

Socialist Worker

for workers control and international socialism

The
2d
paper
that
fights for
YOU

BAN ON UNOFFICIAL STRIKES: IS THIS NEW LABOUR PLAN?

A BAN ON UNOFFICIAL STRIKES is seriously being considered by the government, according to reliable sources.

The owners of the giant car combines, reeling under the impact of recent disputes, are putting great pressure on the Labour government to outlaw strikes that hit at the sacred god of Exports.

It is a measure of the complete capitulation of Wilson and company to the demands of big business that they are prepared to consider such a blatantly reactionary move.

And leading the rush to the Law Courts is that brave "left-wing" figure, Mrs. Barbara Castle, Minister for Employment and Productivity. Last week she was lobbied by the profit-hungry overlords of Rootes, British Leyland, Vauxhall and Ford who demanded sweeping changes in industrial legislation.

They demanded a ban on so-called "wildcat" strikes and they want the government to rush a law through parliament that would sweep away the democratic rights of industrial workers.

They want the new law to set out penalties, including fines and possibly imprisonment, that breach established agreements drawn up by employers and union officials.

It is believed that the Cabinet is considering writing such legislation into the Queen's Speech that will introduce the new session of parliament this autumn.

Even to contemplate such action proves that the Labour government is viciously anti-working class. Of course there is anarchy in the car industry, but this is caused by the manner in which it is run and owned by a tiny clique of millionaires, hell-bent on making even more profit at the expense of the workers.

Trade unionists in all industries should prepare now for one of the most flagrant attacks on their hard-won rights. Committees linking up shop stewards throughout the car industry should be formed to plan counter-action to the government.

A united call of defiance from the ranks of the working class would not only stop the government in its tracks. It would be a significant step forward in the fight for real socialism, for workers' power.

* see WILDCAT BOSSES: back page



LAST SUNDAY 10,000 tenants marched to Downing Street to demand government action to stop GLC rents going up. Picture shows part of the crowd at the rally held in Trafalgar Square before the march.

'Not a penny on the rents' tenants tell Tory council

by SEAN DUNNE

'WE WON'T PAY A PENNY EXTRA.'

This slogan, printed in red, will appear in the windows of thousands of Greater London Council flats and houses in the next week.

When the rent collectors call, they will be given the rent and charges that were laid down until September 29.

ANGRY

But thousands of people are not going to pay the increases in rent and other charges imposed by the Tory GLC from September 30.

In some cases the increases amount to 15s a week, and the tenants, with two massive demonstrations, have made it clear that they will not stand for any more increases. They are especially angry because the GLC have made it clear that they intend to repeat the increases year after year.

With rents due to go up in many parts of Britain, the fight by London tenants takes on nationwide significance.

Scores of militant tenants' associations have been organising through the

GLC Tenants' Action Committee. The Action Committee's policy is:

1. We won't pay the increases.
2. If they try to evict a tenant, we will call a complete rent strike throughout London, and industrial support from the entire London working class will be called for.

Each tenant will get an envelope the size of a rent book. On it will be written or printed: THIS ENVELOPE CONTAINS THE OLD RENT AND CHARGES, BUT NO INCREASE.

Every week an appointed block or landing representative will collect the envelopes on rent day, and wait with two witnesses for the rent collector to call. That evening, the representatives will return the rent

books and envelopes to each tenant for the following week.

The system is designed to maintain unity, solidarity and communications on the estates while the rent strike is on. The GLC hope to smash the tenants by waiting until people become complacent. The council have already announced that they won't take any action for six months.

CONTACT

Measures are being taken to combat the danger of complacency. The Action Committee's policy will ensure that tenants are kept in contact with one another.

A film group will show a short film of last Sunday's demonstration, and meetings and mass demonstrations

will keep different estates in contact.

But eventually, the GLC will be forced to move. They will probably pick off a few tenants as "examples", and take them to court.

The Action Committee's policy then, is to step up the campaign. Demonstrations will be held at the courts to show solidarity and determination.

If bailiffs try to evict, all GLC tenants' associations will be informed immediately and will attempt to turn the bailiffs away or get the evicted tenant back.

The tenants see their battle clearly as a fight against the Prices and Incomes policy, the wage freeze and the system whereby housing is used to boost the profits of the moneylenders.

If the tenants win it will be a blow against the wage freeze. And they can win, if the working class of London gives its support.

Already many factory committees, docks groups, and union branches have promised support. More is needed. Requests for speakers and financial contributions to The Secretary, GLC Action Committee 24, Atholl House, London W9.

MINISTRY SNUB FOR TENANTS

NEWCASTLE:- The Ministry of Housing refused to meet a delegation from Newcastle Tenants' Action Committee to discuss rent rises. Parliamentary secretary James McColl would only receive Tory councillors and officers.

The Tories pleaded last

week for special financial help to avoid rent increases in a region where unemployment is rampant. They got nothing. Housing Minister Anthony Greenwood had already approved next month's increases of up to 5s a week.

COLLEGE BARRICADED TO KEEP OUT STUDENTS

by MAGGIE HACKWORTH

TWO HUNDRED students and staff waited outside Hornsey College of Art in North London on Monday for Alderman George Cathles, chairman of the Haringey education committee, and Alderman Baines, chairman of the college governors.

The authorities refused to open the college last Monday but they will not give a definite date for re-opening.

Cathles and Baines had been asked by letter to come to the college at 10 am to announce the date of opening, but they didn't turn up. Students and staff marched down to the Civic Centre but were told that only a small delegation would be admitted into the building.

The rest of the demonstrators sat down outside. Students and staff want to get back to college in order to put into action the educational reforms discussed during the sit-in last term. But, the authorities say there is an administrative backlog of work caused by the sit-in.

This is not true. Many of the technical and admin-

istrative staff were told to go on indefinite holiday with full pay.

The maintenance work going on in the college is not to repair any damage, but to strengthen the buildings against the students and staff trying to occupy it.

The authorities are throwing away the ratepayers' money by fortifying the building. Barbed wire has been put on the roof and spikes on the drain pipes.

PRISON

Steel doors are installed and entrances blocked so that the college is only accessible from two entrances. They have made Hornsey College of Art into a security prison.

The students are doing their best to continue their education although the college is closed. They are organising research projects into housing and building adventure playgrounds for children in and around the borough of Haringey.

They are working as best they can without grants and without proper equipment. But it is essential that the college opens NOW.

WAGES and DEATH

ARISING OUT OF your report of the findings of the Hither Green rail smash, I wonder when it will occur to travellers on the inter-city expresses to ask themselves when the "productivity agreements" will reach their lines, too, and the workshops where mechanics check and repair the wheels, axles, springs, couplings and other parts of a coach which sustain terrific pressures when travelling at 80 to 100 miles an hour.

Keeping the wages of signalmen, mechanics and permanent way staff very low may seem like good business to the tycoons, who usually travel in large sleek cars or by air. But ordinary people should ask themselves how sound the policy is which compels men to work long hours and miss rest days in order to earn overtime enough to give them and their families a decent living. How can tired men do these jobs properly?

Public transport is a vital public service for a modern country. We do not nowadays expect education or public health to cover their costs; we know that they should be subsidised.

When will the public transport men come out boldly and say they perform a service that is vital to the community, and that they should be paid accordingly?

And when will the TGWU, the NUR and ASLEF back them up in this? ELEANOR HAWARDEN, Manchester 20.

LANGUAGE and FREEDOM

THE ARTICLE by your Spanish correspondent (14 September) shows the danger of using a Spanish correspondent to comment on Basque affairs.

The article, although containing some useful information, is vitiated by the presence of snide remarks aimed against the conception of Basque nationhood. With regard to the language, is your correspondent aware that the Irish Proclamation of Independence in 1916 was written in English? This did not stop the Easter Rising being the first blow in the destruction of the British prison-house of nations.

The inability of Basque guerrillas to speak the Basque language will hinder them just as little as ignorance of Irish hindered the Irish Citizen Army.

Your correspondent finds the idea of an independent Basque-land joining the Common Market simply fantastic; we consider equally fantastic the idea of the perpetuation of the Spanish prison-house of nations.

Revolutionary socialists do not make their support for national liberation movements conditional on their having the right programme, but just to set the record straight the militant section of ETA (the people responsible for the guerrilla activity, not, be it noted, "terrorism") are also left-wingers and have declared that they stand for the socialist revolution.—CHRIS GRAY, GERY LAWLESS, London N8.

IF WILSONISM means anything at all, it means the collapse of Labour's reformism: the end of the idea that the British Labour Party stood, in however small a way, for the aspirations of the British working class against their oppressors.

Harold Wilson, since he entered parliament and politics in 1945, has seen through the various processes which led to the end of that reformism.

The Labour Party manifesto for the 1945 election proclaimed an advance to socialism on two fronts: first by the nationalisation of the sub-structure of British industry—coal, steel, power, transport, gas, electricity; second, by an advance in social welfare provisions.

To some extent at least these promises were kept. Coal, steel and most of transport was nationalised.

Some welfare provisions were enacted. By 1950 Wilson and his associates were claiming that these policies had "created" full employment: that any dismantling of them would mean a return to the 1930s and to slump.

CRISIS

When the Tories won the election, Wilson was the first to promise the nation that slump was inevitable: another 1931 he trumpeted, even as late as 1953:

"I must warn the Conference that we may be called upon to take control in conditions of a major financial crisis comparable with that of 1931" (Labour Conference Report, 1953, p 187).

The Labour leaders went on shouting slump as the biggest, most sustained and most prosperous boom in the history of British capitalism swept the country.

By the time they had lost the 1955 election, the leading reformists, Wilson prominent among them, had had enough. Capitalism, they proclaimed, clearly worked. There was no danger of slump. Nor therefore was there any need to go on talking about nationalisation, still less of socialism.

A new slogan decorated Labour Party banners: "Towards Equality!" was the name given to the executive policy statement of 1956, and all the Labour leaders, including Wilson, unleashed a stream of propaganda aimed at cutting public ownership out of the programme and putting in its place a vision of a decent, free, egalitarian capitalism.

The 1957 policy statement

Wilson, the man who murdered reformism

by PAUL FOOT

*Whose new book was published on Thursday

Industry and Society argued along these lines. It was moved at the conference by Harold Wilson.

The 1959 election was fought on old Fabian slogans for doing better by the old, the unemployed and the young. It cut no ice.

The election was lost by 100 seats, and the Labour leaders searched around for another "rethink".

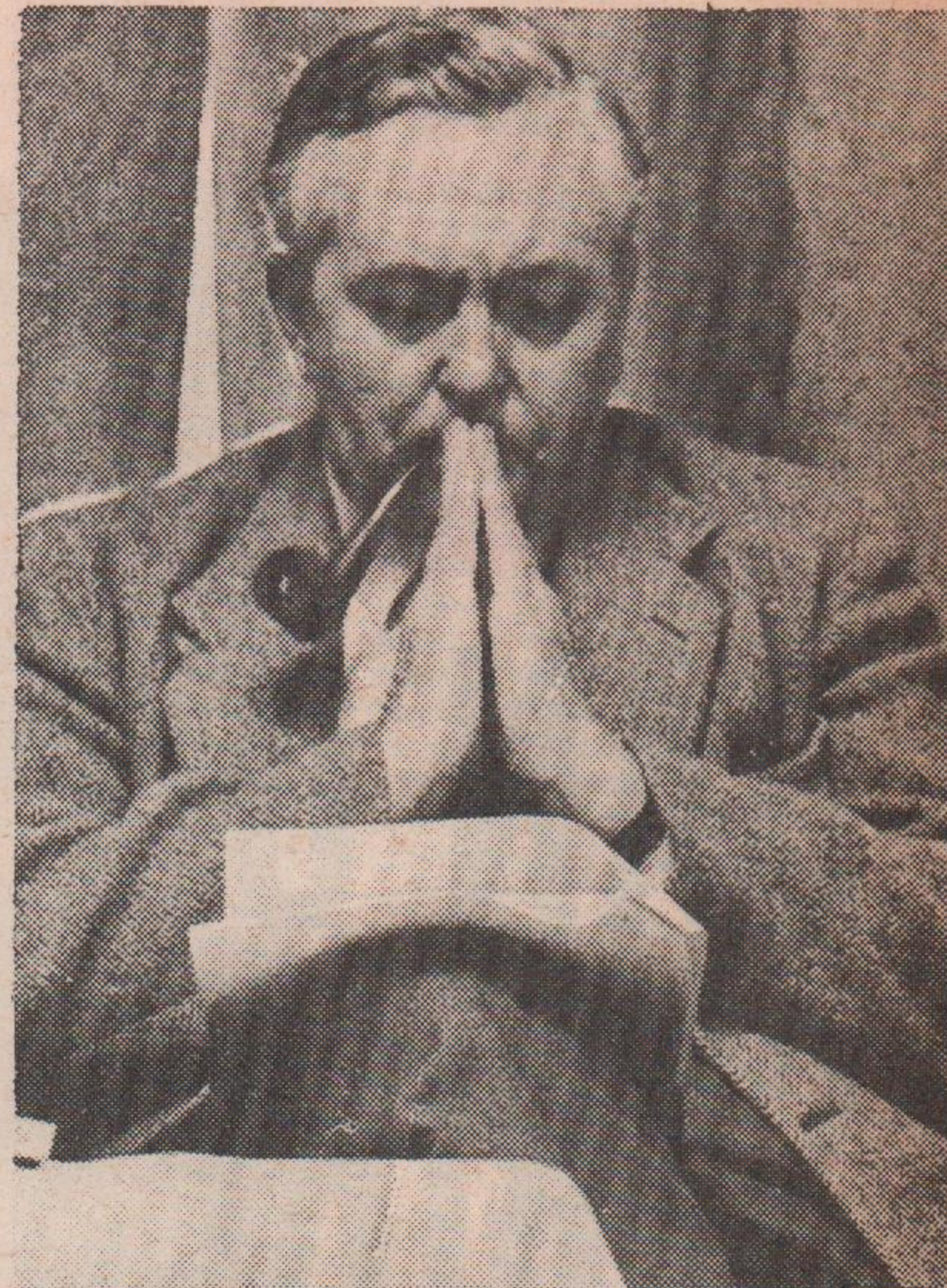
The inspiration came to them from overseas, in America, where, in Wilson's words, "under a new and youthful president, they are flexing their muscles once again. They are looking to New Frontiers."

Old Frontiers like helping the old, the sick, the unemployed, the badly-housed had clearly to be forsaken. What was needed was "a new leadership"—Kennedy-style, dynamic, abrasive, gritty, chunky, which would, to quote Wilson's famous phrase in Signposts for the Sixties "clear the dead wood out of the boardrooms".

COBWEBS

Similarly, in foreign policy, opposition to Dulles' anti-Communist foreign policy no longer attracted votes. Dulles' policies suddenly became accepted by the Labour Party for the unanswerable reason that they were being carried out by Kennedy.

Old loyalties and old sentiments die hard, and the new broom did not sweep out all the cobwebs from Labour's policy. At the 1962 Conference the Party stood firm by old imperialist traditions (the Commonwealth) against new capitalist aspirations (the Common Market), and, for a brief moment, the Party even opposed the control of Commonwealth immigrants.



Seeking guidance from the Great Pragmatist above

But, as soon as Wilson became leader, most of these inconsistencies were sorted out. Immigration control, for instance, suddenly became part of Labour's programme.

And, to the hysterical cheers of the Labour Left, Wilson led the Party firmly Rightwards—away from the welfare reformism of 1959 to the new dynamism of 1964.

It is perhaps fortunate for historians that, in the midst of all his hectic talk about technology and change, Wilson paused for a moment to define socialism.

"Socialism" he told an audience in Birmingham in January, 1964, "means applying a sense of purpose to our national life, economic purpose, social purpose, moral purpose. Purpose means technical skill..."

Socialism, in short, means applying technical skill to our national life. It is therefore exactly the same as capitalism.

For the chief priority of modern capitalism all over the world is the application of the most advanced methods of technology in order to defeat competitors. It is this need which is driving national capitalism into greater and greater solidarity, monopoly and merger, and, as the margins allowed by the rebuilding of Germany and Japan and a permanent arms economy become narrower, to take increasingly confident swipes at the working class.

By the 1964 election, old loyalties and welfare priorities had not totally been abandoned. Much of the programme still included demands for increased welfare and social services. But growthmanship had replaced these as the main priority of British Labour.

FANTASY

What has happened since 1964 has relegated all talk of welfare reforms to the realms of fantasy. The reforms have either been abandoned, like the promise to build 500,000 houses by 1970; or put into effect and then rescinded (like the abolition of prescription charges); or enacted in a manner which makes them useless (like the Rent Act); or reversed to make the situation even worse than it was under the Tories (like the decision to postpone the school-leaving age).

Whatever the juggling with expenditure percentages at this year's party conference, every delegate will know that, as far as reforms are concerned, the situation is worse now than it was five years ago.

Growthmanship remains as the main language of British Labour. Incomes policy, productivity bargaining, balance of payments surpluses are now trumpeted abroad as the grand achievements of a socialist government!

The supreme achievement of Harold Wilson has been his ability to proclaim such transparently capitalist policies as stark necessities, not only forced upon British Labour but also adapted by them in the most pragmatically socialist manner.

For this fantastic conjuring trick Wilson has the support of the entire capitalist propaganda machine, sometimes crude and bludgeoning, like the Daily Express, usually more subtle and sophisticated, like the BBC.

COMFORTS

The Labour rank and file, benumbed into the belief that there is no alternative to this grotesque charade, have supported Wilson out of blind loyalty to Labour. They hope that a boom will bring them reformist comforts.

They are wrong. Capitalist priorities demand that the fruits of any small boom which Wilson and his Cabinet can manoeuvre must go not to the workers but to the investment funds of the big employers.

In boom or slump, the workers will suffer from the government which they elected.

It requires only for the 1968 Labour Conference to set the seal on the whole grisly process with the annual ritual—the standing ovation.

* The Politics of Harold Wilson, Penguin, 6s.

NOT GAMING

FOR MOST PEOPLE Mexico means the Olympic Games which start next month. The Mexican government, anxious to increase tourism, would like to keep it that way.

That is why they brought out tanks and paratroops to put down this week's student demonstrations.

Government to blame

The students, accused of wanting to wreck the Olympic Games, replied: "If our movement is an obstacle to the Games, the blame lies with the government, who bear the responsibility of solving the social problems affecting our country."

For the Mexican people, the charm of the revolution of 1910-1917 has worn very thin. The government party—the Institut-

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WHERE WE STAND

SOCIALIST WORKER IS THE paper of International Socialism, a movement of revolutionary socialists who believe that the present form of society, with its blatant inequalities, its periodic crises, wars and racist hysteria must be replaced by one based on a planned economy under full workers' control; those who produce the wealth should own and control the means of production.

International Socialism is opposed to any incomes policy that seeks to restrict the wages of the workers in order to boost the profits of the employers. We unconditionally support all shop stewards and rank and file trade union members in their struggles for

better wages and conditions and oppose all reactionary laws that threaten the liberties of the labour movement. We support all strikes in defence of workers' interests with the demand of no victimisation of trade unionists. Redundancy should be opposed with the demand: five days work or five days pay. Shop stewards organisations should strengthen and extend their influence by linking up on an industrial and ultimately a national basis.

We are opposed to racial discrimination, a weapon used by the ruling class to divide the labour movement. Immigration control must be ended, ensuring the free movement of peoples regardless of

race and colour. Black and white workers must unite and form their own defence organisations to fight fascism and racialism. The labour movement must demand the immediate recall of British troops from abroad as the first step towards ending colonial exploitation.

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

If you would like to join IS or would like further details of our activities, fill in the form below:

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INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM
Autumn conference September 28 and 29

in London For IS members only

for details contact your branch secretary

In Paris the slogan is 'on to October' as revolutionaries prepare for the next round ...

THE WORD "OCTOBRE" has started to appear on the walls of Paris in bright red paint.

French students at the turbulent communist youth festival in Sofia this summer held "strategy" talks with their German opposite numbers and other revolutionary groups. They seemed certain that "something" will happen in France in October.

If "something" does take place, it can only be an attempt to finish the revolution started last May, in spite of the stranglehold that the Communist Party has on the French working class.

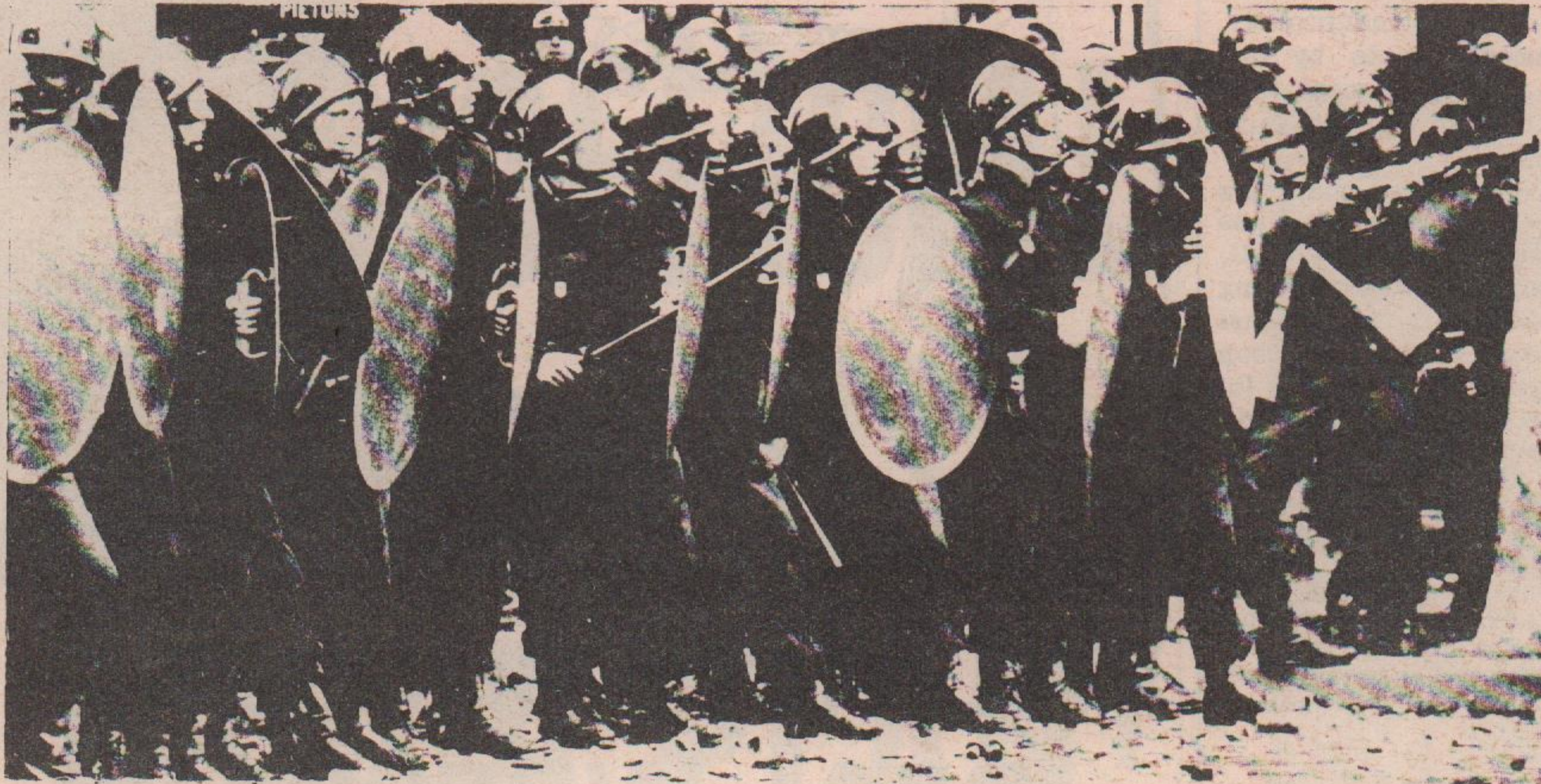
Revolutionary activity is more difficult in France than in West Germany or Britain. Even before May, the Communist Party (PCF) was a much more effective policeman of the French working class than similar Labour or communist parties in other countries.

Routine affair

The official police are already active. In the Latin Quarter, the unofficial headquarters of the revolutionary socialist groups, the brutal riot police, the CRS, are arresting 60 people a night as a routine affair.

Coachloads of CRS occupy the campuses of the universities at the Sorbonne and Nanterre. The cops are kept well lubricated by crates of expensive German beer—paid for by the taxpayer.

But in spite of the police intimidation, the May events have given the Left strength and destroyed illusions that change could be won through parliament. The continuing host-



by IAN TAYLOR

French riot police: ready for action, lubricated by German beer.

ility of the state towards the Left and the working class has helped to steel the socialist movement.

French students and workers realise they are no longer playing games with the Sorbonne authorities or with CGT officials. They are openly facing the aggression of the state, including provocateurs from the secret police and the hefty boots and weapons of the CRS.

The banning of the socialist organisations last summer was an attempt by the authorities to drive four main groups underground: the Trotskyist Workers' Voice group, the Young Communist Revolutionaries (JCR), the Maoists and the anarchist Movement of 22 March. But in fact the ban has given the groups great encouragement.

Some of the jailed revolutionary leaders are being released, usually on conditional dis-

charge. Alain Krivine of the JCR was released on August 25 and he immediately issued a statement denouncing the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Many socialist students have been working in factories during the summer and have set up a number of industrial workers' groups. Other students have worked for newspaper distributors, selling official papers along the boulevards but getting rid of revolutionary leaflets and papers to sympathetic customers.

Widening divisions

The main reading of undergraduates and workers is the seditious leaflet or the newly-translated work of Rosa Luxemburg and Trotsky.

But most of the debate on the Left is about the May events rather than the possibilities of a new upsurge in October. Sadly, divisions between different organisations have widened.

In spite of the call from Workers' Voice (before it was

banned) for talks about the reorganisation and unity of the Left, the groups have failed to come to any agreement. Each group seems more concerned to "prove" the correctness of its policy in May than to examine why the revolution failed.

It is hard to see any of these groups being flexible enough to play a role in the next spontaneous outburst of working-class struggle. What is needed is an organisation that can channel such an outburst away from purely trade union demands (more money, better conditions) towards a real struggle for workers' power.

There are some hopeful signs. A new paper has appeared since June called Workers' Fight. It calls for workers' councils in factories to plan future activity and to bypass the communist-led trade union, the CGT, and the other union bureaucracies.

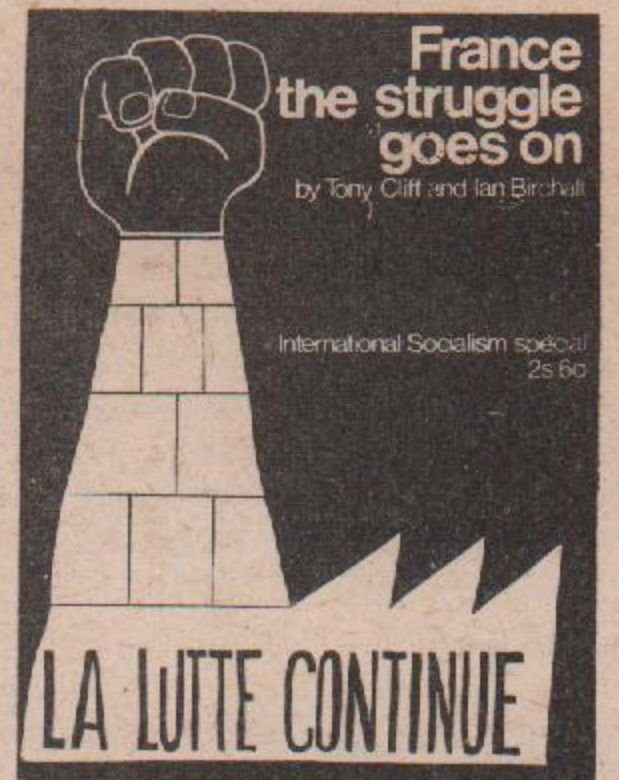
The workers' councils aim to link up with the revolutionary committees that already exist in the universities and high

schools. This is an important strategy—but it is the only one that has appeared in an effort to maintain the impetus of the May events.

For the rest of the French Left, the crying need to co-ordinate workers in struggle in a single revolutionary organisation and to link that organisation with the students, is accepted but not put into operation.

It is a challenge that must be taken up if the next outburst by the workers is to lead on to victory and not defeat.

A brilliant marxist analysis of May's 'unfinished revolution'.



3s. (inc. post) from International Socialism 36 Gilden Road London NW5

JUST FUN AND GAMES IN MEXICO...

ional Revolutionary Party—claims to embody the traditions of that revolution.

But the PRI has been in power ever since 1929, and holds all but one of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies. The parliamentary opposition is negligible, and more radical critics of the regime have been imprisoned and tortured in recent years.

Although Mexico has seen rapid industrial expansion in the last 10 years, this has not benefited the population as a whole.

Last summer a Mexico daily paper carried a report of a baby being eaten alive by rats while its mother begged for food. The land reform programme is a half-hearted failure.

Spark off a struggle

The student movement, growing out of anti-Vietnam protests and encouraged by Paris, has developed rapidly. The students have their own problems, too. The Mexico State University, built for 27,000 students, has over 80,000.

which will make the Olympic competitions pale into insignificance.

Ian Birchall

To understand the crisis in Eastern Europe read...

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PARTY by Kuron and Modzelewski

from International Socialism 36 Gilden Road London NW5.

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SOUTHAMPTON: Mel Doyle, 87 Empress Road, Itchin.

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STOCKPORT: Barry Biddulph, 10 Foliage Crescent, Brinnington.

STOKE NEWINGTON: Mike McGrath, 28 Manor Road, N16.

SWANSEA: Pete (Bianston), 33a Uplands Crescent, Swansea.

TOTTENHAM: Phil Hall, 1 Pelham Road, N15.

WATFORD: Paul Russell, 61 Carpenders Avenue, Carpenders Park.

WIGAN: Ray Challinor, 34 Whiteside Avenue, Hindley, Wigan, Lancs.

WOLVERHAMPTON: Dave Spillabury, 274 Penn Road, Wolverhampton.

WORK: Bob Jones, 28...

'Castle out!' roar strikers

From ROSS HILL

LIVERPOOL:- Rain or no rain, the chants echoed down Lime Street. 2000 voices roaring "Productivity ...OUT!" "Unemployment ...OUT!" "Barbara Castle ...OUT!"

A dozen building sites were on strike in support of the 1150 workers locked out by Chemico at the Shellstar site on Merseyside. The site had unanimously rejected a productivity "agreement" made by the union officials, employers and the government that would have given a small rise to some and the sack to many.

Ford workers ban overtime

By a Ford Shop Steward DAGENHAM: Ford workers voted to ban overtime on Tuesday when 600 men on the nightshift met in pouring rain at 2.15 in the morning.

The men, who work in the Body Plant, said they would not work overtime until the company agreed to pay them a retainer during any lay-off caused by a dispute.

Men in the Assembly Plant put forward a similar demand at another meeting.

The management claim that production men are the most important workers in the plant. The Company has said that it would be "tragic" if they were to refuse to ban overtime.

But the men are the lowest paid and the first to be sent home when a lay-off occurs.

In spite of trouble through outside disputes, Ford are not far off their £225 million export target. The production workers have every right to claim higher wages for their efforts. They have produced profits £50 million higher than last year.

Speed up

As Ford workers are not on piece-work, the only weapon left to the bosses is the use of their time-study methods, which means speed-up for the men. At the present, production men are making about 58 cars an hour. The company says it wants 65 cars an hour by the end of September.

The company uses patriotic propaganda about British export needs, but the profits made from the £225 million export programme will go to the USA. Ford workers still suffer from low wages and paltry responses to claims for justifiable fringe-benefits, and reduction in pensions, sick benefits and reduction in hours on night work.

The overtime ban shows that the workers' resistance is starting to harden.

SMITH WOMEN STRIKE FOR EQUAL PAY

FIFTY women workers at Smith's car accessories in Watford went on strike on Monday. They earn £9 a week and are demanding the same rates as men. The firm began laying off men on Tuesday.

Make sure you see Socialist Worker every week...

Name.....
Address.....
Organisation.....

I enclose £1/10s for a year/six months send me..... copies each week with an invoice (Delete where necessary) send to Socialist Worker, Paxton Works, Paxton Road, London N17.

The soaked marchers made their way to a mass meeting at Central Hall, Liverpool. The meeting ended with a formal decision to set up a shop stewards' movement for sites in the region.

Several stewards criticised the union officials and were given a warm reception by the men who felt bitterly betrayed.

One speaker said: "Many officials say they are against the Incomes Policy. But not one of them has marched with us, or is here on the platform."

Anxious bosses

The employers and union officials are watching this dispute anxiously. The Department of Employment and Productivity, under Barbara Castle, has stepped in to help them.

The agreement was in line with government policy, and the bosses are eager to have even longer dole queues than the deal would have helped create.

They consider heavy unemployment to be essential if wages are to be kept down and the militants curbed.

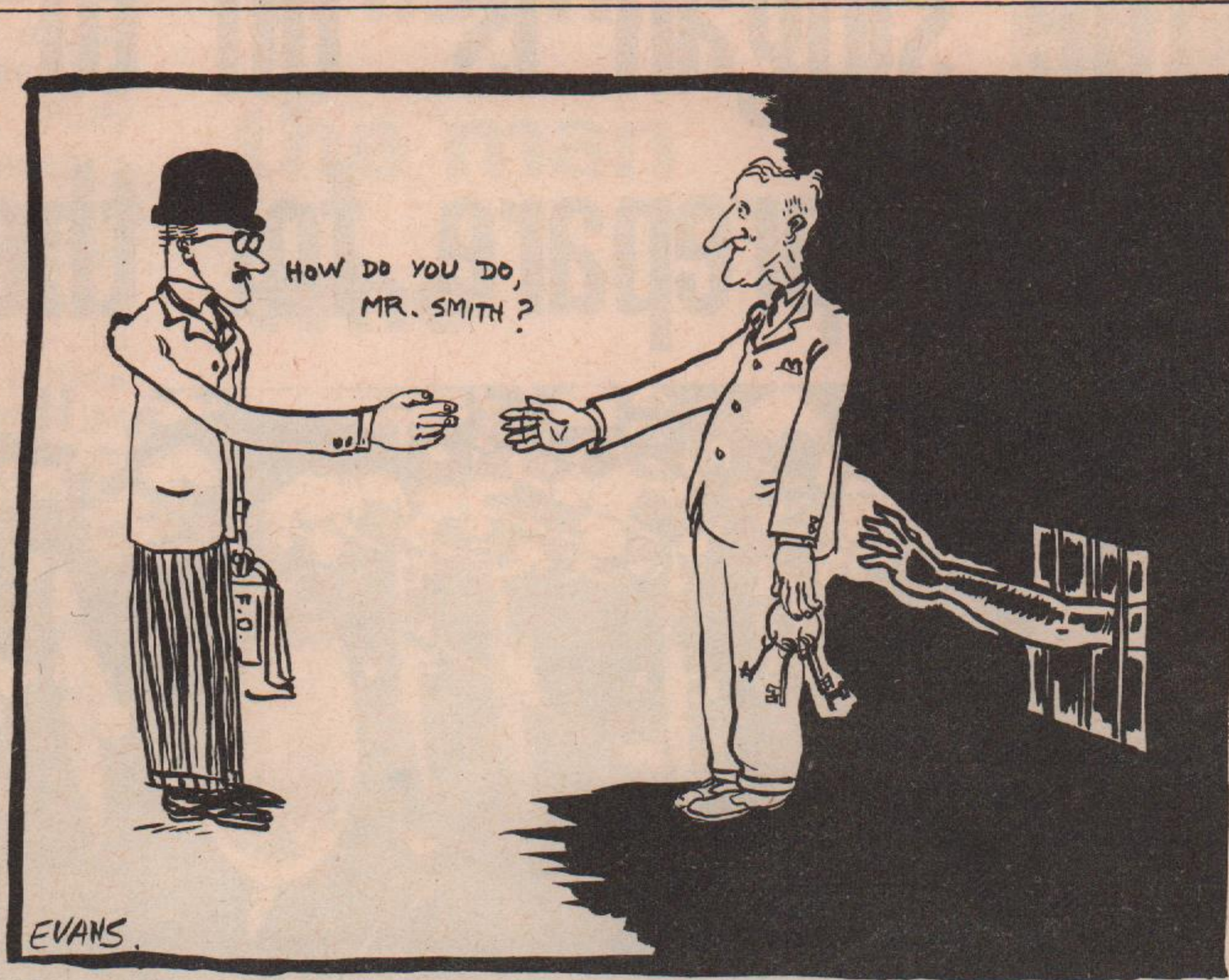
But employers are also worried that a massive battle might develop on Merseyside. They are keen to settle other disputes quickly in order to isolate the Shellstar men.

The Shellstar stewards stress that the best way to help them win is by preventing the operation of productivity swindles on every site, in every area.

Donations to Bro. P. Hedey, 66 Brook Drive, Great Sankey, Warrington, Lancs.

SHOP STEWARDS LINK UP

Shop stewards at Armstrongs of Beverley and York have set up a combined shop stewards' committee to cover the Yorkshire branches of this major components firm. This is an important move in view of the management's plan to set up a new branch in Hull, and the lack of guarantees about employment and rates in the existing plant.



WILDCAT BOSSES — REAL WRECKERS IN CAR INDUSTRY

by BERNARD ROSS

THE MILLIONAIRE press, always eager for a good anti-union story, has been quick to take up the motor bosses' latest scare.

Car strikes, they claim, are costing vast sums in lost production. The government must pass sweeping laws against the sinister agitators and irresponsible wildcats who are to blame, they say.

Sorry tale

We have heard all this before. Two years ago, the motor employers told the same sorry tale to the Royal Commission on Trade Unions.

It is true that, because of the nature of the industry, a small stoppage in one component plant occasionally causes shutdowns in a large part of the car industry. But a recent learned volume on the motor industry—by Professor Turner of Cambridge—showed that the employers' figures of output lost through strikes are wild exaggerations.

Any car worker will know how management often uses a strike in one small section simply as an excuse to close the whole factory—often in order to blackmail the strikers into surrender. It is also common knowledge that a great deal of output is lost through inefficient manage-

ment but is blamed on to strikes.

And in discussing loss of exports, when do the employers tell us the cost of frequent short-time working and redundancies in the motor industry?

The scare stories imply that car workers are ready to strike at a moment's notice, just for the hell of it. Can any trade unionist be taken in by this?

Strikes take place when workers have serious grievances which management is unable or unwilling to resolve. If car workers have to strike more often than their fellow trade unionists elsewhere, it is because of the number of grievances which affect them—conditions, pace of work, wage inequities, insecurity—and which cannot be settled satisfactorily through "procedure".

Of all the car firms, the loudest critic of "wildcats" is Rootes, now under American ownership. This is surprising, for Rootes itself is very good at acting the wildcat.

Take the advice of George Cattell, its managing director until his recent appointment to a key job at the Department of Employment and Productivity.

Earlier this year he headed a special committee of

the Coventry engineering employers, and urged firms to get rid of piecework. Under a new system, he pointed out, management "should be able to plan ahead, and may decide it is worth risking a serious strike".

Rootes have followed this policy in their drive to bring in Measured Day Work at Coventry. Against the resistance of shop stewards and full-time union officials they have tried to force through the new system for over a year.

Massive cut

This August they finally insisted that new working arrangements should be accepted, involving the removal of customary shop steward facilities and a massive cut in manning. The result was a week's full-scale shutdown.

Surprisingly, the press was less excited than usual about the lost exports, and there were few calls for legal restraints on wildcat provocations by employers!

The present press campaign has two purposes. First, to divert attention from the shortcomings of the motor employers and the real grievances of their workers.

Second, to prepare the way for a massive attack on workers' shop floor organisation, not only in the car firms but throughout British industry.

Public opinion, according to the press, is demanding "tough" legislation. This "public" does not include the working class. It is the bosses and shareholders who hope for higher profits through curbs on militant shop stewards.

It is essential to expose the hypocrisy of this campaign, and to be ready to resist legal attacks.

OCTOBER 27 VIETNAM DEMONSTRATION

Posters 1 - 6d

50 - £1

Stickers and Leaflets

1000 for 25/-

(or proportion thereof)

Ad-Hoc Committee,

120 Commercial Road,

London, E1.

RANK & FILE TEACHER

Readers' Meeting

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1
Friday Sept. 27 7.30 pm
All welcome

'We'll strike' say teachers

From JENNIFER BELL

THE YOUNG TEACHER Conference at Loughborough last week-end laid down a hard line on pay and conditions.

The conference marked another step towards teachers seeing themselves as part of the working-class struggle.

A feeble motion on action over salaries was significantly rejected by a good

majority in favour of an amendment calling for: 1. Regional strikes in the event of an unsatisfactory settlement in the current round of pay negotiations. 2. For an immediate build-up of the National Union of Teachers' strike fund and 3. For the NUT "to initiate a campaign together with other trade unions and trade unionists against the Prices and Incomes policy".

MILITANT

Another motion called for militant action if the likely redundancy among teachers becomes a reality. Teachers unemployed while classes remain oversized is an issue which must be fought tooth and nail.

The implementation of these decisions depends on the ability of the rank and file NUT members to organise themselves quickly. The favourable reaction at the

conference to the Rank and File teachers' journal was an encouraging sign.

Many young teachers are not only disgusted with the government, but are disillusioned by the constant sell-outs from their own leadership and are ready to take things into their own hands. It is to be hoped that this mood will spread.

CORRECTION: A misprint occurred in the article on Young Teachers in last week's issue. The relevant sentence should have read: "In the last 50 years.....managers', administrators' and foremen's incomes rose by 100 per cent, skilled and unskilled workers' by 80 per cent, teachers' by a mere 20 per cent."

ETU SHOP STEWARD JAILED

ETU SHOP STEWARD Barrie Shelton from Basildon, Essex was jailed for three months at Marlborough Street Magistrates' Court on Monday.

He had pleaded not guilty to assaulting a police sergeant after the Vietnam demonstration on July 21 at Hyde Park Corner. He was alleged to have punched the sergeant in the stomach after being grabbed from behind.

A witness said the allegation of assault was without foundation. Barrie was in no position to hit the officer, who was holding him round the neck in a tight grip.

IGNORED

The magistrate ignored this evidence, and put Barrie inside for three months. "What else can we (magistrates) do to stop this violence?" he said.

He gave him a conditional discharge on another charge of threatening behaviour, to which he had pleaded guilty. Barrie (22) is married with a young daughter, and his wife is expecting another child. He has no previous convictions.

The case had been remanded three times, and Barrie had already lost considerable earnings, having to travel to the court from Basildon on four separate occasions.

Many other socialists are already in jail as a result of the July 21 demonstration, and more cases have still to be heard. A clear attempt is being made by the authorities to intimidate people into not taking part in the October 27 Vietnam "mobilisation".

Financial aid for Mr. Shelton's family will be forwarded if sent to Socialist Worker.

Battersea men demand 6d an hour

AT A MASS meeting on Tuesday of the 1,700 workers of Morganite Carbon's Battersea and Wandsworth sites in South London, the strikers voted to stay out until their demand is met.

Morganite workers, who have been out for a week, have taken strike action in support of their 6d per hour wage demand "with no strings". Tired of nearly a year's fruitless negotiations with the management, who are only willing to talk in terms of a "productivity" deal involving the loss of the afternoon tea-break, the workers have broken 125 years of peaceful exploitation with their strike action.

Smears

The strike, which will affect the car industry and other electro-engineering industries—Morgan's manufacture electrical brushes and bearings—is almost 100 per cent solid, but as yet lacks the organisation necessary to ensure victory.

Organisation must come from a political view of the struggle which Morganite's self-elected strike committee refuses to take, labelling all those who oppose them as "communist agents".

Strike fund donations to: Bro. Peter Mitchell, 36 Wayford Street, London SW11.

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