

WORKERS PRESS

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DAILY ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

NEW BODY WILL POLICE STATE PAY LAWS

TORY PAY BOARD IS CORPORATISM

BY ROYSTON BULL OUR INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE PAY BOARD will become one of the decisive issues in the class struggle during the coming weeks. For the Tories, the Board will play a key role in policing their new laws for the state control of wages.

It will be vital for the working class to force the union leaders to have no truck with the Board and instead organize united strike action to defeat the Government.

There can be no illusions about the fight that is developing. The ruling class has no way out of its economic crisis other than to drive down wages.

This means defeating the organized strength of the working class—the trade unions—by forcing the pay laws on them and ending free collective bargaining.

The Tories cannot afford not to win. They must drive relentlessly forward, even into the sharpest of confrontations with the working class.

Either the government will go down to defeat. Or Phase Two and the Pay Board will become the law of the land, in deed as well as word.

The reformist TUC leaders have already made their decision. In any revolutionary confrontation they will back law and order against their own class.

Their prime aim must now become to get the working class to accept the Pay Board, the symbol of the new corporatism.

Just as the National Industrial Relations Court has become the acid-test of the trade union leaders' real determination to resist the other prong of corporatism, the Industrial Relations Act, so the Pay Board will fulfil the role on the question of state wage controls.

And just as the reformist leaders eventually have allowed the NIRC to fine their unions, so they are preparing to let the Pay Board police their members' wages.

Crucial in this early period is the attitude of the General and Municipal Workers' Union leaders who organize the gasworkers.

Already, they are getting ready to undermine even the TUC's mere token resistance to the corporatist pay laws.

Initially, the TUC said it would have nothing to do with the Pay Board. But G&MWU secretary David Basnett is saying that the only reason why he cannot say if he will take his members' claim to the Pay Board is:

● Because there has been no concrete invitation yet.

● Because the composition, powers and criteria of the Board for judging 'special cases' are not yet known.

Significantly, the TUC, which has advised that trade unionists should not serve on the Pay Board, has not ruled out a union taking its claim there.

This is how the deed is to be done.

Corporatist controls over pay will be introduced into Britain by reformist leaders giving the Pay Board acceptance and credibility through taking pay claims there for 'special case' pleading.

The noisy protests at the 'low level' of the settlements is just a cover.

And once the idea of the state regulation of wages is sold to the trade union movement, then there will be no looking back for the Tories.

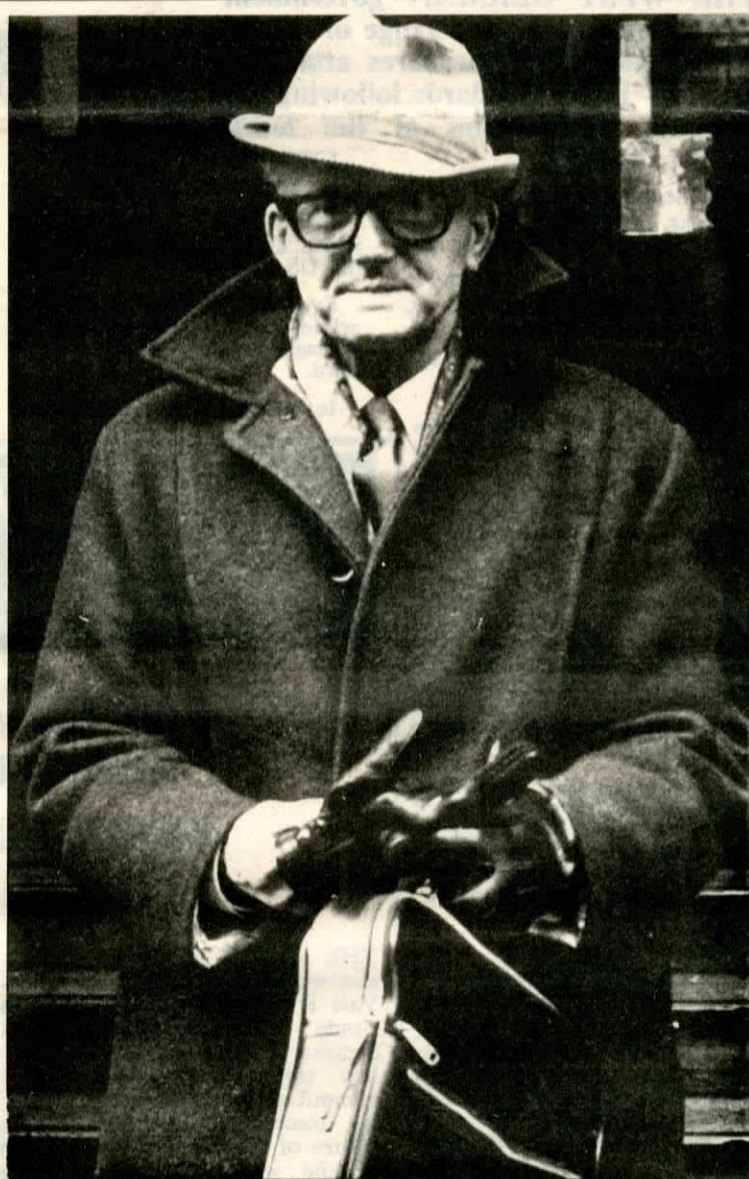
From wage control, it will be but a short step to direct wage-cutting 'in the national interest'.

Although the working mass is showing enormous resistance to the pay laws and a great willingness to go on strike to defeat them, the reformist and revisionist union leaders are already working to dissipate this strength in order to accommodate their unions to the requirements of the ruling class.

The G&MWU is making such puny efforts to organize the industrial action decided on by gasworkers and hospital staffs that demoralization is already a danger.

Because of the lack of fight by the leadership, and the lack of proper picketing and mass meetings etc., workers can quickly lose confidence in their own union's ability to win the fight.

Therefore, the argument starts to creep in that if industrial



Joseph Langston outside the NIRC yesterday.

action is doomed to failure anyway through lack of leadership, workers might just as well settle with the Pay Board without any bother.

The right wing in Ford's, Dagenham, took a trick in the engineshop vote because the Stalinists' policy of a one-day general strike to defeat the pay laws is just not credible.

Only one policy can now unite the working class to defeat the pay laws—a General Strike to create the industrial

and political conditions to make the Tory government resign.

The Tories cannot afford to give in. No single union on its own can breach the pay laws.

This is the only way forward for gasworkers, carworkers, hospital staffs, and all other sections of the working class.

The Pay Board is the trap set for the working class. If it snaps shut, the fight for the basic rights will have received a huge setback.

Brushmakers' Board?

THE National Society of Brushmakers wants to have a new pay award taken before the government's Pay Board. It could be the first reference before the new board.

The 12,000 workers in the British brushmaking industry have negotiated an increase of

between £2.40 and £2.80 giving men a guaranteed basic rate of £20.

The union's general secretary, Mr T. B. Thomas, has expressed the wish that the board approves the pay and extra holiday award.

Langston case: NIRC reserves judgement

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Langston is claiming an 'unfair industrial practice' by the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers and its works' representative, Mr Ken Walton, at the Chrysler plant at Ryton in Coventry.

Neither Mr Walton nor the AUEW were represented at yesterday's hearing. A counsel, briefed by the Treasury solicitor, appeared as amicus curiae (friend of the court) for Langston.

There was a short private hearing followed by a legal argument between Langston's lawyer and the legal representatives of Chrysler (UK) which is also named as a party in the dispute.

Langston has been suspended on full pay since he left the AUEW and fellow workers decided to strike if he was not sacked.

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STALINISTS ORGANIZE DEFEAT

WHAT WE THINK

EDWARD HEATH has laid it on the line. It's either bring down the Tory government or help them go on robbing workers' wage packets and smashing up the most basic trade union rights. This is the issue facing every trade unionist today.

But it is an issue which was not faced up to by the Ford workers' leaders on Sunday.

The Ford national convenors' committee called their shop stewards together in Coventry, brought 400 from every one of the car giant's 21 British factories, invited 100 representatives of other workers hit by the Tory pay laws and emerged, after three hours of discussion, with . . . a call to the TUC for a 'national day of action'.

Stewards who pointed out that this call is no threat to the TUC leadership, and moved an amendment demanding an indefinite General Strike to force the Tories out, were ignored.

Yet in the extremely dangerous situation facing the working-class movement today, protest action of the type the Ford convenors propose simply paves the way for collaboration with the pay laws by the unions' top brass.

This, of course, is why the call was so enthusiastically boosted by yesterday's 'Morning Star', which significantly failed to mention the call for

a General Strike. For, as the 'Star' was at some pains to point out editorially, the policy of the British Communist Party is not bringing down the Tories, but 'forcing the government to take notice' of the TUC's existing, bankrupt treacherous reformist policies.

Before going any further, it is worth putting on record what Sunday's resolution actually said.

Drafted by Sid Harraway, secretary of the Ford convenors' committee and a leading Communist Party member, it pledged the conference to seek backing in the trade union movement 'to call on the TUC on March 5 to implement a national day of action in opposition to the attack on free collective bargaining by the government's incomes policy'.

It went on to urge support for the March 31 conference of the Socialist-led Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions 'to develop the campaign against Phase Two'. Elsewhere it talked about the Tories' 'pay pause'.

The style reflects the politics. Faced with a militant and from minute to

minute more political discussion of how to get rid of the Tories, and how to impose the working class's will on an incoming Labour government, the Stalinists and their reformist allies moved to sow the maximum confusion and drown workers looking for a lead in a reformist swamp.

These are the politics of defeat.

Unable to prevent a large majority of Ford workers voting for all-out strike action from March 1 against the company's £2.40. Phase Two pay offer, the Stalinists seek to create the conditions for the strike's isolation and betrayal by the union chiefs. Then they lie about their actions the next day in the 'Star'.

Although a full text of Sunday's resolution was freely available to the paper within minutes of it being carried, its main article yesterday insisted on describing the call for a 'national day of action' as a call for a one-day General Strike. This lie was then supplemented by another: that the threat of a one-day strike by the TUC last year forced the Tories to 'climb down' over the Industrial Relations Act.

Said the 'Star' editorial: 'When the TUC decided last year to call a General Strike to secure the release of the imprisoned dockers, it was because large numbers of workers had already gone on strike—and the pressure was so strong that the government had to climb down.'

What a 'climb-down' that was! It produced the House of Lords' judgement, which made permanent the £55,000 fine on the Transport and General Workers' Union and paved the way for seizure of £61,000 from the engineers.

The release of the five dockers undoubtedly demonstrated the power of the working-class movement, but it was promptly betrayed by the union leaders' rush to co-operate with the National Industrial Relations Court.

It is absolute treachery for Harraway and the Stalinists to try and force workers to jump into the one-day strike.

When a speaker at Sunday's meeting warned that if Heath's anti-union plans succeeded, the consequence could be a worse dictatorship than that of Hitler, they agreed. But their policy is to hand workers bound and gagged to the union leaders, who propose to do exactly the same service for the Tories.

US unions canvassed for Nixon's trade war

PRESIDENT Nixon went before American TUC leaders yesterday to try and enlist their support in his trade war against Europe and Japan.

It was thought to be the first time a Republican President has gone to an executive council meeting of the AFL-CIO, the country's largest trade union confederation, which represents 5 million workers.

The meeting follows secret talks in Florida between the AFL-CIO leader George Meany and two of Nixon's closest aides, Treasury Secretary George Schultz and Secretary of State William Rogers.

The right-wing AFL-CIO leadership under Meany loudly advocates full-scale protectionism to export unemployment from the United States by imposing tariffs on foreign goods.

The new Trade Bill, now on its way through Congress, will give Nixon the power to impose any tariff he wants. The powerful Republican spokesman Wilbur Mills is calling for an immediate 15 per cent import surcharge.

Nixon wants the Bill through Congress as fast as possible to strengthen his hand for further blows against his capitalist rivals outside the US.

His aides have made it abundantly clear that the dollar devaluation is only the first step as far as America is concerned.

US policy now is the systematic disruption and overthrow of existing relationships between the powers.

At home he will require the support of the right-wing union chiefs to maintain his rigid policy of state control over wages at a time when wholesale food prices are rising 1.3 per cent a month.

Under the guise of fighting the trade war, these leaders are being led into even closer collaboration with the capitalist state, not only against the US overseas rivals, but also against the American working class.

Brandt's tax rises will hit working class

THE WEST GERMAN government has introduced a wide range of tax increases and other measures attacking workers' living standards following the enforced up-valuation of the mark against the dollar.

BY JOHN SPENCER

The Social-Democratic government of Willy Brandt has raised the tax on petrol by over 10 per cent in a move which will clearly lead to a steep increase in the cost of transport, food and manufactured goods.

Prices of these staple items in the working-class budget will leap up at a time when the increases are estimated already at 6.5 per cent a year—the highest rate in West Germany for more than 20 years.

To sow confusion, the Social-Democrats are predicting a fall in the pace of consumer price rises over the coming year. But this prediction is quite worthless and will, in any case, be nullified by the government's own actions.

The government is making great play with the abolition of certain tax deductible depreciation allowances and the imposition of a (very moderate) level of corporation tax and surtax.

Higher Prices

But it is obvious that far from soaking the rich, the cost of these extra taxes will immediately be passed on to the working class in the form of higher prices. This in turn must intensify the struggle for wages which the trade union bureaucracy is striving hard to betray.

The West German economy is now in an extremely precarious position. For the second time in less than 15 months the mark has been sharply up-valued against the dollar.

The intensity with which the Bundesbank struggled to keep the mark at its existing parity testifies to the fear of the West German ruling class over revaluation.

It will certainly create an extremely difficult position for the country's export industries,

which are heavily dependent on the US market.

Even the Brandt government acknowledges that it will cut the German trading surplus by a third.

In addition, the West German

employers face sharper competition within the Common Market from their traditional industrial rivals in Britain. The position of the German employing class is part of the rapidly-worsening crisis of the whole EEC bourgeoisie.

The Brandt government boasts that its latest measures are

strictly in line with the Common Market 'anti-inflation' policy adopted at the Paris summit of EEC heads of state last autumn.

This was nothing more than a class-war plan to foist the burden of the economic crisis of capitalism onto the backs of the workers of all the Common Market states.

PAGEANT DIARY

The Road to Workers Power

Ebbw Vale steel jobs and Pageant have common factor—get rid of the Tories

THE NEWS for the steelworkers at Ebbw Vale is grim. The Tory Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Walker has told the works' committee he can give no assurances for the future of the south end of the works.

In other words the 'rationalization' scheme announced two weeks ago will be put into effect.

This means the loss of some 4,500 jobs. The steel workers will hear this news at a mass meeting on Thursday.

It followed a 28-day ultimatum which the committee gave to Walker after the closure was first threatened.

But Walker, a former City financier belonging to the Slater Walker empire, is not frightened by ultimatums of this sort.

Nor will he be frightened by the one-day strike and lobby of parliament being proposed for March 14.

On Thursday the workers will also have a chance to hear the 'concrete proposals' of their MP, Michael Foot, who is making a special trip to speak to the meeting.

The fight for the right to work cannot be won by stunts and protests.

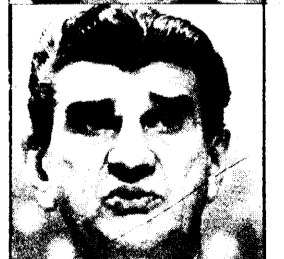
It now requires an all out campaign against the Tory government which is responsible for creating

record post-war levels of unemployment, feeding inflation, raising council rents, ending free wage bargaining and attacking the basic democratic rights of the working class.

The fight for these rights is at the centre of our Pageant work centred on Merthyr Tydfil.

That is why we have appealed throughout the working-class community in the valley to support our presentation of the Taff Vale incident, as the Welsh contribution to the 'Road to Workers' Power'.

● We have a public meeting at the AUEW Hall in Merthyr on Thursday night. Don't miss it.



Speakers at Sunday's meeting in Jarrow (top to bottom) Gerry Healy, Tom Marshall, Alan Lonstad and John West.

£82 London allowance cut to £15

Poverty-line teachers start pay strikes

INTERVIEW BY IAN YEATS

'MRS THATCHER has attacked one of the most sacred rights written into the law—the right of an employee to negotiate his own value.'

Mr John J. Bull was speaking for 2,000 of London's 36,000 teachers who this week begin their month-long strike campaign for an increase in the London allowance.

Today and tomorrow 45,000 children at 20, Havering schools will have a day off while their teachers demonstrate and lobby local officials for a rise in the allowance currently fixed at £118 a year.

Similar simultaneous actions are being mounted by teachers at up to 125 other outer London schools.

Before Phase One of the Tory state pay plan, the London boroughs' Education Association had offered the teachers an £82 increase.

Then Tory Education Secretary Mrs Margaret Thatcher stepped in and slashed the offer to £12, raising it after a barrage of teachers' protests to the princely sum of £15.

Her 'generosity' was rejected.

Teachers are particularly incensed that last May the same Mrs Thatcher signed an arbitration award promising the allowance would be raised on November 1. On November 3—three days before Phase One swung into action—the Education Secretary told borough councils not to pay.

Mr Bull is headmaster of Ayloff Primary School, which has 600 pupils. He is also secretary of Havering Association of the National Union of Teachers.

He told me: 'Since November the teaching profession has used every democratic means of persuasion

open to them to persuade the government to allow free negotiation to continue outside the freeze.

'Within a few weeks the government intends to put through parliament a Phase Two freeze bill and teachers are now left with only a few weeks in which to persuade them to leave the London allowance outside the Bill.

'Very reluctantly teachers are left with the only other free means to democratically dissuade the government from its misguided intent—the withdrawal of teachers' services.'

Feeling, especially among young teachers, is running high. 15,000 London teachers took part in a mass lobby of the Department of Education and Science in November. Havering sent one of the largest contingents—700.

Over 50 per cent of London's teachers are under 30 with salaries around £1,300 a year.

Probationary teachers straight out of college or university actually begin their careers at the government-defined poverty level—under £20 a week.

Many of these young teachers take 'digs' in London at rents ranging from £6 to £9 a week with tra-



Headmaster John J. Bull . . . Reluctantly teachers have to take action.

velling costs of £2 a week and sometimes more on top of that.

A large number have homes in other parts of Britain, but find it next to impossible to raise the fares for regular visits to their families.

Young married couples cannot afford a new car and face the prospect of not being able to afford even the deposit on a house over the next decade. All extravagance is ruled out—in some cases including even visits to the cinema.

'Some of the young wives, especially, cry over the money', said Mr Bull. Even an experienced

older teacher cannot expect to earn average gross pay of more than £1,750 a year.

One of the most serious consequences of low pay in high cost-of-living areas such as London or Birmingham in the provinces is the level of staff turnover.

Of Havering's 2,000 teachers, up to a third change over every year.

Said Mr Bull: 'The turnover is far too high to benefit children. The young ones, especially, need the security of the consistent presence of one person who knows them and their families in detail, not three or six different teachers.'

Staff turnover is one aspect of the problem created by low pay. The other is the absolute staff shortage.

Posts at either end of the teaching scale are often vacant because the pay is absolutely too low or because top men and women are not prepared to live on it.

The situation can be so bad that in a crisis a welfare assistant might be put in charge of a class as a substitute for a trained teacher.

There is often not time for the discussions which teachers and parents find it helpful to have about pupils.

Cases occur of parents visiting a school where their child's teacher has constantly to slip backwards and forwards to her unattended class to check that all is well.

With social problems in the community increasing as a result of 'broken homes' and 'crime', such talks are assuming greater significance.

A still more damaging effect of the teacher shortage is that class sizes stay high up at the 40 mark.

While teaching methods have switched from general average instruction to specific individual tuition, class sizes threaten to prevent the new techniques from being used or mean that they are put into practice imperfectly.

Increasingly unable to do their jobs and fighting to keep the wolf from the door, London teachers have decided on a militant campaign to raise their special London allowance.

Said Mr Bull: 'Heath has said there are going to be no exceptions to the freeze. But we shall try as hard as we can to win.'

Shipping charges will push up food prices

WORLD shipping charges will go up by an average of 10 per cent today because of the devaluation of the US dollar.

A spokesman for a leading shipping conference said yesterday: 'It is now impossible to accurately calculate the impact of the dollar devaluation.'

Nevertheless, he said, it had been decided to introduce 'a currency adjustment charge without delay'.

Members of the Association of West India Trans-Atlantic Steam Ship Lines will put up their charges by 10 per cent today while members of the European-South Pacific and Magellan Conference are also recommending a similar increase.

The India-Pakistan Conference has opted for an 11-per-cent increase while the New Zealand European Shipping Service has agreed on an 11-per-cent rise.

These hefty charges, which arise directly from the world monetary crisis, mean all-round increases in the cost of imported goods.

For British housewives, therefore, the future is certain to hold soaring increases in food prices.

Lock-out at Derby Birmid plant

ALL MANUAL workers at the Birmid Qualcast plant in Victory Road, Derby, were locked out by management yesterday.

The lock-out follows the imposition of 40-hour working by the union over a claim.

The shop stewards' committee met last night to discuss the situation and draw up a statement.

Many of the workers are of Asian origin and their main union is the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers.

Defence of basic rights a question of power

LEADERS of the trade union and labour movement were ganging up to stop the working class moving towards revolution, the first meeting in the north-east Pageant campaign was told on Sunday.

Gerry Healy, national secretary of the Socialist Labour League, warned an audience in Jarrow Civic Hall that talk of a General Strike against the government by miners' leader Joe Gormley was designed to frighten the 'lefts' in the trade union movement.

'The right-wing represented by Gormley is only getting ready to accept the government laws and join the corporate state.'

'Meanwhile the "lefts" in the trade union movement are seeking desperately to keep the working class from the revolutionary implications of the confrontation brewing in Britain,' he said.

Healy went on to say that the working class needed more than strikes, even a General

Strike, to defend its basic rights.

Heath had made himself a self-appointed arbiter of law and declared that the 20 million workers fighting to maintain their standard of living were 'criminals'.

'If the working class is going to fight it is not simply a question of calling a General Strike, therefore, but of taking the power.'

'This is what even Tory commentators admit.'

'The truth is we are not here to swap nice words with the working class. Workers have no choice but to fight and struggle and struggle means suffering,' he said.

The north-east had a history of struggle—from the earliest miners' unions, the Reforms Acts of parliament, and against unemployment and the murder of whole communities during the Depression.

Now the biggest task of all lay ahead.

The Tories were not

just challenging this or that particular right, but were determined to smash all the workers' historic gains and reduce them to the rabble they were before trade unions.

'This brings me to the Pageant of workers' rights.'

'This is not a play, neither is it acting; it is part of the training for the revolutionary struggles which lie right ahead.'

'Every worker knows that to do a job needs a training. The Pageant is part of the training to develop revolutionaries and a revolutionary party.'

'I appeal to you all to come forward and join us in this historic task.'

Tom Marshall, one of the organizers of the north-east campaign, which centres round the reconstruction of the early miners' struggles in the north-east, said that the whole analysis of the League was based on the economic crisis. 'This crisis is driving

forward the Tory government to attack all the basic rights of the working class.

'We say these rights must be defended now by building a revolutionary leadership.'

'As part of this we are presenting episodes from the 1830s which show the bitter struggle and sacrifice the miners made to gain the most elementary rights for their class.'

Allan Loustad, YS National Committee member, said that youth had a vital role to play in defence of basic rights.

'The YS unites all sections of youth in this fight—this includes students, unemployed workers left to rot on the dole and housewives.'

John West, a boiler-makers' shop steward from Tyneside, spoke to the meeting in a personal capacity.

'There is no leadership whatsoever for the working class from the top in the TUC and the Labour Party,' he said.

'This is the most vital problem facing the working class now.'

FROM STEPHEN JOHNS

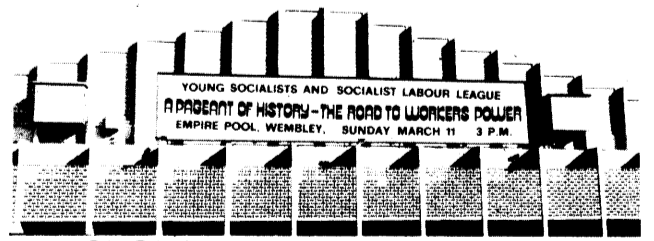
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DEFEND ALL DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

Defend trade unionism and basic living standards

Unite in action to make this Tory government resign

The road to power is through the building of the revolutionary party



SUNDAY MARCH 11th 3pm

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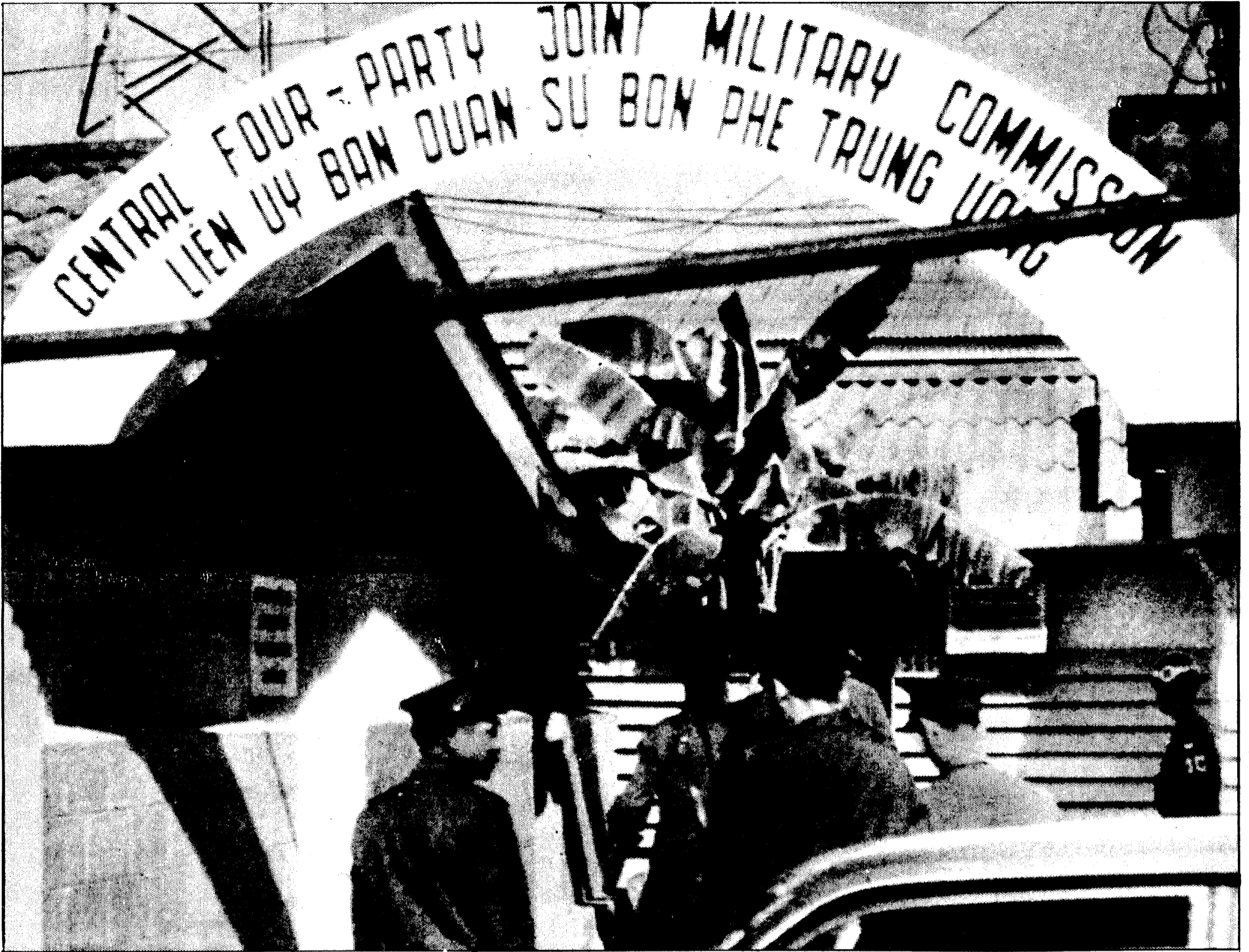
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THERE IS NO PEACE IN VIETNAM

A statement by the International Committee of the Fourth International

The International Committee of the Fourth International salutes the heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants in their 26th year of revolutionary struggle.

Faced with the most barbarous repression of imperialism and the joint betrayals of Chinese and Soviet Stalinism, who have deprived them of the necessary weaponry and political help, the Hanoi and National Liberation Front regimes have been forced to a compromise.

This is the meaning of the ceasefire agreement signed on January 27.

While US imperialism is determined to impose a 'peace' which threatens all previous conquests of the Indo-Chinese people, nevertheless the terms of the Paris agreement show that none of the major problems facing the US occupiers and their Saigon lackeys have been solved.

The Paris agreement has not ended the war, but has changed the form which the civil war will take. If US imperialism is too weak to regain control of the south, the NLF and Hanoi conversely have been deprived of the modern armaments necessary to conquer

and decisively defeat the Saigon armies and the US air force.

In defining this relation of forces the agreement reveals the insoluble contradictions of the present situation in Vietnam and makes the continuation of civil war inevitable.

On the one hand the agreement implicitly recognizes the existence of 140,000 North Vietnamese troops and does not make their withdrawal a pre-condition for a ceasefire.

It explicitly underwrites the decision of the US government to withdraw its troops.

But these decisions are qualified and virtually annulled by contradicting clauses which make the operation of a 'cease fire' an impossible task.

Article Three, for example, states that the 'modalities' for the withdrawal of US and allied troops shall be determined by the four-party joint military commission—but this commission, the Agreement stipulates 'shall operate in accordance with the principle of consultations and unanimity'. Moreover, the commission is hopefully expected to complete its job in 60 days.

Article Three (b) stipulates that a two-party joint military commission of the 'two South Vietnamese parties shall determine the areas controlled by each party and the modalities

of stationing'.

Far from the commission being able to achieve even a minimum of agreement it has instead broken down because of continuous fighting by the NLF for control of the countryside.

The US imperialists are cynically hoping to woo, if not split, the Hanoi leaders with prospects of economic aid to rebuild the shattered country and with admission into the United Nations. Dr Henry Kissinger's latest visit to Peking is obviously intended to get Peking recognition for Nixon's policy of two Vietnams at the summit conference which is to take place soon.

Although the agreement recognizes two Vietnams by depicting as 'sacred and inalienable' the South Vietnamese people's 'right to self-determination', this scheme is being continually undermined by the civil war waged in the south and the incessant flow of men and materials down the Ho Chi Minh trail.

The Thieu puppet regime, despite the concessions of the NLF and Hanoi and the technical superiority of its army and air force, has lost the strategic initiative in the civil war. Hated by the peasantry and harassed by the guerrillas the Saigon regime is now

rapidly succumbing to the dual pressures of inflation and corruption.

Thieu's control of Saigon and the provincial capitals is proving extremely tenuous since the NLF control all the district towns, the frontier regions and the strategically vital areas of the central highlands and the Mekong delta.

Thieu's hold over the cities is conditioned not so much on US aid, but by the political neutrality of the working class for whom the bourgeois character of the NLF programme has little to offer.

In the Tet offensive and again in the Spring offensive of 1972, the urban workers did not respond in a big way to NLF appeals, mainly because the PRG programme promises to respect private property and does not include nationalization proposals.

But the massive inflation of food prices and imported necessities in the towns and the dollar devaluation will undoubtedly bring the working class into action against Thieu and create serious problems for the NLF leadership and the Provisional Government.

Thieu's reactionary laws on the Press and the unions and his electoral laws which ensure a one-party dictatorship are guaranteed to intensify popular hatred of the regime and trans-

form any election campaign into a civil war.

So long as the land remains in the hands of absentee landowners and the rural debt is not abolished, so long too will the civil war continue. No 'peace' agreement, no 'cease fire' can eliminate this. As the bourgeois correspondent of the 'Daily Telegraph' reported from Saigon on February 12:

'Neither the Paris conference nor the International Commission of Control and Stability appears able to cause a serious reduction in the number of incidents which occur every day. Scores are undoubtedly initiated by the local Vietcong or North Vietnamese leaders on the spot, but others by the South Vietnamese army.'

These examples suffice to show the unviable and utterly reactionary nature of the Paris agreement. It is also plain that the agreement will not resolve the vexed question of 600,000 political prisoners and that, in fact, the concentration camps and notorious penal settlements such as Poulo Condor will remain monumental evidence of the complicity of world Stalinism in this betrayal of the colonial peoples.

From the beginning, the Vietnamese revolution has been a serious embarrassment to these bureaucracies. Unable

to oppose openly the Vietnamese struggle, Stalinism has all along tried to exploit this struggle in order to pressurize French and, now, US imperialism to recognize the *status quo* in Europe and underwrite 'peaceful co-existence' between Stalinism and imperialism.

Thus in the mid-1950s the Vietminh were robbed of the fruits of the historic victory at Dien Bien Phu by Peking and Moscow in order that French imperialism might be persuaded to oppose the remilitarization of Germany. This betrayal consummated at Geneva and hailed by the Stalinists and Pabliste revisionists as a 'great victory' did not bring peace, but laid the basis for the present civil war.

Soviet and Chinese Stalinism's attitude to the Vietnam Revolution, which is a compound of bureaucratic knee-crooking before imperialism and a nationalist and reformist hatred of world revolution, has been highly valued by US imperialist observers.

No greater indictment of Moscow-Peking policy can be found than the succinct appreciation of the Geneva (1954) Agreement by the US Presidential advisers contained in the Pentagon Papers:

'While it is fair to state that the immediate implications of the Accords did not reflect (even according to CIA reports) Vietminh strength and control in Vietnam at the time of the conference, it is equally important to understand why. Vietminh ambitions were thwarted, not so much by western resistance or treachery, as by Sino-Soviet pressures on them to co-operate... Together and separately, Moscow and Peking pressed concessions on the Vietminh.

'Invariably, the two principal communist delegates, Chou En-lai and Molotov, played major roles in breaking deadlocks with conciliatory initiatives...

'Peaceful co-existence' was the hall-mark of their diplomacy. The Chinese, in particular, were interested in border security, buffers, preventing the formation of US alliance system with bases in the region, and reconstruction at home.

'The two powers did not hesitate in asserting the paramountcy of their interests over those of the Vietminh.' (Our emphasis).

So it was in 1954 so it is today!

The alarm and hatred of the Stalinist bureaucracies toward the Vietnam struggle today is directly related to the fact that this struggle takes place in the context of the greatest monetary crisis in capitalism's history and an unprecedented upsurge of class struggle in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas.

A decisive victory for the NLF would act as a tremendous stimulant to the struggle in west Europe and within the USSR and eastern Europe as well.

Such a victory would severely intensify the crisis of Stalinism.

Another contributing factor towards this policy is the growing agricultural crisis in the USSR, which results from the bureaucratic methods of the Soviet leaders and their gross incompetence in managing agriculture.

Unable to feed the working class and fearful of another series of revolts like those which unseated Khrushchev, the Soviet leaders have decided to sacrifice the Vietnamese revolution in exchange for US grain.

For these reasons the Soviet leaders deliberately refused to supply the latest missiles to the North Vietnamese and entertained Nixon while Hanoi and Haiphong were devastated.

While previous Presidents refused to sanction the mining of the northern ports for fear of Soviet and Chinese retaliation Nixon could—and did—pursue a total blockade be-



Left: North Vietnamese at the joint military commission headquarters which are supposed to operate 'in accordance with the principle of consultations and unanimity.' Above: Nixon and US troops. A B52 bomber, downed by the Vietnamese despite the lack of modern weaponry.

cause both bureaucracies had indicated their compliance with his war aims.

Outside of Vietnam Stalinism has supplemented these betrayals by converting the defence of Vietnam into a pacifist-protest exercise designed to strengthen the domination of 'left' bureaucrats and middle-class politicians and aimed against the development of revolutionary leadership.

In Britain the high point of this betrayal was the refusal of the British Communist Party leaders to campaign against Wilson's visit to Washington in 1969 and their recent campaign to bring pressure on Nixon to sign the agreements.

In the US, Stalinist participation in the anti-war movement was designed to tie the anti-war movement to the Democratic Party and turn the movement into a pawn in the presidential election.

The American CP did not hesitate to split the anti-war movement in 1970 in order to support 'progressive' capitalist politicians. In these manoeuvres they were aided by the unprincipled intervention of the revisionists who substituted their own brand of 'single-issue non-exclusionary' reformism for that of the Stalinists.

The International Committee of the Fourth International alone preserved and developed the Leninist theory of defeatism by openly attacking the bogus 'united fronts' of the revisionists and Stalinists and by making the Vietnam Revolution a central issue in the programme to build a revolutionary party.

The absolute correctness of the IC and Socialist Labour League's break with the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign on the role of international Stalinism and the Vietnam Revolution in 1966 and our refusal to participate in the October 27, 1968, fraud is now amply confirmed by the events leading to the Paris treaty.

The defence of the Viet-

namese Revolution means, first of all, a complete rejection of petty-bourgeois, pacifist opposition to the war, which confines the anti-imperialist struggle to a series of adventurist and propagandist gestures calculated to disarm the working-class politically and generate the illusion that wars can be ended by pressure on capitalist statesmen.

Underlying such an opposition is the reformist assumption that wars are accidents of the capitalist system and that the system can exist without militarism and war.

This reformist-pacifist perspective of the revisionists and Stalinists confuses the vanguard of the working class on the inevitability of revolutionary struggles between the working class and the capitalist state and, more importantly, of the necessity to smash and not to reform the apparatus of capitalist coercion and rule by the actions of the working class led by the revolutionary party.

As Lenin stated at the inception of World War I:

'Under capitalism, particularly in its imperialist stage, wars are unavoidable.'

The task of revolutionaries, therefore, is to show, in theory and practice, the inescapable necessity to combine the struggle against imperialist war with the struggle for state power. To do this is to build the Marxist party without which the working class cannot be liberated.

All the activities of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, the Indo-China Solidarity Front, the Student Mobilization Committee, the revisionist Young Socialist Alliance and the various ad hoc organizations set up in the USA under Stalinist and revisionist patronage cogently reveal that 'a propaganda of peace at the present time, if not accompanied by a call to revolutionary mass actions, is only capable of spreading illusions, of demoralizing the proletariat

by imbibing it with confidence in the humanitarianism of the bourgeoisie, and of making it a plaything in the hands of secret diplomacy of the belligerent countries.' (Lenin.)

In this sense the differences between the US Stalinists and the US revisionists of the Socialist Workers' Party were completely factitious.

While the CP called on Nixon to 'Sign Now!', the SWP-YSA called on Nixon to withdraw his troops unconditionally.

Both groups based their policies on the reformist illusion that 'public opinion' and the clamour for 'peace' would end imperialist oppression in Indo-China. Neither group campaigned for the indispensable necessity to place no political confidence in the Nixon regime and to break the US working-class decisively from the two-party system by forming an independent Labour Party, with a socialist programme, based on the trade unions.

Their faith in the Nixon regime is but the reverse side of a deep middle-class scepticism about the European and US working class.

Secondly, no defence of the Vietnamese Revolution is possible without an implacable struggle to expose the role of Stalinism in this war and to equip the vanguard of the working class with a correct and comprehensive understanding of the counter-revolutionary nature of Stalinism.

As the monetary and economic crisis of imperialism worsens and as the capitalist powers whip up a hysteria of economic nationalism to justify their corporatist measures, the Stalinist bureaucracies in western Europe are already openly collaborating with the monopolist plans to strait-jacket the working class.

While the European ruling classes, particularly in France and Italy, integrate their plans for civil war through the

mechanism of the Common Market, the Stalinist leaders prostrate themselves before the decaying organs of bourgeois democracy and swear to uphold the most reactionary constitutions in post-war Europe.

The same doctrine of 'peaceful co-existence' which permitted untold death and devastation in Indo-China and created the basis for a barbaric protraction of the war, means, today, in Europe, the preparation of the greatest and bloodiest defeats of the European working class by capitalist reaction.

In Britain, too, Stalinism consciously opposes every attempt to force the Tories to resign and covers up for the corporatist policies of the trade union bureaucracy and its acquiescence to the Treaty of Rome.

In Greece, Stalinism has plumbed new depths of treachery by its open support of the monarchy and its recognition of a monarchical constitution.

The International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) warns the working class that no step forward is possible in Europe or Asia without the destruction of Stalinism and this struggle cannot and will not be conducted by the centrist movements like Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI), Lutte Ouvrière, International Socialism (IS), International Marxist Group (IMG) and the Ligue Communiste, but only through the construction of ICFI sections in every European state.

The Vietnamese Revolution—despite the temporary setbacks—will prove greater than the bureaucratic strait-jacket. But the ultimate victory of the Indo-Chinese people depends, more than ever, upon the struggle of European and US workers to build an alternative leadership to Stalinism and reformism and to smash imperialism.

February 16, 1973

PRICES: BEHIND THE MARKET FORCES

BY STEPHEN JOHNS—PART TWO

The Tories like to portray the food industry as a competitive jungle where prices glide up and down propelled by mysterious market forces over which manufacturers have no control.

But there is no jungle and certainly no mysterious market forces. The entire industry from farm to shop is dominated by huge monopolies who have abolished price competition in favour of massive advertising campaigns and promotion gimmicks.

Supermarkets may give the impression of bewildering variety. But beneath the gay wrapping food is becoming standardized and real choice ever more restricted.

The multitude of brand names does not mean more competition—the top selling commodities are owned by a tiny handful of food giants.

Monopoly is universal. Three firms control 70 per cent of the milk product; four firms own 78 per cent of the bread market; three firms 60 per cent of cakes; two 62 per cent of biscuits; two 75 per cent of ice cream; three 72 per cent of chocolate; two 72 per cent of jam; three 100 per cent of sugar; two 100 per cent of margarine; three 72 per cent of tea; three 90 per cent of all frozen foods; two 55 per cent of poultry; three 70 per cent of baked beans; one 60 per cent of soup; one 60 per cent of all pet foods—and so on.

Often the same firm monopolizes several fields. Hence Cadbury Schweppes dominates in cakes, chocolate and tea, Heinz in beans, soup and sauce and Unilever in margarine, detergents and frozen foods.

In some cases the food manufacturers have extended the empires forward into the retail. For example, Associated British Foods, the baking monolith owned by the Canadian Garfield Weston family, runs Fine Fare, the multiple grocery chain, with an annual turnover of £147m.

In other cases the retail giants have reached backwards—the fast rising Cavenhams group, now the largest supermarket chain has the major share of the slimming breads market.

Even the farmers are caught in the monopolist net. In the cash crop sector concentration is high.

In 1969, 18.8 per cent of farmers grew 86.6 per cent of the pea crop and 3.5 per cent grew 37.7 per cent.

Over 88.4 per cent of the pea crop, 96.4 per cent of the French bean crop and 64.4 per cent of the broad bean crop went straight into the manufacturers' factories.

Two or three manufacturers dominate these fields, with

Unilever, which owns Batchelor's; and Bird's Eye, far and away the largest.

The economic relationship between the manufacturer and the farmer was described in a special paper on the British vegetable market published in May 1970 by W. L. Hinton of the Land Economics Department of Cambridge University.

'The process for canning and freezing is well established,' he wrote. 'For peas and beans (and to an extent for carrots) the processor [manufacturer] controls the production of the crop. Contracts are made and the price is known before the planting . . . a few groups of farmers have freezing facilities, but the big three Bird's Eye, Imperial Tobacco [Ross and Smedleys the backbone of IMPs' Imperial Foods] and Findus dominate the field.'

'The carrot crop is different. Over 80,000ha and the 120,000ha are under the control of grower-merchants who have contracts with the processors in advance and often informal agreements with the farmers.'

'It is common for the merchant to take over the carrot land from the farmer for ploughing, but wherever a merchant operates he does the harvesting. The carrot merchant supplies most of the biggest market outlets, the open market as well, and most of the markets for canning.'

Clearly the farmer in Britain's richest cash-crop areas is little more than an employee of the big firms. They supply the seed, fix the price (in the case of Unilever supply all the animal feedstuffs) and guarantee to buy his whole crop. He can, of course, choose not to co-operate, but the choice is Hobson's choice—grow our peas or go bankrupt.

The scramble for monopoly, of course, is a general law of capitalist society. Firms must expand and expand to bear the weight of enormous promotion expenditures to wipe out potential competition and to secure markets and supplies.

With size comes the power of the monarch

In a 1963 interview Lord Cole, then the head of Unilever listed the decisions taken at the top—'Should we expand output of this product? Should we shut this place down here? Should we build a new plant there? Should we try to buy this company? Should we move into competition with that company? Move into this market or out of that market? With size comes the power of the absolute monarch.'

It is beyond the scope of these articles to cover the whole of the food industry. But there are only minor differences in character between



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one sector and another. One example—bread—will give a fairly accurate picture of the pattern of ownership and control that pervades the whole field of food.

The bread and baking industry is a classic case of big monopolies racing forward into the market to secure outlets for their supplies.

At the end of the war the big millers were in a comfortable and commanding position, facing thousands of bakeries—some attached to a small shop. But in the 1950s, Garfield Weston, the Canadian food millionaire, invaded and began buying up bakeries and outlets all over the country.

The British millers panicked and joined in the fight for secure markets. They merged and built up their own baking

empire. Today the once-fragmented industry is highly monopolized with the big three—Associated British Foods (Westons), Ranks Hovis McDougall and Spillers—controlling 70 per cent of all milling and baking. The result has been generally a standardization as the giants cut costs and wiped out variety.

Far from promoting competition, variety and improvement, capitalist trends in the bread industry have meant the reverse. We have dearer bread in the larder and more millions in the monopolies' bank accounts. The profit from bread is staggering, as these examples show.

Associated British Foods (Sunblest, Tiger, Ryvita, etc.) is controlled by the Weston family through several trusts

and companies, but chiefly George Weston Holdings, which owns 74 per cent of ABF shares.

In volume ABF has 24 per cent of all British bread sales. The UK sector of the company operates 21 mills; Allied Bakeries with 52 bakeries and 2,388 shops, Weston Foods, which runs eight biscuit and crisp factories, and eight tea and coffee factories. The UK grocery sector is based on Fine Fare and its subsidiaries and runs 503 supermarkets, 577 shops, a department store and nine manufacturing units. In addition to Food Securities Group operates 56 warehouses and seven factories.

The trading profits (before tax and directors' fees) at £44m in 1972 are very high. Dividends to shareholders have

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Above: A selection from the shopping basket; who produced it and what it all costs. Scott's Porage Oats. Ranks Hovis McDougall; Smedley's Tinned Carrots, Imperial Tobacco; Roses Lime Juice Cordial, Cadbury Schweppes; Hartley's Cherry Jam, Cadbury Schweppes; Persil, Unilever; Kit e Kat, Mars (US firm); Smash Instant Potatoes, Cadbury Schweppes; Ryvita, Associated British Foods; Pedigree Chum, Mars; Brooke Bond Tea, J. Lyons; Ajax, Proctor

and Gable; HP Tomato Ketchup, Imperial Tobacco; Hovis, Ranks Hovis McDougall; Walls Pork Sausages, Unilever; Flora Margarine, Unilever; Stork Margarine, Unilever; Birds Eye Frozen Sprouts, Unilever; Birds Eye Beefburgers, Unilever; McVities Digestive Biscuits, United Biscuits; Palmolive Soap, Unilever; Palmolive Brushless Shaving Cream, Unilever; Total Cost February 12, 1973 £2.20. Bought at Fine Fare Supermarket (Associated British Foods).

income to around £40,000—more than the average Spiller worker earns in 30 years.

Shareholders have found Spillers a very profitable investment. One hundred shares bought ten years ago would have cost £62, but are now worth £73. Dividends over the period would have been £39 (a 64 per cent profit plus a 17 per cent capital gain).

These profits are not exceptional in the food industry. In other sectors of manufacturing, monopoly is even more concentrated and returns are greater. All the major companies have increased sales and profits over the last two years.

These are facts the Tories never reveal. This is deliberate. If information like this was widely published the public outcry over price rises to safeguard profit margins would clearly be enormous.

In the retail and wholesale sectors the trend has also been towards a greater concentration of power in few hands. Here, too, record profits are made.

The rise of the supermarket has dealt a death-blow to the corner grocer. Now he is faced with the prospect of joining one of the two main symbol groups which dominate the smaller shop sector—MACE or Spar-Vivo. Membership is slightly self-defeating, since the truly independent grocer must relinquish his powers over ordering and sales inside a group.

The supermarket also had a dramatic effect on wholesaling. The smaller wholesalers were forced to merge to protect themselves on the one hand against the food giants and on the other against the retail chains which could buy direct from the supplier.

As a result, wholesaling has also become monopolistic. One survey in 1970 found that 300 wholesaling points controlled 60 per cent of the grocery trade. The five largest multiples controlled another 25 per cent and the symbol groups another 10 per cent.

Monopoly in wholesaling has a strong geographical element. If those 300 outlets are spread across the country, the small retailer in any one area would be found to have very limited choice as to where to obtain his supplies.

The decline of the small grocer can be seen from figures which show that in 1950 he traded 40 per cent of all grocery turnover whereas his total in 1971 has slumped to 20 per cent. In that year the symbols dealt with 22 per cent, the supermarkets 43 per cent and the Co-op 15 per cent.

One large myth about the supermarket is that it slashes prices. But this is only partially true.

Supermarket bills are smaller than bills from corner shops. But the price reductions are not nearly as great as they could be if the chains passed on the full economic benefits of large-scale retailing to the consumer. There are the 'lost leaders'—items cut specially to lure the housewife into the shop—but much of the reduced retailing costs is raked back in higher profits.

Now a new trend is emerging. The first flush of the retail revolution is over. Supermarkets are settling down to a more comfortable life and there is less pressure to reduce prices. Some manufacturers report they are being asked by supermarket chains to increase the recommended price.

Excluding the Co-op, the retail empires can be judged by these turnover figures for 1971. Allied Suppliers (Maypoles, Home and Colonial, Liptons, etc. sold last year by Unilever to Cavenhams, controlled by the financier Jimmy Goldsmith) £269m; Tesco £259m; Sainsbury £221m; Spar £175m; Mace £150m; Fine Fare £147m; International Tea

£109m; Moores (Cavenhams again) £51m; Mac Fisheries (Unilever) £40m.

The housewives have less and less choice. The groups get a greater and greater grip of the High street and the small shops, the specialist shops (pork butchers, bakers and so on) go to the wall. In 1971, 69 per cent of housewives shopped at stores owned by only five of the biggest chains. The proportion now is almost certain to be even higher.

Profits, again, are very substantial. Return on capital in the retail trade is even greater than in manufacturing.

Cavenhams, for example, made profits of £11.6m in the 32 weeks to November last year. This was more than double returns for the whole of 1971. The extra money came from the vast retail empire built up at break-neck speed by Jimmy Goldsmith, a financier from the Slater Walker stable who owns a Paris-based finance company called Finance Occidental.

Allied suppliers, the biggest fish of all

Finance Occidental bought Cavenhams—an ailing Midlands grocery group—and used it as a shell for future operations. Goldsmith added Moores Stores in a £1m cash and shares deal, but sold Moore's biscuit interests to the monopoly United Biscuits for £4m. Then Goldsmith swallowed the biggest fish of all—Allied Suppliers, the Unilever retail empire bought in January 1971.

Goldsmith did a revaluation to bolster the balance-sheet by millions and went into partnership with the Southland Corporation, the biggest American store group, which got a share of his newsagents, tobacconists and Moores stores (millions more in the kitty).

The breathless pace of Goldsmith's operations exudes from the latest Cavenhams report. Goldsmith said the company's tasks fell into four categories.

(1) Integrate recently-acquired companies so as to... organize benefits. (2) Lay down the foundations for maintaining substantial organic growth throughout the group as a whole. (3) Dispose of all assets and activities that are incompatible with these objectives. (4) Re-invest the total cash funds that we will receive in the course of the current year in a way that will contribute to a major phase of development.'

The search is for profit, always more profit. The fact that Cavenhams provides the country's major outlet for food by which people live is secondary.

The aim of this article has been to show the highly-monopolistic nature of the food industry. A conclusion that can almost immediately be drawn is that a relatively small number of individuals who lead the major food combines do have the power to control prices. We repeat, there are no hidden, unstoppable market forces that guide the price of food.

Another obvious conclusion is that monopoly in food has unlocked the door to vast wealth for a tiny minority. The whining by food companies about pressure on margins is a charade. Profit in food is very substantial and keeps on going up.

There is, however, a much more serious aspect of monopoly. The development in food of mammoth combines has led to the elimination of price competition and a freak development of promotion and advertising.

Expenditures in these fields are almost entirely parasitic, adding little value to the commodity in question. We examine the human waste cause by monopoly in food in tomorrow's article.

CONTINUED TOMORROW

risen from 25 per cent to 39 per cent in the nine years to 1972. One thousand shares bought in 1962 would have cost £575, last year they were worth £805, a capital gain of 40 per cent and a good hedge against inflation.

£25,000 pay as chairman is just pocket money

The directors of the group are well rewarded. In 1971-1972 they got £81,000 between them and the chairman, Garry H. Weston, got £25,000.

But the main benefactors of the bonanza have been the Weston family which raked in the bulk of the £6.25m dividends. Garry's £25,000 pay as chairman will just be his pocket money—next time you

eat a slice of Sunblest, think of him. Recently Ranks Hovis McDougall complained about the high price of wheat. The firm asked the Tories to allow a 1.5p increase on the loaf. If not, it said, profits would suffer. Well RHM's returns could certainly stand quite a battering. In 1971 there was a trading profit of £32m and last year's was the largest ever.

RHM (Mother's Pride, Nimble, Scotts Porage Oats, Bisto, McDougall's flour, Hovis, Cerebos salt, etc. is the largest milling and baking combine in the land, with 25 per cent of all bread sales.

Apart from giving thousands of pounds to right-wing outfits like Aims of Industry and the red-hunters in the Economic League, RHM paid chair-

man Joseph Rank £41,000 in 1970-1971. During the same year the 61,000 employees got an average of £1,105.

A hundred shares were worth £155 ten years ago. Last year they were valued at £185, a capital gain of 32 per cent.

Spillers (Wonderloaf, Dinkum toasting bread, Tyne-Brand canned meats, etc. is the third big group, with 20 per cent of the market.

It recently merged its milling and baking interests with J. Lyons and the Co-operative Wholesale Society but owns 75 per cent of the merged combine.

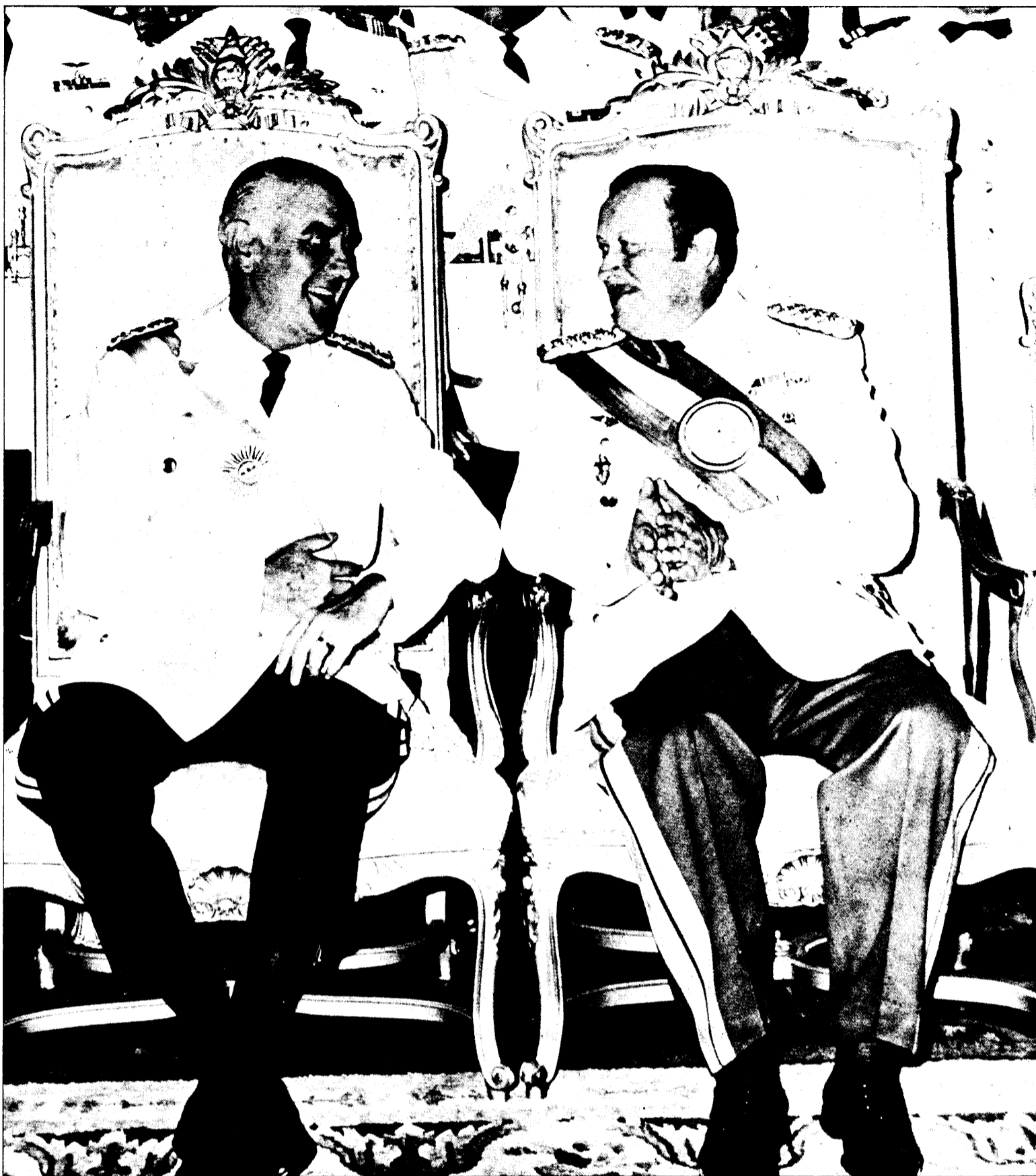
In 1971-1972, trading profit rose 30 per cent to £15.2m. The chairman, W. M. Vernon gets £27,500 a year, but dividends from his 370,000 ordinary shares bumped his total

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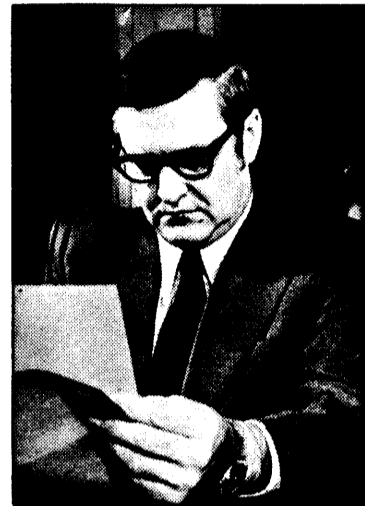
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But in July 1971, when the weekly 'El Radical' attempted to publish the names of the military chiefs behind the smuggling of heroin from Paraguay to the United States, the edition was seized by the police and Chief of Police General Brites threatened editor Juan Carlos Zaldiver with death if he tried such a thing again.

But in June last year Washington columnist Jack Anderson revealed the contents of a CIA report which proved that Stroessner granted 'concessions' on heroin smuggling to military leaders.



Left: Stroessner of Paraguay with Lanusse (left) of Argentina. Above: Jack Anderson, Washington columnist.

The men named were General Andres Rodriguez, General Patricio Colman, General German Martinez Jara and Rear-Admiral Hugo Gonzalez.

All the foreign Press agencies in Paraguay are controlled by men who are either high-ranking Colorados or personal friends of President Stroessner. Reuter has N. Rojas, EFE has Atilio Fernandez, France Press has Caceres Almada.

When information prejudicial to the government is sent by telex, the state communications organization (ANTELCO) refuses to transmit it.

The legal system is also controlled by Colorados. The head of the Supreme Court, Dr Morales, and three of its six members are active leaders of the Colorado Party.

Only two political prisoners in Paraguay have ever been tried. But even in these cases the veneer of justice was thin. Antonio Maidana was sentenced to two years, nine months in 1958, and Alfredo Alcorta got 12 months in the same year.

Both are still in jail, nearly 15 years later.

Decisions on the fate of prisoners rest entirely on Stroessner, since citizens can be retained on his personal order when a 'state of emergency' is in force.

A state of emergency has been in force ever since Stroessner came to power in 1954.

On September 10, 1970, the 'Law for the Defence of the Public Peace and Liberty of Persons' was passed.

Article 4 of this law states: 'Whoever publicly preaches hate between Paraguayans or the destruction of social classes will be sentenced to one to six years imprisonment.'

Article 5 says: 'Those who form an illegal organization of three or more members' will get three to six years, and leaders four to eight years.

Article 6 gives those who 'slander or falsely accuse' the President, the executive or the Supreme Court, three to six years.

Article 7 provides for one to four years for 'showing contempt for any of the symbols of the Republic'.

Article 8: Any contact with 'any Communist Party or organization', including letting rooms to them, results in sentences of up to five years.

Articles 9-15 provide for savage penalties for kidnapping.

Article 16 gives up to four years in addition to any other penalty for 'inciting mobs'.

CONTINUED TOMORROW

THE US CATTLE RANCH

Part two of a series on Paraguay. By Jack Gale.

In 1959, following the Cuban Revolution, Oscar Credyt, secretary of the Partido Comunista Paraguaya (PCP) hastily organized a guerrilla movement called Frente Unida de Liberacion Nacional (FULNA).

This led to a series of disasters—52 guerrillas of the Ytororo brigade who crossed from Argentina were all killed. The Paraguayan authorities knew exactly when and where they were crossing.

A peasant guerrilla group called Columna Mariscal Lopez which occupied the town of Eusebio Ayala in 1960, was infiltrated by agents and destroyed. In June 1963 a leading PCP member, Wilfredo Alvarez, was betrayed to the police and killed.

In 1967 Credyt was expelled from the PCP and accused of being a traitor. Since then the party has kept strictly to the Moscow line.

In 1968 Credyt declared for Peking and established a pro-Chinese Communist Party in Montevideo.

President Stroessner is regarded as the United States best friend in south America and is certainly its most

vociferous anti-communist ally.

Up to 1970, Paraguay, which is strategically situated in the middle of the continent, had received over \$146m from the USA. In 1971 some \$400,000 was sent in military aid alone. Over 1,000 Paraguayan military personnel have been trained in the US and Canal Zone military schools.

Stroessner has signed the Selden Resolution which authorizes unilateral intervention by US troops into Paraguay if American interests are endangered 'in a confrontation with communism'. US embassy and AID officials work in close conjunction with the Paraguayan police.

During his visit to Washington in March 1968, Stroessner offered to send Paraguayan troops to Vietnam. During this visit he was quoted in the US Press as saying that he considered the US ambassador to be a member of his cabinet.

And Paraguay was the first country to send support troops to back the US invasion of the Dominican Republic.

The main US private investment in Paraguay is in cattle ranching for export. In addition, in 1970, two US oil companies signed an agreement with the Paraguayan government which granted them full exploration and exploitation rights for oil in the northern part of the

Chaco region, with a government royalty on production of only 17 per cent, one of the lowest in the world.

The first trade union in Paraguay was founded in 1896 and the first strike took place in 1936. In August, 1958, the Confederacion Paraguaya de Trabajadores (CPT) called a General Strike following Stroessner's refusal to allow a 29-per-cent wage increase. The strike and the union organization were smashed.

A new CPT executive committee was appointed by the government and the organization has been a tool of the Stroessner regime ever since.

Despite this the CPT is affiliated to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and in 1971 the Instituto Americano para el desarrollo del sindicalismo (American Institute for the Development of Trade Unionism), an AFL-CIO-sponsored organization in Latin America, sent Jesus Artigas to work with the CPT in Paraguay in the field of trade union 'education'.

The Confederacion Cristiana de Trabajadores (CCT), a Christian trade union organization formed in 1962, has a 3,000 membership. It is denied legal status and its leaders are frequently arrested and beaten up.

There is also a co-operative movement among small farmers, originally begun by sections of the lower Catholic clergy in the early 1960s, in conflict with the church hierarchy.

These organizations are heavily persecuted because of the regime's fear of communism among the peasants who make up 80 per cent of the country's population.

The heaviest repression of recent times was in May 1970, in Coronel Oviedo. US-trained Major Boson Pinanez and Captain Apuril rounded up 200 families and took them off to military installations.

Every village in Paraguay is ruled by the police chief, the local leader of the Colorado Party and the mayor. All these are government appointees. There is also a military garrison in every village, attached to the police station.

There is no Press freedom in Paraguay—one of the most corrupt regimes in Latin America, which is saying a great deal.

The few 'independent' (i.e. not published directly by the government) newspapers refrain from all political comment or criticism of the regime.

It is well known that army generals and top government officials are behind the various rackets such as the contraband trade in drugs, whisky and cigarettes.

WORKERS NOTEBOOK

ILL-HEALTH

The Tories are always howling about the days lost through industrial disputes. Last year's total was the highest since the 1926 General Strike. The strikes were a direct result of the Tories' policy of confrontation with the unions and their hated anti-union laws.

Figures have just been published showing that there were 35 million working days lost through mental ill-health and stress last year.

This compares with the 24 million days lost through industrial disputes in the same period.

The mounting toll of industrial accidents could largely be blamed on 'human failings of a psychological kind', according to David Ennals, the former Labour Health Minister.

Research showed eight out of ten accidents were due to this, he said. What was often dismissed as 'being accident-prone' might conceal chronic anxiety.

Ennals, a prospective MP at the next election, is now director of a mental health campaign called MIND. He was a notorious right winger in the Wilson government and was known as its 'Spiro Agnew' because of his attacks on the 'work shy'.

After releasing statistics of accidents and ill-health in industry, Ennals appealed to business executives to get more concerned with the problem.

'It is a challenge management cannot afford to ignore,' he said, 'particularly if we are to achieve the output results necessary for effective competition within the Common Market.'

CASH-REGISTER

Andrew Sinclair, writing in 'World Medicine', gives a grisly view of private health in the United States.

When I had appendicitis over there, I saw a woman untreated for 40 minutes after being rushed in by ambulance while the receptionist rang round her relatives trying to find somebody to guarantee her hospital bills.

She was dead before a cousin said he'd cough up.

I've been turned away with a haemorrhaging wife in Oregon because the doctor said he wouldn't treat her—fear of student youth, fear of lawsuit, fear of not being paid.

Individually, American doctors and surgeons are humane, efficient, kind. But as a pack or a Medical Association, with accountants instead of hearts and cash registers for stethoscopes . . . And always the four charity beds in a hospital for 400 paying patients, just to prove Hippocrates isn't a dead oath . . .

BULK

The middle and upper class are finding one way to cushion the effect of higher food prices. They are buying in bulk.

This bulk-buying is creating a mini-bonanza for Mr Wilf Cassel of the Stockport-based, Cordon Bleu Freezer Food Centres.

His customers aren't buying the 1 lb and 2 lb bags of peas that are on sale in your local supermarket.

They're buying 10 lb bags, the cost of which is not revealed.

Because of the increased trade, Mr Cassel is putting £500,000 into an expansion programme, including the opening of two new frozen food supermarkets.

TAKE-OVER

Is there no end to the growth of monopolies? Clarks Cereal Products, the Dagenham-based 'Butterkist' popcorn group, has just taken over its only serious rival—Pims Popcorn of Wembley.

Negotiations for the take-over of Pims, a subsidiary of Watney Mann, began last April.

General sales manager at Butterkist, Mr J. K. Lewis, said: 'We expect to improve the product of Pims Popcorn and give it wider distribution than it has previously experienced, while our main objective will continue to be the expansion of our own product.'

Next thing we can expect a takeover of the streetcorner chestnut vendor.

AMERICA AND EEC: BICKERING OVER TARIFFS

US ROUND-UP BY IAN YEATS

The nine-nation Common Market is to make a formal complaint to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) about United States measures which they claim favour exporters.

Through the Domestic and International Sales Corporation (DISC), US exporters receive special tax deferments on profits earned from sales abroad.

The EEC countries are

arguing that the DISC system is incompatible with GATT.

If their complaint is not upheld, they could take retaliatory action in a further step down the slope to trade war.

The Common Market countries say DISC is a tax exemption which violates GATT.

The US insists that it only gives an advantage to home-based companies to bring them up to the level of those which sell through foreign-based subsidiaries.

Meanwhile the US Tariff Commission has exonerated multi-national companies from 'destructive, predatory' policies likely to contribute

materially to the world currency crisis.

Nevertheless the Commission revealed that the short-term liquid assets held by private institutions on the international finance scene reached the staggering total of \$268,000m at the end of 1971—twice as much as central banks and world monetary institutions controlled at the same time.

With such huge resources at their disposal it was not surprising that even a relatively small movement of funds could turn an incipient crisis into a thoroughgoing one.



THE LIE TO NIXON'S PRICES FREEZE

Rises in food and agricultural products prices have forced a steep increase in the US Wholesale Prices Index.

The Index rose by 1.3 per cent in January—an increase described by business observers as 'alarming.' In December the Index shot up by 1.8 per cent.

Prices of food items as a whole went up by 3.7 per cent in the month including livestock, poultry, vegetables, eggs, milk and wheat.

The Index now stands at 7.1 per cent above its level for January 1972, according to the latest figures issued by the Bureau of Labour Statistics.

By the end of this month, food prices will have risen by 8 per cent for the year.

Hazen Gale, a food economist with the Agriculture Department said: 'By spring the pace may ease as meat supplies increase above a year earlier.'

The steep rises give the lie to Nixon's claims that Phase Two of his economic programme has kept prices in check.

Phase Three imposes no controls on farm food prices and Nixon hopes to depress prices by the unlikely tactic of urging farmers to raise output.



NOW THE WHITE HOUSE WANTS TRADE WITH VIETNAM

After raining more explosives than in any other war in history onto the heads of the long-suffering North Vietnamese the US government is offering them aid for reconstruction.

With consummate cynicism Nixon has offered to participate in a joint commission with the North Vietnamese to consider and finance some of the rebuilding of the country.

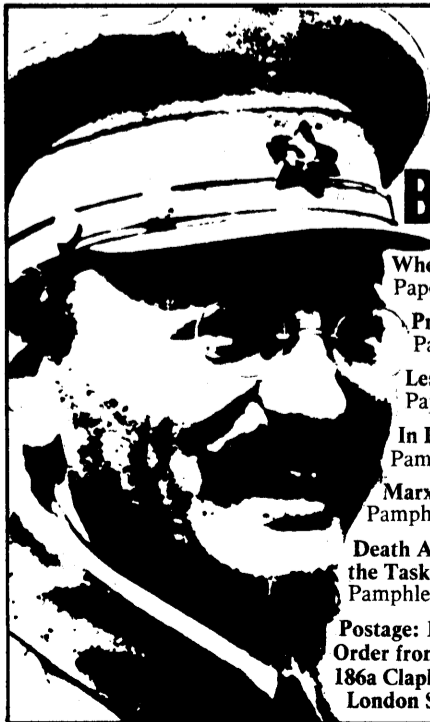
A White House statement said that the commission would be charged with 'developing the economic rela-

tions with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the United States'. The agreement between the two sides follows Dr Henry Kissinger's visit to Hanoi.

No firm aid figure has been publicly disclosed, but last autumn Nixon mentioned—\$7,500m to be divided equally between north and south Vietnam.

Nixon is determined to exploit the mood of relief brought about by the formal end of the Vietnam war and Kissinger was despatched to Peking last week to further develop relations there.

The effort is primarily directed at the creation of bilateral trade links.



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BBC 1

9.38 Schools. 12.30 Ar y trywydd. 12.55 News. 1.00 Pebble Mill at one. 1.30 Andy Pandy. 1.45 Ask the family. 2.05 Schools. 2.50 Sixteen plus. 3.15 Gardeners' world. 4.40 French chef. 4.10 Play school. 4.35 Jackanory. 4.50 Viaduct. 5.10 John Craven's newsround. 5.15 Vision on. 5.40 Wombles. 5.45 News. Weather.

- 6.00 NATIONWIDE. 6.45 LAUREL AND HARDY.
- 7.05 FILM: 'HAPPY EVER AFTER'. David Niven, Yvonne De Carlo, Barry Fitzgerald. British comedy.
- 8.30 WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE LIKELY LADS? No Hiding Place.
- 9.00 NINE O'CLOCK NEWS. Weather.
- 9.25 DOCUMENTARY: 'THE BIG SCREEN'. John Schlesinger and Gerald Thomas are two film directors seen at work in this documentary.
- 10.15 FILM 73. 10.45 MIDWEEK. 11.30 NEWS.
- 11.35 VIEWPOINT . . . a green hope in our desert. Lanza del Vasto, friend of Gandhi. 11.55 Weather.

ITV

9.30 Schools. 10.30 This week (London only). 11.00 Schools. 12.05 Mr. Trimble. 12.25 Pinky and Perky. 12.40 First report. 1.00 Lunchtime with Wogan. 1.30 Emmerdale farm. 2.00 Harriet's back in town. 2.30 Good afternoon. 3.00 About Britain. 3.25 Kate. 4.25 Junior showtime. 4.50 Magpie. 5.20 I dream of Jeannie. 5.50 News.

- 6.00 TODAY. 6.40 CROSSROADS.
- 7.05 WHICKER'S SOUTH SEAS. If We were Over-confident We'd Be Dead.
- 7.35 MCMILLAN AND WIFE. Terror Times Two.
- 9.00 DOCUMENTARY: 'THE SEARCH FOR REVENGE'. Looking for Francis Drake's flagship in the Atlantic.
- 10.00 NEWS AT TEN. 10.30 PLAYHOUSE. A Point in Time.
- 11.20 PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING. 12.05 ANYTHING TO SAY?

BBC 2

- 11.00-11.25 Play school. 5.50 Open University.
- 6.40 OFFICE. Organisation.
- 7.05 OPEN UNIVERSITY. 7.30 NEWS. Weather.
- 7.35 COLLECTOR'S WORLD. 8.05 INTERNATIONAL TENNIS. Ilie Nastase v Stan Smith.
- 9.00 POT BLACK. 9.25 PLAY: 'EVELYN'. By Rhys Adrian. With Edward Woodward, Angela Scoular.
- 10.15 LEAP IN THE DARK. Pendulums and Hazel Twigs. Telepathy.
- 10.40 THE OLD GREY WHISTLE TEST. Strawbs, Judee Sill.
- 11.15 NEWS EXTRA. Weather.

TODAY'S TV



Rodney Bewes (left) as Bob and James Bolam as Terry are in another episode of 'Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads' on BBC 1

REGIONAL TV

CHANNEL: 9.30-12.00 London. 1.15 News. 1.30 London. 2.30 Women. 3.00 London. 4.20 Lottery. 4.25 London. 5.20 Partridge family. 5.50 London. 6.00 News. 6.10 Lookaround. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.00 Whicker. 7.30 Film: 'Destination Gobi'. 9.00 London. 12.05 News, weather.

WESTWARD. As Channel except: 12.05 London. 12.20 Gus Honeybun. 12.40 London. 12.57 News. 1.00 London. 6.00 Diary. 12.02 News. 12.05 Faith for life.

SOUTHERN: 9.30 London. 12.04 News. 12.05 London. 2.30 House party. 3.00 London. 5.20 Cartoon. 5.25 Crossroads. 5.50 London. 6.00 Day by day. 6.35 Junkin. 7.05 Doctor in charge. 7.35 McMillan and wife. 9.00 London. 12.05 News. 12.15 Weather. Guideline.

HARLECH: 9.30 London. 2.30 Houseparty. 3.00 London. 5.20 Chuckleheads. 5.25 Crossroads. 5.50 London. 6.01 Report West. 6.18 Report Wales. 6.35 Try for ten. 7.05 Film: 'Saddle Tramp'. 8.30 Whicker. 9.00 London. 10.30 A point in time. 11.20 London. 12.05 Looking at . . . 12.35 Weather.

HTV Cymru/Wales as above except: 4.25-4.35 Miri mawr. 4.35-4.50 Cantamil. 6.01-6.18 Y dydd. 10.30-11.00 Ar waetha'r gelyn. 12.05 World in action.

HTV West as above except: 6.18-6.35 Report west.

ANGLIA: 9.30 London. 2.30 About women. 3.00 London. 4.20 News. 4.25 London. 5.20 Cartoons. 5.35 Wind in the willows. 5.50 London. 6.00 About Anglia. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.00 Whicker. 7.30 McCloud. 9.00 London.

ATV MIDLANDS: 9.30 London. 2.30 Women. 3.00 London. 5.20 Osmonds. 5.50 London. 6.00 Today. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.00 Whicker. 7.30 Cartoon. 7.35 'Cool million'. 9.00 London. 12.15 Ian Phelps. Weather.

ULSTER: 11.00 London. 1.32 News. 1.40 London. 2.40 Romper room. 3.00 London. 4.22 News. 4.25 London. 5.20 Emmerdale farm. 5.50 London. 6.00 Reports. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.00 Cartoon. 7.10 McMillan and wife. 8.30 Whicker. 9.00 London.

YORKSHIRE: 9.30 London. 2.30 Houseparty. 3.00 London. 5.20 Here's Lucy. 5.50 London. 6.00 Calendar. Weather. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.00

Whicker. 7.30 Cartoon. 7.35 Cool million. 9.00 London. 12.15 Scotland Yard mysteries. 12.50 Weather.

GRANADA: 9.30 London. 2.30 Collecting on a shoestring. 2.55 London. 5.15 Primus. 5.50 London. 6.00 News. Police file. 6.35 Smith family. 7.05 London. 7.35 Film: 'The Astronaut'. 9.00 London. 10.30 A point in time. 11.15 London.

TYNE TEES: 9.25 Our total well being. 9.30 London. 2.30 News. 2.31 Kreskin. 3.00 London. 5.20 Jackson five. 5.50 London. 6.00 Today. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.00 Whicker. 7.35 Cool million. 9.00 London. 12.05 News. 12.25 Lectern.

SCOTTISH: 9.30 London. 2.30 Dateline. 3.00 London. 5.25 Crossroads. 5.50 London. 6.00 Today. 6.35 Adam Smith. 7.00 Whicker. 7.30 McCloud. 9.00 London. 12.04 Late call.

GRAMPIAN: 10.58 London. 1.38 Schools. 2.35 Cartoon. 2.52 News. 3.00 London. 5.20 Emmerdale farm. 5.50 London. 6.00 News. 6.05 Doris Day. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.00 Whicker. 7.30 Cartoon. 7.35 Cool million. 9.00 London. 12.05 Meditation.

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Fight rising rents and prices
 Defend basic democratic rights
 Force the Tories to resign

BRIXTON: Tuesday February 20, 8 p.m. Brixton Training Centre, Control Room. 'No state control of wages'.

LIVERPOOL: Tuesday February 20, 7.30 p.m. AEU House, Mount Pleasant.

DAGENHAM: Tuesday February 20, 8 p.m. Barking Co-op Hall, Fanshawe Avenue. 'Defend basic rights'.

SKELMERSDALE: Tuesday February 20, 7.30 p.m. Quarry Bank. 'Forward to the Pageant'.

EAST LONDON: Tuesday February 20, 'Festival Inn', Chrisp Street, E.14. 'Common Market Conspiracy'.

LANCASTER: Wednesday February 21, 8 p.m. Trades Hall, Fenton Street (near GPO). 'Stop the retreat on Rents. Defend basic rights'.

WINSFORD: Wednesday February 21, 8 p.m. 'Wheatshaf Hotel'.

LANGLEY: Wednesday February 21, 8 p.m. 'Cardinal's Hat', Wood Street. 'Defend Democratic Rights. Forward to the Pageant'.

PRESTON: Wednesday February 21, 7.30 p.m. 'Waterloo Hotel', Friargate. 'The Road to Workers' Power'.

WOOLWICH: Wednesday February 21, 8 p.m. 'The Castle', Powis Street, S.E.18. 'The Crisis of leadership'.

TOTTENHAM: Wednesday February 21, 8 p.m. 'Bricklayers Arms', High Road, near White Hart Lane. 'The case for a Labour government pledged to socialist policies'.

STEVENAGE: Thursday February 22, 8 p.m. 'Red Lion', Stevenage Old Town. 'Support the gasmen'.

LEWISHAM: Thursday February 22, 8 p.m. Deptford Engineers Club. (opposite New Cross station).

HACKNEY: Thursday February 22, 8 p.m. Parlour Room, Central Hall, opposite Town Hall, Mare Street.

WILLESDEN: Thursday February 22, 8 p.m. Labour and Trades Hall, High Road, N.W.10. 'Road to Workers' Power'.

SCUNTHORPE: Sunday February 25, 7.30 p.m. The Kingsley Hall, Cole Street.

BASILDON: Sunday February 25, 5.20 p.m. Barnstable Community Centre. 'Road to Workers' Power'.

WANDSWORTH: Monday February 26, 8 p.m. 'King's Arms', High Street, S.W.18. 'Defend the right to work'.

WATFORD: Monday February 26, 8 p.m. Trade Union Hall, Woodford Road, near Watford Junction Station. 'Rise of fascism in Italy'.

ACTON: Tuesday February 27, 8 p.m. Co-op Hall, High Road, W3. 'Forward to the Pageant —The Road to Workers' Power'.

CLAPHAM: Tuesday February 27, 8 p.m. Clapham Manor Baths, Clapham Manor Street, S.W.4. 'Defend Democratic Rights'.

CAMDEN: Tuesday February 27, 8 p.m. 'Prince Albert', Wharfedale Road, Kings Cross. 'Lessons of fighting the Housing Finance Act'.

HARROW: Tuesday February 27, 8 p.m. Labour Hall, Wealdstone. 'All out for Wembley Pageant'.

TOOTING: Tuesday February 27, 8 p.m. 'Selkirk Hotel', Selkirk Road, Tooting Broadway. 'The rise of Italian Fascism'.

DERBY: Thursday, March 1, 7.30 p.m. Metal Mechanics' Premises, Charnwood Street.

CROYDON: Thursday March 1, 8 p.m. Ruskin House, Coombe Road. 'Support the gasmen'.

HOLLOWAY: Thursday March 1, 8 p.m. Co-op Hall, Seven Sisters Road (near Finsbury Park Station). 'Marxism and the trade unions'.

KINGSTON: Thursday March 1, 8 p.m. 'Liverpool Arms', Cambridge Road. 'Support the gasmen and hospital workers'.

GLASGOW: Wednesday, February 21, 7.30 p.m. Woodside Hall, St George's Cross.

PADDINGTON: Tuesday February 27, 8 p.m. 'Prince of Wales', corner of Harrow Road and Great Western Road.

KIRKBY: Tuesday February 27, 8 p.m. Southdene Community Centre, off Broad Lane. 'Crisis of capitalism and the future of the trade unions'.

Socialist Labour League Lectures

SHEFFIELD: Monday March 5, 8 p.m. YS PREMISES, Portobello (near Jessops hospital). 'The Revolutionary Party in Britain'.

GLASGOW: Sunday, February 25, 7.30 p.m. WOODSIDE HALL, St George's Cross. 1933-1938. From the German defeat to the Fourth International. Speaker: Tom Kemp.

Pay law angers both young and old Manchester hospital workers on strike course

FROM STEPHEN JOHNS

WORKERS at one of the north's largest and most militant hospitals say they will strike in ten days time whether their union call them out or not.

Porters, kitchen staff and other ancillary workers are certain to be among the very first to take action when the selective strike campaign called by hospital unions begins on March 1.

A day after National Union of Public Employees' leader Alan Fisher announced the campaign, the Manchester Royal Infirmary workers told me they wanted an all-out national stoppage.

Kitchen staff shop steward David McIntyre (22) told me: 'We disagree with the selective strike policy. We all voted here for all-out action in the ballot—as did the majority of hospital workers. But Fisher has come along and decided for selective action. What was the ballot for?'

Dave and his militant colleagues in the Manchester Royal's kitchen pointed out that selective strikes would not have a strong enough effect on management.

They also said it would tend to split up the ranks. Some staff would be drawing money while others would be in the front line fighting.

The workers are also angry about the advanced warning given by the unions. At Manchester Royal trouble has been brewing for some time. One-day strikes have been held already. 'Management has been preparing for this for weeks now. Supplies of tinned food have been doubled and the management plans to do the cooking in the wards. If we had of struck without warning they would not have got this advantage,' said George Rogerson.

Like the gas men the 500 ancillary workers at Manchester Royal have endured low pay and bad conditions in peace for too long. Many are still disappointed that the original £8 claim mooted in early days of the conflict with management has been abandoned.

Dave McIntyre told me that his take-home pay for 60 hours was as little as £24. Basic rates for the kitchen staff are around £16 take-home, and £14 for the porters.

'You can't live decently on this kind of money,' said Dave. 'You are forced into overtime—six-day and even seven-day wor-

Registered unions get together

FORTY registered trade unions have accepted invitations to a meeting aimed at forming their own organization strong enough to have a say in prices and wages talks with the government.

The meeting has been called at Warwick on March 21 by the Coventry-based Union of Sales, Technical Representatives and Agents, which suggested that the new organization should be known as the Federation of Registered Trade Unions.

Mr Jack Ogden, general secretary, said yesterday that delegates to the meeting at the University of Warwick would represent blue as well as white-collar unions.

The registered bodies concerned do not include any of the bigger unions.

David McIntyre (left) and Tommy Turnbull... young and old determined to strike.



king—just to get anywhere near decent money. We want all this scrapped and a good basic.'

The policy of the Tory government causes fierce discussion in the kitchen staff canteen. There are a couple of Tories on the staff (100 per cent behind the strike nevertheless), but the vast majority of workers bitterly condemn the state pay laws.

'This freeze is a farce,' said older worker Tommy Turnbull,

'I went into a shop the other day for a bottle of Lucozade—then I saw a bottle in another shop 1.5p dearer. It's no use complaining, nothing is ever done. Everyone knows that prices have gone sky high since the freeze.'

Denis Wheatley said that the example of the gasworkers had caused militancy to increase in the National Health Service.

'They are low paid as well,'

he said, 'This is the first strike they have ever had. They've been like us—plodding along and doing nothing—but you don't get anything unless you fight for it,' said Denis.

'The gasworkers have given the lead. Soon we will be with them. I think all the unions being attacked by this government should come together and sort it out once and for all.'

● See London interviews p. 12.

Pay Board proposition is rubbish—gasmen

BY OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

FITTERS and service workers at the Linacre gasworks, Liverpool, are entering the fourth week of their strike for a 'substantial' pay increase.

Only the General and Municipal Workers' Union members are acting officially.

A group picketing the plant talked to Workers Press about the seriousness of the present confrontation with the government and the best way forward.

J. Windrow, a member of the plumbers' union, which has not made the strike official, said the unions should call out the production workers.

'We will achieve nothing by ourselves. We are only holding up the North Sea gas conversions. There must be unity among gasworkers—working-to-rule and one-day strikes will not win.'

'The only way is to get rid of the Tories. That will need a General Strike.'

'The proposition of the Pay Board is rubbish. The men wouldn't accept it. They want an answer in money terms.'

Like other workers, he was concerned about the operation of private contractors.

E. McGraw, said a full strike in the gas industry was the only way to win. Another plumber, Jimmy Henderson, said: 'We need a General Strike and a General Election to win.'

He said that fitters and maintenance workers on the production side came out for the first day of their strike. But the union got them back to work.

'They would come out if the union called them,' he said. (The production men are at present working-to-rule.)

R. Kennedy said: 'We need an all-out strike of production and

everything. On our own we are really not effective.

'The work-to-rule in the gas plant is having no effect.'

He also complained about pri-

private contractors doing work in the industry. Some of these private jobs were being done—at a handsome profit—by ex-Gas Board bosses.

Another striker added: 'We need a General Strike from Land's End to John O'Groats.'

ASTMS wants rights in ICI

ASTMS, Britain's largest white-collar union, will stage a protest lobby outside the London headquarters of ICI on March 19.

The union has been demanding organizing and bargaining rights in the company during a prolonged struggle.

Association general secretary Clive Jenkins is demanding a meeting with ICI chairman Jack Caliard to resolve the conflict.

A spokesman said the union would fight 'tooth and nail' to get representation and the March 19 lobby could be followed by stoppages.

Socialist Labour League Public Meetings UNITE IN ACTION TO DEFEND BASIC RIGHTS

MERTHYR
THURSDAY FEBRUARY 22

8pm
AUEW Hall,
Swan Street
Speaker: G. HEALY
(SLL National Sec)

WANDSWORTH
THURSDAY FEBRUARY 22,

8pm
Wandsworth Town Hall
Wandsworth High Street
speaker: MIKE BANDA
(SLL Central Cttee)

BRADFORD
THURSDAY FEBRUARY 22,

7.30 p.m.
Central Library
Top of Hall Ings.
Speaker:
Cliff Slaughter
(SLL Central Committee)

CASTLEFORD
SUNDAY FEBRUARY 25,

6.30 p.m.
Castleford Civic Hall
Ferry Bridge Road
Speaker: C. SLAUGHTER
(SLL Central Committee)

BIRMINGHAM
SUNDAY FEBRUARY 25, 7pm

Digbeth, Civic Hall
Digbeth, Birmingham

speaker: MIKE BANDA
(SLL Central Cttee)

SOUTHAMPTON
MONDAY FEBRUARY 26, 8 p.m.

Marlands Hall
Havelock Road
opp. Civic Centre
Speaker: ALAN THORNETT
(Deputy Senior Steward Morris
Motors in a personal capacity)

OXFORD
TUESDAY FEBRUARY 27

8 p.m.
Clarendon Institute
Walton
Speaker: G. HEALY
(SLL National Secretary)

MEDWAY
TUESDAY FEBRUARY 27, 8pm

Aurora Hotel
Brompton Road
Gillingham
speaker: MIKE BANDA
(SLL Central Cttee)

SLOUGH
WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 28

8pm
Britwell Community Centre
Long Furlong Drive
Britwell Estate
speaker: G HEALY
(SLL National Sec)

DAGENHAM

THURSDAY MARCH 1, 8pm
Manor Park Library
Romford Rd/Rabbits Road
opp Rabbits Pub
speaker: G HEALY
(SLL National Sec)

HULL
THURSDAY MARCH 1, 8 p.m.

'Windmill Hotel'
Witham
Speaker: CLIFF SLAUGHTER
(SLL Central Cttee)

WEST LONDON
THURSDAY MARCH 1, 8 p.m.

Lyndhurst Hall
Grafton Road, NW3
Speaker: M. BANDA
(SLL Central Committee)

LUTON
FRIDAY MARCH 2, 8 p.m.

Assembly Hall
Town Hall
Speaker: M. BANDA
(SLL Central Committee)

TOTTENHAM
TUESDAY MARCH 6, 8 p.m.

Lord Morrison Hall
Chesnut Grove
Speaker: G. HEALY
(SLL National Secretary)

90 per cent of ancillary workers earn £16 a week

Low-pay revolt bursts onto the hospital scene

BY IAN YEATS

NINETY per cent of hospital ancillary workers take home a paltry £16 a week it was revealed yesterday on the eve of a wave of selective strikes due to begin on March 1. Mr. James Jewell, G&MWU shop steward at London's Whittington hospital, claims you need £25 a week today 'before you can even think about the cost of living'.

Even then, including Saturday and Sunday work, hospital staff would only take home £21 to keep themselves and their families.

Laundry van driver Mr David Smart told me: 'This strike is really over those on £16 a week. There are people who could get £15 on national assistance, so why come here for an extra £1?'

'I think the government is at fault. The Tories have got their priorities all wrong. It is all very well to talk in terms of percentages, but there is a considerable difference between a man earning £20 and a man earning 20 grand.

'They have got to talk in terms which mean something to the lower paid.

'You've got your wife coming up to you every day now saying something has gone up. What can you get for a £ in this day and age?'

'The Tories seem to be very clever at saying no to the lower paid, yet look at the tremendous rises they gave themselves.

'We don't want to come out on strike. Very few can afford it. But the feeling is that there is nothing else to do.'

Already the accusations are beginning to fly in the Tory Press that the hospital ancillary workers are behaving irresponsibly.

We care

But, said Mr Smart: 'We would not work in hospitals if we did not care for people. It is a bit hard to say we are striking to make people suffer.'

'The ancillary workers are low paid. They are not greedy. They are coming out on strike for the wage they need to survive. Forget about percentages. These people need £25 a week to live on.'

As the 220,000 workers prepare for selective strike action from March 1, many are worried that the unions will not act decisively to halt scabbing and victimization.

Driver Michael Bowman told me: 'Last time we had a strike, the local vicar turned up with 20 people. By the evening there were 30 to 40 more. There were more people than jobs.'

He added: 'Management saw me handing out leaflets and the next thing I knew I had lost my Saturday work.'

The belief is widespread that anything short of a total national stoppage will open the door to scabbing and victimization.

Workers complain that during their last strike members of other unions did their jobs and Mr Jewell said this time they wanted guarantees from their unions and the TUC that this would not happen.

Women workers at the hospital left no doubt that they

Women ancillary workers at London's Whittington hospital angrily cite raised prices, from rents to beef, to justify their demand for bigger pay packets.



could not go on much longer without bigger pay packets, and raised prices, ranging from rents to beef, were cited angrily.

But like the drivers they fear the effect of rolling strikes will be broken by volunteers.

'We don't mind striking' a cleaner told me, 'but we want to be sure we've got proper organization and backing. We are only labourers. They could sack us tomorrow and we don't want to end up outside.'

The intensity of anti-Tory feeling among hospital workers, triggered by steep cost-of-living increases, is at white heat.

But all eyes are turned anxiously on the leaderships of the four hospital unions to see how they will measure up to the Tory pay challenge.

● See north-west interviews page 11.

BRS drivers still set on £2.50 bonus

THE BONUS dispute between lorry drivers and British Road Services in the Midlands entered its third week yesterday with the union ranks unbroken.

The dispute has paralyzed the Midlands car and car components industry and British-Leyland, BRS's biggest single customer, claims to have production losses of more than £35m.

Albert Caldicott, shop steward from the Bromford Lane depot, said: 'We are sticking out for the £2.50. We're not prepared to go

back for anything with strings attached.'

At Cheapside depot, drivers said they thought that BRS management was going on the offensive in the bonus fight.

Management, they said, was preparing to make conditions worse than they were before the dispute began. Basically, management is demanding that average miles an hour should increase.

Aidan Lee, steward at the BRS Contract department, remarked: 'This would make drivers a menace on the road.'

The proposed schedules would mean men working 11 hours a day. This would break the present national agreement.

Harry Shorter, secretary of the 5/538 branch, said: 'We are struggling for an eight-hour day and we're not going back for an 11-hour day.'

'We want the £2.50 merit allowance as recognition of our skill.'

The men scoffed at the claims by BRS managing director Mr Kenneth Cook that some depots might be closed because of the dispute. They said the closures had been threatened for a long time and were not directly connected with the bonus dispute.

North-east workers back crane occupiers

WORKERS in the north-east may strike for one-day in support of engineers sitting in at Coles Cranes, Sunderland.

At a mass meeting of Coles Cranes men yesterday sheet-metal workers' official Arthur Tarn said that if management did not concede to the workers' demands, district-wide strike action might have to be proposed.

The 2,500 Coles Cranes men have been occupying their plant for eight weeks. This followed the Swiss chairman

William Alphonse de Vigire's announcement of 300 redundancies without consultation.

The workers also heard of international support from the International Federation of Chemical Workers who will raise money and hinder the flow of the group's products if management does not settle.

APEX (clerical workers') official John Creavy, said: 'We will not give in in this fight. We are fighting for all the workers in this group.'

Workers Press MONTHLY APPEAL FUND

FEBRUARY FUND NEEDS £1,044.78 IN 9 DAYS

IT IS a tough battle ahead. We need to raise approximately £116.08 each day between now and the end of February to complete our £1,750 target. We urge you all, dear readers—there is not a moment to lose.

We must not, on any account, sit back. We know that each month so far, we have always pulled through. But in this political situation, let's leave nothing to chance.

While the Tories prepare a snap election to try and bring in even harsher attacks against the working class, the trade union leaders remain on their knees.

Workers Press is needed more than ever today to expose this treacherous reformist leadership. They will never take up the fight against this Tory government. Our paper must be used to build a revolutionary alternative to lead workers all over the country and to force this government to resign.

Back us up all the way. Make a very special effort and turn the situation for February's Fund. Collect extra amounts where possible. Rush all donations immediately to:

WORKERS PRESS
FEBRUARY APPEAL FUND,
186a Clapham High Street,
London SW4 7UG.

Print staff seek rise

TALKS this week could end a two-week strike by clerks at the SOGAT headquarters in Balham, London.

Father of the 16-man chapel, Mr. Brian Clarke, said yesterday they were on strike for a 'substantial pay rise' to bring them in line with cost-of-living increases.

All overtime has ended following the streamlining of work practices in the printing union's offices and the men claim their average £25-a-week take-home pay is no more than they were earning two years ago.

Mr. Clarke said yesterday that they were hoping a compromise settlement would emerge this week to end the strike.

CAMBRIDGE
SUNDAY FEBRUARY 25
Mawson Hall
Mawson Rd
SPECIAL SHOWING OF
'RIGHT TO WORK' FILM
RALLY, 3 p.m.
Speaker: Maureen Bambrick
(YS Nat. Cttee)

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SHOP STEWARDS leaders from engineering plants in London and the south-east yesterday called for a mass lobby of the March 5 recalled TUC and for a one-day strike on May 1.

George Guy, secretary of the Sheet Metal Workers' Union, failed as chairman to put to the meeting a motion calling on the TUC to mobilize an indefinite General Strike to force the Tories to resign.

Unite in action to defend basic rights

SLL	ACTON TUESDAY FEBRUARY 20 8 p.m. Woodlands Hall Crown Street Speaker: G HEALY (SLL national secretary)	WANDSWORTH THURSDAY FEBRUARY 22, 8pm Wandsworth Town Hall Wandsworth High Street speaker: MIKE BANDA (SLL Central Committee)	BRADFORD THURSDAY FEBRUARY 22, 7.30 p.m. Central Library Top of Hall Ings. Speaker: Cliff Slaughter (SLL Central Committee)
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PUBLIC MEETINGS