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SOCIALISM & DEMOCRACY NEED STRONG UNIONS

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EEC MANOEUVRES IN GMWU

WILL THORNE (SWANSEA)

MANY members of the General and Municipal Workers' Union who were hoping that the new General Secretary, David Bassnet, would introduce a breath of democracy into the Union have been disappointed, particularly by behind-the-scenes manipulations over the question of the Union's attitude to the Common Market, to be debated at this Summers Conference. The G & M has always lined up the side of the pro-marketeters with Bassnet himself as one of the keenest supporters last year.

Rank and file feeling is building up against the EEC and Bassnet has now lost the support of his top lieutenant, Jack Eccles, the North Western regional secretary. At least two other powerful officials are also in the anti-EEC camp—Cyril Unwin, the East Midlands secretary, who, like Eccles, has changed colours of late, and Derek Gladwin. Joining this group are about half a dozen National Industrial Officers including John Edmunds who represents the Gasworkers.

Bassnet is under pressure to bring his Union's EEC policy nearer to the conditional opposition of the Labour Party. Further, his own members in the sugar industry whose future is threatened by the EEC have been lobbying vigorously in the past few months. But in spite of all this, Bassnet is reluctant to see the pro-EEC stand overturned. He hopes to make a gesture that will appease the anti-market forces without really changing anything.

The leadership's strategy for the forthcoming Annual Conference emerged at a recent union school at the G & M's Woodstock College. It involves flooding the branches and regions with leaflets arguing the case for continued support of the Common Market. But where to get the necessary arguments? There's the rub. Patching together a case in favour of the Market has taxed the brains of the G & M's friends in the EEC headquarters and in the Labour Committee for Europe in recent months.

Once the 'persuasive' leaflet is out, the next step follows automatically. A short sharp debate at Conference with only a handful of carefully selected speakers called by the faithful old Chairman, Alec Donnet. It may not be breaking the constitution—but it sure isn't democracy!

MEMBERS HAVE BEEN WARNED. THEY SHOULD MAKE SURE THAT CLEAR STRONGLY-WORDED RESOLUTIONS ARE SENT IN ON THE QUESTION SO THAT THE PLATFORM POSITION ISN'T THE ONLY ONE DEBATED. AND THEY SHOULD WATCH OUT FOR SLICK PROCEDURAL MOVES TO RAILROAD THE BUSINESS THROUGH.

No. Democracy isn't coming fast enough to the General and Municipal. Come to think of it, Brother Bassnet could start by releasing the confidential internal report on the Union's inadequacies which was prepared by a university professor over a year ago.

CHILE

THE situation is becoming desperate for fugitives from the military coup still in Chile, according to a recent report from Amnesty International.

Foreign governments are being pressed to give up former Allende supporters at present taking refuge in their embassies in Santiago; and those still at large in the country are being hunted down ruthlessly, to be tortured and shot when caught.

The flow of refugees to Europe is increasing steadily under this pressure, as Chile's neighbours refuse to allow further fugitives to settle and start to force out those who arrived immediately after the coup.

To meet this problem Amnesty recently joined with the National Council for Civil Liberties and other organisations in starting a campaign to persuade the Government to admit at least a thousand Chilean refugees to Britain. This demand will be central to the Chile Solidarity Campaign's appeal for funds now being circulated to trade union branches and other labour movement organisations. Make sure that your branch responds generously; add your weight to the Campaign.

ADMIT 1,000 NOW!

WORKERS CONTROL USA

from a VOICE special reporter in Boston, Mass.

JANUARY, 1974 saw the launch of the first national movement for workers' control in the USA. At a conference in Boston attended by over 250 people from all over North America, workers' control has been put firmly on the map for the first time. Key speakers at the conference were Jaroslav Vanek, economics professor at Cornell University; Walter Kendall of VOICE and the IWC (invited over specially for the occasion), and Irving Bluestone, vice-president in charge of the General Motors Division of the over 1,000,000-strong United Auto-Workers' Union.

There was great enthusiasm amongst participants at the conference. One outcome has been the establishment of PEOPLE FOR SELF MANAGEMENT as an ongoing organisation which will promote research, publication and activity in favour of workers' control, encourage practical workers' self-management ventures and also summon an annual convention of all those interested in this field.

PEOPLE FOR SELF MANAGEMENT has already attracted markedly more academic and research people to the idea of self-management than the movement has in Britain over the last few years. Many of the papers presented to the conference were at a very high level and set a standard which the British Movement might well aspire to in the future.

In terms of worker support, however, PEOPLE FOR SELF MANAGEMENT remains far more isolated than the workers' control movement in Britain. One reason, of course, is that America lacks a Labour Party and there is far less socialist influence in the unions than in the United Kingdom. During the conference sessions, Walter Kendall was very much to the fore arguing from British experience that it was essential to carry the message of workers' control to the organised working class if the movement in the USA was to succeed.

VOICE congratulates PEOPLE FOR SELF MANAGEMENT on a major success resulting from much hard work by many self-sacrificing individuals. We wish PEOPLE FOR SELF MANAGEMENT well for the future. VOICE readers will certainly be hearing more about workers' control in the USA in the months to come.

For information, contact: Professor Jaroslav Vanek, Economics Department, Uris Hall, Cornell University, New York, USA.

VOICE EDITORIAL

WHATEVER the final outcome (which will perhaps not be apparent for many months), it is clear that the General Election was a massive defeat for Edward Heath and the brand of Toryism he represented. Heath sought a vote of confidence in his confrontation with the unions—as represented by the miners—with the Industrial Relations Act as a major plank in his platform. In the event the electorate was quite unmoved by anti-socialist, Red-scare tactics directed against the unions, “extremists” and militants, disproving the thesis of Jenkins and his allies on the right of the Labour Party that socialism and industrial militancy are vote-losers. This view was endorsed by the success of Labour M.P.s such as Norman Atkinson and Anthony Benn, who stood on a clearly socialist platform, while Dick Taverne narrowly escaped defeat at Lincoln and his Social Democrat colleagues polled derisory votes against Atkinson and Benn.

Further, Eddie Milne, an avowed socialist, was triumphant at Blyth against the official Labour candidate after being manoeuvred out of his seat by the right wing, because of his insistence on a public enquiry into local Labour involvement in the Poulson affair. The romantic revolutionaries could not even achieve the 0.1 per cent of the poll mustered by the Communists, showing that—for all its faults—Labour is the only party that can lay claim to the allegiance of the British working class.

The Liberals' readiness to do a deal with the Tories exposed the falsity of their claims as a “radical party of the left”—in fact, they are the alternative bourgeoisie party as they always have been, committed to the retention of capitalism in its present form.

The strange events following the poll illuminated the crucial role still played by the monarch in time of crisis. Instead of sending for Harold Wilson as the leader of the party with the largest number of Members in the new parliament, the Queen allowed Heath to seek ways of remaining in office.

What should Labour do now? Firstly it should stick to its programme, repudiating any deal with the Liberals or any other capitalist party—as Wilson has rightly done so far. Secondly, it should insist on its right to form a government—whether or not it is immediately successful in doing so—with the intention of pushing through Parliament the most radical parts of its programme relevant to the country's immediate problems. Priority should be given to the repeal of the Industrial Relations and Housing Finance Acts and nationalisation of land and North Sea oil—both surely popular measures in view of the failure of the free market to provide adequate housing and recent revelations that the oil companies will pay little or no tax on their profits, two-thirds of which will be sent abroad. On issues such as these Labour should force a General Election at the earliest possible moment.

Once again the bankruptcy of the Liberals is shown by Thorpe's post-election call for “moderation”. We have had “moderation” for twenty years and it has failed to solve our problems. Britain is a class society. We need radical redistribution of power and wealth in favour of the working class to start to correct the gross inequality and distortion of the economy resulting from centuries of exploitation of working people by a tiny minority of the population—the property-owning elite.

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VOICE



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MARCH 1974

ECONOMIC CRISIS

THE economic problems facing Britain today spring from the failure of the British capitalist class to adapt effectively to Britain's shift from a first to a fourth or fifth-class power, compounded by the incompetence, arrogance and class bound nature of the Tory Government under Edward Heath.

Conservative ministers fly to Switzerland and the Middle East to grovel before idle and reactionary Shahs and Sheiks whom they agree to pay, without demur, thousands of millions of pounds extra for oil. These “patriotic Englishmen” call a General Election, rather than pay hard working British miners a rise they richly deserve.

Although Labour's parliamentary leadership remains composed in the main of left-overs from the Gaitskell era, Labour policies are now the most advanced since 1945. The credit belongs to VOICE, to VOICE supporters and those like minded individuals who have worked day in day out, for years, within the Labour Party and the trade unions, and to no one else. The task is to shift the composition of the leadership to the left, to ensure radical socialist policies are actually advocated and carried out.

The crisis is real and genuine. It is a capitalist crisis. Yet it is one of British capitalism within the world system. We need to advance British solutions. Evangelical Christian exhortations which argue that nothing can be done until a millenium which is to follow some final collapse, will get us nowhere at all.

IN THE SHORT TERM

The government should enact a legal moratorium to benefit all those unable to pay rent, hire purchase, or long standing commitments, as a result of a government-imposed three-day week.

All future scheduled rent increases resulting from past Tory legislation would be void permanently, forthwith.

The government enacted the three-day week. They must make it obligatory for firms to pay five-days' pay, to all those workers ready and willing to work, for whom work is not provided. White-collar workers are already in this position. Blue-collar workers should be too.

A socialist strategy should recognise the emphasis of Tory policy in recent years and seek to shift the burden balance back the other way. Conservatives have sought to redress the balance of power and income against Labour and in favour of Capital. Amongst the more important tendencies have been:

1 A deliberate move away from full employment towards a modified and controlled version of the old boom slump trade cycle.

2 Cuts in public expenditure.

3 Limits on the growth of the mass consumption sector.

4 Transfer of income from workers to rentier capitalists via the abolition of rent controls and speculative profits of real estate operators.

5 Shifts of income from workers to capitalists via shifts from direct to indirect taxation designed to switch burdens from property to labour, from higher, to lower paid.

Some less obvious elements of a counter strategy would be:

Use of the public sector as a source of initiative and a means of national planning, and not just as a service aid to the national bourgeoisie.

THIS WOULD INVOLVE

(a) Investment preference for selected publicly-owned industrial projects.

(b) Use of public enterprise pricing systems to serve the national interest, not least by holding consumer prices down and so halt inflation.

(c) Extension of the public sector into innovative, rather than obsolescent industries, so that this could become an energiser for the whole economy.

Income transfers from capitalists to workers.

(a) Reduce rents of private properties to pre-Tory inflation levels... this would represent a net transfer of income from one class to another.

(b) Restore rent controls and tenancy rights to these properties, thus safeguarding for the future.

(c) Step up council house building to a level that can solve the housing problem within a generation.

(d) Make this increase in council house building possible by a differential pricing system in regard to interest on capital, making funds available at a nominal rate in the region of two per cent.

(e) Cut mortgage relief at present available to higher income groups, thus making these funds available to persons with greater need.

(a) Selective subsidies.

(b) Publicly-owned Commodity Commissions to operate in the main areas, to achieve long-term contracts and bulk buying. This is being done in regard to oil. It should also be done in regard to food.

(c) The government should buy into the food processing sector, taking over some major company such as Unigate so as to

be able to influence capitalist policy and pricing, directly through its own competitive agent.

(d) Aid to co-operative societies from the government to enable them to fulfil a similar role.

(e) The government should also buy into some major retail chain like Tesco in order similarly to be able to influence directly capitalist policies in the retail sector.

The British people cannot control the British economy unless the government possesses far more direct power over imports. It is necessary to cut down on imports of superfluous luxuries, to maximise home production wherever possible as an alternative. This makes greater control over imports an urgent necessity.

MEDIUM-LONG TERM

The City of London is a dangerous cancer in the body of the British economy, a malevolent hangover from Britain's imperialist past, when it acted as greedy, grasping, money-lender cum pawnbroker to the whole world.

The City is responsible for an enormous outflow of surplus value produced in Britain to the rest of the world. In exchange Britain has become a reservoir of “hot” and “warm” money, on which bankers grow rich, but which exposes the British economy to massive capital flights, and serious economic crises, at the whim of foreign capitalists and trusts.

The City of London, in short, is the means by which the whole capitalist-imperialist world exercises surveillance and brutal pressure on the British economy and above all on all socialist moves by a Labour Government.

The City of London as a dominant political-financial influence on British society must be eliminated if ever we are to build socialism in Britain.

First steps would be:

To re-direct investment abroad into the British economy;

To realise for cash City investments abroad to finance deficits in British economy;

To phase out the international banking role of the City over the next decade;

To nationalise the major banks, as Labour's conference policy demands, with a view to making all this possible.

THESE and similar measures are essential if Labour is to produce a socialist solution to the crisis. We want no repetition of 1924, 1929-31, 1964-70, nor of the tragic end of the Weimar Republic in Germany.

CAPITALIST CRISIS demands a SOCIALIST SOLUTION

VOICE considers that political and economic action are both equally legitimate methods of advance to the achievement of the socialist objective. We consider that the increase of working class and union power within the plant is at least as important as extending socialist presence in Parliament.

VOICE considers that the interests of the working class of the world are one. Accordingly we pledge ourselves to aid and solidarity with all those who are oppressed, in whichever state and under whatever political regime they may be.

VOICE does not believe that the ruling elite in any class divided society will ever surrender its power voluntarily. Accordingly we call on the workers to take by ballot, union and industrial action what they can, by force what they must.

What do readers think?

WALTER KENDALL

FIGHTING FUND

WHO RULES BRITAIN?

EVERY worker knows the answer to that question and every worker fights to get a decent standard of living from those who DO rule.

The Bankers, Speculators and City gamblers ARE the rulers of Britain. The workers are the wealth producers.

You will think I have a nerve to repeat the appeal to strengthen the position of our paper. Well!!! without nerve our struggle against injustice would cease. Nerve with cash is what keeps your paper alive. So even though you will be fighting to remove this politically motivated gang of Tories from the Government of the country I underline the need for your continued financial as well as physical (selling the paper and bring it to the attention of

others) support. As with the miners (and how right they are) we want CASH ON THE TABLE.

All power to the workers — and over ninety per cent of our people are workers — let us all unite in the fight to get the Heath Government out and a Labour Government in. Send donations and contributions to me at: VOICE NEWSPAPERS, Subscription Dept., 73 Ridgway Place, London, S.W.19.

DONATIONS have been received from: M. Tydesley, Worsley, £1; J. Godfrey, Welwyn, 25p; R. W. Wright, London, 80p; D. O'Brien, Leamington, 50p; R. Pearce, Swindon, £1; D. Lawton, Hull, 50p; E. Heffer, Liverpool, 50p; J. Spencer, London, £1; E. & S. Yeo, Brighton, £2; W. Kendall, Oxford, £2; R. Fletcher, London, £1; V. Rabinovitch, Brighton, £1.

What is Voice?

WALTER KENDALL

MANY readers ask Voice sellers what is the paper's platform and aims. May I suggest the following?

VOICE is a working-class socialist paper dedicated to the establishment of workers' control and the ending of the exploitation of the many by the few.

VOICE believes that the ending of the political domination of the capitalist class and the construction of a socialist society based on workers' self administration, must be the work of the workers themselves.

VOICE affirms that the working class cannot be liberated, either by simple Parliamentary legislative action, by foreign armed forces, or by the action of any self-appointed elite, however well intentioned. Experience has shown that “short-cuts” lead to an elitism which

has nothing in common with socialism.

VOICE considers that a socialist society is impossible without the fullest possible democracy, a democracy fuller and not more constricted than that which exists in bourgeois society. VOICE accordingly seeks not to destroy the freedoms gained by the working class within capitalist society but to retain them and raise them to a vastly higher level.

VOICE in short does not consider that socialism will be legislated by Parliament, nor introduced summarily by a self-appointed “revolutionary” “elite”. Socialism can only be the result of the conscious self activity of the workers themselves.

STUDENTS

VOICE

INTRODUCING THE STUDENTS

by David J. Lawton

SINCE this is the opening of a new column on students' problems, politics and struggle, may I grant myself the liberty of a few opening words. The role of students in major periods of political change is remarkable and significant. Not just in the great days of 1968 but even earlier in the storming of the radio station in Budapest during the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 against Stalinist absolutism and even earlier in 1919, students raised the banner for Socialism in the "May 4th Movement" in China. On any socialist students' banner for a socialist republic should be the motto of the Plebs League, "Rise with your class, not out of your class."

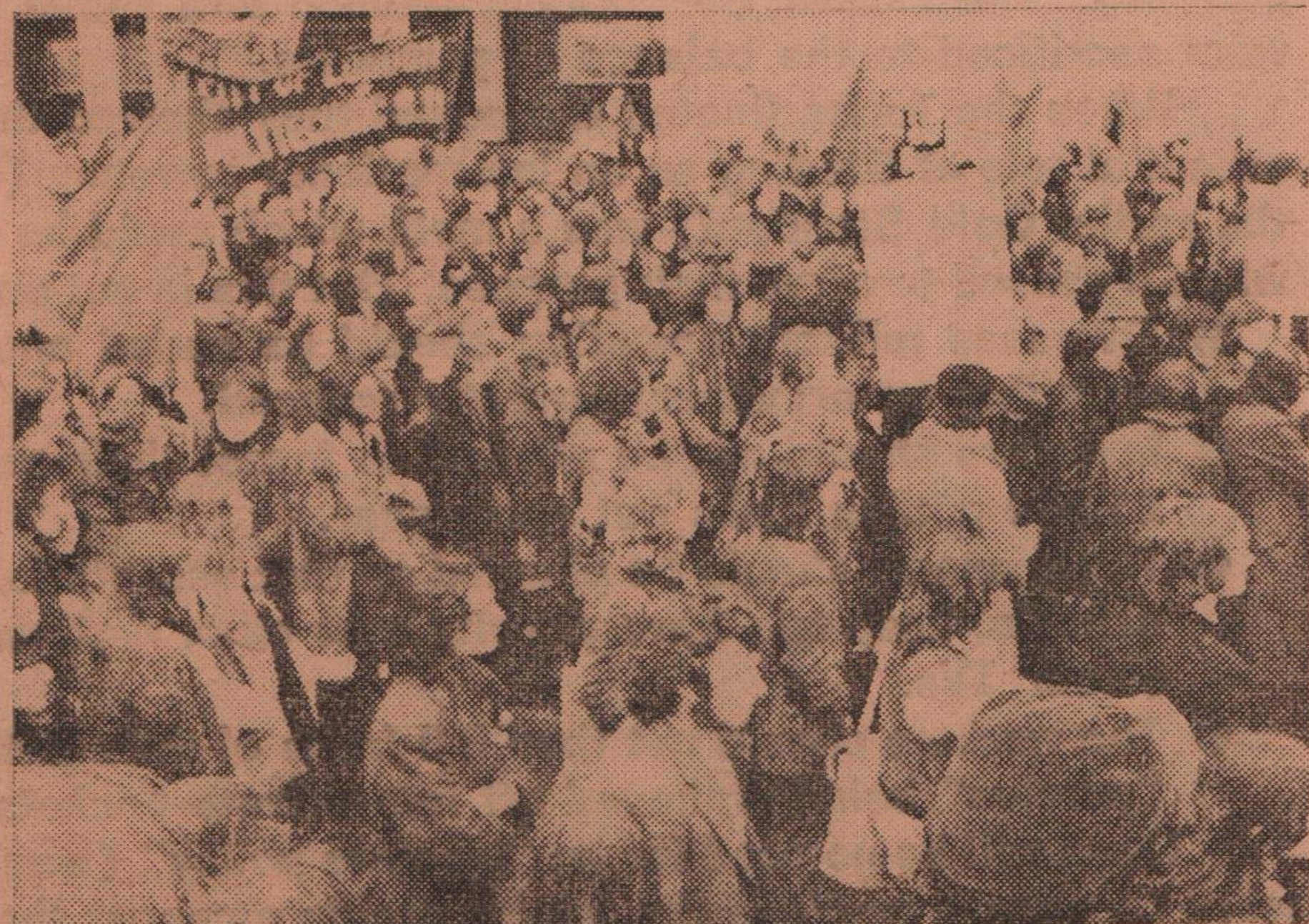
"The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie," wrote Marx in the Communist manifesto. So, though the student body has changed in its composition from being composed of the sons of the charmed elite, later of the sons and daughters of the property-owning big shots and only in the post-war years including the sons (and daughters) of the sons of toil, the state remains. The nature of student politics (involving issues like grants, discretionary grants,

refectory boycotts, university bookshop boycotts and sit-ins) involves of necessity, conflicts with the state.

Problems of students with regard to grants under the current economic (capitalist) crisis, the political problems and contributions of student organisations and, lastly, students' activities in relation to the rest of the labour movement are three main areas of concern for this column's coverage.

When the general influence of the trade unions and the Labour Party conferences shifted from the Right wing (à la Carron, Citrine, Woodcock, Gaitskill, Wilson) to the Left, as when Joe Gormley lost his seat on the Labour Party International Committee, and when those political dwarfs (or gnomes) of the "Broad Left" and Co., lost their influence at the recent NOLS conference, the pathological concern for democracy emerged. So too did the typical witch-hunt tactics. Marxism over-concentrated comes out like the Trotskyism of the ultra Left; over-diluted, it comes out like the opportunist policies of the "broad Left". Students and workers take note!

All news and views please to: 43 Gordon Street, Boulevard, Hull.



25,000 students from all over the country gathered together in London on Friday, February 8th, to demonstrate for fair grants for all students. They want an end to the present discrimination in the grants system — against students from low-income families, and against women.

All students should get an equal grant which should be enough to live on, even at a time

of soaring inflation. Until the students get fair grants, education will continue to be dominated by those who can afford to be educated. Students are campaigning for a minimum grant of £655 a year.

The students demonstrated outside the Department of Education and Science, and then went on to a rally at Hyde Park Corner.

SAVAGE sentences ranging from three years' jail to nine months' suspended sentences have been imposed on six building workers who were picketing during a strike.

Dennis Warren was called by the judge the "most militant", the leader and the prime mover of the pickets. He was sentenced to three years on each of the three counts of conspiracy to intimidate, unlawful assembly, and affray. The sentences are to run concurrently.

Eric Tomlinson was sentenced to two years on each count, to run concurrently. As this sentence was announced, the foreman of the jury was heard to exclaim "disgraceful". He then stood up and joined by another juror left the court.

Speaking from the dock before the sentences were passed, Mr Warren said: "It has been said in this court that this trial has nothing to do with politics. Among the ten million trade unionists in this country I doubt if you will find one who would agree with that statement."

"It is a fact of life that, due entirely to Acts of Parliament, every strike is now regarded as a political act. It therefore fol-

lows that every action taken in furtherance of an industrial dispute also becomes a political act."

"This is something not of the making of trade unions. Politically motivated interference acting on behalf of and under political pressure from employers, now means that no trade unionist can enter freely into negotiations with employers."

"The building employers by their contempt of the laws governing safety regulations are guilty of causing the deaths and maiming of workers. Yet they are not dealt with by the court."

Mr Bumble said: "The law is an ass." If he were here now, he would draw the conclusion that the law is quite clearly an instrument of the State to be used in the interests of a tiny majority against a majority.

"It is biased. It is class law, and nowhere has that been demonstrated more than in the prosecution case in this trial — the very nature of the charges, the delving into ancient Acts of Parliament to dredge up conspiracy shows this to be so."

"Was there a conspiracy? YES, there was, but not by the

pickets. The conspiracy began when the miners gave this government a good hiding last year, and I hope they do the same again this year.

"It developed when the government was forced to perform legal gymnastics to get five dockers out of prison after having only just put them there.

"The conspiracy was one between the Home Secretary, the employers and the police. It was conceived after pressure from Tory MPs who demanded changes in picketing laws," Mr Tomlinson added.

"I look forward to the day when the real culprits, the McAlpines, Wimpeys, Laings and Bovises and all their political puppets are in the dock facing charges of conspiracy and intimidating the workers from doing what is their lawful right, picketing.

"It is hoped that the union movement and the working class of this country will act now to ensure that another charade such as this will never take place again, and the right to picket or strike will be defended even at the cost of great personal hardship or individual freedom."

WHAT PRICE WEEKEND OVERTIME

by TONY STYGAL

JOHN works as a layout artist for an investment firm in London. He does overtime at weekends. He is exploited by his boss who only pays him £1.01 an hour for weekend work.

John has a widowed mother, five sisters and a brother, and has to live at home. He has been looking for a new job for four years; although he likes the work he doesn't get on with his workmates. Why can't he find a new job? Why doesn't he get on with his workmates? Why is he exploited?

John is deaf.

He can't get a new job because employees don't realise when they invite a deaf person for an interview that that person probably has a speech impediment. As soon as John

opens his mouth at an interview he has lost the job. Only ten or fifteen minutes of chat is necessary to be able to understand and be understood by a deaf person. Fifteen minutes isn't long to ask for a person's life.

Let's assume that John gets his new job, what is likely to happen? For a few months, life is probably good for John. He settles in, enjoys his work and gets on quite well with other workers. But after a while the other workers get lazy. It's too much trouble to make sure that "John" can see your face to enable him to read your lips. So he gets left out of the conversation.

That's not so bad because more work gets done by John. But then John gets the reputation of being a recluse and if he initiates a conversation he gets snubbed.

He becomes a "crawler" because the boss finds him more conscientious. The boss asks him to do more work; he gets more overtime; he is invaluable. He works on Saturdays and even on Sundays. The boss takes advantage and only pays time-and-a-quarter for all the overtime. John wants to leave but because he is deaf he can't find another job. What can he do?

John's story is true. Should we sit back and let this happen? Deaf workers need to be given an equal opportunity to earn their living. They must not be exploited as this will undercut others.

Employers, Union, Workers — help the deaf to help you — it only takes a little effort.

TONY STYGAL

EXPLOITATION IN THE RAG TRADE

THE National Union of Tailors & Garment Workers (NUTGW) is showing grave concern for the exploitation of immigrant workers in the rag trade, the majority of them working in nineteenth-century sweat shops, mostly slum factories, old shops, basements and out-door work.

As much of our cheap clothing is produced in these sweat shops, the main clothing manufacturers rely heavily on them. Most of these sweat shops are non-union shops because their workers are frightened to join for fear of losing their jobs. The language barrier also hampers the organisation of the union.

This exploitation is mainly centred in the east end of London. Areas traditionally housing immigrant workers, Aldgate, Tower Hamlets and the notorious Brick Lane area. At present these sweat shops are mainly staffed by Bengalis, Indians and West Indian immigrants. But as the flow of cheap labour has dried up due to the immigration acts of this country, the sweat shop system is exported to much cheaper labour abroad.

The NUTGW is well aware of the difficulties the overworked factory inspectors have and better liaison with inspectors and local councils to combat this problem is slowly developing.

But these cases can drag on for up to two years in the courts where the inspectors have acted.

Sweat shops are very often exempt from prosecution concerning fire regulations, i.e. as long as less than 20 people are employed in a basement and less than 10 people on a second floor. Small fires are very common on these kind of premises.

The workers in the sweat shops may earn up to £100 a week but the hourly rate may be low and a 60 to 80-hour week is not uncommon. The NUTGW is very concerned that the trade's bad image will discourage school leavers, thus reinforcing the reliance on cheap exploitable labour.

WHO RULES?

THE formation of a new government makes little difference to those who govern Britain. The real rulers are those with their hands on the levers of economic power — the two per cent of the population who own and control capital.

Tories and Liberals never tire of raising the cry of "one nation." They know that if the workers realised they are slaving to keep this two per cent in luxury, they would never be given the chance to form another government.

When these parties talk of "National Interest," they mean the interest of this tiny minority of politically motivated men who rob the rest of the population to satisfy their own greed, not the overwhelming majority who are the country's real workers, or those who struggle to make ends meet on a miserable pension after a lifetime of drudgery.

It is those whose share deals create massive redundancies in industry; property speculators who force up rents and business costs; and those whose expenditure on armaments, advertising and prestige projects like Concorde who hold the country to ransom, leaving insufficient resources for essential services: housing, health and welfare.

Yet the blame is put on the miners who demand a reasonable wage for risking their lives and health underground to supply the nation with essential fuel.

For over a century the ruling élite—Conservative, Liberal and Labour—have tried to impose an incomes policy to hold down wages and salaries, yet not interfere with prices and profits rising without limit.

In 1926 this élite was strong enough to reduce wages and successfully rode out the resulting General Strike.

Since then, British workers have steadily gained sufficient power to keep up with cost of living rises. Beyond this their role is still defensive. They have been powerless to resist health charges, growing poverty amongst the lower paid, pensioners and children, cuts in school milk and reduction of public investment for social purposes.

But the wealthy have received substantial tax cuts and despite the 'wage freeze,' company profits have risen by 27 per cent.

National Lock-out

It is a remarkable comment on the market economy that while half a million people are unemployed, the country is incapable of functioning unless others in employment work excessive hours.

The miners showed considerable restraint by banning overtime. They chose to work a normal week instead of the excessive hours necessary to provide a living wage.

The Government panicked. They refused to discuss the miners' claim and responded with a national lock-out—the three-day week. (This is an exact counterpart of the enforced reduction of wages of 1926).

The miners' union was obliged to call a national strike after a 4-1 majority vote of members in favour.

Rather than face the issues, the Government raised the biggest red scare since the Zinoviev Letter. (The first Labour Government in this country fell in 1924 after a press 'Red Scare.' They printed instructions to British Communists on subversion supposed to have come from Zinoviev, Chairman of the Communist International Executive).

At a recent meeting, Mick McGahey, Vice-President of the Miners' Union and a Communist, had said that IF troops were used against the miners they should be persuaded not to take 'peace-keeping' action against fellow members of the working class: "The use of lethal weapons and warlike skills, to kill or impose the fear of death, which we hope will cause peace-breakers to abandon their objectives." (Brigadier Bidwell, April 4th, 1973).

Immediately politicians and press picked this up as incitement to mutiny. It confirmed their worst fears about the "dangerous

band of militant extremists who are holding the country to ransom for their own political ends."

It is a pity the Government's intentions were not challenged—particularly after the totally unwarranted show of force at London Airport. This was intended to convince the working-class that the Government mean business. Brigadier Kitson admitted that the exercise was to accustom the public to tanks and armoured cars used against the civilian population.

In this light, McGahey's call to reason on the part of the troops seems remarkably moderate. One of the worst features of the episode was the cringing repudiation of McGahey's remarks by Wilson and the Labour leadership, and his subsequent withdrawal was unfortunate.

Parliamentary Labourism

The Parliamentary Labour Party has failed to give whole-hearted support to the miners. Another reminder that the Parliamentary Wing is isolating itself from the rank and file.

The problem is the bourgeois, anti-working-class traditions of the House of Commons. Until Labour M.P.s understand and repudiate this, even a Labour Government will be a reactionary force inhibiting the spread of common ownership and control.

The institutions found at Westminster are authoritarian, antiquated and upper class. They have no place in a libertarian, democratic-socialist system, where power is held by the people at the base, not by a small élite at the top.

This does not mean—as some revolutionaries say—that a Socialist Britain does not need a parliament. The first British Socialists, the Levellers and Diggers, encouraged Parliamentary reform for a true representation of the people.

This means the miners, steelworkers, shipbuilders, engineers, drivers and all those who produce the nation's wealth. The majority on both sides of the present House of Commons are lawyers, lecturers, directors and advertising men.

A weakness in the Parliamentary Left is the lack of a coherent plan to reform and democratise Parliament and Government. Until it has such a programme it will be tarred with the same brush as all other M.P.s in the eyes of the majority of the working class, whose electoral support will continue to be unenthusiastic.

Economic policy

What policies should Labour adopt now? Before Labour took office in 1964 we said Sterling should be dropped as an international currency. The Labour Government refused and social measures were sacrificed to the balance of payments.

When the Tories floated the pound they showed that the essential role of Sterling as an international currency (like that of the earlier Gold Standard) was a myth which could be discarded when it ceased to serve their purpose. But this is not enough:

- Overseas military spending should be ended and overall spending on armaments greatly reduced.
- Investors should not be allowed to invest their capital abroad. £1,200 million leaks out every year.
- The economy should be planned so that essentials, housing, schools, hospitals have priority over cars, motorways and colour TVs.
- The workers should get the "full fruits of their labour," with no "surplus" being siphoned off into private pockets.

There will be no need for an "incomes policy" (wage restraint) when those who produce the wealth decide amongst themselves how to distribute it. A 'Parliament of Labour' would not neglect those unable to work—pensioners, disabled and children. The unions have already shown concern for the unprivileged through campaigns for higher pensions, a national disability income, fully comprehensive education, free school milk and meals, etc.

They are infinitely more concerned than successive governments who have attempted to solve the problems of capitalism at the expense of the working class. Whoever controls industry governs Britain. The choice is workers' control in the interests of the community, or financiers' control in the interests of a tiny minority.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER:

Constitutional Government is being attacked.

Let all good citizens whose livelihood and labour have thus been put in peril bear with fortitude and patience the hardships with which they have been so suddenly confronted.

Stand behind the Government who are doing their part

confident that you will co-operate in the measures they have undertaken to preserve the liberties and privileges of the people of these islands.

The Laws of England are the People's birthright.

The laws are in your keeping.

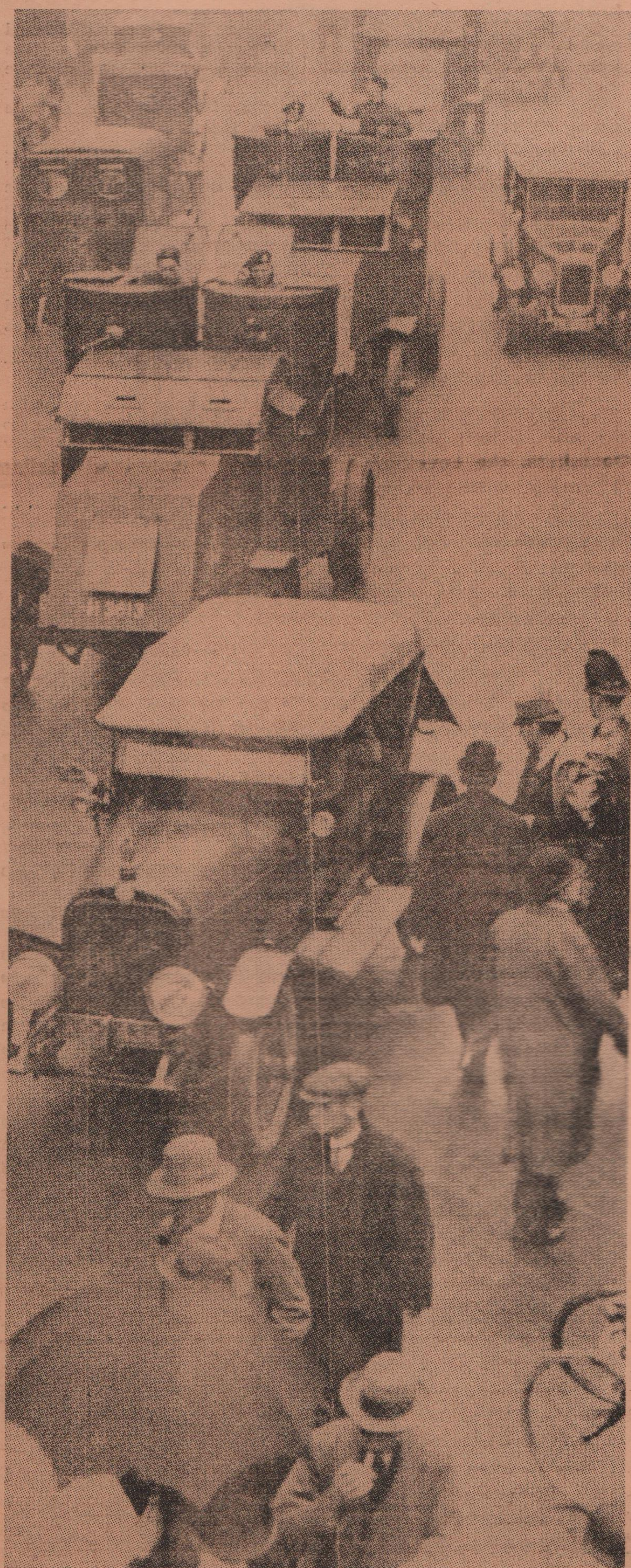
You have made Parliament their guardian

The General Strike is a challenge to Parliament and is the road to anarchy and ruin.

STANLEY BALDWIN.

Government poster
appealing for
support in
General Strike.

Below: picture of
troops in the streets
of London during
the General Strike.



British miners are the lowest paid in Western Europe, with a maximum basic wage over £30 less than miners in Belgium and West Germany and less even than fascist Spain.

W. Germany Basic wage £66.19

Belgium £66.00

Spain £48.54

France £26.47

Britain £25.29

COST OF LIVING RISE

Since the last General Election in June 1970 the cost of living index has risen by 46.2 per cent: in the last 12 months by 10.3 per cent.

PRICE OF 11% MORTGAGE

Raising mortgage rates to 11 per cent means that repayments over 25 years will amount to nearly three times the original loan. On a loan of £10,000, monthly repayment will be £99; total repayment will be £29,700.

COMPANY PROFITS RISING 27% A YEAR

Company profits in the first half of 1973 are estimated at £3,938 million, an annual rate of 27 per cent. Many firms are reporting record profits, e.g. (first half 1973):

Tube Investments	£16.3m.	101% increase
Bowater Corp.	£20.1m.	91% increase
Vickers	£7.1m.	115% increase
Geo. Wimpey	£12.8m.	133% increase
General Electric	£66.9m.	57% increase

HOUSE BUILDING AT NEW LOW

New houses completed in first half of 1973 fell to 148,400—15,500 less than same period last year, whose total was itself the lowest in 10 years.

COST OF ROYAL PALACES, 1973-74

Windsor Castle	£636,370
Buckingham Palace	£619,645
Hampton Court	£470,730
St. James Palace	£277,630
Holyrood House	£139,815
Kensington Palace	£69,050
Other properties, etc.	£122,760

£2,336,000

(Hansard, July 24th, 1973)

HOW TO TURN £100,000 INTO £446,680

"An investment of £100,000 could give an immediate income of £10,000 tax free or, after 15 years, a cash sum of £446,680 tax free which could give an income of over £44,000 per year tax free."

(Advertisement by Bevington Lowndes, 'Sunday Times,' Aug. 5th, 1973).

CHAIRMAN'S PAY

Twenty-five company chairmen were paid £1,084,486 last year, an annual average of over £43,000 each.

OVERSEAS INVESTMENT OVER £1,000m. A YEAR

Overseas investment in the first half of 1973 was £628m., an annual rate of over £1,200m. per annum. Total UK private overseas investment was £18,520m. at the end of 1972.

PROPERTY COMPANIES' ASSETS UP BY £1,150m.

Net assets of 54 property companies making their annual reports in 1973 rose from £2,199m. to £3,355m.

TANKS AT HEATHROW

"Conflict about the continuation of the security exercise concentrated on London Airport has arisen between Defence chiefs and the police. They suspect that the Home Office, which organised the operation, is now using it as a cover to gain maximum experience of collaborating with the Army against extremists of any kind."

(C. Pincher, 'Daily Express,' Jan. 6th, 1974).

The above material is published with acknowledgement to "Labour" Research, obtainable from LRD, 78 Blackfriars Road, London, SE1 1HF, 15p monthly, 18p post free. Annual subscription £2.16.

MULTINATIONAL GIANTS IN OILS AND CHEMICALS

By Bob Edwards, M.P. (National Officers, Transport & General Workers' Union and Chairman, Chemical Division I.C.F.)

FOR half a century chemical and oil production has been internationalised by seven major companies controlling 80 per cent of the oil supplies of the western world. In the past supplies have been deliberately withheld especially in Middle Eastern lands and North America, thus creating an artificial scarcity to maintain high prices. To prevent competition with their monopoly, development of oil from coal or coal calcification has been sabotaged.

The super profits of oil companies are the basic cause of inflation in the western world today. For example B.P. expect to increase profits over 1972 by 350 per cent to £250 million for 1973; Gulf Oil by 59 per cent; Texaco by 48 per cent; Mobil by 47 per cent and Shell by 36 per cent.

They used governments to establish sheikdoms in the Middle Eastern lands, giving military, political, and financial support to undemocratic rulers, sultans and sheiks. They were kept in power against their peoples' will and when in danger of being overthrown, military force was used against liberation movements. Today control is still maintained in Middle Eastern oils. Super profits are made by being accountable to no government but only to themselves.

Oil is now the basic raw material of the chemical industry constituting 60 per cent used for thousands of by-pro-

ducts: drugs, medicines, fertilisers, dyestuffs, plastics, etc., by simple chemical processes. Assets and profits are limitless. Some of the largest multinational companies in the world control the chemical section of the industry. Forty per cent of production in Britain for example is controlled by Imperial Chemical Industries.

They produce 39 chemicals without competition and nine basic dyestuffs under exclusive monopoly. Between the wars, I.C.I., American Dupont, IG Farben Industries of Germany and French Color signed cartel agreements allocating interests throughout the western world.

Production was controlled, and patents bought up and shared in control, to prevent competition and new products coming on to the market. New life-saving drugs were not produced lest they interfered with capital investments. For example, penicillin discovered in 1929, was not produced until the second world war, when it was needed to heal wounded servicemen. Other drugs were similarly kept off the market.

Two years ago I submitted an indictment against the Swiss-based firm of Hoffman La Roche, claiming they were making 1,000 per cent profits on two tranquillisers under their exclusive control, which they supply to our health service. Business amounted to £9 million a year. The Monopolies Commission considered that the drugs' prices

could be cut by 75 per cent and 60 per cent respectively, and still allow reasonable profits. They claimed that this company, through its British subsidiary had made £24 million in six years from the tranquillisers alone, and offered them to refund £11 million to the government, this representing the overcharge in prices. Hoffman La Roche are faced with similar enquiries elsewhere.

This emphasises the pharmaceutical industry's huge profits reaped from people's ill-health—profits which are elaborately covered up.

Cheap labour exploitation is a characteristic of these companies. The most recent example occurred in the Hoffman La Roche's Madrid factory where 170 women workers came out on strike over weekly pay equivalent to only a quarter of the wage received by women members of the Transport and General Workers' Union employed for the same company in Britain. Furthermore they worked eight hours a week longer.

A strike of chemical workers took place in Turkey, and after a world-wide campaign organised by the International Federation of Chemical Workers' Unions (ICF) and especially the Swiss Chemical Workers' Union, the parent company was shamed into increasing the workers' wage by 60 per cent at one stroke.

In my time, a share in Hoffman La Roche was worth only

6/4d.; now they are valued at £17,000 each.

There are no sanctions, at present against these companies apart from the Trade Union Movement who are challenging the firm's global investments, 60 per cent of which are aimed at increased production with less labour, and only 40 per cent in new production, thus creating closures and redundancies. A

Labour government should bring these huge concentrations of capital and production under public ownership and control to safeguard the British economy and, in addition, develop an international policy to outlaw the malpractices of these companies. Trade unions will need to toughen their challenge, otherwise within a decade collective bargaining will have to extend across the frontiers of the world.

ACQUISITION BILL PUBLIC LAND

A PARLIAMENTARY Bill to help secure a better future for the homeless and inadequately housed will be moved by Frank Allaun, MP for Salford East. The object is to reverse the soaring cost of land which cause house costs to be beyond the reach of most families. More attention will be given to good planning, based on social needs and population growth.

In his parliamentary speech he said that in 1923 a similar Bill was proposed by a Labour MP. Had it been accepted by the government, our people would not be suffering the housing tragedy that exists today.

Seven years ago Lord Wimborne inherited 350 acres of land in Dorset, estimated to be worth £120,000. He recently sold it to Poole Borough Council for £7.5 million. This example of rapid

inflation, Mr Allaun said, would have considerable effects on the house buyer and renter. The price of a council house in London is now £5,000 before a single brick is laid.

The Bill's principle stipulates that increases in land value, if caused by the efforts of the community and not by the owner, should be accountable to the community only.

There are three basic features of the Bill.

1 Land will be compensated at its existing use value, i.e. as derelict, dock land, etc.

2 There should be compulsory purchase.

3 A ten-year land bank, with yearly additions, available to local authorities so they may plan ahead.

Mr Allaun considers the Bill "both right and popular" ... "a vote winner".

FAIRNESS AND REASON - A TORY ILLUSION

By Dan McGregor

IN the nineteenth century Charles Dickens and Charles Kingsley dramatically wrote on the injustice towards and suffering of the lower classes.

Now the present prime minister is betraying the same lack of sensitivity and blindness towards the truth emphasised in a quote from "The Times" of the 2nd February, 1974: "Take away Britain's traditional fairness and reason and we should not be the great nation that we are. Fairness and reason must be supported. The slide into unreason must stop now." He also stated that Britain's greatest resources were not oil and coal nor technical skills but a traditional belief in fairness and reason.

According to Heath, then, there has never been any poverty, unfairness or lack of reason, totally contrary to the socialist writings of the last century.

Charlie Booth (1891-1903), a ship owner and sociologist wrote a book entitled "Life and Labour of the people in London", designed to show: "The numerical relation of which poverty, misery and depravity bear to regular earnings to describe the general conditions under which each class lives. In the eyes of Heath today, these words would constitute a "Communist plot"—"an attempt to undermine the authority of democratic government".

Charles Kingsley, a churchman and founder of Christian Socialism also expressed the evil of Heath's belief in "the traditional

fairness and reason of our life". Heath, not only in this preposterous speech, but in every speech, continues to expose his indifference to, and ignorance of the facts.

This cruel society must be recognised. The message demanding a new society should be spread across the country — one based on need not greed: the return of a Labour Government.

HISTORY OF LABOUR AT NEW MUSEUM

By Walter Southgate

THE Trade Union Labour and Democratic History Society has been in existence for some time to try to dispel the apathy of trade unionists towards their own history.

Since the Combination Laws of 1799, workers have continually struggled to organise unions and advance and protect their standard of living. Employers have shown antagonism towards such unions by: lock outs, through acts of parliament and law decisions against the improvement of the workers' situation. The latest example of this is the Industrial Relations Act — a flagrant piece of class legislation to hamper the unions.

Until ten years ago this long struggle has never been shown in a visual documentary form for the nation. Now, this society — the TULC embraces individual membership and affiliations from Trade Unions,

Trade Councils, etc., and occasionally puts on educational exhibitions in association with local bodies. It is non-political dealing only with the preservation and presentation of history.

The society's latest appeal to the movement has raised over £1,000 to equip a National Museum of Labour History. The Limehouse Town Hall has been loaned for this purpose by the Tower Hamlets Borough Council, and it is hoped it will be opened in a few months' time for the spectacular event.

Why not join the society and help in this work? Individual membership is 50p a year and £2 p.a. for Trade Union and societies affiliations.

Write, then, to either: Henry Fry, Secretary, TULC, 31 Chartfield Road, Reigate, Surrey, or Walter Southgate, Membership Secretary, "Kelsale", Colchester Road, Harold Park, Romford, Essex.

VOICE LIBRARY

Workers' Control (Ernie Roberts)	£2.25
Capital, Inflation and the Multinationals (Levinson)	£1.50
State Ownership, Workers' Control and Socialism (Kendall)	10p
Problems of Trade Union Democracy (Fletcher)	10p
Leninism or Marxism? (Luxemburg)	7½p
The Way Forward to Workers' Control (Scanlon)	7½p
Workers' Control and the Transatlantic Company (Scanlon)	7½p
Workers' Control (IWC Debate: Tony Benn and others)	15p
Catching Up With The Times: TUC and Workers' Control (Coates and Topham)	15p
The "Big Flame" and What is the IWC? (Barrett-Brown/Coates)	4p
How and Why Industry Must be Democratised (Coates/Williams)	75p
Docks Three: A National Programme (Greendale/Nicholson)	8p
Democracy in the Motor Industry (ed. Coates)	30p
Discrimination Against Women (LP report)	20p
Women and the Struggle for Workers' Control (Wise)	12p
The Struggle for Quebec (Fekete/Rabinovitch/Campbell)	30p
Co-Determination: German Workers' Rights (DGB)	10p
Unions in Europe (Kendall/Marx)	30p
Remembering John Maclean (McShane)	10p
Workers' Participation and Workers' Control (Kendall)	5p
John MacLean (Biography), Nan Wilton	£1.50

Available from

VOICE Library, 79 Thrale Road, London, S.W.16
Postal charges: 4p on orders under 50p; 6p on orders between 50p and £1.

LABOUR MOVEMENT IN EUROPE

Walter Kendall's new book giving the full facts for the first time, will be published by Allen Lane-Penguin June 1974

Special rates for VOICE readers
£2.50 paperback — £5.00 hardback

VOICE

LETTERS

Contributions longer than 150 words may be cut.

RUSKIN SUPPORT

Tuesday, January 22nd, 1974.

DEAR COMRADE,—Please find enclosed a cheque for £10 to help you continue the very important and valuable contribution that your paper makes within the Labour Movement.

Yours fraternally,

DAVE DOWLING

Secretary, Ruskin College
Students' Association.

"MAGNIFICENT"

January 6th, 1974.

DEAR COMRADES,—I have just read the last month's edition of "Labour's Voice". I think you are doing a magnificent job—far better than I did when I used to edit the "Voice".

I enclose a cheque for £20 which I hope you will use to encourage circulation, so that you will be able to serve the movement even more influentially.

With best wishes for success in 1974

and greetings from

FRANK ALLAUN, M.P.

Manchester 21.

'PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY'

DEAR COMRADE,—May I add the following thoughts to the "Principles of Democracy" Manifesto published in VOICE in November 1973.

(1) Capitalism is inherently undemocratic. The working-class struggle is democratic in its direction, to the extent to which it is orientated towards the elimination of an oligarchy of wealth, privilege, and political power.

(2) While democracy at the workplace is critical, people have need of self-governing organisations as residents of communities; and as citizens and consumers.

(3) Democracy inside and outside of work organisations means equal rights, and less inequality, for oppressed groups including women, racial and ethnic minorities, and low-status workers.

(4) The struggle for democracy has penetrated many kinds of organisations which socialists have tended to neglect: professional societies, universities, and even churches. There have been remarkable similarities in the demands for democratic rights and organisational re-structuring

raised by reform groups in such organisations, and in the labour movement. Such similarities have not been accidental, but have flowed largely from the American civil rights movement and from the New Left in various countries. Revolutionary democrats will look with sympathy on the struggle for democracy in most organisations which are not inherently anti-working class.

(5) The struggle for democracy is fully applicable to so-called Communist countries.

(6) Concerning the general perspective within which the manifesto falls, it should be noted that the struggle for democracy can be profoundly unsettling and motivating. It may be true that in the past democracy was hardly ever an issue "in itself", but democracy as a slogan can achieve a certain appeal in its own right. Indeed, socialism is advanced to the extent that it does. At any rate, democracy is not a "reform" which can readily be granted, or achieved once and for all.

ALAN GRANT

Boston, Mass.

UNITY IS STRENGTH

DEAR COMRADE,—In the January issue Walter Kendall challenged me "to produce a single item . . . in which VOICE has not stood four square with Britain's workers against the bosses". I never doubted the support, VOICE (to which I devote a good share of my time) gives to the workers in this country. But the paper gives, though unwittingly, also support to the bosses, by "Voicing" their propaganda lie, that fascist and Communist regimes are equally bad, e.g. in the cartoon comparing Chile and Czechoslovakia or by "blasting Union bureaucrats in Russia and America". Hence, I am not ashamed of calling the space devoted to these contributions "Voice of the Monopolies".

We have since seen the spectacle of the Tories trying to get out of a tight corner by a bit of anti-communist witch hunting and Wilson and Co. following Du Cann's anti-communist motion with a rather similar one of their own. If anybody has to be ashamed, it is those who prepared the climate for Du Cann, Wilson and Callaghan, with their own attacks on Communists.

In the February issue, Sam Bornstein takes anti-Communism one step further by debunking the heroes of the Clyde; to "Tell the Truth", he quotes as his authority a Professor, whom he describes himself as "connected with a semi-fascist body". That happens to a sincere old socialist campaigner, like Sam, once he is bitten by the anti-red bug!

Why do these comrades follow the example of the mass media, and do not "Tell the Truth", so relevant for the British worker, that in the Soviet Union and East Germany the State controlled prices of all consumer goods have remained unchanged since twenty years, whilst wages go up regularly according to plan?

Reverting to Walter Kendall in the January VOICE, he writes on another page: "Socialists who forget their Socialism in time of crisis . . . pave the way for reaction as German Socialists and Communists found to their cost in 1933". I have seen myself the death cells of the Social-democratic leader Breitscheid and the Communist leader Thaelmann next door to each other, in the Buchenwald concentration camp. That's where hostility between "Democratic Socialists" and Communists leads to!

I agree with Ian Bullock that we do not want a "monolithic horde of Zombies", but people who know where they stand with regard to all issues. Fortunately, however, there are no fundamental differences between the responses of VOICE and our British Communist brethren to the challenges of the British bourgeoisie, which is hell bent on a semi-fascist solution of its problems.

I am confident that any VOICE reader, if in the chair of a meeting on "The Three Days' Week" or "The Answer: Workers' Control" etc., would rule out of order a speaker, who would enlarge on "Russian Bureaucracy", "Mental Homes in Russia" etc. Let's impose on ourselves the same discipline in our paper and give a lead in forging working-class unity in our present battle!

J. SPENCER
LONDON N.4.

MORE SACKING AT LUCAS

LUCAS AEROSPACE was set up in the late 'sixties when the Lucas organisation took over sections of A.E.I., English Electric and Hobsons, Wolverhampton. The merger of these with the company's own aerospace activities at Willesden, Hemel Hempstead and Birmingham was aided with taxpayers' money by the Labour Government with payments of approximately £3½ million through the Industrial Reorganisation Corporation.

At the time of its formation there were 18,000 highly skilled workers in Lucas Aerospace. During the past five years this has been reduced to 13,000 in a series of wanton sackings. This in spite of the fact that the actual turnover has been increased. On January 18th the company announced its intention to cut its dwindling workforce by a further 800. The management barefacedly admitted that it was not due to loss of orders; indeed many sites are actually overloaded. The reasons is very simple—PROFITS. The company says it has invested £44 million in aerospace with business turnover of £63 million and it pays £34 million in wages. This yields 3 per cent profits (they say), so in the very worst Weinstock tradition of "people last and profits first", 800 are to be chopped.



Three years ago the Lucas workforce set about building a Combine Committee which would represent the workers throughout the whole of the country and irrespective of the unions to which they belonged.

During the three years the Lucas Aerospace Combine has gone from strength to strength. During the past 18 months when the company attempted to close down the Willesden factory, transfer of products, technical know-how and equipment was completely blocked by the Combine Committee throughout the rest of the group, and the plant is now to stay open.

The shop-stewards made it clear to the company that there will be no more enforced sackings throughout the company. When it refused to withdraw the sacking notices, the Combine Committee embarked upon a series of guerilla actions at all sites.

Firstly, there were mass meetings at every location to approve and discuss the shop-stewards' proposals. Immediately an overtime ban was imposed followed by a rigid work-to-rule. The staff refused to use any telephones, internal or external, and in so many plants the switchboard staff were withdrawn to prevent management doing so. At two sites, the computerised production control and wages system was disrupted and is inoperable. In others Telex staff were withdrawn. The withdrawal of key dispatch staffs at many of the plants has prevented the inter-factory transfer of goods. If the company persists with its sacking proposals, these sanctions will be intensified gradually.

BILL HOLMES, Wolverhampton.



STOP PRESS — As a result of pressure described above a closure of the Willesden plant has been withdrawn by the firm indefinitely.

Industrial Notes



Send your news to: Ernest Jones,
73 Ridgway Place, London, S.W.19.

'SO-CALLED' PRESS

THE attacks by the national Press on trade unions are so common as to be a regular feature of British life.

The anti-union campaign operates on various levels. Some papers, the more honest ones generally, just report union activities and leaders' statements right out of context so as to place them in an unfavourable light.

Other papers make a big point of reporting non-news — "There was no violence on the miners' picket line last night" or "We have just been told that Mr Lawrence Daly has stopped beating his wife."

Many papers, and TV news too, always refer derisively to left wingers as, "the self-styled leader of . . .", "the so-called revolutionary Mr . . ." or "the self-confessed Communist . . ." You don't hear Heath referred to as "the self-styled organist of Sidcup", or Barber talked of as the "so-called Chancellor".

Papers like the "Guardian", with a facade of radicalism, have to adopt a more subtle technique which involves denying that words have the meaning commonly associated with them. For example, you'd think that a

union like the AUEW, which adopts a policy of letting workers ratify pay deals at mass meetings or gatherings of stewards, would be called "democratic".

Not so. Comparing this with ETU practice, the "Guardian" refers to it as "an abdication of leadership". By contrast the ETU leaders are applauded for " . . . their realism, their bargaining skill and their ability to lead."

And what would you say if you heard of an organisation that had national officers under the supervision of a rank-and-file delegate policy-making body and with a carefully worked-out, detailed rule book to guide their procedure?

Again, no doubt you'd say it sounded like a fairly democratic organisation. That is unless you happened to be a journalist working on the "Guardian" writing about the AUEW. Then you'd refer to it as "The unwieldy AUEW with its complicated rule book, together with the overwhelming supremacy of its national committee, which makes officials prisoners of union policy."

It makes democracy sound very sinister doesn't it?

CASUALTY COUNT

**Old King Coal
Is a jolly old soul,
And a jolly old soul is he;
He thinks it fine sport,
And so does his court,
To shoot the miners, free.**

—Taken from JUSTICE, 1898, the weekly newspaper of the Social - Democratic Party, the first Marxist socialist party in Britain.

★ ★ ★

If you think the above poem is exaggerating, then consider a few of these facts. In the modern period, the British Army and the Navy have been used regularly to protect strike-breaking and to "protect property".

In 1893, during the first ever national coal strike, two miners were shot dead by troops sent to Featherstone (near Pontefract) in Yorkshire.

In 1893, as well, two Navy gunboats, 250 soldiers and massive police reinforcements were sent to Hull, with the object of protecting blacklegs who had taken the jobs of locked-out sailors and dockers.

In 1898, the Army sent soldiers into parts of South Wales for the duration of the Great Coal Strike, lasting five months.

In 1910, Winston Churchill, then Home Secretary in the Liberal Government, sent the troops into the Welsh mining valleys for the duration of the coal strike. At Tonypandy, troops armed with bayonets con-

fronted the strikers. Overall, at least one miner was killed, and 500 injured.

In 1911, Winston Churchill sent Army troops to 27 different locations, and in August, 1911, two strikers were shot dead by troops.

In 1912, the Army was again sent to striking areas, this time in the North-West. Two Navy gunboats were sent up the Mersey River, to train their guns on Liverpool. Tom Mann and three others were charged with "sedition" for issuing a leaflet which asked soldiers not to shoot on their working-class brothers.

In 1926, the Army was used extensively to break through picket lines, during the General Strike.

Now, we don't want to overstate the facts. It is worth remembering that in Poland only two years ago, it was officially announced that 45 workers were killed during the wave of strikes.

But the British record speaks for itself. In every period of serious and rising class tensions, in the mid-1890s, in 1910-1912, and in 1926, the troops have been sent in.

What will happen in 1974, and in 1975?

—VIC RABINOVITCH

COUNTER ATTACK

FLEET STREET journalists meeting on the eve of the miners' strike succeeded in defeating a resolution from their Central London Branch committee which would have instructed members working on the national newspapers to ensure fair reporting and comment on the strike.

This was a defeat for the left and was not unexpected. However, the fact that the move was made at all is a step forward for the traditionally elitist and conservative-minded National Union of Journalists. Strong opposition to the motion was mounted by the right-wing faction in the branch led by members of the Daily Express staff.

The resolution was a "gross insult" to members of the NUJ, they argued. Most newspapers, including the Daily Express, they said, were not identified with any political party. They must defend themselves against this attempted "censorship" and "interference with the freedom of the press."

The defeated resolution, which was moved by Paul Carden of the Daily Mirror and seconded by Jeremy Bugler from the Observer, had the branch committee's backing. In fact it specifically reaffirmed its "support for the right of free speech."

It went on to say: "In doing so, it (the branch) asserts that this right is not the sole prerogative of newspaper publishers and others who customarily vilify and distort the aims of trade unionists seeking to achieve improvements in their wages and conditions."

After reminding all branch members of their "responsibility of ensuring that facts are fully and fairly represented, that stories are not angled or distorted to suit editorial policy, and that comment is scrupulously fair," the resolution stated: "The Branch instructs all chapels to ensure that these

guidelines are implemented in their respective papers."

"Should there be any breach of these guidelines, chapels are instructed to demand that a statement dissociating the editorial employees from offending stories and comment be published on the same pages as the offending material."

Obviously this was all too much for the gentlemen of the Tory press, to swallow at one go. By 40 votes to 30 they carried an amendment which simply pointed out that the journalists' union already had a Code of Professional Conduct which laid down a duty of fair reporting, and stated that this was observed by the vast majority of journalists.

However, sections of the print workers' unions have also been stepping up demands for fair play for the Labour movement. On February 5th, the same day that the NUJ turned down the resolution on the miners' strike, NATSOPA general secretary Richard Briginshaw issued a circular asking members to "act in defence of the miners wherever they can and to give them such support, financial and industrial, as may be proper in any given circumstances."

Rank-and-file print workers had already taken matters into their own hands in December and January when they objected to printing the "Reds Under the Beds" advertisements from Aims of Industry. Production was held up on The Times, Daily Telegraph and Sunday Express. The Express was forced to print a statement from the NATSOPA night machine chapel and the SOGAT chapel dissociating them from the right-wing propaganda.

These latest actions are shots in a continuing battle over the control and ownership of the mass media in Britain. What is needed is for journalists and print workers to come together and co-ordinate their efforts in a joint campaign for workers' control of the press.

—JOHN JENNINGS (NUJ)



• their share

PROFITS per employee of the five largest employers in Britain in 1971-2 were as follows:

General Electric	£436
British Leyland	£272
ICI	£1,060
Courtaulds	£537
Grand Metropolitan	£685

★ ★ ★

• what we don't want

WATNEYS, the brewer of some of the worst beer in Britain, is facing an embarrassing situation at Mortlake brewery. Large numbers of its employees are to be found at dinner time drinking at one of its rival's pubs.

"We wouldn't be caught supping that stuff at any price," one of the workers told VOICE. And you can judge the sincerity of that statement when you realise that Watney's provide free beer to its employees.

★ ★ ★

• even-handed

THE National Front sympathiser who plastered the TUC headquarters with right-wing slogans was fined five pounds.

Just prior to that, three left-wing students who were caught in Hove sticking fly posters on building site hoardings were each fined fifty pounds.

Justice?

It's what Britain's famous for.

★ ★ ★

• our share

ACCORDING to Press reports the average worker is now making £40 per week.

What they don't say is that this average includes doctors, lawyers, "literary, artistic and sporting personalities" and other such typical workers.

If these people are excluded, the average earnings of full-time manual workers works out at £38. Of this £6.2 is overtime; £3.6 comes as a result of productivity deals (i.e. working harder); and £1 for working at night.

Whoever the £40 worker is he is clearly not the average manual worker.

SENT TO COVENTRY

WORD has just reached us of a series of courses being offered by the Coventry and District Engineering Employers' Association. Designed primarily for managerial and supervisory grades, the nature of the courses should be of interest to all trade unionists.

The first one, in co-operation with the Coventry Constabulary, and with the blessing of the Chief Constable of Warwickshire, is a series of lectures on law and prevention of crime in industrial premises.

The next is all about reducing indirect payroll costs. That, to you and me, means speed up and redundancies for engineering and drawing office; production planning and control; sales; marketing; toolroom; maintenance and warehouse personnel. As the Coventry bosses say, while there has been a concerted effort to control direct production costs, the area of indirect costs has remained "relatively unexplored."

The final course is called "Work Study Appreciation" and sounds just the job for all you sour pussers who don't at the moment appreciate work study. The announcement promises that after the course participants should:

(a) "Co-operate more effectively in the application of method and time study;

(b) "Accept the importance of sound work measurement for equitable payment."

Anybody who finds he has time on his hands with the three-day week and doesn't mind spending £125 (plus £9 VAT) on fees should present himself at the Coventry Management Training Centre on May 8th. To avoid arousing suspicion pin stripe suits should be worn and a "Financial Times" carried under the arm.

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