machinery at Dagenham for the re-appraisal of the grade allocated last July to 187 female sewing-machinists, the women reached the decision that they were left with no alternative but to withdraw their labour.

The struggle is over the ancient problem of sex-discrimination. The women, fully trained in their trade before taking up employment with Ford, are only allowed a grading within the semi-skilled male grades—even after having to submit themselves to a Ford trade test. The company went to extraordinary lengths to maintain the women within the semi-skilled grade, contrary to all the evidence produced by the Review Committee during the period of job evaluation.

This committee unanimously agreed on a profile which unambiguously placed the women into the skilled grade. The company, however, disqualified this profile after the Review Committee had been disbanded to avoid any reference back.

Barbara Castle has unambiguously come out in favour of equal pay for equal work, with the sole proviso that whatever increases the "economy" can afford to grant the women at present will have to be counterbalanced by a slower rate of increase in the wages of male workers.

In other words, she has followed the lead of the Ford management who have laid off 5000 men in an attempt to arouse animosity on the part of the men towards the women.

ATTEMPT

The company did this in spite of the unprecedented prosperity they have enjoyed since January, which the shop stewards and convenors pointed out in a vain attempt to persuade the management to retain the workers on full pay. The women are determined to stay out until they receive their extra 5d. an



The Dagenham machinists seen lobbying MPs during their strike

Donovan: the velvet glove stays on - bosses not ready for the knuckle duster

by **COLIN BARKER**

AFTER THREE YEARS' labour, the Royal Commission on Trade Unions has finally reported. The 352-page document (price £1) looks at industrial relations from the point of view of a section of the ruling class today. It is written in the

Table 2 shows the numbers of official strikes from 1960 to 1966. The figures show that they are not increasing in number.

Table 2
Numbers of official strikes
1960

official strikes be made illegal in some way, or at least give employers the opportunity to take civil action in the courts.

The Commission is terrified of this kind of idea, though they do say that if their pro-

strong enough to overthrow it

So the Royal Commission doesn't recommend such use of legal action. Instead they suggest that, to control workshop bargaining, firms should be required to register their factory agreements with the government.

A new Industrial Relations Commission (a sort of second

Teesside tenants prepare for rents struggle

by **BRIAN EBBATSON**

MASSIVE OPPOSITION is building up against rent increases proposed by the Tory Council of the new Teesside County Borough.

47,000 tenants in the old boroughs of Middlesbrough, Stockton, Billingham, Redcar and Thornaby are affected. Rents are due to be increased by as much as 39s. 6d. a week, in phases of 10s. a year. The first increase is due in October.

The rate contribution is to be abolished, which alone accounts for 10s. of the total increases. And a rent rebate scheme, together with a means test, (on the lines advocated by the Labour government) is included to sweeten the pill.

Thousands of tenants are already protesting against the increases. They realise that the rebate scheme will affect only a few, and no one will pay less rent than they do now.

The Council's "Revised Rent Structure and Rent Rebate Scheme" has been simply and aptly renamed, "Rent Increase Scheme," by the chairman of the Teesside Federation of Tenants Associations. The Federation was formed in May.

Thirteen associations are now affiliated. Petitions with more than 10,000 signatures have already been gathered and a mass rally and protest march in the city centre are planned for July, when a seven-point programme will be presented to the council. Its demands are:

1. Withdrawal of proposed rent increases.
2. Withdrawal of rent rebate scheme.
3. Maintenance of the rate contribution.
4. Pressure from the council on the government to provide interest-free loans for council housing.
5. No rent to rise above the gross value of the house.

kers on full pay. The women are determined to stay out until they receive their extra 5d. an hour, and at present all the signs are that they will maintain their solid stand.

The women's militant struggle against sex-discrimination represents a major breakthrough at two levels. First, it is the most significant struggle that has been waged at Dagenham since the defeat of 1962.

It is the most important expression so far of the solid but painful job of reconstruction that the militants have been undertaking since 1962. That defeat left Dagenham workers weak and demoralised, completely disillusioned with their trade union organisations.

STRATEGY

This demoralisation enabled the Ford company to enforce their strategy of upholding at all cost the sanctity of national agreements and agreements with the National Joint Negotiating Committee, while merely paying lip-service to the principle of plant autonomy. There have been statutory monthly meetings between the management and the Joint Works Committees of the various plants, but these are strictly limited to the discussion of minor grievances.

Any major issue impinging on national economic policy—wages, pensions, major working conditions such as shift allowances—is referred to the NJNC as the only body authorised to deal with such "national" problems. As a result of the 1962 defeat, the coercive discipline of the management was enforced more harshly than ever before, especially at the PTA plant.

ACTIVITY

The stewards have faced a tremendously hard task rebuilding the confidence of the Dagenham workers, but the signs are that there is a resurgence of trade union spirit and activity.

Secondly, the current struggle represents a breakthrough in the fight for sex equality. Whether they win or lose, the women of Fords by their militancy will have proved to the millions of other exploited, oppressed women workers that they are capable of fighting against the system which needs to reduce them to a lower status, and that they don't have to rely on anyone else to fight their battles for them.

a section of the ruling class today. It is written in the mealy-mouthed way most government documents enjoy, and it is often downright dull.

The Commission is very clear about its main problems. It gives an example of a skilled engineering fitter's pay packet in a factory in the North East in December 1967. What worries the Commission is the way the pay is made up:

Table 1

Time rate for the industry for a 40-hour week (negotiated between the Employers' Federation and the Confederation of Unions)

£11 1 8d.

Overtime (8 hours at double time)

£4 8 8d.

Night shift premium

£3 13 11d.

Lieu bonus, negotiated between management and shop stewards in the factory.

£11 14 11d.

Total pay before deductions

£30 19 2d.

In the words of the Commission, "Britain has two systems of industrial relations." The first system is the official system in which the trade union officials meet officials of the employers' associations, and settle disputes, negotiate wages, and so on.

But there is more to life than what was written into rule-books and procedures 50 years ago. It is that "more" that terrifies the bosses and the union leaders alike.

The old, official, system has decayed. Since the end of the 1930's, real bargaining over wages has slipped out of the hands of the full-time officials and has been taken over, at the workplace level, by shop stewards. For very many workers today, like the worker whose pay-packet is shown in Table 1, a considerable part of their weekly wage comes from local bargaining, from unofficial bargaining, from shop stewards more than union officials.

It is the same with strikes. Apart from the mining industry, there is a steady rise in the number of strikes. In 1957 there were 635 strikes (in the official statistics), in 1960 there were 1,166, and in 1967 there were 1,694 in all industries except coal-mining.

But what sort of strikes?

Year	Numbers of official strikes
1960	68
1961	60
1962	78
1962	78
1963	49
1964	70
1965	97
1966	60

So it is the unofficial strikes which have nearly trebled in number since 1957. In fact, they have probably more than trebled, for the short strikes (which are the most common) are not even counted in the statistics.

It isn't really the numbers of strikes that worry the employers so much. What really worries them is that they can't control the situation. They want a wages policy, so that they can increase their profits at the expense of the working people. But they can't get a wages policy that works if it is being spoiled all the time in the factories.

And that is what is happening. In piece-rate arguments, in clashes over overtime, tea-breaks, washing-time allowances, travel allowances and a host of other workplace matters, rank-and-file workers and their shop stewards keep pushing up the wage rates.

They do this independently of the unions, and independently of the government. They do it to such an extent that it creates one of the biggest headaches for British employers and for the government's wages policy.

So, says the Commission the biggest problem in British industry is that things are not controlled, in other words not controlled by the managements.

What the Commission wants to do is to restore "order" to British industry. The bulk of the Report is taken up with a long discussion of what they can do.

Many of the employers' organisations, the Tory Party and others, have demanded that un-

officials of this kind of idea, though they do say that if their proposals don't work then it may be necessary to "look again" at the idea of legal controls.

Their reasons for rejecting legal action are, first, that employers at the moment are afraid of using the law against unofficial strikers because they know that if a striker is fined or jailed the result will only be more strikes, go-slows, overtime bans and so forth.

Secondly, the Commission are convinced that legal action will not work. The best part of the Report is a two-page Appendix, written for them by Sir Harold Emmerson, who was a senior Ministry of Labour official during the last war.

Emmerson tells how, in 1941, 4,000 Kent miners went on illegal strike in support of a wage claim. 1,000 of the men were issued with summonses, under the wartime National Arbitration Order, and extra JPs and police had to be drafted to serve the summonses.

The result of the trial, in which the men pleaded guilty, was that three union officials were imprisoned with hard labour, 335 were fined £3 (or one month in gaol) and about 1,000 were fined £1 (or 14 days).

In protest, the men stayed out—and the men who could call off the strike were in gaol. After five days the colliery management were forced to sign an agreement, in the prison, with the union officials, giving the men everything they had asked for. But the men refused to go back to work till their officials were released, and after 11 days the law caved in.

No government can cheerfully face this kind of situation again. If the law is brought into disrepute because it cannot be enforced, then the whole basis of "authority" is made a laughing-stock. And no "authority" can bear to be laughed at—people who can laugh at a government will feel

A new Industrial Relations Commission (a sort of second Aubrey Jones) will be set up to investigate these factory agreements. This way, it is hoped, shop floor bargaining, unofficial strikes and shop stewards will somehow be "regulated" more to the satisfaction of the employers and the government.

Other recommendations are also intended to serve the same purpose. More unions should be urged to merge, or come to agreements among themselves, to reduce the power of multi-union committees of shop stewards. Full-time union officials ought to try to get control of the unofficial stewards' committees.

Immune

Only in one respect does a majority of the Commission recommend a change of any weight. Up to now, any "combination" of workers—not only recognised union, but also unofficial stewards' committees, "breakaway" unions, etc—has been immune from various sorts of legal penalty.

Now, it is proposed that only unions which are registered with the authorities should have this "privilege." In other words, it will now be possible, if the Commission's ideas are put into practice, for anyone who thinks he has been hurt by a strike to sue those involved, if the strike was not called by a registered union.

This will lay shop stewards open to the risk of prosecution. In nearly every strike in the country, there will be the risk of civil or criminal proceedings being taken.

The aim of this Report is to find a way of getting rid of the class struggle, as it is seen on the shop floor, or at least bringing it under control. But we can be sure that the proposals they have made will not work, and that they will not satisfy big business.

As capitalism gets into bigger and bigger crises in the years ahead, business will demand much more government and legal control over unofficial strikes. It may be soon, it may take several years. But the result will be a sharpening of the class struggle. There are bigger battles ahead than we have had for a generation.

These battles will create the possibility of mass working-class action to overthrow capitalism and build a socialist society. Socialists and militants should be organising now in readiness for those battles.

5. No rent to rise above the gross value of the house.

6. Full publication of the Housing Revenue Account each year.

7. No alteration in rent levels at any time without consultation with representatives of the tenants.

Control

Emphasis has been placed on involving the greatest number of tenants possible in the campaign and leaving control in their hands. Many tenants were conscious of past mistakes and failures of tenants' movements, and a move by Communist Party members to limit federation meetings to two or three delegates from each estate was soundly defeated on the grounds that as many people as possible should be involved in organisation, leadership and decision-making at all levels.

The chairman reminded tenants of the lessons of St. Pancras in 1960 when Labour and Communist party leaders recommended that the tenants call off their rent strike against increases, and carry the fight to council elections. Labour won the election with the tenants support but the rent increases remained in force.

With three months to go to the first increase there is much work to do to build a strong organisation. But the council is already wavering. It is trying to dampen the tenants' militancy by talk about reducing the increases by a quarter and postponing them till December.

The council's uncertainty means considerable hope of Teesside tenants making the first big breakthrough in the nation-wide struggle to defeat the rent increases.

FRENCH LEFT

from page one

talks with other Trotskyists.

Socialists in Britain must bring the bans and jailings to the attention of the labour movement. Protests should flood the French Embassy in London, and money should be raised to help pay for bail and legal cost.

Members of International Socialism have already raised large sums of money for their French comrades, but more is needed. Rush donations now to Socialist Worker (France) 39 Gondar Gdns., London NW6.

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