

Telly groovies and the Whitewash gang unite to stamp out real protest

TV

cohabit, would be unbearable) had already been effectively done to death many times down the road in the Aldwych, the last nail in the coffin being Peter Brook's US, which rivalled this programme in pretentiousness and self-proclaimed modernity.

cratic groovies to show The Big Flame, and the Wednesday play is constantly hampered and diluted by the big boys upstairs.

connected with the way society conducts its affairs. It's a very nice way of looking at violence, as a fact as disconnected from your and my life and behaviour as an earthquake.

DETERMINED

The sad fact is that the BBC, while hipply revamping old theatrical and cinematic forms like improvisation and documentary (Piscator was showing films on stage as part of plays while television was still a dirty gleam in James Baird's eye), is determined to stamp on new content, without which really new forms cannot emerge.

After the glimmer of creative and committed drama by writers like Jim Allen and Alan Plater, the Whitewashes (for whom 'moral' censorship is merely a cover for political censorship - to show violence as part of a violent age is more dangerous than the intrigues of Galsworthy and Edwardia) are winning the day.

IRRESPONSIBLE

But it is an approach which is sterile, myopic, indulgent and wrong. The BBC's attempt to wrap its drama in a vast, disinfected polythene bag is social irresponsibility of the first water.

DAVID EDGAR

ghoulish delight in which they built up the Thirty-minute Theatre production Invasion as being the new departure to end all new departures was really very funny.

The show turned out to be a few well-known 'personalities' having dinner while a television set showed newsreels of Vietnam atrocities with which the company gradually became involved.

HAILED

The dialogue was unscripted. The 'personalities' chatted away about their clothes, the latest jollities at the Roundhouse, and the meal they were eating, while one by one they got killed off, symbolically by the presence of the television images. It

was hailed as a triumph, a revolution in television technique.

The fact that improvisation (which was the only new departure) has figured in the modern (let alone the classical) theatre for years didn't seem to matter. Nor did it matter that the 'message' (that the tension between our ordinary lives and the horrors of Vietnam, if allowed to

THE OLD ADAGE 'I don't go to the theatre to see violence, rape and incest, I can get all that at home' is a bit ironic with reference to the BBC's latest self-preoccupation, the place of violence in its programmes.

Talkback has discussed it, with middle-class drearies begging 'more relevant programmes' and telly trendies justifying 405-line violence as being really terribly moral.

The Mrs Whitewash gang, indeed, seem to verge from complaining that they can't understand plays to complaining (even more virulently) that when they see brutality in Vietnam or revolution in The Big Flame they understand it only too well.

Of course, the BBC high-ups are very shot on their role as leaders of taste, the creators of new forms. The

Does a stolen Picasso have a message for us all?

SIX PAINTINGS by Picasso were among works stolen a few weeks ago from the home of Sir Roland Penrose, a trustee of the Tate Gallery.

The total value of the loss was provisionally valued at £300,000.

A dejected Sir Roland said that he supposed they were priced so highly because of a general lack of confidence in money, which is causing people to invest in paintings.

One of the Picassos, 'Woman Weeping', is valued at between 60 and 80 thousand pounds.

But is a painting - any painting - really this valuable? To thousands of

And of course it is true that financial speculators, whose only concern for paintings is their use as a capital investment with fantastic interest, have grossly inflated their price.

Grotesque prices

I think such works do have enormous value, but it is a value which cannot be expressed in money terms. The grotesque prices affixed to many works of art often obscure whether they are good or bad, and in any case ruling-class fashions in art are notoriously fickle.

Many 'great' artists worshipped by the Victorian bourgeoisie, for example, have long been relegated to the historical dustbin.

Let us examine one of the stolen paintings, and try to assess its real value, if any.

The Weeping Woman is at first glance painted in a

Great paintings - more than an 'investment' for rich speculators

by **PHIL EVANS**

The idea of the drawing is hard to understand.

Her crumpled-up face has literally dissolved in tears. She chews a handkerchief held in a hand which looks like the paw of a Trog cartoon character.

For some reason she has two profiles, facing us and to our right at the same time. It is impossible to tell which bits are face and which bits are her right hand.

Why has Picasso, an artist with superb technical skill, chosen this way of painting? What advantage did he think it had over the so-called realistic style of painting?

In the first place, it is necessary to realise that even the most 'photographic' type of painting, simple though it may appear, uses an enormous number of complicated conventions which literally need to be learnt before they can be understood. We understand them

because we are brought up with them. We learn them just as we learn English, and are as unaware of the process as we are of learning the grammar of our spoken language.

Conventions which are familiar to us, of line, perspective, or shading, can be baffling to people of another cultural background. The language of drawing is no more international than any other language.

E.H. Gombrich, the art critic, in his excellent book *Art and Illusion*, tells of an incident which shows this. 'James Cheng, who taught painting to a group of Chinese trained in different

made with his students to a famous beauty spot, one of Peking's old gates.

'The task baffled them. In the end, one of the students asked to be given at least a picture postcard of the building so that they would have something to copy.'

In other words they were unfamiliar with the Western vocabulary of drawing conventions which are our jumping-off point when drawing new objects. The language of Oriental calligraphic-based art is equally mysterious to us.

All painters use some kind of code, to simplify and select from what they see. The difficulties arise when artists invent personal and unfamiliar codes to describe what they see.

When we meet these new codes we become confused, and often fall back on condemnation as an alternative to understanding.

Tongue in cheek

The painter James McNeill Whistler gave a tongue-in-cheek guide to this kind of criticism: 'You shouldn't say you do not like it; and then, you know, you're perfectly safe.'

The Weeping Woman is a painting whose 'code', or syntax, needs to be understood before its content can be appreciated.



Weeping Woman: don't look for realism

I compared part of its drawing earlier with that of a cartoonist. We do not look for realism in cartoons. We accept easily their vocabulary of distortions; big feet, pot-bellies, bulbous noses.

Andy Capp, for instance, is really a simple and repetitive combination of squiggles which we accept as triggers to set off laughter. Perhaps it is Picasso's cartoon-like exaggerations which lead some people to laugh at his paintings.

Just as Andy Capp's nose is nothing like a real nose, but a mark which we take to mean nose, this woman's face is built up from marks we can 'read' as a network of sinus and tear glands, trembling fingers and mouth.

If we are prepared to learn the new visual grammar used

here it can be seen that it is a powerful picture; the neurotic face of a hysterical century.

It sums up our psychology just as Shakespeare summed up that of technically advanced but self-doubting Renaissance men in plays like Hamlet.

A victim?

That is why the picture is valuable. It is, of course, easy to be over-respectful towards 'Great Art'. It is more difficult to respect the bourgeois philistines whose only criterion of value seems to be a work's price in the salerooms.

Perhaps the Weeping Woman is also a victim of the 'lack of confidence in money' which has been the cause of so much misery this century?

Socialist Worker

EDITORIAL 657a High Road Tottenham London N17 telephone 01-808 2879, BUSINESS Paxton Works Paxton Road London N17 telephone 01-808 4847

Editor Roger Protz
Editorial Committee Paul Foot Richard Kuper Laurie Flynn Sabby Sagall
Business Manager Jim Nichol

SOCIALIST WORKER is the paper of International Socialism, a movement of revolutionary socialists who believe that the present form of society, with its blatant inequalities, its periodic crises, wars and racialist hysteria must be replaced by one based on a planned economy under full workers' control; those who produce the wealth should own and control the means of production. International Socialism is opposed to any incomes policy that seeks to restrict the wages of the workers in order to boost the profits of the employers. We unconditionally support all shop stewards and rank and file trade union members in their struggles for better wages and conditions and oppose all reactionary laws that threaten the liberties of the labour movement. We support all strikes in defence of workers' interests with the de-

WHERE WE STAND

mand of no victimisation of trade unionists. Redundancy should be opposed with the demand: five days work or five days pay. Shop stewards organisations should strengthen and extend their in-

fluence by linking up on an industrial and ultimately a national basis.

We are opposed to racial discrimination, a weapon used by the ruling class to divide the labour movement. Immigration control must be ended, ensuring the free movement of peoples regardless of race and colour. Black and white workers must unite and form their own defence organisations to fight fascism and racialism. The labour movement must demand the immediate recall of British troops from abroad as the first step towards ending colonial exploitation.

The task of revolutionary socialists is to join workers in their struggles with socialist ideas that will link up the various sections of the labour movement and help create a force that will lead on to workers' power and international socialism.

International Socialism 36

the marxist journal that provides a political backdrop for readers of Socialist Worker

Ireland/students/perspectives/
Kidron on Mandel/Higgins on CP 'history'

3s pp or 15s for a year

36 Gilden Road London NW5

WHY DID THE Labour Party have a Labour Party and the Labour Party supposed to be men's party union party.

And now ping up a against the stewards, against the who have the bone of the ment.

Politics of Socialist power workers' power.

These are the Labour even the best of the has been done in a capitalist the power is the big business.

It has to them. They or tricked in

And this by a working and conscious in society to liberate itself of the power - the about every their lives - hands.

To educate organise for that's means in the is a tough job.

How much concentrate on total machinery of telling with their knees, and fight, prejudices capitalist hire.

You can for being can talk a heat of the

'Si str

AT THE Election I International parallel without putting

The cam the usual meetings, would be basic type document policy and nature of the capitalist

On election have our own preferably on vans. Electors to's (or some s recording the and trade would be s the normal at factory gate

Our 'res announced a later through channels of would also useful local

A system be more posing and would in investigation of Labour candidates. not exclude these candidates want to.

This point ant legally a election p result in pro technicality. tage of the does not in heavy expend its yet enal political ac political p clearly show and difference

Moreover effective the ional protest itself ensnare entary proces

Our elec should be a c forward pol and should in ifically the iples of rank and re-call. T tal in electin in political - more essent areas of the I think it

Workers' power — the only alternative to the Labour/Tory run-around...

HEY do it? We our government our Party is be the working y, the trade they are whip- real hysteria unions, against strikers, very people been the back-Labour move- s about power. tics is about er. the facts that Party, including t and most sin- Labour 'lefts', dging for years. t society most of in the hands of, ess bosses. You can win friends and influence voters and when you win a general election you can, you hope, introduce all sorts of reforms which will somehow change the system. Well, it has been tried. We are now in our fourth year of the current instalment. The bosses are richer and more powerful than ever. We are no nearer a democratic, humane, classless society than we were under Macmillan or Home.

by **DUNCAN HALLAS**

Fed up

revolution' and 'fairer shares in expanding prosperity'. You can win friends and influence voters and when you win a general election you can, you hope, introduce all sorts of reforms which will somehow change the system. Well, it has been tried. We are now in our fourth year of the current instalment. The bosses are richer and more powerful than ever. We are no nearer a democratic, humane, classless society than we were under Macmillan or Home.

Lesser evil?

What about the lesser evil, better half a loaf than no bread? A good test is that proposed by Mr Harold Wilson (in opposition of course). 'Given a Labour victory,' said Harold, 'the test is this. Will there be, 12 months from now, a narrowing of the gap between rich and poor, quite apart from any general upward movement there may be as a result of increased

national production? The answer is, quite simply that there will.' This is the same man who refused to permit an increase of 14s a week for agricultural workers while accepting increases of up to £145 per week for the bosses of nationalised industries! Not that he can really help it. Once you accept that the job of a Labour government is to keep the capitalist system going so you can introduce reforms, you are caught up in the logic of the thing. The capitalists must be kept happy so nothing fundamental can be disturbed. Reforms are easier to carry

through if there is plenty to go round, so profits have to be kept up. To keep up profits the workers have to be kept in line and the rich given 'incentives' — in plain words more swill in their trough.

The rich get richer and the working man gets fed up. Then the aim becomes to win the middle-class vote and the votes of the most backward elements in the population. We get In Place of Strife, adventures in Anguilla, immigration control, lofty rhetoric about the 'national interest' and all the old Tory run around. There is no way out of this by increasing productivity more output and the rest. The point was well made by H. Wilson (in opposition again). 'In any period of economic expansion, there is a law of increasing returns to the rich; of an increased proportion of



Part of the IS contingent on the London May Day march

newly produced wealth accruing to the owners of property whether in equity shares or land.' In short we get further away from the classless society instead of nearer to it. Of course the Labour Party is not and never has been a real socialist party. At best it has been a party which has accepted the capitalist system, in fact it is not in words, but has tried to tilt the balance within the system slightly towards the left, towards the interests of working people. Not any more. Wilson, Castle and the rest are now appealing to the most backward and reactionary prejudices against organised workers. They are doing the Tories' work for them. They have gone over to the other side. Why? Are they rogues? Lord Brockway, in the days when he was still plain Mr Fenner Brockway, once wrote 'I have spent three years in prison and three years in parliament — and parliament was a far more demoralising experience'. There is something in this. The weak brethren in the parliamentary party have no doubt been corrupted by the

subtle and not so subtle pressures to conform. Jobs or the promise of jobs, company directorships for ex-ministers, fat salaries, soft living, all these things have their influence. One of the first things the newly elected Labour government did was to raise the salaries of MPs — and ministers! Many of the Westminster Labour crowd were opportunists and self-seekers from the beginning. But as an explanation of why the Labour government has become the spearhead of the big business offensive against the workers, this sort of thing is not enough.

wingers of some sort or other. They still have the same fundamental approach to society and politics as their friends of yesterday. Right-wing forces and attitudes are reinforced. After all, the richest place on earth is the State of California — and they've got Ronald Reagan in power! What is the alternative? The only way forward for socialists is to base themselves on the actual struggles of workers, tenants, the homeless, the poor. We have to fight in any and every battle in which the interests of working people are involved. We have to recreate the authentic socialist tradition and develop it in the course of these struggles. There are no short cuts. Voting for Bloggs will not solve the problems. Out of the growing conflicts that are now being forced on working people will come the rebirth of the British labour movement. Harold Wilson is succeeding where Ramsay MacDonald failed. He is destroying once and for all the credibility of reformist, labourite politics. The revolutionary socialist alternative is the only road left for militant workers.

Thick and thin

There are rotten apples in every barrel. For nearly the whole barrel to be rotten there must be something fundamentally wrong. Take for instance Mr Michael Foot and his friends. They are not careerists. And yet they supported Wilson through thick and thin until the latest anti-union proposals stuck in their throats. Even now they can't quite get rid of the idea that Harold and Barbara are left

Sign for 'socialism' — an IS strategy for the next election?

LETTERS

NEXT General suggest that the Socialists run a political campaign against up candidates. Campaign would use methods of leaflets, posters, etc and end on a manifesto, stating our exposing the parliament within state. On day we would in polling booths, mobile and based. We would invite 'sign for socialism' (such slogan) by their name, address, union. Our vans stationed outside voting places or es. ults' could be the count and the normal distribution. They include many contacts. Like this would involve us in the using the suitabur or Communist Indeed it does people voting for dates if they

IS begins to discuss the electoral issue now instead of being caught unprepared with the resulting confusion and conflicting actions at the election, whenever it is called. - ALAN WOODWARD, Tottenham IS.

capable of compelling observance of its norms. It follows that under communism not only will bourgeois law survive for a certain time, but also even a bourgeois state, without the bourgeoisie!

writer feels it necessary to question Ralph Miliband's standing as a marxist. We can only say that, on the evidence of past statistics, if 1 per cent of today's militant students make as serious a contribution to marxist exposition and analysis as Ralph Miliband has, we shall be very lucky indeed

Trotsky and a 'workers state'

A GOOD review of some of Lenin's ideas expounded in State and Revolution (April 19) was spoiled by the insertion of a few somewhat obtuse remarks referring to Trotsky's 'radically different definition' of a workers' state.

The theory of state capitalism may be taken to imply that the Stalinist bureaucracy has a historical mission to develop the productive forces—despite the fact that the world is over ripe for socialism.

If as many as 5 per cent stick to socialism after they graduate for as long as he has done, then we shall know the revolution is on its way. - PETER SEDGWICK, BOB LOOKER, York. IS.

Support film group

I WOULD LIKE to urge all SW readers to give support to a new group called Cinema Action. They came to Liverpool to show films last weekend and were well received. They produce and distribute films which the Rank and ABC monopoly circuits won't touch because they are too pro-worker, pro-tenant, or pro-left. They are particularly interested in using film to provoke debate, and in showing to trade unionists in factory canteens, etc, or at union weekend schools, to left groups, and so on.

Trotsky stated in the Revolution Betrayed that 'the nationalisation of the land, the means of industrial production, transport and exchange, together with the monopoly of foreign trade, constitute the basis of the Soviet social structure.' However he goes on to emphasise that it is not abstract state ownership which defines socialism but also the historical conditions under which it is established. 'Through these relations established by the proletarian revolution, the basic nature of the Soviet Union as a proletarian state is for us defined.'

The decimation of the civil war left the working class with little 'effective control over their work situation'. However Lenin was severely attacked by the Workers' Opposition who stated that the USSR had degenerated into a form of state capitalism. Lenin's genius lies not in adherence to formal criteria but in his persistent attempts to recognise and change conditions. - GEOFF HODGSON, Manchester IS.

Be careful with nicknames

IN THE MAY DAY issue, Martin Shaw, reporting from LSE, writes of 'marxist' (Martin Shaw's quotes) 'Ralph Miliband (known to the students as Moribund).'

Of course there may be the individual film that one might disagree with, but they are all generally militant/revolutionary in essence. I'm sure they'll be a powerful weapon in the class war. You can get all the details of their films, equipment, etc. from Ann Lamche, 21 Bron-desbury Park, London NW6, or ring 01-WIL 3633. - ROSS HILL, Liverpool IS.

More letters on page 4

Join the International Socialists

- ABERDEEN Pete Drummond 19 High Street Aberdeen
- ACTON Tom Hillier 59 Denzil Road NW10
- BARNLEY Joe Kenyon 120 Standhill Crescent
- BECKENHAM Mervyn Smith 9 Alton Gardens Copers Cope Rd 01 658 6552
- BIRMINGHAM Godfrey Webster 128 Yardley Wood Rd B'm 13
- BRADFORD Bob Kornreich Flat 1 7 Oak Avenue Bradford 8
- BRIGHTON Andrew Moir 14 Upper Wellington Road Brighton
- BRISTOL David Rose 25 Sydenham Rd Bristol 6
- CAMBRIDGE Ian Rutledge 1 New Square Cambridge
- CAMDEN EAST Lee Kane 26 St Paul's Crescent NW1
- CAMDEN WEST Pat Denny 36 Gilden Road NW5
- CARDIFF Derek Shields 6 Ruthin Gdns Cathays
- CHERTSEY Chris Wickenden Langmead Pirbright Woking Sy Brookwood 3003
- COLCHESTER Ian Noble 12 Coach Rd Arlesford Wivenhoe 272
- COVENTRY Dave Edwards 53 Palmerston Rd Earlsdon
- CRAWLEY Deborah Ward 2 Weddell Rd Tilgate
- CROYDON Jenny Woodhams 26 Braemar Avenue South Croydon
- DURHAM Pam Law 16 Hartfield View
- EAST LONDON Bob Light 2 Oster Tce Southcote Rd E17
- EDINBURGH Jim Smith 25 Pitt St (Leith) Edinburgh 6
- ENFIELD Ian Birchall 109 Croyland Rd N9
- FULHAM Jackie Taylor 41 Perham Road W14

- GLASGOW Ian Mooney 4 Dalcross Passage W1
- GRAYS & TILBURY Alf Waters c/o 1 Russell Rd Tilbury Essex
- HARROW Kevin Simms 56 Salisbury Road
- HAMPSTEAD Chris Barker 36 Gilden Road NW5
- HAVERING Terry Ward 91 Heath Park Rd Gidea Pk
- HIGHBURY Joyce Rosser 23 Hampstead Lane N6
- HORNSEY Valerie Clark 18 Dickinson Rd N8
- HULL Paul Gerhardt 52 Freehold Street
- ILFORD Lionel Sims 99 Belgrave Rd 01 SEV 6991
- IPSWICH Malcolm Bezant 45 Melbourne Road
- ISLINGTON/ANGEL D Phillips 2 Chapel Mkt Grant St N1 01 BRU 1026
- KILBURN Valerie Lloyd 37 King Henry's Rd NW3
- KINGSTON John Owen 4 Sandown Court Esher
- LAMBETH Andy Smith Flat 6 126 Streatham Hill SW2
- LEICESTER Lynette Allham Stanford Hall Stoughton Drive South Oadby Leics.
- LEEDS Woodhouse Viv Hopkins 25 Midland Rd Leeds 6; Vince Hall Flat 3 25 Bagby Rd Leeds 2
- LOWESTOFT Paul Welby 173 The Avenue
- MANCHESTER J Sutton 11a Rowan Ave Walley Range M16
- MERSYSIDE Ross Hill 5 Lothair Rd Anfield L'pool 4
- MERTON Fred Milsom 119 Wolsey Crescent Morden
- NEWCASTLE Tony Corcoran 26 Lesbury Road
- NORTHAMPTON Alan Druker 21 Ardington Road

- NORWICH Gerald Crompton 220 College Rd NOR 54F
- NOTTINGHAM Tony Evans 289 Derby Rd Nottingham
- OXFORD Dave Peers 21 First Tum
- PORTSMOUTH/SOUTHSEA Alan Sandham 30 Lowcay Road Southsea Hants
- POTTERIES John Whitfield 5 Grosvenor Rd New castle
- PRESTON J Prus, 72 Lower Bank Rd, Fulwood Preston
- READING Miriam Belsey 22 Redlands Rd Reading
- RICHMOND Edward Brown 4 Cheyne Ave Twickenham Mddx
- SELBY John Charlton 12 Thatch Close Selby Yorks
- SHEFFIELD J Wilkin 15 Raven Rd Sheffield S7 5TB
- SOUTHAMPTON John Fisher 144 Thornhill Park Road
- STEVENAGE Michael Downing 57 Trumper Rd Trots Hill
- STOCKPORT Geoff Hodgson 73a Forest Range M/C 19
- STOKE NEWINGTON Mike McGrath 28 Manor Road N16
- SWANSEA Dick Jones 19 Woodlands Tce
- TEESSIDE Barry Slater Flat 3 73 Redcar Rd Giusborough Yorks
- John Foster 10 Pallister Ave Brambles Farm Middlesbro
- TOTTENHAM Laurie Flynn 374 High Road N17
- WATFORD Paul Russell 61 Carpenders Avenue Carpenders Park
- WIGAN Ray Challinor 34 Whiteside Ave Hindley
- WOLVERHAMPTON Dave Spilsbury 274 Penn Road
- YORK Bob Looker 22 Hobbgate
- VICTORIA Tony Dunne 14 Carlisle Mansions Carlisle Place SW1

Please send further details of the meetings and activities of the international socialists to

Name _____ Address _____



Lutte Ouvriere
French revolutionary weekly paper. Subscription £3 for a year, £1 10s for 6 months, from Ian Birchall, 109 Croyland Road London N9 Proceeds to Socialist Worker.

tion statement clear and straight- tical document clude quite spec- socialist princ- and file control his is fundamen- representatives — as well as the al industrial — class struggle. is important that

Despite the emphasis in Duncan Hallas's article on the necessity for workers' control of production in a healthy workers' state it misses an essential part of Lenin's analysis. Lenin wrote that 'bourgeois law in relation to the distribution of the objects of consumption assumes, of course, inevitably a bourgeois state, for law is nothing without an apparatus

It is interesting that your

FORD SHOP-FLOOR FEARS RETREAT ON PAY DEMANDS

Jim Lamborn

ON MARCH 19 the Ford strikers held a mass meeting in Dagenham where union officials praised them for their solidarity and recommended a return to work.

The men heard promises of worker consultation, a new spirit of trade unionism and talks on equal rates with the Midlands as soon as they resumed work.

They knew the right-wing officials like Les Kealey and Mark Young had suffered a defeat and they saw in Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon the messiahs of a new trade union attitude that would be close to the rank and file.

What hopes they had then. What despair they are feeling now.

At the end of the strike, the Ford company accepted an 'open-ended' agreement but once the men were back at work they inserted a clause that there should be no more pay demands until July 1970.

Ironed out

There have been two meetings of the National Joint Negotiating Committee since the strike, the last on April 19, and all the difficulties have been ironed out — except the terminal date of the new pay agreement.

Many on the trade union side felt that Ford's insistence on the July 1970 date was due to pressure from Mrs Castle's Ministry of Employment and Productivity. The NJNC broke up with the union delegates stating they would consult their executives.

This has worried Ford workers. The officials were given a mandate at the final mass meeting on March 19 for an open-ended agreement. So far, no NJNC delegates have approached their members to change that mandate.

The rank and file fear another betrayal. They have had bitter experience of the NJNC and the great gap between union executives and the men on the floor.

Compromise

They returned to work with the slogan of 'parity with the Midlands before 1970', but the union side on the NJNC have already offered to accept a compromise date of March 1970.

Anything less than the March 19 demands will be a betrayal and the bitterness and cynicism it would create will put the unions at Ford back a decade.

The fact that the union executives are again in a position to either fulfil the workers' hopes or justify their fears shows that the present system is outmoded and undemocratic. Workers must control their own unions through mass meetings.

It is surely unrealistic when the wishes of Harold Wilson's hatchet woman take priority over the workers' own democratic union decisions.

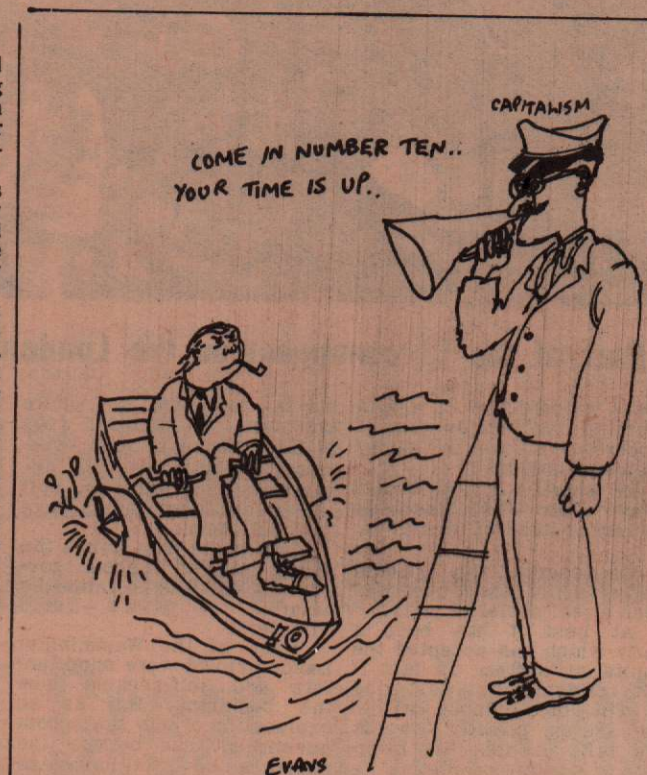
Engineers strike in pay battle

Terry Jacques

LEEDS:- Engineering workers at Poundometers, Hunslet, went on strike last week to back their demands for an improved bonus and wage structure. The AEF declared the strike official and the Leeds District Committee has blacked all work from the firm.

The firm manufactures instruments for various industries including the Navy Department of the Ministry of Defence. It has a Victorian attitude to efficiency and had to rely on low wages to make their work pay.

Workers are among the worst paid in Leeds. They have been trying without success to negotiate improvements to pay and bonuses for several months.



Rootes workers feel the lash of 'prod' deal

Dave McLean

LINWOOD:- The last two weeks have shown Rootes workers in Scotland what productivity is all about.

The deal accepted last year gives production workers £2414s a week under Measured Day Working, flexibility and mobility. The bait was big enough, but now the taste is sour.

Productivity rose by almost 50 per cent under the deal, while the labour force was expanded by a fifth. 'More work for more money' was the call — but now it is only 'more work'.

The car storage park at the back of the plant is full with some 9000 cars. The old capitalist crisis of overproduction is with us again.

Two weeks ago the management tried to 'solve' this problem on the cheap by provoking a strike of night-shift workers.

FORCED

They were told they could not get off permanent night-shift, and were forced to accept this or strike. They struck, and vehicle assembly stopped for a week until the management said they would talk.

Last week the management sent home a press shop steward who refused to do a job normally performed by fork-lift drivers. The men stayed out for two days, including May 1st, until the

Biafran unionists to speak

THREE trade unionists from the breakaway state of Biafra will speak on the struggle against the Nigerian central government this Friday, May 9.

The meeting, organised by North London IS branches, will be held at the Crown and Sugarloaf, Garlick Hill, EC4, next to the Beaver Hall. Nearest tube is Mansion House. The meeting starts at 8pm.

Engineers school cancelled

THE IS engineers' school due to be held in Coventry this weekend has had to be postponed. Revised plans will be issued as soon as possible.

Builders locked-out for 7 months

SW Reporter

HOUNSLOW:- 500 building workers have been locked out of the giant Ivy Bridge site for seven months since the main contractor, Turriff, closed the development in a dispute over trade union rights.

A thousand half-finished council homes have been abandoned in an area of chronic shortage and bad housing.

The dispute flared when Turriff sacked 86 workers in an attempt to weed out known stewards and militants. The firm ignored the findings of regional and national disputes commissions which directed them to reinstate the sacked men.

Instead, Turriff closed the whole site and hired security police and guard dogs to intimidate the pickets. Negotiations have continued in an effort to re-open the site but the firm has been adamant in its refusal to re-start work unless it can first smash union organisation.

Cheap labour

The plight of thousands of homeless families and slum dwellers means nothing to the hard-faced bosses. Their only concern is to hire cheap labour without union rights in order to boost their profits.

The Ivy Bridge lock-out committee have stated that the underlying reason for the lock-out is Turriff's desire to extend their contract and win a further £1m from Hounslow Council.

When questions were asked in the Commons, the Department of Employment and Productivity admitted that Turriff had sought their advice before closing the site.

The DEP advised the bosses to throw out the negotiated site agreements — the action which led directly to the close down and mass dismissals.

Challenge

The lock-out committee said this week 'The trade union movement must answer this challenge in the only language that Turriff understands: by a massive extension of this dispute to other sites.'

'We call upon all trade union members to play their part in ending the disgrace of Ivy Bridge and demanding an official extension of the dispute.'

* Financial assistance is badly needed. Donations or information to: Sonny McGowan, 6 Nicosia Road, London SW18.

Police evict docks militant from union HQ

SW Reporter

TILBURY:- Docks militant Terry Barrett was forcibly evicted by a police officer from his union's local office on Tuesday after a dispute with a Transport Workers' official.

Barrett went to the office with another TGWU member John Purdy to ask district official Mr Freeman if the union would support the call for a one-day strike on June 5 against anti-union laws. Freeman, who is appointed by the union executive not elected by the rank and file, refused to comment.

Barrett then said he would use the office phone to ring Transport House and ask if head office would back the strike. Freeman refused. 'This is my office and my phone,' he declared.

When Barrett pointed out

IT IS UNFORTUNATE that many of the members of IS had not read Paul Foot's article 'Parliamentary socialism — Labour's road to disaster' on May Day.

'Even today,' he wrote, 'after the unimaginable collapse in the last four and a half years, conventional "left-wing" demonstrations move, as if pulled by a magnet to parliament, there to conduct "a lobby", and so-called revolutionaries pin their politics to the idiotic slogan: Make the left MPs fight.'

And this was the decision of the IS group at Tower Hill on May Day after the Stalinists had sabotaged the meeting of the London Workers May Day Committee. With the honourable exception of Southampton IS, the great majority of International Socialists rejected their prior agreement to march through East London to Victoria Park. They traipsed off with the 'phony left wingers' to indulge in futile lobbying.

Later in the day IS groups arrived at Victoria Park rather disillusioned and with the apology that they had just gone along to 'flog lit' and so forth. Or maybe they had read your excellent page 3 by Paul Foot whilst kicking their heels waiting for absentee MPs and trade union bureaucrats. - M. CALLINAN, London W2.

THE EDITOR REPLIES:- The IS attitude to May Day was this: when we heard that a second march of trade unionists was assembling at Tower Hill we decided to attempt to call for one united march of the May Day Committee and the trade unionists, which would march to Ludgate Circus and then divide to go to parliament and to Victoria Park.

The plan was disrupted by the dishonesty and manoeuvring of Communist Party spokesmen, who broke agreements, including one to allow Bernadette Devlin to speak. The sectarianism of the May Day Committee did not help — they were opposed to a united march.

When some 20,000 trade unionists moved off toward parliament, the IS members unhesitatingly decided that we must go with them. The only way to shatter workers' illusions in them, not about sterile nonsense from the sidelines.

No IS members were apologetic, least of all the Southampton branch who arrived too late for the main march but fully supported the decision to join it. Not being sectarians, they and other IS members joined the May Day Committee march.

IS industrial workers had, in any case, to go with the main march as they were part of their union or shop stewards' contingent.

In the event, very few on the main march went on to parliament. Perhaps the marchers had also read Paul Foot's article!

Ineptitude

THE ACCUSATION of combining good theory with bad practice must be levelled at IS as a group in their total ineptitude in the face of 15,000 militant workers on May Day in London.

In an excellent article by the Editorial Board in Socialist Worker we read, 'on the road of direct political/industrial action workers will gain, indeed make, a conc-

rete political experience for themselves. New ideas, new concepts of struggle will be thrown up... It is precisely at this point that revolutionaries can AND MUST (my emphasis) indicate their own conception of the way forward and their voices will be respected.'

On May 1st our voices were not respected because they were not raised. It is no use demanding that militants 'be vigilant about their political ideas' and euphorically stating that we must 'arouse the rank and file' and 'shatter the illusions of passivity and defeat' if, when it comes to the crunch, we are apprehensive about implementing our own proposals.

The workers who struck in the face of a vicious onslaught from the press, the bosses and the union executives deserved more than being told they were on strike on May Day. They deserved a political perspective on the future of their struggle and IS refused to provide it.

The idea that a vocal IS platform would have led to charges of sectarianism only has relevance if we believe that it is wrong to put forward our political position when no one else is putting theirs.

The people who made the decision not to use our platform must bear the responsibility of IS once again failing to take full advantage of an opportunity we helped to create. - PETER GILPIN, Essex University.

Misleading

YOUR HEADLINE in last week's issue is very misleading: 'Rootes stewards take the sting out of MDW deal'. It implies that the worker can secure 'good' conditions (ie without the 'sting') under Measured Day Working.

At Rootes Linwood, we are now working under MDW which was accepted after a struggle last year when the management made the same so-called 'concession', allowing daily totals to be 'mutually decided'.

But this 'concession' changed nothing. The management still determined daily totals — by standing over workers and forcing them to work for every minute of the 7 hrs 25 minutes which belongs to them.

MDW means total control over the worker by the management — inside and outside the plant. Workers even receive written warnings when showing a doctor's line for absence. The speed of the line has risen from 28 to 42 cars an hour since our deal came into operation. And the management still has the power to tell us we'll be on short-time next month.

MDW in fact doesn't lose its sting. It is the sting, and intensifies with time. We are now feeling the pinch in Rootes, Scotland. Other workers facing a similar deal musn't kid themselves that it can be 'improved'. - S.J., J.M., W.M., A.R., R.R., Rootes Linwood.

that as a TGWU member he considered it to be his office as well and that he

had a right to use the phone, Freeman rang the police.

PC 1356 Lewis of the Essex constabulary arrived and evicted Barrett who said on Tuesday night that he was considering taking out a summons against Freeman.

NOTICES

MERSEYSIDE public meeting: Chris Davison, London Transport Bus Shop Steward on Productivity deals — and how to fight them. 7.30pm Sunday May 18, Wedding House pub, Highfield St, off Tithebarn St., Liverpool.

Hotel, Royal Terrace (nr. London Road Roundabout). Sunday May 18. 3 - 6 Scottish nationalism versus socialism? introduced by Laurie Flynn. War Memorial Hall, Westfield Rd, Gorgie

TRIBUNE - the leading socialist weekly. Absolutely essential reading for every socialist, radical and revolutionary. Every Friday from newsgagents or 24 St John St London EC1.

RELEASE Dave Kitson! March from Ruskin College Oxford on May 23 stopping at High Wycombe Uxbridge (24th) and Chiswick (25th). Trafalgar Sq rally on Whit Monday, spkrs will include Bernadette Devlin, MP. Details from RCKC, Old Headington, Oxford OX392E.