An Army spokesman said today that rubber bullets were used in Andersonstown, Belfast. No casualties were reported... (see page one)
Mrs Groves, blinded by a rubber bullet: why didn't this photograph appear?

What do the papers say?

-What the Army tells them

The media coverage of events in Northern Ireland has been so blatantly biased in favour of Stormont, Westminster and the Army that recently even journalists have protested. But the lies continue.

As well as the scale of the slaughter, something else distinguished Derry's Bloody Sunday from earlier atrocities committed by the British Army: the fact that a number of British journalists were there on the spot when it happened. They and their editors did not have the option which they normally exercise: to depend for the basis of their report on whatever story is manufactured by the Army PRs.

Of course the Army press boys did their usual job of covering up: no one in Northern Ireland is admitted to be dead unless he's in the IRA - or killed by an IRA bullet. But this time it didn't sound quite as convincing as usual. Because, alongside Army statements - 'There is no shadow of doubt whatsoever that the Army fired only at established targets after first being fired on' - newspapers the next day published bits like: 'A photographer who was directly behind the Parachutists when they jumped down from their armoured cars said: "I was appalled. They opened up into a crowd of people. As far as I could see they didn't fire over people's heads at all."' - There were journalists behind the Army when they opened fire - and journalists in front. Simon Winchester, who is by no means a popular figure in civil rights circles, wrote in the Guardian: "Paratroopers..."
What do the papers say?

What the Army tells them

The media coverage of events in Northern Ireland has been so blatantly biased in favour of Stormont, Westminster and the Army that recently even journalists have protested, but the lies continue.

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There were journalists behind the Army when they opened fire - and journalists in front. Simon Winchester, who is by no means a popular figure in civil rights circles, wrote in the Guardian: 'Paratroopers

Mrs Groves, blinded by a rubber bullet: why didn't this photograph appear?
Was the Army to blame for Bloody Sunday?

**GUilty**

Bogside accuses troops

A blue and white banner draped with blood became a shrine for the people of the Bogside yesterday. The Ulster Defence were last seen on the parade ground before they left for the great parade. The Union Jack was raised in the town to mark the occasion of the anniversary of the day's demonstration.

The march of the military was met with a massive show of support from the local community. Thousands of people lined the streets to pay their respects to the fallen.

**NOT GUILTY**

By David Tattersall and Joe Corrigan

Lynch recalls his envoy from London

While the events of Bloody Sunday are still being remembered, the pcs have been recalled to their positions. The pcs are now back on the streets, ensuring the peace.

Target:

The pcs have been placed on a high alert. A file has been opened on the suspects, and the pcs are ready to act at any moment.

Pressure:

The citizens are demanding answers from the government. The pcs have been under pressure to do more, and they have been understaffed.

Danger on the March:

The pcs have been warned of a potential threat. The pcs are on high alert, and they are ready to act at any moment.

Four of the dead were wanted men

The pcs have been placed on a high alert. A file has been opened on the suspects, and the pcs are ready to act at any moment.

Balanced coverage: if the IRA had shot down 13 unarmed men would the Mirror have asked who was to blame?
Was the Army to blame for Bloody Sunday?

**GUILTY**

Bogside accuses troops

A BLUE and white banner draped with blood became a shrine for the people of the Bogside yesterday.

As the Irish Daily Express last night on the peak of the street, here was a steady stream of people, who gathered to see the bodies of the victims of yesterday's demonstration. The crowd, which numbered in the thousands, was so dense that it was not possible to count the exact number.

The leader of the crowd was Mr. Michael McKinnon, the father of the dead man. He was accompanied by his two sons, who were also killed. The crowd was formed into a line, and the bodies of the dead were placed in the center.

A police car was parked at the front of the crowd, and the bodies were placed on the hood of the car. The crowd was silent, and the only sound was the sound of the police car siren.

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**NOT GUILTY**

Four of the dead were wanted men

The coroner said that the bodies of the dead men were found in the street. The coroner also said that the bodies were found in the street.

Another body was found in the street, and the coroner said that it was not possible to identify the body. The coroner also said that it was not possible to identify the body.

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**DANGER ON THE MARCH**

'There have been too many deaths, too many injuries, too many losses, too many lives that have been lost. The IRA has to stop.'

The IRA has said that it was not possible to identify the body. The IRA also said that it was not possible to identify the body.

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'Balanced' coverage: if the IRA had shot down 13 unarmed men would the Mirror have asked who was to blame?
piled out of their vehicles, many ran forward to make arrests, but others rushed to the street corners. It was this men, perhaps 20 in all, who carried their rifles. I saw three men fall to the ground.

Army snipers could be seen firing contin-ually towards Ballymurphy and the streets and at one stage a lone Army sniper on a street corner fired two shots towards me as I poked my head around a corner. One shot chipped a large chunk of masonry from a wall behind me.

But even after Bloody Sunday, when the Army version of what had happened was clearly contradicted by facts body after body was there except the Army - the media insisted on "balancing" their follow-up coverage.

"Was the Army to blame for Bloody Sunday?" asked the Mirror and the Sunday - and recorded two verdicts across its centre spread: 'GUILTY - Baggot accrues troops' and 'NOT GUILTY - 'Four of the dead were wanted men'!

And this Week on the Thursday 'balanced' an eye-witness account by a Welsh ex-soldier - with denials by the Para- troopers themselves.

So anybody who works in journalism or is in the habit of comparing what appears in the papers or is broadcast on TV or radio with what actually happened can be thankful to the Army, which had not answered the question above at all, it certainly would not have surprised the working-class Catholics of Northern Ireland.

One of these was Goven, of 79 Follymore Gardens, Andersontown, Belfast, doesn't get to see television or the papers nowa- days; she lost the sight of both her eyes when a Paratrooper fired into her face at point-blank range.

The incident happened on the morning of 4 November, 1971. A military search was in progress in her area. One group of soldiers had completed their work and left. Then the Paras moved in.

Mrs Goven opened her window. She was sold by a Paratrooper to lose your "Fucking window". She did not. She was then shot in the face. The rubber bullet collapsed the bridge of her nose and blinded her for life.

A Catholic listening to their radio set afterwards heard an Army voice say on a walkie-talkie: 'I hope we killed the Catholic.' A day later, a child was killed in Britain; the photograph on the inside cover was sensational enough for the British press - who were at the time busy publishing pictures of tarring and feathering - but it showed an Army soldier firing a rifle in the street.

The list of Army atrocities similarly not reported or distorted by the British media includes:

Bernard Matt, 28, and James Saunders, 19
both shot and killed on 6 February, 1971
in Belfast

As Private Eye revealed, the papers got their 'information' that the two men were members of the IRA direct from an Army hand-out. Watt, an unemployed labourer from Hooker Street, Belfast, was neither a member of the IRA nor of any political party. Saunders was never a member of any wing of the IRA.

Watt was shot down after he had joined a crowd of rioters. He had no weapon except stones. Saunders had been engaged in an unreported flight between Protestants and Catholics in Lourian Street. He too had no weapon except stones, and was hit by an Army bullet when the Army joined in on the Protestant side.

'He fell, wounded in the chest, at the junction between Glencairn and Glenview Street and dragged himself to Mayfair Street where he was picked up by a Knight's of Malta ambulance. The Army, which had completed its work and left the streets at the time, kept the ambulance from moving out of the area for half an hour, at the end of which Saunders died.'

Eamonn Gunion and Desmond Jentey shot and
died on 8 July, 1971 in Derry

An Eamonn Gunion wrote in his pamphlet The British Press and Northern Ireland where there were numerous civilian eye-witnesses to each killing and these were unanimous that neither was armed. Yet a number of papers quite automatically report as "facts" the British press statement as straight news.

William McKevaghman shot and killed on August, 1971 in Belfast

McKevaghman was described by the British press as a 'gunman' - which is what the Army said. But an Army report gave a different story to an Army press officer who replied: 'There was a lot of confusion about that night. In fact there was no shot sniper on Orangy's factory, that is correct.' No British newspaper printed this statement.

There are a few examples - by no means an exhaustive list. As Eamonn Gunion wrote in his pamphlet, on this police bullet in the real, sustained and systematic distortion began when British soldiers came onto the streets and by the middle of 1970, when the telescope was in almost constant conflict with Catholic working-class neighbourhoods, most papers had in effect stopped carrying the news. They were vehicles for propaganda.

Where there were inventions. Half-truths were presented as hard facts.

'As far as the British press was concerned the soldiers could do no wrong. Residents of the working-class areas in Belfast and Derry could see rubber bullets being fired at point-blank range, the indiscriminate boning of bystanders and rioters alike, then being seized and kicked unconscious and then let go. As time went on and weaponry escalated some witnessed the reckless use of firearms, the casual killing of people, sometimes at a range of a few yards.'

'They experienced the offensive arrogance of soldiers on patrol, the constant barrage in the British press they read of Tommy's endless patience under intense provocation, of his restraint in the face of fearful attack. This was a constant in most difficult circumstances.

'The real, sustained and systematic distortion began when British military shot cases came out to the streets as long before then the British press had been hard at work covering up for Stormont and Westminster.


'On the night of 14 August, a 10-year-old Protestant was murdered in his Belfast home by the Army. His name was Ballymurphy. He had been shot in the chest, at point-blank range.

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Some of the Sunday Times statements had
piled out of their vehicles, many ran forward to make arrests, but others rushed to the street corners. It was this men, perhaps 20 in all, who wanted to fight, who brought their rifles. I saw three men fall to the ground.

Army snipers could be seen firing continuously from behind the house, streets and at one stage a lone Army sniper on a street corner fired two shots towards me as I peeked my head around a corner. One shot chipped a large chunk of masonry from a wall behind me.' But even after Bloody Sunday, when the Army version of what had happened was distinctly contradictory to eyewitness accounts, there was—except the Army—the media involved in 'balancing' their follow-up coverage.

Was the Army to blame for Bloody Sunday? asked the Mirror on the Monday and recorded two verdicts across its centre spread: 'GUILTY — Bogsie accurates troops' and 'NOT GUILTY — Four of the dead were wanted men.' And this Week on the Thursday: 'balanced an eye-witness account by a Welsh ex-soldier with denials by the Paras themselves.

This should have surprised everybody who works in journalism or is in the habit of comparing what appears in the papers or is broadcast on TV or radio with what actually took place. In all, it certainly would not have surprised the working-class Catholics of Northern Ireland.

One of these is Groves, of 79 Fullmore Gardens, Andersonstown, Belfast, doesn't get to see television or the papers nowadays; he lost the sight of both her eyes when a Paratrooper fired into her face at point-blank range. The incident happened on the morning of 4 November, 1971. A military search was in progress in her area. One group of soldiers had covered her and her work and left. Then the Paras moved in. Mrs Groves opened her window. She was sold by a Paratrooper to lose your fucking window.' She did not. She was then shot in the face. The rubber bullet collapsed the bridge of her nose and blinded her for life.

Another Catholic listening to their radio set afterwards heard an Army voice say on a walkie-talkie: 'I hope we killed the cunt.'

The British press were at the time busy publishing pictures of tarring and feathering — but it showed an atrocious situation.

The list of Army atrocities similarly not reported or distorted by the British media included:

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Both shot and killed on 6 February 1971 in Belfast

As Private Eye revealed, the papers got their 'information' that the two men were members of the IRA direct from an Army hand-out. Watt, an unemployed labourer from Hooker Street, Belfast, was neither a member of the IRA nor of any political party. Saunders was never a member of any of the IRA.

Watt was shot down after he had joined a crowd of rioters. He had no weapon except stones. Saunders had been engaged in an unreported fight between Protestants and Catholics in Louria Street. He too had no weapon except stones, and was hit by an Army bullet when the Army joined in on the Protestant side.

He fell, wounded in the chest, at the junction between Louria and Cliffoney Street and dragged himself to Mayfair Street where he was picked up by a Knight's Malta ambulance. The Army, which had completed its work and was leaving the streets at the time, kept the ambulance from moving out of the area for half an hour, at the end of which Saunders died.

Seamus Cusack and Desmond Jento shot and killed on 8 July, 1971 in Derry

As Sunday Express wrote in its pamphlet The British Press and Northern Ireland: There were numerous civilian eye witnesses to each killing and these were unanimous that neither was armed. Yet a number of papers quite automatically published the British press statement as straight news.

William McKevvagh shot and killed on 11 August, 1971 in Belfast

McKevagh was described by the British press as an 'gunman' — that is what the Army claimed. But when the British press reported a different story to an Army press officer who replied: 'There was a lot of confusion about that night. In fact there was no sniper shot on Ingelby's factory, that is correct.' No British newspaper printed this statement.

There are a few examples — by no means an exhaustive list. As Samson McCann wrote in his pamphlet The British Press and Northern Ireland: The small, sustained and systematic distortion began when British soldiers came onto the streets and by the middle of 1970, when the troops were in almost constant conflict with Catholic working-class neighbourhoods, most papers had in effect stopped carrying the news. They were vehicles for propaganda.

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As far as the British press was concerned the soldiers could do no wrong. Residents of two working-class areas in Belfast and Derry could see rubber bullets being fired at point-blank range, the indiscriminate blasting of weapons and pictures of men, civilians, sometimes, at a range of a few yards.

'They experienced the offensive arrogance of soldiers on petrol, the collective barrage of violence on the streets and in the British press they read of Tommy's endless patience under intense provocation, of his restraint in the face of ferocious attack, of British atrocities in most difficult circumstances.

'The real, sustained and systematic distortion began when British soldiers' case came onto the streets. Longer ranges before then the British press had been hard at work covering up for Stormont and Westminster. In 1969 Kenion Post and Neil Lyndon wrote a report for the Free Communications Group on Northern Ireland press coverage, concentrating on the events of 12-15 August, 1969. The report was not published but a cut version of it appeared in Inq on 7 January, 1971.

On the night of 14 August Patrick Rooney was murdered in his Belfast home. He was killed by a 9mm bullet in the back. Rooney was travelling in a straight line ship with his head down. Only the police and the SAS had loaded high-velocity rifles in the area. The bodies were not reported — but made no attempt to say who fired the fatal shot. What it did say was that the police were trying 'to trace the parents' of Patrick Rooney who were with him when he was shot.

'Few papers showed any interest in the street fighting andatrocity in Belfast during 15 August,' the report said. 'The only cover story 'a collision of half-lies, distortions and evasions'.

The Guardian published a story on 15 August 1969 from Derry in front of the line of British soldiers not there because he'd gone to the riot — but because the riot had come to him: a petrol bomb was thrown through the window of the City Hotel. Derry and stones followed. As the authors of the report observe, 'Journalists are an idle bunch. They were virtually all inside the City Hotel. Their day's work done, their copy filled, they showed small interest in what was going on down the road.'

Compare this with the account of an INSIDE STORY correspondent who spent a week in Belfast late in 1971: 'In a war zone one expects to find reporters and camera crews — at least I did — but there was none to be seen. In all, I didn't come into contact with a single one. So I started asking around. "Didn't you know? They don't come round here much," they said, smiling at my ignorance.

'A little investigation led me to the luxurious Europa Hotel in the city centre. There were dozens of photographers and reporters there, half-heartedly for news of the next incident when they make the quick phone call to Army HQ for the inevitable statement on who bombed whom.'

As I boarded the plane to take me home to London, there they were again in their snob suits and Austin Reed fur coats, puffing cigars and sporting silver watches. One found me: "But you didn't know they'd had a pleasant trip — though perhaps the drive to the airport was the slightest bit uncomfortable with all those soldiers lining the road."

On 15 October, 1971 the Sunday Times published a 'scoop' story on the torture of internecines. This was the first the British public had heard about these allegations. It had been common knowledge in Ireland for nearly two months —

Some of the Sunday Times statements had
IRA launch fund-raising campaign in Britain and tell factory workers...

"KILL A BRITISH SOLDIER"

BY NICK DAVIES AND STANLEY DAVIES

The IRA has launched a massive fund-raising campaign among factory workers in Britain.

Trade unions have been urged to seek support for the campaign in factories throughout the country.

At some meetings workers have been told to take blood samples.

The Mirror on the Anti-Internment League: sensationalist lies

been taken by the Association for Legal Justice in Belfast and distributed to the press by 20 August. By the end of the month these accounts had been published in Irish newspapers. In the first week of September all British papers including the Sunday Times were sent a 10-page dossier on torture produced by the Anti-Internment League.

The Sunday Times has since won a special award for its reporting of events in Northern Ireland. Which is rather like giving the world heavyweight championship to a man with one hand firmly held behind his back - when everybody else refuses to use either hand.

The Anti-Internment League in Britain has had its fair share of press distortion, particularly from the Daily Mirror. As seven days reported on 5 January, the Mirror's front page story on 17 December - and the follow-up next day - consisted mainly of sensationalist lies and trivial errors of detail.

After the first article Gordon Lennox (incidentally, also the subject of the seven days Aden torture story) phoned the Mirror, discussed its report with Nick Davies, one of the men who'd written it, and described an all meeting he'd been to in Notting Hill. Lennox was understandably astounded when the following day's Mirror carried the account by Davies of the Notting Hill meeting. It was not just that it was wholly inaccurate but Davies had specifically told Lennox that he had not been there.

Since then the matter has been reported to the Press Council - and on these grounds the Mirror has refused to comment. However, as seven days observes, 'If the matter was "sub judice" it is surprising that two Mirror men visited Lennox, took him to the pub and tried to persuade him to drop his allegations ...'.

British TV and radio have distorted events in Northern Ireland in just the same way as the press. It's now common knowledge that the BBC imposed a ban on interviews with the IRA in April; that the BBC refused to mention the torture of internees until after the Sunday Times story had been denied by Faulkner; that even then the BBC would not permit interviews with priests or doctors who could corroborate the accounts of internees; that programmes as a whole have had to show 'the BBC's detestation of terrorism'.

The New Statesman on 31 December 1971 published a long, anonymous piece, obviously written by someone inside the BBC, which gave numerous examples of the censorship and distortion of news. A few weeks before Private Eye had shown - with extensive quotation from the minutes of the BBC News and Current Affairs meetings - how censorship is applied.

The meetings are chaired by the editor of News of the World, Eric Badger, and the controller, a strong Unionist, 'not unsympathetic to the Orange Order'. BBC stories on Ireland are checked by Wilde Maguire, the controller of BBC Northern Ireland, who is also a Unionist. And in the summer of 1971 the meetings were attended by Martin Wallace, a third Unionist, specially brought over from BBC Belfast to 'oversee' Irish programmes.

Meanwhile, over at ITV, Drum Henderson, managing director of Ulster TV, is not only himself a Unionist, but his brother, Captain Bill, is chairman of the Unionist Party Publicity Office. Ulster TV shows only those current affairs programmes which will not offend the brothers Henderson.

And on the Guardian, the deputy editor, John Cole, is a staunch Unionist, best known...
IRA launch fund-raising campaign in Britain and tell factory workers... 

KILL A BRITISH SOLDIER

By NICK DAVIES and STANLEY BIRKENET

The IRA has launched a massive fund-raising campaign to factory workers in Britain.

Trade unionists are being urged to seek support for the campaign in factories throughout the country.

At some meetings workers have been asked to take student nurses.

Release

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Hardly anybody from the tour turned up for this meeting.

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The meetings are chaired by the editor of News, Oliver Corr; by its first assistant, Desmond Tilly, an Ulsterman and a strong Unionist 'not unsympathetic to the Orange Order'. BBC stories on Ireland are checked by Willie Maguire, the controller of BBC Northern Ireland, who is also a Unionist. And in the summer of 1971 the meetings were attended by Martin Wallace, a third Unionist, specially brought over from BBC Belfast to 'oversee' Irish programmes.

Meanwhile, over at ITV, Bram Henderson, managing director of Ulster TV, is not only himself a Unionist; his brother, Captain Bill, is chairman of the Unionist Party Publicity Office. Ulster TV shows only those current affairs programmes which will not offend the Brothers Henderson.

And on the Guardian the deputy editor, John Cole, is a staunch Unionist least known
BBC coverage in Northern Ireland: 
Call for a work ban by BBC staff sent to Northern Ireland 
To take effect after January 10 

Producers, reporters and technicians are meeting increasing pressure to hold back or censor news and current affairs items from Northern Ireland. The integrity of journalists trying to do a difficult job is being openly challenged. Pressure is applied in a variety of ways. We mention just some of them.

1 Programmes are refusing to make items they feel will not get on the air because of pressure from outside and within the BBC.
2 Programmes are refusing to put material produced by BBC producers and reporters sent to Northern Ireland.
3 Pressure comes from heads of departments in BBC Northern Ireland and in England who now openly act as censors. We recognise that they are subject to pressures to censor programmes but we demand this should be resisted strongly.

4 There is now an 'official' list of reporters and producers who are now banned from working in Northern Ireland. Some have been told they are not 'welcome' because of the 'controversial' nature of programmes they have been responsible for in the past.
5 BBC Northern Ireland is now withdrawing permission for reporters and producers to talk with some civil rights leaders and some Roman Catholic priests. Presumably it is felt by Broadcasting House Belfast, that any Ulster Catholic must be an IRA supporter. We also question strongly the open ban on interviewing IRA leaders, who we feel, must have some contribution to make about future developments within Northern Ireland.
6 There is pressure on producers and reporters who are sometimes made to feel they may lose their jobs if they make "controversial" items even though they are of legitimate concern.

7 Several news and current affairs programmes are holding material that has not been shown. Reasons given for this are usually that the material could offend various interests inside Northern Ireland.

Reporters and producers are not biased against any side in the complex Ulster situation. We demand only that we are allowed to work in an open and free manner, disciplined by normal journalistic and BBC standards. We emphasise that increasing censorship is not just being exercised within the BBC; Independent Television and the Press are also experiencing the corrupting and self-defeating hand of censorship.

We are calling for a total ban on BBC staff visiting Northern Ireland if BBC censorship and pressures are not lifted immediately. We have the support of an increasing number of like-minded people within the BBC. We believe that the ban should take effect from Monday January 10 1972 if our demands are not met. Naturally we hope that the ban will not be necessary.

A meeting in London - the venue to be announced later - will take place at 8 o'clock on January 10.

We have not signed this letter for reasons outlined in paragraph six. We are certain that you will be the first to understand our anonymity.

This call for a work ban, sent out before the letter on the previous page, was a flop outside the paper for editing O'Neill's speeches - and inside it for ensuring that it expresses his views.

It was in fact ITV that produced the first signs of concerted opposition to this wholesale management of news. When South of the Border a Granada TV film on Ireland made by World in Action was banned by the IRA - at first merely on the basis of a written report - the Granada journalists took the initiative and called a protest meeting at the ICA on 22 November, 1971.

They were also worried by the general threat of external censorship; Maulding was seeing both Hill of the Bally and Ayresome of the ITA around this time to 'inform them of the concern of some Conservative MPs about Northern Ireland coverage'. The meeting was attended by some 100 people. Most of it was taken up with accounts of how the news was already distorted and suppressed inside newspapers, the BBC and the 'independent' TV companies - but the new threat of direct interference from the government ensured that the word 'censorship' would be used in all resolutions on the subject from now.

The ICA meeting deplored 'the intensifying censorship in the television, radio and press coverage of events in Ireland' and added: 'We are lumbered with no one to oppose it. How far has this opposition - promised with such emotional fervour - actually got? How much has the 'censorship' of the media been reduced by the efforts of journalists?

Sadly, the answer must be: not at all. In the past year a number of resolution resolutions have been passed in the churches, shops and branches of the National Union of Journalists, the Association of Cinematographers, Television and Allied Technicians and the Association of Broadcasting Staff; that the Federation of Broadcasting Unions has written to the BBC and the IBA; that an NUJ delegation has been to see the Newspaper Proprietors' Association.

But even the staunchest group of journalists wrote to the editor suggesting that they meet him to discuss the paper's editorial policy on Ireland. The editor, Allan Brien of the Sunday Times, said: "I have been promised by him and his senior colleagues that the editorial policy on Ireland will be the same as on the UK."

And it's true in the BBC an anonymous group called for a work ban from 10 January and then organised an open discussion for BBC news and current affairs staff in Fulham Town Hall that night. There was no work ban and hardly anybody from the BBC turned up for the meeting.

Between 22 November and mid-February there has been no meeting of those who came together at the ICA. The two groups which might have been expected to take the initiative - the Press Communications Group and the 'rank and file' of the NUJ, which had a conference in Manchester on 20 November - both twice the ICA meeting - have not called a further meeting.

Which leaves us with the unions - or rather their executives. A protest meeting, officially sponsored by the NUJ and the ACTT, was half-organised - and then called off - in mid-January. Now the position is that a meeting will be held if and when the NUJ executive think it makes that means: if and when the editor of the Daily Express is arrested and bailed.

For, as has occasionally been pointed out, official censorship is not the main enemy: the main enemy is the day-to-day management of television and radio news by some of their senior executives..."
BBC coverage in Northern Ireland:
Call for a work ban by BBC staff sent to Northern Ireland
To take effect after January 10

Producers, reporters and technicians are meeting increasing pressure to hold back censor news and current affairs items from Northern Ireland. The integrity of journalists trying to do a difficult job is being openly challenged. Pressure is applied in a variety of ways. We mention just some of them.

1 Programmes are refusing to make items they feel will not get on the air because of pressure from outside and within the BBC.

2 Programmes are refusing to put material produced by BBC producers and reporters sent to Northern Ireland.

3 Pressure comes from heads of departments in BBC Northern Ireland and in England who now openly act as censors. We recognise that they are subject to pressures to censor programmes but we demand this should be resisted strongly.

4 There is now an 'unofficial' list of reporters and producers who are now banned from working in Northern Ireland. Some have been told they are not 'welcome' because of the 'controversial' nature of programmes they have been responsible for in the past.

5 BBC Northern Ireland is now withdrawing permission for reporters and producers to talk with some civil rights leaders and some Roman Catholic priests. Presumably it is felt by Broadcasting House Belfast that any Ulster Catholic must be an IRA supporter. We also question strongly the open ban on interviewing IRA leaders, who we feel, must have some contribution to make about future developments within Northern Ireland.

6 There is pressure on producers and reporters who are sometimes made to feel they may lose their jobs if they make 'controversial' items even though they are of legitimate concern.

7 Several news and current affairs programmes are holding material that has not been shown. Reasons given for this are usually that the material could offend various interests inside Northern Ireland.

Reporters and producers are not biased against any side in the complex Ulster situation. We demand only that we are allowed to work in an open and free manner, disciplined by normal journalistic and BBC standards. We emphasise that increasing censorship is not just being exercised within the BBC; Independent Television and the Press are also experiencing the corrupting and self-defeating hand of censorship.

We are calling for a total ban on BBC staff visiting Northern Ireland if BBC censorship and pressures are not lifted immediately. We have the support of an increasing number of like-minded people within the BBC. We believe that the ban should take effect from Monday January 10 1972 if our demands are not met.

Naturaly we hope that the ban will not be necessary.

A meeting in London the venue to be announced later - will take place at 8 o'clock on January 10.

We have not signed this letter for reasons outlined in paragraph six. We are certain that you will be the first to understand our anonymity.

This call for a work ban, sent out before the letter on the previous page, was a flop outside the paper for editing O'Neill's speeches - and inside it for ensuring that it expresses his views.

It was in fact ITV that produced the first signs of concerted opposition to this wholesale management of news. When South of the Border a Granada TV film on Ireland made by World in Action was banned by the IRA - at first merely on the basis of a written report - the Granada journalists took the initiative and called a protest meeting at the ICA on 22 November, 1971. They were also worried by the general threat of external censorship; Maulding was seeing both Hill of the BBC and Aylestone of the ICA around this time to inform them of the concern of some Conservative MPs about Northern Ireland coverage'. The meeting was attended by some 200 people. Most of it would later overlap with accounts of how the news was already distorted and suppressed inside newspapers, the BBC and the 'independent' TV companies - but the new threat of direct interference from the government ensured that the word 'censorship' would be used in all resolutions on the subject from now on.

The ICA meeting deplored the 'intensifying censorship in the television, radio and press coverage of events in Ireland' and the way 'the US has been used to oppose it.' How far has this opposition - promised with such emotional fervor - actually got? How much has the 'censorship' of the media been reduced by the efforts of journalists? Sadly, the answer must be: not at all.

Given the need for resolution, resolutions have been passed in the chambers, shops and branches of the National Union of Journalists, the Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians and the Association of Broadcasting Staff; that the Federation of Broadcasting Unions has written to the BBC and the ICA; that an NUJ delegation has been seen to see the Newspaper Proprietors' Association.

So far the Ulster group of journalists wrote to the editor suggesting that they meet him to discuss the paper's editorial policy on Ireland. The editor, Allan Borthwick, described that he and his senior colleagues knew the situation in Ireland well enough and saw no need for consultation with journalists. And it's true that in the BBC an anonymous group called for a work ban from 10 January and then organised an open discussion for BBC news and current affairs staff' in Fulham Town Hall that night. There was no work ban and hardly anybody from the BBC turned up for the meeting. Between 22 November and mid-February there has been no meeting of those who came together at the ICA. The two groups which might have been expected to take the initiative - the Free Communications Group and the 'rank and file' of the NUJ, which had a conference in Manchester on 20 November only two weeks after the ICA meeting - have not called a further meeting.

Which leaves us with the unions - or rather their executives. A protest meeting, officially sponsored by the NUJ and the ACTT, was half-organised - and then called off - in mid-January. Now the position is that a meeting will be held if and when the situation 'becomes more pressing'. What that means: if and when the editor of the Daily Express is arrested and jailed.

For, as has occasionally been pointed out, official censorship is not the main enemy: the main enemy is the day-to-day management of the BBC, 'the government of the BBC'. The BBC is a national monopoly. Hence, the main line of attack is to appeal to the executives of journalists' unions: they are disillusions to risk their successful collaboration with management - and their own jobs - by adopting a radical political role.

Lower down the hierarchy there are weaknesses. If journalists do not come forward with pressure they are easily bypassed by the London Radio and TV Branch of the NUJ which, as mentioned above, has never been sympathetic to the view that the BBC is not truly independent; that the management has been too complacent in the face of the local悭's demands for a news service which at least is not allowed to report back the BBC's line on 'irregular' events.

And even in the heady atmosphere of that original ICA meeting there were clear examples of the BBC's current weaknesses; lack support in vital areas. No one from a mass circulation Sunday or daily rose to attack the policy of his paper. And even that editor of the Independent and Andrew Wilson of the Observer assumed in their compliant liberal way that the trouble was all in radio and TV: their newspapers were doing a good job on Ireland.

Finally - as Bernard Falk of 24 Hours said at the time - 'Journalists are the
worse trade unionists. We’ve got a duty and won’t speak with one voice - how many of you would come out and support me if I got the sack tomorrow?

On the morning of Derry’s Bloody Sunday the Sunday Times published a thoughtful piece by Murray Sayle on the censorship of reports of the India-Pakistan war. He quoted a Pakistani PR - ‘But British television accepts censorship in Ulster.

That’s your war, this is ours!‘ - and concluded: ‘I am ashamed to say I had no answer to that.

But before that, the British press - including its own newspaper - also accepted that it had a part to play in the Ulster war effort, the Sunday Times sub would certainly have proved the point by deleting the extra bit. But further proof was not needed.

By the week after the Derry Massacre a team of Sunday Times reporters - led by the tireless Murray Sayle - had established a piece of evidence that for weeks before the shooting the Army had planned to provoke a confrontation with the IRA. The plan was that rubber bullets and CS gas would be shot into the crowd and that, when the IRA started shooting back, the Paratroopers would be ready for a shoot-out with the gunman.

Was the Sunday Times right then, the Paratroopers opened up anyway - and killed 13 unarmed men.

The Sunday Times of 6 February did not include this report; the editor, Harold Evans, said that it would be a breach of the Triumvirate of Inquiry (Evidence) Act 1921, which required publication of the report of the IRA. There followed, according to one senior editorial executive, ‘the worst dispute I’ve known in five years of the paper’. Yet the article was not published.

Even if it had been, it would not have removed the responsibility of the British press in Northern Ireland. For, by their sustained and systematic distortion of events in Northern Ireland, the media have encouraged Stormont - and the Government in Westminster - in the belief that they can get away with - murder.

The responsibility for Bloody Sunday lies not only with Chalker, Heath and Two but with the editors and managers of the newspapers, radio and TV. And not only with those who actually gave the go-ahead - like the soldiers in Northern Ireland - have generally carried out their orders.

One man who finally quit

In the week after Bloody Sunday John O’Callaghan, who’d worked for the Guardian for 11 years, resigned. Here he explains why.

If a couple of British papers and a broadcasting channel have done wrong, why has the Sunday Times' occasional scepticism about the performance of the British army in Northern Ireland the slaughter in Derry on Bloody Sunday might have been averted? It is hardly possible to believe that, if those commanding the troops knew that a section of the press would be continuing a vigorous, well-researched and carefully thought-through investigation of human lives which will be lost if the security forces do not get a continuing flow of information.

Apart from the suspicion of a bully’s aside - ‘hit them where it won’t show for too long’ - the military must have felt that if the light of the Guardian’s report had been allowed to shine this would have undermined the previous tradition the open encouragement of vigorous and tough interrogation amounted to what one can only call a licence for mayhem.

Given that the whole institution of the Guardian was geared to this outlook it is not surprising that it would be looking for atrocities, or paid particular attention to those who claimed that they were taking place. What was sought was more evidence of the traditional intellectual dishonesty of the IRA, and supporting the proposition that the tough and violent methods by which 15,000 British soldiers were bringing the victory so incidently predicted and unambiguously demanded in the leader column.

When this policy had become bankruptcy, even to those seeking to endorse it in Northern Ireland, did the reporting move unapologetically into the mainstream which events dictated? The actual evidence, in the view of expectations, the press as a whole has done badly.

The press corps in Ulster lives and works very closely in touch with the European Hotel for journalists which is the newest and costliest in Belfast: its clientele has been almost exclusively journalists for the crisis period. This lends a different perspective to the work of the hard-boiled London reporters who have been to Ulster before Bloody Sunday are consequences only of this evil at the core.
One man who finally quits

In the week after Bloody Sunday John O’Callaghan, who’d worked for the Guardian for 11 years, resigned. Here he explains why.

If a couple of British papers and a broadcasting channel had not crossed the Rubicon in Sunday’s occasions scepticism about the performance of the British army in Northern Ireland the slaughter in Derry on Bloody Sunday might have been averted. It is hardly possible to believe that, if those commanding the troops knew that a section of the press would be continuing a vigorous campaign aggressively critical of their work, they might have felt able to embark on the adventure that led to the death of 13 people on the Bogside street.

It was the pressure of this reflection that caused me to resign from the Guardian. In such a newspaper’s leader writing room there are too blunt a weapon for use on British suburban housing estates with any hope of success. And it should have also been the Guardian’s automatic posture that confronted the instruments of state violence. Virtually beyond such law as remains in Ulster, the people’s only defence would be the press. If you believe only half the stories about military brutality, the failure to control the activities of the troops more closely, and to report the feelings of the Catholic community more fully, you get a gross dereliction of duty.

To point up the contrast between what might have been expected from the Guardian and what actually has happened here are three editions of the paper. The editorial of the official history of the Guardian says of 1916-22 that the British government ‘regularly suppressed disturbances half caused or incited by its own servants — while giving great prominence to murdered policemen.’ It became the prisoner of its own propaganda, and could only be freed to make peace if English people were told the truth. This truth telling was the Guardian’s claim to be different. The paper’s contribution to the peace making. At first the British people did not want to know what was happening in Ireland. But when the government had done, they were certain it must stop.

Instead of pioneering the truth telling about Ireland, the Guardian instead allowed its leaders make excuses for internment. When it became clear that premeditated atrocities were part of the internment package, the Guardian published a statement which was ‘Vigorous and tough interrogation must go on.’ Discomfort of the kind revealed in this report leaving no physical damage caused criticism of the internment of human lives which will be lost if the security forces do not get a continuing flow of information.

Apart from the sickening quality of the bully’s aside — ‘hit them where it won’t show for too long’ — the military must have felt it was no longer possible with the tradition the open encouragement of vigorous and tough interrogation amounted to what one can only call a licence for mayhem.

Given that the whole institution of the Guardian was geared to this outlook it is no surprise that it was looking for atrocities, or paid particular attention to those who claimed that they were taking place. What was sought was more evidence of the moral bankruptcy of the IRA, and supporting the proposition that the tough and vigorous methods by 15,000 British soldiers were bringing the victory so indelibly predicted and unambiguously demanded in the leader column.

When this policy had become bankrupt, even to those seeking to endorse it in Northern Ireland, did the reporting move unapologetically into the mainstream which events dictated no longer possible. The Guardian was to date from a week before Bloody Sunday. Which was too late. But although the Guardian for a time still talked of Peace in view of expectations, the press as a whole had done badly.

The press corps in Ulster lives and works very closely with the European Hotel for the Massacre which is the newest and costliest in Belfast its clientele has been almost exclusively journalists for this crisis period. The paper’s correspondent in the city and the need to concentrate in one place has given the Army public relations a new dimension which makes the job of getting the message across easier for the Army, and reduces the need for a journalist to leave a warm armchair to interview screaming harridans in some blacked out Catholic ghetto on a rainy night.

But the whole spirit of the journalistic operation is exactly that which prevailed in the Federal Palace Hotel, Lagos, during the Nigerian war. The natives are for us, the Africans ... you mustn’t ... can’t get near the front ... have to put up with what the Army says in the daily checked by the Guardian. Intense competition for readers among newspapers has made them less rather than more adventurous. It matters more — for a weary reporter’s peace of mind — that all the stories filed should be the same, rather than that they should be right. When the executive are over a few editions of all the rival papers, life is easier if everybody has sent over much the same account of events.

We get now to what alternative leader policy the Guardian might have expected to have adopted. Its central concern would have been to insist that in 50 years the British Army had become a bourgeois society and one that cannot say its way. This fundamentally affects any ‘right’ Unionists can claim from their moral superiority. Secondly, the alternative policy should have called the backlash bluff from the start. Not by daring the government to commit the troops, but by examining and re-examining the fears that give sustenance to the backlash — fears of Rome, Munich, the Catholic Church. If we are found, I think, that these fears lack any kind of substance. Where they have the shadow of substance every paper — and the Guardian included should report the existence of the republic’s constitution should have been urgent. This is the central cancer that ought to have been attacked. The IRA took the first step, but Bloody Sunday are consequences only of this evil at the core.
How many more?

Two young British soldiers who deserted from Belfast on Tuesday said at a Dublin press conference yesterday they disagreed with what the Army was doing in Ulster, and that they had handed their weapons to the IRA, who had arranged their journey to Eire, but they had no intention of joining the movement.
Below we publish two statements by reluctant servicemen, one of whom served in Ireland, but first - an interview with an ex-soldier just back from there.

Lance Corporal John Woodman, who was born and brought up in Blackpool, where his family still live, signed on in 1961 at the age of 18 for nine years in the Army. He served in Germany and Libya, went on an initiative trip to Expo 67 in Montreal and was posted to Northern Ireland in the spring of 1966 - a few months before the Army 'went in'. He started a regimental newspaper and as a photographer saw a lot of action. In this interview he describes the Northern Ireland conflict from the soldier's point of view and says why he's glad his nine years are over.

Why did you join?
To make a break, to get away from the routine of a provincial town.

What did you expect from Army life?
Travel ... snacking around like a toy soldier, doing the things common men expected to do. Nobody ever joins the Army expecting to kill people. Nobody joins out of blood lust with the idea they're going to be given a gun and allowed to kill other people. They join to make a living, learn a trade, bring up a family. You don't have this conception of the soldier as a shooting gun. If it was war, of course, you would. But a peace time army is just another unit.

What was Northern Ireland like when you first went there?
An easy place, a routine, humdrum existence.

And then?
I did all the things a soldier's expected to do. I was attached to a water cannon in Belfast, I commanded scout cars on the border, I helped to man roadblocks, I was in the pre-internment sweep, I trained with a riot squad.

It was all very strong - sniper, baton men, rubber bullet men, gas men, a photographer, officers. They're all armed and not supposed to shoot till an officer gives the order - but it's different. You train with a bunch of other soldiers acting as a mob - throwing stones. You just beat each other up.

One time I was in a water cannon we refused to turn it on the crowd because we could see women and children - and that jet of water really lays you out. I didn't like what was going on around me.

I could see the situation deteriorating all the time. But you'd get somebody importunate saying that there was a light at the end of the tunnel - the same sort of thing you heard about Vietnam. There is no light at the end of the tunnel, there is no military solution: we weren't fighting a battle - we had no aim. Edward Kennedy wasn't all that wrong about Northern Ireland being Britain's Vietnam.

What about terrorism?
The Army didn't want terrorism. We felt it was just not productive - not justified in terms of the mission. On 9 August, when internment started, things got terrifyingly depressing. Internment worsened things considerably.

You feel just the same whether it's a Catholic or a Protestant throwing stones at you. You're in the middle. It simply doesn't matter which flag is being waved. But you do feel something - not exactly exhilaration - when an IRA man gets shot. He's the enemy: he's the man with you in his sights. The fact that he may represent a section of people isn't important.

What are your feelings now?
I'm glad to be out. I didn't like being a target for assassination. Soldiers are the real internees in Northern Ireland. They are also the victims - killed by both sides. And they're not interested in taking anybody's side.

My feeling now is that the Army is only an extension of a political party. And they're all in entrenched positions - IRA, Catholics, Protestants, soldiers are all brutalisied.

My solution would be to pull the Army out, put in a United Nations force and scrap Section 24. Then the military control of the Army should be transferred to Westminster where it belongs, not left at provincial level - in the hands of the Northern Ireland Security Committee, presided over, as far as I can see, by the Prime Minister ... and the county security committees of local commanders, sitting in consultation with the BRS and the UDR. They seem to decide policies on the ground.

I was 17½ years old when I signed on with the Army. Since then I have discovered many aspects of Army life and policy which I didn't expect. I don't agree with what I see. I appreciate that these considerations would have been evaluated by me before I pledged myself to the services of Her Majesty - but at 17 the full significance of what lies ahead is not immediately apparent.

The situation now, as it stands, is that I have been AWOL for a period of just over two months. The reason by any means a conscientious objector. One has to fulfill a certain role however objectionable it might be, but the manner in which the duties have to be accomplished is at times revolting to me.

As a soldier I am not permitted an identity, but a number and forced by regulations to comply with every order, whatever it might be - whether in my eyes it's right or wrong. As a human being I am expected to express my feelings but NOT whilst I am a soldier.

Service in Ireland changed the whole complexion of things. Prior to my posting there I made repeated requests to be allowed to stay on in Germany. Verbal promises that this would be possible were given. But I was suddenly told to do what I had been told all along: leave Ireland.

I was on leave prior to my absence without leave and as a last resort made another request to be allowed of duty in Ireland. This too was refused.

Being thoroughly disillusioned I reacted in much the same way by going AWOL. By doing so I hoped I could draw attention to my plight.

This soldier returned to his unit on 4 January

After being sacked from my job as a junior reporter on a nearby provincial newspaper, I decided in November 1966 that I would give the Forces a try. I signed up as a private and chose the Royal Marines. The appeared to be the toughest and most glamorous - strong
Although they're ever anxious to tell you
the latest news about high recruitment
figures, the men in the Ministry of Defence
public relations office don't exactly
have at their fingertips the latest figures
on desertsions from the services or absences
without leave. The only figures available
at the time of writing were: from March
1970 to March 1971 486 men left the Navy
and 506 came back (so the Navy actually
 gained); 1679 left the Army and 1403 came
back; 485 left the Royal Air Force and
456 came back.

The National Council for Civil Liberties
has for years been campaigning against
the regulations which compel boy servicemen
to serve long engagements once they’ve
signed on. Although there were some
changes last year, these affected only new
recruits. 'Cases of servicemen writing
to us are still coming in at the same rate
as before,' say the NCCL. 'The difference
is that more are deserters rather than
writing from within the services.'

As more people - civilians and soldiers -
are killed in Ireland and as the campaign
to withdraw the troops intensifies,
disaffectation in the Army will inevitably
increase. A leaflet recently in Belfast
reports: 'The soldiers I personally met
wanted to be as far away from Northern
Ireland as possible.'
Below we publish two statements by reluctant servicemen, one of whom served in Ireland, but first – an interview with an ex-soldier just back from there.

Lance Corporal John Woodman, who was born and brought up in Blackpool, where his family still live, signed on in 1961 at the age of 18 for nine years in the Army. He served in Germany and Libya, went on an initiative trip to Expo 67 in Montreal and was posted to Northern Ireland in the spring of 1969 – a few months before the Army ‘went in’. He started a regimental newspaper and as a photographer saw a lot of action. In this interview he describes the Northern Ireland conflict from the soldier’s point of view and says why he’s glad his nine years are over.

Why did you join?
To make a break, to get away from the routine of a provincial town.

What did you expect from Army life?
Travel – slogging around like a toy soldier, doing the things everyone expected to do. Nobody ever joins the Army expecting to kill people. Nobody joins out of blood lust with the idea they’re going to be given a gun and allowed to kill other people. They join to make a living, learn a trade, bring up a family. You don’t have this conception of violence or shooting a gun. If it was war, of course, you would. But a peace-time army is just another unit.

What was Northern Ireland like when you first went there?
An easy place, a routine, humdrum existence.

And then?
I did all the things a soldier’s expected to do. I was attached to a water cannon in Belfast, I comanded scout cars on the borders, I helped to man road blocks, I was in the pre-interim troop, I trained with a riot squad.

You are about as strong – sniper, baton man, rubber bullet men, gas men, a photographer, officers. They’re all armed and not supposed to shoot till an officer gives the order – I suppose they’re different. You train with a bunch of other soldiers acting like a mob – throwing stones. You just beat each other up.

Once in a while we refused to turn it on the crowd because we could see women and children – and that sort of really lays you out.

I didn’t like what was going on around me. I could see the situation deteriorating all the time. But you get somebody important saying they’re doing a job, so there’s a light at the end of the tunnel – the same sort of thing you heard about Vietnam. There is no light at the end of the tunnel, there is no military solution: we weren’t fighting a battle – we had no aim. Edward Kennedy wasn’t all that wrong about Northern Ireland being British. Vietnam.

What about internment?
The Army didn’t want internment. We felt it was just not productive – not justified in terms of the situation. On 9 August, when internment started, things got terribly depressing. Internment worsened things considerably.

You really put your life in your hands when you went out. You were involved 24 hours a day. You couldn’t shrug it off being called away – you were back in the knowledge, even when you just want shopping or drinking or to the cinema, somebody might put a bullet in your back.

You really took your life in your hands in Northern Ireland.

What was your feeling now?
I’m glad to be going. I didn’t like being a target for assassination. Soldiers are the real internees in Northern Ireland. They aren’t interested in having respect for anyone. They don’t want to be there, they’re not interested in taking anybody’s side.

What are your feelings now?
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My feeling now is that the Army is only an extension of a political party. And they’re all in entrenched positions – IRA, Catholics, Protestants, soldiers: all brutalised.

My solution would be to pull the Army out, put in a United Nations force and scrap the whole damn lot. The Army should be transferred to Westminster where it belongs, not left at provincial level – in the hands of the Northern Ireland Security Committee, presided over, as far as I can see, by the Prime Minister and the county security committees of local commanders, working in consultation with the BGS and the UDR.

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The situation now, as it stands, is that I have been ANGL for a period of just over a year. I am currently a conscientious objector. One has to fulfill a certain role however objectionable it might be, but the manner in which the duties have to be accomplished is at times revolting to me.

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Service in Ireland changed the whole complexion of things. Prior to my posting there I made repeated requests to be allowed to stay on in Germany. Verbal promises that this would be possible were given. I was broken when I lost what faith I had. I was on leave prior to my absence without leave and as a last resort made another request to be going ANGL. This too was refused.

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This soldier returned to his unit on 4 January

After being sacked from my job as a junior reporter on a nearby provincial newspaper, I decided in November 1966 that I would give the Forces a try.

The service and the Royal Marines. The appeared to be the toughest and most glamorous – strong
So on 7 December 1969 I went on Christmas leave and flew out to Singapore. I came back to the UK in January 1970 and managed to escape from my regiment, and two years later I returned to Plymouth and was discharged for the last time on 7 October 1971.

Reluctant Marine
John Burton
Factors in an impressionable 17 year old's mind. My father was not in agreement and refused to give his consent. This served only to strengthen my desire. So I killed six months in a railway booking office until I reached the responsible age of 17 and was able to commit myself for the next 21 years.

Ten days after I was old enough I arrived at Deal in Kent full of enthusiasm for my new career. 9 years didn't seem all that long anyway I was sure to like the life. Amidst the continuous merry-go-round of drill, PT, weapon training etc I rarely paused to think of other things. Towards the end of the first three months we were told of the £20 discharge option. A few of the blokes utilised the offer, including one fellow who'd walked 50 miles on flat feet to prove his capability for the Marines. I was too keen and hardly considered the opportunity. In February 1968 I was charged with being absent from parade ground at Lyme Stone in Devon, a fully trained Royal Marine Commando.

Next came a four month long signals course. Followed shortly by a parachute course. I was very proud and keen. By this time it was October 1969 and life was suddenly less hectic now that I'd finished training. With the opportunity to sit back and reflect came the nagging doubt that soldiering wasn't really me. Various other factors assisted my gradual disillusionment. Promotion was a question of seniority and not merit. I had also become interested in left wing politics through an old school friend. I began to lose my positive drive and my copious enthusiasm began to wane.

Late in 1969 I was told that I would be drafted to Singapore in the following May. I like travel so I decided to wait and see if a foreign commission altered my feelings. Writing proved difficult, my morale sank and I was in a continual state of mental conflict. I got drunk regularly and managed to acquaint myself with Plymouth courts after one drunken evening.

Singapore case and my remaining hopes of a marine career evaporated. I finally accepted that I didn't fit in the service and that I should strive to get out. Taking the plunge I requested discharge on self-betterment grounds - only to be told that no such grounds officially existed. I wanted to return to full-time education and qualify myself for a more rewarding occupation. I tried studying whilst abroad but too many complications, not least my state of mind, prohibited any meaningful administration. Since then I've been absent.

Soon after my initial discharge request I asked to be removed from the roster of candidates for promotion. From then on I openly displayed my dissatisfaction with service life. What really frustrated me was the authorities' refusal to recognise it as a reason for discharge. I was unable to apply for release as my grievances did not officially exist.

Once I asked the doctor if I could see a psychiatrist he saw my point but said that I'd be wasting my time. Like most of the hierarchy in the marines he could see the faults but accepted them for fear of being labelled a blemish.

After 15 months in Singapore and Hong Kong I returned to England during November 1970. I marched off the parade ground in Devon, a fully trained Royal Marine, and managed to reconcile myself to another two years in the Marines until I could buy myself out. It was the hardest thing I've ever attempted. The self-conflict that I experienced as an adolescent compromised as more than I can relate. The resultant effect on my personality and social life was near-disastrous. I know that if I had continued with that course of action I would have regularly failed to meet my superiors expectations.

On 17 December 1971 I was charged with being absent without leave, charged with being absent without leave, charged with being absent without leave. I had not been detained but fined £50.

I intend to return to my unit tomorrow after three weeks and two days. My punishment should be not more than about a month in detention quarters. A new experience - but to what purpose? As for the future I doubt that I will be re-engaged for another year. I also doubt that I will settle down and serve.

John Burton gave himself up on 25 January.

Charged with being absent without leave, he was not detained but fined £50.

Reluctant Marine

John Burton
Why I was sacked by the BBC

Northern Ireland is not the only issue to have provoked political disagreement inside the BBC during the past year. Below is an article by Frances Howard who was sacked last August. A few months ago 22 members of the BBC television staff were forcefully retired. They consisted of researchers, producers and film editors, mainly employed in the Features, Documentaries, and Current Affairs departments. They were all employed on three-monthly to yearly contracts, and had worked at the Beeb for at least two years. This system of employment by contract is standard practice. It means, amongst other things, that if a contract is not renewed redundancy payments are not required.

Each of the 22 'sacked' was just straightforwardly told in a letter from the department organizer that his contract would not be renewed - but given no actual reason other than 'You will of course appreciate that the present circumstances of the Corporation compel a fairly severe appraisal of people and staffing needs....'

Despite this apparent belt-tightening in the Beeb, at least five of the sacked have already been replaced and two of the film editors were invited back because of 'a desperate shortage of staff'.

Now I doubt whether the particular circumstances of my sacking were any different from the other 21. But I did manage to extract a few words from my editor on the subject: 'You know, you get far too involved in your stories,' he said, 'it only makes for unsound editorial judgment.'

Then he finally let the cat out of the bag and told me that my politics were a bit far-out and that perhaps I let them influence my work just that little bit too much. 'You cannot let your feelings interfere with your work here,' he concluded, 'balance is absolutely essential.'

When I went on to inquire about a colleague sacked at the same time from 24 Hours, his comment was even more amusing: 'I know he's supposed to be a good film director, but why did he let his hair grow that long? You can't go around looking like that in the BBC.'

Yet another of the 22 was supposed to be guilty of 'Marxist tendencies'. He was given the boot only days after completing a highly successful series for Further Education which received rave reviews from the critics.

The truth behind the whole affair is, in fact, and not unexpectedly, that it's part of the repressive backlash going on inside the disgusting organs of Auntie. What the sackings had in common was long (ish) hair with the occasional badge and a general concern that television be used realistiically and truthfully to put over news and current affairs instead of using the truth to make good television. Good television usually means entertaining propaganda for the establishment.

11th August 1971

Dear Frances,

I'm very sorry to have to tell you that it seems unlikely that Current Affairs Group will be able to offer you an extension to your contract when it expires on 3rd September.

You will appreciate that the present circumstances of the Corporation compel a fairly severe appraisal of people and of staffing needs. I am sorry to have to say that we do not feel able to persuade your employment on a staff basis any longer.

I think it probable that you have a certain amount of leave outstanding. Perhaps you will let Tony Holloway know what the position is so that he can make the necessary arrangements for you to be paid.

I am sorry that I shall be on leave when you receive this letter and unable to speak to you immediately. I hope that it does not come as too great a shock, however unwelcome it may be.

Yours sincerely,

(Glynne Price)
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Bad but true: Your average out-of-London journalist - whose daily job involves dissent - is a conformist dedicated to free enterprise. For journalists have traditionally aspired to the status of professional men ... and deposed such proletarian imperfections as strikes.

Result (for years) was a pusillanimous union leadership, therefore a lousy basic wage, therefore a general reliance on private enterprise - writing for other newspapers, agencies, TV and radio - for bread money.

But over the past three years, younger journalists have belatedly realised you don't make the boss pay up by reasoning or collaborating with him - but by collective industrial action. And a new generation of novice militants has upturned the status quo by demanding the National Union of Journalists leadership get up off its knees and fight.

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Disaster for the NUJ

First, new consultation machinery was set up: 'Joint Standing Committee' covering both national and provincial newspapers, which gave the rank-and-file a voice in framing pay claims AND a seat at the negotiating table. Second, union leaders were explicitly forbidden to accept any wage package that depros house agreements.

This was the background to the critical battle for a new pay structure in the provincial press, begun last September against the Newspaper Society... the thickest wallets and the bloodiest minds in the industry. It seemed, at first, that democratic belligerence was working. The provincial press lords lined up their usual propaganda—collapse of circulations, advertising and profits—and their usual strategy—procrastination. The NUJ negotiating team didn't budge.

Then some London militants produced a superbly expedient formula for industrial action that seemed no journalist could lose... selective guerrilla strikes in union strongholds, backed up by a £1 per-week-per-member levy to pay strike wages.

Mandatory union meetings throughout the country turned in the provincial journalists' first-ever strike vote. And London journalists discarded their traditional indifference to the provinces and weighed in with support by word and money.

So the Newspaper Society tried solidarity-busting: an attack on the validity of the 28-days' strike notice; sporadic attempts by individual companies to persuade junior staff they would lose long-service payments if they struck; public declarations—swallowed whole by national newspapers—that the NUJ front was crumbling; and, finally, an identical letter to every provincial journalist, threatening not only a lock-out but the sack for all who did not sign an anti-union pledge.

They miscalculated—for these tactics alienated the most loyal company servants ('After all my years') and hardened up the tough printing unions... who can of course really stop the presses. A union victory seemed certain.

And yet the final settlement of the dispute was, for the NUJ, near-disastrous. The wage rise—though the biggest ever screwed out of the Newspaper Society—was way below the original claim. There were no improved rates for juniors, no agreement over freelance feature and photography rates, no extra holidays. And on the first page was the very condition that had been specifically outlawed, a ban on house agreements.

What went wrong? The answer seems to lie partly in the psychological dynamics of the negotiating-room—which nobody has yet studied—and partly in the inexperience of the militants on the NUJ team.

After all, they were faced with a double enemy: not just the bosses, but the appeasement squad on their own side, the NUJ executive. Whatever happened (and the militants themselves don't know) the final offer was put to ballot—an invitation to grassroots wavers to opt out of striking. Which they did.
Five months ago the New Statesman concluded an article on the effects of Common Market entry on the steel industry with the following paragraph: 'Far more significant in the (British Steel) Corporation's 1971-81 development plan, which is still shrouded in secrecy, it takes EEC entry for granted and assumes that any really major steel expansion will have to be sited in the South-East of England or in North-West Europe. For Scotland, Wales, the North-West and other established steelmaking areas, the plan postulates a rate of redundancy that can only be described as horrific. The plan has not yet been shown to even the most biddable trade union officials. If, when they see it, any of them are still in favour of EEC entry, they will need to have their heads examined.'

Recently a copy of a BSC Confidential Report on plant closures in the steel industry came - as they say - into our hands. Could it be that this document has something to do with the BSC's secret development plan? The redundancies proposed are certainly 'horrific' as the New Statesman suggests. Below we outline some of the implications of the Confidential Report, which is in tabular form – see left.

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<tr>
<th>Steel Town</th>
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<th>Primary Forming etc</th>
<th>Secondary Rolling etc</th>
<th>Transfer of semi</th>
<th>Blooms from Teesside</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glenarvon</td>
<td></td>
<td>C. 6 x 115 ton OH furnaces - 1976</td>
<td>C. 42&quot; Cogging Mill</td>
<td>E. Mill/Bar/Rail Mill</td>
<td>C. 2 x Section Mills - '74</td>
<td>Blooms from Teesside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lanarkshire</td>
<td>W. Hartlepool</td>
<td>C. Blast furnaces - 1974</td>
<td>C. 6 x OH furnaces - '74</td>
<td>C. 43&quot; Blooming Mill</td>
<td>- '74</td>
<td>[See Lackenby/ Redcar]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coarse Steel</td>
<td>Five months ago</td>
<td>C. Coke Ovens - '74</td>
<td>C. 360 ton OH furnaces - 1974</td>
<td>C. Slabbing Mill</td>
<td>- '74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teesside: Clay Lane</td>
<td>C. Sinter Machine</td>
<td>C. 3 Blast furnaces - 1978</td>
<td>C. 6 x OH furnaces - '71</td>
<td>C. 40&quot; Cogging Mill</td>
<td>- '74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cargo Fleet</td>
<td>Close</td>
<td>C. 2 Blast furnaces - 1971</td>
<td>C. 4 x OH furnaces - 1970</td>
<td>C. 42&quot; Blooming Mill</td>
<td>- '70/71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skinningrove</td>
<td>Close in '71 except for section mill rolling special sections</td>
<td>C. 1 x Sinter Machine</td>
<td>C. Continuous Casting Plant - '74</td>
<td>C. 6 Arc furnaces - '76</td>
<td>C. 32&quot; Cogging Mill</td>
<td>- '76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrow</td>
<td>Close 1974</td>
<td>C. 1 x Blast Furnace</td>
<td>C. 10 x OH furnaces - '74</td>
<td>C. Cogging Mill</td>
<td>- '74</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Brymbo</td>
<td>Close 1976</td>
<td>C. 4 x Blast Furnaces - '74</td>
<td>C. Coke Ovens - '74</td>
<td>C. 32&quot; Double Duo mills - '74</td>
<td>C. Billet Mill</td>
<td>- '76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irlam, Warrington and Wrexham</td>
<td>Close 1974 (latest proposal is for closure of iron and part of steelmaking in '72/3 and remainder in '73/4)</td>
<td>C. 2 x Sinter Machine</td>
<td>C. 21&quot; Billet Mill - '74</td>
<td>C. 31&quot; stand Rod Mill - '74</td>
<td>C. M. Section Mill (W) - '74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall</td>
<td>Close 1974</td>
<td>C. 8 x Arc Furnaces</td>
<td>C. 28&quot; Bloom/Slab Mill - 1971</td>
<td>C. 3 x bar mills - '71</td>
<td>C. Sheet/Plate Mill - 1971</td>
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<td>Heavy Plate Mill - '74</td>
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**Confidential steel appeal**

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In 1969 the BSC works councils have announced that they will shift their production of steel from the Lorraine to Pos, near Marseilles, on the Mediterranean Coast. In Britain the same ruthless policies are also being applied - as the BSC Confidential Report makes clear.

In Scotland, for example, practically all steel-making is open hearth. The only LD* plant is Ravenscraig, which is part of the BSC Strips Mills Division. According to the report the Clydeside and Clyde Iron, Clydesdale, Dalsell, Glengarnock, Lanarkshire and Tollcross works will all close. And, with only Ravenscraig remaining open, crude steel will in fact be imported from other steel-making areas in the UK.

What will all this mean in human and political terms? In the current year 20,000 steel workers are being given notice of closures. In 1969 the BSC was talking in terms of cutting back about 50,000 of its labour force. The figure over the next 10 years must be at least twice that. In 1969 it looked as though regular redundancies would be reduced to a minimum. But in fact most workers being made redundant by BSC are faced with a desperate situation - not least because by their nature many of the redundancies are hitting areas already badly hit by unemployment.

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The following BSC works will still be operating in 1980-81:

Cleveland
Conssett & Jarrow
Crewe
Dinmore
Dunfermline
Llanwern
Port Talbot/Pontypridd/Yelindre
Ravenscraig
River Don
Scunthorpe
Sheffield
Ting泺side
Tinley Park

The following BSC works will close between now and 1980-81:

Bilston, Wolverhampton, Birchesley
Barrow
Clydeside & Clyde Iron
Clydesdale
Dorby
Dalsell
Symbo
East Moors
Rbb Vale
Glanmarnock
Grimesthorpe
Irlam, Warrington & Monk's Hall
Lanarkshire
Openshaw
Panteg
Shotton
Slomoing Grove
Steel, Fosse & Torder
Tweside Cargo Fleet
Tweside Clay Lane
Tollcross
Trafalgar Park
West Hartlepool
Workington

* LD - Lnea/Donau, a modern steel-making process

Could it happen here?

One of INSIDE STORY'S industrial correspondent reports on what the German bosses can teach Mr Robert Carr.

Mr Robert Carr, the Secretary for Employment, is due this month to visit West Germany, Holland and Brussels to sample industrial relations within the Common Market. And one of the Continental delicacies which he will be offered is the example of worker participation which operates in West Germany. Could it be imported to Britain? Could it be adapted to operate here? These are the questions which will be intriguing Mr Carr.

For the system is far from what is envisaged as workers' control. The simple fact is that in Germany co-determination has been so turned round on the worker that, while he has a measure of say in the management of his firm, the hands of his union are securely tied.

This is shown by the recent metal workers' strike - the first stoppage in the industry has bad for nine years - when the workers went back with an increase of just seven per cent, one per cent more than the increase in the cost of living.

When one considers that the metal workers' union IG Metall is the biggest in the Western world with a membership of 5.2 million, it becomes clear that, large as its size for size, West Germany's trade unions are vastly weaker than their counterparts in this country.

The reason for this is all too clear - for much of the power of unions in Germany has been handed over to works councils under Germany's Works Constitution Act. Yet the councils, as bargaining units, have not made much use of the rights they have.

German management is unable to dismiss a worker even older and considerably slower. The works councils, whose members are elected from the shop floor. If the council objects to the worker being retained on the payroll until all procedures of labour courts are exhausted, a process which can last two or three years.

On hiring, works councils have the right to insist that a post be filled from inside the company and not from outside - provided that the right man is available from within. They must also be consulted on promotion.

If major redundancies are proposed, the works council must be consulted, and a 'social plan' agreed. This provides for redundancy payments, retraining and resettlement. If it is not agreed by the council then the issue goes to outside arbitration.

Councils also have the power to object to job-evaluation schemes and new-piece-work agreements, again with the right of outside arbitration if no deal can be reached. It's clear that most of the council's powers relate to personnel policy, matters which any good shop steward in Britain can easily handle. Since they are not the prerogative of the unions in Germany, the unions' only real function is to maintain a wage increase on pay - and this is done at national level.

It is the old policy of divide and rule for German management and it has not worked satisfactorily for years. As a line of communication, the works council is ideal from management's point of view, providing a grass-roots channel of influencing the plant rank and file.

And German workers have accepted this state of affairs. A German Ministry of
The following BSC works will still be operating in 1980-81:

- Cleveland
- Consett & Jarrow
- Crewe
- Haslam
- Lackenby/Bedford
- Llanwern
- Park Gate
- Port Talbot/Poetree/Yelindre
- Ravenscroag
- River Don
- Scunthorpe
- Saltend
- Stockbridge
- Tinsley Park

The following BSC works will close between now and 1980-81:

- Billston, Wolverhampton, Birchley
- Barrow
- Clydebridge & Clyde Iron
- Clydesdale
- Corby
- Dalzell
- Elsecar
- East Moors
- Bwth Vale
- Glengarnock
- Grimthorpe
- Irlam, Warrington & Monk Hall
- Lonmarkshire
- Openshaw
- Pentig
- Shotton
- Skinningroove
- Steel, Fenn & Tosser
- Teesside Cargo Fleet
- Teesside Clay Lane
- Tollcross
- Trafford Park
- West Hartlepool
- Workington

In its 1970-71 annual report the BSC said:

- "The present state of the world steel market, including the closure of the United States to Japanese steel - which now seeks substitute outlets in Europe - all steelmakers are thinking in terms of drastic cuts and re-organisations in production."

- "The British steel industry also has the EU’s pricing rules to adjust to."

- "The logic of steel industry development in Europe and Japan is that bulk, crude steelmaking should shift from traditional orefields and industry-based sites to coastal regions - and into very large units using basic oxygen processes. Small scale units of production, based on inland sites, will be abandoned."

- "In Scotland, for example, practically all steelmaking is open hearth. The only LD* plant is Ravenscroag, which is part of the BSC Strip Mills Division. According to the Report the Clydebridge and Clyde Iron, Clydesdale, Dalzell, Glengarnock, Lanarkshire and Tollcross works will ALL close."

- "The workers being made redundant by BSC are faced with a desperate situation - not least because by nature many of the redundancies are hitting areas already badly hit by unemployment."

- "With the present state of the world steel market, including the closure of the United States to Japanese steel - which now seeks substitute outlets in Europe - all steelmakers are thinking in terms of drastic cuts and re-organisations in production."

Could it happen here?

One of INSIDE STORY's industrial correspondents reports on what the German bosses can teach Mr Robert Carr.

Mr Robert Carr, the Secretary for Employment, is due this month to visit West Germany, Holland and Brussels to sample industrial relations within the Common Market. And one of the Continental delicacies which he will be offered a taste of is the system of worker participation which operates in West Germany.

Could it be imported to Britain? Could it be adapted to operate here? These are the questions which will be intriguing Mr Carr.

For the system is far from what is envisaged as workers’ control. The simple fact is that in Germany co-determination has been so turned round on the worker that, while he has a measure of say in the management of his firm, the hands of his union are securely tied.

This is shown by the recent metal workers’ strike - the first stoppage of the industry has had for nine years - when the workers went back with an increase of just seven per cent, one per cent more than the increase in the cost of living.

When one considers that the metal workers’ union IG Metall is the biggest in the Western world with a membership of 2.2 million, it becomes clear that, size for size, West Germany’s trade unions are vastly weaker than their counterparts in this country.

The reason for this is all too clear - for much of the power of unions in Germany has been handed over to works councils under Germany’s Works Constitution Act. Yet the councils, as bargaining units, have not made much use of the rights they have.

German management is unable to dismiss a worker and must consult him at some stage in the redundancy process, whose members are elected from the shop floor. If the council objects, the worker must be retained on the payroll until all procedures of labour courts are exhausted, a process which can last two or three years.

On hiring, works councils have the right to insist that a post be filled from inside the company and not from outside - provided that the right man is available from within. They must also be consulted on promotion.

If major redundancies are proposed, the works council must be consulted, and a ‘social plan’ agreed. This provides for redundancy payments, retraining and resettlement. If it is not agreed by the council then the issue goes to outside arbitration.

Councls also have the power to object to job-evaluation schemes and new piecework payments, again with the right to insist to arbitration if no deal can be reached. It’s clear that most of the council’s powers relate to personnel policy, matters which any good shop steward in Britain can easily handle. Since they are not the prerogative of the unions in Germany, the unions’ only real function is to keep a watchful eye on pay - and this is done at national level.

It is the old policy of divide and rule: for German management it has worked satisfactorily for years. As a line of communication, the works council is ideal from management’s point of view, providing a channel sometimes influencing the plant rank and file.

And German workers have accepted this state of affairs. A German Ministry of
Labour officials say: 'German labour law suits the character of the Germans. You cannot export the system. For example, if you cross the country to France, you meet a different type of worker and he needs a certain tradition before this type of law can work.' In Germany, you see, every worker feels a visible class status of a member of the proletariat. On Sunday, walking down the street, it is impossible to tell who is a worker, a clerk, lawyer, labourer or factory worker.' Ideologically and theoretically it is all wrong. But it succeeds in Germany where work is the opium of the masses and trade unions are regarded by two thirds of the labour force as organisations they just don't want to know. At the same time, it is clear that such a deliberate campaign in Germany by both Government and employers to encourage this attitude of mind could be a means by which they can once again impose an effective discipline on the German work force.

By means of laws to introduce compulsory profit sharing, special savings agreements, housing subsidies and such like, they have, if not exactly induced the worker, at least cushioned him financially. What they have achieved, in fact, is a nation of Little Captain's. But there are now distinct signs that this - for the employers - cosy state of affairs may be about to undergo slow but significant change. Two things are worrying the German employers' confederation.

First of all there is concern that the revised Works Constitution Act, which passed through the Bundesrat last week, may pave the way towards a real measure of workers' control. They fear that, if Herr Brandt's Social Democratic party obtains an overall majority in next year's elections, unions could well succeed in their aim of achieving parity of representation on the boards of directors of joint stock companies.

At the moment, this further aspect of workers' control is still, in the main, a paper one and can be controlled by management in most cases so that workers can only nominate one third of the directors of supervisory boards. In three industrious years, however, this situation is changing. In the old days, workers were mere cogs in the machinery of management but they now have a say in the running of the company.

But there are now 500 Communist workers papers circulating in Germany, with a readership between them of two million. The employers now have an enemy they must fight. In an attempt to control the campaign through house journals and the press to persuade the workers that they are fighting the 'capitalists' from above and not the 'capitalists' from below.

And the works councils are an important weapon in spreading that propaganda, making sure that it goes down to the shop floor and reaches the ears of the workers. And the employers, an observation which Mr Carr is sure to appreciate during his tour...
Labour officials say 'German labour law suits the character of the Germans. You cannot export the system. For example, if you cross the country to France, you meet a quite different type of worker who need a certain tradition before this type of law can work.

In Germany, you see, every worker feels a vital class interest as a member of the proletariat. On Sunday, walking down the street, it is impossible to tell who is a worker, denier, lawyer, labourer or factory worker.

Ideologically and theoretically it is all wrong. But it succeeds in Germany where work is the opium of the masses and trade unions are regarded by two thirds of the labour force as organisations they just don't want to know. At the same time, it is clear that the deliberate campaign in Germany by both Government and employers to encourage this attitude of mind.

By means of laws to introduce compulsory profit sharing, special savings agreements, housing subsidies and such like, they have, if not exactly induced the worker, at least cushioned him financially. What they have achieved, in fact, is a nation of Little Capitalists.

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First of all there is concern that the revised Works Constitution Act, which passed through the Bundesrat seemingly may pave the way towards a real measure of workers' control. They fear that, if Herr Brandt's Social Democratic party obtains an overall majority in next year's elections, unions could well succeed in their aim of achieving parity of representation on boards of directors of joint stock companies. At the moment, this further aspect of workers' rights to be controlled by management in most cases so that workers can only nominate one third of the directors of supervisory boards. In three industries where iron and steel - there is parity of representation, and the unions would like to see this extended.

Secondly, this is something which the German employers' confederation oppose: 'We don't think extension of parity is possible or desirable. It is a power question and not to the advantage of the individual worker. We believe that the shareholder has the right to decide who runs the company and what the financial consequences, but we are prepared to go along with co-determination on the old basis - that is a good partnership.' Quite so.

But there is also another and, to the employers, equally ominous threat developing in Germany, one which is more of a feeling of militancy apparent in some quarters - a feeling expressed by some members of the IG Metall executive who say that there will have to be more and more strikes in future if the union is to achieve its aims. Coming after an era during which there has been a relative absence of strikes, this is revolutionary thinking indeed for a German union.

And since the Communist Party was legally re-established two years ago, people, one feels, that the enemy you can define is easier to deal with than the one in the shadows - employers have been alarmed by its increasing industrial activity, so much so that the employers confederation have set up a special 'anti-subversive' department to identify and combat the industrial trouble-makers - a sort of civilian Special Branch.

So far, they say, this undercover squad has had great success. We have had two instances recently at Opel and Mercedes factories where Communist agents moved in to invite workers along to outside meetings, similar to the Communist Union movement.

They also tried to stop a company assembly and distributed foreign language leaflets, for there are numbers of foreign workers at both plants. In all cases they were stopped in time, but we fear things will get worse. However, we are watching the situation closely.

There are now 300 Communist works papers circulating in Germany, with a readership between their two million. The employers say they are now using this as part of a campaign through house journals and the press to persuade the workers that they are 'too industrialised' and 'lagging behind'.

And the works councils are an important weapon in spreading that propaganda, making sure that it gets down to the shop-floor level. So the employers, an observation which Mr Carr is sure to appreciate during his tour...
could do whatever you liked with the boy as long as you both kept the floor with him. And the boy was aware of his father’s attitude.

You had other boys who didn’t accept it at all – one in particular refused to be caned and in the end he left the school and went somewhere else. It may be that children are more prepared to question authority now. Certainly that fourth and fifth formers are more likely to question authority than I was at that time. I don’t ever remember being struck by a teacher back then, but nowadays some boys would certainly be prepared to do this.

Had you ever used the cane?

Yes, once. Much as I detest caning it was the only way it was in one particular instance. Some lavatories were found smashed up: three, possibly four, lavatory pans were found smashed. And inquiries were being made rather disreterly, putting pressure on smaller children – younger ones who were always on the fringe of things. I was trying to find out who’d done it. And it was pretty obvious that someone in my fifth form had done it, so I started asking questions. Because I felt at this point that I’d shielded them very frequently from the obstinate attitude of members of staff who would condemn these kids out of hand. I said that in this particular case I would like to know what had happened. Eventually the two kids came up and admitted it. I said what am I that am I doing this now? There’s about £150 worth of damage – you can’t pay for it, can you? No, they couldn’t. We don’t want our parents to know, that’s the first thing. And they also asked that it should not be written down on their report from school.

In fact, so what I did was I asked them what they thought punishment should be or what they could do about it – and they said they would do it again and done with and have a caning. Then we’re free, completely, we can do our exams.” So I told the head and he agreed that no parents would be told, that there would be no mention of it on their leaving report and that they would be caned.

Afterwards one of them said to me that he was bloody glad it was all over and done with. Whereas if it had been on their report and if their parents had known the boys felt it would have been worse. In fact it was the opposite: apart from the effect of a written report on their job prospects, one of the boys would certainly have been severely beaten by his father – he’d have had it both ways.

In other words, you can’t separate physical punishment from other forms of force.

Exactly. Violence exists not only in a physical way. Violence exists when authority overrides rational questioning. One can be mentally violent to somebody else. We accept in our legal system that there is such a thing as mental cruelty, so if there is cruelty there is presumably some violence.

Finally, what about the raising of the school leaving age – the reason why the NAS have been making all this fuss about ‘violence’?

I would say that the majority of secondary school teachers think the raising of the school leaving age – at this moment in time, with all the resources and limitations – will fall you into the routine of continuing an academic as opposed to a social education. Because it’s easier: that’s nothing easier under some circumstances than to dish out facts. There are some schools where a very enlightened attitude to careers holds. But these are very few and far between: Ken is absolutely right. It’s not overplayed at all, it’s not caricature; it’s reality. They’re thinking they can virtually use a waste of time to make school careers people coming in to talk to them because they’re so unrealistic. They tend to go to what you’re likely to get as an examination subject – not you as a person. And that’s at a grammar school – not an modem or modern or a neighbourhood comprehensive.

When the school leaving age is raised to 16, Silverthorne Secondary School for Girls in Camberwell, South London – like other secondary schools – will face a number of extra problems. By no means the least of these will be the attitude of those 15 year old girls who have already made up their minds that school has nothing to offer them. Some of the girls at Silverthorne will need a lot of convincing after the extra mandatory examinations. Some of the girls at Silverthorne will need a lot of convincing after the extra mandatory examinations. So the teachers and children stay where they are – in two separate buildings some distance apart. There is a limited number of inside lavatories. There are no other facilities. There is no water for the whole school – so the annual prize-giving takes place at another school. For the raising of the school leaving age, the teachers are necessary; they will be built on what is now the playground.

The girls are drawn from as many as 42 different primary schools. While the percentage of immigrant children in local secondary schools is 10.2, over 60% of Silverthorne girls are from immigrant families.

Formal punishment in the school consists mainly of detention – 10 minutes for being late, 30 minutes for bad conduct. But the young girls are very shy girls. Class vs, the only CSE exam class at Silverthorne, consists therefore of those girls who have decided to stay on after 15 to get an academic qualification. In September 1971 the class had 30 girls. Most of them had been together since the First Year. And on their way up the school they’d come to know for being talkative and troublesome. A few weeks after the beginning of term a duplicated letter was sent by the headmistress to the parents of 12 girls in the class complaining about their standard of work and attitude. Then on 26 November a final exclusion letter was sent to the parents of every girl in VS. This referred to the earlier letter and said: ‘I am sorry to say there has been little or no improvement.’

The parents were warned: ‘You will be informed of the results of the CSE Mock examinations before the end of this term and you are needed because of lack of effort, non-co-operation and general disinterest, your daughter has not reached the standard of which the Staff and I think she is capable. In fact I think you should ask your daughter to leave.’

The parents were not in the event ‘informed’ of the results of the CSE Mock examinations. But six of them did receive a handwritten letter from the headmistress which told them ‘Despite the above findings we are not prepared for them to remain at school.’

Later the headmistress was to say that she intended to arrange transfers for
could do whatever you liked with the boy as long as you didn't hit him, and you could slap the floor with him. And the boy was aware of his father's attitude.

You had other boys who didn't accept it at all - one in particular refused to be caned and in the end he left the school and went somewhere else. It may be that children are more prepared to question authority now. Certainly that fourth and fifth formers are more likely to question authority than I was at that time. I don't ever remember being afraid of a teacher back then, but nowadays some boys would certainly be prepared to do this.

**Have you ever used the cane?**

Yes, once. Much as I detest caning it was the only way at the time. The particular instance. Some Bavarian were found smashed up; three, possibly four, lavatory pans were found in the back yard.

And inquiries were being made rather discreetly, winding pressure on smaller children - younger ones who were always on the fringe of things. In the event of course the culprits had been found out and it was pretty obvious that someone in my fifth form had done it, so the questions were asked about it. Because I was a bit at this point that I'd shielded them very frequently from the obstinate authority of members of staff who would condemn these kids out of hand. I said that in this particular case I would like to know what had happened. Eventually the two kids came up and admitted it. I said "That's right?" That's right? Is that the case? There's about £50 worth of damage - you can't pay for it, can you? No, they couldn't. "We don't want our parents to know, that's the first thing. And they also asked that it should not be written down on their report from school.

In fact, in that respect I was quite right. In fact I did ask them what they thought punishment should be or what they could do about it - and they said they would do it again and do it worse. Then we're free, completely, we can do our exams." So I told the head and he agreed that no punishment would be told, that there would be no mention of it on their leaving report and that they would be caned.

Afterwards of them said to me that he was bloody glad he had all done and over done with. Whereas if it had been on their report and if their parents had known the boys felt it would have been worse. In fact it had been worse: apart from the effect of a written report on their job prospects, one of the boys would certainly have been severely beaten by his father - he'd have had it both ways.

**In other words, you can't separate physical punishment from other forms of force?**

Exactly. Violence exists not only in a physical way. Violence exists when authority overrides rational questioning. One can be mentally violent to somebody else. We accept in our legal system that there is such a thing as mental cruelty, so if there is cruelty there is presumably some violence.

Finally, what about the raising of the school leaving age - the reason why the NAS have been making all this fuss about 'violence'?

I would say that the majority of secondary school teachers think the raising of the school leaving age - at this moment in time, with the resources available - is a mistake. To make it worthwhile for the kids you'd need to restructure drastically secondary education from the age of 11. I mean there's a lot of talk - a lot of lip-service is paid to 'links with the outside world', trips round factories and so on. It's not there. The schools are doing it very well indeed.

But there's still such a lack of imagination, lack of funds, lack of incentive, for teachers to make contacts with industry - and unimaginative employers' attitudes. In many cases boys who had a worthwhile job would be held back by practical considerations at 15 years old and serving an apprenticeship with an enlightened craftsman. That sounds as reactionary as the NAS but in schools - and only in schools - you are missing contact with the outside world.

There's no gradual move into deep adolescence and there's no help for them in the transition from a schoolboy world to an adult world. That's what the extra year should be for! It should be for social education. It should be for further education. I'm afraid that this year is going to be used for more, inappropriate academic education - and if so there are going to be a lot of problems.

When you sit down and talk to a group of 30 or boys or girls, the questions coming at you are more than you can possibly cope with. It's not enough with the raising of the leaving age because your groups need to be smaller. But what looks happening is that as a teacher you're not only facing educational limitations: you'll fall into the routine of continuing an academic as opposed to a social education. Because it's easier: there's nothing easier under these circumstances than to dish out facts. There are some schools where a very enlightened attitude to careers holds. But these are very few and far between. I think absolutely right. It's not overlaid at all, it's not caricatured; it's reality. The type of school that you'd be held down by practical considerations. It's virtually a waste of time the school careers people coming in to talk to them because they're so unrealistic. They tend to go on you're what you're likely to get as an examination subject - not on you as a person. And that's at a grammar school - not even at a modern or a neighbourhood comprehensive.

When the school leaving age is raised to 16. Silverthorne Secondary School for Girls in Camberwell, South London - like other secondary schools - will face a number of extra problems. By no means the least of these will be the attitude of those 15 year olds who have already made up their minds that school has nothing to offer them. Some of the girls at Silverthorne will need a lot of convincing after the extraordinary incident last December when six members of the school's only CSI exam class were summarily expelled by the headmistress.

Silverthorne Secondary School is an anachronism in several ways. It is a single sex secondary modern in an area committed to coeducational comprehensive schools. Plans to rebuild it and combine it with a boys' school to form a comprehensive have been postponed indefinitely.

So the teachers and children stay where they are - in two inept buildings some distance apart. There is a limited number of inside lavatories. There are no play areas big enough for the whole school - so the annual prize-giving takes place at another school. For the raising of the school leaving age serious educational changes are necessary: they will be built on what is now the playground.

The girls are drawn from as many as 42 different primary schools. While the very few who go to Silverthorne in local secondary schools is 10.2, over 60% of Silverthorne girls are from immigrant families.

Formal punishment in the school consists mainly of detention - 10 minutes for being late, 30 minutes for bad conduct. But the most common bane this year.

Class VI, the only CSI exam class at Silverthorne, consists therefore of those girls who have decided to stay on after age 15 to gain an academic qualification. In September 1971 the class had 30 girls. Most of them had been together since the first day of school. On their way up the school they'd come across for being talkative and troublesome.

A few weeks after the beginning of term a duplicated letter was sent by the headmistress to the parents of 12 girls in the class complaining about their standard of work and attitude. Then on 26 November the whole class was sent home to the parents of every girl in VI. This referred to the earlier letter and said: 'I am sorry to say there has been little or no improvement since last term.'

The parents were warned: 'You will be informed of the results of the CSI Mock examinations before the end of this term and your daughter will be moved into the coeducational exam class unless there is sufficient improvement."

The parents were not in the event 'informed of the results of the CSI Mock examinations'. But six of them did receive a handwritten letter from the headmistress which told them their daughter was not 'prepared for to remain at school. Later the headmistress was to say that she intended to arrange transfers for..."
Dear Mr. Atkins,

I regret to inform you that I am not prepared for your daughter to remain at school. In spite of repeated attempts the head of the school has been made unco-operative and Maria has been moved from one school to another. Maria has a natural ability and she needs the undoubted ability and support of teachers. She is a willing student and her results have been very satisfactory. We do not think she is the type to do well in school. If you would like me to arrange an appointment with the Youth Employment Officer perhaps you would be kind enough to let me know.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Davis

Date: 18.12.76

P.S. If you still wish to appeal against the suspension, you would be kind enough to let me know.

The following facts may be of interest:

1. At no point did the headmistress suggest that parents come to see her to discuss their children's progress.

2. Of the six girls who were expelled none was accused of any offence except the general ones - noise, lack of co-operation etc. - which the group of 12 and the whole class were also accused of.

3. Of the 26 girls who remained in the class, two left 'in protest', two left for other reasons and two were put back in the fourth year.

4. Of the six girls, five are black and one, Maria, is a Greek Cypriot. Or, if the girls to other schools. However, this point was not included in any of the letters - and at least two specifically mentioned a possible appointment with the Youth Employment Officer. One of these is reproduced opposite.

Of the six girls one accepted the situation and went to the Youth Employment Office. The father of another, Maria Papaphotis, went at once to see the headmistress - and was told that she could be transferred to another school. Two girls made enquiries about further education.

One parent went to see the vice-chairman of the school's governors, who pointed out that the girls could not technically be expelled or suspended without certain formalities. He gave four girls letters stating their right to return to school. They went back, produced the letters - and were sent away again, this time with a more formal suspension letter.

Transfers to other schools were arranged for three girls, but Maria Papaphotis and Norma Atkins refused. These two - and only these two - were then informed by the ELM Divisional Office that they had the right of appeal to the Board of Governors.

The governors heard their appeal on 21 January and rejected it. Now an appeal is being made to the Department of Education and Science. Meanwhile Maria and Norma, after several weeks away, have been transferred to other schools.

Whatever the result of this appeal, the girls and their parents will go on feeling angry and bitter about what was done to them. Most people will feel that they have good reason.

One of the six expulsion letters sent to Silverthorne School girls' parents

Silverthornes is not the only London school where a head teacher has acted in this arbitrary way: there have been similar incidents recently in at least three others.

Mr. Atkins on the appeal to the governors:

At the governors' meeting the head said Norma was going to be transferred from the beginning, but there's the letter about the Youth Employment Office. And she was sent to the Youth Employment Office before I got the letter. I said to the head "Can't you give these young girls a chance?" And she said "Oh no, not by letting them back here - by transferring them to another school." But you have to start all over again.

If a child says "I want to stay at school and achieve something" - and you keep them from it - that's not fair.

Mr. Papaphotis on the appeal to the governors:

The school took the easiest way: chuck them out and perhaps we'll have some peace and quiet.

Last summer my daughter brought home a report most parents would be proud of. She was second in class and first in several subjects with good marks. They say she could do better; we all could.
Dear Mr. Atkins,

I regret to inform you that I am not prepared for your daughter to remain at school after the end of his term. In spite of repeated meetings, the school has made no move to accept Maria, and her headmistress has refused to discuss the matter.

If you would like her to return, please let me know. You would be kind enough to let me know your comments. Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Davis

Headmistress

One of the six expulsion letters sent to Silverthorne School girls' parents

The following extra facts may be of interest:

1. At no point did the headmistress suggest that parents come to see her to discuss their children's progress.
2. Of the six girls who were expelled, none was accused of any offence except the general ones: noise, lack of discipline, and the group of 12 who were expelled.
3. Of the 24 girls who remained in the class, two left in protest, two left for other reasons, and two were put back into the class.
4. Of the six girls, five are black and one, Maria, is a Greek Cypriot. Or, if...

The school took the easiest way: chuck them out and perhaps we'll have none peace and quiet.

Last summer my daughter brought home a report most parents would be proud of. She was second in class and first in several subjects with good marks. But they say she could do better; we all could.
From the third volume of Claude Cockburn’s autobiography *View from the West*. It seems that many years ago — when Alexander Cockburn was still at his preparatory school — his famous father and Samuel Beckett tried to get Hulton Press to start a revolutionary new periodical. It was to be called — surprise, surprise — *Seven Days*. The first issue appeared in May 1971 and was taken out of the school magazine by using cartoons ‘in the worst possible taste’ and was also to be printed on ‘cheaper, scruffier paper than anyone else used’. Sadly, the second *Seven Days*, which Alexander Cockburn helps to produce, has not learned very much from the start.

Claude Cockburn meanwhile — apart from acting as one of the *Seven Days* trustees and contributing a couple of articles — has seemed to prefer to write for its satirical rival *Private Eye*.

This, you will recall, is a cheap and scruffy paper in very bad taste.

*Private Eye* is also well known for the political reporting of Paul Post, who is perhaps the most able journalist in Britain. Indeed the magazine’s appeal is based on its unique blend of international socialism and Toryism with a funny human face. From time to time, however, the ‘operative tension’ between Foot and editor Richard Ingrams becomes open conflict — as last summer when Foot successfully stopped Ingrams using a covering feature tarring Bernstein Devlin.

But Ingrams is the editor of *The New Statesman* and usually has his way on Ireland. *Private Eye* certainly does not endorse the ‘critical support for the IRA’ which is the policy of Foot’s International Socialism organisation. In fact attacks on the IRA in the front half of *Private Eye* have been used to stir up situations elsewhere on the left that Foot ‘acquiesced in the publishing of pro-imperialist lines’!

*Private Eye* did not reply to this particular charge. Instead Ingrams told Gerry Lawless, a member of the International Marxist Group which publishes the *Eye*, that he was no longer wanted in the *Private Eye* office.

*The Times Group*’s ‘Going British Revolution is — not surprisingly — written from the standpoint of the International Marxist Group. Tariq is, after all, its best known member and, as he makes clear in one of the book’s many footnotes, he would not claim the ‘bourgeois specificity’ of the text. And you would not expect members of rival Trotskyist organisations, in reviewing his book, to be swept away by its heady rhetoric. You would expect them, in fact, to point out Tariq Ali’s dangerous doctrinal deviations from the true path of Bolshevikism.

But, if the hostile book review is written for a newspaper like *The Times* in a lofty academic style by someone who intimates that the struggle, its readers can be forgiven for being ‘mystified’.

Christopher Hitchens, who is a member of International Socialism, wrote in *The Times* on 27 January: ‘The reader who wants a serious account of revolutionary politics in Britain must look elsewhere.’

The same, it seems, goes for serious reviews of revolutionary books.

It seems that Robert Ollendorff, much-publicized radical doctor, is not altogether as liberated as he makes out to be. Recently, he called a meeting of the trustees and staff of the magazine *Children’s Rights* (two issues out so far) at his private home. There he proceeded to attack the two editors, Roger Marks and Andrew Harrison, saying that they were irresponsible, that they had no right to run the magazine the way they did and that he was shaking them on the spot.

When they protested at this outburst of authoritarianism, Ollendorff promptly insisted on escorting them bodily out of his house, all this time foaming at the mouth. During this highly emotive incident, Michael Dune, the libertarian teacher, and Andrew Harrison, on the editorial board, remained seated and did not utter a word. So it’s doubtful whether *Children’s Rights* will survive further than its third issue — especially under the sole surviving editor Julian Hall.

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**satire section**

Readers of Seven Days who are beginning to tire of this revolutionary breakthrough in photo-journalism may be interested in the following words of wisdom:

"Certainly there are some wonderful press photographs about, and every so often you get a photograph which, in its impact and revelation, is so potent that any medium could convey it in any other medium. On the other hand, eighty per cent of the photographs people publish are inferior to what a black and white artist can do with the same subject."

This quotation is taken from the third volume of Claud Cookburn's autobiography View from the West. It seems that many years ago - when Alexander Cookburn was still at his preparatory school - his famous father, and Maurice Cookburn, tried to get Fulton Press to start a revolutionary new periodical. It was to be called - surprise, surprise - Seven Days. The first issue was to be taken straight from the strikethroughs of photography by using cartoons 'in the worst possible taste' and was also to be printed on 'cheaper, scruffier paper than anyone else used'. Sadly, the second Seven Days, which Alexander Cookburn helps to produce, has not learned very much from the first.

Claud Cookburn meanwhile - apart from acting as one of the Seven Days trustees and contributing a couple of articles - has seemed to prefer to write for its satirical rival Private Eye.

This, you will recall, is a cheap and scruff paper in very bad taste.

Private Eye is also well known for the political reporting of Paul Post, who is perhaps the most able journalist in Britain. Indeed the magazine's appeal is based on its unique blend of international socialism and Trotskyism with a funny human face. From time to time, however, the 'cagey tension' between Post and editor Richard Ingrams becomes open conflict - as last summer when Foot successfully stopped Ingrams using a cover featuring Benadette Devlin.

But Ingrams is the editor of the paper and usually has his way on Ireland. Private Eye certainly does not endorse the 'apolitical support for the IRA' which is the policy of Foot's International Socialism organisation. In fact attacks on the IRA in the front half of Private Eye have occasioned unaccustomed squeamishness elsewhere.

Private Eye did not reply to this particular charge. Instead Ingrams told Gerry Lawless, a member of the International Marxist Group which publishes the NLR, that he was no longer wanted in the Private Eye office.

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The New Statesman is up to its old tricks again. The left-wing journal that suing its editor, Auberon Waugh, still has to have it both ways: 'and it does occur to me that a better scheme for protecting the public against psychotherapeutic amateurs than that proposed by Sir John would be a revision of the law of libel.'

The management of news on the Observer is not restricted to the news pages. Before the BBC's mammoth talk-in on Ulster, editor Peter Frankel telephoned his old friend Mary Holland - who is not known for her support for the use of British troops in Ireland - to tell her: 'Now don't be political; write about whether it's good television.'

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England's Coming British Revolution is not surprisingly - written from the standpoint of the International Marxist Group. Tariq, who has just been bought up in the book's many footnotes, would not claim the 'bourgeois specificity' of the book. And we would not expect members of rival Trotskyist organisations, in reviewing his book, to be swept away by its heady rhetoric. You would expect them, in fact, to point out Tariq Ali's dangerous doctrinal deviations from the true path of Bolshevikism.

But, if the hostile book review is written for a newspaper like The Times in a lofty academic style by someone who insists that the struggle, its readers can be forgiven for being 'mystified'.

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An Army spokesman said today that rubber bullets were used in Andersonstown, Belfast. No casualties were reported... (see page one)