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DAILY ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

EUROPEAN EXCHANGES PANIC GALE FORCE CRISIS HITS MONEY MARKETS

BY STEPHEN JOHNS

PANIC GRIPPED the continental money markets yesterday after the shock decision by the Swiss authorities to float the franc—Europe's strongest currency. The big banks and speculators waited tensely for an announcement from the Swiss National Bank on the next move of their war against the dollar.

In London, the centre of the Euro-dollar market, the price of gold rose steeply by 15 points and the dollar slipped down 21 points against sterling.

The rapid events of the last two days, started by the effective devaluation of the Italian lira, spell the complete breakdown of all monetary relations inside and outside Europe.

A mood of economic nationalism is sweeping the main financial centres. This is encouraged by the big banks and the authorities. The watchword in the economic war now unleashing itself across the capitalist world is 'every man for himself'.

The count down to crisis began in August 1971 when Nixon removed the gold backing from the dollar and left Europe stranded with \$70,000m of the increasingly worthless American currency.

The capitalist heads of the world attempted to restore some semblance of order in December 1971 with the Smithsonian agreement where new currency rates against the dollar were agreed.

But this bid failed. The new 'official' price for gold of \$38 an ounce could not contain the wave of speculation in favour of the yellow metal—gold has continued to go up and up in price on the free market.

Another hammer blow was delivered last November when the ten big world banks officially buried the two-tier gold system by allowing settlements of debts in paper currency. This applied particularly to Britain and Italy with big trade

deficits who both refuse to release what remains of their precious gold assets.

Meanwhile the Americans have responded with an open declaration of trade war.

At his inaugural ceremony on Saturday President Nixon made it clear that America would look after her own interests in the international economy.

His declaration coincided with the decision of the American airlines to undermine the French and British aircraft industry by placing the future of the Concorde in jeopardy.

But the renewed currency war on the dollar will mean an acute crisis for the European capitalist nations. Germany alone now maintains a fixed rate of exchange—once the holy grail of world trading relations.

This means the German Bundesbank will have to bear the brunt of speculation against the dollar or float the mark.

The crisis on the trade and monetary front is already spilling over onto the stock markets.

After Monday's record 18-point collapse of share values, shares fell once more on the London Exchange. The industrial capitalists, too, know that they face a future of economic war, intensified by the worst crisis of monetary value since 1929.

Gold is now the only stable basis of exchange, which means that the future of all paper money becomes more and more speculative.

The crisis has profound implications for the working class of Europe. The threat of economic disintegration will set the capitalist class clamouring for dictatorship and methods of government suitable to the drive to impoverish workers and rob them of basic democratic rights.

The only answer to this offensive is a revolutionary struggle to expropriate the means of production and the creation of workers' states.

The immediate task facing British workers is to build the Socialist Labour League into a revolutionary party to lead this fight.

ITALY'S NEW FASCISTS See centre pages

A series of special reports on the fascist movement in Italy starts on the centre pages today. Reporter Stephen Johns and staff photographer Martin Mayer flew to Rome to investigate the resurgence of the heirs of Mussolini. Who are they? Who finances them? What is their strength? What is their meaning in the Common Market? This is a series no worker can afford to miss. Order your copy now. Telephone: 01-622 7029

Engineers protest pay law at parliament



SEVERAL hundred engineers from London and the south-east lobbied MPs at the House of Commons yesterday. They were protesting against the Tory pay law. Most major factories in the area were represented at the lobby called by the No. 8 division of the Confederation

of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions. Among them were a large group of Ford workers, who are on the brink of a major pay clash with the Tories. Women workers from the Hoover factory at Perivale (above) formed a lively contingent chanting 'Heath Out' and

carrying placards condemning the rocketing food prices. Bill McLoughlin, divisional secretary of the CSEU, told Workers Press that the lobby was the start of a campaign to mobilize engineers in the area against the pay law and the Industrial Relations Act.

Pound's buying power drops 18p

THE PURCHASING power of the pound has dropped by 18p since the General Election, MPs were told yesterday. Labour members groaned when the Financial Secretary Terence Higgins said that assuming the purchasing power of the pound was 100p in June 1970, its value last month was 82p. Joe Ashton (Lab. Bassetlaw) commented: 'The last three occasions on which you have answered this recurring question, the pound has gone down by 1p per month.' And he added: 'When is the freeze supposed to start working?'

workers press

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Battles in readiness for 'peace'

BY A FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

A BITTER struggle for territory is going on in South Vietnam as the possibility of a cease-fire agreement again looms.

The corrupt and brutal regime of President Nguyen Van Thieu, fighting for its existence, has issued orders to wipe out the National Liberation Front after a cease fire.

New laws give police and soldiers the right to shoot on sight anyone suspected of rebellion. Defecting soldiers and civilians can be summarily executed. The use of banknotes issued by the NLF brings an automatic death sentence.

Thousands of political opponents are being tortured and massacred in Thieu's jails and more arrests are being made all the time. It is estimated there are at least 75,000 political prisoners in South Vietnam.

A cease fire will bring no let up in the struggle until the Thieu regime is swept away.

The North Vietnamese and the NLF have continued to make progress in the ground fighting and now hold more territory than they did at the time of the abortive October peace agreement. Other areas, while no longer firmly under their control, cannot be claimed by Saigon either.

Heavy fighting has been going on in the area south of the demilitarized zone where the South Vietnamese have been trying to extend their holdings of territory. In the fighting around the Michelin rubber plantations 35 miles north of Saigon, South Vietnamese units have been badly mauled.

Small NLF guerrilla units have been moving into many parts of the country in anticipation of a cease fire, forming nuclei of control from which they can fan out later.

● Top negotiators Dr Henry Kissinger and North Vietnam Politburo member Le Duc Tho met in Paris for crucial talks yesterday. The South Vietnamese Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam and Madam Nguyen Thi Binh, the NLF Foreign Minister, also arrived in Paris.

Spain reaches for Market

THE PRESIDENT of the National Council of Employers in Spain, Manuel Conde Bandres, has given his full support to the integration of Spain into the Common Market.

He emphasized that the fulfilment of the 'European personality' of Spain meant the intensification of corporatism within Spanish factories.

The employers' policy must aim at a 'greater integration of the worker in the factory', the eradication of labour absenteeism fomented by 'reforms in Social Security', and the strike weapon, which he described as a 'primitive form of coercion'.

His audience of Valencian employers hardly needed this encouragement from Bandres to step up their attacks on the illegal independent organizations of the Spanish working class.

Their prize could be the huge Ford or Toyota factories planned for Spain.

The United States Steel Corporation is already involved in top-level negotiations with Spanish Minister of Industry Lopez de Letona aimed at building an ultra-modern plant in Sagunto in Valencia province.

The Government Office for Foreign Investment reports that foreign investment in Spain—more than 50 per cent of capital in different projects—amounted to 900 million pesetas in 1972. This only represents the investment officially authorized by the regime.

40 per cent of the capital was from Switzerland (1971, 14 per cent); 37 per cent from the United States, (1971, 15 per cent); 4 per cent from the United Kingdom (1971, 11 per cent); 8 per cent from West Germany (1971, 22 per cent); 5 per cent from France (1971, 10.5 per cent).

The 'European personality' of Franco's regime seems to be quite flexible from the rapid increase in US investment in Spain over the last year!

Union chiefs in Cabral protest

DEMONSTRATORS gathered outside the Portuguese Embassy in London on Monday night in a two-hour vigil against the assassination of Amilcar Cabral, the leader of the Guinea liberation movement.

A leaflet distributed at the vigil said: 'Inspired by Amilcar Cabral's example, let us fight together in 1973 to end the evil alliance between the British government and the Portuguese colonialists and avenge the death of him and all those militants who have fallen on the battlefield.' Below left: AUEW

assistant general secretary Ernie Roberts (left) and NUM general secretary Lawrence Daly joined the vigil in front of a giant portrait of Cabral.

Two further meetings will be held next week. On Monday night at 7.30 a memorial meeting will be held in St Pancras Town Hall and, on Friday, February 2, journalist Basil Davidson will talk about the African liberation struggle at a meeting at 7 p.m. at the reading room of the School of Oriental and African Studies, Malet Street.



Money talks set three targets

AS THE disintegration of the European currencies reached a further stage, top international monetary experts yesterday began a three-day meeting in Paris to discuss reform of the monetary system.

Known as the 'Committee of 20 Deputies', this specialist panel will consider:

- The role of gold.
- The huge volume of

unwanted dollars choking the world monetary system.

- Means to bring about foreign exchange adjustments.

The discussions will continue the acute divisions not only between the Americans and the Europeans, but also among the Europeans themselves.

President Nixon's measures of August 15, 1971, ending dollar con-

vertibility have been followed by a whole series of such meetings, none of which has been able to make any progress.

Against a background of lira devaluation and the floating of the Swiss franc, this meeting will be no exception.

It is chaired by Jeremy Morse, former executive director of the Bank of England.

President who couldn't crush Vietnam

LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON, the former US President who died on Monday night aged 64, will go down in history as the man who tried and failed to crush the Vietnamese revolution.

Johnson was responsible for the faked-up Tonkin Gulf incident in August 1964—the excuse for a massive influx of US ground troops into South Vietnam and for bombing the North.

A Texan machine politician who was shot into prominence by the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, Johnson set out to become the conqueror of Indo-China using the full might of the US military machine.

By 1968, however, the famous Tet offensive of the Vietnamese liberation armies had destroyed Johnson politically and reduced his military strategy to a shambles.

The President was forced to stand down

BY JOHN SPENCER

at the 1968 presidential election and make way for his deputy Hubert Humphrey, who was decisively beaten at the polls.

Johnson's counter-revolutionary record in Indo-China earned him the hatred of millions all over the world.

In the last days of his presidency he did not dare venture out in public, but instead travelled from one army base to another.

Vietnam was not Johnson's only imperialist adventure.

In 1965 he sent 20,000 Marines to the Dominican Republic to suppress a revolt against the extreme right-wing military rulers.



Signing civil rights Bill, 1968

He later boasted that his intervention there had saved the Caribbean from going the same way as Cuba.

At home, Johnson liked to pose as a reformer, on the basis of his 'civil rights' legislation.

But his White House term saw the massive race riots in Detroit and other cities, fuelled by heavy unemployment and sharp rises in the cost of living.

Long before he became President, Johnson earned an unenviable reputation for graft and arm-twisting.

He narrowly avoided an untimely end to his political career when his protégé Bobby

Baker was imprisoned for corruption.

Johnson built up a multi-million dollar fortune in the course of his 37 years in Democratic Party politics.

He leaves a huge ranch, an important commercial radio station and other big business interests.

It is particularly fitting that Ngo Cao Ky of South Vietnam, should describe the deceased as 'a combatant who had contributed his efforts alongside the Vietnamese people'.

This tribute—from one bankrupt butcher (and admirer of Hitler, to boot) to another of the same type—just about puts Johnson in perspective.

France's oh so loyal left

FRANCOIS MITTERAND, leader of the French Socialist Party, held a joint Press conference with Georges Marchais of the Communist Party and Robert Fabre of the 'left' Radicals on Monday: 'We are not asking for a new Constitution.'

Evidently with the support of the Stalinist Marchais, Mitterand called on President Pompidou to 'respect the Constitution' in the event of a victory for the left coalition of the three parties in the March general elections.

Marchais gave his own guarantees of good behaviour in an exercise aimed to convince the middle class of the coalition's respectability.

Much emphasis was laid on the fact that it would not be difficult to finance the reforms proposed in the common programme. Marchais said that small investors held only 20 per cent of the shares of the 1 per cent of firms which it is proposed to nationalize.

In a statement read before the Press Marchais claimed that the programme did not propose any changes for which the money could not be found. The CP and its partners were ready to carry out these reforms 'in order and liberty'.

The coalition partners offer themselves as loyal managers of the capitalist economy within the framework of the Bonapartist constitution of 1958 which gives vast powers to Pompidou.

Fighting the Tory rent Act

Clay Cross councillors talk new rent tactics

THE COUNCILLORS of embattled Clay Cross were meeting last night to decide what action to take to defend themselves against the Tory rent Act. The 11 councillors have each got a bill for £635 when they became the first in Britain to be 'surcharged' for refusing to implement the Tory Act. Yesterday a small delegation from Clay Cross visited Transport House to seek 'legal advice'. Several of the councillors have given their views on the struggle to Workers Press.



Tom Swain MP, Cllrs David Nuttall and David Skinner from Clay Cross going to Labour Party headquarters to discuss their next move in the rents fight.

Charlie Bunting

THE FIGHT'S not really started —only just coming out of the corners. We've had hundreds of letters. It's so encouraging. In war-time, conscientious objectors are allowed to challenge the law. Suddenly we say on principle and in all conscience Clay Cross will not implement the Act to upset or penalize the tenants and they say: you can't do that. In peace we're penalized for

Just coming out of the first corner

fighting the government. I've been thinking about it. We've challenged the government on their authority to tell what is right and what is wrong.

We're supposed to live in a democracy. But at this stage of the game it isn't. It can't be where people can still be exploited. It is as plain and simple as that. This is the old firm back in

business. They dragged us into a couple of wars and murdered millions of people in the process. 'Death Pays the Dividend' was a book my father used to show me. It showed what huge profits were made for the capitalist system out of wars.

Midlothian caves in to Scottish rent Act

MIDLOTHIAN County Council has ended its defiance of the rent Act. At a special meeting in Edinburgh, it decided by 21 votes to 18, with one abstention, to implement the Housing (Financial Provisions) (Scotland) Act.

Monday's special meeting followed a default order on the council, one of the few remaining defiant local authorities in Scotland, by the Secretary of State for Scotland after a public inquiry.

Arthur Wellon

We're punished for fighting rent iniquities

WE SHALL do exactly as we have said we will do. We shall commandeer the council offices and put the staff under our jurisdiction until such time as we are physically restrained from entering the council premises.

There's no power in the land—moral or physical—which will force us to operate this vicious Act. We accept that we are acting illegally and would never deny that. But we are morally right.

Sometimes your moral obligations are far greater than the legal obligations. We've been elected by the people of Clay Cross on a pledge that we will not increase rents and instead fight the Housing Finance Act by every means in our power.

The whole situation is virtually the same as when the labour movement first started. A small minority will fight the iniquities of the state and are punished for fighting for the rights

of the working class.

Eventually this movement consolidated and, with the unification of the working class, a movement grew up known as the Labour Party.

Since that period the Labour Party has modified until its leadership is non-representative of the working class and the people.

We've reached a stage where a revival of the grass roots politics can lead in a short span of time to a change in the labour movement in Britain.

George Hudson

11 councillors have lit national fuse

CLAY CROSS has a history of strife and has always been socialist minded. As far as I can see, people in Clay Cross cannot comprehend a Tory. If they thought throwing a brick through a TV set would help, they would do it.

The people of Clay Cross really believe in the councillors. But history is repeating itself with our leaders being bought out by people who can offer more.

Then they start collaborating. They get their fat chairs and then don't want any strikes, want to play it down all the time.

They're using us as a test case. If they can beat us they've won. I think the Tories want to do it quietly and not put us in jail.

It could spark off a chain reaction throughout the country. That's what we're hoping. Eleven councillors

or 10,000 people can't do it. They can light the fuse though.

If the TUC don't fight them, and collaborate instead, the Tories will run to the end of their term. On the other hand, we could get a General Strike and cause the return of the Labour Party.

The Labour Party leadership is no help. It's like joining a union, being victimized and finding no help from the union.

Port employers press fight over registration

LIVERPOOL port employers have launched a new propaganda offensive against docks shop stewards over a manning dispute at Seaforth grain terminal.

They are trying to put pressure on the stewards, through their union's national officials, to drop a demand that the terminal's control room is manned by registered dockers.

Refusal to accept non-registered members of ACTS, clerical section of the Transport and General Workers' Union, is losing the port work to Germany according to the employers.

Talks between the employers and the T&GWU are due at national level within the next few days.

So far the docks stewards, who have seen 2,000 registered jobs disappear from the port over the last six months, have refused to

discuss manning scales for the terminal as a whole until the control-room issue is settled to their satisfaction.

Registration is now a key issue for the dockers.

The special severance terms offered in the Jones-Aldington report have already paved the

way for a backdoor attack on the Dock Labour Scheme, which underpins dockers' job security.

In a number of ports employers' strategy is to use labour shortages created by Jones-Aldington to bring in casual labour, which does not enjoy the Scheme's full protection.

Teesside teachers back

THE COMMITTEE of inquiry into the Teesside teachers' dispute is due to begin meeting in London today.

Yesterday schools in the area were back to normal following the return to work of the 156 teachers dismissed or suspended during a three-month row with the education committee. The

authority will pay them for the period they did not work.

The teachers, who were demanding job security during the changeover to comprehensive education, are now offering to work overtime to make up lessons lost by 6,000 children due to take GCE and CSE exams this summer.

Right-wing MPs attack IRA interview

BY A WORKERS PRESS REPORTER

BACKBENCH Tory MPs have tabled a Commons motion censuring an interview on television between Provisional IRA leader David O'Connell and journalist Mary Holland. The interview was screened last Sunday on the London Weekend Television programme 'Weekend World'.



David O'Connell

Sponsors of the motion include right-wingers like John Biggs-Davidson, Dame Patricia Hornsby-Smith, Philip Goodhart and John Tilney.

Titled 'IRA propaganda on UK TV', the motion 'deplores the failure of the IBA to discharge its duty under the Television Acts in that it allowed Mr David O'Connell . . . to incite murder and violence against HM Forces and loyal subjects in the UK.'

The motion 'further regrets the affront to the government of the Irish Republic — co-operation with which is essential to the defeat of terrorism — implicit in the holding of the interview in Eire territory where this organization is illegal and Mr O'Connell is sought by the forces of law and order'.

CLERICAL workers on strike at the London 'Evening Standard' picketed the paper's offices yesterday. The 200 members of the National Society of Operative Printers, Graphical and Media

Personnel were staging a one-day stoppage over negotiations for their new pay agreement. NATSOPA clerical chapel officers later met Newspaper Publishers' Association representatives to discuss the dispute.

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The General Electric Company Limited is a £1,000m 'electrical colossus' with extensive world-wide interests, with subsidiaries and associate companies in Africa, north America, Asia, Australia, south America and western Europe.

It ranks eighth in the world electrical corporations and third in Europe, superseded by Philips of Holland and Siemens of Germany. It is the fifth largest company in the United Kingdom and employs 211,000 people throughout the world.

GEC has just announced its half-year profits. Pre-tax profits are up one third, while sales have risen by only £5m.

The reason for the marginal increase in sales, alongside the vast increase in profits, has been the ruthless closing of factories which failed to show a high enough profit.

Since the triple merger of GEC, AEI and English Electric in 1967-1968 the labour force has fallen from 265,000 to 211,000, a loss of 54,000 jobs. Between 1969-1970 and 1971-1972 the labour force in the UK has fallen by 25,000, from 206,000 to 181,000. At the same time trading profit per employee has risen from £455 in 1969-1970 to £588 in 1971-1972.

The salient details shown in the table below:

	Year ending			
	1969	1970	1971	1972
Sales (£ m) ...	921	891	924	975
Profit (£ m) ...	49	58	63	77
Number of Employees ...	230,000	206,000	195,000	181,000
Sales per Employee (£) ...	4,004	4,325	4,738	5,386
Profits per Employee (£) ...	213	281	323	424

In 1972 the average gross wage per employee was £27 a week (this includes management incomes).

The six months after March 1972, were even better:

Profits — 6 months to September 30	1971	1972	Per cent change
	£m	£m	
Sales ...	447	452	+ 1.2
Pre-tax profit ...	31.5	42.5	+ 34.9

But things have not been good for the workers. Neither the Department of Employment nor GEC issues a full public list of redundancies, but since the GEC-English Electric merger in 1968, the following have certainly lost their jobs:

1968	
February:	
Woolwich	5,500
Sydenham	400
Blackheath/Harlow	200
Harlow	400
May:	
Witton (B'ham)	1,650
Wythenshawe	300
Aldridge	80
Coventry	1,650
Willesden	1,200
1969	
February:	
Rugby	140
Newton-le-Willows	1,200
Witton	1,200
Liverpool	200
May:	
Stafford	300
Birmingham	570
Cross Heath	150
Kidsgrove	135
Watson & Sons	100
August:	
Manchester	50
Ashton-under-Lyme	140
Chesham	40
Whetstone	230
Walthamstow	810
Netherton	1,400
Accrington	285
Stafford	305
Bradford	50
Liverpool	305
Manchester	810
Napier	1,400
Trafford Park	200

1970
(The 'Sunday Times' July 4, 1971 estimates a further 8,000 redundancies in 1970)

April:	
Witton Moulded Plastics Ltd.	60
May:	
GEC Power Eng Ltd, Reactor Equip Div, Whetstone	60
July:	
GEC Semiconductors Ltd	
Marconi Elliott Microelec, Witham	65
Trafford Park Research Lab	55
October:	
GEC Elec Components Ltd	
Thermal Control Div	
E Kilbride & Motherwell	
Marconi Elliott Computer Systems Ltd, Borehamwood	50
November:	
Accrington Bushings Unit	
GEC Transformers Ltd, Wythenshawe	750
1971	
April to November:	
Witham	300
Harlow	269
Stafford	238
Hersham	241
Glenrothes	150
Rochester	520
Slough	280
Willesden	210
Amersham	200
Winsford	90
Hammersmith	65
Lincoln	50
Liverpool	350
Trafford Park	775
Whitton	80
Bridgend	270
Kidsgrove	230
Rugby	200
Basildon	80
Walthamstow	290
Bradford	70

1972	
January:	
Chelmsford	605
Coventry	150
Wembley	500
Stafford	492
Greenwich & Lewisham	100
Hersham	450
Wembley	500
Stafford	550
March:	
Swinton	620
Maryport	40
Lewisham	60
Newton-le-Willows	160
April:	
GEC Automation, Stafford	500
June:	
GEC Fife Computer factory	100
July:	
Dorman Diesels, Lincoln	380

Others to lose their jobs between April and August last year include:

Accrington	325
Rugby	100
Kidsgrove	555
Manchester (Barton)	60

If the workers have not done well, the GEC shareholders have done superbly. 100 GEC £1 shares purchased in 1960 would have cost £214; through free share issues the shareholders would now have 1,089 25p shares worth £1,742 (160p per share on December 14).

And the 16 directors also do very well. Between them they own £37m in shares. Chairman Lord Nelson of Stafford—a director of the Bank of England and eight other companies—was paid £40,000 in 1972 and owns £102,000 worth of GEC shares.

Other directors include Lord Aldington (of the Jones-Aldington docks report, who holds £52,000 worth of shares) and Sir Jack Scamp (industrial 'trouble-shooter' under the Labour government, who holds £126,000 worth of GEC shares).

One director was paid between £32,500 and £35,000 in 1972, three were paid between £20,000 and £30,000, and four were paid between £10,000 and £17,500.

GEC does extremely well in South Africa, where the company employs about 4,000 staff. The reason is not hard to discover—the African worker receives between £4.81 and £9.49 for a 45-hour week. All GEC black workers fall below the official poverty line set by the South African Chamber of Commerce. While the labour force was being reduced in Britain, profits had gone up by 48 per cent in the last three years.

GEC South Africa also pays the minimum rates laid for the electrical industry in the Industrial Council Agreements, authorized by the South African State.

The lowest grade of pay for Africans doing general labouring, scrap recovery, or sealing ends, as laid down in June 1970 was 10.7p an hour. The top rate for Africans was 21.5p an hour.

The South Africa Chamber of Commerce poverty line for African industrial workers, amounted to £10.50 a week, in 1972, with the proviso that 'the minimum budget should be increased automatically as the cost of living spirals'.

GEC South Africa (Pty) Ltd, one of the 27 South African subsidiaries and associate companies of GEC-EE, is the largest electrical engineering group in the Republic with major plants in Benoni, Germiston, Wadeville and Springs. It employs 4,000 people and has a turnover of £25m a year. It has several major operating companies:

- GEC-AEI (Pty) Ltd, (Domestic appliances to light electrical goods);
- GEC-EE of SA (Pty) Ltd (Industrial electrical equipment);
- Henley Africa (Pty) Ltd (Telecommunications);
- GEC-Elliott Automation (Pty) Ltd (Technical information on automation);
- Endean Manufacturing Co (Pty) Ltd (Switchgear and equipment for mining industry);
- Marconi South Africa.

Among the major subsidiary companies is the African Cables and Telephone Manufacturers of South Africa (Pty) Ltd.

Through such companies GEC supplies the South African state corporations.

In this connection, it is worth remembering the laws which are in operation against African workers in Vorster's police state. These include:

'An African factory worker who calls on other workers to strike for an increase in pay commits a criminal offence punishable by a fine not exceeding \$700 or imprisonment for not longer than three years, or both such fine and imprisonment.'

'An African whose employment has been cancelled may be removed from the town where he worked and prohibited from returning to that town for such period as the labour officer specifies.'

'An African worker who neglects any work it is his duty to do, in addition to being dismissed, a) may be fined by a government inspector an amount not more than \$2.80 which is withheld from his wages, and b) is guilty of a criminal offence punishable by a fine of not more than \$70, or imprisonment for not longer than three months.'

GEC benefits indirectly through arms contracts to South Africa. For instance, the 920B Marconi Elliott computer installed in all operational Nimrod reconnaissance aircraft, which are sold to South Africa. Marconi-Elliott Avionic Systems produce flight control systems for Lightning and Buccaneer aircraft, which feature prominently in the South African Air Force. Through its 40 per cent holding in the British Aircraft Corporation, GEC profits from the sale of Vampires, Viscounts, Skymasters and Buccaneer aircraft.

GEC also did well out of the Vietnam war. For Elliott Automation (now GEC-Marconi) gained a contract worth \$402m with the United States Air Force.

No examination of GEC is possible, however, without looking at the record of the Labourites. In 1966 the Labour government formed the Industrial Reorganization Corporation, with £150m capital.

This was part of Harold Wilson's much-vaunted 'technological revolution'.

The merger of GEC and AEI in 1967 was largely brought about by the Labour govern-

ment. George Brown talked at the time of 'a great and fruitful partnership between private enterprise and government'.

After this merger English Electric was given £15m IRC money to encourage it to take over Elliott Automation.

In 1968 the Wilson government endorsed the merger between GEC and English Electric.

Apart from the GEC-AEI-EE merger the IRC was instrumental in reconstructing the British Nuclear Design and Construction, to which it subscribed £260,000. GEC has a 25 per cent holding in BNDC.

It was also the IRC in 1968 that gave a £17m loan 'to persuade IC & Tabulators, English Electric and Plessey to pool their computer interests in a single new computer group called International Computers Ltd'. (Labour Research 1968.)

GEC has a 20 per cent holding in ICL. The Labour government gave ICL £13.5m in development grants, while in July 1971, the Conservative government declared that it would pay the outstanding balance of its shareholding in ICL next year. The sum would amount to £3.15m. The government would also 'place contracts to assist the development of new products and applications'. ('The Times', July 31, 1971.)

GEC is also assured a market by the state in nationalized industries, i.e. British Rail, Central Electricity Generating Board, the Post Office and the Ministry of Defence. Its relative share is as follows:

Traction Equipment	90%
GRID Switchgear	70%
Turbo Generators	50%
Defence electronics	50%
Transformers	45%
Small Switchgear	40%

(IRC Statement 14.9.68)

One of the conditions the IRC made for support of the merger was the promise by the company 'to confer with appropriate trade unions and government departments about any matters arising from the merger which would significantly affect the workpeople and with appropriate government departments about other action having an important bearing on the government's regional policies'. (IRC statement, September 13, 1968.)

To pursue these regional policies government gives firms investment, retraining and development grants to move to areas of high unemployment.

In 1968, GEC promised to create 4,000 new jobs in Scotland, the north east and south Wales. The state provided £400,000 for this 'service' under the Development Grants Scheme.

In addition GEC got £5 a week for each person it trained. Total government 'aid' to GEC in 1968 amounted to £1.7m. No money was refunded by GEC after redundancies.

At the time of the announcement of redundancies government reaction was as the 'Economist' put it on February 8, 1969:

'Already there are rumblings around Whitehall about Arnold Weinstock not "playing the game" the way the government wants. As the Industrial Reorganization Corporation was instrumental in the aggrandisement of GEC, some MPs feel that Mr Weinstock should show a proper degree of gratefulness.'

It was, of course, a bit late in the day for the Labour MPs to start 'rumbling'.

It was because the Labour government was concerned to protect the interests of the capitalists at the expense of those of the workers that the Tories won the 1970 election.

Now the task facing the working class is to force the Tory government to resign and put in a Labour government pledged to socialist policies which will include nationalization of all major industries—including electronics—without compensation and under workers' control.



MR HEATH HAS GUESTS FROM CHINA

BY OUR FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

Ping-pong with Nixon, now an orchestral evening by courtesy of Edward Heath. The Chinese leadership moves in strange ways to reach diplomatic objectives with the imperialists.

In terms of reaching an 'understanding' with China, Britain is way behind the field. The pace is being set by France, Italy and the United States.

GRAND TOUR

Still, last week, a leading Foreign Minister was given a grand tour in Britain inspecting factories belonging to British-Leyland, British Aircraft Corporation and Rolls-Royce.

Mr Pai Hsiang-kuo was the first Chinese Minister to visit this country since 1949. He will be followed early next

month by Mr Chi Peng-fei, a Foreign Minister.

He was the guest of the Cabinet's most aggressive capitalist, Peter Walker, the newly-appointed Secretary for Trade and Industry. The Chinese delegation also had an audience with Heath at No. 10 Downing Street, though it was overshadowed by news of the state pay plan.

Britain is making a belated attempt to impress the Chinese leaders. On March 26 a British industrial exhibition will be staged in Peking. This will be the largest foreign trade show in China since the cultural revolution.

In the same month the London Philharmonic Orchestra will tour China as part of the 'Buy British' campaign.

Britain's trade with China rose about £4m last year to £32m, but its relative position with other countries worsened. By June 1972 it had slipped to fourth place in Europe behind Germany, Italy and France.

Britain's trade balance re-

mained unfavourable, but there is optimism that this will change with the sale of aircraft.

Italy is currently receiving the favours of the Maoists. The Italian government set off the diplomatic recognition bandwagon two years ago and has sent a series of trade and cultural missionaries.

NEW PRIZE

In 1971 it became the first European country to sign a trade agreement with Peking. Since then it has shown the sharpest rise in trade with China in 1972. In the first six months of the year its exports to Peking shot up 73 per cent, producing a 40 per cent increase in two-way trade.

Last week the Italian government received a new prize—an agreement for the exchange of air services. This should enable Alitalia to become the first western airline to run scheduled flights to Peking. (Air France, which has

Above: Mr Pai Hsiang-kuo, China's Foreign Trade Minister on a tour of Britain which included visits to British-Leyland, BAC and Rolls-Royce factories and a visit to Mr Heath at No 10 Downing St.

two flights a week to Shanghai, is the only European airline which now flies to China.)

Signor Medici, the Italian Foreign Minister who signed the agreement, was the fourth Foreign Minister of the enlarged EEC to visit China in the past six months.

Commenting on the visit the 'Economist' said: 'The Chinese are the cheerleaders of the Common Market. No other country on the sidelines has shown as much enthusiasm for the enlargement of the community, and the degree of Chinese fervour never ceases to amaze.'

A member of the Italian delegation is said to have remarked: 'I've seldom heard such encouragement.'

Meanwhile the British Maoists maintain a discreet silence . . .

CASE OF THE EXILED VOLGA GERMANS

'The German farming families in Kazakhstan are prosperous', says Alex Debolsky, editor of the weekly German-language paper, 'Freundschaft' published in the Kazakh Soviet Republic, writing in 'Soviet News'.

According to the article some 840,000 Germans live in the region. Some had been settled there for a long time under the Tsarist regime, but most are former inhabitants of the Volga German Republic, once a favourite subject of Soviet propaganda.

According to Debolsky these Germans 'were evacuated in 1941 from the western regions, then threatened by occupation' by the advancing Nazi army.

The fact is, however, that the Volga Germans were not 'evacuated' but forcibly deported to Kazakhstan and other distant regions where, in most cases, they were simply dumped and told to fend for themselves.

Many had to dig holes in the ground for shelter or died of cold and hunger. What crime had the Volga Germans committed?

According to the decree signed by the Soviet President at the time, Michel Kalinin, there were 'among the German population living in the Volga area thousands and tens of thousands of diversionists and spies who on a signal from Germany are to carry out sabotage in the area inhabited by the Germans of the Volga.'

'None of the Germans living in the Volga area has reported to the Soviet authorities the existence of such a large number of diversionists and spies among the Volga Germans; consequently the German population of the Volga are concealed enemies of the Soviet people and of the Soviet authority in its midst.'

The entire population, Communist Party members included, were ordered to be deported.

Until after Stalin's death, the Volga German exiles were treated with mistrust and subject to special control by the security police. When released from these disabilities by a decree of the Supreme Soviet in December 1955 is was expressly laid down that 'the revocation of the restrictions on the Germans . . . does not imply the return of property confiscated in connection with the deportation, and further that they do not have the right to return to the regions from which they were deported'.

While it may be true that those who survived the many hardships were able to rebuild their lives, become relatively prosperous as farmers or secure a place in Kazakhstan industry, this is hardly a triumph for the nationalities policy of the Soviet Union as it is presented in 'Soviet News'.

In fact the bureaucracy tries to gloss over the tremendous injustice done to the Volga Germans and the other nationalities deported savagely during the Stalin period as a form of collective punishment. To describe the deportation of the Volga Germans as 'evacuation' is a travesty of history.

The story of the Volga Germans is one more condemnation of Stalinism. The way in which it is treated by the bureaucracy today bears witness to its own guilt.

ITALY'S NEW FASCISTS



CREEPING COUP D'ETAT

BY STEPHEN JOHNS.
PHOTOGRAPHS BY
MARTIN MAYER.

Italy is on the brink of a crisis which may end in civil war. The ruling class is preparing to destroy the trade unions and the left by force. Already the army, police and many monopolies have declared allegiance to fascism—once more a powerful force in Italian society.

The focus of this dramatic ideological shift is the MSI (Italian Social Movement). Led by Giorgio Almirante, the MSI has 56 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and is the third biggest party in many areas of Italy, notably Sicily and the south.

The MSI is a fascist party. It cannot call itself such, since fascism is 'illegal' in Italy (as are gestures, speeches, uniforms, meetings, etc. of a fascist character, regulations the para-military police consistently ignore).

In public the MSI maintains a cynical front of ultra-conservative respectability. The duplicity that pervades the movement was best expressed by one supporter who remarked, when Almirante became leader in 1969: 'For 15 years under Michelini [the old 'conservative' general secretary] the party was dead. We fascists . . . excuse me . . . we of the national right were dead . . . then he came and we all woke up. He was right when he said "less stuffed shirts and more stick".'

Almirante, who plasters his walls with pictures of Il Duce Mussolini, says he is now leader of the 'national right'—*destra nazionale*. In fact MSI members are responsible for bomb attacks, terror against militants and the systematic murder of left-wing activists which generally take place beneath the loving eyes of the police.

To carry out this work, the MSI leaders and deputies control bands of armed 'squadristi'—youth fired by the example of the Black Shirts and the Nazis who are pledged to the physical destruction of communists and socialists. (The connections between the MSI and the fascist terror organizations will be revealed in tomorrow's article.)

But it is the carefully-contrived sobriety that is the most sinister aspect of MSI. This image is a deliberate ploy by the fascists to reassure their supporters within the ruling Christian Democratic Party, the state and big business. The

capitalist class, as always, is a little squeamish over the methods of fascism. It knows it needs the thugs but does not like their activities thrust under its nose.

'Respectability' also provides a convenient cover for the rapid developments towards fascism within the police and the special detachments of the army.

(The support for fascism within industry and the state will also be analysed in a later article.)

The growth of Italian fascism is connected directly to the crisis of imperialism and the chronic malaise that grips capitalism in the Common Market. Investment in Italy is stagnant. Unemployment gets higher every month. The home economy is unable to sustain the lira, which was devalued two days ago. This will mean bankruptcy for many small firms which depend largely on imported raw materials.

The big monopolies, for their part, are keen supporters of the MSI idea of a greater European economic community. This will embrace fascist Spain and the colonels' Greece. MSI wants to smash all resistance to capitalism by destroying free trade unions and constructing a corporate state on the Hitler-Mussolini model. This is sweet music to industrial giants like Fiat, Pirelli and Montedison.

The story of the Italian fascist revival is a grave warning to British workers. The very forces preparing the reign of terror in Italy are present in the UK and the Common Market. Alarmed by the fear of crisis, they are also baying for action. Italy proves the immediate prospect in Europe is either fascism or socialism.

The origins of the MSI are to be found in the remnants and relics of the Mussolini era. The few fanatical fascists left after the execution of Mussolini in April 1945 regrouped and formed their own party in December 1946.

Many of these men now hold high MSI office.

Almirante himself had to wait until the end of the war before Mussolini rewarded him with a post. The defeated dictator had taken refuge at Salo, by Lake Garda, in the north. From his depleted forces he formed the government of the so-called 'Social Republic'.

The important post of Minister of Culture and Population went to a pro-Nazi, Pavolini Mezzasoma, who appointed in turn a keen fascist journalist called Almirante as the chief of his secretariat. Almirante went to work with gusto. One of his jobs was to call for the execution of partisans and all Italian soldiers who refused to fight the Allied armies.

In May 1944, he issued an order giving all Italians 24 hours to rally to the doomed Salo Republic. He warned partisans and soldiers: 'Those who do not present themselves will be considered outlaws and executed by shooting in the back.'

Almirante always tries to

cover up his service of fascism. He was desperate and outraged when this information was posted over wide areas of Italy by socialist councillors a year ago. They called him 'a shooter, massacer and torturer' of the Italian people. Almirante took them to court and pathetically denied signing the infamous execution order. The judge thought otherwise and found that the words complained of were true.

Other Mussolini men include Pino Romualdi, MSI president and senator in Italy's upper house of parliament. He is an illegitimate son of Mussolini and organised Il Duce's retreat into Switzerland—not very efficiently since Romualdi quickly surrendered to the communist-led partisans.

MSI senator Araldo Di Crolalanza was Mussolini's Minister of Public Works and must have had a hand in building the exhibition centre outside Rome—a temple to the fascist mystique—where the MSI held its congress last week.

Many other fossils of the Mussolini era hang around the fringes of the movement. They make appearances at MSI gatherings and play hero to the youthful 'squadristi' who thrill at the days when the jack-boot ruled Italy.

One of these fascist pensioners, General Bergonzoli, in an impromptu address to an enthusiastic crowd last week, rediscovered some of his malevolent spirit as he spoke. His face flushed and his white beard wagged at the spontaneous applause (Bergonzoli looks like Ezra Pound, the poet who broadcast for the fascists in Italy. Pound is an MSI cult figure and his works do a brisk sale at the big meetings).

These connections with the past show that fascism never really died in Italy. After the collapse of Mussolini the Communist Party and the partisans effectively held the power. But under Stalin's orders, the CP held back the masses and worked for a coalition with the reformists and the social democrats.

TERROR

The coalition made no real effort to destroy the fascist movement. In 1946 secret negotiations took place with fascists and they were allowed to stand for parliament.

In Rome Almirante and Arturo Michelini were elected deputies in 1946 and in Naples Giovanni Roberti, now the leader of the fascist union CISNAL, was returned.

The 1950s and 1960s saw a gradual growth of fascist influence among the middle class. Extra-parliamentary activity included campaigns to secure the release of the few remaining hardcore war criminals and the odd bomb explosion.

One notable development, however, was the formation in the 1950s of several paramilitary fascist groups who boasted their overt allegiance to Nazism and terror tactics. These were later to play an



Fossils of the Mussolini era visit the big fascist congress. The 'squadristi' gather round and thrill over the time when the jack-boot ruled all Italy. (Top) One old fascist, General Bergonzoli—nicknamed 'Electric Beard'—poses with MSI members at the Rome Congress last week. (Above) Giulio Caradonna, MSI deputy and the leader of the Rome strong-arm squad. He planned a coup with army support after the Italian elections last May.





important role in the re-birth of MSI.

Within the MSI there was a split between the general secretary Michelini, who stood for the 'stuffed shirt', ultra-conservative wing, and Almirante, who called for more 'stick' and attracted a big following of new recruits, especially youth.

1968 was the watershed for the MSI. In the elections that year the party won 1,415,000 votes, compared with the CP's 8,500,000. MSI was still a relatively small party, but one with substantial pull among the smaller employers, the middle class and the sub-proletariat of the impoverished south.

But the events of the next four years were dramatic. MSI was transformed from a peripheral, extreme-right tendency to a major political force. A Reuter's dispatch captures the mood of MSI in May 1972, poised on the threshold of its electoral breakthrough.

Over 20,000 fascists had gathered in Rome. A banner draped the platform on which the new Il Duce, Almirante, stood: 'Marxism is the system, death to the system', it proclaimed.

'Fascism and all its trappings are banned under a 1952 law,' Reuter's Rome correspondent wrote, 'but a sprinkling of black shirts could be seen and one youth jubilantly thrust his hand upwards in the fascist salute as Signore Almirante proudly presented the party's latest convert. He is General Giova De Lorenzo.'

Fascism had arrived and the

election returns proved it. The MSI doubled its vote to 2,894,000 and won 56 seats in the chamber of deputies and 26 in the senate. In the regions it had 32 deputies and 151 county councillors and 2,953 town councillors. It boasted a membership of 400,000 and 7,560 branches all over Italy.

In the south and Sicily it had formed a pact with the Mafia and the right-wing Christian Democrats. MSI now had an important say in the running of half Italy. Almost all the landowners were sworn fascists. Even more important, big business was swinging rapidly behind the fascist movement.

The success of the MSI cannot be simply explained by the attraction its policies obviously had for the capitalist class and frustrated section of the middle class. Back in 1968 support went overwhelmingly to the Christian Democrats—the party officially blessed by the Catholic church.

UNSTABLE

Deeper forces were at work within the country. Italian capitalism is an extremely shaky institution. It has never been able to survive without massive state support. Public trusts, controlled by the Christian Democrats 'mother' most industry and ensure that private enterprise does not face bankruptcy. This structure was always unstable and became more so as the effects of the post-war boom were dissipated and competition within the EEC grew fierce.

The crisis was made immeasurably worse by an upsurge of militancy by the working class. The years since 1968 were full of continuous class struggle. General Strike followed General Strike and despite the desperate CP Stalinists' policy of confining actions to protest, the working class inflicted serious damage on the monopolies.

In the northern factories a new unity between the immigrant workers from the south and the older industrialized proletariat began to develop. The newcomers, stripped of any Stalinist or reformist ideology, plunged from bitter rural poverty into the most vicious regimes of mass production, rapidly adopted a militant socialist consciousness. Strikes and violent clashes between workers and the military police became daily occurrences. The same tensions led to a wave of student protest.

This was the background to the rise of MSI which adopted the popular cry of order and posed as the force to deal with communism.

There was another significant factor. In Greece the same capitalist crisis (and the same refusal of the Communist Party to mobilize the masses in political and industrial action) led to the colonels' coup.

All the eyes of the Italian ruling class were turned to Greece. Here was a living example of how to deal with the working class—a point the fascists never failed to drive home. Support was two-way.

Pino Rauti, now an MSI deputy and one of the most hardened fascists in the movement, went to Greece at the invitation of the colonels and was welcomed by Prime Minister Pattakos.

The Greek leader allowed the fascists to organize military training camps on their territory, while in Italy their agent, Constantino Plevris, channeled funds into the MSI and put the Greek pro-fascist student movement at the disposal of the extreme right.

Under the impact of these upheavals the Italian government became a regime of permanent crisis. Government followed government, almost as rapidly as strike followed strike. The Communist Party's refusal to mobilize the working class and campaign for power, strengthened the forces of the right. Amidst the anarchy, the ruling class began to look towards the MSI for salvation.

This was the background to the fascist success at the elections. The situation now is very grave.

Up to a third of the Christian Democrats, backed by Vatican reactionaries, want to see an MSI victory.

There was and is an agreement between these right-wing forces and the fascists over terror. The argument they use is that bomb attacks and other outrages can be blamed on the left and stampede the middle class into accepting a colonels' regime in Italy. One highly-experienced observer in Italy described the policy as one of 'creeping coup d'etat'.

ALLIANCE

A major example of this conspiracy was the murder of Feltrinelli, the left-wing publisher, at the height of the 1972 election.

Feltrinelli's mutilated body was found by an electricity pylon. The remains of a bomb was found nearby. The suggestion was that Feltrinelli had been engaged in a left-wing terror attack.

The evidence police offered to support their conclusions was exposed as totally inconsistent by several journalists.

Feltrinelli had been murdered by the fascists, the police, or a combination of both. No one was surprised when, days after the body was discovered, the right-wing Press published lurid stories about two 'Red Brigade' hide-outs discovered in Milan. Police conveniently found Feltrinelli's identity card in one of them.

But in April 1972, more concrete evidence of this alliance between the fascists, the Christian Democrats and particularly the army and police, came to light.

Pictures were published showing Giulio Caradonna, an MSI deputy and leader of the Rome strong-arm squads, before maps of the Rome region of Lazio. Symbols showed troop concentrations and Communist Party strongholds marked with a hammer and sickle. With Caradonna were three of his 'adjutants', Mario Narduzzi, Fernando Philippi and Bernardo De Palma—an ex-graduate of the aeronautical college.

A letter sent to the magazine 'Panorama' explained the plan. It said that a big MSI success in the May 7 elections would lead to demonstrations by the working class. These would be countered with an occupation of key points in Rome by fascist 'commandos'. The army would be held in reserve ready to crush any popular rebellion.

Control of Rome would give the fascists the television network, the ministries and all the centres of power. The letter explained in detail how the operation would take place over three days. Arrests of left-wing politicians and trade union leaders would begin at an early stage. Moreover the NATO command had given an assurance that it

would not intervene. For foreign consumption the 'coup' would be presented as a legal operation to restore order.

If election success did not produce the predicted disorder, the plan would change slightly. Squads of fascists would go out attacking trade union leaders and party headquarters to provoke a reaction.

Caradonna's excuse was that the picture was deliberately taken by the MSI for 'election purposes'. Later it was pointed out that the hammers and sickles and the names of the army and police garrisons clearly visible were hardly consistent with this explanation. He then changed his line. The evidence, he said, was 'photographic' falsification.

The Caradonna affair was concrete evidence that the fascists, the army and police were working to create the conditions for a coup. But more startling revelations were to come.

More incidents that suggested a conspiracy came to light during the summer last year and, in November, Arnaldo Forlani, who held the important post of secretary of the Christian Democratic Party, made a remarkable statement.

He claimed that during the last election Italy had been in grave danger of a right-wing coup.

'This divisive attack,' he continued, 'was prompted by a plot which has substantial financial and organizational roots, arising probably not only from internal, but also from international solidarity.'

'This attempt is not finished. We have in a documented fashion and in the areas of our responsibility that this attempt is still under way,' he added.

The statement caused a public outcry. Forlani was pressed to reveal more, especially about the 'international solidarity'. But he refused. His outburst caused great turmoil within the Christian Democrats, a party split into about nine factions. Originally the party attempted to censor the key phrases, but was forced to admit that Forlani had in fact made the accusations, but only after they were published in the left-wing Press.

It is worth dwelling at length on these conspiracies. They illustrate one important factor in the development towards fascist rule—the connections between the fascist movement and the state and, through the state, the ruling class.

In Italy it would be both foolish and indeed lethal to imagine that fascism must wait for the emergence of some mass black-shirt force. That force is already waiting in the wings within the army, within the para-military police and the Carabinieri (the armed 'national guard').

That is not to say either that fascism can suddenly 'emerge' as a system from a coup d'etat. A seizure of power by the fascist forces, supported by the forces of law and order, would unquestionably lead to civil war.

All over the north, the home of one of the most militant sections of the European working class, the banner of resistance would be raised. The working class would have to be defeated in battle, their organization destroyed, their leaders murdered before a second Il Duce could rule Italy.

But it is true to say, that while the Communist Party calls on the state to put down the fascists, advanced preparations for a coup are underway.

This is the acute crisis and danger that faces every worker in Italy. As always it expresses itself as a crisis of working-class leadership.

TOMORROW: The 'squadristi' murder and terror squads of the right. THURSDAY: The people who back the fascists.

'Squadristi' gather (Top) One old with MSI member, MSI deputy coup with army



JIM SLATER RIDES AGAIN

BY PHILIP WADE

Once upon a time Jim Slater, the head of Britain's most powerful and diverse conglomerate, was a quiet man. Rarely in the news. He was seen (everywhere) but not heard.

More and more frequently, however, Slater is venturing into journalism to put the point of view of his section of British capitalism.

Recently he wrote about the things going on with so-called 'insider' deals on the Stock Exchange—transactions made by those with the advantage of knowing company results before anyone else.

A few days later it was a call for 'socially responsible' capitalism which struck the headlines.

Now, the head of Slater Walker Securities has seen fit to advise his old partner in business.

Former SWS partner Peter Walker (he quit to join the government in June 1970), is now, of course, head of Britain's most powerful government ministry—the Department of Trade and Industry. As such he is considering, in line with British capitalism's requirements, the 'reform' of monopoly legislation.

Go-ahead

As chairman of a £150m group with interests as far away as Hong Kong, Slater took time out to write a half-page article in 'The Times' Business News advising the

government what to do next.

But what he made a plea for was nothing less than a more efficient system where go-aheads are rapidly given for conglomerate takeovers of other industries, and mergers.

Undoubtedly Slater spells out in so many words that the policy changes are needed because British capitalism is breaking up under world competition in a trade war situation. The best thing to do, therefore, is to salvage, through ruthless rationalization, what you can and dump the rest.

'The most important single consideration of the government should be to ensure national economic survival within the context of the EEC and in the face of increasingly strong international competition,' wrote Slater.

He says one of 'the most difficult problems facing the government is to determine its policy on conglomerate mergers', roughly translating into the takeover of industrial companies by firms like Slater Walker.

Naturally enough, chairman Slater makes out a 'case' for allowing such mergers. Unless they were given the go-ahead, 'the largest and second largest companies in an industry would literally be safe from takeover'.

And if this happened it 'would surely be against the national interest', he argues.

Just to illustrate what new monopoly legislation should enable the conglomerates to do, Slater supplies details from a takeover his company made in May 1968.

At the time Critall-Hope was taken over it was, admits

Slater, by far the leading metal window manufacturer in the United Kingdom. In the three years the company was wholly owned by Slater, Critall-Hope underwent a dramatic transformation in its assets position and many workers got the sack.

Profits up

First Slater decided to do something about the business which 'cried out for the rationalization which we carried out'.

After selling up loss-making companies and selling a profitable, independent subsidiary in America, 'the proceeds of rationalization liberated approximately £10m'.

A further £9.3m was created by the development of Slater-Walker Securities (South Africa) from the assets of Critall-Hope's quoted subsidiary in South Africa.

The original investment there has increased in value, reports Slater, from £1.2m in May 1968 to £10.5m today.

Profits in the company have gone up £800,000 in four years with 'a much reduced capital employment, and turnover per employee has more than doubled from £2,250 to £5,150.

'There were, of course, redundancies resulting from the closure of some duplicated activities,' explains Slater.

This sort of operation, he adds, is what life should be all about. Rationalize, hive-off, create more capital, sack workers and force up profits.

Suddenly Slater has become morally upright about these questions. 'It is alarming that, in the present emotive climate surrounding mergers, there is

a little distinct possibility that this type of acquisition might be described as "asset-stripping" or dismissed as being an undesirable conglomerate merger,' he tells 'The Times' readers.

Asset-stripping, 'a relatively rare occurrence', according to Slater, should not be confused with 'industrial rationalization and putting assets to much better use'.

For much of his article Slater talks of the need to be sober when deciding on allowing the formation of monopolies and the need for legislation 'aimed at better protecting the public interest'.

Faster

Well, there's nothing like the old master handing out a few salutary warnings to anyone who wants to climb the ladder.

In about nine years, Slater has progressed from being deputy sales director at British-Leyland to the chairman of a company capitalized on the stock market at almost £200m.

In a short period the company—with Peter Walker as deputy chairman—passed through the control of an estimated 500 companies—leaving both men millionaires.

Slater moved faster than the City was used to in making the deals. 'It's like a knife and butter and we're the knife', he once said. The period 1964-1968, Slater describes thus: 'As soon as the ink was dry on one bid we launched another.'

Slater emerges today as a public relations man—in effect—for the Tory government, trying to allay the fears of

Peter Walker (left) and Jim Slater, partners and millionaires.

middle-class, potential Conservative voters who think that everyone in the City is speculation mad.

But in fact Slater makes out the best possible case for the expropriation of companies like his own and the socialization of the entire means of production.

Much of industry is today in the hands of industrial and financial conglomerates like Slater Walker Securities.

The question to be asked is: what right have a handful of multi-millionaires and big companies to break up the lives of thousands of workers through an accelerating succession of takeovers, mergers, rationalization and redundancies?

Such people cannot be left to control the means of production. The anarchy of the capitalist system which, through incessant searching for profits, brings misery to millions of workers, must be ended.

The Tory government which represents the Slaters and the British capitalist class must be forced out of office through the mobilization of the entire working class.

A returning Labour government must be made to nationalize all the basic industries, expropriating without compensation companies like Slater Walker.

With all the factories under the control of the working class, the basis will be established for a planned socialist economy run not for profit but for the needs of society as a whole.

WORKERS NOTEBOOK

CORRUPT

Yugoslav law allows groups of private individuals to set up their own companies. But according to the country's deputy public prosecutor, Muhamed Mirica, this is a source of wholesale corruption.

He told the Trade Union Federation Committee for Social and Economic Relations that the majority (!) of such private enterprise companies were corrupt and urged that they be banned from most forms of business activity.

They should not be allowed, he said, to practise trade or commerce, to act as mediators, representatives or agencies or to take part in the provision of services.

This view was accepted by the union body, but in the resulting discussion, a Belgrade professor said it remained to be seen whether such companies served any necessary economic function.

He felt, he said, that society had suffered enormous damage at the hands of these companies since they were first legalized in 1967. They had caused social inequality and a flow of socialist capital into private pockets.

DIRECTORS

A random sample of 5,000 members of the Institute of Directors, published in the December issue of 'The Director', shows that they manage fairly well.

Sixty per cent of them have two cars in their household and 19 per cent have more than two cars (79 per cent are provided with a car by their company).

Sixty-five per cent of the total have a colour TV; 51 per cent possess a deep freeze; 50 per cent an automatic dishwasher; 44 per cent hi-fi equipment; 17 per cent have a holiday home in the UK or abroad; 14 per cent own a yacht or power boat; 8 per cent have a swimming pool; 6 per cent a caravan; and a fortunate 1 per cent a private aircraft.

STREAMLINED



An unusual type of speed-up seems to be taking place within the Catholic Church. Pope Paul (75) has streamlined the administration of the extreme unction.

This rite—usually reserved for Roman Catholics on the point of death—consists of anointing the subject five times with olive oil (symbolizing the five senses) and repeating a prayer each time. Now the whole business is to be made quicker and simpler.

The wording of the unction is to be made plainer and, if necessary, only one anointing will do.

And if the priest can't lay his hands on some ready olive oil any other plant oil will do. (But it must be plant oil—as everyone knows, this closely resembles the matter indicated in the Holy Scriptures.)

Most convenient of all, the priest needn't wait until a member of the faithful is actually dying. As soon as anyone starts getting sick or old he qualifies, even if he might not be dying right then.

Obviously, this means that if a priest has a spare afternoon he can just dodge out and perform a few extreme unctions in order to get a bit ahead.



CGT LEADERS PROMISE CO-OPERATION WITH STATE

BY JOHN SPENCER

The French electorate is due to go to the polls on March 4 to elect a new National Assembly and the public opinion polls predict a victory for the parties of the left.

The latest polls put the common front of Socialist, Communist and Left Radical parties 8 per cent ahead of the Gaullist UDR, which at present controls a majority of seats in the parliament.

The prospect of ministerial office almost within their grasp has whetted the appetites of the common front leaders, particularly the Stalinists. They are determined to appear as men of moderation who have no intention of upsetting the established order.

The left parties are united by a common programme which consists of a number of mild reforms, including nationalization of 1 per cent of industry, a national minimum wage and retirement at 60.

The Gaullists are trying to paint the common front as a 'red menace' which will have dire consequences for the middle class. They are trying to stampede the small businessmen and farmers with memory of the May-June 1968 General Strike.

Revolution, however, is the last thing the Stalinists and the social-democrats want. They have spent the past few months proclaiming how modest and reasonable their demands are.

Most of their effort is devoted to holding back the workers, staving off strike actions and assuring the employers that their interests will not be jeopardized if the CP-SP government comes to power.

They have made it clear that they will accept the rules of the parliamentary game and will not seek to impose any form of dictatorship. They have indicated they will serve loyally under President Pompidou.

In their eagerness to convince the French employers that their system can safely be entrusted to a cabinet with CP Ministers, the Party has run

into trouble with the reformist CFDT trade union confederation which is subservient to the Catholic hierarchy.

Georges Ségué, leader of the Stalinist-dominated CGT trade union confederation, the largest and most influential in the country, recently attacked the CFDT for its mild criticisms of the common programme.

In an article in the Stalinist 'L'Humanité' he referred to those who falsely claimed that the unions would 'paralyse the government with an avalanche of wage claims which would, if conceded, weaken the public finances and ruin business'.

Nothing of the sort would happen if the CP had any say in the matter, the Stalinist union chief implied. He referred to certain union leaders (meaning the CFDT) who had 'announced in a tone containing an element of menace that they intended to claim this or that demand from the left government'.

Ségué said they were bringing grist to the mill of the opponents of the common programme and described their action as 'cavalier'. In any case, he said, these leaders were pushing against an open door because what they were asking for was already contained in the programme. CFDT leader Edmond Maire replied that any political power, whatever its intentions, had need of 'the driving force of the popular will' to put its programme into operation.

'If the action of the unions is to be made dependent on the action of the government, if the workers are passive if the unions are partners with the government, if everything is dependent on political action, then a left government will be impotent.'

Maire's opposition is not in the least principled. He no doubt fears he may be too deeply compromised if he commits himself to full support before the left government is even elected.

What clearly emerged from this controversy, however, is the extent to which the Stalinists intend tying the unions to the state if they win at the elections. This is a task French capitalism has been trying to tackle since Gaullism came to power 14 years ago.

Ségué said that on the day

after the left victory, the unions would consult with the government to work out the details of how the 'great economic and social reforms' were to be brought about.

This would usher in 'an era of new ties between the state and the trade union movement', which Ségué justified on the grounds that it would make things harder for firms which wanted to avoid implementing the new social legislation.

The new era would be marked by the prevalence of 'discussion and negotiations' which would be used to settle all vexed questions, 'by dealing with the causes which give rise to them'.



Georges Ségué, leader of the CGT. Above: Events in France, May, 1968. The Gaullists try to stampede the farmers and middle class with memories of the General Strike.

The Gaullists had never been able to involve the unions in their schemes for 'participation' because they were only interested in class-collaboration, making the unions their accomplices in the super-exploitation and alienation of the workers, Ségué said.

He added that the advent to power of a left government would invest, for the first time, the idea of participation with 'a progressive social significance'.

The CGT and Communist Party leaders, in other words, are bidding for the support of the middle class on the basis that they alone can destroy the independence of the unions and get their full collaboration with the state. Once again the CP is posing as the 'party of order' and trying to out-do the Gaullists at their own game.

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TODAY'S TV

BBC 1

9.15 Schools. 12.30 Nai zindagi naya jeevan. 12.55 News. 1.00 Pebble Mill at one. 1.30 On the farm. 1.45 Made in Britain. 2.05-2.50 Schools. 3.00 Sunday debate. 3.30 Young scientists of the year. 4.00 Deputy dawg. 4.10 Play school. 4.35 Jackanory 4.50 Thursday's child. 5.20 Screen test. 5.40 Magic roundabout. 5.45 News. Weather. **6.00 NATIONWIDE.** 6.45 **ASK THE FAMILY.** 7.05 **TOMORROW'S WORLD.** **7.30 NOW LOOK HERE.** New series with Ronnie Corbett and Rosemary Leach. **8.00 SOFTLY, SOFTLY: TASK FORCE.** For Love or Money. **8.50 WEEK BY WEEK.** **9.00 NEWS.** Weather. **9.25 SPORTSNIGHT.** England world cup soccer, international tennis, The All Blacks v Neath-Aberavon. **10.45 MIDWEEK.** **11.30 LATE NIGHT NEWS.** **11.35 Weather.**

ITV

9.30 Schools. 10.35 Yoga (London only). 12.05 Inigo Pipkin. 12.25 Rupert Bear. 12.40 First report. 1.00 Sing out with The Settlers. 1.30 Crown court. 2.00 Harriet's back in town. 2.30 Good afternoon. 3.00 Whose baby? 3.25 Saint. 4.20 Get this. 4.50 Arthur of the Britons. 5.20 Survival. 5.50 News. **6.00 TODAY.** **6.35 CROSSROADS.** **7.00 THIS IS YOUR LIFE.** **7.30 CORONATION STREET.** **8.00 THE FIRST OF LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR.** **8.30 NEAREST AND DEAREST.** The One That Got Away. **9.00 PUBLIC EYE.** It's a Woman's Privilege. **10.00 NEWS AT TEN.** **10.30 A PLACE IN THE COUNTRY.** Waddesdon. **LATE NIGHT THEATRE: MELODRAMA.** The Gypsy's Revenge or The Wrath of the Romanies. **11.30 FILM: 'HUMAN DESIRE.'** Glenn Ford, Gloria Grahame, Broderick Crawford. Love and murder. 1.05 Epilogue.



Beatrix Lehmann plays Mrs Fennel, a senile but non-stop talking old lady who becomes a burden on her son in 'Is Nellie Dead?', BBC 2's Thirty-Minute Theatre production at 10.15. Ronnie Corbett also has 'mother' trouble in the first of a new series 'Now Look Here' on BBC 1 at 7.30.

REGIONAL TV

CHANNEL: 9.30-11.55 London. 1.15 News. 1.30 London. 2.30 Galloping gourmet. 3.00 London. 6.00 News. 6.10 Hogan's heroes. 6.35 London. 7.00 Treasure hunt. 7.30 London. 8.00 This is your life. 8.30 London. 11.30 News, weather.

WESTWARD. As Channel except: 12.05 London. 12.25 Hammy hamster. 12.37 Gus Honeybun. 12.40 London. 12.57 News. 1.00 London. 6.00 Diary. 11.30 News. 11.33 Generation three. 12.00 Faith for life.

SOUTHERN: 9.30 London. 12.00 News. 12.05 London. 2.30 Houseparty. 3.00 London. 3.30 Danger man. 4.25 London. 5.20 Cartoon. 5.25 Crossroads. 5.50 London. 6.00 Day by day. 6.30 Survival. 7.00 London. 11.30 What the papers say. 11.45 News. 11.55 Guide-line. 12.00 Shirley's world. 12.30 Weather.

HARLECH: 9.30 London. 2.30 Houseparty. 3.00 London. 4.50 Rainbow country. 5.20 Chuckleheads. 5.25 Crossroads. 5.50 London. 6.01 Report West. 6.15 Report Wales. 6.30 Arthur of the Britons. 7.00 London. 8.00 Pathfinders. 9.00 London. 11.30 Cinema. 12.00 Weather.

HTV Cymru/Wales as above except: 4.20 Miri mawr. 4.35-4.50 Cantamil. 6.01-6.15 Y dydd.

HTV West as above except: 6.15-6.30 Report West.

ANGLIA: 9.30 London. 12.04 News. 12.05 London. 2.30 Houseparty. 3.00 London. 3.30 Odd couple. 3.55 Romper room. 4.09 News. 4.20 London. 5.20 Lucy. 5.50 London. 6.00 About Anglia. 6.35 London. 8.00 Survival. 8.30 London. 11.30 Spyforce. Prayer.

BBC 2

11.00-11.25 Play school. 5.25 Open University.

- 7.05 MAN AT WORK.** Be Your Own Boss.
- 7.30 NEWS SUMMARY.** Weather.
- 7.35 ALL IN A DAY.** The Match. Ipswich Town football team before a game.
- 8.05 MUSIC ON 2.** Michael Ponti plays works by Scriabin, Schumann, Blumenfeld and Stravinsky.
- 9.05 OSTERLEY PARK HOUSE.**
- 9.25 MAN ALIVE.** Not on Speaking Terms. Break-up of a marriage.
- 10.15 THIRTY MINUTE THEATRE: 'IS NELLIE DEAD?'** By Tom Woodall. With Beatrix Lehmann, Philip Latham, Robert Powell.
- 10.45 EDITION.** **11.15 NEWS EXTRA.** Weather.

ATV MIDLANDS: 9.30 London. 12.00 Today. 12.05 London. 6.00 Today. 6.35 London. 8.00 Please sir! 8.30 London. 10.30 Odd couple. 11.00 London. 11.30 O'Hara US Treasury. Weather.

the buses. 8.30 London. 11.30 What the papers say.

ULSTER: 11.00 London. 1.32 News. 1.40 Schools. 2.45 Romper room. 3.00 London. 3.25 Women today. 3.55 Harriet's back in town. 4.23 News. 4.25 London. 6.00 Reports. 6.35 London. 8.00 Protectors. 8.30 London. 11.30 World War I.

TYNE TEES: 9.25 Prologue. 9.30 London. 2.30 News. 2.31 London. 3.30 Champions. 4.20 London. 6.00 Today. 6.35 London. 8.00 Anna and the king. 8.30 London. 10.30 Tour. 11.00 London. 11.30 News. 11.45 Edgar Wallace. 12.40 Lectern.

YORKSHIRE: 9.30 London. 5.20 Bewitched. 5.50 London. 6.00 Calendar, weather. 6.35 London. 8.00 Anna and the king. 8.30 London. 10.30 Adam 12. 11.00 London. 11.30 Spyforce. 12.25 Weather.

SCOTTISH: 9.30 London. 2.30 Date-line. 3.00 London. 5.25 Crossroads. 5.50 London. 6.00 Today. 6.30 Survival. 7.00 London. 8.00 Pathfinders. 9.00 London. 10.30 Sound stage. 11.00 London. 11.30 What the papers say. 11.45 Late call. 11.50 Blue light.

GRANADA: 9.30 London. 3.25 Yoga. 3.50 Cartoon. 4.00 Crossroads. 4.20 London. 6.00 Newsday. What's on. 6.30 Lucy. 7.00 London. 8.00 On

GRAMPIAN: 10.58 London. 1.38 Schools. 2.45 Cartoon. 2.52 News. 3.00 London. 3.25 Women. 3.55 Harriet's back in town. 4.20 London. 6.00 News. 6.05 Thompson at tea-time. 6.35 London. 8.00 Stuart Gillies show. 8.30 London. 11.30 A kind of living. 12.00 Meditation.

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ALL TRADES UNIONS ALLIANCE MEETINGS

- Fight Rising Prices
Force the Tories to Resign
Support the Engineers
- GLASGOW:** Wednesday January 24, 7.30 p.m. Room 3, Partick Burgh Halls.
 - LEICESTER:** Wednesday January 24, 8 p.m. Queen's Hotel, Rutland Street.
 - FELTHAM:** Thursday January 25, 7.30 p.m. The Co-op Hall, Bath Road (near the Bell Pub), Hounslow.
 - WILLESDEN:** Thursday January 25, 8 p.m. Trades and Labour Hall, High Road, NW10.
 - HACKNEY:** Thursday January 25, 8 p.m. Parlour Room, Central Hall, opposite Hackney Town Hall.
 - LEEDS:** Thursday, January 25, 8 p.m. Peel Hotel, Boar Lane. 'The state pay plan'.
 - MIDDLESBROUGH:** Sunday January 28, 7.30 p.m. Settlement Community Centre, Newport Road.
 - PADDINGTON:** Monday January 29, 8 p.m. 'Dudley Arms', corner North Wharf and Bishop's Bridge Road, W.2.
 - ROCHESTER:** Tuesday January 30, 8 p.m. 'The Greyhound', Rochester Avenue.
 - BARKING:** Tuesday January 30, 8 p.m. Co-op Hall, corner of Fanshawe Ave./Lagbridge Road.
 - HARROW:** Tuesday January 30, 8 p.m. Labour Hall, Harrow and Wealdstone.
 - CLAPHAM:** Tuesday January 30, 8 p.m. Clapham Manor Baths, Clapham Manor Street, SW4.
 - WANDSWORTH:** Tuesday January 30, 8 p.m. Selkirk Hotel, Tooting Broadway, SW17.
 - KINGSTON:** Thursday February 1, 8 p.m. 'Liverpool Arms', (corner of Cambridge Road/London Road).
 - CAMBRIDGE:** Thursday February 1, 8 p.m. 'The Rose and Crown', corner of Newmarket Road and East Road.

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An appeal on behalf of the Fine Tubes strikers of Plymouth

THE Plymouth Fine Tubes strikers have just completed two years and seven months on strike.

These men have waged a bitter struggle for the most basic right a worker can possess—the right to belong to a trade union.

Strike committee members have travelled over 100,000 miles to sustain their fight.

These latest months have been the hardest of all for the men, their wives and 53 children. Common Market entry, with rapidly rising prices, has imposed a severe financial burden. The 37 strikers face the challenging months ahead with a depleted strike fund—this is in a period when meat has now become a luxury for all but the highest paid. January is always a difficult month to raise money to further their fight.

Yet they are determined to fight on. This is a struggle the working class cannot afford to lose. That is why the Socialist Labour League and the Workers Press wishes to make a special appeal to all trade unionists to take collections in their factories and branches for the Fine Tubes men in order that their heroic and determined action can be carried forward. All money should be sent to:

Fine Tubes Treasurer
c/o 65 Bretonside
Plymouth, Devon.

DAVID MAUDE, our industrial correspondent, in an on-the-spot assessment from Merseyside

THE FIGHT against the closure at CAV, Fazakerley, is at a turning point. After 14 weeks of sit-in strike, the strikers are in urgent need of support from the wider trade union movement.

The future of the sit-in is balanced on a razor edge. Key questions are raised for every Merseyside trade unionist.

Last Thursday a mass meeting endorsed a recommendation from the occupation committee to relax control of the site. It agreed to call off picketing of three other factories in the area.

Since week three of the sit-in, the strikers have been regulating all movement of supplies on and off the site, operating all the on-site services and controlling who goes in and out with an effective system of passes.

The Lucas combine, which owns CAV and a smaller factory on the same site, would not accept this. So workers at the smaller factory, Lucas Industrial Equipment were laid off.

This had several contradictory effects.

It handed the strikers a powerful lever for notching up the pressure on Lucas, since it tied up the combine's central transport system for the whole of the Merseyside area.

This meant that the Fazakerley transport drivers, now laid off, could appeal to their opposite numbers at Lucas headquarters, Birmingham, to black all loads normally carried by them.

Since all loads to and from Merseyside car and Lucas group factories would normally have been carried by the Fazakerley men, this should, theoretically, have reinforced the occupation committee's general call for a black on Lucas products and stop the car factories.

Another effect of the LIE lay-offs was to cut off valuable financial support to the sit-in. The LIE workers had been operating a weekly levy, which embraced both hourly paid and staff, in support of CAV.

But more important, the lay-off set up a potential counter-pressure against the sit-in among sections of workers who simply wanted to start drawing wages again. It was at this point that the role of the union leadership and officials became crucial.

Marked time

The question was: would the union chiefs take firm action to back the sit-in strikers, and hence the whole struggle against unemployment on Merseyside, or would they virtually mark time and allow the company unlimited time to develop strategies for undermining the sit-in?

In the event they marked time. Although officially backing the sit-in, they refused last November to support a strike in solidarity throughout the Lucas combine on Merseyside.

The executive of the engineers' union, which organized a majority of the 1,000 workers facing the dole, sent a message 'sympathizing' with the strikers' aims.

At the same time there was no support for the blacking campaign, or the picket of three Merseyside factories which continued to use Lucas products in defiance of the black.

John Howe, AUEW deputy convenor at CAV, described the demoralizing effect of this: 'We had pickets on at Ford and Standard Triumph all day and at Victor works [Lucas' aerospace factory] round the clock.

'People were on for two hours at a time, and it was absolutely demoralizing. The pattern was: in two hours you'd get maybe seven or eight lorries turning up.

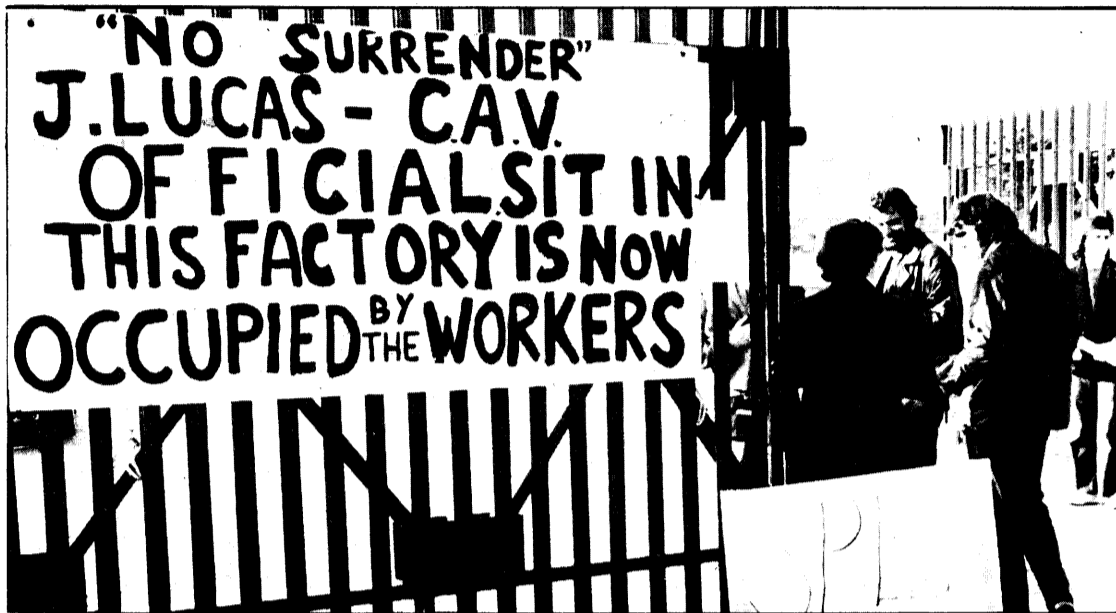
'You'd talk to the drivers, they'd ring up their shop steward. He'd ring the Transport and General Workers' Union office and be told to cross the picket line. So you'd end up with, say, eight lorries arriving and eight lorries going in. And this was costing us £10 a day in petrol alone.'

While this was going on, the local union officials were carefully changing the whole basis of the sit-in.

At the outset the action had been designed to keep the

CAV sit-in fight at critical stage

From the third week of the 15-week sit-in, the workers have controlled the gates to the Lucas-CAV Fazakerley complex.



factory open and preserve all 1,000 jobs. In their discussions with management, however, the officials began edging towards the formula that alternative work should be found in the Lucas combine.

At the same time the officials ignored calls—even when made jointly by the CAV and LIE stewards—to arrange a meeting with the shop-floor leaderships at Ford, Standard Triumph and Lucas aerospace.

Franny Martin, T&GWU convenor, explains the importance of the officials' role here:

'In the case of Ford's we have definite information that work we normally do is being pipelined in on their direct rail link from Dagenham. Instead of going through Birmingham and up by lorry, it's marshalled at East Thurrock, and then it's into Dagenham and straight into Halewood.

'Given the opportunity I'm sure we could have got this stopped ages ago. It's absolutely vital now.'

The officials' deliberate refusal to help make the black effective strengthened the hand of those, for instance, on Merseyside docks shop stewards' committee, who preferred sceptical comment about the possible outcome of the sit-in to action in its support.

So far the docks' stewards have countered calls to black all Lucas products by demanding a pledge that car and engineering workers will back them if they run into trouble with the Industrial Relations Act.

No accident

Whether they will agree to a new proposal that they black just products normally made at Fazakerley remains to be seen.

What has so far been missed by the foot-draggers and sceptics, however, is that the sit-in remains strong, effective and capable of posing serious problems for Lucas if the combine proceeds with its closure plans.

It cannot be an accident that the growth of pressure on the occupation committee to relax its control of the site coincided with severe difficulties for the combine management.

Because the occupation took place in October, rather than at the threatened date of closure this April, the combine is left with considerable amounts of diesel pump stock which it cannot complete without components normally produced at Fazakerley.

Pledges have been received from CAV factories in the south-east that these components will not be supplied from there. And because of a laboratory workers'

dispute at CAV, Acton, in London, last year, Lucas is badly behind schedule with a new pump designed to replace the Fazakerley product.

It was when this situation became acute and Lucas faced the loss of both money and markets that the combine management threatened to close LIE in two weeks unless the occupation committee loosened its grip.

Reaction

The reaction of the majority of LIE stewards, with union officials in the background, was to call for all measures 'within the labour movement' to get their factory open.

Some stewards began touring branches to whip up support for this policy. They now want the district committee to contact the engineers' union executive to ask that financial aid to the sit-in strikers should be withdrawn.



John Howe, deputy convenor

Just over a week ago the company made its move. Seventeen clerical workers who had been taking part in the sit-in were offered eight weeks' full pay, their redundancy money and the promise of jobs at other factories in the Lucas combine including LIE.

On Tuesday of last week the occupation committee met to consider the new situation. By 15 votes to eight they decided to allow the reopening of LIE under the conditions which had existed during the first three weeks of the sit-in.

Through the officials came word that this was acceptable to the management. But at a mass meeting on Thursday someone remembered that these conditions included the operation of a pass system by the occupation committee and insisted this be spelt out.

By Friday morning the management had informed Gerry Russell, AUEW divisional organizer, that it would not accept this. Its proposal was the opening of an old gate well away from LIE and the separation of the two

factories to allow free movement of transport.

At a stormy meeting of the LIE stewards on Friday morning, one steward who supported the sit-in throughout was told that he was excluded from future stewards' meetings for allegedly working against the policy of the stewards' committee.

This was done despite the fact that the committee has no standing orders and that it is questionable if such a move will be upheld by either the district committee or the steward's own section.

Some CAV stewards are also reflecting similar pressure and talking about a 'rethink' of the whole policy on which the occupation has been conducted.

But what stands out is that the sit-in is now at a point where it can be won.

The reason for the heat in both factories is that Lucas is on the spot. The combine management wants to clear CAV Fazakerley off the agenda before major struggles break out in the car and car components industry. It knows that such struggles are inevitable.

Basic rights

Workers in the Lucas combine are in the cockpit of the struggle for the defence of basic democratic rights.

● Defence of basic trade union rights.

Engineers in the combine have recently staged countrywide strikes against the £61,000 fines imposed on their union by the National Industrial Relations Court. This followed the prosecutions launched on the union by CAV worker at Sudbury, Suffolk, Mr James Goad.

● Defence of the right to work.

The sit-in strike at Fazakerley, which began almost 15 weeks ago, shows the determination of workers to resist closures and massive redundancies. The pattern of close downs by the big employers will be stepped up now that the Tories have joined the capitalist conspiracy in the Common Market.

As CAV and other firms remove their capital to countries like Spain, the fight for the right to work will be a key rallying point against the Tory government.

● Defence of a decent standard of living.

Heath's new state pay laws are designed to completely undermine the relatively high earnings in the car and car components industry. Engineering workers who previously relied on the

reformist gravy train to get a few pounds' extra each year have seen wage-bargaining abolished and pay increases limited to £1 a week plus 4 per cent. This sum cannot possibly compensate for the soaring cost of living.

To defend these basic rights requires a political and industrial struggle throughout the labour and trade union movement against the Tory government.

There is no evading the issue—the Tories have to be removed from office if rights are to be defended and the standard of living of the working-class protected. Socialist policies for the future must also be hammered out.

The land, the banks and the basic industries must be nationalized without compensation and under workers' control.

In the struggle for these twin policies—forcing the Tories out and the preparation of a socialist programme—the right-wing traitors in the Labour Party and the TUC must be roundly exposed before the masses. The returned Labour government must be forced to implement socialist policies.

This struggle against the Tories and the right wing is inseparable from the urgent task of transforming the Socialist Labour League into a revolutionary party.

Workers being thrust into the struggle, some for the first time, must immediately join the SLL or the All Trades Unions Alliance and help this historic campaign.

SLL LECTURES

HULL

Wednesday January 24
Marxist theory and the revolutionary party

WHITE HART HOTEL
Alfred Gelder Street
(near Drypool Bridge)
8 p.m.

GLASGOW

Sunday January 28
The Communist International in the Days of Lenin and Trotsky.
Sunday, February 4
The Left Opposition's struggle against Stalinism.

MID HALL
Partick Burgh Halls
7.30 p.m.

Lectures by Tom Kemp, SLL Central Committee member

DONCASTER

Sunday February 4
The crisis and the socialist answer.
Sunday February 11
The revolutionary party in Britain.

Lectures given by Cliff Slaughter.

SPREAD EAGLE HOTEL
Westlathgate
7.30 p.m.

TODMORDEN

Monday February 5
'Trotskyism'

THE WEAVERS' INSTITUTE, Burnley Road,
7.30 p.m.

No opposition to Tories' state pay plan

Labour-TUC chiefs beat retreat

THE PARLIAMENTARY Labour Party yesterday backed its leader, Harold Wilson, and decided not to impede Heath's state pay legislation.

The party gave 'unqualified support' for Wilson's policy of 'opposing' the legislation with a 'reasoned amendment'. The amendment is a procedural method of denying a Second Reading.

In other words the Labourites are preparing to go through a parliamentary charade in which there will be no genuine opposition to the Tory attack on wages and the standard of living of the working class.

Robert Mellish, the Labour Chief Whip, told the meeting there would be no question of filibustering on the committee stage of the Bill, which the government wants completed by the end of February. But there was plenty which could occupy their attention without any deliberate delaying tactics, he added.

The Press Association political correspondent commented: 'Left-wing Labour MPs in particular welcomed the party line in the debate which followed.'

The joint TUC-Labour Party statement 'Economic Policy and the Cost of Living' is a deliberate attempt to hide the complicity of the Labour and trade union leaders with the Tory government's attacks on the working class.

It also aims at persuading workers that it is not necessary to fight these attacks now.

BY JACK GALE

It seeks to hide the real nature of the economic crisis.

The 'unhappy' state of the economy, the document says, is a legacy of 'serious and damaging mistakes' by the Tory government. This is dangerous nonsense.

The Industrial Relations Act, the wage control legislation, the Housing Finance Act and entry into the Common Market were not 'mistakes' but deliberate policies consciously carried out against the working class on behalf of monopoly capitalism.

Since the Tories took office, food prices have gone up 25 per cent, rents and rates more than 25 per cent, fares 33 per cent and house prices more than 50 per cent.

All this was brought about by government measures, including the floating of the pound last June which was designed to create soaring inflation.

In this situation, the Tories hoped to be able to defeat the unions.

Now the TUC and Labour Party leaders pretend that all this can be reversed by a Labour government introducing a few tax changes and some unspecified 'selective' powers.

Yet only one day before the document appeared, Labour leader Harold Wilson was

saying a Labour government would make use of the Tory 'bequest' of wage-control legislation.

Wilson wants these powers because he knows that inflation is not some passing phase which can be reformed out of existence, but an indication of the deep economic crisis of capitalism.

This crisis has led to an all out trade war against European capitalism by the United States and Japan.

Key industries like cars, motor-cycles, machine tools, aircraft, shipbuilding, electronics and textiles come under increasing pressure.

The jobs and living standards of millions of workers are at stake as capitalism is forced to attack them in its desperate effort to survive.

This is the economic reality which creates the political crisis in western Europe. The Labour leaders' document tries to paper this over.

They themselves, of course, have collaborated at every stage of the Tory offensive against the working class.

The Wilson government paved the way for the Tory measures by its prices and incomes policy and its attempted legislation against the unions. It handed power to Heath in 1970 by disillusioning hundreds of thousands of Labour voters.

The TUC leaders continued talks with the Tory chiefs while unions were being fined and wage-control legislation enacted.

In fact, the TUC-Labour Party document does not complain about the anti-trade union legislation, but about the fact that they weren't allowed even more consultation over it!

The document says: 'It was certainly unprecedented for a government in this country to introduce legislation intended to transform the entire legal framework of one of the greatest institutions in our society without any attempt at serious discussion of the principles.'

By telling workers not to fight, by coming forward with not a single proposal against the Tory onslaught, they strengthen the employers against the working class.

In this situation it is urgent to build Councils of Action to fight the Tories now, to launch a campaign to make the unions destroy the Tory pay law, and to expose the Labour leaders by forcing the Tory government to resign and electing a Labour government pledged to socialist policies.

Central to this is the formation of the revolutionary party to prevent a sell-out which would eclipse 1926 and 1931 in its magnitude.

Most Birmingham building sites stop in campaign against sacking and the lump



Sacked UCATT steward Peter Carter (left) in London yesterday for a joint conciliation council hearing on his case.

ABOUT 500 builders marched through Birmingham yesterday in a demonstration against the sacking of Peter Carter, chairman of the UCATT shop stewards, and three others by C. Bryant and Sons. Later they held a protest meeting outside the main Bryant office in Small Heath.

On the way they stopped outside the Birmingham City Council headquarters and were addressed by Stan Yapp, leader of the Labour Council who said:

'The Labour Council is going to reintroduce a direct labour scheme again. We have no intention of removing our council minute which refuses to give contracts to firms who use lump labour. Even though at the moment Birmingham is suffering from this by having less houses built.'

Mike Shilcock told Workers Press: 'Forty sites have stopped work. Two to three thousand men have taken the day off. The main sites affected are Laing's, McAlpine, Wimpey, Gilbert Ash, Cubitts and Bryant.'

'These big firms have up to ten to 15 sites apiece.'

'This attack on Carter is designed to destroy the union here by the use of lump labour. If the employers can get away with it, all the right-wing reactionary tendencies in the country would be reinforced.'

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Workers Press MONTHLY APPEAL FUND

JANUARY FUND NEEDS £856.80 IN EIGHT DAYS

IT IS now getting close to the end of the month and we are a long way from completing our £1,750 target. Let's step up the fight immediately. This month our Fund is needed more than ever before.

In this political situation, Workers Press is vital. Our paper is needed to give a clear, firm lead in the fight against the Tories. As share values fall drastically an even bigger economic crisis faces this Tory government.

Only our paper warns workers everywhere of the dangers of even greater attacks on their living standards and basic democratic rights. The onslaught by this government has only just begun.

There is no doubt that trade unionists everywhere will fight back as never before. Let us show all our determination with a big campaign for our January Fund. Extra amounts must be raised. Do all you can and complete our target in time. Rush every donation immediately to:

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

STUDENTS are joining manual workers on the picket line at Warwick University, Coventry, in a dispute over pay. The 300 ancillary staff went on strike last Saturday demanding parity with workers in local authority establishments. A Transport and General Workers' Union official tried to persuade the strikers to return to work.

But Mrs Sparham, one of the strikers, told Workers Press: 'We feel as though we are in the right. This claim was in long before the freeze.'

UNIONS in South Wales are being asked to consider strikes in protest at rent rises due for tenants of two Housing Finance Act 'rebel' councils. The rises, due in about three weeks, were fixed by housing commissioners appointed for Merthyr Tydfil and Bedwas and Machen councils after they refused to implement the rises under the Act.

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