

WORKERS PRESS

INCORPORATING THE NEWSLETTER • MONDAY APRIL 30, 1973 • No 1060 • 4p

THE DAILY ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

Mobilize the united strength of the working class

Clear out the TUC traitors

MAY DAY MANIFESTO OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

Force the Tory govt to resign

Capitalism in crisis

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change the enormous deficits in the US balance of payments and by the end of the year, the dollar was again in deep trouble.

The final collapse of fixed parities early this year and the adoption of universal floating has done nothing to stabilize the situation. Currencies are still being driven down or upwards in value in response to balance of payments deficits of the different capitalist nations. As a consequence, international credit and trading operations are becoming increasingly difficult.

The massive US balance-of-payments deficit has led to a further devaluation of the dollar, and a general distrust of paper money. The flight into gold continues. It now stands at over \$90 an ounce and US financiers predict \$120 before long.

As currency declines in value the growth of world-wide inflation is inexorable. Capitalist countries have undermined their own currencies in vain attempts to expand their way out of the crisis of their economic system.

The more they print paper money, the deeper their crisis becomes, based as it is on an over-production of capital itself relative to the amount of surplus

value that can be squeezed out of the world's working class.

The attempts to start reflationary booms by creating more fictitious capital only puts off the day of reckoning for a while and also ensures that the economic crash, when it comes, will be on a far more devastating scale than 1929.

The only way the ruling classes of the capitalist countries can try to overcome this crisis is first of all to make their own working classes bear the cost of curbing inflation by taking enormous cuts in their living standards and producing far more surplus value in return for far less goods to consume.

This is the reason for Phase Two and the Tory state pay laws. The Tories conspire to let prices rise to the full extent that the pent-up inflationary spiral has taken them while wages remain at a standstill—in a word introducing wage-cutting.

If allowed to continue, it will lead to a permanent reduction in workers' living standards to probably less than one quarter of what they are today. It will lead to an intensification of the trade war and the rapid development of a world slump.

Either the socialist revolution or dictatorship and nuclear war

WE SAY emphatically that this cannot happen without a revolutionary crisis maturing. The working class cannot be driven back on such an international scale without a period of turmoil, of wars and revolutions.

The ruling class cannot impose such a solution on the working class without first destroying the organized class strength of workers in their trade unions and political parties. Such an attempt would provoke civil war.

The alternative way for the capitalists to try to overcome their crisis with their system intact is to whip up the growing trade war into a shooting war—the third nuclear war.

We solemnly warn the labour movement that the economic and political conditions are being created for a drive towards dictatorship and fascism simultaneously with a drive towards the third imperialist war.

Inflation has created enormous problems for the workers and peasants of the colonial and semi-colonial countries. It takes the form of a drastic reduction in aid programmes, a growing

difficulty with credit facilities and a threatened collapse of raw materials markets.

This enormously accelerates conditions for revolution in a situation where hunger and starvation predominate.

It is this crisis in the colonial countries which could well become the sparking off point for World War III. There is no peace in Vietnam. Japan is once more turning towards rearmament. With American connivance Japan hopes to become the predominant power once again in the Far East. A major conflict with China is inevitable if this policy continues uninterrupted.

Dr Henry Kissinger's latest proposals for the military organization of capitalist Europe amount to an updating of the long-standing plans for the other theatre of world war against the Soviet Union and East Europe.

Despite the degeneration of the Soviet bureaucracy and the transformation of the CPSU by Stalin into the major agency of counter-revolution in the world, the imperialist camp's main drive

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01-622 7029.

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DEMONSTRATE TUES. MAY 1ST



DEFEND BASIC DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS
BUILD THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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STEEL:

EBBW VALE LEADERS HAVE FALSE HOPE OF REPRIEVE

After only three weeks the national rank-and-file steel action committee is falling apart.

Leaders at Ebbw Vale steelworks, South Wales, where 4,500 men are due to be sacked, have announced their withdrawal.

And they say they will ignore the committee's call for a one-day industry-wide stoppage on May 1 in protest against the closures announced in the Tory White Paper.

The decision takes the 'plant chauvinism' which characterized the special Connah's Quay, North Wales, conference on April 16 to its logical conclusion.

The Ebbw Vale works' council plainly hopes that if they keep their noses clean the British Steel Corporation's promise to negotiate closure dates may yet be turned into a wholesale reprieve for the works.

And the action committee at East Moors Works, Cardiff, has never broken from the belief that with good management a new works can be phased in and many of the threatened 4,100 jobs saved.

Illusions

Although they called the national action committee's conference, the Shotton leaders in North Wales have their share of illusions they can save 6,500 jobs by being 'reasonable' men.

These moods are also behind last Tuesday's move by the Steel Industry Management Association to use court action if necessary to force the BSC to reveal the grounds on which Shotton is to be shut.

In addition, works' leaders have allowed themselves to be fobbed off with the vague promise from steel union leaders that they will act where sackings are not matched by the availability of alternative jobs.

It is this belief that underlies Ebbw Vale committee chairman Mr Colin Hudson's explanation: 'We put our trust in the national official movement.'

The stark truth none of the action committees will face is that closure is not related to plant profitability, but to industry-wide profitability.

Ebbw Vale, Cardiff and Shotton all make money and the illusion is that this is all that is needed for them to be kept open.

The fact is that the BSC as a whole is in serious difficulty unless the old, costly, open-hearth process can be phased out and the cheaper more modern basic oxygen system brought in.

The challenge is industry-wide change—backed by the government. It can only be fought on an industry-wide basis. This means on a political basis.

The Tories cannot be 'persuaded' to scrap the plan to modernize BSC. They can only be stopped by a serious and decisive fight for the right to work.

This campaign must be aimed at creating the conditions in which the Tories will be forced to resign, paving the way for the election of a Labour government which can be forced by mass action to implement genuine socialist policies.

The action committees are riddled with a second major mistaken belief that if they can only hold on until Labour gets back to power their jobs will automatically be safe.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Michael Foot (representing Ebbw Vale) and a galaxy of other Labour MPs have said publicly time and again that they are not opposed to modernization.

They are opposed to the manner of it under the Tory government; to its social callousness.

Labour in power would not



One of a series of demonstrations by Shotton workers against the proposed closure of the Deeside works. Inset: Colin Hudson, Ebbw Vale action committee chairman.

end the process of changes in the steel industry, but rather they would try to make them more endurable.

From 1900 and before it has always been the role of reformist social democracy to temper the worst social excesses of capitalism while doing nothing at all to put an end to the monster responsible.

Furthermore in two years' time Labour will not be able to put the clocks back, even if they wanted to.

By then not only the basic oxygen process, but the new innovations for large-scale capital intensive working in rolling will be under way.

Lost forever

Even if the trade unions and the Labour Party between them were to succeed in cushioning the social effects of the closures, they will be job opportunities lost forever with all the frightful consequences for the steel

communities.

The fight for the right to work and against the loss of job opportunities in the steel industry is one which must be stepped up if unemployment is to be avoided and whole communities like Ebbw Vale and Shotton are not to wither away.

It is also a struggle which is inseparable from the struggle to build an alternative revolutionary leadership in the trade union and labour movement.

A new English edition of the 'First Five Years of the Communist International' incorporating hitherto unpublished material from Volume XIII of Trotsky's 'Works'

NEW EDITION

The First Five Years of the Communist International
This first volume of Trotsky's writings and speeches for the Communist International covers the period of its first three Congresses when the post-war revolutionary upsurge reached its peak and then began to recede. It establishes, without fear of contradiction, the important role which he played in the foundation of this, the Third workers' International, and in the formation and early development of the French, German and Italian Communist Parties. At this time the theory of 'socialism in one country' had not been invented and Joseph Stalin was still a second-line Bolshevik leader who played no part in the international movement which he was later to pervert and eventually destroy.

Price: £1.50, 421 pages. Available from:
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28 Charlotte Street, London, W1
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PENNY-PINCHING IN ABERFAN

Residents of Aberfan, South Wales, claim the removal of tips near the one which killed over a hundred people — the majority of them children — is being used to make fat profits.

Instead of merely being carted away in the shortest possible time, tip material is being processed for coal.

Once the fuel has been salvaged, the shale is then distributed over the 28-acre Grove Field.

But without reclamation, the residents feel the two tips on either side of the Aberfan Road could be cleared more rapidly.

The work is already in its sixth month and the National Coal Board, which is responsible for the removals, says it is likely to go on for another year.

A Coal Board spokesman

denies that any profit is being made.

But the whole project is an outstanding example of Tory penny-pinching in the face of a most horrible disaster.

The managing director of Ryan Industrial Fuels, contractors to the NCB, Mr George Tomkins, said that about 10 per cent of coal was being yielded by the reclamation process.

He added: 'This way it helps to pay for the operation.'

Mr Stewart Phillips, whose home overlooks the tip site, said: 'It seems to be turning into a commercial venture. It is bound to take longer when the coal is being taken from the shale. We want it completed in the quickest possible time.'

Mrs Annette Griffiths, a teacher, said: 'It looks like a miniature colliery. If they are going to do good here, why does there have to be a profit? This is going to slow the process down. We have seen enough coal in Aberfan.'

ANTI-PICKET SQUAD — THERE'S MORE IN RESERVE

The massive police force that made up the special anti-picket squad used against Hull dockers recently was only the tip of the law and order iceberg.

Mark Carlisle, a junior minister at the Home Office has revealed that 200 police were on duty outside Barchard's Wharf, Hull, when a cargo of timber was being unloaded by labour not enjoying the privileges of the National Dock Labour Scheme.

But the minister said that a further 'substantial' number of police were held in reserve. They came from the Bradford, Leeds, Sheffield, Rotherham, west Yorkshire, York and the north east Yorkshire forces as well as from Hull.

The operation must have taken considerable planning but Carlisle would not reveal how much advanced notice Barchard's had given the Hull Chief Constable of their intention to unload the boat.

Hull dockers say they recognized many faces from last year's clashes when police sent massive forces to keep private wharfs open around Hull during last year's dockers' strike.

Answering Hull Labour MP Kevin McNamara, Carlisle said: 'The extra cost of the operation is not yet known. Advanced information was given to the Chief Constable but I do not think it right to go into detail.'

TREBLE PROFITS AND PRICES UP

Despite almost trebling its profits in 1972, the Esso Petroleum Company, a subsidiary of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, wants an increase in the price of crude oil.

In its annual report the company states: 'Whilst we must endeavour during 1973 to contain the extra costs generated inside the United Kingdom, it is not possible to contain the massive cost increases in the price of crude oil.'

Pre-tax profits for 1972 were £47,053,000 compared to £16,337,000 in 1971. Turnover increased by some £46,600,000 to £723,953,000.

IRELAND'S LABOUR PARTY BECOMES A RUBBER STAMP FOR FINE GAEL

Labour Party leaders in Eire are celebrating their 'victory' within the government they share with the right-wing Fine Gael Party.

There is the belief that they did well out of the share-out of posts in the government and there are some who say

BY IAN YEATS

Mrs Margaret Bailey is afraid to answer her front door to anyone and cannot sleep at night.

She is terrified that she will get another midnight visit at her Harlesden, north-west London home by men who broke down the door and searched her flat.

On Monday April 8, 60-year-old widow Mrs Bailey was sitting quietly with her son watching 'Scales of Justice' on television.

At about ten minutes to one after the programme had ended they decided to go to bed.

Mrs Bailey claims her 21-year-old son, Peter, came home from the musical instrument factory where he works and flopped into an armchair to watch television all evening.

Mrs Bailey says he prepared for bed while she went down two flights of steep stairs to leave some bottles out for the milkman.

As she put the bottles out she claims she saw two youth running along an alleyway opposite her front door.

She took no notice, closed the door and slid the top bolt into position. Since her husband died, Mrs Bailey has been extra anxious about security.

As she bent down to close the bottom bolt she heard a furious hammering on the door.

A voice shouted 'open up' but, frightened out of her wits, she refused. 'I thought it was drunks,' Mrs Bailey told me. 'We get a lot of them in that doorway.'



Her entrance is recessed next door to a steel-shuttered greengrocer's shop.

Seconds later, while she stood petrified in the hallway, a voice again told her to open up and warned that those on the other side were police.

'I still didn't open it,' said Mrs Bailey. 'They could have been phonies for all I knew.'

While she pressed her slight body against the door from the inside the men outside hurled themselves against it wrenching locks and bolts out

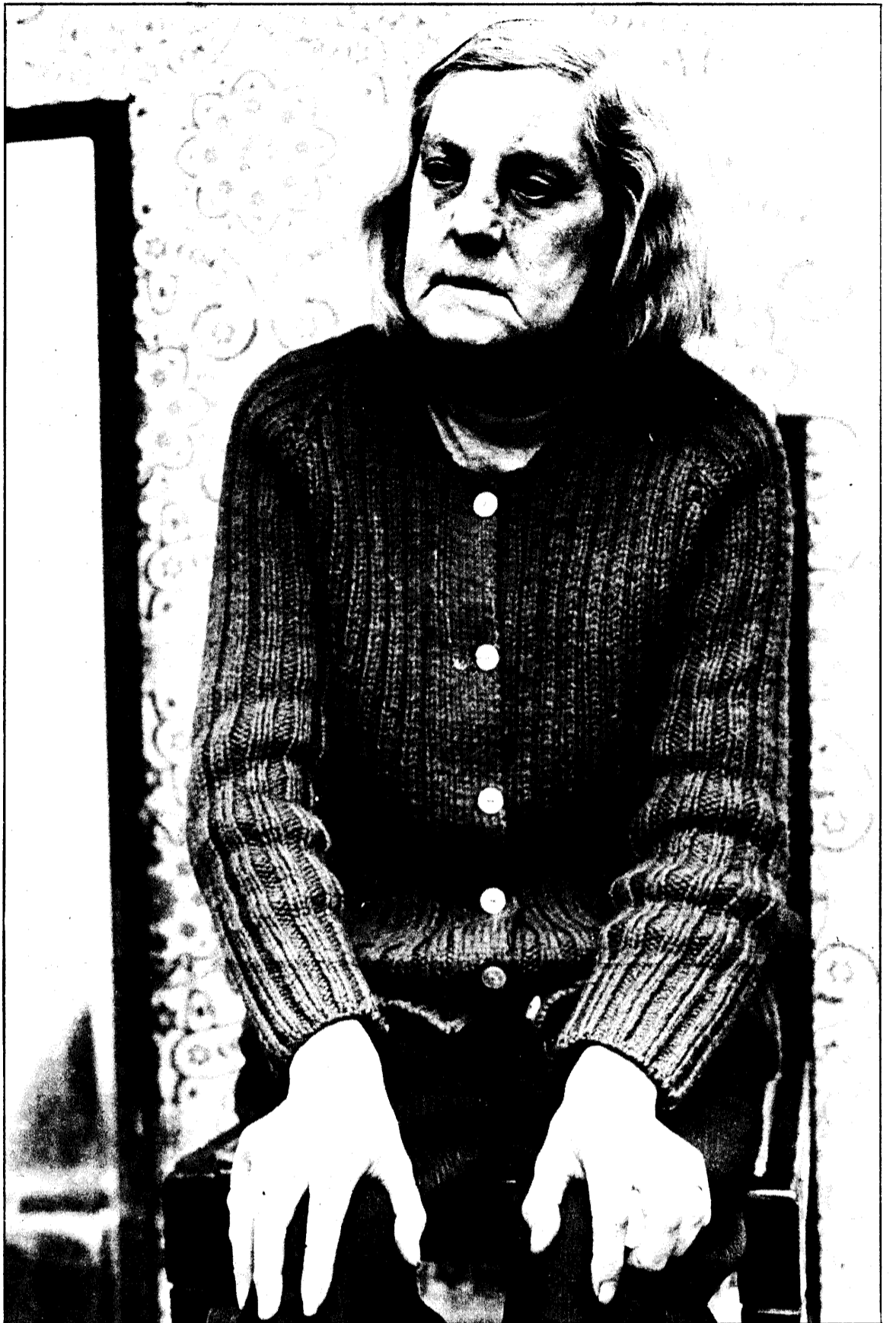
this signals a lurch to the left in the Republic. The most recent activities of the new government however will destroy this tender hope.

Labour appear to be the prisoners (willing or unwilling) rather than the masters of Fine Gael and are rapidly becoming the rubber stamp for the pro-Common Market politicians.

This was highlighted recently by a decision not to reintroduce the Restrictive Practices Amendment Bill brought in by the last Fiana Fail government to curb the power of big business and the monopolies.

Fine Gael, who have close connections with the most reactionary sections of big business, are against this legislation. The Minister of Finance, Fine Gael member Ryan, claimed that there was little evidence that problems associated with mergers, such

'VISIT' FROM THE POLICE AT MIDNIGHT



Mrs Margaret Bailey, who suffered bruised forehead, black eyes and shock when police made a midnight search of her home. Above left: Mrs Bailey's son, who was taken away by police, but not charged.

of the woodwork and forcing it back on to Mrs Bailey.

She received two black eyes, a bruised forehead and was extremely shocked. She was treated afterwards at Willesden Green Hospital.

Far from being robbers or thugs, Mrs Bailey told me that six policemen rushed into her home, searched it and took away her son.

She claims they asked him where his mate was and refused to believe either of them that he had been watching television all evening.

It transpired that the police were chasing two youth and when they saw the light from Mrs Bailey's door as she put out her milk bottles they thought the boys had gone to ground there.

Mrs Bailey says she is sure the police had no warrant to search her house. She was certainly never shown one. No charges have been brought against her son.

Mrs Bailey is placing full details of the case in the hands of the Citizen's Advice Bureau and she intends to sue the police for damages as a result of the injuries to herself.

POLITICAL PROFILES

By LEON TROTSKY
Paperback. £1.00 Illustrated



Sharp pen-portraits of leading figures of the Second International in Russia and Europe, for the first time published in an English edition. The translations were first commissioned by the Young Socialists' paper 'Keep Left' Their enormous success has led to the completion of the translation of the whole book, which is the first part of Volume 8 of Leon Trotsky's 'Works' published in the Soviet Union in 1926. It provides the most vivid picture available of the historic figures of the Second International, their strengths and weaknesses, written by an observer who was also a participant in the daily struggle of the European and Russian working class.

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HISTORY POINTS A FINGER AT FEATHER

Last week Victor Feather opened an exhibition of historic trade union banners just a few hours after signalling 'reluctant' TUC acceptance of the Tory pay laws. Here, graphically expressed, we see the two faces of the trade union bureaucracy today.

On the one hand, stuffed in their vaults, they keep the record of the bitter struggle of generations of workers to build their defence organizations.

These are brought out for an occasional airing, to impress the rank-and-file whom these leaders actually hold in contempt. Holiday speeches are made about the 'forefathers' of the

labour movement.

On the other hand, the union chiefs use these occasions to cover their return to the treacherous, reformist practices which threaten to undermine all the gains of these past struggles.

When Feather spells out 'resentful, reluctant acquiescence in Phase Two of the government's pay policy', he is in fact declaring the TUC General Council's acceptance of the first steps towards a corporate state in Britain.

The corporate state means the end of independent trade unionism. For Feather to appear smiling, with a proprietorial air, amongst the banners of those who fought so determinedly and self-sacrificingly to found the early unions is an act of the utmost cynicism.

Earliest of the banners in the exhibition—that of the United Tin Plate Workers' Society of about 1821—was made when trade unionists were still labouring under the penal constraints of the vicious Combination Acts.

Today the slogan of Feather and the TUC General Council is co-operation with a government which is seeking to legislate away all workers' rights—co-operation with those who want to bring back the

Combination Acts in a modern form.

Another banner in the exhibition is that of the export branch of the Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Labourers' Union, which arose out of the great 1889 'dockers' tanner' strike.

John Gorman, who assembled the exhibition and wrote the new book 'Banner Bright' (Allen Lane, £5), recalls a contemporary account of the dockers' triumphant march on September 15, 1889, having won both their sixpence-an-hour rate and recognition for their union.

'All along the Commercial Road the women turned out in their thousands to see their husbands and sons pass in triumph. The sun seemed brighter, the music more inspiring, the banners more in number than ever before.'

And there were more banners. The strike, as Gorman says, 'signalled an explosion of unionism among the semi-skilled and unskilled'.

Now all these gains, this history, are called into question and the working class needs new banners—the banners of the revolutionary party—to meet the challenge

Significantly, one of the most elaborate banners on display, thought to date from

around 1895, was only brought to light when the Pilkington glass strikers raided the St Helens office of the General Municipal Workers' Union in 1970.

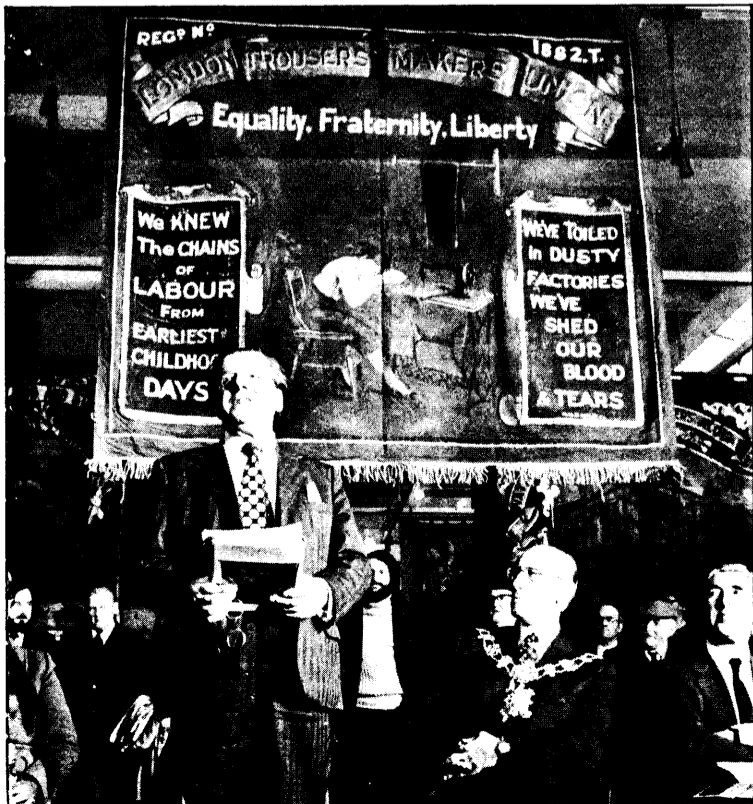
This is the banner of the St Helens Sheet Glass Flat-tanners Trade Protection Society, which became part of the G&MWU in 1924. Like the revolutionary traditions of another G&MWU constituent, the Gasworkers' Union which Eleanor Marx helped to found, the banner had been buried by the bureaucracy.

Feather was pictured last week, with John Gorman, under the Southall branch banner of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers, Motormen, Firemen and Cleaners.

Made in 1921, the banner is still on occasion carried by the locomotive union ASLEF. It featured prominently, for instance, in demonstrations against the infamous Beeching cuts.

Under the slogan 'The Power of Unity Breaks Down the Barriers of Capitalism', the banner portrays the heroic figure of a worker storming the employers in their lair.

Feather can certainly lay no claim to coming from that tradition. The banners exhibition points an accusing finger at him and his kind.



MAY DAY

MAY DAY 1890

Like Tuesday's celebrations, the first May Day parade held in London in 1890 took place under conditions of great crisis and change inside the working-class movement.

For the huge demonstration which descended on Hyde Park on Sunday May 4 occurred at a decisive turning point when millions of workers were being forced by the sharp turn in the class struggle to break from their old leaders and create new political organizations which alone could solve their growing problems.

The 1890s marked the advent of the imperialist stage of capitalism. The ruling class in every country was forced onto the offensive against the growing power of the working-class movement. In the desperate struggle for markets and outlets for capital exports, the employers embarked upon a determined onslaught against the living standards and organizations of millions of workers.

So it is today. All over the world, the capitalist system faces a crisis which can be summed up in a single word—*inflation*. It is the pressure of inflation which now continually shatters any attempt at 'stability' throughout Europe and America.

It is inflation which is thrusting the capitalist class into struggle to take from the working class all those rights and privileges which it has wrested from capitalism over the last century and a half.

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Soon, however, the committee was to meet with the wrath and opposition of the official movement. It was in the preparation for the first May Day in 1890 that the battle between those advocating the legal eight-hour day as against those who favoured a campaign for the eight-hour day was to come to a head.

This was no mere difference over words. For what the 'Old Guard' trade union leaders who dominated the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC (forerunner of the General Council) wanted was to tie the working class to the Liberal Party. They opposed all political action which would raise the question of a new, independent party for labour. In limiting the fight to the question of the eight-hour day, they wanted to confine the struggle against each employer at the point of production.

Eleanor Marx and her supporters, by raising the question of the legal eight-hour day, insisted upon the political nature of the struggle against the government. It was in response to her lead that the most oppressed workers, like the gasworkers, who were joining unions for the first time, provided the basis for the huge demonstration which gathered in Hyde Park on May 4.

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It is important to remember in 1973 that the first London May Day was part of an international movement of workers throughout Europe. Just as today, so in 1890, the development of imperialism unified the struggle in every country. The call for the May Day demonstrations had met with an enthusiastic response throughout Europe.

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MAY DAY

MAY DAY 1890

Like Tuesday's celebrations, the first May Day parade held in London in 1890 took place under conditions of great crisis and change inside the working-class movement.

For the huge demonstration which descended on Hyde Park on Sunday May 4 occurred at a decisive turning point when millions of workers were being forced by the sharp turn in the class struggle to break from their old leaders and create new political organizations which alone could solve their growing problems.

The 1890s marked the advent of the imperialist stage of capitalism. The ruling class in every country was forced onto the offensive against the growing power of the working-class movement. In the desperate struggle for markets and outlets for capital exports, the employers embarked upon a determined onslaught against the living standards and organizations of millions of workers.

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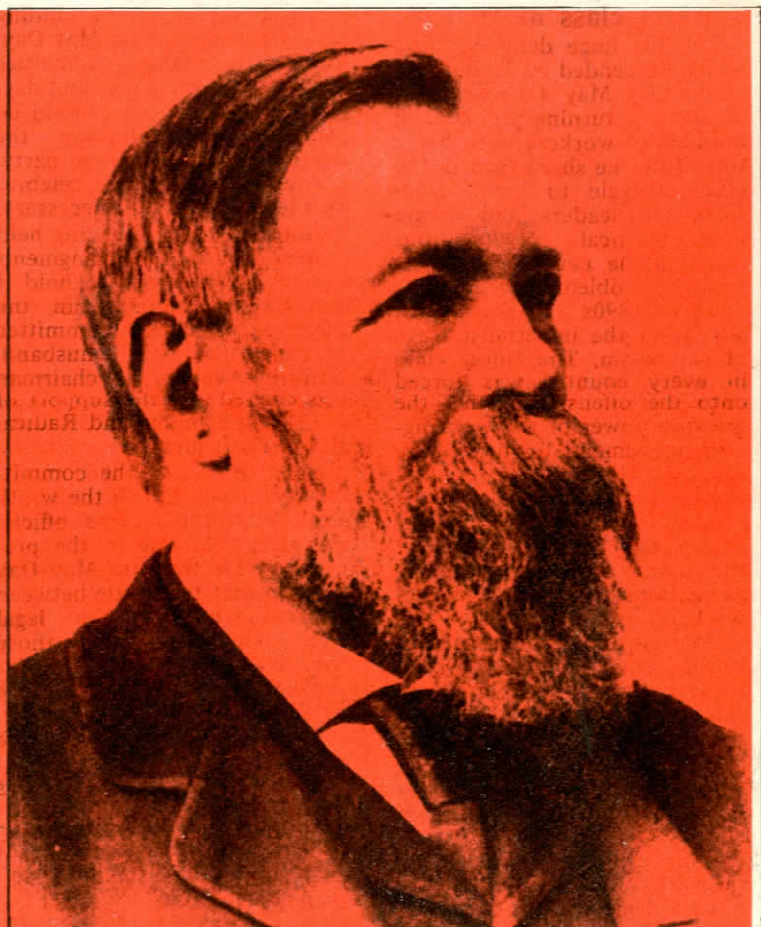
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**BUILD
THE
LABOUR
PARTY**





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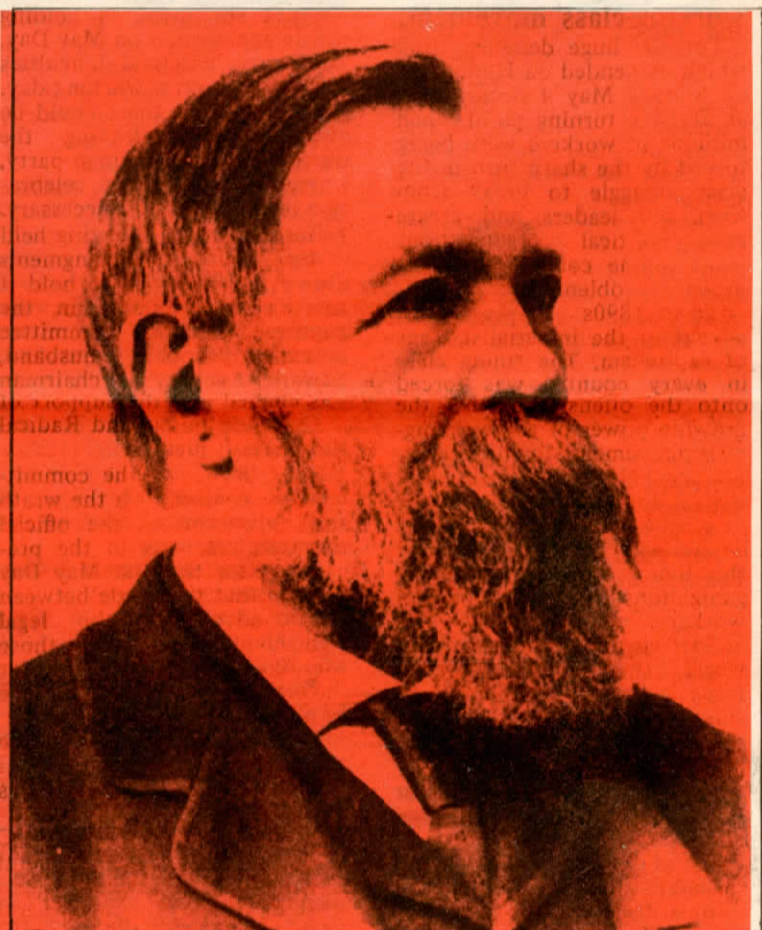


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But it was a campaign based on the continual fight to turn the working class to politics which was to reap such great rewards in the decade after Marx's death in 1883.

Victor Adler, leader of the Austrian Social Democracy,

summed up the gains following from the first May Day in that country:

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The changes in the English working class were equally important following May Day 1890.

It gave a great impetus to the fight against the 'Old Guard' union leaders who had up to that point dominated the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC. A new group of leaders, often working under the direction of Eleanor Marx and Engels, came forward to fight consistently inside the movement for the programme of the legal eight-hour day and for a break from Liberalism and the formation of an independent Labour Party.

Despite all attempts by the old leaders, represented most typically by Henry Broadhurst,

secretary of the Parliamentary Committee, it was a fight which brought great gains. In the summer of 1890 the London Trades Council—which only a few months earlier had led the fight against Aveling's central committee—instructed all its delegates to the 1890 TUC to vote for the legal eight-hour day.

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Never for a moment had Engels or Eleanor Marx advocated that the fight inside the existing workers' organizations, particularly the trade unions, should be abandoned. They had always insisted with their collaborators—such as Will Thorne and Tom Mann—that they had to fight Broadhurst and his clique at every stage. Despite early rebuffs in the late 1880s, when the leaders of the old 'labour aristocracy' had been able to isolate the socialists in the TUC, Thorne and company never turned their backs on the fight.

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How Engels would have denounced the revisionists of today. They have prepared for May Day 1973 by advocating the crudest forms of 'rank and file-ism' which can only confuse the working class while allowing the trade union and Labour leaders—who have done everything possible to destroy a united fight against the Tory government—to get off the hook.

Not only was May Day, 1890, a powerful blow for the struggle of the socialists inside the unions. It also was a crucial step in the fight for those political changes which Engels had advocated throughout the 1880s. For in January 1893, some two years before Engels died, the Independent Labour Party was established at a meeting in Bradford.

And despite its serious limitations and the inevitable confusion on the part of many of its leaders, Engels warmly welcomed the move as a vital step forward in the development of a political movement inside the British working class.

It is in this spirit that today we celebrate May Day. The

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THE TORY ATTACK ON SHOPWORKERS

A series by Bernard Franks.
Part One

The Tories have launched a determined attack on the rights and conditions of the working class in Britain. The effects of a rampant world economic crisis of capitalism are to be offset by protecting and developing big business at the expense of workers' jobs and wages.

The low-paid shopworker and others, far from being 'specially considered' as the Tories maintain, would have their poverty-line existence permanently endorsed. In real terms of what their money will buy, all workers face a savage wage-cut.

Some stark contrasts are shown in the retail distribution industry. On the one hand, hundreds of millions more pounds have been flowing through the tills of the giant retail chains. These stem from the 25-per-cent rise in prices during the past two years.

Recently announced profit increases include:

Safeways Food Stores: profits to October 1972, up by 50 per cent.

Lennons Supermarkets: profits up by more than 25 per cent.

W. H. Smith: profits for eight months up by 70 per cent on the similar eight months of the previous year.

Dorothy Perkins: the ladies clothing retail group: 32 per cent increase of profit for the half-year to November 1972.

(Out of this a golden handshake of £45,000 was paid to a director who resigned).

The John Lewis Partnership: profits for 1972 up 36 per cent on the previous year.

International Stores: forecasts made of a 25 per cent increase of profit to April 1973 over the previous year.

Dixon's photographic chain: profits for 28 weeks to November 1972 increased by 143 per cent over the similar period in the previous year.

Millions more are expected from the price increases to come.

For example, Harrods, the London department store, took a record £1.1m during one day of the January sales, probably the first time ever that a single store in Britain has notched such a turnover in one day's trading.

On the other hand, the enforcement of state wage control laws, which can make any action for a living wage an illegal act, is an attempt to condemn the underpaid shopworkers and others to permanent privation.

In grocery retail the Tories put a complete stop to a miserable pay deal which would barely have taken the minimum beyond £16 a week.

For shop workers, of course, there was no similar 'freeze' put by the government or em-

ployers on the extra work associated with the Christmas-time rush, or the additional work involved in the January sales and re-stocking.

Even government-backed bodies like the National Economic Developments Office are forced to admit that shop wages are among the lowest.

'The majority of workers in the industry must be accounted low-paid workers', said a 1971 Neddy report.

Retail minimum rates are set by wages councils covering different sections of the industry, the decisions being made law and known as statutory minimum rates.

Some statutory minimum rates for sales assistants in 1972 were £14.4 men, £12.05 women for 41 hours in drapery, outfitting and footwear; £13.90 men, £11.85 women for 41 hours in retail food.

These were London figures. In provincial areas they could be more than £1 a week lower.

On this basis, firms paying above minimum rates could safely point out that they were paying £3 and £4 over these amounts, yet still be sending their workers home with under £16.

It should be added that, unlike many production industries, there are rarely any 'extras' available by way of shift allowances, bonuses or overtime payments.

The above-mentioned Neddy report states:

'The shop worker on average gets very little more than the basic rate.'

Not that workers should have to increase their workload and hours to get a living wage.

Shop staff, like any other workers, will bear the brunt of rent rises and the price rises in line with Common Market entry. These include the payment of Value Added Tax (VAT) of which the government's Green Paper explained: 'Although it is paid by traders, in effect, the tax falls ultimately on final consumer expenditure.'

The Tory price freeze, of course, is a complete fraud. Food prices have run riot. Further, as every manufacturer can claim that his product is affected by the cost of imported raw materials—because some substances in virtually every manufacturing process do come from abroad—then they are all in line for 'justified' price rises.

The giant superstores

In recent years there has been wide-spread rationalization of shops and shop work by the major companies and this is by no means over.

Changes from counter service to self-service; the introduction of decimalization; the use of modern methods of warehousing, transporting, handling, packaging, checking-out and accounting; the trend towards larger supermarkets run by fewer workers, have all meant that modern store-working often takes on the form and speed of a factory

production line, and that an inroad into jobs has begun.

At the moment the major companies are in a mad scramble to get planning permission for giant superstores on greenbelt and edge-of-town sites. These will cater for the middle classes and the better-paid worker shopping by car, who will not find it worthwhile to spend less than £4 to £5 a visit.

At the same time, many small town-centre stores are being closed as 'uneconomic' and are being sold to developers.

The fact is, every major distribution chain is in two businesses: retailing and property.

A retailing chain may own hundreds of key sites throughout the country, which, with zooming land and property prices, means enormous increases in assets without a penny being spent.

For example, a 1972 re-valuation of properties owned by United Drapery Stores Ltd, gave an extra £52m surplus over book value of shops and stores held.

The last revaluation was in 1965.

There are 3.75 million people in the distributive trades in Britain—one in seven of the working population.

In shops there are just over 2 million workers, including sales assistants, porters, packers, cashiers, cleaners, buyers and managers. A third are part-time workers and two-thirds are women.

Another 250,000 work in jobs selling a service—boot and shoe repairs, laundrettes, dry-cleaning. On the wholesale side there are more than 500,000 workers, and another 500,000 work in associated motor trades, or as distributive workers for manufacturers—drivers, warehousemen, storekeepers, and so on.

There are roughly 480,000 retail establishments in Britain though the number is falling rapidly.

As well as shops, this figure includes market stalls, kiosks, roundsmen's depots and mobile stores. More than three-quarters are 'independent' i.e. not part of a retail chain. These are run by 500,000 people consisting of working proprietors, often with unpaid family help.

Shop work requires most staff to be on their feet all the time, to be instantly on call, even when no work is directly being done, to carry out extra work before and after shop hours and keep up

a good appearance and manner.

Sales assistants in modern stores are required to work at top speed, act as a security force to watch for pilfering, check for forged bank notes and carry the can for promised but unkept delivery dates.

Certainly, conditions are not always perfect. A recent report on safety exposed large discrepancies between conditions for customers and those for staff, with 'Exit' doors locked, others wedged open, no fire instruction and poor lighting.

Another concern is the constant contact with chemical fumes in dry-cleaning and ladies hairdressing establishments. And today's mechanization of storage increases the danger involved in working with powered machines in confined spaces.

Mostly, shop work is not complicated just chronically underpaid. Rates for young people are especially bad. They may start at £8 or £9 for boys and £6.50 for girls or less paid as 'youth or learners'. There is, in fact, little to learn as most jobs have been simplified into elementary actions and activities. They are simply putting in an adult workload for a junior's pay.

Over the past ten years, the small independent shops have been closing at an average rate of 6,000 a year: 26 per cent of all grocers' shops alone have closed since 1961.

Numbers of empty premises stand derelict on every high street. Now, the time and energy-consuming paperwork in line with the Tories' Common Market entry policy—the introduction of VAT—is to be one more mighty nail in the small trader's coffin. He is to be given the job of unpaid tax collector.

It is not generally known that shop workers have a history of militancy reaching back to the middle of the last century.

TUC leaders do nothing

They fought continuously for better pay, for union recognition, against pernicious hours of work and the 'living-in' system, and for legislation to define their rights and conditions. Today many are determined to continue that tradition.

Before Christmas hundreds of angry shop workers from big grocery multiples like Tesco and Fine Fare registered their disgust at the Tory treatment of their pay situation.



Shop staff on Tyneside and Wearside demonstrated and picketed shops. Pay talks at the Department of Employment and Productivity were lobbied by staff from South Wales stores.

Branches of the union representing 120,000 multiple grocery workers demanded action for a £20 minimum wage.

This activity, however, is in sharp contrast to that of many trade union officials.

The TUC leaders have done nothing to mobilize the membership against the Tory attacks on the labour movement. Far from seeking to improve the impoverished condition of the low-paid, they actively supported the talks with the employers and the government on controlling pay and banning strikes.

Even when workers were imprisoned under the Industrial Relations Act for defending their jobs, the TUC leaders did not withdraw from the talks. Instead, agreement was reached with the leading employers to set up a so-called conciliation and arbitration service—to police labour disputes.

In July 1972 the TUC and the employers established a joint standing committee to set up and oversee the service. The TUC's eight representatives included 'lefts', Hugh Scanlon and Jack Jones, as well as the general secretary of USDAW, Alf Allen.

This collaboration paved the way for the Tories to bring in their new attack on wages, strikes and trade unions, the so-called Counter-Inflation Bill.

In face of the Tory offensive the USDAW negotiators completely caved in on the grocery shop workers' claim, accepting a miserable £2.30 to £3.50 offer by the employers.

The action by furious shopworkers forced the officials to reopen negotiations. They finally accepted a further 50p which would—if it were paid—bring the minimum scales to between £16.80 and £21.55 a week.

Said USDAW's assistant general secretary: 'We would have liked more, but in the circumstances we are urging our members to accept the new offer.'

Previously they had gone along to plead cap-in-hand with the Tories that any rise agreed might actually be paid—after February 26—when the initial 90 days 'freeze' was to end.

In fact, the Tories had made it clear that there was no question of their pay policy being a short-term measure; that, on the contrary, the current law was a holding operation while a stronger, more permanent system of wage control was prepared and established.

The Tory Bill had, in any case, a 60-day extension clause built in, which was clearly there to be used.

Along with the already operating labour courts, the policy further developed in Phase Two of replacing collective bargaining with rigid and permanent wage ordering by organizations appointed by the state, with heavy fines for strikes, is strongly reminiscent of the Labour Codes introduced by the Italian and German fascists in the 1920s and 1930s.

It is no wonder that Tesco's interim statement of December 1972 announced 'Record Group profits'—a 30 per cent increase—and remarked: 'It is anticipated that the second half of the current financial year will produce further good results.'

Clearly, a new leadership must be built in the trade unions which will resolutely take up the political struggle to defend workers' rights, to defeat the Tories and to return a Labour government entirely committed to the implementation of socialist policies.

CONTINUED TOMORROW

BY IAN YEATS

'Minamata'. Directed by Noriaki Tsuchimoto. Distributors: Contemporary Films.

'Minamata' is the story of how a happy community of simple Japanese fishermen were overnight laid low by the callous, unscrupulous poisoning of their environment by the Chisso petro-chemical corporation.

Into the blue, sun-dappled sea from which the fishermen drew their food and their livelihoods Chisso indiscriminately pumped the waste products from their plant.

The waste included killer mercury which Chisso had introduced to step up production and increase profits.

First the fish the community lived on died, then the dogs and cats, then human beings. Even the unborn were affected in the wombs of their mothers.

At first, Noriaki Tsuchimoto's documentary shows the fisherfolk did not know what was happening.

Between 1952 and 1960, 138 Minamatans died or were maimed by the dreadful disease which took the name of the town where they lived.

The disease intoxicates the nervous system and is characterized by ataxia, which can mean anything from slurred speech to complete loss of bodily control.

Unborn children can be inflicted with physical and nervous deformities as well as severe brain damage. Mothers saw the effects on their children as the disease ate away up to two thirds of their brain before death.

Wives saw the flesh fall away from husbands they remembered as sun-tanned giants.

Husbands watched for years at the bedside of wives they married as lively young girls reduced by the disease to helpless, mindless, incontinent wrecks.

Meanwhile Chisso notched up profits running into millions of dollars.

From the start the company refused to admit a shred of responsibility for its crimes against human beings. And when the fishermen staged a monster 4,000-strong demonstration the police were called.

Doctors refused and are still refusing to diagnose Minamata in dozens of sufferers who are therefore prevented from claiming compensation or state aid.

Government officials made it clear whose side they were on and for the first time many of the fisherfolk had a glimpse of the real nature of the capitalist state.

In 1960 the disease was said to have officially ended. Yet in 1961 children were still being born with all its symptoms.

The fishermen mounted a campaign throughout the length

THE STORY OF MINAMATA



The Minamata factory, owned by the Chisso petrochemical corporation, source of the pollution which caused disease and death.

and breadth of Japan to force Chisso to admit responsibility and pay damages.

They appeared in symbolic funeral robes on the streets of major towns and cities to be gaped at or ignored putting their case over to the public with loud-hailers.

They succeeded in raising hundreds of thousands of yen for their campaign and launched a single share movement so that they could legitimately attend the company's 1972 annual general meeting.

Twenty years after Chisso

first contaminated the coastal waters where the fishermen lived, the victims still had received only about \$1,500 from all sources.

The care of invalids, in some cases almost totally incapacitated and all requiring special treatment, imposed huge strains on the meagre incomes of the villagers.

The villagers went to the meeting and finally confronted the score of sombre-suited, previously faceless executives who had caused them so much horrible and untold misery...

They were offered sympathy.

After all the suffering they had inflicted, Chisso then began to move out of Minamata to more profitable locations.

Finally, after an unprecedented campaign, the notorious Chisso company was forced to pay £1.5m to the bereaved and maimed of Minamata.

The case graphically illustrates the criminal thoughtlessness of capitalism in consciously neglecting even the most elementary safety precautions in its rapacious lust for profit.

It shows the utter and totally immoral callousness of the capitalists, even after they have broken up families and inflicted the most horrible 'living death' on scores of people in refusing to own up or to pay compensation.

The cash the villagers received could not bring back the dead or alleviate the suffering.

While there is capitalism there will be other Chissos. The only way to end its murderous excesses is to end capitalism.

WORKERS NOTEBOOK

BURNING BOOKS

Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, the young Moslem fanatic who rules Libya, has embarked on a new drive to wipe out the infidel at home.

Speaking on the birthday of the Prophet Mohammed on April 15, Gaddafi decreed the suspension of all laws which might stand in the way of the struggle against the infidel.

He said: 'Anyone who talks to me about communism, Marx and atheism we will put into prison. We will give the order to the Minister of the Interior to purge any group of these sick people.'

He added that he intended

to wage 'a cultural battle' to destroy 'rotten and alien' ideas.

'Only true ideology stemming from God's Book in which we have believed since Mohammed, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, will be tolerated,' Gaddafi said.

'There is room only for the true ideology which knows no falsehoods; the ideology which stems from the Book of God and which expresses Arabism, Islam, humanity, socialism and progress.

'People, destroy all libraries and bookshops from which the real light does not shine, the light which guides people out of darkness. Destroy the libraries which are the sources of darkness and dirt, the dirt of imported, reactionary capitalist and Jewish-communist ideology.'

Gaddafi said a committee of 'revolutionary intellectuals' was already at work drawing up a list of books considered

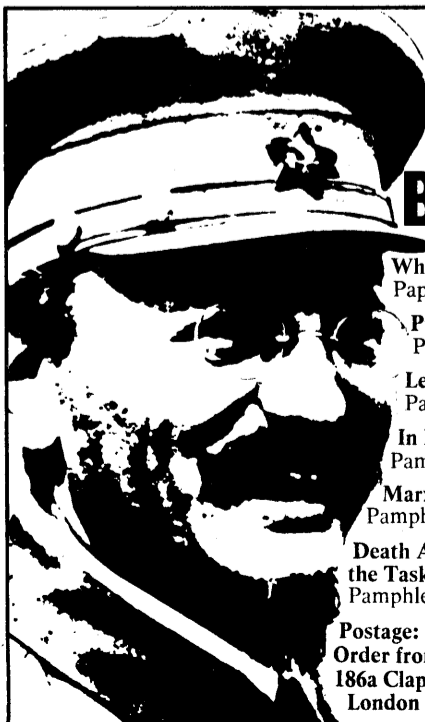
fit only for burning. He added that some libraries, cinemas and cultural centres had already been purged of 'bad' literature.

The 'enemies of the Union of Arab Republics' (Egypt-Libya-Syria) had to be eliminated, even if it meant civil war in Libya. Gaddafi said ominously. His talents as a law-maker have been demonstrated on previous occasions.

His last major piece of domestic legislation restored the ancient Islamic rule that thieves should have their hands cut off.

Gaddafi doesn't want anyone to think him behind the times and so he drew up a carefully-graded scale relating the size of the theft to the extent of the mutilation.

He also decreed that the hands (and in some cases feet) of the offenders should be amputated under sterile conditions by properly qualified surgeons.



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HUGE PROFITS FOR STEVEDORING GROUP

Ocean Transport and Trading, the powerful shipping and stevedoring group, is forecasting that its profits for this year could exceed £15m—50 per cent up on the results it has just announced.

The group, which under various guises has played a big part in the employers' campaign to undermine dockers' hard-won job-security, sailed in with pre-tax profits of £10.4m for 1972.

The comparable figure for 1971 was £7.24m, and the stock market had been expecting an increase to something like £9m.

But Ocean berthed with a £3m profit from associated companies, which now include interests in warehousing, road haulage, air forwarding and off-shore services to the oil industry.

This is a major turnaround. Previously Ocean's associated

companies made a £567,000 loss.

The major boost in this sector came from Ocean's container company, OCL, and from the recently-acquired shipowning and fuel contracting firm Wm Cory.

Overall profit rise of 44 per cent before tax was achieved on a turnover up 65 per cent at £137m. Shareholders will receive a final gross dividend of 16½ per cent, to bring the total for the year up to 31½ per cent.

Meanwhile the campaign against dockers' rights continues, with the port employers and road haulage interests, among both of whom Ocean has a powerful voice, firmly resisting extension of the Dock Labour Scheme.

● It was the then head of Ocean, Sir John Nicholson, who initiated the employers' lobby of the Tories, within weeks of their election victory, for abolition of the Scheme.



LEYLAND BATTLE TO SAVE PIECEWORK

Bus and truck workers at the five Leyland Motor factories in Lancashire are waging a determined battle against company attempts to push through a new pay system which would undermine piecework.

Talks on the company's proposals are currently deadlocked; the works committee has registered a 'failure to agree'.

And convenor Len Brindle says there is unlikely to be any change in the situation until a connected pay dispute involving 58 engine assemblers is settled.

The assemblers have stayed out despite a vote by the rest of the factories not to support them. By today more than 2,000 production workers could be laid off.

But while there is some confusion in the five plants over the engine assemblers' dispute, opposition to the management's proposed new pay system is widespread.

The proposals, which have been produced following negotiations with the works' committee starting in November 1972, include putting a ceiling on piecework earnings, increasing the fixed element in the wage-packet, cutting bonus pay and establishing rules for the fixing and review of piecework timings.

PRINCIPLE

Leyland claims the aim of the proposals is 'to give a fairer payment system, to give greater earnings stability to employees, to reward effort and skill more consistently, to reduce the time lost in bonus disputes'.

Union officials say there are at least three areas in which the proposals require changes involving basic principle—and at least eight essential points which are not covered in the draft agreement.

The shop-floor approach is much more direct.

No worker will gain anything from the agreement in pay terms, it is said. The proposed average increase of £2.50 is totally inadequate to meet

the rise in prices since their last pay deal. And the main avenue for increasing earning power will be blocked off.

Meanwhile Leyland will considerably reduce its costs. And in addition, the company has admitted that at a later stage it intends to use the deal to put work-study men on the shop floor.

Leyland denies that the proposed deal is Measured-Day Work (MDW). But many workers insist that it would be a big step in this direction.

In the summer of 1969 the five Leyland Motor factories—Chorley, North Works, South Works, Spurrier Works and Farrington—struck for six weeks to win improvements in their then relatively poor wages and conditions.

The strike resulted in some important concessions being wrung from the company.

All job times were reviewed, for instance. The bonus percentage paid for demonstration jobs was set at 200 per cent.

On the basis of the 1969 deal, over the last three years, further concessions have been won.

Demonstration times are now set at 400 per cent. Average bonus percentages of 550 per cent are now not abnormal.

One relatively high-paid worker compared gross pay of £23 for 47 hours just after the 1969 strike with £38 for 40 hours today.

But Leyland is now hell-bent on taking back these gains.

The company claims that 'much of this wage growth has produced unjustifiable differences in wages between different sections' and that 'ever-increasing sectional claims have led to the growing number of stoppages and disruption of work'.

In 1972, complained an April 17 letter to all workers from operations director A. D. Fogg, there were 48 separate strikes and 19 other occasions when workers imposed sanctions of one kind or another.

Failure to agree the new proposals meant that the practice of presenting sectional claims continued—conditions which produced industrial action by maintenance engineers, storekeepers at the Chorley factory and the engine assemblers' dispute which is still going on.



Len Brindle. Above: Leyland workers from Lancashire on strike in the summer of 1966.

But at a works' conference early in April, the company indicated that it intended to stick fast to the Tories' Phase Two pay-law norm, even if it meant continuing lay-offs and no agreement on the proposals.

In a bid to frighten the unions into acceptance Leyland insisted that if 'wage drift' continued at its present rate (it claimed it had been 12 per cent in 1972), it faced disaster.

RELUCTANT

At a further conference on April 13 the company reiterated that its offer was the maximum allowed under Phase Two.

Then, according to Bob Crook, district secretary of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, 'we finally stated that since we were no longer free agents to discuss and reach agreement because of outside interference, then the scheme was not acceptable'.

The company, Crook says in a report to his members, was 'reluctant to call it a day'. But the union side indicated that no useful purpose would be served by continuing discussions since it was not possible to arrive at a mutual agreement.

Since the conference had been sought by the company, it was its turn to record a failure to agree, and the union position is that the next move is up to the company.

But as one worker stressed: 'On the question of scrapping the present piecework agreement the men are determined that come hell or high water it's not on. We are not going to give up what we've won over the last three years.'

'There's a strong feeling for strike action, and since our present pay deal has now expired we're all watching very closely to see what our officials and shop stewards are going to do.'

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MAY DAY MANIFESTO

FROM PAGE 1

in any war must still be against the nationalized property relations of the bureaucratically deformed workers' states taking up where Hitler left off, to restore the capitalist system throughout the world.

● We demand freedom for all colonial and semi-colonial peoples.

● We demand the US forces out of Cambodia.

● We demand the withdrawal of all troops from overseas.

● Down with the imperialist preparations for the third nuclear world war. While waging a relentless campaign against Stalinism we will fight to defend the USSR, China and Eastern Europe against imperialist aggression.

wages in the autumn. In effect, they are opening the gates to the corporate state.

But the Tory government, while taking the fullest advantage of every retreat of the bureaucracy, is guided by the worsening economic crisis and will continue preparations for open confrontation with the working class.

The world crisis of inflation is unifying the working class in the colonial and metropolitan coun-

tries into one mighty force against capitalism.

In Britain, the Tory pay laws have left the working class with no alternative but to fight the government. Every struggle for wages today poses fundamental political issues.

Since the working class has to fight the Tory government for wages to preserve its standard of living, the working class is drawn directly into a struggle for power.

The working class must re-establish control over its own trade unions if it is not to submit to Tory dictatorship of trade union policies. We demand that the trade union movement breaks from the Tory government and the capitalist state.

Either the working class will win this struggle, or the capitalist system will steadily prepare for the introduction of ever-more violent dictatorship leading eventually to fascism.

Reformist trade unionism is bankrupt

THE PAST year has been a black one for trade unionism. Not only was the Industrial Relations Act strengthened by further High Court and House of Lords anti-union decisions, but it has created a deep-going split within the trade union movement.

The extreme right-wing trade union leaders have already registered their unions and more are preparing to register. The TUC is looking for openings to instruct the membership to come to terms with the government on amendments to the Act.

The discussions between the TUC and the Tory Cabinet have eventually given way to open connivance with the Tory government over Phases One and Two of the state pay laws.

The most important element in this retreat has been the 'left' cover which Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon have provided for the TUC's treacherous actions.

Neither they, nor the Communist Party, which always backs them up, has uttered a word against this organized betrayal, either over the hospital workers, the gas workers, or any other section which the TUC has abandoned.

The truth is that the whole of the bureaucracy—right wing, 'left' wing, and Stalinist—is incapable of waging an independent fight against the Tory government and imperialism in this period

of the sharpest class struggles because of its totally compromised class-collaboration relationship with the capitalists. In the case of the Communist Party, this is based upon the reformist 'peaceful road to socialism' which was drafted by Stalin for the British CP in 1952.

The trade union bureaucracy represents essentially the opportunist degeneration of the workers' movement under pressure from imperialism. When the capitalist system is in crisis, the bureaucracy must emerge openly on the side of the capitalist enemy. Hence Feather and the TUC's announcement of capitulation to the Tory pay laws.

But the TUC leadership could not function if it was not for the connivance of the Communist Party. The Stalinists consistently cover up for the actions of Jones and Scanlon on the leading TUC committees. The CP supports a one-day protest on May Day, but at the National Union of Teachers' conference its members turned a blind eye while the NUT leadership, under its communist president, refused to back the May 1 demonstration and accepted a Phase Two pay deal.

Everywhere the reformist bureaucracy is in deep crisis. The TUC leaders and their Stalinist apologists will next give the go ahead for fresh talks with the Tory government to discuss plans for imposing on workers Phase Three of the state control on

Build the revolutionary party

Transform the Socialist Labour League

IN THIS highly political situation, where the struggle for power is posed, the revisionist groups would wish to confine the working class to the level of spontaneous activity, to an endless round of protests.

In practice, this means crawling behind the activity of the Stalinists and their bogus Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions and avoiding like the plague the struggle to mobilize the working class to organize the General Strike to bring down this Tory government.

If the working class is brought into struggle by the crisis of inflation, it is also true that the capitalist class in every country has mobilized all its agencies—from social democracy through to the Stalinists and the revisionists—to defend its system.

Nowhere is this more true than in Ulster, where the fight against British imperialism has been undermined by every kind of bourgeois ideological influence which has prevented the development of unity between the working class of Ireland and Britain.

Only such a unity, forged in the combined struggle to defeat the common capitalist enemy ruling at Westminster, Dublin, and Belfast, can win for the Irish people their full right to self-determination.

The working class in Britain cannot fight the Tory government effectively while its imperialist army is allowed to trample on the working class of Northern Ireland and establish a virtual military dictatorship with many democratic rights abolished.

The arbitrary shootings, internment without trial, torture, arrests without warrants and the general reign of terror unleashed on the working-class sectors of the main Northern Ireland towns are only the preparation for what the armed forces of the capitalist state will attempt to do in British cities when the economic and political crisis erupts into open class confrontation here.

A campaign in defence of democratic rights in Britain and Northern Ireland is now an urgent question in order to:

● Repeal the Industrial Relations Act;

● Restore free collective bargaining and repeal the pay laws;

● Abolish the restrictions on normal legal rights in Ulster and the proposals to restrict legal rights in Britain.

● This means a united campaign between the working classes

of Britain and Ulster to force the withdrawal of British troops.

● The only way to achieve these aims is by mobilizing the working class in a General Strike to bring down the Tory government.

The most urgent task before the working class is to construct a revolutionary party and leadership based on the struggle for revolutionary Marxism as its theory of knowledge.

Such a party will be based on the achievements of Leninism and the Bolshevik Party in the Russian Revolution, on the struggles of Trotsky and the Left Opposition against Stalinism in the 1920s, and on the achievements leading to the founding of the Fourth International in 1938.

Trotskyism today directly continues the struggles of Lenin and the Bolshevik Party for the world socialist revolution.

The Socialist Labour League in Britain is affiliated to the International Committee of the Fourth International. We base ourselves entirely on the strength of the working class and its ability to overturn capitalism, exactly as did Marx and Engels when they wrote the Communist Manifesto in 1848.

Fellow trade unionists, comrades and friends on this historic May Day we address you with this urgent call to action:

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

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

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

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

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

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

2) The right to work! Capitalism demands mass unemployment. The right to a job must be guaranteed. This can only be done by breaking the grip of capitalist ownership on the economy. Employed and unemployed must unite to insist on a Labour government nationalizing the main industries and banks, under workers' control and without compensation.

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

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

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

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

4) The right to defend rights won in the past and change the system. All the changes in legal procedures made by the Tory government must be repealed. All secret police and MI5 organizations must be disbanded and fully exposed. The secrets of the Tory administration in this sphere must be published. All rights to assembly, free speech and the Press must be guaranteed.

The struggle must begin now. No closures, no sackings, must be the policy of the trade unions. Occupation of factories threatened with closure,

as part of the fight to bring down the Tories.

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

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

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

6) The right to health and welfare benefits. Every Tory gov-

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

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

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

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

Unite in the struggle for the Socialist United States of Europe, the only alternative to the Common Market plans for dictatorship.

Withdraw all British troops from abroad and disband the present standing army.

Sign treaties with all ex-colonial countries for programmes of equal trade and mutual assistance.

Break from NATO and all imperialist alliances.

For the carrying out of such policies the SLL fights for the setting up of Councils of Action to lead the struggle against the Tory government in every area. These Councils unite trade unionists, tenants, unemployed, all political parties and tendencies of the working class (Labour Party, Communist Party, SLL, IS, IMG, etc.) to fight against the main enemy, the Tory government.

The SLL calls upon every socialist and class-conscious worker to consider this programme and manifesto very carefully, and to decide now to take up their inescapable responsibilities. The building of the revolutionary party is the burning question now, not in some remote future. The SLL is determined to carry through its transformation into a revolutionary party.

JOIN the Socialist Labour League and help transform it into a revolutionary party.

Central Committee
Socialist Labour League
May 1, 1973.