

Socialist Worker

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Redundancies and unemployment can be fought

UCS OCCUPATION SHOWS THE WAY

THE OCCUPATION of the UCS yards has raised the struggle against unemployment to a new level. The government has announced its intention of slashing the workforce from 8,400 to 2,500 and the UCS workers immediately assumed control of the yards.

In John Browns—the only yard where the workers have returned from their holidays—the shop stewards have made it clear that nothing can be done without their permission. Stewards are also manning the entrances to other yards as a symbol of their intention to assert their control when the workers return on 9 August.

The steps already taken represent a huge leap forward from any previous redundancy struggles. But clearly further measures are necessary before the workers exert full control in the yards. For example, stewards have already advised workers not to accept their redundancy notices sent out last week.

They should also instruct the office staff not to make up redundancy payments, insurance cards, etc for the 400 workers concerned.

If, as the workers, have decided, production is to be maintained, then the organisation of production has to involve the workers concerned. So far, management have been represented on the committees set up by the shop stewards to run the yards, but no workers are involved except the shop stewards committee.

INSULT

One of the lessons that has to be drawn, is that workers don't need a foreman standing over them and still less do they require private ownership.

The government's acceptance of the Inquiry Committee's Report has only made the workers more determined than ever. Almost 6000 redundancies are bad enough, but when an attempt is made to sugar the pill by stating that 1000 jobs are available at the Scott Lithgow yards then this is adding insult to injury.

Scott Lithgow is at least 20 miles from most UCS workers' homes, so travelling time and expenses would increase, while wages are currently 20-25p an hour less than at UCS.

Clearly a wage reduction of this dimension (£8-£10 a week) is what is meant by the Committee's reference to the need to achieve 'competitive wage rates'.

The unions would also have to agree to radically alter working practices and this means more flexibility, interchangeability, work study, etc.

Double-day shifts from 6am to 2pm and from 2pm to 10pm are further government demands. This would mean that workers living in outlying areas would have to get up at 4am for the first shift, or become social hermits on the second shift.

To crown it all the report states

From PETER BAIN

that the new company would decide whom to employ and may start labour from outside UCS so even the 2500 jobs retained appear to be an exaggeration.

In the past, a succession of crises were utilised to foist similar measures on UCS workers. This time with the chronic local unemployment situation, the workers' backs are against the wall. They have no choice but to fight.

One of the principal architects of the 'accept this or the yards close' policy was, of course, Anthony Wedgwood Benn.

It was Wedgwood Benn who demanded more than 3000 redundancies in May 1969, 45 per cent productivity increase, increased shift work, rigid adherence to procedure, etc.

Now that he is safely in opposition Benn has confessed he made mistakes in the past. He has now discovered that he should have nationalised UCS, while his new-found belief in workers' control is of even more recent vintage.

WHY

If Benn wishes to support the UCS workers' struggle then that is up to him. But those who uncritically accept this support have to ask themselves why it is that Benn, who chopped thousands of UCS workers when in government, now supports them in opposition.

Is it just a coincidence that Barbara Castle, the 'brain' behind In Place of Strife' now opposes the Industrial Relations Bill, while Wilson weeps crocodile tears over the health service and school milk charges which he initiated? The Labour Party always shows its 'left' face when in opposition so as to pick up votes. These opportunists are plumbing the depths of cynicism, with Benn clearly staking his claim as future leader of the Labour Party.

But no UCS worker can believe that the struggle can be won by speeches in parliament.

The only way to defeat the government is to continue the occupation and to mobilise the whole labour movement in a massive campaign against unemployment.

POLICE ASSAULT FINE TUBES PICKETS



Clashes outside the Plymouth factory last week. For an on the spot report see back page.

HOW TO WIN

UCS WORKERS can defeat the government and stop the redundancies. But only by a determined and militant struggle. They have given a lead to the whole working class by their action of occupying the yards. It needs to be followed up.

Within the yards it has to be made quite clear that the workers are in control and not the liquidator. Regular mass meetings should be held to which delegates must report back.

Any worker who wants to must have the right to speak at such meetings. Only in this way will the whole workforce feel that they really are determining what is happening to their yard.

The workers must also make it clear that they are in charge by ordering the clerical staff to stop processing redundancy notices and to keep on paying out wages to the whole work force.

Thirdly, as an indication that they really are in control, the workers should insist that the meeting of stewards from the west of Scotland to discuss solidarity

action next Tuesday should take place in the yards, and not outside in some cinema.

The key to victory for the workers is that the initiative remains with them and does not pass into the Tories' hands.

The best way to ensure this is to press for a spreading of the occupation. The call should go out for other workers in the Glasgow area to show solidarity, not only by continuing supplies to UCS, but by occupying their own plants as well.

Workers in other plants threatened with redundancies should be prepared to follow the UCS example. That would really give rise to a movement the Tories could not isolate, defeat or ignore.

The TUC, the Scottish TUC and the unions with members in UCS should be called upon to organise a one-day general strike in solidarity with the Clyde workers and against unemployment generally.

Collections and messages of support should be sent to Mr R MacKenzie, convenor's office, Clydebank Division, Upper Clyde Ship Builders, Dunbartonshire.

TYNE STRIKES

WHILE UCS men were occupying their yards, shipyard workers in the north-east were showing that they were not to be cowed into submission by high unemployment. For the first time in 10 years, all ship building in the Tyne came to a halt when the five yards of Swan Hunter closed on 2 August.

At a mass meeting held in Wallsend on Sunday the 2800 general workers in the yard voted overwhelmingly to strike in support of their claim for a basic £20.40p a week.

The men, all members of the General and Municipal Workers Union, are demanding parity with the general workers in the ship repair yards. They turned down a management offer of £20.17p a week.

The mass meeting rejected the advice of Ken Baker, the National Industrial Organiser of the G&MWU not to strike. As the yards reopened on 2 August after the two week summer holiday, management were faced with a 100 per cent response to the strike call by the general workers and within hours the yards were closed.

Socialist Worker

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Militancy vital for Upper Clyde victory

THE OCCUPATION of UCS is a turning point in the fight against the employers' offensive. This great step forward can turn the tide UCS can be saved, the government can be beaten.

Harland and Wolff is proof enough. Whatever the profit prospects of the Belfast yard, the government has effectively guaranteed that it will stay in business. Why? Because the Tories are desperately afraid that its closure would lose them the support of the Protestant workers in Belfast. That support is essential to their rule in Northern Ireland. It is politics that is the deciding factor and not, as the Tories pretend, market forces beyond their control.

If anyone has any doubt about this they should look at the Concorde project. Hundreds of millions of pounds down the drain for an aircraft that nobody even pretends will ever show a profit on the books. Or consider the cost to the state in unemployment pay and supplementary benefit of 18,000 redundancies in the West of Scotland. It would be cheaper to subsidise UCS to continue production even if it ran at a permanent loss.

But politics decides. The Tory 'no lame ducks' policy is part of the overall strategy of the bosses to intimidate and discipline workers by the threat of unemployment. They want to dampen down militancy, weaken shop floor organisation, shackle the unions with the Industrial Relations Bill and they want all these things quite simply to push up profits at the expense of real wages.

The fight of the UCS workers is the fight to put people before profits. It is a fight in the interests of every working man and woman in the country. It will be won if the occupation sparks off a massive movement of support that can break the Tories' will. Every socialist has the duty to do the utmost possible to support that movement.

Socialists have another, less pleasant duty. It is to point out that if UCS remains isolated, if too much attention is paid to the advice, that will be freely forthcoming—to keep the movement in 'safe', 'respectable' channels—then the UCS workers will be beaten.

To succeed, the movement must spread and must have the most militant character possible. It is absolutely right to demand support from the Scottish Trades Union Congress, the TUC and the Labour Party. It is absolutely right to utilise every scrap of support that can be got from Feather, Wilson, Wedgwood Benn and co. And it is absolutely suicidal to put any trust in such allies or to allow them to influence the course of action.

Remember the postmen. The UPW was beaten to its knees because, when it came to the crunch, the trade union bureaucracies would not give any serious financial support, let alone sympathetic action. It will be the same with UCS unless the rank and file forces action.

It has also to be said that the policy of continuing work, of a 'work in' rather than an occupation as such, is very dangerous. One bargaining asset in the hands of the workers is the thirty million pounds worth of unfinished ships. The liquidator hopes to get these jobs finished and to pay off men progressively as they are no longer needed. To carry on working slots into this policy. Far greater pressure can be exerted by a sit-in strike, an occupation without working.

But above all the call has to come from UCS for sympathetic occupations of other plants threatened with redundancies, for a national demonstration stoppage in support of UCS, for the organisation of sustained financial support for an unlimited occupation. Spreading the movement is the key to success. The determination and unity of the rank and file is the key to spreading the movement.

Every channel, official and unofficial, must be used. The Tories can and will be beaten provided that the siren voices of 'respectability', 'maturity' and 'no politics' are drowned in a roar of working-class protest.

BEHIND THE OZ WITCH-HUNT

THE VICIOUS treatment of the editors of Oz must be condemned by everybody on the left. They have been found guilty of 'publishing an obscene article' and have been held in prison for a week before sentencing for 'mental reports'. This follows closely upon a similar judgment against the publishers of the Little Red Schoolbook.

The important point about these decisions is that really they have nothing whatsoever to do with obscenity. If that were what the police and judges were really concerned with they could turn their attention to the big cinema chains who make a handsome profit from exploiting sexual frustrations or to the big advertising concerns who continually use explicit sexual symbolism in their efforts to outsell one another.

Behind the attacks on Oz and the Little Red School Book are quite different motives. Increasing numbers of people are becoming worried about the state of the society they live in. They feel that something is wrong with it. Yet they are not conscious of the origin of their discontent or of how to deal with it.

Politicians who have no solution to these problems try instead to gain popularity by using scapegoats. Right-wing Tories, or for that matter Labour lords, like Longford, can get a following for a campaign against 'filth' which they could never get for their policies on unemployment.

Those who have real power welcome such moves. Attention is diverted from the real barbarity and obscenity of capitalist society, whether it be the war in Vietnam, the genocide in Bengal or the throwing out of work of hundreds of thousands of people.

The hypocrisy of the upper classes is underlined by the fact that they never let the rigid puritanism of such campaigns and laws against 'filth' determine their own behaviour—as was shown, for instance, in the Profumo scandal some years ago. Repressive legislation is always directed at those lower down the social scale.

If such campaigns involve attacking publications of a leftist hue, so much the better. The powers of the police to arbitrarily intimidate and harass is increased. And judges can get massive press publicity for actions that make it seem that anyone with a genuinely critical attitude to the existing set-up is in need of 'mental' treatment.

LESSONS FROM GERMAN STRIKE

by James Wickham in Frankfurt

THE STRIKE of the West German chemical workers is now over. After originally demanding 11 per cent, the union settled for 7 per cent. This is actually under the government's wage guide line and only ½ per cent above the employers' original offer. Yet if this is a victory for the employers and the government, what actually happened in many factories is not.

The weakness of the German working class has been the lack of any militant organisation at the base. For example, there is nothing that could really be called a shop stewards' movement.

Until the unofficial strike wave of September 1969 control by the union bureaucracy seemed absolute. Now the chemical workers have shown that they too are capable of self-organisation.

The union's strategy was to allow individual factories to decide how and when to strike. This ensured that the strike remained split and localised—only 10 per cent of the 600,000 strong workforce ever struck.

Yet at local level many militant strikes took place. In particular the foreign workers played an important role, especially in manning the picket lines. The isolation of these two million 'Gastarbeiter' from the rest of the working class is slowly being overcome through common struggle.

Democratic strike committees were often elected—a comparatively new development, and in these factories the demand for a lump sum increase instead of a percentage rise became more popular during the strike. In these factories too, the settlement was often rejected by the shop stewards and on occasions by mass meetings. However, the militant factories were far too isolated to think of carrying on the strike alone.

Another important development is that the workers as a whole were not afraid to accept help from student groups. This is important because the students at the moment mean politics—something German workers think



German workers picketing chemical factory (photo: Keystone Press)

have nothing to do with wage demands.

In one of the largest factories in Frankfurt students organised shifts to help man the pickets. They also drove a van containing a duplicator round the factory churning out information sheets to let the pickets at the different gates know what was going on. Two of the students were unofficially made members of the strike committee.

Fragmented

What was really needed were rank and file local and national links to overcome the splintering tactic of the union bureaucracy. The Communist Party could have done this, but tailed behind the union. The revolutionary left is too fragmented and inexperienced and did not even intervene at a local level.

In the autumn the crucial metal workers' wage round begins. It is too early to say how the chemical strike will affect this.

The government's hope that a 'moderate' settlement would dampen the size of the demand may succeed. But it is more likely that the metal workers will be encouraged by the development of effective local strikes in the previously passive chemical industry.

The bureaucracy of the IG-Metall (the metal-workers' union with 1.8 million members) will probably try the same tactic as the chemical union: encouraging local strikes but preventing any link-up between them.

The most discouraging thing is that the left will probably be unable to even start any effective fight against this.

Tortured prisoners in S. African trial

TWO important political trials began this week in South Africa, both under the all-embracing provisions of the Terrorism Act. The trial in Pretoria of the Dean of Johannesburg, the Rev Gonville-french-Beytagh has received much publicity.

The other trial in Peitermaritzburg Natal, has gone almost unnoticed by the world's press.

In this trial 14 members of the Unity Movement of South Africa are being charged on four counts of conspiring to undermine and overthrow the South African government.

Some 38 people were arrested in February and March in various parts of South Africa and were held incommunicado until the 14 were charged on 16 June. The accused are two Asians, two Coloured and ten Africans mainly from the Transkei Bantustan.

We have received information that the accused have laid charges of torture against the Security Branch of the South African police. The following are some of the allegations:

'The accused were held in solitary confinement for about six months. The allegations by the accused include violent assaults to their bodies with fists, whips and sticks.

'One, Reggie Moeng, was handcuffed with his hands around a tree trunk, above his head, where he was whipped and beaten almost continuously for three days and nights while the police officers attempted to get him to make a statement.

'Several of the accused were subjected to the well-known electrical machine, applied to various parts of the body, including the penis.

'Mtayeni Cushela from Quobo Location at Bizana in the Transkei complained of severe headaches after the "electrical treatment", but he was not accorded any medical treatment despite repeated requests by another prisoner.

'When Cushela suddenly went into a coma, in the Umtata gaol, the gaoler had him removed to the hospital where he was reported dead.

'It is alleged that a constable of the South African police took his body to his kraal and was attacked by Cushela's wife who took up an axe saying, "You took my husband away alive and you bring back a corpse." The constable escaped.

'One of the accused, Vimba, bears the scars, across his back of the severe whipping inflicted upon him by the South African police in February of this year.

'Kadar Hassim, no 1 accused, an attorney by profession, was forced to stand in one position for 15 hours while the senior security branch officers interrogated him.'

(from Amnesty International)

NIGERIAN SOCIALISTS ASK FOR HELP

LAST YEAR the militant paper Nigerian Socialist faced closure when a docks employer, encouraged by the Gowon government, successfully sued it for libel and was awarded damages of £2000. (See Socialist Worker, 29 August 1970).

But editor Baba Oluwinde has told Socialist Worker that the fine has been paid by contributions from the militant dockers of Lagos port. And, through strikes and other agitation, the employer who sued the paper has been struck off the list of docks labour contractors.

Oluwinde speaks of rampant inflation, a threatened famine and the breakdown of local government in the countryside, which is making 'life so unbearable as to produce a revolt on whatever pretext'. In the towns agitation has forced the government to set up a commission to recommend higher wages.

The Nigerian Socialist's task of mobilisation and organisation is made difficult because they 'lack the tools of propaganda'. Baba Oluwinde appeals to all readers of Socialist Worker to contribute left literature to a recently founded shanty town youth library called The Frederick Engels Memorial Library.

Please send as many pamphlets and books as you can spare to: Nigerian Socialist's Library, c/o Wenda E Clenaghan, 28 Manor Road, London N16.

I would like more information about the International Socialists

Name

Address

Send to: IS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN

A MILLION ON THE DOLE UNLESS FIGHT BACK STARTS NOW

FOR THE first time since the thirties there will be a million unemployed this year. Jobs are being destroyed at the rate of 2000 a day. By any standards this is a major crisis for the British labour movement.

If the American system of recording unemployment figures was used in Britain, we would already have a million unemployed. In the United States anyone who could work if there were jobs available is counted as unemployed. In Britain the government only counts those who register at the labour exchanges.

But many married women, older men, partially disabled and part-time workers do not register when they lose their jobs. So there is a considerable number of 'hidden unemployed'. How large this is can be gauged from the fact that unemployment in production industries has fallen by one million since 1966, although the rise in registered unemployment (to January 1971) has been only 350,000.

The hard-core of the unemployed consists of unskilled, older men. But there are some unusual faces at the labour exchanges as new sections of workers join the queue.

The productivity drive is now working its way up from the shop floor and into the offices and a considerable shake-out of staff workers is taking place. In March this year there were 34,257 unemployed administrative, professional and technical workers. Among clerical workers there were nearly ten unemployed for every vacancy.

Bleak year

Even technical and design staff in the engineering industry—formerly one of the most rapidly expanding occupation groups—are now feeling the pinch. The draughtsmen's union (DATA) is paying out more than three times as much in unemployment benefit than it did last year.

In the former boom areas of the West Midlands, unemployment has become a problem for the first time since the war. In May 1971 there were 12 unemployed

for every vacancy in Birmingham.

This will be a bleak year for school leavers. In black spots like Kirkby, outside Liverpool, youth unemployment has doubled over the last twelve months and the juvenile unemployment rate is as high as 30 per cent. In Newcastle upon Tyne there will be 5000 young people leaving school this year to compete for no more than 1000 available jobs.

At the centre of the government's strategy on unemployment is the attempt to use it as a threat to keep wages from rising in step with prices.

The lines of unemployed are meant to frighten those with jobs. At the same time, the government is deliberately allowing a few big firms to go bankrupt, in order to encourage other employers to cut their costs and reduce their wage bills.

In the odd, unguarded moment, Tory ministers have admitted this. Dudley Smith, minister with special responsibility for employment, told the Times (19 May) 'We could provide temporary easement, but that is not what we want. We want surgery that is going to work. At the end of it the



Dundee building workers demonstrate against redundancies

industrial patient will be a good deal healthier.'

And Edward Heath made clear what the Tories mean by 'health' when he said in April, 'jobs depend on making it possible for firms to earn profits.'

Naturally, the Tories are not often so open about their policies. They try to shift the blame elsewhere. Their favourite story is that workers themselves cause unemployment by demanding 'excessive' wage increases.

The fact is, however, that the level of wage increases is not keeping up with the rise in prices. And prices started shooting upwards not because of wages but mainly because of 'tax increases and devaluation' (as the Tories recognised in their election manifesto last year).

Neither the Labour Party nor the TUC are capable of fighting unemployment. When Labour came to power the average size of the pool of unemployment was 400,000. Three years later it had increased to 600,000, where it remained until this year.

Harold Wilson has described in his

Memoirs what happened to Labour's policies after they were elected: 'We had now reached the situation where a newly elected government with a mandate from the people was being told . . . by international speculators that the policy on which we fought the election could not be implemented: that the government was to be forced into the adoption of Tory policies to which it was fundamentally opposed.'

Cut labour force

Another aspect of Labour policy inevitably raised unemployment. This was the obsession with 'productivity'. In conditions of meagre economic growth, increased productivity could only come about by cutting the labour force.

As the Economist predicted in February 1968: 'rationalisation means men out of jobs. More than 1½ million workers are likely to be affected by rationalisation and reorganisation in the next two years.'

It is a strange sight to see the same Labour leaders who willingly pushed up employment to 600,000 accusing the Tor-

ies of creating an 'unacceptable' level of unemployment.

Equally hypocritical is the attitude of the TUC leaders. They collaborated wholeheartedly with Labour's drive for productivity deals. Now they suddenly claim to be upset by the effects.

A real struggle against unemployment cannot take place through reliance upon such leaders. Instead, it has to be linked to the struggle for militant leadership and for rank and file control of the unions.

The key demands have to be ones that link the struggle against unemployment to the struggles of employed workers. They must include:

No more productivity deals. These mean a reduction in the work force.

Cut the working week to 35 hours without loss of pay.

Five days work or five days pay.

Work sharing instead of redundancies.

A complete overtime ban in any firm that declares redundancies in any of its factories.

Nationalisation under workers' control and without compensation of any firm that closes any of its factories.

'COMMUNISTS' LEAD ONSLAUGHT ON THE LEFT

The Communist Party played down as much as possible the fact that there was a revolution in Spain. It is, after all, rather an embarrassment to have the armed working class taking power if you happen to be arguing, as the Comintern was, that all that was needed was a bourgeois revolution.

A former minister described the situation: 'The fact that is concealed [by the Popular Front] is that there has been a successful social revolution in half of Spain. During the three months that I was director of propaganda . . . I was instructed not to send out one word about this revolution . . . Nor are any foreign correspondents in Valencia permitted to write freely of the revolution that has taken place . . .'

Of course, Stalin didn't want fascism in Spain any more than he wanted a workers' revolution there to upset his French and English allies. So some military help was sent to the Republic, but only after three months of non-intervention by Stalin had failed to stem the flow of Italian and German help to Franco.

At the same time as the massive purges of old Bolsheviks were getting under way in Moscow, Stalin sent with the arms to Spain agents of his political police, experts at heresy hunting and purging, who established their own reign of terror in the Republican ranks.

So from the beginning of the Communist Party's influence on the war, there was a double civil war raging—between fascism and the armed workers and also, behind the Republican front lines, between the Communist Party and the revolutionary left.

WEAKNESS

Many hundreds of courageous and sincere Communists took part in the war, often in the famous volunteer International Brigades, but they were tragically misled and starved of information and weapons by the Moscow-dominated leadership.

The big anarchist union, the CNT, contained the most militant revolutionary elements in Spain, grouped on a loose federal basis, with no paid officials. But Spanish anarchism believed not only in the spontaneity of the masses but also in the

need for a certain sort of leadership—a small secret organisation, the FAI, which would control the large, loose federation of trade unions.

Such a practice, which drained from the Spanish workers' movement the necessary democratic control over decisions, may partly explain a serious weakness in the workers' committees which controlled land and factories. These committees, instead of being based on majority decisions

remained, tottering but still there, waiting for its chance to advance on the workers' organisation.

So from the time that Russian influence began to be felt in Spain it met no effective opposition in its progress to destroy the gains of the revolution. George Orwell noted a curious fact as early as December—the militias at the front were deprived of weapons while the security forces in the rear, whose task was to preserve

FASCISM

THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR 3 by JILL BRANSTON

of democratically elected delegates from militias and factories, tended instead to be based on mutual agreement between the organisations whose members took part in the collectives. This unfortunately meant they were vulnerable to the strong-arm manipulations of the Communist Party.

Along with this inability to see the need for a democratic and centralised workers' movement went the anarchists' confused attitude towards the state and its power.

The anarchist leadership was faced with an intolerable contradiction between its fine, organised practice in the running of the collectives, and refusal to extend this so as to replace the old state institutions by these organs of the revolution—the workers' and peasants' committees linked democratically, on a national scale.

In the absence of such a lead from the from the anarchists the old, official gov-

ernment remained, tottering but still there, waiting for its chance to advance on the workers' organisation.

So from the time that Russian influence began to be felt in Spain it met no effective opposition in its progress to destroy the gains of the revolution. George Orwell noted a curious fact as early as December—the militias at the front were deprived of weapons while the security forces in the rear, whose task was to preserve

property and the status quo, were superbly equipped, early evidence that the Republican government was more afraid of revolution than of fascism.

Finally, in May 1937 came the famous

May Days when the masses of Barcelona took to the barricades, provoked beyond endurance by such signs of the counter-revolution as the disarming of workers, the ban on all public meetings on May Day, and finally the seizure of the vital telephone exchange by the Communists.

Major figures of the Marxist opposition to the Communist Party like Nin and Berneri were systematically murdered by the GPU, the Russian secret police. It is interesting to compare the ruthlessness with which they were exterminated to the half-hearted inefficiency with which the Republic dealt with fascist sympathisers.

This destruction of the revolution terribly demoralised workers at the front who thought they were fighting for a total change in Spain, and such defeats as Malaga have been directly attributed to it. But in areas like the Asturias, where the militias were not destroyed by the Communist Party, guerrilla warfare continued until well after Franco's victory.

Spain today has still not solved its economic problems and is still under Franco's fascist dictatorship. The Communist Party is still calling for a Popular Front, while Polish coal was recently imported to break a strike of the Asturian miners.

Since 1966, however, a series of national demonstrations and strikes have allowed us to glimpse through the censorship the existence of underground workers' organisations which operate democratically, and on a national basis. Spain may yet be the flame that sets all Europe alight.

**NEXT WEEK:
FASCISM IN BRITAIN**

LETTERS

TONY POLAN's letter (31 July) says, in effect, don't support entry into the Common Market but don't oppose it either. Abstain because in or out we have capitalism and exploitation.

'Do we fight productivity deals by defending Payment by Result?' he asks 'No, we deny the capitalist the right to rationalise industry at the expense of the workers etc. etc. . .'

When stewards attempt to resist the introduction of Measured Day Work, are they defending the existing bonus system? Of course they are. Each and every one of them may oppose any kind of incentive pay but in fact they are forced to defend a bonus system to resist something worse.

What, as a matter of fact does it mean to 'deny the capitalist the right to rationalise?' It means to take industry out of his hands altogether. And until we are strong enough to do this we are forced to fight on all sorts of issues within the system.

The politics of the Common Market issue are perfectly clear. Big business wants in. Its own political party is in power with a smallish majority some of whom may defect on this issue. Therefore big business desperately needs the support of the right wing of the Labour Party.

It is our job to do what we can, in whatever organisations we have influence, to help to isolate and intimidate the extreme right wing of the labour movement and make it as hard as possible for them to come to Heath's rescue.

Of course your simon-pure sectarian 'socialist' will not be impressed by these facts. Why kick out the Tories when Harold Wilson is also committed to capitalism? I hope it is not necessary to expose that kind of ultra-leftism yet again.

Until we are strong enough to push the Labour Party aside we have no choice but to give it critical support. And we can only become strong enough by intervening in each and every political struggle that affects the mass of the workers.

Like it or not, the Common Market is a major political issue in the workers' movement. The issue is for or against The Treaty of Rome. And, in case any readers are in doubt, the line of the International Socialists is against the Treaty of Rome—DUNCAN HALLAS National Secretary of the International Socialists.

Socialist Worker

Tool room struggle continues

by EDDIE McCLUSKY
(Senior Steward, Chrysler, Stoke)

THOUSANDS of workers in the Coventry area are involved in a protracted work to rule and overtime ban. They are resisting an attempt by the engineering employers to end the Coventry Tool Room Agreement.

The agreement was first concluded during the war, in an attempt to stop the drift of toolroom workers to more lucrative piecework jobs on the shop floor. But over the years it has been extended to cover many more workers and in some plants, such as Self Changing Gears, all hourly paid workers are on it on a percentage basis.

More importantly, it means that average earnings are published every month. They are a barometer of rates in the district which is important not only to Coventry car workers, but to engineering workers nationally. The rate provides one of the main items used in claims for parity throughout the country.

The Toolroom Agreement has been an important factor in what the employers like to call 'wage drift'. The rate has increased by an average of one shilling per hour each year for the last few years in spite of wage freezes, percentage norms and prices and incomes policies. In the last two years the rate has grown faster than ever, and the employers have no chance of holding down wages while it continues.

For instance, Chrysler now have a Measured Day Work system. But they have been unable to break the TRA in their Coventry plants.

The rate is still employed by the Tool Room, MTR, Cutter Grinders Gauge and Tool Inspectors. The Stoke agreement for the rest of hourly paid workers specifically mentions the TRA with reference to wages.

The Tool Room Agreement must be defended at all cost against the employers' attack. Full support must be given to any workers involved in struggle to defend it.

Any workers laid off because of struggles over the agreement should remember that it is as important to them as to workers directly affected by it.

The maximum unity is essential. Any attempts by the employers to split workers on this issue must be resisted by all trade unionists.

NOTICES

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS' conference on youth work, 10am Sunday 8 August at 6 Cottons Gardens. Open to 15 members only. Credentials from branches.

WANDSWORTH IS: public meeting. The Politics of Pornography. Speaker Paul Adams. Thursday 12 August 8pm. The Spotted Dog, 72 Garrett Lane, Wandsworth SW18. (near Wandsworth Town Hall).

FOUR PAGE PAPER

Socialist Worker will contain only four pages this week and next because of the summer holidays. We return to eight pages for the 21 August issue.

Demand for TUC action on Bill

SW Reporter

THE big guns of the TUC have already moved into action to try and persuade SOGAT, the printers' union, to drop or composite a tough motion on the Industrial Relations Bill it has put forward for next month's Congress.

SOGAT's motion calls for the expulsion from the TUC of any union which registers under the Tories' anti-union measures and for immediate removal from the General Council of any union leaders whose union registers.

Those at the top of the TUC would like to see either straightforward withdrawal of the motion or a harmless composite which would remove its spine. Unfortunately—for them—there is very little likelihood of SOGAT agreeing to such a squalid compromise.

Drop pretence

The motion poses the issue of registration and collaboration in practice with the Tory laws in the sharpest possible fashion. It will force those who claim to be on the left of the General Council to make a choice between engaging in a principled

fight or dropping any pretence in that direction.

Most of those in the cosy cabinet of the General Council are claiming to be against registration in public, while privately gearing up to accept it as something inevitable.

The importance of the SOGAT motion is that it will make them come clean on where they really stand.

Pressure must be built up in the different unions during the coming month to ensure it is not prevented from coming to a vote by some underhand manoeuvres.

PLYMOUTH STRIKERS ATTACKED BY POLICE

by Kitty Williams

POLICE viciously attacked a mass picket outside the Fine Tube factory in Plymouth last week. Nine people were arrested and indiscriminately bundled into police cars.

250 people had turned up to give backing to the workers of Fine Tubes, who have been on official strike since June of last year. Supporters came from as far away as Chrysler, Coventry, and Fords, Dagenham.

The pickets had been very patient and quiet as the first scabs arrived for work by car. Trouble began when a large, overweight police motor cyclist (PC 1556) began to push around and bully the pickets, one of whom was punched in the face. General pushing and elbowing from the police followed.

The strikers were very restrained, considering the long struggle in which they have been involved. However, anger was sparked off by the behaviour of the scabs, who swore, spat and drove their cars at a crowd that included women and children, and by the police who were intent on knocking people about. In the resulting confrontation windows were smashed and several pickets were injured.

The Regional Organiser of the T&GWU, Mr Ron Nethercott, complained bitterly about police aggression. 'I have never seen a scene like this before in all my life. The police have behaved disgracefully and many of our lads have been pushed to the ground for doing nothing... There were ugly scenes here this morning, but they have been caused by the police. I know of one person who was punched in the face by a constable.'

The newscaster from Westward TV who was present at the picket said, on the programme Westward Diary, that the trouble began when the police motor cyclist arrived. He also told how he personally had seen a woman and a man knocked to the ground.

Support

The local T&GWU, AEUW and trades councils are to make official complaints about police behaviour. One individual has several witnesses to the fact that the police pushed him into the path of a car travelling at excessive speed towards the factory gates.

Delegates representing various factories and organisations gave their full support to the Fine Tubes' dispute at a meeting held in the AEUW's Plymouth headquarters after the morning picket.

Backing was pledged for another national picket, in September, with assurances that the number would be in the thousands next time.

But a plan to return to the factory for the day shift coming out at 3.30pm was not needed. Rather than face the pickets again, the management gave the scabs the afternoon off.

A delegation from the Fine Tubes strikers has been picketing the AEUW national headquarters in Peckham, London this week. The engineering union will not pay strike pay for more than fifty two weeks and the men have been on strike now for sixty weeks.

This has meant that T&GWU members, who are still getting strike pay, are having to share it with their AEUW colleagues. Engineering union members should put pressure on their executive to extend further aid to the strikers.

Meanwhile, the strikers need support and donations. Send them to Strike Appeal Fund, 48 Stuart Road, Plymouth.

Leaders flout union policy

MILITANT journalists have launched a nation-wide campaign to stop the leaders of their union flouting official policy in a bid to register when the Industrial Relations Bill becomes law.

Last week the executive of the National Union of Journalists decided to ballot their 25,000 members on whether or not they wish to register. The decision flies in the face of this year's conference, which told the executive to fight for a policy of non-registration within the Printed and Kindred Trades Federation, the umbrella organisation for all printing unions.

A minority of executive members condemned the decision as undemocratic and said that a ballot allowed no discussion on such a vital matter. They stressed that an informed discussion could only take place if a special conference was called, allowing debate in the branches and mandating of conference delegates.

Led by the members who represent the union's biggest branch, Magazine and Book, the minority of the executive have called on branches to demand a special conference on registration.

Such a conference must take place if one fifth of the branches call for it. 35 branches are needed and so far 12 have agreed to back the demand.

Two victimised

BOLTON:-E T Barwick's Mills, the largest manufacturer of tufted carpets in the world, have just sacked two workers for trying to organise the factory.

This firm originates from the American deep south, where labour is cheap and union organisation virtually non-existent.

One of the workers sacked, who had worked in the factory for two and a half years, was told that he was being fired for 'his activities inside and outside work'.

It seems that management have information about the out-of-work activities of their employees—presumably through employing industrial spies.

The T&GWU is treating the case as one of victimisation. Unemployment in the Bolton area is high, and unless the union reacts in a vigorous manner the prospects for union organisation in carpet factories in the area are remote.

20000 DEMONSTRATE FOR BANGLA DESH



Bengalis from all over Britain packed Trafalgar Square in London on Sunday. Their protests against the oppression of their homeland by Yahya Khan—who is helped out by arms supplies from both the USA and China—was supported by revolutionary socialists and others from Britain.

The placards of the demonstrators demanded an end to the genocide in East Bengal and gave full support to the Bangla Desh liberation forces.

WORKERS RESIST SACKINGS AT DONCASTER ICI

by JOHN GRIME

YES to work sharing but no to redundancies was the message from ICI's nylon workers in Doncaster last Sunday.

Over 1000 workers, with only two against, voted for vigorous action to secure work sharing at a mass meeting in Doncaster Racecourse.

This decision is of vital importance both in Doncaster and in ICI as a whole. The redundancies (reported in last week's Socialist Worker) total 1450 throughout ICI's nylon plants, with 740 concentrated in Doncaster.

Members of the ICI (Northern) Stewards Combine Committee from Wilton, Manchester and Huddersfield attended the meeting. Reg Cross AEUW convenor, Huddersfield, said 'The eyes of ICI workers are on Doncaster'. John Grace, T&GWU convenor ICI Wilton, said 'In Teesside there are two sets of three initials on our lips—UCS and ICI—in the battle against unemployment'.

Local Labour MPs H Walker and R Kelly stressed that it was up to ICI workers to make the fight, they could expect no victory to be won in parliament.

George Cantwell, AEUW organiser said to mass applause, 'Now is the time for action'.

Support from other ICI factories will be vital to a successful outcome to the battle against redundancies. Every effort must be made to win more plants to the combine committee.

The next step must be to fight not only for work sharing but for a shorter working week—five days work or five days pay until alternative work at comparable rates of pay is available.

At the very least ICI must be forced to keep to their WSA agreement of a guaranteed annual salary. Every ICI worker must be paid full pay at the very least, until the end of the year.

No doubt, like ICI's promise on no redundancies in the WSA productivity deal, they will try to get out of it. But they can afford to pay. Their profits total over £200 million. Last week they spent £11.6million on buying Qualitex.

ICI workers must make sure there is a mass demonstration against redundancies when the top management meet national union officials at Harrogate.

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